PERSONALITY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Religion in Evolution

An Introduction to the History of Religion

Evolution

PERSONALITY

BY

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PREFACE

EVERYBODY believes in his own existence and that he knows something about himself. What exactly he knows about himself, and his own personality, is another question. It is an interesting question; and, the moment a man tries to answer it, he begins to be a philosopher. But it is a difficult question, and, inasmuch as science contrives to get on without answering or even raising it, he may be tempted to doubt whether his own personality has any reality. Especially, will this doubt become troublesome, when he discovers that psychology provides no proof of the existence of the self, and that

some psychologists proceed to deny the reality of personal identity. Probably, however, he will feel that, if he cannot prove, neither, after all, can he doubt, his own existence ; and, with that, he may be tempted to imagine that he can dismiss the question. But he cannot. The same doubts that are raised about his own personality and existence can be raised about the existence and personality of God. If personality is an unmeaning term, designating nothing, then there are no persons, human or divine. If it has a meaning, and designates a reality of some kind, then we ought at least to try to understand what we mean by it, and to form some conception of what the reality is which is designated by the term.

The preceding words state in outline the argument which is contained in the following pages, and which formed the matter of four

lectures, given last summer at Oxford in the Vacation Term for Biblical Study. In Chapter I. it is pointed out that physical science and psychology can go their way and do their work without assuming the existence of personality. In Chapter II. is an examination of arguments which are based on psychology, and are intended to show that I am certain I do not exist; that personality is a mistaken inference; and that the only Thinker is the passing Thought. Chapter III. is a discussion of M. Bergson's argument that "there are changes, but no things which change," and the inference, to be drawn from it, that there are changes, but no persons who change. In Chapter IV. it is maintained that persons are not individuals, in the sense of closed systems, but are at once subjects cognizant of objects, and objects presented to other subjects; that the principle of unity which

holds persons together, and the impulse towards unity, with one's neighbour and one's God, is love.

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PERSONALITY

CHAPTER I

PERSONALITY AND IMPERSONALITY

Personality a hypothesis not required either by Physical Science or by Psychology or by Pre-Animism—Impersonality, however, denies, and therefore presupposes, Personality.

IT is possible to be quite certain about a thing, and quite wrong: to err is human; and the whole human race may make the same mistake for centuries before discovering the error. For countless centuries mankind was certain that the earth was motionless: the Lord "hath made the round world so sure, that it cannot be moved." And yet it moves. When the earth thus gives way beneath our feet—and, at every step we take, we thrust the earth away—where shall we find any

ground of certainty? A common mode of expressing absolute certainty about a thing is to say, "I am as certain of it as I am of my own existence." And it is indisputable that most people are certain of their own existence. But it is also indisputable that all people for long were certain that the earth "cannot be moved." If, then, for all their certainty they were wrong about the earth, it is apparently, at any rate, possible that on the other point also—their own existence—they may be quite certain and yet quite wrong. We can understand now how natural and how easy it was for man to draw the wrong inference from the apparent motion of the sun. Then may not his certainty about his own existence be an inference which it is easy to draw, which is first drawn precisely because it is easiest drawn, and for that very reason is least likely to be the correct inference? If it took mankind ages to draw the correct inference in the one case, little wonder that it has not yet been commonly drawn in the other case.

If the movement of thought in the one case was from error to truth, may it not in the other case be also in the same direction ?

"In the notion of self," a recently published philosophical work (*English Thought for English Thinkers*, p. 193) says, "we have the sole presented type of substance, a something that continues unchanged under a change of accidents." But the notion of the self as something that continues unchanged is very like the notion of the earth as something that "cannot be moved." We have had to give up the notion that the earth is the centre round which the solar system revolves. We are slowly parting with the notion that man is the centre round which and for which the universe exists. The geocentric notion has gone and is carrying with it the anthropocentric notion also. There is no fixed, unmoved, unchanging centre such as the earth was once supposed to be. The notion is illusory. To recognize that the notion of personality, the notion of

the self as something which exists or continues unchanged, may be an illusory notion, is doubtless as difficult as to realize that the earth is rotating on its axis and revolving round the sun. Yet the difficulty does not alter the fact. The truth, indeed, is that some facts can be explained just as satisfactorily on the assumption that the sun moves as they can be on the assumption that the earth moves. And those facts were precisely the facts which were most obvious and which therefore monopolized the attention of man for countless centuries. The facts which were less obvious failed, for that very reason, to arrest his attention. But, when his attention was arrested, it became evident eventually that when all the facts —and not merely the most obvious—were taken into account, however great the difficulty of realizing the motion of the earth, the difficulties in the way of supposing it motionless were infinitely greater. These difficulties however did not present themselves at first. At first, and for long

afterwards, the supposition that the earth was fixed and motionless, and that the sun it was that moved, sufficed as an explanation of the facts that were observed. In the same way, the supposition that, though the things around one change, one does not change oneself—that one's Self, or Personality, is "something that continues unchanged under a change of accidents"—is a supposition which is easily made, which is made indeed without thinking, but which now in these later days may seem incapable of sustaining any longer the weight and burden of the facts which science has accumulated upon it.

In the lowest stage of development in which we can directly observe human society, we find not only that man believes —or rather we should say acts on the belief—in his own personality, but also that everywhere around him he finds a personality not his own. He does things himself—or thinks he does—and his explanation of the things that happen to

him, if he feels that they require explanation, is that they also are the doing of some personal being or other. His notion is that he is a personal power, surrounded by personal powers. He believes in agents, in personal agents ; and he has, as yet, no conception of impersonal causes. He is in the stage of development known as animism. The successive journeys of the sun do not seem to him to be successions merely. He must account for them ; and the only account he can render is that they are the doing or the behaviour of a personal power, which is like himself in that it is personal, though as power it transcends any power of his own.

In this supposition of personal power he finds a satisfactory explanation of the unexpected and the unforeseen. And, with his very limited knowledge of natural laws, much is to him unforeseeable that modern science predicts with a sense of certainty. Eclipses and comets which confirm our knowledge of the laws of nature are ascribed by him to the arbitrary will

of the personal agents whom he supposes to produce them. On the other hand, the events in the ordinary, trivial round of human life, which happen in the usual way, which are expected and which come off as expected, seem to require no explanation. They are regarded as quite natural. And the progress of knowledge, or at any rate the advance of scientific knowledge, consists precisely in wresting territory from the domain of the unexpected and the unforeseen. It consists in ascertaining the conditions under which an event, once unforeseeable and startling in its occurrence, may be expected with assurance, or even be produced by man. When the conditions which determine that the thunder shall follow the lightning are known, there is nothing more mysterious or unexpected in the sequence than there is in the fact that the electric bell rings when you press the push. Primitive man's supposition that personal power was required to account for the thunder—the Psalmist's conviction that " the voice of thy thunder was in the

heaven" — becomes superfluous: given the conditions enumerated by science, the thunder or the bell is heard. No further explanation is necessary. There is no room for any other conditions than those which science enumerates—and neither personal power nor arbitrary will is amongst those conditions. Science seeks to ascertain the conditions under which events do as a matter of fact take place; and it formulates those conditions in the shape of laws of co-existence and succession. So far has science now advanced in dealing in this way with the occurrences which take place around us, that the existence of laws of nature is beyond the possibility of doubt. That our knowledge of them is as yet defective and erroneous is also beyond the possibility of doubt. If our knowledge of the laws of nature were not defective and erroneous, it would be impossible for science to advance. It is because there are defects and errors that there is room and need for science to progress. But the reason why science has

progressed thus far is that it has set aside the attempt to find amongst the objects of nature either personality or personal power. It no longer seeks for either. Its aim is to ascertain the laws of the co-existence and succession of the events that take place around us.

But the events that take place around us are not the only events which interest us. What goes on within us interests us profoundly. And what goes on within us may be studied, as well as what takes place around us. It may be studied and it is studied by Psychology. The object of Psychology, as a science, must obviously be the same as that of all other sciences. Their object is to ascertain the laws of nature. Its object therefore is to ascertain the laws of human nature. The other sciences study the co-existence and succession of the events that take place around us. The science of Psychology studies the co-existence and succession of the events that take place within us. Psychology, John Stuart Mill tells us, is "the science

which is concerned with the uniformities of succession—the laws, whether ultimate or derivative—according to which mental states succeed one another." Psychology, therefore, as thus defined, deals with uniformities; like all the other sciences, it sets aside arbitrary will. By the very meaning of the words, what is "arbitrary" is not "uniform." If mental states succeed one another in arbitrary fashion, they do not succeed one another uniformly. And if there are no uniformities of succession, there can be no science of mental states—that is, there can be no psychology. But it is undeniable that in similar circumstances we have much the same feelings; and when we have the same feelings we act in much the same way as before. Obviously, therefore, there are uniformities of succession within us, just as there are uniformities of succession in the events that take place around us. And if the latter can be studied and formulated with some degree of correctness, then the former can also. Human nature as well as physical

nature can be studied scientifically. Science can deal with the one as well as with the other—on the same terms and conditions, viz., that arbitrary will is excluded, and uniformity of succession is admitted. When however we have once come to see that uniformity of succession must be admitted, and the freedom of the will be excluded, in order that psychology may take its proper place amongst the sciences, we shall have little hesitation in taking one further step. Indeed, if psychology is to assume its full rank as a science we must take the one further step. Physical science, or the natural sciences, have, as we have seen, no use for the notion, entertained by primitive man and by the Psalmist, that personal power is required to account for thunder and lightning. "The thunderer," a *Jupiter tonans*, is from the point of view of science wholly superfluous: there is no such person. If then psychology is to be really scientific—if it is to be concerned solely with "the uniformities of succession, according to

which mental states succeed one another" —then just as a thunderer is superfluous, so from the point of view of science a thinker is superfluous: there is no such person. Mental states, or states of consciousness, of course, there must be, if there is to be any psychology at all. And those states of consciousness must not only succeed one another, but must exhibit uniformities of succession, if psychology is to be a science. But beyond or behind "the uniformities of succession, according to which mental states succeed one another" it is as unnecessary for psychology to go, as it is for physical science to go beyond or behind the uniformities of succession which are to be observed in the occurrence of the events that take place around us. Indeed, just as the hypothesis of "a thunderer," a *Jupiter tonans*, is, for the purposes of science, either otiose or positively misleading, so for the science of psychology the hypothesis of "a thinker" is either otiose or positively misleading If it implies and is conceded to imply

nothing more than the fact, admitted on all hands, that consciousness exists and that states of consciousness exhibit uniformities of succession, then the hypothesis of "a thinker" is otiose and superfluous. No one denies the existence of consciousness. But the consciousness which is thus admitted to exist is, as Huxley termed it, "epiphenomenal." It accompanies successive states of the brain, as the shadow of a train may accompany the train as it travels. But the shadow does not make the train move; nor does this "epiphenomenal" consciousness cause the successive states of the brain: it simply accompanies them.

If, on the other hand, the hypothesis of "a thinker" is found on consideration to imply something more than that there are thoughts or states of consciousness, exhibiting uniformities of succession, that over and above, or behind, the changing thoughts or successive states of consciousness, there is "something that continues unchanged," a permanent Self or person,

then we relapse into a position exactly parallel to the supposition discarded by physical science, that over and above, or behind, the thunder, there is "a thunderer," who thunders, when he chooses to do so, arbitrarily. At the present day however we have given up the belief in a *Jupiter tonans* ; and, if we have given up the notion of "a thunderer," we are, it may be argued, called upon, in consistency, to give up the notion of "a thinker."

Thus the events within us and the events around us, when studied from the same point of view—the scientific point of view —and by the same method—the scientific method—point in the same direction and to the same conclusion. All knowledge, if it is really knowledge, and not a misapprehension of facts, must be harmonious and consistent : it must form a unity. The unification of knowledge consists precisely in discarding assumptions prematurely made. Such premature assumptions, accounting for some facts only, must be discarded in favour of those which come

later and which account for a much wider range of facts. Personality, from this point of view, is an assumption which was early made, to account for all the events—external and internal—which arrested the attention of man and called for explanation. It is an assumption which science has steadily set aside. The succession of events without us can be explained by science without resorting to that hypothesis. The succession of events within us can be explained by science without resorting to it. It is not an aid, but an embarrassment to science. It does not tend to the unification of knowledge, but, by introducing an unfathomable gap between the personal and the impersonal, seems to make unification impossible.

Perhaps it may be felt to be strange that all mankind, at all stages of human development, should have resorted to this notion of personality as the sole explanation of all events that take place around us and within us, and that yet this notion of personality should be a false explanation

of the facts. But, in the first place, even if we assume this to have been the case, it is by no means unique or singular. As we have already seen, the notion that the earth cannot be moved was for thousands of years accepted as a fact, whereas it was really a false explanation of the actual facts. There is no *a priori* reason why a false inference should not, for a time, and for a long time, be universally drawn. But, if it be felt strange that man should from the beginning have gone so far astray from the simple facts of observation as to attribute every event that interested him to personal agency, then it will also be felt necessary to inquire whether in the beginning he really did attribute everything that occurred to personal agency, whether, that is to say, it was from animism that man started in his attempt to explain the events that happen in the world, or from something earlier. And in point of fact within the last few years, inquiry into this question has been started; and the theory of a pre-animistic period in the

intellectual evolution of man has been put forward. "The root idea of this *pre-Animism*," Mr. Clodd says in *The Transactions of the Third Congress of the History of Religions*, 1908, "is that of power everywhere, power vaguely apprehended, but immanent, and as yet unclothed with personal or supernatural attributes." In a paper on "Pre-Animistic Religion," which appeared in *Folk Lore* in June 1900, Mr. Marett had earlier argued that "Religious Awe is towards Powers, and these are not necessarily spirits or ghosts, though they tend to become so." And in the *Census of India*, 1901, Sir Herbert Risley tells us that in Chota Nagpur he has come across instances which "linger on as survivals of the impersonal stages of early religion." Sir Herbert's impression is that what the jungle people there really do believe in is "not a person at all in any sense of the word," but "some sort of power." Mr. Clodd cites as indicative of this pre-animistic period, "the Melanesian and Maori belief in a power or influence called *mana*, to which no personal qualities

are attributed," and says that "with this, in broad and indefinite conception, may be compared the *kutchi* of the Australian Dieri, the *agud* of the Torres Islanders, the *manitou* of the Algonkins, the *wakonda* of the Dakotans, and the *oki* or *orenda* of the Iroquois." "The Bantu *mulungu* and the Kaffir *unkulunkulu* have no connection with the idea of personality," and he quotes Mr. Hollis's suggestion that in the *engai* of the Masai "we may have primitive and developed religious sentiment, where the personality of the deity is hardly separated from striking natural phenomena."

Let us now consider this pre-animistic theory in its relation to the question of Personality. The notion of Personality is a notion which science, as we have seen, finds useless or worse than useless for its purposes. The uniformities of succession which science is concerned to ascertain and establish, whether they be uniformities in the succession of the events that take place around man, or of those which take place

within him, can be ascertained and established without assuming the existence of persons. Indeed, if by persons are meant beings possessing free-will, and having the power to act or not to act uniformly, then the notion of Personality is worse than useless for the purposes of science. From this point of view, if science is to be accepted, the notion of Personality must be regarded as an erroneous notion. It must be regarded not as a fact, but as a false inference from the facts. It must be regarded not as a fact from the beginning but as a fallacy into which man stumbled. In the stage of his evolution known as animism, we find him fallen into the fallacy of supposing that he is a person having to do with other personalities, human and other than human. There must therefore have been a previous stage, prior to animism, in which as yet he had not stumbled into this fallacy. In this pre-animistic period, man observed succession in the events that took place around him, but he did not ascribe those events to the

action of any person : he had not yet the conception—the fallacious conception—of "a person at all, in any sense of the word." What he had, we are told, was a vague conception of power, "unclothed with personal or supernatural attributes." When things happened to man, in this stage of his evolution, he did not regard them as the doing of any person at all : he ascribed them "to some sort of power," to power vaguely conceived.

For the moment let us suppose that this was so, and for the moment let us not ask for any proof that it was so. Let us ask, And what then ? The supposition enables us to dismiss personality. If there was a stage in the evolution of man when he simply had not the vaguest conception of personality, he obviously could not use the conception of personal power to account for the occurrence of any event. When therefore he wished to explain anything that befell him, he was in one respect, and a very important respect, like the modern man of science : he did not make

the mistake of ascribing the event to any person or personality. And so far, the hypothesis of a pre-animistic period appears to harmonize with the view that the belief in personality is an inference—a false inference from the facts. The hypothesis of pre-animism enables us to point to a period when it had as yet never entered the mind of man to draw that inference. The teaching of science enables us to see that the inference — when it came to be drawn—was a false inference. Pre-animistic man could not ascribe the production of events to personal agency, for the very sufficient reason that he had no conception of persons or personality.

But though pre-animistic man on this supposition was thus in agreement with the most recent teachings of science, he was also, on this supposition, from the beginning absolutely wrong, from the scientific point of view, on another matter. According to the hypothesis, though pre-animistic man had no conception of a person at all, in any sense of the word,

he had a vague conception of power, and it was to power, vaguely conceived, that he attributed the events which happened around him or happened to him. But science has come to set aside the conception of power, just as it has set aside the conception of personality. Its object is to ascertain and state uniformities of succession; and that it can do perfectly well without using the conception, or reverting to the hypothesis, of power. Science deals with the sequence of events and endeavours to ascertain uniformities of sequence. Whether there is any power which produces those sequences and uniformities is a question into which science does not enter. Whether there be such a power or not does not in the least affect the fact that the sequences and uniformities do actually obtain. But as regards pre-animistic man the supposition is that he did ascribe the occurrence of events to some sort of power; and from the scientific point of view pre-animistic man was just as much in error in ascribing

events to some sort of power, as animistic man was in ascribing events to personal power or persons. In resorting to the supposition of power man went just as far astray from the simple facts with which scientific observation is concerned as he did in resorting to the supposition of persons or personal power.

Power, then, whether personal or impersonal, is a conception for which science has no use. Power, either personal or impersonal, is an explanation of events to which man has always had recourse. On the theory that animism is the earliest stage in the intellectual evolution of man, personal power was that in which man from the beginning sought the explanation of the events that befell him. On the theory of pre-animism it was in power, power vaguely conceived, some sort of power, that man first sought the explanation of the events that befell him. Now, if the power to which, on the pre-animistic theory, man referred the events that befell him, was the power not of a person at all,

in any sense of the word, then perhaps it might be argued that such impersonal power, even though it was but a hypothesis, is at any rate a hypothesis of which modern science is tolerant : it is a hypothesis with which the facts of science and of ordinary experience are reconcilable, whereas the hypothesis of personality or personal power is irreconcilable with the scientific conception of the uniformity of nature.

The question then is as to the nature of the power to which man in the beginning referred the events that befell him. On the pre-animistic theory, man at that stage of his history had not yet framed the conception, the fallacious conception of personality, or personal power. Obviously, therefore, if he had no idea of personality, he could have no idea of impersonality. The idea of personality must exist if it is to be denied. Impersonality is simply the denial of personality. Impersonal power is simply power which is not personal; and the idea of impersonal power could not

possibly enter the mind of a man unless he had some sort of notion of personal power. By universal consent man in the animistic period had a notion—however vague and however unsatisfactory—of personality; he explained every event that seemed to him to require explanation by ascribing it to the action of some personality—either a human personality or some being which resembled man in being a personality, but which possessed more and other powers than man. Only by slow degrees did he come to attain to the idea of power in the abstract, apart from the person who exercised it. The idea of "things," having power to act, was an idea which animistic man did not possess.

The argument advanced in support of the theory of pre-animism is that because man had no conception, or had not yet realized the conception, of things as impersonal, therefore he had no conception of persons and did not know persons to be persons. Now this argument would be conclusive, if it were true that personality

was a relative term, if person and thing were relative terms necessarily implying each other in the same way that "mother" and "child" are terms each of which necessarily implies the other and neither of which can be understood without reference to the other. If "person" were a term which had no meaning, when considered apart from "things," as "mother" would be a term without signification if we did not know the meaning of "child," then indeed it would be undeniable that the conception of "person" could not arise or be understood before man had the conception of "things." But that is not the case: "person" is a term, the meaning of which involves no reference to "things." It is perfectly possible to this day to suppose that persons and persons alone exist, that there is nothing and can be nothing which is impersonal. The supposition may be false, it may overlook facts which are fatal to it. And animistic man may have overlooked those facts. If there are such facts, then it is part of

the theory of animism that at that stage of his intellectual development man did overlook them. The theory of animism is that man did things (or supposed he did), and that he explained such things as he undertook to explain by supposing that they too were done by somebody. Whatever the conception was that animistic man framed of himself and his fellow-men and of the way in which or the power by which he and they performed actions, that conception was the conception of personality. And the conception of "things," having power to act had not yet been entertained by him : what we regard as lifeless, inanimate "things," he regarded as living persons, acting as he did, and from motives similar to his, when they did act. The one and only explanation he could give or admit for anything that required explanation was that somebody did it. The only power he could or did conceive of was personal power. That filled the whole field of his intellectual vision.

Those upholders therefore of the theory of pre-animism who assert that the period of animism was preceded by "impersonal stages of early religion" commit themselves to maintaining that man framed the concept of impersonal things before he formed any concept of personality. But this position appears untenable.

Other upholders of the pre-animistic theory avoid the manifest error of supposing that the concept of impersonal things could exist prior to and independent of the concept of personality. They adopt a position which appears to be more in harmony with the theory of evolution. They assume that the two concepts of the personal and the impersonal were evolved or differentiated out of some earlier concept, which was neither and which, when differentiated, was differentiated into both. This earlier concept was vaguely conceived: it was neither the concept of personality nor the concept of thing, but was one in which both those concepts were held as it were in solution—to be precipitated at

some later time in some way as yet unexplained. What man at this period, on this theory, was aware of was power, neither personal nor impersonal, but "power vaguely conceived," power not yet differentiated into personal power and impersonal power, power "to which," Mr. Clodd says, "no personal qualities are attributed," and to which therefore, we may add, no impersonal qualities could be attributed. In a word, at this period man did not distinguish between personal and impersonal power, between person and thing. But that is precisely what is meant by "animism." In the animistic period man did not distinguish between person and thing. And the reason why he did not differentiate between them is that as yet he had not formed the idea that things had power to act, whereas he knew that men did act. It is quite true that man at that time had not yet differentiated personal power from impersonal power. But it is also true that he knew he himself had power to act, even though

he had not yet formed the idea that things could act. The root-idea of animism is that things were done by man and done to him ; and that in the one case as in the other they were done by somebody—by man himself or by some one who resembled man, in that he did things and did them for a reason, but differed from him in so far as he did things which it was beyond man to do.

We may therefore set aside that form of the pre-animistic theory which bases itself on the assumption that originally power was conceived as being neither personal nor impersonal, and that only subsequently was it differentiated into the personal and the impersonal. The division of power, into power which is personal and power which is not, is an exhaustive division, there is no room for any third kind : power is either personal or it is not. The power Mr. Clodd talks of as being " unclothed with personal attributes " is simply impersonal power. And the pre-animistic theory is only of philosophic

value, if understood to mean that primitive, unsophisticated man, seeing facts as they are, saw only impersonal power wherever he gazed. The theory may be said to be of philosophic value, because it accords with the philosophy which teaches that the uniformities of succession, exhibited by matter in motion, if they require power to account for them, are compatible only with the assumption of impersonal power. Then if the power which manifests itself to us in uniformities of succession be impersonal, the theory of pre-animism shows that from the beginning man recognized the power as impersonal. If in subsequent stages of his evolution he was for a long time led astray by the attempt to interpret that power as personal, the aberration was bound in the long run to be corrected: that closer study of observed facts, which we call science, necessarily recalled him from such speculative extravagances to the actual uniformities of succession, which are simply incompatible with the idea that they

are the expression of arbitrary, personal power.

This philosophic theory, however, makes two assumptions, and neither of them is a necessary assumption. It assumes that the free will of a personal power cannot behave uniformly ; and on the strength of that assumption it infers that the uniformities of succession which we observe cannot be the work of a personal power but are proof conclusive that the power which produces them must be impersonal. Next it assumes that man framed the concept of impersonal things before he framed any concept of personality—that is to say, the idea of personality was denied before it was known. The truth however is that man from the beginning did things himself, and from that fact drew the conclusion that the things which happened to him were done by somebody.

We may therefore note that the philosophic theory which explains events by the assumption that they are the expressions of a power which must be impersonal,

is based simply on an assumption: the power may be equally well assumed to be personal. Next, if there be no personal power in the universe, then man indeed cannot be a personality, and his belief that he is a person must be fallacious. But inasmuch as it is a mere assumption that there is no personal power and that there are no persons in the universe, there is nothing but mere assumption to set against man's belief in his own personality.

There is, however, one interesting point of resemblance or affinity which should not be overlooked, between the philosophic theory which denies personality and the intellectual position of man in the animistic stage. Animistic man found an explanation for every event which struck him as requiring explanation in the supposition that it was the doing of some personal being. But events which happened to him in the ordinary course of things, in the way in which they always had happened, and in which he took it for granted they would happen, required no explanation at

all. It was startling, unexpected occurrences which alone called for explanation. So, too, to the modern man of science events which happen in the usual way, that is to say, uniformities of succession, seem to require no explanation at all. The savage does not invoke—even man in the animistic stage did not invoke—personal power to account for the expected, but only for the unexpected. Animistic man does not invoke impersonal power to account for the expected : he does not account for it, or think even of trying to account for it —he takes it for granted and as it comes.

Now that is the interesting point of resemblance between these two schools of thought, ancient and modern : the ordinary uniformities of succession, because they are familiar and established, call for no explanation, or rather explanation consists simply in stating accurately the conditions under which a given event will take place. Why things should be so arranged, that given the conditions the event occurs, is a question which neither the man of science

nor animistic man inquires into. For each the fact, the simple fact, suffices. If the philosopher likes to assume the existence of impersonal power to account for the uniformity of succession, he may do so, as far as the man of science is concerned. Animistic man did not account for the uniformity of successions by that or any other assumption at all : it never occurred to him even to try to account for it—it never occurred to him that there was anything to account for. And so, too, modern science aims only at establishing uniformities of succession, not at accounting for them. If the expected happens, no explanation is called for. The progress of science consists in teaching us what we may expect. It consists, that is to say, in steadily diminishing the unexpected. But it was the unexpected and the startling which animistic man explained by the assumption that some personal agent other than human produced it. The progress of science therefore has consisted in steadily diminishing the occasions, and the excuse

for resorting to the hypothesis of personal agency to account for the events that take place around us. So successful has science proved that it does not hesitate in holding that nature is absolutely and without exception uniform : we may, and as a matter of fact we do, know only some of the conditions which prevail around us, and consequently we can only foresee some of the consequences which will ensue. But, if nature is uniform, then we must believe that the consequences which we do not foresee are, just as much as the consequences which we do foresee, the outcome of the pre-existing conditions. That is to say, if nature is throughout and without exception uniform, then theoretically every event that happens is foreseeable. Unexpected and startling events only show our ignorance of the causes at work : they do not warrant us in resorting to the hypothesis of personal agency to account for them. But even so—granting that the course of nature is thus absolutely uniform, granting that the uniformity of nature

were not an assumption, but were a demonstrated fact—we shall, being human, still ask, Why? We shall still ask what there is in that fact, if it be a fact, inconsistent with the belief that the uniformity of nature is the expression of a will which knows no shadow of turning? The idea, indeed, that the only evidence which can be adduced for the belief in a divine will consists in supposed violations of the uniformity of nature will have to be dropped, if the uniformity of nature is proved inviolable. But then the very uniformity of nature will harmonize with the conception of a divine will which changes not.

On the other hand, we must bear in mind that the conception of the uniformity of nature does not adapt itself very readily to the theory of evolution. The essence of the theory of evolution is that the state of the universe at any moment is different from any state that has ever been before or will ever be again. What is implied in the very notion of uniformities of succession is that what has once occurred will under the

same conditions occur again. What is implied in the very notion of evolution is that the same conditions never can recur. The course of nature exhibits not monotonous uniformity but continual change. If we cannot foresee—and we certainly cannot foresee—changes that a moment may bring forth, the reason may be just the opposite of that alleged by the upholders of the theory that nature is uniform. They hold that nature is uniform and that we can only dimly trace the lines on which she works ; but though our vision is unsteady, her lines nevertheless are fixed. But possibly the actual truth may be that neither the course of nature nor that of human nature is pre-determined. And the reason why we cannot foresee it may simply be that it is not yet fixed. It may be that what is not yet cannot for that very reason now be known.

CHAPTER II

PSYCHOLOGY AND PERSONALITY

Hume's position, that man is nothing but a collection of different perceptions ; and that, consequently, I am certain I do not exist — William James' argument (1) that personality is an inference, and a mistaken inference ; (2) that the only thinker is the passing thought.

IF any science can tell us what Personality or the Self is, it should be the science of Psychology. And yet the science of Psychology tells us in the long run either that there is no Self, no Personality ; or that the problem of Personality is one which can no more be solved by the science of psychology than the question whether there is a God can be solved by science in general. If then we assume that what science cannot know cannot be knowledge, —if, that is to say, we deny the value of metaphysics,—we shall hold that neither

problem is soluble, that is to say we shall adopt the Agnostic position. Now, the Agnostic attitude seems to some people a rational attitude to assume towards the question whether there is or is not a Divine Personality ; there seems to them to be no absurdity in saying there may or may not be a God, but that it is impossible to know whether there is or is not. But to assume the Agnostic attitude towards human personality, and to say, "I may or may not exist, but in either case it is quite impossible for me to know whether I do or do not," is an absurdity from which, when once it is plainly stated, most people shrink. The absurdity is equally great whether it be towards the Divine Personality or the human that the Agnostic attitude is assumed ; but the absurdity is, for various reasons, more easily swallowed in the one case than in the other.

But the Agnostic attitude towards the problem of personality is based on the assumption that the science of Psychology leaves the problem open, whereas to some

psychologists it seems that their science, so far from leaving the problem open, definitely decides it against the existence of Personality. Those psychologists who disbelieve in metaphysics are especially concerned to rescue the problem of personality from metaphysical discussion, and to decide it, if possible, by psychology on scientific grounds. Speaking generally, we may say that psychologists who decide, or interpret psychology as deciding, against Personality, do nothing more than repeat Hume's argument. Hume's argument, in the famous chapter on Personal Identity in his *Treatise on Human Nature,* may be summed up in a few short quotations. He says : " There are some philosophers who imagine we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF ; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence, and are certain, beyond the evidence of a demonstration, both of its perfect identity and simplicity. . . . Unluckily all these positive assertions are contrary to that very experience which is

pleaded for them ; nor have we any idea of Self, after the manner it is here explained. . . . For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception. . . . If any one upon serious and unprejudiced reflection thinks he has a different notion of *himself*, I must confess I can no longer reason with him. . . . He may, perhaps, perceive something simple and continued which he calls *himself* ; though I am certain there is no such principle in me. But setting aside some metaphysicians of this kind, I may venture to affirm of the rest of mankind that they are nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions."

It will be observed that Hume says : " When I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other," and this

mode of expression seems to imply that I who enter into what I call myself am different from that into which I enter. If that is what is meant, as well as implied, then it is evident that the various perceptions of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure, are not the same as I who have the various perceptions. I am not any one of them ; they are, all of them, things on which I stumble. I am not a pain or a pleasure. I am not any one of the different perceptions which I have, nor am I a bundle or collection of different perceptions. If that is so, if I am not a perception or a pleasure or a pain, then, of course, I am not to be found in the bundle or collection of different perceptions. And Hume's argument seems to be that if I am not to be found in the bundle, I am found not to exist at all. "When I enter most intimately into what I call myself," I find "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions." By "myself" Hume evidently means as he says, "nothing but a bundle or collection of different

perceptions." But when he says that "I stumble on some particular perception or other," he seems to draw a distinction between the subject of the verb "stumble" and the object. "I" am the subject who stumble on, or enter on, something; and the object on which I stumble, or into which I enter, is spoken of by Hume indifferently as "myself," and as nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions. Now, if we take the object on which I stumble, or into which I enter, to be a bundle of perceptions, and nothing but a bundle of perceptions, then "I" the subject am plainly different from the perceptions which I have. And if I am not to be found in the perceptions, that is simply because I, who have the perceptions, am not one of the perceptions that I have. The inference that I who have the perceptions do not exist is obviously a false inference. It simply amounts to saying that because I —as everybody will agree—am not one of my perceptions, and am not one of the objects which I perceive, therefore

I, the subject, who perceive, do not exist.

But, as already said, Hume speaks of that on which I stumble sometimes as being a bundle of perceptions and sometimes as being "myself." The question then arises whether I who stumble am to be regarded as identical with the "self" on which I stumble, or as different from "myself." Now, as we have seen, if we identify the object on which I stumble with Hume's "bundle of perceptions," there is no difficulty; I am neither a sensation nor a bundle of sensations—I am not a pleasure or a pain; I am not heat or cold, or light or shade; I am not any of the sensations that I have, or all of them. Neither can any or all of them be "myself." Nor, when I stumble on some particular perception or other, do I enter into what I call myself. The subject which stumbles on something or other is not the object on which it stumbles. But though this is evidently true it is evidently not what Hume meant: it is the diametrical opposite

of the conclusion which he wished to draw. The conclusion which he wished to establish was that I am nothing but the perceptions which I have. His words therefore, "When I enter most intimately into what I call myself," ought to be interpreted according to the meaning which he himself puts upon the terms which he employs. By "myself" he declares that he means "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions." If therefore the term "I" as used by Hume is identical with "myself," then his words, "when I enter most intimately into what I call myself," mean "when a bundle or collection of perceptions enters into a bundle or collection of perceptions." Such words, however, have no meaning. And if they had—if pleasure or pain, heat or cold, light or shade, which according to Hume are perceptions, could perceive anything—still the words would be irrelevant. They would be irrelevant because the question in dispute is not about perceptions, but about my perceptions—about the percep-

tions which I have. Perceptions which nobody has simply do not exist. And as they do not exist they cannot explain anything. As they do not exist, it is impossible for Hume or any one else to enter into them. The only perceptions I can enter into are my own; and the only person who can enter into my sensations is myself. Hume says: "I never can catch myself at any time without a perception," but it would be at least as true to say that I never can at any time catch a perception without myself. Hume, however, thinks that he can catch a perception without himself. That is obviously erroneous: the only perceptions any one can have are his own. But without dwelling on that, let us simply observe Hume's position as he states it himself. His position is that I can catch perceptions, but can never catch myself: therefore the perceptions exist, but "I" do not. The reply is obvious: if "I" do not exist I cannot catch perceptions or anything else. Hume cannot start his argument

without admitting that I, the subject, exist: "I" enter intimately into what I call myself, "I" stumble on some perception or other, "I" observe nothing but perceptions, "I" have a certain notion of myself, "I" am certain that no other notion exists in me. Nay! in the last resort he falls back upon his own personal certainty that the facts are as he states, and not as they are stated by the metaphysicians whom he waives aside. The metaphysician, being a metaphysician, "may perhaps," Hume says, "perceive something simple and continued, which he calls *himself*; though I am certain there is no such principle in me." Of course, if there is no "me," there can be no such principle in me. But if there is no such principle as "self," if "I" do not exist, then how can "I" be certain? There is no "I" to be certain; and the whole argument collapses. On the other hand, if there is an "I" to be certain, and if I am certain, then to say "I am certain I do not exist," is simple self-contra-

diction. Yet it is on that simple self-contradiction that Hume's reduction of the self to "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions" is based.

Let us now turn to a modern psychologist, the late William James, and let us take the chapter in his *Principles of Psychology* which deals with "The Consciousness of Self." "In its widest possible sense," he says, "a man's Self is the sum total of all that we can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and horses, and yacht and bank account." This sentence occurs on the first page of the chapter, and at once marks James' position as akin to Hume's. A difference there is. Hume says the Self is nothing but different perceptions. James includes much more —indeed he includes so much that even a solipsist could hardly complain that it did not include enough. The difference

however is not of importance to our present argument. What is of importance is the resemblance. James says, "A man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his." That is to say, there are first all the things that can be called his, and next there is "he" who calls them his; and the man's Self is the sum total of the things that can be called his. But "he," the man, is just left out. He does not figure amongst the sum total of all the things that can be called his. The Self includes them indeed, but finds no room for him. Thus from the start James is in harmony in this matter with Hume. By "myself" Hume tells us he means "nothing but a bundle or collection of different perceptions." The Self, according to Hume, consists of the perceptions and does not include the percipient, just as according to James a man's self consists of all that can be called his but does not include the owner.

According to James "the sum total of all that a man can call his" constitutes the Empirical Self or Me. And, when

James analyses the Empirical Self or Me, we find its constituents to be (1) the Material Self, (2) the Social Self, (3) the Spiritual Self. The material self is not merely the body. That is only part of the material self. The material self, as understood by James, comprises father, mother, wife and children, our home, our property, anything that is saturated with our labour. "There are," he says, "few men who would not feel personally annihilated if a lifelong construction of their hands or brains—say an entomological collection or an extensive work in manuscript—were suddenly swept away." Next there is the social Self. "A man's social self is the recognition he gets from his mates." And from this it follows that, "properly speaking, a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognize him and carry an image of him in their mind." Finally, there is the Spiritual Self by which James means, he says, "a man's inner or subjective being, his psychic faculties or dispositions."

It is important, therefore, for a proper comprehension of what James means by the Empirical Self or Me, to understand that by the Spiritual Self James means not the subject or person who has the faculties or displays the dispositions, but the faculties or dispositions taken by themselves. "These psychic dispositions," he says, "are the most enduring and intimate part of the self." The other parts of the self, according to James, are of course the Material Self, and the Social Self, already described. From them the Spiritual Self is quite distinguishable. It may be regarded in the abstract or in the concrete. Regarded in the abstract it is but psychic faculties or dispositions. In consciousness, "as it actually presents itself," James says, "a plurality of such faculties is always to be found." From these words it would seem, then, according to James, that the faculties or dispositions which make up that part of the Empirical Self or Me designated the Spiritual Self are found in consciousness as it actually pre-

sents itself. And to bring out the fact that the Empirical Self or Me is an object observed and is not the subject, or the person, I, that does the observing, we have only, when James speaks of consciousness as actually presenting itself, to ask to whom does consciousness present itself, and by whom is a plurality of faculties always found in consciousness? If consciousness presents itself, it must present itself to some subject; if a plurality of faculties is always found, they must be found by some one. Taking the Empirical Self to be, as James describes it to be, "the Self of Selves," and granting it to be, as James defines it to be, nothing but psychic faculties or dispositions, we still, when told that "it actually presents itself," must ask, to whom? Thus far all that we have got from James is that psychical faculties or dispositions are presented. Indeed at this point of James' argument we find that we have lost something that we started with. At the beginning of his chapter, James started with the words,

"a man's self is the sum total of all that he can call his." We started, that is to say, with what is important in a discussion of personality, viz. a personal pronoun and a possessive pronoun. But in this "abstract way of dealing with consciousness" the personal pronouns drop out and a plurality of faculties alone is left.

This abstract way of dealing with the Spiritual Self indeed reduces the Spiritual Self to something impersonal. This "self of selves" this "central nucleus of the Self," James tells us, is felt—by whom he does not say. And this central active self, this self of selves, he tells us, "when carefully examined, is found to consist mainly of the collection of [certain] peculiar motions in the head or between the head and throat." The inference from, or rather the plain meaning of these words is, that the Spiritual Self consists of certain peculiar motions. And if so, the Spiritual Self seems certainly impersonal. But these motions in the head, or between the head and neck, which constitute the Spiritual

Self, are felt. And if felt, they are felt by some one ; and they are not the person who feels them. If, on the other hand, they are felt by nobody, they are feelings which are not felt—that is to say, they are a self-contradiction. Be this however as it may, by the Spiritual Self James means simply certain motions which are felt in the head or between the head and neck. He does not mean the subject or person who feels them.

Thus when James has completed his analysis of the Empirical Self or Me, and has enumerated its constituents, viz., the Material Self, the Social Self, and the Spiritual Self, he has nowhere found in them any subject or person. He has found feelings, but nowhere any person who has the feelings—thoughts, but nowhere any subject who thinks them. Since then the person or subject who thinks and feels is not to be found in the Empirical Self or Me, there remains only one quarter in which we can look for it, and that is, according to James, the sense of personal

identity. If it is not to be found there, we may rest assured that the notion of a person or subject is a false inference from the facts. The bottom facts will be thoughts and feelings—thoughts which no person thinks and feelings which nobody feels. If therefore James' argument leads to the conclusion that there are unfelt feelings and non-existent thoughts, there must be something wrong with his argument. Let us therefore examine it.

His argument starts from the sense of personal identity. His conclusion is that there is neither identity nor personality; there are only passing thoughts. The first and indispensable step in his argument is to beg the question. In the first paragraph of the section on the Sense of Personal Identity he assumes what it is his object and his business to prove, viz., that a thought can happen or exist without any thinking subject or person: each thought, he says, may think of a multitude of thoughts. On the next page he says: "The thought not only thinks [of a present

self and a self of yesterday], but thinks that they are identical." But the whole question at issue is begged, when it is thus assumed at the beginning that "I" do not think; and it is begged without any explanation—yet surely some explanation is required, if we are expected to believe that our thoughts can take place without our thinking them.

The next step in the argument is to represent the sense of our own personal identity, not as something of which we are directly aware, but as a conclusion or inference drawn. The sense of our personal identity, James says, "is a conclusion grounded either on the resemblance in a fundamental respect, or on the continuity before the mind, of the phenomena compared." The sense of our personal identity, then, is a conclusion, and it is a conclusion based on the resemblance which certain phenomena display when compared together. Certain phenomena — certain mental phenomena—when compared together display a resemblance, and from

that resemblance the conclusion of our personal identity is drawn. Further, these phenomena—these mental phenomena—are continuous to the mind, or display "continuity before the mind"; and from this continuity again the inference of our personal identity is drawn.

James therefore evidently holds that we have no sense of our personal identity, if by "sense" is meant that we are directly aware, or have immediate apprehension, of it. Our personal identity simply is not known to us at all: it is a pure inference—and a mistaken inference. There are phenomena before the mind which exhibit resemblance to one another and display continuity; and from these phenomena, with their continuity and resemblance to one another, a conclusion is drawn. Then we ask, By whom or by what is the inference drawn? Apparently, since the phenomena from which the inference is drawn are before the mind, it is to the mind that the phenomena are presented, and it is by the mind that the inference is drawn.

James' argument, therefore, cannot start without postulating that there is a mind, that phenomena are presented to it, and that it draws inferences from them, that is to say, thinks thoughts about them. In other words, our personality is not an inference from our thoughts but a condition without which there would be no thoughts. James however imagines that our personality is an inference, and that it is an inference from the phenomena presented to us. If it were an inference from the phenomena, if it were an inference at all, it would be a mistaken inference; and James would be right. But it is not an inference from the phenomena: it is the subject to whom the phenomena are presented. The word "phenomenon" in itself implies a person to whom it is presented or appears: a thing which appears to nobody is not a phenomenon or appearance at all. There can be no phenomena or appearances if there is no subject to whom they can appear.

If further proof be wanted to show that

James does, without knowing it, postulate a subject or person, it can be found in his own words. The sense of our personal identity, he says, "is grounded on the resemblance of the phenomena compared." If phenomena are compared they must be compared by somebody. It is evidently possible to overlook the fact that phenomena or appearances can only appear to somebody, for James does overlook it. But even if we pass that by and suppose that phenomena can just appear, all by themselves, how can they possibly be compared unless some one compares them? A subject or person is simply indispensable. If nobody makes comparisons, no comparisons will be made. If nobody draws inferences, no inferences will be drawn.

It is not however our personality alone, but our personal identity which James seeks to explain away. He explains it away first by substituting resemblance for identity; and next by seeking for it in the phenomena and not in the mind to which the phenomena are presented and by

which the phenomena are compared. But, by the very meaning of the words, "resemblance" is not the same as "identity." Things which resemble one another are things which, though they resemble one another, are different. If they were not different, they would not resemble one another : they would be identical. When, then, James says that the sense of our personal identity is grounded on the resemblance of the phenomena compared, and argues that such resemblance is no good ground for inferring identity, the reply is that, whether the phenomena compared by the mind or person resemble one another or not, is an irrelevant consideration. What is asserted by the upholders of personal identity is not that the phenomena presented to the subject or person are identical, but that the subject or person to whom they are presented and by whom they are compared, is identical.

The case is the same with the continuity of the phenomena. According to James there is a continuity in the phenomena

before the mind; and from that continuity, according to James, the false inference is drawn, that the person to whom the phenomena are presented possesses identity or is identically the same person throughout. Now, if continuity in the phenomena were the single solitary premise given, then personal identity would have to be an inference from it; and then we should have to consider whether it was a legitimate inference, or, as James maintains, a false inference from it. But it is not from continuity in the phenomena that James starts. It is continuity in the phenomena before the mind that he starts from, as he says himself. And if there is continuity in the phenomena before the mind or subject, there must be continuity in the mind or subject to which the phenomena appear. But once more the subject's identity in continuity is not an inference from the continuity of the phenomena presented to the subject or person. It is not in the phenomena presented that the subject's identity is to be sought or can be found,

but only in the subject to whom the phenomena are presented and by whom they are compared. When James says that our personal identity "is grounded on the resemblance of the phenomena compared" he admits that continuous phenomena are compared; but if compared they must be compared by some subject or person; and the subject or person who apprehends and compares continuous phenomena must be there all the time; and unless it were the same person or self who compared them they could not be compared at all.

To James, however, it seems that my personality and my personal identity are inferences. If he regarded my personality as an inference from "my" thoughts, it would be open to us to say that by talking of "my" thoughts he simply begged the question, for "my" thoughts imply "me," and without "me" there could be no thoughts of the kind called "mine." It is therefore of the essence of his argument to assume the existence of thoughts which are not "yours" or "mine," but are the

thoughts of no thinker or person whatsoever. And if there are such thoughts, then the inference that they are "my" thoughts or "your" thoughts, or are the thoughts of any person or thinker whatever, must be erroneous; for the assumption from which James starts is that the only thoughts that exist or occur are the thoughts of no person or thinker at all.

Accordingly, we have first of all to understand how the problem of personal identity presents itself, if with James we begin by assuming no person or thinker whatever. In that case we begin by admitting the existence of thoughts, and we select for consideration the one particular thought of personal identity; and we desire to know whether that particular thought is correct or not—in James' words, "whether it be right or wrong when it says, I am the same self that I was yesterday." Now if the proper way to begin is by assuming no thinker or person or self whatever, then the thought ought not to make any such assumption: it ought

to say, "This thought is the same thought as it was yesterday," and all we have to inquire is whether the thought is right or wrong in saying so. And the answer to the inquiry is plain: no thought to-day is identical with any of yesterday's thoughts There may be a resemblance between them. There can be no identity. And James concludes, therefore there can be no personal identity. Of course, no personality or personal identity can be inferred from the premise, "This thought is the same as that," if we begin by stating that thought does not imply any thinker or person. Evidently therefore James does not start from the premise, "This thought is the same thought as it was yesterday."

The premise he starts from is the one he himself lays down in his own words, "I am the same self that I was yesterday." That is the thought from which he starts. The thought may be wrong, as James intends to show. But right or wrong it is there, and we have got to start with it,

or else we cannot begin discussing it at all. Very good! then we have, to start with, the notions of self, or personality, and of personal identity. They are not inferences drawn but premises given. And they are premises given by the thought which, according to James, assumes no person or thinker whatever. The very thought which according to James assumes no thinker, no "I," asserts personality, declares that "I am," and goes on to declare, "I am the same person that I was yesterday." It asserts that there is only one "I" to-day and yesterday. It denies that there was one self yesterday, and that there is another self to-day.

James, however, interprets the words, "I am the same self that I was yesterday," to imply that to-day's self, the present self, and yesterday's, are different selves. And he does so obviously, because he identifies "thought" and "self." From this identification it follows that there are many passing thoughts and therefore as many transient selves. Hence it is that

he can say, "The only question for us is as to what consciousness may mean when it calls the present self the same with one of the past selves which it has in mind." That is to say, the only question for us is as to what consciousness may mean when it calls the present thought the same with any past thought. And to that question, as we have seen, James' answer is that no present thought is the same with any past thought, though they may have some resemblance to one another. Different thoughts cannot have identity; and if we admit that a thought, which implies no thinker or subject, is, as James says, a self, then it will follow that there are just as many transient selves as there are transitory thoughts; and that there is no personal identity because no two thoughts can be identical.

If then with James we assume that the given facts, with which we have to start, are successive thoughts, without any person who thinks them, how are we to explain the continuity of thought which

James admits to exist? Continuity seems to presuppose the unity and identity, the personal unity and personal identity, which James is anxious to represent as an inference and a mistaken inference. Common-sense, as James does not hesitate to point out, would drive us to admit that there is "a self-same and changeless principle" of personal identity running through the whole stream of thought. How then is James to explain — and to explain away —what common-sense thus demands? The explanation is very simple. "Each thought," James says, "dies away and is replaced by another. The other, among the things it knows, knows its own predecessor, and greets it, saying, Thou art mine, and part of the same self with me. Each later thought, knowing and including thus the thoughts which went before, is the final receptacle—and appropriating them is the final owner—of all that they contain and own." Each thought, then, is cognitive, for it knows the thoughts that went before; and it is an agent, exercising choice, ap-

propriating some of the thoughts that went before as its "own," and repudiating others.

In criticizing this it may be well to begin by calling to mind that James has previously said that there are as many "selves" as there are passing thoughts. "The only question for us is," he said, what consciousness means by calling "the present self the *same* with one of the past selves." He has expressly explained that these many fleeting, transitory selves are not for one moment to be confused with the one, personal, identical self, which metaphysics and common-sense agree in recognizing as a fact, but which James regards as an inference, and a mistaken inference, from facts. Yet, now, in the passage just quoted, James represents each thought as saying to its predecessor, Thou art part of the same self with me. Surely, it is clear that if each thought is part of the same self, no thought is more than part of the self. How then can "the passing thought be," as James says that it is, "the Thinker" or self? No thought

can be the self, if each thought is but part of the self. And if each thought is but part of the self, no thought is the self, and no thought is the thinker. "Each thought dies away, and is replaced by another," as James says, but the person who thinks is there all the time. Indeed, when James speaks of each thought as not only knowing the thoughts that went before, but as being an agent and exercising choice, he is simply personifying each thought. "The passing Thought then," he says, "seems to be the Thinker." If so, then the stream of thought which passes through your mind is a stream of selves or thinkers. By personifying thoughts we do not get rid of personality, any more than the magician's apprentice, by breaking to pieces the broom-stick, got rid of the pail of water it was fetching. On the contrary, all the pieces fetched pails. So too the result of breaking up the unity of the self is that we get a self bewitched into as many selves as there are thoughts. But this embarrassing result

is a mere piece of magic, which substitutes passing thoughts in the place of the identity of the thinker.

It would seem to be quite plain that, if the passing thought is the Thinker, then there must be as many Thinkers as there are passing Thoughts. But it should be noticed that James does not seem always to hold to this, for he says, "Our 'Thought' —a cognitive phenomenal event in time— is, if it exist at all, itself the only Thinker which the facts require." These words may mean that only one Thinker is required by the facts, and not as many thinkers as there are passing thoughts. But to put such a meaning on the words would be wholly inconsistent with James' description of the consciousness of self, for which he claims, when summarizing it, that it is "unencumbered with any hypothesis save that of the existence of passing thoughts or states of mind." "The consciousness of self," he says, "involves a stream of thought, each part of which as 'I' can (1) remember those which went before; and (2) empha-

size and care paramountly for certain ones among them as '*me*' and *appropriate to these* the rest." The distinction which in these words James draws between the 'I' and the 'me' is made still more explicit when he goes on to say, "This me is an empirical aggregate of things objectively known. The *I* which knows them . . . is a *Thought*, at each moment different from that of the last moment, but *appropriative* of the latter, together with all that the latter called its own." And "that Thought," he adds, "is itself the thinker." It is then clear from these words that there are, according to James' argument, as many thinkers as there are moments; and each Thinker is different from every other Thinker.

Now this theory is at least very different from the Common-sense view of the self: it does away with the identity of the self. The Common-sense view is that the self is as it were one continuous, unbroken line. James' view substitutes for the unbroken line a series of dots, each one of which is a thinker or self, and every one of which is

different from every other thinker or self in the row. His very first words, in summarizing his argument, are: "The consciousness of self involves a stream of thought." The stream of thought then is what James starts from. He chooses to begin, because he has to begin, with the stream of thought—continuous and unbroken. In his very next words, indeed, he abandons it: "The consciousness of Self involves a stream of thought," he says, "each part of which as 'I' remembers" and appropriates those which went before. Thus, for the continuous line he substitutes parts or dots, for the stream of consciousness he substitutes disconnected drops. Nay! more. When we start, as James starts, with the consciousness of Self as involving a stream of thought, we start with one Self only, continuous and indivisible. That Self is the 'I.' But James divides the stream into drops, the line into dots, consciousness into separate thoughts; and then says each of those dots is a self; there are many selves and not the one Self, from

the consciousness of which we originally started. Perhaps therefore it may be suggested that though James starts by speaking in his very first words of a stream of thought and the consciousness of Self, he did not himself understand those expressions to imply that the Self was one, or that there was any unity in the stream of thought. How could he, when all the time he was intending to argue that there are as many selves as there are drops in the stream of consciousness, as many thinkers as there are thoughts? If the conclusion, which from the beginning he desired to reach, was that there are many successive selves and a plurality of thinkers, then from the beginning also the phrases which he uses—"a stream of thought," and "the consciousness of Self"—must have been meant to imply that there was no unity in the stream of thought—that "each thought," as he says in a passage already quoted, "dies away and is replaced by another," in fine, that the stream is a series of successive drops. But it is im-

possible to maintain that James at the outset of his argument denied unity to the stream of thought, as he does at the conclusion. On the first occasion when he used the metaphor of the stream of consciousness he used it precisely because it implied unity. He said we may speak of "either the entire stream of our personal consciousness, or the present 'segment' or 'section' of that stream, according as we take a broader or a narrower view," but in either case each is "a unity after its own peculiar kind." It is therefore quite clear that what James actually starts from is the premise that the entire stream of our personal consciousness is a unity. And it is equally clear that a river or any other stream is not made up of separate drops; that a continuous line is fundamentally different from a row of dots; and consequently that the stream of thought is not made up of parts.

In fine, if our personal consciousness is a stream of thought, a unity, and a whole, then all that psychology, or psychological analysis, can do is to attend to each of its

various phases or parts separately. But though the psychologist may attend to them separately, the fact that he attends to them separately does not give them any separate existence. If, as the result of a lifelong concentration of attention on the parts separately, he forgets that the parts are never and nowhere to be found save in the whole, the forgetfulness is very natural, but it is none the less erroneous. It was from the stream of consciousness we started, and to it we must return. It is useless to say, by psychological analysis we have reduced it to drops, therefore it is a scientific error to suppose that there is or ever was a stream. Indeed, we may even go farther. We may say that, if the first thing the psychologist has to do is to substitute as it were a row of dots for the continuous line which is given to him in the first instance, all his conclusions will be separated from truth and actual fact by just the difference there is between a continuous line and a row of dots. Conclusions which hold good of the row of dots may not be

equally true of the continuous line. But that is no reason for denying the existence of the continuous line. It may be that for the purposes of his science the psychologist is bound to begin by assuming a series of thoughts, each of which " dies away and is replaced by another " ; it may be that for the purposes of his science it is convenient or necessary to assume that each thought is a thinker ; but, if so, these are scientific assumptions. They are not the facts with which we start, nor can Common-sense be expected to accept the conclusion that the " I," the subject of consciousness, is not one person or thinker, but is a series of thinkers, and that at every moment each thinker dies away and is replaced by another thinker. Moments—separate moments—are pure abstractions : time is continuous and unbroken. And the momentary thinker, for that very reason, if for no other, is a pure abstraction, scientific—convenient and even necessary for scientific purposes—but to be found only in the domain of science, not in the actual world of fact.

CHAPTER III

PERSONALITY AND CHANGE

Bergson's argument that change alone exists and requires no substratum or substance — His further arguments that *we* perceive *ourselves*, that subject and object are distinguished, that change is free-will —The consequence : if we are change, then change is self-consciousness and implies personality.

THUS far we have made no reference to the theory of evolution. In the first chapter we accepted the theory of the Uniformity of Nature, and of the universality throughout space and throughout time of causes, which uniformly recurred, and uniformly produced the same effects. From that point of view the object of science was simply to ascertain the working of these uniform and monotonous laws of Nature. They may be properly termed monotonous because on this scheme Nature

works with mechanical regularity, and no variety: the only sound which reaches our ears from the monotonous mechanism is a uniform, regularly repeated, thud-thud. From the point of view of the theory of evolution, however, we get a very different conception of the universe: the conception we get is that the state of the universe at any moment is different from its state at any other moment that has ever been or will ever be. It is indeed at all moments and every moment the same universe, otherwise there could be no change in it. If it changes, it must be there to change. Unless it were there all the time, it could not change, because it would not be there—nothing would be there—to change. There would be no changing universe. There would be a succession of universes, each one of which would at each moment "die away and be replaced by another." In place of the continuous, flowing line of evolution, we should have a series of dots, each separated from the one that preceded it by an unbridgeable, unfathom-

able chasm. Thus, there is resemblance between the universe and the individual. Each is a whole, one whole. Each is a whole which changes, and which could not change unless it were there all the time to change. Each presents both change and identity: if there were no identity there would be nothing to change, if there were no changes there could be no identity running through them. About your personal identity through all the changes you have undergone in the course of your life, you have no doubt. It is beyond possibility of denial that you have changed; and it is equally certain that it is you—and nobody else—who have undergone those changes. You—and nobody else—the same, identical you.

An analogy, therefore, if nothing more than an analogy, may be drawn between the changes which make up your growth and development and those in which the evolution of the world consists. You are not a succession of different persons, nor is the universe a succession of different

universes. How far the analogy between the world and the individual may be pressed is matter of doubt and speculation. You are conscious both of your identity through all changes, and of the changes through which you go. The universe also is identical through all its changes. But whether we can say that, through all its changes, it is identical with itself; whether, that is, we can say it is a Self, is another question. If we do say so, then we say that in the whole universe there is nothing but personality to be found—no impersonal things or brute matter. The words "in Him we live and move and have our being" will be literally true for us. "God is a spirit," and the ultimate reality is spiritual, and spiritual alone.

If, then, we take identity to imply Self, by its very meaning, and to mean identity with Self, we cannot predicate identity of the universe without thereby predicating Selfhood. If change by its very meaning implies something which, or some one who, changes, then change and identity are

terms neither of which can be understood without reference to the other. The theory of evolution may direct itself primarily, or limit its attention wholly, to the changes which take place, but it will nevertheless postulate the reality of that which changes, and therefore the identity of that which changes. You, on the other hand, do not postulate, you know your own reality and identity. You know it from the inside, so to speak. And as you are part of the universe, you know part of the universe from the inside, and not merely from the outside—which is the point of view from which the evolutionist studies it. As it is from the outside that the evolutionist approaches it, as it is with the changes that he is concerned, he may very naturally—if erroneously—hold that the changes which he studies are not only real, but the whole reality, just as on the other hand the student of metaphysics, in search of reality, sometimes falls into the error of dismissing change as mere appearance.

The view that changes are not only real but the whole of reality is set forth by the distinguished French philosopher, M. Bergson, as the key to the right understanding both of the world and of the individual. An analogy, as already said, there undoubtedly is between the changes which mark or make up your growth and development and those in which the evolution of the universe consists. If the resemblance is not merely seeming but real, if the changes of the one are in their very nature of the same kind as the changes of the other, then that which, though it changes, retains its identity throughout, must be of the nature of personality. But before we can draw this inference we are arrested by the argument set forth by M. Bergson that changes are not only real, but the whole of reality—that change, indeed, continuous change exists, but nothing else.

Every change and every movement, he says, is indivisible. I move my hand in one sweep from A to C. It is one move-

ment and indivisible. I might indeed stop half-way at B and then go on to C. But in that case there would be the movement from A to B, followed by the movement from B to C. There would be two movements; and those two movements are quite different from the one movement, with never a stop, from A to C. The space traversed by the hand may be the same, but the one movement from A to C is not the same thing as the two movements, first from A to B and then from B to C. Every movement is one and indivisible.

Movement or motion, it will not be doubted, is real. But what, M. Bergson asks, what of immobility or motionlessness? If two trains are running side by side at the same rate, the passengers in the one can converse and shake hands with those in the other: relatively to each other the two trains are motionless, but nevertheless they are moving all the time. Suppose, however, they stop? Still they are on the earth, and the earth is rotating on its axis and revolving round the sun. Nothing

in the world is or can be motionless. There simply is nothing immobile or motionless. Movement, M. Bergson says, is the one reality: "What we call immobility is a certain state of things identical with, or analogous to, that which occurs when two trains travel at the same rate in the same direction on parallel lines: each of the two trains then appears motionless to the travellers seated in the other." Immobility therefore, according to M. Bergson, is mere appearance: it is the way in which the one train appears to the passengers in the other. And, if we speak of it as a state, we must remember that the state is only an appearance and not a reality: the state of the one train appears to the passengers in the other to be a state of immobility—but there is no such state in reality, because there is no such immobility—the train is moving all the time.

What M. Bergson has said of movement is, he maintains, equally true of every change. Every real change, he argues, is an indivisible change just as every move-

ment has been shown to be indivisible. We are apt indeed to consider a change as a series of successive states, that is to say, to consider it as divisible, whereas it is indivisible; and to suppose that it can be divided into states, whereas a state is only an appearance and is nothing real. If the continuous change, which each one of us calls "myself," is to act on the continuous change which we call a "thing," then these two changes must be, relatively to each other, in a situation analogous to that of the two trains already mentioned. When the two changes—that of the object and that of the subject—take place in these particular conditions, they produce, he says, that particular appearance which we call a 'state.' The changes, which are real, produce the appearance of a state; and he maintains it is just reversing the facts to say that the appearance produces the change, or that the change which is the reality is made up of a series of appearances or states.

In fact, according to M. Bergson:

"there are changes, but no things which change—change requires no substratum or substance. There are movements, but not therefore unchanging objects which move—a movement does not presuppose a moving thing." M. Bergson illustrates, illuminates his argument that movement and change are realities in their own right, capable of standing by themselves and requiring no substratum or substance on which to base themselves, by an illustration from the sense of hearing. When we listen to the melody that's sweetly played in tune, what is presented to us is a movement, but in the movement there is no thing which moves, there is change but there is no thing which changes. The tune is the change and the change is the tune. And the tune, like every other movement, is indivisible. Divide it, make a pause in the middle of the phrase, and you get two phrases each of which is different from the undivided phrase. A whole is by no means the same thing as the parts into which it may be divided. It is indivisible.

And in this indivisible movement there is nothing but change. It is change which constitutes the tune. In the tune there is nothing but the change: there is not the change and something else—the tune and something other than the tune. The substance of the tune is the tune and nothing else.

And what is thus true of the tune he says is true of every change. If we turn to our inner life we shall find that its substance is change and nothing else. The ordinary theories of personality, however, assume on the one hand a series of psychological states, and on the other, a Self. The Self is represented as a substratum or substance, which is a rigid, invariable, immutable unity. The psychological states are a plurality and are equally invariable. But how this plurality or multiplicity can possibly be combined with that unity, is, M. Bergson argues, simply not explained by the ordinary theories of personality. The truth indeed is, according to M. Bergson, that there is

no rigid, immutable substratum or substance; and that there are no distinct states which pass over it in the way that actors pass over the stage. There is simply the continuous melody of our inner life—a melody which runs on, indivisible from the beginning to the end of our conscious existence. That, and nothing else, is our personality.

Further, M. Bergson argues, if our inner life runs on thus with never a break or a stop, because it is, in its very inmost nature, movement and change, and therefore indivisible, as is every movement and change; then the past cannot be divided or cut off as it were by a knife from the present. Then what is the present? According to M. Bergson, "My present, this moment, is the phrase I am engaged in pronouncing. And it is so, because I am pleased to restrict the field of my attention to that phrase. Attention may expand or contract." It may narrow itself down to the phrase I am uttering, or it may extend to the previous phrase,

or to the one before that, or as far back as I will. What is not attended to, what is dropped from attention, ceases to be present and *ipso facto* becomes past.

We may note in passing, that here M. Bergson appears to distinguish between attention and the phrase which is attended to ; and that this distinction occurs in the continuous melody of our inner life. The melody may run on continuously like a fugue. But as in a fugue there are more parts than one, so in this continuous melody of our inner life there are two parts—the attention as well as that which is attended to. There is not only life but attention to life ; and, theoretically at any rate, such attention might at any moment embrace, according to M. Bergson, the whole past history of the conscious person. So that we seem to have the conscious person, his past history, and his attention to it—all comprised, even though latent and not at first sight obvious, in that melody of our conscious life which thus seems to be not a simple air but a

fugue having parts. This seems to be again implied when M. Bergson, speaking of the difficulty of fully understanding the changes which go on outside us, says that to decide the point "it would be necessary for us to be inside the things in the same way as we are inside ourselves." The implication is that the conscious person of whom M. Bergson speaks is on the inside of the continuous melody of our inner life, attending to its various phrases—now to this or that, now to this and that.

But, to resume and conclude this brief summary of M. Bergson's remarks on personality—remarks which are scattered here and there throughout his works, and which have not yet been focused by him. He recognizes and adopts the words "subject" and "object." By the "subject" he explains that he means continuous change, the continuous melody of our inner life, and that he means nothing else or other than the change. By the "object" or the universe as object, he means

all the other continuous movements or changes which go on around us; and he does not mean or intend to imply more than the changes—there are the changes, but there are no "things" which change, just as in the case of the subject there is change but nothing more—no person who changes. In neither subject nor object is there anything stationary, immobile, unchanging. Neither subject nor object has states. States, whether psychological states, or states of supposed "things," are but appearance, an appearance wholly due to the fact that two movements, like two trains, may travel side by side in the same direction at the same rate. The ultimate principle of reality is an eternity of life and movement. In that ultimate principle "we live and move and have our being." Our being is not something static, rigid, immobile. Our very being is life and movement. But—let us remember, when M. Bergson tells us this—he also tells us that though everywhere there is movement, nowhere is there any-

thing which moves. Change there is, but nothing which changes, and (the inference seems to be) no one who changes. Life there is, but no one it would seem who lives.

At the beginning of *l'Évolution Créatrice*, M. Bergson says: "The existence that we are most assured of, and that we know the best, is beyond dispute our own. Of all other objects we have notions which may be deemed external and superficial, whereas we perceive ourselves from the inside." What then, he asks, is the precise meaning of the word "exist"? And his answer is that to exist is to change. Our own existence is change. The existence of all other objects is change. If then we are change—and nothing else or more—how comes it that man imagines there are things which change, and persons who change—nay! who not only change, but at the same time maintain their own identity? As our notions of object may be deemed external and superficial, we will not inquire whether there are things

which change. We will confine ourselves to the existence we are most assured of, and that we know the best—our own. If we are change—and nothing else or more—how comes it, according to M. Bergson, that man imagines that there is a person, an "I," a self, that through all the changes and chances of this mortal life maintains its own identity? The notion—according to M. Bergson, the fallacious notion—that there is a self or Me, is, he argues, the outcome of the mistaken idea that there are states. The truth is, he says, that when the continuous change which each of us calls "myself," moves so to speak at the same rate, and in the same direction as the continuous change which we call a "thing," there arises that particular appearance which we call a "state." Two trains moving at the same rate appear in a state of immobility, though both are moving; and neither is in a state of immobility, for there is no such state, since both, *ex hypothesi*, are in motion. But one fallacy, M. Bergson says, leads on to

another. No sooner have we substituted the notion of states, and of states that follow one another, for the unbroken, continuous change that is the reality, than we find it necessary to re-unite what we have sundered. M. Bergson says: "As our attention has artificially distinguished and separated [these states], it is by an artificial bond that it is obliged subsequently to re-unite them. Consequently it imagines a self or me, amorphous and unchanging, on which the psychological states that it has converted into independent entities may be threaded and moved . . . like the different pearls of a necklace: it is simply bound to imagine a thread . . . to keep the pearls together." This thread is concealed by the pearls, that is to say, by the psychological states: it is that which underlies them, the subject or substratum. But, says M. Bergson, "in truth this substratum is not a reality: it is for our consciousness merely a sign intended to remind it perpetually of the artificial character of the operation by

which attention sets one state side by side with another, where really there is continuity unfolding itself."

Thus our attention first imagines states —which have no existence — and then invents an imaginary "me" to hold together these non-existent things: the pearls are not real, neither is the thread. Both are creations of imagination: it is "our attention" which artificially separates them, and artificially re-unites them by means of an artificial "me." And whose work, we may ask, is all this artificial proceeding? It is the work of "our" attention. The continuous change which each of us calls "myself," is the manufactory in which these artificial pearls, and the imaginary "me," are produced. The imaginary "me" is the work of "myself." It is the work not of attention in general, but of "our" attention. If the "me" is artificial, imaginary, unreal, then "my" attention must be equally unreal. My attention certainly cannot exist without me, or before me. "I" cannot be an

inference from my own attention. "Attention" is a word which by its very meaning implies not only an object attended to, but a subject that attends to it. If no object whatever is attended to, there can be no attention. If there is no subject which attends, there can be no attention. Still less can there be any attention, if there is neither subject nor object. And M. Bergson himself, as we have seen, recognizes and adopts the terms subject and object. If therefore he postulates attention as a fact, and admits both a subject and an object of attention, how can he maintain that the subject is an imaginary "me," which attends to non-existent things? It seems clear that if the subject and the object of attention are non-existent, then attention is equally imaginary. And if attention is imaginary and non-existent, then M. Bergson cannot postulate it as a fact.

But even if we put aside this objection, on the ground that it cannot seem to M. Bergson destructive of his position, as it

does to us ; even if we agree to start from an "attention," in which there is neither subject that attends nor object attended to, attention is a state. And M. Bergson declares that there are no states. That particular appearance which we call a state is merely an appearance and not a reality. Attention therefore itself is nothing real, but only an appearance. And this conclusion is strictly consistent with the idea that the subject of attention is an imaginary "me," and the object a non-existent thing. The state, the subject, and the object of attention are all fallacious inferences. They are all false inferences from what M. Bergson postulates as the one ultimate fact and reality—change, continuous change.

Perhaps, however, it may be felt, and perhaps it may be the case, that M. Bergson, though he speaks of attention, would decline to allow that there can be any "state" of attention, inasmuch as he expressly declares that "states" of any kind are mere fictions. His position, it

may be argued, is that when the continuous change which each of us calls "myself" moves, so to speak, at the same rate, and in the same direction as the continuous change which we call a "thing," there arises that particular appearance which we call a state—the state of immobility. And that state is only appearance, not fact, because, in fact, or at any rate on this hypothesis, there is nothing but change postulated. Now, we can attend to change, we can watch a process taking place; and we who attend to it are changing—we are growing older—as it takes place. If therefore by "state" we mean what the word itself implies, viz. that a state is something which so long as it continues is the cessation or absence of change, then it is clear that attention, implying as it does change both in that which attends and that which is attended to, is not a state but is change, through and through. There is, we may say, the train of moving events to which we attend; and there is the train of attention which

accompanies them. Now, in the case of two railway trains travelling side by side at the same speed in the same direction, the relations between the passengers and the telegraph-poles, the trees, and the distant hills are continually changing; but the relation between the two trains remains the same. And this relation which remains the same is every bit as real as the other relations which continuously change. It is just as true for the passengers in the one train to say that the other train is always there, as it is for them to say that the things which they see through the opposite window are continuously changing. If change is the undoubted fact that we realize when we look out of the one window, the absence of change when we look out of the other window is a fact which it is equally impossible to deny. But this latter is precisely the fact which M. Bergson does deny. He looks out of the one window from which is seen continuous change; and he refuses to look out of the other window from which

the opposite of change is just as visible. Hence he necessarily affirms the one relation, which is the only one he sees; and denies the other relation, at which he will not look. He affirms the reality of the one relation; and simply denies that the other relation exists. If only he would look out of the window on the other side he would see that the relation between the two trains is as unchanging, as the relation between the train and the telegraph-posts is changing. But he says: "No! the relation between the train and the telegraph-poles, the hedges, the trees, and the hills is one of change; the only relation possible between any two things in the whole world is one of change; therefore, if the relation between the two trains appears not to be the relation of change, it can be only an appearance, and not a real relation." But yet, earnestly and persistently though M. Bergson endeavours to exclude sameness from the universe, or to admit any relation save that of change, he does not—indeed,

he cannot—exclude it from his own argument. To establish his own argument he has to postulate that the rate at which his two trains move is the same. The rate must be the same and unchanging, or else his whole argument breaks down. Sameness and persistence in sameness are the very foundation of the argument whereby he seeks to prove that the relation of sameness is mere appearance, and that the one and only relation is that of change. If it is impossible for two trains to move at the same rate, his argument cannot begin. If their rate can be for a time the same and unchanging, his conclusion that change alone is possible cannot be right. But, M. Bergson assumes that their rate for a time can be the same and unchanging. Then, for that time, they are relatively to one another in the same unchanging "state"; and the "state" is not a mere appearance, but a relation just as real as the relation of change itself.

But perhaps it will be said that, though the relation of the two trains remains un-

changed so long as they travel at the same rate, nevertheless they are both moving all the time—that, though the train of continuous change which we call the subject may travel as it were at the same rate as the train of continuous change which we call the object, and so long the relation between them remains unchanged, still the two trains of change are both moving all the time, and consequently M. Bergson is right after all in saying that everywhere there is change. But, in the first place, so long as the relation between the two trains remains unchanged, it is untrue to say that there is nothing but change in the world. That is just as untrue as what we may call the "static" view of the universe—that the real is the unchanging. When M. Bergson resolves existence into change, and says that to exist is to change, he is simply closing his eyes to half of the fact that has to be taken into account. To say that to exist is to change is to utter only half of the truth : the other and equally important half of the truth is that to exist is to persist

and to remain the same. How a thing can change, that is to say how a thing can be and yet not be the same, may be difficult alike to explain and to understand. But the difficulty is neither explained nor understood, if we begin by denying that the difficulty exists. And to say either that change alone exists, or that the only reality is that which never changes, is simply to say that the difficulty neither exists nor can exist. It is strange indeed, and as bold as it is strange, for M. Bergson to cite our own consciousness as evidence that change exists and that sameness or identity is simply non-existent. Persistence in change—change which is never complete change—is the characteristic and essence of our consciousness. Here, if nowhere else—or, rather, here as everywhere else—existence is neither change alone, nor unchanging sameness, but sameness in change. It is an identity which does not exclude change : a change which does not exclude identity. M. Bergson says, in words already quoted, that, to understand

the changes that go on outside ourselves, "it would be necessary for us to be on the inside of things in the same way as we are inside ourselves." He then invites us to descend within ourselves; he bids us consider what we find there; and he tells us we find change, continual change, and nothing else. What he overlooks, or will not see, is that it is "we" who find the change that is continually going on there. And if I find change continually going on there or elsewhere, then I must be there all the time. If I were not there, I could not find it. If I find it all the time, then I must be there all the time. And the "I" that finds it there all the time must be the same "I." Unless the same identical "I" were there, it could not be conscious that change was continually going on. There could be no consciousness of change unless there were something to contrast it with. And what we contrast it with is precisely our own identity. Even the changes that go on within us would not be changes *for us* unless we had something to measure them

by, and it is precisely by reference to our personal identity that we do measure them. It is only by reference to something unchanging that we can be conscious of change.

When, then, in our desire to understand what change, as it occurs outside us, really is, we follow M. Bergson's advice, and look within ourselves, we find that it involves a contrast with our personal identity, and that only by contrast with identity can change have any meaning. That this is the consequence which logically and inevitably flows from the premises, is confirmed—were confirmation necessary—by the fact that M. Bergson proceeds to deny the premises, even though they were his own. It was he who originally said, "The existence *we* know the best is *our own*," and who, in those words, admitted that we do exist—admitted not only that there is consciousness or attention, but that we are conscious and that we attend. It was he who said, "*We* perceive *ourselves* from the inside." True! M. Bergson

proceeds to argue that our existence is a false inference from the premises. But our existence is not an inference from the premises at all—it is itself the premise : " the existence we know the best is our own." We don't infer it then. We know it—and that, according to M. Bergson himself.

If it be argued that M. Bergson's point is to show that existence is change, and not that *we* do not exist, then our reply has already been given : change is a relative term, intelligible, like every other relative term, only by reference to its correlative, viz., identity.

But M. Bergson's point seems to be that " we " do not exist. He starts indeed by conceding that " *we* perceive *ourselves* from the inside "—that *we* are conscious and that *we* attend. But he only makes this concession for the purpose of ultimately showing that it is untrue. His ultimate objective from the start is to show that everywhere there is change, continual change ; and he seems to imply that there are no persons who change ; just as accord-

ing to him there is movement, but there are no things which move. The only question is whether, starting from the premises that *we* perceive *ourselves* from the inside, that *we* are conscious and that *we* attend, it is possible to prove that *we* do not exist. Of course, it is not. What M. Bergson does is, at a certain point in his argument, simply to drop the "we." He begins by saying "we attend," but he goes on to speak simply of "attention." And eventually he reaches the conclusion that "attention" can be paid to what is going on, without being paid by any person whatever. Just as he has persuaded himself that there is movement but no things which move, so he seems to assume that there is attention but nowhere any person who attends—that there is change but nowhere any person who changes.

Whether these assumptions are correct or not—whether indeed they have any meaning or not—at any rate they cannot be inferences from the premises that "*we* perceive *ourselves* from the inside," that

" the existence that we are most assured of, and that we know the best, is beyond dispute our own." They are not inferences from those premises but are contradictory of them. If M. Bergson admitted that " we attend " or that " we change," he would admit—and would be bound by the admission—that in addition to attention there is the person who attends, that over and above—or, if you will, underlying—the change is the subject who changes. But that is precisely what M. Bergson does not admit, and therefore cannot be bound by. His position is that there is change, and that there is attention—which is in its essence change—but more or other than attention there is nothing.

It is of the greatest importance to realize that this is M. Bergson's position, for on it is based his method of unifying the universe and of comprehending evolution.

M. Bergson's unification of the universe consists in viewing every so-called thing and every so-called person in it as simply continuous change. What I call " myself "

I find to be continuous change and nothing more: when, in his words, "we perceive ourselves from the inside," we find nothing but continual change, and the change we find is ourselves—"we" are but change; "our" inner life is a continuous melody, which runs on, indivisible from the beginning to the end of our conscious existence. To understand the changes that go on outside ourselves, "it would be necessary," M. Bergson says, "for us to be on the inside of things in the same way as we are inside ourselves." But though this would seem to be impossible, the fact remains, according to M. Bergson, that outside ourselves there are no things, just as inside ourselves there is no person, but only change. Within and without there is continuous change, and nothing but change. All beings are change, all being is change. Thus is the universe unified by M. Bergson.

But at the same time that it is thus unified it is depersonalized—or at any rate we are depersonalized. But though we are depersonalized we are not reduced to

things, because according to M. Bergson, if there are no persons, neither are there things. There are neither things nor persons: there is only continual change. There is the continuous change which, for some reason that M. Bergson never explains, the subject calls "myself." And there are other continuous changes which I, the subject, call object. And when M. Bergson thus admits or rather postulates this difference—which he does not explain—between subject and object, it may be supposed that after all he has not succeeded in unifying his universe, but on the contrary has sundered it into two: the change which is subject cannot be the change which is object, for they are two changes; neither can the subject be the same as the object, for "sameness" or "identity" is, as we have seen, not admitted by M. Bergson to exist in his universe where change alone is found. But the chasm does not exist for M. Bergson, or is bridged over by him. If the change he postulates were merely change, the gap

between the continuous change which the subject calls "myself" and the continuous change which he calls "object," might be one impossible either to cross or to ignore. But the change he postulates as the one reality everywhere is will, free-will, or the way in which free-will expresses and displays itself. Change—whether it be the change which each of us, for some reason not explained by M. Bergson, calls "myself," or whether it be the changes which we erroneously call "things"—is in both cases the way in which will manifests itself. Further, that continuous change is what we call evolution. And, as continuous change means the continual bringing forth of something new, which has never before existed, evolution is incessant creation: it is free-will continually unfolding itself. Thus, after all, M. Bergson's universe is unified, for it is as he has said all along continual change, or evolution; that is to say, it is incessant creation; and that creation which is constantly going on is the same, whether it is the

change which is called "self"—subject—or whether it is the change which is called object, for the continual change, the incessant creation, is in both cases free-will continually unfolding itself.

But we must not travel further than M. Bergson's premises and definitions permit. The free-will which he discovers everywhere is not the free-will of a person, if persons in M. Bergson's universe really are as non-existent as things. Again, the free-will, or the kind of free-will to which he limits himself strictly, is one which foresees nothing, for the simple reason that nothing which it produces can be foreseen. Nothing it produces can be foreseen, because everything which it displays as it unfolds itself is absolutely new—a new creation. History does not repeat itself. That is why it cannot be foreseen. And that is as true of the history which we call the evolution of the universe as it is of the history of a nation. If, therefore, nothing of what M. Bergson's kind of free-will displays, as it unfolds itself, can be fore-

seen, then nothing of what M. Bergson's kind of free-will displays can be intended. As regards the future, free-will, as defined by M. Bergson, is blind. It attends indeed to the present and to the past. To the future it cannot attend, for the simple reason that the future is non-existent, and what does not exist cannot be seen or foreseen. As, therefore, there is and can be no beacon visible ahead by which to steer or for which to make, the course of evolution is not a direct course to any point. It is not a course at all. It is not directed to any point. It is not directed at all, but, as M. Bergson says, it is dispersive. He compares its course to that of an explosive shell fired from a mortar. The shell bursts and discharges a multitude of other shells, each one of which in its turn bursts and discharges yet more shells, and so *ad infinitum*. The rush of the shells from the mortar is in no one direction, but in a multitude of directions, none of which can be foreseen or predicted, for the action of free-will is

absolutely imprevisible. The rush of life may start from some one point, but it is not directed to any one point or goal or purpose: it scatters, widely and ever more widely as it goes.

Thus, by means of the theory of evolution we reach a conclusion very different from that arrived at by those who assumed that Nature is uniform, and that there is a uniform law of causation, working with the uniform regularity of a monotonous mechanism. The essence of that view of the universe is that Nature works with monotonous regularity and no variety whatever: Nature is a whole and has unity indeed on that view, but it is a mechanical whole, and from the unity of its working there are no departures—such departures would be miracles—variety there can be none, where uniformity alone is possible. To this view of the universe M. Bergson's theory of evolution is diametrically opposed. In creative evolution M. Bergson finds everywhere nothing but variety. The essence of evolution is con-

tinuous change. In the place of unity accordingly we get continuity; in the place of identity, change. There is movement and change, but there are no things which move, and, it would seem, no persons who change. The very term "person" implies identity; and in a universe which consists of change there is no place for either identity or personal identity, save as mere appearance and false inference. If then the very conception of identity must be excluded from a universe, which not merely includes movement and change, but actually is nothing but movement and change, then it is by the category of change alone that the action of free-will can be properly understood, or understood at all. There can be no unity of purpose or identity of action where change has solitary domain. Free-will, to be free, cannot subserve any one purpose or end. It cannot have any unity or display any identity.

Consequently and consistently M. Bergson, though he postulates consciousness

and free-will, does not combine them, or admit that they can be combined, in a unity—still less in a personality. Our inner life he compares to a melody, and a melody he declares to be continual change. But from this very comparison it is clear that our inner life has a unity of its own, just as every melody has its unity. It is one melody as being different from every other melody; and it is one as being the melody which it is. Doubtless in the melody there is continual change; but unless it also had unity it would not be a melody at all. And to say that this continual change differs from that continual change is to regard each as one. A melody, any melody, is a unity—a unity in change, a unity of change—but none the less a unity identical with itself and different from every other tune. When M. Bergson speaks of the continual change which each one of us calls "myself," he admits by his very words that each such change, each change called a self, is thereby distinguished from all other such contin-

uities of change. It is distinguished. Its unity is thereby admitted—and also its difference from all other selves. Unless it be one such continuity of change it cannot be distinguished from others. The change which each of us calls "myself" could not be called "myself" unless it were, to begin with, a unity different and distinguishable from all other such unities. Further, the unity of change which is called "myself" is called so by somebody. And there is only one being in the whole world who can call it "myself." And I who call the change "myself" must be there to do so. I am the unity in change, and the unity of change; and I am conscious not only of the continuity of change, as M. Bergson says, but also of its unity, and of the fact that it is not any other continuity of change—that I am not the continuity of change to which you apply the term "self."

Perhaps it will be felt that, however convincing the argument just advanced may be found by those who believe to begin with in personality, and who are satisfied

that they themselves exist, it cannot appeal to those who hold, with M. Bergson, that the existence of persons or selves is a matter which must be proved before it can be accepted. In reply to this we might indeed well ask, "Proved to whom? and by whom? Surely the objection itself assumes that there is a person by whom it can be proved and a person by whom the proof can be accepted?" But let us not insist on this reply. Let us consider the matter from the point of view of M. Bergson's own premises. His position is that everywhere there are continuities of change. Of those continuities of change there is one which is called indeed "myself," and which stands to other continuities of change in the relation of subject to object. Now, if M. Bergson admitted that the continuity of change called "myself" were really a self and a person, that it constituted a unity and possessed an identity, he would be faithless to his own first principles. The continuity of change which is called

"myself" would not only be called, it would be, a Self—throughout its continuity it would be a unity possessing or manifesting identity. But, it will be remembered, that is precisely what M. Bergson denies: a self running through the continuity of change is, according to M. Bergson, a purely imaginary thread, superfluously imagined, because the continuity of change requires nothing to hold it together. Its cohesion is guaranteed by its very definition: a change which is defined as continuous is a change which by its definition coheres. No "self" therefore is required to hold it together. The continuity of change is what each of us calls "myself," but it is not a "self" —that is only a word or name—it is continuous change and nothing else. The subject is continuous change; and its objects are continuities of change. Everywhere there are continuities of change; and nowhere is there anything else. That seems to be M. Bergson's position. All, then, that remains for him to do is to

explain why this one particular continuity of change, which we will call A, is " me " —and all the other continuities of change are not-me. What is that difference between the particular continuity of change A, and all the other continuities, B, C, D, etc., which is implied by the term " me " ? To say that there is no difference is vain. To admit that the difference is real is to admit that personality is real—to admit both that " I " am different from the not-me, and that " I " am " I "—a unity, and a personal unity, identical with itself.

Let us however look once again at M. Bergson's position. It is that the continuous change which each of us calls " myself " is indeed a continuity of change but not a unity. About the reality of will—free-will—and the reality of consciousness he has no doubt or difficulty ; each of them is change, continuous change ; and so in neither is there anything repugnant to or inconsistent with that continuity of change which alone he postulates. He would not of course deny

that free-will and consciousness go together. What he does deny apparently is that, when they go together, there is in addition to them, or underlying them, any such third reality as personality. If in criticism of this we take two continuities of change, A and B, and say that each of them, to be compared and contrasted with the other, must be a unity, and that unity a personal unity, his reply is that if we look into that unity we shall never find anything more in it than what he has already pointed out, viz. free-will and consciousness. The best answer to M. Bergson's argument is one that was given long ago by a Hindu philosopher in discussing personality, and which was in substance as follows: Take any unity or whole, break it up into its constituent parts, point out that the parts exist but that the whole does not, and you have a proof—of a sort—that the parts are real and that the whole is not a reality. The Hindu illustration of this process is: There is a chariot, apparently a reality. But of what does it really consist? Of the

body, wheels, and pole. They are the only realities to be found in what each of us calls a chariot. There is nothing else in the chariot. They are real, but the chariot is not. It is patently absurd to say that in addition to the body, wheels, and pole, there is a fourth thing, called a chariot. There is no such thing. It is simply a false inference, a mistaken inference, from the facts. It is an imaginary substratum, supposed to underlie the parts and hold them together. Now, we may venture to suggest, M. Bergson's argument is open to exactly the same criticism as this demonstration of the non-existence and unreality of the chariot. The starting-point in the one case is what each of us calls "myself," in the other what we call a chariot. If we look into the one, we are told, we shall find nothing but pole, wheels, and body; if we look into the other we are told we shall find nothing but free-will and consciousness. We shall not find any substratum underlying the pole, wheels, and body; and we shall not find any subject

underlying free-will and consciousness. As therefore there is no substratum underlying the wheels, pole, and body, there is no chariot. And as there is no subject underlying free-will and consciousness, there is no person: what each of us calls "myself" is just as non-existent as what each of us calls a chariot.

Of course, the plain fact is that if there were no chariot to start with, it could not be pulled asunder into body, pole, and wheels. And if the "me" did not exist to start with, it could not be discriminated into free-will and consciousness. To say that because in a chariot we can discriminate pole, wheels, and body, therefore there is no chariot, is exactly parallel to the argument that, because in the "me" we can discriminate consciousness and free-will, therefore the "me" does not exist.

The truth is that it is impossible to resolve the "me" into something else which is not me. If the something else is not "me," it is not me—and I have not been resolved into it.

CHAPTER IV

PERSONALITY AND INDIVIDUALITY

No individual, in the sense of a closed system, exists either for science or in society—Persons are not closed systems but are subjects presented to objects, and objects presented to other subjects—The principle of unity which holds persons together is love, and "love is the mainspring of logic," "the impulse towards unity" (Bosanquet), but towards unity with one's neighbour and one's God.

NO one, we may suppose, will doubt or deny that changes take place. Every one will admit that changes do take place both within us and without us. Of the things of this world, at least, it may be truly said that "nothing abideth long in one stay." But though the occurrence of change will be universally admitted, there may not be, and indeed there is not, the same universal agreement as to the direction of change. There may be and there

is difference of opinion as to whether change is dispersive always, or is in the long run towards unity and coherence. If everything is constantly changing, then the direction of change must itself be altering at every moment; and in that case, if changes are in no one direction, they cannot be in the long run directed towards unity and coherence.

How then are we to determine the question whether change is in the long run towards unity and coherence or is dispersive always?

But perhaps the first thing to ask is, Does it matter how it is answered?

Well, of course, in some of the changes that go on around us, we are obviously interested. And we may be interested in the changes that go on within us. Some of them may be of a kind and tendency that we do not at all care about. And from that point of view there is some consolation in the reflection that everything changes.

On the other hand, some of the changes

that take place in us or around us may be of a kind or in a direction that we approve, and which we could wish to be continued—as one does every time one sets oneself once more to follow the path of righteousness. There seems then to be some interest in the question whether the direction of change is itself always changing and dispersive, or whether it is in the long run in some particular direction that we approve of.

Then, if the question has some interest, how are we to answer it? Where are we to look for an answer? Within us or without?

Outside, the process which takes place is the process of evolution. It is admittedly a process of change; and, at any rate as regards the evolution of living organisms, that process has been one of differentiation and dispersion.

For instance, from their common ancestor the archæopteryx, the innumerable species of birds and of reptiles have widely diverged. M. Bergson's simile of the shell, which, discharged from the mortar, bursts into

a thousand shells, each of which again bursts into thousands of others, and so *ad infinitum*, sets before us a vivid picture of what he means by speaking of the rush of evolution as dispersive. And M. Bergson, it will be remembered, holds that the motive force, as it were, which is at work in this continual change, or rather which is itself this continual change, is will; and that will is free because, or in the sense that, this continual change is ever changing—it never repeats itself and never follows any one direction—it is dispersive ever.

But, it may be inquired, is it really true that in our experience we never come across anything but change? That there is no repetition either in what we do or in what we meet with? Is there no regularity in what we do, and no monotony whatever in our lives? Is the future so entirely subject to change that we can never foresee anything? Can eclipses not be foretold? Is the uniformity of nature, is the law of cause and effect an entire delusion?

M. Bergson is not prepared to go that length. Nor does he feel compelled to go so far by his own view that the rush of evolution, which is the movement of free-will, is never towards unity and coherence, but is dispersive ever. The upward rush of evolution may indeed be compared to that of a fountain of water which rises, and as it springs aloft diverges in innumerable different directions. But all the time the fountain plays and rises, the drops of water are falling, gravitating uniformly and directly towards the earth. In the upward rush and soar you have the freedom of the will ever changing and diverging; in the downward fall, regular, direct, monotonous, and uniform, you have the very opposite of freedom and diversity—you have the uniformity of nature, the regularity of cause and effect, the regularity of human nature, that is to say custom and habit, from which the freedom of the will has died away. Some of us are settling down into habits and have become the creatures of custom. The upward rush

and soar of life—the *élan de la vie* — has died away—our freedom gone. Freedom is change ; and how difficult is change for us !

Such is the contrast which M. Bergson pictures between life, which is continuous change, instinct with free will, ever differentiating, diverging, dispersing, and the uniformity—whether of nature or of human nature—from which life and freedom have disappeared.

But the picture is not true. For the Uniformity of Nature in the logical sense of the term, in the sense in which Mill held it to constitute a logical principle, M. Bergson has substituted the Uniformity of Nature "in the popular and prima facie sense, disclaimed by logicians, that 'the future will resemble the past'—that the procedure of nature is regular, is a mode of repetition" (Bosanquet, *Individuality and Value*, p. 83), whereas "the Law of Uniformity, in the logical sense of the term, means rational system, such that all changes and differences are relevant to one another" (*ib.* p. 84).

As a matter of fact and of observation it is never found that the future exactly resembles the past: nowhere in the procedure of nature is the future a mere repetition of the past. The Uniformity of Nature is not a mere mechanical process of gravitation, a downward fall, regular, direct, monotonous, and uniform; but a rational system, in which there are changes and differences, and those changes and differences relevant to one another. It is only by taking the Uniformity of Nature "in the popular and prima facie sense, disclaimed by logicians," that M. Bergson is enabled to picture it as a movement mechanical rather than rational, as a downward fall rather than a movement upwards and onwards.

And as M. Bergson fails to see the rational nature of the Law of Uniformity, so he similarly misconceives the nature of change and the freedom of the will. Just as he conceives the Uniformity of Nature to be a process marked by mechanical uniformity and by exemption from change

and difference, so he conceives the freedom of the will to consist exclusively of change and difference, and its movement to be purely dispersive. Just as, according to M. Bergson, the Uniformity of Nature knows no change or difference, so, according to him, the freedom of the will knows nothing but change and difference. It is, of course, as every one of us from personal knowledge knows, false to say that we can never of our own free will strive twice in the same direction or towards the same end. It is therefore an error to say that the freedom of the will excludes everything but change and difference. And that error is complementary to the other error of saying that the Uniformity of Nature is such that it cannot include change and difference. These two errors seem to be combined by M. Bergson when he represents evolution as the upward rush of the fountain in directions ever changing and ever more and more divergent; and the Uniformity of Nature as a regular, monotonous fall, marked by the entire absence alike of reason

and change. The truth is that the Uniformity of Nature is a rational system, in which there are changes and differences, relevant to one another ; and freedom of the will, so far from being pure change, ever more and more dispersive and divergent, "lies in the direction towards unity and coherence" (Bosanquet, p. 326).

This chapter started from the admitted fact that change takes place, and from the question whether the direction of change is itself always changing. For an answer to this question we may look either within ourselves or without. If we look outside ourselves and observe the uniformity of nature, we find not the dead monotony of a mechanical system, which is all that M. Bergson finds there, but a rational system in which all changes and differences are relevant to one another. That is to say, there are changes and differences, even though the tendencies be towards uniformity. The tendencies towards uniformity are indeed sufficient, and sufficiently reliable, to enable man to cope to some

extent with the future. They are not sufficient to overcome his ignorance of what a day may bring forth. We none of us know what may happen to us in a day, an hour, or even a minute. How much less can we pretend therefore to predict or to comprehend the course of the universe as we look out upon it, and to decide whether its course and direction is or is not always changing.

It remains then to look within ourselves. And we may with the more confidence direct our gaze within, if we remember that we are part of the universe; and consequently when we look within ourselves we are looking into the universe—it may be into the very foundation and reality of the universe. If, as Plato says, "God holds the soul attached to him by its root," then by descending into the depths of the soul we may find Him as surely there as in the universe without; and, finding Him, we may be content—with Plato—to "dismiss the starry heavens."

Then let us look within—to our inner life. But to the inner life of ourselves as

persons or as individuals? Not as individuals, for if by "individual" we mean somewhat absolutely self-existent, and cut off from everything else, we mean what does not exist. As Professor Pringle Pattison says: "If a mere individual, as we are often told, would be a being without consciousness of its own limitations—a being therefore which could not know itself as an individual—then no Self is a mere individual. We may even safely say that the mere individual is a fiction of philosophic thought." Professor Pringle Pattison however goes on to say: "It is none the less true that each self is a unique existence, which is perfectly *impervious*, if I may so speak, to other selves—impervious in a fashion of which the impenetrability of matter is a faint analogue. The self, accordingly, resists invasion; in its character of self it refuses to admit another self within itself." But it is just this imperviousness, of which Professor Pringle Pattison speaks, this impermeability, which is implied by the term individuality,

and which must lead those who postulate it either to solipsism or to the conclusion that there is but one individual and one being—the Absolute.

Before however considering the consequences to which the postulate leads, let us consider the postulate itself. What is postulated by the term "individual" is somewhat self-existent, not dependent on any other thing or person, but existing independent, in its own right, of everything else. Now in the world of living creatures there plainly is no creature "individual" in this sense. The organism of the offspring is a continuation of the parent organisms. If the parent organism were absolutely and perfectly individual and indivisible, then no part of it could be detached or live separately from it. The relation of parent to child would be a non-existent and impossible relation. The offspring is the reproduction of the parents—the constitution of an organism which is new only in the sense that it is the offshoot of an older organism.

On the physical side therefore there is no "individual" in the sense of a closed system, having no relation to any other individual whatever. On the contrary all organized beings are related and a-kin. We are indeed apt to forget the relationship; and yet we cannot deny that "he prayeth well who loveth well both man and bird and beast."

But, leaving the physical side, let us inquire whether elsewhere we find any "individual" who is a closed system, absolutely cut off, impervious, impermeable, impenetrable. There is none such. It is only by mutual co-operation, as members of a system, as members of one another, that we can live together, or can live at all. No man liveth to himself alone. If he did, or could, so live, then he would indeed be no member of a society or system, but himself a closed system, cut off from all others, and impervious to them. It is precisely this idea that each of us is thus individual which leads to the notion, the monstrous notion, that it is

physical force which holds society together. Such a notion would be alike monstrous and absurd if it were applied not to persons but to physical organisms. It would be patently absurd to say that it is physical force, from the outside, which holds the parts of a physical organism together, and gives them their unity. A physical organism is not a machine made by putting this part and that together, and welding them together by force. It is from the beginning of its existence a unity. And though from the beginning to the end of its existence as a physical organism it is a unity, it is never at any time a closed system. Throughout its history, in order simply to live and go on living, it must draw upon its environment, and take up into its own unity that which is outside itself. And that it could not do if it were a closed system. If it were an "individual," impervious and impermeable, it simply could not go on living. And this process, whereby it maintains its life and its unity, is no application of

physical force from the outside. If then it is obviously and patently absurd to suppose that the unity of the physical organism is the result of physical pressure, if it is not physical pressure which creates or maintains the unity of the physical organism, how much more monstrous is it to suppose that it is physical force which holds the members of a society together, or is the bond of union between them? If the members of a society were absolutely impervious and impermeable, if they were so many closed systems, so many "individuals," in a word, then indeed only by physical force could they be driven together. And that is why those who believe that we are "individuals" are obliged to have recourse to the notion, the futile notion, that it is physical force which holds society together. A society is not a mere aggregate of "individuals," placed side by side, any more than a physical organism is a mere collection of parts or members or limbs put side by side. Just as a heap of cannon balls

may be put together in the shape of a pyramid, but can never, so long as each retains its individual spherical form, assume the shape and unity of one single sphere; so if you choose to start by assuming the existence of "individuals," who are not members of one another, but so many closed systems, you can never—no matter how much physical force you suppose applied to them—account for society. "Individuals" they will remain, if they were really individual to start with. Members of one another and of society they can never become. The mere existence of society then is enough to show that there are within it no "individuals," no systems, closed, impervious, and impermeable.

What then is it which is the principle of unity that holds together the members of society as members of one another? If it is only in society and by mutual co-operation that we can live together or live at all, what is the bond of union whereby we live, on which our very life depends? What holds us thus together, is trust in

each other, rising into love for one another. If we could not trust one another, society would fall at once to pieces. It is just so far as engagements made can be relied on that society holds together, and that life for each one of us is made possible. For every necessary of life we are dependent upon others, who may be growing corn, planting tea, rearing cattle, in far-distant quarters of the globe. Engagements may be broken, and are broken ; nevertheless we rely, and rightly rely, upon a man to keep his word. We trust one another ; and in the vast majority of cases our confidence proves well placed. The mere existence of society proves that our trust is justified : if it were not, there would be no society.

It is true there are people whom we find we cannot trust, whom there are very few to trust. Such people are on the way to becoming " individuals," closed systems, and are apt to be regarded as fit only to be segregated, susceptible only to force and to compulsion from without.

But though they are on the way to becoming "individuals," though in each of them the self is tending to pass into selfishness, though it is just so far as the tendency towards individualism, towards selfishness, prevails, that society tends to go to pieces, still the process is never completely carried out. Even among thieves there is honour: they hold together for the time; and they hold together precisely so long and so far as they can trust one another. That is the only bond of union capable of holding men together. "A house divided against itself cannot stand." The bond of union may be nothing more than trust; but it is only a perfect bond provided it be love. He liveth best who loveth best. It is in a word just so far as persons tend to become "individuals" and selfish—to love least—that they become worst, whilé he liveth best and has the greatest personality who loveth best.

But no man, however low he may fall in the depths of selfishness, can become a mere "individual," an absolutely closed

system, "a unique existence perfectly impervious to other selves." But though no self can in actual life be thus cut off from all other persons, in philosophy it is possible—or has been supposed possible—to imagine such a unique existence. What we find as a matter of fact in actual life are persons bound together in dependence on one another, a dependence implying trust at least, a trust which sometimes is and may always prove to be love. We never anywhere find an "individual" capable of solitary existence. If however as philosophers we simply set facts aside, and start from the assumption that I, the individual, have existence by myself, a unique existence impervious to other selves, then though in words — in the words "impervious to other selves"— we admit the possible existence of other selves beyond our own, we shall find that we have reduced the existence of other selves to a possibility and an inference. And when we have done that we shall have it pointed out to us that the only

existence I as an individual can know is my own. I may, if I choose to make conjectures, conjecture that there are other individuals. But the conjecture is one which no individual can possibly verify. The only existence I can know is my own. If therefore, the argument will continue, I am to base myself on fact and confine myself to fact, I am bound to hold that I, alone, *solus*, am the only self, or *ipse*, that I know to exist. In a word, solipsism is the philosophical conclusion to which we are logically forced, if we start from the assumption that I, the individual, have existence by myself, a unique existence, impervious to other selves. The conclusion is indeed a false one, and can be shown to be false, not only by pointing out that it starts from a premise which is false, but by showing that it contradicts itself. Its inherent self-contradiction lies in the simple fact that if there were such a being as an individual, and there were only one individual in existence, such a being could not know itself to be

an individual. Only by contrast with another, not itself, could it know itself to be an individual; and such contrast is impossible, if we begin by assuming that one individual alone exists.

By other philosophers, who seek the ground of all reality in "a unique existence impervious to other selves," but who feel the absurdity of seeking it in the human individual, escape is sought in the conception of the Absolute, that is in "the unification of consciousness—the human and divine—in a single self." But here again, if the Absolute is thus single and individual at the start and in the premises, single and individual it must remain to the end and in the conclusion. If in the conclusion it appears to be divided into the divine self and the human, that must be mere appearance and false appearance, for the term "individual" means simply that which is *individuum* and cannot be divided.

We find if we start from the false idea that "persons" are "individuals," so many closed systems, impervious, imper-

meable, and impenetrable, it matters not whether we assume one or many such. If many, they remain closed systems inaccessible to one another, and isolated from each other by their very nature and definition. If we assume but one, then beyond that one we can never get, whether we adopt Solipsism or the theory of the Absolute.

Let us therefore put aside the idea that any self is or can be "individual." What we find as a matter of fact in actual life are persons, not isolated from each other but members of one another, bound together more or less imperfectly by the bond of love. Personality, in this sense, that is personality as we actually know it, is not an idea which carries with it, as part of its meaning, the denial of all selves or persons but one. On the contrary, it implies that I "distinguish" myself from other selves, and recognize the existence both of them and of myself. It implies, that is to say, that I am not only a "subject" to which they are presented as "object," but that

I too am "object" and that they are "subjects" to whom I am presented. And thereby it implies that both subjects and objects are embraced in a common world, which is one Reality.

When M. Bergson asserts that there is movement but that there is nothing which moves, he is making an unmeaning and impossible assertion, which may lead to the denial of the existence of personal identity. If everywhere there is change and nothing but change, then nowhere is there identity; and if nowhere can identity be found, then nowhere can any person exist, for a person having no identity is not a person at all. The complementary error to M. Bergson's is that made by those philosophers who regard change as a mere appearance, an unreality. They find the principle of all reality in identity—the identity of the One, the Absolute, in which they seek to unify the divine subject and the human. But thus to unify the divine and human subject in the Absolute is to destroy the reality of both, and in place of

two reals to give us one blank identity. Identity, however, is not the only relation with which we are acquainted, there is also the relation of similarity; and it is important to bear in mind their difference. Similarity between any two persons there may be: identity there cannot be. Only with himself can any person be identical—not with any other. A plurality of selves is compatible with similarity, but can never form an identity. Nor can an identical self, or Absolute, be a plurality of selves. If there is only one subject, the Divine, then there can be no other selves. On the other hand, if there are a plurality of selves, if human beings really exist, and each one of us is a self, then it is impossible to maintain that the Divine self, or Absolute, alone exists.

Let us then avoid both errors, the error of denying identity, the identity of a person with himself; and the error of denying difference—that difference which is implied by saying of two things that they are "similar, indeed." To assert identity and

to deny difference, in the case of the Divine personality and the human, is simply to destroy religion. As Professor Pringle Pattison says, "religion is the self-surrender of the human will to the divine. 'Our wills are ours to make them Thine.' But this is a *self*-surrender which only self, only will, can make." And it is a surrender which is impossible, if there is no real difference between the Divine personality and the human, if the one reality is the identity of the Absolute.

We never, as has been said above, find anywhere an "individual" capable of solitary existence. What we find as a matter of fact in actual life are persons bound together in dependence upon one another. This dependence has its metaphysical side and its moral side. On the metaphysical side it carries with it the fact that every person is both subject, cognizant of others, and object of whom others are cognizant. That is to say, on the metaphysical side, it is fatal to the theory of Solipsism. On the moral side, this de-

pendence on others implies trust and love. That is to say, on the moral side it is as incompatible with the theory of Egotism, as on the metaphysical side it is incompatible with Solipsism. Solipsism is the theory that I alone exist. Egotism is that theory put into practice. Egotism can indeed be practised without any formal or conscious acknowledgment of the metaphysical theory of Solipsism. It can be practised without any formal denial of the fact that there are other persons than myself. All that is necessary for its practical working is the practical ignoring of the existence of others. And a merely theoretical recognition of the existence of my neighbour and my God is in effect and practice Egotism: their existence is not and cannot be really recognized in any way save by trust in them and love for them. The only bond of union between persons—whether between human persons or between the human person and the Divine—is love. If human beings are recognized by me merely as means to my

own enjoyment or convenience, if gods are recognized merely as supernatural instruments for attaining my own desires, they are not so much conceived to exist as misconceived. As a matter of fact, it is impossible consistently and at all times for any man to treat all other beings, human and divine, as merely means at his disposal ; and equally impossible for him to place no trust in them : there is honour even among thieves. Ignored, other beings cannot be in actual life. But if not treated as means, then they must be treated as being selves or persons as much as myself, that is as being in themselves ends. And it is impossible to treat them as ends, to treat them as myself, without love. But if they are to be treated by myself as ends, there must be self-surrender on my part. If their will is to be done, there must be self-sacrifice on my part. But self-surrender to a human will places the person to whom the surrender is made in the position of a human being who treats others as merely means to his own purposes or his

own enjoyment. Such self-surrender—which, alas! is possible—defeats the very purpose of the love which prompts it: it robs the love of its very purpose and its very nature, for it harms the object loved. There is only One to whom self can be surrendered without defeating the very purpose of self-sacrifice—and that is God. Love of our neighbour, to achieve its end, must be love of God. So only can it be love, pure and undefiled. Regarded thus, religion is not the invention, whether of priests or of men. It is not an accretion from without. It is nothing external—no ritual or ceremony. It is an indefeasible element of personality: it is that bond of union between selves which is denied implicitly if we conceive selves as "individuals," and which is implied in the very conception of "personality." A person is one who is both subject, as cognizant of others; and object, of whom others are cognizant. As a person he is also a subject who loves and an object loved, or he is no person at all. Others may know him and

love him ; that is, he may be object of their knowledge and love—but he cannot be those others who know and love him—as subject he is for ever different from those subjects. What then is it possible for one subject to know of those others who, though object to him, are subjects to themselves ? and how is such knowledge possible ? A dominating personality forces its way everywhere, pervades everything. Its reality, when we are submitting to it, is the last thing we can doubt. Yet what do we know of it ? and how ? We know the person by his acts and words, for he may be said to be what his words and works are. They are the objective side of him, which is what is known to us. But as a subject he has a centre or focus of his own which never can in truth be ours. From it he sees his acts and words as we cannot. "It would be untrue," as Mr. Bosanquet says (*Individuality and Value*, xxxiv), "to suppose that circumstances are in one mind or active focus what they seem as seen from the outside, or as in any other mind or focus."

And the fact that he sees his acts and words as we cannot, far from suggesting that he does not exist or has no personality, confirms his existence and personality, for that is the focus or point of view from which we are conscious of our own. It is in this way that personality other than our own—whether human or divine—is known to us. We know God by his manifestations, as we know human personalities by theirs. But in the one case as in the other, there is a centre which never can in fact be ours. And in neither case does this fact suggest doubt as to the reality, for our own personality is equally impenetrable to others, and its reality equally beyond possibility of doubt.

From the intellectual point of view, from the point of view of knowledge, a person is both the subject who knows others and an object of knowledge to others, and as subject he is for ever different from others. Thus as a centre or focus of knowledge, as a subject who knows, a person is for ever different from all other persons—we might even say inacces-

sible to them, for only as object can he be known, never as subject. But every person is a subject and an object of love as well as of knowledge. And the question naturally suggests itself, whether from the point of view of love there is or can be the same difference as there is from the point of view of knowledge. In one sense —and we must not disparage the importance of it—there is : unless there be two subjects or persons there can be no love. Nor can there be mutual love, unless each of the persons is the object of the other's love. But, if we insist that from the point of view of love two persons must be, as they are from the point of view of knowledge, not only different but inaccessible, then we are in fact denying the existence of love. Love is the bond of union between two persons ; and the fact that it exists, however imperfectly, is enough to show that it is impossible to speak of inaccessibility where love exists. To speak of the persons as inaccessible would be simply to relapse into the error, already pointed

out, of regarding persons as "individuals" —impervious, impermeable, impenetrable. The plain fact is that the intellectual relation between subject and object is not the relation of love which exists between, or rather which unites, two subjects: it is vain to ignore the relation of love; and still more vain to suppose that the most important question to put in philosophy is, How is knowledge possible? There still remains the infinitely more important question of, What is implied by the existence of love? And if, to answer that question, we are bound to transcend the mere intellectual reasons which philosophy can give, let us comfort ourselves with the reflection that "the heart has its reasons which the reason knows not of." And let us not imagine that in doing so we are straying beyond the bounds of logic. Mr. Bosanquet says well, "It is the strict and fundamental truth that love is the mainspring of logic" (p. 341). "By logic we understand the supreme law or nature of experience, the impulse towards

unity and reverence (the positive spirit of non-contradiction) by which every fragment yearns towards the whole to which it belongs" (p. 340).

Though we may seem to have wandered far from it, we have in fact been steadily approaching an answer to the question with which we started in this chapter; and Mr. Bosanquet's words may make it clear to us. We started from the admitted fact that change takes place, and from the question whether the direction of change is itself always changing. We looked without us, on the changes going on around us, and found in nature tendencies to uniformity, but we found no means of deciding whether the course and direction of change is or is not always changing. Then we turned our gaze inwards, to our inner life, peradventure there we might look into the very foundation and reality of the universe. But it was into the inner life of ourselves as persons, not as individuals, that we were brought to look—persons not cut off from one another, but united,

not by the mere fact of personality, but by the act wherein it reveals itself and its nature, which is love. But of love as it exists between human personalities the most we can say is that it is, in Mr. Bosanquet's words, "the impulse towards unity." An impulse it is, and towards unity. But as between human persons the unity is never reached. Only between the three Persons, divine Persons, who are one God —only in the Trinity in Unity—does it exist. The unity is God, and "God is love"—the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son. As between human persons, love is an impulse, and towards unity. But the unity is never attained. The impulse is constantly thwarted, and is thwarted by the presence in the human personality of that which is absent from the Divine—by the presence of evil. Evil it is which divides man from man, and which divides a man against himself. "The evil self," Mr. Bosanquet says (p. 350), "is the adversary of unification of experience, and the vehicle of contradic-

tion in the very heart of the self." Self-contradiction is a fact experienced not only in the domain of the intellect, but in the spiritual nature of each one of us who has occasion to say to himself, "Miserable man! what I would, that I do not." From that inconsistency and contradiction, whether in the intellectual or the spiritual sphere, when we are conscious of it, we strive, more or less feebly, to escape. And there is only one direction in which we can escape. From inconsistency of thought and the contradiction of our spiritual nature, escape can only be in the direction of the unification of experience after which the intellect strives, and of the unity of love for which our spiritual nature yearns. In both cases the impulse is the same; though in the one case we are apt to call it logic and in the other love. It is the same impulse in both cases. "It is the strict and fundamental truth that love is the mainspring of logic." And the impulse of both is in the same direction—towards unity. If the change

which marks the inner life of each one of us is not always towards unity, but is divided against itself and dispersive; if there is contradiction in the very heart of the self, still the very words in which we formulate the statement, that change is not always towards unity, imply that there is a unity of life and of love to which we do sometimes and might more often strive. If contradiction is in the very heart of the self, then the heart of the self is not itself contradiction. In that reflection we may find some comfort. We cannot, however, but find some difficulty. If what I would, that I do not, if contradiction is in the very heart of the self, then the self cannot be a unity. Only where no evil is can there be unity—not in the heart of man. Once more, there is no "individual," no man who is *individuum*, not divided against himself. And there is no man who does not yearn to cease to be divided against himself and attain to peace—"the peace which passeth human understanding."

The law of the striving of the self

is that it strives towards unity and coherence, towards the coherence of logic and the unity of love which is the mainspring of logic. "A self," Mr. Bosanquet says, "appears to us as a striving towards unity and coherence." And "a true self," he says, "is something to be made and won, to be held together with pains and labour, not something given to be enjoyed" (p. 338). "The evil self is the adversary of unification of experience and the vehicle of contradiction in the very heart of the self." It is a truth, known to all from personal experience, that evil is that "contradiction in the very heart of the self," whereby man is divided against himself, and whereby any society of men is divided against itself so that their fellowship is endangered and even, it may be, destroyed. And with our attention fixed on that fact, we may be tempted not only to say that the law of the striving of the self is to strive towards unity, but to be content with saying that, and not to inquire precisely as to the nature of the

unity, for which the man strives who is divided against himself. If we are content to leave the nature of this unification undetermined and ambiguous, it will be open to any one to suppose that the unification of the self which is striven after consists in driving out the evil self, which is "the adversary of the unification of experience," and so converting the self into an "individual" who, being *individuum,* is no longer divided against himself. But — even if the unification of the self into an "individual" were possible—if, that is to say, the self could cease to be a person—still, the only result attained by the unification of the self into an "individual" would be that the individual would be brought into unity with himself —not that he would be brought into unity with other human beings, still less with God. And in such a process of unification there would be no need, and no room even, for love. For love carries us beyond the narrow bounds of our own personality, whereas this process of unification is

supposed to take place entirely within them. If, then, "by logic we understand the supreme law of experience," and if it is "the strict and fundamental truth that love is the mainspring of logic," then there is no logic in the supposition that unification is to be attained by bringing an individual into unity with himself, and, in that supposition, love there is none. Shall we then say that the law of the striving of the self is to strive towards unity with others? And shall we say that by "others" we mean persons who are human? If human personalities were the only Personality known to us, then indeed we should have to hold that the law of the striving of the self is only to strive towards unity with other human selves; and we should have also to hold that the law was one incapable of fulfilment. Impervious and impenetable to us, other persons certainly are not. Nor are we perfectly inaccessible to them. But our access to them and to their love, profoundly though at times it moves us, is not that

which we seek to find when we turn to God.

We shall then be prepared to accept Mr. Bosanquet's statement (p. 335), that "a self appears to us as a striving towards unity and coherence," and to understand it to mean that the unity and coherence striven after by the self is that unity and coherence with other personalities which is to be attained only by love. But to describe a self as the striving towards unity and coherence is to imply that the striving, being towards unity and coherence, is from a condition which is not one of unity and coherence, but of division and incoherence. And it is of importance to ask ourselves what exactly is implied by such division and incoherence. It will have been noticed that Mr Bosanquet speaks of "the evil self" and "the true self." And we may be tempted to picture the division and incoherence, of which we are conscious within ourselves, as a struggle between the evil self and the true self. But there are two considerations

either of which should suffice to show that such a picture is a misrepresentation of the plain facts. The first consideration is that such a picture is absolutely inconsistent with the fact that " the self appears to us as a striving towards unity and coherence." For, in our moral struggles, victory consists in the expulsion of evil and the triumph of good, not in striving towards making them compatible with one another ; they cannot be unified ; and no coherence is possible between them — though we flatter ourselves that our darling sins are not so incompatible with goodness that we must actually abandon them altogether. The striving then towards unity and coherence cannot be a striving to make good and evil cohere together and to form them into a unity. That is the first consideration. The other consideration is that if we picture the division and incoherence of which we are conscious within ourselves as a struggle between the evil self and the true self, then we are bound to ask what it is that is thus divided?

It is both untrue and useless to say that there is nothing that is thus divided: useless, because if there is nothing to be divided, there can be no division; untrue, because I know that "I" am divided against myself. If therefore it is alike useless and untrue to say that there is nothing in our moral struggles that is divided against itself and incoherent with itself, then what we are presented with from the beginning of our moral history is unity and coherence—though an imperfect coherence and an incomplete unity. And this unity and coherence, however imperfect and incomplete, is one self—and that self "myself"—otherwise "I" have no interest in it. Until my personality begins, for me nothing exists. When it begins, it is there—divided and incoherent within itself doubtless, but still a personality and a self; and a unity, as is shown by the very fact that it is capable of division, and is divided.

There is, however, much danger in allowing our attention to be concentrated on

the problem of the unity and coherence of the self. The danger is that of being drawn unawares into the morass of Solipsism, and of supposing that the only problem is how I may attain unity and coherence with myself. If "I" alone exist, that is indeed the only problem. If, however, "I" am not an "individual" in the solipsist sense, but a "person"; and if as a "person" I am for logic both subject and object; and if for the love, which is the mainspring of logic, I am also both subject and object: then "personality" implies other personalities, human and divine. The unity and the coherence after which a "person" strives, "the peace which passeth all understanding," is to be gained only by that love which is the impulse towards unity with one's neighbour and one's God.

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