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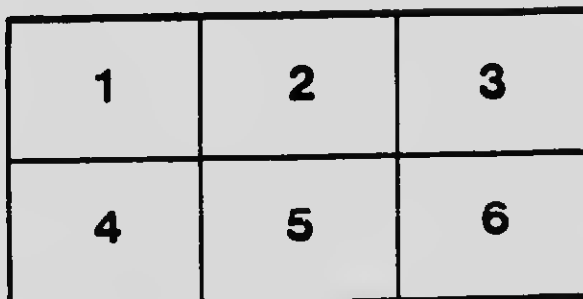
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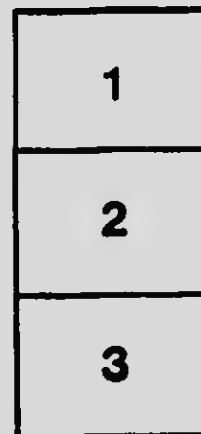
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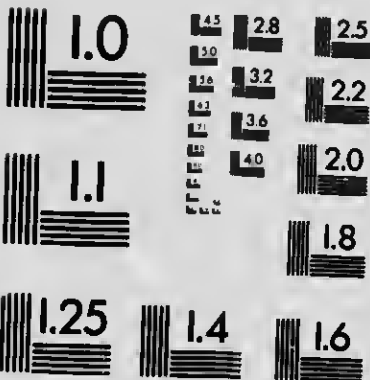
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THE INTERPRETATION OF  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE



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THE INTERPRETATION  
OF  
RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

THE GIFFORD LECTURES  
DELIVERED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW  
IN THE YEARS 1910-12

BY  
JOHN WATSON, LL.D.  
PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY IN QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY  
KINGSTON, CANADA

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WATSON,

1881



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## *PART SECOND. CONSTRUCTIVE.*

### LECTURE FIRST.

#### FAITH, KNOWLEDGE AND MYTHOLOGY.

IN my former course of lectures I tried to show that it is a fundamental mistake to think of religion as occupying a separate and independent sphere of its own, where it dwells in calmness and serenity undisturbed by the conflicting interests of everyday life ; that, on the contrary, it is co-extensive with the whole realm of human experience. No doubt in his religious consciousness man is lifted above all division and contradiction by his union with the divine ; but this union is not attained by abstraction from the finite, but by its spiritualization. Through all its changing phases religion has remained faithful, in spirit if not always in letter, to the fundamental principle, that nature, man and God are inseparable from one another. Beginning as a simple and almost undifferentiated germ, it has developed into a highly specialized organism ; but it has through the whole of its history preserved the three aspects of religion, as a life, a creed and a ritual ; though the tendency to abstraction, which is the great vice of the reflective intellect, has often led thinkers who sought to analyze its contents to isolate one of those aspects, to the neglect or suppression of the others. At the present time, there are many writers who lay all the emphasis upon



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life. Religion, it is said, is entirely independent of any creed, orthodox or heterodox, and it is even doubtful if a theology is possible at all, in view of the necessary limitations of human experience. There is an absolute contrast, it is contended, between the freedom and spontaneity of religious life and the arid abstractions of theology. Religion, they say, rests upon faith, not upon the artificial constructions of the intellect, and nothing can be more fatal than the identification of the one with the other. The religious man may be a very poor theologian, the theologian need not be religious; and religion can only be preserved, in these days of unrest and sceptical mistrust, by an appeal to intuition, not by the futile attempt to construct a system of theology, an attempt which from the nature of the case must always end in failure.

This endeavour to base religion upon faith, as distinguished from knowledge, may either be advanced in defence of the Christian view of life, or as the only basis of any form of religion whatever; and it will therefore throw some light upon the subject of these lectures to consider shortly what can be said in support of each of those views.

According to the former, the essence of Christianity was revealed for all time in the first century of our era, and therefore the nature of Christianity must be learned from a study of the original Christian records, combined with a vigorous exercise of the historical imagination. In this way, it is contended, we may succeed in seeing things with the eyes of the first disciples of our Lord, and in freeing ourselves from the obscurations and perversions with which the original revelation has been subsequently overlaid. In the life and death and teaching of the Master, it is said, there was embodied the deepest principle of the religion that he founded; and therefore, by imaginative



contact with him, there may be reproduced in us the fresh and vigorous spiritual life of the first Christians. Where else, indeed, can we expect to find the fundamental nature of Christianity revealed, if not in the three first Gospels, as properly interpreted? In the writings of St. Paul, we are told, the religion of Jesus is already intermingled with Pharisaic elements; and the Fourth Gospel, with its mystical doctrine of the Word that became flesh—a doctrine suggested by, if not borrowed from, the philosophy of Alexandria—carries this process of obscuration further still; while the subsequent speculations of the Greek and Roman fathers, and the whole dualistic and ascetic movement of the medieval Church, have almost destroyed the warm and breathing life of genuine Christianity. Only by removing the veil which has for so long obscured the truth, can we hope for a renewal of spiritual life and for the experience of a real living faith such as the immediate followers of Jesus experienced.

What underlies this endeavour to recover the ideas and feelings of the first century is the conviction that in this way we may get rid at a stroke of the whole edifice of dogma, which, it is held, has been built up by the intermixture of abstract speculation with an unhistorical interpretation of the Christian documents. The system of doctrine endorsed by the Church claims to be deduced from scripture by the exercise of reflective thought. This claim, it is contended, cannot be substantiated. When we apply modern methods of criticism to the sacred text, the result is that by a slow yet sure method one by one the folds of misinterpretation are removed, misunderstandings due to want of sympathy and to unfamiliarity with the intellectual and spiritual atmosphere of the past are disclosed, and at last there gradually emerges the divine figure of the Master as he really was, so that we come



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to see what he actually taught and what was the true significance of his self-sacrificing life and atoning death.

Now, I should be the last to undervalue the labours of the great army of historical critics, who have done so much to make the past live again for us, by removing to so large an extent the prejudices and preconceptions which for so long prevented us from reading the sacred writings in something like their original sense ; but I am not prepared to admit that by this method a substitute can be provided for a theology or philosophy of religion. I am unable to see that the new insight gained into the life and thought of the first century can possibly lead to the conclusion that the labours of theologians and philosophers have been nothing but the misdirected efforts of able and pious men in pursuit of an impossible task, or that the reconstruction of theology in the light of modern thought is either useless or impossible.

It seems to be assumed by those who adopt this view of the history of religion that, by getting back to the original form in which the Christian religion was enunciated by its Founder, we may reach absolute religious truth, and that any attempt in the slightest degree to modify or expand this truth in the light of subsequent experience must necessarily lead to its obscuration and distortion. What, then, is the picture of Jesus which is held to result from the application of the historical method to the sacred writings ? The question is still to a certain extent unsettled, but a measure of agreement has been reached by all unbiased critics as a result of their laborious investigations.

The idea of the Kingdom of God, so we are told, on which the teaching of Jesus was based, can be traced back to a very early stage of the religion of Israel. What Jesus did was to impart to it a new and deeper meaning. Like his immediate predecessor, John the Baptist, he accepted



the idea of the Kingdom to which apocalyptic writers like Enoch and Baruch had given currency : the calamities of the last days, the circumstances of the Judgment, and the dissolution of the whole order of nature and society. At the same time his conception of the Kingdom was not a mere transcript of the apocalyptic tradition. He does not, for example, contemplate an entire destruction of the present world, but its continuance in a transfigured and purified form, with a fresh beginning in the history of the world, when even the outward limitations and evils of man's life will be done away, so that there will be no distinctions of rank and class ; no sorrow, or poverty or death. But the greatest and most fundamental change he conceives to lie in the spiritual transformation of man's life. Having a clear consciousness of the mind of God, the heirs of the Kingdom will freely and spontaneously conform to it. Thus the present imperfect world, into which evil has somehow entered, will be purified and renovated. Not that the existing world belongs to Satan, but it is so far imperfect, that the will of God only works itself out in antagonism to the evil powers that ever seek to obstruct its operation. There are, it is admitted, no doubt sayings of Jesus which seem to imply that the Kingdom will come as the result of a slow and gradual process ; but, on the whole, the sayings in which a sudden and miraculous coming is assumed are still more numerous. Image is heaped upon image in order to make it perfectly clear that the Kingdom will come with a bewildering abruptness through the direct and miraculous intervention of God. Nor can our Lord have meant that the Kingdom had already begun. This supposition is excluded by the conception of its sudden and miraculous advent, which necessarily involves its futurity. So close at hand, however, was the Kingdom believed to be that its power could



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be already felt, and there were indubitable signs and guarantees of its near approach. As a preparation for the advent of the new age Jesus demanded, in place of a mere outward conformity to the precepts of the Law, a complete transformation of the inner nature. Each commandment he traced back to its source in the will. Repentance, therefore, consisted in a radical change of heart. Jesus demanded of his followers an entire renunciation of occupation, wealth and even family ties; not on ascetic grounds, but because these things were bound up with the present order, which was so soon to come to an end. We cannot, it is contended, explain away this eschatological idea of the Kingdom of God by interpreting it in a purely spiritual sense, or viewing it as but the imaginative setting of moral and religious ideas. On the other hand, it is even a greater mistake to regard the moral and spiritual ideas of Jesus as something secondary and incidental; for only by projecting himself into a world of ideal conditions was he able to realize the true purpose and will of God. Thus, while the apocalyptic hope supplied the outer framework of his teaching, it was the higher spiritual interest that for him was always paramount. And, though the Kingdom was conceived of as the direct gift of God, yet, giving an example in his own life of an all-conquering faith, Jesus urged his followers to hasten its advent by their own efforts.<sup>1</sup>

Now, it must be admitted that the picture thus sketched for us, as the result of recent historical criticism, undoubtedly enables us to realize more vividly the personal life of Jesus and the source of his influence upon his contemporaries. It is impossible, in the presence of this

<sup>1</sup> For the summary of recent critical thought contained in this paragraph I am much indebted to the able work of my colleague, Dr. E. F. Scott, on "The Kingdom of the Messiah" (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh).



## FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE

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inspiring figure, to acquiesce in such later fictions as those adopted by certain theologians, whether they take the form of a spectral Christ instead of the Jesus of history, or of that impossible combination of human limitations and divine omnipotence which was supposed to solve the problem of the relations of God and man. But, while we are thus enabled to get a clearer and truer vision of the person of Jesus, we only become all the more conscious that for us the whole atmosphere of ideas in which he lived and moved has so completely changed, that it is only by an effort of the historical imagination, and as the result of a minute and careful study of the ideas and modes of thought of his time, that we can enter with sympathy into his mind and teaching. The whole idea of a sudden and miraculous advent of a new order of things, to take place in the lifetime of those then living, has been made incredible to us, not only by its failure of accomplishment, but by its incompatibility with that gradual process of evolution that is one of the main presuppositions of our world of ideas. It is therefore impossible for us to accept without criticism even the spiritual ideas expressed by Jesus. True, the principle enunciated by him, that the whole essence of religion is summed up in the command to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and our neighbour as ourselves, we feel constrained to accept; but this principle, absolute and comprehensive as it is, does not solve the difficulties that have come upon us as a result of the controversies and the conflicts of centuries. Undoubtedly Jesus expressed the deepest principle of religion—the unity of Man in his true nature with God—and embodied it in his life and death; but it is impossible, if we are to attain to anything like security of faith, to avoid asking what meaning this principle has for us, who live in a world that does not correspond to the ideal Kingdom of



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God, and who have laid upon us the immense burden of the apparently conflicting results of science, politics, philosophy and religion.

The claim to substitute a historical description of Christianity, as it appeared to the mind of the Founder, for a philosophy of religion derives support from the conviction that theology and philosophy are not essential to the religious life. This is no doubt true, in the sense that piety and theology do not always go together; but it is not true, if it is meant that a simple reference to the teaching of Jesus makes the endeavour to construct a system of theology superfluous. When it is once admitted that the eschatological setting of the ideas of Jesus cannot be accepted, we are simply forced to ask upon what grounds of reason the fundamental principle of Christianity is based, and how far it admits of justification in the light of modern thought. Or rather, the real problem is, how a principle not dead but full of vitalizing power has gradually defined itself in its conflict with antagonistic or complementary ideas; and how that principle is to be interpreted in harmony with the highest results of modern investigation.

The theory which we are considering seeks to take us back to the point of view of the Founder of Christianity and thus to arouse in us a living faith. What, then, is faith? It is clearly impossible to identify faith with the mere presence of an idea in the mind, or even with a belief in the truth of that idea. It is not the former, for I may have an idea before my mind without regarding it as corresponding to reality. Some thinkers, for example, deny that the existence of an omniscient and omnipresent God is capable of demonstration; but the very fact that the existence of such a Being is denied, is sufficient evidence that it exists as an idea in the mind of those who make the denial. To have the idea of an infinite Being is



therefore not the same thing as to have faith in the reality of that Being. But, further, we may believe in the reality of God without having, in the religious sense, faith in him. For, faith, in this sense of the term, while it presupposes belief in its object, also involves an act of will. I cannot have faith in God without having the conviction that he is not a mere fiction of my own creation; but, unless this conviction is of such a character as to influence my life, it cannot be called faith, in the religious sense of the word. Thus "faith" is the expression of my deepest and truest self; it is the spirit which determines the whole character of my self-conscious life. To suppose that genuine faith should exist without being translated into action is therefore a contradiction in terms. The faith which has no influence on the life is not faith. Bearing this in mind, we can understand why it has been maintained that religion has nothing to do with creeds and confessions. One may be perfectly familiar with a definite system of doctrine, and yet be entirely destitute of religious faith. What can it matter to me, it is said, that I am an accomplished theologian, if my life is in no way influenced by what I believe? It is therefore inferred that faith is something different from, and even antagonistic to, any and every system of doctrine.

While it is undoubtedly true that religious faith is nothing unless it determines the will and issues in action, it by no means follows that the intellectual formulation of the contents of religion is superfluous. A precondition of faith is belief in certain ideas, though that belief does not of itself constitute faith. If I do not in some sense believe in the reality of God, even if my belief is only in the validity of an ideal, I shall certainly not strive after truth and beauty and goodness. If I am convinced that unselfish conduct has no higher claim to obedience than



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selfish conduct, my life will either be a continual oscillation between opposite courses of action, or it will degenerate into the most pronounced selfishness. While therefore there may be doubt as to the truth or adequacy of the ideas formulated in a creed, there can be no religious faith where there are no ideas and no belief in them. Thus, while faith is something more than the theoretical endorsement of certain ideas, it yet necessarily presupposes that endorsement. What we should compare, therefore, is not faith as a whole, faith as an expression of the whole man, but the intellectual side of faith with that systematic formulation of ideas which constitutes a theology or philosophy of religion.

Looked at from this point of view, we can no longer contrast the ideas involved in faith with the ideas contained in a theological system as if they were abstract opposites. They are related in no such antithetical way. The difference between the idea of God as it exists in the mind of the least reflective believer, and the idea of God as held by the theologian, can only be a distinction between implicit and explicit truth. Just as Plato pointed out that moral ideas, as they exist in the mind of the ordinary unreflective citizen, are not to be regarded as contradictory of the moral ideas formulated in a system of ethics; so the religious ideas of the unreflective man are not opposed, or at least need not be opposed, to those of the theologian. In truth, it is impossible for man to believe in ideas that are fundamentally untrue; and therefore we may be certain that the beliefs of the religious man only need to be explicitly stated, and freed from a certain vagueness and inconsistency, to be converted into an articulate system of theology. Religion is possible only for a being who continually thinks, feels and acts under the presupposition that he lives in a spiritual universe; and this



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presupposition, when made explicit and grasped in all its articulations, constitutes a philosophy of religion.

We may conclude, then, that religious faith must necessarily express itself in action, and that this essential relation to the will constitutes its differentia from theology. It is important, however, to guard against the fallacy that faith is the result or product of action. What gives plausibility to this view is the fact already insisted upon, that religion is a life, and that only by living the religious life can a man realize what is meant by religion. It is by *doing* what is good, it may be said, that a man learns what is good. We do not begin by making an elaborate investigation into what ought to be done, and then proceed to do it; but we do it, and in this way determine what ought to be done. Without action there would be no faith.

There is an ambiguity in this view which leads to a fatal confusion of thought. It may mean, in the first place, that religious faith can be entirely resolved into action, or is simply the result of action. Taken in this sense, it seems to me fundamentally false. To say that a thing is right because it is done, means at bottom that the distinction between good and evil is merely a question of what is or is not customary. The fallacy is similar to that into which the pragmatist falls, when he says that "truth" is that which is found to "work," instead of saying that it "works" because of its "truth." The reason why an attempt has been made to explain faith as the result instead of the source of right action is, that man, in action as in knowledge, begins with an indefinite faith, which he only learns to comprehend at all adequately after he has acted. On the other hand, man would never will the good, were it not that he is always governed by a desire for the good; which again involves a belief that the good can only be found



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in a certain general course of conduct. Gradually, as he translates his intuitions into practice, man learns to determine more and more what the ideal course of conduct is ; but were his action from the first not guided by ideas, though not necessarily by ideas that are made an object of reflection, he would learn nothing by the teaching of experience. We cannot separate faith from action, as if the one could be regarded as the cause of the other. All such modes of thought are inadequate to express the nature of the religious life. There is no religious faith that does not involve the combined and inseparable activity of thought, emotion and will. Take away all thought, and nothing remains but mechanical action that has no more meaning than the fall of a stone ; eliminate feeling, and there would be no response of the individual ; remove will, and thought would never be translated into action. What this shows is that we cannot divide up the self-conscious life of man into three separate and independent powers, and therefore that we can have no action that is either good or evil which does not involve the whole man. Since the whole man is expressed in what he wills, the only true sense in which it can be held that faith is dependent upon action, is the sense that will is realized faith. To say that faith is the result or effect of action is therefore to say that it is the result of itself. As a form of intelligent and emotional activity, involving the whole rational subject, faith cannot be due to anything but itself.

Faith, then, to sum up, always involves (1) an idea, (2) belief in the object of that idea, (3) willing in conformity with the belief ; and its distinction from theology lies in its active or practical character, and in the fact that, so far as it is contrasted with theology, it contains implicitly, or in an unreflective form, that which in theology ought to be expressed in a completely rounded system.



It is therefore only in a true theology that faith can find its theoretical justification ; while, on the other hand, theology can only compass this justification, in so far as it does not contradict the total content of faith.

From what has been said it manifestly follows that faith is not exclusive of knowledge ; in truth, the aim of theology is to determine how far faith can be justified ; in other words, to effect the transition from unreflective to reflective knowledge. It is no doubt true that this transition cannot be made without some alteration in the form in which truth is presented ; but there can be no alteration which destroys the substantial content of what is held in faith. It may be said, however, and indeed it has been said, that the gradual increase of knowledge must lead to a correspondent diminution of faith ; so that ultimately faith will be entirely replaced by knowledge.

To this view there seems to be the insuperable objection, that knowledge is here conceived, not as the development of the truth implicit in faith, but as a process in which faith is gradually abolished. But surely this is a perverse view of their relation. Faith no doubt exists at first in a form that is reflectively very vague and indefinite. A man, for example, may firmly believe that the highest life consists somehow in union with the divine, while the attempt to specify what is meant by the divine, and by union with it, may be a task entirely beyond his powers. When, therefore, the theologian, by a dialectical process, goes on to specify ideas which to the ordinary consciousness are vague and indefinite, he is not at every step receding from faith, but, on the contrary, interpreting it to itself ; and if it is possible to carry this process to its completion in knowledge, faith, so far from being attenuated more and more until it vanishes away, will have been confirmed and strengthened. The notion that knowledge displaces



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faith seems to be largely due to a confusion between faith and credulity. But these are really opposites. Credulity is belief resting upon no evidence of any kind ; whereas faith is conviction to which all that is deepest in nature and human life bears witness. Hence faith cannot be abolished by knowledge, but the strongest faith must be the result of the amplest knowledge. It is only because, in the ratiocinative process by which faith is gradually transformed until it coincides with the highest knowledge, adventitious elements, which are really inconsistent with its principle, are eliminated, that reflection can seem to lead to the destruction of faith. In the unreflective faith of the ordinary consciousness there is inevitably much that is foreign to the genuine religious consciousness, and this element theology is compelled to reject. A man, for example, may be accustomed to conceive of God as a "magnified and non-natural man in the next street"; he may think of the world as formed after the manner in which the builder fashions a house, or the sculptor a statue; he may represent evil as the result of the machinations of the devil; he may think of the regeneration of man in terms of the market-place or the law-court; he may imagine the soul to be of a ghost-like half-material substance, and attempt to establish immortality by more than doubtful stories of the supernatural influence of disembodied spirits; and in all these ways he may contradict the fundamental truth of the spiritual faith which really rules his life. It is therefore only natural, when these crude and inadequate modes of thought have been shown to be untenable, that he should for the moment feel as if his faith had suffered a shock from which it might never recover. But, in truth, his faith did not derive its support from such inadequate modes of representation: it sprung from something much deeper, which the removal of these



fictions cannot possibly affect. And when, for the inadequate idea of a finite anthropomorphic God, he substitutes the conception of God as self-conscious spirit; when he comes to see that for the confused notion of creation out of nothing must be substituted the idea of the world as a reality which has no meaning apart from God; when evil is discerned to be the product of his own irrational will, not of any external agency; when he sees that the regeneration of man is inseparable from the whole spiritual constitution of the universe; when he discards the fiction of the soul as a ghost-like replica of himself, and sees in his self-conscious spiritual nature the only defence of immortality; with the abandonment of these inadequate modes of thought, and the substitution for them of conceptions that will stand the test of the severest criticism, he is not really faithless to his religious intuitions, but he merely frees them from accretions which make the preservation of faith for reflective minds a difficult and in some cases an impossible task.

We may conclude, then, I think, that a completely purified and developed faith is identical with the highest knowledge of divine things, so far as the intellectual element implied in it is concerned. The man who interprets his religion in the light of a comprehensive theology does not weaken his faith, but imparts to it security and confidence. An unreflective faith is necessarily in a condition of unstable equilibrium, and is liable to be shaken by every wind of doctrine. Nothing but a reasoned and systematic faith, a faith which has triumphed over the worst assaults of scepticism and pessimism, can give us permanent satisfaction, especially in our day when no truth however venerable is immune from attack.

It may be contended, however, that from the nature of the case faith cannot be converted into knowledge, and



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therefore that religion must in the end be based upon a faith which excludes knowledge. The older Positivism or Agnosticism, it may be said, erred in dogmatically assuming that the results of science are absolute, whereas they are but limited truths, which leave a whole region of possible reality unexplored. This vague and indefinite reality, it is true, cannot be brought within the sphere of knowledge; but, certain as we are that it exists, our attitude should not be that of positive assertion but only of suggestion, not logic but passion, not prose but poetry. Divination is here more important than fact, imagination than reason. In all that concerns his higher life man must, in default of knowledge, fall back upon mythology and poetry, which do not pretend to a knowledge that is beyond the reach of man, and yet figure forth something that in some way corresponds to reality and satisfies his needs and aspirations. The content of this new mythology, which shall displace the old and self-contradictory creed, can only be vaguely suggested, but it will probably include such beliefs as these: (1) that the world is somehow in harmony with man's ideals; (2) that evil is not a mere appearance but a fact, so that in fighting for good we are assisting something real that is divine, and resisting something real that is diabolical; (3) that, instead of dwelling upon the false idea of original sin, we should insist upon man's power to overcome nature and adapt it to his own ends; and (4) that we should cherish the stimulating idea of personal immortality, and therefore welcome such investigations as those conducted by the Society for Psychical Research. Thus, it is contended, faith may supplement knowledge, and, so long as it is kept from hardening into the rigidity of dogma, it should prove a powerful incentive to further knowledge, as well as to progress in ethical well-being.

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Now, so long as a knowledge of reality as it is in itself is denied, the attempt to save our higher interests by falling back upon mythology I regard as utterly futile and self-contradictory. We are asked, in the absence of knowledge, to trust to our divinations or aspirations, as something higher than the facts and laws of science. But these divinations, it would seem, are so fluctuating and uncertain in their character, that they can only prompt us to believe, in the absence of any convincing ground for our belief, that somehow or other, we know not how, the world is not hostile to the fulfilment of our higher needs. All attempts to explain the unreconciled dualism of good and evil we are to abandon as hopeless, while for the belief in personal immortality there is no other ground than the precarious evidence furnished by the Society for Psychical Research. One can understand the contention that our higher needs, as involved in the self-conscious life of man, demand a belief in the triumph of goodness, in the value of the struggle with evil, and in personal immortality; but this attempt to base them upon an arbitrary mythology, which has no other support than a vague and vacillating aspiration, which cannot even state definitely what it means, is little more than a cry of despair. In the absence of any rational basis for the beliefs in question, what are they but unverifiable fictions? How utterly uncertain is the appeal to divination, passion and imagination, we may learn from the ambiguity of the oracle; it cannot even tell us whether it is for or against the belief in personal immortality; apparently the oracle gives forth so uncertain a sound, that it may be cited in support of either. No other result indeed could be anticipated from a theory which makes uncriticized feeling the basis of faith. Where there is no ground for holding one thing rather than another; where we have no support beyond



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vague intimations, which may with equal plausibility be claimed by either side ; we may construct our mythology after any pattern we please, but what we cannot do is to have permanent faith in it. An appeal is made, in support of this defence of a baseless mythology, or at least a mythology that cannot tell what its basis is, to the poets, and we are told that it is to them, and not to the theologians or philosophers, that we must look for comfort and for truth. And no doubt there is a sense in which poetry may be more philosophical, not merely than history, as Aristotle said, but even than theology or philosophy. The poetic intuitions of Wordsworth and Browning, of Goethe and Schiller, contain larger and deeper truth than is to be found in the systems of contemporary theologians or philosophers ; but the reason is, not that imagination comes closer to reality than reflection, but that it naturally outruns its slower-paced sister. Poetry never contains deeper truth than philosophy, except when it embodies intuitions that are afterwards expressed, or may afterwards be expressed, in systematic form. In poetry we have the concrete presentation of ideas in definite pictorial form, but it is only as it exhibits the whole through the parts, the ideal in the sensible, that it can ever be regarded as reaching a higher stage than a philosophy which has lost itself in the parts. If poetry merely gave expression to the vague yearnings of the human spirit, it would be absurd to appeal to it in support of religion. No doubt lyrical poetry may legitimately express the feelings of the individual, and such an expression may be shown to have a universal value by the critic who is seeking to determine the character of a certain type of mind or of a certain age ; but no one who knows what he is about would cite the lyrical outpourings, say of a despairing and overburdened soul, as a literal expression of truth.



Poetry, then, does undoubtedly contain true ideas, and, it may be, even ideas which are truer than any that have hitherto been divined; but it does so only because it has penetrated more deeply to the heart of reality; and in that case it is the task and the duty of theology and philosophy to make room in their systems for the new truth. The only test of the value of a poem is the possibility of expressing its underlying ideas in a connected and rational system; and if that cannot be done, the failure is due either to want of inspiration in the poet or to the imperfect comprehension of the reflective thinker. I contend, therefore, that a mythology which is not based upon reason has no value whatever, and indeed may prove to be but another obstacle in the way of truth. It cannot be admitted that whatever is called faith is necessarily higher than knowledge. A faith that cannot be shown to be rational is simply a play of fancy, not a product of genuine poetic imagination, which never contradicts reason. It must not be supposed, however, that philosophy, because it is capable of expressing in systematic shape the ideas that inform the imagination of the poet, can be employed as a substitute for poetry, or can dispense with its aid. It is not a substitute; for, after the construction of the most perfect system of philosophy, poetry is essential to give to the system its concrete realization. Nor can it dispense with the aid of poetry, because it is only through the fresh intuitions of poetic genius that new truths, or rather new developments of truth, are brought to light. The poet, working directly upon his own typical experience, and looking at the world with the fresh unjaded eyes of a new unconventional soul, discerns in the concrete and immediate the operation of the single principle that binds all things together; and the abstract thinker, looking at nature and human life through the inspired eyes of the poet, is enabled to make



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a new synthesis, a synthesis that otherwise would have been beyond his reach. The poet and the philosopher have a different task to perform, and yet each must harmonize in his results with the other—assuming, that is, that each performs his own work adequately and in his own way. This, indeed, is essential, for if the poet lapses into the abstracting, reflective, and in the first instance divisive, mood of the philosopher, his poetry will be "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought"; while the philosopher who falls back upon the intuitive and imaginative method of the poet, will fail to attain to that clear distinction and that coherent connection and completeness which it is his business to secure.

We cannot admit, then, that the only organ of religion is imagination, while the only true products of imagination are mythologies, not systems of thought. Nevertheless, there is a sense in which it may be said that faith must always outrun knowledge. The edifice of truth is not built in a day, nor is it ever absolutely complete. Each stage in its development grows out of a former stage and prepares for that which follows. However far the progress of knowledge may have gone, a new and unexplored region must always lie vaguely beyond, and this new region can only be indicated by faith. It would therefore seem that after all we must oppose faith to knowledge. It must be observed, however, in the first place, that the faith which is thus contrasted with knowledge is itself based upon knowledge, and therefore differs in kind from the faith which is identified with baseless mythological fictions; and, in the second place, that, just because it emerges from knowledge, it is really already implied in knowledge. There is no advance by discontinuous leaps: each new stage of knowledge is already implicit in its predecessor; and therefore faith points beyond knowledge only by



bringing to light what is already implicit in knowledge. To take an illustration from our special subject, the idea of God as the unity which gives meaning to life is implied even in the simplest form of religion. No doubt this unity is at first wrongly identified with a particular sensible object; but were there not in this primitive form of religion the implicit idea of an absolute unity, there would be no continuity in the development of the religious consciousness. We must therefore recognize that, while faith may go beyond, and does go beyond, what is explicitly formulated, it does not go beyond what is implied in that formulation. Or, to put the matter in another way, the whole progress of knowledge consists in the continuous process by which a single reality is grasped in its determinate forms. Thus, while knowledge in its progress brings ever new differences into prominence, it at the same time remains, and must remain, within the unity of one intelligible world. The unity and the differences develop *pari passu*. As new distinctions are made, the unity becomes ever more concrete, but it never ceases to be a unity. Now, faith just consists in a reassertion of the unity that is always presupposed as the condition of knowledge. At each stage in the progress of knowledge, the mind reacts, and must react, because at no stage has the universe been completely specified. But the fundamental presupposition which underlies every stage of that progress is the unity or absolute coherence of reality; and it is this idea, which, at each advance, faith reasserts. We may, no doubt, refuse to this presupposition the name of knowledge; but it is only not knowledge, because it is the condition of all knowledge. Thus, in the end, it becomes apparent that faith never transcends knowledge, but, as the assertion of the principle which underlies and makes knowledge possible, it is the highest form of knowledge.



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There is only one other point to which reference should be made before we leave this mythological theory of faith. Its advocates summarily reject what they call the Christian doctrines of creation, the incarnation, the inherent sinfulness of man, and the resurrection, as formulated in the creeds of the Church. Now, the creeds of the Church are simply unintelligible apart from their place in the historical evolution of ideas. By an application of the same external method, it might plausibly be shown that there is nothing in common between the various forms of religion. This whole mode of thought seems to me belated and pernicious. It can hardly be necessary at the present day to enter into an elaborate argument to prove that the history of man is inexplicable apart from the idea of evolution; and the application of that idea will convince any one that such unsympathetic criticisms as those referred to are inept and anachronistic. Historical investigation has amply proved that, by slow and tentative steps, the primitive religions of Greece and Israel developed into monotheism, and that Christianity effected a synthesis of Greek and Jewish ideas by the aid of a principle implicit in both, but wider and deeper than either; and especially that the development of theology has consisted in the reinterpretation of Christian ideas in the light of enlarged religious experience. We cannot, therefore, without ignoring this long and toilsome process, go back to the theological ideas of the first, the fourth or the seventeenth century. The fundamental principle of Christianity—the essential unity of the divine and human natures—must needs receive new applications and come to a clearer and clearer understanding of itself as time goes on, and it is therefore preposterous to identify Christianity with the inadequate formulation of its principle in any given age. At the same time, it is equally one-sided to find in the beliefs of any age nothing but a perversion of



the truth. We cannot thus "cut things in two with a hatchet." The only profitable study of theological conceptions is that which endeavours to discover what element of truth they contain, and what is the degree of error which prevents them from expressing the truth in its purity and comprehensiveness. To remain rigidly bound by a particular formulation of the Christian principle makes progress impossible; to deny all truth to it, makes progress unintelligible. The development of theology, like all other manifestations of the human spirit, is never the mere annihilation of the old and the substitution of the new. So to read the history of thought is to reduce it to a mere alternation of contradictory ideas, and a mere alternation is the denial of all law. The history of man becomes an unintelligible enigma, if any period, whether it be the first or the twentieth century, is isolated and treated as self-sufficing. The first Christian century grew out of the preceding non-Christian centuries, as the twentieth has developed out of all the centuries that have followed the advent of the new form of religion. No absolute line of demarcation can be drawn anywhere; and, unless we are determined to treat Christianity as a dead and lifeless mechanism, we must be prepared to incorporate in our theology the result of its centuries of struggle and conflict with partly alien and partly kindred forces. To eliminate all that has been contributed, not only by writers like St. Paul and St. John, but by the theologians and philosophers of nineteen centuries, will leave us with a content so vague and general as to be incapable of satisfying the religious needs of our age. At the same time, the history of these ideas cannot be treated as simply the record of different and conflicting views about the same or kindred topics; it must be conceived as the ever fuller development of a germ that in its complete differentiation comprehends the whole



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of life. Development necessarily seems at each crisis of belief to be a reversion to earlier and simpler modes of thought ; but that is only because it is necessary, in taking a new step, to realize, in something like its original simplicity and comprehensiveness, the principle that underlies the whole movement. This is the aspect which has been called faith, and it has therefore sometimes been falsely assumed that faith goes back to an earlier stage of thought, ignoring the whole process that has intervened. In reality it is not so, for the return is no mere return, but the preparation for a further advance. The history of man, as M. Bergson insists, is creative, in the sense that the present gathers up the meaning of the past and prepares for an advance beyond it :

One accent of the Holy Ghost  
A heedless world hath never lost.

The long ascetic discipline of the medieval Church, when properly understood, was a practical refutation in advance of the ethics of self-assertion, as preached in somewhat rhapsodical fashion by Nietzsche ; while its dualistic theology contributed an element of truth which is a necessary complement of pantheism. It is therefore a mark of crudity and superficiality of thought, when we find such a view as that we have been considering advanced as a substitute for a Christianity that is rejected only because it is viewed as a stationary creed, not as a living principle which is continually creating new forms for itself.

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## LECTURE SECOND.

### THE FALLACY OF RADICAL EMPIRICISM.

THE conclusion at which we had arrived at the end of last lecture was that the absolute opposition of faith and knowledge is one that cannot from any point of view be legitimately maintained ; that, on the contrary, that which in faith is present in an unreflective form must be clearly grasped by thought and shown to be in its permanent elements capable of consistent and systematic statement in a theology or philosophy of religion. We cannot be satisfied with an appeal to immediate conviction, or avoid the toil and difficulty of investigation, by falling back upon " the faith once delivered to the saints " ; nor is it possible to rest satisfied with the creation of mythological fictions, however comforting they may be ; but we must be prepared to show that the truths of religion admit of rational defence and systematic statement. The possibility of constructing a philosophy of religion presupposes these two principles : firstly, that the universe is rational ; and, secondly, that it is capable of being comprehended in its essential nature by us ; and unless we are convinced of their truth, we cannot advance a single step. It will therefore prepare the way for a more positive treatment, if we ask what conception of the universe must be held on the assumption that it is in itself completely rational and can be known by us to be completely rational.

To take the last point first, it is manifest that, admitting



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the universe to be completely rational, it can only be known by us to be so, provided that our intelligence is not infected with an absolute limit, which for ever prevents it from transcending appearance and grasping reality as it actually is. For, as has often been pointed out, an absolute limit in intelligence is incompatible with the consciousness by intelligence that it is absolutely limited. If I know that there are absolute limits to my intelligence, it must be because, *per impossibile*, I have for once somehow escaped from those limits. For, the assertion that my intelligence is absolutely limited must be absolute; i.e., it must be an assertion which no increase in my power of comprehension would in any way affect; an assertion, therefore, which would be endorsed by an intelligence that knows all things as they are; in short, an omniscient intelligence. But, if the judgment that my intelligence is absolutely limited is true without any reservation, it must be only in reference to all other judgments that the limitation applies, not to this judgment itself. If there is any doubt of the truth of this judgment, it becomes doubtful whether other judgments may not be absolutely true; and if this judgment is false, its contradictory must be true, and therefore it must be false that all other judgments are not absolutely true. It thus seems obvious that, granting the truth of the hypothesis that the universe is rational, we cannot without contradiction defend the thesis, that there is an absolute limit in the human intelligence, which prevents it from knowing that the universe is rational.

It may, however, be admitted that the assertion of an absolute limit in the human intelligence refutes itself, and yet it may be contended that *under the conditions of our knowledge* we can never prove that the universe is rational. Our judgments, it may be said, are never more than a formulation of that partial and inadequate comprehension



of reality which alone is ours. It is not necessary, it may be contended, to maintain that our judgments are absolutely false; all that need be held is that they are our human way of representing a reality which never actually comes within the circle of our intelligence. All our judgments in regard to ultimate reality, it may be urged, are of this character: they are not false, and yet they are not absolutely true. For example, it is ordinarily held that the Unity, which we are compelled to postulate as the principle of all things, is a "person" or a "self-conscious intelligence." And it must be admitted that "personality" is the highest category within our reach, and therefore may be legitimately enough predicated of the Absolute or God, provided we do not suppose it to be an adequate characterization of the ultimate Unity. That it is not adequate may at once be seen if we reflect that, in the strict sense of the term, "personality" has no meaning except when predicated of finite beings. We speak of a "person" when we are referring to a particular individual, who is and knows himself to be distinct from all other individuals; and, therefore, we cannot speak of God as a "person" without denying that he is the principle which all existence implies. But, though it cannot be an attribute of God, "personality" may fairly be said to represent or symbolize the real nature of God, and indeed to represent it in the highest way possible for our limited intelligences. We may therefore make use of the term "personality" when we are speaking of God, so long as we recognize that we are employing a metaphor, which only suggests or indicates that which it is not in our power to define. Certainly it is a more adequate way of describing the nature of God to say that he is a "person," than to speak of him as an abstract "Power" or a "Substance"; and, if anyone is tempted to think of God in either of these inadequate ways, he may usefully correct that tendency by



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conceiving of him as a "person," provided always he recognizes that God is something infinitely higher than personality, though what this something is no human mind can possibly tell.

This modified doctrine is not so obviously self-contradictory as the unqualified assertion, that the human intelligence is absolutely limited. It recognizes "degrees of truth," refusing to say outright that by its very nature the human intelligence is shut out from all knowledge of reality as it absolutely is. But it can hardly be said to be a self-consistent doctrine. It goes on the principle that it is possible for the human intelligence to discern the limits within which it is confined, without being able in any way or in any sense to see beyond them. We can, it is assumed, tell that our judgments in regard to the nature of ultimate reality are not absolute, without being able to say positively what the content of an absolute judgment would be. Thus we are entitled to say, it may be urged, that the Absolute is not a person, much less a blind force or substance, because we can see that personality is applicable only to one individual subject as contrasted with another, while we are certain that God is not such an individual subject. But, surely, this doctrine must either be pushed further or entirely abandoned. If we know that God is not personal because he is not finite, it must be because we know him to be infinite, and that not in the purely negative sense that he does not belong to the class of finite beings—for in that case he might be nothing at all—but in the positive sense that he contains all reality within himself or is all-comprehensive. If we say that he is "super-personal," we must have a positive ground for making the assertion. That being so, it must be possible to characterize God by a higher category than that of personality. If it is replied that we possess no higher



category, then we must answer that in that case we have no ground for asserting that there is any higher category. But the contention can hardly be made good. For, to say that we have no higher category than personality is the same as saying that we have no conception of anything higher than abstract individuality—unless indeed we abandon the ordinary definition of personality, and employ it in a deeper sense, and then it may not follow that it is inadequate as a definition of God. The truth is, that in the very conception of God as infinite or all-comprehensive, we have, at least implicitly, a higher category than that of abstract individuality, since God is then conceived to be the *prius* of all abstract individuality. And when we go on to consider what is meant by personality, at least as understood by those who deny its applicability to God, we find that it is by no means "the highest category within our reach." For, as we have said, personality is assumed to imply abstract individuality, and abstract individuality is demonstrably inadequate even as a characterization of man, not to speak of God. If it is said that every man is an abstract individual, *i.e.* an individual whose nature it is to be independent of all other things, it may easily be shown that such an abstract individual is a mere fiction. If any such individual actually existed, he would be independent, in the sense that he would be what he is even if all other beings were annihilated, or had never existed. But such a self-centred individual has no more existence than a centre without a circumference. Hence, personality must be interpreted in a higher way; or, what is the same thing, a higher category is required to define the nature of man. For, man is what he is, not in his isolation, but in his relations to other beings, the purely individual man being a mere abstraction. This higher category may be called self-conscious reason, and nothing less will adequately char-



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acterize the nature of man. Hence we must at least define God as self-conscious reason ; and if this category also is found to be inadequate, we must replace it by others, until we have found one that is adequate. Whether or not the category of self-conscious reason is adequate can only be determined as the final result of our whole enquiry ; all that is at present maintained is, that there is nothing in the nature of our intelligence which makes it hopeless to attempt a characterization of the nature of God, since the rejection of any given determination is legitimate only if we have already reached a higher determination.

That this is the only defensible conclusion may be shown in another way. When the predicates by which we seek to characterize the nature of God are said to be true in an analogical but not in a literal sense, it is implied that, somehow or other, we are capable of comparing them with the predicates which actually and precisely characterize his nature. It is therefore assumed that the human intelligence has in some sense before it both the inadequate and the adequate categories. For, in every case of comparison, both terms must be present. If, for example, a photograph is declared to be a good likeness, obviously the picture and the original must both be known. No one can say that the photograph is either good or bad unless he knows what the person represented looks like. Similarly, if it is said that personality is a good representation of the actual character of God, he who says so must have some knowledge of what that character is. If he knows nothing of the nature of God, how can he tell whether personality is a more or less adequate determination than force or substance, or indeed whether any of these predicates has the remotest likeness to the attributes of God ? If God is truly beyond our knowledge, for us he is perfectly destitute of all positive attributes. Even granting therefore that in



himself God has a determinate nature, this does not help us to show that we can prove him to have such a nature. It thus seems illegitimate for anyone who denies that we have a positive knowledge of the nature of God to claim that he has even an analogical apprehension of that nature. He must therefore be content to say that there is a God, without affirming that the predicates by which the nature of God is made intelligible to himself have the remotest resemblance to the actual nature of God. And when we have reached this stage, it is only another step to the denial of God altogether, since that of which nothing more can be said than that it is, cannot be distinguished from that of which nothing whatever can be said. The assumption of an absolutely incomprehensible God is at the most merely an index of the ineradicable tendency of our nature to refer all modes of being to a single all-comprehensive unity; but the assertion that this unity is indefinable is inconsistent with the assertion that it exists. We must, therefore, conclude that, neither in its unqualified, nor in its qualified form, can the absolute limitation of the human intelligence be defended.

Now if the human intelligence is not infected with an absolute limit, it cannot be shown that the universe is in any sense irrational. The two propositions, indeed, imply each other. Intelligence is not an abstract power which works in a vacuum, but essentially consists in the comprehension of reality. If we suppose the universe to be infected with irrationality, the intelligence, if it proceeds upon the assumption that the universe is completely rational, is bound to find itself checked and frustrated in its effort to comprehend that which, as irrational, must be absolutely incomprehensible. We cannot set up an absolute limit in the universe without virtually dividing it into two opposite and irreconcilable sections: one in



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which every element is supposed to be combined in the transparent unity of the whole, and the other which is the absolute negation of that unity. So long as, beyond the region which is radiant in the light of reason, there falls a perfectly dark and opaque region, of which nothing can be said but that it is absolutely inscrutable; so long the human intelligence must be subjected to the absolute limit which is implied in the absolutely unintelligible. Such an external limit to the intelligence necessarily implies a limit in the intelligence itself; for the intelligence can only exist, and possess the nature of intelligence, provided that it is consistent with the total nature of things. A perfectly rational intelligence cannot exist in a partially rational universe; and therefore the complete rationality of the universe is the indispensable condition of an intelligence free from any absolute limit. The rational and the real must coincide: if we cannot show that the real is rational, it is certain that we cannot prove the rational to be real; and the truth of both propositions is the indispensable condition of a philosophy of religion.

I have attempted to summarize the arguments for a rational universe and for the possibility of its comprehension, partly because these two principles seem to me indispensable as the basis of a theology, and also because there is a class of thinkers who claim, in the most emphatic way, that all such attempts are foredoomed to failure from the very nature of the case. We are precluded, it is held, from making any absolute statements in regard to the ultimate nature of things by the very nature of our experience. The Critical Philosophy, as we know, because of its distinction between phenomena and noumena was led to deny that we can have any knowledge of reality as it is in itself, though it also contended that we can reach an assured faith in God, freedom and immortality through the moral consciousness.



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And radical empiricism, as advocated by the late Professor James and endorsed by his followers, goes much further, refusing to admit that we can even refer all things to a single principle. If this last contention can be successfully defended, there can be no philosophy of religion as I understand it; and therefore it seems necessary to ask whether its main contention may not rest upon a false and indefensible foundation.

Radical empiricism, we are informed, denies that the universe can be shown to be a rational whole, maintaining that the character of our experience does not justify such an inference. Holding this view, it naturally refuses, we are told, to admit that any of the conceptions by which we seek to introduce order into our experience can be regarded as more than "working conceptions," liable to be superseded at any moment. It is therefore opposed in principle to rationalism, understanding by this term the doctrine that the universe is an intelligible whole. There is nothing in our experience, it is maintained, which entitles us with certainty to go beyond particular facts. On the other hand, we cannot in consistency exclude any element that is actually experienced, and therefore, since "conjunctive relations" are experienced, they must be accounted as real as anything else. The recognition of conjunctive relations, Professor James assures us, is the great superiority of the new empiricism over the old. "Ordinary empiricism, in spite of the fact that conjunctive and disjunctive relations present themselves as being fully co-ordinate parts of experience, has always shown a tendency to do away with the connections of things, and to insist most on the disjunctions."<sup>1</sup> Radical empiricism, however, does not, like rationalism, treat these relations as being true "in some supernal way," as if the unity of things and their variety

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Philosophy*, I. 534.



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belonged to different orders of truth and vitality altogether.

Now, nothing seems at first sight more reasonable than the contention that we must not go beyond what the facts of experience warrant. In the infinity of particulars ever crowding upon us, we are in many cases forced to be content with mere "brute fact," without being able to show why it should exist. Who will prove to us the rationality of a thunderstorm or an earthquake? And if we cannot show the rationality of all the facts that we experience, how shall we prove the rationality of the whole? Does the rationality of the whole demand that there should be pain and sorrow, crime and guilt? Must we have a Catiline and a Borgia? Is it not more reasonable to say that, while these are undeniable facts, we cannot explain them? Must we hold that whatever occurs is consistent with the rationality of the universe? Is it true, in Hegel's famous phrase, that "whatever is rational is real, and whatever is real is rational"? Why should we run counter to the plain facts of experience? Why should there not be "chance," "accident," "matter," or by whatever term we choose to express the seeming unintelligibility of things?

I do not think that reasoning of this kind can be met by urging the probability that, as many things have been explained which once seemed inexplicable, there is good ground for believing that all things could be explained, if only our experience were more ample. This hardly meets the difficulty. The progress of science has no doubt in many cases revealed the particular conditions under which certain events occur, conditions of which we were at first ignorant, and to that extent has done away with our first impression that they simply happened, or were due to chance or accident. But, while this is true, I do not think that we can base an inviolable law upon any accumulation



of particular instances ; and therefore in the end we seem forced to admit, that the conception of inviolable law is an assumption that we cannot possibly establish. Moreover, the argument from probability or analogy is necessarily weak, because an objector may always retort that, as we have never been able to get beyond a limited number of instances, it is just as legitimate to argue that there are things which by their very nature are inexplicable, or at least can never be shown by us not to be inexplicable, as to maintain that they are capable of explanation. I think we must therefore attack the problem in another way.

The first thing to notice is that the plausibility of the argument against the complete intelligibility of the universe implies that it is partially intelligible. Now, I think it may be shown that even partial intelligibility either implies complete intelligibility or the absence of all intelligibility. The changes which objects undergo are capable of explanation just in so far as they occur, not in an irregular way, but in a fixed and inexorable order ; and if this order is denied, there is no longer anything that admits of explanation. Suppose for a moment that our experiences were so discrepant that there was absolutely nothing in any two of them that we could call identical ; suppose, for instance, that the pavement should suddenly get up and hit one on the head ; and what would be the logical result ? The logical result would be that no judgment whatever could be framed, since judgment rests upon a recognition of something identical in our experience. But the hypothesis of an experience in which there is no identity whatever is absurd, for the simple reason that the minimum of experience involves at least the distinction of " this " from " that," and such a distinction is impossible unless there is something identical in " this " and " that "—whether it is identity in extension, or in time, or in quality, or in some



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other mode. An absolutely chaotic experience, in fact, is no experience at all; to my mind indeed it is simply nonsense: some fixity or order there must be, even if one is only to buy a pair of boots or to match two pieces of silk. Now fixity or order, from the nature of the case, is not something which can be limited in its application: it must be true absolutely and without any exception. It cannot be established by any accumulation of particular instances; for, unless we could perform the impossible feat of summing up an infinite series, we should never in this way attain to the universality of a law. Anyone who seeks to base the regularity and order of our experiences upon a supposed summation of particulars, can give no reason why at any moment all order should not disappear, leaving us weltering in an absolute chaos. The supposition, therefore, of an experienced world absolutely destitute of order, or absolutely unintelligible, is one that cannot be entertained without self-contradiction; it is an hypothesis which, by making all experience impossible, makes itself impossible. We must either postulate the complete intelligibility of the universe, or deny that we can have any experience whatever. That of course is very different from saying that we can explain every fact of our experience. What is asserted is, not that we can show in detail that the universe is completely intelligible, but that on no other supposition than its complete intelligibility can we make any assertion whatever, not even the assertion that it is not completely intelligible. This distinction seems to meet the difficulty, that we are asserting absolutely that which we only prove relatively. Such a judgment as "water rusts iron" we affirm, not on the ground that we have observed all the cases in which water rusts iron, but on the ground that, without presupposing the universal principle, we cannot have the particular experience. How,



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on any other supposition, can we make even so simple a judgment as "that is green"? Admit even that the judgment means no more than that "I am conscious of something green"—without determining whether it is a mere illusion of my own, or something capable of presenting itself to anyone with normal eyesight—even then the judgment itself is at least an actual judgment, which every mind under precisely the same circumstances would make. But, in the assumption that every mind must recognize the certainty of the fact as a fact of consciousness, we have tacitly assumed it to be an unchangeable law, that under precisely the same conditions the same judgment must be made. And this involves the tacit assumption that nothing can be real for any mind except that which is compatible with the fundamental law of all mind, that no judgment can be true which affirms and denies in the same breath.

Radical empiricism rests upon the assumption that experience presents us with an assemblage of facts, the relations of which to one another we are capable of partially discovering, while yet the facts do not warrant the inference that we live in a completely intelligible world. This doctrine obviously presupposes the reality of the facts, while denying the inference that the world is one. Now, what is a fact? It is something which presents itself within the experience of this or that individual, and so presents itself that he cannot but admit its reality. The assertion of the reality of what falls within the experience of the individual is in truth the ground upon which the denial of Monism is based. The character of the facts, it is argued, is such that they do not warrant the inference to the complete rationality of the world as a whole. If therefore the facts were not indubitable, the negative conclusion drawn from their character would be invalid. Now, the facts are not momentary states of this or that



subject, but an identity in the experience of the same subject, or of different subjects at different times. Deny this identity, and there is no fact, and indeed nothing that we can speak of as an "experience." "The sun shines" does not mean: "There is in my consciousness a sensation of light at this moment"; what it means is: "I am conscious at this moment of a fact that I call the sun shining," a consciousness which every other mind would have under precisely the same conditions, inward and outward. The simplest everyday fact of experience thus presupposes that very intelligibility which radical empiricism affects to deny. The fixed and unalterable nature of a fact—and if not fixed and unalterable, how can it be a fact?—is meaningless, if the systematic connection of all facts is denied. Thus the unity and intelligibility of the world is first tacitly assumed by radical empiricism, under the guise of particular facts, and then plausibly denied just because it has been assumed. Not only do we admittedly always assume that the world is intelligible, but our assumption is one that justifies itself.

Rationalism, however, we are assured, "tends to emphasize universals and to make wholes prior to parts in the order of logic as well as in that of being. Empiricism, on the contrary, lays the explanatory stress upon the part, the element, the individual, and treats the whole as a collection and the universal as an abstraction."<sup>1</sup>

Without entering into an historical enquiry into the legitimacy of this characterization of rationalism, I shall only say that I do not think we are bound to accept either radical empiricism or what here is characterized as rationalism. I for my part distinctly reject the doctrine that "wholes are prior to parts," just as I emphatically deny that "parts" are "prior to wholes," or that "wholes" are simply a "collection" of parts. It is not true that

<sup>1</sup> *Journal of Philosophy*, 1. 534.



"wholes" are "prior to parts," and just as false that "parts" are "prior to wholes." Neither is prior to the other, either "logically" or "really." Take the simple case of such a judgment as "the sun warms the stone." This is a particular case of a causal connection, and as such it is meaningless if causal connection is denied. No one can truly say that "the sun warms the stone," who does not presuppose the universal and inviolable law, that every change occurs under certain fixed conditions. Deny the principle, and you deny the particular instance of the principle. Thus the particular does not precede the whole, but the whole is involved in it. Nor does the whole precede the particular; for the principle has no existence except as manifested in this and other particulars. To speak of the whole as a "collection" is as absurd as to suppose that a heap of stones is an organism. The whole is always in the part, and were it otherwise the part would be meaningless.

This principle of the essential correlativity of whole and part, universal and particular, is violated by all forms of empiricism, and not least by this new form of it. As we find it in Locke, empiricism, starting from the assumed object of real things and states of the individual mind, seeks to explain how from these states a knowledge of real things may be obtained. Such knowledge, it is maintained, can only come to the individual through impressions of sense, while universals or conceptions derive their meaning from what is discovered by a comparison of impressions with one another. Now, the objection that may fairly be made to this doctrine is that it attempts to explain knowledge by assuming that things as known are independent of the conscious subject, and only act upon him in an external way. Thus perception is supposed to be the purely passive apprehension of an object, which is



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for the subject a sensation or idea produced in his mind without the exercise of any activity on his part, or at least of any activity that affects the impression he receives from the external thing. Such a doctrine falls into the fatal mistake of explaining knowledge by eliminating from it every vestige of thought, and seeking to account for it in a purely external and mechanical way. In contrast to this doctrine we maintain that things are what they are for us as thinking beings, and that to speak of knowledge as given in mere sensation is to commit oneself to a theory which must empty the known world of all meaning. From sensation as defined not even the appearance of knowledge could arise. It is only by identifying this supposed sensation with perception, and treating perception as if it did not differ from what is called sensation, that we seem to exclude all universality. Nor can any modification of empiricism alter its essential nature, so long as the fundamental postulate is retained, that objects are known in a purely passive apprehension. To say that the individual subject does in point of fact find before him, not unrelated feelings, but feelings which are conjoined to one another, does not overcome the fundamental fallacy of empiricism, which consists in viewing the mind as if it were on the same level as other things, and might therefore be treated, if not as a series of events, at least as a "stream," in which a new thought, internally complex it may be, perpetually displaces the old. For, though it is no doubt true that an absolutely simple feeling can yield no knowledge, the mere complexity of feeling will not explain the universality of judgment, without which knowledge of reality is impossible. So long as the separate individuality of mind is assumed, and each mind is resolved into a temporal succession of states, the difficulty remains, that there is nothing in a mind as so defined which accounts



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for its comprehension of the actual nature of things. Conceiving of reality as a collection of separate things, and applying the same idea to mind, empiricism is forced to reduce the individual mind, either with the older empiricists to a "succession," or, with radical empiricism, to a "stream" of feelings. Whether we take the one view or the other is of very little importance, so long as the mind is practically defined to be a collection of elements only related to one another by the superficial bond of time. A disconnected "series" of feelings and a "stream" of feelings have this in common, that the elements of either are merely particular, and as such can yield no universal judgment. What is really characteristic of mind is that it cannot live in the particular, but always in some way grasps the universal in the particular.

These considerations seem to show that this supposed "new way of ideas" is not free from the fundamental incoherences which led to the bankruptcy of the older empiricism in the scepticism of Hume. Attempting to build up a theory of knowledge on the basis of an accumulation of particulars destitute of universal significance, it is able to give plausibility to its denial of the unity and rationality of the world only by tacitly assuming an order that by its principles it ought to deny. What it supposes to be mere particulars really involve universal principles; and if it were not so, there could be no law whatever in things. The "facts" which it assumes are not merely particular experiences, valid only for the subject experiencing them, at the moment of experiencing them, but fixed conditions under which experience takes place. Thus, in the simplest fact there is already involved that very unity or rational system which radical empiricism denies. To admit the reality of anything whatever, however apparently insignificant, is to assume the



reality of a rational and intelligible universe. This is the sense in which we may rightly claim that the reality of God is involved in the reality of the simplest object of experience. Such a doctrine naturally can only be made convincing by a comprehensive review of experience in all its forms; but I hope to convince you, in the immortal words with which Spinoza concludes his "Ethics," that, "if the way to the blessed life is hard and steep, it yet is not impossible of attainment. Hard it must be, or it would not be followed by so few, all that is of great value being as difficult as it is rare."

Meantime, it will make our progress somewhat easier if we first ask what must be the general character of a universe which is at once rational and intelligible. The first and most obvious characteristic of a rational universe is that it must be an absolute unity. And this unity must be understood in the strictest possible sense. It must not, for example, be confused with an aggregate, or a mere assemblage of particulars. An aggregate is not a unity, because it implies the separate and independent existence of particulars which have no necessary connection with one another. A number of points in space is not a unity, when these points are regarded as distinct and separate from one another: it is a perfectly arbitrary collection, dependent upon the mind of the conscious subject, who chooses for his own purposes to regard the collection as a whole. If the points were really a whole, they would not be separate and independent, but would be so indissolubly bound up with one another that no power could separate them. And, constituting a whole, they could neither be increased nor diminished, whereas it is the very idea of number that it can be increased or decreased at will, every element in it being capable of separation from every other. If therefore the universe is a true unity, it cannot be of the nature of



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an aggregate: its elements must be so adapted to one another as to be incapable of existing apart, so that to remove any single element would be to destroy the whole. Hence its unity cannot be dependent upon the caprice or arbitrary choice of a conscious subject, but must belong to the object itself. Every element in it must be intimately and indissolubly connected with every other. No assemblage of points in space or moments in time can constitute a true unity. Nor can the elements of an absolute unity be "parts," in the sense that they have a nature of their own in no way dependent upon the unity. For, this would immediately degrade the unity into an aggregate or collection; or, if not an aggregate, at least an independent being, standing outside of the parts, and only externally related to them. In that case the so-called unity would not unify; for nothing can really unify except that which includes within itself all the elements that it unifies. On the other hand, there is no unity which is not differentiated into distinguishable elements. For a unity which contains or implies no differences, is a mere abstraction. To be a real unity, the universe must therefore have two aspects: it must be absolutely one, and it must be absolutely many. And the two aspects must be correlative: a unity that is not differentiated is essentially exclusive of all differences; and differences which are independent are exclusive of unity. If the universe is truly a unity, it must comprehend within itself all possible differences. It will, then, be a perfect whole—not in the sense that, as a matter of fact, it contains in itself all differences, but in the sense that no differences can possibly exist independently of it. As an absolute whole, it must be infinite, not as excluding all finite determinations in the way of quality or quantity, but because it is an absolutely complete whole, beyond which there is



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nothing, and can be nothing. It is not enough, therefore, to say that a rational unity is a perfect or complete whole, but we must add that it is the only perfect or complete whole. The conception of Leibnitz, for example, that the universe is "the best of all possible worlds," implies that there must be a perfect or complete whole; but, in admitting the possibility of other wholes, it virtually assumes the imperfection and irrationality of the whole that is held to exist. Moreover a truly rational unity must be not only completely differentiated, but it must be absolutely perfect. This does not mean that it can undergo no change. To suppose so, is to predicate of it a stiff unbending inflexibility, which is incompatible with the reality of its differences. The unity cannot be a dead unchanging identity, but, on the contrary, it must express itself in an infinity of changes. These changes, however, must be due to nothing but itself. When Plato argues that the divine cannot change, because it must change either from better to worse, or from worse to better, what he is thinking of is that the divine being by changing must lose its absolute unity and perfection. But Plato overlooks, or seems to overlook, the other and equally essential truth, that a unity which excludes all process is an abstract or dead identity, which cannot possibly exist, because it is nothing. What is true is that the process involved in the absolute unity must not be confused with a transition from lower to higher, or from higher to lower: the absolute unity must be equally perfect in all its phases.

The second main characteristic, therefore, of a rational unity is its self-differentiation. That is self-differentiated, which is in no way dependent for its differences upon anything else. As all reality or being is contained within the one unity, obviously there is nothing on which it could be



dependent ; and indeed dependent being necessarily implies self-dependent being. Granting that there is an absolute unity, it is therefore illogical to regard reality as made up of parts only externally and arbitrarily connected with one another. An absolute unity, in virtue of its very nature must differentiate itself in its parts, and this differentiation is therefore no accident, but the expression of what it is and must be. Not that the Absolute is the only possible self-differentiating unity, but only that all other self-differentiating beings must be subordinated to the Absolute, and cannot be absolutely self-differentiated. To this point we shall have to return, when we come to deal with man as a free or self-determining being.

Lastly, a rational universe must be not only one and self-differentiating, but it must be a coherent system. Every element in the whole must be related to every other ; so that any change in one element will involve a correspondent change in all. This close connection of all the parts is indispensable to a true conception of the whole ; for, if a change may occur in one part which in no way involves a correspondent change in other parts, we must suppose that the part which changes is in no way affected by the others, while they in turn are not affected by it ; and this is inconsistent with the unity and self-differentiation of the whole, which demands a consistent system of changes. System or coherence is, therefore, an essential mark of a rational whole ; so that we may legitimately argue, from the appearance of disconnection and arbitrariness in our experience, that we have not truly comprehended the nature of things.

The real, then, must be an absolute unity, it must be self-differentiating, and its differentiations must form a perfect system. These seem to be indispensable features in a rational universe. Whether they can be shown to be



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inferences necessitated by the character of our experience considered in its totality, is the main problem of a philosophy of religion, to which we must address ourselves in our next lecture.



### LECTURE THIRD.

#### REALISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD.

It is of supreme importance that we should not confuse our first inadequate view of things with a really comprehensive and self-consistent appreciation of them. There are three main ways in which existence or reality may be conceived. The first and most natural way is to look upon the world as made up of particular things, each of which is real or has an existence of its own that is quite independent of all other things. No doubt, when we reflect that things are in the same space and time, and exhibit resemblances, differences and orderly sequences, we do as a matter of fact connect them in our minds; but the relations thus introduced are not at this stage regarded as in any way affecting the solid reality of the things so compared, and indeed are regarded merely as a convenient method of finding our way amidst a confusing mass of ever-changing particulars. Nor is any doubt thrown upon the truth of this first conception of the world by the fact that things are obviously divisible into parts; for it is assumed that these parts must themselves be real, self-complete and independent; so that, while it is admitted that the things we at first sight regard as real are not so, no fundamental change in our point of view is thereby effected, each thing being now conceived as an aggregate of smaller reals, and as presupposing the separate reality of the parts composing it. Pressed to its logical consequences, this



doctrine dissolves the world into an infinity of disconnected particulars, each of which, though it is actually found to exist along with other particulars, need not so exist, since it has a positive being of its own, which nothing can in any way affect. The logic of this first view of the world is the law of contradiction, as interpreted to mean that a thing is absolutely unique or individual. And the same mode of thought, when applied to the mind, results in the doctrine that each self is, and must be, unique or individual, in the sense that it is absolutely impervious to all other beings; the logical consequence of which would seem to be, that the world is not truly a whole, but merely an aggregate of independent units, which for our own purposes we choose to regard as a whole.

When by further reflection it becomes apparent that this first view of things is untenable, since no object can be found that does not in some way depend upon other objects, the doctrine now formulated is, that there are no independent and self-complete things, such as we had at first supposed, and that relations are by no means due to external comparison, but are absolutely essential to the reality of anything whatever. This doctrine is implicit, for example, in the Newtonian law of gravitation, which insists upon the essential relativity or interdependence of things; and indeed it is the natural view of those who are engaged in scientific pursuits, though they very rarely get rid of the imperfection of the first view of things, and usually hold both side by side without any clear consciousness of their discrepancy. This phase of thought, when pressed to its consequences, virtually denies, not only that there are any independent or individual things, in the sense of separate or unrelated objects—which it has a perfect right to do—but that there are individual things in any sense whatever. If A depends upon B, B upon C, C upon D, and so on *ad*



*Infinitum*, we shall in vain search for a principle which is the absolute source of anything. This mode of thought, therefore, is the basis of all phenomenalism, and if applied to mind it results either in reducing it to a series of modes or states, discrete or continuous—the former being the view of the older empiricists, the latter of the new—or in hypothesizing it as something lying behind these modes or states which cannot be further defined. Seeing clearly that there are no separate and independent things, phenomenalism not unnaturally infers that no real things can be known, because nothing can be found which is not a passing phase in a perpetually changing world. No doubt it grants that, as a matter of fact, changes occur in a regular way, but it denies that we are entitled to say that they are subject to any absolute law.

What is the mistake of the first view of things, which affirms that all reality consists of separate, and therefore virtually of self-existent, things? Its mistake lies in overlooking the universal process which is involved in each thing, a process without which nothing could exist or be known. This universal process is not due merely to the external comparison of one thing with another, but implies a vital objective activity which is essential to the reality of the thing. This is the fundamental point. A physical or chemical law is not merely a "working conception," but an actual principle or cause, without which there would be no fact requiring explanation. Nor will it help us to say that each thing *resembles* another; for no valid universal law can be based upon *resemblance*, but only upon *identity*. If it is said that a "law" is merely an abstract idea or conception, and that no conception can be adequate to reality, it must be answered that in that case knowledge is simply an impossibility. No doubt, if a conception were merely a "bloodless category," it would want the concrete-



ness of reality ; but a conception, properly understood, is the grasp by thought of a living principle which is the very soul of reality. To frame the image of an oak is no doubt to form an abstraction, but the conception of an oak comprehends all possible individual oaks, which, however much they may differ from one another, must agree in being dependent upon the energy by which they are produced. A conception therefore corresponds, not to the particular oak, but to the energy by which this and all other oaks are generated. Thus thought, and thought alone, comprehends the real nature of things, for only thought can grasp the living energy without which nothing whatever could exist. There can be in fact no conception of reality at all without the activity of thought in the formation of conceptions. Not that this activity is necessarily made a direct object of attention, but it must be operative in the experience of the real world, and, when formulated, it must set forth the necessary conditions under which that world is possible or knowable.

Though this second or reflective stage of thought is a distinct advance upon the first or perceptual stage, it is not ultimate. "All relational modes of thought," as Mr. Bradley says, "are self-contradictory," or, as I should prefer to say, are self-contradictory when taken as the true or ultimate character of thought. It is a mistake to assume that all thinkable reality must be relational or dependent. For, when reality is so conceived, the mind is inevitably forced upon an infinite series in the attempt to characterize it, and obviously an infinite series can never be summed up or completed in any way. If we could come to an end of the series, it is assumed, we should have exhausted the infinity of particulars and no reality would lie beyond the whole thus reached ; but as the series of dependent particulars is endless, the attempt is foredoomed to failure.



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This method of conceiving reality, however, when it is closely examined, may be seen to have refuted itself. If it is true that nothing comes within our experience except dependent beings, we can never reach a true cause at all, but only one that is a link in an endless chain, the first link of which it is therefore impossible to discover. Evidently, the reason why the mind cannot be satisfied with this view of things is that such a series does not take us beyond a reality that is dependent, and we therefore affirm it not to be true reality but only appearance. Thus we tacitly assume that only that which is self-dependent can be real. Dependent being, in other words, presupposes self-dependent being. But there can be only one absolutely self-dependent being; and therefore man, like other forms of being, can only be self-dependent in so far as within him there is operative the same principle as that which manifests itself in all other modes of being, though in beings lower than man it never comes to self-consciousness. Thus there is no division in principle between knowledge and reality, and therefore no absolute separation between any mode of existence whatever and any other. There is no nature which is not capable of being known by the human intelligence, no human intelligence which is capable of existing apart from nature, and neither nature nor the human intelligence can have any existence in separation from God. We must therefore deny altogether the doctrine that there are real things having each an independent reality of its own, and just as decidedly the doctrine that there exist only individual minds with their flux of ideas, so that God can be truly conceived as a separate and independent Being, who is complete in himself apart from all relation to nature and human intelligences. At the same time, while we recognize the relative truth of the second or scientific stage of thought, which interprets reality as a



system of dependent beings, and therefore refuses to admit that any independent beings can be found in the world, we must deny that this method of thought is ultimately satisfactory. What really underlies and gives it force is its tacit presupposition that true reality must be self-dependent, and therefore self-causing and self-differentiating. Thus we reaffirm the individuality of finite things and finite minds in the whole, while denying their separate reality ; and the whole we view, not as a mere aggregate, but as an organic and spiritual unity. All forms of being, from the material particle to the most developed human intelligence, we regard as unreal and impossible apart from that absolute unity, but as real and necessary in relation to it. And we further maintain that the one and only perfectly self-dependent, self-active, and self-differentiating unity must be self-conscious, not because it is isolated or independent either in existence or in knowledge, but because it manifests its nature in all modes of being, and most fully in and to man. This unity may therefore be called the Absolute or God, according as we are viewing it from the reflective or the religious point of view ; but it is rightly called the Absolute or God only because it is infinite, in the sense of involving all possible reality as its manifestation.

The development from the first to the third stage of thought through the second rests upon the presupposition that nothing can give permanent satisfaction to our minds that is not seen to be an intelligible or rational whole. On this principle, and only on this principle, I believe, can a satisfactory philosophy of religion be based. Nor can we find satisfaction in anything less than the assurance that, whatever difficulties we may encounter in the attempt to establish the truth of this principle by an interpretation of the facts of our experience, it is a truly objective principle,



and no mere ideal set up by us in contrast to the actual world that we know. If the ideal is not the real, it becomes a mere fiction with which we may vainly seek to comfort our hearts, and thus the real becomes an insoluble enigma. If heaven is not with us now, there is no heaven ; and a God who is but the embodiment of what we are ourselves blindly striving after, is but a mirage in which we have no right to believe, and which can never be a rock upon which our life can be built. If the world is not intelligible, it is impossible for us to construct a theology which is free from the imperfections of the first and second stages of thought ; for, whatever else it may involve, a theology which denies or is doubtful of the rational unity of all things cannot be more than a make-shift. An irrational universe is one that even an absolutely perfect intelligence could not comprehend. This conclusion I shall now attempt to justify by a detailed consideration of the three stages of knowledge indicated.

The conception of the world which in our ordinary everyday consciousness we all possess is, as I have said, that of numberless things lying side by side in space and undergoing changes in time, the reality of any one of these things being, as we imagine, in no way affected by the reality of the others. These things vary in shape, and each has its peculiar qualities of weight, colour, taste, smell and touch—qualities which belong to them individually and enable us to distinguish them from one another and to identify each. We all suppose, moreover, that the human forms with which we are familiar are animated by minds and directed by wills, and that, like the sensible objects known to us, they have a definite and specific character which constitutes their claim to individual reality. I am myself and no one else, it is thought, and nothing can possibly destroy my self-centred individuality, so long as I exist and think and



act. And though it is a thought which usually remains in the background of our minds, we are all disposed to think of all these objects in space, along with the human beings which we distinguish from them, as somehow dependent upon God, whom we ordinarily imagine as a Being existing beyond the world, and so far like the things and minds of which we have experience that he is an independent individual, in no way to be confused or identified with any single object or subject. How God can be, as we believe he is, the source of all reality, while yet all modes of being have an independent existence ; or how God can be infinite, and yet stand opposed to the world as a separate Being ; these questions, as a rule, we pass by, usually with some vague idea that ultimate questions of that kind are insoluble. As Spinoza says, at one time we affirm the reality of the finite, and at another time the reality of the infinite, but we rarely bring the two together and face the problem, how there can be a finite which is independent of the infinite, or an infinite which is independent of the finite.

Now, whatever solution of this problem we shall be led to adopt, it seems obvious that we shall be compelled to surrender our first uncritical view, that the world is made up of a number of independent beings, each of which is real apart from all others. If we can satisfy ourselves that no object and no mind can be found which is real, so to speak, in its own right, we shall have made at least one step towards the reconciliation of the finite with the infinite. For, if neither object nor subject has any absolutely singular reality, we shall naturally be led to ask ourselves whether the conception of God as a Being complete in himself apart from the world may not have to be revised. It is therefore no mere matter of idle curiosity which leads us to ask, whether our first conception of real beings, material or spiritual, finite or infinite, can be consistently maintained.



Our first view of the world seems to be confirmed by the character of our sensible experience. When we have advanced beyond the first entangled and relatively undifferentiated stage of feeling, we become aware of objects which we sharply distinguish from one another and from ourselves. Here and now there lies before us an object that we see or touch or handle, and this object seems to be simply "given" to us. Why it should exist, or why it should be what it presents itself as being, we are quite unable to tell; but we are quite certain that we do not make it, and that if we are to apprehend it as it really is, we must resolutely exclude all our fancies of what it might have been or what we should like it to be, and take it just as it is. What an object will look like, no one can possibly tell beforehand; what its character actually is we can only learn from experience. Thus the knowing subject and its objects seem to be so unlike and opposed, that no explanation of why a thing should exist or be what it is seems to be possible. Every sensible object is alike in this respect, that it is external to every other. This is here, that is there; what is now follows that which was then, and precedes what comes after. And these distinctions are involved in the very nature of sensible experience; so that, without distinguishing that which is here from that which is there, what is now from what was then and will be hereafter, there can be no such experience. The separateness of things thus seems to be undeniable, unless we are to fall back upon the idea that there is no external reality whatever; that, as Berkeley suggested, "the whole choir of heaven and furniture of earth" have no existence except as perceived by this or that subject. The independence of the objects of sense being apparently so absolute and undeniable, subject and object are regarded as necessarily external to each other. It thus seems to be of the very



essence of sensible experience, that each object should be outside of every other, and all objects external to the subject that apprehends them. The tree or the river or the mountain that I see is for my sensible experience this that is here and now before me. With every movement of my eyes or turn of my head a new object is before me, and each object I am aware of as this that is now here. Thus what at one moment is this, the next moment becomes that ; what is here becomes there ; what is now becomes then. And there is nothing in the objects to determine why, because I see a tree at this moment, I should the next moment see a mountain or a river ; it is so, but sensible experience must simply accept the fact, without being able to explain it. Sensible experience, in other words, seems to be absolutely passive or receptive.

The world, then, as it exists for the ordinary unreflective consciousness, appears to be directly given or presented in an immediate apprehension that excludes all additions made by the thought of the apprehending subject. It is a world of separate things and events in space and time ; these things, as it is assumed, depending in no way for their reality upon one another or upon the mind that apprehends them. The truth of this view therefore depends upon the possibility of preserving the separateness of things without destroying their reality. At first sight indeed nothing seems more reasonable. In sensation, as common-sense supposes, we come directly into the presence of real things ; and whether we recognize it or not, we can never get rid of the conviction, that what is thus presented is indubitably real. Sensible experience has two inseparable aspects : firstly, something of which we are aware, and secondly, our awareness of this something. And though we may not say, with Locke, that in sentient experience we are entirely passive, at any rate we assume that the activity of the



mind in no way constitutes or modifies the reality or character of that which is apprehended. Anything that I apprehend involves three distinguishable but inseparable elements: (1) the simple, unchangeable quality, (2) the apprehension of this quality, (3) the relation between the apprehension and the quality. Now the apprehension does not seem to affect the quality of the thing apprehended, but leaves it just as it was prior to the apprehension: the experiencing makes no difference to the fact; and the quality, as it is usually put, would remain what it is apprehended as being even if there were no human mind to apprehend it. Thus the relation between subject and object is such that the factors related seem to be in no way affected by the relation. Sentient experience, we may say, is "pure and unmixed" in the sense that it is a perfectly transparent medium, which does not refract or distort the immediate object. No doubt no one can know that the tree is green without experience, but the fact that it is green is not affected by experience. It is absurd to suppose that the tree becomes green when I see it, or the chord harmonious when I hear it; the tree is green, and the chord is harmonious, whether or not I see the one or hear the other.

That there is an element of truth in this view of the world is obvious. The object of sensible experience cannot be reduced to ideas in the individual mind, even if those ideas are said not to be evanescent states of feeling, but feelings reduced to order and coherence by conceptions. The former view is the fallacy of the older associationists, such as Mill and Bain, who held that momentary sensations were associated with one another in the way of resemblance and difference, or contiguity in time and place, and thus came to suggest to the subject a world of objects that had no real existence. The latter view again was advanced by



Kant, who, starting from impressions of sense, endeavoured to explain our experience of objects by the hypothesis that the mind has certain unchangeable forms of perception and thought under which the impressions are brought, with the result that we experience an orderly world of objects. But this world, on Kant's view, is after all "subjective" in this sense, that, though it is in its fundamental features the same for all human intelligences, it cannot coincide with reality as it is in itself, inasmuch as by its very nature it can never be a complete whole, no such whole being possible in the case of objects in space and time. In contrast to both of these doctrines, it is maintained by our new realists that the objects of our experience have a reality of their own distinct and separate from all ideas—whether, with the associationists, these are conceived as momentary and particular states of this or that individual subject, or, after the manner of Kant, as sensations objectified by universal and unchangeable forms of perception and thought. Even the familiar distinction of primary and secondary qualities, it is contended, must be rejected, if it means to affirm that the secondary qualities are merely sensations with nothing corresponding to them. The sensation of green is not merely a state of the subject, but the experience by the subject of something belonging to the objective world. My feeling of hunger is only one aspect of the complex fact; which is a feeling of hunger in relation to an actual state of the organism. In all cases there is an irreducible difference between an idea and its object. The tree that I see is an extended thing, but my idea of its extension is not extended. I feel an object to be heavy, but my feeling cannot be measured in ounces or pounds. Green is a colour, but my idea of green is not itself green. Pleasure is always pleasant, but not so my idea of pleasure.



What gives its most convincing force to this argument is its contention that real things cannot be reduced to states of the individual consciousness, nor even to those states as interpreted in the light of categories peculiar to the human mind. Neither Associational Sensationalism nor Critical Phenomenalism, it is contended, and to my mind rightly contended, gives a true account of sensible experience. But the question is, whether the denial of these doctrines leaves as the only tenable theory the belief that real things have each an indissoluble core of reality, when they are separated from one another and from the mind that apprehends them. We may admit that a tree is not a cluster of feelings actual and possible, nor even a complex of sensations universalized by the forms of our mind; and yet we may be just as certain that the world is not made up of two independent factors, subject and object, or that every single object is real in its absolute isolation.

When I perceive a tree, it is said, I have on the one hand a consciousness or awareness of the tree, and, on the other hand, I am conscious or aware that the tree has a reality of its own, which is not made by my apprehension of it. That my apprehension does not make the tree is absolutely certain; but the important question is what this admission involves. Does it establish the contention of the realist? It is admitted that there is before the subject an object that he is aware of, an object which does not come into existence with his becoming aware of it, but exists when he is not aware of it. Evidently, therefore, the subject must be capable of going beyond the apprehension of a given moment and predicating of the object before him an existence that began before it was apprehended and will continue after the apprehension is over. Now, it is manifest that the consciousness of an object as existing outside of the particular apprehension in which it is said to be revealed,



cannot be identified with a particular state of the individual conscious subject. Thus, the consciousness of the tree as real means at least that it is real, not merely in the apprehension of a particular conscious subject at a given moment of time, but in the apprehension of it by any conscious subject at any moment of time. If the particular conscious subject can only say that at this moment there is presented to him a tree, he cannot tell what may happen the next moment. Hence the consciousness that the tree is real implies that the subject has the capacity of going beyond the immediate sensation which he now experiences and affirming that, whenever he, *or any other subject*, is placed under the same conditions again, they will all have the identical experience of a tree. But, if this universal point of view is indispensable to the experience of the reality of the object, how can it be held that the subject's experience is exhausted in the immediate and direct apprehension of this thing now before him? If the subject were actually limited to the sensation of the moment, he would not be able to say that the object is real independently of his sensation. He must, therefore, in having the sensation, be able to interpret it in this way: that whenever he or anyone else experiences a given object, that experience is made possible by the universalizing power of the mind. Sensible experience, in short, is not the mere apprehension of this thing as here and now, but it is implicitly the comprehension of this thing as capable of existing in any here and now.

The view we have been considering therefore misinterprets the facts. It is true that experiencing makes no difference to the facts, in the sense that the facts are not dependent upon the changing ideas of the individual subject; but it is not true that facts are independent of the individual subject so far as he is a rational intelligence. It



is just because it is the nature of such an intelligence to act in accordance with the universal nature of all intelligences, that there is any fact at all. To distinguish an object from himself, the subject must comprehend within his embrace both himself and the object. Granting, then, that in sensible experience there is on the one side an idea, and on the other side an object, we have still to explain how the subject can possibly know that the idea represents the object. An idea, it is said, is immaterial and unextended, while the object is material and extended; and therefore, it is argued, the reality of the object must be independent of the idea. Nevertheless, it is assumed that the idea is a perfectly correct counterpart of the object, and that on this ground we are entitled to say that we actually apprehend the object. But, if we are aware, not only of the idea, but of the object represented by it, we must have both before our consciousness; and therefore, besides the idea which is assumed to represent the object, the mind must have the power of comparing the one with the other, and pronouncing them to agree. In point of fact, they do not agree. The object is relatively permanent, sensation is momentary; the one is extended, the other not; and, if the only means of knowing the object is through particular sensations, the reality of the object will vanish with each change in the sensitive subject. Plainly, therefore, the contention of the realist, that in immediate sensitive experience real objects are "given," and "given" as independent, must logically lead to the denial of all objectivity, and the reduction of what we call reality to a flux of feelings. From separate sensations no consciousness of a real object is possible, but only from a recognition of identity in successive perceptions.

And if we look at the nature of the object, we shall find that the doctrine of the realist involves us in similar difficulties. It is strongly insisted that the object is real;



but what is meant by the object? If I have before me a tree which appears green, is it meant that the tree is green whether any eye sees it or not? If so, one would like to know what is the nature of "green" when it is not perceived by anybody. The only "green" that we can immediately experience is the green which involves relation to an eye; and if there is besides this a green which is real apart from our vision, it must be for us purely hypothetical. If it were actually the case that "green" exists in itself, independently of any organism, we should have to deny that the man who is colour-blind apprehends the real colour of the tree. Thus, apparently, the reality of green means its reality as it is apprehended by one with normal vision. But what again is normal vision? If every sentient subject apprehends the object just as it is, how does it come that the painter sees many shades of "green" which to the ordinary eye are invisible? Considering all the degrees of distinction with which colours are apprehended—from the colour-blind at one end of the scale to the highly trained vision of the artist at the other end—how can it be held that a colour has an absolutely fixed and determinate character, which is in no way dependent upon the eye that sees it? Must we not rather hold that no eye is fine enough to detect all the shades of colour, and therefore that the supposition of an absolutely fixed quality called colour is a pure abstraction?

In truth there is no real reason for the attempt to save the reality of qualified things by any such fiction as that of separately existent and unchangeable qualities. Certainly, colour is real and objective; but why it should be assumed that it can only be real and objective, if it is a separate and independent being? A colour or a sound has no reality apart from a living being with definite organs of vision and hearing; but this in no way destroys its objectivity, or



proves that it is only a state of the individual subject. It is objective, because it is actually experienced under certain definite conditions, and under those conditions is identical for all. When two men look at a tree, the sensations of each are different, and yet the object may be identical, because by the object is properly meant the fixed character of the experience. But, it by no means follows that besides the object as thus experienced there is another object, having a nature of its own in isolation from the sensitive subject. In truth such an object is a mere fiction of abstraction, which has no more reality than an inside without an outside. Colours, sounds, tastes, are real and objective; they are not mere states of this or that subject; but their reality or objectivity means that they are discerned by the conscious subject to be constant relations which are always the same under the same totality of conditions. The first view of the world as made up of an infinity of isolated particulars thus proves to be untenable. There are no separate and independent things, but each thing is what it is only because it is a certain aspect of a reality, which is no mere assemblage of particulars, but a veritable unity.

The importance of the subject for a true philosophy of religion, which can find no basis for itself unless it can be shown that we live in a universe that is an indissoluble whole, may excuse a further attempt to show the inadequacy of our first view of things. If things were really so isolated that their nature was in no way dependent upon their relations to one another and to the whole, every true judgment in regard to objects must be of an absolutely simple and affirmative character. If I say, "this is green," it seems evident that I am at least tacitly predicating within a whole, and not only affirming "this" to be "green," but denying that it is any other of the colours of the spectrum



but "green." An affirmative judgment therefore involves a corresponding negative judgment. Eliminate the latter, and we have merely the tautology, "This green object is this green object," which is not a judgment at all. Now, if we cannot express the nature of our experience without at once affirming and denying within an identical whole, it would seem that the simplest object of our experience exists only in relation to other objects, while both are included in the whole, of which the object immediately before us, along with other objects not immediately before us, is a differentiation.

It may be said, however, that the distinction of the "green" object from other objects "not-green," while it is an essential step in the formation of a judgment, does not show that in the object itself there is involved negation as well as affirmation. The tree that I apprehend, it may be argued, has a positive quality "green," and to say that it excludes other qualities only means that in apprehending it as "green" we of course do not apprehend it as "not-green." Negation, in other words, is not a quality of objects at all, but belongs entirely to us, as beings who gradually learn through experience what the qualities of things are. To exclude a thing from the class of "green" things does not show that it has any real relation to that class.

It is undoubtedly plausible to say that the reality of a thing cannot be determined by heaping up any number of negations. To say that a tree is not blue, not red, not white, etc., does not tell us what it really is: ultimately, it may be said, we must reach a positive quality, or we cannot characterize the thing at all. And this is perfectly true; but it does not touch the question, whether, when we have reached a positive quality, that quality is purely positive. What would a purely positive quality be? It would be one which existed even if all other qualities were



annihilated. But where is such a quality to be found? "Green" has no existence apart from wave-lengths of ether in contact with the ocular nerve, and it only seems to belong to "this" object because its conditions are not at first known. But, unless we are to take every immediate judgment as expressing the real nature of things, the absence of our knowledge of the conditions of sensible experience cannot be supposed to prove that there are no such conditions. There is no possible apprehension of a thing as green, unless under presupposition of the conditions under which objects are experienced as coloured; and these conditions are essentially relations between objects, not positive qualities attaching to objects in their isolation.

It is not merely in our judgment, therefore, that positive and negative determinations are inseparable, but our judgment expresses the actual nature of things. The judgment, "this is green," means that we have before us an object which is determinate in colour just because it is limited and partial; and were it not so—were it not conceived as a partial and limited determination of a whole—it would not be a definite object of experience. What is true in this case is true in all other cases: no determinate object can be experienced, that is not experienced as a partial determination of a whole; and thus the negation is as essential as the affirmation. On any other supposition we might concurrently experience something absolutely indeterminate—something of which we could only say that it is, without being able to tell what it is. But nothing is more manifest than that to predicate nothing but pure being is to predicate pure nothing; for the fundamental condition of all thought is distinction. This is evident even in such elementary judgments as "this is here"; for, even in a judgment so indeterminate, in speaking of "this," we tacitly distinguish "this" from "that," and without this minimum



of discrimination the judgment would vanish altogether. And when we go on to more concrete judgments, such as "this is green," the same principle holds good; for we cannot predicate green without negating all other colours, and thereby determining the object as a being that only partially determines reality. Every judgment of perception is therefore an affirmation which involves a negation, and the negation as well as the affirmation are alike essential. A judgment which predicates pure being is meaningless; we can only predicate determinate or limited being on the one hand, or a total reality which is differentiated in determinate or limited beings, that is, is self-differentiated.

When we see that no object can be experienced which is not at once positive and negative, the opposition between the law of thought and the law of things disappears. As we cannot think without determining, so nothing but the determinate can be experienced. It is not true that things have a nature of their own in their isolation, for of such things we have no experience. We must therefore revise our first uncritical view of the world, and admit that things are not absolutely unrelated to one another. Each gets its character from its relations to other things; and as these relations are negative as well as positive, all objects of experience in virtue of their determinate character are limited or finite, and therefore stand in reciprocal relation to one another.



#### LECTURE FOURTH.

#### THE PERCEPTIVE STAGE OF KNOWLEDGE.

We have seen reason to conclude that sensible apprehension is not, as it at first seems to be, the immediate apprehension of that which is here and now ; for to apprehend anything at all we must know it to be something that does not pass away, but is in some sense permanent. When this fact is tacitly recognized, an effort is naturally made to discover the group of sensible properties, believed to constitute the finite individuality of a thing and mark it off from other things. The elements combined into an individual whole, and called by a particular name, are no doubt sensible elements, being relative to the several senses, but they are now regarded as permanent elements or properties, not transitory elements supposed to be given in single evanescent sensations. Apparently, therefore, truth consists in correctly copying or representing an object which exists independently of the subject, and is known through its influence on the several senses. No theory, indeed, could be more plausible than that which holds that truth is attained when we have before our minds such a complex idea or combination of ideas as corresponds to, or is a copy of, a thing as it actually exists. We cannot make or unmake things for ourselves. When we pass judgments upon things we naturally think that we should each be dealing with an entirely different object, were there not some fact to which the idea in the mind of each of us corresponds. If a man



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is going to act he must have before him a correct notion of the main features of the situation, and this seems to mean that his idea must, at least generally, correspond point by point to the object. A judgment seems to be true, then, when I am conscious that the idea in my mind is such that its elements correspond to, though they are not identical with, the elements in the object.

One thing that gives apparent force to this view is the element of truth which we have found in our first view of the world as endorsed by realism. That element is the undoubted fact that a thing is not made true or false by our so thinking of it. Truth is certainly "objective," in the sense that it has a nature of its own to which the judgment of the individual must conform. This, however, does not mean that truth is independent, in the sense that it exists apart from every mind: what it properly means is that it is opposed to a false conjunction of ideas in any mind. To think truly is to think in accordance with the actual nature of reality. Therefore truth implies, firstly, a mind in which it resides, and, secondly, an objective operation of that mind. If all mind were annihilated, there could be no truth, and equally the mind for which truth exists must comprehend the actual nature of things. When I judge, I judge that reality is as I judge it to be; that is, I believe that reality is as I judge it to be. It does not follow, however, that I am right in my belief; and therefore we cannot say that truth consists in my belief; what we can say is that truth involves belief, though belief does not necessarily involve truth. The fact that belief is inseparable from truth indicates that truth has no existence except in a mind. A true judgment, then, is one the content of which is identical with that which a mind that had a complete grasp of reality would make. In this sense—the sense that the individual subject, in order to form a



true judgment, must in his judgments agree with the judgments of a mind which comprehends the real—it may be said that truth consists in correspondence. But the correspondence, it must be observed, is not between reality and mind, but, on the contrary, correspondence with a reality which exists only for a mind that has eliminated all the sources of error and grasped the reality as it actually is. There is no opposition of an idea in the mind to a reality complete in itself beyond the mind, but only of an inadequate idea of reality as compared with an adequate idea of it. We cannot contrast an idea in the mind with a reality beyond the mind: the only intelligible contrast is between reality as imperfectly conceived, and reality as it is present in the mind that has penetrated to its actual nature. In the ordinary view of correspondence, however, a dualism is assumed between the idea in the mind and the object of which it is supposed to be a copy. Now, our account of sensible experience has made it evident that an idea of the kind supposed is a pure fiction. The simplest form of experience involves the indissoluble identity of consciousness with its object. There are not two things—an idea of sensation, as Locke calls it, and a sensible object—but what is called an idea of sensation is simply the consciousness of a sensible object, and the sensible object is inseparable from that consciousness. And when consciousness recognizes that a thing consists of permanent properties in their combination with one another, it is implied that we have, and can have, no experience of an object in addition to that which emerges in the process by which the object is formed. Hence to speak of an idea as copying an object involves the absurdity of an idea copying itself. There is no object separate from the idea, and therefore there can be no correspondence between them. It is only because we contrast an object as observed with the same object as it is



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vaguely conceived to exist for a perfect intelligence, and then hypostatize the latter, that we come to speak of our idea as copying, or corresponding to, the real object. The real object has no existence except for a mind, and our idea of an object can only be true in so far as it corresponds to or copies this ideal object. Thus the human mind can only frame a true judgment by interpreting the elements of its experience in an objective way. We are only capable of attaining to truth, in so far as we are able to set aside the accidental relations of elements of experience ; but, on the other hand, there is no truth apart from the activity of the mind in interpreting those elements in a self-consistent and comprehensive way. Such self-consistency and comprehensiveness imply the rational constitution of the universe and the fundamental identity of all intelligences. Both are essential : a judgment would not be proved true even if it were held by all intelligences, unless they all comprehended reality as it is ; and reality could not be comprehended, if in intelligence there were some limit which prevented it from grasping reality as it is.

We may conclude, then, that the correspondence-theory of truth has the fatal defect of virtually assuming that the real object has an independent nature of its own which must be reproduced in the mind of the subject, and that truth consists in the accuracy with which the former is reproduced in the latter. There is no such separation of idea and reality, since a reality that does not exist for a mind is an unintelligible abstraction. It may thus seem that the only valid doctrine is that which affirms that what is called reality is in fact a certain aspect of mind as misunderstood and falsely hypostatized. Therefore, it may be contended, we can only escape from dualism by reducing all reality to products of the individual mind.

In this way of looking at things, we begin with the con-



ception of a mind, unique and individual, which exists in successive moments in changing states, and we ask whether there is anything in the character of these states to explain the perception of things. As things are denied to have any existence apart from an individual mind, human or other, we must obviously seek to account for the world of objects as the result of the normal action of that mind in its operation on the content of its own states. If I wish to explain the perception of a house, I must do so, not by saying that the house exists beyond my mind, and somehow acts upon it—for there is no experience of such an independent house—but by showing how the "object," namely, the experienced house, is the inevitable result of the operation of my mind, which distinguishes and relates the content of immediate feelings, and thus forms a world of objects, which present the appearance of lying outside of one another and out from my body. We start, then, it may be said, with certain sensations of sight, hearing, touch, taste or smell; and, by the operation of certain laws of the mind, we come to have the consciousness of things, which have the appearance of independence and self-existence, though in reality they exist only for individual minds. Why different minds agree in framing the same or a similar world, may be explained as due to the fact that the relations by which sensations are connected in an orderly way are the fixed or universal modes in which all individual minds operate. The sensations are the same or similar in all; the understanding works in the same or a similar way in all; and, on the whole, the world which emerges from the combining activity of thought, as operating upon immediate sensations, is an identical or similar world.

Now, this theory undoubtedly provides a valuable corrective for the false doctrine of the realists, that reality is objective in the sense that it may, and indeed does,



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exist independently of mind ; but this result it secures at the expense of reducing all real existence to modes of individual minds. It affirms that so-called external objects are not external in the sense that they are beyond the mind, but only in the sense that they are presented as related to one another in a spatial order, while this spatial order is itself the product of the relating activity of thought as determining sensations in that way. This mode of conceiving the matter, it is said, does away with the valid objection which has been repeatedly urged against the Berkeleyan form of Idealism—the objection, namely, that it reduces the world to evanescent states of the individual consciousness, and, if carried out consistently, leaves us, as Hume rightly contended, with nothing but a series of feelings, both matter and mind having disappeared in the process. From this fatal result, it is argued, we are saved, when it is recognized that objects are not separate and momentary feelings, but feelings as distinguished and related by thought.

Now, it is undoubtedly of great importance to recognize that not even the appearance of a stable world is possible, unless we admit that the constitution of that world involves the activity of thought. But the question is, whether this activity can be correctly characterized as consisting in relations instituted by the mind, or recognized by the mind as subsisting between immediate feelings. Is it true that nothing exists except individual minds with their feelings, volitions and thoughts ? More particularly, is the external world reducible to feelings related by thought ?

The inadequacy of this view may be shown, if we consider how it must attempt to explain the consciousness of objects as existing in space. If we start originally with simple and immediate sensations, the attempt must be made to derive from these the appearance of independent objects



as occupying different positions in space. One method of making the transition is by attributing a certain qualitative character to sensation. Every sensation, it may be said, while it is inextended, has yet the quality of "extensity," and out of this the individual mind derives the extension which we attribute to objects, while things are regarded as external by the projection of self.

Now, the fundamental defect in this explanation is that it begins with a fiction—the fiction of purely immediate states of mind, which have only a qualitative character—and attempts to make the transition from these to extended and external objects, which by their very nature involve quantity. (1) If "extensity" is purely qualitative, as it must be if the external object is to be derived from feelings, it is impossible to explain how we come to experience extension, which is a whole of parts, and therefore quantitative. By no legitimate process can the consciousness of parts outside of one another be derived from a feeling which is assumed to be simple and therefore devoid of external parts. The attempt at such a derivation cannot succeed, any more than Mill's, Bain's or Spencer's attempt to explain extension by the rapid succession or the fusion of sensations. It is therefore only by a confusion of thought that extension can be supposed to be derived from what may be deceptively called "extensity." If one begins with immediate feelings as inextended, there is no possible way of making the transition to extended things. Nor will it help in the least to suppose that each sensation has a "local sign"; for, if this so-called "local sign" is purely qualitative, it cannot yield the consciousness of extension: and if it already involves extension, the derivation of extension from it is obviously superfluous.

(2) A similar defect attaches to the explanation of externality. How do we come to judge that there are things



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beyond the individual mind? We begin, it may be said, with the consciousness of sensations as changes in our own state. When I move my hand, I am conscious of a series of visual sensations which I have myself initiated, and these I therefore refer to myself; when, again, I move to the window, I experience a series of visual sensations not initiated by me. Hence by analogy I attribute the latter to a not-self, just as I have been directly conscious of the former as due to myself.

The more closely we examine this explanation of the transition from subjective sensations to the consciousness of external objects, the less satisfactory does it appear. It must be remembered that what the subject is supposed to have originally before him is not a world in which objects are extended and stand apart from one another, his own body being one of them, but merely a number of sensations, which he knows only as changes in his own state of mind. When therefore the subject moves his hand, and is conscious of a series of visual sensations, he cannot in consistency with the original assumption be conscious of the movement of his hand as an actual movement; for this would anticipate the consciousness of externality, which the theory is seeking to explain; all that he can be supposed to be aware of is a series of muscular sensations, as accompanied by a series of visual sensations. Hence so far obviously he will have no idea of any reality distinct from his own sensations. Is it any different when he moves to the window and experiences a series of visual sensations? He has on the theory no knowledge of the movement of his body as implying the transition from one place to another of an extended thing, his only knowledge being of certain motor sensations; nor has he any knowledge of a window, or of the objects seen through it as extended, since his knowledge is supposed to be exhausted in the series of motor sensa-



tions, as followed by the series of visual sensations. There is, therefore, nothing in this second case to account for his projection of self; he is, as before, shut up within his own individual consciousness, and would never for a moment, under the conditions imagined, suppose that there was any not-self. It is thus evident that the derivation of the consciousness of external things from an original datum of subjective states is an impossible feat. Neither the knowledge of objects in space, nor the knowledge of external beings, conscious or unconscious, can be explained in that way. The only legitimate conclusion, in truth, from the premises is that the individual subject is alone with himself and his immediate states. Such a result may well make us pause, and ask ourselves whether the attempt to derive our perception of the world from immediate sensations, even when these are held to be combined by thought, is not based upon a fundamental misconception of the manner in which our knowledge arises and develops.

A confusion is sometimes made between the proposition that the world exists only for mind, and the assertion that the individual subject is aware of this truth. It is supposed that, if we could trace back the history of the individual to a stage when he had no knowledge of an external world, we should have in some way proved that no such world exists. In truth this is an absolute *ignoratio elenchi*. Even if it could be shown that the individual mind was at first nothing but a series of unrelated or individual feelings, it would not follow that all reality is resolvable into such feelings. There is therefore nothing to be gained by denying that the individual at first is aware only of a series of immediate feelings, and that from these the world is gradually built up. When therefore I deny that there is any warrant for the assumption that the individual mind is originally nothing but a succession of immediate feelings, I



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do so because there is no proof of the contention, not because it is incompatible with the theory of the universe for which I contend. It is simply a question of fact.

Now, I have no wish to deny that the mind of the individual may be described as originally that of pure feeling, in which there is no explicit operation of thought; what I deny is that it is originally simply a series of discrete feelings, having no relation to one another, and with no suggestion in them of anything but themselves. In the history of the individual there seems to be at first simply a nucleus of feeling which yet has differences within it, though these are not definitely distinguished from one another. Relatively undifferentiated as this primitive mind is, it seems to me to be a fundamental error, the fruitful mother of all subsequent errors, to say that its content is purely subjective, and therefore excludes all trace of objectivity. It is certainly true that there is no explicit contrast of subject and object, such as is found at a later stage, but it by no means follows that the mind is originally aware only of its own states. The contrast of subject and object is strictly correlative; and where there is no explicit consciousness of the object, there is no explicit consciousness of the subject. What we must say, therefore, is that in the feeling soul there is an implicit or vague consciousness of both subject and object, an explicit or clearly differentiated consciousness of neither. The distinction between subject and object works and is felt, but it is only at a more developed stage that the subject is distinctly aware of the contrast. Thus there is at once a feeling of difference and a feeling of unity. We cannot indeed say that, at this rudimentary stage, there is a distinct consciousness of externality, much less of definite spatial relations, which imply the contrast of various objects from one another, and a perception of their differences; but we



may say that there is a feeling of externality, which develops later into the consciousness of sensible objects, as occupying different regions of space; and it is no doubt this vague feeling of externality which has been called "extensity." While, therefore, we cannot derive extension from "extensity," when "extensity" is conceived as a quality attaching to purely subjective states, it may be admitted that the feeling of "extensity," interpreted as outness, is the germ of the later explicit discrimination of extension. No analysis can possibly find extension in "extensity," when the latter is conceived as merely a quality of feelings; but this does not preclude the legitimate derivation of extension from "extensity," when the latter is conceived as the implicit object of sensation. Similarly we cannot possibly account for the consciousness of the externality or independence of things by saying that it arises from "self-projection." We do not first have in our minds a series of sensations recognized as belonging to ourselves, and then, finding another series not initiated by us, refer them to a not-self. This account involves a *hysteron proteron*: for we cannot be conscious of self without a correlative consciousness of other selves, and, more generally, of a not-self. The supposed "projection" of self is based upon the false assumption that we are primarily conscious only of our own states, and afterwards infer the existence of objects corresponding to them; and that we first have a consciousness of ourselves, and then infer the existence of other selves. In truth, if we are to speak of priority at all, it would be more correct to say that, in the order of explicit knowledge, we are first aware of the not-self, including other selves, and afterwards come to the explicit consciousness of self. It is, however, less misleading to say that subject and object, self and not-self, are strictly correlative. The subject becomes aware of himself in contrast to the object, and there is no



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consciousness of self except as one among a community of selves.

In the feeling soul, then, what we have is a more or less vague and undifferentiated mass of feeling, which contains the germ, but only the germ of that world of objects which subsequently emerges into explicit consciousness. It is therefore misleading to speak of this stage of psychical life as a unity—the type of that complete unity of idea and reality, after which we are always striving. For the feeling soul is as far as possible from being a unity. There can be no unity where there are no differences, and indeed the most perfect form of unity must be that in which the most apparently uncombinable differences have been overcome. Discrimination and unification are inseparable from each other, and in the feeling life there is explicitly neither the one nor the other. It is in fact only by anticipation that we can call it a unity at all. The associationist doctrine, that the feeling soul is nothing but a series of disconnected feelings, is no more false than the doctrine that it is a perfect unity. Hence, we cannot say that there is for the feeling being a variety of pleasures and pains, but only that there is sometimes a vague sense of satisfaction and at other times a vague sense of unrest. For the feeling being what is afterwards discriminated as a quality of the thing, is merely the feeling that this differs from that—how is not perceived; that which becomes the consciousness of the spatial order of things is felt only as an indefinite but objective extensity; and that which develops into distinct pleasures and pains is felt only as a vague rest or unrest. We must avoid speaking of the feeling soul as if it contained in itself, in a confused and indefinite mass, all the distinctions by which we characterize the world. The scholastic adage, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuerit in sensu*, was formed in a pre-evolutional age, and must now



be discarded. Just as the protoplasmic germ of the living being is not an ill-defined miniature of the developed plant or animal, so the feeling soul is not a "blurred whole," containing in itself preformed all the distinctions that emerge into clearness at a more developed stage. No increase in the fineness of our perceptions would enable us to discover in it the distinctions of extension, externality and tone that we experience in our conscious life. These we cannot find in the feeling soul, for the simple reason that they are not there; just as no analysis can find in the cell the preformed animal or plant. The transition from the feeling soul to consciousness, and much more to self-consciousness, is the evolution of the higher from the lower. No doubt the lower contains the higher potentially, but it does not contain the higher merely in a less definite form. The development is real; there is identity, but it is an identity that undergoes a process at once of differentiation and integration, so that the later contains what in the earlier has no existence.

If this is at all a correct account of the manner in which a transition is made from the feeling soul to mind proper, it is manifest that the subjective idealist has made a fundamental error the basis of his philosophy. He argues that there can be no reality but that of individual minds, and that the world is constructed by these minds out of their own states, as determined by relations of thought. This explanation cannot possibly be sound, because there are no merely subjective states, relations are not determinations imposed by the individual mind, and there are no merely individual minds. (1) The assumption that we start with mere sensations, as excluding all reference to anything but themselves, we have seen to have no basis in fact. All sensations, even as they exist in the merely feeling soul, involve a tacit distinction between the feeling or appre-

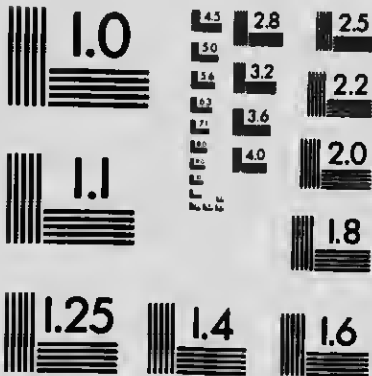






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hension and that which is apprehended. Here in fact is the germ of what is afterwards developed into the consciousness of a world of objects, recognized by the subject as occupying different regions of space and independent of his will. (2) As there are no purely subjective sensations to form the material for thought to operate upon, so the relations introduced by thought are not forms belonging to the individual mind, but determinations to which the mind is led in its effort to account for the facts of experience. The relations of thought are not abstracted from what is presented in sensation; for, as we have seen, sensation, prior to thinking experience, does not contain the relations which thought finds in the world. But, just as sensation is the feeling of something not-itself, something having extensity and externality; so thought gradually discerns that extensity contains the germ of spatial order, while externality must be interpreted as the first faint apprehension of objective reality; while sensation, the subjective side of the feeling soul, develops into the consciousness of extended reality, a consciousness which involves as its correlative factor the unity of the conscious subject. It follows that in the conscious life sensation no longer exists, in the sense in which it existed in the feeling soul, having been transformed into the thinking consciousness of extended objects existing in space and time, these objects being strictly relative to that consciousness of self which is involved in all consciousness of objects. Thought, then, does not relate sensations to one another; what it does is to relate the objects, which have emerged for the thinking consciousness out of the vague something not-sensation of the feeling soul, in accordance with the development of conscious experience. Hence, it is obviously false to say that nothing exists except that which is present in the consciousness of the individual. For, there can be no



consciousness of self except in relation to that which is recognized as not-self; and to deny the reality of the object is therefore equivalent to a denial of the reality of the subject. (3) Lastly, the subjective idealist is wrong in saying that there are any individual minds, in the sense of minds that are independent of all except the divine mind. There is no consciousness of self apart from the consciousness of other selves; and it is absolutely certain that a single being, if he were alone in the universe, would never become conscious of himself. The consciousness of oneself involves the distinction of oneself from other selves, and we cannot make such a distinction without having a knowledge of those other selves. Moreover, granting that the self has no existence apart from God, it follows that the self cannot know itself apart from God. The consciousness of myself is no doubt the consciousness of a unity to which all that I know is relative; but it is not the consciousness of a unity which comprehends all existence. In other words, it is the consciousness of a being that in its isolation is essentially finite. Now, there can be no consciousness of the finite, as Descartes well said, except as the correlate of the consciousness of the infinite. Hence, what are called by the subjective idealist "individual minds" are not "individual," if this means that they are self-complete and self-dependent. In a word, it is not true that the world can be resolved into ideas of the individual mind; that thought operates only with those ideas, thus constructing what seems to be an independent world; and that the totality of reality is composed of a number of individual minds or selves, somehow dependent upon an infinite individual mind. This fairy-tale of speculation we have seen to be false in all its particulars. The real world cannot be resolved into states of mind; thought does not relate sensations to one another in the process by which



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it builds up that world ; and there are no individual minds, in the subjective idealist's sense, because every finite mind " lives and moves and has its being " in the infinite Mind.

The course of our discussion has led us to see how the feeling soul develops into the consciousness of a world of objects, which present the appearance of extended things related to one another in space and time. We have now to ask what are the defects of this form of experience, which compel us to advance to deeper and more comprehensive views of the world, of ourselves, and of God.

We have seen that neither Realism nor Subjective Idealism expresses the real nature of the world. The former errs by assuming that things have a nature of their own in isolation from one another and from mind ; while the latter falls into the mistake of dissolving things into particular states of consciousness, connected at the most only by relations of thought imposed by the individual mind. Objects are therefore neither isolated beings nor combinations of ideas, but involve at once relations to one another and to the subject capable of knowing them. In other words, object and subject imply each other, and therefore they are distinctions within a whole, which manifests itself in both, though not in both equally. If by object we mean whatever is determined as spatial and temporal, and by subject whatever is conscious, the object is a less determinate form of reality than the subject, because the former involves abstraction from the subject, while the latter by its very nature includes the object, while at the same time distinguishing it from itself.

Now, perception differs from sensitive apprehension in this way, that it is not content to take what immediately presents itself as real, but seeks to characterize and define the real. From moment to moment our sensations change



upon us, and thus the real seems to be simply that which is present to each sensible experience in turn. It is for this reason that anyone who remains on the plane of sensible experience, thinks of the real merely as that which *is*, that which presents itself in each sensible experience, or that which constitutes the *being* of all immediate objects. In perception, again, we are aware no doubt of what is immediate and sensible, but we are also aware that this is not the true reality. Perception, therefore, regards the real as that which is permanent and universal in the immediate sensible. When I perceive a mountain or a river, I am aware that the impressions of sense that at the moment I have from either is not the real mountain or river, which, unlike the impressions, does not pass away but persists. Hence it is not unnatural to say that the mountain or river, as it really is, is something merely indicated by my impressions, something to which I refer my impressions. Perception, then, does not deal with particulars, but with universals of sense. An object appears as the unity of various sensible qualities. This is what we call a "thing," and a "thing" is viewed as a complete or individual whole, of which the qualities are phases or aspects. A "quality" is not a particular, but a universal; but, being a sensible universal, each quality seems to be independent of the others and of the central unity. Because a piece of wax is hard, why should it be red, or have a certain shape? As a matter of fact we find all three qualities co-existing and belonging to the wax, but we see no reason why they should co-exist. Then, again, we cannot tell why the wax should have these and no other qualities. No doubt, as a matter of fact, we find that it does have them; but we should have been equally satisfied, had we found that the thing had entirely different qualities. Just as the qualities have no connection, so the thing merely happens to have these qualities; but, for



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aught that perception tells us, it might have had any other group of qualities. All that we can say is, that the qualities belong to the object as its properties, or are externally attached to it, or inhere in it. So much is this the case, that we are not in the least astonished, when the thing changes and gets a new set of qualities ; as *e.g.*, when a piece of wax is melted, thereby changing its shape and becoming soft instead of hard ; or when water is transformed into vapour or ice. Nevertheless, we do attribute unity to the thing. And the reason is, that we regard it as individual or exclusive of all other things. The wax changes when melted, but it changes in a certain way ; water becomes vapour or ice, but we do not find it transformed into gold or silver. The sensible qualities therefore are not indifferent to the thing, but belong to it as an individual thing, which is exclusive of all other things. Thus the thing exhibits a stability and persistence of nature that are not found in immediate sense-experience—though no doubt it is the stability of that which is sensible—and presents itself as outside of, or side by side with, other things.

It must be observed that, at the stage of perception, there is no consciousness of the inner contradiction which is involved in the idea of a unity that is independent of the properties by which it is characterized, and the similar contradiction of properties each of which is independent of the others while all belong to the same thing. We accept the contradiction without hesitation just because we are unaware of it. Locke, attempting to rationalize perception, thought of the "thing" as a "substrate" which was unaffected by its properties, and therefore remained at unity with itself, however the properties might change ; not seeing that, by his explanation, he had destroyed another fundamental characteristic of the perceived object, namely, its individuality ; for, obviously, if the thing is real apart from the



properties, it is impossible to distinguish one "substrate" from another, and indeed impossible to state what the "substrate" is. Hence Locke inevitably issued in Berkeley, who denied that there was any "substrate," and therefore made it impossible any longer to speak of "things" at all. Both Locke and Berkeley thus take us beyond perception; for in perception what we seem to experience are individual sensible things, lying side by side and mutually exclusive. From the subjective side, perception, as we have seen above, does not consist in the consciousness of subjective states, which are then referred to an object, or projected in space and time; for from the first the subject comprehends the object, at first indeterminately, and, by the gradual development of experience, more and more concretely. We may either say that the subject gradually gains a knowledge of the object, or that the object comes to consciousness in the subject. Any difficulty that may be felt in accepting this second mode of statement is due to the fallacy, already exposed, that the object exists in itself as full-formed and is then apprehended passively by the subject—a view which overlooks the fact, that the known object gradually arises from the subject in the process by which it is constituted. This does not mean that the object, as it presents itself in perception, is a final determination of reality; for, as we shall see, it is no more a final determination of reality, than the idea of reality involved in immediate sensible experience. The process of perception consists in the experiences connected with the various senses, none of these experiences being derivable from the other, just as the properties relative to the various senses seem to be merely found, not made. Thus in perception we have the same combination of unity and diversity as in the object perceived. The process by which the thing is constituted as a unity of various properties, is the same process as that



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in which the various functions of sense are combined in the unity of a single self. "I perceive this thing as one," and "this thing is one," are but different ways of expressing the unity of experience.

We have now to see what are the defects of this stage of experience when it is supposed to be ultimate. It is obvious that, if perception were the last word, we should have to admit that the world is not an organic whole, but merely a collection of objects, lying side by side and connected by no necessary bond. We should also have to admit that the only knowable reality is that which involves direct relations to our senses; and therefore that we must deny the possibility of any knowledge of the supersensible. This, indeed, is the conclusion to which Kant was driven because of his initial assumption that perception is different in kind from conception, and therefore that what cannot be perceived necessarily falls beyond knowledge, "conceptions without perceptions" being "empty." One important result for him of this virtual limitation of knowledge to perception, is that God, even by the aid of the moral consciousness, cannot be brought within the circle of knowledge, but remains to the end an object of "faith." It is therefore of great importance that we should clearly realize, that perception is essentially self-contradictory, when it is put forward as an ultimate explanation of reality.

For perception reality seems to consist of numberless objects in space, which pass through changes in time, these objects being absolutely exclusive of one another. Can this way of regarding reality be regarded as final? Its defects as an ultimate determination of the world are not far to seek. In the first place, the objects of perception are arbitrary or contingent. The mind, in its search for unity, bewildered by the confused mass of sensible particulars ever crowding upon it, selects what seem to it permanent



elements, and in the very process of selection, as guided by its interests, theoretical and practical, it abstracts from all elements that seem to it unessential. Thus, by its fundamental character, perception is debarred from the attainment of a complete unity. What it regards as a unity is the result of isolating one thing from another, and treating each as having a reality of its own, which is unaffected by the reality of other things. Obviously, the result is not a unity, but a number of unities, all exclusive of one another. In the second place, the unity it has thus gained by arbitrary selection, is not itself even a relative unity; for, with the lapse of time, the qualities, which at first seemed to be permanent, pass away and give place to others, which in their turn also pass away. Nor is this all; for, in the third place, no finite thing whatever can be found that is not ultimately destroyed, though no doubt it is replaced by other things. The mountain that seems so stable is really in process of dissolution, and the heavens which we call "eternal" contain in themselves the seeds of their own decay. Thus finitude is not an accident, but is inseparable from the very nature of all visible objects. It cannot be otherwise, because these objects are not real in themselves, but only indicate a reality which they do not explicitly reveal. Not that we must condemn perception on the ground that it only gives us objects that enable us to organize our life. This is the mistake of Pragmatism, which overlooks the element of truth involved in perception. Things as they exist for the perceptive consciousness are not reality, but neither are they mere fictions of the perceptive subject. There is something in the nature of reality which justifies the instinct of perception to affirm that things, transitory as they are, are somehow real. Nevertheless the object of perception, as it stands, is essentially self-contradictory. The affirmation that each thing is real in its



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isolation, that its qualities are permanent, and that it is itself eternal, is contradicted by the obvious truth, that nothing can exist which is not affected by other things, that the qualities of all things are transient, and that things are themselves doomed to destruction. All sensible objects come into being and cease to be. This is their unchangeable nature ; and therefore their very existence is the process through which they accomplish their destiny. It is this fact of the internal contradiction involved in the very being of visible things that has led to the familiar lament over the transitoriness of all earthly things, and in more speculative minds like Spinoza's to the denial that they have any positive reality whatever. The finitude of all things is therefore the inevitable conclusion from the perceptual view of the world. Each thing is held to be real in itself, and yet its reality is inseparable from that of other things ; for it is impossible to separate one thing from another without presupposing their original connection. Similarly, the qualities of a thing seem to be isolated from one another, and yet isolation means relation, because that which is completely isolated, since it has then no character, is really a nonentity.

The defects of the perceptual consciousness therefore compel us to seek for a more adequate way of conceiving the world. The mind cannot be satisfied with anything short of a reality which is all comprehensive and perfectly coherent. Contradiction and multiplicity are signs of an imperfect grasp of reality ; for, as I have already argued, a perfectly rational and intelligible whole is the indispensable condition of reality and truth. The perceptual conception of things violates this principle ; for it virtually denies all connection, and therefore all rational connection. The true lesson to be learned from the failure of perception to attain its end of rationalizing the world, is not that knowledge is



an impossibility, but that it is impossible when it is sought in this manner. If we assume the absoluteness of the perceptual consciousness, no doubt we must surrender the attempt to know reality as it is. But the inherent contradiction implied in this conception of things shows that it cannot be final. In truth the consciousness of the imperfection and incoherence of the perceptual view of things arises from the inability of the mind to be satisfied with anything less than a perfectly articulated and unified reality.



## LECTURE FIFTH.

### THE SCIENTIFIC VIEW OF THE WORLD.

WE have seen that the mind's unappeasable desire for unity cannot be satisfied by the conception of things as independent of one another and as a mere collection of isolated qualities, having no essential relation to one another or to the thing to which they are conceived to belong. Whatever reality in its true nature is, it must form a self-consistent, all-comprehensive and coherent whole ; and these characteristics are not found in the world of perception. Now, if isolated things are a fiction of abstraction—being formed by the arbitrary selection, out of what presents itself as a whole, of certain aspects to the neglect of others—it is obvious that no purely immediate or unrelated being can be found in our experience. The only real being therefore must be mediated or related ; in other words, things must form a system in which all things are interconnected and interdependent. Nor is this advance from immediate to mediate being merely our effort to save ourselves from utter contradiction. The world, as we now conceive it, is not an ideal world, in the sense that we construct it, and set it opposite to the real world as something which gives us satisfaction ; but it is in the effort to comprehend the world, and the necessity laid upon us by the facts to discard our first inadequate hypothesis, that we are led to substitute a world of connected objects for the discarded world of isolated things. The world never was, nor could be, a



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collection of isolated things with merely accidental relations to one another. The perceptual way of thinking does not take the world as it actually is, but unwittingly creates a fictitious world by leaving out the relations of things with one another, without which they could not possibly exist. Thus we must restore to the world the systematic connection of its objects of which we have deprived it.

When we begin to see the inadequacy of the perceptual consciousness, we are at first tempted to save the situation by distinguishing between the essential and the unessential. Things, we suppose, are real and possess real properties, but the changes through which they pass do not destroy their individuality, because their essential nature is unaffected. It was in this way that Descartes sought to preserve the reality of things, and Locke's distinction of primary and secondary qualities of body with respect to the same device. Extension, according to Descartes, is essential to body, just as consciousness is the essence of mind, and though a body may alter in its position, or undergo the most radical changes in its other qualities, it never loses its extension; in the same way, the mind may pass from the least to the most definite mode of consciousness, but it is always conscious in some form. In truth this defence is not only false in principle—assuming as it does that real being is more indeterminate than unreal being—but it contradicts the obvious fact that no single thing retains its extension any more than its motion or resistance, inasmuch as no single thing can be found which is not finally destroyed. The distinction of essential and unessential qualities is therefore inadequate to solve the inherent contradiction of isolated things that undergo change: it is in fact merely a convenient device. The physicist finds it necessary to ignore the chemical and vital aspects of objects, in order to economize his thought, the chemist to abstract from the



physical and vital properties, and the biologist to concentrate his attention upon the phenomena of life. Thus what for the one is essential is for the other unessential; and obviously the same objects cannot be legitimately characterized by properties that are both essential and unessential. We must, therefore, effect a more radical transformation of the perceptual view of the world, if we are to reach a comprehensive and self-consistent theory.

Finding that this device really leaves things as they were—since it only marks a convenient distinction in our subjective way of looking at what in its own nature remains unaffected—we may be led to hold that true reality is entirely beyond the perceptual world, and is therefore contrasted with it as reality with appearance. And as appearance exhausts all that for us is determinate, all that we know of reality positively is that it *is*. We cannot, it may be said, get beyond phenomena, and therefore we are unable to say whether things in themselves are qualified as we perceive them, or indeed whether we can speak of them as having qualities at all. So long, therefore, as we remain at this dualistic point of view, the gulf between appearance and reality is impassable. This doctrine is, therefore, obviously infected with an insoluble contradiction. If we know nothing of reality as it truly is, how can we even say that it is? A subject which is limited to appearance cannot even know that it is so limited. We must therefore seek for a different solution—one that will not be intrinsically self-contradictory. The element of truth in phenomenalism is that objects of perception do imply something deeper than lies on the surface; and if we can discover what this is, we shall have reached a higher stage of knowledge, which will at once include and transcend the perceptual stage.

The basis of all dualism is the false assumption of the



separate and independent being of things, and we only get beyond this false assumption when we recognize that what at first seem to be isolated things are really the passing phases of a total reality which does not pass away. Phenomena are properly the manifestation of a principle, which produces them and again annihilates them, but nevertheless maintains its own being in and through incessant change. Thus appearances have no independent being: their sole reality is the reality of the perfect unity which is manifested in them. True reality is, therefore, self-complete or infinite. And as the passing phases of its being, which we call phenomena, do not in the least affect its permanence, we must pronounce it eternal.

The transition from Perception to Understanding, which is implied in the contrast of appearances and reality, is tacitly assumed by all the sciences, but very often the full force of the transition is not realized. The doctrine of the conservation of energy really takes us beyond the stage of perception, since it maintains that in all the changes of phenomena the quantity of energy remains constant. The conservation of energy is, however, not infrequently conceived as if it were an external law imposed upon things; and therefore it is supposed that things might have been subject to entirely different laws. A law is held to be merely a statement of the manner in which as a matter of fact things are found to behave, while it is supposed that the world might have been entirely different for aught we can show to the contrary. But a law is not accidental to the world; it is a living and active principle, without which the world could not exist. It is only, for example, when we first assume that bodies may exist and move in space independently of gravitation, that the law seems to be something imposed externally upon them. In reality, without gravitation nothing could exist in space at all. Nor is



gravitation a quality of isolated things ; it is essentially a constant relation between things which only exist in a cosmos or orderly system. Natural law must not be conceived as simply a conception in the mind of the subject, enabling him to systematize his experience, but not to penetrate to the nature of things. There is no law of gravitation apart from the system of gravitating bodies. The idea that the mind is able to frame conceptions, which it obtains either by generalizing particular experiences—that is, by comparing a number of isolated objects, abstracting from their differences, and so framing abstract ideas—or by employing the machinery which belongs to its own independent constitution ; both of these modes of conception are fundamentally false, resting as they do upon the assumption that perception reveals to us the independent existence of individual objects, and therefore that thought must operate upon the material supplied to it by perception. On the former view, thought contributes nothing to the constitution of the knowable world, since an abstract idea differs from a concrete fact only in the absence of determinations which the latter possesses. The latter view, again, which is that of Kant, makes the relation of thought to objects external and artificial, and can never get over the initial difficulty of explaining how the creations of the mind can legitimately apply to a material with which it has no essential connection. Kant, it is true, tries to remove the difficulty by saying that the synthesis of imagination must be in harmony with the synthesis of the understanding ; but this still leaves the initial difficulty unsolved, namely, why there should be such a harmony at all, since the synthesis of imagination is a combination of sensible elements, which have to be combined in certain ways only because otherwise the mind could not have an orderly and systematic experience.



For the mechanical connection of elements which are supposed to have no inherent relation to one another must therefore be substituted their organic or inherent connection. Perception and understanding are related as two stages in the comprehension of the world, not as two factors only externally combined. In perception there is already implied the inseparable connection of different elements in a unity, and the true meaning of this connection is brought to light in the comprehension of law as the principle of unity without which those elements could not exist at all. Thought lifts perception to a higher plane, not by dropping its distinctions, but by reinterpreting them, *i.e.* by bringing them under laws. No doubt the subject may make mistakes in regard to the nature or scope of a given law ; but this does not invalidate the principle, that a lawless is an unknowable universe. There is indeed an order of subordination among laws, some being more comprehensive than others ; but this order of subordination simply means that reality is a system, not a mere aggregate. Now, every law of nature is a form of energy, and therefore the whole body of laws is a differentiation of the one unchangeable energy. Hence law is not something imposed upon objects by the understanding ; it is the recognition of the essential nature of things. The incessant changes of things are an expression of the fundamental energy which in all changes retains its quantity ; while, on the other hand, the energy must express itself in the changes. Thus energy is eternal. It is not manifested at one moment and not at another, but persists through all the changes of phenomena. Not that it is beyond time ; for energy, since it never began to be, must eternally have manifested itself in change ; but though not beyond time, it is unaffected by time.

Phenomena, then, do not constitute the world of experi-



ence, as distinguished from things in themselves, which occupy a sphere beyond experience. They are simply the one reality, viewed on the side of its manifestations, as contrasted with the one reality of which they are the manifestations. If therefore we deny the reality of phenomena, we must equally deny the reality of the fundamental energy of which they are the expression. Experience is one; and all distinctions must therefore fall within it. We can distinguish phenomena from reality, but we cannot separate them.

In grasping the laws of phenomena the subject is conscious that he has done away with the foreignness which haunts his mind so long as they are for him only probable hypotheses. In the comprehension of a law, there is, as Kant says, a peculiar feeling of satisfaction, which is an index that the subject is in harmony with the object, and therefore with himself. So long as there is a contrast between subject and object, there is inevitably a feeling of dissatisfaction; for nothing less than perfect consistency with the self can give satisfaction to an intelligence, the one absolute presupposition of which is that of the intelligibility of the world. Thus, not only implicitly but explicitly, the transition has been made from the consciousness of the object to the consciousness of self. This transition, in truth, is not a simple change from one class of objects to another, but a development; for, though at first attention is concentrated on the object, there is always a tacit reference to the unity of the subject; and therefore, when perception develops into understanding, the consciousness of the unity of the world is at the same time a recognition of the correlative unity of the subject for which the world is. It is this essential correlativity of consciousness and self-consciousness which leads Kant to regard the activity of the understanding as necessarily implying the unity of



self-consciousness, though he destroys the value of this contention by conceiving of self-consciousness as merely the manner in which an understanding such as ours is compelled to operate upon a material of sense that is given to it. In truth, since the whole process of experience involves the correlative development of subject and object, self-consciousness must be regarded as the supreme principle, not merely of the world of experience, but of all reality. Without the consciousness of self, tacit or explicit, there is no world of objects; and therefore in self-consciousness we have the prius of all knowable reality.

Before going on to consider more particularly what is implied in self-conscious experience, it will be advisable to get a clearer notion of the nature of understanding, as the reflective process of thought by which the world is grasped as a system.

The contrast between appearance and reality is one which we have seen to arise from a recognition of the essential defect of the perceptive stage of consciousness. Just because it so arises, our first view naturally is that appearance in no way corresponds to reality, and in fact is an illusion, arising from the necessary limitation of the human mind. Reality, on the other hand, we think of as that which, since it is free from all illusion, must be entirely outside of the limited sphere of our experience. Though we do not maintain that there are two independent realms of being—the sensible or phenomenal and the real or noumenal—yet for us there are practically two separate and mutually exclusive realms. But this virtual dualism it is hard to maintain. For the idea of the real is obtained by negating or denying the immediate being, and thereby the independence, of the phenomenal; and that which is not immediate being but true reality must be a permanent reality, which is not subject to mutation and change. Thus appearance



must be dependent upon reality for its existence even as an illusion, for unless it were so dependent, it would itself be reality. Appearance thus becomes the manifestation of a reality which does not itself appear. From the side of thought the distinction of appearance and reality involves the exercise of reflection. At the stage of sensitive experience both subject and object seem to be merely particular; in perception, both are individual; in reflection, both are universal. In this last stage, the real is neither purely immediate being, nor a congeries of finite things, but a whole which manifests itself in particular phases and yet maintains its self-identity.

Appearance, as the object of reflection, can only be said to be, in the sense that it exhibits a certain universal form which dominates the individual beings in which it appears. A phenomenon, as the scientific man speaks of it, is not an immediate being: it cannot be seen or touched or handled, but is the invariable manner in which immediate beings of a certain type appear. This piece of gold is soluble in aqua regia, to take Locke's instance, and the solution destroys its immediate being; but every piece of gold is subject to the same law, and therefore the law is universal or eternal. This plant or animal appears in various phases, but they are all appearances or manifestations of the generative energy or form which is characteristic of its kind. The being of a phenomenon, therefore, consists in the identity, or universal form, which dominates or masters every phase of the individual being, and thus destroys its independence. Here therefore we have (a) inner identity, (b) outward difference. Our first view of reflection therefore is, that it consists in the negative process by which the self-identity of the supersensible reality is maintained. The phases through which the individual being passes do not affect the eternal energy which supports and sustains all



individual beings. Thus the first result of reflection is to destroy the independence of immediate beings by converting them into vanishing phases of a reality which is self-dependent and unchangeable. Beyond all immediate beings, as we think, is the true reality.

This aspect of reflection, however, seems to destroy the finite altogether; for it affirms that the finite has no being of its own, its own being consisting in the fact that it is the manifestation of a reality which does not appear. But it seems as if this could hardly be true, since, with the disappearance of the phenomenon, the reality must also be destroyed. In the face of this difficulty, it is natural to hold that the reduction of sensible reality to mere appearance cannot be admitted; and hence it is said that it is only from the point of view of external reflection or comparison that immediate being seems to be deprived of its independence. Reflection is thus held to be a merely subjective operation, which does not affect the essential nature of the object. The individual objects of perception are therefore maintained to be real, and the supersensible reality which is supposed to explain them is affirmed to be but a conception in the mind of the conscious subject, formed by abstraction, and having no existence apart from the mind that frames it. This is the manner in which common logic attempts to explain the nature of thought. Reality, it holds, is in no way affected by our thought; on the contrary, any attempt to qualify things by conceptions can only result in representing them as they are not.

This view of thought, as dealing only with abstractions—the view on which formal logic is based—derives its plausibility from the assumption that the only real objects are objects of perception. Working only with conceptions supposed to be formed by abstraction from the differences of things, judgment is held to consist in the process of predi-



cating what is or is not already contained, obscurely it may be, in the conception with which it starts ; while inference merely states what is already involved in the two judgments which form the premises of every inference. Pressed to its consequences, this doctrine reduces thought to an empty tautology. In truth, no significant judgment can be formed which is not negative as well as positive, or which does not at once distinguish and relate within a whole. This principle is violated by the doctrine of external reflection, which assumes the isolated reality of the objects of perception, and therefore supposes thought to deal separately with each object, merely expressing what is already contained in it. It is not observed that, in the affirmation that a given object is real, we have tacitly determined it by relation to other objects. The finite is assumed to be given in immediate experience, and therefore the infinite is conceived to be that which lies beyond the finite and excludes it. The supposition is that each must have independent reality, and therefore that our thought cannot affect the reality of either. All that thought can do is compare the finite with the infinite, and to determine their difference from each other. In truth, when each is thus isolated, neither has any attributes. What can possibly be meant by a finite that is isolated from the infinite ? To think of anything as finite is to determine it as within a whole, and a whole which is not finite is infinite. On the other hand, an infinite that is isolated from the finite is absolutely indeterminate, and the absolutely indeterminate is unthinkable. It is thus evident that it is only by thinking finite and infinite together that we can think of either, and so to think them is to conceive them as essentially correlative. All reflection is therefore essentially determinant.

The first aspect of reflection is that in which immediate being is denied to have any reality in itself ; the second,



that in which both immediate and mediate being are affirmed to be real, each in its own way. The former resolves the finite into the infinite; the latter claims that both finite and infinite have their own indefeasible reality, being mutually exclusive. Thus, while reflection in its first form abolishes the finite and leaves only the infinite, in its second form it maintains the independence of both. From the former point of view, all differences disappear in simple identity; from the latter, differences are just as real as identity. The one declares that the distinction of matter and mind, subject and object, must be abolished; the other maintains that they are *abstract* opposites, and must for us always remain so.

Now, in these two aspects of reflection it is virtually implied that, properly understood, neither the abstract assertion of the infinite at the expense of the finite, nor the abstract opposition of the two, can really be thought. It is true, as reflective thought insists, that a finite which exists in its own right is a contradiction in terms. It is impossible to think of the finite except as that which occupies part of the total sphere of the infinite. Hence, in its second phase, reflection rightly enough maintains that the finite is just as real as the infinite. But what it overlooks is that the finite is not real in its isolation, but only in the infinite; and that an infinite which is out of all relation to the finite, as absolutely indeterminate, has no meaning whatever. Reflection, in its highest form, therefore recognizes that finite and infinite have no reality in separation from each other; in other words, that the infinite is the absolute unity presupposed in the finite, and the finite the expression of the inexhaustible energy and self-determination of the infinite; or, to express the same idea in theological terms, God, so far from being unknowable or indefinable, is infinitely determinate and manifests himself



in all that has been, is, or will be. Whether this conception of God is compatible with the maintenance of different stages of reality, and with the freedom of man, we shall afterwards consider. At present we have reached the conclusion that reality cannot be either purely finite or purely infinite, but must be both in one ; in other words, that nothing is possible except within the unity of an absolute and self-differentiating whole.

As we have seen, the unity of subject and object, which in sensible experience is merely implicit, in perception takes the form of a contrast between the conscious subject and the concrete sensible object ; while in understanding this contrast is so far overcome, that the thinking subject grasps the laws involved in the phases through which objects pass, and thus finds itself at home with them. So far as I have discovered the law of a phenomenon, I can predict how it will behave ; whereas in sensible experience we have a mere transition from one being to another ; and in perception, while things are separately of a certain character, we cannot see why they should change in fixed and definite ways. Understanding, again, in grasping the laws of phenomena, breaks up the apparent independence of sensible things ; and in place of it substitutes laws, not of this or that thing in its isolation, but of real beings, which survive the dissolution of individual things. When we know that planets move in an ellipse, we are no longer perplexed by the apparent arbitrariness of their movements. When we can bring falling bodies and the revolution of the earth around the sun under the same law, we understand why things are as they are ; and in so understanding them, our demand for a reason why things should be as they are is so far satisfied.

Now, the various laws to which we are able to reduce the different phenomena are all determinations of a single



unity, the world ; and the understanding which finds itself at home in all is also one. This means, not only that, in point of fact, we succeed to a certain extent in reducing facts to laws, but that the intelligence itself must be a unity. Nor can this unity be explained as due merely to a peculiarity of the human mind, which cannot have a single experience unless it is able to refer the laws formed in experience to a single self ; for, on this view, which is countenanced by Kant, and maintained by the pragmatists, the world of law after all only happens to be as we find it ; and thus the door is opened for a sceptical distrust of the possibility of any knowledge whatever. Understanding is by its essential nature one ; that is, it cannot act now in one way and again in another and a different way ; but, in conceiving the knowable world as under the dominion of law, it exhibits the universal character of all intelligence. The satisfaction which accompanies the discovery of a law where before all seemed chaotic, is due to the subject's recognition that he has raised himself to the point of view of universal intelligence ; or, what is at bottom the same thing, that he has comprehended the rational character of the world. Now an intelligence which is thus conscious of having so far penetrated to the open secret of nature, is tacitly an intelligence which knows itself as intelligence ; in other words, it is aware of being in harmony with the nature of things. When this tacit self-comprehension is made explicit, and the intelligence becomes conscious of itself as intelligence, the true meaning of understanding is laid bare. Thus we make the transition to self-conscious experience, or Mind proper. It is not that self-consciousness was not implied in the simplest experience ; but only that the successively deeper stages of consciousness must be traversed, before consciousness can come to the explicit consciousness of itself. This late result of experience is



in accordance with the law of all development ; which is never a mere transition from one phase to another, but always an evolution of that which is from the first implicit. Thus self-consciousness is the truth or meaning of consciousness. The intelligence cannot be an object to itself, without becoming conscious of itself as in indissoluble unity with the real world. We cannot separate the world from the intelligence, or the intelligence from the world, without landing ourselves logically in scepticism. When, therefore, we become explicitly conscious that intelligence is the logical prius of real objects, we at last become aware of the end towards which our experience has been all along tending. The last is first, and the first last. In self-conscious experience reality is revealed as what it truly is. Realism, dualism, subjective idealism, are all fragments of the one truth, that the intelligible is the real, and the real the intelligible.

This long and I fear somewhat tiresome investigation into the development of experience has made it clear that there can be for us no world of objects which does not involve the activity of our intelligence, and that this activity must proceed in ways that are in essential harmony with every possible intelligence. There is no object which is simply "presented"; it is only through the tacit or explicit operation of mind that there is any object at all. The unity of mind is presupposed even in the lowest stage of experience, and if it emerges into clearness in the end, that is only because it has been operative from the first. We cannot go beyond experience to condemn it by something that we do not experience ; and therefore any limitation that we find attaching to it must be itself experienced. We cannot, for example, be aware that we are ignorant of the cause of a given phenomenon, unless we know that every phenomenon must have a cause. And so in all cases.



Were we not somehow beyond our ignorance, we should be entirely unaware of our ignorance. Absolute ignorance is the complete absence of all experience, and as such it can never be a predicate of experience. The lowest stage of experience must be what Plato called "opinion" (*δόξα*); that is, ignorance based upon implicit knowledge. Necessity is thus laid upon us to explain what in ultimate analysis is the character of the universe. So far we have seen how consciousness, with its faith in the intelligibility of things, is forced to read sensible experience in the light of perception, and perception in the light of understanding; and how, finding that the world has not yet "orbed into the perfect star," it advances beyond consciousness to self-consciousness. The process has been in one sense from the almost indefinite contrast of subject and object, through the perfectly definite and at first sight apparently insuperable opposition of the two, to an opposition so great that we seem forced beyond experience altogether and compelled to take refuge in a so-called supersensible world. But in reality the contrast of subject and object was really leading us, by an unknown and cunning path, to the ultimate consciousness of their absolute harmony. What seemed to be an alien world was only alien to the immediate world of sense; and with the consciousness of self we come upon the principle which has built up unseen the ordered world that seems at first so strange and foreign. As we learn more and more to understand the world and to comprehend its law, we come to experience the delight of a son in the house of his father, no longer the sadness of a slave and an exile.

But with the abolition of the feeling of estrangement, and the consciousness that the world is a system, not a mere assemblage of objects that happen to come together, have we reached the last stage in the upward flight of the



spirit? Kant, as we know, fixed the limit of knowledge in the determination of the world as consisting in a number of objects, none of which can have properties, or undergo changes, except in so far as they are all reciprocally active. It followed, he thought, that there was no possibility of our having a knowledge of any self-determined being. Hence, in order to show even the possibility of immortality, freedom and the existence of God, we have, according to Kant, to place them theoretically in a realm beyond the known world, and to base their reality upon a "faith" which can never become knowledge. There can be no system of experience, Kant contends, apart from the synthetic activity implied in self-consciousness; but to take this as meaning that the self which is involved in self-consciousness is determined by itself, or is a free subject, is to transcend the boundaries of legitimate knowledge, and hypostatize the mere "form" in which our experience must appear, as if it were equivalent to the independent existence of a self-dependent being. We cannot know that we are free, because nothing is knowable except that which falls within the sphere of experience; and nothing so falls but objects, which are not free but necessitated, having no independent spring of energy in themselves.

What has been said in regard to the development of knowledge makes it plain that we cannot thus limit knowledge without logically destroying its foundation. There is no experience whatever of an object in separation from a subject; and if the subject cannot be found within the realm of experience, that is because the forms by which objects are made possible belong neither to the object alone, nor to the subject alone, but to both in inseparable unity. Hence, we must begin by denying that the knowable world, in Kant's sense of the term, is identical with the system of nature. The real question is whether our experi-



ence, in its widest sense, compels us to advance beyond the system of nature to a more comprehensive and more concrete view of reality. Why should it be supposed that knowledge stops at the stage in which objects are determined as reciprocally active? Is morality not a legitimate object of knowledge, and can we find any rational basis for it, if it falls beyond the sphere of knowledge? Why should we not have knowledge of a free subject, if experience is inexplicable without it? What reason can there be for denying knowledge of God, if God is the one principle which makes experience an absolutely comprehensive and self-consistent whole? We must in truth be able to show that morality, freedom and God are objects of knowledge, or the solid ground apparently gained by a knowledge of the system of nature will crumble under our feet, and leave us vainly calling upon an empty faith to save us from absolute despair.

In attempting to go beyond the point reached by Kant, what we have to do is to show that self-consciousness is not merely formal; in other words, that it does not leave knowledge at the stage of the special sciences, but compels us to re-interpret this stage from the higher point of view of a free or self-determined being.

The first thing to be observed is that, if we are right, there is no longer any abstract opposition between the rational subject and his world. There are not two worlds—the world of appearance and the world of reality—but only one world; and in this world the rational subject finds himself at home because the world is itself essentially rational. This is virtually indicated by Kant, when he advances, in favour of "practical" reason, a claim which, in the case of "theoretical" reason, he denies. Beyond the realm of phenomena, he tells us, in which understanding rules supreme, is the hypothetical realm of reason, which is



converted into a realm of absolute truth by a consideration of the moral consciousness. Discarding the arbitrary barrier set to knowledge by Kant's initial dualism, which he never transcends, this means that understanding is simply a lower stage of reason, the latter being the former when it has become fully conscious of its own pre-suppositions.<sup>1</sup>

Now (1) when we have reached the stage of reason—that stage in which the rational subject is aware of its identity with the world—we can no longer contemplate the world as it appeared to us at the stage of understanding. "Nature" cannot now be conceived merely as a congeries of objects reciprocally determining one another; it is essentially a unity, which expresses itself in the certainty and inviolability of law. Were nature not subject to law, the rational subject would be unable to feel himself at home in it. The alternative is not forced upon us, either to accept the inviolability of law or to fall back upon an utterly irrational universe. Inviolable law no longer seems to be external compulsion, when it is regarded as the one form in which reason can express itself. In discovering the subjection of all objects to unchanging law, the subject learns that there actually is realized outwardly that organic unity which his reason invariably demands, and in all of its phases has been searching after. Thus, when we cast our glance back over the path by which we have been led, beginning with sensible experience, and, stage by stage, ascending to the explicit unity of self-conscious-

<sup>1</sup> The reader will understand that I have used the terms "understanding" and "reason" in accommodation to Kant's dualistic point of view. Perhaps "intelligence" might better express my view that there are not two separate faculties, namely "understanding" and "reason"; but almost no term will successfully prevent logical distinctions from being read as real separations.



ness, we realize that, in all our efforts, we have been unconsciously working towards a goal predetermined for us by the essential nature of reason. This is virtually admitted by the scientific man, who always assumes, when he is unable to give a satisfactory explanation of a fact, that this is due, not to anything inherent in the nature of the world, but to some defect in the amount of his knowledge or in the hypothesis by which he tries to account for the fact. He knows that he must get rid of all that is peculiar to himself, if he is to penetrate to the truth of things; and this surely means that he believes in the rationality of the world, if only he could discover the specific forms in which it is realized.

The first way in which the life of reason is manifested is in observation. Here, we concentrate attention upon certain aspects of the real world, seeking to make clear to ourselves their specific nature. In this way we deal with inorganic nature, organic life and the self-conscious individual, always under the presupposition that, if we "describe" the object, without disturbing it by our over-eager fancies, we shall thereby characterize it exactly as it is. This is the goal of all observation. What the object is, is what we "describe" it as being; and if there is any discrepancy between our description and the nature of the object, we conclude that we have not described it properly.

In observation, then, reason proceeds to test its immediate experience by tacit reference to the principle of a rational and intelligible universe. For, observation is not a merely passive process, in which we simply accept what is immediately given in sense experience, but a process in which we come to the object with the assured conviction, that we shall not properly "observe" it as it is, until we find it conform to our presupposition. When, therefore, fixing upon a certain aspect of the world, we discover that it is



what we call "inorganic," it is not that we have found a separate and independent class of things, but only that the world exhibits certain features, which do not seem of themselves to demand the application of any conception beyond that of "mechanism." This aspect of the world is properly called "mechanical," only because that is the "conception" which fits it; and it is not known as "mechanical" except through the "conception" which seems to fit it. Reason demands in all cases that the object should be a "whole," and it can only be satisfied that it has found a "whole," when the object as conceived really stands the test of reason. Or, otherwise put, the principle of reason is the unconditioned and nothing less can satisfy it; because, the moment an object is seen to be conditioned, it obviously points beyond itself, or is not self-determining. Thus the mind is forced by its very nature, in its interpretation of experience, never to rest satisfied until it has hit upon a conception, than which there is no higher. It must, however, be observed, that this process of proceeding from the less to the more comprehensive is at the same time an advance from the less to the more determinate. When, for example, it is found that the conception of "mechanism" is not ultimate but conditioned, we do not simply set aside that conception, substituting that of "organic life" in its stead; but we work with the wider conception of "organism," which does not exclude "mechanism," but transmutes it into a higher form. So, when we pass from "life" to "consciousness," we do not set the former aside; but we see that reality comprehends and yet transcends life, and therefore involves a more determinate conception.

It is the very nature of reason, then, at once to unify and to determine, to universalize and to particularize; and the various stages through which it passes consist in



### THE SCIENTIFIC VIEW OF THE WORLD III

a progressive unification and differentiation. Reason is never a reduction of differences to abstract unity, but the recognition of a unity essentially concrete or specific. If "life" simply abolished "mechanism," and "self-consciousness" "life," we should be left with an abstract residuum—a unity that was perfectly indeterminate. Hence the necessity of recognizing that each step upward carries the lower with it. Life is not the mere negation of mechanism—though it is negation—it is a positive re-interpretation of mechanism by its inclusion in a higher unity. A life that does not presuppose "mechanism" is nowhere found; just as a life which is identical with "mechanism" is not life. And the same is true of self-consciousness. There is no self-consciousness that does not at once negate and include life; and therefore, if we seek for a self-conscious reality which does not rest upon a basis of life, we obtain a mere fiction of abstraction. It is thus necessary that reason should specify as well as unify; and all false theories of reality may be reduced to the undue isolation of one or the other of these inseparable aspects. Reason differentiates itself into various spheres, each of which combines unity and difference; but each new sphere combines unity and difference in forms at once more comprehensive and more specific. And it must be observed, that it is the more concrete conception which is always the more adequate. The seeming "truth" of the lower conception is found to be inadequate when we have advanced to the higher. Nevertheless the lower is not superfluous, nor is it absolutely devoid of truth. It is the character of all development that the higher is implicit in the lower; and indeed, were it not so, there would be no possible transition from lower to higher. Thus reason cannot be said to possess a number of separate "conceptions," which it brings out and applies



as occasion serves ; it is present in each "conception" in its fulness, because each is but a phase or stage of a single all-comprehensive unity. The notion that reason possesses "conceptions" as a man possesses a hat or a coat, is fatal to any real comprehension of what reason is. The various conceptions are all modes in which the one unifying and differentiating activity is expressed. Reason, we may say, is "all in the whole and all in every part."

It thus seems to me a gross mistake to suppose that, in order to preserve the unity of the world, it is necessary to show that the conception of the inorganic must be denied, and every real object declared to be an "organism." For (1) this view—the view of Lotze and the personal idealists—assumes that whatever is real must be individual, in the sense of being real in its isolation. If this were a legitimate mode of conception, we should have to maintain that all real being is not only living, but self-conscious, and indeed that the only reality consists of completely self-conscious beings. For, if we are to deny the reality of "inorganic" beings on the ground that they do not admit of "individuality," we must equally deny the reality of conscious beings because they are not completely self-conscious, since nothing less than complete self-consciousness can yield complete individuality. Thus we are confronted with the dilemma : either there is an infinity of omniscient beings, or there is no reality whatever. If we accept the first horn of the dilemma, we lapse into the absurdity of an infinite number of separate realities ; if we adopt the latter alternative, we drift into absolute scepticism. It is therefore necessary to maintain the whole hierarchy of "conceptions," but to regard them as phases in the progressive unification and differentiation of the one rational reality.

These conceptions, or ways of unifying the elements of experience, being functions of reason, in actual operation



take the form of judgments, and these, looked at from the objective side, are laws or principles. Thus observation passes into systematic connection. The laws implied in observation are not merely subjective modes of combining and connecting what is otherwise chaotic, but determinations involved in the actual nature of the world. They are not externally applied to objects, but constitute the essential nature of objects. Without them objects could not exist at all, for they constitute the life and meaning of the world. Certainly they must be grasped by a subject, but it is in virtue of the subject's universal nature as reason, and of the embodiment of reason in the world, that any insight into the real nature of things is possible. This is the highest point which reason as such is capable of attaining. Its ideal is a completely articulated or rationalized world; and though in point of fact this goal is never reached by us, it yet is presupposed in all the processes by which the world is reduced to the unity of law.

The world, then, exists for the subject only because reason, as operative in him, has constructed it. Thus the life of the subject is the life of the world as it develops in the subject. That to which the subject submits is the reason expressed in the world; and hence, in obeying the laws of the world the subject is free, or obeying only his own true self. The fact that the subject lives in a rational world involves the freedom of the subject; for only a free subject is capable of comprehending a rational world. And nothing is for the subject but the rational reality which it comprehends. In this sense the world has no existence except for the subject. But the world is no arbitrary product, no mere series of ideas in a separate mind; for it exists only in so far as the subject comprehends that what exists for him is not merely his, but what every rational



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subject under the same conditions must recognize to be real. The self-conscious individual is at the same time universal. Isolated individuality is therefore a fiction. There can be no consciousness of self except in so far as all individual selves are conscious of themselves as involving a universal self-consciousness. It is not in my isolation that I am conscious of myself—for an isolated self would never become self-conscious—but only in so far as the universal self-consciousness realizes itself in my self-consciousness.

Now self-conscious individuality is the world of spiritual life, which assumes the form of the moral life and the order of society. Freedom is necessarily involved in morality. To be free is not to lead an isolated life, but a life which is most perfectly identified with the ends that reason prescribes. A community of self-conscious individuals, all recognizing that each must be a self, and that what is demanded of one is demanded of all under the same conditions, is freedom, because no subject can be free that does not recognize the claims of every subject as equal to his own, and his own as equal to the claims of others. The moral life is thus essentially a social life. Action which proceeds from such a regard for oneself as is inconsistent with due regard for others, is not moral. Thus there is no opposition between egoism and altruism, such as is sometimes affirmed. To realize myself I must attain that which is best for me ; but that which is best for me is that which is best for all other selves as well. Thus morality involves the transcendence of immediate impulse, and the setting up of laws that are permanent and universal, existing as it does only through the realization in the individual of universal self-consciousness.

Morality is "practical," because it consists in the free or self-determined life. It is not enough that universal



ends should be recognized theoretically to be the true reality of the self, but these ends must become actual. Thus morality consists in living the life of spirit. It cannot be said to exist except in so far as the subject lives, and lives consciously, in the universal. The very nature of the self is to be universal, and morality consists in the active realization of that nature. Society is not made by the voluntary agreement of individuals, and therefore it cannot be based upon "contract," but expresses the universal self-consciousness. No doubt there is no society apart from self-conscious individuals, but that merely means that society is not an abstraction, but the concrete realization of the ideal nature of each and all the individuals who compose it. Without society, therefore, moral individuality is an impossibility. Society cannot be based on "contract," because there can be no "contract" without society. Moreover, the moral life cannot consist in each individual realizing his duty in isolation from others, for no justification of society could then be given.

Morality thus involves, on the one hand, universal self-consciousness, and, on the other hand, its realization through individual self-conscious centres. There is no society apart from individuals, and no real individuals apart from society. The proper relation of these two factors is the secret of social life, as embodied in social law and custom. The individual realizes himself in harmony with the spirit of his people, which expresses itself in habitual ways of acting. It is this spirit that the individual seeks to realize. For he has rights only in society, as a member of the family, the civic community, the state, the world. These have different degrees of universality; but they are not so related that the one is superseded by the other; all are essential to the complete determination of the whole, each having its own specific mode of realizing the whole.



The individual, on the other hand, lives in the whole, and his ideal life consists in being a whole. It is the prerogative of self-consciousness thus to transcend mere individuality. For, while each must fulfil his own special function, he can do so only in subordination to the whole social organism. It is not enough that he should simply conform to the customs and laws of his people, but he must have his share in determining them; indeed, he may even turn against them, though the only defence of this antagonistic attitude is his discernment that they are not consistent with the complete realization of self-consciousness.

Thus arises the sphere of individual morality, as involving definite choice and individual responsibility. The principle of the whole is realized and specified in the case of each self-conscious individual, taking the form of a law—the law of conscience. Here the universal assumes the form of the particular; for conscience is not formulated as a public or social law, but exists in an immediate form. Not that it is a mere instinct; for it is the instinct of a rational and self-conscious subject, who can impose nothing upon himself that he does not regard as equally binding upon others, or upon others that is not a law also for himself. Hence, freedom cannot exist in the individual, unless it is embodied in the customs and laws of a free society; nor can there be any free society, which does not imply the freedom of individuals. The individual cannot be "forced to be free" by the bare compulsion of society, nor can he secure freedom by ignoring the claims of others, and affirming his own arbitrary will.

The perfect harmony of individual and universal self-consciousness is the goal towards which reason ever strives. The spiritual life must be the free, rational life of all the members of a people, and ultimately of humanity. True freedom cannot be realized except in a completely spiritual-



ized society, *i.e.* in a society in which every self-conscious individual lives a life which has an absolute moral significance. Thus freedom implies "conscience."

"Conscience," however, must be implicitly identical with what is universally valid. There are no rights of private conscience, if that means that the individual may claim exemption from moral law, because his conscience dissents from it. No one can claim to be exempt from a law recognized to be binding upon others. If a man dissents from custom or established law, it can only be on the ground that in his "conscience" there is involved a deeper and truer law. He cannot be saved by the badness of his conscience. For conscience exists only because the individual lives in a social whole; and without the moral training obtained through society—including the family—he would have no conscience. The authority of the individual conscience cannot be proved by a mere appeal to what is recognized to be right; nor is it disproved by the discrepancy between the consciences of individuals; nothing can establish the universality of a moral law but the rationality of its content.

Self-conscious individuality includes "nature" as a constituent element in its own life. Hence the climate and the physical features and conditions of the life of a people determine the manner of life which it leads. The self-conscious individual, however, subordinates nature to his own ends. An external thing ceases to be external, and comes to express the will of the self-conscious subject: thus arises property. This is true of "nature" in all its aspects. A territory becomes a country, a home; it is related to universal self-consciousness as the individual soul to the individual body. Nature is not something alien to man; it is the means by which his moral life is realized.

Not only physical nature, but organic functions, have a



moral meaning. The family, which is based upon the organic function of sex, thus comes to have a spiritual meaning by its tendency to raise the individuals composing it above their separate individuality. There is no "natural law in the spiritual world," but there is "spiritual law in the natural world." All modes of organic activity, when brought within self-consciousness, become the expression of purposes, and have a moral value. So, in the state, natural resources are transformed into instruments of spirit.

The same principle applies to the self-conscious life of individuals. Moral life does not go on in independence of the physical and vital activities ; but these assume a new meaning when they become instruments for the realization of conscious purposes. The merely natural life of the individual is determined by his reaction on the environment in which he is placed ; the moral life, on the other hand, is not a mere passive acquiescence in the natural relation, but a comprehension of its meaning in the whole, and the predetermination of its activities by moral ends. There is no spiritual life in independence of the natural ; but neither in a self-conscious being is there any natural life in independence of the spiritual. It is therefore a mistake to speak of man as if he might live two separate and independent lives, the natural and the spiritual ; there is but one life, the spiritual, since in it the natural is transformed and thus obtains a new meaning. The contrast between a completely developed and an imperfectly developed spiritual life gives rise to the historical evolution of the race and the process of moral life in the individual. The history of the race may be regarded as the means by which freedom is developed ; that of the individual as the process through which he participates in the highest development of the race and contributes to its further development. Moral and social laws are the universal modes in which the spiritual life of



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individuals is embodied. The moral order, as expressed in conscience, does not separate, but unites individuals, since it is the comprehension by the individual of the essential nature of society. Freedom in the state is impossible without freedom of conscience; and therefore the history of man is the history of the development of free self-consciousness. The perfect harmony of society and the individual is the goal of all human effort. Is this goal capable of being achieved? The answer to this question involves the transition from morality to religion.



## LECTURE SIXTH.

### THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS AND DEISM.

THE moral life, as we have seen from our rapid sketch, while it presupposes the natural, gathers the latter up into itself, and therefore there is no longer any contrast in principle between the natural and the spiritual life. The individual self-consciousness is in idea identical with universal self-consciousness. The freedom of the individual is essential to the realization of the universal, for morality is nothing apart from the implicit or explicit recognition by the individual of his free obligation to realize himself in ways that are conformable to the highest interests of society. The life of spirit is the life which expresses the essential nature of man. It is "objective," not because it is externally imposed upon the individual as a means of happiness, but because it is the ideal of himself. Nothing therefore can be higher in nature than spirit. All the stages of experience are gathered up and concentrated in the moral life. We cannot properly say with Arnold, that morality is "three-fourths of life": it is the whole of life, since nothing can fall beyond it. In this sense we may speak with Kant of the primacy of practical reason; but in doing so, we must be careful to observe that we can no longer oppose the "practical" to the "theoretical" reason, as if the former excluded the latter. What has the "primacy" is not a separate sphere of "moral experience," standing over against another kind of experience revealed by theoretical



reason, but a "moral experience" which includes and yet transcends all that for Kant falls within "experience."

Though morality goes beyond and comprehends within itself all previous stages of experience, it is not ultimate, since it necessarily involves a struggle towards complete realization, and therefore a conflict between the individual and the universal. Thus the whole is not realized. The individual always goes on the assumption that the process of his spiritual life is a real development, and not a mere transition from one kind of experience to another. If it were not so, the history of man would be nothing more than the record of a never-ending series of efforts to find a satisfaction which for ever eluded him. Now, faith in the absoluteness of the ideal spiritual life, if it is not a mere pious imagination—a projection of what the individual wishes and desires—must be a rational faith. It must therefore be possible to show that nothing less is rational. The universe must not only admit of the realization of spirit, but spirit must be real, and indeed the only reality that is: it must be spirit completely conscious of itself as constituting the absolute reality of the universe. Nothing can serve as a basis for the conviction which inspires the never-ceasing struggle of morality, but a rational faith that in that struggle man is bound to be successful, because the struggle itself is an expression of the essential nature of things. Thus spirit ultimately assumes the form of religion.

It is perfectly true that religion is developed from morality; but it by no means follows that it is based upon morality. Without morality there could be no religion, because it is in morality that man becomes conscious of his freedom and universality. Here, however, as always, "the last is first." When we pass from sensible experience to perception, and from perception to understanding, we do not thereby base the later upon the earlier. The transi-



tion is at the same time a development, and development is never external analysis or external synthesis, but a process in which that which is implicit becomes explicit—not, indeed, by merely becoming clearer, but by an actual evolution, or “creative synthesis,” as it has been called. So it is in the transition from morality to religion. Religion presupposes morality, and morality contains religion implicitly; but, when the transition has been made to religion, morality has no longer a separate and independent existence, but is transcended and yet preserved. The religious man does not look at life as a hopeless struggle, but as a struggle which must succeed because it is the struggle of spirit, and spirit is the explanation and revelation of the real nature of existence. Kant argues that to obey moral law because it is commanded by God is to destroy man’s autonomy, for nothing but the moral law itself must constitute the motive of his action. And it is perfectly true that to regard morality as deriving its obligation from its being imposed upon us by an external lawgiver, even if he is said to be divine, is to make obedience merely a means to the attainment of happiness. But this is not the true relation of morality and religion. Moral law is not imposed by the arbitrary fiat of any lawgiver; it is the absolute nature of spirit; and therefore in obeying it we are already in harmony with the divine. But, while this is so, it is none the less true that, in affirming the harmony of morality with the real nature of things, we have gone beyond morality. For the harmony cannot be a merely external adaptation of morality to that which confronts it, but a fundamental identity of principle. Thus morality takes us beyond itself. Kant’s objection to making morality merely a means to securing the divine favour is only valid against such a theological hedonism as that of Paley, who makes desire for one’s own greatest happiness, including the happiness of eternal



felicity, the motive of all action : it does not apply to the doctrine I have been trying to express, that morality is the process in which the finite spirit seeks to realize its ideal for a perfect unity of the individual and the universal, and therefore implies religion as its basis and justification. Nor is Religion simply "morality touched with emotion" ; for, however it may be "touched with emotion," the nature of morality will not be transformed unless it is lifted up into the realm of religion, and then it is no longer morality, but has been converted into religion.

Our conclusion, then, is that religion can neither be resolved into morality, nor is simply a new and separate experience added to morality. It is not the former, because morality is not self-supporting and self-complete. Just as there are no rights in society which do not presuppose moral laws, so there is no morality which does not presuppose religion. And as morality is co-extensive with all lower stages of experience, religion touches life at every point. Thus, all the phases of experience assume a new aspect. From the religious point of view, "nature" is the manifestation of spirit, not, as in morality, the means for the realization of spirit. So the religious consciousness lifts the individual above the struggle which the moral life necessarily involves, giving him the assurance that if his finite ends are not realized, it is because they do not deserve to be realized. Religion exhibits the history of man in the development of society as the process through which his self-consciousness is evolved. When a people loses its religion, as in the case of the Roman Empire, its development comes to an end, and the process of what M. Bergson calls "creative evolution" is carried on by other nations.

In the religious life man adopts the "absolute" point of view ; in Browning's phrase, he "sees things clear as gods do" ; all effort is overcome, and all contradictions removed.



In religion, therefore, man comes to the explicit consciousness of what he has always been obscurely aware of—namely, that his true life is life in the Eternal. As Augustine so finely puts it: "our souls are created for God and can find rest only in God." Although religious life implies absolute faith in the triumph of goodness, it does not lead to a relaxation of the struggle involved in morality; on the contrary, it lends intensity to the struggle, since the individual has the assurance that he is a fellow-worker with God, and may therefore fight in full confidence of victory. Religion does not affirm that good will triumph whatever man does; what it says is that it will triumph because man, who is in his essential nature spiritual, can never be satisfied with anything less than the complete realization of goodness. Doubt, scepticism, hesitation in regard to the triumph of goodness, must tend to paralyze the effort after goodness, whereas assurance of that triumph, as conditioned by human effort, is the strongest incentive to the moral life.

This attitude of religion is not compatible with the assumption that the ideal of complete self-consciousness is merely an ideal; that is, is found only in finite spirits. For, on this supposition, reality must be exclusive of complete self-consciousness; it must in fact be a vanishing phase, which will disappear with the passing away of the finite consciousness. The religious consciousness, in other words, implies that reality is itself self-conscious spirit, not merely that it admits of complete self-consciousness in some future and hypothetical age. The whole of our discussion shows the inadequacy of the view that the universe contains no being higher than man. For, even in the simplest experience we have found that there is a reality distinguished through relation to the subject; and this undefined reality is just that which finally emerges as the absolute spirit.



Religion is therefore the supreme expression of man's rationality. It is not, however, as the mystic maintains, the form in which man completely transcends his individuality and is merged in God. This supposition is precluded by what has been said as to the freedom of the individual. To be religious, man must be conscious of the essential nature of God as spirit, but he does not therefore lose his freedom, and therefore his individual self-consciousness. It is one thing to view his life from the point of view of the absolute spirit, and another thing to say that he is the absolute spirit. Hence the defect of mysticism, which abolishes the distinction of man from God, sublimating the consciousness of man until its distinction from the divine self-consciousness has disappeared. It is true that the highest life of man can only be realized through the consciousness that he has no true life which can be severed from life in God; but this consciousness is not the negation of his distinction from God; it is the consciousness that only in conscious identification with God can he realize his own deepest self. Separate man from God and he has no consciousness of himself; but it does not follow that in his consciousness of God he loses his consciousness of himself. That assumption is based upon the false idea that God may be conceived as purely abstract Being, and self-consciousness as a mark of limitation and finitude. Religion is an attitude of human experience, and no such experience is possible without the distinction of subject and object—a distinction which does not disappear, when subject becomes spirit, the object of which is God.

Religion, then, since it consists in identification with God, does not involve a process from lower to higher. God is not a Being who grows in experience, as some recent writers have suggested. Such a conception is the natural complement of the view that God may be or must be finite.



If God is gradually acquiring new experience, it must be because he is getting better acquainted with the true nature of the universe ; and therefore the universe as a whole, not God, becomes the true principle of reality. The conception of God as finite is thus a mere play with words, that which is called the universe being endowed with the attributes denied of God. But, while we cannot admit that God undergoes a process of development, this does not mean that all process is necessarily denied of him. There is process, but it is not a process from lower to higher. All ascent therefore belongs to the finite spirit ; which does gradually mount from lower to higher—though, on the other hand, in a sense the whole is always implied in the lower. All process is within God himself : it is not something that goes on apart from him, and which he contemplates from without. If it were so, he would be of the same nature as man, and process would itself be inexplicable. In coming to the consciousness of God man is not in the proper sense creative. That supposition is contrary to the nature of experience in all its forms, for even in the simplest experience man is conscious of something not-himself. Man's consciousness of God is his realization of that which is implied in the nature of his own consciousness : that which is real, whether he realizes it or not, whether he affirms or denies it ; just as man's consciousness of the solar system does not bring that system into existence. Humanity is never self-complete, and apart from God can never be self-complete. Nothing less than absolute spirit will supply that which morality lacks—the certainty that goodness is the true nature of things. Only so is it possible for man to find rest and peace.

As religion takes the point of view of absolute spirit, and absolute spirit must manifest itself, it must be revealed in nature, in man, and in the universe as a whole. This does not mean that there are three distinct religions, each of



which is true ; there can be only one religion, and different religions must be related as less and more developed forms of the one religion. It is no doubt true that historically the first stage of religion is that in which the divine is regarded as manifested in some natural form, while in the second stage it is conceived to be of the nature of a self-conscious individual, and in the third stage as an all-comprehensive spirit, revealed fully only in the unity which embraces both nature and man. But, while this is true of the historical evolution of the idea of God, we must not, when we reach the third stage, suppose that the two first are simply abolished ; they are not abolished, but preserved in a sublimated form. Hence, in the absolute religion we find the three phases which in lower religions have been held apart. It is the spirit of Nature, the spirit of Man, and the spirit of the Universe ; and it is the same indivisible Spirit which is manifested in all three. It is necessary to insist upon the distinction as well as the unity of these three phases of the absolute religion, because differentiation is as essential to the Absolute as identity. Even in the separate forms that religion has historically assumed, all three phases are implicit, though one phase is emphasized more than another.

The first phase of the absolute religion is that in which God is immediately experienced as present in Nature. This phase, while its historical forms have vanished, is that aspect of the highest religion which is expressed by Wordsworth, when he speaks of :

Something far more deeply interfused,  
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns  
And the round ocean, and the living air,  
And in the mind of man.

The second phase of the absolute religion is that in which God is shown in the moral order. In withdrawing from the



immediate life of nature, the subject becomes conscious of himself as that which is to overcome nature and subordinate it to moral ends. God is thus revealed, not as indifferent to the purposes of man, but as involved in them. Nature is not something which simply stands alongside of man, but its processes are in harmony with the ends of the self-conscious life.

The third phase of religion is that of spirit in its concrete fulness, as manifested, not merely in immediate reality, or in the inward life, but as that which is conscious of itself as the only reality. In this stage nature is seen to have no independent being; it is in every part the manifestation of spirit. There is nothing common or unclean, because God is present in all things. The self does not stand opposed to nature, because nature is recognized to be a mode in which reason, as the essence of the self, is expressed. The life of nature and the life of spirit are the same life. Hence in his religious life man does not withdraw into himself, but "lives in the world though not of it." This phase of religion may properly be called "revealed,"—not because it is a special and peculiar revelation of what otherwise would have remained for ever concealed, but because it is the consciousness of spirit as spirit. It is not national or even humanitarian, but absolute. It is the religion of all men, because it is the religion of self-conscious spirit; and as the religion of free spirit, it is independent of all limits and restrictions, and therefore absolutely universal.

We have now by a somewhat circuitous route reached an altitude from which we may survey the whole of our experience, in its main divisions and articulations; and what remains to be done is to attempt the systematic statement and defence of the ideas that in our view underlie and give meaning to the religious consciousness, as that which comprehends all other forms of consciousness within



itself. From what has been said it should be manifest that theology is summed up in the one word spirit; for spirit is that which constitutes the principle of unity manifested in nature, in man, and in the universe as a whole. To express all that is involved in the idea of spirit is therefore to obtain a clear consciousness of the nature of God in his relations to the physical world and to human life in its struggle with evil, in its triumph and in its organic or spiritual unity.

The great variety of ways in which God is conceived is a proof not merely of the difficulty of the problem, but of the unwisdom of attempting to solve it by any "short and easy" method. How should it be otherwise, when in the idea of God man seeks to sum up and express his ultimate view of existence? The complexity which we find in different attempts to express what we mean by the term "God" is reflected in the ordinary religious consciousness, which on the one hand impels us to prostrate ourselves in humility and awe before a Being of ineffable power and wisdom and goodness, and on the other hand is dominated by the assured belief that God is "not far from anyone of us," being "in our mouths and in our hearts." "Dost thou believe in God?" asks Margaret of her lover in Goethe's immortal poem, and Faust in his answer expresses this double aspect of the religious consciousness, when he replies:

"Who dares aspire  
To say he doth believe in God?  
Who dares pronounce His name?  
And who proclaim—  
I do believe in Him?  
And who dares presume  
To utter—I believe Him not?  
The All-embracer,  
The All-upholder,



Grasps and upholds He not  
Thee, me, Himself?  
Vaults not the Heaven his vasty dome above thee?  
Stand not the earth's foundntions firm beneath thee?  
And climb not, with benignant beaming,  
Up heaven's slopes the eternal stars?

And feel'st thou not an innate force propelling  
Thy tide of life to head and heart,  
A power that, in eternal mystery dwelling,  
Invisible visible moves beside thee?  
Go, fill thy heart therewith, in all its greatness,  
And when thy heart brims with this feeling,  
Then call it what thou wilt.

Hear! Happiness! Love! God!  
I have no name for that which passes all revealing!  
Feeling is all in all;  
Name is but smoke and sound,  
Enshrouding heaven's glow."<sup>1</sup>

The religious consciousness therefore believes just as intensely in the greatness and majesty of God—a greatness and majesty transcending all that we know or can express—as in the presence of God in the human soul. Thus, on the one hand God seems to be beyond the limited circle of our experience, and on the other hand to be one with our inmost being; and perhaps the most important problem of theology is to determine whether either of these convictions must be surrendered, or whether both may not be capable of reconciliation in a single concrete conception. Is God, to use the current terms, transcendent or immanent? Or is he, perhaps, at once transcendent and immanent? An answer to these questions must be given, if we are to attain to anything like intellectual clearness and serenity. No doubt the religious consciousness will refuse to surrender

<sup>1</sup> Blackie's translation.



its belief in either of these apparent opposites ; but, unless the rational spirit can be satisfied that one or the other conviction is false, or that a real synthesis can be made of the two, man must lead a more or less divided life, on the one hand refusing to surrender his faith, and on the other hand unable to satisfy his intellect. It is therefore of the greatest importance that this faith should pass into knowledge. If that transition can legitimately be made, the internecine feud of religion and theology will be laid to rest, so far as this fundamental article of belief is concerned.

The religious consciousness is not infrequently interpreted in the light of certain theological ideas with which it can hardly be reconciled. Starting from the independent reality of the external world, the inner or spiritual life of man and God, the ordinary consciousness on the whole shrinks from enquiring too curiously into their relations to one another. Nature is regarded as independent of man, and as governed by laws which regulate its movements ; and while it is vaguely felt to be dependent upon God, it yet is thought to be in its normal operations free from all interference, though it is believed that in the past it may have been the scene of certain miraculous transactions. The world, it is held, was at some more or less remote period brought into existence by the almighty power and wisdom of God, and has ever since been maintained in existence by the same power. While it is admitted that man cannot set aside the laws of nature, it is held that in his own proper life he is above and beyond nature, turning it to his own ends and gradually working out a more and more perfect form of social organization. In this task he is dependent upon God ; who, however, stands to man in a different relation from that which he bears to nature ; for, whereas God works in man through his higher consciousness, he absolutely determines the course of nature, which in all



ordinary cases conforms to the laws that he has imposed upon it.

To the ordinary consciousness, then, while nature, man and God are conceived to be related to one another, yet each has its own independent reality, their relations being of such an external character as not to interfere with their independence. Having been created, nature, at least as a rule, is assumed to go on without interference from God; man lives his own free and independent life; and God is complete in himself apart both from nature and man. How nature can have a reality separate from God, and yet owe its origin and continuance to God; how man can be free, while yet he is dependent upon God for all that he is or does; how God can exist apart from the world and man, and yet maintain his infinitude; these questions, though at times they may produce a certain uneasiness in the mind of the plain man, as a rule he does not dwell upon, regarding their discussion as on the whole unprofitable if not irreverent, and tending to weaken or destroy man's natural faith in the divine. On the other hand, minds of a more speculative type do not feel that they can avoid such problems, especially as they are forced upon them by the development of modern thought, as well as by modern social and political movements; and naturally the solutions advanced take their colour from the sphere of investigation with which the exponent is most familiar. The scientific man, whose thoughts are so largely concentrated upon the study of nature, has a tendency to set up a theory based upon the inviolability of law; the psychologist, occupied with investigations into the nature and development of the individual mind, not unnaturally seeks to base his conclusions upon the character of conscious experience; the metaphysician shows a disposition to reduce the three spheres of nature, man and God to an all-comprehensive unity; while the



religious genius may find satisfaction in the absolute identification of man in his higher nature with God. Obviously these conflicting ways of conceiving the universe cannot all be true without modification; and therefore we are simply compelled to ask whether there may not be some way of combining the elements of truth to be found in each in a comprehensive and harmonious system.

The doctrine which comes nearest to the popular theological belief, as distinguished from the deeper truth implicit in the religious consciousness, is that which may be called without any great impropriety the deistic view. Starting from the first or uncritical phase of consciousness—that in which real objects are viewed as individual things, separated from one another in space and undergoing continual changes in time—Deism accounts for the existence of these things by referring them to the creative fiat of an omnipotent and all-wise Being, and attributing their process to his control and guidance. The beginning of the world is therefore ascribed to the will of God, while the laws of nature are assimilated to the decrees of an enlightened and civilized state. Thus nature and man, while they are conceived as distinct from God, are yet regarded as dependent upon his creative power and his ever-active wisdom.

When we examine this doctrine closely, I think we shall find that it is an inadequate and pictorial way of representing the relations of nature, man and God. It contains three irreconcilable ideas: creation, formative design, and external control.

(1) The assumption being made that the world consists of an infinite number of separate things and events in space and time, it is asked how these have come into existence. The answer given is, that God of his good will and pleasure



determined to bring them into existence, and therefore created them out of nothing.

The difficulties connected with this view are insuperable. In the first place, it involves the contradiction that God is infinite before the creation of the world, and is no more than infinite after its creation. In what sense can we suppose God to be infinite before creation? If indeed we assume the existence of a supersensible or spiritual world, absolutely different in kind from the world as known to us, we may imagine it to be complete in itself independently of the world that we know. God may therefore be conceived as having before him this supersensible world. But, obviously, if this supersensible world contains the whole of reality, there will be no possibility of creating another world distinct from it; and if it does not contain all reality, it cannot be an expression of the infinite power of God. Moreover, the same problem would arise in regard to its relation to God as in the case of our world. If it is a product of the infinite power of God, that must be because it is not complete in itself, but requires a cause to account for it. Hence we must suppose it to have come into existence by the creative power of God at some definite time. But in that case it must be finite, and therefore cannot require us to assign an infinite cause of its existence. Thus, we shall ultimately be compelled either to postulate an infinite series of worlds, or to deny the adequacy of the idea of creation. The former alternative is absurd, and therefore we must adopt the latter.

Creation out of nothing, then, is contradictory of the idea of an infinite being. And the reason is not far to seek. When we ask what is the cause of any particular event, we are seeking to explain, not the absolute origination of anything, but the reason why a certain change has occurred. By the cause of the change, we mean something which,



while belonging to the same series of events, is its condition ; and therefore the cause assigned is never an ultimate ground of the existence of the change, but only a particular condition of it, occurring at a given moment. Now, if we attempt to apply this idea of cause in explanation of the absolute origination of the world, it is manifest that we have made a *μετάβασις εἰς ἄλλο γένος*. We are no longer seeking to explain one event by another prior event, but to assign an absolute origin to that which absolutely originates. Cause therefore obtains an entirely new meaning. That meaning may, or may not, be legitimate, but at any rate it entirely transcends the idea of causality as commonly employed, and therefore compels us to restate the whole argument.

What then is the underlying idea which gives plausibility to the notion of creation out of nothing ? Certainly it is entirely different from that of causation, as ordinarily understood. The use of such qualifications as " first cause " to describe the originaive source of the world, shows that by cause is meant, not an antecedent event, as in the ordinary use of the term, but a cause which is not itself an effect, *i.e.* a self-determining or self-originaive cause. And when it is said that this primal source of being creates the world out of nothing, what is really meant is that we are in a region of thought where temporal antecedence and sequence have no meaning. The world is said to be created " out of nothing," because it is not the effect of an antecedent event, but is by its very nature inseparable from God. Apart from God, *i.e.* considered in its independence, it has no reality whatever. Hence, it is entirely superfluous to ask how it has come to be. No doubt we can speak of changes as occurring in the world, but not of the world as at one time absolutely non-existent and then at a subsequent time as absolutely originated ; for, as it has no separate



and independent reality of its own, but is bound up with the reality of God, to affirm its independent reality is to separate the manifestation of God from the being of God. The world therefore never began to be, but is eternal. It is not independent of God, but bound up with his reality ; just as the reality of God is involved in the reality of the world. The creation of the world therefore only has meaning when it is interpreted as signifying the eternal self-manifestation of God.

This conclusion is manifestly the inevitable result of our survey of the deepening stages of human experience. It is only from the point of view of separate events as occurring in time that we speak of causality in the ordinary meaning of the term ; and when we have discovered that this mechanical and external mode of thought is obviously not ultimate, we are forced to advance first to the idea of a self-developing total reality, and ultimately to the conception of God as the absolute source of all modes of being. But, as I have so frequently insisted, the result is not to destroy the infinite variety of being, but to preserve it as a manifestation of the one principle which differentiates itself in all that is. Now, if nothing can possibly be apart from God as the absolute principle of existence, it is obvious that a denial of the reality of any mode of being must lead to a denial of the unity on which it depends. Hence to assert an absolute creation of being is the same thing as to assert an absolute creation of God, since the world exists only because it is the essential nature of God to manifest himself in it.

But, (2) still more inadequate than the conception of God as creator of the world is the idea that he fashions or shapes it, as an architect constructs a house or a sculptor a statue. A human artificer has no power to alter the essential nature of the material with which he works ; all that he can do is



to take advantage of the properties which things possess, in order to give to them the particular shape he desires. Hence, if God is conceived as merely giving form to a pre-existent material, he must obviously be limited by the character of the material with which he works. In order to get rid of this objection, it may be said that, in speaking of God as fashioning the world, it is not meant that he does not also create the material to which he gives shape. The argument, it may be said, is that the matter is so fashioned as to realize an idea which pre-existed in the mind of God. To this defence of the argument from design it may be answered, that it is obviously inadequate, in so far as it supposes the matter of the world to be first created, and then fashioned according to a preconceived plan. When a human architect gives shape to the material with which he works, he is not dealing with something that has no definite constitution of its own; it is, in fact, as I have said, by taking advantage of the actual properties of things that he is able to realize his idea. But, when we attempt to apply this mode of thought to the formation of the world, we are obviously assuming that what is created is a formless matter, to which a certain shape is afterwards given. Now a formless matter is a pure abstraction, to which nothing real corresponds. We can only suppose, therefore, that what is created is a number of relatively formless objects, to which more specific forms are afterwards assigned. But such an idea is obviously perfectly arbitrary, besides being open to the objection that it supposes God to have first created what was imperfect and chaotic, in order subsequently to reduce it to system and rationality. As an absolutely chaotic world is an impossible idea, the assumption of such a world is really meaningless. We must therefore fall back on the conception that the world as originally created was already of such a character as to display order and harmony.



But, with this revision, our first notion of God as an architect of the world is abandoned ; for the whole idea of a Being who adapts things in a certain way, in accordance with a preconceived idea, can no longer be entertained when the character of things already involves the design supposed to be externally superinduced upon them. We must therefore substitute for the idea of external design the deeper notion of a world the very constitution of which involves immanent purpose, order and system.

How impossible it is to apply consistently the conception of external purpose is evident even from a consideration of the physical world. When that world is said to be under the dominion of inviolable law, what is implied is that no particle of matter can possibly exist except as an element in an orderly system, separated from which it has no attributes and indeed is nothing but a pure abstraction. A material system cannot be explained as the arrangement by an external designer of material atoms which otherwise would form a chaos, for the simple reason that except as elements in an orderly system they could not exist at all. And what is true of inorganic things is more obviously true of living beings, the existence of which implies the form and purpose which constitute their life. Hence, when we pass to man, a being who not only realizes ends but consciously and deliberately aims at them, it is manifest that his very nature is inconsistent with the idea that he has been externally formed in the same way as an architect fashions a house. If man were related to God after the manner in which stone and lime are related to the architect, what is characteristic of him would remain unexplained and indeed inexplicable. For, if we suppose that the ends which he pursues are dictated for him mechanically by God, it is manifest that he can no longer be regarded as self-deter-



mined, any more than the tones which are shaped and arranged by the builder. If therefore we assume, as the deist does assume, that man has been created by God, we must hold that he is related to God, not in the sense that his actions are determined for him, but in the sense that he is capable of comprehending and willing objects which are compatible with the essential nature of God. In other words, God must be immanent in him, and that in such a way that he is only truly himself when he realizes the purposes of God. Without this free recognition of God, man cannot realize himself; and therefore it cannot be said that God acts upon him by bending his will in a certain direction, irrespective of his own volitions; what we must say is, that in realizing what his own true nature is, he attains to the consciousness of the real nature of God, which is just his own nature in its full realization. Such a consciousness is necessarily ideal, because, though man is self-determining, he is not self-creative; but it is a real ideal, *i.e.* one based upon and presupposing the actual nature of the world. I think, therefore, we may fairly conclude that the conception of God as a designer must be regarded as an imperfect grasp of the true principle that the world in all its forms is the embodiment of an absolute self-realizing reason. That the world bears a resemblance to the products of human art is the result of its essentially purposive character, and not of any form externally imposed upon it. God must, therefore, be conceived, not as a Being external to the world, but as the innermost essence of the world. If it is said that this is an inadequate conception, since it does not take us beyond the idea of an immanent teleology, the answer is, that no doubt God is something more than the purpose implied in all forms of being, but he is certainly not less; and therefore an important step has been taken towards an adequate definition of God when he is affirmed to be the



immanent reason of the world. That he is more than this, I hope afterwards to show. Meantime, it is something to have seen that God is in his world, not beyond it.

(3) Another step may be made by considering the third characteristic of the deistic doctrine, its contention that God must be conceived as the moral governor of the world. The analogy is from the relations of men in society to an external ruler, who imposes upon his subjects certain laws which they are under obligation to obey. This idea is the natural one so long as the ruler is conceived to have plenary authority to impose upon his subjects commands, to which they must submit whether they are seen to be reasonable or not. But such a notion of even a human ruler is utterly inadequate. I shall not press the point that a ruler whose power is absolute may impose upon his subjects laws which are in themselves unreasonable. That is no doubt true, since the possession of despotic power, in a being like man who is liable to error, is certain to lead to irrational commands, when the ruler is deprived of the enlightenment which comes from the free play of other minds. This point, however, is not the main one. Even granting that the commands of the ruler were perfectly reasonable, it would still be true that the relation of an autocrat to his subjects cannot be adequate as a type of the true relation of God to man. It is the essential nature of man that he should obey only those laws which his own reason has shown him to be reasonable. Blind obedience to a law, however perfect the law may be, is not rational conduct. Moral action must not only conform to rational law, but must be recognized by the agent as so conforming. No doubt an act may be recognized to be moral although the agent cannot set forth the reasons which make it rational; but without some response of the subject's own spirit, no morality whatever is possible. When therefore we are



asked to admit that God is the moral Governor of the universe, we must answer that, if this means that certain moral laws are imposed by God with a view to the better regulation of the world, the conception, though not absolutely false, is certainly inadequate. A world regulated in this way would not be a moral world. The only moral world is one in which the agents not only do what is right, but do it purely because they see it to be right. In other words, there is a moral world at all only in so far as moral ideals are consciously willed as good. Not that conduct is made good by being willed; for nothing is good except that which is in harmony with the nature of things; but that even the best action is not moral unless the motive is moral. God therefore can only be called the Moral Governor of the world in the sense that by the essential nature of the world, and especially of man as the highest finite agent in it, the good must realize itself through the constitution of society; he is certainly not the Moral Governor of the world in the sense that his laws are externally imposed upon man and must be obeyed because they are so imposed. No being can legitimately prescribe any law to a free agent except that of which his reason approves. In other words, God is immanent in the conscience of man, and only as so immanent can he be called the Moral Governor of the world. The providence of God works, and can only work, through the free consent of man, who, in virtue of the identity of his true nature with that of God, wills, and cannot but will, that which reveals itself to him as good. Thus, on the one hand, moral law is the divine reason in man, which cannot be opposed by him except in ignorance or caprice; and, on the other hand, it is the voice of his own reason. But these are but different aspects of the same thing. Just so far as man is at unity with God, he is at unity with himself. His obedience to



law is no blind obedience, and his relation to God no external relation. As in obeying moral law he is acting in accordance with the witness of his spirit to that which he recognizes as divine, his open-eyed obedience is the essential condition of the realization of the divine purpose in the world. From this point of view it is obvious that we cannot conceive of the providence of God as a law which operates irrespective of the will of man. It is no doubt true that good must and does prevail over evil, and that it is vain for man to war against the inevitable tendency toward good ; but it is not true that this invincible progress of goodness is independent of the free volition of man. It cannot possibly be so independent, for the simple reason that apart from free volition there is neither good nor evil. No doubt, as it is said, God " overrules " evil for good, and subdues the most stiff-necked to his purposes ; but this is not brought about arbitrarily or independently of human effort, but only by the active and free endeavour of man after the good. God works, not upon man, but in him. No good is achieved without a fierce struggle, and this struggle is due to man's unconquerable rationality, and to the corresponding rationality in the nature of things. Thus, as for the inadequate ideas of creation out of nothing, and the external adaptation of matter to a preconceived end, must be substituted the ideas of eternal self-determination and immanent purpose ; so the notion of a Moral Governor of the world must be replaced by the idea of a law of righteousness working in and through free human agents, whose self-consciousness is inseparable from their consciousness of God.



## LECTURE SEVENTH.

### NATURALISM AND EVOLUTION.

THE ordinary deistic or dualistic view of the relations of nature, man and God, as we have concluded, must be replaced by a doctrine which, instead of conceiving them as separate spheres only accidentally and arbitrarily related to one another, maintains that they are so intimately connected as to be unintelligible apart from one another. It is at least certain that, starting from their abstract opposition, it is not possible legitimately to bring them together. An attempt, however, may be made to solve the problem, not by connecting the three spheres in an arbitrary and external way, but by showing that they are really reducible to one. Nature, it may be said, includes what is ordinarily opposed to it ; for, when we examine our experience at first hand, setting aside all preconceptions, we discover that the only reality known to us is that of nature itself. That is one method of securing unity. Another method is to maintain that nature has no reality apart from the experience of conscious beings, while God is merely a name for the totality of such beings with their experiences. In this way finite and more especially human beings are held to be the only reality, while nature and God are merely the contents of the experience of these beings, hypostatized as independent. On this view—the view of Pluralism—nature and God disappear as independent beings, leaving only the experiences of finite beings. A modification



of this theory is that which seeks to combine Pluralism with Theism, affirming that the universe is composed of finite selves, which in their experiences are independent, while in their existence they are dependent upon God. This may be called Theistic Pluralism. Once more it may be said that nature and man have no independent reality, but are merely correlative points of view, which we find ourselves compelled to adopt in order to reduce our experience to order and system. This is Phenomenalism. As the phenomenal necessarily implies the real or noumenal, this doctrine logically leads to Agnosticism, *i.e.* the theory that, while there is some reality behind the phenomena of mind and matter, the limitations of our knowledge prevent us from giving it definition. Lastly, nature and man may be denied to have any separate reality, the view held being that they are either modes of God, or illusions that from the highest point of view disappear, leaving only the one absolute reality of God. Thus two forms of Monism arise, Pantheism and Mysticism. The former admits the reality of the finite as a determination of the infinite, the latter resolves all beings, human and non-human, into one all-comprehensive Being.

It will be observed that all these theories are agreed in assuming that reality must of necessity be a unity, the only question being in regard to the specific character of this unity. What we shall have to ask is whether any of them really secures the unity at which it aims. And first of all as to Naturalism, the theory which finds in nature itself a sufficient explanation of all the facts that fall within our experience, and therefore discards what it regards as the fiction of any reality, human or divine, which is not reducible to nature. Naturalism is perfectly aware that in life and consciousness we seem to have facts which cannot be explained on purely naturalistic principles, and that,



granting the irreducibility of mind and matter, we seem compelled to maintain the existence of a God to serve as the unity comprehending both. But the separate and independent reality of mind and God are held to be incompatible with the assured results of science, which finds nothing in our experience that cannot be reduced to a mechanical system of mass-points that undergo transpositions in space. It must be carefully observed that Naturalism is entirely distinct from Science. A physicist, chemist or biologist may indeed hold that, for the attainment of his special object, namely, the mathematical or quantitative estimate of all phenomena, it is essential to regard all beings, whether inorganic, organic or self-conscious, from the point of view of mass and energy; but the scientific man as such does not maintain that the universe is completely explained when it is quantitatively determined. The peculiarity of Naturalism is that it converts the attitude of the scientific man, adopted as a convenient and practical method of solving his special problem, into the positive or dogmatic assertion that this attitude is ultimate, and therefore that nothing in the universe is real except the mechanical system of mass-points as undergoing certain reciprocal changes. For a consistent Naturalism the only God is this mechanical system, to which all the facts of life and mind are held to be reducible. It is this rigid and dogmatic system that we must now try to understand and estimate.

The first view of the world, as we have seen, is that which regards it as composed of an infinite number of separate things and events, the relations of which, as merely external, do not affect their independence and individuality. From this point of view, which is that of common sense, science starts, and, though the result of its investigations is to show that no concrete sensible thing is really per-



manent, it is loath to surrender its original presupposition, and therefore the scientific man is apt to maintain that, while sensible things are continually undergoing dissolution, the ultimate elements of which they are composed are eternal and unchangeable. What these ultimate elements are is not perfectly clear. The prevalent view is that all real objects, whether we distinguish them as inorganic or organic, and whether the latter do or do not imply consciousness, are actually made up of hard or incompressible atoms, arranged in varying configurations and in greater or less complexity. All the changes in the world must therefore be regarded as reducible to the movement of atoms, as resulting in a continual kaleidoscopic alteration in the manner in which they are grouped together. Thus is explained or described "the movements of the earth and the heavenly bodies, the seasons and the tides, the sun and the wind and the rain, the weathering of the mountains, the making of the fruitful land and so forth."<sup>1</sup> These processes may be regarded as "merely complicated cases of change of configuration in a system of mass particles." The universe is thus conceived as constituted by ultimate elements, variously compounded and in incessant motion. Sometimes the changes of these elements are held to take the form of vibratory movements, at other times that of translation. Physical phenomena and chemical action, as well as other qualities of matter which are perceived by our senses—heat, sound, electricity, possibly even attraction—are supposed to be reducible to the elementary movements of the ether, the electron or the atom. Moreover, the matter of which organized bodies are composed, is held to be equally subject to the same laws: all the changes in the nervous system, *e.g.*, being due to the attraction and repulsion of its molecules and atoms. The

<sup>1</sup>J. Arthur Thomson in *Hibbert Journal*, x. i. 111.



nervous system, it is said, suffers a series of shocks from surrounding bodies, and therefore the sensations, feelings and ideas which arise in consciousness may be defined as mechanical resultants; while the molecular movements of the nervous system lead either to reflex movements, or to so-called "voluntary actions," which are at bottom of the same essential nature.

It may be doubted, however, whether this particular form of the atomic theory is more than a good "working conception." How it is reached has already been indicated. Starting from the assumption of a world which is made up of a number of particular things, independent at once of one another and of the conscious subject which apprehends them, an attempt is made to explain how they come to be known. As actually perceived they seem to be distinguished from one another by the qualities they display, and therefore at first sight it seems impossible to understand how they can be equivalent to one another. For, not only do beings possessed of consciousness seem to differ in kind from those that are merely sensitive, and much more from those that are only capable of assimilation and growth; not only is there an apparently irreducible contrast between living and non-living beings; but even in the case of inorganic things, it seems at first sight impossible to reduce chemical and physical phenomena to a common denominator. This difficulty, however, is supposed to be overcome by ascribing the qualitative differences of things to the effect upon our senses of external things, which, as devoid of such qualities, are perfectly homogeneous. When we have got rid in this way of colour, heat, resistance and weight, the only characteristics of a thing that remain seem to be its extension, shape, position and mobility. But we can hardly stop even here; for shape still seems to be a definite and irreducible quality of particular things.



Eliminating shape, nothing apparently is left but occupancy of space, mobility and fluidity. This is virtually the conclusion of the late Lord Kelvin, who conceived of matter as "a homogeneous and incompressible fluid in which vortices move, thus producing the properties of matter." In this view of the universe it is still assumed that the physical world is independent of mind, and that it is possible to distinguish one mode of movement from another. Strictly speaking the last supposition is hardly consistent with the theory; for in a perfectly homogeneous fluid there is no separation of parts; nor can there be any distinction between one vortex-movement and another, since the movement of the perfectly homogeneous is the same thing as no movement. The reason, in fact, why it is supposed that one part of the fluid can be distinguished from another, and therefore that actual motion is conceivable, is that the changes in sensible objects are assumed to have correspondent changes in matter as it is in itself. But this correspondence is simply taken on trust, and is due to the attribution of distinctions which in strictness hold only of things as presented to sense, not to the frictionless fluid which exists only for abstract thought. It will be understood that I have no intention of denying the value for science of the atomic theory, even in the sublimated form suggested by Lord Kelvin; what I wish to draw attention to is that, when it is put forward as a complete explanation of reality, it suffers from the fundamental defect of identifying an abstraction from reality with reality in its completeness. In a perfectly frictionless fluid we may assume whatever distinctions we please, but any distinction that is so made must be due to an arbitrary limit set up by our imagination in that which is declared to be in itself devoid of all limits because absolutely homogeneous. Fictions may aid us in calculating the movements



of things, but it by no means follows that reality must correspond to them.

Whether the atomic theory of matter in either of its forms is accepted or not, and indeed even if no hypothesis as to the ultimate constitution of matter is advanced, there can be no doubt that the theorem of the conservation of energy is a correct formulation as far as it goes of the nature of all physical processes. On the axiom that all bodies, however they may differ in their sensible properties or dimensions, are subject to the same mechanical laws, rests the whole of our physical science, and, if naturalism is right, the only scientific view of the world. In any closed system the sum of the kinetic and potential energy is constant, being incapable either of increase or diminution. Potential energy is shown in a stone when it reaches the highest point of its path after being thrown straight up from the earth, and in the chemical energy stored up in a living body, while in the bob of a pendulum kinetic energy is converted into latent energy of position at each moment in which it occupies either of the extremities of its path. Dealing only with mass, or quantity of inertia, and energy, science finds within the order of physical facts uniformities which are absolutely rigid and inviolable. The movements of bodies are interdependent; and therefore the greater the mass, the less in any given case is the acceleration; the less the mass, the greater the acceleration. When therefore two masses come into dynamical relation to each other, two equal and opposite forces are involved—a force being defined as rate of change of momentum. When one form of energy is transformed into another, there is no change in the quantity of energy; and hence "the total sum of physical processes of the universe results in no change in the quantity of its physical energy"; so that "the sum total of the energy of the physical universe is a constant



quantity, remaining without the least increase or diminution throughout all time." <sup>1</sup>

Now, naturalism maintains that the doctrine of the conservation of energy is the fundamental law of all existence, and, therefore, embraces within its sweep, not only physical and chemical, but also organic and conscious processes. There is only one science of nature, it is said—that which interprets all things in purely mechanical terms. The assumption of common sense that there is in living beings, and much more in conscious beings, a reservoir of independent energy which can in any way interfere with the total quantity of physical energy, is fatal to all science. To the principle of the conservation of energy there can be no possible exception; there is "not an atom, either in the nervous system, or in the whole universe, whose position is not determined by the sum of the mechanical actions, which the other atoms exert upon it. And the mathematician who knew the position of the molecules or atoms of a human organism at a given moment, as well as the position and motion of all the atoms in the universe capable of influencing it, could calculate with unfailing certainty the past, present and future actions of the person to whom this organism belongs, just as one predicts an astronomical phenomenon." Granting the universality of the principle, this conclusion follows as a necessary inference; for we must then suppose that "the material points of which the universe is composed are subject solely to forces of attraction and repulsion, arising from these points themselves and possessing intensities which depend only on their distances; hence the relative positions of the material points at a given moment—whatever be their nature—would be strictly determined by what it was at the preceding

<sup>1</sup> M'Dougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 91.



moment."<sup>1</sup> The energy of the universe being a constant quantity, nothing can in the least degree influence the movement of any body but the impact upon it of another body; and therefore vital or mental influence is inconceivable, since it would increase or diminish the existing quantity of energy.

It is obvious from the nature of the method employed, which consists in abstracting from everything but mass and energy, that the result must be hypothetical in this sense, that it depends upon the legitimacy of the assumption that the presence of such concrete properties as density, cohesion, chemical affinity and vital phenomena in no way alters the validity of the conclusion. Whatever the other properties of a body may be, its mass and energy, it is held, may be determined independently. What the mechanical theory of the world proves, therefore, is that, however diverse in quality phenomena may be, the transformation of one form of energy into another in no way changes its total quantity. Energy in the form of mechanical work is precisely equivalent to so much energy in the way of heat or of radiant energy or of energy of the electric field. It must be observed, however, that the admission of quantitative equivalence does not necessarily imply that all forms of energy are at bottom mechanical. The doctrine of the conservation of energy means that there is constancy in the quantitative relations of physical processes, not that there are in these no qualitative differences. It is assumed by naturalism, however, that the whole process of evolution, including not only physical and chemical phenomena, but the origination and development of living and conscious beings, can be explained without reference to any other principle. This conclusion is an illegitimate extension of a

<sup>1</sup>H. Bergson, "Les données immédiates de la conscience," 110, 111; *tr. Time and Free Will*, pp. 144-5.



principle which is undoubtedly valid within its own sphere. To say that the total quantity of energy in a closed system is constant, is quite compatible with any modification of the system which leaves that quantity intact. The principle of degradation of energy, for example, is perfectly consistent with the principle of conservation, expressing as it does the fact that there is a tendency in all physical changes to take the form of heat, and that heat tends to be distributed among bodies in a uniform manner. Thus the instability due to the great variety of qualitative changes which take place in our solar system is said to be gradually giving place to a monotonous repetition of elementary vibrations. This principle therefore concerns solely changes in the form of energy manifested, and in no way interferes with the quantity of energy. At the end of a long process, in which changes that are visible and heterogeneous are converted into changes that are invisible and homogeneous, it still remains true that the quantity of energy is neither increased nor diminished. On the other hand, the law will equally be preserved, if mechanical energy is transformed into its equivalent in thermal, chemical or vital energy. The doctrine of the conservation of energy tells us nothing in regard to the specific form assumed by the world. So far as it is concerned, the solar system might have begun with the greatest complexity, and in course of time have reverted to the greatest simplicity. From a purely mechanical point of view, there seems to be no reason why there should be any increase of complexity. We cannot by the law of conservation of energy, as Dr. Ward points out, tell whether an egg will be transformed into a chicken or into an omelette, because in either case the quantity of energy will be the same.<sup>1</sup> The only change which is allowed for is change of motion—i.e. change in the grouping of elements that are

<sup>1</sup>J. Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, i. 229.



unchanged, because they are assumed to be entirely destitute of qualitative diversity. Whether there is stagnation, development or degradation, the law of conservation of energy will hold good, since all that it demands is such a rearrangement of masses in space and time as leaves the total quantity of energy unaffected. It is thus evident that any real process of evolution can only be defended upon grounds that lie beyond that law. This does not mean that the principle of conservation of energy is in any sense doubtful, but only that it is an incomplete determination of the universe. It is true that chemical, vital and conscious phenomena presuppose mass and energy; but the attempt to express these phenomena purely in such terms involves a confusion of ideas. On the mechanical level there is neither life nor mind, because all that is characteristic of them has been eliminated for purposes of research; and therefore, if we are really to characterize life and mind as they are, we must first restore what has been set aside, and seek for conceptions adequate to the new facts. One reason why this obvious truth has been overlooked is the confusion between analysis and abstraction. When the chemist is seeking to determine the constituent elements of a substance, he must abstract from all the other characteristics found in it and concentrate his attention entirely upon the chemical changes it is found to undergo. The result is to break up the whole into its elements—a process which is at once an analysis and a synthesis; for, in discovering the elements that will combine into a whole, the chemist at once distinguishes the elements from one another and combines them into a unity. Similarly the physicist determines the special sphere of his investigation by abstracting from all that is irrelevant for his purpose, which is to discover the laws of motion; and, confining himself within this sphere, he is able to show that the elements of mass, space



and time are essential to the mechanical changes of bodies, and thus he is able to advance by synthesis to the laws of motion. It is therefore evident that analysis and synthesis, in each of the special sciences, always proceed on a basis of abstraction. From the point of view of mechanics we cannot by synthesis go beyond the elements determined for us by our primary abstraction, just as in chemistry no combination of elements will yield any solution of the problem of biology. The attempt to explain the facts of life in mechanical terms is therefore foredoomed to failure ; and with this failure the whole foundation of naturalism crumbles away.

From what has been said it is evident that there is no real ground for asserting that the principle of conservation of energy is an adequate formulation of all modes of existence. It is therefore a mistake to assume that whatever refuses to be compressed within its framework cannot be true in any absolute sense, but must arise from the limitation of our experience. There is no reason to suppose that any expansion of knowledge would ever bring life and consciousness under this rule. We must therefore come to the study of these free from the gratuitous assumption that they can be explained on the principle of conservation of energy. It is certainly true that a rational system cannot be one that is given up to chance ; law there must be ; but it does not follow that this law must be limited to the formulation of the conditions of a quantitative system. It is therefore of great importance to determine whether the facts of our experience do or do not compel us to employ a higher conception than that of conservation of energy when we are dealing with life and mind. If not, we must be prepared to view the universe as by its very constitution excluding even the possibility of freedom, and ruling out in advance, as a hypothesis not only unverifiable but self-contradictory, the whole conception of the world



as the manifestation of a divine principle. Such a conclusion is not one to be lightly accepted. The moral and religious consciousness alike revolt from a theory which, in Goethe's words, "reduces that which appears higher than nature, or rather as the higher in nature itself, to a useless and formless matter and motion." This mechanical philosophy, he says in the *Dichtung und Wahrheit*, "appeared to us so grey, so Cimmerian and so dead that we shuddered at it as at a ghost. We thought it the very quintessence of old age. All was to be necessary, and therefore no God. Why, we asked, should not a necessity for God find its place among other necessities? We confessed, indeed, that we could not withdraw ourselves from the necessary influences of day and night, of the seasons, of the climatic changes of physical and animal conditions; yet we felt something within us that appeared arbitrarily to assert itself against all this; and again something which sought to counterpoise such arbitrariness and to restore the equilibrium of life."<sup>1</sup> The poets of the nineteenth century, indeed, are unanimous in rejecting the cold dead identity of a universe without process and without life. Tennyson formulates and passionately protests against it:

"The stars," she whispers, "blodly run;  
A web is wov'o across the sky:  
From out waste places comes a cry,  
And murmurs from the dying sun;

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands,—  
With all the music in her tone,  
A hollow echo of my own,—  
A bollow form with empty hands.

"And shall I take a thing so blind,  
Embrace her as my natural good;  
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,  
Upon the threshold of the mind?

Quoted in E. Caird's *Essays in Literature and Philosophy*, 1st ed., i. 74.



And, in another passage :

"Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature leads such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life.

"So careful of the type? but no,  
From scarfed cliff and quarried stoop,  
She cries 'a thousand types are gone ;  
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :  
I bring to life, I bring to death :  
The spirit does but mean the breath :  
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

"Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,  
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,  
Who roll'd the psalm to wottry skies,  
Who built him groves of fruitless prayer ;

"Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,  
Who battled for the True, the Just,  
Be blown about the desert dust,  
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

Such a conclusion he rejects, declaring that

"like a man in wrath the heart  
Stood up and answered, 'I have felt'";

in other words, that all our higher aspirations contradict the creed of naturalism. It is not enough, however, simply to appeal to feeling ; and we must therefore ask whether an impartial examination of the facts of experience compels us to regard the mechanical conception of the world as the last word of reason.

In support of the conclusion that there is no generic distinction between organic and inorganic things various arguments are advanced, which in their cumulative force are held to reach at least the highest degree of probability.



An appeal is made to the fact that many chemical compounds, formerly supposed to be peculiar to the living body, have been produced in the laboratory by artificial synthesis. Not only so, but chemistry has even produced what looks like certain facts of organization, such as the movement of protoplasm, and even the movement of the amoeba and the infusorian. It is also admitted that there are certain laws which are common to living and non-living beings. Moreover, irritability, which was wont to be regarded as peculiar to living matter, has been ascribed to the liberation of the potential energy stored up in the organism. It is also argued, from the fact that crystals restore themselves to their normal form when injured, that the adaptation of an organism to changed conditions—as displayed, for example, in the regeneration of lost organs—is at bottom a mechanical process. And, lastly, it is maintained that there is a series of connecting links between inorganic matter and the elementary cells out of which all organisms are built up.

To all such attempts to level down the organic to the inorganic, the general objection applies, that it confuses the proposition, that there are no living processes without mechanism, with the very different proposition, that living processes are nothing but mechanism. It is the former proposition that gives to Naturalism its plausibility; while it is the latter which it supposes itself to make good. So far as it is a protest against the assumption of a separate and independent principle of life, which is complete in itself apart from mechanism, Naturalism contains an element of truth of the utmost importance. Such an assumption leads to the fiction of a soul which is only externally attached to the body, and therefore, by an inevitable logic, to the doctrine of metempsychosis. Of any independent principle of life we have no experience, nor can it be legitimately deduced from experience. All life



as known to us is inseparable from the mechanical system of which it constitutes the principle, and to separate it from its conditions is to convert it into an abstraction. But, while Naturalism escapes from the absurdity of maintaining the independent reality of a "vital principle," it falls into the still more disastrous fallacy of identifying one aspect of the total process of life with the whole. It is at bottom the same fallacy as leads the vitalist to affirm the existence of life in its isolation which acts upon the mind of the naturalist when he affirms the independent reality of mechanism. Both views are abstract and one-sided. There is no life apart from body, and yet life is not body, but the principle which determines its specific character. The mechanical system expresses that constancy in the system of energies by which the world is characterized, while the principle of life is the informing principle without which that system would have no meaning, and indeed could not even exist. We may, therefore, be certain that the attempt to reduce life to physical or chemical processes must rest upon an inadequate and untenable conception of the real world.

(1) It is argued that, as compounds formed by the living organism have also been produced artificially, these cannot demand a peculiar vital principle for their production. Scientific men, however, are by no means agreed in their interpretation of such facts. Leading chemists like Cope point out that the only organic compounds artificially produced are waste products, while the peculiarly active plastic substances such as result from the assimilation of inorganic substances, have never been constructed artificially.<sup>1</sup> The appearance of vital activity, again, proves nothing so long as protoplasm cannot be artificially produced; while even the humblest manifestation of life, as in

<sup>1</sup>Cope, *The Primary Factors of Organic Evolution*, Chicago, 1896, pp. 478-484.



the infusorian, and still more in the amoeba, do not admit of physical or chemical explanation. The truth is that the deeper the study of the facts of life, the more inadequate seems every attempt to explain them by physics or chemistry. "The study of the cell," says an eminent histologist, Mr. G. B. Wilson, "has on the whole seemed to widen rather than to narrow the enormous gap that separates even the lowest forms of life from the inorganic world."<sup>1</sup>

(2) The argument that the chemical processes which go on in non-living beings are of the same nature as those present in living beings obviously does not prove what it is supposed to prove. The fallacy here is a special instance of that tendency to isolate and hypostatize one aspect of the whole, against which we have to be continually on our guard. Living processes cannot be reduced to physical or chemical processes, though the latter are the necessary presupposition of the former. When therefore abstraction is made from what is characteristic of life, no difference between living and non-living beings can possibly be found. But the presence in the living body of the same physical and chemical laws as those that are found in other bodies by no means proves that all bodies are the same in their fundamental nature. An organism is not a mere aggregate of parts, subject to the law that the changes which the parts undergo leave them essentially unchanged; on the contrary, its parts are complementary of one another, so that the functions of the living being are interdependent, and its changes bring into existence what previously had no reality. Nothing like this is found in the inorganic world. Astronomical, physical and chemical facts form part of an unchanging system, whereas a living being is

<sup>1</sup>G. B. Wilson, *The Cell in Development and Inheritance*, New York, 1897, p. 330.



continuously generating itself from moment to moment. No doubt life involves mechanism, but this mechanism is no independent reality ; it is merely the artificial isolation of what actually obtains only within a whole. As M. Bergson says, " life is no more made up of physico-chemical elements than a curve is composed of straight lines." <sup>1</sup>

Hence (3) when it is said that irritability may be nothing but the liberation of potential energy, it is overlooked that the energy so liberated would not be stored up in the organism, or liberated at a given moment, but for the distinctive processes of the organism. The vegetable " derives directly from the air and water and soil the elements necessary to maintain life, especially carbon and nitrogen," while the animal assimilates these elements after they have been fixed for it in organic substances by plants, or by animals which directly or indirectly owe them to plants ; but the process of assimilation in either case is distinctive of living beings, and is never found in inorganic things. It is characteristic of animals, as distinguished from plants, that they have the power of employing the nervous mechanism, or what corresponds to it in the lower forms of life, for the conversion of the energy stored up into movements from place to place.

(4) From what has been said it is evident that the assimilation of a living organism to a crystal is fallacious. The crystal has neither differences of parts nor diversity of functions, and therefore it can lay no claim to individuality ; whereas the whole process of life is in the direction of individuality. It is true that complete individuality is not realized even in man ; nevertheless all forms of life, even the lowest, exhibit a persistent tendency towards individuality. The most we can say of the crystal is that it displays a power of self-restoration which is analogous to the

<sup>1</sup> Bergson, *L'Évolution créatrice*, p. 34 ; tr. p. 31.



regeneration of lost organs characteristic of living beings; nevertheless, the fundamental difference remains, that the living being is composed of organs which are mutually dependent and perform diverse functions, and that its self-restoration is essentially a process by which new organs are created and its tendency to individuality maintained and developed.

(5) Nor can it be fairly argued that, because a series of intermediate forms may be interposed between inorganic things and the living cell, we can therefore reduce life to mechanism. Why should we not rather conclude that in organisms there is to be found explicitly realized that which in inorganic things is only a promise and a prophecy? In truth, however, what the facts prove is neither the reduction of the organic to the inorganic, nor the elevation of the inorganic to the rank of the organic, but simply that in all its forms nature is striving towards complete individuality. Notwithstanding the analogy of the inorganic to the organic, I do not think that we can regard the former as in essence identical with the latter; much less can we degrade the latter to the level of the former. Life is an absolute beginning in this sense, that no amount of complication of the inorganic will produce it. Nor can we say, because the crystal and the animal both undergo a process of restoration, that they are therefore identical in essence; to reason in this way is to follow the fallacious argument by which Fluellen proves King Henry the Fifth to be a hero like Alexander the Great, because he was born in Wales, and there is a river in Wales as well as in Macedon.<sup>1</sup> No doubt if it could be shown that inorganic things have developed into living beings, we should then have to conclude that the former are in essence identical with the latter; but, until that proof is supplied, we must hold that the self-

<sup>1</sup> *King Henry V.*, Act IV. sc. vii.



restorative process of living organisms differs in kind from the process by which a crystal restores its lost parts.

These considerations seem to make it clear that by no possibility can life be explained upon purely mechanical principles. It may be said, however, that this conclusion is rendered doubtful or even incredible when we take into consideration the process of biological evolution, which is apparently inconsistent with any generic distinction between the living and non-living. It will therefore be advisable to consider the two dominant theories in regard to the development of living forms, which may be called in a general sense the Darwinian and the Lamarckian: the former favouring a purely mechanical explanation; the latter maintaining a certain purposive tendency. Naturalism, believing as it does that all the facts of our experience are explicable on a purely mechanical basis, inevitably gravitates towards the former and rejects the latter.

Darwinism, as we know, denies the older biological doctrine, which maintained that living beings can be divided up into distinct species, each of which has an independent origin. It is no doubt true that all living beings may be arranged in classes from a comparison of their peculiarities of form, size, colour, etc.; but the classes so formed, it is argued, cannot be identified with natural species. For species are not immutable, as this theory would imply, since living beings belonging to what are called the same genera are lineal descendants of some other and generally extinct species, just as the acknowledged varieties of any one species are the descendants of that species. In the "struggle for existence," those survive which are best adapted to the environment; and, by the accumulation of slight increments of favourable differences, the immense variety of living beings that cover the earth are gradually



developed from the one or more primordial forms that we may hypothetically assume to have been their original progenitors. Thus natural selection, operating upon accidental variations, which are transmitted by heredity, is held to be the main, if not the exclusive, factor in the evolution of organic forms.

The strict Darwinian theory, then, would explain the development of living beings on the principle that, in the struggle for existence, only those representatives of the species which happen to possess some favourable characteristic are able to survive and to leave descendants. According to this view, the outer conditions do not exert a positive influence upon the being, but merely eliminate beings not provided with the advantageous feature. A plant that happens to be well-supplied with spines or hairs may escape destruction, while another less favourably endowed perishes. Why a plant should have such an advantageous feature we cannot tell. The theory therefore is that the variations by which the development of organic forms is explained are purely accidental, and are, moreover, of a very slight character. No doubt sudden variations do occur, but these, it is held, are not perpetuated. The genesis of species is therefore to be accounted for by an accumulation of insensible variations.

This is a simple and clear form of the doctrine ; but, just because of its simplicity and clearness, it seems to be open to insuperable difficulties. These no one has pointed out with more convincing force than M. Bergson, in his brilliant book on "Creative Evolution." We are told, he says, that every organic structure is the result of the slow and gradual accumulation of very small differences. Let us, then, take such a complex structure as the human eye, and compare it with the eye of a mollusc like the common pecten. While it is held that vertebrates and molluscs may be traced back



to a common ancestor, they yet must have separated and developed on divergent lines long before there was any appearance of an eye. How then is the remarkable similarity between the eye of the vertebrate and the eye of the mollusc to be explained? We must suppose that it is due to the accidental occurrence of variations which have been produced by an almost infinite number of infinitesimal causes. Moreover, as the eye is composed of thousands of different cells, each of which is itself a kind of organism, we are confronted with the extreme improbability of the vertebrate and the mollusc changing point by point, and finally, under the influence of entirely different causes, developing a structure the essential parts of which are the same in both. For, we must remember that the different parts of an organism must be co-ordinated, or the variation will be of no advantage. We have therefore to suppose that every part of the organ simultaneously develops correlated variations; so that, not only does variation arise accidentally, but, equally accidentally, there emerge a number of correlated variations; and these, on the hypothesis, must arise accidentally in two entirely independent lines of evolution.

It thus seems incredible that two independent and yet closely resembling structures can have arisen in the manner required by the hypothesis of accidental but insensible variations. There is no reason why we should deny that the eye of the vertebrate and the eye of the mollusc have developed by the gradual accumulation of slight increments of difference, so long as we admit the principle of correlation—a principle, indeed, which Darwin accepted; but to admit correlation is virtually to deny evolution by the purely accidental appearance of variations. All that the theory really shows is that the evolution of organized beings takes place, as a rule, by the gradual accumulation of slight



differences ; it gives no explanation of the appearance of such differences, much less of the appearance of correlated differences ; and therefore, to obtain such an explanation, we must have recourse to an entirely different method. For the mechanical form of the doctrine of evolution, in other words, must be substituted the organic.

An attempt, however, has been made to evade this conclusion by maintaining, in contrast to Darwin's theory of insensible variations, that, while variations are accidental, they occur suddenly and simultaneously, so that a new species comes into being not gradually but all at once. This form of the doctrine cannot be regarded as satisfactory ; for, while it rightly recognizes that the parts of an organ must be co-ordinated, it makes this fact incredible by ascribing the simultaneous variation to accident. It is hard to believe that by accident sudden variations should occur along two independent lines of development. Here again, therefore, we are forced to fall back upon a principle different from that of mechanism.

These two forms of evolution seek to account for the development of organisms on the principle of accidental variations in the living being itself. There is, however, a third form of the mechanical hypothesis : that which attributes the variations to the direct influence of outer circumstances. In this case the resemblance in structure between the eye of the vertebrate and of the mollusc is held to be due to the action of light upon two different organized forms, the result being a similar change in the structure of both. Now, it must be observed that on this view the organism is supposed to be adapted to the apprehension of light by the influence of light upon it. The eye does not first exist as an eye, and is then modified by the influence of light, but it is supposed to be developed by the direct action of light itself. In the lower organisms, it is said,



there is only a pigment spot, which we may well suppose to have been produced by the action of light, and by a gradual process this simple spot develops into a complicated eye. But the real question is, whether light alone could ever have developed an organ capable of using it. The eye in vertebrates is connected with a nervous, muscular, and osseous system; and it will hardly be maintained that these have been formed by the influence of light. Thus we must ascribe the formation of the eye and all that is connected with it to a power different from light, the power of building up a complicated structure which turns to account the excitation that light produces. Moreover, the process of development of the eye in the case of vertebrates is quite different from that of molluscs; in the former, the retina is an expansion in the rudimentary brain of the embryo, in the latter it is directly derived. It is therefore impossible to explain these two distinct evolutionary processes without having recourse to some inner principle other than that of mechanism, by which the same effect is obtained by entirely different means. And thus we are inevitably led to consider whether the Lamarckian theory may not give a truer account of the evolution of living beings.

On this theory living beings are regarded as displaying a certain selective activity, so that the variation which results in the formation of a new species is not due merely to accident, but results from the effort of the being to adapt itself to the environment; while the modified structure acquired by the use or disuse of its organs is transmitted to descendants.

There seems to be a certain ambiguity in regard to the meaning to be attached to the term "effort," by which evolution is on this view sought to be explained. It is undoubtedly true that an organ may be strengthened and enlarged by use; but something more than this is needed



to explain the evolution of a complicated structure like the eye of the vertebrate or the mollusc. Before the Lamarckian doctrine can be accepted, we must also be prepared to admit, what biologists like Weismann deny, that acquired characters can be transmitted. Weismann maintains that development is entirely determined by the constitution of the germinal cells, which he regards as practically independent of the somatic cells, so that the only characters transmitted are those which are already found in the germinal cells. Acquired characters are generally habits or the effects of habit, and it is argued that, as all habits rest upon a natural aptitude, it is this natural aptitude which is transmitted, not the acquired character resulting from its repeated exercise. The influence of alcoholism on descendants is not an instance of the transmission of acquired characters, because here both soma and plasma have suffered from the action of the same cause. It is then at least doubtful whether the Lamarckian theory of the transmission of acquired characters can be accepted. In any case, such transmission is more or less exceptional, and therefore it is highly improbable that it can account for the enormous number of variations, all in the same direction, that we must suppose to have effected the transition from the pigment spot of the infusorian to the eye of the mollusc and of the vertebrate.

Neither the neo-Darwinian nor the neo Lamarckian theory, then, can be regarded as a complete and adequate explanation of the process by which species have originated, though both have fixed upon different elements involved in that process. The former is probably right in affirming that we must look to the differences inherent in the germ borne by the individual for the essential causes of variation. On the other hand, the fundamental defect of this mode of explanation is its assumption that these differences are



entirely fortuitous. Eimer is probably right in claiming that variations continue in definite directions from generation to generation, though his claim to account for the development of the most complicated organic structures by purely physical and chemical causes is obviously untenable. The neo-Lamarckian reference of evolution to selective activity, again, has undoubtedly a solid basis of truth behind it ; but it is a mistake to regard this activity as dependent upon the more or less conscious effort of the individual. The effort which produces such a profound transformation of primitive forms as that which results in the formation of a complicated structure like the eye can only be attributed to something in the fundamental nature of the universe. This organizing principle must be conceived, not as an abstraction, formed by simply generalizing the common characteristics of all living beings, but as a principle constituting their essential nature. The process of evolution we must therefore conceive as the realization in millions of individuals of the same identical and self-differentiating principle of life, a principle which realizes itself by subduing the physical and chemical forces of the universe to itself and using them as its instruments. The development of organic structures cannot be the result of an infinite number of accidental variations, accidentally working in a certain direction, and accidentally resulting in the formation of an infinite variety of species ; it must be the self-differentiation of a single eternal and inexhaustible principle.

It is usually supposed that with the rejection of all purely mechanical explanations of evolution we are compelled to admit that only by a teleological conception of organized beings can we make them intelligible to ourselves. M. Bergson, however, in this following the lead of Kant, who regarded the idea of purposiveness as merely subjective and regulative, rejects finalism as decidedly as mechanism.



His main objection to it seems to be, that it does not allow for that "creative evolution" which he regards as the fundamental principle of the universe. In the extreme form in which finalism is maintained by Leibnitz it is held that all real beings are living, and in the beginning already contain "preformed" all that is subsequently evolved. This view, M. Bergson contends, is merely an inverted mechanism and allows of no real evolution, all that presents itself in the subsequent history of individuals being presupposed to begin with. There is no real succession, change or transition, time being nothing but a confused perception, which would vanish away if only we were capable of seeing things as they truly are. Not only, however, does he hold that we must reject this form of finalism, but M. Bergson will not accept even that internal or immanent finality, which maintains that "each being is made for itself," and that "all its parts conspire for the greatest good of the whole and are intelligently organized in view of that end."<sup>1</sup> We cannot, indeed, on this view, say that the universe has any single end "to which the whole creation moves," or that different beings have been made for each other. Nature, it is said, presents disorder alongside of order, and it is a very shallow view which affirms that grass was made for the cow or the lamb for the wolf; but, taking each organism separately, the division of labour and co-operation of all the parts are inexplicable apart from the principle of immanent purpose. Now, the assumption here made, argues M. Bergson, is that finality is purely internal; which again implies that each living being is a complete individual. But purely internal finality is nowhere to be found. An organism is composed of tissues, and the tissues of cells; and both tissues and cells have as much right to be called individuals as the whole organism

<sup>1</sup> H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, p. 44; tr. p. 41.



When therefore it is said that the elements which comprise the organism all contribute to its life, we virtually fall back on the principle of external finality, which we have denied of the universe as a whole. There is no internal "vital principle," says M. Bergson, peculiar to each individual, since no real individual can anywhere be found. All living beings are connected directly or indirectly with all others, and therefore the attempt to defend finality by restricting it to separate individuals is foredoomed to failure. "It there is finality in the world of life, it includes the whole of life in a single indivisible embrace."<sup>1</sup> Why, then, does the idea of immanent teleology seem so conclusive? The reason, M. Bergson answers, is that our intellect is "cast in the mould of action." In order to act, we make a plan, and this plan we are able to realize only if there is a fixed connection between means and ends. When therefore we employ the intellect speculatively, we not unnaturally make use of the mode of conception with which we are familiar in practical life, and therefore we come to think of an organism as realizing by the co-operation of its parts a pre-conceived end. But this anthropomorphic mode of conception is inadmissible. In truth finalism is open to the same objection as mechanism, namely, that in assuming absolute fixity in the end and in the means by which it is reached, it allows of no real evolution, but only of the apparent evolution of that which is already unalterably involved in the original constitution of things.

M. Bergson therefore holds that the true explanation must be found in a principle which transcends both mechanism and finalism. Reality, he contends, is never the repetition of that which already exists, but the "ceaseless upspringing of something new."<sup>2</sup> Hence we cannot tell beforehand what

<sup>1</sup> H. Bergson, *L'Évolution Créatrice*, p. 47; tr. p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 50; tr. p. 47.



path life will take. How, then, can it be said that the end towards which life moves is predetermined? To think of the matter in this way is, he argues, to assimilate the development of life to the labour of a workman, who gathers together a number of separate things and arranges them in imitation of a model. But this is not how nature works; it does not bring together a number of pre-existent elements according to a pre-conceived plan; it is *we* who divide up the organism into a number of elements, which *we* then conceive to be externally put together to form a whole. In reality an organism is no compound of separate elements, either coming together accidentally, or brought together purposively. To organize is not the same thing as to manufacture. The former works from the centre to the periphery, the latter from the periphery to the centre. A machine displays all the parts that have been externally combined, whereas an organism is the creation by dissociation and division of new elements. Life is "a tendency to act on inert matter," but "the direction of this action is not predetermined, hence the unforeseeable variety of forms which life, in evolving, sows along its path." There is always involved "at least a rudiment of choice," and "a choice involves the anticipatory idea of several possible actions." Evolution is not the realization of a plan, but "a creation that goes on forever in virtue of an initial movement." The unity of the organized world is "a prolific unity of an infinite richness."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 100, 105, 114; tr. 92, 96, 104-5.



## LECTURE EIGHTH.

### CREATIVE EVOLUTION, BODY AND MIND, AND PERSONAL RELATION.

IN the last lecture we have examined the two main forms of the mechanical theory of evolution under the guidance of M. Bergson ; and we have seen reason to believe that neither the hypothesis of insensible variations nor that of sudden variations occurring accidentally explains the facts of life ; nor again can they be accounted for by the direct action of the environment as resulting in the gradual transformation of the organism. The inadequacy of the mechanical theory has been partly recognized by eminent biologists, who have been led to adopt the Lamarckian principle in a modified form, supplemented by the principles of correlated variations and of sexual selection. It is held that there is in the living being a tendency toward development in a definite direction, together with the tendency to the concomitant variation of the parts. Thus both in their selective power and in the essential unity of their elements living beings exhibit an inherent impulse toward a definite end. They are not the passive victims of chance factors, but, diverse as the external conditions may be, they develop in harmony with their own inherent tendencies. Thus we seem compelled to substitute for the older idea of the special creation of a number of species, the deeper idea of an immanent principle involved in the very nature of living beings, and realizing itself in forms which, by their increasing complexity



and power of adaptation, display more and more fully the essential unity of the whole. We have seen, however, that this explanation of life by the idea of internal purposiveness is rejected by M. Bergson, who maintains that it does not do justice to the essential nature of life, which consists in the inexhaustible power of creating new forms of being. To suppose that evolution is the process of realizing a pre-determined end, he regards as an imperfect way of conceiving reality, due to our invincible tendency to apply the intellect, which has been itself evolved from the necessities of action, in the interpretation of the theoretical problem of the ultimate nature of things. Even the idea that the various members of the organism all conspire to constitute its individuality he regards as an untenable hypothesis, since no living being can be found which is individual, while the tissues and cells of which a living being is composed are themselves relative individuals; and therefore, he contends, we have in the end to fall back upon that external finality from which the hypothesis of immanent finality was supposed to provide a way of escape. Finalism, M. Bergson argues, is at bottom open to the same objection as mechanism; it allows of no real evolution at all, since the course of evolution is assumed to be unalterably predetermined. In truth, the process of life consists in the ceaseless creation of new forms; a process which cannot be anticipated, because it does not advance towards a predetermined end. We must discard the analogy of human art, which differs fundamentally from the creative activity of nature, inasmuch as it makes use of pre-existent materials, and in its products preserves unchanged the materials to which it gives form. In contrast to this mere accumulation of unchangeable elements, life is really a process of dissociationism or differentiation, which always involves choice of some kind, and is never the mere realization of a predetermined end.

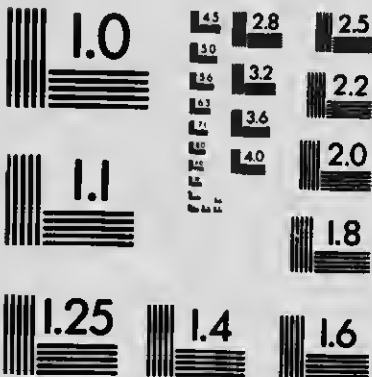






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Now, it will hardly be denied that in his conception of the infinite richness and prodigality of the principle of life, M. Bergson emphasizes a truth, the importance of which cannot be overestimated. The universe is certainly very inadequately conceived when it is contemplated as the monotonous movement of unchanging elements. Life, by its very nature, is always the evolution of that which is essentially new ; and therefore all attempts to resolve it into unchanging elements miss what is distinctive of it. Nor, again, can an organism be adequately conceived as but the co-ordination of parts, which are externally brought together, and which remain unaffected by the form that is given to them. But the question is, whether M. Bergson is justified in his reduction of immanent teleology to the formal and external arrangement of pre-existent elements that remain unchanged in the product.

It is argued by M. Bergson that life cannot be explained on the principle of internal finality, because no organism can be found that is really individual, and therefore he claims that we have in the end to fall back upon the external adaptation of elements. Now, it is certainly true that no living being in its isolation can be called individual, and equally true that immanent finality as applied to any given organism is an inadequate conception. But M. Bergson has himself pointed out, in another connection, that a living being is an individual only in the sense that it is in process of realizing individuality, not in the sense that it has actually realized it. If this is true, how can it be denied that the living being is working or tending toward an end ? No doubt the end cannot be identified with that which is actually realized in any single organism ; but the reason is not that life is a blind process which evolves in any direction whatever, but that it is a process which is always working or tending toward the end of complete indi-



viduality. It is quite true, that in no organism whatever as such can perfect individuality be realized; but that, as I hope to show, is because life is not the ultimate principle of the universe. What we must say, then, is that no single living being has any independent or separate individuality whatever, but is essentially a member of the total sphere of life. On the other hand, each living being contains within itself the one single principle of life, without which it could not exist. And this universal principle is, as M. Bergson says, no abstraction, but an actual principle which is continually realizing itself in the creation of living beings. We can therefore say that every organism contains within itself the principle of life, since the whole process of evolution is the self-differentiation of a principle which by its very nature is an organic whole. This organic whole, it is true, is never completely realized, just because it is creative; but, on the other hand, it has no reality apart from the definite organisms in which it is in process of realization. Each organism is at once universal and particular, expressing as it does the one eternal principle as embodied in a specific and limited being.

M. Bergson objects to the doctrine of immanent teleology that it limits the development of life to a determinate end, and therefore does not allow for the spontaneity or choice which in some more or less definite form every living being displays. But, surely it cannot be meant that all free activity is destroyed unless it is conceived to be devoid of any definite end whatever. M. Bergson admits that freedom is not to be confused with caprice; and it is not easy to understand how caprice can be avoided except by the admission that choice must be, not between an infinity of ends, but between various specific ends, all of which are compatible with the one supreme end of complete individuality. No doubt there are many ways of reaching the



same end, as M. Bergson has shown in the case of the evolution of the eye in the vertebrates and the molluscs ; but an infinity of routes leading nowhere seems to me a thoroughly irrational conception. What appears to underlie the objection to immanent teleology is the assumption that freedom is incompatible with all law—a thoroughly false assumption, which, notwithstanding M. Bergson's disclaimer, makes freedom the same thing as caprice. Every living being has undoubtedly a measure of freedom or self-determination ; but this freedom it possesses, not because it may follow any one of an infinity of paths, but because it has the power in some sense of selecting different paths, all of which lead towards the final end of complete individuality. No doubt, when any given path is entered upon, the choice of other paths is thereby limited ; but this in no way conflicts with the principle that, by the very nature of the universe, the number of paths cannot be infinite. An infinity of paths is at bottom the same thing as no path at all. In a rational universe no being can possibly enter upon a course of action which leads nowhere, and therefore action, by its very nature, involves an end.

M. Bergson might perhaps answer that the whole conception of an end to be realized is due to the character of our intellect, which cannot grasp the idea of creation at all, and therefore converts it into the idea of realizing a pre-conceived plan. It would take us too far to attempt a criticism of this theory of the intellect. I may say, however, that it seems to me to rest upon the false assumption that the highest conception of which the intellect is capable is that of mechanism. Now, while it is perfectly true that the special sciences never get beyond the category of mechanism, I can see no reason why the intellect should be limited to a conception which, as M. Bergson has himself shown, is



entirely inadequate to express the real nature of things. What M. Bergson calls Intuition seems to me but Intelligence or Reason in its final form—with this difference, that the latter is reached only by a process in which all less adequate modes of conception are transcended. Intuition, as he describes it, is simply immediate concrete experience, and to set forth the principles involved in that experience involves the exercise of Intellect or Reason. Unless those principles are clearly grasped, we are left with vague and indefinite ideas, which, just because they are vague and indefinite, are necessarily ambiguous. It is true that the principles grasped by thought, when they are isolated from concrete experience, become mere abstractions; but it is equally true that concrete experience which is not subjected to a process of analysis and synthesis is abstract in another way. What philosophy has to do is to set forth in articulate form the system of principles presupposed in the totality of experience, always recognizing that these get their meaning from their embodiment in experience. To assume, with M. Bergson, that the intellect cannot transcend the mechanical conception of the universe is virtually to affirm that reason is by its very nature self-contradictory; for nothing is more certain than that a universe of pure mechanism is one that contradicts the presupposition of all knowledge and reality—the presupposition that it must be a self-consistent and complete whole.

The conclusion to which we have been led, that the world cannot be adequately determined as a purely mechanical system, will receive additional confirmation from a consideration of the relations of body and mind—perhaps one of the most pressing problems of the present day.

The most consistent form which the mechanical explanation of mind assumes is the doctrine which, since the



days of Huxley, has been generally known as Epiphenomenalism. Accepting the general principle that all changes in the world consist of the transposition of mass-points, it is maintained that the movements which go on in the organism of any living being, including those which occur in the human brain, are strictly subject to the laws of mechanism. What is characteristic of Epiphenomenalism, however, is the contention that all the changes which occur in consciousness are collateral products of the corresponding movements in the brain. There is therefore, it is maintained, no real activity except that of the processes which go on in the brain, consciousness being simply the feelings which successively appear and disappear, without influencing one another or reacting upon the brain-processes by which they are produced. Our mental conditions, as Huxley puts it, "are simply the symbols in consciousness of the changes that take place automatically in the organism." In the evolution of the material universe, living organisms are held to have emerged because of the increased complexity of the atomic structure of certain molecules, and these organisms, it is said, have gone on increasing in complexity until, with the origination of brains of a certain degree of complexity, consciousness has appeared, and has finally reached the greatest degree of complexity in the evolution of the human brain. It of course follows that with the extinction of living beings with brains consciousness will simultaneously disappear from the universe.

It will be found, I think, that this view of the relation of consciousness to the brain is based upon an ambiguity which involves a fallacy. Conscious states are said to be a "collateral effect" or "epiphenomenon" of the organism. What is here obscurely implied is that consciousness is an effect which arises without any expenditure of physical energy. But this is the same as saying that it is an effect



which arises without a cause. A cause is the totality of conditions without which an effect cannot take place ; and therefore, if the conscious state is part of the effect of which the expenditure of physical energy is the cause, it must involve an expenditure of such energy. On the other hand, if the physical event may give rise to the mental without any expenditure of energy, there can be no reason why the mental should not equally give rise to the physical. Either, therefore, the conscious state is not in any sense a product of the physical, or it must be admitted that there is an influence of each upon the other. In the former case, the whole idea of mind as epiphenomenal must be abandoned ; in the latter, we must surrender the principle of causality as employed in scientific investigation. In truth, as I hope we shall immediately see, both conclusions must in a sense be accepted. Mind may be shown not to be a collateral product of body, and natural causation is certainly not an ultimate explanation of anything. Meantime, it may be pointed out that the doctrine of animal automatism is inconsistent with the principles of mechanics adopted by naturalism and regarded as absolute. For, the combination of parts required to form an organism, even assuming that the organism is merely a machine, cannot be explained without going beyond the laws of matter and energy which ignore all forms of combination ; and even if we assume the existence of the organism, consciousness is on the theory of automatism held to be entirely destitute of activity. Let us, then, see if the doctrine that psychical activity is an illusion is consistent with the facts of our experience.

When any process of thought takes place, we are to suppose that in spite of appearances to the contrary it is not due to any activity on the part of the conscious subject, but is merely a collateral product of certain molecular



changes that simultaneously go on in the brain. Similarly, volitions are supposed to arise somehow from bodily movements. Now all physical movements, including the molecular movements in the brain, are for naturalism absolutely determined, and therefore anything like spontaneity in the correspondent psychical process is for it logically impossible. Our mental conditions are therefore said to be simply "the symbols in consciousness of the changes that take place automatically in the organism." Thus, the whole contents of consciousness are as inevitably determined as the corresponding physical counterpart, of which they are the symbols. We must, therefore, if we are consistent, deny that mind in any of its modes is self-active. We have already seen, however, that by the principles of naturalism the physical series likewise excludes self-activity. No body can receive any energy but that which is imparted to it by another body, or impart energy to another body without itself losing an equivalent amount. Hence for naturalism all self-activity, whether mental or physical, is banished from the world. But this conclusion brings the naturalistic view of body and mind into contradiction with itself. Starting with the doctrine that consciousness is an "epiphenomenon" of the organism, it is finally forced to the conclusion that, as there is no activity in either body or mind, the latter can in no sense be a product, not even a collateral product, of the former. Each is left confronting the other in abrupt antagonism. This is the view adopted by what is called Psycho-physical Parallelism; which is, therefore, a more self-consistent form of Epiphenomenalism.

Psycho-physical parallelism, in the strict sense of the term, conceives of physical and psychical processes as entirely independent of each other, but yet as simultaneous and corresponding point by point. There is no causal



connection on this view between the two processes, but in each the successive steps are causally related. This doctrine is held in one of two forms: either the parallelism is only between the changes in the brain and the corresponding changes in consciousness, or all physical processes, whether inorganic or organic, are maintained to have their psychical concomitants.

The first form of the doctrine is beset with obvious difficulties. It is supposed that there is a parallelism between changes in consciousness and the correspondent changes in the brain, but not between the former and those physical processes which precede the brain processes. Now, if all physical processes, as a consistent naturalism must hold, are of the same essential nature, why should it be supposed that only certain brain-processes are accompanied by conscious concomitants? On this hypothesis, consciousness corresponds to a very small fraction of the changes which go on in the world. Are we to suppose, then, that no other changes are in any way represented in consciousness? But this would seem to reduce our knowledge of reality to a very small compass. Moreover, it is supposed that for each subject all that exists are the ideas corresponding to changes in his own brain; and it would therefore seem that the knowledge of each subject must be limited absolutely to those changes, so that he can have no knowledge of any brain but his own, and much less of any world of objects distinct from the changes in his own brain. But the culminating absurdity of the whole theory is that only by a miracle can the knowledge of his own brain be explained. For, on any theory whatever, it is certain that a man's own brain is precisely that of which he can have no direct knowledge. We must, therefore, suppose that it is only by a complex series of inferences that the subject comes to the conclusion that the ideas in his consciousness correspond to



changes in his brain. Thus for him those changes are known only as ideas in his consciousness, and it is these ideas that we must suppose to correspond to his immediate sensations. But the thoughts of his brain-processes are not temporal concomitants of sensations. Thus the whole theory of parallelism breaks down, and we are left with nothing but more or less complex modes of mind.

The second or universal form of parallelism will be found to be equally untenable. It is now held that every physical process, and not simply the process in the brain, has its concomitant psychical representative. The physical sequences, consisting of stimulus, excitation of the sense-organs, processes of conduction along the sensory nerves and lower nervous centres, are therefore entirely independent of the psychical changes which correspond to each of these movements.

This form of the parallelistic hypothesis involves the difficulty that, while it consistently maintains that physical and psychical changes are parallel in their whole range and extent, it seems to be out of harmony with the facts of our experience. Sensations only appear in consciousness in connection with brain-processes, and it is therefore only by an elaborate process of inference that we can conclude to the presence of psychical elements, corresponding to the successive steps which precede the excitation in the brain, itself the final result of the whole physical sequence. Whether or not we are entitled to affirm that there is a psychical as well as a physical change at each stage of the total process is a distinct question; but in any case it is a special difficulty in this form of parallelism that it at least seems to extend psychical phenomena beyond what the facts warrant. Waiving this objection, it is enough to say that the doctrine is incompatible with a tenable theory of knowledge. Physical and psychical processes are alike



facts of experience, and therefore any consistent theory of their relation must enable us to see how they can both belong to the same universe. But the doctrine of parallelism affirms that they confront each other as two diverse and irreducible modes of being. The only plausible mode of escape from this contradiction between what are claimed to be opposite facts of our experience is to fall back upon the doctrine that our experience is not of reality, but only of appearance. Since neither the physical nor the psychical series can be reduced to the other, while yet they must belong to a single universe, we may suppose that mind and body are appearances of an underlying reality which is beyond the reach of our experience. This is the doctrine that has been called Phenomenalistic Parallelism.<sup>1</sup>

The doctrine that physical and mental processes are two "aspects" of a reality which is itself unknown is open to grave objections. What gives plausibility to the doctrine is the assimilation of the two processes, physical and mental, to two different points of view from which sensible objects may be regarded, as, e.g. when we "see the strokes of a hammer upon a gong, or hear them."<sup>2</sup> But when the process in the brain and the sensation as it appears in consciousness are spoken of as different "aspects" of the same reality, the term is misleading, in so far as it suggests the apprehension of the same process from two different points of view. The movements in the brain and the changes in consciousness are held to be utterly different from each other, being separated by the whole diameter of being, and to speak of them as if they were in any sense identical is a mere confusion of thought. It is indeed just for this reason

<sup>1</sup> This is Dr. M'Dougall's term. I may add that his classification and discussion of the various theories of body and mind I have found very suggestive, though I am unable to accept his final dualistic solution.

<sup>2</sup> W. M'Dougall, *Body and Mind*, p. 156.



that the two processes are referred to a reality different from both. But the whole conception of a reality different from the two discrepant processes, and yet somehow unifying them, is self-contradictory. Matter and mind, we must suppose, are merely appearances, having no doubt some analogy to the reality which underlies them, but yet differing from that reality in ways that we are unable to define. This assertion of our invincible ignorance of the nature of reality seems indeed to provide a separate sphere for the religious consciousness, which naturalism threatened with extinction. For, while any specific knowledge of absolute reality is denied, it is positively affirmed that it exists beyond the sphere of our experience, just because we are conscious that what falls within experience is not reality. Thus, strangely enough, the attempt to carry out naturalism to its logical conclusion results in its complete reversal. The unalterable system of nature is found to be merely the construction, out of the inadequate elements supplied to us in experience, of a working conception, which enables us to calculate and measure phenomena and to observe the behaviour of our own minds, but which in no way enables us to comprehend the reality of which these two irreducible forms of our experience are but the symbol and adumbration. This is a virtual confession that the whole theory of parallelism has broken down. A reality that lies beyond knowledge, and yet unites two mutually exclusive streams of phenomena without possessing anything identical with either, is a conception so utterly self-contradictory that it can only secure adhesion so long as we think loosely and vaguely. It is assumed that our knowledge, phenomenal as it is, must somehow, we know not how, correspond to reality; but when we ask how we can possibly tell that a reality, of which nothing can be predicated but that we can predicate nothing of it, can have anything in common with



the specific objects of our experience, we see that at the most this self-contradictory idea obtains its plausibility only from our conviction that all modes of reality must somehow be combined in the unity of a single universe. This instinct of reason is no doubt sound, but it can only be justified by a doctrine which, unlike phenomenalistic parallelism, shows that the physical and mental are not discrepant and mutually exclusive, but are truly different phases of a single reality.

It will prepare the way for such a solution if we ask ourselves *for whom* the supposed independence and correlativity of bodily and mental states exists. Any one who asserts that the two series correspond must have a knowledge of both. Now, the theory claims that there is no relation whatever between the physical and the conscious process. It therefore follows that anyone limited entirely to the apprehension of conscious states will know nothing of bodily states. Nor is it any answer to say that the former are a symbol of the latter, since any ground for making such an assertion must be based upon a knowledge of both. We are thus left in the curious position, that we are asserted to have a direct knowledge of a psychical series of events, but no knowledge of the physical series maintained to correspond to it. Here in fact we come upon the main line of thought which leads to Subjective Idealism. Now Subjective Idealism, as we have already seen, is fatally defective, in so far as it reduces reality to the experience of the individual subject. But, if we reject this doctrine, it seems as if we were forced to admit that in some sense the parallelism of mind and body must be accepted. We return then to our original question; for whom do the two series exist? Certainly not for a being who is shut up within the psychical series. For whom, then? To answer this question we must consider that



nothing can possibly be known to us that falls beyond our conscious experience. When therefore it is said that body and mind are separate and distinct, it must be observed that, however separate and distinct they may be, they must both be contained within the same conscious experience. But conscious experience is the same thing as mind ; and therefore we have the result that body and mind are both contained within mind ; in other words, that mind embraces both itself and body. If this is so, we can understand how the two series, at first viewed as separate and distinct, are related to each other. They are related, not in themselves, but in the mind which is conscious of both, apart from which they have no reality whatever. Hence body and mind can be distinguished from each other only in so far as both are brought together or related by the one identical mind. But if body and mind as known are distinguished from each other, the mind which is related to body must be distinguished from the mind which comprehends both. What then do we mean by the mind which is known as distinct from the body ? We mean, not a separately existing being, but one aspect of the total object comprehended by the mind, the other aspect being body. Thus body and mind are aspects of the same thing.

At this point we must be careful not to confuse the view that body and mind as known are distinctions within a whole, with the phenomenalist doctrine that they are separate aspects of a single unity distinct from both. Phenomenalism, starting from the independence and correlativity of the physical and the psychical aspects, is led to hold that from the point of view of noumenal reality each is identical with the other. Thus the distinction of body and mind is regarded as an insoluble enigma, since for us the two aspects are irreducible, while yet they are held to be at bottom identical, if only we could be freed



from the limits of our experience. Our view, on the other hand, is that body and mind are known as distinguishable aspects which cannot possibly be reduced to identity, but yet are essentially correlative and are therefore different phases of a single known unity.

What do we mean by body? From the ordinary dualistic point of view body is supposed to be an independent being the parts of which are material and extended, while mind is said to be immaterial and inextended. We have seen, however, that what we distinguish as the material world is reducible to mass and energy, and that these are only elements of reality fixed upon and formulated by the natural sciences, but by no means exhaustive of the full nature of reality. Body, therefore, is not a collection of material particles, nor, on the other hand, has it any independent existence; it is but a certain aspect of reality, abstracted from other aspects and considered by itself. When it is contrasted with mind, body must not be conceived as a mere collection of mass-points, but as an organism, the characteristic feature of which is that it continually secures the end of its own self-maintenance. As an organism, therefore, body is not simply a complex series of motions—though, of course, it is also that—but it is a self-directed, though unconscious, series of motions, the result of which is the continuance and development of the living being. What we must now contrast with mind, therefore, is not a purely physical series of movements, but a connected and purposive series of movements. But even yet we have not explained the relation of mind and body. Another element must be added. Mind involves, not merely purposive activity, but purposive activity which is at the same time conscious. But this consciousness is not something added to the organism and having an independent reality apart from it; it is the organism which



no longer simply displays purposive activity, but has come to the consciousness that it does so. Thus consciousness is not something parallel to the organism, but it comprehends while it transcends the organism. There is no consciousness apart from the organism—not because the latter is independent of the former, but because consciousness expresses what is already implicit in the organism. Mind is thus the synthesis of matter, life and consciousness. The logical distinction of body, soul and mind—if we use the term "soul" to express the character of a self-directed unity—remains, but it is a distinction, not a separation. The conscious being is not made up of three separate constituents, though in order to comprehend what it involves we have to distinguish these three aspects of its reality.

Now, if mind comprehends body, it is natural to ask why the separation of the two seems so manifest, and why we continually fall back into the way of conceiving them as independent. There are no doubt many other reasons, partly practical and partly religious, for the separation; but the main theoretical reason is that we are directly conscious of the operations of our own minds, while we are only indirectly aware of the changes in the organism. As a matter of fact, the earliest form in which the individual subject has any experience is that of immediate feeling as distinct from and yet related to something afterwards explicitly discriminated as a bodily change. And even when this primitive experience has developed into the consciousness of a complex world of objects apparently opposed to the subject, we have still a direct experience which suggests the contrast of mind and body. The operations of the body are not directly and immediately apprehended, and therefore we not unnaturally contrast the body with our own immediate state. If therefore a true view of the world



could be based upon immediate apprehension, the opposition of mind and body would seem to be amply confirmed. But before such a contrast can possibly be made, we must obviously have in some way learned of the reality of bodily movements, for we cannot contrast two objects if we know only one. Now this knowledge is bound up with that developed experience of the world which is mediated by thought. The changes of body are known to us, not in immediate feeling, but through that interpretation of feeling which is essential to what we call experience. It is in this way that the whole complex wealth of our world has arisen for us, and only because we are able to live in this larger world can we contrast mind and body at all. It is therefore a short-sighted and inadequate view of experience to identify it with immediate feeling. When that is done, it is not surprising that mind and body should be contrasted as utterly disparate. From the larger point of view, as we have seen, mind is the unity which comprehends the living body within itself; it is not contrasted with body as a series of feelings with a series of movements. There is therefore nothing but mind, and the real problem is to determine what mind in its completeness is. For, though mind is the organism that has come to comprehend itself, it must be observed that no finite individual is mind in its perfection. Mind in its perfection is found only in God, who must be conceived as the fully developed or absolute Mind. As we have already found that God is not merely the unchangeable system of the world, but its life; so now we are led to the conclusion that he is Mind or Spirit in its completeness.

From the point of view we have now reached there can be no difficulty in seeing the inadequacy of Agnosticism. The reality and yet unknowability of the ultimate principle of the universe is the inevitable result of the false contrast



of mind and matter. Two parallel series, which correspond but have no connection, is a challenge to that instinct for unity which is inseparable from intelligence. Since the opposition is incompatible with the demand for unity, refuge is taken in the idea of a reality transcending the distinctions of our divisive intelligence. It can hardly be necessary to dwell upon the self-contradictory character of this doctrine, which at once affirms that we have knowledge of the Absolute and yet have no knowledge of what it is. Reduced, as it logically is, to the pure abstraction of Being, the most that can be said for Agnosticism is that it clings desperately to the idea of a unity, which it is unable to reconcile with its theory of knowledge. To this strait it is brought, because it has never got beyond the untenable opposition of mind and matter, soul and body. When it is seen that reality must comprehend all the distinctions involved in our experience by uniting them in a higher unity, and that this unity is Mind, there is no longer any reason for falling back upon a Great Reality of which we can say nothing but that it is. God is Spirit, and Spirit or Mind is in its perfection infinitely differentiating, not infinitely abstract. A God who is not manifested in every part of the universe is manifested in none; for, unless as the principle of unity the idea of God becomes a mere hypothesis. Agnosticism is at least right in maintaining that God is the Being who resolves all the contradictions of life, and therefore is necessarily one—though, no doubt, even unity is for this doctrine merely an unprovable assumption.

Discarding the opposition of mind and matter, which leads to parallelism and agnosticism, we are forced to conclude that the only reality is mind. This may be regarded as the common attitude of all idealistic systems. But a marked difference emerges when we ask in what



sense it is affirmed that mind is the principle of existence. Is the mind which constitutes the unity of the world individual or universal? Are we to say that nothing exists except for this or that individual mind? Is there an infinite mind in which all reality is contained, or must we say that all mind is individual? If the last view is the one adopted, we shall be led to hold that the only forms of being are individual minds, matter being a fiction of abstraction. This is the doctrine known as Personal Idealism.

The theory that consciousness is a collateral effect or by-product of material processes is by the personal idealist rightly declared to be untenable. We have no knowledge of an independent matter, but only of concrete objects which are essentially relative to mind. The world of our experience is said to be constituted for us by the application of conceptions to the sensations which we immediately experience. For each individual the world consists of his experiences. Can we then affirm that the world is nothing but the experiences of finite minds? No, but that the world, while it has no existence except in the mind of God, is known by us only in so far as we have experience of the same kind as that of God, though less comprehensive in its extent. At the same time the human mind, though it has been created by God and is dependent upon him for its continued existence, is yet independent and individual, since it lives its own self-active life, and is absolutely impervious even to God. It is therefore admitted that God, as a separate individual, is limited in so far as he is not immanent in man, though it may be added that this is not a defect, since the limitation is self-limitation. In this way, it is thought, the freedom and moral responsibility of man may be preserved, while yet a place is found for the reality of God. The universe, it is said, must be con-



ceived to be composed of finite minds and the omniscient mind of God.

Idealism in all its forms denies the independent reality of a world which can be resolved into the correlated movements of masses, maintaining that in its separation from mind such a world is a mere abstraction. But there is a certain ambiguity in the interpretation of the principle that without mind there can be no world of nature. Does it mean that nature is constructed by the human mind in its endeavour to interpret its immediate experiences in a self-consistent and comprehensive way? or, on the other hand, that it is the partial formulation of the rational system of the universe? And again, assuming the world of nature to be a system of abstract conceptions formed by the human mind, are we to regard this system as the product of the individual mind, or as somehow the result of a universal intelligence operating in and through the individual mind? The answer to these questions will determine whether our idealism is of a subjective or an objective type.

Personal Idealism starts from the point of view with which Kant has made us familiar, that the nature of the real world can only be truly apprehended when we ask how our experience is possible. Now within our experience, as it goes on to say, we find objects that we see, feel and handle; with which is contrasted the invisible and intangible world that for its own purposes science has been impelled to construct. The transition from a world of sensible things to a world that exists only for abstract thought must, it is argued, admit of explanation, since it must have been experienced by the man of science. In any case, it is plain that both worlds exist only for the mind, and therefore that we have no more reason for affirming the independent reality of the world as conceived by the man of science, than for maintaining the separate existence of



sensible objects. The hypothetical world of science is just as much an experience of the conscious subject as the immediate world of sensible perception. Since space, time, mass and energy are simply conceptions by which we explain the changes that take place within the sensible world, it is plain that they cannot be legitimately supposed to exist apart from the mind that has formed them.

In seeking to explain the transition from immediate experience to the conceptual world of science, we must be careful to take the former as it presents itself. Our earliest experience does not consist of atomic feelings or a disconnected multiplicity of sensations, which are simply given to the subject and afterwards combined into a whole. The very simplest experience involves the distinction and unity in one consciousness of subject and object, and the sensations with which that experience begins are already differentiated in quality, intensity and extensity. What the subject originally experiences is not "pure sensation," but "primary or perceptual presentation." From the first a definite object is apprehended by a conscious subject. The object so apprehended is certainly not the cause of which the experience of the subject is the effect, for to say so would be to make one element of experience the cause of experience as a whole; nor is the subject the creator of its own experience, for this would isolate each individual from all others. Experience, in short, cannot be explained by anything but itself. We must therefore start from this solid fact, that "experience is a whole, or more precisely a continuity, and that it consists in the correlation of subject and object as its universal factors."<sup>1</sup>

In the process of transition from immediate to conceptual experience, nothing, we are told, enters into the experience of the subject apart from the self-activity

<sup>1</sup> Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, ii. 130.



by which objects that interest us are selected. What gives objects their place in experience are those features in them which minister to the end of self-conservation. It is with this purpose in view that the living experience of the individual is supplemented by the experience of the race, as systematized and formulated by means of abstract conceptions. As to the former, nothing is retained or enters into experience except that in which the subject is actively interested. Each individual gives its peculiar character to his experience by his selective activity. It is in this way that we come to regard an object as one and individual, its unity being constituted by the subjective interest which leads us to select certain features and combine them into a whole. As experience develops, objects are more and more differentiated, because ends become more specific.

Even the simplest experience, it is contended, involves synthesis; but it is synthesis in an immediate or unreflective form. As experience progresses, this synthesis becomes explicit. A comparison is made of objects with one another and the similarity of things and events that are partly different is recognized. No two objects are precisely the same for two individual subjects. The sun that I see is not precisely the same as yours. A, B, C cannot exchange objects, and if they could, the experience of each would cease to be his own. For, the object is essentially relative to the individual subject, being a product of his separate experience, as determined by the selective activity which he has exercised. Hence the object of A exists only for A, the object of B for B, the object of C for C. What then is meant by saying that A, B and C all have the same object? We cannot mean that the object is numerically or determinately the same; what we really mean is that in the different experiences of A, B,



and C there is something common, and it is this common element that is embodied in language, and forms the basis of what we may call the "transsubjective" object. Now, there can be no object without a subject, and therefore there must be a subject corresponding to the "transsubjective" object. Ordinary thought misinterprets the fact. Finding that my object is mine only, and another's object is his only, it infers that the real object is independent of both. This is the fallacy of "introjection." In truth, there is no object in addition to the concrete object of individual experience. The "transsubjective" object is general, abstract or conceptual, and gets its meaning from its relation to individual experience. Hence, "the subject of universal experience is one and continuous with the subject of individual experience." By universal experience we must understand that which is common to all intelligent subjects, and peculiar to none. Thus there is no object apart from the experience of individual subjects, the "transsubjective" object being simply that which is "common" to all individual subjects. In this sense we may say that "intersubjective intercourse does not carry us beyond the wider solipsism of consciousness in general."<sup>1</sup> The "transsubjective" object or world, in short, turns out to be a world that exists only in the minds of individual subjects each of whom recognizes the element common to their varying experiences.

Now the conception of "natural law," the personal idealist goes on to say, has been framed as a means of furthering human ends, and therefore it is teleological. Nature is conceived as a system, the parts of which are determined by universal laws, and the knowledge of these laws is an essential condition of human welfare. Thus the activity of the subject is primarily practical. (1) The

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* ii. 197.



unity of nature is the result of selective synthesis. The intellect organizes experience, and indeed experience consists in the process of unification. (?) The special ways in which this unification is accomplished are by means of the categories, the chief of which is causality. The ideas of cause and effect are in the first instance derived from our subjective activity, and then transferred to the relation between changes in the objective world. In reality, there is no causal activity in objects, but merely uniformity of sequence; the only causal activity of which we have experience is that of subjects. We "postulate" regularity in nature, and find our postulate fulfilled. Thus nature conforms to the conditions of our intelligence, and is therefore amenable to human ends. As experience develops, the subject displays an ever-increasing activity, in which the world is more and more found to be intelligible. A consistent Naturalism reduces "laws of nature" to uniformities of co-existence and succession. But such uniformities, it is urged, do not exclude causal agents; on the contrary, the very fact that causality is excluded from nature implies that it must be found beyond nature. Being a cosmos the world implies a Supreme Intelligence as its only sufficient reason and efficient cause. Nor can we admit that God stands outside of the world, but we must regard the world as inseparable from God. It is no real objection to say that nature is a fixed and unchangeable system; for how should there be any breaks in the order of nature, if it is an expression of the mind of God?

We conclude then, argues the personal idealist, that we have no knowledge of anything but minds, as acting and reacting on one another, and so constituting the ideal world of science as a means of self-development. The world is found to be comprehensible by our intelligence and to be the means of realizing our rational ends.



It is true that we can never completely formulate the infinite wealth of the world, for only in God is there perfect identity of the ideal and the real ; but all experience is a progressive confirmation of the hypothesis with which we start, that the world is one, unchangeable and rational.

From what has been said it follows that reality for each individual consists of experience. Does this mean, it is asked, that the world is nothing but the experience of finite minds ? No, but that the world, while it has no existence except in the mind of God, is known by us only in so far as we have experience of the same kind as that of God, though less comprehensive in extent. At the same time, the human mind, though it has been created by God and owes to him its continued existence, is yet independent and individual, living as it does a single self-active life, which is impervious even to God himself. Freedom and moral responsibility are, therefore, it is contended, shown to be inseparable from the self-consciousness of man, while yet no violence is done to the reality of God. The universe, in a word, is composed of finite minds and the omniscient mind of God.



## LECTURE NINTH.

### PERSONAL AND ABSOLUTE IDEALISM.

IN the last lecture a summary was given of that form of Idealism which has been called Personal Idealism. So far as this doctrine denies that there is any world of matter which exists in separation from mind, it adopts a conclusion which since Kant may be regarded as proved beyond the possibility of doubt. If we remove from objects all that implies the activity of mind, nothing will be left but an abstract residuum without meaning or reality. That which is not a possible object of experience cannot be asserted to exist, and that which by definition is beyond the mind cannot be experienced. It is no real answer to say that, while matter in itself lies beyond experience, it may be brought within experience by an inference from sensible perception. For, in the first place, no such inference can be legitimately drawn, if matter is the opposite of mind; and, in the second place, matter is not shown to be beyond experience because it is not an object of sensible perception. It may quite well be a conception and yet real; but it cannot be real, unless in some way it is brought within experience; and if it is brought within experience, it cannot have any isolated or independent reality. The proper question must therefore be, not how we come to know an independent material world, but how we come to distinguish the world of matter from the world of mind.

So far this form of idealism closely follows the lead of



Kant, in substituting for the unmeaning opposition of matter and mind the indubitable contrast of subject and object. Kant, however, as we know, maintained that beyond the limits of experience we must suppose the existence of things-in-themselves, which are required to account for the impressions or sensations that serve as the "matter" out of which objects of experience arise by the application of the "forms" of perception and thought. This opposition of objects of experience or phenomena to things-in-themselves, it is argued, cannot be admitted by a consistent Idealism. To accept it is to fall back in another way into that dualism from which the Critical Philosophy gloried in having liberated us. What has misled Kant, it is said, is his assumption that experience in its earliest form consists of a pure "manifold" or disconnected multiplicity of sensations, which are only combined and connected by the independent activity of thought. From Kant's point of view it is natural to say that the subject is absolutely passive in relation to these atomic sensations, and that the synthetic activity of thought is required to combine them into the unity of a single experience. In truth, this is a distortion of the facts. What is first experienced by the subject is not a multiplicity of sensations, but a continuum of experience, in which the distinction of subject and object is already involved; and it is only by the selective activity of the subject that one object is distinguished from another, and both from the subject. It is not true that sensations are simply "given" to the subject; what we call sensation already involves the contrast of subject and object; and hence what Kant calls the "matter" of experience is really experience itself in its simplest form.

Whether this criticism of the familiar opposition between phenomena and things-in-themselves, and of the contrast of "matter" and "form," does full justice to Kant, it would



take us too long to enquire ; what we are immediately concerned with is whether the account given by Personal Idealism of our primary experience is sound. I think it is undoubtedly sound in so far as it maintains that experience even in its simplest form involves the implicit distinction of subject and object, and that there are no isolated or atomic sensations which have to be combined by the independent activity of thought. The necessary condition of any experience whatever, even the most elementary, is the consciousness of something as immediately felt. If therefore we distinguish sensation from thought it cannot be on the ground of a fundamental opposition in nature, such that sensation is purely passive, while thought is actively synthetic ; for, apart from the synthetic activity which all consciousness involves, there can be no experience whatever. But as the term "thought" is ambiguous—being employed sometimes in the general sense of consciousness, and at other times in the specific sense of the explicit or reflective formation and use of general conceptions—it is perhaps better to say that what is called sensation consists in the presentation in and for the conscious subject of some distinguishable element of the real world. Immediate experience is not made up of two separate ingredients—sensation and consciousness—but of a single concrete whole, in which we may distinguish, but cannot separate, the two aspects of subject and object. Nor can there be any object apart from the selective activity of the subject. Interest in the elements of reality presented is essential to experience.

Admitting, then, that it is a false and futile method of explanation to set up a hypothetical world of things-in-themselves as opposed to things-as-experienced, and that experience does not begin with a pure "manifold" of sensations, we have to ask whether it follows that the experience in question can be regarded as purely individual.



Is it true that the single subject shapes his own world by selecting out of the objective continuum the elements that interest him and combining them in the manner that suits himself, and that the whole process is peculiar to himself? I think we shall find that this account of the nature of experience over-emphasizes one aspect of it, leaving the other and equally important aspect out of account. The process of experience is certainly impossible without the self-activity of the individual subject. There is no such thing as experience in general, but experience is necessarily that of an individual subject, who cannot be identified with any other subject. No one can have my experience, nor can I have the experience of another. With the elimination of the individual subject the object also disappears. But, while this is undoubtedly true, it does not follow that the object of each individual subject is peculiar to himself. Certainly, the individual subject exercises selective activity, without which there would be for him no object. But selective activity does not involve the arbitrary creation of the elements selected. No doubt sensation is not something simply "given" to the individual subject, which enters into the unity of experience by the additional activity of thought; nevertheless the object which is apprehended in sensation is not *made by* the subject apprehending it, but has its own character, which no effort on his part can destroy. And the reason is that the sensations of the individual subject presuppose the whole constitution of the universe. Alter in the slightest degree any single element of reality, and the sensations of the individual must also change. The individual subject, in coming to the apprehension of something sensible, is therefore experiencing an element of reality which is absolutely unchangeable. It is in truth this vague and unreflective apprehension of the fixed constitution of the universe that accounts



for the stubborn character of sensible perception, and has led to the conception of the independent reality of the sensible object. Independent reality, in the sense of something disparate from the reality we experience, is undoubtedly a fiction of abstraction; but not so reality that is not made by the individual subject. What that reality ultimately is can only be determined by a long and slow process of reflection, and is certainly not consciously present in our first immediate experience; but it seems to me of the utmost importance to hold fast by the position, that the object apprehended by the individual subject is not created but only recognized by him. The individual subject can no more produce the object than he can produce himself; and it is only when the psychologist assumes the individual subject with his experience, that he seems to himself to reduce reality to the experience of this or that individual. The experience of the individual is possible only in virtue of his universal nature. Every subject distinguishes between himself and the object, because this capacity for contrasting the object with himself and thereby uniting himself to it, is the indispensable condition of any experience whatever. And though the object so constituted is determined by the selective activity of the subject, that selective activity does not act without law, but is one form in which the universal nature of a conscious subject is expressed. Under the same conditions every subject has precisely the same presentations. It is therefore a mistake to speak of presentations as if they were absolutely unshareable, while thoughts are regarded as common to various subjects. Feelings and thoughts are in this respect precisely on the same level. No one can think for me any more than he can feel for me. Universality does not lie in the uniqueness of either feeling or thought, but in the fixed way in which both operate. When any-



thing is said to be objective, this does not mean that it has a separate nature of its own, but only that it has a nature which it only possesses in virtue of its relation to the whole rational universe.

The simplest form of experience, then, implies the correlative distinction and relation of subject and object; but the object, as we have concluded, though it must exist for an individual subject, is no more the product of that subject in its private capacity, than it is an independent thing-in-itself. We are told, however, that "individual experience" is expanded by the experience of the race. The transition is made, it is said, through the intercourse of various individual subjects with one another. By comparison of their several experiences, a certain common element is discovered. The real experiences of each differ from one another, if for no other reason than that they are the experiences of each. How then do they all come to know the same object or world? No one can communicate to another his unique experience; all that he can do is to communicate what is common to the experience of both. This "transsubjective" object exists only for "consciousness in general." It is a world which exists only for conceptual thought.

This account of the transition from individual to universal experience seems to me beset with insuperable difficulties. In the first place, it is difficult to understand how the individual subject, who is assumed to be confined to his own separate experience and object, can know that there is anything common to his own and others' experiences. If the object of my immediate experience is different from the several objects experienced by others, is not the object of my thought also different from the several objects thought of by others? Perceptual and conceptual experience are admittedly continuous, and therefore the uniqueness of the



former must involve the uniqueness of the latter. Apart from this, surely in nothing can the individual subject display a greater degree of activity than in the formation of conceptions. If therefore the perceptual object is peculiar to the individual subject, much more ought the conceptual object, as the product of the purely spontaneous activity of the individual subject, be the sole possession of the individual subject. Again, if the immediate experience of the individual subject is peculiar to himself, how can he possibly discover that there is anything "common" to his experience and that of others? Limited as he is supposed to be to his own private experience, it is not evident how he can break through the charmed circle in which he is confined and come in contact with the experience of another. If it is said, that he can indicate what he means either by the primitive method of pointing, or by the use of words, it is forgotten that his "pointing" and his "words" can have a meaning only to himself, since the object that he attempts to indicate is not the same as the object of another, and therefore the one is as disparate from the other as if they belonged to independent worlds. And even if we suppose that the individual subject could get beyond his own experience and bring before his mind the experience of another, this would not prove that there was any identity between the two; for, *ex hypothesi*, every single experience is absolutely unique, and therefore A's thought of B's experience must after all leave B's experience absolutely separate and distinct. It thus seems that, on the hypothesis of absolutely individual experiences, there is no possibility of knowledge on the part of any individual subject of an object common to all individual subjects.

This result is the logical conclusion from that separation of individual subjects which is the *πρῶτον ψεῦδος* of all forms of subjective idealism. Unless the subject is from the first



placed within the actual world, there is no possibility of bringing that world within the subject. The experiences of the individual must be determined by the total rational nature of the universe or they can have no objective meaning. It is only in and through his actual intercourse with reality—a reality which he can neither make nor unmake—that the individual can comprehend the true nature of existence. Begin by isolating him from the world, and his isolation can never be overcome. On the other hand, admit that the subject can only know himself as contrasted with the world, and there is no need to invent an imaginary process of transition. Experience as it grows certainly comprehends more and more the rational structure of existence, but from the first it is in contact with reality, not outside of it. Hence there is no difficulty in understanding how the transition is made from perceptual to conceptual experience. The latter is the further determination of that reality which is partially apprehended in the former, and is no mere factitious construction invented as a medium of communication between separate and incommunicable individual subjects.

And this indicates another objectionable feature in this form of idealism, namely, its inadequate and misleading account of the nature of thought. Naturalism it condemns on the ground that the elements of mass, time, motion and energy, into which the real world is resolved, are merely conceptions formed by abstraction from the concreteness of perception. Thus, instead of saying that those elements constitute the true nature of things, we ought to say, it is argued, that they are simply convenient instruments for describing our actual experience. The conception of a system of nature is a postulate which enables us to interpret our experience, but we cannot legitimately affirm that it has any objective existence.



Now, it is of course manifest that the conceptions of mass, motion and energy which the physical sciences employ have no separate and independent reality; taken by themselves, they are abstractions, which no more exist objectively than such abstractions as house, man or animal. Just as there is no independent reality corresponding to these conceptions, so the conceptions of science have no real objects of which they are the counterpart. No space, time, mass, motion or energy remains over after the concrete wealth of experience has been eliminated. But, while this is true, it is just as true that these conceptions are not merely convenient "working conceptions," which have nothing in the real world corresponding to them; on the contrary, they are universal and necessary determinations or relations of the known world, and their removal from the world of our experience would leave it in a condition of absolute chaos. There is no pure space, which exists in independence of all other determinations, and yet the conclusions of geometry are absolute so far as they apply, because no object of experience is possible which does not conform to the fundamental nature of space as a determination of external things. Similarly, there is no purely abstract time, which survives after abstraction has been made from all definite events, and yet no change in the world of our experience is possible, which does not occur in conformity with the nature of time. There is no separate and independent mass or energy, but nothing can be known by us which is not an element in a system in which mass and energy bear a constant relation to each other. The conception of gravitation certainly has no independent reality, and yet no particle of matter can be found that does not conform to the law that bodies attract one another in proportion to their mass and inversely as the square of the distance. If the conceptions employed in science were merely hypotheses or postulates,



how could they be regarded as anything more than convenient fictions which a wider knowledge might entirely reverse? Unless they express the real conditions of objects there is no ground for affirming that the world is a system at all, and therefore no ground for maintaining its intelligibility. It is quite true that we do find the world intelligible, but surely the reason is not the mere fact that it happens to be capable of being *regarded* as a system, but the fact that it actually is a system.

The fallacy which leads to the denial of all objective law is based upon a false idea of the method of thought. That method is supposed to be one of external comparison, in which "common" elements are found in various concrete objects and gathered together in an abstract idea. There is no more pernicious fallacy than this. It assumes that in strictness there is no real identity, but only similarity, in things, and that the supposed identity is due entirely to the fact that we have eliminated all the differences by a process of abstraction. But scientific thought does not really proceed in this way. The conception of mass or energy is not formed by comparing a number of sensible things with one another, and fixing upon the points of identity; it is a process in which the actual relations involved in these things are grasped by thought. Similarly, by no process of external comparison could the law of gravitation have been discovered. Scientific thought always proceeds by a combined process of determination and unification. The chemist breaks up a whole into elements, but his process at once brings to light elements never before apprehended and unifies them in a new conception of the whole. Thus, the process of experience is at once analytic and synthetic, never merely analytic or merely synthetic: not the former, because the analysis into separate elements would give us, not a world, but a



collection of fragments ; and not the latter, because without distinguishable elements there is no real synthesis.

The conceptions of science, then, are not mere subjective ideas, which somehow enable us to find our way through the confusion of sensible particulars ; they are actual principles, without which those particulars could not exist. If they were merely postulates or hypotheses, they would never enable us to systematize our experience. One cannot systematize that which is in itself devoid of system. If particulars are the true realities and conceptions merely abstractions in our minds, the former cannot be dependent upon the latter for their reality ; for in that case, even if there were no conceptions, we must suppose that the particulars would still exist. But this is a false and untenable doctrine. When the universal determinations grasped by thought are removed, the particulars also disappear. How could any sensible object be real after all spatial and temporal determinations had been removed ? It is not true, therefore, that the particulars exist apart from the universals, any more than that the universals exist apart from the particulars. One reason for the false assumption of mere particulars is that our experience is a continuous process. Adopting the point of view of the psychologist, who concentrates his attention on this process, we may seem to have mere particulars of sense, which are afterwards referred to conceptions. But this is simply an instance of that parallax to which the psychologist is especially liable. There are really no mere particulars of sense, but in the simplest experience there is already implicitly contained the whole system of the universe. The conscious subject has no experience at all that does not involve the correlation of subject and object ; and the first vague and indeterminate idea of the object is the germ from which the comprehension of the whole universe develops. The conception of the



world as a system in which the total quantity of energy is always conserved, is a stage in this process of development. It is not ultimate, because it sets aside for the time being all elements but those which concern the motion of masses ; and therefore it needs to be supplemented by a fuller and more concrete grasp of reality. But inadequate as it is, it is a real determination of the world so far as it goes ; and the reduction of its conceptions to mere hypotheses or postulates, when pressed to its logical consequences, can only result in the fundamentally sceptical conclusion of Pragmatism, that truth is merely that which in our human experience is found to "work." Nothing can really be found to "work" except that which is in conformity with the nature of things.

If Personal Idealism, as I believe, is inconsistent with our experience of the world, it is hardly to be expected that it should yield a satisfactory theology. Starting from the independent reality of the individual subject, we have seen that it cannot explain how there should be any communication between one subject and another. The same difficulty arises in an aggravated form, when an attempt is made to establish the existence of God and to explain how the isolated subject comes to have a knowledge of him.

(1) It is difficult to see how, starting from the hypothesis of a number of isolated or monadic subjects, any adequate reason can be advanced for affirming the existence of God at all. In the strongest possible way it is maintained that the conscious life of each person is so unique that it is absolutely impervious to any other being, human or divine. Nothing less, it is supposed, will enable us to defend the freedom and moral responsibility of the individual man. Now, if each person is thus impervious to everything but his own experience, it is difficult to see how the transition is to be made to the existence of God. If it is said that the



individual subject is conscious of his own limitations, and therefore is compelled to suppose a Being who is beyond all limitations, we are met by the difficulty that such a Being must include all reality within himself, and therefore cannot be absolutely separated from all other beings. This is so far admitted by the personal idealist, that he denies God to be unlimited in power, though he maintains that God is unlimited in knowledge. But this abstract separation of power and knowledge seems to be inconsistent with the contention that will and thought are merely aspects of one single indissoluble person. A being of limited power must be limited by something that to him is incomprehensible, and therefore he cannot be unlimited in knowledge. On the other hand, unlimited knowledge must imply unlimited power, since, assuming the existence of power, there is no limit to it except that arising from ignorance. The truth however is, that to the personal idealist, who absolutely isolates each conscious subject, the idea of God can have no objective reality whatever, but can at most merely mean that he is conscious of his own limitations. If all the conceptions by which the conscious subject seeks to describe his experience are hypotheses, the conception of God must share the same fate as the rest. It is in truth self-evident that, if the conscious subject is shut up within the circle of his own experience, he can have no knowledge of God any more than of other conscious subjects like himself.

We have thus seen the inadequacy of the doctrine which attempts to preserve the freedom and moral responsibility of man by regarding his experience as so absolutely individual that no real participation of one conscious subject in the experience of another is logically possible. That doctrine makes the existence and infinity of God inconceivable, since the individual subject is virtually enclosed within



himself and therefore can have no ground for affirming the reality of any being but himself. The fallacy which thus logically leads to Solipsism is, as I have contended, partly due to the false idea that thinking is a process of abstraction, and therefore that in immediate experience we have the true reality, which conceptions merely help us to understand. In truth, thought is not abstraction, but a process of combined differentiation and unification, analysis and synthesis. As experience grows there is at once a more determinate knowledge of the manifold differences of the world and a more perfect unity. Hence the process by which science for its own purposes reduces the world to mass and energy, is not a permanent movement away from the concreteness of immediate experience, but a necessary step in the advance to a real comprehension of the world. It is perfectly true that in immediate experience there are elements which this mechanical conception ignores; but, on the other hand, abstraction is made from these merely in order to concentrate attention upon some real aspect of the world hidden from immediate experience, though no doubt implied in it. It is a decided advance beyond the first stage of experience to prove that, whatever its other determinations may be, the world is not a mere aggregate of things lying side by side in space, or of events following one another in time, and that things have no separate and independent being of their own, but are elements in a system. This conception of the world prepares the way for a still further advance, in which it is seen that the world is a teleological and self-determining unity.

Although Personal Idealism rightly insists that the world is a realm of ends, to my mind it defends this principle upon grounds that are fatal to the spiritual life of man and incompatible with the theism that it seeks to establish. It makes no attempt, we are told,



to give a complete solution of "the so-called riddle of the universe."<sup>1</sup> In this apparently modest and reasonable attitude there is an ambiguity which seems to me to lead to disastrous logical consequences. Is it meant (1) that we cannot pretend to have a completely exhaustive knowledge of all the facts of the universe, since such a knowledge would involve, not only an extension of our experience which, for beings like man who are limited in space and time, is impossible, but because, extend our knowledge as far as we may, we can never completely determine the nature of any single object found in the world? Or is the contention (2) that we cannot have a knowledge of the ultimate principle by which the universe is to be explained, because, however comprehensive the category or conception by which we think the universe, we can never say that there is not a still more comprehensive conception, if only we could free ourselves from the limits of our experience? If the former is meant, it must of course be admitted that we can never completely exhaust the universe, limited as we necessarily are by the conditions of our sensible experience. Beyond the farthest bounds to which our knowledge of particular things extends, there is an indefinite expanse which we are unable, at least under the present conditions of our experience, to traverse. But why should it be assumed that our want of experience of the world, in all its breadth and extent, involves such a limitation of knowledge as prevents us from solving "the so-called riddle of the universe"? Is it because experience is a process in which we slowly add particular to particular? If that were true, obviously we should not be able to prove a single universal proposition. For, if knowledge is limited to the particular as here and now, by what right can we affirm even that the particular is here and now? "Here" and "now" are by their very

<sup>1</sup> James Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 430.



nature universals, and a particular sensation occurring at a given moment cannot be identified with the apprehension of a particular fact, unless we assume that it is the sign of a property or characteristic which is not simply here and now, but exists always under the same conditions. If knowledge were really limited to what is "here" and "now," how could we judge that "ginger is hot in the mouth"—not simply at this moment, but at any and every moment, and not merely for me, but for any living being with a normal palate? Evidently, therefore, it cannot be true that the process of knowledge is a mere accumulation of particulars. That is the fallacy of sensationalistic empiricism, which theistic pluralism assumes itself to have outgrown. Now, if we cannot have any, even the simplest, knowledge without presupposing the faculty in man of comprehending the universal, why should it be supposed that our ignorance of the world in its full extent and in its minute differences makes it impossible for us to "solve the so-called riddle of the universe"? It certainly makes it impossible for us to give an enumeration of all the facts or properties of all the objects anywhere to be found in the wide universe, but surely it does not prevent us from saying that, whatever facts or properties there may be, they must present themselves to us in the one space and the one time. But any one who admits so much has assumed the absolutely universal validity of space and time. Is he then precluded from saying that there is one space and one time? He is certainly precluded from such an unqualified affirmation, if the only way of obtaining knowledge is by the heaping up of particulars. Who ever has passed over, or ever will pass over, the whole extent of space or time? And if not, why should we say that our experience is always of what is in space or time, and in the same space and time? It can only be on some such ground as that advanced by



Kant, that to deny space and time to be conditions of our experience is to abandon the attempt even to explain the illusion of experience.

It may be said, however, that, while space and time are universal conditions of our experience, they cannot be conditions of all possible experience, because any attempt to find a totality of spatial or temporal experience leads to alternative impossibilities of thought. This is in brief the argument by which Kant seeks to show that our experience is only of phenomena, not of things as they are in their own nature. Now, with all deference to Kant, and to the eminent thinkers who have endorsed his argument, I venture to affirm that it rests upon a palpable fallacy, at bottom the same fallacy that leads to the false notion that our experience is an accumulation of particulars, and that we cannot form a valid judgment without an absolutely exhaustive enumeration of all the relevant particulars. Kant argues that we can have no experience of an absolute beginning of the world, because such a beginning would involve the experience of an event with nothing to account for its origination; nor again can we have experience of a world that never began to be, because it would be necessary to traverse one after the other an infinite series of moments, and that is an impossibility. But this whole argument rests upon the false assumption that experience consists in an accumulation of particulars, or, what is the same thing, that by a series of images, presented the one after the other, we may somehow obtain a totality. Even Mr. Bradley, who, in his *Logic*, has so clearly exposed the fallacy of the assumption that an accumulation of images can constitute either the subject or the predicate of a judgment, in his *Appearance and Reality* is so determined to prove that all the categories by which we determine the world are self-contradictory, that he virtually endorses Kant's fallacious



reasoning in regard to the impossibility of obtaining a whole of space or of time. But to show that no accumulation of images will ever give us a whole does not prove that a world in space and time is necessarily phenomenal, for the simple reason that no knowledge whatever can be derived from the accumulation of any number of images. The attempt to obtain a whole by presenting image after image of moments of time is necessarily futile. In that way we shall never get a whole. How do we know? Simply because time is a synthesis of differences, all of which are homogeneous. Hence, it is at once impossible and superfluous to seek for a whole of time by any accumulation of differences—in this case of homogeneous differences—since such an accumulation excludes the unity of the differences, without which time is meaningless. To think of time at all we must think of it as a unity of homogeneous differences all of which are successive. There is no need to ask how we can experience a whole of time, for the simple reason that we have already experienced it. To repeat the unification of homogeneous successive differences will add nothing to our knowledge of time, because a repetition of the same thought is objectively the same thought. If, as Mr. Bradley has so clearly shown, the judgment, "a whale is a mammal," is not formed by driving an endless number of whale-images into one part of our mental field, and an endless number of mammal-images into another part of our mental field, and then picking out the infinite number of whales from among the infinite number of mammals, and yet leaving the mammals still infinite; if this tissue of absurdities arises from the assumption that to know is to accumulate images, why should we not discard the assumption, instead of stigmatizing our knowledge as phenomenal? If it is said that, unless the world in space and time is admitted to be self-



contradictory, we have no reason for advancing to higher categories, I should answer that the reason why we are compelled to advance to higher categories is, not that lower categories are self-contradictory, but that they are obviously inadequate characterizations of experience as we actually find it. It is true that we cannot identify experience with every superficial view of it that anybody chooses to put forward; but we may at least say, that sensible experience by its very nature is impossible otherwise than under the conditions of a single space and a single time, and that any theory which violates this principle cannot be a true interpretation of it. Hence I am unable to see that space and time can from any point of view be eliminated, unless we are prepared to say that we have no knowledge whatever. For, with the elimination of space and time, as we must remember, there also vanish permanence, motion and change; and as without these all our sciences, whether physical or mental, disappear, nothing is left but the fiction of a reality that we can only define as that which is indefinable. I think, therefore, that we are entitled to say, that any argument drawn from the supposed accumulative character of our experience is essentially fallacious. Knowledge is never *a priori* in the sense that it is derivable from pure conceptions, but neither is it ever *a posteriori* in the sense of being based upon mere particulars; it is always, and in all its forms, the comprehension of particulars as embraced within a unity of some kind, even if it is only the unity of a single space and time.

(2) Perhaps, however, the reason why it is supposed that we cannot solve "the so-called riddle of the universe" is, that our knowledge is necessarily limited to the categories involved in experience, and these can never be co-extensive with the universe. This seems to me to be merely another form of the fallacy already considered. If knowledge is



never the mere accumulation of particulars, so neither is it ever the application to particulars of conceptions which are each separate and distinct from one another. In other words, every conception by which we characterize the world of our experience is a special form of the single category of rational unity. The simplest category of experience is that of space, which exhibits the universal characteristics of every more determinate category in being a universal differentiated in particulars and therefore an individual. In viewing things as all in one space, and yet as distinguished from one another, the mind experiences a temporary satisfaction; and the reason is that it has found in the world that unity-in-difference which it rightly feels to be essential to reality. This satisfaction, it is true, is but short-lived; for experience of the fact of change compels the mind to employ the new category of time; which agrees with space in being a unity-in-difference, but is an advance in this respect, that it involves a vague grasp of the principle that the real is not merely permanent, but permanent through change. And when, instead of this general characterization of objects as in space and time—which does not explicitly take account of their specific differences—an advance is made to the categories of substance, causality and reciprocal action, the mind has not dropped its simpler modes of determining reality, but has reinterpreted them. This seems to me the true view of the progress of knowledge, which is never a mere transition from one particular to another, but the comprehension of particulars as instances of a universal principle. Now, if this is a true statement of what experience involves, it is obvious that the highest category will contain the same features as the earlier, but with this difference, that it will include and reinterpret all the others. This highest category, as I have argued throughout, is that of a perfect self-conscious or rational



unity; and if the argument has been sound, this unity cannot be separate and distinct from the world of our experience, but can only be the principle which our experience in its completeness necessarily involves. Moreover, it will follow that to find in anything short of this principle the true explanation of the world will be to fall short of what our experience necessarily involves; and hence a theistic pluralism is a contradiction in terms, as I hope immediately to show. Meantime I venture to say that a philosophy which disclaims any attempt to solve "the so-called riddle of the universe" has abdicated all claim to be called a philosophy. Either we can, or cannot, tell what is the ultimate principle of the universe. If we can, it is a kind of mock humility to say that the problem is insoluble; if we cannot, we must be prepared to admit that what we call knowledge is a fiction.

It may be said, however, that, though we cannot have a knowledge of the ultimate nature of things, we are able to rule out lower points of view in favour of the highest within our reach. Now, it may be admitted that a considerable advance in the determination of the real is made when the inadequacy of certain points of view is proved, and for a less adequate is substituted a more adequate or more fundamental point of view. On the other hand, it is not clear how any category can be shown to be inadequate except on the ground that it does not account for our experience in its totality. In this way it may be proved that the mechanical, and even the teleological, conception of the universe is not final, and that nothing less than the conception of spirit, or self-conscious intelligence, can be satisfactory. But if this is true, we not only reach the "most fundamental," but an absolutely fundamental, point of view; and therefore we can no longer deny that the "so-called riddle of the universe" is soluble. For, unless



we have reached a conception than which there is no higher, there is nothing to show that, if we could reach the absolutely highest conception, all that we call knowledge would not be entirely reversed. And if it is said that the idea of spirit is after all a matter of faith, not of knowledge, it must be answered that faith in what is affirmed to be the absolute principle of the universe, unless it has no intelligible ground, but is based merely upon our desires, must include knowledge, and in fact, as I have already contended,<sup>1</sup> must be the highest form of knowledge.

The truth, however, is that theistic pluralism cannot surrender the opposition of faith and knowledge, because it is based upon a fundamental discrepancy, as I shall now try to show. Pluralism, in the form under consideration, which is also called Personal Idealism, has the merit of insisting that the mechanical conception of nature cannot be regarded as a true characterization of the universe. On the other hand, in its zeal for the spiritualization of the universe, it is led to deny, not only that nature has any reality in itself, but that it has any reality whatever. Hence this form of pluralism adopts the Leibnitzian view, that the only reality, or rather realities, are spirits—that which we call “matter” being simply the manifestation or appearance of the activity of spirits. From Leibnitz it differs only in denying that the relation between the spirits or monads which constitute the world is merely that of a pre-established harmony, and in maintaining that their life consists in their relations to one another. It is further held that the essential nature of these spirits or monads is their self-activity, which involves self-determination by reference to conceived ends. Even when the result is knowledge, it is achieved only through the activity of the subject; and it is because we fail to take account of this activity, it is said, that we

<sup>1</sup> Lecture First, *passim*.



are "led to conceive of the universe as in itself only objective."<sup>1</sup> It is further argued that the universe cannot be reduced to the self-activity of a single being. All attempts to establish this thesis have resulted, it is contended, not in explaining our experience, but in explaining it away. We must, therefore, at least provisionally, start from the undoubted fact that we find in our experience a number of "individuals animated in various degrees and striving for self-preservation or betterment."<sup>2</sup> These beings are engaged in working out their own destiny, though in the process they either compete with one another or get in each other's way. That the world is composed of beings all of the same essential nature seems to be established by the principle of continuity and the principle of individualism. The activities of these beings no doubt seem to be but instances of the uniformity of nature, but this illusion is due to the fact that they are not considered in their distinctive character, but are massed together and treated after the manner of statistical tables. In truth the orderliness and regularity that we find in nature are not the condition, but the result, of self-determined action. All striving implies an effort to realize the good, an end which can be achieved only by a process of trial and error; and while there is contingency, as distinguished from necessity, there is no pure chance or utter chaos, but only the freely directed activity of more or less rational subjects. Even this contingency, however, is continually giving way to definite progression or evolution—meaning by evolution, not the mere unfolding of that which is implicit in the being from the first, but an "epigenesis," or "creative synthesis," in which there is a real "origination by integration of new properties."<sup>3</sup> True, there is no creation of new "entities," but only of new "values," that is, the development of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 431.<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 432.<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 434.



higher unities and worthier ideals. Thus the goal of evolution is the establishment of a community of spiritual beings, in which there is perfect co-operation of all in the creation of a single realm of ends. Just as the principle of continuity forbids us to admit that there is any lower limit, at which mind or spirit passes over into inert matter; so it demands the assumption of a hierarchy of intelligences higher than man, and finally of a highest of all. Of this upper limit, indeed, we never can have actual knowledge, just as we cannot directly experience the lower limit; but we must hold the existence of both in faith, connecting the one with the other through the idea of creation. If it is objected that a plurality of individuals is inconceivable, it is answered that, while a plurality of isolated individuals is no doubt an untenable idea, there is nothing to prevent us from believing in the interaction of "individuals severally distinct as regards their existence."<sup>1</sup> The only defensible form of theism, therefore, is that which admits the Many, while yet maintaining the One. Finite spirits, in order to be spirits at all, must not be absorbed in the One; and therefore God, while he is not one of these spirits, must be their Creator; which means that he must create beings who themselves are creators. Thus God is in a sense limited; but as the limitation is self-limitation, he does not thereby cease to be infinite. If we bear in mind the difference between determination by mechanical laws and self-determination as employing teleological categories, we can understand how there may be fixed possibilities, which yet allow for the contingency of freedom. In no other way can the problem of evil be solved. God can do no evil; but, as finite beings have been created with freedom of choice, moral evil is their own free act. As to physical evils, we are simply unable to conceive how there could be a world at

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 437.



all, unless its parts limited one another. Apart from this "metaphysical evil," which is not really evil, the physical ills that are admittedly contingent we must regard as an incentive to progress, resulting in the formation of "those ideals that Hegel calls the objective spirit."<sup>1</sup> As man is under the influence of both physical ills and spiritual ideals, the present spatial and temporal world points beyond itself to a "more spiritual world." How the two are connected we do not know, but our spiritual ideas lead us to believe in God and immortality. Thus faith carries us beyond knowledge, for "knowledge is of things we see, and seeks to interpret the world as if they were the whole; while faith is aware that now we see but in part and convinced that only provided the unseen satisfies our spiritual yearnings is the part we see intelligible—that which ought to be being the key to that which is."<sup>2</sup>

The conclusion of this form of idealism therefore is, that God is spirit, *i.e.*, possesses intelligence and will, and so is personal. The world is the expression and revelation of God, but as its creator he is transcendent to it. He is "a living God with a living world, not a potter God with a world of illusory clay, not an inconceivable abstraction that is only infinite and absolute, because it is beyond everything and means nothing."<sup>3</sup> We cannot stop at a plurality of finite selves in interaction, for only if there is a God can we be assured that there is no ineradicable evil. No doubt the action of God in the world is for us as inscrutable as his creation of it; and indeed, though we are certain that he is not related to it in a merely external or mechanical fashion, or even as one finite spirit is related to another, "we trench upon the mystical when we attempt to picture" the "divine immanence."<sup>4</sup> It would thus seem

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 440.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* p. 443.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.* p. 441.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* p. 448.



that, on its own showing, Personal Idealism does make some attempt to solve "the so-called riddle of the universe."

We are able, it appears, to see the inadequacy of the hypothesis from which we started, namely, that the world is entirely composed of a number of finite self-determined spirits, and to attain by faith to the certainty of God and immortality, a certainty which for knowledge is impossible.

The first thing that strikes us in regard to this theory is that, professing to base itself upon the facts of experience, it is led to maintain propositions which are admittedly entirely beyond the reach of experience. We are to accept as absolute the distinction of subject and object, because it is essential to any experience whatever, and yet the result of the reasoning by which personal idealism is supported is to abolish this distinction by eliminating all generic differences between various modes of being, and maintaining that the lowest forms of finite being known to us must be regarded as the same in kind with the highest. Now, in the first place, this seems to be a violation of any legitimate process of arriving at truth. Whatever view of the process of knowledge we take, it can hardly be granted that we are entitled to affirm the reality of that which is admittedly not now an object of experience, and may never become an object of experience. We have no experience of life below the stage of the plant or very rudimentary forms of animal, and to affirm that there are no beings differing in kind from what we ordinarily regard as organized, seems to me a purely gratuitous assumption. Similarly, we have no experience, or at least no properly authenticated experience, of finite beings higher than man, and to assume a "hierarchy of intelligences," rising I suppose row on row above each other, seems to me equally an unprovable assumption.

The first argument advanced in favour of the hypothesis that there is a lower and a higher limit, with an infinity



of gradations between them, is based upon what is called the "principle of continuity." This principle is interpreted to mean, that all modes of being must be capable of being arranged in a graduated scale, every degree of which must be represented by an actual form of being. But this so-called "principle" is a pure assumption. Moreover, if it were true, there ought to be no lower limit whatever, since intensive magnitude or degree, which the supposed "principle" illegitimately hypostatizes, is an ideal limit having no real termination. Are we, then, to suppose that there are actual beings representing a *progressus ad infinitum*? Is it not manifest that this way of looking at things confuses the abstraction of degree with the actual existence of spiritual beings? Similarly, if this hypothetical "principle" is to be applied to the upward limit, it will prove, not the existence of God, but an innumerable procession of beings going on to infinity and never reaching an end. It is in fact only by denying the principle of "continuity" that pluralism can make the existence of God plausible at all; and therefore, having begun by arguing from that principle, it is forced to abandon it and to fall back upon "faith." If God is one of a hierarchy of spirits, and differs only in degree from lower spirits, the theistic conclusion is not reached at all; and if God is *sui generis*, obviously no argument based upon degree can possibly carry us a single step towards the establishment of his existence. Now, if neither the lower nor the higher limit can be proved by the principle of continuity, it is just as impossible in that way to prove that there is a gradual ascent in spirituality, beginning with man and stretching upwards to God. The untenability of the whole position is manifest, when we consider that between any two degrees whatever we can always find a lesser degree; so that the doctrine finally leads either to the absurdity of an absolutely completed



infinite progression, or to a denial of the applicability of the "principle of continuity" in determination of the existence of beings admittedly not capable of being made an object of experience. It seems to me therefore that this attempt to revive the monadism of Leibnitz is at once anachronistic and essentially inconclusive.

Besides the argument from the principle of continuity, it is maintained that no two beings can be found which are exactly alike; a fact which is declared to be consistent with selfhood or personality, but contradictory of the physicist's conception of atoms. Now, in the first place, it is an extraordinary delusion to imagine that the principle of individualism can be proved by an appeal to direct observation. How can the pluralist possibly tell that no two beings exactly alike can be found, without a comparison of every being in the whole universe—a comparison which is obviously impossible. The notion that any universal proposition can be established by the method of "simple enumeration" is surely one of the most elementary fallacies. If again we attempt to base the principle of individualism upon general considerations, by what process can it be proved that every real individual must necessarily be a self or person? If by individuality is meant absolute self-centredness, no finite being whatever is individual. And the personal idealist, who insists upon the necessity of some difference between every possible being, is least of all entitled to hold that any finite being can be truly individual. Moreover, we are told that every subject known to us is one of a community of subjects, apart from which there would be no self-consciousness. How, then, can it be consistently maintained that each subject is an independent being? If it is said that the individuality of a spiritual being consists in existence, not in knowledge, the answer is, that a spiritual being is precisely one that does not admit of the separation



of existence and knowledge of existence. Such a being is held to be essentially self-knowing, and apart from self-knowledge it is nothing at all. And, finally, the assumption that the only individual being is one that is spiritual, is entirely baseless. There is some force in saying that individuality involves absolute self-completeness, and even that the only being that can strictly be said to be individual is one that experiences no limit in knowledge, power or goodness; but, the moment limitation of any kind is admitted, there is no longer any reason why it should be asserted that the only individuals are those which are spiritual. If individuality means perfect self-completeness, the only individual properly so called is God; and, if it is once granted that there exist beings which are not in this strict sense entitled to be called individual, why should it be argued that only "spiritual" beings exist because these alone are individual? Besides, the predication of self-complete individuality, as applied to man and other finite beings, is contradictory of the assumption that no two beings are exactly alike.

It would thus seem that, whether he appeals to induction, or to *a priori* arguments based upon the so-called facts of continuity and individuality, the personal idealist is forced to maintain a pluralism that is merely relative; in other words, that is not a pluralism at all. And when we look at the actual facts of our experience, we find nothing in them which entitles us to maintain that there are individual beings all of which are essentially the same in kind. It is true, as we have admitted, and indeed contended, that the mechanical conception of the world, when it is put forward as a complete account of the universe, is quite inadequate; but it by no means follows that the only beings are those which must be characterized as spirits. To speak of a plant, or even an animal, as identical in nature with man,



on the ground that all three imply the principle of life, seems to be much the same as affirming that, because the higher animals have a brain and nervous system, we must hold that every living being, including the plant and the infusorian, has a brain and nervous system. Such an application of the principle of identity violates its very nature. The identity which is common to all living beings is an identity based upon the principle of life. It is true that a self-conscious being involves this principle, but it does not follow that whatever involves this principle is self-conscious. To say so, is to assume that to live is necessarily to be a spirit. But this is in manifest contradiction of the facts. There is no evidence that a plant or an amoeba is conscious of self; and until that can be shown, we are entitled, and indeed compelled, to maintain that the distinction between man and the plants, as well as at least the lower forms of animal life, is not one merely of degree, but of kind. To be unconsciously striving towards an end is one thing, to be consciously striving towards an end is another and a very different thing. This distinction the pluralist would have us obliterate, on the ground that to deny mechanism is to affirm spirit. This whole way of looking at things seems to me to be fallacious. In the first place, as I have already argued, mechanism cannot be denied, in so far as it is a partial, and yet true, characterization of one aspect of the universe. We do not get rid of the inviolability of natural law by showing that, interpreted as distinctive of the free activity of rational beings, it is false; for the law, when it is regarded as a manifestation of the divine reason, remains as inviolable as ever. Nor do we abolish the distinction between living and self-conscious beings when we show that, from the point of view of the whole, the former are an expression of the self-conscious intelligence which constitutes the ultimate nature of the universe. It



thus seems to me that the attempt to identify living with rational beings, as if the former could not exist without being the latter, rests upon a confusion between the development of reason in finite beings and the principle that the world as a whole is a manifestation of the divine reason. Finite beings are not all rational because the universe is rational. The former proposition would be true only if there could be no life without self-consciousness ; the latter is true, whatever be the inner condition of finite beings. It is one thing to say that no being in the universe can exist apart from the divine reason, and an entirely different thing to say that every being must be not only an expression of that reason, but be conscious of itself as rational ; and the confusion between these opposite views seems to underlie the personal idealist's endeavour to show that all finite beings are essentially the same in kind.

Even if personal idealism were entitled to start from a plurality of individuals, it must in consistency surrender the assumption when it goes on to maintain the truth of theism. The starting-point is the Many, and by the Many must be understood a plurality of individuals requiring no principle beyond themselves to account for their existence. But, if this view is maintained to be the only true view, obviously theism is ruled out as contrary to the very foundation of the theory. It would thus seem that those pluralists who find the universe to consist of a number of self-centred individuals, are the only logically consistent pluralists. No doubt this doctrine has the demerit of breaking up the unity of the world into fragments, and is ultimately open to the objection that, if consistently developed, it would make every individual a universe for itself ; but at least it is so far consistent, that it does not start from the exclusive individuality of the Many, and then go on to assert the One, while still endeavouring to maintain



the exclusive individuality of the Many. When, therefore, the personal idealist seeks to combine his pluralism with monism, he naturally finds it very difficult to explain how the reality of the Many may be reconciled with the supremacy of the One. In this strait he falls back upon the idea that the One is the ultimate source of the being of the Many and the ultimate end of their ends. God, in other words, must be conceived as the Creator of all finite spirits, and the "impersonated Ideal" towards which they are ever striving. It is contended, however, that he must be conceived as the Creator of beings who are themselves creative. Thus the world as a whole is held to be ever in process towards a perfection which it never attains, its imperfection being due to the blind striving of free creatures towards an end which they very imperfectly comprehend, and to ignorance of the proper means to realize the end which they so vaguely conceive.

This attempt to reconcile the Many with the One can hardly be regarded as successful. The crux of the whole doctrine lies in its attribution to each separate soul of a power of absolute and unconditioned self-determination, combined with the assertion of the dependence of each individual upon God. It is held that God has created beings, who are themselves creators. In what way, then, is the Creator distinguished from his creative creatures? It is admitted that God is creative, in the sense of absolutely originating his creatures; and therefore we must deny to the creature any power of absolute origination. The creature, we are told, is "creative," not of new "entities," but only of new "values." But can it properly be said that a being who acts from ends, or sets before himself ideals, is "creative" of the ends or ideals of which he is conscious? If he is, we must suppose that these ends or ideas first come into existence with his consciousness of them. But this seems to be the same as



saying that they are the product of his own individual limited mind ; and it is hard to see how a product of this kind can have any absolute value. And yet, unless we admit that the moral ideals of man have an absolute value, how can we advance from them to the proof of the existence of God and the immortality of the soul, as we are bidden by the theistic pluralist to do ? It would thus seem that the created soul must be creative only in so far as the ideals which it sets before itself, and which it seeks to realize, are harmonious with the ultimate nature of the universe. Hence the finite individual does not really "create" ideals, but only recognizes their consistency with the inviolable nature of the universe ; *i.e.*, his moral life exists only as he comes to a recognition of the rational nature of God as manifested in his own self-conscious life. Thus, after all his efforts to exclude God from the asserted self-centred life of finite beings, it turns out that, if the personal idealist could really establish his case, he would at the same time destroy the very foundation of morality, and therefore, on his own showing, the existence of God and the immortality of man, which are held to rest upon that foundation. In truth he is attempting to reconcile the irreconcilable. His conception of God has all the hardness and abstractness of the transcendent God of Deism ; and his attempts to reconcile the separateness and self-completeness of God with the assertion of the independent self-sufficiency of a plurality of created souls, is logically impossible, and, if it were successful, would result in the abolition of all that gives meaning to the religious consciousness. For, the religious consciousness has always had absolute faith that only by living in God, and surrendering all that is characteristic of his own finitude, can man attain to blessedness. If the personal idealist would but recognize that God is not a being apart from the world, but the spirit



which is operative in every being in the world, he would go far to reconcile the freedom of man with the perfection of God. For, as man cannot possibly attain to true freedom except by identification with God, all attempts to explain the moral and religious consciousness on the basis of the separation of man and God must necessarily be inadequate. To be free is to be conscious of the external world as under inviolable natural law, and of oneself as under inviolable moral law ; and the only mode of reconciling the one with the other is to recognize that both are aspects, at different levels, of the one absolutely rational Spirit which is God.



## LECTURE TENTH.

### HYPOTHETICAL THEISM, ABSOLUTISM AND MYSTICISM.

IN my last lecture I endeavoured to show the inadequacy of personal idealism as an explanation of the spiritual life of man, of the nature of God, and of the relation between man and God. Its fundamental defect, I argued, arises from the assumption that the absolute self-sufficiency of the individual is the necessary condition of morality, freedom and immortality. The pluralism from which personal idealism starts is also maintained by Radical Empiricism, although the conclusion reached is only that of a hypothetical and limited theism. The universe, it is held, is composed of a number of finite selves of whom God, if he exists, is the highest. In the study of religion, as in other investigations, we must, we are told, "base our conclusions upon the facts, and the facts here are the various beliefs which have been held by men with a genius for religion." Many of these have been "creatures of exalted emotional sensibility, exhibiting peculiarities which are ordinarily classed as pathological"; and it is held that in such abnormal forms of consciousness, and indeed ultimately in the "subliminal" form of consciousness, the secret of religion must be sought. Certainly, we cannot accept the crude theory of medical materialism, which disposes of St. Paul by "calling his vision on the road to Damascus a discharging lesion of the occipital cortex," stigmatizes Saint Teresa as



an hysteric, and calls St. Francis a hereditary degenerate. It would be just as fair and pertinent to ascribe atheism to a diseased condition of the liver. We have therefore to examine the contents of the religious consciousness. It turns out, however, that it is in the "subliminal" consciousness that we must look for the basis of religion. "We have in the fact that the conscious person is continuous with a wider self . . . a positive content of religious experience which is literally and objectively true as far as it goes."<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the subliminal consciousness gives a very divided testimony, and, on the whole, it does not seem that we can derive from it more than the conviction that there is something higher than ourselves, though whether that something is a Being of infinite knowledge, power and goodness seems to be very doubtful. The result, then, of this attempt to base religion upon the "subliminal" consciousness is, that the only conclusion of which we can be certain is that there is probably some being or beings higher than ourselves by whom we may hope to be aided in our spiritual life.

Now, while we must agree with radical empiricism, as with personal idealism, that experience is not reducible to mechanical law, it seems to me that the attempt to base religion upon so uncertain and dubious a witness as the "subliminal" consciousness is fundamentally wrong in principle. A philosophy of religion which ignores the verifiable results of conscious experience, and takes refuge in the obscure and doubtful region of the "subliminal" consciousness, is surely self-condemned. If religion is a principle of unification, it must unify and not isolate; but by the method of ignoring the results of science and philosophy, and falling back upon the vagaries of obscure and self-contradictory feeling, religion is identified with that

<sup>1</sup> W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience*.



which is capricious and unreasonable. Religious emotion, as I have contended, is essentially rational, because it implicitly rests upon a higher synthesis than that of ordinary experience, and therefore admits of rational defence. St. Paul is only allowed to rank as a man of religious genius, along with a crowd of hysterical visionaries, because of his visions—as if his inspired conception of a universal religion, in which all men were united in the bonds of a common faith in one God and Father, counts for less in the history of the race than the accidents of his temperament. Having thus excluded the possibility of a rational faith, it is not surprising that the only positive conclusion we seem fairly entitled to reach is a doubtful belief in something that is called divine only because it is perhaps higher than ourselves, though like us it is finite.

In contrast to both Radical Empiricism and Personal Idealism we have seen reason to believe that the world is not an aggregate of separate subjects, each confined to its own experience, and that no conscious subjects are possible which do not genuinely participate in the life of the whole. But, while it is certain that the conception of absolutely independent individuals is untenable, it is of the utmost importance that we should not fall into the opposite mistake of viewing the world as a unity which completely abolishes all individual subjects, by reducing them to phenomenal aspects of a single Unity in which they are transformed or transmuted, we know not how. An abstract Monism seems to me just as untenable as an abstract Individualism. It is perfectly true that nothing can be real which does not fall within experience; but the question is whether experience must ultimately be resolved into a unity which abolishes all distinctions. An Absolute in which all the distinctions are abolished by which the world of our experience is redeemed from chaos and vacuity, cannot be



regarded as the true principle of the universe. It will therefore be advisable to state succinctly the method by which Absolutism is sought to be established.

In attempting to determine the true nature of reality we are entitled, it is argued, to assume that reality must be such that it will satisfy the intellect. If we therefore succeed in finding a way of conceiving reality which is entirely satisfactory to the intellect, we must conclude that our conception is true, or is a comprehension of reality as it absolutely is. No doubt there seems to be a difference between thought and reality, and it may be asked how we can know that such a difference exists, without bringing reality within thought? We do something to solve the problem by saying that reality is identical with experience, but the difficulty remains, that thought must truly comprehend experience, or we shall not bring reality within it. The only possible solution, it is contended, is that thought cannot be satisfied without a conception of reality which includes the aspects opposed to mere thinking; and such inclusion is impossible for thought, because thought would then cease to be thought. It follows that reality is above thought, and above every partial aspect of being, but includes them all. Each of these aspects must be in harmony with the others, and their unity must constitute the perfect whole. Thus in the end nothing is real except the Absolute. Everything else is appearance, which is indeed real in the Absolute, but not taken by itself. Intellectually, appearance is error; and as every appearance is real in the Absolute, there is no absolute error, while the degree of reality is measured by the amount of supplementation required in each case. If it is objected that such an Absolute is a mere blank, or else unintelligible, it is answered, that it is only unintelligible in the sense that we cannot understand all its detail, while it is perfectly intelligible in



the abstract. The Absolute, we may fairly argue, must be a unity, because anything like independent plurality or external relations cannot satisfy the intellect. And it fails to satisfy the intellect because it is a self-contradiction. For the same reason the Absolute is one system in the very highest sense of the term, any lower sense being unreal because in the end self-contradictory.

The necessity of postulating the existence of an Absolute, which may be defined as a single all-comprehensive system, may be shown indirectly by an examination of the various ways in which we ordinarily interpret our experience, all of which finally break down in self-contradiction. Take, for example, the familiar distinction between primary and secondary qualities. The former are those aspects of what we perceive or feel and are spatial; the latter are non-spatial. A real thing, it is assumed, is something that remains always the same, and therefore something the properties of which are always present in the thing. But secondary qualities are not of this character. A thing is not coloured except when seen by an eye, and its colour is not the same for every eye. Similarly, cold and heat, sound, smell and taste, exist only in relation to an organ of sense, and are not always the same to every such organ. It is therefore inferred that secondary qualities are appearances of a reality which possesses only primary qualities. Now, not to mention other objections, the same line of reasoning which shows that secondary qualities are not real, is fatal to the claim of the primary to be real. These also are relative to an organ of sense. Besides, if we eliminate the secondary qualities, the primary are inconceivable; for extension is never presented except as coloured or touched or as relative to the muscular sense. We must therefore conclude that the distinction of primary and secondary qualities, from which materialism is



blindly developed, brings us no nearer to the nature of reality.

In a similar way it may be shown that other modes of conceiving the world break down in self-contradiction, and therefore cannot be ultimate, since nothing can satisfy the intellect short of a comprehensive self-consistent and coherent system. It is therefore argued that none of these methods of comprehending reality can possibly be true. When it has been shown, for example, that materialism breaks down in self-contradiction, it is set aside as false, and the question is not raised whether it has not made an important advance upon the ordinary common-sense view of the world as merely an aggregate of disconnected objects in space and time. Now, as we have found in criticising Personal Idealism, while Materialism is a very inadequate determination of the world, it has this signal merit, that it insists upon the inviolability of the system of nature, so far as nature is identified with the reciprocal movements of masses. Similarly, space, time and causality are no doubt very inadequate determinations of reality, and it is therefore inferred that the Absolute is beyond space and time, and cannot be determined as a cause. So sweeping a conclusion does not seem to me to be justified. Undoubtedly the attempt to characterize the world as purely spatial, or purely temporal, or as a succession of connected or causal changes, must contradict itself; but surely it does not follow that the world is therefore in itself non-spatial, non-temporal and non-causal. To say so seems to me to play into the hands of Phenomenalism, which yet is characterized as self-contradictory.

The answer which is made to this objection to the ordinary ways of regarding reality is that what has been viewed as appearance, self-contradictory as it is, is not a mere nonentity, but must somehow belong to reality. I can only



understand this reply by drawing a distinction between two different senses in which the term "appearance" may be used. By "appearance" may be meant either (1) those fictions which are shown to be false by breaking down in self-contradiction, or (2) those immediate or apparently immediate experiences which seem to be facts, whatever be our ways of regarding reality. In the first sense appearance is very much the same thing as "error" or "illusion" or "in-compatible hypotheses"; in the latter sense "appearance" can only be called "appearance" as contrasted with reality. Now, it seems to me that it is only "appearance" in the second sense that we can declare to belong to reality. But it is "appearance" in the former sense that is set aside as untrue, and therefore as incompatible with the fundamental nature of the Absolute. One of the discarded hypotheses is that of independent things; another, that things are in space or mutually external; a third, that there are actual changes or events in time; and other untenable doctrines are those of causation, activity, things-in-themselves, and selves. Not one of these hypotheses, it is held, can be regarded as true, and therefore they may be called "appearances." But they are surely not "appearances" in the sense that they belong to reality. As hypotheses which we have discovered to be false, they must be placed on the same level as the idea, for example, of "chance," and therefore simply discarded. If there are no things with qualities, no objects and events in space and time, no movements or changes, no action of one thing or another, no identical selves, how can we say that they are not mere nonentities, or that they belong to reality in any sense whatever? As false hypotheses they are nothing but nonentities, and certainly do not belong to reality. The only thing to be done with an hypothesis that we are sure is false is to set it aside absolutely; and when the world of



appearance is said still in some sense to survive, I can only suppose that it is not any of the discarded hypotheses which survives, but the facts which these were supposed to explain. In that case, the doctrine will be, that after the rejection of all false explanations of the facts of experience, these facts still remain. But if they are to be regarded as facts of experience, which withstand any assault that can be made upon them, why should they be called "appearances"? On the other hand, if they are "appearances," how can they be called "facts"? The abstract opposition of "appearances" and "reality" seems to me to be a false contrast, and I do not think we shall ever get a satisfactory theory of reality so long as it is regarded as absolute. The only valid distinction is that which regards "appearance" as an inadequate but not absolutely false comprehension of reality, and therefore does not oppose "appearance" and "reality" as abstract opposites, but views the former as a less complete or less adequate form of the latter.

What is sought to be substituted for our false ways of conceiving reality is a conception of it which shall be perfectly satisfactory, because free from self-contradiction. Now, whatever else it may be, reality, it is argued, must be a single self-consistent and all-comprehensive system. If it is denied that we can tell anything about the nature of reality, it must be on the ground that what is presented to us in our immediate experience cannot be identical with reality. But why should we deny that immediate experience is identical with reality? There is no other valid reason, it is said, than that immediate experience is self-contradictory; which obviously implies that reality is not self-contradictory, or, what is the same thing, that it is self-consistent. Thus, we assume that self-consistency is an absolute criterion, by which we may determine the nature of reality. If it is asked what is the ground of this criterion,



the answer is that it has no ground, because it is the ultimate logical principle to which every true judgment must conform. And if it is objected that non-contradiction yields no positive knowledge, it is replied, that as a bare denial is impossible, the rejection of all other predicates but those of unity, self-consistency and comprehensiveness implies that we have a positive basis for our objection.

Now, it is undoubtedly true that every negation must rest upon an affirmation. Logically, it is impossible to condemn anything as "appearance" without having a positive knowledge of "reality." It seems to me, however, that in one of the two ways of defining "appearance," to which reference has already been made, this principle is violated. If we summarily reject all the ordinary ways of regarding reality as entirely false we are logically left, not with reality, but with nothing. From this point of view, therefore, no positive result is reached by the application of the "criterion." Hence it is only in so far as we take "appearance" in the sense of immediate experience, that we have any real ground for a positive knowledge. What is immediately experienced certainly cannot be a mere nonentity, but must be involved in reality; and when it is properly understood, it must be identical with reality. A sudden leap from "appearance" to "reality" obscures this fact. It is only by advancing from less to more and more comprehensive determinations of experience, that we can attain any positive grasp of reality. We must, in other words, be able to show that the various contradictory ways of regarding immediate experience are inadequate conceptions of it, and that, when truly comprehended, our experience is possible only within a self-consistent and harmonious world.

When we have reached the conclusion that reality must be self-consistent, the difficulty may be raised, whether reality is one or many. The latter view, it is said, cannot



possibly be accepted, because a number of reals which are not in relation to one another cannot be many, while a number of reals in relation to one another cannot be independent. Hence reality must be a unity which comprehends all distinctions within itself.

Now, it is no doubt true that the conception of a number of completely independent beings can never satisfy the intellect, and that there can only be a single reality, in which all beings must somehow be embraced. But the question is whether this unity is to be conceived as one which abolishes all the individuality and independence of the several beings, or whether it differentiates itself in beings which are individual, just because they are capable of living in the whole. If an Absolute is maintained, which gathers up into itself and transmutes individuals in some way that we cannot comprehend, we virtually abolish all individuality and self-determination on the part of the several beings. Now, while we have seen reason to reject the self-centred individuals of Personal Idealism, it does not follow that we must fall back upon an abstract Absolute, in which all subordinate individuality is abolished. Reality must be conceived as a self-consistent unity differentiating itself in individuals. The Absolute is a spiritual or organic whole, and in such a whole the self-activity and self-determination of the parts is as essential as their unity with the whole. As we have argued above, the consciousness of self is inseparable from the consciousness of the world, and by its very nature self-consciousness is free and self-determined. It is no doubt true that only gradually does any individual theoretically comprehend and practically realize his unity with the whole, but that unity is not first created when he comes to the consciousness of it.

No satisfactory theology can be constructed which does not recognize that nothing can possibly be real except in



dependence upon and subordination to God, while yet this dependence and subordination must be consistent with the reality of the finite. This twofold demand, as we have seen, makes it impossible for us to accept either the view which makes God merely one among a number of separate subjects, or that which abolishes all finite subjects in the one all-comprehensive unity of God. God must be the inner principle of the finite, and he cannot be in the physical world alone, or in the conscious world alone, but he must be in both.

We have seen that it is only by abstraction that the world of nature seems to have any reality independently of mind. The world becomes for us a cosmos, an orderly and coherent world, only when it is conceived as a manifestation of mind. Even from the point of view of our growing experience, it is obvious that only because he is a thinking rational subject can man construct for himself a world of order and law. On the other hand, it is only as the conscious subject recognizes that the world is no arbitrary creation of his own mind, that he rises to the consciousness of the creative Mind which is immanent in the world. This Mind is not immanent merely in nature, but is more fully and clearly manifested in the self-conscious life of man. For, in the first place, unless the human mind as knowing is identical in its essential nature with the infinite mind, it cannot possibly comprehend anything of reality. A law of nature, or a law of society, is redeemed from arbitrariness only in so far as the human mind is able to grasp the principle which gives it meaning; and that principle can be nothing else than one phase of the eternal Mind. It is just in so far as we set aside all prejudices and preconceptions that we enter into communion with the mind of God. In this self-abnegation we realize that which our intellectual nature demands. To live in



the whole is to live in God. His Mind must be our mind, and it is only as we enter into his Mind that we learn the true nature of things. It is true that in the growth of our knowledge we never completely comprehend the depth and riches of the Divine Mind; that is, completely comprehend that object of which our mind is continually in search; but we do comprehend the principles of that Divine Mind, in so far as we comprehend the principles of nature and of human society.

In the second place, it may be shown that God must be manifested in the world. When God is conceived as a Being complete in himself apart from the world, the existence of the world becomes unintelligible. We come to a knowledge of the world as a system because it is the embodiment of Mind, and therefore the world cannot be separated from God without ceasing to be an intelligible object. Moreover, it is in the comprehension of our own self-conscious life that we obtain the clearest and fullest conception of God; and therefore that life is the fullest expression of the Mind of God. The ideals of man are not merely conventional, but express his essential nature; and the nature of man is not determined by what he thinks of himself, but by what reason compels him to think of himself. Now a principle operative in man, and continually realizing itself more perfectly as man develops in social organization, is the expression of the very nature of God. To suppose that the highest in man is something accidental, is simply to conceive of God as a purely arbitrary Being. Thus God is ever realizing himself in the spiritual nature and history of man, and without this self-realization he would not be God. It is not possible to believe that man is in communion with God, except in so far as God communicates himself to man.

The self-conscious life of man is possible only because



man comes to the consciousness of himself as related to and contrasted with the world of nature and the world of society. But the principle present in both is that divine Principle which we call God. Thus, man comes to self-consciousness only in and through the response of his spirit to the Divine Spirit. The latter cannot be conceived as isolated and self-centred, but is necessarily self-revealing ; and if it were not manifested in the world, there would be no possibility of communion with God. In man, and especially in the highest theoretical artistic and religious ideals, God reveals himself to the human spirit. If the highest conception of human society is that of a community of rational subjects, each seeking his own good in the good of the whole, the perfect nature of God must consist in the absolute surrender of himself to the good of his creatures, which is at the same time the absolute realization of himself.

The difficulty which naturally presents itself in this connection is that the conception of God as infinite, eternal and unchangeable seems to imply that the nature of man cannot be identical in kind with that of God. Man, it may be said, is at once soul and body, God is spirit ; man is capable of evil, God is absolutely holy. For this reason it is thought to be impossible to regard man as of the same essential nature as God. We have to observe, however, in the first place, that when man is said to be identical in nature with God, what is meant is that his ideal nature is of this character. This ideal nature is not something belonging to man in his first state, but something which must be slowly and laboriously achieved by his own conscious activity. This is true of every side of man's nature. Knowledge "grows from more to more" ; morality is achieved only through stress and conflict. But, though it is only the ideal nature of man that can be said to be identical with that of God, yet that ideal is in a sense already



realized. In the spirit of man it operates as "the light of all his seeing" and the motive power which ever urges him forward toward greater achievements. Looking at man as in idea he is, it is no exaggeration to say that he contains in himself an element that is infinite. For, while he is "part of this partial world," on the other hand he is capable of comprehending the nature of God and seeking to realize that which in idea he is; and this power of comprehension and self-identification with God implies that, finite as in one aspect he is, in another aspect he is infinite. Thus he is capable of transcending in idea all limits of space and time, and grasping the principle from which all that is has proceeded. If man were not thus capable of transcending the limits of his finite existence, he would never become conscious of his finitude. In the simplest knowledge, as we have seen, there is involved that comprehension of something not ourselves which develops into the explicit consciousness of God. All our experience moves within the framework of an absolute unity, and no degree of progress ever carries us beyond it. The simplest discrimination of the difference between "this" and "that" is possible only because consciousness is a universal capacity for distinction and unification. And in the moral life the implicit infinity of the human spirit reveals itself in the unceasing effort after perfection. The conflict with evil is the struggle towards that unity with oneself which is inseparable from unity with God. Were it not that man's self-consciousness involves the presence in him of this ideal of perfection, he would be satisfied, like lower beings, with the gratification of his immediate desires and inclinations; but, because nothing short of absolute perfection of nature can give him permanent satisfaction, his spiritual life is necessarily a struggle toward an ideal, which he can only realize in the sense that it is the principle of his undying efforts. Thus in principle



the battle is already won. Conscious of his own weakness and imperfection, man is yet, in his religious consciousness, assured that goodness must be progressively realized, because, in his struggle after it, he is realizing the absolute will of God. His spiritual life man leads, not in isolation, but as containing in himself and embodying in his life the principle that gives meaning to the whole universe. No doubt man is capable of doing violence to his ideal nature, which is also his true nature ; but, in so far as his desires are transformed into universal principles of action, he is in unity with the perfect will of God. In this religious consciousness man learns that his own true will and the will of God are the same. Though the spiritual life of man must ever be progressive, it yet is in principle one with the life of God. Thus man may "live in the eternal," and enjoy the peace and blessedness which come from self-surrender to the divine.

What has been said may help us to understand why no adequate conception of God is possible, when appearance and reality are so separated from each other, that no actual union of them is conceivable. From this dualistic point of view, all the objects of our experience are riddled with contradiction ; while, from the point of view of an abstract Absolute, there is nothing but blank indefinable reality, of which we vainly predicate unity and system, since there are no differences to unify or systematize. We can only maintain that experience and reality are identical by recognizing that there is no isolated finite or isolated infinite, but only such a union of finite and infinite as does away with their abstract opposition.

The main difficulty which prevents us from admitting this unity is due to the mechanical way in which we usually think of both. How can God, it is asked, be immanent in man, while man preserves his individuality ? Now, this



mode of conception is inadequate even as applied to living beings, not to speak of self-conscious or spiritual beings. We cannot separate the principle of life from its relations directly to the body, and indirectly to the whole physical world. No answer can be given to a question which logically precludes an answer. There is no productive activity in a tree apart from its environment, and the environment really presupposes the tree. Both must operate: the tree working up and assimilating the soil, and the soil supplying the material to be assimilated. And when we attempt to apply the categories of exclusion to self-conscious beings, we find that they are even less adequate than when they are applied to living organisms. The individual man would not be self-conscious at all but for his spiritual relation to his fellows; yet we cannot say that he is merely the product of society, for his own self-activity is a necessary factor in the development of his spiritual life. Without the spiritual atmosphere in which he lives, he could have no self-conscious life; but in his relation to his fellow-men, while he can be influenced by ideas, he cannot be influenced except by ideas, and the acceptance of an idea is possible only through his own self-conscious activity. When one man is said to influence another, the relation is not to be compared to the communication of motion from one body to another; for no man can influence another unless the other is in a condition to be influenced. So far from it being true that the action of mind upon mind destroys freedom and individuality, there can be no such influence without freedom and individuality. As a rational being, man can accept nothing but what seems to him reasonable, though no doubt he often comes to believe what is unreasonable. The more reasonable any two self-conscious beings are, the greater is the influence of the one upon the other. The influence is that of reason, and the response of



reason can only be to that which is essentially reasonable. When therefore we say that the Divine Spirit is immanent in the human spirit, we must not think of the relation as that of two separate and distinct individuals, one of which acts upon the other irrespective of the response of his own spirit, but rather after the manner in which the Church speaks of the influence of the Holy Spirit. Nothing can destroy the freedom of a rational subject, which consists in believing and doing nothing but that which commends itself as reasonable ; and therefore the influence upon man of the indwelling spirit of God is in essence identical with the influence of one human mind upon another ; it operates by bringing to light that which is essentially reasonable.

God, then, we conclude, is not immanent only in nature, but is the informing spirit of both nature and man. He is not present in one particular event or series of events, but in the history of man as a whole. There can be no progressive evolution of morality, unless in all his efforts man is seeking consciously to realize that ideal goodness which is implied in the reality of God. "God," it has been said, "is transcendent as Maker and Ruler of all things, and yet through His eternal spirit immanent in the world and particularly in man and his history." This seems to be an unsuccessful attempt to combine the two ideas of transcendence and immanence. God is assumed to be transcendent, in so far as he has brought the world into existence and rules it from without ; while he is immanent, not in himself, but in his spirit, in "man and his history." The former view is open to the objection which we have seen to be fatal to the deistic conception of God ; while the latter does not really explain how the spirit of God is reconcilable with the freedom and moral responsibility of man. It is perfectly true that God cannot be identified with the physical world of matter and motion ; for that world, taken by



itself, is an abstraction, and therefore it is nothing apart from God. On the other hand, to speak of the spirit of God as immanent in man does not tell us how this immanence is to be reconciled with man's freedom or self-determination. Only in a doctrine which recognizes that God is immanent in man just in so far as man is in self-conscious identity with God, can the immanence and transcendence which are separately affirmed be united in a single concrete idea.

Human life in all its aspects, theoretical, practical and productive, is essentially purposive. We live in ideals, and these ideals are the mainspring of all our efforts. Truth, goodness and beauty, as the partial realization of absolute ends, are principles immanent in the human soul and yet they are unrealized ideals. But, unless these ideals were actually operative, they would not be recognized as real. In a completely developed spiritual life they would be realized in unity and harmony with one another. This absolute unity, which is at once constitutive of our self-conscious life, and yet transcends its actual realization, is what we mean by God; and therefore God must be conceived as the principle, identification with which is the motive and the goal of our total spiritual activity. Thus God is at once present with us in all our spiritual endeavour, and yet infinitely transcends our highest achievement. Without this twofold consciousness we should have no knowledge of good, and therefore no knowledge of evil. But this brings us to one of the most difficult problems in the philosophy of religion, the problem of the origin and nature of evil. Before we attempt to deal with this problem it will be advisable, however, to complete our review of inadequate conceptions of the nature of God by considering the account of that nature which is given by Mysticism.

Absolutism, as we have seen, maintains that all the facts of our experience, while they cannot be taken as expressing



the ultimate nature of things, yet belong to the Absolute. This opposition of that which facts are as phenomenal, and that which they are affirmed to be from the absolute point of view, does not enable us to tell how they must be regarded from the latter point of view. What is for us indefinable cannot be grasped by our intelligence, which operates only by making and resolving distinctions. Thus the Absolute becomes for us nothing more than pure or abstract being. Logically, therefore, it leads to Mysticism, the doctrine which virtually abolishes all relations, even the relation of subject and object. Beyond all the definite conceptions, by which in our ordinary consciousness we make the world intelligible to ourselves, the subject is in certain exalted states held to be capable of complete identification with the Absolute. And as God is isolated from the world, and even from the ordinary consciousness of man, no positive predicates can be applied in determination of the divine nature. Only by a complete surrender of the whole being, a surrender in which all the distinctions which separate us from God are abolished, can we realize our true nature. Since God, the Absolute One, cannot be compressed within the framework of our ordinary divisive intellect, he is affirmed to be a unity which transcends and abolishes all distinctions, even the distinction of subject and object. As unthinkable and ineffable, he can only be lived or experienced, not comprehended by the intellect.

Mysticism agrees with Agnosticism in abolishing all distinctions, and therefore affirming that the intellect cannot comprehend the Absolute; but it reaches this conclusion, not by a purely naturalistic explanation of the world, but by regarding the whole sphere of scientific knowledge as occupied with what is merely illusion. Man's true life is held to be the life of religion, and in this life he is not shut out from the Apprehension of God, but, on the



contrary, comes into direct contact and communion with God. For in God, it is said, there is no finitude, change or division, and therefore only by dropping all the distinctions by which the finite self is characterized, including the distinction of the self from itself, does man "erect himself above himself."

Now, it is not to be denied that Mysticism has fixed upon an aspect of truth which it is of supreme importance to emphasize. The religious consciousness undoubtedly lifts man above all the divisions of his ordinary secular consciousness, and enables him to enter into communion with the divine. On the other hand, Mysticism makes all rational defence of the religious consciousness impossible by its assumption that the intelligence is in its fundamental nature incapable of comprehending anything but the finite. Moreover, it affirms the imbecility of the intelligence, on the ground that by this faculty man cannot accomplish what cannot possibly be accomplished, namely, the reduction of all reality to abstract conceptions. The result of this double mistake is that the whole of our experience is condemned as illusive, instead of being reinterpreted from the highest point of view. And this false conception of the world and of man inevitably leads to an equally false view of God. The world and man, as divorced from God, are necessarily illusive, because they are but fragments of the whole. It is no wonder therefore that, having first severed the spiritual bond by which the world, the self, and God are united, Mysticism can only fall back upon analogy when it seeks to express the inexpressible, heaping metaphor upon metaphor in its vain attempt to give an air of plausibility to the doctrine that, while God is absolutely complete in himself apart from the world, yet the world is absorbed in God. In contrast to this essentially self-contradictory and irrational doctrine, I have tried to show that the world only



seems to be an arbitrary product of the divine nature when it is assumed to have a separate and independent existence. We are continually tempted to take a phase of the whole and affirm its self-completeness. We begin by assuming that things as isolated from one another by spatial externality have a real existence ; then, finding that they undergo changes, we think of them as a series of vanishing states in time ; discovering that, in a mere succession, there is nothing to explain the orderly sequence of events, we attempt to characterize the world as a congeries of interrelated objects, which go through an eternal cycle of changes, while always preserving the same inviolate order ; reflecting still further, we see that a system of mere objects, however orderly, does not account for the self-determining process exhibited in the life of organized beings, and we then conceive of the world as the manifestation of an eternal self-evolving soul ; still unsatisfied, we at length discover that only in self-conscious beings, which yet are in inseparable union with the absolute self-conscious Being—the only absolutely self-determining or creative spirit—can a self-consistent and comprehensive theory of the universe be reached. Thus by a regressive process we finally reach the true meaning of the universe ; and, recovering our faith, we see that the world and man are " everywhere bound by gold chains about the feet of God." All being manifests him, and to suppose that God could be apart from the world in its totality, is to suppose that he could be and yet not be. There are no finite beings, if by that is meant things which exist in isolation from other beings and from the absolute principle without which they could not be. No device is needed to bring together what has never been separated. God cannot be revealed to us in an ecstatic vision, which lifts us above all the distinctions of things ; for, by the abolition of distinctions, and above all of the funda-



mental distinction of subject and object, if it were possible, we should plunge into the abyss of nothingness. It is true that God can be apprehended only by the response of man's whole nature; but this response does not involve the abolition of all distinctions, but their interpretation from the point of view of the whole. There is no possibility of transcending self-consciousness, because with such transcendence we should cease to be rational. But since self-consciousness is possible only in and through the consciousness of the world in all its phases, to destroy the consciousness of the world is to destroy the consciousness of self; and as the consciousness of God is inseparable, as I have tried to show, from the consciousness of self, Mysticism, in its eagerness to preserve the unity of God, has really destroyed it. Misled by the fact that in the upward movement of reason we finally come to see all things illuminated by the idea of God as a self-revealing intelligence, we are apt to suppose that this vision of all things in God is a vision of all things as God. In reality the religious consciousness is the most concrete of all, because it allows of no exception to the principle that nothing is real apart from God. So far from it being true that in the intuition of God all distinctions vanish away, the very reverse is true; for it is by referring all things to God that we learn what a depth of meaning may lie in the globule of dew or the "flower in the crannied wall." The progress of the religious consciousness has really been towards a more and more definite consciousness at once of the world, the self and God; and in its blindness to this fact, Mysticism has failed to learn the lesson of all history and all experience.



## LECTURE ELEVENTH.

### THE PROBLEM OF EVIL.

THE special view taken of evil is naturally determined by the general conception which we form in regard to the fundamental nature of reality. The problem as it presents itself to those who adopt the deistic conception of the universe is to explain how evil can exist in a world which, as it is assumed, has come from the hand of an infinitely wise, all-powerful, absolutely holy and perfectly good Creator and Governor. The world as we experience it seems at first sight to be incompatible with its assumed origin. For, not only are pain and suffering the lot of all sentient creatures, but it seems difficult to understand how an all-wise, all-powerful and all-loving God should have created a world apparently full of imperfection. Why should disease and premature death carry off their thousands? How are we to explain the terrible havoc produced by tempests, floods, droughts, earthquakes and volcanoes? Surely in a world governed by divine wisdom there would be no epidemic or endemic maladies to fasten upon animal organisms and inflict upon them suffering and death. Is it compatible with the government of a loving God that nature should be "red of tooth and claw"? Could no better means of perpetuating life have been devised than the law of prey by which the life of one species must be sacrificed to the necessities of another? And when we come to man, does not the conception of a world ruled by



absolute wisdom become almost ludicrously inadequate? Man "looks before and after": he lives, not only in the present, but in the remembrance of the past and the anticipation of the future, and thus a kind of eternity is given to the sufferings that otherwise would be momentary. Sorrow takes hold of him and will not be laid to rest; anxiety goes before him, and poisons his enjoyment of the present. Still more terrible is the moral evil which spreads its poisonous miasma over all that is his. Why should a good God create beings whose ignorance and physical weakness and strength of passion inevitably lead to action that entails the keenest pain and suffering on themselves and on their innocent children? Must we not sympathize with Huxley, when he exclaims: "I protest that if some great Power would agree to make me think always what is true and do what is right on condition of being turned into a sort of clock . . . I should instantly close with the bargain. The only freedom I care about is the freedom to do right; the freedom to do wrong I am ready to part with on the cheapest terms to anyone who will take it of me." If, again, we turn to the pages of history, do we not find there convincing evidence that force is stronger than reason? In Hannibal do we not see "the baffled heroism of an extinguished country, and in the victims of an Alva the fruitless martyrdoms of a crushed faith"? Can anyone believe in the wisdom which allowed the rude soldiery of Macedon to trample upon the civilization of Greece? Was the triumph of the Barbarian over imperial Rome a triumph of reason? In the presence of the ruthless slaughter of a St. Bartholomew's night can we retain our faith in the watchful providence of a compassionate God?

These and other objections to the conception of a world

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Ward's *The Realm of Ends*, pp. 372-3.

<sup>2</sup> Martineau's *A Study of Religion*, p. 117.



created by a wise and good Being cannot be adequately met from the point of view of deism. So long as the world is assimilated to the material to which an artificer gives form, it must always be possible to object that, as no finite being can possibly be absolutely perfect, the world cannot conform to the ideal. The creator of an independent world must necessarily be limited by what he has created, and therefore the most that he can accomplish must be the fashioning of the universe into as perfect a form as is consistent with the imperfect character of his material. The only way, it would seem, in which the pain and evil that admittedly exist in the world can be explained, is by the supposition that in no other way could the final cause of the world be realized. Thus we must conclude with Leibnitz that, while the world is not absolutely perfect, it is the "best of all possible worlds." This answer, however, seems to have the fatal defect that it starts with the assumption of an absolutely perfect being, and proceeds to maintain that the world must therefore be the product of divine wisdom and goodness. But it may surely be argued with equal fairness, that if the world is imperfect, it cannot be the product of a perfect Being. Deism therefore seems to lie open to the objection that its conception of the world contradicts its conception of God. There is no possible way of advancing from an imperfect world to a perfect creator; only by denying the former can we establish the latter. "God and evil," as Dr. Ward says, "are contraries; if the problem of evil is altogether insoluble, there is an end of theism: if God exists there is nothing absolutely evil."<sup>1</sup>

As deism can give no real solution of the general problem of evil, it must fail in its attempt to explain moral evil. A perfectly good God must, it is argued, have so constituted the world that it must be possible for man to obtain the

<sup>1</sup> J. Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 319.



happiness which his nature craves. Now, the assumption that happiness is the end of life seems to break down when it is confronted with the actual facts of experience. The most that the hedonist can venture to claim is that there is on the whole a preponderance of pleasure over pain. Without urging the objections that have been frequently made to the possibility of a calculus of pleasures, such as would enable us to strike a balance between pleasures and pains, it is enough to point out that, even granting that life on the whole brings more pleasure than pain, this does not explain how in a world governed by a Being of perfect goodness there should be pain at all. Here, in fact, we have in a special form the fundamental difficulty which lies at the root of deism, the incompatibility of an imperfect world with the inference to a perfect Creator and governor.

Shall we then fall back in despair on the doctrine of Naturalism, that pain and pleasure, good and evil, have no meaning when we realize that everything occurs in accordance with the unchangeable constitution of the world and the inviolable laws by which its processes are determined? On this view, what we call evil is just as inevitable as what we call good; and, in truth, these terms are purely anthropomorphic, being based upon the false supposition that we have power to act in one way rather than in another, whereas all action, good or bad, is as absolutely determined as the fall of a stone or the movement of a planet. I shall not repeat what has already been said as to the untenable character of Naturalism; it is enough to say that it is incompatible with our experience, both on its theoretical and on its practical side. It cannot explain knowledge, because the inviolable law to which it declares the world to be subject has no meaning unless under presupposition of a rational principle; and it equally fails to account for action, because only a free or self-determining subject, who



as such is lifted above the world, can possibly act at all.

Nor can we accept the solution of Absolutism, which maintains that in the Absolute pain and evil disappear, being absorbed in a higher unity. From this point of view pessimism and optimism are alike indifferent; for whether we say that the world of our experience is the worst or the best of all possible worlds, it will remain true that these predicates have a meaning only from the relative or phenomenal point of view of our ordinary consciousness, whereas from the point of view of the Absolute there is no good or evil, but all is transmuted and glorified. Whether or not this may be regarded as the ultimate conclusion of a comprehensive theory of the universe, it at least does not seem to explain the moral distinction of good and evil, but rather to explain it away. In Schopenhauer, however, an attempt is made to combine an absolutist metaphysic with a pessimistic theory of ethics, and it may throw some light on our special problem to consider his method of reconciling the one with the other.

The philosophy of Schopenhauer claims not inaptly to be the expression of "a single thought," which reveals itself in knowledge, in being, in art and in conduct. That thought is that the ultimate nature of reality is will; an idea which Schopenhauer developed, under the influence of Fichte, from his teacher Bouterwek, who maintained that we become aware of our own reality only in will, and of the reality of other things by finding that they offer resistance to our will. In Schopenhauer this psychological theory is boldly transformed into a metaphysic of the universe. Will is the very essence of the world, the true thing-in-itself. This being so, the world of our ordinary experience is not the world as it truly is, but an appearance generated by our understanding out of impressions of sense, which correspond only to the



changes that occur in our body. These impressions are at once referred by an unconscious act of the understanding to an external cause, which is conceived to act in time and to be spatially separate from our bodies. From this world of perception materialism is developed by a natural misunderstanding; for materialism is not aware that the world of objects and events in time and space is not the world as it is in itself, but is merely the world as it presents itself to our minds. Under the false assumption that it is dealing with absolute reality science has reduced the universe to a mere dead body, a thing of cogs and wheels and the eternal monotonous whirr of machinery. But life is more than knowledge. That which science regards as realities are but "phantoms of the brain," the translation of a reality that lies beyond our experience into a system of ideas ever changing in place and time. Never in this way shall we reach true reality. Under the guidance of the category of causality, we refer one event to another, this to a precedent event, and so on to infinity, vainly seeking to penetrate to the true nature of things. Only when we entirely change our point of view and throw the light back upon ourselves, do we solve the mystery of the world. Then we discern by a direct intuition that will is the real nature of things. Thus we reach the real kernel of being. It is will, energy, activity, that constitutes our own true nature. At bottom "my body and my will are one"; the one being myself as I appear when I bring myself under the divisive forms of space, time and causality; the other, when I apprehend myself directly by intuition. Only when I feel myself as active do I escape from the limitation of the sensible world. If it is objected that will, as we know it in ourselves, only acts under the stimulation of a motive, and therefore must be brought under one form of the category of causation, Schopenhauer replies that, though will as we apprehend it in



ourselves may not be the ultimate form of reality, yet we must regard it as indicating that reality. From the beginning it is will that guides the course of our ideas, though of this we are not in our ordinary experience aware. Knowledge, in fact, is the servant of the will. There is in us an ineradicable will to live, and in order to find the means by which this blind impulse may be realized, we have to learn how we are related to things. For will is the unity which is presupposed in all the emotions, desires and volitions. Not self-consciousness, as Kant affirmed, is the ultimate principle, but will; and upon will, not upon self-consciousness, personal identity depends.

Now, if will is the nature of all things, it must be manifested in all modes of being. Mind and body are not two distinct things, but what to our self-consciousness is will is for our knowledge body. Bodily movements are not effects of will, but its sensible appearance. So the various natural forces are expressions of the one identical will. What science regards as the impact of one body on another, or as the attraction of masses, or the oscillations of the magnetic needle, or the process of chemical combinations, or, finally, the phenomena of organic growth, are all at bottom but different forms and degrees of that will which in us "pursues its aims by the light of knowledge." "What truly is, is a world which is one and all, where there is no earlier and later, no here and there—where 'a thousand years are as one day'—a world which concentrates eternities and infinities into an absolute onnipresence and unity."<sup>1</sup> Man and nature are mere phenomenal divisions of the one indivisible will. The intellect, cutting up and isolating one thing from another, cannot comprehend the indissoluble unity of will. Employed at first only as the instrument of will, it never entirely loses this character even in the highest

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Wallace's *Life of Schopenhauer*, p. 126.



generalizations of science. Thus knowledge nourishes the will to live, which is the power that ever pushes us onwards from behind, though all the time we imagine that we are making for our own freely chosen ends. In this way Schopenhauer explains the passion of love, which, he says, is "the genius of the race manifesting itself in the feelings of two people for the purpose of its own perpetuation."<sup>1</sup> In truth the impulse to exist underlies all things, inorganic, organic and conscious. This impulse, however, is at once blind, irrational and objectless; and as it can never be satisfied, having no definite goal as its end, it is the source of all unhappiness. In support of this contention Schopenhauer appeals to experience. To will is to suffer, for will proceeds from the unceasing desire after an unattainable satisfaction. No sooner is this inner fire quenched for a moment than it breaks out anew, calling for a relief that is never found. Pleasure is therefore not positive but negative, consisting as it does merely in the momentary relief from pain. Hence under all circumstances pain must be in preponderance. The beast that devours experiences only a momentary pleasure, but that which is devoured suffers intense pain. If the majority of men do not realize the misery that underlies all things, it lies wide open to the man of genius, because he has immense capacities for joy, and therefore his disappointments are proportionately keen. Byron but expresses the experience of all higher minds:

"Count o'er the joys thine eyes have seen,  
Count o'er thy days from anguish free,  
And know, whatever thou hast been,  
'Tis something better not to be."

Even if uninterrupted happiness were possible, we should experience nothing positive. "If we could even approxi-

<sup>1</sup> This is the central idea which George Bernard Shaw in his whimsical way illustrates in *Man and Superman*.



mately conceive the sum of want and pain and misery of every sort on which in its course the sun daily shines, we should acknowledge that it would have been better if the earth like the moon had been but a lifeless mass." <sup>1</sup>

Nothing can alter the fundamental nature of will, but knowledge may escape from its original bondage to it by the disinterested contemplation of works of art. As the ultimate reality, will cannot be made a direct object of knowledge, for that would be to compress it within the framework of the understanding; but the typical individualities, which are the external product of will, as divined by artistic perception, bring a satisfaction which liberates us from the will to live and from all the wretched desires that govern us in our everyday experience. Genius interprets the confused speech of nature, creating what she tries in vain herself to create. By absorption in the products of art the will to live is for the moment suspended, and with that suspension the consciousness of pain and suffering is stilled.

Art, then, shows us things as they really are, free from that restless striving which is the curse of will. But the relief thus obtained is evanescent, for the will to live revives and urges us to turn the whole world into a means of appeasing our inappeasable desires. Thus men attack one another, vainly hoping thereby to be rid of their torment. This unbridled selfishness the State tries to remedy by inflicting punishment on the aggressor; but in vain, for there is no external cure for a disease that is internal. Selfishness cannot be overcome until we realize that one and the same life is lived in each of us. Morality only arises when we see that the divisions which are conceived to isolate men from one another are but illusions; then we learn that the

<sup>1</sup> *Parerga and Paralipomena*, bk. ii, pp. 150 ff. Quoted by Ward, *The Realm of Ends*, p. 323.



supreme principle of positive ethics is the consciousness of the underlying identity of all men. Sympathy is therefore the ultimate basis of ethics. But absolute rest cannot be found even in this way, for love of others can never do away with the pain and sorrow which are inseparable from the will to live. Nothing can do so but the absolute negation of all desire. Perfect peace can be found only when the will to live has died completely away, as in the ascetic and the saint, the Buddhist and the early Christian, who, lifted above the illusion of individuality, ceased to desire the continuance of their individual selves or the perpetuation of the race. The happiness of a community, or even of all sentient beings, is a mirage. "All life is essentially sorrow," and the sorrows of man can at the best but lessen an incurable misery. There is no possible removal of the endless pain of life. Progress there is none, but only the repetition in generation after generation of the same sordid tragedy. It is therefore hopeless to attempt a reformation of the will ; the only thing to do is to annihilate it. In the pure light of disinterested knowledge we see that will, as the source of all pain and evil, must be done away. How that can be accomplished it is hard to see, but it is certain that only in the transcendence of the will to live can salvation be found.

Schopenhauer's contrast of knowledge and will is due to the further development of that opposition of theoretical and practical reason, which is affirmed by Kant and endorsed by Fichte. Knowledge was by Kant assumed to be limited to the world of nature, as determined by the categories of the understanding ; and this world, he maintained, cannot be identical with reality as it is in itself, because reality must be a perfect whole, which the sensible world cannot possibly be. It is impossible, he said, to make reality a direct object of knowledge, because the unconditioned is merely the Idea of a possible reality, which cannot be con-

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verted into actual knowledge because the categories of the understanding cannot yield knowledge unless when a sensible element is given to them to which they can be applied. The consciousness of self, on the other hand, gives rise to the Idea of a pure intelligence, in which the opposition of subject and object, which for us is theoretically absolute, is completely transcended. Thus we reach the conception of a subject which determines itself as an object and yet maintains its own unity. And though such a self-conscious unity can never be made an object of knowledge, it must be postulated as the explanation of the moral consciousness. Thus practical reason gives us a certitude of the value of life to which theoretical reason cannot possibly attain. It is through the absolute obligation of the moral law that we learn our own freedom, for a moral being must necessarily be a free being. A free being is one that in all its actions is absolutely uninfluenced by desire, since desire as a phenomenon in time comes under the same law of causality as other phenomena.

This doctrine of Kant has in it an element of truth and an element of error. It contains the important truth, that the actions of man cannot be merely links in a chain of natural causation, but can only be truly determined when they are conceived as modes in which a free subject determines himself. The error into which Kant falls is to remove this free subject entirely from the realm of knowledge. Such a doctrine obviously springs from the false assumption that knowledge can never transcend the realm of external nature, an assumption which is arbitrary and untenable. If this line of thought is developed to its logical conclusion, practical reason or will becomes a form of activity which is blindly directed to an end that cannot be brought within the sphere of knowledge. From this conclusion Kant was saved by his conception of the moral law as supplying a



standard by reference to which actions are determined as good or bad. Thus in an indirect way he restored the intelligibility which ostensibly he denied. The moral consciousness is only not knowledge, because it is a higher form of knowledge than that of the world of nature. Thus the opposition of knowledge and will is virtually transcended. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, carries out unflinchingly the untrue element in Kant, with the result that will is held to be absolutely blind and irrational. Not only does he convert the world of nature into an illusion based upon the finite forms of space, time and causality, but he rejects all modes of causation, even that of self-cause. The will is therefore not, as with Kant, the expression of reason in its highest form, but it is fundamentally and absolutely irrational. Since knowledge never gets beyond the mechanical determination of the world, and the mechanical determination of the world is an illusion, will can have in it no element of knowledge; which for Schopenhauer means that it is utterly mysterious and unintelligible. It is little wonder that a world of which an irrational will is declared to be the underlying principle should be declared to be one that brings to man nothing but pain and misery. What else could such a world bring to a being who can be satisfied with nothing short of that which conforms to the demands of his intellect and his conscience? We must, therefore, if we are really to understand the world, reverse the method of Schopenhauer. Not by a process of abstraction, in which the world of our ordinary experience is pronounced illusory, and we are asked to fall back upon the immediate consciousness of self; not by eliminating from the self all the intellectual elements that give it meaning; not by eliminating from will all that distinguishes it from the fall of a stone or the attraction of a magnet; in none of these ways can we expect to comprehend the nature of the world



or of ourselves. Only by a synthetic process, in which nature is viewed in the light of the rational principle manifested in it, and in human life conceived in its concrete form as at once intellectual and practical, can we reach a complete and adequate view of the nature of things. Knowledge is neither the slave of a blind and irrational will, as Schopenhauer declares, nor is it a separate and independent faculty, which operates apart from will, but knowing and willing are but different aspects of the one self-conscious mind. To talk of the primacy of either is simply to substantiate an abstraction. Nor can will be identified with blind feeling, as Schopenhauer assumes. To this conclusion he is led by his purely abstract conception of will as an objectless activity. Feeling, like knowledge and will, is but one aspect of the concrete subject—that aspect in which its personal response to the world is manifested. Schopenhauer, eliminating as he does all distinction of one person from another, and maintaining that there is nothing but the blind activity of the absolute will, naturally has no place for feeling any more than for knowledge. His philosophy is indeed the expression of "a single thought," but its simplicity is the result of abstraction from all that gives meaning to reality.

When Schopenhauer goes on to explain how the one irrational will is manifested in the world, he adopts the same method of abstraction as in the derivation of the fundamental nature of reality. There is no real distinction between mind and body, because body is but the phenomenal appearance of what inwardly is will. Now, we have seen that the identity of mind and body is a true solution of the problem which epiphenomenalism and psycho-physical parallelism fail to solve; but the solution does not consist in the reduction of both to a blind activity, but in showing that body is a lower manifestation of the rational principle



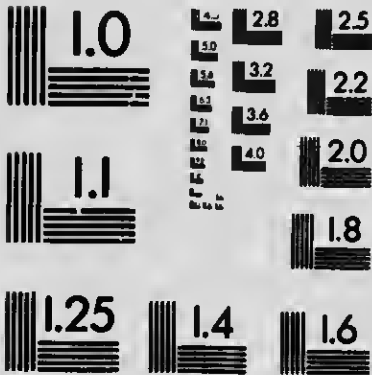
which in mind attains to self-consciousness. Schopenhauer, on the other hand, expressly denies that self-consciousness is the highest form in which reality is manifested, maintaining that the true form of reality is a will which is beyond the distinction of subject and object. Thus mind and body are only held to be identical because they are each the expression of the blind activity which Schopenhauer calls will. No doubt in thus maintaining a principle which transcends the distinction of subject and object, self and not self, he means to combine both in a higher synthesis ; but in reality what he does is merely to fix upon the activity found in each, abstracting from the diverse modes in which that activity is manifested. After the same manner he finds will assuming the form of gravitation, magnetism, electricity and organic growth ; and therefore he places these on the same level as self-conscious mind. Thus his method is in all cases one of abstraction. No real unity is reached, but merely a dead unchanging identity, which is absolutely unaffected by all the apparent changes of the world. There is from this point of view no development and no history. The efforts of man to attain to happiness are necessarily futile, because in a will that is divorced from knowledge there is no end to be attained, and if there were, no means of attaining it. Will as it operates in man is ever seeking for a satisfaction which cannot be secured, just because it can only provide an anodyne for a desire that immediately springs up in a new form. With his general conception of pleasure as the temporary removal of pain, Schopenhauer combines a hedonistic theory of morality. Man is ever seeking for happiness, under the instigation of blind will, but happiness cannot possibly be secured, because pain is positive, pleasure negative, and therefore the sum of pain must necessarily be in excess of the sum of pleasure—if indeed we can properly speak of that as capable of being







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summed which is at most but the absence of pain. It is hardly necessary to point out that to make pleasure the end of life is but another way of saying that there is no rational end. If it were really true that man always aims, and rightly aims, at a life of uninterrupted pleasure, it must be admitted that he is following a phantom which can never be captured. Moreover, such an end is immoral, because it regards the experience of pleasure as an absolute end, and therefore logically abolishes all other ends. Even if a life of uninterrupted pleasure were possible, it would not be a rational end; for no rational end is conceivable which does not include the development of the spiritual nature, even if that should involve the sacrifice of pleasure. There can be no rational end which is not recognized to be rational by every rational subject; whereas, in the fluctuation and uncertainty of feelings of pleasure, which vary not only with the susceptibility of different individuals, but even with every change of the same individual, no universal laws of conduct can be found. In Schopenhauer's conclusion that even life itself is an evil, we may see a tacit admission that evil is not identical with pain or good with pleasure, but that both have a meaning only in relation to an intelligent and self-active subject.

This admission underlies Schopenhauer's theory of art, for the influence of art he regards as due to its tendency to put the spectator into a state of mind in which all that belongs to his merely individual self fades from his consciousness. Even here, however, Schopenhauer's conception of will as a blind and irrational activity perverts his doctrine. Art for him derives its power, not from its presentation of reality as it really is, but because it temporarily soothes the insatiable will to live. Thus the aesthetic theory of Schopenhauer does not recognize the real power of art, which consists, not in mitigating the desire after self-



realization, but in the presentation of ideal types of self-realization. It is true that art implies the disinterested contemplation of nature and human life, as Schopenhauer learned from Kant; but disinterested contemplation does not consist in turning away from what concerns the individual self, but in the intuition of that larger self which constitutes the individual man as he truly is. Thus the influence of art is not merely negative, as Schopenhauer assumes; it is positive in this sense, that by the presentation of ideal types, which body forth the hidden nature of things, it tends to call forth the love of what is true and beautiful and good.

A similar defect besets Schopenhauer's theory of society. In the State he sees nothing more than the attempt to destroy the selfishness of man by the infliction of an external punishment, which can never secure the object aimed at, because it can only affect the actions of men without changing the heart. This is Schopenhauer's version of the Kantian doctrine, that the State can only aid in promoting the happiness of man, while his will can only be changed by a radical change of heart. This theory even in Kant is based upon an untenable opposition of desire and reason, but in Schopenhauer it becomes an arraignment of all society as external and superficial. In truth no free or rational subject is possible at all except in the spiritual organism of society. Nor is punishment a merely external means of avoiding the anarchy of a number of arbitrary and selfish wills, but a method of bringing home to the individual those rational principles of conduct which have been developed as the result of the toil and tears and self-sacrifice of centuries. The State is, therefore, not simply a means of mitigating or preventing the fierce conflict of selfish wills, but a spiritual medium in which an unselfish and therefore rational will is generated.



Schopenhauer finds in sympathy the ultimate basis of ethics. And naturally so; for "all life is essentially sorrow" just because of the will to live, which involves the contradiction of ever striving after that which is by the very nature of will unattainable. Morality is therefore held to lie in a recognition of the artificial character of all distinctions which separate one man from another, and indeed of the falsity of the individual consciousness of self. Thus for Schopenhauer it does not consist in a recognition of the essential kinship of all men in their rational nature, but only in the absence of any positive distinction between them. But even morality fails to destroy the will to live which is the root of all evil; and hence Schopenhauer regards the absolute negation of the will to live as the true secret of life. How the will to live can be annihilated without the exercise of will he does not explain; and, like other thinkers, he covers up the failure of his philosophy by calling this will to negate will a "mystery." In truth the only "mystery" it involves is how a doctrine which contradicts itself can possibly be true. We may however see, in this will to destroy will, the blind suggestion of a form of will which, unlike the will to live, is the real expression of the rational and self-conscious nature. Religion certainly does not consist in the destruction of the will to live, but in its spiritualization. Christianity never maintained that the secret of existence consists in the annihilation of the desire to live; what it affirmed was that it consists in the annihilation of the desire to live at all costs. Even in the inadequate form of medieval piety, which comes nearest to Schopenhauer's ideal of pure negation, it insisted upon self-mortification only as a stage towards a higher self-affirmation; and in its modern form, so far from insisting upon the annihilation of will, what it affirms is that only by identification with the divine will can man realize a truly free will.



These remarks will receive further confirmation by looking at the manner in which Nietzsche developed the central idea of Schopenhauer. Starting from the view of Schopenhauer that intelligence is a secondary and derivative power, which works in the interest of will, Nietzsche goes on to say that "consciousness does not properly belong to the individual existence of man, but only to that part in him which is of the nature of community and gregariousness." Men come together in society because they are too weak to stand alone. Consciousness is developed by the intercourse of men, and only accomplishes in a feeble and hesitating way that which is secured by the infallible energy of instinct. Intellectualism will have nothing short of perfect clearness and intelligibility. It demands clear-cut definitions, and will admit nothing that it cannot prove. Hence it lets drop the full reality in favour of its pallid abstractions. Art brings us nearer to the undivided will of the universe, for the true language of man is the myth, which is concrete and individual; it is not abstract thought, which is but a mutilated copy of reality. Religion, perhaps the supreme form of art, is employed by the will to live in its struggle against the hostile forces of the universe, and indeed it is this and not any truth that it is supposed to contain which constitutes its real value. But even art and religion, though they lift us above the fluctuations of time and change, are but stages in the onward and upward course of humanity. The present age is parasitic and self-distrustful; it has no confidence in itself, and is therefore ready to listen to any voice from the past; it is in short a period of decadence. We must have "a new gospel, the gospel of a new humanity, which, instead of sacrificing the individual to the mass, and the earthly Here to a heavenly Hereafter, shall be realized on earth in a more than human race, a race for which society shall not be an obstacle but, as it were, a fostering



garden where men may grow in grace and strength, and for which deity shall be the inspiring faith in perfectibility, not a fixed power impending as a menace and check upon the path of progress." This golden age can never arrive until we have abolished Utilitarianism and Asceticism. The former seeks only to secure the comfort of the masses, and to this mean end are sacrificed the claims of science and morality; the latter frowns on all natural impulses, and teaches an altruism that sacrifices the just claims of the individual. Man is only in the making, and before he can become what he is to be, he must undergo effort, suffering and sacrifice. We must get rid of the superstition that we have already discovered a number of immutable rules of morality. There is no finality in any observance or institution however venerable. True, we cannot measure out and define the ideal: we can only break away from the narrow creed of the philistine and the ascetic, and in a bold venture of idealism teach and discipline ourselves in preparation for the advent of the man that is to be. In view of this ideal we must spare neither one's neighbour nor oneself. Sympathy is not, as Schopenhauer supposed, the true principle of conduct. "There is a wholesome and healthy selfishness, which springs from a mighty soul," and indeed "to learn how to be one's self is the finest and cunningest of arts." If the heavy and the weary weight of the past is crushing down the spirit of man, how are we to escape from it? Only, it would seem, by an act of faith, in which man sees that in his true nature he is essentially identical with "the supreme freedom and unchartered spirit of life in all its range and sweep."

Nietzsche, then, so far agrees with Schopenhauer that "the world is very evil"; but, unlike him, he extracts an optimism from the very heart of pessimism. Like his early master, he regards consciousness as a poor and in-



adequate substitute for instinct, and in accordance with this contrast his final solution is a faith in the potential identity of man with the underlying principle of the universe. The pride of the intellect in its clear-cut distinctions, which are only clear-cut because they abstract from the fulness of life, must be struck down, if man is to effect the transition to that "over-man" of whom Nietzsche dreams. This point is one that has already been dealt with in various forms. It rests upon a confusion between abstract ideas and really synthetic principles, and between the function of philosophy as not itself life but a formulation of the principles lying at the basis of life. When Nietzsche goes on to say that art is the true interpreter of life, he is merely stating in another form his objection to the substitution of abstractions for the concrete fulness of experience; and if that substitution were really made by a true philosophy, his conclusion would inevitably follow. No theory of life can do more than bring to light the principles which underlie existence, and therefore art is in one way nearer, though in another way further from, reality than philosophy: nearer, in so far as it embodies the universal in the particular; more remote, because in it the universal is still immersed in the particular. Thus art and philosophy are really complementary; so that it is a mistake to oppose them, as if art must exclude philosophy, and philosophy art. Such an opposition is like that between the unreflective judgments of common sense and the reflective judgments of science; which are not really related as opposites, but only as less and more explicit forms of the same truth.

Nietzsche is no doubt right in protesting against a narrow utilitarianism and an asceticism which finds the last word of morality in an altruism that is identified with self-negation. But when he goes on to affirm that the morality of the past has been entirely on the side of altruism, he



manifestly paints in too glaring colours. We cannot divide history into opposite halves—that in which the claims of the individual were overridden by the might of society, and that in which men shall be liberated from this intolerable yoke and work only for the perfection of the individual. It is no doubt a fatal mistake to regard the individual as merely a means for the perfection of the whole, but it is a much greater mistake to affirm that the individual must seek only to develop himself irrespective of the development of others. Absolute negation of self leads to the encouragement of enormous selfishness in others, while absolute self-assertion must result in fostering enormous selfishness in the individual. The problem of society therefore is to provide for the fullest development of every individual—not of "the greatest number," as the utilitarian formula runs—and that can only be done by the reconciliation of the competing claims of individuals. Nietzsche's protest against the utilitarian and the ascetic ideal is of great value as an assertion of the claims of the spiritual individual; but he does not seem clearly to have realized that those claims are just as incompatible with the passionate self-assertion of the absolute rights of the natural man as with an impossible asceticism. Morality involves a negative as well as a positive element, and the attempt to resolve it into pure self-assertion can only result in its destruction. The "over-man" of Nietzsche is but man as he now is, developed in the direction of the ideal. It is therefore a mistake to condemn the past or the narrow morality of the ordinary good citizen, as if they were the negation of the higher life. There can be no "over-man," if the past has not prepared for the future; and no "over-man" may spurn the ordinary morality of everyday life, which after all contains in its principles that, when they are developed, must carry it on to the widest and highest forms of the spirit. Because



he has neglected this simple truth, Nietzsche has to confess that what the "over-man" is, or how the present man is to be transformed, he does not know; and therefore he falls back upon a faith in the ultimate identity of man with the underlying principle of the universe. That faith is no doubt capable of justification, but not by the fatal method of abstraction upon which Nietzsche has entered; its justification can come only from a philosophy which is able to show that "morality is the nature of things," and that man in the whole course of his history has been ever tending towards a fuller and higher because a more rational life.

In thus affirming the possibility and necessity for the highest life of identification with the divine will, we must be careful to avoid the mistake of Mysticism, which does not really admit the reality of the human will, but regards it as abolished and transcended in the religious consciousness. In the mystic intuition of God all distinctions are supposed to vanish away, including the distinction between the self and God. Thus self-consciousness would disappear, and with its abolition, could it be accomplished, man would not be brought nearer to God, but simply would cease to be. It is only because the mystic thinks of the transcendence of all definite thought as an ascent to a higher state of being, including all that thought fails to grasp, that he believes himself to find in a God who is indistinguishable from pure being a depth of meaning too great for utterance. The false path upon which he has thus blindly entered under the stress of religious emotion, necessarily leads to an inadequate comprehension of human life, and especially to a false conception of evil. Even Christian mystics, though they live in the faith that God is Love, are prone to turn away from active conflict with the evil of the world, and to believe that man attains to the highest religious life in a mystical contemplation of the



eternal. And where mysticism is not modified by the higher positive consciousness of Christianity, evil is regarded as ceasing to have any reality when it is brought into relation with the absolute perfection of God. It is not merely that, from the highest point of view, evil must be viewed as a stage in the evolution of good, but that it ceases to have any reality whatever. What we call evil is held to be simply the inevitable want of true or absolute being which attaches to everything finite. No finite being can possibly be good; and therefore only by such a transcendence of finitude as implies complete absorption in the infinite, can man pass into the true life. Even God cannot transform a being who exists as a self-conscious subject only in virtue of his inherent limitation, into a being free from all limitation, and therefore evil is for such a subject inseparable from his existence.

It is quite in accordance with this fundamental conception of evil as inseparable from individuality, that the mystic tends to regard the association of the soul with the body as necessarily evil. The true life of man being that of identity with the absolute, the earthly life, in which the soul is prevented from realizing its true nature by the body, is regarded as contrary to its true nature. In order to free the soul from the desires which spring from the body, the soul must continually war against them, seeking to suppress the fatal influence by which they drag it down to earthly things, instead of allowing it to soar freely into the pure ether of the eternal. Since the desires are by their nature directed to the preservation of finitude and individuality, they are essentially evil; and therefore only in so far as the soul suppresses their malign influence can any approximation be made to the highest life. Obviously morality, conceived in this way as purely negative, can only be a hopeless struggle with the natural desires, and nothing



can bring the struggle to an end but the complete separation of the soul from the body. Morality can therefore have no meaning except as a conflict in which the soul is ever vainly struggling to free itself from the limitations imposed upon it by the body. At the most this conflict is but a preparation for that complete absorption in the divine, which is the end towards which the soul is ever striving. As morality is the fruitless effort to convert the finite into the infinite, the religious life can only consist in the complete transcendence of all finite interests, and therefore Mysticism logically leads to indifference to morality. Instead of saying that religion reveals the principle which justifies morality, showing it to be in harmony with the nature of things, Mysticism speaks of it as lifting man into a region where it ceases to have any meaning. Thus the moral and the religious life are not only different but essentially discrepant; for the real meaning of morality is the organization of the higher interests of man as a means of realizing his practical ideals, whereas religion, as the mystic conceives of it, consists in devotion to an ideal which has nothing in common with everyday life. To pursue any definite end seems to the mystic to be a method of seeking to perpetuate that divisive self which separates man from God; and therefore man can be religious only as he soars above all limited ends and is immersed in the infinite ocean of absolute being.



## LECTURE TWELFTH.

### EVIL AND ATONEMENT.

THE fundamental difficulty which meets us in regard to evil is, as we have seen, to reconcile its existence with the conclusion that the world is the manifestation of infinite goodness. So great does the difficulty seem that some thinkers have cut the knot by maintaining that we must admit the limitation of the power of God in order to preserve the infinity of his goodness. Moreover, if man's nature is in its essence identical with that of God, how are we to explain the origin of evil in it? And, on the other hand, if man has by nature a bias to evil, how are we to account for this bias without ascribing it to the Creator of man? Nor does it get rid of the difficulty to attribute the existence of evil to some malign external influence, for this influence could not operate unless there were something in the nature of man that caused him to succumb to temptation.

These difficulties have perplexed the religious, and especially the Christian, consciousness for centuries. One method of solution, first definitely put forward as a solution by Augustine, is to say that God created man morally pure and good, endowing him with absolute freedom of choice between good and evil, and that sin had its origin in the transgression of the first man, who, as representative of the whole race, misused his freedom to will evil, and so introduced that bias to evil which has vitiated the whole race.

While the form in which this theory is stated is open to



grave objections, it contains this element of truth: that no individual is free from the influence of the ideas, customs, laws and institutions which constitute the spiritual atmosphere in which he lives; indeed, were he absolutely unaffected by such influences, all progress would be inconceivable. The conception of a first man, it is true, created absolutely perfect and yet capable of willing either good or evil, is a fiction which the progress of modern thought has made incredible. The further we go back in the history of man, the less developed spiritually we find him to be. The process of history exhibits, not the descent from an original state of perfection, but a gradual evolution, in which the later, speaking generally, is higher spiritually than the earlier. But, while this is true, it is none the less true that the development of spirit, in all its forms, is only made possible by the combined reason of the race. Society is from the first the condition of morality in the individual, because morality itself is meaningless except as expressing the relations of individuals to one another. On the other hand, it is only because the individual is capable of comprehending the essential nature of society that the foundation and development of society is possible at all. There is no society except in so far as the individual recognizes, with more or less consciousness, that he is a member in a whole, for which it is his duty and the fulfilment of his nature to work. Thus, on the one hand, society is essential to the spiritual life of the members composing it, and, on the other hand, the individual must recognize his social obligations to be reasonable, or society cannot exist. Society at once imposes its obligations on the individual and is constituted by the individual. Now, the true element in the Augustinian doctrine is the recognition of this union of the individual and the race. No doubt the individual is not a mere passive medium of society, but no individual can



become self-conscious without recognizing himself as under obligation to conform his actions to the ideal of which society is an embodiment. Moreover, society is not constituted once for all, but is the slow growth of a more and more rational comprehension of what a truly organic society is. Thus we may say that the progress of the race is the condition of the progress of the individual. Each stage in that progress brings to light wider and closer bonds of union between the members of society, and, in proportion as society embodies these higher ideas in its structure, the members of which it is composed come to have a higher conception of their duty. On the other hand, as no form of society is a perfect realization of the ideal, it inevitably has an evil side as well as a good. The savage is moral, in so far as he has learned that in subservience to the customs in which his moral ideas are embodied consists his true life ; but the very act of obedience to those customs leads to the commission of acts which from the ideal point of view are evil. And so in all other actual forms of society : in none is there realized that perfect organization which is the fulfilment of the social ideal. In this sense we may say that the individual is good or evil, just in so far as humanity is good or evil. At the same time, we must not forget that each stage of morality involves the free response of the individual, and indeed it is this response which gives it meaning ; so that when the individual has outgrown the existing form of society, the advance to a new stage is inevitable.

From what has been said, it is obvious that moral evil is in no sense something that can be imposed upon the individual from without : it exists only in so far as the phase of morality embodied in society is accepted by its members and conceived to be an expression of their true life. We may therefore say that every stage of society is good, in



the sense that it expresses the highest ideal reached at the time. It is only by reference to a more developed standard that it can be called evil. We condemn savage morality as evil because we contrast it with the more developed morality of civilized life; but, in doing so, we do not mean that it was possible for the savage to anticipate the morality of the civilized man. In this sense we may say that evil is necessary. Each stage of morality is the condition of the succeeding stage, and it is only by a process of abstraction that we think of the individual of a given age as capable of a higher conception of morality than that to which he has actually attained. The spiritual development of man is a process which is as inevitably determined by his spiritual nature as the process of the physical world by the laws operative in it. Therefore, evil is inseparable from the development of society. To suppose that absolute good could be attained at any given stage in the evolution is to suppose that the human spirit could overleap its limits, and anticipate the gradual process by which it learns to understand the world and so to understand itself. Man cannot be said to have been created either as good or evil, because morality exists only as willed by a rational subject. Discarding this obsolete mode of thought, what we must say is, that the spiritual nature of man is the product of a gradual process of evolution, each phase of which is a fresh conquest of the good as compared with that from which it has emerged; while from the point of view of a more advanced stage it is evil. Evil is therefore not the abstract opposite of good, but a lower stage of good. It no doubt at first gives an unpleasant shock to our developed moral consciousness to think of the savage as displaying the highest morality of which he was capable in the torture of the conquered enemy of his tribe; but this is because we are judging him as if he were perversely contravening the



recognized morality of civilized society. That what we call his evil act was the condition of good seems less paradoxical when we consider that he was expressing the solidarity which seemed to him, and at that stage was, essential to his existence and to the discharge of his duties as a member of the tribe. We in our own day do not regard ourselves as immoral, when in war we shoot down the public enemy, because we conceive our act to be essential to all that makes for the highest good of our own nation and indirectly of the world. This fact may reconcile us to the seemingly paradoxical statement, that evil is the condition of good ; not indeed evil recognized as such, but evil that from the point of view of reason is the opposite of good.

It would thus seem to be the very nature of man as a finite being that, in his imperfect apprehension of goodness, he should conceive as good that which from a higher point of view is evil. Starting from the conception of the finitude of man, it may therefore be argued that evil is merely another name for finitude. God, it may be said, is the source of all the positive good in the world, while evil is due to the inherent limitation of the finite. From the side of the infinite, therefore, evil has no positive reality, but is merely the absence of good.

Now, it may be pointed out, firstly, that if the finite, as is assumed, has no being, but is merely the absence of being, we must suppose that the only being is that which is infinite. But an infinite which excludes all finitude is simply the abstraction of pure being, and pure being, when we attempt to think of it in itself, apart from all the determinations that we have rejected as negations, is indistinguishable from pure nothing. Hence, if evil is to be regarded as simply the absence of good, the only good must be that which is absolute. But absolute goodness, as that which excludes all definite forms of goodness, is no more thinkable than an



infinite which is the negation of all finitude. The attempt, therefore, to resolve evil into mere negation can only result in the entire destruction of goodness. Evil is essentially relative to good, and as such it is necessarily determinate. To identify the former with pure negation is at the same time to eliminate the latter.

The whole point of view which leads to the conception of evil as mere privation or negation is based upon an utterly false view of reality. Our knowledge, as we have already argued, does not grow by a process of abstraction, in which, as we advance to a more and more comprehensive notion of the universe, we gradually eliminate the differences of things. If this were a true account of the process, the ultimate object of knowledge would be that of a Being absolutely devoid of all determination; precisely the idea which, as we have seen, results from the conception of the finite as purely negative. But in truth the advance of knowledge at once consists in ever greater differentiation and more perfect unification; so that the infinite must be conceived as infinitely differentiated, not as completely dissolved into abstract being. When therefore it is said that evil is simply the absence of good, we are asked to believe that the good is that in which all the differences involved in evil are eliminated; and this, as we have seen, is the same as saying that the good is destitute of all definiteness. How inadequate such a view is may be seen at once, if we but consider that the less differentiated form of society is also that which is least moral. As civilization develops, so also does the specialization of functions, and at the same time it is just because of this increased differentiation that society becomes more perfectly unified. The ideal of society is that in which each individual shall have freedom and opportunity to develop his special capacities and talents, while yet he works in the spirit of the whole; and



this differentiation of functions is the condition of an organized community in which all participate in the triumphs of each.

Any given stage of moral evolution, then, is evil only when contrasted with a higher stage, though it is never absolutely but only relatively evil. Nevertheless within each stage there is the contrast of evil and good. From this point of view, those acts are evil which contradict the ideal of good recognized by the individual; and only because man has an ideal does he condemn certain acts as evil. The ideal is the true real, and for the individual it expresses his consciousness of God. The wretchedness which is experienced when the ideal is violated is thus the indication of that higher self which expresses what man in his true nature is. Now, it has been held that this contrast of the ideal and the actual is the same contrast as that between action which proceeds from immediate impulse and action which is determined by reason. The former, according to Kant, is the result of natural propensities when they are allowed to operate mechanically; the latter alone is an expression of the free spirit. Thus evil is held to be due to the obstructive influence of the natural desires, whereas goodness consists in conformity to the absolute law of reason. The moral life of man is therefore supposed to be the result of the protracted and ever-renewed conflict of opposite tendencies.

The fundamental defect of this doctrine is its assumption that the natural desires as such can possibly constitute a motive to action. A purely natural desire is no more a motive to action than the external compulsion of physical force. Only as impulse is interpreted by consciousness, and conceived to be an end fitted to realize the nature of man, does it become a motive to action. No impulse can be the motive of a free agent except under this condition.



Thus it is only *sub ratione boni* that man can act at all. What is called the conflict of sense and reason is really the conflict between a lower and a higher mode of self-realization. Evil, therefore, cannot be ascribed to the predominance of sensuous desires, but only to the will. There is no struggle between impulse and reason, but only between those ends which falsely claim to be, and those which really are, rational. In the proper sense of the term the only action—as distinguished from mechanical movements—is that which proceeds from willed ends or motives; and motives are the same thing as the rational subject in action. "Nothing in the world," says Kant, "is absolutely good but a good will;" to which we must add "nor absolutely evil but an evil will." Good and evil are predicates which express the character of the will. The negation of natural desire is not good, or its affirmation evil: good lies solely in the will; and whether the immediate end of a natural desire is good or evil must be determined by its place in the whole spiritual life of man. The unity of the family has a natural basis, but out of this spring "the tender charities of husband, son and brother." Industrial and political life grow out of the natural desires, but in the civil community and the State they are transformed and spiritualized.

Evil, then, has its origin in the will, and the will is undoubtedly the expression of the character. The good will is therefore that in which the ideal or true end of humanity is realized. This does not mean that in realizing the ideal self man is selfish, for the ideal self is that which is inseparable from the social self. In self-realization the subject experiences self-satisfaction, but it is the self-satisfaction which is inseparable from the rational will. The only permanent satisfaction is that which comes from willing the good, and though the willing of the good brings satisfaction, it is not willed simply as a means of satisfaction,



but as an end in itself. The attempt to make the pleasure which results from willing the rational self the object of the will cannot possibly yield the satisfaction aimed at, because it makes the motive of action, not the ideal self, but a self that seeks to be satisfied without realizing the ideal. The philanthropist undoubtedly finds satisfaction in making the good of his kind the object of his will, but if he makes the pleasure that accrues from unselfish devotion the motive of his action, he must necessarily fail in his object, because the satisfaction of philanthropy cannot be secured without being philanthropic, and no man is so who makes philanthropy the means to another end, namely, that of securing pleasure. No act can possibly be attributed to an agent that is not an expression of his will; and therefore to eliminate the relation of the act to the will is to empty it of all moral significance. But though a moral act must be the act of a self, it does not follow that it is a selfish act. Every act involves the conception of self, of an end to be realized, and of determination by the self; and the distinction between a good and a bad act is that between a self which seeks for self-realization in accordance with the rational nature and one which wills a self that is irrational.

The good self is therefore that which is in harmony with the rational will; in other words, that which consists in willing what is in consonance with the divine will; and this again means that which involves the perfect realization of all that is characteristic of man as a rational being. Self-realization does not, however, mean that every individual must perform precisely the same acts. While the self is essentially social, the social self is no abstraction, but that which in fulfilling its special function is contributing to the harmony and perfection of the whole. The scientific man, the artist and the social reformer are at one in seeking



the universal ; but the universal is a concrete ideal, which involves the performance of distinctive acts by each. The same principle is involved in every case. Every individual, however obscure or humble, has his own special function, and fills a place which can be filled by no one else. Nevertheless all good men are agreed in making the universal good their end, differ as they may, and do, in the specific way in which that good is by each sought to be realized. This unselfish devotion to the universal constitutes the religious point of view, for devotion to the good of humanity is at the same time the only possible way in which the finite spirit can be identified with God. Conscious identification with the whole is the only possible morality, and this consciousness, when it involves the willing of the good, with the accompanying idea that in so willing we are realizing the true end of man, is religion.

From what has been said it follows that evil consists in seeking for the satisfaction of our nature in particular, limited or selfish ends. Every evil act involves the willing of an end which is incompatible with the universal self ; every good act in the willing of that which is in harmony with the universal self, the self which reason imposes upon the individual who views himself as a conscious agent of the universal good. The natural desires are evil when their end is made absolute ; they are good when they are willed only as means to the attainment of universal ends. He who uses society as a means of self-gratification wills evil, and his acts recoil upon himself ; for, in making his own separate good his end, irrespective of the injustice and wrong done to others, he shuts himself out from the blessedness that results from that unselfish devotion to the common good which alone is in harmony with the divine will. " He that saveth his life shall lose it ; and he that loseth his life shall save it."



We have seen, then, that moral evil is in this sense the condition of good, that it is in and through the recognition of something as contrary to good that the consciousness of evil arises. It is therefore impossible that man can be wholly and irredeemably evil. A being who was absolutely evil would have no consciousness of evil, because he would have no consciousness of good. Nor would such a being be capable of the slightest progress towards good, for good is possible only for a being who possesses a rational will, and a being without the consciousness of good could not possibly will it. A being absolutely evil could never cease to be evil, no matter what external influence was brought to bear upon him, since nothing could give him the consciousness of good. No being can be either good or evil without self-determination, and therefore he cannot be externally acted upon. How then, we may ask, is the transition from evil to good possible?

What is needed is that the conception of God should not remain a mere conception, but should be actually expressed in a concrete form; and that form, as we have seen, is for us the human. We cannot indeed say that the ideal of perfect humanity contains all that is implied in our idea of God, but we may undoubtedly say that it is the highest embodiment of the divine that we can make the principle of our action. Moreover, the idea of humanity is not a mere abstract conception, formed by elimination of the differences of one man from another, but that of a concrete spiritual being, containing all the perfections of which individual men are capable. Such a conception has been elaborated by the Church in the person of Christ, and in devotion and love for this concrete realization of the ideal may be found the living principle by which the evil of human nature can be transcended. In this divine figure is gathered up and concentrated that comprehensive sympathy and



love for all men, which is fitted to awaken a corresponding sympathy and love. Here we have at once the combination of absolute love and of absolute righteousness. When the individual man is possessed by the spirit of which Christ is the perfect embodiment, he is lifted above himself and made one with God. The Christ which operates in and through the spirit of individuals is God himself, present now, as he has ever been, in the souls of all men, revealing himself in all that makes for the perfect life. Christ after the flesh, the historic person, has passed away, but the Christ of the spirit remains forever, for he is one with that ever-growing life of humanity which consists in the progressive conquest of evil by the living power of goodness. The history of man bears witness to the undying power of this divine spirit, which can never cease to be the indwelling spirit of God shaping human destiny to ever nobler ends. It cannot cease, because it is the end "to which the whole creation moves."

The doctrine of the Incarnation must therefore be understood as implying the indissoluble unity of God and man, not in any external and artificial sense, but as an expression of the essential nature of both. It is but another expression of the principle that God is at once immanent and transcendent. It brings to light the divine element which is involved in the nature of man, and the human element inseparable from the nature of God. If we start from an abstract or dualistic opposition of God and man, there is no possibility of reconciling the one with the other. It is no solution of the problem to say that as a finite being man is the opposite of God, and therefore that the union of God and man is a mysterious and inexplicable dogma which we must accept on the basis of some external authority. If this were true, the union would not only be inexplicable, but self-contradictory. The limits of our knowledge are



only too obvious, but whatever they are, they can never make credible the combination of two ideas, one of which is the negation of the other. If there is no infinite element in human nature, the doctrine of the Incarnation must be pronounced a mere fiction of the pious imagination. The history of this doctrine is full of significance. The understanding, with its exclusive categories, conceives of God and man as possessing absolutely antagonistic natures—God being infinite, man finite; God absolutely holy, man absolutely evil; and many attempts have been made to perform the impossible feat of showing that after all the union of these opposites is not impossible.

The different views of the Incarnation which have been advanced correspond to the various conceptions of God which we have already examined. In the first place, we have the deistic view, which rejects the conception of Christ whose nature is fundamentally different from our own, and therefore, while admitting that there is a very real and intimate relation of the mind and will of Christ to the mind and will of God, denies that Christ is identical in nature with God. A kindred view is that which seeks to bring God nearer to man by holding that the eternal Logos, or Son of God, by an act of self-limitation took upon himself a real and veritable human nature. There is also a modification of this view, according to which it is held that God, without surrendering his divine nature, veiled it under the form of humanity. In contrast to these theories, which seek to make the union of the divine and human natures in one person conceivable by approximating the former to the latter, stands the doctrine that in Christ the divine spirit informed a human organism.

None of these theories really does anything to solve the initial difficulty, that the divine nature is conceived as



abstract opposite, and therefore as necessarily exclusive of, the human. But this abstract opposition, as we have argued, is itself untenable. Man and God are not in their essence contradictory of each other. Unless the human spirit is capable of union with the spirit of God it cannot realize itself. This union must not be conceived as in any sense the abolition of the distinction between God and man. Nothing exists for a self-conscious subject except in so far as he brings to consciousness that which is implicit in his own nature. Now, we have seen that this is possible only because both in nature and in man the divine spirit is immanent. Apart from God neither has any reality, and therefore man, in comprehending the laws of nature and in coming to the consciousness of himself, at the same time comes to the consciousness of God. In our ordinary mind we think of identity as mere self-sameness; but, as we saw in considering the sense in which we can speak of our own self-identity, this is an utterly inadequate mode of conception. True identity is unity in difference. Hence to speak of the divine and human natures as identical by no means abolishes the distinction between them. Man is identical with God because he is a rational subject, not because the immanence of God in him abolishes his individuality. Under the imperfect conception of creation we think of man as projected out of God, or as formed out of a pre-existent material by the shaping activity of God, as the sculptor shapes a block of marble. But, when we discard this inadequate mode of conception, we find that for this external productive or formative activity must be substituted the idea of God as present spiritually in the soul of every man, and therefore as capable of being comprehended by every man. Thus, we must conceive of the relation of man to God as one which involves the independent individuality of each, but an individuality which implies



the distinction and yet the unity of both. Man is most truly himself when he recognizes that in all things he is dependent upon God, and that he can only truly comprehend his own nature by conceiving it as in essence identical with that of God. In the conscious recognition that only in God is man truly himself ; that only in giving up his divisive will and living in the spirit of God can he realize his ideal self in this conscious identification of himself with God, man transcends his finite personality and lives a divine life. To the infinite intelligence and will of God man can surrender himself, because in God he finds that perfection and completeness which in all his thought and action he is striving to reach. Here there is no blind surrender to an external authority, but a conscious identification with the highest and best of which he is capable. Thus the religious life consists in the conscious identification of man's thought and will with the thought and will of God. On the other hand, this identification would be impossible, were it not that God is present in our spirit as its deepest essence. On another supposition, there would be no possibility of man rising to the consciousness of God. The union of man and God is therefore not something accidental and arbitrary, nor does it obliterate human freedom and individuality. Man is not the passive medium for the display of the divine power ; if he were, he would no more be an agent than the stone that falls to the earth in accordance with the law of gravitation. It is only so far as, through union with God, he realizes the true purpose of his being, that man comes to a full recognition of his own nature. Perfect union with God is no doubt an ideal only imperfectly realized, a goal towards which humanity is slowly advancing ; nevertheless it is no fiction, but a fact to which nature and history unerringly point. This ideal the Church has embodied in the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ, in whom



the perfect union of divine and human is held to be embodied, thus expressing as realized that which is only in process of realization; and the Church has ever refused any compromises that have been suggested on the basis of the essential antagonism in nature of God and man.

Sin, it has been held, can only be forgiven after the punishment inexorably demanded by the transgression of divine law has been undergone. This punishment took the form of the sufferings and death of Christ, and thus the way has been opened up by which man may receive the divine forgiveness by appealing to the satisfaction of divine justice undergone with a view to his salvation.

The main defect in this doctrine is its confusion between sin and crime. These are in their nature fundamentally different. Crime, as I have already argued,<sup>1</sup> is a violation of the personal rights of another, and as an offence against the external order of the State, it must be expiated by an external punishment. No doubt that punishment is at once preventive, educational and retributive. It tends to prevent the commission of unjust acts by awakening in men the consciousness that they are all members one of another, and bringing home to them the idea that crime is worthy of punishment, while it is also a vindication of the higher social self against the lower individual self. But the State cannot by means of punishment transform the inner being of the citizens, creating in them a new heart; all that it can do is to vindicate the majesty of the law, and forcibly prevent the commission of crime or lead to its voluntary diminution. Sin, on the other hand, is not merely a violation of rights, but a desecration of the ideal nature of the sinner, the willing of himself as in his true nature he

<sup>1</sup> Vol. I., p. 121.



is not. Since, therefore, external punishment may not lead to the transformation of the inner nature of man, it is an ineffective weapon in the conversion of man to a real consciousness of himself. What is required is the creation in him of a new consciousness, well called a "new birth," a consciousness which reveals to him the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the blessedness which springs from a realization of the higher life. In man, by virtue of the divine principle which is one with his deepest self, the consciousness of God is bound up with the consciousness of himself, and he cannot do violence to the one without doing violence to the other. Hence God is not a judge, allotting punishment according to an external law, but the perfectly Holy Being, by reference to whom man condemns himself. The aim of religion is not simply the preservation of the social order, but the regeneration of the individual soul. It deals with the inner nature of man, not merely with the result of his act upon society; and hence, unless it transforms and spiritualizes him, it entirely fails of its end. God cannot be properly conceived as a sovereign who lays down laws the violation of which brings punishment, but only as a Being of infinite love. It is his very nature to communicate himself to his creatures, whom he loves with an infinite love, and in whom only He can realize his own blessedness. Man can only be saved from sin by realizing in his life the self-communicating spirit of God. In taking upon himself the burden of the race, he lives a divine life. The destruction of all those selfish desires which are hostile to his true nature, and the unreserved surrender of himself to the good of all, is the secret which Jesus expressed and which he realized in his life. Nothing that belongs to a man—neither capacities, talents, opportunities nor even life itself—is his to be used for individual ends; and in the practical realization of this faith consists the religious life.



A devotion to the service of infinite goodness, which springs from the consciousness that only in the life of self-sacrifice does man realize his ideal nature, is the true atonement ; and complete acceptance of this principle, with the consequent condemnation of a life polluted by the least taint of sin, is the genuine mark of piety. Sin cannot be atoned for by another, because no one can create a new heart in another by discharging the obligations which the other has failed to fulfil, and the salvation of man is not possible without the complete surrender of the individual to God. The very essence of the religious life is incompatible with the idea of an external transference of goodness from one being to another. Regeneration cannot be thus arbitrarily conferred upon man ; its very essence is the transformation of the whole man into the likeness of Christ. Man can be reconciled with God in no other way than by an absolute surrender of himself to a life in God. To assimilate this spiritual act to a commercial or a legal transaction is to destroy the very idea of the religious life, which consists in active participation in the life of love. No doubt the results of this life are good even from the lower point of view of the benefits which follow in its train, but these are not the motives of that life, which can only exist when it is by itself the sole and absolute end. It is true that under the moral order in which we live, the innocent suffer for the guilty. This, however, is not the same thing as saying that moral purity or moral guilt can be transferred from one person to another. No action can be attributed to an agent which does not proceed from his will. Whether the action is good or evil, its moral quality belongs entirely to the agent. Hence the necessity of "faith," and the meaning of the doctrine of "justification by faith." No mere belief in goodness can be of any avail in effecting a transformation of our life. Such a faith involves the entire



surrender of the self to a life of love. If we are right in holding that the self-conscious recognition of God is essential to a true recognition of one's self, it is obvious that faith is an indispensable element in the religious life. Not even God can forgive sin in the case of a man who has not repented of his sin and actively entered upon the path of goodness. It is true that man cannot demand as a right the forgiveness of sin, for no merit accrues from doing what is demanded by the spiritual nature ; yet faith is not separable from the love of God, but essentially correspondent to it. No amount of suffering can be bartered for forgiveness which must be an act of " free and unmerited grace " in this sense, that it can be bestowed only on the man who discards all pretence of giving an equivalent for sin, and throws himself upon the love of God. Nor can a man by mere wishing bring himself into the frame of mind which leads to forgiveness ; he can only have faith by rising to the full consciousness of the nature of God. As this consciousness implies the identification of the individual will with the ideal of goodness, there is no real faith which does not issue in good acts. It is not possible to transfer goodness in any external way ; for that would mean that by some magical process a man was forgiven without any change of heart. Faith is therefore identification with the principle of goodness, a complete surrender of the soul to God, renunciation of all selfish interests, and the persistent endeavour after the ideal of the perfect life. The complete transformation of the self, as involving the abandonment of all merely private interests, is the essence of the religious consciousness ; and though this ideal is never completely realized, it is ever in process of realization by him whose life " is hid with Christ in God." This principle of faith is the " promise and potency " of the consummately holy life, a principle which must ultimately subdue to itself all the



selfish desires which war against the ideal. Thus, in the midst of conflict, and even in the agony of a temporary relapse from goodness, the religious man is lifted above the storm and stress of a growing moral life, and experiences the blessedness and peace of perfect reconciliation with God.



## LECTURE THIRTEENTH.

### THE INVISIBLE CHURCH AND IMMORTALITY.

EVIL, as we have seen, marks the transition by which man advances to good, and in this sense it is a necessary condition of good. This transition cannot but take place, because man's true nature is that towards which he is progressing, not his first or original nature. In man the spirit of God is immanent, and, when he comes to a clear consciousness of himself, he learns that only in identity with that spirit can he overcome the evil in the world and in himself. The process by which man comes into union with God is not one which belongs purely to the individual but is made possible only by the combination of men in society. Thus we are led to think of the religious life as the realization in a community or church of the divine spirit. Nothing short of the complete spiritualization of every member of the community can be the perfect realization of that spirit. It is not enough that man should conform outwardly to certain customary observances, or even to recognized moral precepts and social laws ; but all must be done with the full co-operation of the individual, though not necessarily with an explicit comprehension on his part of the rational basis of those observances, precepts and laws. We must therefore be careful to distinguish between the church as a special organization and the true or invisible church, as composed of all who aid in the never-ceasing warfare of good with evil. This warfare can only be carried



on by the united efforts of all men. The religious life is essentially social, because it consists in the identification of one's own good with the common weal, and the promotion of the common weal is possible only by identification of the individual will with the will of God. But, while the will of God is the ideal and the motive power in which man must ever live and strive, that will is practically embodied in all the agencies which help him to realize his true nature. One of these agencies is the church as a special organization expressly devoted to the uplifting of humanity. But even when the spirit of Christ is the spring and motive power of this organization, it is not co-extensive with that higher or invisible church, which must be identified with the Kingdom of the Spirit. The invisible church comprehends the whole of life. Whatever tends to spiritualize and elevate human nature makes for a clearer and fuller revelation of the essential unity and harmony of man and God. The whole process of civilization is therefore a process of spiritualization. Beginning in the endeavour to satisfy the natural wants, man, unexpectedly to himself, stumbles upon a higher good. His desires seem at first sight to be purely natural, but they result in the formation of the family, the industrial community, the State. The work of that rational spirit which constitutes the essential nature of man is therefore to build up social and political institutions, which free him from the tyranny of his immediate impulses and make him a member of a whole larger than his individual self. Within this whole are developed in progressive measure the circle of the natural sciences, with their applications to practical life; the fine arts, which reveal the principles that are involved in all modes of being, and which come to their clearest expression in the life of man; the philosophical sciences, which trace out the spiritual filaments that connect all modes of being in the unity of a



single organic whole. If we ask, where then is religion in all this development of secular interests? we must answer not here or there, and not in any transcendent region beyond the world, but now and everywhere. Religion is life in the spirit, and the spirit specialises itself in all the agencies which tend to uplift humanity. To identify the divine spirit with any or all of the imperfect forms in which it is partially realized in particular religious bodies is to destroy its infinite comprehensiveness. In that case the church is falsely opposed to the world, the sacred to the secular, the clergy to the laity. In the invisible church all such oppositions are transcended. It is the embodiment of all the ways and instruments by which man is helped to overcome the evil tendency to selfish isolation; and what is contrasted with this spiritual organism as the world is all that tends to confirm man in his evil tendencies. Hence we must not regard the true church as giving any countenance to self-mortification for its own sake. Asceticism is based on the false notion that man's end in life is simply to free himself from the influence of the natural desires, not to transmute them into spiritual motives. This conception of life is really a form of individualism. It makes the salvation of the individual soul in its isolation the end, not identification with the universal good; and it virtually stigmatizes the world, and especially the nature of man, as essentially and ineradicably so evil that his whole endeavour must be to modify or destroy the essential nature which God has given him. Nothing which belongs to the nature of man can be regarded as common or unclean, and a genuine religion must therefore seek to grasp the spiritual meaning implicit in all the desires, and to employ it in the furtherance of the higher life. In the history of man the extension and organization of trade and commerce, and the improvement of the instruments of production and distribution, have tended to



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bring men into closer and more sympathetic intercourse. The formation of political organizations has also been an indispensable means for securing this end, because, though these may in some cases tend to a narrow exclusiveness which regards all other nations as enemies, they yet generate a spirit of patriotism that lifts the citizen above his petty personal interests and unites him in the closest bonds to his fellow-citizens. And within each nation, there are influences which tend to bring men together in a more comprehensive organism than that of nationality. Science recognizes no national limits. The disinterested search for truth leads men more and more to recognize that rational structure which constitutes what Hegel calls the "diamond net" of the universe. "Thinking God's thoughts after him," in Kepler's phrase, men of science aid the religious mind to enter into communion with God. Especially in the history of man the divine spirit makes itself visible in the rise and fall of nations, and in the steady progress of man in the arts of self-government. In this expansion and elevation of man's spiritual horizon fine art also plays a very important part. Not merely in poetry but in the other arts, and especially in music, man is freed from the obscurities which custom and convention are apt to engender, and learns to contemplate the outward world and human life as they appear to the penetrative eye of genius. The true artist lives in the infinite and eternal, and makes it visible to us in sensible form. Thus his creations combine with science and religion to reveal the deeper realities on which our life is founded. Science, art and religion are all essential to the complete development of humanity, and the perfection of any one of them is made possible only by the perfection of the others. It is indeed possible to be a scientific man without appreciation of the nature and value of art; nor is the artist always pious, or the pious man necessarily



enlightened or artistic ; but for the full stature of manhood, science, art and religion must each in its own way contribute to the perfection of the whole. In any case, no one, even if he would, can separate himself from the influence of all three. Our whole life is saturated with the results of science ; our very language and ideas have been formed by the poet and artist ; and from the influence of Christianity no one can escape, even though he may in words proclaim himself a disbeliever in its truth. The complete realization of the spirit demands that science, art and religion should not be rivals but fellow-workers. Their perfect synthesis is no doubt still an ideal, but it is an ideal which at every step in the onward march of humanity throws its light forward on the path to be traversed ; and no one who believes in the essential rationality of the world and of man can doubt that, in spite of the confusion and unrest and ferment of our time, we are really laying the foundation for a closer union of science, art and religion, and therefore for the better reconciliation of the intellect, the heart and the imagination.

Such a consummation cannot be attained by any merely external means. The invisible church is not a community of slaves but of free men, and therefore men must be allowed freedom of action, even if it leads immediately to much evil. In no other way can a spiritual community be developed. The divine spirit cannot be externally imposed upon men. Compulsion and freedom are incompatible, and not less incompatible are compulsion and spirituality. For this reason the invisible church cannot be established once for all, and its lineaments fixed for all time. It is indeed eternal ; but its eternity is that of a living, growing and developing organism, which never loses its identity, and yet is perpetually undergoing change. The invisible church had its beginning in the first gleam of the higher life that



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## THE INVISIBLE CHURCH

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presented itself to the obscure vision of primitive man, and it can never perish, because it is the expression of the divine spirit as it works in the inner being of man. This ideal church cannot have a rigid and unbending creed, just because of that abounding life and movement which are its characteristics; but, on the other hand, the principle upon which it is based can only suffer development, never complete abrogation. That principle is the essential identity of man and God—a principle which is ever receiving a deeper and wider application, but which always preserves the same fundamental character.

Nor again can the invisible church have a fixed and unchanging ritual. As its fundamental principle is the essential identity of the human and divine natures, any symbolical acts which are fitted to body forth this truth may be employed as a means of educating the young and reminding the mature of this central idea. We must not overlook the danger that besets all forms of ceremonial—the danger that, while in their first institution they are of service in symbolizing the life of the spirit, they may degenerate into a dead and lifeless routine. From this danger we may partly be saved by contemplating the total sphere of art as the only perfectly adequate symbolism of the invisible church. The question of the particular medium in which the religious consciousness may most fitly express itself is sometimes placed upon a narrow and untenable basis. Those who would exclude all forms of symbolism but those employed by a particular ecclesiastical organization, sometimes speak of the traditional ritual as if it were in a peculiar sense a divine revelation, carrying with it a unique and peculiar sanction, and therefore inseparable from the religious life. This whole mode of thought converts religion into a sort of mystical thaumaturgy, and removes it beyond the sphere of rational criticism, making no other



attitude than that of blind acceptance possible for the individual. It is therefore the natural view of those who believe in the absolute authority of the visible church, which they regard as the divinely appointed custodian both of ritual and dogma. In his peculiar theory of development Cardinal Newman contended that it is the function of the church to interpret and expound the rudiments of truth expressed in the sacred writings, while it is the one and only duty of the believer to accept without question the dogmas decreed by the Church. So, as we must suppose, all the changes in the form of worship that have been from time to time decreed are the result of the divinely guided progressive insight of the church, and are therefore the only channels of divine grace. It need hardly be said that the conception of religion to which we have been led is no more compatible with this mystical conception of ritual than with Newman's view that the doctrines of the church are by their sanctity sheltered from all rational criticism. The church is assumed to be the only depository of religious truth, having derived its authority directly from God himself. Such an identification of the church with a particular ecclesiastical organization obscures the truth, that the only church which can possibly guarantee truth is the invisible church, the spirit that works in humanity as a whole. The contrast is indeed so marked that what the visible church has in some cases condemned, the invisible church has endorsed and what the one has endorsed, the other has condemned. The only defence of any form of religious ritual must therefore be its adequacy to express in symbol the emotions and ideas of the religious soul. While it would be a mistake to say that the ritual of the visible church has been of no service in ministering to the life of the spirit, it is a mistake not less fatal to limit symbolism entirely to that ritual. If the invisible church is the spirit that is continually working in



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all forms of human endeavour, leading through conflict and controversy, and even through blood and tears, to an ever fuller comprehension of God, the true symbolism of the spirit cannot be identified with the limited and inadequate symbolism embodied in the traditional ritual. From the earliest time of which we have any knowledge man bodied forth his religious ideas in visible form. But the symbolism employed by him in his worship of the divine was only one of the ways in which his artistic activity was expressed. The totem of primitive man was a symbol of a very crude type, but it at least shows that man naturally expresses his religious emotions in an artistic form. In the history of Greek religion, again, art was inevitably employed, because the religious ideas of the Greeks were based upon the conception of the divine as manifested especially in the beautiful plastic shapes of their anthropomorphic gods. Nor with the advent of Christianity did art cease to be employed in the service of religion, though it was forced to find a more spiritual mode of expressing religious emotion. So long as it was only employed in the expression of the traditional ideas of the visible church, art was necessarily limited in its range of subjects ; but this limitation tended to disappear when the modern world was ushered in by the revival of letters, which was equally a revival of the free artistic spirit of Greek antiquity. With the Reformation there came the tendency to reject art as inconsistent with the spirituality of religion, and even to reduce the ceremonial of the church to as bald and inartistic a form as seemed compatible with the symbolization of the truths embodied in the creed. This tendency no doubt partly sprung from an exaggeration of the truth that, as religion consists essentially in the inner life of the soul, it is fatal to identify it with any outward ceremonial, which may easily become mechanical ; but it is also partly based upon the fallacy



that art is merely an imitation of the visible and sensible and therefore is incompatible with the nature of God's spirit. When, however, it is seen that art is really an expression of the spirit, since spirit is manifested in all forms of being, it becomes obvious that art is not the foe, but the friend of religion, bringing to light an aspect of the divine nature that cannot otherwise be represented at all. The complete expression of the religious consciousness—which, as we have seen, is at once a life, a creed and a ritual—must therefore include artistic expression, as well as the good life and an adequate theology. The religion which excludes beauty is necessarily of an abstract character. In order to comprehend all that is implied in the divine life, art, religion and science must co-operate; and while nothing can be a substitute for the absence of a personal consciousness of the divine, the full stature of the religious life also demands its embodiment in art as well as its theoretical expression in a theology or philosophy of religion.

In considering the progressive development of religion it is of the utmost importance that we should not underestimate the influence of the community or invisible church upon the religious life of the individual. Without the spiritual atmosphere into which he is born, and which encompasses the whole of his life, man would not be a spiritual being at all. Now this atmosphere is no creation of any individual and therefore it can never be the task of any individual to create an absolutely new religion, though it may well be his function to purify and develop it to a higher stage. The main object of the ordinary man is to rise to the level of the religious consciousness of his time. There seems therefore to be no good reason why every individual should experience that poignancy of distress which is apt to overshadow the life of the individualist in religion, especially when, as in the case of such men as Bunyan, it is combined



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with a passionate intensity of feeling that readily passes over into an abnormal and hardly sane remorse. It is partly as a revolt from this half-superstitious form of piety that such recent developments of the religious life as that of "Christian Science" must be explained; combined, no doubt, with an unscientific distortion of facts of the sensitive life. Nevertheless, we must not underrate the importance of that "new birth," which the religious life necessarily implies; for, though in those who have been trained in a Christian community, and have lived in a spiritual atmosphere which insensibly promotes the transition from the first or natural state of man to a higher stage, the consciousness by the individual of personal sin as a violation of his spiritual nature cannot as a rule reach the intensity of those whose "new birth" has the appearance of being an entire inversion of their whole past life; yet religion is impossible without the consciousness of sin, of the infinite distance between man as a natural being and God, and of the necessity for a complete "change of mind." The divine spirit must be consciously realized by the individual as the essential and indispensable condition of his regeneration. The spirit of God must be present in and to the spirit of man. But this identification of the human and the divine will must not be conceived either as a pure act of the individual will or as the compulsion of the divine will acting externally upon the individual will, but as the free response of the individual spirit to the spirit of God. This is what the church has called "faith," and "faith," as we have seen, by its very nature must be expressed in action. Thus religion is the divinely inspired will of man as expressing itself in all that makes for the higher life. Religion cannot be divorced from truth, beauty and goodness without losing its essential nature. What is called faith then becomes mere credulity, the ideas which rule the life a superstition,



and worship the mechanical observance of an unmeaning ritual.

While a philosophy of religion cannot take the place of living personal religion, it yet is of great value in so far as not only formulates the principles underlying the religious consciousness, but frees the individual from that confusion of thought which is the fruitful mother of superstition and intolerance. A clear grasp of the inseparable connection of religion with science, art and morality, leading to a perception of the essential difference between a dead and a vital faith and of the symbolical and relative character of all ritualistic observances, tends to make man's life a systematic whole. No doubt a mere theoretical acquaintance with these distinctions will not of itself supply motive power to the religious life ; but, in combination with and as part of that education of the spirit which is always going on in a civilized society, it is at least a safeguard against foolish and irrational experiments in living, and a reinforcement and intensification of the spiritualizing influences of a more or less Christianized community. In furtherance of these influences, the development of science and philosophy is of great importance ; for science, as we have reason to conclude, reveals to us the rational structure of the world, a structure which only seems mechanical when the spiritual principle which it presupposes is overlooked. There can be no truly moral law which ignores the inviolability of natural law ; and a religion that is opposed to morality is a perversion of that which properly understood is higher. Thus science, morality and religion are not antithetical spheres, but are in perfect harmony with one another ; and if science ever seems to contradict morality and religion, it is religion to be independent of science and morality, it is only because neither is understood as it really is. This at least is the result of the philosophy of religion as I understand it.



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It is of the utmost importance to recognize that, while the development of man involves an ever clearer realization of the divine spirit, that development can only take place through the efforts of man as a self-determining individual. To assume that, because the course of events is a process in which there is increasing spirituality, we may therefore safely leave all things to the divine spirit, is entirely to misread the essential nature of what is usually called providence. It is no doubt true that good must be more powerful than evil; but the reason is not that, whatever man does, everything as it is said is "overruled" for good, so that the divine purpose will realize itself as well in a Catiline or a Borgia as through the self-denying efforts of the greatest philanthropist. The divine purpose will of a certainty be realized, but only because men are not all Catilines or Borgias, but are, in spite of their mistakes and stumblings and sins, on the whole acting under the ideal of the good. The idea that we may neglect our social duties because the divine will must be realized, whatever comfort it may bring to those whose piety is of a sentimental and rather effeminate sort, is fundamentally false and irreligious. The Kingdom of God is not to be won without violence. Christianity is not a matter of vague emotion; it gives no countenance to the idea that "whatever is is right," but insists upon the necessity of a crusade against all misery, evil and injustice.

Nor is religion to be regarded as offering a bribe for obedience to moral law, whether the bribe is that of success in this life, or the expectation of felicity hereafter. That which is right must be done, not because of any external advantage attaching, or supposed to be attaching to it, but because it is the essential nature of man to work for the realization of that ideal which never entirely vanishes from the soul of even the most depraved. Only by "erecting



himself above himself" can man truly realize himself and therefore the process of regeneration is not a thing that may be postponed to another world, but must constitute the business of life here and now. The idea that happiness here or hereafter, is a reward for virtue is an absolutely immoral principle; nay, it is logically even worse than that for it is in essence a self-contradiction. If man does what is right, not because he regards that way of acting as demanded by his ideal of himself, but from some other motive, he does not really will the good, but something else, for the attainment of which the good is only a means. No selfish end can be good, and therefore action the spring of which is the desire for a reward cannot possibly be good. This is not to say that the good has nothing to do with willing the means by which self-satisfaction may be obtained; but the self-satisfaction must be that which is identified with spiritual well-being. The hedonistic theory of life confuses this spiritual well-being, which cannot be separated from the good, with the pursuit of particular means of personal satisfaction, being apparently unable to see that to make the attainment of such satisfaction the end is either to subordinate the good to pleasure or to confuse pleasure with that spiritual well-being, which is ready to forego all pleasure if only it may be attained. What really underlies the idea of a morality, the motive for which is the hope of reward or the fear of punishment, is the tacit conviction that good must in the long run prevail over evil, and therefore that even as a matter of policy it is better to be on its side. But if it is really true, as it is, that morality must prove stronger than evil, it can only be because, living in a rational universe, man cannot be permanently satisfied with anything less than rational action. Thus, in a half-blind way, the idea that virtue is more profitable than vice, justice than injustice, is a virtual confession that the good



is really to be valued because it is the only expression of man's true self.

If this view of morality is sound, the future world must not be conceived mainly as a place where every man is to be rewarded or punished according to his deeds. That which is contrary to the very nature of morality cannot be realized anywhere. If men are to be rewarded or punished in a future life, not according to their spiritual condition, but by the external imposition of rewards or punishments in proportion to their outward acts, we must suppose that what is right and good here ceases to be so in a future world. In this life the reward of virtue is the spiritual condition of the agent ; and it is an entire perversion of religion to suppose that in a future life it is not the inner state of the agent, but a certain class of acts, no matter what may be the motive for doing them, that determines human destiny. If it were really so, we must suppose the present world to be fundamentally irrational and antimoral ; for certainly in this world no one can be made moral by means of a system of rewards and punishments, however cunningly contrived that system may be. It is only man's inextinguishable belief in the triumph of goodness that gives to the idea of external rewards and punishments its persuasive force ; and those who make use of this method of interpretation practically employ the rhetorical arts of the Greek Sophists, who, by over-accentuating one element in the total conception of morality, were able to " make the worse appear the better reason." By dwelling upon what is called " the success " of the wicked, it seems as if this world were on the whole the kingdom of the devil ; and thus the pious mind, firmly convinced that good must somehow and somewhere be triumphant, postpones its triumph to another world, and speaks of it as the final success of the good and the defeat of the wicked. It seems to be forgotten that,



if this world is essentially evil, it cannot be the creation of a good God. Thus religion is really sought to be saved by starting from a basis of virtual atheism. Nor is it any real answer to say that in a future life the proper balance of good and evil will be secured; for, if the whole process of the world as we know it is a descent from comparative goodness to evil, or at least is not an ascent from comparative evil to goodness, why should we suppose that the whole nature of things will be suddenly and fundamentally changed?

Religion is the principle that provides the basis for morality by justifying our belief in the reality of goodness. Whatever the apparent triumph of evil may be, it does not overthrow the faith of the religious man that the good is sure to prevail and is prevailing. Thus faith is not a mere "pious imagination," or a belief to which men cling in desperation, notwithstanding the weight of evidence to the contrary, but, as I have tried to show, the only hypothesis which will account for all the facts. We are all conscious of impulses that war against the good, but we refuse to admit that these are our true self, and therefore we do not admit that evil is the real nature of things. This profound faith in goodness as our own true self must not be confused with the antinomian fallacy, that we may do evil and yet remain unaffected in the inmost centre of our being. For action, as the expression of will, is the man himself, and no casuistry can convert an evil action into good. On the other hand, no evil act is the expression of man's real will, which is always, as Plato argued, directed towards the good, and indeed the firm conviction that in willing evil man is not willing his true self is the mainspring of the good will. If one were convinced that in its inmost essence his will is evil, all his endeavours after good would be completely paralyzed. Why should he make the attempt to realize an ideal which by the very constitution of human nature



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he knows to be incapable of realization? On such a supposition, no single step towards goodness is possible; and his life, even if we could suppose him to be tantalized by the vision of an impossible goodness, would be a heart-breaking struggle to subdue the ineradicable evil of his nature. Nor could even omnipotence aid him in this abortive struggle, for not even omnipotence could convert absolute evil into goodness. On the other hand, to the man who is inspired with the vision of the intrinsic power of the good to overcome the evil will, nothing short of a perfectly good will can bring permanent satisfaction. Therefore his faith in the reality of goodness enables him, in all his struggles with the evil in him and without him, to preserve his serenity, certain as he is that he is a "fellow-worker with God," so long as he is true to his own deeper self.

In the whole of our discussion of the relations of man and God, we have been endeavouring to show that man in his true, ideal or essential nature partakes of the nature of God. It is true that while he grasps the principles which are manifested in the world, and especially the ultimate principle which gives meaning to all the others, he yet cannot completely realize the infinite wealth of the divine nature. His life is a process in which there is a continual realization of the ideal, that leaves it in its perfection still unrealized. It would therefore seem to follow that unless the ideal of humanity is little more than a fiction, deluding man into a continual search for what can never be realized, there must be an eternal progress in knowledge, art and morality, leading to an ever clearer and fuller comprehension of God. A comprehension of the principles of reality, it is true, brings man into essential relation and communion with God; but all eternity would seem to be required to give opportunity for progress in the knowledge of God and for approximation to his infinite perfection.



In the comprehension of principles I think we may fairly say that of all the beings known to us man is unique. While, on the one hand, he is an individual finite object limited in space and time, yet he alone is capable of transcending the limits of his individuality and contemplating all things, including himself, from a universal point of view. It is this peculiar and distinctive power which makes him akin to God. Now, the intelligence which can in this way rise to a universal point of view is obviously in a sense, as Plato said of the philosopher, "a spectator of all time and of all existence." Those objects which in immediate experience present themselves as a number of particular things in space and of events which succeed one another in time are taken out of their spatial and temporal order and contemplated as particular instances of laws, which no doubt have a spatial and temporal application, but which in themselves are eternal and unchangeable. Every principle which is grasped by the intelligence is conceived as beyond the changes and fluctuations of finite things. The laws of nature and of human history certainly have no meaning except as statements of the eternal constitution of the physical world and of the process of life and mind, but these laws apply, not at one time only, but at all times. The intelligence which is capable of comprehending a law is thereby shown to be unaffected by the limitations of space and time. Man, in virtue of his power of discovering the inviolable principles of existence, is on that side of his nature a universal intelligence. Moreover, in the process of knowledge not only does man learn to comprehend the world, but he learns to comprehend himself. We have seen reason to believe that the world is in its minutest fibre a rational system, in which nothing is there by chance and in which each element is relative to a whole without which it could not be. It is, indeed, only in so far as the world



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is such a system that it can be understood at all. Thus the principles that our intelligence finds to be involved in the universe are at the same time principles of the intelligence itself. In truth, the intelligence can comprehend the world only because it has in itself the same principles as are manifested in the world. But progress in the knowledge of the world can never come to an end, and therefore it would seem that we must affirm that the intelligence of man is also eternal. What is true of knowledge is no less true of morality. In the moral life man is continually realizing an ideal which yet is never completely realized. With the attainment of one stage of moral progress, a new problem presents itself, and the solution of this problem leads to another. We can therefore say that the moral life is essentially an unending process. On the other hand, just because it is a process, man is moral only because he is capable of grasping the eternal principles of goodness. Hence in his moral life he is, as in the intellectual life, in unity with the infinite and eternal. These considerations seem to show that nothing less than eternity can afford adequate scope for the development of man's intellectual and spiritual life. In struggle and conflict man has gradually attained to a measure of knowledge and morality, and it does not seem credible that all this toil and pain and strife should be suddenly cut short for ever.

No doubt it may be objected that these considerations do not necessarily involve more than the conclusion that the continuance and progressiveness of the human race as a whole is highly probable. It is only by the united action of men that any advance is made, and it may even be argued that the sacrifice of the individual is essential to the development of the whole.

Now it is certainly true that progress is possible only by the association of individuals and the division of functions ;



and it is also true that in this process the individual is often sacrificed. The Greek state in its best days made extraordinary progress in all the arts of civilization, but that progress was conditioned by the institution of slavery which set the citizens free to devote themselves to art, politics and religion. So in modern society, as at present constituted, the lower classes must toil and suffer many privations, in order that the development of science, art and philosophy may be secured. It thus seems as if the universe were of such a nature that only by the greater or less sacrifice of individuals can any progress be made.

These considerations, however, are not by any means conclusive as against the belief in individual, as distinguished from corporate immortality. The institution of slavery in ancient times may have been necessary to the highest results of Greek civilization, and the toil of millions in modern times may be the condition of the highest results but as time goes on it becomes more and more apparent that the true nature of man demands the conscious personal participation of all the members of society in its highest triumphs, if society is itself to develop the ideal of a completely organized community. In the political sphere this has come to be more and more recognized. It is not enough that the well-being of each should be secured but every citizen must *consciously participate* in the process by which it is secured. Thus we recognize that, just as slavery was a violation of the fundamental rights of every man to freedom, so it is a fundamental right of every man to share in the government of his country. True, the individual man cannot be at once workman, artist and thinker ; division of employments is indispensable to the highest results of society ; but an intelligent interest in and comprehension of the higher products rendered possible by social co-operation is not an utopian and un-



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realizable ideal. Thus it is recognized that every man should personally participate in the good realized by the whole. If therefore the argument from the unrealized possibilities of mankind to a rational faith in the immortality of man has any weight, it must be regarded as tending to establish the immortality of the individual and not merely of the race. Man, as I have argued, is in his deepest nature identical with God, and nothing short of the conscious realization of that identity seems demanded by the rationality of the universe. No doubt this conclusion must rest upon a rational faith; but, as we have seen, a rational faith is the only possible foundation of knowledge and morality; since, without the presupposition of the rationality and intelligibility of the world, we can have no principle of either the one or the other.

In drawing these lectures to a close it may be well to cast a rapid glance back over the course by which we have been led in following the evolution of ideas. If the process of development through which religion and theology have passed has been at all accurately described, a general inference may fairly be drawn in regard to their fundamental nature. Beginning with a limited and imperfect idea of the divine, religion, both in Greece and among the Hebrew people, advanced by slow and tentative steps to the conception of God as the one principle from which all things proceed and to which they all return. This process of evolution was not dictated by any *a priori* conception imposed from without upon the facts, but was the natural result of the free operation of the striving of man after a satisfactory view of life. The agreement in regard to the ultimate principle of all reality, thus reached independently along two very different lines of development, affords at least a strong presumption in favour of a monistic view of the universe. It cannot be said that monotheism was the



result of abstract speculation ; on the contrary, even in Greece we find in Pindar, Æschylus and Sophocles what must at least be called an ethical monotheism, though no doubt it is only in Plato and Aristotle that pure monotheism is explicitly affirmed and defended, while in Judea it was mainly the creation of the prophets. Now, I have argued throughout that theology is the systematic statement of what is already involved, no doubt with some admixture of foreign and inconsistent elements, in the popular religious consciousness ; and therefore we are entitled, I think, to claim that an unbiassed examination of religious experience confirms the conclusion reached by independent speculation that a single principle is presupposed in every mode of finite reality. Thus we may fairly conclude that so far as pluralism, when it seriously means what it says, is concerned, is condemned upon any fair interpretation of the character of religious experience.

But, although the religious consciousness, both in Greece and among the Hebrew people, independently reached the conclusion that there is one God, who is the God of the whole universe, there is displayed in both a tendency to conceive of God as absolutely perfect and complete in himself, entirely apart from the universe. Now this bias towards dualism is at bottom inconsistent with the monistic belief which the pious minds of both peoples at least believed that they believed ; and we find it crossed by the complementary belief in the presence of God in the world and in the human soul. The religious consciousness itself therefore indicates that the one Principle to which everything must be referred is not a transcendent being removed from all profane contact with nature and man, but is truly manifested in them, and reveals itself to the pious soul as that without which the existence of nature and the life of man are inconceivable. This profound consciousness of the nearness



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and self-manifestation of God, which in the Hebrew prophets and the later poets of Greece was felt, and indeed expressed, though in a somewhat imperfect way, is the secret which the Founder of Christianity saw with absolute clearness; and upon this conception of God he based the correlative principle of the brotherhood of man. Thus the religious consciousness not only reached the certitude of one single Principle, but it further discerned intuitively that this Principle is no far-off and inscrutable Power, lifted above the tumult and disorder of the world, but is present in the world, and is experienced in the religious consciousness of man, whose path in life it illuminates and sanctifies. From the study of the evolution of the religious consciousness we therefore seem to learn, that the only tenable Monism is that which conceives of God as self-revealing or self-manifesting, and that nothing less than a recognition of the whole universe as spiritual can satisfy our religious aspirations. We may expect, then, that when the reflective intellect undertakes the task of stating explicitly what the religious consciousness involves, it will never be satisfied permanently with anything short of a spiritual Monism.

Now, when we come to look at the actual development of theology, we find that there is a continual oscillation between the idea of a transcendent God, too august to be revealed or comprehended by man, and the contrary idea of a God who is here and now, comprehensible by our intellect, giving perfect peace to our heart, and directing the main-spring of our will to the highest ends. Nor is this to be wondered at. Not only is there an almost irresistible tendency in the human mind to isolate and hypostatize whatever it clearly and distinctly conceives, but the religious consciousness was compelled to express itself theologically for centuries in the dualistic categories of Greece and Rome, and therefore early Christian theology, while it



refused to surrender either the transcendence or the immanence of God, was in sore straits to reconcile what seemed to be opposite and mutually exclusive ideas. The consequence was that the theology of the Fathers and of the Scholastic theologians was unable to find a formula that perfectly expressed the idea underlying it all—the idea, namely, that God is the principle of all things and therefore present in all things. Nevertheless, in the doctrine of the Trinity, it sought to embody its inextinguishable belief in the spiritual unity of God.

When we leave the cloistered piety of the middle-ages and enter the free and spacious realm of the modern world, we find the battle of spiritual Monism raging more fiercely than ever, just because all tradition has been swept aside and an attempt has been made to begin at the beginning. Absolutely to begin at the beginning was an impossibility for the mind of man, if we may adapt the saying of Goethe: "It is a plagiarism of all the ideas that constitute the consciousness of the race." Nevertheless, the guarded scepticism with which Descartes began his enquiry had to give way to the complete initial scepticism of Spinoza, if Theology was to be built upon a foundation that would make all subsequent scepticism an anachronism. Had Descartes been truer to his own principle of doubt, he would not have assumed the separation of nature, man and God as he did; but, largely because he refused to view his own mind as but a fragment of the larger mind of the race, he did not see that three spheres only externally related to one another was an untenable doctrine, and therefore he virtually reverted to the abstract Monism which Christian thought had persistently refused to accept. Accordingly, the physical world was conceived as a purely mechanical system, its asserted dependence upon God being practically ignored, while man was virtually regarded as made up of two separate



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beings, namely, of a mind that had no relation to a body, and of a body that was so mindless as to change after the manner of an automaton. Nor was the pluralism thus embedded in the Cartesian system abolished even when Spinoza affirmed an absolute Monism ; for, as he blindly endorsed Descartes' abstract opposition of thought and extension, he vainly referred all things to God, since he could not possibly explain how a Being who was in himself beyond the antithesis of mind and nature could have any determinate character whatever, or, if he had, how it should manifest itself in attributes and modes that destroyed its perfect unity. It was therefore a true instinct which led Leibnitz to deny both the pluralism of Descartes and the abstract Monism of Spinoza, and to maintain that God must be conceived as a concrete individual, from whom proceed all dependent concrete individuals. But, while the monadism of Leibnitz rightly finds the type of the highest being in the self-complete individual, his system compels him to say that the universe is at once a pluralism and a monism ; which at bottom means that it is not a rational unity. To set up a number of isolated and self-complete individuals, and then to affirm that they all exist in dependence upon a single isolated and self-complete individual, does not reduce the world to a single principle, even when this individual is affirmed to be absolute and infinite. There is no possible way of combining a consistent pluralism with monism ; and therefore Leibnitz's philosophy has merely named the problem, but has not solved it. Nor can it be solved, so long as the ultimate principle is conceived as self-complete in its isolation.

When we turn to the development of philosophy in England, we find the same attempt to establish an infinite which is defined as the negation of the finite ; but, in this case, the result actually reached is a clear and explicit



consciousness of the futility of the attempt. Locke, starting from the purely individual mind, could only by a halting process of logic reason to the existence of a transcendent God; and so little apprehension had he of the logical sweep of his principles, that he set up a number of independent physical substances, and a number of independent mental substances, in defiance of his own assumption that all our experience is reducible to particular ideas. Detecting, clearly enough the fundamental weakness of the assumption of independent material substances, which could not possibly be given in a series of atomic feelings, Berkeley boldly discarded an independent physical world altogether, referring the series of ideas, which he still inconsistently conceived of as states of a mental substance, to God as their cause. It was therefore perfectly legitimate, on these premises, for Hume to deny that there was a substance of mind any more than of matter, and to challenge the reference of ideas to God on the ground of its inconsistency with the theory of ideas inherited from Locke. Thus the history of English philosophy has demonstrated once for all that a theory which resolves consciousness into a series of subjective states must end in the denial of all reality.

These two streams of thought have brought us to this result, that pluralism and monism are in irreconcilable conflict with each other. With Kant we enter upon a new method of seeking to unite the one and the many. The world of our experience is for him a system in which no single object can be found that is not connected with and dependent for its character upon other objects. Nevertheless this system is not a complete whole, and nothing less than a complete whole can satisfy the human mind. We must therefore conclude, argues Kant, that what we call Nature is the product of the peculiar character of our minds, which can only experience that which we present to our-



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selves under the forms of our perception and thought. While therefore the world of our experience is in its fundamental outlines the same for all human intelligences, and possibly for all finite intelligences, human or other (if other there be), we cannot identify it with reality as in its own nature it must be. Thus we learn that beyond our limited range of knowledge there are possible real beings, which, unlike the objects we experience, are self-complete and individual wholes. In this way, Kant thinks, we can make room for the existence of God, and for the proof that man is a free moral and immortal being. This critical method of reconciling monism with pluralism cannot, however, be regarded as a genuine solution of the problem; and it is not surprising that Kant's successors, and especially Hegel, converted the absolute distinction of appearance and reality into a relative one, and found within the sphere of experience a number of phases, all of which are equally real, though none is a complete and adequate manifestation of the Absolute except the most concrete of all. Hegel, therefore, sought in the idea of a spiritual Unity, *i.e.* a Unity which is essentially self-manifesting and self-knowing, for the true principle which should explain life, art and religion. A review of the development of modern philosophy from Descartes to Hegel thus forces us to come to the same conclusion deliberately and reflectively, as that attributed to the Founder of Christianity in the saying that "God is a Spirit." No doubt Hegel's eagerness to do away with the Kantian opposition of appearance and reality may have led him to over-accentuate, or seem to over-accentuate, the absoluteness of God, at the expense of the independent reality and self-activity of finite beings; but there can be no doubt, I think, that his fundamental idea was that only by self-conscious identification with God can man truly realize himself.



If this is at all a fair account of the evolution of religious experience and its philosophical interpretation, the general character of the constructive part of our undertaking is clearly indicated beforehand. No dualistic or pluralistic conception of the world, in whatever form it presents itself, can be regarded as a satisfactory solution. No doubt the greater complexity of the material to be interpreted adds to the difficulty of the attempt to provide an adequate synthesis; but, however great that difficulty may be, nothing less than a comprehensive doctrine, embracing all the facts, can give satisfaction to our highly critical age. What has been called Radical Empiricism seems to me not only to ignore the lesson to be learned from a comprehensive review of the history of religious experience and of its theological formulation, but it is itself infected with the fundamental contradiction of affirming the possibility of knowledge, while denying the principle without which no knowledge whatever is even conceivable. This attitude it has assumed, in my opinion blindly, because it has confused the truth, that in all departments of knowledge and action man is continually obtaining a more precise and definite view of things, with the false notion that no principles of reality whatever can be discovered by man. These two contradictory ideas the radical empiricist seeks to combine; not seeing that if knowledge is either to begin or to develop, it can only be under presupposition of the rationality and intelligibility of the world. Each branch of knowledge moves within the sphere of the principle characteristic of it, and if that principle is denied no possible progress can be made. Moreover, the totality of knowledge is embraced within a single organic or spiritual whole, and therefore the principles of the special sciences are more or less comprehensive expressions of the one single rational principle which they all presuppose. The whole history



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religion and philosophy compels us to deny as even possible the pragmatic doctrine that the only certainty we have is, that whatever "works" must have some degree of "truth" in it. Nothing can possibly "work" or be "true" in an irrational and therefore unintelligible universe.

Granting, then, that the supreme principle of theology is the rational unity of all things, we must next ask how this unity specifies itself in the various distinguishable spheres of our experience. The first and most natural view of the world is that it is composed of a number of things and events, which are in no way affected by their relations to one another or to the mind that apprehends them. This conception of things, however, we are forced to abandon, when we discover that no single thing is permanent, and that the character of every object is determined by the fact that it is a more or less evanescent phase in the ever-changing process of the world. It is not possible, however, to accept the inference which naturalism bases upon this fact; namely, that reality in its ultimate nature may be defined as a purely mechanical system. This theory is inconsistent with the irreducible distinction of living from non-living beings; and therefore the world is no mere assemblage of objects only externally acting and reacting upon one another, but must be conceived as a teleological system. At the same time it does not seem possible to admit the contention of the personal idealist, that all beings are self-active or living; what we must rather say is that, from the ultimate point of view, nothing exists that does not presuppose the spirituality of the world. Hence, while to no mode of reality can be assigned an isolated independence, the specific character of each mode must be determined by an appeal to the facts of experience. Reality, we find, presents an infinity of aspects, all of which in varying



degree manifest the presence in them of the one spiritual principle. We may broadly distinguish between inorganic things, living beings and self-conscious subjects ; and, while all three presuppose the one principle, it is only self-conscious subjects that at once manifest that principle and are distinctly conscious of its nature. Man in all his feeling, thought and action experiences the divine, and the whole of his history is a record of his ever clearer comprehension of it. His experience of the spirituality of the universe constitutes religion, of which theology is the systematic and reflective expression. The conclusion therefore of our whole investigation is, that man as a spiritual or self-conscious being is capable of experiencing God, who is the absolutely spiritual or self-conscious being, and that the influence of God upon man is not external or mechanical but spiritual, and so far from being destructive of freedom, is the condition without which freedom is inconceivable.

One of the difficulties felt in accepting this idealistic interpretation of experience is that it seems to be inconsistent with the growing experience of the race. Should not man, continually haunted as he cannot but be by the shadow of his ignorance, be contented with working rules of life, and abandon all claims to know the absolute nature of things ? The answer to this objection has already been indicated. In the first place, we do not get rid of the claim to know the absolute nature of things by affirming our ignorance ; for, the affirmation of ignorance is a claim to know that we are ignorant ; and such a claim cannot be established unless we know what the distinction between knowledge and ignorance is. And, in the second place, in claiming that we have a knowledge of principles or laws we are only stating what all men virtually assume and what the scientific man expressly asserts. That assumption and that assertion cannot be justified by a reference to any number



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of particular instances, but are necessarily presupposed as the condition without which there can be no experience of any particular instance whatever. And what is true of any special principles applies also to the principle that the universe is rational or spiritual. Nothing less can explain our experience in its totality ; and it is only by treating a particular phase of that experience as if it were the whole, that a plausible case can be made out for denying the one principle that gives to all experience its meaning.

It has also been objected, that, by affirming a single absolute principle, we make all self-activity or freedom of the individual impossible, and therefore play into the hands of naturalism with its mechanical conception of the world. But such an objection seems to show that the objector has never distinguished between an abstract and a concrete Absolute. No doubt if we conceive the ultimate principle as one that abolishes all the self-activity or freedom of finite beings, the result must be, not indeed a mechanical conception of things, but an Absolute of which nothing definite can be predicated. But such an Absolute is at the opposite pole from the Absolute for which I have been contending. The former excludes, while the latter includes, all differences ; the one denies that our intelligence can define the ultimate nature of reality, the other declares that in spirit or self-conscious intelligence we reach the idea that makes all others intelligible ; the first denies the self-activity of man, while our view maintains that without self-activity man could not exist at all. It thus seems to me that, with the removal of these misconceptions, it becomes obvious that the religious interests of man can be preserved only by a theology which affirms that all forms of being are manifestations of a single spiritual principle in identification with which the true life of man consists. Living in this faith the future of the race is assured. Religion is the



spirit which must more and more subdue all things to itself, informing science and art, and realizing itself in the higher organization of the family, the civic community, the state, and ultimately the world, and gradually filling the mind and heart of every individual with the love of God and the enthusiasm of humanity.



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