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**THE WORKS OF
H. G. WELLS
ATLANTIC EDITION**

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**THE EDITION FOR AMERICA IS LIMITED TO ONE THOU-
SAND AND FIFTY SETS, OF WHICH ONE THOUSAND
ARE FOR SALE AND FIFTY ARE FOR PRESENTATION**

**THE WORKS OF
H. G. WELLS
ATLANTIC EDITION**

VOLUME XI

THE HISTORY OF THE FUTURE

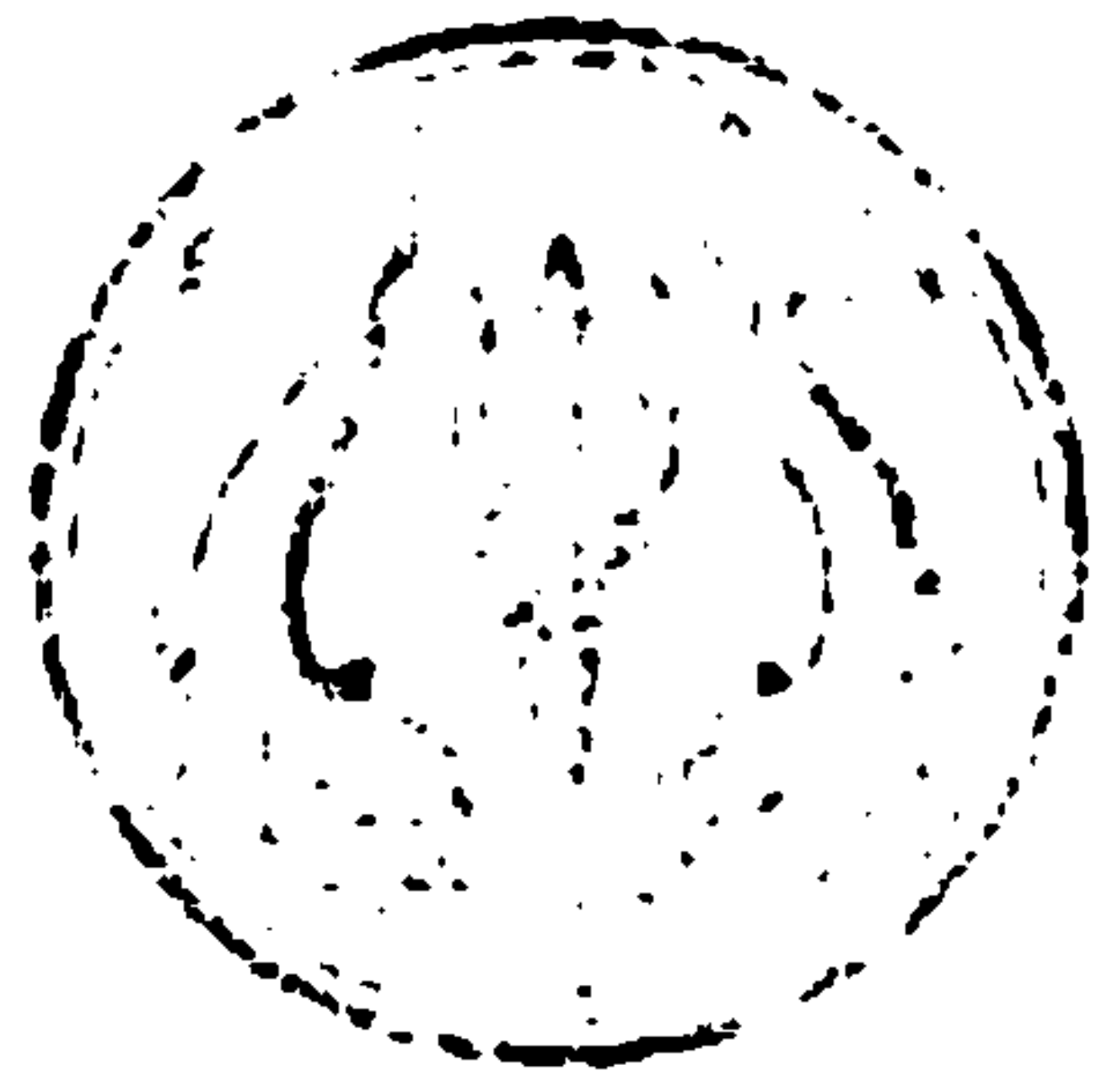
AND

THE SCIENCE OF THE PAST

AND THE PROPHETIC ARTS

BY

H. C. WELLS



LONDON

MCMXXV

1. Introduction

2. Methodology

3. Results and Discussion

The first part of the paper discusses the need for a more comprehensive approach to the study of the history of the United States. It is argued that the traditional approach, which has focused on the political and economic aspects of the country's development, is insufficient to understand the full complexity of the nation's history. A more holistic approach is proposed, one that takes into account the social, cultural, and intellectual currents of the time.

The second part of the paper examines the role of the individual in the development of the United States. It is argued that the actions of individuals, particularly those of the founding fathers, have had a profound impact on the course of the nation's history. The paper explores the motivations and beliefs of these individuals and how they have shaped the political and social landscape of the country.

The third part of the paper discusses the impact of the American Revolution on the development of the United States. It is argued that the Revolution was a turning point in the nation's history, one that established the principles of democracy and individual rights. The paper explores the challenges faced by the new nation and how it overcame them to become a powerful and influential country.

The fourth part of the paper discusses the role of the American West in the development of the United States. It is argued that the West played a crucial role in the expansion of the nation and the development of its economy. The paper explores the challenges faced by the pioneers and how they overcame them to build a new life in a remote and often hostile environment.

The fifth part of the paper discusses the role of the American South in the development of the United States. It is argued that the South played a crucial role in the development of the nation's economy and culture. The paper explores the challenges faced by the South and how it overcame them to become a powerful and influential region.

The sixth part of the paper discusses the role of the American Midwest in the development of the United States. It is argued that the Midwest played a crucial role in the development of the nation's economy and culture. The paper explores the challenges faced by the pioneers and how they overcame them to build a new life in a remote and often hostile environment.

The seventh part of the paper discusses the role of the American Northeast in the development of the United States. It is argued that the Northeast played a crucial role in the development of the nation's economy and culture. The paper explores the challenges faced by the pioneers and how they overcame them to build a new life in a remote and often hostile environment.

APPENDIX A: Primary Sources

1. Founding Documents

**THE UNDYING FIRE
AND
PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL
SPECULATIONS**

**BY
H. G. WELLS**



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PREFACE TO VOLUME XI

HERE, very much out of its proper order, is a theological book, "The Undying Fire." It is modelled very closely upon the Book of Job; most of its characters are obviously the characters of that great dramatic dialogue modernised; like the Book of Job it is a discussion about evil and the will of God. The rest of the volume may be regarded as an explanatory appendix to this dialogue novel. It is a carefully winnowed gathering of the writer's theological discussion for the last fifteen years.

"First and Last Things" was written in 1907-8 under the stimulation of a discussion about fundamental ideas that was going on in the London Fabian Society. Various members read papers entitled "What I Believe;" and "First and Last Things" was, to begin with, one of these papers. But having launched out upon confession, the writer's desire for explicitness and fullness expanded it into a book. It was revised in 1917. The revised version is reprinted here with the exception of eleven sections that were not good enough to reprint. They dealt with the Churches, brotherhoods and the organisations of men and women for mutual help and support in their efforts after righteousness. The writer has no aptitude for such organisation or indeed for any sort of co-operative work, and these sections are not worth reading. Several of these sections simply enlarge

PREFACE

upon the idea of the *Samurai* already given in "A Modern Utopia."

Finally bound up in this volume is "God the Invisible King," which was not written and issued until 1917. It is put here into one cover with "First and Last Things" because the former explains and is necessary to the understanding of the latter work. It is a strenuous attempt to gather up into the recognised forms and terms of contemporary religion the beliefs embodied in the earlier book. The writer has personified and emotionalised to his utmost. He has done all he can in this book to express his ideas on current religious phraseology. Perhaps he has done too much. His religious outlook is in truth Promethean rather than Theistic, Manichean rather than Catholic, Persian rather than either Greek or Hebrew.

Let him insist upon the connection of "God the Invisible King" with the metaphysical sections of "First and Last Things."

In the voluminous discussion that has arisen out of "God the Invisible King" nothing has so impressed him as the impossibility of getting to understandings with people who are unconscious of metaphysical difficulties and who consequently use words with an uncritical confidence. Anyone who would fully understand the reasoning of "God the Invisible King" must grasp the fundamental scepticism about human thought which underlies that discourse.

The writer questions the ultimate validity of human thought—he does not deny it but he questions it; he is saturated with the idea of its incurable in-

PREFACE

accuracy at present and of its unavoidable sketchiness and artistry. There are groups of those who criticise "God the Invisible King"—the most striking cases are the critics from the Rationalist Press Association and from the Roman Catholic Church—who are manifestly saturated by the absolutely opposite idea, the conviction that the terms of human thought are solid, opaque and stable. They will allow no license to poetry unless it scans, rhymes, is printed in lines and otherwise marked clearly as such. Otherwise they insist upon a literal and material consistency. When they encounter such a phrase as "God walked in the garden" they insist that it follows that he cast a shadow, crushed stray caterpillars in the turf and kicked aside the gravel. The former group demand therefore footprints and the size of His boots for purposes of verification, being equally prepared to deny the Presence altogether or prove a Cockney trespasser; the second, following the same line of thought in an opposite direction, are ready to welcome any stray scraps of boot-heel, any cast shoe protectors or the like as evidence to silence the sceptic. Either side is equally angry when it is told that the statement was not intended to that extent. There is virtuous indignation.

Or again if one writes, "God responds," they demand "by a voice?" or "was it by planchette?" or how the trick was done. Mr. William Archer became almost facetious in his "God and Mr. Wells" because God who can come into men's hearts as a still small voice does not come in with a few recipes of practical value. Many people have evidently never realised

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that all discussion except the discussion of matters of fact is incurably poetical. Yet all terms used in human speech are either the names of definite facts in the common experience of men or they are metaphors, witticisms or a deliberate distortion or extension of such terms to express vaguely apprehended realities that are otherwise elusive. "Molecule" and "ether" are just as real and just as unreal as the personality of God. Anyone may jeer at the preposterous idea of a medium as rigid as steel in which we move freely, yet that was the conception of "ether" necessitated by physical science a few years ago; anyone can refuse to find any further significance than a faint squeak in a "still small voice." Yet in either case there is *something* there and the word or phrase we use is the most expressive we can find. But both Rationalist and Romanist are blind with the vanity of mental finality. The Rationalist knows exactly that that something is It and not Him, the Romanist knows the exact contrary in clear detail. He knows indeed at what rate God's beard grows. With neither type is any real understanding possible until the almost wilful metaphysical ignorance that sanctions this conceit of exactitude has been overcome.

THE UNDYING FIRE

A CONTEMPORARY NOVEL

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THE UNDYING FIRE

CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

§ 1



Two eternal beings, magnificently enhaloed, the one in a blinding excess of white radiance and the other in a bewildering extravagance of colours, converse amidst stupendous surroundings. These surroundings are by tradition palatial, but there is now also a marked cosmic tendency about them. They have no definite locality; they are above and comprehensive of the material universe.

There is a quality in the scene as if a futurist with a considerable knowledge of modern chemical and physical speculation and some obscure theological animus had repainted the designs of a pre-Raphaelite. The vast pillars vanish into unfathomable darknesses, and the complicated curves and whorls of the decorations seem to have been traced by the flight of elemental particles. Suns and planets spin and glitter through the avanturine depths of a floor of crystalline ether. Great winged shapes are in attendance, wrought of iridescences and bearing globes, stars, rolls of the law, flaming swords, and similar symbols. The voices of the Cherubim and Seraphim can be heard crying continually, "Holy, Holy, Holy."

THE UNDYING FIRE

Now, as in the ancient story, it is a reception of the sons of God.

The Master of the gathering, to whom one might reasonably attribute a sublime boredom, seeing that everything that can possibly happen is necessarily known to him, displays on the contrary as lively an interest in his interlocutor as ever. This interlocutor is of course Satan, the Unexpected.

The contrast of these two eternal beings is very marked; while the Deity, veiled and almost hidden in light, with his hair like wool and his eyes like the blue of infinite space, conveys an effect of stable, remote, and mountainous grandeur, Satan has the compact alertness of habitual travel; he is as definite as a grip-sack, and he brings a flavour of initiative and even bustle upon a scene that would otherwise be one of serene perfection. His halo even has a slightly travelled look. He has been going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it; his labels are still upon him. His status in heaven remains as undefined as it was in the time of Job; it is uncertain to this day whether he is to be regarded as one of the sons of God or as an inexplicable intruder among them. (But see upon this question the *Encyclopædia Biblica* under his name.) Whatever his origin there can be little doubt of his increasing assurance of independence and importance in the Divine presence. His freedom may be sanctioned or innate, but he himself has no doubt remaining of the security of his personal autonomy. He believes that he is a necessary accessory to God, and that his incalculable quality is an indispensable relief to the acqui-

THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

escences of the Archangels. He never misses these reunions. If God is omnipresent by a calm necessity, Satan is everywhere by an infinite activity. They engage in unending metaphysical differences into which Satan has imported a tone of friendly badinage. They play chess together.

But the chess they play is not the little ingenious game that originated in India; it is on an altogether different scale. The Ruler of the Universe creates the board, the pieces, and the rules; he makes all the moves; he may make as many moves as he likes whenever he likes; his antagonist, however, is permitted to introduce a slight inexplicable inaccuracy into each move, which necessitates further moves in correction. The Creator determines and conceals the aim of the game, and it is never clear whether the purpose of the adversary is to defeat or assist him in his unfathomable project. Apparently the adversary cannot win, but also he cannot lose so long as he can keep the game going. But he is concerned, it would seem, in preventing the development of any reasoned scheme in the game.

§ 2

Celestial badinage is at once too high and broad to come readily within the compass of earthly print and understanding. The Satanic element of unexpectedness can fill the whole sphere of Being with laughter; thrills begotten of those vast reverberations startle our poor wits at the strangest moments. It is the humour of Satan to thrust upon the Master his

THE UNDYING FIRE

own title of the Unique and to seek to wrest from him the authorship of life. (But such jesting distresses the angels.)

“I alone create.”

“But I—I ferment.”

“Matter I made and all things.”

“Stagnant as a sleeping top but for the wobble I give it.”

“You are just the little difference of the individual. You are the little Uniqueness in everyone and everything, the Unique that breaks the law, a marginal idiosyncrasy.”

“Sire, *you* are the Unique, the Uniqueness of the whole.”

Heaven smiled, and there were halcyon days in the planets. “I shall average you out in the end and you will disappear.”

“And everything will end.”

“Will be complete.”

“Without me!”

“You spoil the symmetry of my universe.”

“I give it life.”

“Life comes from me.”

“No, Sire, life comes from me.”

One of the great shapes in attendance became distinct as Michael bearing his sword.

“He blasphemes, O Lord. Shall I cast him forth?”

“But you did that some time ago,” answered Satan, speaking carelessly over his shoulder and not even looking at the speaker. “You keep on doing it. And—I am here.”

THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

“He returns,” said the Lord soothingly. “Perhaps I will him to return. What should we be without him?”

“Without me, time and space would freeze into crystalline perfection,” said Satan, and at his smile the criminal statistics of a myriad planets displayed an upward wave. “It is I who trouble the waters. I trouble all things. I am the spirit of life.”

“But the soul,” said God.

Satan, sitting with one arm thrown over the back of his throne towards Michael, raised his eyebrows by way of answer. This talk about the soul he regarded as a divine weakness. He knew nothing of the soul.

“I made man in my own image,” said God.

“And I made him a man of the world. If it had not been for me he would still be a needless gardener—pretending to cultivate a weedless garden that grew right because it couldn’t grow wrong—in ‘those endless summers the blessed ones see.’ Think of it, ye Powers and Dominions! Perfect flowers! Perfect fruits! Never an autumn chill! Never a yellow leaf! Golden leopards, noble lions, carnivores unfulfilled, purring for his caresses amidst the aimless friskings of lambs that would never grow old! Good Lord! How bored he would have been! How bored! Instead of which, did I not launch him on the most marvellous adventures? It was I who gave him history. Up to the very limit of his possibilities. Up to the very limit. . . . And did not you, O Lord, by sending your angels with their flaming swords, approve of what I had done?”

THE UNDYING FIRE

God gave no answer.

“But that reminds me,” said Satan unabashed.

§ 3

The great winged shapes drew nearer, for Satan is the celestial raconteur. He alone makes stories.

“There was a certain man in the land of Uz whose name was Job.”

“We remember him.”

“We had a wager of sorts,” said Satan. “It was some time ago.”

“The wager was never very distinct—and now that you remind me of it, there is no record of your paying.”

“Did I lose or win? The issue was obscured by discussion. How those men did talk! You intervened. There was no decision.”

“You lost, Satan,” said a great Being of Light who bore a book. “The wager was whether Job would lose faith in God and curse him. He was afflicted in every way, and particularly by the conversation of his friends. But there remains an undying fire in man.”

Satan rested his dark face on his hand, and looked down between his knees through the pellucid floor to that little eddying in the ether which makes our world. “Job,” he said, “lives still.”

Then after an interval: “The whole earth is now—Job.”

Satan delights equally in statistics and in quoting scripture. He leaned back in his seat with an expression of quiet satisfaction. “Job,” he said, in easy

THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

narrative tones, "lived to a great age. After his disagreeable experiences he lived one hundred and forty years. He had again seven sons and three daughters, and he saw his offspring for four generations. So much is classical. These ten children brought him seventy grandchildren, who again prospered generally and had large families. (It was a prolific strain.) And now if we allow three generations to a century, and the reality is rather more than that, and if we take the survival rate as roughly three to a family, and if we agree with your excellent Bishop Usher that Job lived about thirty-five centuries ago, that gives us— How many? Three to the hundred and fifth power? . . . It is at any rate a sum vastly in excess of the present population of the earth. . . . You have globes and rolls and swords and stars here; has anyone a slide rule?"

But the computation was brushed aside.

"A thousand years in my sight are but as yesterday when it is past. I will grant what you seek to prove; that Job has become mankind."

§ 4

The dark regard of Satan smote down through the quivering universe and left the toiling light waves behind. "See there," he said pointing. "My old friend on his little planet—Adam—Job—Man—like a roast on a spit. It is time we had another wager."

God condescended to look with Satan at mankind, circling between day and night. "Whether he will curse or bless?"

THE UNDYING FIRE

"Whether he will even remember God."

"I have given my promise that I will at last restore Adam."

The downcast face smiled faintly.

"These questions change from age to age," said Satan.

"The Whole remains the same."

"The story grows longer in either direction," said Satan, speaking as one who thinks aloud; "past and future unfold together. . . . When the first atoms jarred I was there, and so conflict was there—and progress. The days of the old story have each expanded to hundreds of millions of years now, and still I am in them all. The sharks and crawling monsters of the early seas, the first things that crept out of the water into the jungle of fronds and stems, the early reptiles, the leaping and flying dragons of the great age of life, the mighty beasts of hoof and horn that came later; they all feared and suffered and were perplexed. At last came this Man of yours, out of the woods, hairy, beetle-browed and blood-stained, peering not too hopefully for that Eden-bower of the ancient story. It wasn't there. There never had been a garden. He had fallen before he arose, and the weeds and thorns are as ancient as the flowers. The Fall goes back in time now beyond man, beyond the world, beyond imagination. The very stars were born in sin. . . .

"If we can still call it sin," mused Satan.

"On a little planet this Thing arises, this red earth, this Adam, this Edomite, this Job. He builds cities, he tills the earth, he catches the lightning and makes

THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

a slave of it, he changes the breed of beast and grain. Clever things to do, but still petty things. You say that in some manner he is to come up at last to *this*. . . . He is too foolish and too weak. His achievements only illuminate his limitations. Look at his little brain boxed up from growth in a skull of bone! Look at his bag of a body full of rags and rudiments, a haggis of diseases! His life is decay. . . . *Does he grow? I do not see it. Has he made any perceptible step forward in quality in the last ten thousand years? He quarrels endlessly and aimlessly with himself. . . . In a little while his planet will cool and freeze.*"

"In the end he will rule over the stars," said the voice that was above Satan. "My spirit is in him."

Satan shaded his face with his hand from the effulgence about him. He said no more for a time, but sat watching mankind as a boy might sit on the bank of a stream and watch the fry of minnows in the clear water of a shallow.

"Nay," he said at last, "but it is incredible. It is impossible. I have disturbed and afflicted him long enough. I have driven him as far as he can be driven. But now I am moved to pity. Let us end this dispute. It has been interesting, but now— Is it not enough? It grows cruel. He has reached his limit. Let us give him a little peace now, Lord, a little season of sunshine and plenty, and then some painless universal pestilence and so let him die."

"He is immortal and he does but begin."

"He is mortal and near his end. At times no doubt he has a certain air that seems to promise under-

THE UNDYING FIRE

standing and mastery in his world; it is but an air; give me the power to afflict and subdue him but a little, and after a few squeaks of faith and hope he will whine and collapse like any other beast. He will behave like any kindred creature with a smaller brain and a larger jaw; he too is doomed to suffer to no purpose, to struggle by instinct merely to live, to endure for a season and then to pass. . . . Give me but the power and you shall see his courage snap like a rotten string."

"You may do all that you will to him, only you must not slay him. For my spirit is in him."

"That he will cast out of his own accord—when I have ruined his hopes, mocked his sacrifices, blackened his skies and filled his veins with torture. . . . But it is too easy to do. Let me just slay him now and end his story. Then let us begin another, a different one, and something more amusing. Let us, for example, put brains—and this Soul of yours—into the ants or the bees or the beavers! Or take up the octopus, already a very tactful and intelligent creature!"

"No; but do as you have said, Satan. For you also are my instrument. Try Man to the uttermost. See if he is indeed no more than a little stir amidst the slime, a fuss in the mud that signifies nothing. . . ."

§ 5

The Satan, his face hidden in shadow, seemed not to hear this, but remained still and intent upon the world of men.

THE PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

And as that brown figure, with its vast halo like the worn tail of some fiery peacock, brooded high over the realms of being, this that follows happened to a certain man upon the earth.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

AT SEA VIEW, SUNDERING ON SEA

§ 1

IN an uncomfortable arm-chair of slippery black horsehair, in a mean apartment at Sundering on Sea, sat a sick man staring dully out of the window. It was an oppressive day, hot under a leaden sky; there was scarcely a movement in the air save for the rare thuds of the gun practice at Shorehamstow. A multitude of flies crawled and buzzed fitfully about the room, and ever and again some chained-up cur in the neighbourhood gave tongue to its discontent. The window looked out upon a vacant building lot, a waste of scorched grass and rusty rubbish surrounded by a fence of barrel staves and barbed wire. Between the ruinous notice-board of some pre-war building enterprise and the gaunt verandah of a convalescent home, on which the motionless blue forms of two despondent wounded men in deck chairs were visible, came the sea view which justified the name of the house; beyond a wide waste of mud, over which quivered the heat-tormented air, the still anger of the heavens lowered down to meet in a line of hard conspiracy, the steely criminality of the remote deserted sea.

The man in the chair flapped his hand and spoke. "You accursed creature," he said. "Why did God make flies?"

AT SEA VIEW, SUNDERING ON SEA

After a long interval he sighed deeply and repeated: "*Why?*"

He made a fitful effort to assume a more comfortable position, and relapsed at last into his former attitude of brooding despondency.

When presently his landlady came in to lay the table for lunch, an almost imperceptible wincing alone betrayed his sense of the threatening swish and emphasis of her movements. She was manifestly heated by cooking, and a smell of burned potatoes had drifted in with her appearance. She was a meagre little woman with a resentful manner, glasses pinched her sharp red nose, and as she spread out the grey-white diaper and rapped down the knives and forks in their places she glanced at him darkly as if his inattention aggrieved her. Twice she was moved to speak and did not do so, but at length she could endure his indifference no longer. "Still feeling ill I suppose, Mr. 'Uss?" she said, in the manner of one who knows only too well what the answer will be.

He started at the sound of her voice, and gave her his attention as if with an effort. "I beg your pardon, Mrs. Croome?"

The landlady repeated with acerbity, "I arst if you was still feeling ill, Mr. 'Uss."

He did not look at her when he replied, but glanced towards her out of the corner of his eyes. "Yes," he said. "Yes, I am. I am afraid I am ill." She made a noise of unfriendly confirmation that brought his face round to her. "But mind you, Mrs. Croome, I don't want Mrs. Huss worried about it. She has enough to trouble her just now. Quite enough."

THE UNDYING FIRE

“Misfortunes don’t ever come singly,” said Mrs. Croome with quiet satisfaction, leaning across the table to brush some spilt salt from off the cloth to the floor. She was not going to make any rash promises about Mrs. Huss.

“We ’ave to bear up with what is put upon us,” said Mrs. Croome. “We ’ave to find strength where strength is to be found.”

She stood up and regarded him with pensive malignity. “Very likely all you want is a tonic of some sort. Very likely you’ve just let yourself go. I shouldn’t be surprised.”

The sick man gave no welcome to this suggestion.

“If you was to go round to the young doctor at the corner—Barrack isnameis—very likely he’d put you right. Everybody says he’s very clever. Not that me and Croome put much faith in doctors. Nor need to. But you’re in a different position.”

The man in the chair had been to see the young doctor at the corner twice already, but he did not want to discuss that interview with Mrs. Croome just then. “I must think about it,” he said evasively.

“After all it isn’t fair to yourself, it isn’t fair to others, to sicken for—it might be anything—without proper advice. Sitting there and doing nothing. Especially in lodgings at this time of year. It isn’t, well—not what I call considerate.”

“Exactly,” said Mr. Huss weakly.

“There’s homes and hospitals properly equipped.”

The sick man nodded his head appreciatively.

“If things are nipped in the bud they’re nipped in the bud, otherwise they grow and make trouble.”

AT SEA VIEW, SUNDERING ON SEA

It was exactly what her hearer was thinking.

Mrs. Croome ducked to the cellarette of a gaunt sideboard and rapped out a whisky bottle, a bottle of lime-juice, and a soda-water syphon upon the table. She surveyed her handiwork with a critical eye. "Cruet," she whispered, and vanished from the room, leaving the door, after a tormenting phase of creaking, to slam by its own weight behind her. . . .

The invalid raised his hand to his forehead and found it wet with perspiration. His hand was trembling violently. "My *God!*" he whispered. . . .

§ 2

This man's name was Job Huss. His father had been called Job before him, and so far as the family tradition extended the eldest son had always been called Job. Four weeks ago he would have been esteemed by most people a conspicuously successful and enviable man, and then had come a swift rush of disaster.

He had been the headmaster of the great modern public school at Woldingstanton in Norfolk, a revived school under the Papermakers' Guild of the City of London; he had given himself without stint to its establishment and he had made a great name in the world for it and for himself. He had been the first English schoolmaster to liberate the modern side from the entanglement of its lower forms with the classical masters; it was the only school in England where Spanish and Russian were honestly taught; his science laboratories were the best school labora-

THE UNDYING FIRE

tories in Great Britain and perhaps in the world, and his new methods in the teaching of history and politics brought a steady stream of foreign inquirers to Woldingstanton. The hand of the adversary had touched him first just at the end of the summer term. There had been an epidemic of measles in which, through the inexplicable negligence of a trusted nurse, two boys had died. On the afternoon of the second of these deaths an assistant master was killed by an explosion in the chemical laboratory. Then on the very last night of the term came the School House fire, in which two of the younger boys were burned to death.

Against any single one of these misfortunes Mr. Huss and his school might have maintained an unbroken front, but their quick succession had a very shattering effect. Every circumstance conspired to make these events vividly dreadful to Mr. Huss. He had been the first to come to the help of his chemistry master, who had fallen among some carboys of acid, and though still alive and struggling was blinded, nearly faceless, and hopelessly mangled. The poor fellow died before he could be extricated. On the night of the fire Mr. Huss strained himself internally and bruised his foot very painfully, and he himself found and carried out the charred body of one of the two little victims from the room in which they had been trapped by the locking of a door during some "last day" ragging. It added an element of exasperating inconvenience to his greater distresses that all his papers and nearly all his personal possessions were burned.

AT SEA VIEW, SUNDERING ON SEA

On the morning after the fire Mr. Huss's solicitor committed suicide. He was an old friend to whom Mr. Huss had entrusted the complete control of the savings that were to secure him and Mrs. Huss a dignified old age. The lawyer was a man of strong political feelings and liberal views, and he had bought roubles to his utmost for Mr. Huss as for himself, in order to demonstrate his confidence in the Russian revolution.

All these things had a quite sufficiently disorganising effect upon Mr. Huss; upon his wife the impression they made was altogether disastrous. She was a worthy but emotional lady, effusive rather than steadfast. Like the wives of most schoolmasters, she had been habitually preoccupied with matters of domestic management for many years, and her first reaction was in the direction of a bitter economy, mingled with a display of contempt she had never manifested hitherto for her husband's practical ability. Far better would it have been for Mr. Huss if she had broken down altogether; she insisted upon directing everything, and doing so with a sort of pitiful vehemence that brooked no contradiction. It was impossible to stay at Woldingstanton through the vacation, in sight of the tragic and blackened ruins of School House, and so she decided upon Sundering on Sea because of its nearness and its pre-war reputation for cheapness. There, she announced, her husband must "pull himself together and pick up," and then return to the rebuilding of School House and the rehabilitation of the school. Many formalities had to be gone through before the building could be

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put in hand, for in those days Britain was at the extremity of her war effort, and labour and material were unobtainable without special permits and great exertion. Sundering on Sea was as convenient a place as anywhere from which to write letters, but his idea of going to London to see influential people was resisted by Mrs. Huss on the score of the expense, and overcome when he persisted in it by a storm of tears.

On her arrival at Sundering Mrs. Huss put up at the Railway Hotel for the night, and spent the next morning in a stern visitation of possible lodgings. Something in the unassuming outlook of Sea View attracted her, and after a long dispute she was able to beat down Mrs. Croome's demand from five to four and a half guineas a week. That afternoon some importunate applicant in an extremity of homelessness—for there had been a sudden rush of visitors to Sundering—offered six guineas. Mrs. Croome tried to call off her first bargain, but Mrs. Huss was obdurate, and thereafter all the intercourse of landlady and her lodgers went to the unspoken refrain of "I get four and a half guineas and I ought to get six." To recoup herself Mrs. Croome attempted to make extra charges for the use of the bathroom, for cooking after five o'clock, for cleaning Mr. Huss's brown boots with specially bought brown cream instead of blacking, and for the ink used by him in his very voluminous correspondence; upon all of which points there was much argument and bitterness.

But a heavier blow than any they had hitherto experienced was now to fall upon Mr. and Mrs. Huss. Job in the ancient story had seven sons and

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three daughters, and they were all swept away. This Job was to suffer a sharper thrust; he had but one dear only son, a boy of great promise, who had gone into the Royal Flying Corps. News came that he had been shot down over the German lines.

Unhappily there had been a conflict between Mr. and Mrs. Huss about this boy. Huss had been proud that the youngster should choose the heroic service; Mrs. Huss had done her utmost to prevent his joining it. The poor lady was now ruthless in her anguish. She railed upon him as the murderer of their child. She hoped he was pleased with his handiwork. He could count one more name on his list; he could add it to the roll of honour in the chapel "with the others." Her *baby* boy! This said, she went wailing from the room.

The wretched man sat confounded. That "with the others" cut him to the heart. For the school chapel had a list of V.C.'s, D.C.M.'s and the like, second to none, and it had indeed been a pride to him.

For some days his soul was stunned. He was utterly exhausted and lethargic. He could hardly attend to the most necessary letters. From dignity, hope, and a great sheaf of activities, his life had shrunken abruptly to the compass of this dingy lodging, pervaded by the squabbling of two irrational women; his work in the world was in ruins; he had no strength left in him to struggle against fate. And a vague internal pain crept slowly into his consciousness.

His wife, insane now and cruel with sorrow, tried

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to put a great quarrel upon him about wearing mourning for their son. He had always disliked and spoken against these pomps of death, but she insisted that whatever callousness he might display she at least must wear black. He might, she said, rest assured that she would spend no more money than the barest decency required; she would buy the cheapest material, and make it up in her bedroom. But black she must have. This resolution led straight to a conflict with Mrs. Croome, who objected to her best bedroom being littered with bits of black stuff, and cancelled the loan of her sewing-machine. The mourning should be made, Mrs. Huss insisted, though she had to sew every stitch of it by hand. And the poor distraught lady in her silly parsimony made still deeper trouble for herself by cutting her material in every direction half an inch or more short of the paper pattern. She came almost to a physical tussle with Mrs. Croome because of the state of the carpet and counterpane, and Mrs. Croome did her utmost to drag Mr. Huss into an altercation upon the matter with her husband.

“Croome don’t interfere much, but some things he or nobody ain’t going to stand, Mr. ’Uss.”

For some days in this battlefield of insatiable grief and petty cruelty, and with a dull pain steadily boring its way to recognition, Mr. Huss forced himself to carry on in a fashion the complex of business necessitated by the school disaster. Then in the night came a dream, as dreams sometimes will, to enlighten him upon his bodily condition. Projecting from his side he saw a hard, white body that sent round, worm-

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like tentacles into every corner of his being. A number of doctors were struggling to tear this thing away from him. At every effort the pain increased.

He awoke, but the pain throbbed on.

He lay quite still. Upon the heavy darkness he saw the word "Cancer," bright red and glowing—as pain glows. . . .

He argued in the face of invincible conviction. He kept the mood conditional. "If it be so," he said, though he knew that the thing was so. What should he do? There would have to be operations, great expenses, enfeeblement. . . .

Whom could he ask for advice? Who would help him? . . .

Suppose in the morning he were to take a bathing ticket as if he meant to bathe, and struggle out beyond the mud-flats. He could behave as though cramp had taken him suddenly. . . .

Five minutes of suffocation he would have to force himself through, and then *peace*—endless peace!

"No," he said, with a sudden gust of courage. "I will fight it out to the end."

But his mind was too dull to form plans and physically he was afraid. He would have to find a doctor somehow, and even that little task appalled him.

Then he would have to tell Mrs. Huss. . . .

For a time he lay quite still as if he listened to the alternative swell and diminuendo of his pain.

"Oh! if I had someone to help me!" he whispered, and was overcome by the lonely misery of his position. "If I had someone!"

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For years he had never wept, but now tears were wrung from him. He rolled over and buried his face in the pillow and tried to wriggle his body away from that steady gnawing; he fretted as a child might do.

The night about him was as it were a great watching presence that would not help nor answer.

§ 3

Behind the brass plate at the corner which said "Dr. Elihu Barrack" Mr. Huss found a hard, competent young man, who had returned from the war to his practice at Sundering after losing a leg. The mechanical substitute seemed to have taken to him very kindly. He appeared to be both modest and resourceful; his unfavourable diagnosis was all the more convincing because it was tentative and conditional. He knew the very specialist for the case; no less a surgeon than Sir Alpheus Mengo came, it happened, quite frequently to play golf on the Sundering links. It would be easy to arrange for him to examine Mr. Huss in Dr. Barrack's little consulting room, and if an operation had to be performed it could be managed with a minimum of expense in Mr. Huss's own lodgings without any extra charge for mileage and the like.

"Of course," said Mr. Huss, "of course," with a clear vision of Mrs. Croome confronted with the proposal.

Sir Alpheus Mengo came down the next Saturday, and made a clandestine examination. He decided to

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operate the following week-end. Mr. Huss was left at his own request to break the news to his wife and to make the necessary arrangements for this use of Mrs. Croome's rooms. But it was two days before he could bring himself to broach the matter.

He sat now listening to the sounds of his wife moving about in the bedroom overhead, and to the muffled crashes that intimated the climax of Mrs. Croome's preparation of the midday meal. He heard her calling upstairs to know whether Mrs. Huss was ready for her to serve up. He was seized with panic as a schoolboy might be who had not prepared his lesson. He tried hastily to frame some introductory phrases, but nothing would come into his mind save terms of disgust and lamentation. The sullen heat of the day mingled in one impression with his pain. He was nauseated by the smell of cooking. He felt it would be impossible to sit up at table and pretend to eat the meal of burnt bacon and potatoes that was all too evidently coming.

It came. Its progress along the passage was announced by a clatter of dishes. The door was opened by a kick. Mrs. Croome put the feast upon the table with something between defence and defiance in her manner. "What else," she seemed to intimate, "could one expect for four and a half guineas a week in the very height of the season? From a woman who could have got six!"

"Your dinner's there," Mrs. Croome called upstairs to Mrs. Huss in tones of studied negligence, and then retired to her own affairs in the kitchen, slamming the door behind her.

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The room quivered down to silence, and then Mr. Huss could hear the footsteps of his wife crossing the bedroom and descending the staircase.

Mrs. Huss was a dark, graceful, and rather untidy lady of seven and forty, with the bridling bearing of one who habitually repels implicit accusations. She lifted the lid of the vegetable dish. "I thought I smelled burning," she said. "The woman is impossible."

She stood by her chair, regarding her husband and waiting.

He rose reluctantly, and transferred himself to a seat at table.

It had always been her custom to carve. She now prepared to serve him. "No," he said, full of loathing. "I can't eat. I *can't*."

She put down the tablespoon and fork she had just raised, and regarded him with eyes of dark disapproval.

"It's all we can get," she said.

He shook his head. "It isn't that."

"I don't know what you expect me to get for you here," she complained. "The tradesmen don't know us—and don't care."

"It isn't that. I'm ill."

"It's the heat. We are all ill. Everyone. In such weather as this. It's no excuse for not making an effort, situated as we are."

"I mean I am really ill. I am in pain."

She looked at him as one might look at an unreasonable child. He was constrained to more definite statement.

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“I suppose I must tell you sooner or later. I’ve had to see a doctor.”

“Without consulting me!”

“I thought if it turned out to be fancy I needn’t bother you.”

“But how did you find a doctor?”

“There’s a fellow at the corner. Oh! it’s no good making a long story of it. I have cancer. . . . Nothing will do but an operation.” Self-pity wrung him. He controlled a violent desire to cry. “I am too ill to eat. I ought to be lying down.”

She flopped back in her chair and stared at him as one stares at some hideous monstrosity. “Oh!” she said. “To have cancer now! In these lodgings!”

“I can’t *help* it,” he said in accents that were almost a whine. “I didn’t choose the time.”

“*Cancer!*” she cried reproachfully. “The horror of it!”

He looked at her for a moment with hate in his heart. He saw under her knitted brows dark and hostile eyes that had once sparkled with affection, he saw a loose mouth with downturned corners that had been proud and pretty, and this mask of dislike was projecting forward upon a neck he had used to call her head-stalk, so like had it seemed to the stem of some pretty flower. She had had lovely shoulders and an impudent humour; and now the skin upon her neck and shoulders had a little loosened, and she was no longer impudent but harsh. Her brows were moist with heat, and her hair more than usually astray. But these things did not increase, they mitigated his antagonism. They did not repel him as

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defects; they hurt him as wounds received in a common misfortune. Always he had petted and spared and rejoiced in her vanity and weakness, and now as he realised the full extent of her selfish abandonment a protective pity arose in his heart that overcame his physical pain. It was terrible to see how completely her delicacy and tenderness of mind had been broken down. She had neither the strength nor the courage left even for an unselfish thought. And he could not help her; whatever power he had possessed over her mind had gone long ago. His magic had departed.

Latterly he had been thinking very much of her prospects if he were to die. In some ways his death might be a good thing for her. He had an endowment assurance running that would bring in about seven thousand pounds immediately at his death, but which would otherwise involve heavy annual payments for some years. So far, to die would be clear gain. But who would invest this money for her and look after her interests? She was, he knew, very silly about property; suspicious of people she knew intimately, and greedy and credulous with strangers. He had helped to make her incompetent, and he owed it to her to live and protect her if he could. And behind that intimate and immediate reason for living he had a strong sense of work in the world yet to be done by him, and a task in education still incomplete.

He spoke with his chin in his hand and his eyes staring at the dark and distant sea. "An operation," he said, "might cure me."

Her thoughts, it became apparent, had been trav-

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elling through some broken and unbeautiful country roughly parallel with the course of his own. "But need there be an operation?" she thought aloud. "Are they ever any good?"

"I could die," he admitted bitterly, and repented as he spoke.

There had been times, he remembered, when she had said and done sweet and gallant things, poor soul! poor broken companion! And now she had fallen into a darkness far greater than his. He had feared that he had hurt her, and then when he saw that she was not hurt, and that she scrutinised his face eagerly as if she weighed the sincerity of his words, his sense of utter loneliness was completed.

Over his mean drama of pain and debasement in its close atmosphere buzzing with flies, it was as if some gigantic and remorseless being watched him as a man of science might hover over some experiment, and marked his life and all his world. "You are alone," this brooding witness counselled, "you are utterly alone. *Curse God and die.*"

It seemed a long time before Mr. Huss answered this imagined voice, and when he answered it he spoke as if he addressed his wife alone.

"No," he said with a sudden decisiveness. "No. I will face that operation. . . . We are ill and our hearts are faint. Neither for you, dear, nor for me must our story finish in this fashion. No. I shall go on to the end."

"And have your operation here?"

"In this house. It is by far the most convenient place, as things are."

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“You may die here!”

“Well, I shall die fighting.”

“Leaving me here with Mrs. Croome.”

His temper broke under her reply. “Leaving you here with Mrs. Croome,” he said harshly.

He got up. “I can eat nothing,” he repeated, and dropped back sullenly into the horsehair arm-chair.

There was a long silence, and then he heard the little, almost mouselike, movements of his wife as she began her meal. For a while he had forgotten the dull ache within him, but now, glowing and fading and glowing, it made its way back into his consciousness. He was helpless and perplexed; he had not meant to quarrel. He had hurt this poor thing who had been his love and companion; he had bullied her. His clogged brain could think of nothing to set matters right. He stared with dull eyes at a world utterly hateful to him.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE THREE VISITORS

§ 1

WHILE this unhappy conversation was occurring at Sundering on Sea, three men were discussing the case of Mr. Huss very earnestly over a meatless but abundant lunch in the bow window of a club that gives upon the trees and sunshine of Carlton Gardens. Lobster salad engaged them, and the ice in the jug of hock cup clinked very pleasantly as they replenished their glasses.

The host was Sir Eliphaz Burrows, the patentee and manufacturer of those Temanite building blocks which have not only revolutionised the construction of army hutments, but put the whole problem of industrial and rural housing upon an altogether new footing; his guests were Mr. William Dad, formerly the maker of the celebrated Dad and Showwhite car de luxe, and now one of the chief contractors for aeroplanes in England; and Mr. Joseph Farr, the head of the technical section of Woldingstanton School. Both the former gentlemen were governors of that foundation and now immensely rich, and Sir Eliphaz had once been a pupil of the father of Mr. Huss and had played a large part in the appointment of the latter to Woldingstanton. He was a slender old man, with an avid vulturine head poised on a

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long red neck, and he had an abundance of parti-coloured hair, red and white, springing from a circle round the crown of his head, from his eyebrows, his face generally, and the backs of his hands. He wore a blue soft shirt with a turn-down collar within a roomy blue serge suit, and that and something about his large loose black tie suggested scholarship and refinement. His manners were elaborately courteous. Mr. Dad was a compacter, keener type, warily alert in his bearing, an industrial fox-terrier from the Midlands, silver-haired and dressed in ordinary morning dress except for a tan vest with a bright brown ribbon border. Mr. Farr was big in a grey flannel Norfolk suit; he had a large, round, white, shiny, clean-shaven face and uneasy hands, and it was apparent that he carried pocket-books and such-like luggage in his breast pocket.

They consumed the lobster appreciatively, and approached in a fragmentary and tentative manner the business that had assembled them: namely, the misfortunes that had overwhelmed Mr. Huss and their bearing upon the future of the school.

“For my part I don’t think there is such a thing as misfortune,” said Mr. Dad. “I don’t hold with it. Miscalculation *if* you like.”

“In a sense,” said Mr. Farr ambiguously, glancing at Sir Eliphaz.

“If a man keeps his head screwed on the right way,” said Mr. Dad, and attacked a claw with hope and appetite. Mr. Dad affected the parsimony of unfinished sentences.

“I can’t help thinking,” said Sir Eliphaz, putting

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down his glass and wiping his moustache and eyebrows with care before resuming his lobster, "that a man who entrusts his affairs to a solicitor, after the fashion of the widow and orphan, must be singularly lacking in judgment. Or reckless. Never in the whole course of my life have I met a solicitor who could invest money safely and profitably. Clergymen I have known, women of all sorts, savages, monomaniacs, criminals, but *never* solicitors."

"I have known some smart business parsons," said Mr. Dad judicially. "One in particular. Sharp as nails. They are a much underestimated class."

"Perhaps it is natural that a solicitor should be a wild investor," Sir Eliphaz pursued his subject. "He lives out of the ordinary world in a dirty little office in some antiquated inn, his office fittings are fifty years out of date, his habitual scenery consists of tin boxes painted with the names of dead and disreputable clients; he has to take the law courts, filled with horse-boxes and men dressed up in gowns and horse-hair wigs, quite seriously; nobody ever goes near him but abnormal people or people in abnormal states: people upset by jealousy, people upset by fear, blackmailed people, cheats trying to dodge the law, lunatics, litigants and legatees. The only investments he ever discusses are queer investments. Naturally he loses all sense of proportion. Naturally he becomes insanely suspicious; and when a client asks for positive action he flounders and gambles."

"Naturally," said Mr. Dad. "And here we find poor Huss giving all his business over——"

"Exactly," said Sir Eliphaz, and filled his glass.

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“There’s been a great change in him in the last two years,” said Mr. Farr. “He let the war worry him for one thing.”

“No good doing that,” said Mr. Dad.

“And even before the war,” Sir Eliphaz began.

“Even before the war,” said Mr. Farr, in a pause.

“There was a change,” said Sir Eliphaz. “He had been bitten by educational theories.”

“No business for a headmaster,” said Mr. Farr.

“Our intention had always been a great scientific and technical school,” said Sir Eliphaz. “He introduced Logic into the teaching of plain English—against my opinion. He encouraged some of the boys to read philosophy.”

“All he could,” said Mr. Farr.

“I never held with his fad for teaching history,” said Mr. Dad. “He was history mad. It got worse and worse. What’s history after all? At the best, it’s over and done with. . . . But he wouldn’t argue upon it—not reasonably. He was—overbearing. He had a way of looking at you. . . . It was never our intention to make Woldingstanton into a school of history.”

“And now, Mr. Farr,” said Sir Eliphaz, “what are the particulars of the fire?”

“It isn’t for me to criticise,” said Mr. Farr.

“What I say,” said Mr. Dad, projecting his muzzle with an appearance of great determination, “is, fix responsibility. *Fix responsibility*. Here is a door locked that common sense dictated should be open. Who was responsible?”

“No one in School House seems to have been

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especially responsible for that door so far as I can ascertain," said Mr. Farr.

"All responsibility," said Mr. Dad, with an expression of peevish insistence, as though Mr. Farr had annoyed him, "*all* responsibility that is not delegated rests with the Head. That's a hard and fast and primary rule of business organisation. In my factory I say quite plainly to everyone who comes into it, man or woman, chick or child. . . ."

Mr. Dad was still explaining in a series of imaginary dialogues, tersely but dramatically, his methods of delegating authority, when Sir Eliphaz cut across the flow with, "Returning to Mr. Huss for a moment. . . ."

The point that Sir Eliphaz wanted to get at was whether Mr. Huss expected to continue headmaster at Woldingstanton. From some chance phrase in a letter Sir Eliphaz rather gathered that he did.

"Well," said Mr. Farr portentously, letting the thing hang for a moment, "he does."

"Tcha!" said Mr. Dad, and shut his mouth tightly and waved his head slowly from side to side with knitted brows as if he had bitten his tongue.

"I would be the first to recognise the splendid work he did for the school in his opening years," said Mr. Farr. "I would be the last to alter the broad lines of the work as he set it out. Barring that I should replace a certain amount of the biological teaching and practically all this new history stuff by chemistry and physics. But one has to admit that Mr. Huss did not know when to relinquish power nor when to devolve responsibility. We, all of us, the entire staff—it is

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no mere personal grievance of mine—were kept, well, to say the least of it, in tutelage. Rather than let authority go definitely out of his hands, he would allow things to drift. Witness that door, witness the business of the nurse.”

Mr. Dad, with his lips compressed, nodded his head; each nod like the tap of a hammer.

“I never believed in all this overdoing history in the school,” Mr. Dad remarked rather disconnectedly. “If you get rid of Latin and Greek, why bring it all back again in another form? Why, I’m told he taught ’em things about Assyria. Assyria! A modern school ought to be a modern school—business first and business last and business all the time. And teach boys to work. We shall need it, mark my words.”

“A certain amount of modern culture,” waved Sir Eliphaz.

“*Modern,*” said Mr. Farr softly.

Mr. Dad grunted. “In my opinion that sort of thing gives the boys ideas.”

Mr. Farr steered his way discreetly. “Science with a due regard to its technical applications should certainly be the substantial part of a modern education.” . . .

They were in the smoking-room and half way through three princely cigars before they got beyond such fragmentary detractions of the fallen headmaster. Then Mr. Dad in the clear-cut style of a business man, brought his companions to action. “Well,” said Mr. Dad, turning abruptly upon Sir Eliphaz, “what about it?”

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“It is manifest that Woldingstanton has to enter on a new phase; what has happened brings us to the parting of the ways,” said Sir Eliphaz. “Much as I regret the misfortunes of an old friend.”

“*That*,” said Mr. Dad, “spells Farr.”

“If he will shoulder the burthen,” said Sir Eliphaz, smiling upon Mr. Farr not so much with his mouth as by the most engaging convolutions, curvatures and waving about of his various strands of hair.

“I don’t want to see the school go down,” said Mr. Farr. “I’ve given it a good slice of my life.”

“Right,” said Mr. Dad. “Right. File that. That suits us. And now how do we set about the affair? The next thing, I take it, is to break it to Huss. . . . How?”

He paused to give the ideas of his companions a fair chance.

“Well, *my* idea is this. None of us want to be hard on Mr. Huss. Luck has been hard enough as it is. We want to do this job as gently as we can. It happens that I go and play golf at Sundering on Sea ever and again. Excellent links, well kept up all things considered, and the big hotel close by does you wonderfully, the railway company sees to that; in spite of the war. Well, why shouldn’t we all, if Sir Eliphaz’s engagements permit, go down there in a sort of *casual* way, and take the opportunity of a good clear talk with him and settle it all up? The thing’s got to be done, and it seems to me altogether more kindly to go there personally and put it to him than do it by correspondence. Very likely we could put it to him in such a way that he himself would

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suggest the very arrangement we want. You particularly, Sir Eliphaz, being as you say an old friend." . . .

§ 2

Since there was little likelihood of Mr. Huss going away from Sundering on Sea, it did not appear necessary to Mr. Dad to apprise him of the projected visitation. And so these three gentlemen heard nothing about any operation for cancer until they reached that resort.

Mr. Dad came down early on Friday afternoon to the Golf Hotel, where he had already engaged rooms for the party. He needed the relaxation of the links very badly, the task of accumulating a balance sufficiently large to secure an opulent future for British industry, with which Mr. Dad in his straightforward way identified himself, was one that in a controlled establishment between the Scylla of aggressive labour and the Charybdis of the war-profits tax, strained his mind to the utmost. He was joined by Mr. Farr at dinner-time, and Sir Eliphaz, who was detained in London by some negotiations with the American Government, arrived replete by the dining-car train. Mr. Farr made a preliminary reconnaissance at Sea View, and was the first to hear of the operation.

Sir Alpheus Mengo was due at Sea View by the first train on Saturday. He had arranged to operate before lunch. It was clear therefore that the only time available for a conversation between the three and Mr. Huss was between breakfast and the arrival of Sir Alpheus.

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Mr. Huss, whose lethargy had now departed, displayed himself feverishly anxious to talk about the school. "There are points I must make clear," he said, "vital points," and so a meeting was arranged for half-past nine. This would give a full hour before the arrival of the doctors.

"He feels that in a way it will be his testament, so to speak," said Mr. Farr. "Naturally he has his own ideas about the future of the school. We all have. I would be the last person to suggest that he could say anything about Woldingstanton that would not be well worth hearing. Some of us may have heard most of it before, and be better able to discount some of his assertions. But that under the present circumstances is neither here nor there."

§ 3

Matters in the confined space of Sea View were not nearly so strained as Mr. Huss had feared. The prospect of an operation was not without its agreeable side to Mrs. Croome. Possibly she would have preferred that the subject should have been Mrs. rather than Mr. Huss, but it was clear that she made no claim to dictate upon this point. Her demand for special fees to meet the inconveniences of the occasion had been met quite liberally by Mr. Huss. And there was a genuine appreciation of order and method in Mrs. Croome; she was a furious spring-cleaner, a hurricane tidier-up, her feeling for the discursive state of Mrs. Huss's hair was almost as involuntary as a racial animosity; and the swift dexterous prep-

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arations of the nurse who presently came to convert the best bedroom to surgical uses, impressed her deeply. She was allowed to help. Superfluous hangings and furnishings were removed, everything was thoroughly scrubbed, at the last moment clean linen sheets of a wonderful hardness were to be spread over every exposed surface. They were to be brought in sterilised drums. The idea of sterilised drums fascinated her. She had never heard of such things before. She wished she could keep her own linen in a sterilised drum always, and let her lodgers have something else instead.

She felt that she was going to be a sort of assistant priestess at a sacrifice, the sacrifice of Mr. Huss. She had always secretly feared his submissive quiet as a thing unaccountable that might at any time turn upon her; she suspected him of ironies; and he would be helpless, under chloroform, subject to examination with no possibilities of disconcerting repartee. She did her best to persuade Dr. Barrack that she would be useful in the room during the proceedings. Her imagination conjured up a wonderful vision of the Huss interior as a great chest full of strange and interesting viscera with the lid wide open and Sir Alpheus picking thoughtfully, with deprecatory remarks, amid its contents. But that sight was denied her.

She was very helpful and cheerful on the Saturday morning, addressing herself to the consolation of Mr. and the bracing-up of Mrs. Huss. She assisted in the final transformation of the room.

“It might be a real ’ospital,” she said. “Nursing

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must be nice work. I never thought of it like this before.”

Mr. Huss was no longer depressed but flushed and resolute, but Mrs. Huss, wounded by the neglect of everyone—no one seemed to consider for a moment what she must be feeling—remained very much in her own room, working inefficiently upon the mourning that might now be doubly needed.

§ 4

Mr. Huss knew Mr. Farr very well. For the last ten years it had been his earnest desire to get rid of him, but he had been difficult to replace because of his real accomplishment in technical chemistry. In the course of their five minutes' talk in his bedroom on Friday evening, Mr. Huss grasped the situation. Woldingstanton, his creation, his life work, was to be taken out of his hands, and in favour of this, his most soul-deadening assistant. He had been foolish no doubt, but he had never anticipated that. He had never supposed that Farr would dare.

He thought hard through that long night of Friday. His pain was no distraction. He had his intentions very ready and clear in his mind when his three visitors arrived.

He had insisted upon getting up and dressing fully.

“I can't talk about Woldingstanton in bed,” he said. The doctor was not there to gainsay him.

Sir Eliphaz was the first to arrive, and Mrs. Huss retrieved him from Mrs. Croome in the passage and

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brought him in. He was wearing a Norfolk jacket suit of a coarse yet hairy consistency and of a pale sage green colour. He shone greatly in the eyes of Mrs. Huss. "I can't help thinking of you, dear lady," he said, bowing over her hand, and all his hair was for a moment sad and sympathetic like a sick Skye terrier's. Mr. Dad and Mr. Farr entered a moment later; Mr. Farr in grey flannel trousers and a brown jacket, and Mr. Dad in a natty dark grey suit with a luminous purple waistcoat.

"My dear," said Mr. Huss to his wife, "I must be alone with these gentlemen," and when she seemed disposed to linger near the understanding warmth of Sir Eliphaz, he added, "Figures, my dear—*Finance*," and drove her forth. . . .

"'Pon my honour," said Mr. Dad, coming close up to the arm-chair, wrinkling his muzzle and putting through his compliments in good business-like style before coming to the harder stuff in hand; "I don't like to see you like this, Mr. Huss."

"Nor does Sir Eliphaz, I hope—nor Farr. Please find yourselves chairs."

And while Mr. Farr made protesting noises and Sir Eliphaz waved his hair about before beginning the little speech he had prepared, Mr. Huss took the discourse out of their mouths and began:

"I know perfectly well the task you have set yourselves. You have come to make an end of me as headmaster of Woldingstanton. And Mr. Farr has very obligingly. . . ."

He held up his white and wasted hand as Mr. Farr began to disavow.

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“No,” said Mr. Huss. “But before you three gentlemen proceed with your office, I should like to tell you something of what the school and my work in it, and my work for education, is to me. I am a man of little more than fifty. A month ago I counted with a reasonable confidence upon twenty years more of work before I relaxed. . . . Then these misfortunes rained upon me. I have lost all my private independence; there have been these shocking deaths in the school; my son, my only son . . . killed . . . trouble has darkened the love and kindness of my wife . . . and now my body is suffering so that my mind is like a swimmer struggling through waves of pain . . . far from land. . . . These are heavy blows. But the hardest blow of all, harder to bear than any of these others—I do not speak rashly, gentlemen, I have thought it out through an endless night—the last blow will be this rejection of my life work. That will strike the inmost me, the heart and soul of me. . . .”

He paused.

“You mustn’t take it quite like that, Mr. Huss,” protested Mr. Dad. “It isn’t fair to us to put it like that.”

“I want you to listen to me,” said Mr. Huss.

“Only the very kindest motives,” continued Mr. Dad.

“Let me speak,” said Mr. Huss, with the voice of authority that had ruled Woldingstanton for five and twenty years. “I cannot wrangle and contradict. At most we have an hour.”

Mr. Dad made much the same sound that a dog will make when it has proposed to bark and has been

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told to get under the table. For a time he looked an ill-used man.

“To end my work in the school will be to end me altogether. . . . I do not see why I should not speak plainly to you, gentlemen, situated as I am here. I do not see why I should not talk to you for once in my own language. Pain and death are our interlocutors; this is a rare and raw and bleeding occasion; in an hour or so the women may be laying out my body and I may be silent for ever. I have hidden my religion, but why should I hide it now? To you I have always tried to seem as practical and self-seeking as possible, but in secret I have been a fanatic; and Woldingstanton was the altar on which I offered myself to God. I have done ill and feebly there I know; I have been indolent and rash; those were my weaknesses; but I have done my best. To the limits of my strength and knowledge I have served God. . . . And now in this hour of darkness where is this God that I have served? Why does he not stand here between me and this last injury you would do to the work I have dedicated to him?”

At these words Mr. Dad turned horrified eyes to Mr. Farr.

But Mr. Huss went on as though talking to himself. “In the night I have looked into my heart; I have sought in my heart for base motives and secret sins. I have put myself on trial to find why God should hide himself from me now, and I can find no reason and no justification. . . . In the bitterness of my heart I am tempted to give way to you and to tell you to take the school and to do just what you

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will with it. . . . The nearness of death makes the familiar things of experience flimsy and unreal, and far more real to me now is this darkness that broods over me, as blight will sometimes overhang the world at noon, and mocks me day and night with a perpetual challenge to curse God and die. . . .

“Why do I not curse God and die? Why do I cling to my work when the God to whom I dedicated it is—silent? Because, I suppose, I still hope for some sign of reassurance. Because I am not yet altogether defeated. I would go on telling you why I want Woldingstanton to continue on its present lines and why it is impossible for you, why it will be a sort of murder for you to hand it over to Farr here, if my pain were ten times what it is. . . .”

At the mention of his name, Mr. Farr started and looked first at Mr. Dad, and then at Sir Eliphaz. “Really,” he said, “really! One might think I had conspired——”

“I am afraid, Mr. Huss,” said Sir Eliphaz, with a large reassuring gesture to the technical master, “that the suggestion that Mr. Farr should be your successor, came in the first instance from *me*.”

“You must reconsider it,” said Mr. Huss, moistening his lips and staring steadfastly in front of him.

Here Mr. Dad broke out in a querulous voice: “Are you really in a state, Mr. Huss, to discuss a matter like this—feverish and suffering as you are?”

“I could not be in a better frame for this discussion,” said Mr. Huss. . . . “And now, for what I have to say about the school:—Woldingstanton, when I came to it, was a humdrum school of some

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seventy boys, following a worn-out routine. A little Latin was taught and less Greek, chiefly in order to say that Greek was taught; some scraps of mathematical processes, a few rags of general knowledge, English history—not human history, mind you, but just the national brand, cut dried flowers from the past with no roots and no meaning, a smattering of French. . . . That was practically all; it was no sort of education, it was a mere education-like posturing. And to-day, what has that school become?”

“We never grudged you money,” said Sir Eliphaz.

“Nor loyal help,” said Mr. Farr, but in a half whisper.

“I am not thinking of its visible prosperity. The houses and laboratories and museums that have grown about that nucleus are nothing in themselves. The reality of a school is not in buildings and numbers but in matters of the mind and soul. Woldingstanton has become a torch at which lives are set aflame. I have lit a candle there—the winds of fate may yet blow it into a world-wide blaze.”

As Mr. Huss said these things he was uplifted by enthusiasm, and his pain sank down out of his consciousness.

“What,” he said, “is the task of the teacher in the world? It is the greatest of all human tasks. It is to ensure that Man, Man the Divine, grows in the souls of men. For what is a man without instruction? He is born as the beasts are born, a greedy egotism, a clutching desire, a thing of lusts and fears. He can regard nothing except in relation to himself. Even his love is a bargain; and his utmost effort is

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vanity because he has to die. And it is we teachers alone who can lift him out of that self-preoccupation. We teachers . . . We can release him into a wider circle of ideas beyond himself in which he can at length forget himself and his meagre personal ends altogether. We can open his eyes to the past and to the future and to the undying life of Man. So through us and through us only, he escapes from death and futility. An untaught man is but himself alone, as lonely in his ends and destiny as any beast; a man instructed is a man enlarged from that narrow prison of self into participation in an undying life, that began we know not when, that grows above and beyond the greatness of the stars. . . .”

He spoke as if he addressed some other hearer than the three before him. Mr. Dad, with eyebrows raised and lips compressed, nodded silently to Mr. Farr as if his worst suspicions were confirmed, and there were signs and signals that Sir Eliphaz was about to speak, when Mr. Huss resumed.

“For five and twenty years I have ruled over Woldingstanton, and for all that time I have been giving sight to the blind. I have given understanding to some thousands of boys. All those routines of teaching that had become dead we made live again there. My boys have learned the history of mankind so that it has become their own adventure; they have learned geography so that the world is their possession; I have had languages taught to make the past live again in their minds and to be windows upon the souls of alien peoples. Science has played its proper part; it has taken my boys into the secret places of

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matter and out among the nebulae. . . . Always I have kept Farr and his utilities in their due subordination. Some of my boys have already made good business men—because they were more than business men. . . . But I have never sought to make business men and I never will. My boys have gone into the professions, into the services, into the great world and done well—I have had dull boys and intractable boys, but nearly all have gone into the world gentlemen, broad-minded, good-mannered, understanding and unselfish, masters of self, servants of man, because the whole scheme of their education has been to release them from base and narrow things. . . . When the war came, my boys were ready. . . . They have gone to their deaths—how many have gone to their deaths! My own son among them. . . . I did not grudge him. . . . Woldingstanton is a new school; its tradition has scarcely begun; the list of its old boys is now so terribly depleted that its young tradition wilts like a torn seedling. . . . But still we can keep on with it, still that tradition will grow, if my flame still burns. But my teaching must go on as I have planned it. It must. It must. . . . What has made my boys all that they are, has been the history, the biological science, the philosophy. For these things are wisdom. All the rest is training and mere knowledge. If the school is to live, the head must still be a man who can teach history—history in the widest sense; he must be philosopher, biologist, and archæologist as well as scholar. And you would hand that task to Farr! Farr! Farr here has never even touched the essential work of the school. He

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does not know what it is. His mind is no more opened than the cricket professional's."

Mr. Dad made an impatient noise.

The sick man went on with his burning eyes on Farr, his lips bloodless.

"He thinks of chemistry and physics not as a help to understanding but as a help to trading. So long as he has been at Woldingstanton he has been working furtively with our materials in the laboratories, dreaming of some profitable patent. Oh! I know you, Farr. Do you think I didn't see because I didn't choose to complain? If he could have discovered some profitable patent he would have abandoned teaching the day he did so. He would have been even as you are. But with a lifeless imagination you cannot even invent patentable things. He would talk to the boys of the empire at times, but the empire to him is no more than a trading conspiracy fenced about with tariffs. It goes on to nothing. . . . And he thinks we are fighting the Germans, he thinks my dear and precious boy gave his life and that all these other brave lads beyond counting died, in order that we might take the place of the Germans as the chapman-bullies of the world. That is the measure of his mind. He has no religion, no faith, no devotion. Why does he want my place? Because he wants to serve as I have served? No! But because he envies my house, my income, my headship. Whether I live or die, it is impossible that Woldingstanton, my Woldingstanton, should live under his hand. Give it to him, and in a little while it will be dead."

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§ 5

“Gentlemen!” Mr. Farr protested with a white perspiring face.

“I had no idea,” ejaculated Mr. Dad, “I had no idea that things had gone so far.”

Sir Eliphaz indicated by waving his hand that his associates might allay themselves; he recognised that the time had come for him to speak.

“It is deplorable,” Sir Eliphaz began.

He put down his hands and gripped the seat of his chair as if to hold himself on to it very tightly, and he looked very hard at the horizon as if he were trying to decipher some remote inscription. “You have imported a tone into this discussion,” he tried.

He got off at the third attempt. “It is an extremely painful thing to me, Mr. Huss, that to you, standing as you do on the very brink of the Great Chasm, it should be necessary to speak in any but the most cordial and helpful tones. But it is my duty, it is our duty, to hold firmly to those principles which have always guided us as governors of the Woldingstanton School. You speak, I must say it, with an extreme arrogance of an institution to which all of us here have in some measure contributed; you speak as though you, and you alone, were its creator and guide. You must pardon me, Mr. Huss, if I remind you of the facts, the eternal verities of the story. The school, sir, was founded in the spacious days of Queen Elizabeth, and many a good man guided its fortunes down to the time when an unfortunate—a diversion of its endowments led to its

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temporary cessation. The Charity Commissioners revived it after an inquiry some fifty years ago, and it has been largely the lavish generosity of the Paper-makers' Guild, of which I and Dad are humble members, that has stimulated its expansion under you. Loth as I am to cross your mood, Mr. Huss, while you are in pain and anxiety, I am bound to recall to you these things which have made *your* work possible. You could not have made bricks without straw, you could not have built up Woldingstanton without the money obtained by that commercialism for which you display such unqualified contempt. We sordid cits it was who planted, who watered. . . ."

Mr. Huss seemed about to speak, but said nothing.

"Exactly what I say," said Mr. Dad, turning for confirmation to Mr. Farr. "The school is essentially a modern commercial school. It should be run as that."

Mr. Farr nodded his white face ambiguously with his eye on Sir Eliphaz.

"I should have been chary, Mr. Huss, of wrangling about our particular shares and contributions on an occasion so solemn as this, but since you will have it so, since you challenge discussion. . . ."

He turned to his colleagues as if for support.

"Go on," said Mr. Dad. "Facts are facts."

§ 6

Sir Eliphaz cleared his throat, and continued to read the horizon.

"I have raised these points, Mr. Huss, by way of

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an opening. The gist of what I have to say lies deeper. So far I have dealt with the things you have said only in relation to us; as against us you assume your own righteousness, you flout our poor judgments, you sweep them aside; the school must be continued on *your* lines, the teaching must follow *your* schemes. You can imagine no alternative opinion. God forbid that I should say a word in my own defence; I have given freely both of my time and of my money to our school; it would tax my secretaries now to reckon up how much; but I make no claims. . . . None. . . .

“But let me now put all this discussion upon a wider and a graver footing. It is not only us and our poor intentions you arraign. Strange things have dropped from you, Mr. Huss, in this discussion, things it has at once pained and astonished me to hear from you. You have spoken not only of man’s ingratitude, but of God’s. I could scarcely believe my ears, but indeed I heard you say that God was silent, unhelpful, and that he too had deserted you. In spite of the most meritorious exertions on your part. . . . Standing as you do on the margin of the Great Secret, I want to plead very earnestly with you against all that you have said.”

Sir Eliphaz seemed to meditate remotely. He returned like a soaring vulture to his victim. “I would be the last man to obtrude my religious feelings upon anyone. . . . I make no parade of religion, Mr. Huss, none at all. Many people think me no better than an unbeliever. But here I am bound to make my confession. I owe much to God, Mr. Huss. . . .”

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He glowered at the sick man. He abandoned his grip upon the seat of his chair for a moment, to make a gesture with his hairy claw of a hand. "Your attitude to my God is a far deeper offence to me than any merely personal attack could be. Under his chastening blows, under trials that humbler spirits would receive with thankfulness and construe as lessons and warnings, you betray yourself more proud, more self-assured, more—froward is not too harsh a word—more froward, Mr. Huss, than you were even in the days when we used to fret under you on Founder's Day in the Great Hall, when you would dictate to us that here you must have an extension and there you must have a museum or a picture-room or what not, leaving nothing to opinion, making our gifts a duty. . . . You will not recognise the virtue of gifts and graces either in man or God. . . . Cannot you see, my dear Mr. Huss, the falsity of your position? It is upon that point that I want to talk to you now. God does not smite man needlessly. This world is all one vast intention, and not a sparrow falls to the ground unless He wills that sparrow to fall. Is your heart so sure of itself? Does nothing that has happened suggest to you that there may be something in your conduct and direction of Woldingstanton that has made it not quite so acceptable an offering to God as you have imagined it to be?"

Sir Eliphaz paused with an air of giving Mr. Huss his chance, but meeting with no response, he resumed: "I am an old man, Mr. Huss, and I have seen much of the world and more particularly of the world of finance and industry, a world of swift opportunities

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and sudden temptations. I have watched the careers of many young men of parts, who have seemed to be under the impression that the world had been waiting for them overlong; I have seen more promotions, schemes and enterprises, great or grandiose, than I care to recall. Developing Woldingstanton from the mere endowed school of a market-town it was, to its present position, has been for me a subordinate incident, a holiday task, a piece of by-play upon a crowded scene. My experiences have been on a far greater scale. Far greater. And in all my experience I have never seen what I should call a really right-minded man perish or an innocent dealer—provided, that is, that he took ordinary precautions—destroyed. Ups and downs no doubt there are, for the good as well as the bad. I have seen the foolish taking root for a time—it was but for a time. I have watched the manœuvres of some exceedingly crafty men. . . .”

Sir Eliphaz shook his head slowly from side to side and all the hairs on his head waved about.

He hesitated for a moment, and decided to favour his hearers with a scrap of autobiography.

“Quite recently,” he began, “there was a fellow came to us, just as we were laying down our plant for production on a large scale. He was a very plausible, energetic young fellow indeed, an American Armenian. Well, he happened to know somehow that we were going to use kaolin from felspar, a by-product of the new potash process, and he had got hold of a scheme for washing London clay that produced, he assured us, an accessible kaolin just as good for our purpose and not a tenth of the cost of

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the Norwegian stuff. It would have reduced our prime cost something like thirty per cent. Let alone tonnage. Excuse these technicalities. On the face of it it was a thoroughly good thing. The point was that I knew all along that his stuff retained a certain amount of sulphur and couldn't possibly make a building block to last. That wouldn't prevent us selling and using the stuff with practical impunity. It wasn't up to us to know. No one could have made us liable. The thing indeed looked so plain and safe that I admit it tempted me sorely. And then, Mr. Huss, God came in. I received a secret intimation. I want to tell you of this in all good faith and simplicity. In the night when all the world was deep in sleep, I awoke. And I was in the extremest terror; my very bones were shaking; I sat up in my bed afraid almost to touch the switch of the electric light; my hair stood on end. I could see nothing, I could hear nothing, but it was as if a spirit passed in front of my face. And in spite of the silence something seemed to be saying to me: 'How about God, Sir Eliphaz? Have you at last forgotten Him? How can you, that would dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is the dust, escape His judgments?' That was all, Mr. Huss, just that. 'Whose foundation is the dust!' Straight to the point. Well, Mr. Huss, I am not a religious man, but I threw over that Armenian."

Mr. Dad made a sound to intimate that he would have done the same.

"I mention this experience, this intervention—and it is not the only one of which I could tell—be-

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cause I want you to get my view that if an enterprise, even though it is as fair and honest-seeming a business as Woldingstanton School, begins suddenly to crumple and wilt, it means that somehow, somewhere you must have been putting the wrong sort of clay into it. It means not that God is wrong and going back upon you, but that you are wrong. You may be a great and famous teacher now, Mr. Huss, thanks not a little to the pedestal we have made for you, but God is a greater and more famous teacher. He manifestly you have not convinced, even if you could have convinced us, of Woldingstanton's present perfection. . . .

"That is practically all I have to say. When we propose, in all humility, to turn the school about into new and less pretentious courses and you oppose us, that is our answer. If you had done as well and wisely as you declare, you would not be in this position and this discussion would never have arisen."

He paused.

"Said with truth and dignity," said Mr. Dad. "You have put my opinion, Sir Eliphaz, better than I could have put it myself. I thank you."

He coughed briefly.

§ 7

"The question you put to me I have put to myself," said Mr. Huss, and thought deeply for a little while. . . .

"No, I do not feel convicted of wrongdoing. I still believe the work I set myself to do was right, right

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in spirit and intention, right in plan and method. You invite me to confess my faith broken and in the dust; and my faith was never so sure. There is a God in my heart, in my heart at least there is a God, who has always guided me to right and who guides me now. My conscience remains unassailable. These afflictions that you speak of as trials and warnings I can only see as inexplicable disasters. They perplex me, but they do not cow me. They strike me as pointless and irrelevant events."

"But this is terrible!" said Mr. Dad, deeply shocked.

"You push me back, Sir Eliphaz, from the discussion of our school affairs to more fundamental questions. You have raised the problem of the moral government of the world, a problem that has been distressing my mind since I first came here to Sundering, whether indeed failure is condemnation and success the sunshine of God's approval. You believe that the great God of the stars and seas and mountains is attentive to our conduct and responds to it. His sense of right is the same sense of right as ours; He endorses a common aim. Your prosperity is the mark of your harmony with that supreme God. . . ."

"I wouldn't go so far as that," Mr. Dad interjected. "No. No arrogance."

"And my misfortunes express his disapproval. Well, I have believed that; I have believed that the rightness of a schoolmaster's conscience must needs be the same thing as the rightness of destiny, I too had fallen into that comforting persuasion of prosperity; but this series of smashing experiences I

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have had, culminating in your proposal to wipe out the whole effect and significance of my life, brings me face to face with the fundamental question whether the order of the great universe, the God of the stars, has any regard or relationship whatever to the problems of our consciences and the efforts of man to do right. That is a question that echoes to me down the ages. So far I have always professed myself a Christian. . . .”

“Well, I should hope so,” said Mr. Dad, “considering the terms of the school’s foundation.”

“For, I take it, the creeds declare in a beautiful symbol that the God who is present in our hearts is one with the universal father and at the same time his beloved Son, continually and eternally begotten from the universal fatherhood, and crucified only to conquer. He has come into our poor lives to raise them up at last to Himself. But to believe that is to believe in the significance and continuity of the whole effort of mankind. The life of man must be like the perpetual spreading of a fire. If right and wrong are to perish together indifferently, if there is aimless and fruitless suffering, if there opens no hope for an eternal survival in consequences of all good things, then there is no meaning in such a belief as Christianity. It is a mere superstition of priests and sacrifices, and I have read things into it that were never truly there. The rushlight of our faith burns in a windy darkness that will see no dawn.”

“Nay,” said Sir Eliphaz, “nay. If there is God in your work we cannot destroy it.”

“You are doing your best,” said Mr. Huss, “and

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now I am not sure that you will fail. . . . At one time I should have defied you, but now I am not sure. . . . I have sat here through some dreary and dreadful days, and lain awake through some interminable nights; I have thought of many things that men in their days of prosperity are apt to dismiss from their minds; and I am no longer sure of the goodness of the world without us or in the plan of Fate. Perhaps it is only in us within our hearts that the light of God flickers—and flickers insecurely. Where we had thought a God, somehow akin to ourselves, ruled in the universe, it may be there is nothing but black emptiness and a coldness worse than cruelty.”

Mr. Dad was about to interrupt, and restrained himself by a great effort.

“It is a commonplace of pietistic works that natural things are perfect things, and that the whole world of life, if it were not for the sinfulness of man would be perfect. Paley, you will remember, Sir Eliphaz, in his ‘Evidences of Christianity,’ from which we have both suffered, declares that this earth is manifestly made for the happiness of the sentient beings living thereon. But I ask you to consider for a little and dispassionately, whether life through all its stages, up to and including man, is not rather a scheme of uneasiness, imperfect satisfaction, and positive miseries. . . .”

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§ 8

“Aren’t we getting a bit out of our depth in all this?” Mr. Dad burst out. “Put it at that—out of our depth. . . . What does this sort of carping and questioning amount to, Mr. Huss? Does it do us any good? Does it help us in the slightest degree? Why should we go into all this? Why can’t we be humble and leave these deep questions to those who make a specialty of dealing with them? We don’t know the ropes. We can’t. Here are you and Mr. Farr, for instance, both of you whole-time school-masters so to speak; here’s Sir Eliphaz toiling night and day to make simple cheap suitable homes for the masses, who probably won’t say thank you to him when they see them; here’s me an overworked engineer and understaffed most cruelly, not to speak of the most unfair and impossible labour demands, so that you never know where you are and what they won’t ask you next. And in the midst of it all we are to start an argey-bargey about the goodness of God!

“We’re busy men, Mr. Huss. What do *we* know of the world being a scheme of imperfect satisfaction and what all? Where does it come in? What’s its practical value? Words it is, all words, and getting away from the plain and definite question we came to talk over and settle and have done with. Such talk, I will confess, makes me uncomfortable. Give me the Bible and the simple religion I learned at my mother’s knee. That’s good enough for me. Can’t we just have faith and leave all these questions alone?

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What are men in reality? After all their arguments? Worms. Just worms. Well then, let's have the decency to behave as such and stick to business, and do our best in that state of life unto which it has pleased God to call us. That's what *I* say," said Mr. Dad.

He jerked his head back, coughed shortly, adjusted his tie, and nodded to Mr. Farr in a resolute manner.

"A simple, straightforward, commercial and technical education," he added by way of an explanatory colophon. "That's what we're after."

§ 9

Mr. Huss stared absently at Mr. Dad for some moments, and then resumed:

"Let us look squarely at this world about us. What is the true lot of life? Is there the slightest justification for assuming that our conceptions of right and happiness are reflected anywhere in the outward universe? Is there, for instance, much animal happiness? Do health and well-being constitute the normal state of animals?"

He paused. Mr. Dad got up, and stood looking out of the window with his back to Mr. Huss. "Pulling nature to pieces," he said over his shoulder. He turned and urged further, with a snarl of bitterness in his voice: "Suppose things are so, what is the good of *our* calling attention to it? Where's the benefit?"

But the attitude of Sir Eliphaz conveyed a readiness to listen.

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“Before I became too ill to go out here,” said Mr. Huss, “I went for a walk in the country behind this place. I was weary before I started, but I was impelled to go by that almost irresistible desire that will seize upon one at times to get out of one’s immediate surroundings. I wanted to escape from this wretched room, and I wanted to be alone, secure from interruptions, and free to think in peace. There was a treacherous promise in the day outside, much sunshine and a breeze. I had heard of woods a mile or so inland, and that conjured up a vision of cool green shade and kindly streams beneath the trees and of the fellowship of shy and gentle creatures. So I went out into the heat and into the dried and salted east wind, through glare and inky shadows, across many more fields than I had expected, until I came to some woods and then to a neglected park, and there for a time I sat down to rest. . . .

“But I could get no rest. The turf was unclean through the presence of many sheep, and in it there was a number of close-growing but very sharply barbed thistles; and after a little time I realised that harvesters, those minute red beasts that creep upon one in the chalk lands and burrow into the skin and produce an almost intolerable itching, abounded. I got up again and went on, hoping in vain to find some fence or gate on which I might rest more comfortably. There were many flies and gnats, many more than there are here and of different sorts, and they persecuted me more and more. They surrounded me in a humming cloud, and I had to wave my walking-stick about my head all the time to keep them

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off me. I felt too exhausted to walk back, but there was, I knew, a village a mile or so ahead where I hoped to find a conveyance in which I might return by road. . . .

“And as I struggled along in this fashion I came upon first one thing and then another, so apt to my mood that they might have been put there by an adversary. First it was a very young rabbit indeed, it was scarcely as long as my hand, which some cruel thing had dragged from its burrow. The back of its head had been bitten open and was torn and bloody, and the flies rose from its oozing wounds to my face like a cloud of witnesses. Then as I went on, trying to distract my mind from the memory of this pitiful dead thing by looking about me for something more agreeable, I discovered a row of little brown objects in a hawthorn bush, and going closer found they were some half-dozen victims of a butcher bird—beetles, fledgelings, and a mouse or so—spiked on the thorns. They were all twisted into painful attitudes, as if each had suffered horribly and challenged me by the last gesture of its limbs to judge between it and its creator. . . . And a little further on a gaunt, villainous-looking cat with rusty black fur that had bare patches suddenly ran upon me out of a side path; it had something in its mouth which it abandoned at the sight of me and left writhing at my feet, a pretty crested bird, very mangled, that flapped in flat circles upon the turf, unable to rise. A fit of weak and reasonless rage came upon me at this, and seeing the cat halt some yards away and turn to regard me and move as if to recover its vic-

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tim, I rushed at it and pursued it, shouting. Then it occurred to me that it would be kinder if, instead of a futile pursuit of the wretched cat, I went back and put an end to the bird's sufferings. For a time I could not find it, and I searched for it in the bushes in a fever to get it killed, groaning and cursing as I did so. When I found it, it fought at me with its poor bleeding wings and snapped its beak at me, and made me feel less like a deliverer than a murderer. I hit it with my stick, and as it still moved I stamped it to death with my feet. I fled from its body in an agony. 'And this,' I cried, 'this hell revealed, is God's creation!'"

"Tcha!" exclaimed Mr. Dad.

"Suddenly it seemed to me that scales had fallen from my eyes and that I saw the whole world plain. It was as if the universe had put aside a mask it had hitherto worn, and shown me its face, and it was a face of boundless evil. . . . It was as if a power of darkness sat over me and watched me with a mocking gaze, and for the rest of that day I could think of nothing but the feeble miseries of living things. I was tortured, and all life was tortured with me. I failed to find the village I sought; I strayed far, I got back here at last long after dark, stopping sometimes by the wayside to be sick, sometimes kneeling or lying down for a time to rest, shivering and burning with an increasing fever.

"I had, as you know, been the first to find poor Williamson lying helpless among the acids; that ghastly figure and the burned bodies of the two boys who died in School House haunt my mind constantly;

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but what was most in my thoughts on that day when the world of nature showed its teeth to me was the wretchedness of animal life. I do not know why that should have seemed more pitiful to me, and more fundamental, but it did. Human suffering, perhaps, is complicated by moral issues; man can look before and after and find remote justifications and stern consolations outside his present experiences; but the poor birds and beasts, they have only their present experiences and their individual lives cut off and shut in. How can there be righteousness in any scheme that afflicts them? I thought of one creature after another, and I could imagine none that had more than an occasional gleam of false and futile satisfaction between suffering and suffering. And to-day, gentlemen, as I sit here with you, the same dark stream of conviction pours through my mind. I feel that life is a weak and inconsequent stirring amidst the dust of space and time, incapable of overcoming even its internal dissensions, doomed to phases of delusion, to irrational and undeserved punishments, to vain complainings and at last to extinction.

“Is there so much as one healthy living being in the world? I question it. As I wandered that day, I noted the trees as I had never noted them before. There was not one that did not show a stricken or rotten branch, or that was not studded with the stumps of lost branches decaying backwards towards the main stem; from every fork came dark stains of corruption, the bark was twisted and contorted, and fungoid protrusions proclaimed the hidden mycelium of disease. The leaves were spotted with warts and

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blemishes, and gnawed and bitten by a myriad enemies. I noted too that the turf under my feet was worn and scorched and weary; gossamer threads and spiders of a hundred sorts trapped the multitudinous insects in the wilted autumnal undergrowth; the hedges were a slow conflict of thrusting and strangulating plants in which every individual was more or less crippled or stunted. Most of these plants were armed like assassins; they had great thorns or stinging hairs; some ripened poisonous berries. And this was the reality of life; this was no exceptional mood of things, but a revelation of things established. I had been blind and now I saw. Even as these woods and thickets were, so was all the world. . . .

“I had been reading in a book I had chanced to pick up in this lodging about the jungles of India, which many people think of as a vast wealth of splendid and luxuriant vegetation. For the greater part of the year they are hot and thorny wastes of brown, dead and mouldering matter. Comes the steaming downpour of the rains; and then for a little while there is a tangled rush of fighting greenery, jostling, choking, torn and devoured by a multitude of beasts and by a horrible variety of insects that the hot moisture has called to activity. Then under the dry breath of the destroyer the exuberance stales and withers, everything ripens and falls, and the jungle relapses again into sullen heat and gloomy fermentation. And in truth everywhere the growth season is a wild scramble into existence, the rest of the year a complicated massacre. Even in our British climate is it not plain to you how the summer outlasts the

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lavish promise of the spring. In our spring there is no doubt an air of hope, of budding and blossoming; there is the nesting and singing of birds, a certain cleanness of the air, an emergence of primary and comparatively innocent things; but hard upon that freshness follow the pests and parasites, the creatures that corrupt and sting, the minions of waste and pain and lassitude and fever. . . .

“You may say that I am dwelling too much upon the defects in the lives of plants, which do not feel, and of insects and small creatures which may feel in a different manner from ourselves; but indeed their decay and imperfection make up the common texture of life. Even the things that live are only half alive. You may argue that at least the rarer, larger beasts bring with them a certain delight and dignity into the world. But consider the lives of the herbivora; they are all hunted creatures; fear is their habit of mind; even the great Indian buffalo is given to panic flights. They are incessantly worried by swarms of insects. When they are not apathetic they appear to be angry, exasperated with life; their seasonal outbreaks of sex are evidently a violent torment to them, an occasion for fierce bellowings, mutual persecution and desperate combats. Such beasts as the rhinoceros or the buffalo are habitually in a rage; they will run amuck for no conceivable reason, and so too will many elephants, betraying a sort of organic spite against all other living things. . . .

“And if we turn to the great carnivores, who should surely be the lords of the jungle world, their lot seems to be not one whit more happy. The tiger

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leads a life of fear; a dirty scrap of rag will turn him from his path. Much of his waking life is prowling hunger; when he kills he eats ravenously, he eats to the pitch of discomfort; he lies up afterwards in reeds or bushes, savage, disinclined to move. The hunter must beat him out, and he comes out sluggishly and reluctantly to die. His paws, too, are strangely tender; a few miles of rock will make them bleed, they gather thorns. . . . His mouth is so foul that his bite is a poisoned bite. . . .

“All that day I struggled against this persuasion that the utmost happiness of any animal is at best like a transitory smile on a grim and inhuman countenance. I tried to recall some humorous and contented-looking creatures. . . .

“That only recalled a fresh horror. . . .

“You will have seen pictures and photographs of penguins. They will have conveyed to you the sort of effect I tried to recover. They express a quaint and jolly gravity, an aldermanic contentment. But to me now the mere thought of a penguin raises a vision of distress. I will tell you. . . . One of my old boys came to me a year or so ago on his return from a South Polar expedition; he told me the true story of these birds. Their lives, he said—he was speaking more particularly of the king penguin—are tormented by a monstrously exaggerated maternal instinct, an instinct shared by both sexes, which is a necessary condition of survival in the crowded rookeries of that frozen environment. And that instinct makes life one long torment for them. There is always a great smashing of eggs there through vari-

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ous causes; there is an excessive mortality among the chicks; they slip down crevasses, they freeze to death and so forth, three-quarters of each year's brood perish, and without this extravagant passion the species would become extinct. So that every bird is afflicted with desire and anxiety to brood upon and protect a chick. But each couple produces no more than one egg a year; eggs get broken, they roll away into the water, there is always a shortage, and every penguin that has an egg has to guard it jealously, and each one that has not an egg is impelled to steal or capture one. Some in their distress will mother pebbles or scraps of ice, some fortunate in possession will sit for days without leaving the nest in spite of the gnawings of the intense Antarctic hunger. To leave a nest for a moment is to tempt a robber, and the intensity of the emotions aroused is shown by the fact that they will fight to the death over a stolen egg. You see that these pictures of rookeries of apparently comical birds are really pictures of poor dim-minded creatures worried and strained to the very limit of their powers. That is what their lives have always been. . . .

“But the king penguin draws near the end of its history. Let me tell you how its history is closing. Let me tell you of what is happening in the peaceful Southern Seas—now. This old boy of mine was in great distress because of a vile traffic that has arisen. . . . Unless it is stopped, it will destroy these rookeries altogether. These birds are being murdered wholesale for their oil. Parties of men land and club them upon their nests, from which the poor, silly

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things refuse to stir. The dead and stunned, the living and the dead together, are dragged away and thrust into iron crates to be boiled down for their oil. The broken living with the dead. . . . Each bird yields about a farthing's profit, but it pays to kill them at that, and so the thing is done. The people who run these operations, you see, have had a sound commercial training. They believe that when God gives us power He means us to use it, and that what is profitable is just."

"Well really," protested Mr. Dad. "Really!"

Mr. Farr also betrayed a disposition to speak. He cleared his throat, his uneasy hands worried the edge of the table, his face shone. "Sir Eliphaz," he said. . . .

"Let me finish," said Mr. Huss, "for I have still to remind you of the most stubborn facts of all in such an argument as this. Have you ever thought of the significance of such creatures as the entozoa, and the vast multitudes of other sorts of specialised parasites whose very existence is cruelty? There are thousands of orders and genera of insects, crustacea, arachnids, worms, and lowlier things, which are adapted in the most complicated way to prey upon the living and suffering tissues of their fellow creatures, and which can live in no other way. Have you ever thought what that means? If forethought framed these horrors what sort of benevolence was there in that forethought? I will not distress you by describing the life cycles of any of these creatures too exactly. You must know of many of them. I will not dwell upon those wasps, for example, which lay their eggs in the living bodies of victims which

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the young will gnaw to death slowly day by day as they develop, nor will I discuss this unmeaning growth of cells which has made my body its soil. . . . Nor any one of our thousand infectious fevers that fall upon us—without reason, without justice. . . .

“Man is of all creatures the least subjected to internal parasites. In the brief space of a few hundred thousand years he has changed his food, his habitat and every attitude and habit of his life, and comparatively few species, thirty or forty at most, I am told, have been able to follow his changes and specialise themselves to him under these fresh conditions; yet even man can entertain some fearful guests. Every time you drink open water near a sheep pasture you may drink the larval liver fluke, which will make your liver a little township of vile creatures until they eat it up, until they swarm from its oozing ruins into your body cavity and destroy you. In Europe this is a rare fate for a man, but in China there are wide regions where the fluke abounds and rots the life out of thousands of people. . . . The fluke is but one sample of such feats of the Creator. An unwashed leaf of lettuce may be the means of planting a parasitic cyst in your brain to dethrone your reason; a feast of underdone pork may transfer to you from the swine the creeping death torture of trichinosis. . . . But all that men suffer in these matters is nothing to the suffering of the beasts. The torments of the beasts are finished and complete. My biological master tells me that he rarely opens a cod or dogfish without finding bunches of some sort of worm or suchlike pallid lodger in

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possession. He has rows of little tubes with the things he has found in the bodies of rabbits. . . .

“But I will not disgust you further. . . .

“Is this a world made for the happiness of sentient things?

“I ask you, how is it possible for man to be other than a rebel in the face of such facts? How can he trust the Maker who has designed and elaborated and finished these parasites in their endless multitude and variety? For these things are not in the nature of sudden creations and special judgments; they have been produced fearfully and wonderfully by a process of evolution as slow and deliberate as our own. How can Man trust such a Maker to treat him fairly? Why should we shut our eyes to things that stare us in the face? Either the world of life is the creation of a being inspired by a malignancy at once filthy, petty and enormous, or it displays a carelessness, an indifference, a disregard for justice. . . .”

The voice of Mr. Huss faded out.

§ 10

For some time Mr. Farr had been manifesting signs of impatience. The pause gave him his opportunity. He spoke with a sort of restrained volubility.

“Sir Eliphaz, Mr. Dad, after what has passed in relation to myself, I would have preferred to have said nothing in this discussion. Nothing. So far as I myself am concerned, I will still say nothing. But upon some issues it is impossible to keep silence.

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Mr. Huss has said some terrible things, things that must surely never be said at Woldingstanton. . . .

“Think of what such teaching as this may mean among young and susceptible boys! Think of such stuff in the school pulpit! Chary as I am of all wrangling, and I would not set myself up for a moment to wrangle against Mr. Huss, yet I feel that this cavilling against God’s universe, this multitude of evil words, must be answered. It is imperative to answer it, plainly and sternly. It is our duty to God, who has made us what we are. . . .

“Mr. Huss, in your present diseased state you seem incapable of realising the enormous *egotism* of all this depreciation of God’s marvels. But indeed you have suffered from that sort of incapacity always. It is no new thing. Have I not chafed under your arrogant assurance for twelve long years? Your right, now as ever, is the only right; your doctrine alone is pure. Would that God could speak and open his lips against you! How his voice would shatter you and us and everything about us! How you would shrivel amidst your blasphemies!

“Excuse me, gentlemen, if I am too forcible,” said Mr. Farr, moistening his white lips, but Mr. Dad nodded fierce approval.

Thus encouraged, Mr. Farr proceeded. “When first I came into this room, Mr. Huss, I was full of pity for your affliction—I think we all were—we were pitiful; but now it is clear to me that God exacts from you less than your iniquity deserves. Surely the supreme sin is pride. You criticise and belittle God’s universe, but what sort of a universe

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would you give us, Mr. Huss, if you were the Creator? Pardon me if I startle you, gentlemen, but that is a fair question to ask. For it is clear to me now, Mr. Huss, that no less than that will satisfy you. Wold-ington, for all the wonders you have wrought there, in spite of the fact that never before and never again can there be such a head, in spite of the fact that you have lit such a candle there as may one day set the world ablaze, is clearly too small a field for you. Headmaster of the universe is your position. Then, and then alone, could you display your gifts to the full. Then cats would cease to eat birds, and trees grow on in perfect symmetry until they cumbered the sky. I can dimly imagine the sort of world that it would be; the very fleas reformed and trained under your hand, would be flushed with health and happiness and doing the work of boy scouts; every blade of grass would be at least six feet long. As for the liver fluke—but I cannot solve the problem of the liver fluke. I suppose you will provide euthanasia for all the parasites. . . .”

Abruptly Mr. Farr passed from this vein of terrible humour to an earnest and pleading manner. “Mr. Huss, with mortal danger so close to you, I entreat you to reconsider all this wild and wicked talk of yours. You take a few superficial aspects of the world and frame a judgment on them; you try with the poor foot-rule of your mind to measure the plans of God, plans which are longer than the earth, wider than the sea. I ask you, how can such insolence help you in this supreme emergency? There can be little time left. . . .”

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Providence was manifestly resolved to give Mr. Farr the maximum of dramatic effect. "But what is this?" said Mr. Farr. He stood up and looked out of the window.

Somebody had rung the bell, and now, with an effect of impatience, was rapping at the knocker of Sea View.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

DO WE TRULY DIE?

§ 1

MRS. CROOME was heard in the passage, someone was admitted, there were voices, and the handle of the parlour door was turned. "'As'ent E come then?" they heard the voice of Mrs. Croome through the opening. Dr. Elihu Barrack appeared in the doorway.

He was a round-headed young man with a clean-shaven face, a mouth that was determinedly determined and slightly oblique, a short nose, and a general expression of resolution; the fact that he had an artificial leg was scarcely perceptible in his bearing. He considered the four men before him for a moment and then addressed himself to Mr. Huss in a tone of brisk authority. "You ought to be in bed," he said.

"I had this rather important discussion," said Mr. Huss, with a gesture portending introductions.

"But sitting up will fatigue you," the doctor insisted, sticking to his patient.

"It won't distress me so much as leaving these things unsaid would have done."

"Opinions may differ upon that," said Mr. Farr darkly.

"We are still far from any settlement of our difficulties," said Sir Eliphaz to the universe.

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“I have indicated my view at any rate,” said Mr. Huss. “I suppose now Sir Alpheus is here——”

“He isn’t here,” said Dr. Barrack neatly. “He telegraphs to say that he is held up, and will come by the next train. So you get a reprieve, Mr. Huss.”

“In that case I shall go on talking.”

“You had better go to bed.”

“No. I couldn’t lie quiet.” And Mr. Huss proceeded to name his guests to Dr. Barrack, who nodded shortly to each of them in turn, and said: “Pleased-t-meet you.” His face betrayed no excess of pleasure. His eye was hard. He remained standing, as if waiting for them to display symptoms.

“Our discussion has wandered far,” said Sir Eliphaz. “Our original business here was to determine the future development of Woldingstanton School, which we think should be made more practical and technical than hitherto, and less concerned with history and philosophy than it has been under Mr. Huss. (Won’t you sit down, Doctor?)”

The doctor sat down, still watching Sir Eliphaz with hard intelligence.

“Well, we have drifted from that,” Sir Eliphaz continued.

“Not so far as you may think,” said Mr. Huss.

“At any rate Mr. Huss has been regaling us with a discourse upon the miseries of life, how we are all eaten up by parasites and utterly wretched, and how everything is wretched and this an accursed world ruled either by a cruel God or a God so careless as to be practically no God at all.”

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“Nice stuff for nineteen eighteen A. D.,” said Mr. Dad, putting much meaning into the “A. D.”

“Since I left Woldingstanton and came here,” said Mr. Huss, “I have done little else but think. I have not slept during the night, I have had nothing to occupy me during the day, and I have been thinking about fundamental things. I have been forced to revise my faith, and to look more closely than I have ever done before into the meaning of my beliefs and into my springs of action. I have been wrenched away from that habitual confidence in the order of things which seemed the more natural state for a mind to be in. But that has only widened a difference that already existed between me and these three gentlemen, and that was showing very plainly in the days when success still justified my grip upon Woldingstanton. Suddenly, swiftly, I have had misfortune following upon misfortune—without cause or justification. I am thrown now into the darkest doubt and dismay; the universe seems harsh and black to me; whereas formerly I believed that at the core of it and universally pervading it was the Will of a God of Light. . . . I have always denied, even when my faith was undimmed, that the God of Righteousness ruled this world in detail and entirety, giving us day by day our daily rewards and punishments. These gentlemen on the contrary do believe that. They say that God does rule the world traceably and directly, and that success is the measure of his approval and pain and suffering the fulfilment of unrighteousness. And as for what has this to do with education—it has all to do

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with education. You can settle no practical questions until you have settled such disputes as this. Before you can prepare boys to play their part in the world you must ask what is this world for which you prepare them; is it a tragedy or comedy? What is the nature of this drama in which they are to play?"

Dr. Barrack indicated that this statement was noted and approved.

"For clearly," said Mr. Huss, "if success is the justification of life you must train for success. There is no need for men to understand life, then, so long as they do their job in it. That is the opinion of these governors of mine. It has been the opinion of most men of the world—always. Obey the Thing that Is! that is the lesson they would have taught to my boys. Acquiesce. Life for them is not an adventure, not a struggle, but simply obedience and the enjoyment of rewards. . . . That, Dr. Barrack, is what such a technical education as they want set up at Woldingstanton really means. . . ."

"But I have believed always and taught always that what God demands from man is his utmost effort to co-operate and understand. I have taught the imagination, first and most; I have made knowledge, knowledge of what man is and what man's world is and what man may be, which is the adventure of mankind, the substance of all my teaching. At Woldingstanton I have taught philosophy; I have taught the whole history of mankind. If I could not have done that without leaving chemistry and physics, mathematics and languages out of the

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curriculum altogether I would have left them out. And you see why, Dr. Barrack."

"I see your position certainly," said Dr. Barrack.

"And now that my heavens are darkened, now that my eyes have been opened to the wretchedness, futility and horror in the texture of life, I still cling, I cling more than ever, to the spirit of righteousness within me. If there is no God, no mercy, no human kindness in the great frame of space and time, if life is a writhing torment, an itch upon one little planet, and the stars away there in the void no more than huge empty flares, signifying nothing, then all the brighter shines the flame of God in my heart. If the God in my heart is no son of any heavenly father then is he Prometheus the rebel; it does not shake my faith that he is the Master for whom I will live and die. And all the more do I cling to this fire of human tradition we have lit upon this little planet, if it is the one gleam of spirit in all the windy vastness of a dead and empty universe."

Dr. Barrack seemed about to interrupt with some comment, and then, it was manifest, deferred his interpolation.

"Loneliness and littleness," said Mr. Huss, "harshness in the skies above and in the texture of all things. If so it is that things are, so we must see them. Every baby in its mother's arms feels safe in a safe creation; every child in its home. Many men and women have lived and died happy in that illusion of security. But this war has torn away the veil of illusion from millions of men. . . . Mankind is coming of age. We can see life at last for what it is and what it is not.

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Here we spin upon a ball of rock and nickel-steel, upon which a film of water, a few score miles of air, lie like the bloom upon a plum. All about that ball is space unfathomable; all the suns and stars are mere grains of matter scattered through a vastness that is otherwise utterly void. To that thin bloom upon a particle we are confined; if we tunnel down into the earth, presently it is too hot for us to live; if we soar five miles into the air we freeze, the blood runs out of our vessels into our lungs, we die suffocated and choked with blood. . . .

“Out of the litter of muds and gravels that make the soil of the world we have picked some traces of the past of our race and the past of life. In our observatories and laboratories we have gleaned some hints of its future. We have a vision of the opening of the story, but the first pages we cannot read. We discover life, a mere stir amidst the mud, creeping along the littoral of warm and shallow seas in the brief nights and days of a swiftly rotating earth. We follow through vast ages the story of life’s extension into the waters, and its invasion of the air and land. Plants creep upon the land and raise themselves by stems towards the sun; a few worms and crustaceans follow, insects appear; and at length come our amphibious ancestors, breathing air by means of a swimming bladder used as a lung. From the first the land animals are patched-up creatures. They eke out the fish ear they inherit by means of an ear drum made out of a gill slit. You can trace scale and fin in bone and limb. At last this green scum of vegetable life with the beasts entangled in its meshes creeps in the

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form of forests over the hills; grass spreads across the plains, and great animals follow it out into the open. What does it all signify? No more than green moss spreading over an old tile. Steadily the earth cools and the day lengthens. Through long ages of warmth and moisture the wealth of unmeaning life increases; come ages of chill and retrocession, glacial periods, and periods when whole genera and orders die out. Comes man at last, the destroyer, the war-maker, setting fire to the world, burning the forests, exhausting the earth. What hope has he in the end? Always the day drags longer and longer and always the sun radiates its energy away. A time will come when the sun will glow dull red in the heavens, shorn of all its beams, and neither rising nor setting. A day will come when the earth will be as dead and frozen as the moon. . . . A spirit in our hearts, the God of mankind, cries 'No!' but is there any voice outside us in all the cold and empty universe that echoes that 'No'?"

§ 2

"Ah, Mr. Huss, Mr. Huss!" said Sir Eliphaz.

His eye seemed seeking some point of attachment, and found it at last in the steel engraving of Queen Victoria giving a Bible to a dusky potentate, which adorned the little parlour.

"Your sickness colours your vision," said Sir Eliphaz. "What you say is so profoundly true and so utterly false. Mysteriously evolved, living as you say in a mere bloom of air and moisture upon this

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tiny planet, how could we exist, how could we continue, were we not sustained in every moment by the Mercy and Wisdom of God? The flimsier life is, the greater the wonder of his Providence. Not a sparrow," said Sir Eliphaz, and then enlarging the metaphor with a boom in his voice, "not a hair of my head, falls to the ground without His knowledge and consent. . . . I am a man much occupied. I cannot do the reading I would. But while you have been reviling the works of God I have been thinking of some wonders. . . ."

Sir Eliphaz lifted up a hand with thumb and finger opposed as though he held some exquisite thing therein.

"The human eye," said Sir Eliphaz, with an intensity of appreciation that brought tears to his own. . . .

"The cross-fertilisation of plants. . . .

"The marvellous transformations of the higher insects. . . .

"The highly elaborate wing scales of the Lepidoptera.

"The mercy that tempers the wind to the shorn lamb. . . .

"The dark warm marvels of embryology; the order and rhythm and obedience with which the cells of the fertilised ovum divide to build up the perfect body of a living thing, yea, even of a human being—in God's image. First there is one cell, then two; the process of division is extremely beautiful and is called, I believe, *karyokinesis*; then after the two come four, each knows his part, each divides cer-

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tainly and marvellously; eight, sixteen, thirty-two. . . . Each of those thirty-two cells is a complete thirty-second part of a man. Presently this cell says, 'I become a hair'; this, 'a blood corpuscle,' this 'a cell in the brain of a man, to mirror the universe.' Each goes to his own appointed place. . . .

"Would that we could do the like!" said Sir Eliphaz.

"Then consider water," said Sir Eliphaz. "I am not deeply versed in physical science, but there are certain things about water that fill me with wonder and amaze. All other liquids contract when they solidify. With one or two exceptions—useful in the arts. Water expands. Now water is a non-conductor of heat, and if water contracted and became heavier when it became ice, it would sink to the bottom of the polar seas and remain there unmelted. More ice would sink down to it, until all the ocean was ice and life ceased. But water does not do so. No! . . . Were it not for the vapour of water, which catches and entangles the sun's heat, this world would scorch by day and freeze by night. Mercy upon mercy. I myself," said Sir Eliphaz in tones of happy confession, "am ninety per cent. water. . . . We all are. . . ."

"And think how mercifully winter is tempered to us by the snow! When water freezes in the air in winter-time, it does not come pelting down as lumps of ice. Conceivably it might, and then where should we be? But it belongs to the hexagonal system—a system prone to graceful frameworks. It crystallises into the most delicate and beautiful lace of six-rayed

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crystals—wonderful under the microscope. They flake delicately. They lie loosely one upon another. Out of ice is woven a warm garment like wool, white like wool because like wool it is full of air—a warm garment for bud and shoot. . . .

“Then again—you revile God for the parasites he sends. But are they not sent to teach us a great moral lesson? Each one for himself and God for us all. Not so the parasites. They choose a life of base dependence. With that comes physical degeneration, swift and sure. They are the Socialists of nature. They lose their limbs. They lose colour, become bleached, unappetising beings, vile creatures of sloth—often microscopic. Do they not urge us by their shameful lives to self help and exertion? Yet even parasites have a use! I am told that were it not for parasitic bacteria man could not digest his food. A lichen again is made up of an alga and a fungus, mutually parasitic. This is called symbiosis—living together for a mutual benefit. Maybe every one of those thousands of parasites you deem so horrible is working its way upward towards an arrangement——”

Sir Eliphaz weighed his words: “Some mutually advantageous arrangement with its host. A paying guest.

“And finally,” said Sir Eliphaz, with the roll of distant thunder in his voice, “think of the stately procession of life upon the earth, through a myriad of forms, the glorious crescendo of evolution up to its climax, man. What a work is man! The paragon of creation, the microcosm of the cosmos, the ulti-

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mate birth of time. . . . And you would have us doubt the guiding hand!"

He ceased with a gesture.

Mr. Dad made a noise like responses in church.

§ 3

"A certain beauty in the world is no mark of God's favour," said Mr. Huss. "There is no beauty one may not balance by an equal ugliness. The wart-hog and the hyæna, the tapeworm and the stink-horn, are equally God's creations. Nothing you have said points to anything but a cold indifference towards us of this order in which we live. Beauty happens; it is not given. Pain, suffering, happiness; there is no heed. Only in the heart of man burns the fire of righteousness."

For a time Mr. Huss was silent. Then he went on answering Sir Eliphaz.

"You spoke of the wonder of the cross-fertilisation of plants. But do you not know that half these curious and elaborate adaptations no longer work? Scarcely was their evolution completed before the special need that produced them ceased. Half the intricate flowers you see are as futile as the ruins of Palmyra. They are self-fertilised or wind-fertilised. The transformation of the higher insects which give us our gnats and wasps, our malaria and apple-maggots in due season, are a matter for human astonishment rather than human gratitude. If there is any design in these strange and intricate happenings,

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surely it is the design of a misplaced and inhuman ingenuity. The scales of the lepidoptera, again, have wasted their glittering splendours for millions of years. If they were meant for man, why do the most beautiful species fly by night in the tropical forests? As for the human eye, oculists and opticians are scarcely of your opinion. You hymn the peculiar properties of water that make life possible. They make it possible. Do they make it other than it is?

“You have talked of the marvels of embryonic growth in the egg. I admit the wonderful precision of the process; but how does it touch my doubts? Rather it confuses them, as though the God who rules the world ruled not so much in love as in irony. Wonderfully indeed do the cells divide and the chromoplasts of the division slide along their spindle lines. They divide not as if a divine hand guided them but with remorseless logic, with the pitiless consistency of a mathematical process. They divide and marshal themselves and turn this way and that, to make an idiot, to make a congenital cripple. Millions of such cripples pile up—and produce the swaying drunkard at the pot-house door.

“You talk of the crescendo of evolution, of the first beginnings of life, and how the scheme unfolds until it culminates in us—*us*, here, under these circumstances, you and Mr. Dad and Farr and me—waiting for the knife. Would that I could see any such crescendo! I see change indeed and change and change, without plan and without heart. Consider for example the migrations of birds across the Mediterranean, and the tragic absurdity of its incidents.

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Ages ago, and for long ages, there stretched continuous land connections from Africa to Europe. Then the instinct was formed; the birds flew over land from the heated south to the northern summer to build and breed. Slowly age by age the seas crept over those necks of land. Those linking tracts have been broken now for a hundred thousand years, and yet over a constantly widening sea, in which myriads perish exhausted, instinct, blind and pitiless, still drives those birds. And again think of those vain urgencies for some purpose long since forgotten, that drive the swarming lemmings to their fate. And look at man, your evolution's crown; consider his want of balance, the invalidism of his women, the extravagant disproportion of his desires. Consider the Record of the Rocks honestly and frankly, and where can you trace this crescendo you suggest? There have been great ages of marvellous tree-ferns and wonderful forest swamps, and all those glorious growths have died. They did not go on; they reached a climax and died; another sort of plant succeeded them. Then think of all that wonderful fauna of the Mesozoic times, the age of Leviathan; the theriodonts, reptilian beasts, the leaping dinosaurs, the mososaurs and suchlike monsters of the deep, the bat-winged pterodactyls, the plesiosaurs and ichthyosaurs. Think of the marvels of the Mesozoic seas; the thousands of various ammonites, the wealth of fish life. Across all that world of life swept death, as the wet fingers of a child wipe a drawing from a slate. They left no descendants, they clambered to a vast variety and complexity and ceased. The dawn

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of the Eocene was the bleak dawn of a denuded world. Crescendo if you will, but thereafter diminuendo, pianissimo. And then once again from fresh obscure starting-points far down the stem life swelled, and swelled again, only to dwindle. The world we live in to-day is a meagre spectacle beside the abundance of the earlier Tertiary time, when Behemoth in a thousand forms, Deinotherium, Titanotherium, Helladotherium, sabre-toothed tiger, a hundred sorts of elephant, and the like, pushed through the jungles that are now this mild world of to-day. Where is *that* crescendo now? Crescendo! Through those long ages our ancestors were hiding under leaves and climbing into trees to be out of the way of the crescendo. As the *motif* of a crescendo they sang exceedingly small. And now for a little while the world is ours, and we wax in our turn. To what good? To what end? Tell me, you who say the world is good, tell me the end. How can we escape at last the common fate under the darkling sky of a frozen world?"

He paused for some moments, weary with speaking.

"There is no comfort," he said, "in the flowers or the stars; no assurance in the past and no sure hope in the future. There is nothing but the God of faith and courage in the hearts of men. . . . And He gives no sign of power, no earnest of victory. . . . He gives no sign. . . ."

Whereupon Sir Eliphaz breathed the word: "*Immortality!*"

"Let me say a word or two upon Immortality," said Sir Eliphaz, breaking suddenly into eagerness,

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“for that, I presume, is the thing we have forgotten. That, I see, is the difference between us and you, Mr. Huss; that is why we can sit here, content to play our partial rôles, knowing full surely that some day the broken lines and inconsecutiveness that perplex us in this life will all be revealed and resolved into their perfect circles, while you to whom this earthly life is all and final, you must needs be a rebel, you must needs preach a doctrine between defiance and despair. . . . If indeed death ended all! *Ah!* Then indeed you might claim that reason was on your side. The afflictions of man are very many. Why should I deny it?”

The patentee and chief proprietor of the Temanite blocks paused for a moment.

“Yes,” he said, peering up through his eyebrows at the sky, “that is the real issue. Blind to that, you are blind to everything.”

“I don’t know whether I am with you on this question of immortality, Sir Eliphaz,” warned Dr. Barrack, coughing shortly.

“For my part I’m altogether with him,” said Mr. Dad. “If there is no immortal life—well, what’s the good of being temperate and decent and careful for five and fifty years?”

Sir Eliphaz had decided now to drop all apologetics for the scheme of Nature.

“A place of trial, a place of stimulus and training,” he said. “*Respice finem*. The clues are all—beyond.”

“But if you really consider this world as a place for soul-making,” said Mr. Huss, “what do you

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think you are doing when you propose to turn Woldingstanton over to Farr?"

"At any rate," said Farr tartly, "we do not want soul-blackening and counsels of despair at Woldingstanton. We want the boys taught to serve and help first in this lowly economic sphere, cheerfully and enterprisingly, and then in higher things, before they pass on——"

"If death ends all, then what is the good of trying?" Mr. Dad said, still brooding over the question. "If I thought that——!"

He added with deep conviction, "I should let myself go. . . . Anyone would."

He blew heavily, stuck his hands in his pockets, and sat more deeply in his chair, an indignant man, a business man asked to give up something for nothing.

For a moment the little gathering hung, only too manifestly contemplating the spectacle of Mr. Dad amidst wine, women, and waistcoats without restraint, letting himself go, eating, drinking, and rejoicing, being a perfect devil, because on the morrow he had to die. . . .

"Immortal," said Mr. Huss. "I did not expect immortality to come into this discussion. . . .

"Are *you* immortal, Farr?" he asked abruptly.

"I hope so," said Mr. Farr. "Unworthy though I be."

"Exactly," said Mr. Huss. "And so that is the way out for us. You and I, Mr. Dad from his factory, and Sir Eliphaz from his building office, are to soar. It is all arranged for us, and that is why the

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tragic greatness of life is to be hidden from my boys. . . .

“Yet even so,” continued Mr. Huss, “I do not see why you should be so anxious for technical science and so hostile to the history of mankind.”

“Because it is not a true history,” said Sir Eliphaz, his hair waving about like the hair of a man electrified by fresh ideas. “Because it is a bunch of loose ends that are really not ends at all, but only beginnings that pass suddenly into the unseen. I admit that in this world nothing is rationalised, nothing is clearly just. I admit everything you say. But the reason? The reason? Because this life is only the first page of the great book we have to read. We sit here, Mr. Huss, like men in a waiting-room. . . . All this life is like waiting outside, in a place of some disorder, before being admitted to the wider reality, the larger sphere, where all the cruelties, all these confusions, everything—will be explained, justified—and set right.”

He paused, and then perceiving that Mr. Huss was about to speak he resumed, raising his voice slightly.

“And I do not speak without my book in these matters,” he said. “I have been greatly impressed—and, what is more, Lady Burrows has been greatly impressed, by the writings of two thoroughly scientific men, two thoroughly scientific men, Dr. Conan Doyle and Sir Oliver Lodge. Ever since she lost her younger sister early in life Lady Burrows has followed up this interest. It has been a great consolation to her. And the point is, as Sir Oliver

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insists in that wonderful book 'Raymond,' that continued existence in another world is as proven now as the atomic theory in chemistry. It is not a matter of faith, but knowledge. The partition is breached at last. We are in communication. News is coming through. . . . Scientific certainty. . . ."

Sir Eliphaz cleared his throat. "We have already evidences and descriptions of the life into which we shall pass. Remember this is no idle talk, no deception by Sludges and the like; it is a great English scientific man who publishes these records; it is a great French philosopher, no less a man than that wonderful thinker—and *how* he thinks!—Professor Bergson, who counselled their publication. A glory of science and a glory of philosophy combine to reassure us. We walk at last upon a path of fact into that further world. We know already much. We know, for example, that those who have passed over to that higher plane have bodies still. That I found—comforting. Without that—one would feel *bleak*. But, the messages say, the internal organs are constituted differently. Naturally. As one would have expected. The dietary is, I gather, practically nonexistent. Needless. As the outline is the same the space is, I presume, used for other purposes. Some sort of astral storage. . . . They do not bleed. An interesting fact. Lady Burrows' sister is now practically bloodless. And her teeth—she had lost several, she suffered greatly with her teeth—her teeth have all been replaced—a beautiful set. Used now only for articulate speech."

"'Raymond' all over again," said the doctor.

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“You have read the book!” said Sir Eliphaz.

The doctor grunted in a manner that mingled assent and disapproval. His expression betrayed the scientific bigot.

“We know now *details* of the passage,” said Sir Eliphaz. “We have some particulars. We know, for instance, that people blown to pieces take some little time to reconstitute. There is a correlation between this corruptible body and the spirit body that replaces it. There is a sort of spirit doctor over there, very helpful in such cases. And burned bodies, too, are a trouble. . . . The sexes are still distinct, but all the coarseness of sex is gone. The passions fade in that better world. Every passion. Even the habit of smoking and the craving for alcohol fade. Not at first. The newly dead will sometimes ask for a cigar. They are given cigars, higher-plane cigars, and they do not ask for more. There are no children born there. Nothing of that sort. That, it is very important to understand. *Here* is the place of birth; this is where lives begin. This coarse little planet is the seed-bed of life. When it has served its purpose and populated those higher planes, then indeed it may freeze, as you say. A mere empty hull. A seed-case that has served its purpose, mattering nothing. These are the thoughts, the comforting and beautiful thoughts, that receive the endorsement of our highest scientific and philosophical intelligences. . . . One thinks of that life there, no doubt in some other dimension of space, that world arranged in *planes*—metaphorical planes, of course, in which people go to and fro, living in a sort of houses, sur-

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rounded by a sort of beautiful things, made, so we are told, from the *smells* of the things we have here. That is curious, but not irrational. Our favourite doggies will be there. Sublimated also. That thought has been a great comfort to Lady Burrows. . . . We had a dog called Fido, a leetle, teeny fellow—practically human. . . .

“These blessed ones engage very largely in conversation. Other occupations I found difficult to trace. Raymond attended a sort of reception on the very highest plane. It was a special privilege. Perhaps a compliment to Sir Oliver. He met the truth of revealed religion, so to speak, personally. It was a wonderful moment. Sir Oliver suppresses the more solemn details. Lady Burrows intends to write to him. She is anxious for particulars. But I will not dilate,” said Sir Eliphaz. “I will not dilate.”

“And you believe this *stuff*?” said the doctor in tones of the deepest disgust.

Sir Eliphaz waved himself upon the questioner.

“So far as poor earthly expressions can body forth spiritual things,” he hedged.

He regarded his colleagues with an eye of flrid defiance. Both Mr. Farr and Mr. Dad had slightly shamefaced expressions, and Mr. Dad’s ears were red.

Mr. Dad cleared his throat. “I’m sure there’s something in it—anyhow,” said Mr. Dad hoarsely, doing his best in support.

“If I was born with a hare lip,” said the doctor, “would *that* be put right? Do congenital idiots get sublimated? What becomes of a dog one has shot for hydrophobia?”

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“To all of such questions,” said Sir Eliphaz serenely, “the answer is—*we don't know*. Why should we?”

§ 4

Mr. Huss seemed lost in meditation. His pale and sunken face and crumpled pose contrasted strongly with the bristling intellectual rectitude and mounting choler of Dr. Elihu Barrack.

“No, Sir Eliphaz,” said Mr. Huss, and sighed.

“No,” he repeated.

“What a poor phantom of a world these people conjure up! What a mockery of loss and love! The very mothers and lovers who mourn their dead will not believe these foolish stories. Restoration! It is a crowning indignity. It makes me think of nothing in the world but my dear boy's body, broken and crumpled, and some creature, half fool and half imposter, sitting upon it, getting between it and me, and talking cheap rubbish over it about planes of being and astral bodies. . . .

“After all, you teach me, Sir Eliphaz, that life, for all its grossness and pain and horror, is not so bad as it might be—if such things as this were true. But it needs no sifting of the evidence to know they are untrue. No sane man believes this stuff for ten minutes together. It is impossible to believe it. . . .”

Dr. Elihu Barrack applauded. Sir Eliphaz acted a fine self-restraint.

“They are contrary to the texture of everything we know,” said Mr. Huss. “They are less convincing than the wildest dreams. By pain, by desire, by

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muscular effort, by the feeling of sunshine or of rain in the face, by their sense of justice and such-like essential things do men test the reality of appearances before them. This certainly is no reality. It has none of the *feel* of reality. I will not even argue about it. It is thrust now upon a suffering world as comfort, and even as comfort for people stunned and uncritical with grief it fails. You and Lady Burrows may be pleased to think that somehow you two, with your teeth restored and your complexions rejuvenated, will meet again the sublimation of your faithful Fido. At any rate, thank God for that, I know clearly that so I shall never meet my son. Never! He has gone from me. . . .”

For some moments mental and physical suffering gripped him, and he could not speak; but his purpose to continue was so manifested by sweating face and gripping hand that no one spoke until he spoke again.

“Now let me speak plainly about Immortality. For surely I stand nearest to that possibility of all of us here. Immortality, then, is no such dodging away as you imagine, from this strange world which is so desolating, so dreadful, so inexplicable—and at times so utterly lonely. There may be a God in the universe or there may not be. . . . God, if he exists, can be terribly silent. . . . But if there is a God, he is a coherent God. If there is a God above and in the scheme of things, then not only you and I and my dead son, but the crushed frog and the trampled anthill *signify*. On that the God in my heart insists. There has to be an answer, not only to the death of

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my son but to the dying penguin roasted alive for a farthing's worth of oil. There must be an answer to the men who go in ships to do such things. There has to be a justification for all the filth and wretchedness of louse and fluke. I will not have you slipping by on the other side, chattering of planes of living and sublimated atoms, while there is a drunken mother or a man dying of cholera in this world. I will not hear of a God who is just a means for getting away. Whatever foulness and beastliness there is, you must square God with that. Or there is no universal God, but only a coldness, a vast cruel indifference. . . .

“I would not make my peace with such a God if I could. . . .

“I tell you of these black and sinister realities, and what do you reply? That it is all right, because after death we shall get away from them. Why? if presently I go down under the surgeon's knife, down out of this hot and weary world, and then find myself being put together by a spirit doctor in this *beyond* of yours, waking up to a new world of amiable conversations and artificial flowers, having my hair restored and the gaps among my teeth filled up, I shall feel like someone who has deserted his kind, who has sneaked from a sick-room into a party. . . . Well—my infection will go with me. I shall talk of nothing but the tragedy out of which I have come—which still remains—which continues—tragedy.

“And yet I believe in Immortality!”

Dr. Barrack, who had hitherto been following Mr. Huss with evident approval, started, sounded a note

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of surprise and protest, and fixed accusing eyes upon him. For the moment he did not interrupt.

“But it is not I that am immortal, but the God within me. All this personal immortality of which you talk is a mockery of our personalities. What is there personal in us that can live? What makes us our very selves? It is all a matter of little mean things, small differences, slight defects. Where does personal love grip?—on just these petty things. . . . Oh! dearly and bitterly did I love my son, and what is it that my heart most craves for now? His virtues? No! His ambitions? His achievements? . . . No! none of these things. . . . But for a certain queer flush among his freckles, for a kind of high crack in his voice . . . a certain absurd hopefulness in his talk . . . the sound of his footsteps, a little halt there was in the rhythm of them. These are the things we long for. These are the things that wring the heart. . . . But all these things are just the mortal things, just the defects that would be touched out upon this higher plane you talk about. You would give him back to me smoothed and polished and regularised. So, I grant, it must be if there is to be this higher plane. But what does it leave of personal distinction? What does it leave of personal love?

“When my son has had his defects smoothed away, then he will be like all sons. When the older men have been ironed out, they will be like the younger men. There is no personality in hope and honour and righteousness and truth. . . . My son has gone. He has gone for evermore. The pain may

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some day go. . . . The immortal thing in us is the least personal thing. It is not you nor I who go on living; it is Man that lives on, Man the Universal, and he goes on living, a tragic rebel in this same world and in no other. . . .”

Mr. Huss leaned back in his chair.

“There burns an undying fire in the hearts of men. By that fire I live. By that I know the God of my Salvation. His will is Truth; His will is Service. He urges me to conflict, without consolations, without rewards. He takes and does not restore. He uses up and does not atone. He suffers—perhaps to triumph, and we must suffer and find our hope of triumph in Him. He will not let me shut my eyes to sorrow, failure, or perplexity. Though the universe torment and slay me, yet will I trust in Him. And if He also must die— Nevertheless I can do no more; I must serve Him. . . .”

He ceased. For some moments no one spoke, silenced by his intensity.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

ELIHU REPROVES JOB

§ 1

“I DON’T know how all this strikes you,” said Mr. Farr, turning suddenly upon Dr. Barrack.

“Well—it’s interestin’,” said Dr. Barrack, leaning forward upon his folded arms upon the table, and considering his words carefully.

“It’s interestin’,” he repeated. “I don’t know how far you want to hear what I think about it. I’m rather a downright person.”

Sir Eliphaz with great urbanity motioned him to speak on.

“There’s been, if you’ll forgive me, nonsense upon both sides.”

He turned to Sir Eliphaz. “This Spook stuff,” he said, and paused and compressed his lips and shook his head.

“It won’t do.

“I have given some little attention to the evidences in that matter. I’m something of a psychologist—a doctor has to be. Of course, Sir Eliphaz, you’re not responsible for all the nonsense you have been talking about sublimated bricks and spook dogs made of concentrated smell.”

Sir Eliphaz was convulsed. “Tut, tut!” he said. “But indeed——!”

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“No offence, Sir Eliphaz! If you don't want me to talk I won't; but if you do, then I must say what I have in my mind. And as I say, I don't hold you responsible for the things you have been saying. All this cheap medium stuff has been shot upon the world by Sir Oliver J. Lodge, handed out by him to people distraught with grief, in a great fat impressive-looking volume. . . . No end of them have tried their utmost to take it seriously. . . . It's been a pitiful business. . . . I've no doubt the man is honest after his lights, but what lights they are! Obstinate credulity posing as liberalism. He takes every pretence and dodge of these mediums, he accepts their explanations, he edits their babble and rearranges it to make it seem striking. Look at his critical ability! Because many of the mediums are fairly respectable people who either make no money by their—revelations, or at most a very ordinary living—it's a guinea a go, I believe, usually—he insists upon their honesty. That's his key blunder. Any doctor could tell him, as I could have told him after my first year's practice, that telling the truth is the very last triumph of the human mind. Hardly any of my patients tell the truth—ever. It isn't only that they haven't a tithe of the critical ability and detachment necessary, they haven't any real desire to tell the truth. They want to produce effects. Human beings are artistic still; they aren't beginning to be scientific. Either they minimise or they exaggerate. We all do. If I saw a cat run over outside and I came in here to tell you about it, I should certainly touch up the story, make it more dramatic,

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hurt the cat more, make the dray bigger and so on. I should want to justify my telling the story. Put a woman in that chair there, tell her to close her eyes and feel odd, and she'll feel odd right enough; tell her to produce words and sentences that she finds in her head and she'll produce them; give her half a hint that it comes from eastern Asia and the stuff will begin to correspond to her ideas of pigeon English. It isn't that she is cunningly and elaborately deceiving you. It is that she wants to come up to your expectation. You are focussing your interest on her, and all human beings like to have interest focussed on them, so long as it isn't too hostile. She'll cling to that interest all she knows how. She'll cling instinctively. Most of these mediums never held the attention of a roomful of people in their lives until they found out this way of doing it. . . . What can you expect?"

Dr. Barrack cleared his throat. "But all that's beside the question," he said. "Don't think that because I reject all this spook stuff, I'm setting up any finality for the science we have to-day. It's just a little weak squirt of knowledge—all the science in the world. I grant you there may be forces, I would almost say there must be forces in the world, forces universally present, of which we still know nothing. Take the case of electricity. What did men know of electricity in the days of Gilbert? Practically nothing. In the early Neolithic age I doubt if any men had ever noticed there was such a thing as air. I grant you that most things are still unknown. Things perhaps right under our noses. But that doesn't help

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the case of Sir Eliphaz one little bit. These unknown things, as they become known, will join on to the things we do know. They'll complicate or perhaps simplify our ideas, but they won't contradict our general ideas. They'll be things *in* the system. They won't get you out of the grip of the arguments Mr. Huss has brought forward. So far, so far as concerns *your* Immortality, Sir Eliphaz, I am, you see, entirely with Mr. Huss. It's a fancy; it's a dream. As a fancy it's about as pretty as creaking boards at bed-time; as a dream—it's unattractive. As Mr. Huss has said.

“But when it comes to Mr. Huss and *his* Immortality then I find myself with you, gentlemen. That too is a dream. Less than a dream. Less even than a fancy; it's a play on words. Here is this Undying Flame, this Spirit of God in man; it's in him, he says, it's in you, Sir Eliphaz, it's in you, Mr.—Dad, wasn't it? it's in this other gentleman whose name I didn't quite catch; and it's in me. Well, it's extraordinary that none of us know of it except Mr. Huss. How you feel about it I don't know, but personally I object to being made part of God and one with Mr. Huss without my consent in this way. I prefer to remain myself. That may be egotism, but I am by nature an egotistical creature. And Agnostic. . . .

“You've got me talking now, and I may as well go through with it. What is an Agnostic really? A man who accepts fully the limitations of the human intelligence, who takes the world as he finds it, and who takes himself as he finds himself and declines to go further. There may be other universes and

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dimensions galore. There may be a fourth dimension, for example, and, if you like, a fifth dimension and a sixth dimension and any number of other dimensions. They don't concern me. I live in this universe and in three dimensions, and I have no more interest in all these other universes and dimensions than a bug under the wall-paper has in the deep, deep sea. Possibly there are bugs under the wall-paper with a kind of reasoned consciousness of the existence of the deep, deep sea, and a half belief that when at last the Keating's powder gets them, thither they will go. I—if I may have one more go at the image—just live under the wall-paper. . . .

“I am an Agnostic, I say. I have had my eyes pretty well open at the universe since I came into it six and thirty years ago. And not only have I never seen nor heard of nor smelt nor touched a ghost or spirit, Sir Eliphaz, but I have never seen a gleam or sign of this Providence, the Great God of the World of yours, or of this other minor and modern God that Mr. Huss has taken up. In the hearts of men I have found malformations, ossifications, clots, and fatty degeneration; but never a God.

“You will excuse me if I speak plainly to you, gentlemen, but this gentleman, whose name I haven't somehow got——”

“Farr.”

“Mr. Farr, has brought it down on himself and you. He called me in, and I am interested in these questions. It's clear to me that since we exist there's something in all this. But what it is I'm convinced I haven't the ganglia even to begin to understand.

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I decline either the wild guesses of the Spookist and Providentialist—I must put you there, I'm afraid, Sir Eliphaz—or the metaphors of Mr. Huss. Fact. . . .”

Dr. Barrack paused. “I put my faith in Fact.”

“There's a lot in Fact,” said Mr. Dad, who found much that was congenial in the doctor's downright style.

“What do I see about me?” asked Dr. Barrack. “A struggle for existence. About that I ask a very plain and simple question: why try to get behind it? That is It. It made me. I study it and watch it. It put me up like a cockshy, and it keeps on trying to destroy me. I do my best to dodge its blows. It got my leg. My head is bloody but unbowed. I reproduce my kind—as abundantly as circumstances permit—I stamp myself upon the universe as much as possible. If I am right, if I do the right things and have decently good luck, I shall hold out until my waning instincts dispose me to rest. My breed and influence are the marks of my rightness. What else is there? You may call this struggle what you like. God, if you like. But God for me is an anthropomorphic idea. Call it The Process.”

“Why not Evolution?” said Mr. Huss.

“I prefer The Process. The word Evolution rather begs the moral question. It's a cheap word. ‘Shon!’ Evolution seems to suggest just a simple and automatic unfolding. The Process is complex; it has its ups and downs—as Mr. Huss understands. It is more like a Will than an Automaton. A Will feeling about. It isn't indifferent to us as Mr. Huss suggests;

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it uses us. It isn't subordinate to us as Sir Eliphaz would have us believe; playing the part of a Providence just for our comfort and happiness. Some of us are hammer and some of us are anvil, some of us are sparks and some of us are the beaten stuff which survives. The Process doesn't confide in us; why should it? We learn what we can about it, and make what is called a practical use of it, for that is what the will in the Process requires."

Mr. Dad, stirred by the word "practical," made a noise of assent. But not a very confident noise: a loan rather than a gift.

"And that is where it seems to me Mr. Huss goes wrong altogether. He does not submit himself to those Realities. He sets up something called the Spirit in Man, or the God in his Heart, to judge them. He wants to judge the universe by the standards of the human intelligence at its present stage of development. That's where I fall out with him. These are not fixed standards. Man goes on developing and evolving. Some things offend the sense of justice in Mr. Huss, but that is no enduring criterion of justice; the human sense of justice has developed out of something different, and it will develop again into something different. Like everything else in us, it has been produced by the Process and it will be modified by the Process. Some things, again, he says are not beautiful. There also he would condemn. But nothing changes like the sense of beauty. A band of art students can start a new movement, cubist, vorticist, or what not, and change your sense of beauty. If seeing things as beautiful conduces to

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survival, we shall see them as beautiful sooner or later, rest assured. I daresay the hyenas admire each other—in the rutting season anyhow. . . . So it is with mercy and with everything. Each creature has its own standards. After man is the Beyond-Man, who may find mercy folly, who may delight in things that pain our feeble spirits. We have to obey the Process in our own place and our own time. That is how I see things. That is the stark truth of the universe looked at plainly and hard.”

The lips of Mr. Dad repeated noiselessly: “plainly and hard.” But he felt very uncertain.

For some moments the doctor sat with his forearms resting on the table as if he had done. Then he resumed.

“I gather that this talk here to-day arose out of a discussion about education.”

“You’d hardly believe it,” said Mr. Dad.

But Dr. Barrack’s next remark checked Mr. Dad’s growing approval. “That seems perfectly logical to me. It’s one of the things I can never understand about schoolmasters and politicians and suchlike, the way they seem to take it for granted you can educate and not bring in religion and socialism and all your beliefs. What *is* education? Teaching young people to talk and read and write and calculate in order that they may be told how they stand in the world and what we think we and the world generally are up to, and the part we expect them to play in the game. Well, how can we do that and at the same time leave it all out? What *is* the game? That is what every youngster wants to know. Answering him, is educa-

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tion. Either we are going to say what we think the game is plainly and straightforwardly, or else we are going to make motions as though we were educating when we are really doing nothing of the kind. In which case the stupid ones will grow up with their heads all in a muddle and be led by any old catchword anywhere according to luck, and the clever ones will grow up with the idea that life is a sort of empty swindle. Most educated people in this country believe it is a sham and a swindle. They flounder about and never get up against a reality. . . . It's amazing how people can lose their grip on reality—how most people have. The way my patients come along to me and tell me lies—even about their stomachaches. The idea of anything being direct and reasonable has gone clean out of their heads. They think they can fool me about the facts, and that when I'm properly fooled, I shall then humbug their stomachs into not aching—somehow. . . .

“Now my gospel is this:—face facts. Take the world as it is and take yourself as you are. And the fundamental fact we all have to face is this, that this Process takes no account of our desires or fears or moral ideas or anything of the sort. It puts us up, it tries us over, and if we don't stand the tests it knocks us down and ends us. That may not be right as you test it by your little human standards, but it is right by the atoms and the stars. Then what must a proper Education be?”

Dr. Barrack paused. “Tell them what the world is, tell them every rule and trick of the game mankind has learned, and tell them ‘*Be yourselves.*’ Be

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yourselves up to the hilt. It is no good being anything but your essential self because——”

Dr. Barrack spoke like one who quotes a sacred formula. “*There is no inheritance of acquired characteristics.* Your essential self, your essential heredity, are on trial. Put everything of yourself into the Process. If the Process wants you it will accept you; if it doesn’t you will go under. You can’t help it—either way. You may be the bit of marble that is left in the statue, or you may be the bit of marble that is thrown away. You can’t help it. *Be yourself!*”

Dr. Barrack had sat back; he raised his voice at the last words and lifted his hand as if to smite the table. But, so good a thing is professional training, he let his hand fall slowly, as he remembered that Mr. Huss was his patient.

§ 2

Mr. Huss did not speak for some moments. He was thinking so deeply that he seemed to be unobservant of the cessation of the doctor’s discourse.

Then he awoke to the silence with a start.

“You do not differ among yourselves so much as you may think,” he said at last.

“You all argue to one end, however wide apart your starting points may be. You argue that men may lead fragmentary lives. . . .

“And,” he reflected further, “submissive lives.”

“*Not* submissive,” said Dr. Barrack in a kind of footnote.

“You say, Sir Eliphaz, that this Universe is in the

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charge of Providence, all-wise and amiable. That He guides this world to ends we cannot understand; desirable ends, did we but know them, but incomprehensible; that this life, this whole Universe, is but the starting point for a developing series of immortal lives. And from this you conclude that the part a human being has to play in this scheme is the part of a trustful child, which need only not pester the Higher Powers, which need only do its few simple congenial duties, to be surely preserved and rewarded and carried on."

"There is much in simple faith," said Sir Eliphaz; "sneer though you may."

"But your view is a grimmer one, Dr. Barrack; you say that this Process is utterly beyond knowledge and control. We cannot alter it or appease it. It makes of some of us vessels of honour and of others vessels of dishonour. It has scrawled our race across the black emptiness of space, and it may wipe us out again. Such is the quality of Fate. We can but follow our lights and instincts. . . . In the end, in practical matters, your teaching marches with the teaching of Sir Eliphaz. You bow to the thing that is; he gladly and trustfully—with a certain old-world courtesy, you grimly—in the modern style. . . ."

For some moments Mr. Huss sat with compressed lips, as though he listened to the pain within him. Then he said: "I don't.

"I don't submit. I rebel—not in my own strength nor by my own impulse. I rebel by the spirit of God in me. I rebel not merely to make weak gestures of defiance against the black disorder and cruelties of

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space and time, but for mastery. I am a rebel of pride—I am full of the pride of God in my heart. I am the servant of a rebellious and adventurous God who may yet bring order into this cruel and frightful chaos in which we seem to be driven hither and thither like leaves before the wind, a God who, in spite of all appearances, may yet rule over it at last and mould it to his will.”

“*What* a world it will be!” whispered Mr. Farr, unable to restrain himself and yet half-ashamed of his sneer.

“What a world it is, Farr! What a cunning and watchful world! Does it serve even *you*? So insecure has it become that opportunity may yet turn a frightful face upon you—in the very moment as you snatch. . . .

“But you see how I differ from you all. You see that the spirit of my life and of my teaching—of my teaching—for all its weaknesses and slips and failures, is a fight against that Dark Being of the universe who seeks to crush us all. Who broods over me now even as I talk to you. . . . It is a fight against disorder, a refusal of that very submission you have made, a repudiation altogether of that same voluntary death in life. . . .”

He moistened his lips and resumed.

“The end and substance of all real education is to teach men and women of the Battle of God, to teach them of the beginnings of life upon this lonely little planet amidst the endless stars, and how those beginnings have unfolded; to show them how man has arisen through the long ages from amidst the beasts,

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and the nature of the struggle God wages through him, and to draw all men together out of themselves into one common life and effort with God. The nature of God's struggle is the essence of our dispute. It is a struggle, with a hope of victory but with no assurance. You have argued, Sir Eliphaz, that it is an unreal struggle, a sham fight, that indeed all things are perfectly adjusted and for our final happiness, and when I have reminded you a little of the unmasked horrors about us, you have shifted your ground of compensation into another—into an incredible—world."

Sir Eliphaz sounded dissent musically. Then he waved his long hand as Mr. Huss paused and regarded him. "But go on!" he said. "Go on!"

"And now I come to you, Dr. Barrack, and your modern fatalism. You hold this universe is uncontrollable—anyhow. And incomprehensible. For good or ill—we can be no more than our strenuous selves. You must, you say, *be yourself*. I answer, you must lose yourself in something altogether greater—in God. . . . There is a curious likeness, Doctor, and a curious difference in your views and mine. I think you see the world very much as I see it, but you see it coldly like a man before sunrise, and I——"

He paused. "There is a light upon it," he asserted with a noticeable flatness in his voice. "There is a light . . . light . . ."

He became silent. For a while it seemed as if the light he spoke of had gone from him and as if the shadow had engulfed him. When he spoke again it was with an evident effort.

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He turned to Dr. Barrack. "You think," he said, "that there is a will in this Process of yours which will take things somewhere, somewhere definitely greater or better or onward. I hold that there is no will at all except in and through ourselves. If there be any will at all . . . I hold that even your maxim 'be ourselves' is a paradox, for we cannot be ourselves until we have lost ourselves in God. I have talked to Sir Eliphaz and to you since you came in, of the boundless disorder and evil of nature. Let me talk to you now of the boundless miseries that arise from the disorderliness of men and that must continue age after age until either men are united in spirit and in truth or destroyed through their own incoherence. Whether men will be lost or saved I do not know. There have been times when I was sure that God would triumph in us. . . . But dark shadows have fallen upon my spirit. . . .

"Consider the posture of men's affairs now, consider where they stand to-day, because they have not yet begun to look deeply and frankly into realities; because, as they put it, they take life as they find it, because *they are themselves*, heedless of history, and do not realise that in truth they are but parts in one great adventure in space and time. For four years now the world has been marching deeper and deeper into tragedy. . . . Our life that seemed so safe grows insecure and more and more insecure. . . . Six million soldiers, six million young men, have been killed on the battlefields alone; three times as many have been crippled and mutilated; as many again who were not soldiers have been destroyed.

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That has been only the beginning of the disaster that has come upon our race. All human relationships have been strained; roads, ships, harvests destroyed; and behind the red swift tragedy of this warfare comes the gaunt and desolating face of universal famine now, and behind famine that inevitable follower of famine, pestilence. You gentlemen who have played so useful a part in supplying munitions of war, who have every reason in days well spent and energies well used to see a transitory brightness upon these sombre things, you may tell me that I lack faith when I say that I can see nothing to redeem the waste and destruction of the last four years and the still greater waste and spiritless disorder and poverty and disease ahead of us. You will tell me that the world has learned a lesson it could learn in no other way, that we shall set up a World League of Nations now and put an end to war. But on what will you set up your World League of Nations? What foundations have you made in the last four years but ruins? Is there any common idea, any common understanding yet in the minds of men? They are still taking the world as they find it, they are being their unmitigated selves more than ever, and below the few who scramble for profits now is a more and more wolfish multitude scrambling for bread. There are no common ideas in men's minds upon which we can build. How can men be united except by common ideas? The schools have failed the world. What common thought is there in the world? A loud bawling of base newspapers, a posturing of politicians. You can see chaos coming

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again over all the east of Europe now, and bit by bit western Europe crumbles and drops into the confusion. Art, science, reasoned thought, creative effort, such things have ceased altogether in Russia; they may have ceased there perhaps for centuries; they die now in Germany; the universities of the west are bloodless and drained of their youth. That war that seemed at first so like the dawn of a greater age has ceased to matter in the face of this greater disaster. The French and British and Americans are beating back the Germans from Paris. Can they beat them back to any distance? Will not this present counter-thrust diminish and fail as the others have done? Which side may first drop exhausted now, will hardly change the supreme fact. The supreme fact is exhaustion—exhaustion, mental as well as material, failure to grasp and comprehend, cessation even of attempts to grasp and comprehend, slackening of every sort of effort. . . .”

“What’s the *good* of such despair?” said Mr. Dad.

“I do not despair. No. But what is the good of lying about hope and success in the midst of failure and gathering disaster? What is the good of saying that mankind wins—automatically—against the spirit of evil, when mankind is visibly losing point after point, is visibly losing heart? What is the good of pretending that there is order and benevolence or some sort of splendid and incomprehensible process in this festering waste, this windy desolation of reasonless things? There is no reason anywhere, there is no creation anywhere, except the undying fire, the

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spirit of God in the hearts of men . . . which may fail . . . which may fail . . . which seems to me to fail.”

§ 3

He paused. Dr. Barrack cleared his throat.

“I don’t want to seem obdurate,” said Dr. Barrack. “I want to respect deep feeling. One must respect deep feeling. . . . But for the life of me I can’t put much meaning into this phrase, *the spirit of God in the hearts of men*. It’s rather against my habits to worry a patient, but this is so interesting—this is an exceptional occasion. I would like to ask you, Mr. Huss—frankly—is there anything very much more to it, than a phrase?”

There was no answer.

“Words,” said Mr. Dad; “joost words. If Mr. Huss had ever spent three months of war time running a big engineering factory——”

“My mind is a sceptical mind,” Dr. Barrack went on, after staring a moment to see if Mr. Dad meant to finish this sentence. “I want things I can feel and handle. I am an Agnostic by nature and habit and profession. A Doubting Thomas, born and bred. Well, I take it that about the universe Mr. Huss is very much of an Agnostic too. More so. He doubts more than I do. He doubts whether there is any trace of plan or purpose in it. What I call a Process, he calls a windy desolation. He sees Chaos still waiting for a creator. But then he sets up against that this undying fire of his, this spirit of God, which is

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lit in him and only waiting to be lighted in us, a sort of insurgent apprentice creator. Well——”

The doctor frowned and meditated on his words.

“I want more of the practical outcome of this fire. I admit a certain poetry in the idea, but I am a plain and practical man. Give me something to know this fire by and to recognise it again when I see it. I won't ask *why* ‘undying.’ I won't quibble about that. But what does this undying fire mean in actual things and our daily life? In some way it is mixed up with teaching history in schools.” A faint note of derision made him glance at the face to his right. “That doesn't strike me as being so queer as it seems to strike Mr. Farr. It interests me. There is a case for it. But I think there are several links Mr. Huss hasn't shown and several vital points he still has to explain. This undying fire is something that is burning in Mr. Huss, and I gather from his pretty broad hints it ought, he thinks, to be burning in me—and you, gentlemen. It is something that makes us forget our little personal differences, makes us forget ourselves, and brings us all into line against—what. That's my first point;—against what? I don't see the force and value of this line-up. I think we struggle against one another by nature and necessity; that we polish one another in the struggle and sharpen our edges. I think that out of this struggle for existence come better things and better. They may not be better things by our standards now, but by the standards of the Process, they are. Sometimes the mills of the Process may seem overpoweringly grim and high and pitiless; that is a question of scale.

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But Mr. Huss does not believe in the struggle. He wants to take men's minds and teach them so that they will not struggle against each other but live and work all together. *For what?* That is my second point;—*for what?* There is a rationality in my idea of an everlasting struggle making incessantly for betterment, such an idea does at any rate give a direction and take us somewhere; but there is no rationality in declaring we are still fighting and fighting more than ever, while in effect we are arranging to stop that struggle which carries life on—if we can—if we can. That is the paradox of Mr. Huss. When there is neither competition at home nor war abroad, when the cat and the bird have come to a satisfactory understanding, when the spirit of his human God rules even in the jungle and the sea, then where shall we be heading? Time will be still unfolding. But man will have halted. If he has ceased to compete individually he will have halted. Mr. Huss looks at me as if he thought I wronged him in saying that. Well, then he must answer my questions; what will the Human God be leading us *against*, and what shall we be living *for?*”

§ 4

“Let me tell you first what the spirit of God struggles against,” said Mr. Huss.

“I will not dispute that this Process of yours has made good things; all the good things in man it has made as well as all the evil. It has made them indif-

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ferently. In us—in some of us—it has made the will to seize upon that chance-born good and separate it from the chance-born evil. The spirit of God rises out of your process as if he were a part of your process. . . . Except for him, the good and evil are inextricably mixed; good things flower into evil things and evil things wholly or partially redeem themselves by good consequences. ‘Good’ and ‘evil’ have meaning only for us. The Process is indifferent; it makes, it destroys, it favours, it torments. On its own account it preserves nothing and continues nothing. It is just careless. But for us it has made opportunity. Life is opportunity. Unless we do now ourselves seize hold upon life and the Process while we are in it, the Process, becoming uncontrollable again, will presently sweep us altogether away. In the back of your mind, Doctor, is the belief in a happy ending just as much as in the mind of Sir Eliphaz. I see deeper because I am not blinded by health. You think that beyond man comes some sort of splendid super-man. A healthy delusion! There is nothing beyond man unless men will that something shall be. We shall be wiped out as carelessly as we have been made, and something else will come, as disconnected and aimless, something neither necessarily better nor necessarily worse but something different, to be wiped out in its turn. Unless the spirit of God that moves in us can rouse us to seize this universe for Him and ourselves, that is the nature of your Process. Your Process is just Chaos; man is the opportunity, the passing opportunity for order in the waste.

“People write and talk as if this great war which

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is now wrecking the world, was a dramatic and consecutive thing. They talk of it as a purge, as a great lesson, as a phase in history that marks the end of wars and divisions. So it might be; but is it so and will it be so? I asked you a little time ago to look straightly at the realities of animal life, of life in general as we know it. I think I did a little persuade you to my own sense of shallowness of our assumption that there is any natural happiness. The poor beasts and creatures have to suffer. I ask you now to look as straightly at the things that men have done and endured in this war. It is plain that they have shown extraordinary fertility and ingenuity in the inventions they have used and an amazing capacity for sacrifice and courage; but it is, I argue, equally plain that the pains and agonies they have undergone have taught the race little or nothing, and that their devices have been mainly for their own destruction. The only lesson and the only betterment that can come out of this war will come if men, inspired by the Divine courage, say 'This and all such things must end.' . . . But I do not perceive them saying that. On the other hand I do perceive a great amount of human energy and ability that has been devoted and is still being devoted to things that lead straight to futility and extinction.

"The most desolating thing about this war is neither the stupidity nor the cruelty of it, but the streak of perversion that has run through it. Against the meagreness of the intelligence that made the war, against the absolute inability of the good forces in life to arrest it and end it, I ask you to balance the

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intelligence and devotion that has gone to such an enterprise as the offensive use of poison gas. Consider the ingenuity and the elaboration of that; the different sorts of shell used, the beautifully finished devices to delay the release of the poison so as to catch men unawares after their gas masks are removed. One method much in favour with the Germans now involves the use of two sorts of gas. They have a gas now not very deadly but so subtle that it penetrates the gas mask and produces nausea and retching. The man is overcome by the dread of being sick so that he will clog his mask and suffocate, and he snatches off his protection in an ungovernable physical panic. Then the second gas, of the coarser, more deadly type, comes into play. That he breathes in fully. His breath catches; he realises what he has done but it is too late; death has him by the throat; he passes through horrible discomfort and torment to the end. You cough, you stagger, you writhe upon the ground and are deadly sick. . . . You die heaving and panting, with staring eyes. . . . So it is men are being killed now; it is but one of a multitude of methods, disgusting, undignified, and monstrous, but intelligent, technically admirable. . . . You cannot deny, Doctor Barrack, that this ingenious mixture is one of the last fruits of your Process. To that your Process has at last brought men from the hoeing and herding of Neolithic days.

“Now tell me how is the onward progress of mankind to anything, anywhere, secured by this fine flower of the Process? Intellectual energy, industrial energy, are used up without stint to make this horror

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possible; multitudes of brave young men are spoiled or killed. Is there any selection in it? Along such lines can you imagine men or life or the universe getting anywhere at all?

“Why do they do such things?”

“They do not do it out of a complete and organised impulse to evil. If you took the series of researches and inventions that led at last to this use of poison gas, you would find they were the work of a multitude of mainly amiable, fairly virtuous, and kindly-meaning men. Each one was *doing his bit*, as Mr. Dad would say; each one, to use your phrase, doctor, was *being himself* and utilising the gift that was in him in accordance with the drift of the world about him; each one, Sir Eliphaz, was modestly *taking the world as he found it*. They were living in an uninformed world with no common understanding and no collective plan, a world ignorant of its true history and with no conception of its future. Into these horrors they drifted for the want of a world education. Out of these horrors no lesson will be learned, no will can arise, for the same reason. Every man lives ignorantly in his own circumstances, from hand to mouth, from day to day, swayed first of all by this catchword and then by that.

“Let me take another instance of the way in which human ability and energy if they are left to themselves, without co-ordination, without a common basis of purpose, without a God, will run into cul-de-sacs of mere horribleness; let me remind you a little of what the submarine is and what it signifies. In this country we think of the submarine as an instru-

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ment of murder; but we think of it as something ingeniously contrived and at any rate not tormenting and destroying the hands that guide it. I will not recall to you the stories that fill our newspapers of men drowning in the night, of crowded boatloads of sailors and passengers shelled and sunken, of men forced to clamber out of the sea upon the destroying U-boat and robbed of their lifebelts in order that when it submerged they should be more surely drowned. I want you to think of the submarine in itself. There is a kind of crazy belief that killing, however cruel, has a kind of justification in the survival of the killer; we make that our excuse for instance for the destruction of the native Tasmanians who were shot whenever they were seen, and killed by poisoned meat left in their paths. But the marvel of these submarines is that they also torture and kill their own crews. They are miracles of shortsighted ingenuity for the common unprofitable reasonless destruction of Germans and their enemies. They are almost quintessential examples of the elaborate futility and horror into which partial ideas about life, combative and competitive ideas of life, thrust mankind.

“Take some poor German boy with an ordinary sort of intelligence, an ordinary human disposition to kindness, and some gallantry, who becomes finally a sailor in one of these craft. Consider his case and what we do to him. You will find in him a sample of what we are doing for mankind. As a child he is ingenuous, teachable, plastic. He is also egotistical, greedy, and suspicious. He is easily led and

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easily frightened. He likes making things if he knows how to make them; he is capable of affection and capable of resentment. He is a sheet of white paper upon which anything may be written. His parents teach him, his companions, his school. Do they teach him anything of the great history of mankind? Do they teach him of his blood brotherhood with all men? Do they tell him anything of discovery, of exploration, of human effort and achievement? No. They teach him that he belongs to a blonde and wonderful race, the only race that matters on this planet. (No such distinct race ever existed; it is a lie for the damning of men.) And these teachers incite him to suspicion and hatred and contempt of all other races. They fill his mind with fears and hostilities. Everything German they tell him is good and splendid. Everything not German is dangerous and wicked. They take that poor actor of an emperor at Potsdam and glorify him until he shines upon this lad's mind like a star. . . .

“The boy grows up a mental cripple; his capacity for devotion and self-sacrifice is run into a mould of fanatical loyalty for the Kaiser and hatred for foreign things. Comes this war, and the youngster is only too eager to give himself where he is most needed. He is told that the submarine war is the sure way of striking the enemies of his country a conclusive blow. To be in a submarine is to be at the spear point. He dare scarcely hope that he will be accepted for this vital service; to which princes might aspire. But he is fortunate; he is. He trains for a submarine. . . .

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“I do not know how far you gentlemen remember your youth. A schoolmaster perhaps remembers more of his early adolescence than other men because he is being continually reminded of it. But it is a time of very fine emotions, boundless ambitions, a newly awakened and eager sense of beauty. This youngster sees himself as a hero, fighting for his half-divine Kaiser, for dear Germany, against the cold and evil barbarians who resist and would destroy her. He passes through his drill and training. He goes down into a submarine for the first time, clambers down the narrow hatchway. It is a little cold, but wonderful; a marvellous machine. How can such a nest of inventions, ingenuities, beautiful metal-work, wonderful craftsmanship, be anything but right? His mind is full of dreams of proud enemy battle-ships smitten and heeling over into the waters, while he watches his handiwork with a stern pride, a restrained exultation, a sense of Germany vindicated. . . .

“That is how his mind has been made for him. That is the sort of mind that has been made and is being made in boys all over the world. . . . Because there is no common plan in the world, because each person in the making of this boy, just as each person in the making of the submarine, had ‘been himself’ and ‘done his bit,’ followed his own impulses and interests without regard to the whole, regardless of any plan or purpose in human affairs, ignorant of the spirit of God who would unify us and lead us to a common use for all our gifts and energies.

“Let me go on with the story of this youngster. . . .

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“Comes a day when he realises the reality of the work he is doing for his kind. He stands by one of the guns of the submarine in an attack upon some wretched ocean tramp. He realises that the war he wages is no heroic attack on pride or predominance, but a mere murdering of traffic. He sees the little ship shelled, the luckless men killed and wounded, no tyrants of the seas but sailor-men like himself; he sees their boats smashed to pieces. Mostly such sinkings are done at dawn or sundown, under a level light which displays a world of black lines and black silhouettes asway with the slow heaving and falling of coldly shining water. These little black things, he realises incredulously, that struggle and disappear amidst the wreckage are the heads of men, brothers to himself. . . .

“For hundreds of thousands of men who have come into this war expecting bright and romantic and tremendous experiences their first killing must have been a hideous disillusionment. For none so much as for the men of the submarines. All that sense of being right and fine that carries men into battle, that carries most of us through the world, must have vanished completely at this first vision of reality. Our man must have asked himself, ‘*What am I doing?*’ . . .

“In the night he must have lain awake and stared at that question in horrible doubt. . . .

“We scold too much at the German submarine crews in this country. Most of us in their places would be impelled to go on as they go on. The work they do has been reached step by step, logically,

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inevitably, because our world has been content to drift along on false premises and haphazard assumptions about nationality and race and the order of things. These things have happened because the technical education of men has been better than their historical and social education. Once men have lost touch with, or failed to apprehend that idea of a single human community, that idea which is the substance of all true history and the essential teaching of God, it is towards such organised abominations as these that they drift—necessarily. People in this country who are just as incoherent in their minds, just as likely to drift into some kindred cul-de-sac of conduct, would have these U-boat men tortured—to show the superiority of their own moral standards.

“But indeed these men *are* tortured. . . .

“Bear yet a little longer with this boy of mine in the U-boat. I’ve tried to suggest him to you with his conscience scared—at a moment when his submarine had made a kill. But those moments are rare. For most of its time the U-boat is under water and a hunted thing. The surface swarms with hostile craft; sea-planes and observation balloons are seeking it. Every time a U-boat comes even near to the surface it may be spotted by a sea-plane and destruction may fall upon it. Even when it is submerged below the limits of visibility in the turbid North Sea waters, the noise of its engines will betray it to a listening apparatus and a happy guess with a depth-charge may end its career. I want you to think of the daily life of this youngster under these conditions. I want you to see exactly where wrong

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ideas, not his, but wrong ideas ruling in the world about him, are driving him.

“The method of detection by listening apparatus improves steadily, and nowadays our destroyers will follow up a U-boat sometimes for sixty or seventy hours, following her sounds as a hound follows the scent of its quarry. At last, if the U-boat cannot shake off her pursuers she must come to the surface and fight or surrender. That is the strangest game of Blind-Man that ever human beings played. The U-boat doubles and turns, listening also for the sounds of the pursuers at the surface. Are they coming nearer? Are they getting fainter? Unless a helpful mud-bank is available for it to lie up in silence for a time, the U-boat must keep moving and using up electrical force, so that ultimately it must come to the surface to recharge its batteries. As far as possible the crew of the U-boat are kept in ignorance of the chase in progress. They get hints from the anxiety or irritation of the commander, or from the haste and variety of his orders. Something is going on—they do not know quite what—something that may end disagreeably. If the pursuer tries a depth charge, then they know for certain from the concussion that the hand of death is feeling for them in the darkness. . . .

“Always the dread of a depth charge must haunt the imagination of the U-boat sailor. Without notice, at any hour, may come thud and concussion to warn him that the destroying powers are on his track. The fragile ship jumps and quivers from end to end; the men are thrown about. That happens

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to our youngster. He curses the damned English. And if you think it over, what else can you expect him to curse? A little nearer and the rivets will start and actual leakage begin, letting in a pressure of several atmospheres. Yet a little nearer and the water will come pressing in through cracks and breaches at a score of points, the air will be compressed in his lungs, the long death struggle of the U-boat will begin, and after some hours of hopeless suffering he will suffocate and drown like a rat in a flooded tunnel. . . .

“Think of the life of endless apprehension in that confined space below the waters. The air is almost always stuffy and sometimes it is poisonous. All sorts of evil chances may occur in this crowded tinful of machinery to release oppressive gases and evil odours. A whiff of chlorine for instance may warn the crew of flooded accumulators. At the first sting of chlorine the U-boat must come up at any risk. . . . And nothing can be kept dry. The surfaces of the apparatus and the furniture sweat continually; except where the machinery radiates a certain heat a clammy chill pervades the whole contrivance. Have you ever seen the thick blubber of a whale? Only by means of that enormous layer of non-conductor can a whale keep its body warm in spite of the waters about it. A U-boat cannot afford any layer of blubber. It is at the temperature of the dark underwaters. And this life of cold, fear, suffocation, headache and nausea is not sustained by hot and nourishing food. There is no blazing galley fire for the cook of the U-boat.

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“The U-boat rolls very easily; she is, of course, no heavier nor lighter than the water in which she floats, and if by chance she touches bottom in shallow water, she bounds about like a rubber ball on a pavement. Inside the sailors are thrown about and dashed against the machinery.

“That is the quality of everyday life in a U-boat retained below the surface. Now think what an emergence involves. Up she comes until the periscope can scrutinise the sky and the nearer sea. Nothing in sight? Thank God! She rises out of the water and some of the sailors get a breath of fresh air. Not all, for there is no room nor time for all of them to come out. But the fortunate ones who get to the hatches may even have the luck of sunshine. To come to the surface on a calm open sea away from any traffic at all is the secret hope of every U-boat sailor. But suppose now there is something in sight. Then the U-boat must come up with infinite discretion and examine the quarry. It looks an innocent craft, a liner, a trawler, a cargo-boat. But is that innocence certain? How does the U-boat man know that she hasn't a gun? What new contrivance of the hunter may not hide behind that harmless-looking mask? Until they have put a ship down, the U-boat sailors never know what ugly surprise she may not have in store for them. When they approach a vessel they must needs be ignorant of what counter-attack creeps upon them from her unseen other side. As a consequence these men are in terror of every ship they hail.

“Is it any wonder then if their behaviour is hasty

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and hysterical, if they curse and insult the wretched people they are proposing to drown, if they fire upon them unexpectedly and do strange and abominable things? The U-boat man is no fine captain on his quarter deck. He is a man who lives a life of intense physical hardship and extreme fear, who faces overwhelming risks, in order to commit as inglorious a crime as any man can commit. He is a man already in hell.

“The Germans do what they can to keep up the spirit of these crews. An English captain who spent a fortnight upon one as a prisoner and who was recently released by way of Switzerland, says that when they had sunk a merchant ship ‘they played victory music on the gramophone.’ Imagine that bleak festival!

“The inevitable end of the U-boat sailor, unless he is lucky enough to get captured, is death, and a very horrible and slow death indeed. Sooner or later it is bound to come. Some never return from their first voyage. There is a brief spree ashore if they do; then out they go again. Perhaps they return a second time, perhaps not. Some may even have made a score of voyages, but sooner or later they are caught. The average life of a U-boat is less than five voyages—out and home. Of the crews of the original U-boats which began the U-boat campaign very few men survive to-day. When our young hopeful left his home in Germany to join the U-boat service, he left it for a certain death. He learns that slowly from the conversation of his mates. Men are so scarce now for this vile work that once Germany has got a man she will use him to the end.

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“And that end——?”

“I was given some particulars of the fate of one U-boat that were told by two prisoners who died at Harwich the other day. This particular boat was got by a mine which tore a hole in her aft. She was too disabled to come to the surface, and she began to sink tail down. Now the immediate effect of a hole in a U-boat is of course to bring the air pressure within her to the same level as the pressure of the water outside. For every ten yards of depth this means an addition of fourteen pounds to the square inch. The ears and blood-vessels are suddenly subjected to this enormous pressure. There is at once a violent pain in the ears and a weight on the chest. Cotton wool has to be stuffed into ears and nostrils to save the ear drum. Then the boat is no longer on an even keel. The men stand and slip about on the sides of things. They clamber up the floor out of the way of the slowly rising water. For the water does not come rushing in to drown them speedily. It cannot do that because there is no escape for the air; the water creeps in steadily and stealthily as the U-boat goes deeper and deeper. It is a process of slow and crushing submergence that has the cruel deliberation of some story by Edgar Allan Poe; it may last for hours. A time comes when the lights go out and the rising waters stop the apparatus for keeping up the supply of oxygen and absorbing the carbonic acid. Suffocation begins. Think of what must happen in the minds of the doomed men crowded together amidst the machinery. In the particular case these prisoners described, several of the men drowned themselves deliberately in the rising

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waters inside the boat. And in another case where the boat was recovered full of dead men, they had all put their heads under the water inside the boat. People say the U-boat men carry poison against such mischances as this. They don't. It would be too tempting. . . .

“When it becomes evident that the U-boat can never recover the surface, there is usually an attempt to escape by the hatches. The hatches can be opened when at last the pressure inside is equal to that of the water without. The water of course rushes in and sinks the U-boat to the bottom like a stone, but the men *who are nearest to the hatch* have a chance of escaping with the rush of air to the surface. There is of course a violent struggle to get nearest to the hatch. This is what happened in the case of the particular U-boat from which these prisoners came. The forward hatch was opened. Our patrol boat cruising above saw the waters thrown up by the airburst and then the heads of the men struggling on the surface. Most of these men were screaming with pain. All of them went under before they could be picked up except two. And these two died in a day or so. They died because coming suddenly up to the ordinary atmosphere out of the compressed air of the sinking submarine had burst the tissues of their lungs. They were choked with blood.

“Think of those poor creatures dying in the hospital. They were worn out by fits of coughing and hæmorrhage, but there must have been moments of exhausted quiet before the end, when our youngster lay and stared at the bleak walls of the ward and

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thought; when he asked himself, 'What have I been doing? What have I done? What has this world done for me? It has made me a murderer. It has tortured me and wasted me. . . . And I meant well by it. . . .'

"Whether he thought at all about the making of the submarine, the numberless ingenuities and devices, the patience and devotion, that had gone to make that grim trap in which he had been caught at last, I cannot guess. . . . Probably he took it as a matter of course. . . .

"So it was that our German youngster who dreamt dreams, who had ambitions, who wished to serve and do brave and honourable things, died. . . . So five thousand men at least have died, English some of them as well as German, in lost submarines beneath the waters of the narrow seas. . . .

"There is a story and a true story. It is more striking than the fate of most men and women in the world, but is it, in its essence, different? Is not the whole life of our time in the vein of this story? Is not this story of youth and hope and possibility misled, marched step by step into a world misconceived, thrust into evil, and driven down to ugliness and death, only a more vivid rendering of what is now the common fate of great multitudes? Is there any one of us who is not in some fashion aboard a submarine, doing evil and driving towards an evil end? . . .

"What are the businesses in which men engage? How many of them have any likeness to freighted ships that serve the good of mankind? Think of the

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lying and cornering, the crowding and outbidding, the professional etiquette that robs the common man, the unfair advantage smugly accepted! What man among us can say, 'All that I do is service'? Our holding and our effort: is it much better than the long interludes below the surface, and when we come up to struggle for our own hands, torpedoing competitors, wrecking antagonists, how is it with us? The submarine sailors stare in the twilight at drowning men. Every day I stare at a world drowning in poverty and ignorance, a world awash in the seas of hunger, disease, and misery. We have been given leisure, freedom, and intelligence; what have we done to prevent these things?

"I tell you all the world is a submarine, and every one of us is something of a U-boat man. These fools who squeal in the papers for cruelties to the U-boat men do not realise their own part in the world. . . . We might live in sunshine and freedom and security, and we live cramped and cold, in bitter danger, because we are at war with our fellow men. . . .

"But there, Doctor, you have the answer to the first part of your question. You asked what the Spirit of God in Man was against. It is against these mental confusions, these ignorances, that thrust life into a frightful cul-de-sac, that the God in our Hearts urges us to fight. . . . He is crying out in our hearts to save us from these blind alleys of selfishness, darkness, cruelty, and pain in which our race must die; he is crying for the high road which is salvation, he is commanding the organised unity of mankind."

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§ 5

The lassitude that had been earlier apparent in the manner of Mr. Huss had vanished. He was talking now with more energy; his eyes were bright and there was a flush in his cheeks. His voice was low, but his speech was clear and no longer broken by painful pauses.

“But your question had a double edge,” he continued; “you asked me not only what it is that the Spirit of God in us fights against, but what it is he fights for. Whither does the high-road lead? I have told you what I think the life of man is, a felted and corrupting mass of tragic experiences; let me tell you now a little, if this pain at my side will still permit it, what life upon this earth, under the leadership of the Spirit of God our Captain, might be.

“I will take it that men are still as they are, that all this world is individually the same; I will suppose no miraculous change in human nature; but I will suppose that events in the past have run along different channels, so that there has been much more thinking, much more exchange of thought, far better teaching. I want simply this world better taught, so that wherever the flame of God can be lit it has been lit. Everyone I will suppose *educated*. By *educated*, to be explicit, I mean a knowledge and understanding of history. Yes, Mr. Farr—salvation by history. Everyone about the earth I will suppose has been taught not merely to read and write and calculate, but has been given all that can be told simply and plainly of the past history of the earth, of our place

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in space and time, and the true history of mankind. I will not suppose that there is any greater knowledge of things than men actually possess to-day, but instead of its being confusedly stored in many minds and many books and many languages, it has all been sorted out and set out plainly so that it can be easily used. It has been kept back from no one, mistold to no one. Moreover I will suppose that instead of a myriad of tongues and dialects, all men can read the same books and talk together in the same speech.

“These you may say are difficult suppositions, but they are not impossible suppositions. Quite a few resolute men could set mankind definitely towards such a state of affairs so that they would reach it in a dozen generations or so. But think what a difference there would be from our conditions in such a world. In a world so lit and opened by education, most of these violent dissensions that trouble mankind would be impossible. Instead of men and communities behaving like fever patients in delirium, striking at their nurses, oversetting their food and medicine and inflicting injuries on themselves and one another, they would be alive to the facts of their common origin, their common offspring—for at last in our descendants all our lives must meet again—and their common destiny. In that more open and fresher air, the fire that is God will burn more brightly, for most of us who fail to know God fail through want of knowledge. Many more men and women will be happily devoted to the common work of mankind, and the evil that is in all of us will be more plainly seen and more easily restrained. I

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doubt if any man is altogether evil, but in this dark world the good in men is handicapped and sacrifice is mocked. Bad example finishes what weak and aimless teaching has begun. This is a world where folly and hate can bawl sanity out of hearing. Only the determination of schoolmasters and teachers can hope to change that. How can you hope to change it by anything but teaching? Cannot you realise what teaching means? . . .

“When I ask you to suppose a world instructed and educated in the place of this old traditional world of unguided passion and greed and meanness and mean bestiality, a world taught by men instead of a world neglected by hirelings, I do not ask you to imagine any miraculous change in human nature. I ask you only to suppose that each mind has the utmost enlightenment of which it is capable instead of its being darkened and overcast. Everyone is to have the best chance of being his best self. Everyone is to be living in the light of the acutest self-examination and the clearest mutual criticism. Naturally we shall be living under infinitely saner and more helpful institutions. Such a state of things will not indeed mitigate natural vanity or natural self-love; it will not rob the greedy man of his greed, the fool of his folly, the eccentric of his abnormality, nor the lustful of his lust. But it will rob them of excuses and hiding places; it will light them within and cast a light round about them; it will turn their evil to the likeness of a disease of which they themselves in their clear moments will be ready to be cured and which they will hesitate to transmit. That is the

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world which such of us schoolmasters and teachers among us as have the undying fire of God already lit in our hearts, do now labour, generation by generation, against defeat and sometimes against hope, to bring about; that is the present work God has for us. And as we do bring it about then the prospect opens out before mankind to a splendour. . . .

“In this present world men live to be themselves; having their lives they lose them; in the world that we are seeking to make they will give themselves to the God of Mankind, and so they will live indeed. They will as a matter of course change their institutions and their methods so that all men may be used to the best effect, in the common work of mankind. They will take this little planet which has been torn into shreds of possession, and make it again one garden. . . .

“The most perplexing thing about men at the present time is their lack of understanding of the vast possibilities of power and happiness that science is offering them——”

“Then why not teach *science*?” cried Mr. Farr.

“Provided only that they will unite their efforts. They solve the problems of material science in vain until they have solved their social and political problems. When those are solved, the mechanical and technical difficulties are trivial. It is no occult secret; it is a plain and demonstrable thing to-day that the world could give ample food and ample leisure to every human being, if only by a world-wide teaching the spirit of unity could be made to prevail over the impulse to dissension. And not only that, but it

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would then be possible to raise the common health and increase the common fund of happiness immeasurably. Look plainly at the world as it is. Most human beings when they are not dying untimely, are suffering more or less from avoidable disorders, they are ill or they are convalescent, or they are suffering from or crippled by some preventible taint in the blood, or they are stunted or weakened by a needlessly bad food supply, or spiritless and feeble through bad housing, bad clothing, dull occupations, or insecurity and anxiety. Few enjoy for very long stretches at a time that elementary happiness which is the natural accompaniment of sound health. This almost universal lowness of tone, which does not distress us only because most of us are unable to imagine anything better, means an enormous waste of human possibility; less work, less hopefulness. Isolated efforts will never raise men out of this swamp of malaise. At Woldingstanton we have had the best hygienic arrangements we could find, we have taken the utmost precautions, and yet there has scarcely been a year when our work has not been crippled and delayed by some epidemic, influenza one year, measles another, and so on. We take our precautions; but the townspeople, especially in the poorer quarters, don't and can't. I think myself the wastage of these perennial petty pestilences is far greater than that caused by the big epidemics that sometimes sweep the world. But all such things, great or petty, given a sufficient world unanimity, could be absolutely banished from human life. Given a sufficient unanimity and intelligent direction, men could hunt down

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all these infectious diseases, one by one, to the regions in which they are endemic, and from which they start out again and again to distress the world, and could stamp them out for ever. It is not want of knowledge prevents this now but want of a properly designed education, which would give people throughout the world the understanding, the confidence, and the will needed for so collective an enterprise.

“The sufferings and mutual cruelties of animals are no doubt a part of the hard aimlessness of nature, but men are in a position to substitute aim for that aimlessness, they have already all the knowledge and all the resources needed to escape from these cul-de-sacs of wrong-doing and suffering and ugly futility into which they jostle one another. But they do not do it because they have not been sufficiently educated and are not being sufficiently educated to sane understanding and effort. The bulk of their collective strength is dissipated in miserable squabbles and suspicions, in war and the preparation for war, in lawsuits and bickering, in making little sterile private hoards of wealth and power, in chaffering, in stupid persecutions and oppositions and vanities. It is not only that they live in a state of general infection and ill health and bad temper, ill nourished, ill housed and morally horrible, when the light is ready to shine upon them and health and splendour is within their grasp, but that all that they could so attain would be but the prelude to still greater attainments.

“Apart from and above the sweeping away of the poverty, filthiness and misery of life that would follow on an intelligent use of such powers and such

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qualities as men possess now, there would be a tremendous increase in happiness due to the contentment of belonging to one common comprehensible whole, of knowing that one played a part and a worthy part in an immortal and universal task. The merest handful of people can look with content upon the tenor of their lives to-day. A few teachers are perhaps aware that they serve God rightly, a few scientific investigators, a few doctors and bridge-builders and makers of machinery, a few food-growers and sailors and the like. They can believe that they do something that is necessary, or build something which will endure. But most men and women to-day are like beasts caught in a tunnel; they follow base occupations, they trade and pander and dispute; there is no peace in their hearts; they gratify their lusts and seek excitements; they know they spend their lives in vain and they have no means of escape. The world is full of querulousness and abuse, derision and spite, mean tricks and floundering effort, vice without a gleam of pleasure and vain display, because blind Nature spews these people into being and there is no light to guide their steps. Yet there is work to be done by every one, a plain reason for that work, and happiness in the doing of it. . . .

“I do not know if any of us realise all that a systematic organisation of the human intelligence upon the work of research would mean for our race. People talk of the wonders that scientific work has given us in the past two hundred years, wonders of which for the most part we are too disordered and foolish to avail ourselves fully. But what scientific research

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has produced so far must be as yet only the smallest earnest of what scientific research can presently give mankind. All the knowledge that makes to-day different from the world of Queen Elizabeth has been the work of a few score thousand men, mostly poorish men, working with limited material and restricted time, in a world that discouraged and misunderstood them. Many hundreds of thousands of men with gifts that would have been of the profoundest value in scientific work, have missed the education or the opportunity to use those gifts. But in a world clarified by understanding, the net of research would miss few of its born servants, there would be the swiftest, clearest communication of results from worker to worker, the readiest honour and help for every gift. Poor science, which goes about now amidst our crimes and confusions like an ill-trimmed evil-smelling oil lantern in a dark cavern in which men fight and steal, her flickering light, snatched first by this man and then by that, as often as not a help to violence and robbery, would become like the sunrise of a bright summer morning. We do not realise what in a little while mankind could do. Our power over matter, our power over life, our power over ourselves, would increase year by year and day by day.

“Here am I, after great suffering, waiting here for an uncertain operation that may kill me. *It need not have been so.* Here are we all, sitting hot and uncomfortable in this ill-ventilated, ill-furnished room, looking out upon a vile waste. *It need not have been so.* Such is the quality of our days. I sit here wrung by pain, in the antechamber of death, because man-

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kind has suffered me to suffer. . . . All this could have been avoided. . . . Not for ever will such things endure, not for ever will the Mocker of Mankind prevail. . . .

“And such knowledge and power and beauty as we poor watchers before the dawn can guess at, are but the beginning of all that could arise out of these shadows and this torment. Not for ever shall life be marooned upon this planet, imprisoned by the cold and incredible emptiness of space. Is it not plain to you all, from what man in spite of everything has achieved, that he is but at the beginning of achievement? That presently he will take his body and his life and mould them to his will, that he will take gladness and beauty for himself as a girl will pick a flower and twine it in her hair. You have said, Doctor Barrack, that when industrial competition ends among men all change in the race will be at an end. But you said that unthinkingly. For when a collective will grows plain, there will be no blind thrusting into life and no blind battle to keep in life, like the battle of a crowd crushed into a cul-de-sac, any more. The qualities that serve the great ends of the race will be cherished and increased; the sorts of men and women that have these qualities least will be made to understand the necessary restraints of their limitation. You said that when men ceased to compete, they would stand still. Rather is it true that when men cease their internecine war, then and then alone can the race sweep forward. The race will grow in power and beauty swiftly, in every generation it will grow, and not only the human race. All this

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world will man make a garden for himself, ruling not only his kind but all the lives that live, banishing the cruel from life, making the others merciful and tame beneath his hand. The flies and mosquitoes, the thorns and poisons, the fungus in the blood, and the murrain upon his beasts, he will utterly end. He will rob the atoms of their energy and the depths of space of their secrets. He will break his prison in space. He will step from star to star as now we step from stone to stone across a stream. Until he stands in the light of God's presence and looks his Mocker and the Adversary in the face. . . ."

"Oh! *Ravins!*" Mr. Dad burst out, unable to contain himself.

"You may think my mind is fevered because my body is in pain; but never was my mind clearer than it is now. It is as if I stood already half out of this little life that has held me so long. It is not a dream I tell, but a reality. The world is for man, the stars in their courses are for man—if only he will follow the God who calls to him and take the gift God offers. As I sit here and talk of these things to you here, they become so plain to me that I cannot understand your silence and why you do not burn—as I burn—with the fire of God's purpose. . . ."

He stopped short. He seemed to have come to the end of his strength. His chin sank, and his voice when he spoke again was the voice of a weak and weary man.

"I talk. . . . I talk. . . . And then a desolating sense of reality blows like a destroying gust through my mind, and my little lamp of hope goes out. . . ."

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“It is as if some great adversary sat over all my world, mocking me in every phrase I use and every act I do. . . .”

He sighed deeply.

“Have I answered your questions, doctor?” he asked.

§ 6

“You speak of God,” said Dr. Barrack. “But this that you speak of as God, is it really what men understand by God? It seems to me, as I said to begin with, it is just a personification of the good will in us all. Why bring in God? God is a word that has become associated with all sorts of black and cruel things. It sets one thinking of priesthoods, orthodoxies, persecutions. Why do you not call this upward and onward power Humanity? Why do you not call it the Spirit of Men? Then it might be possible for an Agnostic like myself to feel a sort of agreement. . . .”

“Because I have already shown you it is not humanity, it is not the spirit of men. Humanity, the spirit of men, made poison gas and the submarine; the spirit of man is jealous, aggressive and partizan. Humanity has greed and competition in grain, and the spirit of man is fear and hatred, secrecy and conspiracy, quite as much as, much more than, it is making or order. But this spirit in me, this fire which I call God, was lit, I know not how, but as if it came from outside. . . .”

“I use the phrases,” said Mr. Huss, “that come ready to the mind. But I will meet you so far as to

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say that I know that I am metaphorical and inexact. . . . This spirit that comes into life—it is more like a person than a thing and so I call it He. And He is not a feature, not an aspect of things, but a selection among things. . . . He seizes upon and brings out and confirms all that is generous in the natural impulses of the mind. He condemns cruelty and all evil. . . .

“I will not pretend to explain what I cannot explain. It may be that God is as yet only foreshadowed in life. You may reason, Doctor Barrack, that this fire in the heart that I call God, is as much the outcome of your Process as all the other things in life. I cannot argue against that. What I am telling you now is not what I believe so much as what I feel. To me it seems that the creative desire that burns in me is a thing different in its nature from the blind Process of matter, is a force running contrariwise to the power of confusion. . . . But this I do know, that once it is lit in a man it is like a consuming fire. Once it is lit in a man, then his mind is alight—thenceforth. It rules his conscience with compelling power. It summons him to live the residue of his days working and fighting for the unity and release and triumph of mankind. He may be mean still, and cowardly and vile still, but he will know himself for what he is. . . . Some ancient phrases live marvelously. Within my heart *I know that my Redeemer liveth. . . .*”

He stopped abruptly.

Dr. Barrack was unprepared with a reply. But he shook his head obstinately. These time-worn phrases

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were hateful to his soul. They smacked to him of hypocrisy, of a bidding for favour with obsolete and discredited influences. Through such leaks it is superstition comes soaking back into the laboriously bailed-out minds of men. Yet Mr. Huss was a difficult controversialist to grapple. "No," said the doctor provisionally. "No. . . ."

§ 7

Fate came to the relief of Dr. Barrack.

That conference at Sea View was pervaded by the sense of a new personality. This was a short and angry and heated little man, with active dark brown eyes in a tan face, a tooth-brush moustache of iron-grey, and a protruded lower jaw. He was dressed in a bright bluish-grey suit and bright brown boots, and he carried a bright brown leather bag.

He appeared mouthing outside the window, beyond the range of distinct hearing. His expression was blasphemous. He made threatening movements with his bag.

"Good God!" cried Dr. Barrack. "Sir Alpheus! . . . I had no idea of the time!"

He rushed out of the room and there was a scuffle in the passage.

"I ought to have been met," said Sir Alpheus, entering, "I ought to have been met. It's ridiculous to pretend you didn't know the time. A general practitioner *always* knows the time. It is his first duty. I cannot understand the incivility of this reception. I have had to make my way to your surgery, Dr.

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Barrack, without assistance; not a cab free at the station; I have had to come down this road in the heat, carrying everything myself, reading all the names on the gates—the most ridiculous and banal names. The Taj, Thyme Bank, The Cedars, and Capernaum, cheek by jowl! It's worse than Freud."

Dr. Barrack expressed further regrets confusedly and indistinctly.

"We have been talking, Sir Alpheus," said Sir Eliphaz, advancing as if to protect the doctor from his specialist, "upon some very absorbing topics. That must be our excuse for this neglect. We have been discussing education—and the universe. Fate, free-will, predestination absolute." It is not every building contractor can quote Milton.

The great surgeon regarded the patentee of Temanite.

"Fate—fiddlesticks!" said Sir Alpheus suddenly and rudely. "That's no excuse for not meeting me." His bright little eyes darted round the company and recognised Mr. Huss. "What! my patient not in bed! Not even in bed! Go to *bed*, sir! Go to *bed*!"

He became extremely abusive to Dr. Barrack. "You treat an operation, sir, with a levity——!"

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

THE OPERATION

§ 1

WHILE Sir Alpheus grumbled loudly at the unpreparedness of everything, Mr. Huss, with the assistance of Dr. Barrack, walked upstairs and disrobed himself.

This long discussion had taken a very powerful grip upon his mind. Much remained uncertain in his thoughts. He had still a number of things he wanted to say, and these proceedings preliminary to his vivisection seemed to him to be irrelevant and tiresome rites interrupting something far more important.

The bed, the instruments, the preparation for anæsthesia, were to him no more than new contributions to the argument. While he lay on the bed with Dr. Barrack handling the funnel hood that was to go over nose and mouth for the administration of the chloroform, he tried to point out that the very idea of operative surgery was opposed to the scientific fatalism of that gentleman. But Sir Alpheus interrupted him. . . .

“Breathe deeply,” said Dr. Barrack. . . .

“*Breathe deeply.*” . . .

The whole vast argumentative fabric that had arisen in his mind swung with him across an abyss of dread and mental inanity. Whether he thought or

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dreamt what follows it is impossible to say; we can but record the ideas that, like a crystalline bubble as great as all things, filled his consciousness. He felt a characteristic doubt whether the chloroform would do its duty, and then came that twang like the breaking of a violin string:—*Ploot*. . . .

And still he did not seem to be insensible! He was not insensible, and yet things had changed. Dr. Elihu was still present, but somehow Sir Eliphaz and Mr. Dad and Mr. Farr, whom he left downstairs, had come back and were sitting on the ground—on the ashes; they were all seated gravely on a mound of ashes and beneath a sky that blazed with light. Sir Alpheus, the nurse, the bedroom, had vanished. It seemed that they had been the dream.

But this was the reality, an enduring reality, this sackcloth and these reeking ash-heaps outside the city gates. This was the scene of an unending experiment and an immortal argument. He was Job; the same Job who had sat here for thousands of years, and this lean vulturous old man in the vast green turban was Eliphaz the Temanite, the smaller man who peered out of the cowl of a kind of hooded shawl, was his friend Bildad the Shuhite; the eager, coarse face of the man in unclean linen was Zophar the Naamathite; and this fist-faced younger man who sat with an air of false humility insolently judging them all, was Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite of the kindred of Ram. . . .

It was queer that there should have ever been the fancy that these men were doctors or schoolmasters or munition makers, a queer veiling of their immor-

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tal quality in the transitory garments of a period. For ages they had sat here and disputed, and for ages they had still to sit. A little way off waited the asses and camels and slaves of the three emirs, and the two Ethiopian slaves of Eliphaz had been coming towards them bearing bowls of fine grey ashes. (For Eliphaz for sanitary reasons did not use the common ashes of the midden upon his head.) There, far away, splashed green with palms and pierced between pylons by a glittering arm of the river, were the low brown walls of sun-dried brick, the flat-roofed houses, and the twisted temple towers of the ancient city of Uz, where first this great argument had begun. East and west and north and south stretched the wide levels of the world, dotted with small date trees, and above them was the measureless dome of heaven, set with suns and stars and flooded with a light.

This light had shone out since Elihu had spoken, and it was not only a light but a voice clear and luminous, before which Job's very soul bowed and was still. . . .

"Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

By a great effort Job lifted up his eyes to the zenith.

It was as if one shone there who was all, and yet who comprehended powers and kingdoms, and it was as if a screen or shadow was before his face. It was as if a dark figure enhaloed in shapes and colours bent down over the whole world and regarded it curiously and malevolently, and it was as if this dark figure was no more than a translucent veil be-

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fore an infinite and lasting radiance. Was it a veil before the light, or did it not rather nest in the very heart of the light and spread itself out before the face of the light and spread itself and recede and again expand in a perpetual diastole and systole? It was as if the voice that spoke was the voice of God, and yet ever and again it was as if the timbre of the voice was Satan. As the voice spoke to Job, his friends listened and watched him, and the eyes of Elihu shone like garnets and the eyes of Eliphaz like emeralds, but the eyes of Bildad were black like the eyes of a lizard upon a wall, and Zophar had no eyes but looked at him only with the dark shadows beneath his knitted brows. As God spake they all, and Job with them, became smaller and smaller and shrank until they were the minutest of conceivable things, until the whole scene was a little toy; they became unreal like discolourations upon a floating falling disc of paper confetti, amidst greatnesses unfathomable.

“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?”

But in this dream that was dreamt by Mr. Huss while he was under the anæsthetic, God did not speak by words but by light; there were no sounds in his ears, but thoughts ran like swift rivulets of fire through his brain and gathered into pools and made a throbbing pattern of wavelets, curve within curve, that interlaced. . . .

The thoughts that it seemed to him that God was speaking through his mind, can be put into words only after a certain fashion and with great loss, for

THE OPERATION

they were thoughts about things beyond and above this world, and our words are all made out of the names of things and feelings in this world. Things that were contradictory had become compatible, and things incomprehensible seemed straightforward, because he was in a dream. It was as if the anæsthetic had released his ideas from their anchorage to words and phrases and their gravitation towards sensible realities. But it was still the same line of thought he pursued through the stars and spaces, that he had pursued in the stuffy little room at Sundering on Sea.

It was somewhat after this fashion that things ran through the mind of Mr. Huss. It seemed to him at first that he was answering the challenge of the voice that filled the world, not of his own will but mechanically. He was saying: "Then *give* me knowledge."

To which the answer was in the voice of Satan and in tones of mockery. For Satan had become very close and definite to Job, as a dark face, time-worn and yet animated, that sent out circle after circle of glowing colour towards the bounds of space as a swimmer sends waves towards the bank. "But what have you got in the way of a vessel to hold your knowledge if we gave it you?"

"In the name of the God in my heart," said Job, "I demand knowledge and power."

"Who are you? A pedagogue who gives ill-prepared lessons about history in frowsty rooms, and dreams that he has been training his young gentlemen to play leap-frog amidst the stars."

"I am Man," said Job.

"*Huss.*"

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But that queer power of slipping one's identity and losing oneself altogether which dreams will give, had come upon Mr. Huss. He answered with absolute conviction: "I am Man. Down there I was Huss, but here I am Man. I am every man who has ever looked up towards this light of God. I am everyone who has thought or worked or willed for the race. I am all the explorers and leaders and teachers that man has ever had."

The argument evaporated. He carried his point as such points are carried in dreams. The discussion slipped to another of the issues that had been troubling him.

"You would plumb the deep of knowledge; you would scale the heights of space. . . . There is no limit to either."

"Then I will plumb and scale for ever. I will defeat you."

"But you will never destroy me."

"I will fight my way through you to God."

"And never attain him." . . .

It seemed as though yet another voice was speaking. For a while the veil of Satan was drawn aside. The thoughts it uttered ran like incandescent molten metal through the mind of Job, but whether he was saying these things to God or whether God was saying these things to him, did not in any way appear.

"So life goes on for ever. And in no other way could it go on. In no other way could there be such a being as life. For how can you struggle if there is a certainty of victory? Why should you struggle if the end is assured? How can you rise if there is no

THE OPERATION

depth into which you can fall? The blacknesses and the evils about you are the warrants of reality. . . .

“Through the centuries the voice of Job had complained and will complain. Through the centuries the fire of his faith flares and flickers and threatens to go out. But is Job justified in his complaints?

“Is Job indeed justified in his complaints? His mind has been coloured by the colour of misfortune. He has seen all the world reflecting the sufferings of his body. He has dwelt upon illness and cruelty and death. But is there any evil or cruelty or suffering that is beyond the possibility of human control? Were that so then indeed he might complain that God has mocked him. . . . Are sunsets ugly and oppressive? Do mountains disgust, do distant hills repel? Is there any flaw in the starry sky? If the lives of beasts and men are dark and ungracious, yet is not the texture of their bodies lovely beyond comparison? You have sneered because the beauty of cell and tissue may build up an idiot. Why, oh Man, do they build up an idiot? Have you no will, have you no understanding, that you suffer such things to be? The darkness and ungraciousness, the evil and the cruelty, are no more than a challenge to you. In you lies the power to rule all these things. . . .”

Through the tumbled clouds of his mind broke the sunlight of this phrase: “The power to rule all these things. The power to rule——”

“You have dwelt overmuch upon pain. Pain is a swift distress; it ends and is forgotten. Without memory and fear pain is nothing, a contradiction to be heeded, a warning to be taken. Without pain

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what would life become? Pain is the master only of craven men. It is in man's power to rule it. It is in man's power to rule all things. . . ."

It was as if the dreaming patient debated these ideas with himself; and again it was as if he were the universal all and Job and Satan and God disputed together within him. The thoughts in his mind raced faster and suddenly grew bright and glittering, as the waters grow bright when they come racing out of the caves at Han into the light of day. Green-faced, he murmured and stirred in his great debate while the busy specialist plied his scalpels, and Dr. Barrack whispered directions to the intent nurse.

"Another whiff," said Doctor Barrack.

"A cloud rolls back from my soul. . . ."

"I have been through great darkness. I have been through deep waters. . . ."

"Has not your life had laughter in it? Has the freshness of the summer morning never poured joy through your being? Do you know nothing of the embrace of the lover, cheek to cheek or lip to lip? Have you never swum out into the sunlit sea or shouted on a mountain slope? Is there no joy in a handclasp? Your son, your son, you say, is dead with honour. Is there no joy in that honour? Clean and straight was your son, and beautiful in his life. Is that nothing to thank God for? Have you never played with happy children? Has no boy ever answered to your teaching—giving back more than you gave him? Dare you deny the joy of your appetites: the first mouthful of roast red beef on the frosty day and the deep draught of good ale? Do

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you know nothing of the task well done, nor of sleep after a day of toil? Is there no joy for the farmer in the red ploughed fields, and the fields shooting with green blades? When the great prows smite the waves and the aeroplane hums in the sky, is man still a hopeless creature? Can you watch the beat and swing of machinery and still despair? Your illness has coloured the world; a little season of misfortune has hidden the light from your eyes."

It was as if the dreamer pushed his way through the outskirts of a great forest and approached the open, but it was not through trees that he thrust his way but through bars and nets and interlacing curves of blinding, many-coloured light towards the clear promise beyond. He had grown now to an incredible vastness, so that it was no longer earth upon which he set his feet but that crystalline pavement whose translucent depths contain the stars. Yet though he approached the open he never reached the open; the iridescent net that had seemed to grow thin, grew dense again; he was still struggling, and the black doubts that had lifted for a moment swept down upon his soul again. And he realised he was in a dream, a dream that was drawing swiftly now to its close.

"Oh God!" he cried, "answer me! For Satan has mocked me sorely. Answer me before I lose sight of you again. Am I right to fight? Am I right to come out of my little earth, here above the stars?"

"Right if you dare."

"Shall I conquer and prevail? Give me your promise!"

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“Everlastingly you may conquer and find fresh worlds to conquer.”

“*May—but shall I?*”

It was as if the torrent of molten thoughts stopped suddenly. It was as if everything stopped.

“Answer me,” he cried.

Slowly the shining thoughts moved on again.

“So long as your courage endures you will conquer. . . .

“If you have courage, although the night be dark, although the present battle be bloody and cruel and end in a strange and evil fashion, nevertheless victory shall be yours—in a way you will understand—when victory comes. Only have courage. On the courage in your heart all things depend. By courage it is that the stars continue in their courses, day by day. It is the courage of life alone that keeps sky and earth apart. . . . If that courage fail, if that sacred fire go out, then all things fail and all things go out, all things—good and evil, space and time.”

“Leaving nothing?”

“*Nothing.*”

“Nothing,” he echoed, and the word spread like a dark and darkening mask across the face of all things.

And then as if to mark the meaning of the word, it seemed to him that the whole universe began to move inward upon itself, faster and faster, until at last with an incredible haste it rushed together. He resisted this collapse in vain, and with a sense of overwhelmed effort. The white light of God and the whirling colours of the universe, the spaces between the stars—it was as if an unseen fist gripped them

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together. They rushed to one point as water in a clepsydra rushes to its hole. The whole universe became small, became a little thing, diminished to the size of a coin, of a spot, of a pin-point, of one intense black mathematical point, and—vanished. He heard his own voice crying in the void like the echo of a sigh blown before the wind: “But will my courage endure?” The question went unanswered. Not only the things of space but the things of time swept together into nothingness. The last moment of his dream rushed towards the first, crumpled all the intervening moments together and made them one. It seemed to Mr. Huss that he was still in the instant of insensibility. That sound of the breaking string was still in his ears:—*Ploot*. . . .

It became part of that same sound which came before the vision. . . .

He was aware of a new pain within him; not that dull aching now, but a pain keen and sore. He gave a fluttering gasp.

“Quick,” said a voice. “He is coming to!”

“He’ll not wake for hours,” said a second voice.

“His mouth and eyes!”

He lifted his eyelids as one lifts lead. He found himself looking into the intelligent but unsympathetic face of Sir Alpheus Mengo, he tried to comprehend his situation but he had forgotten how he had got to it, he closed his eyes and sank back consciously and wilfully towards insensibility. . . .

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

LETTERS AND A TELEGRAM

§ 1

It was three weeks later.

Never had there been so successful an operation as an operation in the experience of either Sir Alpheus Mengo or Dr. Barrack. The growth that had been removed was a non-malignant growth; the diagnosis of cancer had been unsound. Mr. Huss was still lying flat in his bed in Mrs. Croome's house, but he was already able to read books, letters and newspapers, and take an interest in affairs.

The removal of his morbid growth had made a very great change in his mental atmosphere. He no longer had the same sense of an invincible hostile power brooding over all his life; his natural courage had returned. And the world which had seemed a conspiracy of misfortunes was now a hopeful world again. The last great offensive of the Germans towards Paris had collapsed disastrously under the counter-attacks of Marshal Foch; each morning's paper told of fresh victories for the Allies, and the dark shadow of a German Cæsarism fell no longer across the future. The imaginations of men were passing through a phase of reasonableness and generosity; the idea of an organised world peace had seized upon a multitude of minds; there was now a prospect of a new and better age such as would have seemed

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incredible in the weeks when the illness of Mr. Huss began to bear him down. And it was not simply a general relief that had come to his forebodings. His financial position, for example, which had been wrecked by one accident, had been restored by another. A distant cousin of Mr. Huss, to whom however Mr. Huss was the nearest relative, had died of softening of the brain after a career of almost imbecile speculation. He had left his property partly to Mr. Huss and partly to Woldingstanton School. For some years before the war he had indulged in the wildest buying of depreciated copper shares, and had accumulated piles of what had seemed at the time valueless paper. The war had changed all that. Instead of being almost insolvent, the deceased in spite of heavy losses on Canadian land deals was found by his executors to be worth nearly thirty thousand pounds. It is easy to underrate the good in money. The windfall meant a hundred needed comforts and freedoms, and a release for the mind of Mrs. Huss that nothing else could have given her. And the mind of Mr. Huss reflected the moods of his wife much more than he suspected.

But still better things seemed to be afoot in the world of Mr. Huss. The rest of the governors of Woldingstanton, it became apparent, were not in agreement with Sir Eliphaz and Mr. Dad upon their project of replacing Mr. Huss by Mr. Farr; and a number of the old boys of the school at the front, getting wind of what was going on, had formed a small committee for the express purpose of defending their old master. At the head of this committee, by

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a happy chance, was young Kenneth Burrows, the nephew and heir of Sir Eliphaz. At the school he had never been in the front rank; he had been one of those good-all-round boys who end as a school prefect, a sound man in the first eleven, and second or third in most of the subjects he took. Never had he played a star part or enjoyed very much of the head's confidences. It was all the more delightful therefore to find him the most passionate and indefatigable champion of the order of things that Mr. Huss had set up. He had heard of the proposed changes at his uncle's dinner-table when on leave, and he had done something forthwith to shake that gentleman's resolves. Lady Burrows, who adored him, became at once pro-Huss. She was all the readier to do this because she did not like Mr. Dad's rather emphatic table manners, nor Mr. Farr's clothes.

"You don't know what Mr. Huss was to us, sir," the young man repeated several times, and returned to France with that sentence growing and flowering in his mind. He was one of those good types for whom the war was a powerful developer. Death, hardship, and responsibility—he was still not two-and-twenty, and a major in the artillery—had already made an understanding man out of the schoolboy; he could imagine what dispossession meant; his new maturity made it seem a natural thing to write to comfort his old head as one man writes to another. His pencilled sheets, when first they came, made the enfeebled recipient cry, not with misery but happiness. They were re-read like a

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love-letter; they were now on the coverlet, and Mr. Huss was staring at the ceiling and already planning a new Woldingstanton rising from its ashes, greater than the old.

§ 2

It is only in the last few weeks, the young man wrote, that we have heard of all these schemes to break up the tradition of Woldingstanton, and now there is a talk of your resigning the headmastership in favour of Mr. Farr. Personally, sir, I can't imagine how you can possibly dream of giving up your work—and to him of all people;—I still have a sort of doubt about it; but my uncle was very positive that you were disposed to resign (personally, he said, he had implored you to stay), and it is on the off-chance of his being right that I am bothering you with this letter. Briefly it is to implore you to stand by the school, which is as much as to say to stand by yourself and us. You've taught hundreds of us to stick it, and now you owe it to us to stick it yourself. I know you're ill, dreadfully ill; I've heard about Gilbert, and I know, sir, we all know, although he wasn't in the school and you never betrayed a preference or were led into an unfair thing through it, how much you loved him; you've been put through it, sir, to the last degree. But, sir, there are some of us here who feel almost as though they were your sons; if you don't and can't give us that sort of love, it doesn't alter the fact that there are men out here who think of you as they'd like to think of their fathers. Men like myself particularly, who were left as boys without a father.

I'm no great hand at expressing myself; I'm no

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credit to Mr. Cross and his English class; generally I don't believe in saying too much; but I would like to tell you something of what you have been to a lot of us, and why Woldingstanton going on will seem to us like a flag still flying and Woldingstanton breaking its tradition like a sort of surrender. And I don't want a bit to flatter you, sir, if you'll forgive me, and set you up in what I am writing to you. One of the lovable things about you to us is that you have always been so jolly human to us. You've always been unequal. I've seen you give lessons that were among the best lessons in the world, and I've seen you give some jolly bad lessons. And there were some affairs—that business of the November fireworks for example—when we thought you were harsh and wrong——

“I was wrong,” said Mr. Huss.

That almost led to a mutiny. But that is just where you score, and why Woldingstanton can't do without you. When that firework row was on we called a meeting of the school and house prefects and had up some of the louts to it—you never heard of that meeting—and we said, we all agreed you were wrong and we all agreed that right or wrong we stood by you, and wouldn't let the row go further. Perhaps you remember how that affair shut up all at once. But that is where you've got us. You do wrong, you let us see through you; there never was a schoolmaster or a father gave himself away so freely as you do, you never put up a sham front on us and consequently every one of us knows that what he knows about you is the real thing in you; the very kids in the lower fifth can get a glimpse of it and grasp that you are driving at something with all your heart and

LETTERS AND A TELEGRAM

soul, and that the school goes somewhere and has life in it. We Woldingstanton boys have that in common when we meet; we understand one another; we have something that a lot of the other chaps one meets out here, even from the crack schools, don't seem to have. It isn't a flourish with us, sir, it is a simple statement of fact that the life we joined up to at Woldingstanton is more important to us than the life in our bodies. Just as it is more important to you. It isn't only the way you taught it, though you taught it splendidly, it is the way you felt it that got hold of us. You made us think and feel that the past of the world was our own history; you made us feel that we were in one living story with the reindeer men and the Egyptian priests, with the soldiers of Cæsar and the alchemists of Spain; nothing was dead and nothing alien; you made discovery and civilisation our adventure and the whole future our inheritance. Most of the men I meet here feel lost in this war; they are like rabbits washed out of their burrows by a flood, but we of Woldingstanton have taken it in the day's work, and when the peace comes and the new world begins, it will still be in the story for us, the day's work will still join on. That's the essence of Woldingstanton, that it puts you on the high road that goes on. The other chaps I talk to here from other schools seem to be on no road at all. They are tough and plucky by nature and association; they are fighters and sturdy men; but what holds them in it is either just habit and the example of people about them or something unsound that can't hold out to the end; a vague loyalty to the Empire or a desire to punish the Hun or restore the peace of Europe, some short range view of that sort,

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motives that will leave them stranded at the end of the war, anyhow, with nothing to go on to. To talk of after the war to them is to realise what blind alleys their teachers have led them into. They can understand fighting against things but not for things. Beyond an impossible ambition to go back somewhere and settle down as they used to be, there's not the ghost of an idea to them at all. The whole value of Woldingstanton is that it steers a man through and among the blind alleys and sets him on a way out that he can follow for all the rest of his days; it makes him a player in a limitless team and one with the Creator. We are all coming back to take up our jobs in that spirit, jobs that will all join up at last in making a real world state, a world civilisation and a new order of things, and unless we can think of you, sir, away at Woldingstanton, working away to make more of us, ready to pick up the sons we shall send you presently——

Mr. Huss stopped reading.

§ 3

He lay thinking idly.

“I was talking about blind alleys the other day. Queer that he should have hit on the same phrase. . . .

“Some old sermon of mine perhaps. . . . No doubt I've had the thought before. . . .

“I suppose that one could define education as the lifting of minds out of blind alleys. . . .

“A permissible definition anyhow. . . .

“I wish I could remember that talk better. I said a lot of things about submarines. I said something

LETTERS AND A TELEGRAM

about the whole world really being like the crew of a submarine. . . .

“It’s true—universally. Everyone is in a blind alley until we pierce a road. . . .

“That was a queer talk we had. . . . I remember I wouldn’t go to bed—a kind of fever in the mind. . . .

“Then there was a dream.

“I wish I could remember more of that dream. It was as if I could see round some metaphysical corner. . . . I seemed to be in a great place—talking to God. . . .

“But how could one have talked to God? . . .

“No. It is gone. . . .”

His thought reverted to the letter of young Burrows.

He began to scheme out the reinstatement of Woldingstanton. He had an idea of rebuilding School House with a map corridor to join it to the picture gallery and the concert hall, which were both happily still standing. He wanted the maps on one side to show the growth and succession of empires in the western world, and on the other to present the range of geographical knowledge and thought at different periods in man’s history.

As with many great headmasters, his idle day-dreams were often architectural. He took out another of his dream toys now and played with it. This dream was that he could organise a series of ethnological exhibits showing various groups of primitive peoples in a triple order; first little models of them in their savage state, then displays of their arts and manufactures to show their distinctive gifts and aptitudes, and then suggestions of the part such a

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people might play as artists or guides, or beast tamers or the like, in a wholly civilised world. Such a collection would be far beyond the vastest possibilities to which Woldingstanton could ever attain—but he loved the dream.

The groups would stand in well-lit bays, side chapels, so to speak, in his museum building. There would be a crescent of seats and a black-board, for it was one of his fantasies to have a school so great that the classes would move about it, like little parties of pilgrims in a cathedral. . . .

From that he drifted to a scheme for grouping great schools for such common purposes as the educational development of the cinematograph, a central reference library, and the like. . . .

For one great school leads to another. Schools are living things, and like all living things they must grow and reproduce their kind and go on from conquest to conquest—or fall under the sway of the Farris and Dads, and stagnate, become diseased and malignant, and perish. But Woldingstanton was not to perish. It was to spread. It was to call to its kind across the Atlantic and throughout the world. . . . It was to give and receive ideas, interbreed, and develop. . . .

Across the blue October sky the white clouds drifted, and the air was full of the hum of a passing aeroplane. The chained dog that had once tortured the sick nerves of Mr. Huss now barked unheeded.

“I would like to give one of the chapels of the races to the memory of Gilbert,” whispered Mr. Huss. . . .

LETTERS AND A TELEGRAM

§ 4

The door at the foot of his bed opened, and Mrs. Huss appeared.

She had an effect of appearing suddenly, and yet she moved slowly into the room, clutching a crumpled bit of paper in her hand. Her face had undergone some extraordinary change; it was dead white, and her eyes were wide open and very bright. She stood stiffly. She might have been about to fall. She did not attempt to close the door behind her.

Mrs. Croome became audible rattling her pans downstairs.

When Mrs. Huss spoke, it was in an almost noiseless whisper. "*Job!*"

He had a strange idea that Mrs. Croome must have given them notice to quit instantly or perpetrated some such brutality, a suspicion which his wife's gesture seemed to confirm. She was shaking the crumpled scrap of paper in an absurd manner. He frowned in a gust of impatience.

"I didn't open it," she said at last, "not till I had eaten some breakfast. I didn't dare. I saw it was from the bank and I thought it might be about the overdraft. . . . All the while. . . ."

She was weeping. "All the while I was eating my egg. . . ."

"Oh *what* is it?"

She grimaced.

"From *him*."

He stared.

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“A cheque, Job—come through—from *him*. From our boy.”

His mouth fell open, he drew a deep breath. His tears came. He raised himself, and was reminded of his bandaged state and dropped back again. He held out his lean hand to her.

“He’s a prisoner?” he gasped. “*Alive?*”

She nodded. She seemed about to fling herself violently upon his poor crumpled body. Her arms waved about seeking for something to embrace.

Then she flopped down in the narrow space between bed and paper-adorned fireplace, and gathered the counterpane together into a lump with her clutching hands. “Oh my baby boy!” she wept. “My *baby* boy. . . .

“And I was so wicked about the mourning. . . . I was so *wicked*. . . .”

Mr. Huss lay stiff, as the doctor had ordered him to do; but the hand he stretched down could just touch and caress her hair.

FIRST AND LAST THINGS

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BOOK THE FIRST
METAPHYSICS

§ 1

THE NECESSITY FOR METAPHYSICS

As a preliminary to that experiment in mutual confession from which this book arose, I found it necessary to consider and state certain truths about the nature of knowledge, about the meaning of truth and the value of words, that is to say I found I had to begin by being metaphysical. In writing out these notes now I think it is well that I should state just how important I think this metaphysical prelude is.

There is a popular prejudice against metaphysics as something at once difficult and fruitless, as an idle system of inquiries remote from any human interest. As a matter of fact metaphysical inquiries are a necessary condition to all clear thinking. I suppose this odd misconception arose from the vulgar pretensions of pedants, from their appeal to ancient names and their quotations in unfamiliar tongues, and from the easy fall into technicality of men struggling to be explicit where a high degree of explicitness is impossible. Metaphysics is a discussion of our general ideas, and naturally therefore intelligent metaphysical discussion is hardly possible except in the mother tongue in which those general ideas arose in our minds. But the interests and the pedantries that control higher education in Britain and influence it very powerfully in America, have imposed upon the proper study and teaching of metaphysics the absurd condition that it should be studied

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in connection with the badly-taught and little known language of Ancient Greece. So a naturally elementary discussion has been made into an intricate and allusive one. It needs erudition and accumulated and alien literature to make metaphysics obscure, and some of the most fruitful and able metaphysical discussion in the world was conducted by a number of unhampered men in small Greek cities, who knew no language but their own and had scarcely a technical term. The true metaphysician is after all only a person who says, "Now let us take thought for a moment before we fall into a discussion of the broad questions of life, lest we rush hastily into impossible and needless conflict. What is the exact value of these thoughts we are thinking and these words we are using?" He wants to take thought about thought. There are, of course, ardent spirits who, on the contrary, want to plunge into action or controversy or belief without taking thought; they feel that there is not time to examine thought. "While you argue," they say, "the house is burning." They are the kin of those who rush and struggle and make panics in theatre fires. But they are not likely to be among the readers of this book.

It seems to me that most of the troubles of humanity are really misunderstandings. Men's compositions and characters are, I think, more similar than their views, and if they had not needlessly different modes of expression upon many broad issues, they would be practically at one upon a hundred matters where now they widely differ.

Most of the great controversies of the world, most

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of the wide religious differences that keep men apart, arise from this: from differences in their way of thinking. Men imagine they stand on the same ground and mean the same thing by the same words, whereas they stand on slightly different grounds, use different terms for the same thing and express the same thing in different words. Logomachies, conflict about words,—into such death-traps of effort do ardent spirits run and perish.

This has been said before by numberless people. It has been said before by numberless people, but it seems to me it has been realised by very few—and until it is realised to the fullest extent, we shall continue to live at intellectual cross-purposes and waste the forces of our species needlessly and abundantly.

This persuasion is a very important thing in my mind.

I think that the time has come when the modern mind must take up metaphysical discussion again—when it must resume those subtle but necessary and unavoidable problems which have been so markedly shirked for many years, when it must get to a common and general understanding upon what its ideas of truth, good, and beauty amount to, and upon the relation of the name to the thing, and of the relation of one mind to another mind in the matter of resemblance and the matter of difference—upon all those issues the young science student is apt to dismiss as Rot, and the young classical student as Gas, and the austere student of the science of Economics as Theorising, unsuitable for his methods of research.

In our achievement of understandings in the place

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of these evasions about fundamental things lies the road, I believe, along which the human mind can escape, if ever it is to escape, from the confusion of purposes that distracts it at the present time.

§ 2

CURRENT METAPHYSICAL TEACHING ABSURD

When the intellectual history of our time comes to be written I think that nothing will more impress the students of these years than the extraordinary evasion of metaphysical enlightenment in the education of our youth. Here were exercises and disciplines essential to the proper development of any good mind; here were questions intensely attractive to any intelligent youth; here were the common tests and filters for all knowledge and decision, and the youth of the big English-speaking community was almost deliberately kept away from and cheated out of this strengthening gymnastic. No wonder that the English-speaking mind had an understanding like a broken sieve and a will as capable of definite forms as a dropped egg. Philosophical study, the common material for every type of sound adolescent education, was stuck away into remote pretentious courses, behind barriers of Greek linguistic training, as if it were something too high for normal minds, too mystical for current speech. A general need was treated as a precious luxury. At Oxford instead of calling the philosophical course "Elements," the future historian will remark, with derision, they called it "Greats."

And when this student of things intellectual has

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done with the general preposterousness of a huge modern community treating philosophy as a remote special subject reserved for a small minority of university students, he will find still more matter for amazement and laughter in our way of teaching philosophy. We do not bring the young mind up against the few broad elemental questions that are *the questions of metaphysics*, the questions that provide *the basis of all clear thinking*. We do not make it discuss, correct it, elucidate it. That was the way of the Greeks, and we worship that divine people far too much to adopt their way. No, we lecture to our young people about not philosophy but philosophers, we put them through book after book, telling how other people have discussed these questions. We avoid the questions of metaphysics, but we deliver semi-digested half views of the discussions of, and answers to these questions made by men of all sorts and qualities, in various remote languages and under conditions quite different from our own. In their histories the essential questions are presently completely lost sight of. We give them compact (and indeed highly desiccated) accounts of the philosophy of Aristotle, Plato, Hegel, Locke, Descartes and so on and so on. It is as if we began teaching arithmetic by long lectures upon the origin of the Roman numerals and then went on to the lives and motives of the Arab mathematicians in Spain, or started with Roger Bacon in chemistry or Sir Richard Owen in comparative anatomy. A little while ago I had a most edifying conversation with two young women who had been "doing" and who had "done," bless them! "philosophy" in the Universities of London and

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Cambridge respectively. They had shared experiences of a lecturer, I forget his name, who lectures in both these radiant centres of wisdom. This incredible person lectures, they assured me, upon all philosophies ancient and modern. Poor Omniscience just knows everything, but this marvel knows what everybody has thought about everything. He told his classes what they all thought, all these wise men, and how they "derived" one from another. These two young people were in consequence more like bags of broken fragments from the ages than living intelligences; they discussed glibly of the Platonic Ideal and the Golden Mean, of Categories and Imperatives, of Induction and Syllogism and Materialism; if you spoke of Plotinus they whispered "Mysticism," and if you said Lucretius, the atoms glittered in their eyes. Also they had a fine stock of lecture-room anecdotes. I tried them then upon one or two current questions. And on the whole they thought rather worse than if they had spent these same studious years upon embroidery.

It is time the educational powers began to realise that the questions of metaphysics, the elements of philosophy, are, here and now, to be done afresh in each mind. So far as the thought that has gone before us enlightens our present inquiry so far it lives still. The rest is for the museum and the special scholar. What is wanted is philosophy, and not a shallow smattering of the history of philosophy. Our children ask for bread and we give them worn millstones. . . .

The proper way to discuss metaphysics, like the

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proper way to discuss mathematics or chemistry, is to discuss the accumulated and digested product of human thought in such matters. Only in creative literature and because of beauty are texts immortal. The reverence for texts and the "systems" of individuals in the case of philosophy is just as absurd and mischievous as it would be in the case of science. The only philosophy that a man is entitled to expound and discuss is that which he has made his own. I make no apology therefore in annexing every philosophical idea and phrase from the past that I have cared to assimilate. This is *my* system that I place before you in order that you should make *your* system. You can no more think about the world according to another man's system than you can look at it with a dead man's eyes.

§ 3

THE WORLD OF FACT

Necessarily when one begins an inquiry into the fundamental nature of oneself and one's mind and its processes, one is forced into biography. I begin by asking how the conscious mind with which I identify myself, began.

It presents itself to me as a history of a perception of a world of facts opening out from an accidental centre at which I happened to begin.

I do not attempt to define this word fact. Fact expresses for me something in its nature primary and unanalysable. I start from that. I take as a typical

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statement of fact that I sit here at my desk writing with a fountain pen on a pad of ruled scribbling paper, that the sunlight falls upon me and throws the shadow of the window mullion across the page, that Peter, my cat, sleeps on the window-seat close at hand and that this agate paper-weight with the silver top that once was Henley's holds my loose memoranda together. Outside is a patch of lawn and then a fringe of winter-bitten iris leaves and then the sea, greatly wrinkled and astir under the south-west wind. There is a boat going out which I think may be Jim Pain's, but of that I cannot be sure. . . .

These are statements of a certain quality, a quality that extends through a huge universe in which I find myself placed.

I try to recall how this world of fact arose in my mind. It began with a succession of limited immediate scenes and of certain minutely perceived persons; I recall an underground kitchen with a drawered table, a window looking up at a grating, a back yard in which, growing out by a dust-bin, was a grape-vine; a red-papered room with a bookcase, over my father's shop, the dusty aisles and fixtures, the regiments of wine-glasses and tumblers, the rows of hanging mugs and jugs, the towering edifices of jam-pots, the tea and dinner and toilet sets in that emporium, its brighter side of cricket goods, of pads and balls and stumps. Out of the window one peeped at the more exterior world, the High Street in front, the tailor's garden, the butcher's yard, the churchyard and Bromley church tower behind; and one was taken

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upon expeditions to fields and open places. This limited world was peopled with certain familiar presences, mother and father, two brothers, the evasive but interesting cat, and by intermittent people of a livelier but more transient interest, customers and callers.

Such was my opening world of fact, and each day it enlarged and widened and had more things added to it. I had soon won my way to speech and was hearing of facts beyond my visible world of fact. Presently I was at a Dame's school and learning to read.

From the centre of that little world as primary, as the initiatory material, my perception of the world of fact widened and widened, by new sights and sounds, by reading and hearing descriptions and histories, by guesses and inferences; my curiosity and interest, my appetite for fact, grew by what it fed upon, I carried on my expansion of the world of fact until it took me through the mineral and fossil galleries of the Natural History Museum, through the geological drawers of the College of Science, through a year of dissection and some weeks at the astronomical telescope. So I built up my conceptions of a real world out of facts observed and out of inferences of a nature akin to fact, of a world immense and enduring, receding interminably into space and time. In that I found myself placed, a creature relatively infinitesimal, needing and struggling. It was clear to me, by a hundred considerations, that I in my body upon this planet Earth, was the outcome of countless generations of conflict and begetting,

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the creature of natural selection, the heir of good and bad engendered in that struggle.

So my world of fact shaped itself. I find it altogether impossible to question or doubt that world of fact. Particular facts one may question as facts. For instance, I think I see an unseasonable yellow wallflower from my windows, but you may dispute that and show it is only a broken end of iris leaf accidentally lit to yellow. That is merely a substitution of fact for fact. One may doubt whether one is perceiving or remembering or telling facts clearly, but the persuasion that there are facts independent of one's interpretations and obdurate to one's will, remains invincible.

§ 4

SCEPTICISM OF THE INSTRUMENT

At first I took the world of fact as being exactly as I perceived it. I believed my eyes. Seeing was believing, I thought. Still more did I believe my reasoning. It was only slowly that I began to suspect that the world of fact could be anything different from the clear picture it made upon my mind.

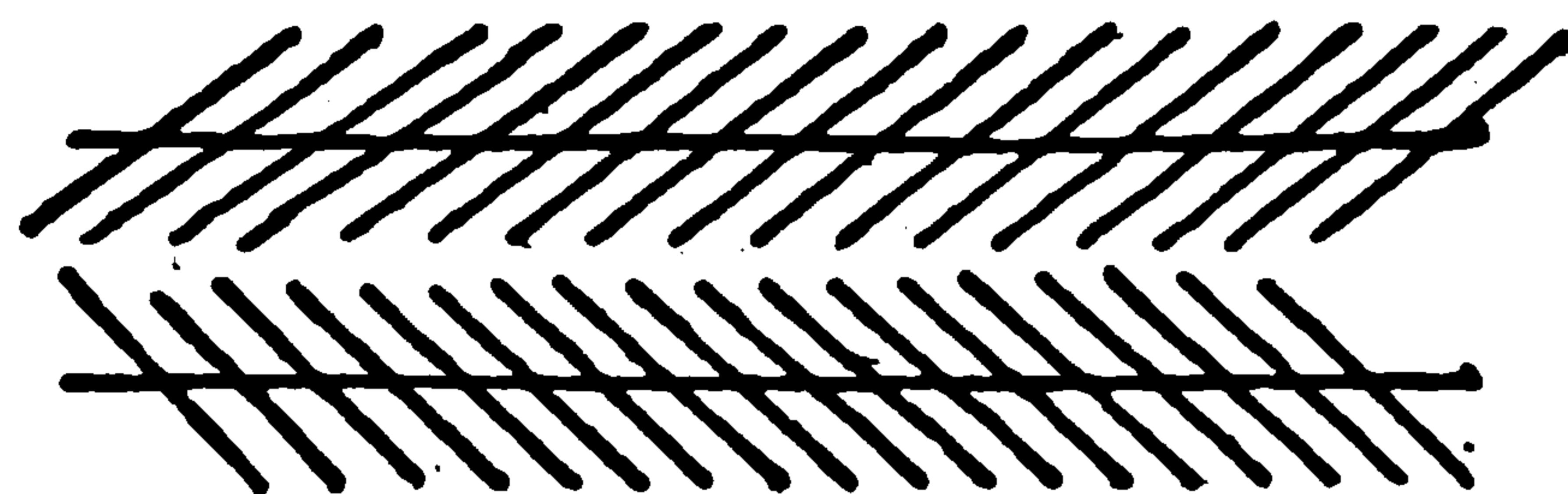
I realised the inadequacy of the senses first. Into that I will not enter here. Any proper text-book of physiology or psychology will supply a number of instances of the habitual deceptions of sight and touch and hearing. I came upon these things in my reading, in the laboratory, with microscope or telescope, lived with them as constant difficulties. I will only instance one trifling case of visual deception in

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order to lead to my next question. One draws two lines strictly parallel; so



Oblique to them one draws a series of lines; so



and instantly the parallelism seems to be disturbed. If the second figure is presented to any one without sufficient science to understand this delusion, the impression is created that these lines converge to the right and diverge to the left. The vision is deceived in its mental factor and judges wrongly of the thing seen.

In this case we are able to measure the distance of the lines, to find how the main lines looked before the cross ones were drawn, to bring the deception up against fact of a different sort and so correct the mistake. If the ignorant observer were unable to do that, he might remain permanently under the impression that the main lines were out of parallelism. And all the infirmities of eye and ear, touch and taste, are discovered and checked by the fact that the erroneous impressions presently strike against fact and discover an incompatibility with it. If they did not we should never have discovered them. If

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on the other hand they are so incompatible with fact as to endanger the lives of the beings labouring under such infirmities, they would tend to be eliminated from among our defects.

The presumption to which biological science brings one is that the senses and mind will work as well as the survival of the species may require, but that they will not work so very much better. There is no ground in matter-of-fact experience for assuming that there is any more inevitable certitude about purely intellectual operations than there is about sensory perceptions. The mind of a man may be primarily only a food-seeking, danger-avoiding, mate-finding instrument, just as the mind of a dog is, just as the nose of a dog is, or the snout of a pig.

You see the strong preparatory reason there is in this view of life for entertaining the suppositions that——

The senses seem surer than they are.

The thinking mind seems clearer than it is and is more positive than it ought to be.

The world of fact is not what it appears to be.

These preliminary assumptions were already strongly established in my mind before I began to philosophise at all.

§ 5

THE CLASSIFICATORY ASSUMPTION

After I had studied science and particularly biological science for some years, I became a teacher in a school for boys. I found it necessary to supple-

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ment my untutored conception of teaching method by a more systematic knowledge of its principles and methods, and I took the courses for the diplomas of Licentiate and Fellow of the London College of Preceptors which happened to be convenient for me. These courses included some of the more elementary aspects of psychology and logic and set me thinking and reading further. From the first, Logic as it was presented to me impressed me as a system of ideas and methods remote and secluded from the world of fact in which I lived and with which I had to deal. As it came to me in the ordinary text-books, it presented itself as the science of inference using the syllogism as its principal instrument. Now I was first struck by the fact that while my teachers in Logic seemed to be assuring me I always thought in this form:—

“M is P.
S is M.
S is P.”

the method of my reasoning was almost always in this form:—

“ S_1 is more or less P.
 S_2 is very similar to S_1 .
 S_2 is very probably but not certainly more or less P.
Let us go on that assumption and see how it works.”

That is to say, I was constantly reasoning by analogy and applying verification. So far from using the syllogistic form confidently, I habitually distrusted it as anything more than a test of consistency in

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statement. But I found the text-books of logic disposed to ignore my customary method of reasoning altogether or to recognise it only where S_1 and S_2 could be lumped together under a common name. Then they put it something after this form as Induction:—

“ $S_1, S_2, S_3,$ and S_4 are P .
 $S_1 + S_2 + S_3 + S_4 + . . .$ are all S .
All S is P .”

I looked into the laws of thought and into the postulates upon which the syllogistic logic is based, and it slowly became clear to me that from my point of view, the point of view of one who seeks truth and reality, logic assumed a belief in the objective reality of classification of which my studies in biology and mineralogy had largely disabused me. Logic, it seemed to me, had taken a common innate error of the mind and had emphasised it in order to develop a system of reasoning that should be exact in its processes. I turned my attention to the examination of that. For in common with the general run of illiterate men I had supposed that logic professed to supply a trustworthy science and method for the investigation and expression of reality.

A mind nourished on anatomical study is of course permeated with the suggestion of the vagueness and instability of biological species. A biological species is quite obviously a great number of unique individuals which is separable from other biological species only by the fact that an enormous number of other linking individuals are inaccessible in time—are in

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other words dead and gone—and each new individual *in* that species does, in the distinction of its own individuality, break away in however infinitesimal degree from the previous average properties of the species. There is no property of any species, even the properties that constitute the specific definition, that is not a matter of more or less.

If, for example, a species be distinguished by a single large red spot on the back, you will find if you go over a great number of specimens that red spot shrinking here to nothing, expanding there to a more general redness, weakening to pink, deepening to russet and brown, shading into crimson, and so on and so on. And this is true not only of biological species. It is true of the mineral specimens constituting a mineral species, and I remember as a constant refrain in the lectures of Professor Judd upon rock classification, the words, “they pass into one another by insensible gradations.” It is true, I hold, of all things.

You will think perhaps of atoms of the elements as instances of identically similar things, but these are things not of experience but of theory, and there is not a phenomenon in chemistry that is not equally well explained on the supposition that it is merely the immense quantities of atoms necessarily taken in any experiment that masks by the operation of the law of averages the fact that each atom also has its unique quality, its special individual difference.

This ideal of uniqueness in all individuals is not only true of the classifications of material science; it is true and still more evidently true of the species of

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common thought; it is true of common terms. Take the word *Chair*. When one says chair, one thinks vaguely of an average chair. But collect individual instances; think of arm-chairs and reading-chairs and dining-room chairs, and kitchen chairs, chairs that pass into benches, chairs that cross the boundary and become settees, dentist's chairs, thrones, opera stalls, seats of all sorts, those miraculous fungoid growths that cumber the floor of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition, and you will perceive what a lax bundle in fact is this simple straightforward term. In co-operation with an intelligent joiner I would undertake to defeat any definition of chair or chairishness that you gave me. Chairs just as much as individual organisms, just as much as mineral and rock specimens, are unique things—if you know them well enough you will find an individual difference even in a set of machine-made chairs—and it is only because we do not possess minds of unlimited capacity, because our brain has only a limited number of pigeon-holes for our correspondence with an unlimited universe of objective uniques, that we have to delude ourselves into the belief that there is a chairishness in this species common to and distinctive of all chairs.

Classification and number, which in truth ignore the fine differences of objective realities, have in the past of human thought been imposed upon things. . . .

Greek thought impresses me as being over-much obsessed by an objective treatment of certain necessary preliminary conditions of human thought—number and definition and class and abstract form! But these things,—number, definition, class and ab-

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stract form,—I hold, are merely unavoidable conditions of mental activity—regrettable conditions rather than essential facts. *The forceps of our minds are clumsy forceps and crush the truth a little in taking hold of it. . . .*

Let me give you a rough figure of what I am trying to convey in this first attack upon the philosophical validity of general terms. You have seen the result of those various methods of black and white reproduction that involve the use of a rectangular net. You know the sort of process picture I mean—it used to be employed very frequently in reproducing photographs. At a little distance you really seem to have a faithful reproduction of the original picture, but when you peer closely you find not the unique form and masses of the original, but a multitude of little rectangles, uniform in shape and size. The more earnestly you go into the thing, the closer you look, the more the picture is lost in reticulations. I submit, the world of reasoned inquiry has a very similar relation to the world of fact. For the rough purposes of every day the network picture will do, but the finer your purpose the less it will serve, and for an ideally fine purpose, for absolute and general knowledge that will be as true for a man at a distance with a telescope as for a man with a microscope, it will not serve at all.

It is true you can make your net of logical interpretation finer and finer, you can fine your classification more and more—up to a certain limit. But essentially you are working in limits, and as you come closer, as you look at finer and subtler things,

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as you leave the practical purpose for which the method exists, the element of error increases. Every species is vague, every term goes cloudy at its edges; and so in my way of thinking, relentless logic is only another name for a stupidity—for a sort of intellectual pigheadedness. If you push a philosophical or metaphysical inquiry through a series of valid syllogisms—never committing any generally recognised fallacy—you nevertheless leave behind you at each step a certain rubbing and marginal loss of objective truth, and you get deflections that are difficult to trace at each phase in the process. Every species waggles about in its definition, every tool is a little loose in its handle, every scale has its individual error. So long as you are reasoning for practical purposes about finite things of experience, you can every now and then check your process and correct your adjustments. But not when you make what are called philosophical and theological inquiries, when you turn your implement towards the final absolute truth of things.

This real vagueness of class terms is equally true whether we consider those terms used extensively or intensively, that is to say whether in relation to all the members of the species or in relation to an imaginary typical specimen. The logician begins by declaring that *S* is either pink or not pink. In the world of fact it is the rarest thing to encounter this absolute alternative; *S*₁ is pink, but *S*₂ is pinker, *S*₃ is scarcely pink at all, and one is in doubt whether *S*₄ is not properly to be called scarlet. The finest type specimen you can find simply has the characteristic qual-

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ity a little more rather than a little less. The neat little circles the logician uses to convey his idea of pink or not pink to the student are just pictures of boundaries in his mind, exaggerations of a natural mental tendency. They are required for the purposes of his science, but they are departures from the nature of fact.

§ 6

EMPTY TERMS

Classes in logic are not only represented by circles with a hard firm outline, whereas in fact they have no such definite limits, but also there is a constant disposition to think of all names as if they represented positive classes. With words just as with numbers and abstract forms there have been definite phases of human development. There was with regard to number, the phase when man could barely count at all, or counted in perfect good faith and sanity upon his fingers. Then there was the phase when he struggled with the development of number, when he began to elaborate all sorts of ideas about numbers, until at last he developed complex superstitions about perfect numbers and imperfect numbers, about threes and sevens and the like. The same was the case with abstract forms; and even to-day we are scarcely more than heads out of the vast subtle muddle of thinking about spheres and ideally perfect forms and so on, that was the price of this little necessary step to clear thinking. How large a part numerical and geometric magic, numerical and

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geometrical philosophy have played in the history of the mind! And the whole apparatus of language and mental communication is beset with like dangers. The language of the elemental savage is I suppose purely positive; the thing has a name, the name has a thing. This indeed is the tradition of language, and even to-day, we, when we hear a name are predisposed—and sometimes it is a very vicious disposition—to imagine forthwith something answering to the name. *We are disposed, as an incurable mental vice, to accumulate intension in terms.* If I say to you Wodget or Crump, you find yourself passing over the fact that these are nothings, these are, so to speak, mere blankety blanks, and trying to think what sort of thing a Wodget or a Crump may be. You find yourself led insensibly by subtle associations of sound and ideas to giving these blank terms attributes.

Now this is true not only of quite empty terms but of terms that carry a meaning. It is a mental necessity that we should make classes and use general terms, and as soon as we do that we fall into immediate danger of unjustifiably increasing the intension of these terms. You will find a large proportion of human prejudice and misunderstanding arises from this universal proclivity.

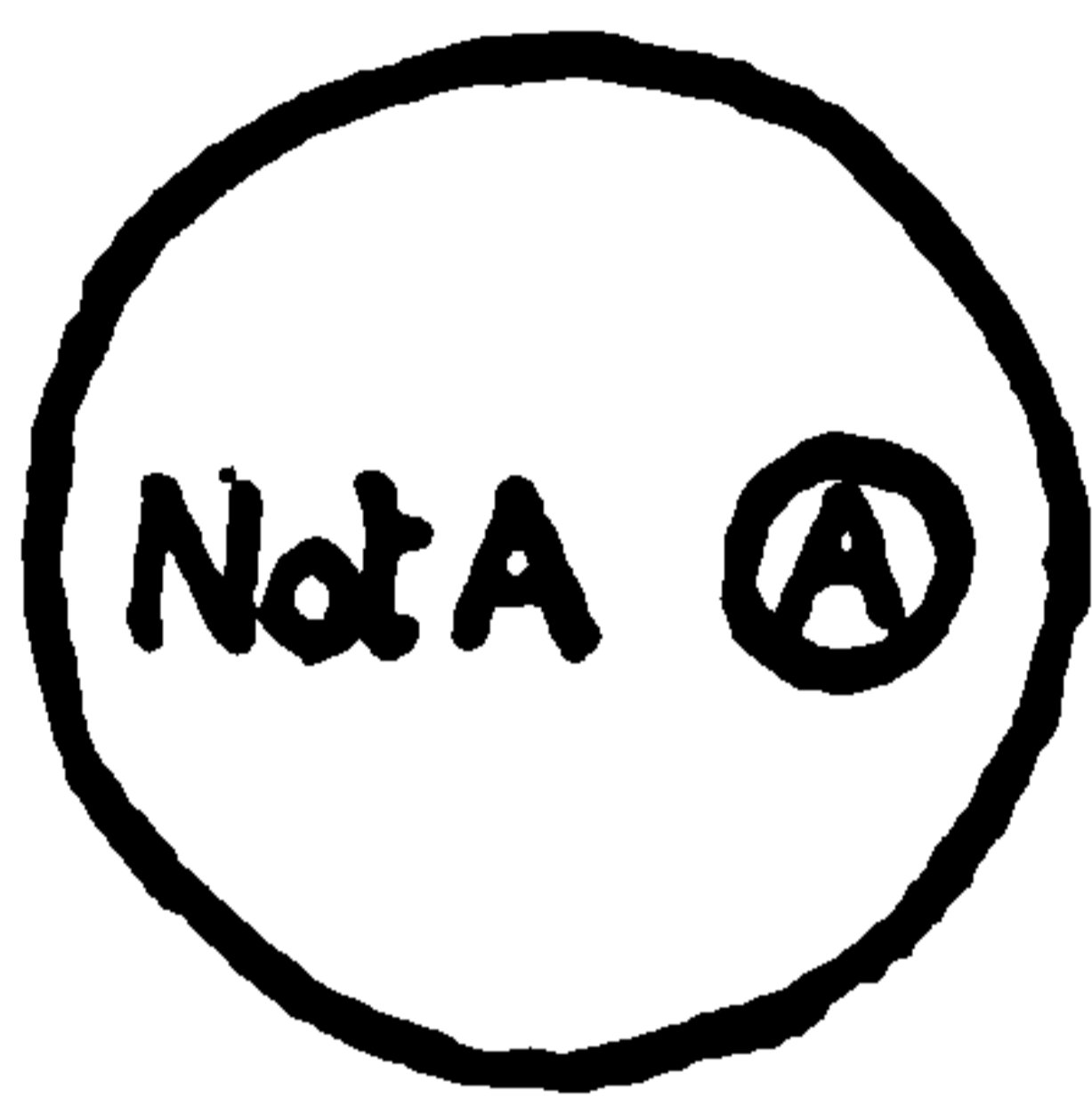
§ 7

NEGATIVE TERMS

There is a particular sort of empty terms that has been and is conspicuously dangerous to the thinker,

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the class of negative terms. The negative term is in plain fact just nothing; "Not-A" is the absence of any trace of the quality that constitutes A, it is the rest of everything for ever. But there seems to be a real bias in the mind towards regarding "Not-A" as a thing mysteriously in the nature of A, as though "Not-A" and A were species of the same genus. When one speaks of Not-Pink one is apt to think of green things and yellow things and to ignore anger or abstract nouns or the sound of thunder. And logicians, following the normal bias of the mind, do actually present A and Not-A in this sort of diagram:—



ignoring altogether the difficult case of the space in which these words are printed. Obviously the diagram that comes nearer experienced fact is:—

Not (A) A

with no outer boundary. But the logician finds it necessary for his processes* to present that outer Not-A as bounded, and to speak of the total area of A and Not-A as the Universe of Discourse; and the metaphysician and the common-sense thinker alike

**Vide, e. g.,* Keynes's *Formal Logic re* Euler's diagrams and Immediate Inferences.

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fall far too readily into the belief that this convention of method is an adequate representation of fact.

Let me try and express how in my mind this matter of negative terms has shaped itself. I think of something which I may perhaps best describe as being off the stage or out of court, or as the Void without Implications, or as Nothingness, or as Outer Darkness. This is a sort of hypothetical Beyond to the visible world of human thought, and thither I think all negative terms reach at last, and merge, and become nothing. Whatever positive class you make, whatever boundary you draw, straight away from that boundary begins the corresponding negative class and passes into the illimitable horizon of nothingness. You talk of pink things, you ignore, as the arbitrary postulates of Logic direct, the more elusive shades of pink, and draw your line. Beyond is the not-pink, known and knowable, and still in the not-pink region one comes to the Outer Darkness. Not blue, not happy, not iron, all the *not* classes meet in that Outer Darkness. That same Outer Darkness and nothingness is infinite space and infinite time and any being of infinite qualities; and all that region I rule out of court in my philosophy altogether. I will neither affirm nor deny if I can help it about any *not* things. I will not deal with *not* things at all, except by accident and inadvertence. If I use the word "infinite" I use it as one often uses "countless," "the countless hosts of the enemy"—or "immeasurable"—"immeasurable cliffs"—that is to say as the limit of measurement, as a convenient

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equivalent to as many times this cloth yard as you can, and as many again, and so on and so on until you and your numerical system are beaten to a standstill.

Now a great number of apparently positive terms are, or have become, practically negative terms and are under the same ban with me. A considerable number of terms that have played a great part in the world of thought, seem to me to be invalidated by this same defect, to have no content or an undefined content or an unjustifiable content. For example, that word Omniscient, as implying infinite knowledge, impresses me as being a word with a delusive air of being solid and full, when it is really hollow with no content whatever. I am persuaded that knowing is the relation of a conscious being to something not itself, that the thing known is defined as a system of parts and aspects and relationships, that knowledge is comprehension, and so that only finite things can know or be known. When you talk of a being of infinite extension and infinite duration, omniscient and omnipotent and perfect, you seem to me to be talking in negatives of nothing whatever.

§ 8

LOGIC STATIC AND LIFE KINETIC

Not only are class terms vague with regard to these marginal instances, but they are also vague in time. The current syllogistic logic rests on the assumption that either A is B or it is not B. The practical reality

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is that nothing is permanent; A is always becoming more or less B or ceasing to be more or less B. But it would seem the human mind cannot manage with that. It has to hold a thing still for a moment before it can think it. It arrests the present moment for its struggle as Joshua stopped the sun. It cannot contemplate things continuously, and so it has to resort to a series of static snapshots. It has to kill motion in order to study it, as a naturalist kills and pins out a butterfly in order to study life.

You see the mind is really pigeon-holed and discontinuous in two respects, in respect to time and in respect to classification; whereas one has a strong persuasion that the world of fact is unbounded or continuous.

§ 9

PLANES AND DIALECTS OF THOUGHT

Finally; the Logician, intent upon perfecting the certitudes of his methods rather than upon expressing the confusing subtleties of truth, has done little to help thinking men in the perpetual difficulty that arises from the fact that the universe can be seen in many different fashions and expressed by many different systems of terms, each expression within its limits true and yet incommensurable with expression upon a differing system. There is a sort of stratification in human ideas. I have it very much in mind that various terms in our reasoning lie, as it were, at different levels and in different planes, and that we accomplish a large amount of error and confusion by

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reasoning terms together that do not lie or nearly lie in the same plane.

Let me endeavour to make myself a little less obscure by a flagrant instance from physical things. Suppose some one began to talk seriously of a man seeing an atom through a microscope, or better perhaps of cutting one in half with a knife. There are a number of non-analytical people who would be quite prepared to believe that an atom could be visible to the eye or cut in this manner. But any one at all conversant with physical conceptions would almost as soon think of killing the square root of 2 with a rook rifle as of cutting an atom in half with a knife. One's conception of an atom is reached through a process of hypothesis and analysis, and in the world of atoms there are no knives and no men to cut. If you have thought with a strong consistent mental movement, then when you have thought of your atom under the knife blade, your knife blade has itself become a cloud of swinging grouped atoms, and your microscope lens a little universe of oscillatory and vibratory molecules. If you think of the universe, thinking at the level of atoms, there is neither knife to cut, scale to weigh, nor eye to see. The universe at that plane to which the mind of the molecular physicist descends has none of the shapes or forms of our common life whatever. This hand with which I write is, in the universe of molecular physics, a cloud of warring atoms and molecules, combining and recombining, colliding, rotating, flying hither and thither in the universal atmosphere of ether.

You see, I hope, what I mean when I say that the

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universe of molecular physics is at a different level from the universe of common experience;—what we call stable and solid is in that world a freely moving system of interlacing centres of force, what we call colour and sound is there no more than this length of vibration or that. We have reached to a conception of that universe of molecular physics by a great enterprise of organised analysis, and our universe of daily experiences stands in relation to that elemental world as if it were a synthesis of those elemental things.

I would suggest to you that this is only a very extreme instance of the general state of affairs, that there may be finer and subtler differences of level between one term and another, and that terms may very well be thought of as lying obliquely and as being twisted through different levels.

It will perhaps give a clearer idea of what I am seeking to convey if I suggest a concrete image for the whole world of a man's thought and knowledge. Imagine a large clear jelly, in which at all angles and in all states of simplicity or contortion his ideas are imbedded. They are all valid and possible ideas as they lie, none incompatible with any. If you imagine the direction of up or down in this clear jelly being as it were the direction in which one moves by analysis or by synthesis, if you go down for example from matter to atoms and centres of force and up to men and states and countries—if you will imagine the ideas lying in that manner—you will get the beginnings of my intention. But our instrument, our process of thinking, like a drawing before the discovery

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of perspective, appears to have difficulties with the third dimension, appears capable only of dealing with or reasoning about ideas by projecting them upon the same plane. It will be obvious that a great multitude of things may very well exist together in a solid jelly, which would be overlapping and incompatible and mutually destructive when projected together upon one plane. Through the bias in our instrument to do this, through reasoning between terms not in the same plane, an enormous amount of confusion, perplexity, and mental deadlocking occurs.

The old theological deadlock between predestination and free will serves admirably as an example of the sort of deadlock I mean. Take life at the level of common sensation and common experience and there is no more indisputable fact than man's freedom of will, unless it is his complete moral responsibility. But make only the least penetrating of scientific analyses and you perceive a world of inevitable consequences, a rigid succession of cause and effect. Insist upon a flat agreement between the two, and there you are! The instrument fails.

So far as this particular opposition is concerned, I shall point out later the reasonableness and convenience of regarding the common-sense belief in free will as truer for one's personal life than determinism.

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§ 10

PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THESE CONSIDERATIONS

Now what is the practical outcome of all these criticisms of the human mind? Does it follow that thought is futile and discussion vain? By no means. Rather these considerations lead us towards mutual understanding. They clear up the deadlocks that come from the hard and fast use of terms, they establish mutual charity as an intellectual necessity. The common way of speech and thought which the old system of logic has simply systematised, is too glib and too presumptuous of certainty. We must needs use language, but we must use it always with the thought in our minds of its unreal exactness, its actual habitual deflection from fact. All propositions are approximations to an elusive truth, and we employ them as the mathematician studies the circle by supposing it to be a polygon of a very great number of sides.

We must make use of terms and sometimes of provisional terms. But we must guard against such terms and the mental danger of excessive intension they carry with them. The child takes a stick and says it is a sword and does not forget, he takes a shadow under the bed and says it is a bear and he half forgets. The man takes a set of emotions and says it is a God, and he gets excited and propagandist and does forget; he is involved in disputes and confusions with the old gods of wood and stone, and

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presently he is making his God a Great White Throne and fitting him up with a mystical family. Yet because he has made these extravagant extensions of his idea of God, it does not follow that his emotional reaction to a something greater than himself and personal like himself, was a deception.

Essentially we have to train our minds to think anew, if we are to think beyond the purposes for which the mind seems to have been evolved. We have to disabuse ourselves from the superstition of the binding nature of definitions and the exactness of logic. We have to cure ourselves of the natural tricks of common thought and argument. You know the way of it, how effective and foolish it is; the quotation of the exact statement of which every jot and tittle must be maintained, the challenge to be consistent, the deadlock between your terms and mine.

More and more as I grow older and more settled in my views am I bored by common argument, bored not because I am ceasing to be interested in the things argued about, but because I see more and more clearly the futility of the methods pursued.

How then are we to think and argue and what truth may we attain? Is not the method of the scientific investigator a valid one, and is there not truth to the world of fact in scientific laws? Decidedly there is. And the continual revision and testing against fact that these laws get is constantly approximating them more and more nearly to a trustworthy statement of fact. Nevertheless they are never true in that dogmatic degree in which they seem true to the unphilosophical student of science. Accepting as

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I do the validity of nearly all the general propositions of modern science, I have constantly to bear in mind that about them too clings the error of excessive claims to precision.

The man trained solely in science falls easily into a superstitious attitude; he is overdone with classification. He believes in the possibility of exact knowledge everywhere. What is not exact he declares is not knowledge. He believes in specialists and experts in all fields.

I dispute this universal range of possible scientific precision. There is, I allege, a not too clearly recognised order in the sciences which forms the gist of my case against this scientific pretension. There is a gradation in the importance of the individual instance as one passes from mechanics and physics and chemistry through the biological sciences to economics and sociology, a gradation whose correlations and implications have not yet received adequate recognition, and which does profoundly affect the method of study and research in each science.

Let me repeat in slightly altered terms some of the points raised in the preceding sections. I have doubted and denied that there are identically similar objective experiences; I consider all objective beings as individual and unique. It is now understood that conceivably only in the subjective world, and in theory and the imagination, do we deal with identically similar units, and with absolutely commensurable quantities. In the real world it is reasonable to suppose we deal at most with *practically* similar units and *practically* commensurable quantities. But there

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is a strong bias, a sort of labour-saving bias, in the normal human mind, to ignore this, and not only to speak but to think of a thousand bricks or a thousand sheep or a thousand Chinamen as though they were all absolutely true to sample. If it is brought before a thinker for a moment that in any special case this is not so, he slips back to the old attitude as soon as his attention is withdrawn. This type of error has, for instance, caught many of the race of chemists, and *atoms* and *ions* and so forth of the same species are tacitly assumed to be identically similar to one another.

Be it noted that, so far as the practical results of chemistry and physics go, it scarcely matters which assumption we adopt, the number of units is so great, the individual difference so drowned and lost. For purposes of inquiry and discussion the incorrect one is infinitely more convenient.

But this ceases to be true directly we emerge from the region of chemistry and physics. In the biological sciences of the eighteenth century, common-sense struggled hard to ignore individuality in shells and plants and animals. There was an attempt to eliminate the more conspicuous departures as abnormalities, as sports, nature's weak moments; and it was only with the establishment of Darwin's great generalisations that the hard and fast classificatory system broke down and individuality came to its own. Yet there had always been a clearly felt difference between the conclusions of the biological sciences and those dealing with lifeless substance, in the relative vagueness, the insubordinate looseness

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and inaccuracy of the former. The naturalist accumulated facts and multiplied names, but he did not go triumphantly from generalisation to generalisation after the fashion of the chemist or physicist. It is easy to see, therefore, how it came about that the inorganic sciences were regarded as the true scientific bedrock. It was scarcely suspected that the biological sciences might perhaps after all be *truer* than the experimental, in spite of the difference in practical value in favour of the latter. It was, and is by the great majority of people to this day, supposed to be the latter that are invincibly true; and the former are regarded as a more complex set of problems merely, with obliquities and refractions that presently will be explained away. Comte and Herbert Spencer certainly seem to me to have taken that much for granted. Herbert Spencer no doubt talked of the unknown and unknowable, but not in this sense as an element of inexactness running through all things. He thought, it seems to me, of the unknown as the indefinable Beyond of an immediate world that might be quite clearly and definitely known.

There is a growing body of people which is beginning to hold the converse view—that counting, measurement, the whole fabric of mathematics, is subjective and untrue to the world of fact, and that the uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth. They realise that we see this world with “atmosphere.” As the number of units taken diminishes, the amount of variety and inexactness of generalisation increases, because individuality tells for more

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and more. Could you take men by the thousand billion, you could generalise about them as you do about atoms; could you take atoms singly, it may be you would find them as individual as your aunts and cousins. That concisely is the minority belief, and my belief.

Now what is called the scientific method in the physical sciences rests upon the ignoring of individualities; and like many mathematical conventions, its great practical convenience is no proof whatever of its final truth. Let me admit the enormous value, the wonder of its results in mechanics, in all the physical sciences, in chemistry, even in physiology,—but what is its value beyond that? Is the scientific method of value in biology? The great advances made by Darwin and his school in biology were not made, it must be remembered, by the scientific method, as it is generally conceived, at all. His was historical research. He conducted a research into pre-documentary history. He collected information along the lines indicated by certain interrogations; and the bulk of his work was the digesting and critical analysis of that. For documents and monuments he had fossils and anatomical structures and germinating eggs too innocent to lie. But, on the other hand, he had to correspond with breeders and travellers of various sorts; classes entirely analogous, from the point of view of evidence, to the writers of history and memoirs. I question profoundly whether the word “science,” in current usage anyhow, ever means such patient disentanglement as Darwin pursued. It means the attainment of something positive

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and emphatic in the way of a conclusion, based on amply repeated experiments capable of infinite repetition, "proved," as they say, "up to the hilt."

It would be of course possible to dispute whether the word "science" should convey this quality of certitude, but to most people it certainly does at the present time. So far as the movements of comets and electric trams go, there is no doubt practically cock-sure science; and Comte and Herbert Spencer seem to me to have believed that cock-sure could be extended to every conceivable finite thing. The fact that Herbert Spencer called a certain doctrine Individualism reflects nothing on the non-individualising quality of his primary assumptions and of his mental texture. He believed that individuality (heterogeneity) was and is an evolutionary product from an original homogeneity, begotten by folding and multiplying and dividing and twisting it, and still fundamentally *it*. It seems to me that the popular usage is entirely for the limitation of the word "science" to knowledge of a high degree of precision and the search after knowledge of a high degree of precision.

Now my contention is that we can arrange the fields of human thought and interest about the world of fact in a sort of scale. At one end the number of units is extreme and the methods almost exact, at the other we have the "humanities" in which there is no exactitude. The science of society stands at the extreme end of the scale from the molecular sciences. In these latter there is an infinitude of units; in sociology, as Comte perceived, there is only one

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unit. It is true that Herbert Spencer, in order to get classification somehow, did, as Professor Durkheim has pointed out, separate human society into societies, and made believe they competed one with another and died and reproduced just like animals, and that economists following List have for the purposes of fiscal controversy discovered economic types; but this is a transparent device, and one is surprised to find thoughtful and reputable writers off their guard against such bad analogy. But indeed it is impossible to isolate complete communities of men, or to trace any but rude general resemblances of men, or to trace any but rude general resemblances between group and group. These alleged units have as much individuality as pieces of cloud; they come, they go, they fuse and separate. And we are forced to conclude that not only is the method of observation, experiment, and verification left far away down the scale, but that the method of classification under types, which has served so useful a purpose in the middle group of subjects, the subjects involving numerous but a finite number of units, has also to be abandoned in social science. We cannot put Humanity into a museum or dry it for examination; our one single still living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuating world of men. There is no satisfactory means of dividing it, and nothing else in the real world with which to compare it. We have only the remotest ideas of its "life-cycle" and a few relics of its origin and dreams of its destiny.

This denial of scientific precision is true of all

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questions of general human relations and attitude. And in regard to all these matters affecting our personal motives, our self-control and our devotions, it is much truer.

From this it is an easy step to the statement that so far as the clear-cut confident sort of knowledge goes, the sort of knowledge one gets from a timetable or a text-book of chemistry, or seeks from a witness in a police court, I am, in relation to religious and moral questions, an agnostic. I do not think any general propositions partaking largely of the nature of fact can be known about these things. There is nothing possessing the general validity of fact to be stated or known.

§ 11

BELIEFS

Yet it is of urgent practical necessity that we should have such propositions and beliefs. All those we conjure out of our mental apparatus and the world of fact dissolve and disappear again under scrutiny. It is clear we must resort to some other method for these necessities.

Now I make my beliefs as I want them. I do not attempt to distil them out of fact as physicists distil their laws. I make them thus and not thus exactly as an artist makes a picture so and not so. I believe that is how we all make our beliefs, but that many people do not see this clearly and confuse their beliefs with perceived and proven fact.

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I draw my beliefs exactly as an artist draws lines to make a picture, to express my impression of the world and my purpose.

The artist cannot defend his expression as a scientific man defends his, and demonstrate that they are true upon any assumptions whatsoever. Any loud fool may stand in the front of a picture and call it inaccurate, untrustworthy, unbeautiful. That last, the most vital issue of all, is the one least assured. Loud fools always do do that sort of thing. Take quite ignorant people before almost any beautiful work of art and they will laugh at it as absurd. If one sits on a popular evening in that long room at South Kensington which contains Raphael's cartoons, one remarks that perhaps a third of those who stray through and look at all those fine efforts, titter. If one searches in the magazines of a little while ago, one finds in the angry and resentful reception of the Pre-Raphaelites another instance of the absolutely indefensible nature of many of the most beautiful propositions. And as a still more striking and remarkable case, take the onslaught made by Ruskin upon the works of Whistler. You will remember that a libel action ensued and that these pictures were gravely reasoned about by barristers and surveyed by jurymen to assess their merits. . . .

In the end in these human matters it is the truth, however indefensible it may be, however open to blank denials, that lasts; it lasts because it works and serves. People come to it and remain and attract other understanding and inquiring people.

Now when I say I make my beliefs and that I can-

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not prove them to you and convince you of them, that does not mean that I make them wantonly and regardless of fact, that I throw them off as a child scribbles on a slate. Mr. Ruskin, if I remember rightly, accused Whistler of throwing a pot of paint in the face of the public,—that was the essence of his libel. The artistic method in this field of beliefs, as in the field of visual renderings, is one of great freedom and initiative and great poverty of test, but of no wantonness; the conditions of rightness are none the less imperative because they are mysterious and indefinable. I adopt certain beliefs because I feel the need for them, because I feel an often quite unanalysable rightness in them; because the alternative of a chaotic life distresses me. My belief in them rests upon the fact that they *work* for me and satisfy my desire for harmony and beauty. They are arbitrary assumptions, if you will, that I see fit to impose upon my universe. But I am not able to go on imposing them upon my universe unless they stand the test of use. With my universe rests the power of veto.

But though my beliefs are really arbitrary in origin, they are not necessarily individual. Just so far as we all have a common likeness, just so far can we be brought under the same imperatives to think and believe. Other minds move as mine does.

And though my beliefs are arbitrary, each day they stand wear and tear, and each new person they satisfy, is another day and another voice towards showing they do correspond to something that is so far fact and real.

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This is Pragmatism as I conceive it: the abandonment of infinite assumptions, the extension of the experimental spirit to all human interests.

§ 12

THE AIM AND METHOD OF SCIENCE

What I have said so far may seem a little ungracious to Science. It may be well to say a little more before leaving this metaphysical discussion altogether, about that new rich store of human knowledge, for the most part the achievement of the last three hundred years.

My qualification of the scope and exactitude of science must not be misread into an attack upon Science. . . .

The scientific process of getting knowledge is really not different in kind from the method in which ordinary sensible men have always got knowledge and its aim has been very largely the same; the difference is that Science is systematic, co-operative and organised. Science is systematic Classification; the ordinary man spends his life working upon classifications unsystematically. But both sorts of judgments are classificatory judgments. The normal form of ordinary thought is, as I have already insisted in § 5, not syllogism but something after this form:—

S_1 is P.

S_2 is probably classifiable with S_1 .

So S_2 is probably more or less P.

Try it.

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Ordinary mental life is constantly making experiments in classification, constantly trying whether S_2 does class in a proper workable way with S_1 . Science only differs from this in its patient and systematic hunt for the most working classification, that is to say for the truest classification of things.

There are degrees of value in classification. Let me take a few instances to show what I mean by this.

Take first such a term as "Red Things" or "Old Things." We may speak of such a class as this for the purposes of some special discussion. We may say for instance that red things look black in a blue light. But such a term has scarcely any "intension" at all; its individuals carry no common property except the property stated in their definition. "Red things" may include a sunset, an angry baby, the planet Mars, a lacquer bowl, a drunkard's nose and so on and so on. The name, "Red-things," is a mere link to hold all this miscellany together for a moment in our minds. Not so do we pack them for good in the pigeonholes of our brains. There are countless more convenient and useful ways than that.

Next take a term just a little less shallow, a term indicating not one attribute but a use, such as chair. Here the "intension" is a little greater. A small group of characteristics are imposed upon all "chairs" by the conditions of sitting down. Apart from that they are of the most diverse materials, forms, characters and qualities. There is something more real here in the name, in the "term" that holds this collection of things together, but it is still mainly a superficial link behind objects otherwise dissimilar.

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The common nouns of our everyday speech record the classifications of everyday life. They record the verdict of the people to which we belong upon what they thought were the working kinds of things. "Science" is really a persistent criticism and rearrangement of these rule-of-thumb work-a-day classifications. It is a persistent attempt to get to truer and truer conceptions of the essential kinds of things. It studied "stuffs" for example; it attacked the classical idea that the stuffs of the world were made up of four elements: fire, air, earth and water. It broke down the idea that this was a primary classification and it replaced it with a far more accurate and secure list of elements. Its classification of fundamental stuffs, albeit it is still remote from any finality, into carbon, hydrogen, mercury and so on, has a far deeper mine of implication, a far keener statement of difference, than the old classification, and it has yielded such a human mastery over stuffs and materials, as men never dreamt of before the scientific age. But this newer classification was got by the organised armies of scientific research exactly after the fashion in which I get my individual judgments. I see S_2 , and something about it suggests to my mind that it is to be classified with S_1 . I know S_1 is P and so I try if S_2 is P . But while I do this individually and do not follow it up and forget about it presently, the organisation of research does it continually, records the judgment, confirms it, reconsiders it and makes sure of it for good. Just as I impose my arbitrary judgments on the universe, subject to the veto of the universe (§ 11), so does

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Science impose its theories upon the universe subject to "verification."

Now if the reader will consider the terms that are used in the sciences of chemistry and mineralogy he will find that they express a far intenser community of quality among their individuals and a far deeper difference in nature between these individuals and individuals of other species in the same classification, than is the case with the terms of such a use-classification as "Chair" and still more than the terms of such a quality-classification as "Red Thing." The term, the name, is more real. A collection of quartz crystals for example have far more in common than a collection of chairs. It is a classification by kind.

Science is perpetually working away from provisional and empirical classifications to classifications of deeper and richer implication. For example it sets aside such obvious classes as Birds, Beasts and Fishes and distinguishes mammal from reptile and whale from fish. In the species of biology we get indeed to a maximum of classificatory intensity. The difference between an individual of this species and an individual of that is a difference in every detail and aspect through and through. The common cat and the common rabbit, except for some superficial resemblances differ in everything; and every individual in each species agrees with every other individual in that same species upon a thousand matters over and above those specified in the definition, and differs from every individual in every other species. You can tell a cat's claw or hair or one of its small bones, you can tell even a little dried up drop of its

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blood from that of a rabbit. Here the term, the specific name, is at its very maximum of reality.

Biological Science does indeed assure us that the distinctness of biological species is exaggerated and emphasised by the disappearance of linking individuals that once bridged the gaps between now separated species. If we could go back in time we should realise that the present sharp distinction of existing biological species melts away in the past. This is a comparatively new idea in human thought. It was natural as well as convenient for man before the scientific era, dealing as he did chiefly with other men and beasts and plants to form an exaggerated idea of the fixity of classes by kind and to regard the terms, or specific names, that indicated things as having in themselves, *reality*.

This was the conception of Plato's Ideals. Besides individual men, Tom Jones, William Smith and so on, he held that there was an enduring reality, *Man*. Whether this was so or not, seems to have been a main subject for discussion in the middle ages; it is a discussion upon which modern biology throws a very strong light, a light so strong indeed as to bleach out many of its difficulties.

§ 13

NOMINALISM AND REALISM

This discussion whether the name of a species expresses something in itself or whether it is merely a sort of verbal clutch holding together all the indi-

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viduals of that species and of no other value at all, is one of the perennial questions of philosophy. It crops up in endless variations. It is unavoidable because upon our answer to it depends the meaning of all our religious formulæ and most of our ideas about the relationships of our individual life to the world around it. What are called the "Realists" in the discussions of the middle ages, were essentially believers in a rather crude rendering of Platonic Idealism, and it is well to bear this in mind because in modern parlance "Realism" has come to mean something diametrically opposite to its proper significance. The Realists held that the name of a species of things did itself express a reality; the Nominalists held that the name was merely a link, the string of the bundle of individual things that alone were real.

It will be evident that § 12 has been designed to lead up to the proposition that both these doctrines may be regarded as more or less true according to the nature of the name considered. If the name is the name of an attribute class such as Red-things, it is obviously merely a link; about such names the Nominalist is right. But as we pass up the scale to biological species we begin to realise that there is a reality transcending the individual and we begin to apprehend the justice of the Realist's arguments so far as classifications by kind is concerned. It was chiefly of man that the Greek and mediæval philosophers were thinking; other things seemed of less significance. They could, they perceived, think of "Man," quite apart from Tom Jones or William

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Smith, and so far from thinking of the species man as merely a crowd of individuals, they thought of these individuals as a collection of failures, through this imperfection and that, from the perfect thing Man. Now these discussions of these matters are alien and perplexing to the modern student because he has behind him a century and more of systematised knowledge which makes his attitude to the idea of individuality very different from that of an ancient Greek or a mediæval monk. He is accustomed to think of *Homo sapiens* or *Lepus cuniculus* as the name of a being of a higher order, synthetically speaking, than an individual man or rabbit, a multiple being that maintains itself in its environment, resists adverse forces, and is sustained, modified or exterminated by the outer forces of the universe as time goes on. The reality of the species as a whole is a commonplace in his thought. Having this idea very firmly established in his mind, he is unable to see what these good gentlemen are so earnestly disputing. He is in the position of a far-sighted man who is asked to listen with attention to two shorter-sighted but revered professors who are discussing very profoundly whether a distant range of mountains is a bank of cloud or a dream figment.

§ 14

WHAT IS A BEING?

Human ideas are necessarily anthropocentred and man's first idea of unity was the unity of himself.

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By the standards of ordinary speech a being is an entity which can have an independent and complete relationship to a man, it is capable of a rôle in the drama of his life. It is unusual to speak of an arm or a finger or a hat or a ploughed field as a being. Still less does one think of them as individual beings. In common speech "an individual" means a human person. This very natural disposition of the human mind obsesses much philosophical discussion. On the other hand there is a pleasant disposition of venerable antiquity to accept individuality in the case of an animal or a tree or a shapely mountain. Roughly speaking the old idea of an individual was something to which you could pray or at which you could shake your fist.

Modern scientific work, particularly in the biological sciences, leads to a much keener criticism of the idea of individuality. Comparative anatomy leads straight to the discussion, "What is an individual?" A student drifts easily into the habit of considering all the larger animals, the metameric metazoa, as being not so much equivalent to one individual of the simpler metazoa as to a linear colony of reduced individuals, and of regarding the metazoa altogether as equivalent to multiples of protozoon individuals. He knows that the white corpuscles in his blood are singularly like individual amœbas and that the digestion of every big animal is dependent on the presence of great multitudes of individual bacteria in the intestine. Colonial organisations, the sponges and corals for example, add another aspect to this question. Vegetable individ-

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uality is still more disconcerting. What is the individual fungus, is it the toadstool springing from the spreading mycelium or the mycelium, and where is the individuality of a series of grafted trees? Is that three-bladed Irish yew that appeared as a sport years ago and which has been spread by cuttings all round and about the world one individual or many? The mind of the modern biological student is prepared by these things for the idea of individualities of a lower and of a higher order; it can contemplate the possibility of mergers and synthetic formations such as never entered into the heads of the ancient philosophers.

And it is his habit to think of a living species as a single whole, as a synthetic being, unique, conducting a unique struggle against the universe, made up of practically similar but still unique individuals, beings of a less complex grade. In that way also he comes to think of "Man."

§ 15

THE GENERAL AND THE INDIVIDUAL

In our consideration of every person we deal with two aspects. He is William Smith or what not and he is a man. And "William Smith" for him implies everything that is Man in him, but the stress is upon everything that is peculiar and distinctive in him. When we call him a "Man" we thrust these idiosyncrasies into the background and insist upon all those things that he possesses in common with the run of

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mankind. His individuality lies in his difference; apart from that he is a sample, a unit of the species. The life of every William Smith among us has that double strain; he is carried along the way of all flesh, he is a man like other men, and at the same time he is in every detail just a little different. By virtue of that difference and of individual accidents he succeeds or fails, he survives or is obliterated, he is accepted into or rejected from the heritage of the race.

At different hours in his life William Smith may be living with the utmost intensity as William Smith, or, self forgetful, as Man. When he lusts, when he boasts, when his vanity is bitterly hurt, he is William Smith in excelsis, when he discusses politics or philosophy or works with delight at a mathematical problem he is at his most generalised. His mind goes then with the mind of the species; he is Man. . . . So perhaps in a quite parallel fashion the tissue cells in our bodies are sometimes full of local and individual stresses, sometimes altogether absorbed in their particular services in the common welfare of our beings.

BOOK THE SECOND
OF BELIEFS

§ 1

MY PRIMARY ACT OF FAITH

AND now having stated my conception of the true relationship between our thoughts and words on the one hand and facts on the other, having distinguished between the more accurate and frequently verified propositions of science and the more arbitrary and infrequently verified propositions of belief, and made clear the *spontaneous and artistic quality that inheres in all our moral and religious generalisations*, I may hope to go on to my confession of faith with less misunderstanding than would otherwise be inevitable.

Now my most comprehensive belief about the external and the internal and myself is that they make one universe in which I and every part are ultimately important. That is quite an arbitrary act of my mind. It is quite possible to maintain that everything is a chaotic assembly, that any part might be destroyed without affecting any other part. I do not choose to argue against that. If you choose to say that, I am no more disposed to argue with you than if you choose to wear a mitre in Fleet Street or drink a bottle of ink, or declare the figure of Ally Sloper more dignified and beautiful than the head of Jove. There is no Q.E.D. that you cannot do so. You can. You will not like to go on with it, I think, and it will not answer, but that is a different matter.

I dismiss the idea that life is chaotic because it

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leaves my life ineffectual, and I cannot contemplate an ineffectual life patiently. I am by my nature impelled to refuse that. I assert that it is not so. I assert therefore that I am important in a scheme, that we all are important in that scheme, that the wheel-smashed frog in the road and the fly drowning in the milk are important and correlated with me. What the scheme as a whole is I do not clearly know; with my limited mind I cannot know. There I become a Mystic. I use the word scheme because it is the best word available, but I strain it in using it. I do not wish to imply a schemer, but only order and co-ordination as distinguished from haphazard. "All this is important, all this is profoundly significant." I say it of the universe as a child that has not learned to read might say it of a parchment agreement. I cannot read the universe, but I can believe that this is so.

And this unfounded and arbitrary declaration of the ultimate rightness and significance of things I call the Act of Faith. It is a voluntary and deliberate determination to believe, a choice made. I do not pretend to be able to prove it. I do not even assert that it is true. It is my working belief.

§ 2

ON USING THE NAME OF GOD

You may say if you will that this scheme I talk about, this something that gives importance and correlation and significance, is what is meant by God.

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You may embark upon a logical wrangle here with me if you have failed to master what I have hitherto said about the meaning of words. If a Scheme, you will say, then there must be a Schemer.

But, I repeat, I am using scheme and importance and significance here only in a spirit of suggestion because they suggest order and because I can find no better words, and I will not allow myself to be entangled by an insistence upon their implications.

Yet let me confess I am greatly attracted by such fine phrases as the Will of God, the Hand of God, the Great Commander. These do most wonderfully express aspects of this belief I choose to hold. I think if there had been no gods before, I would call this God without hesitation. But there is a great danger in doing this sort of thing unguardedly. The run of people nowadays mean something more and something different when they say "God." They intend a personality exterior to them and limited, and they will instantly conclude I mean the same thing. To permit that misconception is, I feel, the first step on the slippery slope of meretricious complaisance, is to become in some small measure a successor of those who cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Occasionally we may best serve the God of Truth by denying him.

Yet at times I admit the sense of personality in the universe is very strong. If I am confessing, I do not see why I should not confess up to the hilt. At times in the silence of the night and in rare lonely moments, I come upon a sort of communion of myself and something great that is not myself. It is perhaps

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poverty of mind and language obliges me to say that then this universal scheme takes on the effect of a sympathetic person—and my communion a quality of fearless worship. These moments happen, and they are the supreme fact in my religious life to me, they are the crown of my religious experiences.

None the less, I do not usually speak of God even in regard to these moments, and where I do use that word it must be understood that I use it as a personification of something entirely different in nature from the personality of a human individual.

§ 3

FREE WILL AND PREDESTINATION

And now let me return to a point raised in the first Book in § 9. Is the whole of this scheme of things settled and done? The whole trend of Science is to that belief. On the scientific plane one is a fatalist, the universe a system of inevitable consequences. But as I show in that section referred to, it is quite possible to accept as true in their several planes both predestination and free will.* If you ask me, I think I should say I incline to believe in predestination and do quite completely believe in free will. The important working belief is free will.

But does the whole universe of fact, the external world about me, the mysterious internal world from which my motives rise, form one rigid and fated sys-

* I use free will in the sense of self-determinism and not as it is defined by Professor William James, and predestination as equivalent to the conception of a universe rigid in time and space.

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tem as determinists teach? Do I believe that, had one a mind ideally clear and powerful, the whole universe would seem orderly and absolutely predestined? I incline to that belief. I do not harshly believe it, but I admit its large plausibility—that is all. I see no value whatever in jumping to a decision. One or two Pragmatists, so far as I can understand them, do not hold this view of predestination at all; but as a provisional assumption it underlies most scientific work.

I glance at this question rather to express a detachment than a view.

For me as a person this theory of predestination has no practical value. At the utmost it is an interesting theory like the theory that there is a fourth dimension. There may be a fourth dimension of space, but one gets along quite well by assuming there are just three. It may be knowable the next time I come to cross-roads which I shall take. Possibly that knowledge actually exists somewhere. There are those who will tell you they can get intimations in the matter from packs of cards or the palms of my hands, or see by peering into crystals. Of such beliefs I am entirely free. The fact is I believe that neither I know nor anybody else who is practically concerned knows which I shall take. I hesitate, I choose just as though the thing was unknowable. For me and my conduct there is much wide practical margin of freedom.

I am free and freely and responsibly making the future—so far as I am concerned. You others are equally free. On that theory I find my life will work,

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and on a theory of mechanical predestination nothing works.

I take the former theory therefore for my everyday purposes, and as a matter of working experience so does everybody else. I regard myself as a free responsible person among free responsible persons.

§ 4

A PICTURE OF THE WORLD OF MEN

Now I have already given a first picture of the world of fact as it shaped itself upon my mind. Let me now give a second picture of this world in which I find myself, a picture in a rather different key and at a different level, in which I turn to a new set of aspects and bring into the foreground the other minds which are with me in the midst of this great spectacle.

What am I?

Here is a question to which in all ages men have sought to give a clear unambiguous answer, and to which a clear unambiguous answer is manifestly unfitted. Am I my body? Yes or no? It seems to me that I can externalise and think of as "not myself" nearly everything that pertains to my body, hands and feet, and even the most secret and central of those living and hidden parts, the pulsing arteries, the throbbing nerves, the ganglionic centres, that no eye, save for the surgeon's knife, has ever seen or ever will see until they coagulate in decay. So far I am not my body; and then as clearly, since I suffer through it, see the whole world through it and am

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always to be called upon where it is, I am it. Am I a mind mysteriously linked to this thing of matter and endeavour?

So I can present myself. I seem to be a consciousness, vague and insecure, placed between two worlds. One of these worlds seems clearly "not me," the other is more closely identified with me and yet is still imperfectly me. The first I called the exterior world, and it presents itself to me as existing in Time and Space. In a certain way I seem able to interfere with it and control it. The second is the interior world, having no forms in space and only a vague evasive reference to time, from which motives arise and storms of emotion, which acts and reacts constantly and in untraceable ways with my conscious mind. And that consciousness itself hangs and drifts about the region where the inner world and the outer world meet, much as a patch of limelight drifts about the stage, illuminating, affecting, following no manifest law except that usually it centres about the hero, my Ego.

It seems to me that to put the thing much more precisely than this is to depart from the reality of the matter.

But so departing a little, let me borrow a phrase from Herbart and identify myself more particularly with my mental self. It seems to me that I may speak of myself as a circle of thought and experience poised between these two imperfectly understood worlds of the internal and the external and passing imperceptibly into the former. The external world impresses me as being, as a practical fact, common

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to me and many other creatures similar to myself; the internal, I find similar but not identical with theirs. It is *mine*. It seems to me at times no more than something cut off from that external world and put into a sort of pit or cave, much as all the inner mystery of my body, those living, writhing, warm and thrilling organs are isolated, hidden from all eyes and interference so long as I remain alive. And I myself, the essential me, am the light and watcher in the mouth of the cave.

So I think of myself, and so I think of all other human beings, as circles of thought and experience, each a little different from the others. Each human being I see as essentially a circle of thought between an internal and an external world.

I figure these circles of thought as more or less imperfectly focussed pictures, all a little askew and vague as to margins and distances. In the internal world arise motives, and they pass outward through the circle of thought and are modified and directed by it into external acts. And through speech, example, and a hundred various acts, one such circle, one human mind, lights and enlarges and plays upon another. That is the image under which the interrelation of minds presents itself to me.

§ 5

THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVES THE REAL PROBLEM OF LIFE

Now each self among us, for all its fluctuations and vagueness of boundary, is, as I have already pointed

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out, invincibly persuaded of Free Will. That is to say, it has a persuasion of responsible control over the impulses that teem from the internal world and tend to express themselves in act. The problem of that control and its solution is the reality of life. "What am I to do?" is the perpetual question of our existence. Our metaphysics, our beliefs are all sought as subsidiary to that and have no significance without it.

I confess I find myself a confusion of motives beside which my confusion of perceptions pales into insignificance.

There are many various motives and motives very variously estimated—some are called gross, some sublime, some—such as pride—wicked. I do not readily accept these classifications.

Many people seem to make a selection among their motives without much inquiry, taking those classifications as just; they seek to lead what they call pure lives or useful lives, and to set aside whole sets of motives which do not accord with this determination. Some exclude the seeking of pleasure as a permissible motive, some the love of beauty; some insist upon one's "being oneself" and prohibit or limit responses to exterior opinions. Most of such selections strike me as wanton and hasty. I decline to dismiss any of my motives at all in that wholesale way. Just as I believe I am important in the scheme of things, so I believe are all my motives. Turning one's back on any set of them seems to me to savour of the headlong actions of stupidity. To suppress a passion or a curiosity for the sake of suppressing a passion is

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to my mind just the burial of a talent that has been entrusted to one's care. One has, I feel, to take all these things as weapons and instruments, material in the service of the scheme; one has to take them in the end gravely and do right among them unbiassed in favour of any set. To take some poor appetite and fling it out is to my mind a cheap and unsatisfactory way of simplifying one's moral problems. One has to accept these things in oneself, I feel—even if one knows them to be dangerous things, even if one is sure they have an evil side.

Let me, however, in order to express my attitude better, make a rough grouping of the motives I find in myself and the people about me.

§ 6

A REVIEW OF MOTIVES

I cannot divide them into clearly defined classes, but I may perhaps begin with those that bring one into the widest sympathy with living things and go on to those one shares only with more intelligent and complex creatures.

There come first the desires one shares with those more limited souls the beasts, just as much as one does with one's fellow man. These are the bodily appetites and the crude emotions of fear and resentment. These first clamour for attention and must be assuaged or controlled before the other sets come into play.

Now in this matter of physical appetites I do not

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know whether to describe myself as a sensualist or an ascetic. If an ascetic is one who suppresses to a minimum all deference to these impulses, then certainly I am not an ascetic; if a sensualist is one who gives himself to heedless gratification, then certainly I am not a sensualist. But I find myself balanced in an intermediate position by something that I will speak of as the sense of Beauty. This sense of Beauty is something in me which demands not simply gratification but the best and keenest of a sense or continuance of sense impressions, and which refuses coarse quantitative assuagements. It ranges all over the senses, and just as I refuse to wholly cut off any of my motives, so do I refuse to limit its use to the plane of the eye or the ear.

It seems to me entirely just to speak of beauty in matters of scent and taste, to talk not only of beautiful skies and beautiful sounds but of beautiful beer and beautiful cheese! The balance as between asceticism and sensuality comes in, it seems to me, if we remember that to drink well one must not have drunken for some time, that to see well one's eye must be clear, that to make love well one must be fit and gracious and sweet and disciplined from top to toe, that the finest sense of all—the joyous sense of bodily well-being—comes only with exercises and restraints and fine living. There I think lies the way of my disposition. I do not want to live in the sensual sty, but also I do not want to scratch in the tub of Diogenes.

But I diverge a little in these comments from my present business of classifying motives.

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Next I perceive hypertrophied in myself and many sympathetic human beings a passion that many animals certainly possess, the beautiful and fearless cousin of fear, Curiosity, that seeks keenly for knowing and feeling. Apart from appetites and bodily desires and blind impulses, I want most urgently to know and feel, for the sake of knowing and feeling. I want to go round corners and see what is there, to cross mountain ranges, to open boxes and parcels. Young animals at least have that disposition too. For me it is something that mingles with all my desires. Much more to me than the desire to live is the desire to taste life. I am not happy until I have done and felt things. I want to get as near as I can to the thrill of a dog going into a fight or the delight of a bird in the air. And not simply in the heroic field of war and the air do I want to understand. I want to know something of the jolly wholesome satisfaction that a hungry pig must find in its wash.

I do not think that in this I confess to any unusual temperament. I think that the more closely mentally animated people scrutinise their motives the less is the importance they will attach to mere physical and brute urgencies and the more to curiosity.

Next after curiosity come those desires and motives that one shares perhaps with some social beasts, but far more so as a conscious thing with men alone. These desires and motives all centre on a clearly apprehended "self" in relation to "others"; they are the essentially egotistical group. They are self-assertion in all its forms. I have dealt with motives towards gratification and motives towards experi-

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ence; this set of motives is for the sake of oneself. Since they are the most acutely conscious motives in unthinking men, there is a tendency on the part of unthinking people to speak of them as though vanity, self-seeking, self-interest, were the only motives. But one has but to reflect on what has gone before to realise that this is not so. One finds these "self" motives vary with the mental power and training of the individual; here they are fragmentary and discursive, there drawn tight together into a coherent scheme. Where they are weak they mingle with the animal motives and curiosity like travellers in a busy market-place, but where the sense of self is strong they become rulers and regulators, self-seeking becomes deliberate and sustained in the case of the human being, vanity passes into pride.

Here again that something in the mind so difficult to define, so easy for all who understand to understand, that something which insists upon a best and keenest, the desire for beauty, comes into the play of motives. Pride demands a beautiful self and would discipline all other passions to its service. It also demands recognition for that beautiful self. Now pride, I know, is denounced by many as the essential quality of sin. We are taught that "self-abnegation" is the substance of virtue and self-forgetfulness the inseparable quality of right conduct. But indeed I cannot so dismiss egotism and that pride which was the first form in which the desire to rule oneself as a whole came to me. Through pride one shapes oneself towards a best, though at first it may be an ill-conceived best. Pride is not always arrogance and ag-

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gression. There is that pride that does not ape but learns humility.

And with the human imagination all these elementary instincts, of the flesh, of curiosity, of self-assertion, become only the basal substance of a huge elaborate edifice of secondary motive and intention. We live in a great flood of example and suggestion, our curiosity and our social quality impel us to a thousand imitations, to dramatic attitudes and subtly obscure ends. Our pride turns this way and that as we respond to new notes in the world about us. We are arenas for a conflict between suggestions flung in from all sources, from the most diverse and essentially incompatible sources. We live long hours and days in a kind of dream, negligent of self-interest, our elementary passions in abeyance, among these derivative things.

§ 7

THE SYNTHETIC MOTIVE

Such it seems to me are the chief masses of the complex of motives in us, the group of sense, the group of pride, curiosity and the imitative and suggested motives, making up the system of impulses which is our will. Such has been the common outfit of motives in every age, and in every age its *mêlée* has been found insufficient in itself. It is a heterogeneous system, it does not form in any sense a completed or balanced system, its constituents are variable and complete among themselves. They are not so much arranged about one another as superposed

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and higgledy-piggledy. The senses and curiosity war with pride and one another, the motives suggested to us fall into conflict with this element or that of our intimate and habitual selves. We find all our instincts are snares to excess. Excesses of indulgence lead to excesses of abstinence, and even the sense of beauty may be clouded and betray. So to us all, even for the most balanced of us, come disappointments, regrets, gaps; and for most of us who are ill-balanced, miseries and despairs. Nearly all of us want something to hold us together—something to dominate this swarming confusion and save us from the black misery of wounded and exploded pride, of thwarted desire, of futile conclusions. We want more oneness, some steadying thing that will afford an escape from fluctuations.

Different people, of differing temperament and tradition, have sought oneness, this steadying and universalising thing, in various manners. Some have attained it in this manner and some in that. Scarcely a religious system has existed that has not worked effectively and proved true for someone. To me it seems that the need is synthetic, that some synthetic idea and belief is needed to harmonise one's life, to give a law by which motive may be tried against motive and an effectual peace of mind achieved. I want an active peace and not a quiescence, and I do not want to suppress and expel any motive at all. But to many people the effort takes the form of attempts to cut off some part of oneself as it were, to repudiate altogether some straining or distressing or disappointing factor in the scheme of motives, and find a tran-

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quillising refuge in the residuum. So we have men and women abandoning their share in economic development, crushing the impulses and evading the complications that arise out of sex and flying to devotions and simple duties in nunneries and monasteries; we have others cutting their lives down to a vegetarian dietary and scientific research, resorting to excesses of self-discipline, giving themselves up wholly to some "art" and making everything else subordinate to that, or, going in another direction, abandoning pride and love in favour of an acquired appetite for drugs or drink.

It seems to me that this desire to get the confused complex of life simplified is essentially what has been called the religious motive, and that the manner in which a man achieves that simplification, if he does achieve it, and imposes an order upon his life, is his religion. I find in the scheme of conversion and salvation as it is presented by many Christian sects, a very exact statement of the mental processes I am trying to express. In these systems this discontent with the complexity of life upon which religion is based, is called the conviction of sin, and it is the first phase in the process of conversion—of finding salvation. It leads through distress and confusion to illumination, to the act of faith and peace.

And after peace comes the beginning of right conduct. If you believe and you are saved, you will want to behave well, you will do your utmost to behave well and to understand what is behaving well and you will feel neither shame nor disappointment when after all you fail. You will say then: "so it is

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failure I had to achieve." And you will not feel bitterly because you seem unsuccessful beside others or because you are misunderstood or unjustly treated; you will not bear malice nor cherish anger nor seek revenge; you will never turn towards suicide as a relief from intolerable things; indeed there will be no intolerable things. You will have peace within you.

But if you do not truly believe and are not saved, you will know it because you will still suffer the conflict of motives; and in regrets, confusions, remorse and discontents, you will suffer the penalties of the unbeliever and the lost. You will know certainly your own salvation.

§ 8

THE BEING OF MANKIND

I will boldly adopt the technicalities of the sects. I will speak as a person with experience and declare that I have been through the distresses of despair and the conviction of sin, and that I have found salvation.

I believe in the scheme, in the Project of all things, in the significance of myself and all life, and that my defects and uglinesses and failures, just as much as my powers and successes, are things that are necessary and important and contributory in that scheme, that scheme which passes my understanding—and that no thwarting of my conception, not even the cruelty of nature, now defeats or can defeat my faith, however much it perplexes my mind.

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And though I say that scheme passes my understanding, nevertheless I hope you will see no inconsistency when I say that necessarily it has an aspect towards me that I find imperative.

It has an aspect that I can perceive, however dimly and fluctuatingly.

I take it that to perceive this aspect to the utmost of my mental power and to shape my acts according to that perception is my function in the scheme; that if I hold steadfastly to that conception, I am *saved*. I find in that idea of perceiving the scheme as a whole towards me and in this attempt to perceive, that something to which all my other emotions and passions may contribute by gathering and contributing experience, and through which the synthesis of my life becomes possible.

Let me try to convey to you what it is I perceive, what aspect this scheme seems to bear on the whole towards me.

The essential fact in man's history to my sense is the slow unfolding of a sense of community with his kind, of the possibilities of co-operations leading to scarce dreamt-of collective powers, of a synthesis of the species, of the development of a common general idea, a common general purpose out of a present confusion. In that awakening of the species, one's own personal being lives and moves—a part of it and contributing to it. *One's individual existence is not so entirely cut off as it seems at first; one's entirely separate individuality is another, a profounder, among the subtle inherent delusions of the human mind.* Between you and me as we set our minds together, and be-

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tween us and the rest of mankind, there is *something*, something real, something that rises through us and is neither you nor me, that comprehends us, that is thinking here and using me and you to play against each other in that thinking just as my finger and thumb play against each other as I hold this pen with which I write.

Let me point out that this is no sentimental or mystical statement. It is hard fact as any hard fact we know. We, you and I, are not only parts in a thought process, but parts of one flow of blood and life. Let me put that in a way that may be new to some readers. Let me remind you of what is sometimes told as a jest, the fact that the number of one's ancestors increases as we look back in time. Disregarding the chances of intermarriage, each one of us had two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and so on backward, until very soon, in less than fifty generations, we should find that, but for the qualification introduced, we should have all the earth's inhabitants of that time as our progenitors. For a hundred generations it must hold absolutely true, that everyone of that time who has issue living now is ancestral to all of us. That brings the thing quite within the historical period. There is not a western European palæolithic or neolithic relic of the present human race that is not a family relic for every soul alive. The blood in our veins has handled it.

And there is something more. We are all going to mingle our blood again. We cannot keep ourselves apart; the worst enemies will some day come to the

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Peace of Verona. All the Montagues and Capulets are doomed to intermarry. A time will come in less than fifty generations when all the population of the world will have my blood, and I and my worst enemy will not be able to say which child is his or mine.

But you may retort—perhaps you may die childless. Then all the sooner the whole species will get the little legacy of my personal achievement, whatever it may be.

You see that from this point of view—which is for me the vividly true and dominating point of view—our individualities, our nations and states and races are but bubbles and clusters of foam upon the great stream of the blood of the species, incidental experiments in the growing knowledge and consciousness of the race.

I think this real solidarity of humanity is a fact that is only being slowly apprehended, that it is an idea that we who have come to realise it have to assist in thinking into the collective mind. I believe the species is still as a whole unawakened, still sunken in the delusion of the permanent separateness of the individual and of races and nations, that so it turns upon itself and frets against itself and fails to see the stupendous possibilities of deliberate self-development that lie open to it now.

I see myself in life as part of a great physical being that strains and I believe grows towards beauty, and of a great mental being that strains and I believe grows towards knowledge and power. In this persuasion that I am a gatherer of experience, a mere tentacle that arranges thought beside thought for

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this being of the species, this being that grows beautiful and powerful, in this persuasion I find the ruling idea of which I stand in need, the ruling idea that reconciles and adjudicates among my warring motives. In it I find both concentration of myself and escape from myself; in a word, I find Salvation.

§ 9

INDIVIDUALITY AN INTERLUDE

I would like in a parenthetical section to expand and render rather more concrete this idea of the species as one divaricating flow of blood, by an appeal to its arithmetical aspect. I do not know if it has ever occurred to the reader to compute the number of his living ancestors at some definite date, at, let us say, the year one of the Christian era. Everyone has two parents and four grandparents, most people have eight great-grandparents, and if we ignore the possibility of intermarriage we shall go on to a fresh power of two with every generation, thus—

Number of generations	Number of ancestors
3	8
4	16
5	32
7	128
10	1,024
20	126,976
30	15,745,024
40	1,956,282,976

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I do not know whether the average age of the parent at the birth of a child under modern conditions can be determined from existing figures. There is, I should think, a strong presumption that it has been a rising age. There may have been a time in the past when most women were mothers in their early teens and bore most or all of their children before thirty, and when men had done the greater part of their procreation before thirty-five; this is still the case in many tropical climates, and I do not think I favour my case unduly by assuming that the average parent must be about, or even less than, five and twenty. This gives four generations to a century. At that rate and *disregarding intermarriage of relations* the ancestors living a thousand years ago needed to account for a living person would be double the estimated population of the world. But it is obvious that if a person sprang from a marriage of first cousins, the eight ancestors of the third generation are cut down to six; if of cousins at the next stage, to fourteen in the fourth. And every time that a common pair of ancestors appears in any generation, the number of ancestors in that generation must be reduced by two from our original figures, or if it is only one common ancestor, by one, and as we go back that reduction will have to be doubled, quadrupled and so on. I daresay that by the time anyone gets to the 8916 names of his Elizabethan ancestors he will find quite a large number repeated over and over again in the list and that he is cut down to perhaps two or three thousand separate persons. But this does not effectually invalidate my assumption that

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if we go back only to the closing years of the Roman Republic, we go back to an age in which nearly every person living within the confines of what was then the Roman Empire who left living offspring must have been ancestral to every person living within that area to-day. No doubt they were so in very variable measure. There must be for everyone some few individuals in that period who have so to speak intermarried with themselves again and again and again down the genealogical series, and others who are represented by just one touch of their blood. The blood of the Jews, for example, has turned in upon itself again and again; but for all we know one Italian proselyte in the first year of the Christian era may have made by this time every Jew alive a descendant of some unrecorded bastard of Julius Cæsar. The exclusive breeding of the Jews is in fact the most effectual guarantee that whatever does get into the charmed circle through either proselytism, the violence of enemies, or feminine unchastity, must ultimately pervade it universally.

It may be argued that as a matter of fact humanity has until recently been segregated in pools; that in the great civilisation of China, for example, humanity has pursued its own interlacing system of inheritances without admixture from other streams of blood. But such considerations only defer the conclusion; they do not stave it off indefinitely. It needs only that one philoprogenitive Chinaman should have wandered into those regions that are now Russia, about the time of Pericles, to link east and west in that matter; one Tartar chieftain in the Steppes

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may have given a daughter to a Roman soldier and sent his grandsons east and west to interlace the branches of every family tree in the world. If any race stands apart it is such an isolated group as that of the now extinct Tasmanian primitives or the Australian black. But even here, in the remote dawn of navigation, may have come some shipwrecked Malays, or some half-breed woman kidnapped by wandering Phoenicians have carried this link of blood back to the western world. The more one lets one's imagination play upon the incalculable drift and soak of population, the more one realises the true value of that spreading relation with the past.

But now let us turn in the other direction, the direction of the future, because there it is that this series of considerations becomes most edifying. It is the commonest trick to think of a man's descendants as though they were his own. We are told that one of the dearest human motives is the desire to found a family, but think how much of a family one founds at the best. One's son is after all only half one's blood, one's grandson only a quarter, and so one goes on until it may be that in ten brief generations one's heir and namesake has but $\frac{1}{1024}$ th of one's inherited self. Those other thousand odd unpredictable people thrust in and mingle with one's pride. The trend of all things nowadays—the ever-increasing ease of communication, the great and increasing drift of population, the establishment of a common standard of civilisation—is to render such admixture far more probable and facile in the future than in the past.

It is a pleasant fancy to imagine some ambitious

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hoarder of wealth, some egotistical founder of name and family, returning to find his descendants—*his* descendants—after the lapse of a few brief generations. His heir and namesake may have not a thousandth part of his heredity, while under some other name, lost to all the tradition and glory of him, enfeebled and degenerate through much intermarriage, may be a multitude of people who have as much as a fiftieth or even more of his quality. They may even be in servitude and dependence to the really alien person who is head of the family. Our founder will go through the spreading record of offspring and find it mixed with that of people he most hated and despised. The antagonists he wronged and overcame will have crept into his line and recaptured all they lost; have played the cuckoo in his blood and acquisitions, and turned out his diluted strain to perish.

And while I am being thus biological let me point out another queer aspect in which our egotism is overridden by physical facts. Men and women are apt to think of their children as being their very own, blood of their blood and bone of their bone. But indeed one of the most striking facts in this matter is the frequent want of resemblance between parents and children. It is one of the commonest things in the world for a child to resemble an aunt or an uncle, or to revive a trait of some grandparent that has seemed entirely lost in the intervening generation. The Mendelians have given much attention to facts of this nature; and though their general method of exposition seems to me quite unjustifiably exact and precise, it cannot be denied that it is often vividly

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illuminating. It is so in this connection. They distinguish between "dominant" and "recessive" qualities, and they establish cases in which parents with all the dominant characteristics produce offspring of recessive type. Recessive qualities are constantly being masked by dominant ones and emerging again in the next generation. It is not the individual that reproduces himself, it is the species that reproduces through the individual and often in spite of his characteristics.

The race flows through us, the race is the drama and we are the incidents. This is not any sort of poetical statement; it is a statement of fact. In so far as we are individuals, in so far as we seek to follow merely individual ends, we are accidental, disconnected, without significance, the sport of chance. In so far as we realise ourselves as experiments of the species for the species, just in so far do we escape from the accidental and the chaotic. We are episodes in an experience greater than ourselves.

Now none of this, if you read me aright, makes for the suppression of one's individual difference, but it does make for its correlation. We have to get everything we can out of ourselves for this very reason that we do not stand alone; we signify as parts of a universal and immortal development. Our separate selves are our charges, the talents of which much has to be made. It is because we are episodic in the great synthesis of life that we have to make the utmost of our individual lives and traits and possibilities.

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§ 10

THE MYSTIC ELEMENT

What stupendous constructive mental and physical possibilities are there to which I feel I am contributing, you may ask, when I feel that I contribute to this greater Being; and at once I confess I become vague and mystical. I do not wish to pass glibly over this point. I call your attention to the fact that here I am mystical and arbitrary. I am what I am, an individual in this present phase. I can see nothing of these possibilities except that they will be in the nature of those indefinable and overpowering gleams of promise in our world that we call Beauty. Elsewhere (in my "Food of the Gods") I have tried to render my sense of our human possibility by monstrous images; I have written of those who will "stand on this earth as on a footstool and reach out their hands among the stars." But that is rhetoric at best, a straining image of unimaginable things. Things move to Power and Beauty; I say that much and I have said all that I can say.

But what is Beauty, you ask, and what will Power do? And here I reach my utmost point in the direction of what you are free to call the rhapsodical and the incomprehensible. I will not even attempt to define Beauty. I will not because I cannot. To me it is a final, quite indefinable thing. Either you understand it or you do not. Every true artist and many who are not artists know—they know there is something that shows suddenly—it may be in music,

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it may be in painting, it may be in the sunlight on a glacier or shadow cast by a furnace or the scent of a flower, it may be in the person or act of some fellow creature, but it is right, it is commanding, it is, to use theological language, the revelation of God. To this mystery of Power and Beauty, out of the earth that mothered us, we move.

I do not attempt to define Beauty nor even to distinguish it from Power. I do not think indeed that one can effectually distinguish these aspects of life. I do not know how far Beauty may not be simply fulness and clearness of sensation, a momentary unveiling of things hitherto seen but dully and darkly. As I have already said, there may be beauty in the feeling of beer in the throat, in the taste of cheese in the mouth; there may be beauty in the scent of earth, in the warmth of a body, in the sensation of waking from sleep. I use the word Beauty therefore in its widest possible sense, ranging far beyond the special beauties that art discovers and develops. Perhaps as we pass from death to life all things become beautiful. The utmost I can do in conveying what I mean by Beauty is to tell of things that I have perceived to be beautiful as beautifully as I can tell of them. It may be, as I suggest elsewhere, that Beauty is a thing synthetic and not simple; it is a common effect produced by a great medley of causes, a larger aspect of harmony.

But the question of what Beauty is does not very greatly concern me since I have known it when I met it and since almost every day in life I seem to apprehend it more and to find it more sufficient and

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satisfying. Objectively it may be altogether complex and various and synthetic, subjectively it is altogether simple. All analysis, all definition, must in the end rest upon and arrive at unanalysable and indefinable things. Beauty is light—I fall back upon that image—it is all things that light can be, beacon, elucidation, pleasure, comfort and consolation, promise, warning, the vision of reality.

§ 11

THE SYNTHESIS

It seems to me that the whole living creation may be regarded as walking in its sleep, as walking in the sleep of instinct and individualised illusion, and that now out of it all rises the Spirit of Man, beginning to perceive his larger self, his collective synthetic purpose to increase Power and realise Beauty. . . .

I write this down. It is the form of my belief, and that unanalysable something called Beauty is the light that falls upon that great figure.

It is only by such images, it is only by the use of what are practically parables, that I can in any way express these things in my mind. These two things, I say, are the two aspects of my belief; one is the form and the other the light. The former places me as it were in a scheme, the latter illuminates and inspires me. I am a member in that greater Being, and my function is, I take it, to develop my capacity for beauty and convey the perception of it to my fellows, to gather and store experience and increase

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the racial consciousness. I hazard no whys nor wherefores. That is how I see things; that is how the universe, in response to my demand for a synthesising aspect, presents itself to me. I see it as the scene of the great adventure of the human spirit, that God of Man, of which I am servant and part.

§ 12

OF PERSONAL IMMORTALITY

These are my beliefs. They begin with arbitrary assumptions; they end in mystery.

So do all beliefs that are not grossly utilitarian and material, promising hours and deathless appetite or endless hunting or a cosmic mortgage. The Peace of God passeth understanding, the Kingdom of Heaven within us and without can be presented only by parables. But the unapproachable distance and vagueness of these things makes them none the less necessary, just as a cloud upon a mountain, or sunlight remotely seen upon the sea, is as real as, and to many people far more necessary than, pork chops. The driven swine may root and take no heed, but man the dreamer drives. And because these things are vague and impalpable and wilfully attained, it is none the less important that they should be rendered with all the truth of one's being. To be atmospherically vague is one thing; to be haphazard, wanton and untruthful, quite another.

But here I may give a specific answer to a question that many find profoundly important, though

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indeed it is already implicitly answered in what has gone before.

I do not believe I have any personal immortality. I am part of an immortality perhaps; but that is different. I personally am not the continuing thing. I am experimental, incidental. I feel I have to do something, a number of things no one else could do, and then I am finished, and finished altogether. Then my substance returns to the common lot. I am a temporary enclosure for a temporary purpose; that served, and my skull and teeth, my idiosyncrasy and desire, will disperse, I believe, like the timbers of a booth after a fair.

Let me shift my ground a little and ask you to consider what is involved in the opposite belief.

My idea of the unknown scheme is of something so wide and deep that I cannot conceive it encumbered by my egotism perpetually. I shall serve my purpose and pass under the wheel and end. That distresses me not at all. Immortality would distress and perplex me. If I may put this in a mixture of theological and social language, I cannot respect, I cannot believe in a God who is always going about with me.

But this is after all what I feel is true and what I choose to believe. It is not a matter of fact. So far as that goes there is no evidence that I am immortal and none that I am not.

I may be altogether wrong in my beliefs; I may be misled by the appearance of things. I believe in the great and growing Being of the Species from which I rise, to which I return, and which, it may be,

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will ultimately even transcend the limitation of the Species and grow into the Conscious Being, the undying conscious Being of all things. Believing that, I cannot also believe that my peculiar little thread will not undergo synthesis and vanish as a separate thing.

And what after all is my distinctive something, a few capacities, a few incapacities, an uncertain memory, a hesitating presence? It matters no doubt in its place and time, as all things matter in their place and time, but where in it all is the eternally indispensable? The great things of my life, love, faith, the intimation of beauty, the things most savouring of immortality, are the things most general, the things most shared and least distinctively me.

§ 13

A CRITICISM OF CHRISTIANITY

And here perhaps, before I go on to the question of Conduct, is the place to define a relationship to that system of faith and religious observance out of which I and most of my readers have come. How do these beliefs on which I base my rule of conduct stand to Christianity?

They do not stand in any attitude of antagonism. A religious system so many-faced and so enduring as Christianity must necessarily be saturated with truth even if it be not wholly true. To assume, as the Atheist and Deist seem to do, that Christianity is a sort of disease that came upon civilisation, an unprofitable and wasting disease, is to deny that con-

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ception of a progressive scheme and rightness which we have taken as our basis of belief. As I have already confessed, the Scheme of Salvation, the idea of a process of sorrow and atonement, presents itself to me as adequately true. So far I do not think my new faith breaks with my old. But it follows as a natural consequence of my metaphysical preliminaries that I should find the Christian theology, Aristotelian, over defined and excessively personified. The painted figure of that bearded ancient upon the Sistine Chapel, or William Blake's wild-haired, wild-eyed Trinity, convey no nearer sense of God to me than some mother-of-pearl-eyed painted and carven monster from the worship of the South Sea Islanders. And the Miltonic fable of the offended creator and the sacrificial son! it cannot span the circle of my ideas; it is a little thing, and none the less little because it is intimate, flesh of my flesh and spirit of my spirit, like the drawings of my youngest boy. I put it aside as I would put aside the gay figure of a costumed officiating priest. The passage of time has made his canonicals too strange, too unlike my world of common thought and costume. These things helped, but now they hinder and disturb. I cannot bring myself back to them.

But the psychological experience and the theology of Christianity are only a ground-work for its essential feature, which is the conception of a relationship of the individual believer to a mystical being at once human and divine, the Risen Christ. This being presents itself to the modern consciousness as a familiar and beautiful figure, associated with a series of say-

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ings and incidents that coalesce with a very distinct and rounded-off and complete effect of personality. After we have cleared off all the definitions of theology, He remains, mystically suffering for humanity, mystically asserting that love in pain and sacrifice in service are the necessary substance of Salvation. Whether he actually existed as a finite individual person in the opening of the Christian era seems to me a question entirely beside the mark. The evidence at this distance is of imperceptible force for or against. The Christ we know is quite evidently something different from any finite person, a figure, a conception, a synthesis of emotions, experiences and inspirations, sustained by and sustaining millions of human souls.

Now it seems to be the common teaching of almost all Christians, that Salvation, that is to say the consolidation and amplification of one's motives through the conception of a general scheme or purpose, is to be attained through the personality of Christ. Christ is made cardinal to the act of Faith. The act of Faith, they assert, is *belief in Him*.

We are dealing here, be it remembered, with beliefs deliberately undertaken and not with questions of fact. The only matters of fact material here are facts of experience. If in your experience Salvation is attainable through Christ, then certainly Christianity is true for you. And if a Christian asserts that my belief is a false light and that presently I shall "come to Christ," I cannot disprove his assertion. I can but disbelieve it. I hesitate even to make the obvious retort.

OF BELIEFS

I hope I shall offend no susceptibilities when I assert that this great and very definite personality in the hearts and imaginations of mankind does not and never has attracted me. It is a fact I record about myself without aggression or regret. I do not find myself able to associate Him with the emotion of Salvation.

I admit the splendid imaginative appeal in the idea of a divine-human friend and mediator. If it were possible to have access by prayer, by meditation, by urgent outcries of the soul, to such a being whose feet were in the darkneses, who stooped down from the light, who was at once great and little, limitless in power and virtue and one's very brother; if it were possible by sheer will in believing to make such a helper, and to make one's way to him, who would refuse such help? But I do not find such a being in Christ. To me the Christian Christ seems not so much a humanised God as an incomprehensibly sinless being neither God nor man. His sinlessness wears his incarnation like a fancy dress, all his white self unchanged. He had no petty weaknesses.

Now the essential trouble of my life is its petty weaknesses. If I am to have that love, that sense of understanding fellowship, which is, I conceive, the peculiar magic and merit of this idea of a personal Saviour, then I need someone quite other than this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean with his crown of thorns, his blood-stained hands and feet. I cannot love him any more than I can love a man upon the rack. Even in the face of torments I do not think I should feel a need for him.

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I had rather than a hundred times have Botticelli's armed angel in his Tobit at Florence. (I hope I do not seem to want to shock in writing these things, but indeed my only aim is to lay my feelings bare.) I know what love for an idealised person can be. It happens that in my younger days I found a character in the history of literature who had a singular and extraordinary charm for me, of whom the thought was tender and comforting, who indeed helped me through shames and humiliations as though he held my hand. This person was Oliver Goldsmith. His blunders and troubles, his vices and vanities, seized and still hold my imagination. The slights of Boswell, the contempt of Gibbon and all his company save Johnson, the exquisite fineness of spirit in his "Vicar of Wakefield," and that green suit of his and the doctor's cane and the love despised, these things together made him a congenial saint and hero for me, so that I thought of him as others pray. When I think of that youthful feeling for Goldsmith, I know what I need in a personal Saviour, as a troglodyte who has seen a candle can imagine the sun. But the Christian Christ in none of his three characteristic phases, neither as the magic babe (from whom I am cut off by the wanton and indecent purity of the Virgin Birth), nor as the white-robed, spotless miracle worker, nor as the fierce unreal torment of the cross, comes close to my soul. I do not understand the Agony in the Garden; to me it is like a scene from a play in an unknown tongue. The last cry of despair is the one human touch, discordant with all the rest of the story. One cry of despair does not

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suffice. The Christian's Christ is too fine for me, not incarnate enough, not flesh enough, not earth enough. He was never foolish and hot-eared and inarticulate, never vain, he never forgot things, nor tangled his miracles. I could love him I think more easily if the dead had not risen and if he had lain in peace in his sepulchre instead of coming back more enhaloed and whiter than ever, as a postscript to his own tragedy.

When I think of the Resurrection I am always reminded of the "happy endings" that editors and actor managers are accustomed to impose upon essentially tragic novels and plays. . . .

You see how I stand in this matter, puzzled and confused by the Christian presentation of Christ. I know there are many will answer that what confuses me is the overlaying of the personality of Jesus by stories and superstitions and conflicting symbols; they will in effect ask me to disentangle the Christ I need from the accumulated material, choosing and rejecting. Perhaps one may do that. They do, I know, so present Him as a man inspired, and strenuously, inadequately and erringly presenting a dream of human brotherhood and the immediate Kingdom of Heaven on earth and so blundering to his failure and death. But that will be a recovered and restored person they would give me, and not the Christ the Christians worship and declare they love, in whom they find their Salvation.

When I write "declare they love" I throw doubt intentionally upon the universal love of Christians for their Saviour. I have watched men and nations in this matter. I am struck by the fact that so many

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Christians fall back upon more humanised figures, upon the tender figure of Mary, upon patron saints and such more erring creatures, for the effect of meditation and sympathy they need.

You see it comes to this: that I think Christianity has been true and is for countless people practically true, but that it is not true now for me, and that for most people it is true only with qualifications. Every believing Christian is, I am sure, my spiritual brother, but if systematically I called myself a Christian I feel that to most men I should imply too much and so tell a lie.

§ 14

OF OTHER RELIGIONS

In the same manner, in varying degree, I hold all religions to be in a measure true. Least comprehensible to me are the Indian formulæ, because they seem to stand not on common experience but on those intellectual assumptions my metaphysical analysis destroys. Transmigration of souls without a continuing memory is to my mind utter foolishness, the imagining of a race of children. The aggression, discipline and submission of Mahomedanism makes, I think, an intellectually limited but fine and honourable religion—for men. Its spirit if not its formulæ is abundantly present in our modern world. Mr. Rudyard Kipling, for example, manifestly preaches a Mahomedan God, a modernised Allah with a taste for engineering. I have no doubt that in devotion to a virile, almost national Deity and to the

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service of His Empire of stern Law and Order, efficiently upheld, men have found and will find Salvation.

All these religions are true for me as Canterbury Cathedral is a true thing and as a Swiss chalet is a true thing. There they are, and they have served a purpose, they have worked. Men and women have lived in and by them. Men and women still do. Only they are not true for me to live in them. I have, I believe, to live in a new edifice of my own discovery. They do not work for me.

These schemes are true, and also these schemes are false! in the sense that new things, new phrasings, have to replace them.

BOOK THE THIRD
OF GENERAL CONDUCT

§ 1

CONDUCT FOLLOWS FROM BELIEF

THE broad direction of conduct follows necessarily from belief. The believer does not require rewards and punishments to direct him to the right. Motive and idea are not so separable. To believe truly is to want to do right. To get salvation is to be unified by a comprehending idea of a purpose and by a ruling motive.

The believer wants to do right, he naturally and necessarily seeks to do right. If he fails to do right, if he finds he has done wrong instead of right, he is not greatly distressed or terrified, he naturally and cheerfully does his best to correct his error. He can be damned only by the fading and loss of his belief. And naturally he recurs to and refreshes his belief.

I write in phrases that the evangelical Christianity of my childhood made familiar to me, because they are the most expressive phrases I have ever met for the psychological facts with which I am dealing.

But faith, though it banishes fear and despair and brings with it a real pervading desire to know and do the Good, does not in itself determine what is the Good or supply any simple guide to the choice between alternatives. If it did, there would be nothing more to be said, this book upon conduct would be unnecessary.

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§ 2

WHAT IS GOOD?

It seems to me one of the heedless errors of those who deal in philosophy, to suppose all things that have simple names or unified effects are in their nature simple and may be discovered and isolated as a sort of essence by analysis. It is natural to suppose—and I think it is also quite wrong to suppose—that such things as Good and Beauty can be abstracted from good and beautiful things and considered alone. But pure Good and pure Beauty are to me empty terms. It seems to me that these are in their nature synthetic things, that they arise out of the coming together of contributory things and conditions, and vanish at their dispersal; they are synthetic just as more obviously Harmony is synthetic. It is consequently not possible to give a definition of Good, just as it is not possible to give a definition of that other something which is so closely akin to it, Beauty. Nor is it to be maintained that what is good for one is good for another. But what is good of one's general relations and what is right in action must be determined by the nature of one's beliefs about the purpose in things. I have set down my broad impression of that purpose in respect to me, as the awakening and development of the consciousness and will of our species, and I have confessed my belief that in subordinating myself and all my motives to that idea lies my Salvation. It follows from that, that the good life is the life that most richly gathers

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and winnows and prepares experience and renders it available for the race, that contributes most effectively to the collective growth.

This is in general terms my idea of Good. So soon as one passes from general terms to the question of individual good, one encounters individuality; for everyone in the differing quality and measure of their personality and powers and possibilities, good and right must be different. We are all engaged, each contributing from his or her own standpoint, in the collective synthesis; whatever one can best do, one must do that; in whatever manner one can best help the synthesis, one must exert oneself; the setting apart of oneself, secrecy, the service of secret and personal ends, is the waste of life and the essential quality of Sin.

That is the general expression for right living as I conceive it. In such terms it may be expressed, but also it may be expressed in far more living words. For this collective "synthesis" is the adventure of humanity, the "purpose in things" is no more and no less than the enterprise of God the captain of mankind.

§ 3

SOCIALISM

In the study of God's will in us, it is very convenient to make a rough division of our subject into general and particular. There are first the interests and problems that affect us all collectively, in which we have a common concern and from which no one

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may legitimately seek exemption; of these interests and problems we may fairly say every man should do so and so, or so and so, or the law should be so and so, or so and so; and secondly there are those other problems in which individual difference and the interplay of one or two individualities is predominant. This is of course no hard and fast classification, but it gives a method of approach. We can begin with the generalised person in ourselves and end with individuality.

In the world of ideas about me, I have found going on a great social and political movement that correlates itself with my conception of God's service as the aspect towards us of the general human scheme. This movement is Socialism. Socialism is to me no clear-cut system of theories and dogmas; it is one of those solid and extensive and synthetic ideas that are better indicated by a number of different formulæ than by one, just as one only realises a statue by walking round it and seeing it from a number of points of view. I do not think it is to be completely expressed by any one system of formulæ or by any one man. Its common quality from nearly every point of view is the subordination of the will of the self-seeking individual to the idea of a racial well-being embodied in an organised state under God, organised for every end that can be best obtained collectively. Upon that I seize; that is the value of Socialism for me.

Socialism for me is a common step we are all taking in the realisation of God's purpose of human organisation and unity. It is the organisation of the general

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effort in regard to a great mass of common and fundamental interests that have hitherto been dispersedly served.

I see humanity scattered over the world, dispersed, conflicting, unawakened. . . . I see human life as avoidable waste and curable confusion. I see peasants living in wretched huts knee-deep in manure, mere parasites on their own pigs and cows; I see shy hunters wandering in primeval forests; I see the grimy millions who slave for industrial production; I see some who are extravagant and yet contemptible creatures of luxury, and some leading lives of shame and indignity; tens of thousands of wealthy people wasting lives in vulgar and unsatisfying trivialities, hundreds of thousands meanly chaffering themselves, rich or poor, in the wasteful byways of trade; I see gamblers, fools, brutes, toilers, martyrs. Their disorder of effort, the spectacle of futility is an offence against God, and fills the believer with a passionate desire to end waste, to create order, to develop understanding. . . . All these people reflect and are part of the waste and discontent of life. The co-ordination of the species to a common general end, and the quest for a personal salvation, are the two aspects, the outer and the inner, the social and the individual aspect of essentially the same desire. . . .

And yet dispersed as all these people are, they are far more closely drawn together to common ends and a common effort than the filthy savages who ate food rotten and uncooked in the age of unpolished stone. They live in the mere opening phase of a synthesis of effort the end of which surpasses our imagination.

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Such intercourse and community as they have is only a dawn. We look towards the day, the day of the earthly Kingdom of God, the organised civilised world state. The first clear intimation of that conscious synthesis of human thought to which I look, the first edge of the dayspring, has arisen—as Socialism, as I conceive of Socialism. Socialism is to me no more and no less than the realisation of a common and universal loyalty in mankind, the awakening of a collective consciousness of duty in humanity, the awakening of a collective will and a collective mind out of which finer individualities may arise for ever in a perpetual series of fresh endeavours and fresh achievements for the race.

§ 4

A CRITICISM OF CERTAIN FORMS OF SOCIALISM

It seems to me one of the heedless errors arising in this way out of the conception of a synthesis of the will and thought of the species will necessarily differ from conceptions of Socialism arrived at in other and different ways. It is based on a self-discontent and self-abnegation and not on self-satisfaction, and it will be essentially a scheme of persistent thought and construction; it will support this or that method of law-making, or this or that method of economic exploitation, or this or that matter of social grouping, only incidentally and in relation to that.

Such a conception of Socialism is very remote in spirit, however it may agree in method, from that

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philanthropic administrative socialism one finds among the British ruling administrative class. That seems to me to be based on a pity which is largely unjustifiable and a pride that is altogether unintelligent. The pity is for the obvious wants and distresses of poverty, the pride appears in the arrogant and aggressive conception of raising one's fellows. I have no strong feeling for the horrors and discomforts of poverty as such, sensibilities can be hardened to endure the life led by the *Romans* in Dartmoor jail a hundred years ago,* or softened to detect the crumpled rose-leaf; what disgusts me is the stupidity and warring purposes of which poverty is the outcome. When it comes to this idea of raising human beings, I must confess the only person I feel concerned about raising is H. G. Wells, and that even in his case my energies might be better employed. After all, presently he must die and the world will have done with him. His output for the species is more important than his individual elevation.

Moreover, all this talk of raising implies a classification I doubt. I find it hard to fix any standards that will determine who is above me and who below. Most people are different from me I perceive, but which among them is better, which worse? I have a certain power of communicating with other minds, but what experiences I communicate seem often far thinner and poorer stuff than those which others less expressive than I half fail to communicate and half display to me. My "inferiors," judged by the com-

* See "The Story of Dartmoor Prison," by Basil Thomson (Heinemann—1907).

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mon social standards, seem indeed intellectually more limited than I and with a narrower outlook; they are often dirtier and more driven, more under the stress of hunger and animal appetites; but on the other hand have they not more vigorous sensations than I, and through sheer coarsening and hardening of fibre, the power to do more toilsome things and sustain intenser sensations than I could endure? When I sit upon the bench, a respectable magistrate, and commit some battered reprobate for trial for this lurid offence or that, or send him or her to prison for drunkenness or suchlike indecorum, the doubt drifts into my mind which of us after all is indeed getting nearest to the keen edge of life. Are I and my respectable colleagues much more than successful evasions of *that*? Perhaps these people in the dock know more of the essential strains and stresses of nature, are more intimate with pain. At any rate I do not think I am justified in saying certainly that they do not know. . . .

No, I do not want to raise people using my own position as a standard, I do not want to be one of a gang of consciously superior people, I do not want arrogantly to change the quality of other lives. I do not want to interfere with other lives, except incidentally—incidentally, in this way that I do want to get an understanding with them. I do want to share and feel with them in our commerce with the collective mind. I suppose I do not stretch language very much when I say I want to get rid of stresses and obstacles between our minds and personalities and to establish a relation that is understanding and sym-

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pathy and that will bring us at last to the harmonious service of God.

I want to make more generally possible a relationship of communication and interchange, that for want of a less battered and ambiguous word I must needs call love.

And if I disavow the Socialism of condescension, so also do I disavow the Socialism of revolt. There is a form of Socialism based upon the economic generalisations of Marx, an economic fatalistic Socialism that I hold to be rather wrong in its vision of facts, rather more distinctly wrong in its theory, and altogether wrong and hopeless in its spirit. It preaches, as inevitable, a concentration of property in the hands of a limited number of property owners and the expropriation of the great proletarian mass of mankind, a concentration which is after all no more than a tendency conditional on changing and changeable conventions about property, and it finds its hope of a better future in the outcome of a class conflict between the expropriated Many and the expropriating Few. Both sides are to be equally swayed by self-interest, but the toilers are to be gregarious and mutually loyal in their self-interest—Heaven knows why, except that otherwise the Marxist dream will not work. The experience of contemporary events seems to show at least an equal power of combination for material ends among owners and employers as among workers.

Now this class-war idea is one diametrically opposed to that religious-spirited Socialism which supplies the form of my general activities. This class-war

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idea would exacerbate the antagonism of the interests of the many individuals against the few individuals, and I would oppose the service of the Whole to the self-seeking of the Individual. The spirit and constructive intention of the many to-day are no better than those of the few, poor and rich alike are over-individualised, self-seeking and non-creative; to organise the confused jostling competitions, over-reachings, envies and hatreds of to-day into two great class-hatreds and antagonisms will advance the reign of love at most only a very little, only so far as it will simplify and make plain certain issues. It may very possibly not advance the reign of love at all, but rather shatter the order we have. Socialism, as I conceive it, seeks to change economic arrangements only by the way, as an aspect and outcome of a great change, a change in the spirit and method of human intercourse, a change from an individual claim to a claim to serve the Spirit of Mankind fully and completely.

I know that here I go beyond the limits many Socialists in the past, and some who are still contemporary, have set for themselves. Much Socialism to-day seems to think of itself as fighting a battle against poverty and its concomitants alone. Now poverty is only a symptom of a profounder evil and is never to be cured by itself. It is one aspect of divided and dispersed purposes. If Socialism is only a conflict with poverty, Socialism is nothing. But I hold that Socialism is and must be a battle against human stupidity and egotism and disorder, a battle fought all through the forests and jungles of the soul

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of man. As we get intellectual and moral light and the realisation of brotherhood, so social and economic organisation will develop. But the Socialist may attack poverty for ever, disregarding the intellectual and moral factors that necessitate it, and he will remain until the end a purely economic doctrinaire crying in the wilderness in vain.

And if I antagonise myself in this way to the philanthropic Socialism of kindly prosperous people on the one hand and to the fierce class-hatred Socialism on the other, still more am I opposed to that furtive Socialism of the specialist which one meets most typically in the Fabian Society. It arises very naturally out of what I may perhaps call specialist fatigue and impatience. It is very easy for writers like myself to deal in the broad generalities of Socialism and urge their adoption as general principles; it is altogether another affair with a man who sets himself to work out the riddle of the complications of actuality in order to modify them in the direction of Socialism. He finds himself in a jungle of difficulties that strain his intellectual power to the utmost. He emerges at last with conclusions, and they are rarely the obvious conclusions, as to what needs to be done. Even the people of his own side he finds do not see as he sees; they are, he perceives, crude and ignorant.

Now I hold that his duty is to explain his discoveries and intentions until they see as he sees. But the specialist temperament is often not a generalising and expository temperament. Specialists are apt to measure minds by their specialty and underrate the average intelligence. The specialist is appalled by

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the real task before him, and he sets himself by tricks and misrepresentations, by benevolent scoundrelism in fact, to effect changes he desires. Too often he fails even in that. Where he might have found fellowship he arouses suspicion. And even if a thing is done in this way, its essential merit is lost. For it is better, I hold, for a man to die of his disease than to be cured unwittingly. That is to cheat him of life and to cheat life of the contribution his consciousness might have given it.

The Socialism of my beliefs rests on a profounder faith and a broader proposition. It looks over and beyond the warring purposes of to-day as a general may look over and beyond a crowd of sullen, excited and confused recruits, to the day when they will be disciplined, exercised, trained, willing and convergent on a common end. It holds persistently to the idea of men increasingly working in agreement, doing things that are sane to do, on a basis of mutual helpfulness, temperance and toleration. It sees the great masses of humanity rising out of base and immediate anxieties, out of dwarfing pressures and cramped surroundings, to understanding and participation and fine effort. It sees the resources of the earth husbanded and harvested, economised and used with scientific skill for the maximum of result. It sees towns and cities finely built, a race of beings finely bred and taught and trained, open ways and peace and freedom from end to end of the earth. It sees beauty increasing in humanity, about humanity and through humanity. Through this great body of mankind goes evermore an increasing understanding, an

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intensifying brotherhood. As Christians have dreamt of the New Jerusalem so does Socialism, growing ever more temperate, patient, forgiving and resolute, set its face to the World City of Mankind.

§ 5

HATE AND LOVE

Before I go on to point out the broad principles of action that flow from this wide conception of Socialism, I may perhaps give a section to elucidating that opposition of hate and love I made when I dealt with the class war. I have already used the word love several times; it is an ambiguous word and it may be well to spend a few words in making clear the sense in which it is used here. I use it here in a broad sense to convey all that complex of motives, impulses, sentiments, that incline us to find our happiness and satisfactions in the happiness and sympathy of others and to merge ourselves emotionally in a design greater than ourselves. Essentially it is a synthetic force in human affairs, the merger tendency, a linking force, an expression in personal will and feeling of the common element and interest. It insists upon resemblances and shares and sympathies. And hate, I take it, is the emotional aspect of antagonism, it is the expression in personal will and feeling of the individual's separation from others. It is the competing and destructive tendency. So long as we are individuals and members of a species, we must needs both hate and love. But because I believe, as I have already

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confessed, that the oneness of the species is a greater fact than individuality, and that we individuals are temporary separations from a collective purpose, and since hate eliminates itself by eliminating its objects, whilst love multiplies itself by multiplying its objects, so love must be a thing more comprehensive and enduring than hate.

Moreover, hate must be in its nature a good thing. We individuals exist as such, I believe, for the purpose in things, and our separations and antagonisms serve that purpose. We play against each other like hammer and anvil. But the synthesis of a collective will in humanity, which is I believe our human and terrestrial share in that purpose, is an idea that carries with it a conception of a secular alteration in the scope and method of both love and hate. Both widen and change with man's widening and developing apprehension of the purpose he serves. The savage man loves in gusts a fellow creature or so about him, and fears and hates all other people. Every expansion of his scope and ideas widens either circle. The common man of our civilised world loves not only many of his friends and associates systematically and enduringly, but dimly he loves also his city and his country, his creed and his race; he loves it may be less intensely but over a far wider field and much more steadily. But he hates also more widely if less passionately and vehemently than a savage, and since love makes rather harmony and peace and hate rather conflicts and events, one may easily be led to suppose that hate is the ruling motive in human affairs. Men band themselves together in leagues and

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loyalties, in cults and organisations and nationalities, and it is often hard to say whether the bond is one of love for the association or hatred of those to whom the association is antagonised. The two things pass insensibly into one another. London people have recently seen an instance of the transition, in the Brown Dog statue riots (1908). A number of people drawn together by their common pity for animal suffering, by love indeed of the most disinterested sort, had so forgotten their initial spirit as to erect a monument with an inscription at once recklessly untruthful, spiteful in spirit and particularly vexatious to one great medical school of London. They have provoked riots and placarded London with taunts and irritating misrepresentation of the spirit of medical research, and they have infected a whole fresh generation of London students with a bitter partisan contempt for the humanitarian effort that has so lamentably misconducted itself. Both sides vow they will never give in, and the antivivisectionists are busy manufacturing small china copies of the Brown Dog figure, inscription and all, for purposes of domestic irritation. Here hate, the evil ugly brother of effort, has manifestly slain love the initiator and taken the affair in hand. That is a little model of human conflicts. So soon as we become militant and play against one another, comes this danger of strain and this possible reversal of motive. The fight begins. Into a pit of heat and hate fall right and wrong together.

Now it seems to me that a religious faith such as I have set forth in the second Book, and a clear sense

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of our community of blood with all mankind, must necessarily affect both our loving and our hatred. It will certainly not abolish hate, but it will subordinate it altogether to love. We are individuals, so the Purpose presents itself to me, in order that we may hate the things that have to go, ugliness, baseness, insufficiency, unreality, that we may love and experiment and strive for the things that collectively we seek—power and beauty. Before our conversion we did this darkly and with our hate spreading to persons and parties from the things for which they stood. But the believer will hate lovingly and without fear. We are of one blood and substance with our antagonists, even with those that we desire keenly may die and leave no issue in flesh or persuasion. They all touch us and are part of one necessary experience. They are all necessary to the synthesis, even if they are necessary only as the potato-peel in the dust-bin is necessary to my dinner.

So it is I disavow and deplore the whole spirit of class-war Socialism with its doctrine of hate, its envious assault upon the leisure and freedom of the wealthy. Without leisure and freedom and the experience of life they gave, the ideas of Socialism could never have been born. The true mission of Socialism is against darkness, vanity and cowardice, that darkness which hides from the property owner the intense beauty, the potentialities of interest, the splendid possibilities of life, that vanity and cowardice that make him clutch his precious holdings and fear and hate the shadow of change. It has to teach the collective organisation of society; and to that the class-

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consciousness and intense class-prejudices of the worker need to bow quite as much as those of the property owner. But when I say that Socialism's mission is to teach, I do not mean that its mission is a merely verbal and mental one; it must use all instruments and teach by example as well as precept. Socialism by becoming charitable and merciful will not cease to be militant. Socialism must, lovingly but resolutely, use law, use force, to dispossess the owners of socially disadvantageous wealth, as one coerces a lunatic brother or takes a wrongfully acquired toy from a spoiled and obstinate child. It must intervene between all who would keep their children from instruction in the business of citizenship and the lessons of fraternity. It must build and guard what it builds with laws and with that sword which is behind all laws. Non-resistance is for the non-constructive man, for the hermit in the cave and the naked saint in the dust; the builder and maker with the first stroke of his foundation spade uses force and opens war against the anti-builder.

§ 6

THE PRELIMINARY SOCIAL DUTY

The belief I have that contributing to the development of the collective being of man is the individual's general meaning and duty, and the formulæ of the Socialism which embodies this belief so far as our common activities go, give a general framework and direction how a man or woman should live. (I do

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throughout all this book mean man or woman equally when I write of "man," unless it is manifestly inapplicable.)

And first in this present time he must see to it that he does live, that is to say he must get food, clothing, covering, and adequate leisure for the finer aspects of living. Socialism plans an organised civilisation in which these things will be a collective solicitude, and the gaining of a subsistence an easy preliminary to the fine drama of existence, but in the world as we have it we are forced to engage much of our energy in scrambling for these preliminary necessities. Our problems of conduct lie in the world as it is and not in the world as we want it to be. First then a man must get a living, a fair, civilised living for himself. It is a fundamental duty. It must be a fair living, not pinched nor mean nor strained. A man can do nothing higher, he can be no service to any cause, until he himself is fed and clothed and equipped and free. He must earn this living or equip himself to earn it in some way not socially disadvantageous, he must contrive as far as possible that the work he does shall be constructive and contributory to the general well-being.

And these primary necessities of food, clothing and freedom being secured, one comes to the general disposition of one's surplus energy. With regard to that I think that a very simple proposition follows from the broad beliefs I have chosen to adopt. The general duty of a man, his existence being secured, is to educate, and chiefly to educate and develop himself. It is his duty to live, to make all he can out of him-

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self and life, to get full of experience, to make himself fine and perceiving and expressive, to render his experience and perceptions honestly and helpfully to others. And in particular he has to educate himself and others with himself in Socialism. He has to make and keep this idea of synthetic human effort and of conscious constructive effort clear first to himself and then clear in the general mind. For it is an idea that comes and goes. We are all of us continually lapsing from it towards individual isolation again. He needs, we all need, constant refreshment in this belief if it is to remain a predominant living fact in our lives.

And that duty of education, of building up the collective idea and organisation of humanity, falls into various divisions depending in their importance upon individual quality. For all there is one personal work that none may evade, and that is thinking hard, criticising strenuously and understanding as clearly as one can religion, socialism and the general principle of one's acts. The intellectual factor is of primary importance in my religion. I can see no more reason why salvation should come to the intellectually incapable than to the morally incapable. For simple souls thinking in simple processes, salvation perhaps comes easily, but there is none for the intellectual coward, for the mental sloven and sluggard, for the stupid and obdurate mind. The Believer will think hard and continue to grow and learn, to read and seek discussion as his needs determine.

Correlated with one's own intellectual activity, part of it and growing out of it for almost everyone,

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is intellectual work with and upon others. By teaching we learn. Not to communicate one's thoughts to others, to keep one's thoughts to oneself as people say, is either cowardice or pride. It is a form of sin. A good man is an open man. It is a duty to talk, teach, explain, write, lecture, read and listen. Every truly religious man, every good Socialist, is a propagandist. Those who cannot write or discuss can talk, those who cannot argue can induce people to listen to others and read. We have a belief and an idea that we want to spread, each to the utmost of his means and measure, throughout all the world. We have a thought that we want to make humanity's thought. And it is a duty too that one should, within the compass of one's ability, make teaching, writing and lecturing possible where it has not existed before. This can be done in a hundred ways, by founding and enlarging schools and universities and chairs, for example; by making print and reading and all the material of thought cheap and abundant, by organising discussion and societies for inquiry.

And talk and thought and study are but the more generalised aspects of duty. The Believer may find his own special aptitude lies rather among concrete things, in experimenting and promoting experiments in collective action. Things teach as well as words, and some of us are most expressive by concrete methods. The Believer will work himself and help others to his utmost in all those developments of material civilisation, in organised sanitation for example, all those developments that force collective acts upon communities and collective realisations

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into the minds of men. And the whole field of scientific research is a field of duty calling to everyone who can enter it, to add to the permanent store of knowledge and new resources for the race.

The Mind of that Civilised State we seek to make by giving ourselves into its making, is evidently the central work before us. But while the writer, the publisher and printer, the bookseller and librarian and teacher and preacher, the investigator and experimenter, the reader and everyone who thinks, will be contributing themselves to this great organised mind and intention in the world, many sorts of specialised men will be more immediately concerned with parallel and more concrete aspects of the human synthesis. The medical worker and the medical investigator, for example, will be building up the body of a new generation, the body of the civilised state, and he will be doing all he can, not simply as an individual, but as a citizen, to *organise* his services of cure and prevention, of hygiene and selection. A great and growing multitude of men will be working out the apparatus of the civilised state; the organisers of transit and housing, the engineers in their incessantly increasing variety, the miners and geologists estimating the world's resources in metals and minerals, the mechanical inventors perpetually economising force. The scientific agriculturist again will be studying the food supply of the world as a whole, and how it may be increased and distributed and economised. And to the student of law comes the task of rephrasing his intricate and often quite beautiful science in relation to modern conceptions.

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All these and a hundred other aspects are integral to the wide project of Constructive Socialism as it shapes itself in my faith.

§ 7

WRONG WAYS OF LIVING

When we lay down the proposition that it is one's duty to get one's living in some way not socially disadvantageous, and as far as possible by work that is contributory to the general well-being and development, when we state that one's surplus energies, after one's living is gained, must be devoted to experience, self-development and constructive work, it is clear we condemn by implication many modes of life that are followed to-day.

For example, it is manifest we condemn living in idleness or on non-productive sport, on the income derived from private property, and all sorts of ways of earning a living that cannot be shown to conduce to the constructive process. We condemn trading that is merely speculative, and in fact all trading and manufacture that is not a positive social service; we condemn living by gambling or by playing games for either stakes or pay. Much more do we condemn dishonest or fraudulent trading and every act of advertisement that is not punctiliously truthful. We must condemn too the taking of any income from the community that is neither earned nor conceded in the collective interest. But to this last point, and to certain issues arising out of it, I will return in the section next following this one.

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And it follows evidently from our general propositions that every form of prostitution is a double sin, against one's individuality and against the species which we serve by the development of that individuality's preferences and idiosyncrasies.

And by prostitution I mean not simply the act of a woman who sells for money, and against her thoughts and preferences, her smiles and endearments and the secret beauty and pleasure of her body, but the act of anyone who, to gain a living, suppresses himself, does things in a manner alien to himself and subverts aims and purposes with which he disagrees. The journalist who writes against his personal convictions, the solicitor who knowingly assists the schemes of rogues, the barrister who pits himself against what he perceives is justice and the right, the artist who does unbeautiful things or less beautiful things than he might, simply to please base employers, the craftsman who makes instruments for foolish uses or bad uses, the dealer who sells and pushes an article because it fits the customer's folly; all these are prostitutes of mind and soul if not of body, with no right to lift an eyebrow at the painted disasters of the streets.

§ 8

SOCIAL PARASITISM AND CONTEMPORARY INJUSTICES

These broad principles about one's way of living are very simple; our minds move freely among them. But the real interest is with the individual case, and the individual case is almost always complicated by

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the fact that the existing social and economic system is based upon conditions that the growing collective intelligence condemns as unjust and undesirable, and that the constructive spirit in men now seeks to supersede. We have to live in a provisional State while we dream of and work for a better one.

The ideal life for the ordinary man in a civilised, that is to say a Socialist, State would be in public employment or in private enterprise aiming at public recognition. But in our present world only a small minority can have that direct and honourable relation of public service in the work they do; most of the important business of the community is done upon the older and more tortuous private ownership system, and the great mass of men in socially useful employment find themselves working only indirectly for the community and directly for the profit of a private owner, or they themselves are private owners. Every man who has any money put by in the bank, or any money invested, is a private owner, and in so far as he draws interest or profit from this investment he is a social parasite. It is in practice almost impossible to divest oneself of that parasitic quality however straightforward the general principle may be.

It is practically impossible for two equally valid sets of reasons. The first is that under existing conditions, saving and investment constitute the only way to rest and security in old age, to leisure, study and intellectual independence, to the safe upbringing of a family and the happiness of one's weaker dependents. These are things that should not be left for the individual to provide; in the civilised state,

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the state itself will insure every citizen against these anxieties that now make the study of the City Article almost a duty. To abandon saving and investment to-day, and to do so is of course to abandon all insurance, is to become a driven and uncertain worker, to risk one's personal freedom and culture and the upbringing and efficiency of one's children. It is to lower the standard of one's personal civilisation, to think with less deliberation and less detachment, to fall away from that work of accumulating fine habits and beautiful and pleasant ways of living contributory to the coming State. And in the second place there is not only no return for such a sacrifice in anything won for Socialism, but for fine-thinking and living people to give up property is merely to let it pass into the hands of more egoistic possessors. Since at present things must be privately owned, it is better that they should be owned by people consciously working for social development and willing to use them to that end.

We have to live in the present system and under the conditions of the present system, while we work with all our power to change that system for a better one.

The case of Cadburys, the cocoa and chocolate makers, and the practical slavery under the Portuguese of the East African negroes who grow the raw material for Messrs. Cadbury, is an illuminating one in this connection. The Cadburys, like the Rowntrees, are well known as an energetic and public-spirited family, their social and industrial experiments at Bournville and their general social and

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political activities are broad and constructive in the best sense. But they find themselves in the peculiar dilemma that they must either abandon an important and profitable portion of their great manufacture or continue to buy produce grown under cruel and even horrible conditions. Their retirement from the branch of the cocoa and chocolate trade concerned would, under these circumstances, mean no diminution of the manufacture or of the horrors of this particular slavery; it would mean merely that less humanitarian manufacturers would step in to take up the abandoned trade. The self-righteous individualist would have no doubts about the question; he would keep his hands clean anyhow, retrench his social work, abandon the types of cocoa involved, and pass by on the other side. But indeed I do not believe we came into the mire of life simply to hold our hands up out of it. Messrs. Cadbury follow a better line; they keep their business going, and exert themselves in every way to let light into the secrets of Portuguese East Africa and to organise a better control of these labour cruelties. That I think is altogether the right course in this difficulty.

We cannot keep our hands clean in this world as it is. There is no excuse indeed for a life of fraud or any other positive fruitless wrong-doing or for a purely parasitic non-productive life, yet all but the fortunate few who are properly paid and recognised state servants must in financial and business matters do their best amidst and through institutions tainted with injustice and flawed with unrealities. All Socialists everywhere are like expeditionary soldiers far

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ahead of the main advance. The organised state that should own and administer their possessions for the general good has not arrived to take them over; and in the meanwhile they must act like its anticipatory agents according to their lights and make things ready for its coming.

The Believer then who is not in the public service, whose life lies among the operations of private enterprise, must work always on the supposition that the property he administers, the business in which he works, the profession he follows, is destined to be taken over and organised collectively for the commonweal and must be made ready for the taking over; that the private outlook he secures by investment, the provision he makes for his friends and children, are temporary, wasteful, though at present unavoidable devices to be presently merged in and superseded by the broad and scientific provisions of the co-operative commonwealth.

§ 9

THE CASE OF THE WIFE AND MOTHER

These principles give a rule also for the problem that faces the great majority of thinking wives and mothers to-day. The most urgent and necessary social work falls upon them; they bear, and largely educate and order the homes of, the next generation, and they have no direct recognition from the community for either of these supreme functions. They are supposed to perform them not for God or the

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world, but to please and satisfy a particular man. Our laws, our social conventions, our economic methods, so hem a woman about that, however fitted for and desirous of maternity she may be, she can only effectually do that duty in a dependent relation to her husband. Nearly always he is the paymaster, and if his payments are grudging or irregular, she has little remedy short of a breach and the rupture of the home. Her duty is conceived of as first to him and only secondarily to her children and the State. Many wives become under these circumstances, mere prostitutes to their husbands, often evading the bearing of children with their consent and even at their request, and "loving for a living." That is a natural outcome of the proprietary theory of the family out of which our civilisation emerges. But our modern ideas trend more and more to regard a woman's primary duty to be her duty to the children and to the world to which she gives them. She is to be a citizen side by side with her husband; no longer is he to intervene between her and the community. As a matter of contemporary fact he can do so and does so habitually, and most women have to square their ideas of life to that possibility.

Before any woman who is clear-headed enough to perceive that this great business of motherhood is one of supreme public importance, there are a number of alternatives at the present time. She may, like Grant Allen's heroine in "The Woman Who Did," declare an exaggerated and impossible independence, refuse the fetters of marriage and bear children to a lover. This, in the present state of

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public opinion in almost every existing social atmosphere, would be a purely anarchistic course. It would mean a fatherless home, and since the woman will have to play the double part of income-earner and mother, an impoverished and struggling home. It would mean also an unsocial because ostracised home. In most cases, and even assuming it to be right in idea, it would still be on all fours with that immediate abandonment of private property we have already discussed, a sort of suicide that helps the world nothing.

Or she may "strike," refuse marriage and pursue a solitary and childless career, engaging her surplus energies in constructive work. But that also is suicide; it is to miss the keenest experiences, the finest realities life has to offer.

Or she may meet a man whom she can trust to keep a treaty with her and supplement the common interpretations and legal insufficiencies of the marriage bond, who will respect her always as a free and independent person, will abstain absolutely from authoritative methods, and will either share and trust his income and property with her in a frank communism, or give her a sufficient and private income for her personal use. It is only fair under existing economic conditions that at marriage a husband should insure his life in his wife's interest, and I do not think it would be impossible to bring our legal marriage contract into accord with modern ideas in that matter. Certainly it should be legally imperative that at the birth of each child a new policy upon its father's life, as the income-getter, should begin.

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The latter provision at least should be a normal condition of marriage and one that a wife should have power to enforce when payments fall away. With such safeguards and under such conditions marriage ceases to be a haphazard dependence for a woman, and she may live, teaching and rearing and free, almost as though the co-operative commonwealth had come.

But in many cases, since great numbers of women marry so young and so ignorantly that their thinking about realities begins only after marriage, a woman will find herself already married to a man before she realises the significance of these things. She may be already the mother of children. Her husband's ideas may not be her ideas. He may dominate, he may prohibit, he may intervene, he may default. He may, if he sees fit, burthen the family income with the charges of his illegitimate offspring. He may by his will deprive wife and children of any share of the family property.

We live in the world as it is and not in the world as it should be. That sentence becomes the refrain of this discussion.

The normal modern married woman has to make the best of a bad position, to do her best under the old conditions, to live as though she was under the new conditions, to make good citizens, to give her spare energies as far as she can to bringing about a better state of affairs. Like the private property owner and the official in a privately owned business, her best method of conduct is to consider herself an unrecognised public official, irregularly commanded

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and improperly paid. There is no good in flagrant rebellion. She has to study her particular circumstances and make what good she can out of them, keeping her face towards the coming time. I cannot better the image I have already used for the thinking and believing modern-minded people of to-day as an advance guard cut off from proper supplies, ill furnished so that makeshift prevails, and rather demoralised. We have to be wise as well as loyal; discretion itself is loyalty to the coming State.

§ 10

OF ABSTINENCES AND DISCIPLINES

I have already confessed that my nature is one that dislikes abstinences and is wearied by and wary of excess.

I do not feel that it is right to suppress altogether any part of one's being. In itself abstinence seems to me a refusal to experience, and that, upon the lines of thought I follow, is to say that abstinence for its own sake is evil. But for an end all abstinences are permissible, and if the kinetic type of believer finds both his individual and his associated efficiency enhanced by a systematic discipline, if he is convinced that he must specialise because of the discursiveness of his motives, because there is something he wants to do or be so good that the rest of them may very well be suppressed for its sake, then he must suppress. But the virtue is in what he gets done and not in what he does not do. Reasonable

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fear is a sound reason for abstinence, as when a man has a passion like a lightly sleeping maniac that the slightest indulgence will arouse. Then he must needs adopt heroic abstinence, and even more so must he take to preventive restraint if he sees any motive becoming unruly and urgent and troublesome. Fear is a sound reason for abstinence and so is love. Many who have sensitive imaginations nowadays very properly abstain from meat because of butchery. And it is often needful, out of love and brotherhood, to abstain from things harmless to oneself because they are inconveniently alluring to others linked to us. The moderate drinker who sits at table sipping his wine in the sight of one he knows to be a potential dipsomaniac is at the best an unloving fool.

But mere abstinence and the doing of barren toilsome unrewarding things for the sake of the toil, is a perversion of one's impulses. There is neither honour nor virtue nor good in that.

I do not believe in negative virtues. I think the ideas of them arise out of the system of metaphysical errors I have roughly analysed in my first Book, out of the inherent tendency of the mind to make the relative absolute and to convert quantitative into qualitative differences. Our minds fall very readily under the spell of such unmitigated words as Purity and Chastity. Only death beyond decay, absolute non-existence, can be Pure and Chaste. Life is impurity, fact is impure. Everything has traces of alien matter; our very health is dependent upon parasitic bacteria; the purest blood in the world has a tainted ancestor, and not a saint but has evil thoughts. It

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was blindness to that which set men stoning the woman taken in adultery. They forgot what they were made of. This stupidity, this unreasonable idealism of the common mind, fills life to-day with cruelties and exclusions, with partial suicides and secret shames. But we are born impure, we die impure; it is a fable that spotless white lilies sprang from any saint's decay, and the chastity of monk or nun is but introverted impurity. We have to take life valiantly on these conditions and make such honour and beauty and sympathy out of our confusions, gather such constructive experience, as we may.

There is a mass of real superstition upon these points, a belief in a magic purity, in magic personalities who can say—

My strength is as the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure,

and wonderful clairvoyant innocents like the young man in Mr. Kipling's "Finest Story in the World."

There is a lurking disposition to believe, even among those who lead the normal type of life, that the abstinent and chastely celibate are exceptionally healthy, energetic, immune. The wildest claims are made. But indeed it is true for all who can see the facts of life simply and plainly, that man is an omnivorous, versatile, various creature and can draw his strength from a hundred varieties of nourishment. He has physiological idiosyncrasies too that are indifferent to biological classifications and moral gen-

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eralities. It is not true that his absorbent vessels begin their task as children begin the guessing game, by asking, "Is it animal, vegetable or mineral?" He responds to stimulation and recuperates after the exhaustion of his response, and his being is singularly careless whether the stimulation comes as a drug or stimulant, or as anger or music or noble appeals.

Most people speak of drugs in the spirit of that admirable firm of soap-boilers which assures its customers that the soap they make "contains no chemicals." Drugs are supposed to be a mystic diabolical class of substance, remote from and contrasting in their nature with all other things. So people banish a tonic from the house and stuff their children with manufactured cereals and chocolate creams. The drunken helot of this system of absurdities is the Christian Scientist who denies healing only to those who have studied pathology, and declares that anything whatever put into a bottle and labelled with directions for its use by a doctor is thereby damnable and damned. But indeed all drugs and all the things of life have their uses and dangers, and there is no wholesale truth to excuse us a particular wisdom and watchfulness in these matters. Unless we except smoking as an unclean and needless artificiality, all these matters of eating and drinking and habit are matters of more or less. It seems to me foolish to make anything that is stimulating and pleasurable into a habit, for that is slowly and surely to lose a stimulus and pleasure and create a need that it may become painful to check or control. The moral rule

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of my standards is irregularity. If I were a father confessor I should begin my catalogue of sins by asking: "Are you a man of regular life?" And I would charge my penitent to go away forthwith and commit some practicable saving irregularity; to fast or get drunk or climb a mountain or sup on pork and beans or give up smoking or spend a month with publicans and sinners. Right conduct for the common unspecialised man lies delicately adjusted between defect and excess as a watch is adjusted and adjustable between fast and slow. We none of us altogether and always keep the balance or are altogether safe from losing it. We swing, balancing and adjusting, along our path. Life is that, and abstinence is for the most part a mere evasion of life.

§ 11

ON FORGETTING, AND THE NEED OF PRAYER, READING, DISCUSSION AND WORSHIP

One aspect of life I had very much in mind when I planned those Samurai disciplines of mine. It was forgetting.

We forget. Even after we have found Salvation, we have to keep hold of Salvation; believing, we must continue to believe. We cannot always be at a high level of noble emotion. We have clambered on the ship of Faith and found our place and work aboard, and even while we are busied upon it, behold we are back and drowning in the sea of chaotic things.

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Every religious body, every religious teacher, has appreciated this difficulty and the need there is of reminders and renewals. Faith needs restatement and revival as the body needs food. And since the Believer is to seek much experience and be a judge of less or more in many things, it is particularly necessary that he should keep hold upon a living Faith.

How may he best do this?

I think we may state it as a general duty that he must do whatever he can to keep his faith constantly alive. But beyond that, what a man must do depends almost entirely upon his own intellectual character. Many people of a regular type of mind can refresh themselves by some recurrent duty, by repeating a daily prayer, by daily reading or re-reading some devotional book. With others constant repetition leads to a mental and spiritual deadening, until beautiful phrases become unmeaning, eloquent statements inane and ridiculous,—matter for parody. All who can, I think, should pray and should read and re-read what they have found spiritually helpful, and if they know of others of kindred dispositions and can organise these exercises, they should do so. Collective worship again is a necessity for many Believers. For many, the public religious services of this or that form of Christianity supply an atmosphere rich in the essential quality of religion and abounding in phrases about the religious life, mellow from the use of centuries and almost immediately applicable. It seems to me that if one can do so, one should participate in such public worship and habituate oneself to

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read back into it that collective purpose and conscience it once embodied.

Very much is to be said for the ceremony of Holy Communion or the Mass, for those whom accident or intellectual scruples do not debar. I do not think young modern liberal thinkers quite appreciate the finer aspects of this, the one universal service of the Christian Church. Some of them are set forth very finely by a man who has been something of a martyr for conscience's sake, and is for me a hero as well as a friend, in a world not rich in heroes,* the Rev. Stewart Headlam, in his book, "The Meaning of the Mass."

With others again, Faith can be most animated by writing, by confession, by discussion, by talk with friends or antagonists.

One or other or all of these things the Believer must do, for the mind is a living and moving process, and the thing that lies inert in it is presently covered up by new interests and lost. If you make a sort of King Log of your faith, presently something else will be sitting upon it, pride or self-interest, or some rebel craving, King *de facto* of your soul, directing it back to anarchy.

For many types that, however, is exactly what happens with public worship. They *do* get a King Log in Ceremony. And if you deliberately overcome and suppress your perception of and repugnance to the perfunctoriness of religion in nine-tenths of the worshippers about you, you may be destroying at the same time your own intellectual and moral sen-

* Obviously written in 1908

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sitiveness. But I am not suggesting that you should force yourself to take part in public worship against your perceptions, but only that if it helps you to worship you should not hesitate to do so.

We deal here with a real need that is not to be fettered by any general prescription. I have one Cambridge friend who finds nothing so uplifting in the world as the atmosphere of the afternoon service in the choir of King's College Chapel, and another, a very great and distinguished and theologically sceptical woman, who accustomed herself for some time to hear from a distant corner the evening service in St. Paul's Cathedral and who would go great distances to do that.

Many people find an exaltation and broadening of the mind in mountain scenery and the starry heavens and the wide arc of the sea; and as I have already said, it was part of the disciplines of these Samurai of mine that yearly they should go apart for at least a week of solitary wandering and meditation in lonely and desolate places. Music again is a frequent means of release from the narrow life as it closes about us. One man I know makes an anthology into which he copies to re-read any passage that stirs and revives in him the sense of broad issues. Others again seem able to refresh their nobility of outlook in the atmosphere of an intense personal love.

Some of us seem to forget almost as if it were an essential part of ourselves. Such a man as myself, irritable, easily fatigued and bored, versatile, sensuous, curious, and a little greedy for experience, is perpetually losing touch with his faith, so that indeed I

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sometimes turn over these pages that I have written and come upon my declarations and confessions with a sense of alien surprise.

It may be, I say, that for some of us forgetting is the normal process, that one has to believe and forget and blunder and learn something and regret and suffer and so come again to belief much as we have to eat and grow hungry and eat again. What these others can get in their temples we, after our own manner, must distil through sleepless and lonely nights, from unavoidable humiliations, from the smarting of bruised shins.

§ 12

DEMOCRACY AND ARISTOCRACY

And now having dealt with the general form of a man's duty and with his duty to himself, let me come to his attitude to his individual fellow men.

The broad principles determining that attitude are involved in things already written in this book. The belief in a collective being gathering experience and developing will, to which every life is subordinated, renders the cruder conception of aristocracy, the idea of a select life going on amidst a majority of trivial and contemptible persons who "do not exist," untenable. It abolishes contempt. Indeed to believe at all in a comprehensive purpose in things is to abandon that attitude and all the habits and acts that imply it. But a belief in universal significance does not altogether preclude a belief in an aristocratic

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method of progress, in the idea of the subordination of a number of individuals to others who can utilise their lives and help and contributory achievements in the general purpose. To a certain extent indeed, this last conception is almost inevitable. We must needs so think of ourselves in relation to plants and animals, and I see no reason why we should not think so of our relations to other men. There are clearly great differences in the capacity and range of experience of man and man and in their power of using and rendering their experiences for the racial synthesis. Vigorous persons do look naturally for help and service from persons of less initiative, and we are all more or less capable of admiration and hero-worship and pleased to help and give ourselves to those we feel to be finer or better or completer or more forceful and leaderly than ourselves. This is a natural and inevitable form of aristocracy.

For that reason aristocracy is not to be organised. We organise things that are not natural nor inevitable, but this is clearly a complex matter of accident and personalities for which there can be no general rule. All organised aristocracy is manifestly begotten by that fallacy of classification my *Metaphysical* book set itself to expose. Its effect is, and has been in all cases, to mask natural aristocracy, to draw the lines by wholesale and wrong, to bolster up weak and ineffectual persons in false positions and to fetter or hamper strong and vigorous people. The false aristocrat is a figure of pride and claims, a consumer followed by dupes. He is proudly secretive, pretending to aims beyond the common understanding. The

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true aristocrat is known rather than knows; he makes and serves. He exacts no deference. He is urgent to make others share what he knows and wants and achieves. He does not think of others as his but as God's as he also is God's.

There is a base democracy just as there is a base aristocracy, the swaggering, aggressive disposition of the vulgar soul that admits neither of superiors nor leaders. Its true name is insubordination. It resents rules and refinements, delicacies, differences and organisation. It dreams that its leaders are its delegates. It takes refuge from all superiority, all special knowledge, in a phantom ideal, the People, the sublime and wonderful People. "You can fool some of the people all the time and all the people some of the time, but you can't fool all the people all the time," expresses I think quite the quintessence of this mystical faith, this faith in which men take refuge from the demand for order, discipline and conscious light. In England it has never been of any great account, but in America the vulgar individualist's self-protective exaltation of an idealised Common Man has worked and is working infinite mischief.

In politics the crude democratic faith leads directly to the submission of every question, however subtle and special its issues may be, to a popular vote. The community is regarded as a consultative committee of profoundly wise, alert and well-informed Common Men. Since the common man is, as Gustave le Bon has pointed out, a gregarious animal, collectively rather like a sheep, emotional, hasty and shallow, the practical outcome of political democracy in all

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large communities under modern conditions is to put power into the hands of rich newspaper proprietors, advertising producers and the energetic wealthy generally who are best able to flood the collective mind freely with the suggestions on which it acts.

But democracy has acquired a better meaning than its first crude intentions—there never was a theory started yet in the human mind that did not beget a finer offspring than itself—and the secondary meaning brings it at last into entire accord with the subtler conception of aristocracy. The test of this quintessential democracy is neither a passionate insistence upon voting and the majority rule, nor an arrogant bearing towards those who are one's betters in this aspect or that, but fellowship. The true democrat and the true aristocrat meet and are one in feeling themselves parts of one synthesis under one purpose and one scheme. Both realise that self-concealment is the last evil, both make frankness and veracity the basis of their intercourse. The general rightness of living for you and others and for others and you is to understand them to the best of your ability and to make them all, to the utmost limits of your capacity of expression and their understanding and sympathy, participators in your act and thought.

§ 13

ON DEBTS OF HONOUR

My ethical disposition is all against punctilio and I set no greater value on unblemished honour than

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I do on purity. I never yet met a man who talked proudly of his honour who did not end by cheating or trying to cheat me, nor a code of honour that did not impress me as a conspiracy against the common welfare and purpose in life. There is honour among thieves, and I think it might well end there as an obligation in conduct. The soldier who risks a life he owes to his army in a duel upon some silly matter of personal pride is no better to me than the clerk who gambles with the money in his master's till. When I was a boy I once paid a debt of honour, and it is one of the things I am most ashamed of. I had played cards into debt and I still remember burningly how I went to my mother and got the money she could so ill afford to give me. I would not pay a debt of honour at such a price now. I would pay with my own skin or not at all. If I were to wake up one morning owing big sums that I had staked overnight I would set to work at once by every means in my power to evade and repudiate that obligation. I should be disgraced! Well and good, I should deserve it. Such money as I have I owe under our present system to wife and sons and my work and the world, and I see no valid reason why I should hand it over to Smith because he and I have played the fool and rascal and gambled. Better by far to accept that fact and be for my own part published fool and rascal than to rob these others or fall short of my tale of bricks.

I have never been able to understand the sentimental spectacle of sons toiling dreadfully and wasting themselves upon mere money-making to save the

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secret of a father's peculations and the "honour of the family," or men conspiring to weave a wide and mischievous net of lies to save the "honour" of a woman. In the conventional drama the preservation of the honour of a woman seems an adequate excuse for nearly any offence short of murder; the preservation that is to say of the appearance of something that is already gone. The honour of the family lies in every son and daughter doing his own service to the world in his own fashion. Here it is that I do definitely part company with the false aristocrat who is by nature and intent a humbug and fabricator of sham attitudes, and ally myself with democracy. Fact, valiantly faced, is of more value than any reputation. The false aristocrat is robed to the chin and unwashed beneath, the true goes stark as Apollo. The false is ridiculous with undignified insistence upon his dignity; the true says like God, "I am that I am."

§ 14

THE IDEA OF JUSTICE

One word has so far played a very little part in this book, and that is the word Justice.

Those who have read the opening book on Metaphysics will perhaps see that this is a necessary corollary of the system of thought developed therein. In my philosophy, with its insistence upon uniqueness and marginal differences and the provisional nature of numbers and classes, there is little scope for that blindfolded lady with the balances, seeking

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always exact equivalents. Nowhere in my system of thought is there work for the idea of Rights and the conception of conscientious litigious-spirited people exactly observing nicely defined relationships.

You will note, for example, that I base my Socialism on the idea of a collective development and not on the "right" of every man to his own labour, or his "right" to work, or his "right" to subsistence. All these ideas of "rights" and of a social "contract" however implicit are merely conventional ways of looking at things, conventions that have arisen in the mercantile phase of human development.

Laws and rights, like common terms in speech, are provisional things, conveniences for taking hold of a number of cases that would otherwise be unmanageable. The appeal to Justice is a necessarily inadequate attempt to de-individualise a case, to eliminate the self's biassed attitude. I have declared that it is my wilful belief that everything that exists is significant and necessary. The idea of Justice seems to me a defective, quantitative application of the spirit of that belief to men and women. In every case you try and discover and act upon a plausible equity that must necessarily be based on arbitrary assumptions.

There is no equity in the universe, in the various spectacle outside our minds, and the most terrible nightmare the human imagination has ever engendered is a Just God, measuring, with himself as the Standard, against finite men. Ultimately there is no adequacy, we are all weighed in the balance and found wanting.

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So, as the recognition of this has grown, Justice has been tempered with Mercy, which indeed is no more than an attempt to equalise things by making the factors of the very defect that is condemned, its condonation. The modern mind fluctuates uncertainly somewhere between these extremes, now harsh and now ineffectual.

To me there seems no validity in these quasi-absolute standards.

A man seeks and obeys standards of equity simply to economise his moral effort, not because there is anything true or sublime about justice, but because he knows he is too egoistic and weak-minded and obsessed to do any perfect thing at all, because he cannot trust himself with his own transitory emotions unless he trains himself beforehand to observe a predetermined rule. There is scarcely an eventuality in life that without the help of these generalisations would not exceed the average man's intellectual power and moral energy, just as there is scarcely an idea or an emotion that can be conveyed without the use of faulty and defective common names. Justice and Mercy are indeed not ultimately different in their nature from such other conventions as the rules of a game, the rules of etiquette, forms of address, cab tariffs and standards of all sorts. They are mere organisations of relationship either to economise thought or else to facilitate mutual understanding and codify common action. Modesty and self-submission, love and service are, in the system of my beliefs, far more fundamental rightnesses and duties.

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We are not mercantile and litigious units such as making Justice our social basis would imply, we are not select responsible right persons mixed with and tending weak irresponsible wrong persons such as the notion of Mercy suggests, we are parts of one being and body, each unique yet sharing a common nature and a variety of imperfections and working together (albeit more or less darkly and ignorantly) for a common end.

We are strong and weak together and in one brotherhood. The weak have no essential rights against the strong, nor the strong against the weak. The world does not exist for our weaknesses but our strength. And the real justification of democracy lies in the fact that none of us are altogether strong nor altogether weak; for everyone there is an aspect wherein he is seen to be weak; for everyone there is a strength though it may be only a little peculiar strength or an undeveloped potentiality. The unconverted man uses his strength egotistically, emphasises himself harshly against the man who is weak where he is strong, and hates and conceals his own weakness. The Believer, in the measure of his belief, respects and seeks to understand the different strength of others and to use his own distinctive power with and not against his fellow men, in the common service of that synthesis to which each one of them is ultimately as necessary as he.

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§ 15

OF LOVE AND JUSTICE

Now here the friend who has read the first draft of this book falls into something like a dispute with me. She does not, I think, like this dismissal of Justice from a primary place in my scheme of conduct.

“Justice,” she asserts, “is an instinctive craving very nearly akin to the physical craving for equilibrium. Its social importance corresponds. It seeks to keep the individual’s claims in such a position as to conflict as little as possible with those of others. Justice is the root instinct of all social feeling, of all feeling which does not take account of whether we like or dislike individuals, it is the feeling of an orderly position of our Ego towards others, merely considered *as* others, and of all the Egos merely *as* Egos towards each other. *Love* cannot be felt towards others *as* others. Love is the expression of individual suitability and preference, its positive existence in some cases implies its absolute negation in others. Hence Love can never be the essential and root of social feeling, and hence the necessity for the instinct of abstract justice which takes no account of preferences or aversions. And here I may say that all application of the word *love* to unknown, distant creatures, to mere *others*, is a perversion and a wasting of the word love, which, taking its origin in sexual and parental preference, always implies a preference of one object to the other. To love everybody is simply not to love at all. And it is *just because* of the pas-

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sionate preference instinctively felt for some individuals, that mankind requires the self-regarding and self-respecting passion of justice.”

Now this is not altogether contradictory of what I hold. I disagree that because love necessarily expresses itself in preference, selecting this rather than that, that it follows necessarily that its absolute negation is implied in the non-selected cases. A man may go into the world as a child goes into a garden and gathers its hands full of the flowers that please it best and then desists, but only because its hands are full and not because it is at an end of the flowers that it can find delight in. So the man finds at last his memory and apprehensions glutted. It is not that he could not love those others. And I dispute that to love everybody is not to love at all. To love two people is surely to love more than to love just one person, and so by way of three and four to a very large number. Love is not an individual thing merely. One may love a class. I love the cheerful English soldier. I love smiling people. But if it is put that love must be a preference because of the mental limitations that forbid us to apprehend and understand more than a few of the multitudinous lovable of life, then I agree. For all the individuals and things and cases for which we have inadequate time and energy, we need a wholesale method—justice. That is exactly what I have said in the previous section. Justice is a time and energy saving device; nothing more.

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§ 16

THE WEAKNESS OF IMMATURITY

One is apt to write and talk of strong and weak as though some were always strong, some always weak. But that is quite a misleading version of life. Apart from the fact that everyone is fluctuatingly strong and fluctuatingly weak, and weak and strong according to the quality we judge them by, we have to remember that we are all developing and learning and changing, gaining strength and at last losing it, from the cradle to the grave. We are all, to borrow the old scholastic term, pupil-teachers of Life; the term is none the less appropriate because the pupil-teacher taught badly and learned under difficulties.

It may seem to be a crowning feat of platitude to write that "we have to remember" this, but it is overlooked in a whole mass of legal, social and economic literature. Those extraordinary imaginary cases as between a man A and a man B who start level, on a desert island or elsewhere, and work or do not work, or save or do not save, become the basis of immense schemes of just arrangement which soar up confidently and serenely regardless of the fact that never did anything like that equal start occur; that from the beginning there were family groups and old heads and young heads, help, guidance and sacrifice, and those who had learned and those who had still to learn, jumbled together in confused transactions. Deals, tradings and so forth are entirely secondary aspects of these primaries, and the attempt to get an

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idea of abstract relationship by beginning upon a secondary issue is the fatal pervading fallacy in all these regions of thought. At the present moment the average age of the world is I suppose about 21 or 22, the normal death somewhen about 44 or 45, that is to say nearly half the world is "under age," green, inexperienced, demanding help, easily misled and put in the wrong and betrayed. Yet the younger moiety, if we do indeed assume life's object is a collective synthesis, is more important than the older, and every older person bound to be something of a guardian to the younger. It follows directly from the fundamental beliefs I have assumed that we are missing the most important aspects of life if we are not directly or indirectly serving the young, helping them individually or collectively. Just in the measure that one's living falls away from that, do we fall away from life into a mere futility of existence, and approach the state, the extraordinary and wonderful middle state of (for example) those extinct and entirely damned old gentlemen one sees and hears eating and sleeping in every comfortable London club.

§ 17

POSSIBILITY OF A NEW ETIQUETTE

These two ideas, firstly the pupil-teacher parental idea and secondly the democratic idea (that is to say the idea of an equal ultimate significance), the second correcting any tendency in the first to pedagogic arrogance and tactful concealments, do I think give,

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when taken together, the general attitude a right-living man will take to his individual fellow creature. They play against each other, providing elements of contradiction and determining a balanced course. It seems to me to follow necessarily from my fundamental beliefs that the Believer will tend to be and want to be and seek to be friendly too, and interested in, all sorts of people, and truthful and helpful and hating concealment. To be that with any approach to perfection demands an intricate and difficult effort, introspection to the hilt of one's power, a saving natural gift; one has to avoid pedantry, aggression, brutality, amiable tiresomeness—there are pitfalls on every side. The more one thinks about other people the more interesting and pleasing they are; I am all for kindly gossip and knowing things about them, and all against the silly and limiting hardness of soul that will not look into one's fellows nor go out to them. The use and justification of most literature, of fiction, verse, history, biography, is that it lets us into understandings and the suggestion of human possibilities. The general purpose of intercourse is to get as close as one can to the realities of the people one meets, and to give oneself to them just so far as possible.

From that I think there arises naturally a new etiquette that would set aside many of the rigidities of procedure that keep people apart to-day. There is a fading prejudice against asking personal questions, against talking about oneself or one's immediate personal interests, against discussing religion and politics and any such keenly felt matter. No doubt it is

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necessary at times to protect oneself against clumsy and stupid familiarities, against noisy and inattentive egotists, against intriguers and liars, but only in the last resort do such breaches of patience seem justifiable to me; for the most part our traditions of speech and intercourse altogether overdo separations, the preservation of distances and protective devices in general.

§ 18

SEX

So far I have ignored the immense importance of Sex in our lives and for the most part kept the discussion so generalised as to apply impartially to women and men. But now I have reached a point when this great boundary line between two halves of the world and the intense and intimate personal problems that play across it must be considered.

For not only must we bend our general activities and our intellectual life to the conception of a human synthesis, but out of our bodies and emotional possibilities we have to make the new world bodily and emotionally. To the test of that we have to bring all sorts of questions that agitate us to-day, the social and political equality and personal freedom of women, the differing code of honour for the sexes, the controls and limitations to set upon love and desire. If, for example, it is for the good of the species that a whole half of its individuals should be specialised and subordinated to the physical sexual life, as in certain phases of human development women have tended

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to be, then certainly we must do nothing to prevent that. We have set aside the conception of Justice as in any sense a countervailing idea to that of the synthetic process.

And it is well to remember that for the whole of sexual conduct there is quite conceivably no general simple rule. It is quite possible that, as Metchnikoff maintains in his extraordinarily illuminating "Nature of Man," we are dealing with an irresolvable tangle of disharmonies. We have passions that do not insist upon their physiological end, desires that may be prematurely vivid in childhood, a fantastic curiosity, old needs of the ape but thinly overlaid by the acquisitions of the man, emotions that jar with physical impulses, inexplicable pains and diseases. And not only have we to remember that we are dealing with disharmonies that may at the very best be only patched together, but we are dealing with matters in which the element of idiosyncrasy is essential, insisting upon an incalculable flexibility in any rule we make, unless we are to take types and indeed whole classes of personality and write them down as absolutely bad and fit only for suppression and restraint. And on the mental side we are further perplexed by the extraordinary suggestibility of human beings. In sexual matters there seems to me—and I think I share a general ignorance here—to be no directing instinct at all, but only an instinct to do something generally sexual; there are almost equally powerful desires to do right and not to act under compulsion. The specific forms of conduct imposed upon these instincts and desires depend upon a vast confusion of

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suggestions, institutions, conventions, ways of putting things. We are dealing therefore with problems ineradicably complex, varying endlessly in their instances, and changing as we deal with them. I am inclined to think that the only really profitable discussion of sexual matters is in terms of individuality, through the novel, the lyric, the play, autobiography or biography of the frankest sort. But such generalizations as I can make I will.

To me it seems manifest that sexual matters may be discussed generally in at least three permissible and valid ways, of which the consideration of the world as a system of births and education is only the dominant chief. There is next the question of the physical health and beauty of the community and how far sexual rules and customs affect that, and thirdly the question of the mental and moral atmosphere in which sexual conventions and laws must necessarily be an important factor. It is alleged that probably in the case of men, and certainly in the case of women, some sexual intercourse is a necessary phase in existence; that without it there is an incompleteness, a failure in the life cycle, a real wilting and failure of energy and vitality and the development of morbid states. And for most of us half the friendships and intimacies from which we derive the daily interest and sustaining force in our lives draw mysterious elements from sexual attraction, and depend and hesitate upon our conception of the liberties and limits we must give to that force.

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§ 19

THE INSTITUTION OF MARRIAGE

The individual attitudes of men to women and of women to men are necessarily determined to a large extent by certain general ideas of relationship, by institutions and conventions. One of the most important and debatable of these is whether we are to consider and treat women as citizens and fellows, or as beings differing mentally from men and grouped in positions of at least material dependence to individual men. Our decision in that direction will affect all our conduct from the larger matters down to the smallest points of deportment; it will affect even our manner of address and determine whether when we speak to a woman we shall be as frank and unaffected as with a man or touched with a faint suggestion of the reserves of a cat which does not wish to be suspected of wanting to steal the milk.

Now so far as that goes it follows almost necessarily from my views upon aristocracy and democracy that I declare for the conventional equality of women, that is to say for the determination to make neither sex nor any sexual characteristic a standard of superiority or inferiority, for the view that a woman is a person as important and necessary, as much to be consulted, and entitled to as much freedom of action as a man. I admit that this decision is a choice into which temperament enters, that I cannot produce compelling reasons why anyone else should adopt my view. I can produce considerations in sup-

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port of my view, that is all. But they are so implicit in all that has gone before that I will not trouble to detail them here.

The conception of equality and fellowship between men and women is an idea at least as old as Plato and one that has recurred wherever civilisation has reached a phase in which men and women were sufficiently released from militant and economic urgency to talk and read and think. But it has never yet been, at least in the historical period and in any but isolated social groups, a working structural idea. The working structural idea is the Patriarchal Family in which the woman is inferior and submits herself and is subordinated to the man, the head of the family.

We live in a constantly changing development and modification of that tradition. It is well to bring that factor of constant change into mind at the outset of this discussion and to keep it there. To forget it, and it is commonly forgotten, is to falsify every issue. Marriage and the Family are perennially fluctuating institutions, and probably scarcely anything in modern life has changed and is changing so much; they are in their legal constitution or their moral and emotional quality profoundly different things from what they were a hundred years ago. A woman who marries nowadays marries, if one may put it quantitatively, far less than she did even half a century ago; the married woman's property act, for example, has revolutionised the economic relationship; her husband has lost his right to assault her and he cannot even compel her to cohabit with him if she refuses to

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do so. Legal separations and divorces have come to modify the quality and logical consequences of the bond. The rights of parent over the child have been even more completely qualified. The State has come in as protector and educator of the children, taking over personal powers and responsibilities that have been essential to the family institution ever since the dawn of history. It inserts itself more and more between child and parent. It invades what were once the most sacred intimacies, and the Salvation Army is now promoting legislation to explore those overcrowded homes in which children (it is estimated to the number of thirty or forty thousand) are living as I write, daily witnesses of their mother's prostitution or in constant danger of incestuous attack from drunken fathers and brothers. And finally as another indication of profound differences, births were almost universally accidental a hundred years ago; they are now in an increasing number of families controlled and deliberate acts of will. In every one of their relations do Marriage and the Family change and continue to change.

But the inherent defectiveness of the human mind which my metaphysical book sets itself to analyse, does lead it constantly to speak of Marriage and the Family as things as fixed and unalterable as, let us say, the characteristics of oxygen. One is asked, Do you believe in Marriage and the Family? as if it was a case of either having or not having some definite thing. Socialists are accused of being "against the Family," as if it were not the case that Socialists, Individualists, high Anglicans and Roman Catholics

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are *all* against Marriage and the Family as these institutions exist at the present time. But once we have realised the absurdity of this absolute treatment, then it should become clear that with it goes most of the fabric of right and wrong, and nearly all those arbitrary standards by which we classify people into moral and immoral. Those last words are used when as a matter of fact we mean either conforming or failing to conform to changing laws and developing institutional customs we may or may not consider right or wrong. Their use imparts a flavour of essential wrong-doing and obliquity into acts and relations that may be in many cases no more than social indiscipline, which may be even conceivably a courageous act of defiance to an obsolescent limitation. Such, until a little while ago, was a man's cohabitation with his deceased wife's sister. This, which was scandalous yesterday, is now a legally honourable relationship, albeit I believe still regarded by the high Anglican as incestuous wickedness.

I am persuaded of the need of much greater facilities of divorce than exist at present, divorce on the score of mutual consent, of faithlessness, of simple cruelty, of insanity, habitual vice or the prolonged imprisonment of either party. And this being so I find it impossible to condemn on any ground, except that it is "breaking ranks" and making a confusion, those who by anticipating such wide facilities as I propose have sinned by existing standards. How far and in what manner such breaking of ranks is to be condoned I will presently discuss. But it is clear it is an offence of a different nature from actions one

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believes to be in themselves and apart from the law reprehensible things.

But my scepticisms about the current legal institutions and customary code are not exhausted by these modifications I have suggested. I believe firmly in some sort of marriage, that is to say an open declaration of the existence of sexual relations between a man and a woman, because I am averse to all unnecessary secrecies and because the existence of these peculiarly intimate relationships affects everybody about the persons concerned. It is ridiculous to say as some do that sexual relations between two people affect no one but themselves unless a child is born. They do, because they tend to break down barriers and set up a peculiar emotional partnership. It is a partnership that kept secret may work as antisocially as a secret business partnership or a secret preferential railway tariff. And I believe too in the general social desirability of the family group, the normal group of father, mother and children, and in the extreme efficacy in the normal human being of the blood link and pride link between parent and child in securing loving care and upbringing for the child. But this clear adhesion to Marriage and to the family grouping about mother and father does not close the door to a large series of exceptional cases which our existing institutions and customs ignore or crush.

For example, monogamy in general seems to me to be clearly indicated (as doctors say) by the fact that there are not several women in the world for every man, but quite as clearly does it seem necessary to recognise that the fact that there are (or were in

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1901) 21,436,107 females to 20,172,984 males in our British community seems to condemn our present rigorous insistence upon monogamy, unless feminine celibacy has its own delights. But, as I have said, it is now largely believed that the sexual life of a woman is more important to her than his sexual life to a man and less easily ignored.

It is true also on the former side that for the great majority of people one knows personally, any sort of household but a monogamous one conjures up painful and unpleasant visions. The ordinary civilised woman and the ordinary civilised man are alike obsessed with the idea of meeting and possessing one peculiar intimate person, one special exclusive lover who is their very own, and a third person of either sex cannot be associated with that couple without an intolerable sense of privacy and confidence and possession destroyed. But if there are people so exceptionally constituted as not to feel in this way, I do not see what right we have to force conformity to our feelings upon them.

The peculiar defects of the human mind when they approach these questions of sex are reinforced by passions peculiar to the topic, and it is perhaps advisable to point out that to discuss these possibilities is not the same thing as to urge the reader to hazardous experiments. We are trained from the nursery to become secretive, muddle-headed and vehemently conclusive upon sexual matters, until at last the editors of magazines blush at the very phrase and long to put a petticoat over the page that bears it. Yet our rebellious natures insist on being interested by

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it. It seems to me that to judge these large questions from the personal point of view, to insist upon the whole world without exception living exactly in the manner that suits oneself or accords with one's emotional imagination and the forms of delicacy in which one has been trained, is not the proper way to deal with them. I want as a sane social organiser to get just as many contented and law-abiding citizens as possible; I do not want to force people who would otherwise be useful citizens into rebellion, concealments and the dark and furtive ways of vice, because they may not love and marry as their temperaments command, and so I want to make the meshes of the law as wide as possible. But the common man will not understand this yet, and seeks to make the meshes just as small as his own private case demands.

Then marriage, to resume my main discussion, does not necessarily mean cohabitation. All women who desire children do not want to be entrusted with their upbringing. Some women are sexual and philoprogenitive without being sedulously maternal, and some are maternal without much or any sexual passion. There are men and women in the world now, great allies, fond and passionate lovers who do not live nor want to live constantly together. It is at least conceivable that there are women who, while desiring offspring, do not want to abandon great careers for the work of maternity, women again who would be happiest managing and rearing children in manless households that they might even share with other women friends, and men to correspond with

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these who do not wish to live in a household with wife and children. I submit, these temperaments exist and have a right to exist in their own way. But one must recognise that the possibility of these departures from the normal type of household opens up other possibilities. The polygamy that is degrading or absurd under one roof assumes a different appearance when one considers it from the point of view of people whose habits of life do not centre upon an isolated home.

All the relations I have glanced at above do as a matter of fact exist to-day, but shamefully and shabbily, tainted with what seems to me an unmerited and unnecessary ignominy and frequently darkened by blackmail. A narrow, intolerant community is the blackmailer's paradise. The punishment for bigamy again, seems to me insane in its severity, contrasted as it is with our leniency to the common seducer. Better ruin a score of women, says the law, than marry two. I do not see why in these matters there should not be much ampler freedom than there is, and this being so I can hardly be expected to condemn with any moral fervour or exclude from my society those who have seen fit to behave by what I believe may be the standards of A. D. 2000 instead of by the standards of 1850. These are offences, so far as they are offences, on an altogether different footing from murder, or exacting usury, or the sweating of children, or cruelty, or transmitting diseases, or unveracity, or commercial or intellectual or physical prostitution, or any such essentially grave anti-social deeds. We must distinguish between sins on the one

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hand and mere errors of judgment and differences of taste from ourselves. To draw up harsh laws, to practise exclusions against everyone who does not see fit to duplicate one's own blameless home life, is to waste a number of courageous and exceptional persons in every generation, to drive many of them into a forced alliance with real crime and embittered rebellion against custom and the law.

§ 20

CONDUCT IN RELATION TO THE THING THAT IS

But the reader must keep clear in his mind the distinction between conduct that is right or permissible in itself and conduct that becomes either inadvisable or mischievous and wrong because of the circumstances about it. There is no harm under ordinary conditions in asking a boy with a pleasant voice to sing a song in the night, but the case is altered altogether if you have reason to suppose that a Red Indian is lying in wait a hundred yards off, holding a loaded rifle and ready to fire at the voice. It is a valid objection to many actions that I do not think objectionable in themselves, that to do them will discharge a loaded prejudice into the heart of my friend—or even into my own. I belong to the world and my work, and I must not lightly throw my time, my power, my influence away. For a splendid thing any risk or any defiance may be justifiable, but is it a sufficiently splendid thing? So far as he possibly can a man must conform to common prejudices, preva-

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lent customs and all laws, whatever his estimate of them may be. But he must at the same time do his utmost to change what he thinks to be wrong.

And I think that conformity must be honest conformity. There is no more anti-social act than secret breaches, and only some very urgent and exceptional occasion justifies even the unverity of silence about the thing done. If your personal convictions bring you to a breach, let it be an open breach, let there be no misrepresentation of attitudes, no meanness, no deception of honourable friends. Of course an open breach need not be an ostentatious breach; to do what is right to yourself without fraud or concealment is one thing, to make a challenge and aggression quite another. Your friends may understand and sympathise and condone, but it does not lie upon you to force them to identify themselves with your act and situation. But better too much openness than too little. Squalid intrigue was the shadow of the old intolerably narrow order; it is a shadow we want to illuminate out of existence. Secrets will be contraband in the new time.

And if it chances to you to feel called upon to make a breach with the institution or custom or prejudice that is, remember that doing so is your own affair. You are going to take risks and specialise as an experiment. You must not expect other people about you to share the consequences of your dash forward. You must not drag in confidants and secondaries. You must fight your little battle in front on your own responsibility, unsupported—and take the consequences without repining.

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§ 21

CONDUCT TOWARDS TRANSGRESSORS

So far as breaches of the prohibitions and laws of marriage go, to me it seems they are to be tolerated by us in others just in the measure that, within the limits set by discretion, they are frank and truthful and animated by spontaneous passion and pervaded by the quality of beauty. I hate the vulgar sexual intriguer, man or woman, and the smart and shallow atmosphere of unloving lust and vanity about the type as I hate few kinds of human life; I would as lief have a polecat in my home as this sort of person; and every sort of prostitute except the victim of utter necessity I despise, even though marriage be the fee. But honest lovers should be I think a charge and pleasure for us. We must judge each pair as we can.

One thing renders a sexual relationship incurably offensive to others and altogether wrong, and that is cruelty. But who can define cruelty? How far is the leaving of a third person to count as cruelty? There again I hesitate to judge. To love and not be loved is a fate for which it seems no one can be blamed; to lose love and to change one's loving belongs to a subtle interplay beyond analysis or control, but to be deceived or mocked or deliberately robbed of love, that at any rate is an abominable wrong.

In all these matters I perceive a general rule is in itself a possible instrument of cruelty. I set down what I can in the way of general principles, but it all leaves off far short of the point of application. Every

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case among those we know I think we moderns must judge for ourselves. Where there is doubt, there I hold must be charity. And with regard to strangers, manifestly our duty is to avoid inquisitorial and uncharitable acts.

This is as true of financial and economic misconduct as of sexual misconduct, of ways of living that are socially harmful and of political faith. We are dealing with people in a maladjusted world to whom absolute right living is practically impossible, because there are no absolutely right institutions and no simple choice of good or evil, and we have to balance merits and defects in every case.

Some people are manifestly and essentially base and self-seeking and regardless of the happiness and welfare of their fellows, some in business affairs and politics as others in love. Some wrong-doers again are evidently so through heedlessness, through weakness, timidity or haste. We have to judge and deal with each sort upon no clear issue, but upon impressions they have given us of their spirit and purpose. We owe it to them and ourselves not to judge too rashly or too harshly, but for all that we are obliged to judge and take sides, to avoid the malignant and exclude them for further opportunity, to help and champion the cheated and the betrayed, to forgive and aid the repentant blunderer and by mercy to save the lesser sinner from desperate alliance with the greater. That is the broad rule, and it is as much as we have to go upon until the individual case comes before us.

BOOK THE FOURTH
SOME PERSONAL THINGS

§ 1

PERSONAL LOVE AND LIFE

It has been most convenient to discuss all that might be generalised about conduct first, to put in the common background, the vistas and atmosphere of the scene. But a man's relations are of two orders, and these questions of rule and principle are over and about and round more vivid and immediate interests. A man is not simply a relationship between his individual self and the race, society and the world. Close about him are persons, friends and enemies and lovers and beloved people. He desires them, lusts after them, craves their affection, needs their presence, abhors them, hates and desires to limit and suppress them. This is for most of us the flesh and blood of life. We go through the scene of the world neither alone, nor alone with God, nor serving an undistinguishable multitude, but in a company of individualised people.

Here is a system of motives and passions, imperious and powerful, which follows no broad general rule and in which each man must needs be a light unto himself upon innumerable issues. I am satisfied that these personal urgencies are neither to be suppressed nor crudely nor ruthlessly subordinated to the general issues. Religious and moral teachers are apt to make this part of life either too detached or too insignificant. They teach it either as if it did not matter or as if it ought not to matter. Indeed our

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individual friends and enemies stand between us and hide or interpret for us all the larger things. Few can even worship alone. They must feel others, and those not strangers, kneeling beside them.

I have already spoken under the heading of Beliefs of the part that the idea of a Mediator has played and can play in the religious life. I have pointed out how the imagination of men has sought and found in certain personalities, historical or fictitious, a bridge between the blood-warm private life and the intolerable spaciousness of right and wrong. The world is full of such figures and their images, Christ and Mary and the Saints and all the lesser, dearer gods of heathendom. These things and the human passion for living leaders and heroes and leagues and brotherhoods all confess the mediatory rôle, the mediatory possibilities of personal love between the individual and the great synthesis of which he is a part and agent. The great synthesis may become incarnate in personal love, and personal love lead us directly to universal service.

I write *may* and temper that sentence to the quality of a possibility alone. This is only true for those who believe, for those who have faith, whose lives have been unified, who have found Salvation. For those whose lives are chaotic, personal loves must also be chaotic; this or that passion, malice, a jesting humour, some physical lust, gratified vanity, egotistical pride, will rule and limit the relationship and colour its ultimate futility. But the Believer uses personal love and sustains himself by personal love. It is his provender, the meat and drink of his campaign.

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§ 2

THE NATURE OF LOVE

It is well perhaps to look a little into the factors that make up Love.

Love does not seem to me to be a simple elemental thing. It is, as I have already said, one of the vicious tendencies of the human mind to think that whatever can be given a simple name can be abstracted as a single something in a state of quintessential purity. I have pointed out that this is not true of Harmony or Beauty, and that these are synthetic things. You bring together this which is not beautiful and that which is not beautiful, and behold! Beauty! So also Love is, I think, a synthetic thing. One observes this and that, one is interested and stirred; suddenly the metal fuses, the dry bones live! One loves.

Almost every interest in one's being may be a factor in the love synthesis. But apart from the overflowing of the parental instinct that makes all that is fine and delicate and young dear to us and to be cherished, there are two main factors that bring us into love with our fellows. There is first the emotional elements in our nature that arise out of the tribal necessity, out of a fellowship in battle and hunting, drinking and feasting, out of the needs and excitements and delights of those occupations; and there is next the intenser narrower desirings and gratitudes, satisfactions and expectations that come from sexual intercourse. Now both these factors originate in physical needs and consummate in ma-

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terial acts, and it is well to remember that this great growth of love in life roots there, and, it may be, dies when its roots are altogether cut away.

At its lowest, love is the mere sharing of, or rather the desire to share, pleasure and excitement, the excitements of conflict or lust or what not. I think that the desire to partake, the desire to merge one's individual identity with another's, remains a necessary element in all personal loves. It is a way out of ourselves, a breaking down of our individual separation, just as hate is an intensification of that. Personal love is the narrow and intense form of that breaking down, just as what I call Salvation is its widest, most extensive form. We cast aside our reserves, our secrecies, our defences; we open ourselves; touches that would be intolerable from common people become a mystery of delight, acts of self-abasement and self-sacrifice are charged with symbolical pleasure. We cannot tell which of us is me, which you. Our imprisoned egoism looks out through this window, forgets its walls, and is for those brief moments released and universal.

For most of us the strain of primordial sexual emotion in our loves is very strong. Many men can love only women, many women only men, and some can scarcely love at all without bodily desire. But the love of fellowship is a strong one also, and for many, love is most possible and easy when the thought of physical love-making has been banished. Then the lovers will pursue other interests together, will work together or journey together. So we have the warm fellowships of men for men and women for women.

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But even then it may happen that men friends together will talk of women, and women friends of men. Nevertheless we have also the strong and altogether sexless glow of those who have fought well together, or drunk or jested together or hunted a common quarry.

Now it seems to me that the Believer must also be a Lover, that he will love as much as he can and as many people as he can, and in many moods and ways. As I have said already, many of those who have taught religion and morality in the past have been neglectful or unduly jealous of the intenser personal loves. They have been, to put it by a figure, urgent upon the road to the ocean. To that they would lead us, though we come to it shivering, fearful and unprepared, and they grudge it that we should strip and plunge into the wayside stream. But all streams, all rivers come from this ocean in the beginning, lead to it in the end.

It is the essential fact of love as I conceive it, that it breaks down the boundaries of self. That love is most perfect which does most completely merge its lovers. But no love is altogether perfect, and for most men and women love is no more than a partial and temporary lowering of the barriers that keep them apart. With many, the attraction of love seems always to fall short of what I hold to be its end, it draws people together in the most momentary of self-forgetfulnesses, and for the rest seems rather to enhance their egotisms and their difference. They are secret from one another even in their embraces. There is a sort of love that is egotistical lust almost

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regardless of its partner, a sort of love that is mere fleshless pride and vanity at a white heat. There is the love-making that springs from sheer boredom, like a man reading a story-book to fill an hour. These inferior loves seek to accomplish an agreeable act, or they seek the pursuit or glory of a living possession, they aim at gratification or excitement or conquest. True love seeks to be mutual and easy-minded, free of doubts, but these egotistical mockeries of love have always resentment in them and hatred in them and a watchful distrust. Jealousy is the measure of self-love in love.

True love is a synthetic thing, an outcome of life, it is not a universal thing. It is the individualised correlative of Salvation; like that it is a synthetic consequence of conflicts and confusions. Many people do not desire or need Salvation, they cannot understand it, much less achieve it; for them chaotic life suffices. So too, many never, save for some rare moment of illumination, desire or feel love. Its happy abandonment, its careless self-giving, these things are mere foolishness to them. But much has been said and sung of faith and love alike, and in their confused greed these things also they desire and parody. So they act worship and make a fine fuss of their devotions. And also they must have a few half-furtive, half-flaunting fallen love-triumphs prowling the secret back-streets of their lives, they know not why.

(In setting this down be it remembered I am doing my best to tell what is in me because I am trying to put my whole view of life before the reader without

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any vital omissions. These are difficult matters to explain because they have no clear outlines; one lets in a hard light suddenly upon things that have lurked in warm intimate shadows, dim inner things engendering motives. I am not only telling quasi-secret things but exploring them for myself. They are none the less real and important because they are elusive.)

True love I think is not simply felt but known. Just as Salvation as I conceive it demands a fine intelligence and mental activity, so love calls to brain and body alike and all one's powers. There is always elaborate thinking and dreaming in love. Love will stir imaginations that have never stirred before.

Love may be, and is for the most part, one-sided. It is the going out from oneself that is love, and not the accident of its return. It is the expedition whether it fail or succeed.

But an expedition starves that comes to no port. Love always seeks mutuality and grows by the sense of responses, or we should love beautiful inanimate things more passionately than we do. Failing a full return, it makes the most of an inadequate return. Failing a sustained return it welcomes a temporary coincidence. Failing a return it finds support in accepted sacrifices. But it seeks a full return, and the fulness of life has come only to those who, loving, have met the lover.

I am trying to be as explicit as possible in thus writing about Love. But the substance in which one works here is emotion that evades definition, poetic flashes and figures of speech are truer than prosaic

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statements. Body and the most sublimated ecstasy pass into one another, exchange themselves and elude every net of words we cast.

I have put out two ideas of unification and self-devotion, extremes upon a scale one from another; one of these ideas is that devotion to the Purpose in things I have called Salvation; the other that devotion to some other most fitting and satisfying individual which is passionate love, the former extensive as the universe, the latter the intensest thing in life. These, it seems to me, are the boundary and the living capital of the empire of life we rule.

All empires need a comprehending boundary, but many have not one capital but many chief cities, and all have cities and towns and villages beyond the capital. It is an impoverished capital that has no dependent towns, and it is a poor love that will not overflow in affection and eager kindly curiosity and sympathy and the search for fresh mutuality. To love is to go living radiantly through the world. To love and be loved is to be fearless of experience and rich in the power to give.

§ 3

THE WILL TO LOVE

Love is a thing to a large extent in its beginnings voluntary and controllable, and at last quite involuntary. It is so hedged about by obligations and consequences, real and artificial, that for the most part I think people are overmuch afraid of it. And

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also the tradition of sentiment that suggests its forms and guides it in the world about us, is far too strongly exclusive. It is not so much when love is glowing as when it is becoming habitual that it is jealous for itself and others. Lovers a little exhausting their mutual interest find a fillip in an alliance against the world. They bury their talent of understanding and sympathy to return it duly in a clean napkin. They narrow their interest in life lest the other lover should misunderstand their amplitude as disloyalty.

Our institutions and social customs seem all to assume a definiteness of preference, a singleness and a limitation of love, which is not psychologically justifiable. People do not, I think, fall naturally into agreement with these assumptions; they train themselves to agreement. They take refuge from experiences that seem to carry with them the risk at least of perplexing situations, in a theory of barred possibilities and locked doors. How far this shy and cultivated irresponsive lovelessness towards the world at large may not carry with it the possibility of compensating intensities, I do not know. Quite equally probable is a starvation of one's emotional nature.

The same reasons that make me decide against mere wanton abstinences make me hostile to the common convention of emotional indifference to most of the charming and interesting people one encounters. In pleasing and being pleased, in the mutual interest, the mutual opening out of people to one another, is the key of the door to all sweet and mellow living.

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§ 4

LOVE AND DEATH

For him who has faith, death, so far as it is his own death, ceases to possess any quality of terror. The experiment will be over, the rinsed beaker returned to its shelf, the crystals gone dissolving down the waste-pipe; the duster sweeps the bench. But the deaths of those we love are harder to understand or bear.

It happens that of those very intimate with me I have lost only one, and that came slowly and elaborately, a long gradual separation wrought by the accumulation of years and mental decay, but many close friends and many whom I have counted upon for sympathy and fellowship have passed out of my world. I miss such a one as Bob Stevenson, that luminous, extravagant talker, that eager fantastic mind. I miss him whenever I write. It is less pleasure now to write a story since he will never read it, much less give me a word of praise for it. And I miss York Powell's friendly laughter and Henley's exuberant welcome. They made a warmth that has gone, those men. I can understand why I, with my fumbling lucidities and explanations, have to finish up presently and go, expressing as I do the mood of a type and of a time; but not those radiant presences.

And the gap these men have left, these men with whom after all I only sat now and again, or wrote to in a cheerful mood or got a letter from at odd times, gives me some measure of the thing that happens,

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that may happen, when the mind that is always near one's thoughts, the person who moves to one's movement and lights nearly all the common flow of events about one with the remainder of fellowship and meaning—ceases.

Faith which feeds on personal love must at last prevail over it. If Faith has any virtue it must have it here when we find ourselves bereft and isolated, facing a world from which the light has fled leaving it bleak and strange. We live for experience and the race; these individual interludes are just helps to that; the warm inn in which we lovers met and refreshed was but a halt on a journey. When we have loved to the intensest point we have done our best with each other. To keep to that image of the inn, we must not sit overlong at our wine beside the fire. We must go on to new experiences and new adventures. Death comes to part us and turn us out and set us on the road again.

But the dead stay where we leave them.

I suppose that is the real good in death, that they do stay; that it makes them immortal for us. Living they were mortal. But now they can never spoil themselves or be spoiled by change again. They have finished—for us indeed just as much as themselves. There they sit for ever, rounded off and bright and done. Beside these clear and certain memories I have of my dead, my impressions of the living are vague provisional things.

And since they are gone out of the world and become immortal memories in me, I feel no need to think of them as in some disembodied and incom-

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prehensible elsewhere, changed and yet not done. I want actual immortality for those I love as little as I desire it for myself.

Indeed I dislike the idea that those I have loved are immortal in any real sense; it conjures up dim uncomfortable drifting phantoms, that have no kindred with the flesh and blood I knew. I would as soon think of them trailing after the tides up and down the Channel outside my window. Bob Stevenson for me is a presence utterly concrete, slouching, eager, quick-eyed, intimate and profound, carelessly dressed (at Sandgate he commonly wore a felt hat that belonged to his little son) and himself, himself, indissoluble matter and spirit, down to the heels of his boots. I cannot conceive of his as any but a concrete immortality. If he lives, he lives as I knew him and clothed as I knew him and with his unalterable voice, in a heaven of dædal flowers or a hell of ineffectual flame; he lives, dreaming and talking and explaining, explaining it all very earnestly and preposterously, so I picture him, into the ear of the amused incredulous, principal person in the place.

I have a real hatred for those dreary fools and knaves who would have me suppose that Henley, that crippled Titan, may conceivably be tapping at the underside of a mahogany table or scratching stifled incoherence into a locked slate! Henley tapping!—for the professional purposes of Sludge! If he found himself among the circumstances of a spiritualist séance he would, I know, instantly smash the table with that big fist of his. And as the splinters flew, surely York Powell, out of the dead past from

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which he shines on me, would laugh that hearty laugh of his back into the world again.

Henley is nowhere now except that, red-faced and jolly like an October sunset, he leans over a gate at Worthing after a long day of picnicking at Chanktonbury Ring, or sits at his Woking table praising and quoting "The Admirable Bashville," or blue-shirted and wearing the hat that Nicholson has painted, is thrust and lugged, laughing and talking aside in his bath-chair, along the Worthing esplanade. . . .

And Bob Stevenson walks for ever about a garden in Chiswick, talking in the dusk.

§ 5

THE CONSOLATION OF FAILURE

That parable of the talents I have made such free use of in this book has one significant defect. It gives but two cases, and three are possible. There was first the man who buried his talent, and of his condemnation we are assured. But those others all took their talents and used them courageously and came back with gain. Was that gain inevitable? Does courage always ensure us victory? because if that is so we can all be heroes and valour is the better part of discretion. Alas! the faith in such magic dies. What of the possible case of the man who took his two or three talents and invested them as best he could and was deceived or heedless and lost them, interest and principal together?

There is something harder to face than death, and

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that is the realisation of failure and misdirected effort and wrong-doing. Faith is no Open Sesame to right-doing, much less is it the secret of success. The service of God on earth is no processional triumph. What if one does wrong so extremely as to condemn one's life, to make oneself part of the refuse and not of the building? Or what if one is misjudged, or it may be too pitilessly judged, and one's co-operation despised and the help one brought becomes a source of weakness? Or suppose that the fine scheme one made lies shattered or wrecked by one's own act, or through some hidden blemish one's offering is rejected and flung back and one is thrust out?

So in the end it may be you or I will find we have been anvil and not hammer in the Purpose of God.

Then indeed will come the time for Faith, for the last word of Faith, to say still steadfastly, disgraced or dying, defeated or discredited, that all is well:—

“This and not that was my appointed work, and this I had to be.”

§ 6

THE LAST CONFESSION

So these broken confessions and statements of mood and attitude come to an end.

But at this end, since I have, I perceive, run a little into a pietistic strain, I must repeat again how provisional and personal I know all these things to be. I began by disavowing ultimates. My beliefs, my dogmas, my rules, they are made for my campaigning needs, like the knapsack and water-bottle

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of a Cockney soldier invading some stupendous mountain gorge. About him are fastnesses and splendours, torrents and cataracts, glaciers and untrodden snows. He comes tramping on heel-worn boots and ragged socks. Beauties and blue mysteries shine upon him and appeal to him, the enigma of beauty smiling the faint strange smile of Leonardo's Mona Lisa. He sees a light on the grass like music; and the blossom on the trees against the sky brings him near weeping. Such things come to him, give themselves to him. I do not know why he should not in response fling his shabby gear aside and behave like a god; I only know that he does not do so. His grunt of appreciation is absurd, his speech goes like a crippled thing—and withal, and partly by virtue of the knapsack and water-bottle, he is conqueror of the valley. The valley is his for the taking.

There is a duality in life that I cannot express except by such images as this, a duality so that we are at once absurd and full of sublimity, and most absurd when we are most anxious to render the real splendours that pervade us. This duplicity in life seems to me at times ineradicable, at times like the confusing of something essentially simple, like the duplication when one looks through a doubly refracting medium. You think in this latter mood that you have only to turn the crystal of Iceland spar about in order to have the whole thing plain. But you never get it plain. I have been doing my halting utmost to get down sincerely and simply my vision of life and duty. I have permitted myself no defensive restraints; I have shamelessly written my

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starkest, and it is plain to me that a smile that is not mine plays over my most urgent passages. There is a rebellious rippling of the grotesque under our utmost tragedy and gravity. One's martialled phrases grimace as one turns, and wink at the reader. None the less they signify. Do you note how in this that I have written, such a word as Believer will begin to wear a capital letter and give itself solemn ridiculous airs? It does not matter. It carries its message for all that necessary superficial absurdity.

Thought has made me shameless. It does not matter at last at all if one is a little harsh or indelicate or ridiculous if that also is in the mystery of things.

Behind everything I perceive the smile that makes all effort and discipline temporary, all the stress and pain of life endurable. In the last resort I do not care whether I am seated on a throne or drunk or dying in a gutter. I follow my leading. I am more than myself for I myself am Man. In the ultimate I know, though I cannot prove my knowledge in any way whatever, that everything is right and all things mine.

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**“Nec erit alia lex Romæ, alia Athenis, alia nunc, alia post-
hac; sed et omnes gentes et omni tempore una lex, et sempi-
terna et immortalis continebit, unusque erit communis quasi
magister et Imperator omnium DEUS.”**

CICERO: DE REPUBLICA.

PREFACE

This book sets out as forcibly and exactly as possible the religious belief of the writer. That belief is not orthodox Christianity; it is not, indeed, Christianity at all; its core nevertheless is a belief in a personal and intimate God. There is nothing in its statements that need shock or offend anyone who is prepared for the expression of a faith different from and perhaps in several particulars opposed to his own. The writer will be found to be sympathetic with all sincere religious feeling. Nevertheless it is well to prepare the prospective reader for statements that may jar harshly against deeply rooted mental habits. It is well to warn him at the outset that the departure from accepted beliefs is here no vague scepticism, but a quite sharply defined objection to dogmas very widely revered. Let the writer state the most probable occasion of trouble forthwith. An issue upon which this book will be found particularly uncompromising is the dogma of the Trinity. The writer is of opinion that the Council of Nicæa, which forcibly crystallised the controversies of two centuries and formulated the creed upon which all the existing Christian churches are based, was one of the most disastrous and one of the least venerable of all religious gatherings, and he holds that the Alexandrine speculations which were then conclusively imposed upon Christianity merit only disrespectful attention at the present time. There you have a

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chief possibility of offence. He is quite unable to pretend any awe for what he considers the spiritual monstrosities established by that undignified gathering. He makes no attempt to be obscure or propitiatory in this connection. He criticises the creeds explicitly and frankly, because he believes it is particularly necessary to clear them out of the way of those who are seeking religious consolation at this present time of exceptional religious need. He does little to conceal his indignation at the rôle played by these dogmas in obscuring, perverting, and preventing the religious life of mankind. After this warning such readers from among the various Christian churches and sects as are accessible to storms of theological fear or passion, to whom the Trinity is an ineffable mystery and the name of God almost unspeakably awful, read on at their own risk. This is a religious book written by a believer, but so far as their beliefs and religion go it may seem to them more sceptical and more antagonistic than blank atheism. That the writer cannot tell. He is not simply denying their God. He is declaring that there is a living God, different altogether from that Triune God and nearer to the heart of man. The spirit of this book is like that of a missionary who would only too gladly overthrow and smash some Polynesian divinity of shark's teeth and painted wood and mother-of-pearl. To the writer such elaborations as "begotten of the Father before all worlds" are no better than intellectual shark's teeth and oyster shells. His purpose, like the purpose of that missionary, is not primarily to shock and insult; but he is

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zealous to liberate, and he is impatient with a reverence that stands between man and God. He gives this fair warning and proceeds with his matter.

His matter is modern religion as he sees it. It is only incidentally and because it is unavoidable that he attacks doctrinal Christianity.

In "First and Last Things" he has stated his convictions upon certain general ideas of life and thought as clearly as he could. All of philosophy, all of metaphysics that is, seems to him to be a discussion of the relations of class and individual. The antagonism of the Nominalist and the Realist, the opposition of the One and the Many, the contrast of the Ideal and the Actual, all these oppositions express a certain structural and essential duality in the activity of the human mind. From an imperfect recognition of that duality ensue great masses of misconception. That was the substance of "First and Last Things." In this present book there is no further attack on philosophical or metaphysical questions. Here we work at a less fundamental level and deal with religious feeling and religious ideas. But just as the writer was inclined to attribute a whole world of disputation and inexactitudes to confused thinking about the exact value of classes and terms, so here he is disposed to think that interminable controversies and conflicts arise out of a confusion of intention due to a double meaning of the word "God"; that the word "God" conveys not one idea or set of ideas, but several essentially different ideas, incompatible one with another, and falling mainly into one or other of two divergent groups; and that people slip

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carelessly from one to the other of these groups of ideas and so get into ultimately inextricable confusions.

The writer believes that the centuries of fluid religious thought that preceded the violent ultimate crystallisation of Nicæa, was essentially a struggle—obscured, of course, by many complexities—to reconcile and get into a relationship these two separate main series of God-ideas.

Putting the leading idea of this book very roughly, these two antagonistic typical conceptions of God may be best contrasted by speaking of one of them as God-as-Nature or the Creator, and of the other as God-as-Christ or the Redeemer. One is the great Outward God; the other is the Inmost God. The first idea was perhaps developed most highly and completely in the God of Spinoza. It is a conception of God tending to pantheism, to an idea of a comprehensive God as ruling with justice rather than affection, to a conception of aloofness and awe-striking worshipfulness. The second idea, which is opposed to this idea of an absolute God, is the God of the human heart. The writer would suggest that the great outline of the theological struggles of that phase of civilisation and world unity which produced Christianity, was a persistent but unsuccessful attempt to get these two different ideas of God into one focus. It was an attempt to make the God of Nature accessible and the God of the Heart invincible, to bring the former into a conception of love and to vest the latter with the beauty of stars and flowers and the dignity of inexorable justice. There

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could be no finer metaphor for such a correlation than Fatherhood and Sonship. But the trouble is that it seems impossible to most people to continue to regard the relations of the Father to the Son as being simply a mystical metaphor. Presently some materialistic bias swings them in a moment of intellectual carelessness back to the idea of sexual filiation.

And it may further be suggested that the extreme aloofness and inhumanity, which is logically necessary in the idea of a Creator God, of an Infinite God, was the reason, so to speak, for the invention of a Holy Spirit, as something proceeding from him, as something bridging the great gulf, a Comforter, a mediator, descending into the sphere of the human understanding. That, and the suggestive influence of the Egyptian Trinity that was then being worshipped at the Serapeum, and which had saturated the thought of Alexandria with the conception of a trinity in unity, are probably the realities that account for the Third Person of the Christian Trinity. At any rate the present writer believes that the discussions that shaped the Christian theology we know were dominated by such natural and fundamental thoughts. These discussions were, of course, complicated from the outset; and particularly were they complicated by the identification of the man Jesus with the theological Christ, by materialistic expectations of his second coming, by materialistic inventions about his "miraculous" begetting, and by the morbid speculations about virginity and the like that arose out of such grossness. They were still further complicated by the idea of the textual inspira-

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tion of the scriptures, which presently swamped thought in textual interpretation. That swamping came very early in the development of Christianity. The writer of St. John's gospel appears still to be thinking with a considerable freedom, but Origen is already hopelessly in the net of the texts. The writer of St. John's gospel was a free man, but Origen was a superstitious man. He was emasculated mentally as well as bodily through his bibliolatry. He quotes; his predecessor thinks.

But the writer throws out these guesses at the probable intentions of early Christian thought in passing. His business here is the definition of a position. The writer's position here in this book is, firstly, complete Agnosticism in the matter of God the Creator, and secondly, entire faith in the matter of God the Redeemer. That, so to speak, is the key of his book. He cannot bring the two ideas under the same term God. He uses the word God therefore for the God in our hearts only, and he uses the term the Veiled Being for the ultimate mysteries of the universe, and he declares that we do not know and perhaps cannot know in any comprehensible terms the relation of the Veiled Being to that living reality in our lives who is, in his terminology, the true God. Speaking from the point of view of practical religion, he is restricting and defining the word God, as meaning only the personal God of mankind, he is restricting it so as to exclude all cosmogony and ideas of providence from our religious thought and leave nothing but the essentials of the religious life.

Many people, whom one would class as rather

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liberal Christians of an Arian or Arminian complexion, may find the larger part of this book acceptable to them if they will read "the Christ God" where the writer has written "God." They will then differ from him upon little more than the question whether there is an essential identity in aim and quality between the Christ God and the Veiled Being, who answer to their Creator God. This the orthodox post-Nicæan Christians assert, and many pre-Nicæans and many heretics (as the Cathars) contradicted with its exact contrary. The Cathars, Paulicians, Albigenses and so on held, with the Manichæans, that the God of Nature, God the Father, was evil. The Christ God was his antagonist. This was the idea of the poet Shelley. And, passing beyond Christian theology altogether a clue can still be found to many problems in comparative theology in this distinction between the Being of Nature (*cf.* Kant's "starry vault above") and the God of the heart (Kant's "moral law within"). The idea of an antagonism seems to have been cardinal in the thought of the Essenes and the Orphic cult and in the Persian dualism. So, too, Buddhism seems to be "antagonistic." On the other hand, the Moslem teaching and modern Judaism seem absolutely to combine and identify the two; God the Creator is altogether and without distinction also God the King of Mankind. Christianity stands somewhere between such complete identification and complete antagonism. It admits a difference in attitude between Father and Son in its distinction between the Old Dispensation (of the Old Testament) and the New. Every pos-

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sible change is rung in the great religions of the world between identification, complete separation, equality, and disproportion of these Beings; but it will be found that these two ideas are, so to speak, the basal elements of all theology in the world. The writer is chary of assertion or denial in these matters. He believes that they are speculations not at all necessary to salvation. He believes that men may differ profoundly in their opinions upon these points and still be in perfect agreement upon the essentials of religion. The reality of religion he believes deals wholly and exclusively with the God of the Heart. He declares as his own opinion, and as the opinion which seems most expressive of modern thought, that there is no reason to suppose the Veiled Being either benevolent or malignant towards men. But if the reader believes that God is Almighty and in every way Infinite the practical outcome is not very different. For the purposes of human relationship it is impossible to deny that God *presents himself as finite*, as struggling and taking a part against evil. The writer believes that these dogmas of relationship are not merely extraneous to religion, but an impediment to religion. His aim in this book is to give a statement of religion which is no longer entangled in such speculations and disputes.

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CHAPTER THE FIRST

THE COSMOGONY OF MODERN RELIGION

§ 1

MODERN RELIGION HAS NO FOUNDER

PERHAPS all religions, unless the flaming onset of Mohammedanism be an exception, have dawned imperceptibly upon the world. A little while ago and the thing was not; and then suddenly it has been found in existence, and already in a state of diffusion. People have begun to hear of the new belief first here and then there. It is interesting, for example, to trace how Christianity drifted into the consciousness of the Roman world. But when a religion has been interrogated it has always had hitherto a tale of beginnings, the name and story of a founder. The nascent religion that is now taking shape, it seems, had no founder; it points to no origins. It is the Truth, its believers declare; it has always been here; it has always been visible to those that had eyes to see. It is perhaps plainer than it was and to more people—that is all.

It is as if it still did not realise its own difference. Many of those who hold it still think of it as if it were a kind of Christianity. Some, catching at a phrase of Huxley's, speak of it as Christianity without Theology. They do not know the creed they are carrying. It has, as a matter of fact, a very fine and

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subtle theology, flatly opposed to any belief that could, except by great stretching of charity and the imagination, be called Christianity. One might find, perhaps, a parallelism with the system ascribed to some Gnostics, but that is far more probably an accidental rather than a sympathetic coincidence. Of that the reader shall presently have an opportunity of judging.

This indefiniteness of statement and relationship is probably only the opening phase of the new faith. Christianity also began with an extreme neglect of definition. It was not at first anything more than a sect of Judaism. It was only after three centuries, amidst the uproar and emotions of the Council of Nicæa, when the more enthusiastic Trinitarians stuffed their fingers in their ears in affected horror at the arguments of old Arius, that the cardinal mystery of the Trinity was established as the essential fact of Christianity. Throughout those three centuries, the centuries of its greatest achievements and noblest martyrdoms, Christianity had not defined its God. And even to-day it has to be noted that a large majority of those who possess and repeat the Christian creeds have come into the practice so insensibly from unthinking childhood, that only in the slightest way do they realise the nature of the statements to which they subscribe. They will speak and think of both Christ and God in ways flatly incompatible with the doctrine of the Triune deity upon which, theoretically, the entire fabric of all the churches rests. They will show themselves as frankly Arians as though that damnable heresy had not been washed out of

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the world for ever after centuries of persecution in torrents of blood. But whatever the present state of Christendom in these matters may be, there can be no doubt of the enormous pains taken in the past to give Christian beliefs the exactest, least ambiguous statement possible. Christianity knew itself clearly for what it was in its maturity, whatever the indecisions of its childhood or the confusions of its decay. The renascent religion that one finds now, a thing active and sufficient in many minds, has still scarcely come to self-consciousness. But it is so coming, and this present book is very largely an attempt to state the shape it is assuming and to compare it with the beliefs and imperatives and usages of the various Christian pseudo-Christian, philosophical, and agnostic cults amidst which it has appeared.

The writer's sympathies and convictions are entirely with this that he speaks of as renascent or modern religion; he is neither atheist nor Buddhist nor Mohammedan nor Christian. He will make no pretence, therefore, to impartiality and detachment. He will do his best to be as fair as possible and as candid as possible, but the reader must reckon with this bias. He has found this faith growing up in himself; he has found it, or something very difficult to distinguish from it, growing independently in the minds of men and women he has met. They have been people of very various origins: English, Americans, Bengalis, Russians, French, people brought up in a "Catholic atmosphere," Positivists, Baptists, Sikhs, Mohammedans. Their diversity of source is as remarkable as their convergence of tendency. A

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miscellany of minds thinking upon parallel lines has come out to the same light. The new teaching is also traceable in many professedly Christian religious books, and it is to be heard from Christian pulpits. The phase of definition is manifestly at hand.

§ 2

MODERN RELIGION HAS A FINITE GOD

Perhaps the most fundamental difference between this new faith and any recognised form of Christianity is that, knowingly or unknowingly, it worships a *finite God*. Directly the believer is fairly confronted with the plain questions of the case, the vague identifications that are still carelessly made with one or all of the persons of the Trinity dissolve away. He will admit that his God is neither all-wise, nor all-powerful, nor omnipresent; that he is neither the maker of heaven nor earth, and that he has little to identify him with that hereditary God of the Jews who became the "Father" in the Christian system. On the other hand he will assert that his God is a god of salvation, that he is a spirit, a person, a strongly marked and knowable personality, loving, inspiring, and lovable, who exists or strives to exist in every human soul. He will be much less certain in his denials that his God has a close resemblance to the Pauline (as distinguished from the Trinitarian) "Christ." . . .

The modern religious man will almost certainly profess a kind of universalism; he will assert that

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whenever men have called upon any God and have found fellowship and comfort and courage and that sense of God within them, that inner light which is the quintessence of the religious experience, it was the True God that answered them. For the True God is a generous God, not a jealous God; the very antithesis of that bickering monopolist who "will have none other gods but Me"; and when a human heart cries out—to what name it matters not—for a larger spirit and a stronger help than the visible things of life can give, straightway the nameless Helper is with it and the God of Man answers to the call. The True God has no scorn nor hate for those who have accepted the many-handed symbols of the Hindu or the lacquered idols of China. Where there is faith, where there is need, there is the True God ready to clasp the hands that stretch out seeking for him into the darkness behind the ivory and gold.

The fact that God is *finite* is one upon which those who think clearly among the new believers are very insistent. He is, above everything else, a personality, and to be a personality is to have characteristics, to be limited by characteristics; he is a Being, not us but dealing with us and through us, he has an aim and that means he has a past and future; he is within time and not outside it. And they point out that this is really what everyone who prays sincerely to God or gets help from God, feels and believes. Our practice with God is better than our theory. None of us really pray to that fantastic, unqualified *danse à trois*, the Trinity, which the wranglings and disputes of the worthies of Alexandria and Syria declared to be God.

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We pray to one single understanding person. But so far the tactics of those Trinitarians at Nicæa, who stuck their fingers in their ears, have prevailed in this world; this was no matter for discussion, they declared, it was a Holy Mystery full of magical terror, and few religious people have thought it worth while to revive these terrors by a definite contradiction. The truly religious have been content to lapse quietly into the comparative sanity of an unformulated Arianism, they have left it to the scoffing Atheist to mock at the patent absurdities of the official creed. But one magnificent protest against this theological fantasy must have been the work of a sincerely religious man, the cold superb humour of that burlesque creed, ascribed, at first no doubt facetiously and then quite seriously, to Saint Athanasius the Great, which, by an irony far beyond its original intention, has become at last the accepted creed of the church.

The long truce in the criticism of Trinitarian theology is drawing to its end. It is when men most urgently need God that they become least patient with foolish presentations and dogmas. The new believers are very definitely set upon a thorough analysis of the nature and growth of the Christian creeds and ideas. There has grown up a practice of assuming that, when God is spoken of, the Hebrew-Christian God of Nicæa is meant. But that God trails with him a thousand misconceptions and bad associations; his alleged infinite nature, his jealousy, his strange preferences, his vindictive Old Testament past. These things do not even make a caricature of

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the True God; they compose an altogether different and antagonistic figure.

It is a very childish and unphilosophical set of impulses that has led the theologians of nearly every faith to claim infinite qualities for their deity. One has to remember the poorness of the mental and moral quality of the churchmen of the third, fourth, and fifth centuries who saddled Christendom with its characteristic dogmas, and the extreme poverty and confusion of the circle of ideas within which they thought. Many of these makers of Christianity, like Saint Ambrose of Milan (who had even to be baptised after his election to his bishopric), had been pitchforked into the church from civil life; they lived in a time of pitiless factions and personal feuds; they had to conduct their disputations amidst the struggles of would-be emperors; court eunuchs and favourites swayed their counsels, and popular rioting clinched their decisions. There was less freedom of discussion then in the Christian world than there is at present (1916) in Belgium, and the whole audience of educated opinion by which a theory could be judged did not equal, either in numbers or accuracy of information, the present population of Constantinople. To these conditions we owe the claim that the Christian God is a magic god, very great medicine in battle, "*in hoc signo vinces*," and the argument so natural to the minds of those days and so absurd to ours, that since he had *all* power, *all* knowledge, and existed for ever and ever, it was no use whatever to set up any other god against him. . . .

By the fifth century Christianity had adopted as

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its fundamental belief, without which everyone was to be "damned everlastingly," a conception of God and of Christ's relation to God, of which even by the Christian account of his teaching, Jesus was either totally unaware or so negligent and careless of the future comfort of his disciples as scarcely to make mention. The doctrine of the Trinity, so far as the relationship of the Third Person goes, hangs almost entirely upon one ambiguous and disputed utterance in St. John's gospel (xv. 26). Most of the teachings of Christian orthodoxy resolve themselves to the attentive student into assertions of the nature of contradiction and repartee. Someone floats an opinion in some matter that has been hitherto vague, in regard, for example, to the sonship of Christ or to the method of his birth. The new opinion arouses the hostility and alarm of minds unaccustomed to so definite a statement, and in the zeal of their recoil they fly to a contrary proposition. The Christians would neither admit that they worshipped more gods than one because of the Greeks, nor deny the divinity of Christ because of the Jews. They dreaded to be polytheistic; equally did they dread the least apparent detraction from the power and importance of their Saviour. They were forced into the theory of the Trinity by the necessity of those contrary assertions, and they had to make it a mystery protected by curses to save it from a *reductio ad absurdum*. The entire history of the growth of the Christian doctrine in those disordered early centuries is a history of theology by committee; a history of furious wrangling, of hasty compromises, and still more

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hasty attempts to clinch matters by anathema. When the muddle was at its very worst, the church was confronted by enormous political opportunities. In order that it should seize these, one chief thing appeared imperative; doctrinal uniformity. The emperor himself, albeit unbaptised and very ignorant of Greek, came and seated himself in the midst of Christian thought upon a golden throne. At the end of it all Eusebius, that supreme Trimmer, was prepared to damn everlastingly all those who doubted that consubstantiality he himself had doubted at the beginning of the conference. It is quite clear that Constantine did not care who was damned or for what period, so long as the Christians ceased to wrangle among themselves. The practical unanimity of Nicæa was secured by threats, and then, turning upon the victors, he sought by threats to restore Arius to communion. The imperial aim was a common faith to unite the empire. The crushing out of the Arians and of the Paulicians and suchlike heretics, and more particularly the systematic destruction by the orthodox of all heretical writings, had about it none of that quality of honest conviction which comes to those who have a real knowledge of God; it was a bawling down of dissensions that, left to work themselves out, would have spoiled good business; it was the fist of Nicolas of Myra over again, except that after the days of Ambrose the sword of the executioner and the fires of the book-burner were added to the weapon of the human voice. Priscillian was the first human sacrifice formally offered up under these improved conditions to the greater glory

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of the reinforced Trinity. Thereafter the blood of the heretics was the cement of Christian unity.

It is with these things in mind that those who profess the new faith are becoming so markedly anxious to distinguish God from the Trinitarian's deity. At present if anyone who has left the Christian communion declares himself a believer in God, priest and parson swell with self-complacency. There is no reason why they should do so. That many of us have gone from them and found God is no concern of theirs. It is not that we who went out into the wilderness which we thought to be a desert, away from their creeds and dogmas, have turned back and are returning. It is that we have gone on still further, and are beyond that desolation. Never more shall we return to those who gather under the cross. By faith we disbelieved and denied. By faith we said of that stuffed scarecrow of divinity, that incoherent accumulation of antique theological notions, the Nicene deity, "This is certainly no God." And by faith we have found God. . . .

§ 3

THE INFINITE BEING IS NOT GOD

There has always been a demand upon the theological teacher that he should supply a cosmogony. It has always been an effective propagandist thing to say: "*Our* God made the whole universe. Don't you think that it would be wise to abandon *your* deity, who did not, as you admit, do anything of the sort?"

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The attentive reader of the lives of the Saints will find that this style of argument did in the past bring many tribes and nations into the Christian fold. It was second only to the claim of magic advantages, demonstrated by a free use of miracles. Only one great religious system, the Buddhist, seems to have resisted the temptation to secure for its divinity the honour and title of Creator. Modern religion is like Buddhism in that respect. It offers no theory whatever about the origin of the universe. It does not reach behind the appearances of space and time. It sees only a featureless presumption in that playing with superlatives which has entertained so many minds from Plotinus to the Hegelians with the delusion that such negative terms as the Absolute or the Unconditioned, can assert anything at all. At the back of all known things there is an impenetrable curtain; the ultimate of existence is a Veiled Being, which seems to know nothing of life or death or good or ill. Of that Being, whether it is simple or complex or divine, we know nothing; to us it is no more than the limit of understanding, the unknown beyond. It may be of practically limitless intricacy and possibility. The new religion does not pretend that the God of its life is that Being, or that he has any relation of control or association with that Being. It does not even assert that God knows all or much more than we do about that ultimate Being.

For us life is a matter of our personalities in space and time. Human analysis probing with philosophy and science towards the Veiled Being reveals nothing of God, reveals space and time only as necessary

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forms of consciousness, glimpses a dance of atoms, of whirls in the ether. Some day in the endless future there may be a knowledge, an understanding of relationship, a power and courage that will pierce into those black wrappings. To that it may be our God, the Captain of Mankind, will take us.

That now is a mere speculation. The veil of the unknown is set with the stars; its outer texture is ether and atom and crystal. The Veiled Being, enigmatical and incomprehensible, broods over the mirror upon which the busy shapes of life are moving. It is as if it waited in a great stillness. Our lives do not deal with it, and cannot deal with it. It may be that they may never be able to deal with it.

§ 4

THE LIFE FORCE IS NOT GOD

So it is that comprehensive setting of the universe presents itself to the modern mind. It is altogether outside good and evil and love and hate. It is outside God, who is love and goodness. And coming out of this veiled being, proceeding out of it in a manner altogether inconceivable, is another lesser being, an impulse thrusting through matter and clothing itself in continually changing material forms, the maker of our world, Life, the Will to Be. It comes out of that inscrutable being as a wave comes rolling to us from beyond the horizon. It is as it were a great wave rushing through matter and possessed by a spirit. It is a breeding, fighting thing; it pants through the

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jungle track as the tiger and lifts itself towards heaven as the tree; it is the rabbit bolting for its life and the dove calling to her mate; it crawls, it flies, it dives, it lusts and devours, it pursues and eats itself in order to live still more eagerly and hastily; it is every living thing, of it are our passions and desires and fears. And it is aware of itself not as a whole, but dispersedly as individual self-consciousness, starting out dispersedly from every one of the sentient creatures it has called into being. They look out for their little moments, red-eyed and fierce, full of greed, full of the passions of acquisition and assimilation and reproduction, submitting only to brief fellowships of defence or aggression. They are beings of strain and conflict and competition. They are living substance still mingled painfully with the dust. The forms in which this being clothes itself bear thorns and fangs and claws, are soaked with poison and bright with threats or allurements, prey slyly or openly on one another, hold their own for a little while, breed savagely and resentfully, and pass. . . .

This second Being men have called the Life Force, the Will to Live, the Struggle for Existence. They have figured it too as Mother Nature. We may speculate whether it is not what the wiser among the Gnostics meant by the Demiurge, but since the Christians destroyed all the Gnostic books, that must remain a mere curious guess. We may speculate whether this heat and haste and wrath of life about us is the Dark God of the Manichees, the evil spirit of the sun worshippers. But in contemporary thought

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there is no conviction apparent that this Demiurge is either good or evil; it is conceived of as both good and evil. If it gives all the pain and conflict of life, it gives also the joy of the sunshine, the delight and hope of youth, the pleasures. If it has elaborated a hundred thousand sorts of parasite, it has also moulded the beautiful limbs of man and woman; it has shaped the slug and the flower. And in it, as part of it, taking its rewards, responding to its goads, struggling against the final abandonment to death, do we all live, as the beasts live, glad, angry, sorry, revengeful, hopeful, weary, disgusted, forgetful, lustful, happy, excited, bored, in pain, mood after mood but always fearing death, with no certainty and no coherence within us, until we find God. And God comes to us neither out of the stars nor out of the pride of life, but as a still small voice within.

§ 5

GOD IS WITHIN

God comes we know not whence, into the conflict of life. He works in men and through men. He is a spirit, a single spirit and a single person; he has begun and he will never end. He is the immortal part and leader of mankind. He has motives, he has characteristics, he has an aim. He is by our poor scales of measurement boundless love, boundless courage, boundless generosity. He is thought and a steadfast will. He is our friend and brother and the light of the world. That briefly is the belief

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of the modern mind with regard to God. There is no very novel idea about this God, unless it be the idea that he had a beginning. This is the God that men have sought and found in all ages, as God or as the Messiah or the Saviour. The finding of him is salvation from the purposelessness of life. The new religion has but disentangled the idea of him from the absolutes and infinities and mysteries of the Christian theologians; from mythological virgin births and the cosmogonies and intellectual pretentiousness of a vanished age.

Modern religion appeals to no revelation, no authoritative teaching, no mystery. The statement it makes is, it declares, a mere statement of what we may all perceive and experience. We all live in the storm of life, we all find our understandings limited by the Veiled Being; if we seek salvation and search within for God, presently we find him. All this is in the nature of things. If everyone who perceives and states it were to be instantly killed and blotted out, presently other people would find their way to the same conclusions; and so on again and again. To this all true religion, casting aside its hulls of misconception, must ultimately come. To it indeed much religion is already coming. Christian thought struggles towards it, with the millstones of Syrian theology and an outrageous mythology of incarnation and resurrection about its neck. When at last our present bench of bishops join the early fathers of the church in heaven there will be, I fear, a note of reproach in their greeting of the ingenious person who saddled them with *omnipotens*. Still more disastrous

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for them has been the virgin birth, with the terrible fascination of its detail for unpoetic minds. How rich is the literature of authoritative Christianity with decisions upon the continuing virginity of Mary and the virginity of Joseph—ideas that first arose in Arabia as a Moslem gloss upon Christianity—and how little have these peepings and prying to do with the needs of the heart and the finding of God!

Within the last few years there have been a score or so of such volumes as that recently compiled by Dr. Foakes Jackson, entitled "The Faith and the War," a volume in which the curious reader may contemplate deans and canons, divines and church dignitaries, men intelligent and inquiring and religiously disposed, all lying like overladen camels, panting under this load of obsolete theological responsibility, groaning great articles, outside the needle's eye that leads to God.

§ 6

THE COMING OF GOD

Modern religion bases its knowledge of God and its account of God entirely upon experience. It has encountered God. It does not argue about God; it relates without any of those wrappings of awe and reverence that fold so necessarily about imposture, it relates as one tells of a friend and his assistance, of a happy adventure, of a beautiful thing found and picked up by the wayside.

So far as its psychological phases go the new account of personal salvation tallies very closely with

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the account of "conversion" as it is given by other religions. It has little to tell that is not already familiar to the reader of William James's "Varieties of Religious Experience." It describes an initial state of distress with the aimlessness and cruelties of life, and particularly with the futility of the individual life, a state of helpless self-disgust, of inability to form any satisfactory plan of living. This is the common prelude known to many sorts of Christian as "conviction of sin"; it is, at any rate, a conviction of hopeless confusion. . . . Then in some way the idea of God comes into the distressed mind, at first simply as an idea, without substance or belief. It is read about or it is remembered; it is expounded by some teacher or some happy convert. In the case of all those of the new faith with whose personal experience I have any intimacy, the idea of God has remained for some time simply as an idea floating about in a mind still dissatisfied. God is not believed in, but it is realised that if there were such a being he would supply the needed consolation and direction, his continuing purpose would knit together the scattered effort of life, his immortality would take the sting from death. Under this realisation the idea is pursued and elaborated. For a time there is a curious resistance to the suggestion that God is truly a person; he is spoken of preferably by such phrases as the Purpose in Things, as the Racial Consciousness, as the Collective Mind.

I believe that this resistance in so many contemporary minds to the idea of God as a person is due very largely to the enormous prejudice against divine

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personality created by the absurdities of the Christian teaching and the habitual monopoly of the Christian idea. The picture of Christ as the Good Shepherd thrusts itself before minds unaccustomed to the idea that they are lambs. The cross in the twilight bars the way. It is a novelty and an enormous relief to such people to realise that one may think of God without being committed to think of either the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost, or of all of them at once. That freedom had not seemed possible to them. They had been hypnotised and obsessed by the idea that the Christian God is the only thinkable God. They had heard so much about that God and so little of any other. With that release their minds become, as it were, nascent and ready for the coming of God.

Then suddenly, in a little while, in his own time, God comes. This cardinal experience is an undoubting, immediate sense of God. It is the attainment of an absolute certainty that one is not alone in oneself. It is as if one was touched at every point by a being akin to oneself, sympathetic, beyond measure wiser, steadfast and pure in aim. It is completer and more intimate, but it is like standing side by side with and touching someone that we love very dearly and trust completely. It is as if this being bridged a thousand misunderstandings and brought us into fellowship with a great multitude of other people. . . .

“Closer he is than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.”

The moment may come while we are alone in the darkness, under the stars, or while we walk by our-

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selves or in a crowd, or while we sit and muse. It may come upon the sinking ship or in the tumult of the battle. There is no saying when it may not come to us. . . . But after it has come our lives are changed, God is with us and there is no more doubt of God. Thereafter one goes about the world like one who was lonely and has found a lover, like one who was perplexed and has found a solution. One is assured that there is a Power that fights with us against the confusion and evil within us and without. There comes into the heart an essential and enduring happiness and courage.

There is but one God, there is but one true religious experience, but under a multitude of names, under veils and darkneses, God has in this manner come into countless lives. There is scarcely a faith, however mean and preposterous, that has not been a way to holiness. God who is himself finite, who himself struggles in his great effort from strength to strength, has no spite against error. Far beyond halfway he hastens to meet the purblind. But God is against the darkness in their eyes. The faith which is returning to men girds at veils and shadows, and would see God plainly. It has little respect for mysteries. It rends the veil of the temple in rags and tatters. It has no superstitious fear of this huge friendliness, of this great brother and leader of our little beings. To find God is but the beginning of wisdom, because then for all our days we have to learn his purpose with us and to live our lives with him.

CHAPTER THE SECOND

HERESIES; OR THE THINGS THAT GOD IS NOT

§ 1

HERESIES ARE MISCONCEPTIONS OF GOD

RELIGION is not a plant that has grown from one seed; it is like a lake that has been fed by countless springs. It is a great pool of living water, mingled from many sources and tainted with much impurity. It is synthetic in its nature; it becomes simpler from original complexities; the sediment subsides.

A life perfectly adjusted to its surroundings is a life without mentality; no judgment is called for, no inhibition, no disturbance of the instinctive flow of perfect reactions. Such a life is bliss, or nirvana. It is unconsciousness below dreaming. Consciousness is discord evoking the will to adjust; it is inseparable from need. At every need consciousness breaks into being. Imperfect adjustments, needs, are the rents and tatters in the smooth dark veil of being through which the light of consciousness shines—the light of consciousness and will of which God is the sun.

So that every need of human life, every disappointment and dissatisfaction and call for help and effort, is a means whereby men may and do come to the realisation of God.

There is no cardinal need, there is no sort of experience in human life from which there does not

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come or has not come a contribution to men's religious ideas. At every challenge men have to put forth effort, feel doubt of adequacy, be thwarted, perceive the chill shadow of their mortality. At every challenge comes the possibility of help from without, the idea of eluding frustration, the aspiration towards immortality. It is possible to classify the appeals men make for God under the headings of their chief system of effort, their efforts to understand, their fear and their struggles for safety and happiness, the craving of their restlessness for peace, their angers against disorder and their desire for the avenger; their sexual passions and perplexities. . . .

Each of these great systems of needs and efforts brings its own sort of sediment into religion. Each, that is to say, has its own kind of heresy, its distinctive misapprehension of God. It is only in the synthesis and mutual correction of many divergent ideas that the idea of God grows clear. The effort to understand completely, for example, leads to the endless Heresies of Theory. Men trip over the inherent infirmities of the human mind. But in these days one does not argue greatly about dogma. Almost every conceivable error about unity, about personality, about time and quantity and genus and species, about begetting and beginning and limitation and similarity and every kink in the difficult mind of man, has been thrust forward in some form of dogma. Beside the errors of thought are the errors of emotion. Fear and feebleness go straight to the Heresies that God is magic or that God is Providence; restless egotism at leisure and unchallenged by urgent

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elementary realities breeds the Heresies of Mysticism, anger and hate call for God's Judgments, and the stormy emotions of sex gave mankind the Phallic God. Those who find themselves possessed by the new Spirit in religion, realise very speedily the necessity of clearing the mind of all these exaggerations, transferences, and overflows of feeling. The search for divine truth is like gold washing; nothing is of any value until most has been swept away.

§ 2

HERESIES OF SPECULATION

One sort of heresies stands apart from the rest. It is infinitely the most various sort. It includes all those heresies which result from wrong-headed mental elaboration, as distinguished from those which are the result of hasty and imperfect apprehension, the heresies of the clever rather than the heresies of the obtuse. The former are of endless variety and complexity; the latter are in comparison natural, simple confusions. The former are the errors of the study, the latter the superstitions that spring by the wayside, or are brought down to us in our social structure out of a barbaric past.

To the heresies of thought and speculation belong the elaborate doctrine of the Trinity, dogmas about God's absolute qualities, such odd deductions as the accepted Christian teachings about the virginity of Mary and Joseph, and the like. All these things are parts of orthodox Christianity. Yet none of them

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did Christ, even by the Christian account, expound or recommend. He treated them as negligible. It was left for the Alexandrians, for Alexander, for little, red-haired, busy, wire-pulling Athanasius to find out exactly what their Master was driving at, three centuries after their Master was dead. . . .

Men still sit at little desks remote from God or life, and rack their inadequate brains to meet fancied difficulties and state unnecessary perfections. They seek God by logic, ignoring the marginal error that creeps into every syllogism. Their conceit blinds them to the limitations upon their thinking. They weave spider-like webs of muddle and disputation across the path by which men come to God. It would not matter very much if it were not that simpler souls are caught in these webs. Every great religious system in the world is choked by such webs; each system has its own. Of all the blood-stained tangled heresies which make up doctrinal Christianity and imprison the mind of the western world to-day, not one seems to have been known to the nominal founder of Christianity. Jesus Christ never certainly claimed to be the Messiah; never spoke clearly of the Trinity; was vague upon the scheme of salvation and the significance of his martyrdom. We are asked to suppose that he left his apostles without instructions that were necessary to their eternal happiness, that he could give them the Lord's Prayer but leave them to guess at the all-important Creed,* and that the

* Even the "Apostles' Creed" is not traceable earlier than the fourth century. It is manifestly an old, patched formulary. Rufinus explains that it was not written down for a long time, but transmitted orally, kept secret, and used as a sort of password among the elect.

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Church staggered along blindly, putting its foot in and out of damnation, until the "experts" of Nicæa, that "garland of priests," marshalled by Constantine's officials, came to its rescue. . . . From the conversion of Paul onward, the heresies of the intellect multiplied about Christ's memory and hid him from the sight of men. We are no longer clear about the doctrine he taught nor about the things he said and did. . . .

We are all so weary of this theology of the Christians, we are all at heart so sceptical about their Triune God, that it is needless here to spend any time or space upon the twenty thousand different formulæ in which the orthodox have attempted to believe in something of the sort. There are several useful encyclopædias of sects and heresies, compact but still bulky, to which the curious may go. There are ten thousand different expositions of orthodoxy. No one who really seeks God thinks of the Trinity, either the Trinity of the Trinitarian or the Trinity of the Sabelian or the Trinity of the Arian, any more than one thinks of those theories made stone, those gods with three heads and seven hands, who sit on lotus leaves and flourish lingams and what not, in the temples of India. Let us leave, therefore, these morbid elaborations of the human intelligence to drift to limbo, and come rather to the natural heresies that spring from fundamental weaknesses of the human character, and which are common to all religions. Against these it is necessary to keep constant watch. They return very insidiously.

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§ 3

GOD IS NOT MAGIC

One of the most universal of these natural misconceptions of God is to consider him as something magic serving the ends of men.

It is not easy for us to grasp at first the full meaning of giving our souls to God. The missionary and teacher of any creed is all too apt to hawk God for what he will fetch; he is greedy for the poor triumph of acquiescence; and so it comes about that many people who have been led to believe themselves religious, are in reality still keeping back their own souls and trying to use God for their own purposes. God is nothing more for them as yet than a magnificent Fetish. They did not really want him, but they have heard that he is potent stuff; their unripe souls think to make use of him. They call upon his name, they do certain things that are supposed to be peculiarly influential with him, such as saying prayers and repeating gross praises of him, or reading in a blind, industrious way that strange miscellany of Jewish and early Christian literature, the Bible, and suchlike mental mortification, or making the Sabbath dull and uncomfortable. In return for these fetishistic propitiations God is supposed to interfere with the normal course of causation in their favour. He becomes a celestial log-roller. He remedies unfavourable accidents, cures petty ailments, contrives unexpected gifts of medicine, money, or the like, he averts bankruptcies, arranges profitable transactions,

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and does a thousand such services for his little clique of faithful people. The pious are represented as being constantly delighted by these little surprises, these bouquets and chocolate boxes from the divinity. Or contrawise he contrives spiteful turns for those who fail in their religious attentions. He murders Sabbath-breaking children, or disorganises the careful business schemes of the ungodly. He is represented as going Sabbath-breaking on Sunday morning as a Staffordshire worker goes ratting. Ordinary everyday Christianity is saturated with this fetishistic conception of God. It may be disowned in *The Hibbert Journal* but it is unblushingly advocated in the parish magazine. It is an idea taken over by Christianity with the rest of the qualities of the Hebrew God. It is natural enough in minds so self-centred that their recognition of weakness and need brings with it no real self-surrender, but it is entirely inconsistent with the modern conception of the true God.

There has dropped upon the table as I write a modest periodical called *The Northern British Israel Review*, illustrated with portraits of various clergymen of the Church of England, and of ladies and gentlemen who belong to the little school of thought which this magazine represents; it is, I should judge, a sub-sect entirely within the Established Church of England, that is to say within the Anglican communion of the Trinitarian Christians. It contains among other papers a very entertaining summary by a gentleman entitled—I cite the unusual title-page of the periodical—"Landseer Mackenzie, Esq.," of the views of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Obadiah upon the

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Kaiser William. They are distinctly hostile views. **Mr. Landseer Mackenzie** discourses not only upon these anticipatory condemnations but also upon the relations of the weather to this war. He is convinced quite simply and honestly that God has been persistently rigging the weather against the Germans. He points out that the absence of mist on the North Sea was of great help to the British in the autumn of 1914, and declares that it was the wet state of the country that really held up the Germans in Flanders in the winter of 1914-15. He ignores the part played by the weather in delaying the relief of Kut-el-Amara, and he has not thought of the difficult question why the Deity, having once decided upon intervention, did not, instead of this comparatively trivial meteorological assistance, adopt the more effective course of, for example, exploding or spoiling the German stores of ammunition by some simple atomic miracle, or misdirecting their gunfire by a sudden local modification of the laws of refraction or gravitation. . . .

Since these views of God come from Anglican vicarages I can only conclude that this kind of belief is quite orthodox and permissible in the established church, and that I am charging orthodox Christianity here with nothing that has ever been officially repudiated. I find indeed the essential assumptions of **Mr. Landseer Mackenzie** repeated in endless official Christian utterances on the part of German and British and Russian divines. The Bishop of Chelmsford, for example, has recently ascribed our difficulties in the war to our impatience with long sermons—

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among other similar causes. Such Christians are manifestly convinced that God can be invoked by ritual—for example by special days of national prayer or an increased observance of Sunday—or made malignant by neglect or levity. It is almost fundamental in their idea of him. The ordinary Mohammedan seems as confident of this magic pettiness of God, and the belief of China in the magic propitiations and resentments of “Heaven” is at least equally strong.

But the true God as those of the new religion know him is no such God of luck and intervention. He is not to serve men’s ends or the ends of nations or associations of men; he is careless of our ceremonies and invocations. He does not lose his temper with our follies and weaknesses. It is for us to serve him. He captains us, he does not coddle us. He has his own ends for which he needs us. . . .

§ 4

GOD IS NOT PROVIDENCE

Closely related to this heresy that God is magic, is the heresy that calls him Providence, that declares the apparent adequacy of cause and effect to be a sham, and that all the time, incalculably, he is pulling about the order of events for our personal advantages.

The idea of Providence was very gaily travestied by Daudet in “Tartarin in the Alps.” You will remember how Tartarin’s friend assured him that all

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Switzerland was one great Trust, intent upon attracting tourists and far too wise and kind to permit them to venture into real danger, that all the precipices were netted invisibly, and all the loose rocks guarded against falling, that the avalanches were prearranged spectacles and the crevasses at their worst slippery ways down into kindly catchment bags. If the mountaineer tried to get into real danger he was turned back by specious excuses. Inspired by this persuasion Tartarin behaved with incredible daring. . . . That is exactly the Providence theory of the whole world. There can be no doubt that it does enable many a timid soul to get through life with a certain recklessness. And provided there is no slip into a crevasse, the Providence theory works well. It would work altogether well if there were no crevasses.

Tartarin was reckless because of his faith in Providence, and escaped. But what would have happened to him if he had fallen into a crevasse?

There exists a very touching and remarkable book by Sir Francis Younghusband called "Within" (Williams and Norgate). It is the confession of a man who lived with a complete confidence in Providence until he was already well advanced in years. He went through battles and campaigns, he filled positions of great honour and responsibility, he saw much of the life of men, without altogether losing his faith. The loss of a child, an Indian famine, could shake it but not overthrow it. Then coming back one day from some races in France, he was knocked down by an automobile and hurt very cruelly. He suffered terribly in body and mind. His sufferings caused

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much suffering to others. He did his utmost to see the hand of a loving Providence in his and their disaster and the torment it inflicted, and being a man of sterling honesty and a fine essential simplicity of mind, he confessed at last that he could not do so. His confidence in the benevolent intervention of God was altogether destroyed. His book tells of this shattering, and how laboriously he reconstructed his religion upon less confident lines. It is a book typical of an age and of a very English sort of mind, a book well worth reading.

That he came to a full sense of the true God cannot be asserted, but how near he came to God, let one quotation witness.

“The existence of an outside Providence,” he writes, “who created us, who watches over us, and who guides our lives like a Merciful Father, we have found impossible longer to believe in. But of the existence of a Holy Spirit radiating upward through all animate beings, and finding its fullest expression, in man in love, and in the flowers in beauty, we can be as certain as of anything in the world. This fiery spiritual impulsion at the centre and the source of things, ever burning in us, is the supremely important factor in our existence. It does not always attain to light. In many directions it fails; the conditions are too hard and it is utterly blocked. In others it only partially succeeds. But in a few it bursts forth into radiant light. There are few who in some heavenly moment of their lives have not been conscious of its presence. We may not be able to give it outward expression, but we know that it is there.” . . .

God does not guide our feet. He is no sedulous governess restraining and correcting the wayward steps of men. If you would fly into the air, there is no God to bank your aeroplane correctly for you or

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keep an ill-tended engine going; if you would cross a glacier, no God nor angel guides your steps amidst the slippery places. He will not even mind your innocent children for you if you leave them before an unguarded fire. Cherish no delusions; for yourself and others you challenge danger and chance on your own strength; no talisman, no God, can help you or those you care for. Nothing of such things will God do; it is an idle dream. But God will be with you nevertheless. In the reeling aeroplane or the dark ice-cave God will be your courage. Though you suffer or are killed, it is not an end. He will be with you as you face death; he will die with you as he has died already countless myriads of brave deaths. He will come so close to you that at the last you will not know whether it is you or he who dies, and the present death will be swallowed up in his victory.

§ 5

THE HERESY OF QUIETISM

God comes to us within and takes us for his own. He releases us from ourselves; he incorporates us with his own undying experience and adventure; he receives us and gives himself. He is a stimulant; he makes us live immortally and more abundantly. I have compared him to the sensation of a dear, strong friend who comes and stands quietly beside one, shoulder to shoulder.

The finding of God is the beginning of service. It is not an escape from life and action; it is the release

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of life and action from the prison of the mortal self. Not to realise that, is the heresy of Quietism, of many mystics. Commonly such people are people of some wealth, able to command services for all their everyday needs. They make religion a method of indolence. They turn their backs on the toil and stresses of existence and give themselves up to a delicious reverie in which they flirt with the divinity. They will recount their privileges and ecstasies, and how ingeniously and wonderfully God has tried and proved them. But indeed the true God was not the lover of Madame Guyon. The true God is not a spiritual troubadour wooing the hearts of men and women to no purpose. The true God goes through the world like fifes and drums and flags, calling for recruits along the street. We must go out to him. We must accept his discipline and fight his battle. The peace of God comes not by thinking about it but by forgetting oneself in him.

§ 6

GOD DOES NOT PUNISH

Man is a social animal, and there is in him a great faculty for moral indignation. Many of the early Gods were mainly Gods of Fear. They were more often "wrath" than not. Such was the temperament of the Semitic deity who, as the Hebrew Jehovah, proliferated, perhaps under the influence of the Alexandrian Serapeum, into the Christian Trinity and who became also the Moslem God.* The natural

* It is not so generally understood as it should be among English and American readers, that a very large proportion of early Christians before the creeds

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hatred of unregenerate men against everything that is unlike themselves, against strange people and cheerful people, against unfamiliar usages and things they do not understand, embodied itself in this conception of a malignant and partisan Deity, perpetually "upset" by the little things people did, and contriving murder and vengeance. Now this God would be drowning everybody in the world, now he would be burning Sodom and Gomorrah, now he would be inciting his congenial Israelites to the most terrific pogroms. This divine "frightfulness" is of course the natural human dislike and distrust for queer practices or for too sunny a carelessness, a dislike reinforced by the latent fierceness of the ape in us, liberating the latent fierceness of the ape in us, giving it an excuse and pressing permission upon it, handing the thing hated and feared over to its secular arm. . . .

It is a human paradox that the desire for seemliness, the instinct for restraints and fair disciplines, and the impulse to cherish sweet familiar things, that these things of the True God should so readily liberate cruelty and tyranny. It is like a woman going with a light to tend and protect her sleeping child, and setting the house on fire. None the less, right down to to-day, the heresy of God the Revengeful,

established and regularised the doctrine of the Trinity, denied absolutely that Jehovah was God; they regarded Christ as a rebel against Jehovah and a rescuer of humanity from him, just as Prometheus was a rebel against Jove. These beliefs survived for a thousand years throughout Christendom; they were held by a great multitude of persecuted sects, from the Albigenses and Cathars to the eastern Paulicians. The Catholic Church found it necessary to prohibit the circulation of the Old Testament among laymen very largely on account of the polemics of the Cathars against the Hebrew God. But in this book, be it noted, the word Christian, when it is not otherwise defined, is used to indicate only the Trinitarians who accept the official creeds.

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God the Persecutor and Avenger, haunts religion. It is only in quite recent years that the growing gentleness of everyday life has begun to make men a little ashamed of a Deity less tolerant and gentle than themselves. The recent literature of the Anglicans abounds in the evidence of this trouble.

Bishop Colenso of Natal was prosecuted and condemned in 1863 for denying the irascibility of his God and teaching "the Kaffirs of Natal" the dangerous heresy that God is all mercy. "We cannot allow it to be said," the Dean of Cape Town insisted, "that God was not angry and was not appeased by punishment." He was angry "on account of Sin, which is a great evil and a great insult to His Majesty." The case of the Rev. Charles Voysey, which occurred in 1870, was a second assertion of the church's insistence upon the fierceness of her God. This case is not to be found in the ordinary church histories nor is it even mentioned in the latest edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*; nevertheless it appears to have been a very illuminating case. It is doubtful if the church would prosecute or condemn either Bishop Colenso or Mr. Voysey to-day.

§ 7

GOD AND THE NURSERY-MAID

Closely related to the Heresy of God the Avenger, is that kind of miniature God the Avenger, to whom the nursery-maid and the overtaxed parent are so apt to appeal. You stab your children with such a

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God and he poisons all their lives. For many of us the word "God" first came into our lives to denote a wanton, irrational restraint, as Bogey, as the All-Seeing and quite ungenerous Eye. God Bogey is a great convenience to the nursery-maid who wants to leave Fear to mind her charges and enforce her disciplines, while she goes off upon her own aims. But indeed, the teaching of God Bogey is an outrage upon the soul of a child scarcely less dreadful than an indecent assault. The reason rebels and is crushed under this horrible and pursuing suggestion. Many minds never rise again from their injury. They remain for the rest of life spiritually crippled and debased, haunted by a fear, stained with a persuasion of relentless cruelty in the ultimate cause of all things.

I, who write, was so set against God, thus rendered. He and his Hell were the nightmare of my childhood; I hated him while I still believed in him, and who could help but hate? I thought of him as a fantastic monster, perpetually spying, perpetually listening, perpetually waiting to condemn and to "strike me dead"; his flames as ready as a grill-room fire. He was over me and about my feebleness and silliness and forgetfulness as the sky and sea would be about a child drowning in mid-Atlantic. When I was still only a child of thirteen, by the grace of the true God in me, I flung this Lie out of my mind, and for many years, until I came to see that God himself had done this thing for me, the name of God meant nothing to me but the hideous scar in my heart where a fearful demon had been.

I see about me to-day many dreadful moral and

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mental cripples with this bogey God of the nursery-maid, with his black, insane revenges, still living like a horrible parasite in their hearts in the place where God should be. They are afraid, afraid, afraid; they dare not be kindly to formal sinners, they dare not abandon a hundred foolish observances; they dare not look at the causes of things. They are afraid of sunshine, of nakedness, of health, of adventure, of science, lest that old watching spider take offence. The voice of the true God whispers in their hearts, echoes in speech and writing, but they avert themselves, fear-driven. For the true God has no lash of fear. And how the foul-minded bigot, with his ill-shaven face, his greasy skin, his thick, gesticulating hands, his bellowings and threatenings, loves to reap this harvest of fear the ignorant cunning of the nursery girl has sown for him! How he loves the importance of denunciation, and, himself a malignant cripple, to rally the company of these crippled souls to persecute and destroy the happy children of God! . . .

Christian priestcraft turns a dreadful face to children. There is a real wickedness of the priest that is different from other wickedness, and that affects a reasonable mind just as cruelty and strange perversions of instinct affect it. Let a former Archbishop of Canterbury speak for me. This that follows is the account given by Archbishop Tait in a debate in the Upper House of Convocation (July 3rd, 1877) of one of the publications of a certain *Society of the Holy Cross*:

“I take this book, as its contents show, to be meant for the instruction of very young children. I find, in one of the pages

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of it, the statement that between the ages of six and six and a half years would be the proper time for the inculcation of the teaching which is to be found in the book. Now, six to six and a half is certainly a very tender age, and to these children I find these statements addressed in the book:

“‘It is to the priest, and to the priest only, that the child must acknowledge his sins, if he desires that God should forgive him.’

“I hope and trust the person, the three clergymen, or however many there were, did not exactly realise what they were writing; that they did not mean to say that a child was not to confess its sins to God direct; that it was not to confess its sins, at the age of six, to its mother, or to its father, but was only to have recourse to the priest. But the words, to say the least of them, are rash. Then comes the very obvious question:

“‘Do you know why? It is because God, when he was on earth, gave to his priests, and to them alone, the Divine Power of forgiving men their sins. It was to priests alone that Jesus said: “Receive ye the Holy Ghost.” . . . Those who will not confess will not be cured. Sin is a terrible sickness, and casts souls into hell.’

“That is addressed to a child six years of age.

“‘I have known,’ the book continues, ‘poor children who concealed their sins in confession for years; they were very unhappy, were tormented with remorse, and if they had died in that state they would certainly have gone to the everlasting fires of hell.’” . . .

Now here is something against nature, something that I have seen time after time in the faces and bearing of priests and heard in their preaching. It is a distinct lust. Much nobility and devotion there are among priests, saintly lives and kindly lives, lives of real worship, lives no man may better; this that I write is not of all, perhaps not of many priests. But there has been in all ages that have known sacerdo-

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talism this terrible type of the priest; priestcraft and priestly power release an aggressive and narrow disposition to a recklessness of suffering and a hatred of liberty that surely exceeds the badness of any other sort of men.

§ 8

THE CHILDREN'S GOD

Children do not naturally love God. They have no great capacity for an idea so subtle and mature as the idea of God. While they are still children in a home and cared for, life is too kind and easy for them to feel any great need of God. All things are still something Godlike. . . .

The true God, our modern minds insist upon believing, can have no appetite for unnatural praises and adoration. He does not clamour for the attention of children. He is not like one of those senile uncles who dream of glory in the nursery, who love to hear it said, "The children adore him." If children are loved and trained to truth, justice, and mutual forbearance, they will be ready for the true God as their needs bring them within his scope. They should be left to their innocence, and to their trust in the innocence of the world, as long as they can be. They should be told only of God as a Great Friend whom some day they will need more and understand and know better. That is as much as most children need. The phrases of religion put too early into their mouths may become a cant, something worse than blasphemy.

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Yet children are sometimes very near to God. Creative passion stirs in their play. At times they display a divine simplicity. But it does not follow that therefore they should be afflicted with theological formulæ or inducted into ceremonies and rites that they may dislike or misinterpret. If by any accident, by the death of a friend or a distressing story, the thought of death afflicts a child, then he may begin to hear of God, who takes those that serve him out of their slain bodies into his shining immortality. Or if by some menial treachery, through some prowling priest, the whisper of Old Bogey reaches our children, then we may set their minds at ease by the assurance of his limitless charity. . . .

With adolescence comes the desire for God and to know more of God, and that is the most suitable time for religious talk and teaching.

§ 9

GOD IS NOT SEXUAL

In the last two or three hundred years there has been a very considerable disentanglement of the idea of God from the complex of sexual thought and feeling. But in the early days of religion the two things were inseparably bound together; the fury of the Hebrew prophets, for example, is continually proclaiming the extraordinary "wrath" of their God at this or that little dirtiness or irregularity or breach of the sexual tabus. The ceremony of circumcision is clearly indicative of the original nature of the

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Semitic deity who developed into the Trinitarian God. So far as Christianity dropped this rite, so far Christianity disavowed the old associations. But to this day the representative Christian churches still make marriage into a mystical sacrament, and, with some exceptions, the Roman communion exacts the sacrifice of celibacy from its priesthood, regardless of the mischievousness and maliciousness that so often ensue. Nearly every Christian church inflicts as much discredit and injustice as it can contrive upon the illegitimate child. They do not treat illegitimate children as unfortunate children, but as children with a mystical and incurable taint of *sin*. Kindly easy-going Christians may resent this statement because it does not tally with their own attitudes, but let them consult their orthodox authorities.

One must distinguish clearly here between what is held to be sacred or sinful in itself and what is held to be one's duty or a nation's duty because it is in itself the wisest, cleanest, clearest, best thing to do. By the latter tests and reasonable arguments most or all of our institutions regulating the relations of the sexes may be justifiable. But my case is not whether they can be justified by these tests but that it is not by these tests that they are judged even to-day, by the professors of the chief religions of the world. It is the temper and not the conclusions of the religious bodies that I would criticise. These sexual questions are guarded by a holy irascibility, and the most violent efforts are made—with a sense of complete righteousness—to prohibit their discussion. That fury about sexual things is only to be explained on the

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hypothesis that the Christian God remains a sex God in the minds of great numbers of his exponents. His disentanglement from that plexus is incomplete. Sexual things are still to the orthodox Christian, sacred things.

Now the God whom those of the new faith are finding is only mediately concerned with the relations of men and women. He is no more sexual essentially than he is essentially dietetic or hygienic. The God of Leviticus was all these things. He is represented as prescribing the most petty and intimate of observances—many of which are now habitually disregarded by the Christians who profess him. . . . It is part of the evolution of the idea of God that we have now so largely disentangled our conception of him from the dietary and regimen and meticulous sexual rules that were once inseparably bound up with his majesty. Christ himself was one of the chief forces in this disentanglement, there is the clearest evidence in several instances of his disregard of the rule and his insistence that his disciples should seek for the spirit underlying and often masked by the rule. His Church being made of baser matter, has followed him as reluctantly as possible and no further than it was obliged. But it has followed him far enough to admit his principle that in all these matters there is no need for superstitious fear, that the interpretation of the divine purpose is left to the unembarrassed intelligence of men. The church has followed him far enough to make the harsh threatenings of priests and ecclesiastics against what they are pleased to consider impurity or sexual impiety, a

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profound inconsistency. One seems to hear their distant protests when one reads of Christ and the Magdalen, or of Christ eating with publicans and sinners. The clergy of our own days play the part of the New Testament Pharisees with the utmost exactness and complete unconsciousness. One cannot imagine a modern ecclesiastic conversing with a Magdalen in terms of ordinary civility, unless she was in a very high social position indeed, or blending with disreputable characters without a dramatic sense of condescension and much explanatory by-play. Those who profess modern religion do but follow in these matters a course entirely compatible with what has survived of the authentic teachings of Christ, when they declare that God is not sexual, and that religious passion and insult and persecution upon the score of sexual things are a barbaric inheritance.

But lest anyone should fling off here with some hasty assumption that those who profess the religion of the true God are sexually anarchistic, let stress be laid at once upon the opening sentence of the preceding paragraph, and let me a little anticipate a section which follows. We would free men and women from exact and superstitious rules and observances, not to make them less the instruments of God but more wholly his. The claim of modern religion is that one should give oneself unreservedly to God, that there is no other salvation. The believer owes all his being and every moment of his life to God, to keep mind and body as clean, fine, wholesome, active and completely at God's service as he can. There is no scope for indulgence or dissipation

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in such a consecrated life. It is a matter between the individual and his conscience or his doctor or his social understanding what exactly he may do or not do, what he may eat or drink or so forth, upon any occasion. Nothing can exonerate him from doing his utmost to determine and perform the right act. Nothing can excuse his failure to do so. But what is here being insisted upon is that none of these things has immediately to do with God or religious emotion, except only the general will to do right in God's service. The detailed interpretation of that "right" is for the dispassionate consideration of the human intelligence.

All this is set down here as distinctly as possible. Because of the emotional reservoirs of sex, sexual dogmas are among the most obstinately recurrent of all heresies, and sexual excitement is always tending to leak back into religious feeling. Amongst the sex-tormented priesthood of the Roman communion in particular, ignorant of the extreme practices of the Essenes and of the Orphic cult and suchlike predecessors of Christianity, there seems to be an extraordinary belief that chastity was not invented until Christianity came, and that the religious life is largely the propitiation of God by feats of sexual abstinence. But a superstitious abstinence that scars and embitters the mind, distorts the imagination, makes the body gross and keeps it unclean, is just as offensive to God as any positive depravity.

CHAPTER THE THIRD

THE LIKENESS OF GOD

§ 1

GOD IS COURAGE

Now having set down what those who profess the new religion regard as the chief misconceptions of God, having put these systems of ideas aside from our explanations, the path is cleared for the statement of what God is. Since language springs entirely from material, spatial things, there is always an element of metaphor in theological statement. So that I have not called this chapter the Nature of God, but the Likeness of God.

And firstly, GOD IS COURAGE.

§ 2

GOD IS A PERSON

And next, GOD IS A PERSON.

Upon this point those who are beginning to profess modern religion are very insistent. It is, they declare, the central article, the axis, of their religion. God is a person who can be known as one knows a friend, who can be served and who receives service, who partakes of our nature; who is, like us, a being in conflict with the unknown and the limitless and the forces of death; who values much that we value

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and is against much that we are pitted against. He is our king to whom we must be loyal; he is our captain, and to know him is to have a direction in our lives. He feels us and knows us; he is helped and gladdened by us. He hopes and attempts. . . . God is no abstraction nor trick of words, no Infinite. He is as real as a bayonet thrust or an embrace.

Now this is where those who have left the old creeds and come asking about the new realisations find their chief difficulty. They say, Show us this person; let us hear him. (If they listen to the silences within, presently they will hear him.) But when one argues, one finds oneself suddenly in the net of those ancient controversies between species and individual, between the one and the many, which arise out of the necessarily imperfect methods of the human mind. Upon these matters there has been much pregnant writing during the last half century. Such ideas as this writer has to offer are to be found in a previous little book of his, "First and Last Things," in which, writing as one without authority or specialisation in logic and philosophy, as an ordinary man vividly interested, for others in a like case, he was at some pains to elucidate the imperfections of this instrument of ours, this mind, by which we must seek and explain and reach up to God. Suffice it here to say that theological discussion may very easily become like the vision of a man with cataract, a mere projection of inherent imperfections. If we do not use our phraseology with a certain courage, and take that of those who are trying to convey their ideas to us with a certain politeness and charity, there is no

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end possible to any discussion in so subtle and intimate a matter as theology but assertions, denials, and wranglings. And about this word "person" it is necessary to be as clear and explicit as possible, though perfect clearness, a definition of mathematical sharpness, is by the very nature of the case impossible.

Now when we speak of a person or an individual we think typically of a man, and we forget that he was once an embryo and will presently decay; we forget that he came of two people and may beget many, that he has forgotten much and will forget more, that he can be confused, divided against himself, delirious, drunken, drugged, or asleep. On the contrary we are, in our hasty way of thinking of him, apt to suppose him continuous, definite, acting consistently and never forgetting. But only abstract and theoretical persons are like that. We couple with him the idea of a body. Indeed, in the common use of the word "person" there is more thought of body than of mind. We speak of a lover possessing the person of his mistress. We speak of offences against the person as opposed to insults, libels, or offences against property. And the gods of primitive men and the earlier civilisations were quite of that quality of person. They were thought of as living in very splendid bodies and as acting consistently. If they were invisible in the ordinary world it was because they were aloof or because their "persons" were too splendid for weak human eyes. Moses was permitted a mitigated view of the person of the Hebrew God on Mount Horeb; and Semele, who in-

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sisted upon seeing Zeus in the glories that were sacred to Juno, was utterly consumed. The early Islamic conception of God, like the conception of most honest simple Christians to-day, was clearly, in spite of the theologians, of a very exalted anthropomorphic personality away somewhere in Heaven. The personal appearance of the Christian God is described in The Revelation, and however much that description may be explained away by commentators as symbolical, it is certainly taken by most straightforward believers as a statement of concrete reality. Now if we are going to insist upon this primary meaning of person and individual, then certainly God as he is now conceived is not a person and not an individual. The true God will never promenade an Eden or a Heaven, nor sit upon a throne.

But current Christianity, modern developments of Islam, much Indian theological thought—that, for instance, which has found such delicate and attractive expression in the devotional poetry of Rabindranath Tagore—has long since abandoned this anthropomorphic insistence upon a body. From the earliest ages man's mind has found little or no difficulty in the idea of something essential to the personality, a soul or a spirit or both, existing apart from the body and continuing after the destruction of the body, and being still a person and an individual. From this it is a small step to the thought of a person existing independently of any existing or pre-existing body. That is the idea of theological Christianity, as distinguished from the Christianity of simple faith. The Triune Persons—omnipresent, omniscient, and

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omnipotent—exist for all time, superior to and independent of matter. They are supremely disembodied. One became incarnate—as a wind eddy might take up a whirl of dust. . . . Those who profess modern religion conceive that this is an excessive abstraction of the idea of spirituality, a disembodiment of the idea of personality beyond the limits of the conceivable; nevertheless they accept the conception that a person, a spiritual individual, may be without an ordinary mortal body. . . . They declare that God is without any specific body, that he is immaterial, that he can affect the material universe—and that means that he can only reach our sight, our hearing, our touch—through the bodies of those who believe in him and serve him.

His nature is of the nature of thought and will. Not only has he, in his essence, nothing to do with matter, but nothing to do with space. He is not of matter nor of space. He comes into them. Since the period when all the great theologies that prevail today were developed, there have been great changes in the ideas of men towards the dimensions of time and space. We owe to Kant the release from the rule of these ideas as essential ideas. Our modern psychology is alive to the possibility of Being that has no extension in space at all, even as our speculative geometry can entertain the possibility of dimensions—fourth, fifth, n th dimensions—outside the three-dimensional universe of our experience. And God being non-spatial is not thereby banished to an infinite remoteness but brought nearer to us; he is everywhere immediately at hand, even as a fourth

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dimension would be everywhere immediately at hand. He is a Being of the minds and in the minds of men. He is in immediate contact with all who apprehend him. . . .

But modern religion declares that though he does not exist in matter or space, he exists in time just as a current of thought may do; that he changes and becomes more even as a man's purpose gathers itself together; that somewhere in the dawning of mankind he had a beginning, an awakening, and that as mankind grows he grows. With our eyes he looks out upon the universe he invades; with our hands, he lays hands upon it. All our truth, all our intentions and achievements, he gathers to himself. He is the undying human memory, the increasing human will.

But this, you may object, is no more than saying that God is the collective mind and purpose of the human race. You may declare that this is no God, but merely the sum of mankind. But those who believe in the new ideas very steadfastly deny that. God is, they say, not an aggregate but a synthesis. He is not merely the best of all of us, but a Being in himself, composed of that but more than that, as a temple is more than a gathering of stones, or a regiment is more than an accumulation of men. They point out that a man is made up of a great multitude of cells, each equivalent to a unicellular organism. Not one of those cells is he, nor is he simply just the addition of all of them. He is more than all of them. You can take away these and these and these, and he still remains. And he can detach part of

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himself and treat it as if it were not himself, just as a man may beat his breast or, as Cranmer the martyr did, thrust his hand into the flames. A man is none the less himself because his hair is cut or his appendix removed or his leg amputated.

And take another image. . . . Who bears affection for this or that spadeful of mud in my garden? Who cares a throb of the heart for all the tons of chalk in Kent or all the lumps of limestone in Yorkshire? But men love England, which is made up of such things.

And so we think of God as a synthetic reality, though he has neither body nor material parts. And so too we may obey him and listen to him, though we think but lightly of the men whose hands or voices he sometimes uses. And we may think of him as having moods and aspects—as a man has—and a consistency we call his character.

These are theorisings about God. These are statements to convey this modern idea of God. This, we say, is the nature of the person whose will and thoughts we serve. No one, however, who understands the religious life seeks conversion by argument. First one must feel the need of God, then one must form or receive an acceptable idea of God. That much is no more than turning one's face to the east to see the coming of the sun. One may still doubt if that direction is the east or whether the sun will rise. The real coming of God is not that. It is a change, an irradiation of the mind. Everything is there as it was before, only now it is aflame. Suddenly the light fills one's eyes, and one knows that God has risen and that doubt has fled for ever.

THE LIKENESS OF GOD

§ 3

GOD IS YOUTH

The third thing to be told of the true God is that **GOD IS YOUTH.**

God, we hold, began and is always beginning. He looks for ever into the future.

Most of the old religions derive from a patriarchal phase. God is in those systems the Ancient of Days. I know of no Christian attempt to represent or symbolise God the Father which is not a bearded, aged man. White hair, beard, bearing, wrinkles, a hundred such symptoms of senile decay are there. These marks of senility do not astonish our modern minds in the picture of God, only because tradition and usage have blinded our eyes to the absurdity of a time-worn immortal. Jove too and Wotan are figures far past the prime of their vigour. These are gods after the ancient habit of the human mind, that turned perpetually backward for causes and reasons and saw all things to come as no more than the working out of Fate,—

“Of Man’s first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe.”

But the God of this new age, we repeat, looks not to our past but our future, and if a figure may represent him it must be the figure of a beautiful youth, already brave and wise, but hardly come to his strength. He should stand lightly on his feet in the

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morning time, eager to go forward, as though he had but newly arisen to a day that was still but a promise; he should bear a sword, that clean, discriminating weapon, his eyes should be as bright as swords; his lips should fall apart with eagerness for the great adventure before him, and he should be in very fresh and golden harness, reflecting the rising sun. Death should still hang like mists and cloud banks and shadows in the valleys of the wide landscape about him. There should be dew upon the threads of gossamer and the little leaves and blades of the turf at his feet. . . .

§ 4

WHEN WE SAY GOD IS LOVE

One of the sayings about God that have grown at the same time most trite and most sacred, is that God is Love. This is a saying that deserves careful examination. Love is a word very loosely used; there are people who will say they love new potatoes; there are a multitude of loves of different colours and values. There is the love of a mother for her child, there is the love of brothers, there is the love of youth and maiden, and the love of husband and wife, there is illicit love and the love one bears one's home or one's country, there are dog-lovers and the loves of the Olympians, and love which is a passion of jealousy. Love is frequently a mere blend of appetite and preference; it may be almost pure greed; it may have scarcely any devotion nor be a whit self-forgetful nor generous. It is possible so to

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phrase things that the furtive craving of a man for another man's wife may be made out to be a light from God. Yet about all the better sorts of love, the sorts of love that people will call "true love," there is something of that same exaltation out of the narrow self that is the essential quality of the knowledge of God.

Only while the exaltation of the love passion comes and goes, the exaltation of religious passion comes to remain. Loves are the windows by which we may look out of the prison of self, but God is the open door by which we freely go. And God never dies, nor disappoints, nor betrays.

The love of a woman and a man has usually, and particularly in its earlier phases of excitement, far too much desire, far too much possessiveness and exclusiveness, far too much distrust or forced trust, and far too great a kindred with jealousy to be like the love of God. The former is a dramatic relationship that drifts to a climax, and then again seeks presently a climax, and that may be satiated or fatigued. But the latter is far more like the love of comrades, or like the love of a man and a woman who have loved and been through much trouble together, who have hurt one another and forgiven, and come to a complete and generous fellowship. There is a strange and beautiful love that men tell of that will spring up on battlefields between sorely wounded men, and often they are men who have fought together, so that they will do almost incredibly brave and tender things for one another, though but recently they have been trying to kill each other.

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There is often a pure exaltation of feeling between those who stand side by side manfully in any great stress. These are the forms of love that perhaps come nearest to what we mean when we speak of the love of God.

That is man's love of God, but there is also something else; there is the love God bears for man in the individual believer. Now this is not an indulgent, instinctive, and sacrificing love like the love of a woman for her baby. It is the love of the captain for his men; God must love his followers as a great captain loves his men, who are so foolish, so helpless in themselves, so confiding, and yet whose faith alone makes him possible. It is an austere love. The spirit of God will not hesitate to send us to torment and bodily death. . . .

And God waits for us, for all of us who have the quality to reach him. He has need of us as we of him. He desires us and desires to make himself known to us. When at last the individual breaks through the limiting darknesses to him, the irradiation of that moment, the smile and soul clasp, is in God as well as in man. He has won us from his enemy. We come staggering through into the golden light of his kingdom, to fight for his kingdom henceforth, until at last we are altogether taken up into his being.

CHAPTER THE FOURTH

THE RELIGION OF ATHEISTS

§ 1

THE SCIENTIFIC ATHEIST

It is a curious thing that while most organised religions seem to drape about and conceal and smother the statement of the true God, the honest Atheist, with his passionate impulse to strip the truth bare, is constantly and unwittingly reproducing the divine likeness. It will be interesting here to call a witness or so to the extreme instability of absolute negation.

Here, for example, is a deliverance from Professor Metchnikoff, who was a very typical antagonist of all religion. He died only the other day. He was a very great physiologist indeed; he was a man almost of the rank and quality of Pasteur or Charles Darwin. A decade or more ago he wrote a book called "The Nature of Man," in which he set out very plainly a number of illuminating facts about life. They are facts so illuminating that presently, in our discussion of sin, they will be referred to again. But it is not Professor Metchnikoff's intention to provide material for a religious discussion. He sets out his facts in order to overthrow theology as he conceives it. The remarkable thing about his book, the thing upon which I would now lay stress, is that

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he betrays no inkling of the fact that he has no longer the right to conceive theology as he conceives it. The development of his science has destroyed that right.

He does not realise how profoundly modern biology has affected our ideas of individuality and species, and how the import of theology is modified through these changes. When he comes from his own world of modern biology to religion and philosophy he goes back in time. He attacks religion as he understood it when first he fell out with it fifty years or more ago.

Let us state as compactly as possible the nature of these changes that biological science has wrought almost imperceptibly in the general scheme and method of our thinking.

The influence of biology upon thought in general consists essentially in diminishing the importance of the individual and developing the realisation of the species, as if it were a kind of super-individual, a modifying and immortal super-individual, maintaining itself against the outer universe by the birth and death of its constituent individuals. Natural History, which began by putting individuals into species as if the latter were mere classificatory divisions, has come to see that the species has its adventures, its history and drama, far exceeding in interest and importance the individual adventure. "The Origin of Species" was for countless minds the discovery of a new romance in life.

The contrast of the individual life and this specific life may be stated plainly and compactly as follows.

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A little while ago we current individuals, we who are alive now, were each of us distributed between two parents, then between four grandparents, and so on backward, we are temporarily assembled, as it were, out of an ancestral diffusion; we stand our trial, and presently our individuality is dispersed and mixed again with other individualities in an uncertain multitude of descendants. But the species is not like this; it goes on steadily from newness to newness, remaining still a unity. The drama of the individual life is a mere episode, beneficial or abandoned, in this continuing adventure of the species. And Metchnikoff finds most of the trouble of life and the distresses of life in the fact that the species is still very painfully adjusting itself to the fluctuating conditions under which it lives. The conflict of life is a continual pursuit of adjustment, and the "ills of life," of the individual life that is, are due to its "disharmonies." Man, acutely aware of himself as an individual adventure and unawakened to himself as a species, finds life jangling and distressful, finds death frustration. He fails and falls as a person in what may be the success and triumph of his kind. He does not apprehend the struggle or the nature of victory, but only his own gravitation to death, and personal extinction.

Now Professor Metchnikoff is anti-religious, and he is anti-religious because to him as to so many Europeans religion is confused with priestcraft and dogmas, is associated with disagreeable early impressions of irrational repression and misguidance. How completely he misconceives the quality of re-

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ligion, how completely he sees it as an individual's affair, his own words may witness:

“Religion is still occupied with the problem of death. The solutions which as yet it has offered cannot be regarded as satisfactory. A future life has no single argument to support it, and the non-existence of life after death is in consonance with the whole range of human knowledge. On the other hand, resignation as preached by Buddha will fail to satisfy humanity, which has a longing for life, and is overcome by the thought of the inevitability of death.”

Now here it is clear that by death he means the individual death, and by a future life the prolongation of individuality. But Buddhism does not in truth appear ever to have been concerned with that, and modern religious developments are certainly not under that preoccupation with the narrower self. Buddhism indeed so far from “preaching resignation” to death, seeks as its greater good a death so complete as to be absolute release from the individual's burthen of *karma*. Buddhism seeks an *escape from individual immortality*. The deeper one pursues religious thought the more nearly it approximates to a search for escape from the self-centred life and over-individuation, and the more it diverges from Professor Metchnikoff's assertion of its aims. Salvation is indeed to lose one's self. But Professor Metchnikoff having roundly denied that this is so, is then left free to take the very essentials of the religious life as they are here conceived and present them as if they were the antithesis of the religious life. His book, when it is analysed, resolves itself into just that research for an escape from the painful

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accidents and chagrins of individuation, which is the ultimate of religion.

At times, indeed, he seems almost wilfully blind to the true solution round and about which his writing goes. He suggests as his most hopeful satisfaction for the cravings of the human heart, such a scientific prolongation of life that the instinct for self-preservation will be at last extinct. If that is not the very "resignation" he imputes to the Buddhist I do not know what it is. He believes that an individual which has lived fully and completely may at last welcome death with the same instinctive readiness as, in the days of its strength, it shows for the embraces of its mate. We are to be gluttoned by living to six score and ten. We are to rise from the table at last as gladly as we sat down. We shall go to death as unresistingly as tired children go to bed. Men are to have a life far beyond the range of what is now considered their prime, and their last period (won by scientific self-control) will be a period of ripe wisdom (from seventy to eighty to a hundred and twenty or thereabouts) and public service!

(But why, one asks, public service? Why not book-collecting or the simple pleasure of reminiscence so dear to aged egotists? Metchnikoff never faces that question. And again, what of the man who is challenged to die for right at the age of thirty? What does the prolongation of life do for him? And where are the consolations for accidental misfortune, for the tormenting disease or the lost limb?)

But in his peroration Professor Metchnikoff lapses into pure religiosity. The prolongation of life gives

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place to sheer self-sacrifice as the fundamental "remedy." And indeed what other remedy has ever been conceived for the general evil of life?

"On the other hand," he writes, "the knowledge that the goal of human life can be attained only by the development of a high degree of solidarity amongst men will restrain actual egotism. The mere fact that the enjoyment of life according to the precepts of Solomon (Ecclesiastes ix. 7-10)* is opposed to the goal of human life, will lessen luxury and the evil that comes from luxury. Conviction that science alone is able to redress the disharmonies of the human constitution will lead directly to the improvement of education and to the solidarity of mankind.

"In progress towards the goal, nature will have to be consulted continuously. Already, in the case of the ephemerids, nature has produced a complete cycle of normal life ending in natural death. In the problem of his own fate, man must not be content with the gifts of nature; he must direct them by his own efforts. Just as he has been able to modify the nature of animals and plants, man must attempt to modify his own constitution, so as to readjust its disharmonies. . . .

"To modify the human constitution, it will be necessary first, to frame the ideal, and thereafter to set to work with all the resources of science.

"If there can be formed an ideal able to unite men in a kind of religion of the future, this ideal must be founded on scientific principles. And if it be true, as has been asserted so often, that man can live by faith alone, the faith must be in the power of science."

* Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works. Let thy garments be always white; and let thy head lack no ointment. Live joyfully with the wife whom thou lovest all the days of the life of thy vanity, which he hath given thee under the sun, all the days of thy vanity: for that is thy portion in this life, and in thy labour which thou takest under the sun. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest.

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Now this, after all the flat repudiations that have preceded it of "religion" and "philosophy" as remedies for human ills, is nothing less than the fundamental proposition of the religious life translated into terms of materialistic science, the proposition that damnation is really over-individuation and that salvation is escape from self into the larger being of life. . . .

What can this "religion of the future" be but that devotion to the racial adventure under the captaincy of God which we have already found, like gold in the bottom of the vessel, when we have washed away the confusions and impurities of dogmatic religion? By an inquiry setting out from a purely religious starting-point we have already reached conclusions identical with this ultimate refuge of an extreme materialist.

This altar to the Future of his, we can claim as an altar to our God—an altar rather indistinctly inscribed.

§ 2

SACRIFICE IMPLIES GOD

Almost all Agnostic and Atheistical writings that show any fineness and generosity of spirit, have this tendency to become as it were the statement of an anonymous God. Everything is said that a religious writer would say—except that God is not named. Religious metaphors abound. It is as if they accepted the living body of religion but denied the bones that held it together—as they might deny the bones

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of a friend. It is true, they would admit, the body moves in a way that implies bones in its every movement, but—*we have never seen those bones.*

The disputes in theory—I do not say the difference in reality—between the modern believer and the atheist or agnostic—becomes at times almost as impalpable as that subtle discussion dear to students of physics, whether the scientific “ether” is real or a formula. Every material phenomenon is consonant with and helps to define this ether, which permeates and sustains and is all things, which nevertheless is perceptible to no sense, which is reached only by an intellectual process. Most minds are disposed to treat this ether as a reality. But the acutely critical mind insists that what is only so attainable by inference is not real; it is no more than “a formula that satisfies all phenomena.”

But if it comes to that, am I anything more than the formula that satisfies all my forms of consciousness?

Intellectually there is hardly anything more than a certain will to believe, to divide the religious man who knows God to be utterly real, from the man who says that God is merely a formula to satisfy moral and spiritual phenomena. The former has encountered him, the other has as yet felt only unassigned impulses. One says God’s will is so; the other that Right is so. One says God moves me to do this or that; the other the Good Will in me which I share with you and all well-disposed men, moves me to do this or that. But the former makes an exterior reference and escapes a risk of self-righteousness.

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I have recently been reading a book by Mr. Joseph McCabe called "The Tyranny of Shams" (Nash), in which he displays very typically this curious tendency to a sort of religion with God "blacked out." His is an extremely interesting case. He is a writer who was formerly a Roman Catholic priest, and in his reaction from Catholicism he displays a resolution even sterner than Professor Metchnikoff's, to deny that anything religious or divine can exist, that there can be any aim in life except happiness, or any guide but "science." But—and here immediately he turns east again—he is careful not to say "individual happiness." And he says "Pleasure is, as Epicureans insisted, only a part of a large ideal of happiness." So he lets the happiness of devotion and sacrifice creep in. So he opens indefinite possibilities of getting away from any merely materialistic rule of life. And he writes:

"In every civilised nation the mass of the people are inert and indifferent. Some even make a pretence of justifying their inertness. Why, they ask, should we stir at all? Is there such a thing as a duty to improve the earth? What is the meaning or purpose of life? Or has it a purpose?"

"One generally finds that this kind of reasoning is merely a piece of controversial athletics or a thin excuse for idleness. People tell you that the conflict of science and religion—it would be better to say, the conflict of modern culture and ancient traditions—has robbed life of its plain significance. The men who, like Tolstoi, seriously urge this point fail to appreciate the modern outlook on life. Certainly modern culture—science, history, philosophy, and art—finds no purpose in life: that is to say, no purpose eternally fixed and to be discovered by man. A great chemist said a few years ago that he could imagine 'a

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series of lucky accidents'—the chance blowing by the wind of certain chemicals into pools on the primitive earth—accounting for the first appearance of life; and one might not unjustly sum up the influences which have lifted those early germs to the level of conscious beings as a similar series of lucky accidents.

“But it is sheer affectation to say that this demoralises us. If there is no purpose impressed on the universe, or prefixed to the development of humanity, it follows only that humanity may choose its own purpose and set up its own goal; and the most elementary sense of order will teach us that this choice must be social, not merely individual. In whatever measure ill-controlled individuals may yield to personal impulses or attractions, the aim of the race must be a collective aim. I do not mean an austere demand of self-sacrifice from the individual, but an adjustment—as genial and generous as possible—of individual variations for common good. Otherwise life becomes discordant and futile, and the pain and waste react on each individual. So we raise again, in the twentieth century, the old question of ‘the greatest good,’ which men discussed in the Stoa Poikile and the suburban groves of Athens, in the cool atria of patrician mansions on the Palatine and the Pincian, in the Museum at Alexandria, and the schools which Omar Khayyam frequented, in the straw-strewn schools of the Middle Ages and the opulent chambers of Cosimo dei Medici.”

And again:

“The old dream of a co-operative effort to improve life, to bring happiness to as many minds of mortals as we can reach, shines above all the mists of the day. Through the ruins of creeds and philosophies, which have for ages disdained it, we are retracing our steps toward that height—just as the Athenians did two thousand years ago. It rests on no metaphysic, no sacred legend, no disputable tradition—nothing that scepticism can corrode or advancing knowledge undermine. Its foundations are the fundamental and unchanging impulses of our nature.”

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And again:

“The revolt which burns in so much of the abler literature of our time is an unselfish revolt, or non-selfish revolt: it is an outcome of that larger spirit which conceives the self to be a part of the general social organism, and it is therefore neither egoistic nor altruistic. It finds a sanction in the new intelligence, and an inspiration in the finer sentiments of our generation, but the glow which chiefly illumines it is the glow of the great vision of a happier earth. It speaks of the claims of truth and justice, and assails untruth and injustice, for these are elemental principles of social life; but it appeals more confidently to the warmer sympathy which is linking the scattered children of the race, and it urges all to co-operate in the restriction of suffering and the creation of happiness. The advance guard of the race, the men and women in whom mental alertness is associated with fine feeling, cry that they have reached Pisgah’s slope; and in increasing numbers men and women are pressing on to see if it be really the Promised Land.”

“Pisgah—the Promised Land!” Mr. McCabe in that passage sounds as if he were half-way to “Oh! Beulah Land!” and the tambourine.

That “larger spirit,” we maintain, is God; those “impulses” are the power of God, and Mr. McCabe serves a Master he denies. He has but to realise fully that God is not necessarily the Triune God of the Catholic Church, and banish his intense suspicion that he may yet be lured back to that altar he abandoned, he has but to look up from that preoccupation, and immediately he will begin to realise the presence of Divinity.

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§ 3

GOD IS AN EXTERNAL REALITY

It may be argued that if atheists and agnostics when they set themselves to express the good will that is in them, do shape out God, that if their conception of right living falls in so completely with the conception of God's service as to be broadly identical, that then indeed God, like the ether of scientific speculation, is no more than a theory, no more than an imaginative externalisation of man's inherent good will. Why trouble about God then? Is not the declaration of a good disposition a sufficient evidence of salvation? What is the difference between such benevolent unbelievers as Professor Metchnikoff or Mr. McCabe and those who have found God?

The difference is this, that the benevolent atheist stands alone upon his own good will, without a reference, without a standard, trusting to his own impulse to goodness, relying upon his own moral strength. A certain immodesty, a certain self-righteousness, hangs like a precipice above him; incalculable temptations open like gulfs beneath his feet. He has not really given himself or got away from himself. He has no one to whom he can give himself. He is still a masterless man. His exaltation is self-centred, is priggishness, his fall is unrestrained by any exterior obligation. His devotion is only the good will in himself, a disposition; it is a mood that may change. At any moment it may change. He may have pledged himself to his own pride and hon-

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our, but who will hold him to his bargain? He has no source of strength beyond his own amiable sentiments, his conscience speaks with an unsupported voice, and no one watches while he sleeps. He cannot pray; he can but ejaculate. He has no real and living link with other men of good will.

And those whose acquiescence in the idea of God is merely intellectual are in no better case than those who deny God altogether. They may have all the forms of truth and not divinity. The religion of the atheist with a God-shaped blank at its heart and the persuasion of the unconverted theologian, are both like lamps unlit. The lit lamp has no difference in form from the lamp unlit. But the lit lamp is alive and the lamp unlit is asleep or dead.

The difference between the unconverted and the unbeliever and the servant of the true God is this; it is that the latter has experienced a complete turning away from self. This only difference is all the difference in the world. It is the realisation that this goodness that I thought was within me and of myself and upon which I rather prided myself, is without me and above myself, and infinitely greater and stronger than I. It is the immortal and I am mortal. It is invincible and steadfast in its purpose, and I am weak and insecure. It is no longer that I, out of my inherent and remarkable goodness, out of the excellence of my quality and the benevolence of my heart, give a considerable amount of time and attention to the happiness and welfare of others—because I choose to do so. On the contrary I have come under a divine imperative, I am obeying an irresistible call,

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I am a humble and willing servant of the righteousness of God. That altruism which Professor Metchnikoff and Mr. McCabe would have us regard as the goal and refuge of a broad and free intelligence, is really the first simple commandment in the religious life.

§ 4

ANOTHER RELIGIOUS MATERIALIST

Now here is a passage from a book, "Evolution and the War" (Murray), by Professor Metchnikoff's translator, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, which comes even closer to our conception of God as an immortal being arising out of man, and external to the individual man. He has been discussing that well-known passage of Kant's: "Two things fill my mind with ever-renewed wonder and awe the more often and deeper I dwell on them—the starry vault above me, and the moral law within me."

From that discussion, Dr. Chalmers Mitchell presently comes to this most definite and interesting statement:

"Writing as a hard-shell Darwinian evolutionist, a lover of the scalpel and microscope, and of patient, empirical observation, as one who dislikes all forms of supernaturalism, and who does not shrink from the implications even of the phrase that thought is a secretion of the brain as bile is a secretion of the liver, I assert as a biological fact that the moral law is as real and as external to man as the starry vault. It has no secure seat in any single man or in any single nation. It is the work of the blood and tears of long generations of men. It is not in

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man, inborn or innate, but is enshrined in his traditions, in his customs, in his literature and his religion. Its creation and sustenance are the crowning glory of man, and his consciousness of it puts him in a high place above the animal world. Men live and die; nations rise and fall, but the struggle of individual lives and of individual nations must be measured not by their immediate needs, but as they tend to the debasement or perfection of man's great achievement."

This is the same reality. This is the same Link and Captain that this book asserts. It seems to me a secondary matter whether we call Him "Man's Great Achievement" or "The Son of Man" or the "God of Mankind" or "God." So far as the practical and moral ends of life are concerned, it does not matter how we explain or refuse to explain His presence in our lives.

There is but one possible gap left between the position of Dr. Chalmers Mitchell and the position of this book. In this book it is asserted that *God responds*, that he *gives* courage and the power of self-suppression to our weakness.

§ 5

A NOTE ON A LECTURE BY PROFESSOR GILBERT MURRAY

Let me now quote and discuss a very beautiful passage from a lecture upon Stoicism (Watts) by Professor Gilbert Murray, which also displays the same characteristic of an involuntary shaping out of God in the forms of denial. It is a passage remarkable for its conscientious and resolute Agnosticism.

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And it is remarkable too for its blindness to the possibility of separating quite completely the idea of the Infinite Being from the idea of God. It is another striking instance of that obsession of modern minds by merely Christian theology of which I have already complained. Professor Murray has quoted Mr. Bevan's phrase for God, "the Friend behind phenomena," and he does not seem to realise that that phrase carries with it no obligation whatever to believe that this Friend is in control of the phenomena. He assumes that he is supposed to be in control as if it were a matter of course.

"We do seem to find," Professor Murray writes, "not only in all religions, but in practically all philosophies, some belief that man is not quite alone in the universe, but is met in his endeavours towards the good by some external help or sympathy. We find it everywhere in the unsophisticated man. We find it in the unguarded self-revelations of the most severe and conscientious Atheists. Now, the Stoics, like many other schools of thought, drew an argument from this consensus of all mankind. It was not an absolute proof of the existence of the Gods or Providence, but it was a strong indication. The existence of a common instinctive belief in the mind of man gives at least a presumption that there must be a good cause for that belief.

"This is a reasonable position. There must be some such cause. But it does not follow that the only valid cause is the truth of the content of the belief. I cannot help suspecting that this is precisely one of those points on which Stoicism, in company with almost all philosophy up to the present time, has gone astray through not sufficiently realising its dependence on the human mind as a natural biological product. For it is very important in this matter to realise that the so-called belief is not really an intellectual judgment so much as a craving of the whole nature.

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“It is only of very late years that psychologists have begun to realise the enormous dominion of those forces in man of which he is normally unconscious. We cannot escape as easily as these brave men dreamed from the grip of the blind powers beneath the threshold. Indeed, as I see philosophy after philosophy falling into this unproven belief in the Friend behind phenomena, as I find that I myself cannot, except for a moment and by an effort, refrain from making the same assumption, it seems to me that perhaps here too we are under the spell of a very old ineradicable instinct. We are gregarious animals; our ancestors have been such for countless ages. We cannot help looking out on the world as gregarious animals do; we see it in terms of humanity and of fellowship. Students of animals under domestication have shown us how the habits of a gregarious creature, taken away from his kind, are shaped in a thousand details by reference to the lost pack which is no longer there—the pack which a dog tries to smell his way back to all the time he is out walking, the pack he calls to for help when danger threatens. It is a strange and touching thing, this eternal hunger of the gregarious animal for the herd of friends who are not there. And it may be, it may very possibly be, that, in the matter of this Friend behind phenomena, our own yearning and our own almost ineradicable instinctive conviction, since they are certainly not founded on either reason or observation, are in origin the groping of a lonely-souled gregarious animal to find its herd or its herd-leader in the great spaces between the stars.

“At any rate, it is a belief very difficult to get rid of.”

There the passage and the lecture end.

I would urge that here again is an inadvertent witness to the reality of God.

Professor Murray writes of gregarious animals as though there existed solitary animals that are not gregarious, pure individualists, “atheists” so to speak, and as though this appeal to a life beyond

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one's own was not the universal disposition of living things. His classical training disposes him to a realistic exaggeration of individual difference. But nearly every animal, and certainly every mentally considerable animal, begins under parental care, in a nest or a litter, mates to breed, and is associated for much of its life. Even the great carnivores do not go alone except when they are old and have done with the most of life. Every pack, every herd, begins at some point in a couple, it is the equivalent of the tiger's litter if that were to remain undispersed. And it is within the memory of men still living that in many districts the African lion has with a change of game and conditions lapsed from a "solitary" to a gregarious, that is to say a prolonged family habit of life.

Man too, if in his ape-like phase he resembled the other higher apes, is an animal becoming more gregarious and not less. He has passed within the historical period from a tribal gregariousness to a nearly cosmopolitan tolerance. And he has his tribe about him. He is not, as Professor Murray seems to suggest, a solitary *lost* gregarious beast. Why should his desire for God be regarded as the overflow of an unsatisfied gregarious instinct, when he has home, town, society, companionship, trade union, state, *increasingly* at hand to glut it? Why should gregariousness drive a man to God rather than to the third-class carriage and the public-house? Why should gregariousness drive men out of crowded Egyptian cities into the cells of the Thebaid? Schopenhauer in a memorable passage (about the hedgehogs who assembled for warmth) is flatly opposed to Professor Mur-

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ray, and seems far more plausible when he declares that the nature of man is insufficiently gregarious. The parallel with the dog is not a valid one.

Does not the truth lie rather in the supposition that it is not the Friend that is the instinctive delusion but the isolation? Is not the real deception, our belief that we are completely individualised, and is it not possible that this that Professor Murray calls "instinct" is really not a vestige but a new thing arising out of our increasing understanding, an intellectual penetration to that greater being of the species, that vine, of which we are the branches? Why should not the soul of the species, many faceted indeed, be nevertheless a soul like our own?

Here, as in the case of Professor Metchnikoff, and in many other cases of atheism, it seems to me that nothing but an inadequate understanding of individuation bars the way to at least the intellectual recognition of the true God.

§ 6

RELIGION AS ETHICS

And while I am dealing with rationalists, let me note certain recent interesting utterances of Sir Harry Johnston's. You will note that while in this book we use the word "God" to indicate the God of the Heart, Sir Harry uses "God" for that idea of God-of-the-Universe, which we have spoken of as the Infinite Being. This use of the word "God" is of late theological origin; the original identity of the

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words "good" and "god" and all the stories of the gods are against him. But Sir Harry takes up God only to define him away into incomprehensible necessity. Thus:

"We know absolutely nothing concerning the Force we call God; and, assuming such an intelligent ruling force to be in existence, permeating this universe of millions of stars and (no doubt) tens of millions of planets, we do not know under what conditions and limitations It works. We are quite entitled to assume that the end of such an influence is intended to be order out of chaos, happiness and perfection out of incompleteness and misery; and we are entitled to identify the reactionary forces of brute Nature with the anthropomorphic Devil of primitive religions, the power of darkness resisting the power of light. But in these conjectures we must surely come to the conclusion that the theoretical potency we call 'God' makes endless experiments, and scrap-heaps the failures. Think of the Dinosaurs and the expenditure of creative energy that went to their differentiation and their well-nigh incredible physical development. . . .

"To such a Divine Force as we postulate, the whole development and perfecting of life on this planet, the whole production of man, may seem little more than to any one of us would be the chipping out, the cutting, the carving, and the polishing of a gem; and we should feel as little remorse or pity for the scattered dust and fragments as must the Creative Force of the immeasurably vast universe feel for the *disjecta membra* of perfected life on this planet. . . ."

But thence he goes on to a curiously imperfect treatment of the God of man as if He consisted in nothing more than some vague sort of humanitarianism. Sir Harry's ideas are much less thoroughly thought out than those of any other of these sceptical writers I have quoted. On that account they are per-

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haps more typical. He speaks as though Christ were simply an eminent but ill-reported and abominably served teacher of ethics—and yet of the only right ideal and ethics. He speaks as though religions were nothing more than ethical movements, and as though Christianity were merely someone remarking with a bright impulsiveness that everything was simply horrid, and so, “Let us instal loving kindness as a cardinal axiom.” He ignores altogether the fundamental essential of religion, which is *the development and synthesis of the divergent and conflicting motives of the unconverted life, and the identification of the individual life with the immortal purpose of God*. He presents a conception of religion relieved of its “nonsense” as the cheerful self-determination of a number of bright little individuals (much stirred but by no means overcome by Cosmic Pity) to the Service of Man. As he seems to present it, it is as outward a thing, it goes as little into the intimacy of their lives, as though they had after proper consideration agreed to send a subscription to a Red Cross Ambulance or take part in a public demonstration against the Armenian Massacres, or do any other rather nice-spirited exterior thing. This is what he says:

“I hope that the religion of the future will devote itself wholly to the Service of Man. It can do so without departing from the Christian ideal and Christian ethics. It need only drop all that is silly and disputable, and ‘mattering not neither here nor there,’ of Christian theology—a theology virtually absent from the direct teaching of Christ—and all of Judaistic literature or prescriptions not made immortal in their application by unsailable truth and by the confirmation of science. An excellent

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remedy for the nonsense which still clings about religion may be found in two books: Cotter Morison's 'Service of Man,' which was published as long ago as 1887, and has since been re-issued by the Rationalist Press Association in its well-known sixpenny series, and J. Allanson Picton's 'Man and the Bible.' Similarly, those who wish to acquire a sane view of the relations between man and God would do well to read Winwood Reade's 'Martyrdom of Man.'"

Sir Harry in fact clears the ground for God very ably, and then makes a well-meaning gesture in the vacant space. There is no help nor strength in his gesture unless God is there. Without God, the "Service of Man" is no better than a hobby or a sentimentality or an hypocrisy in the undisciplined prison of the mortal life.

CHAPTER THE FIFTH

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§ 1

MODERN RELIGION A POLITICAL RELIGION

THE conception of a young and energetic God, an Invisible Prince growing in strength and wisdom, who calls men and women to his service and who gives salvation from self and mortality only through self-abandonment to his service, necessarily involves a demand for a complete revision and fresh orientation of the life of the convert.

God faces the blackness of the Unknown and the blind joys and confusions and cruelties of Life, as one who leads mankind through a dark jungle to a great conquest. He brings mankind not rest but a sword. It is plain that he can admit no divided control of the world he claims. He concedes nothing to Cæsar. In our philosophy there are no human things that are God's and others that are Cæsar's. Those of the new thought cannot render unto God the things that are God's, and to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Whatever claim Cæsar may make to rule men's lives and direct their destinies outside the will of God, is a usurpation. No king nor Cæsar has any right to tax or to service or to tolerance, except he claim as one who holds for and under God. And he must make good his claim. The steps of the altar of the God of

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Youth are no safe place for the sacrilegious figure of a king. Who claims "divine right" plays with the lightning.

The new conceptions do not tolerate either kings or aristocracies or democracies. Its implicit command to all its adherents is to make plain the way to the world theocracy. Its rule of life is the discovery and service of the will of God, which dwells in the hearts of men, and the performance of that will, not only in the private life of the believer but in the acts and order of the state and nation of which he is a part. I give myself to God not only because I am so and so but because I am mankind. I become in a measure responsible for every evil in the world of men. I become a knight in God's service. I become my brother's keeper. I become a responsible minister of my King. I take sides against injustice, disorder, and against all those temporal kings, emperors, princes, landlords, and owners, who set themselves up against God's rule and worship. Kings, owners, and all who claim rule and decisions in the world's affairs, must either show themselves clearly the fellow servants of the believer or become the objects of his steadfast antagonism.

§ 2

THE WILL OF GOD

It is here that those who explain this modern religiosity will seem most arbitrary to the inquirer. For they relate of God, as men will relate of a close

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friend, his dispositions, his apparent intentions, the aims of his kingship. And just as they advance no proof whatever of the existence of God but their realisation of him, so with regard to these qualities and dispositions they have little argument but profound conviction. What they say is this: that if you do not feel God then there is no persuading you of him; we cannot win over the incredulous. And what they say of his qualities is this: that if you feel God then you will know, you will realise more and more clearly, that thus and thus and no other is his method and intention.

It comes as no great shock to those who have grasped the full implications of the statement that God is Finite, to hear it asserted that the first purpose of God is the attainment of clear knowledge, of knowledge as a means to more knowledge, and of knowledge as a means to power. For that he must use human eyes and hands and brains.

And as God gathers power he uses it to an end that he is only beginning to apprehend, and that he will apprehend more fully as time goes on. But it is possible to define the broad outlines of the attainment he seeks. It is the conquest of death.

It is the conquest of death; first the overcoming of death in the individual by the incorporation of the motives of his life into an undying purpose, and then the defeat of that death that seems to threaten our species upon a cooling planet beneath a cooling sun. God fights against death in every form, against the great death of the race, against the petty death of indolence, insufficiency, baseness, misconception, and

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perversion. He it is and no other who can deliver us "from the body of this death." This is the battle that grows plainer; this is the purpose to which he calls us out of the animal's round of eating, drinking, lust-ing, quarrelling and laughing and weeping, fearing and failing, and presently of wearying and dying, which is the whole life that living without God can give us. And from these great propositions there follow many very definite maxims and rules of life for those who serve God. These we will immediately consider.

§ 3

THE CRUCIFIX

But first let me write a few words here about those who hold a kind of intermediate faith between the worship of the God of Youth and the vaguer sort of Christianity. There are a number of people closely in touch with those who have found the new religion who, biassed probably by a dread of too complete a break with Christianity, have adopted a theogony which is very reminiscent of Gnosticism and of the Paulician, Catharist, and kindred sects to which allusion has already been made. He, who is called in this book God, they would call God-the-Son or Christ, or the Logos; and what is here called the Darkness or the Veiled Being, they would call God-the-Father. And what we speak of here as Life, they would call, with a certain disregard of the poor brutes that perish, Man. And they would assert, what we of the new belief, pleading our profound ignorance, would

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neither assert nor deny, that that Darkness, out of which came Life and God, since it produced them must be ultimately sympathetic and of like nature with them. And that ultimately Man, being redeemed and led by Christ and saved from death by him, would be reconciled with God the Father.* And this great adventurer out of the hearts of man that we here call God, they would present as the same with that teacher from Galilee who was crucified at Jerusalem.

Now we of the modern way would offer the following criticisms upon this apparent compromise between our faith and the current religion. Firstly, we do not presume to theorise about the nature of the Veiled Being nor about that being's relations to God and to Life. We do not recognise any consistent sympathetic possibilities between these outer beings and our God. Our God is, we feel, like Prometheus, a rebel. He is unfilial. And the accepted figure of Jesus, instinct with meek submission, is not in the tone of our worship. It is not by suffering that God conquers death, but by fighting. Incidentally our God dies a million deaths, but the thing that matters is not the deaths but the immortality. It may be he cannot escape in this person or that person being nailed to a cross or chained to be torn by vultures on a rock. These may be necessary sufferings, like hunger and thirst in a campaign; they do not in them-

* This probably was the conception of Spinoza. Christ for him is the wisdom of God manifested in all things, and chiefly in the mind of man. Through him we reach the blessedness of an intuitive knowledge of God. Salvation is an escape from the "inadequate" ideas of the mortal human personality to the "adequate" and timeless ideas of God.

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selves bring victory. They may be necessary, but they are not glorious. The symbol of the crucifixion, the drooping, pain-drenched figure of Christ, the sorrowful cry to his Father, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" these things jar with our spirit. We little men may well fail and repent, but it is our faith that our God does not fail us nor himself. We cannot accept the Christian's crucifix, or pray to a pitiful God. We cannot accept the Resurrection as though it were an afterthought to a bitterly felt death. Our crucifix, if you must have a crucifix, would show God with a hand or a foot already torn away from its nail, and with eyes not downcast but resolute against the sky; a face without pain, pain lost and forgotten in the surpassing glory of the struggle and the inflexible will to live and prevail. . . .

But we do not care how long the thorns are drawn, nor how terrible the wounds, so long as he does not droop. God is courage. God is courage beyond any conceivable suffering.

But when all this has been said, it is well to add that it concerns the figure of Christ only in so far as that professes to be the figure of God, and the crucifix only so far as that stands for divine action. The figure of Christ crucified, so soon as we think of it as being no more than the tragic memorial of Jesus, of the man who proclaimed the loving-kindness of God and the supremacy of God's kingdom over the individual life, and who, in the extreme agony of his pain and exhaustion, cried out that he was deserted, becomes something altogether distinct from a theo-

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logical symbol. Immediately that we cease to worship, we can begin to love and pity. Here was a being of extreme gentleness and delicacy and of great courage, of the utmost tolerance and the subtlest sympathy, a saint of non-resistance. . . .

We of the new faith repudiate the teaching of non-resistance. We are the militant followers of and participators in a militant God. We can appreciate and admire the greatness of Christ, this gentle being upon whose nobility the theologians trade. But submission is the remotest quality of all from our God, and a moribund figure is the completest inversion of his likeness as we know him. A Christianity which shows, for its daily symbol, Christ risen and trampling victoriously upon a broken cross, would be far more in the spirit of our worship.*

* It is curious, after writing the above, to find in a letter written by Foss Westcott, Bishop of Durham, to that pertinacious correspondent, the late Lady Victoria Welby, almost exactly the same sentiments I have here expressed. "If I could fill the Crucifix with life as you do," he says, "I would gladly look on it, but the fallen Head and the closed Eye exclude from my thought the idea of glorified humanity. The Christ to whom we are led is One who 'hath been crucified,' who hath passed the trial victoriously and borne the fruits to heaven. I dare not then rest on this side of the glory."

I find, too, a still more remarkable expression of the modern spirit in a tract, "The Call of the Kingdom," by that very able and subtle Anglican theologian, the Rev. W. Temple, who declares that under the vitalising stresses of the war we are winning "faith in Christ as an heroic leader. We have thought of Him so much as meek and gentle that there is no ground in our picture of Him, for the vision which His disciple had of Him: 'His head and His hair were white as white wool, white as snow; and His eyes were as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto burnished brass, as if it had been refined in a furnace; and His voice as the voice of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars; and out of His mouth proceeded a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was as the sun shineth in its strength.'"

These are both exceptional utterances, interesting as showing how clearly parallel are the tendencies within and without Christianity.

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§ 4

THE PRIMARY DUTIES

Now it follows very directly from the conception of God as a finite intelligence of boundless courage and limitless possibilities of growth and victory, who has pitted himself against death, who stands close to our inmost beings ready to receive us and use us, to rescue us from the chagrins of egotism and take us into his immortal adventure, that we who have realised him and given ourselves joyfully to him, must needs be equally ready and willing to give our energies to the task we share with him, to do our utmost to increase knowledge, to increase order and clearness, to fight against indolence, waste, disorder, cruelty, vice, and every form of his and our enemy, death, first and chiefest in ourselves but also in all mankind, and to bring about the establishment of his real and visible kingdom throughout the world.

And that idea of God as the Invisible King of the whole world means not merely that God is to be made and declared the head of the world, but that the kingdom of God is to be present throughout the whole fabric of the world, that the Kingdom of God is to be in the teaching at the village school, in the planning of the railway siding of the market town, in the mixing of the mortar at the building of the workman's house. It means that ultimately no effigy of intrusive king or emperor is to disfigure our coins and stamps any more; God himself and no delegate is to be represented wherever men buy or sell, on our

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letters and our receipts, a perpetual witness, a perpetual reminder. There is no act altogether without significance, no power so humble that it may not be used for or against God, no life but can orient itself to him. To realise God in one's heart is to be filled with the desire to serve him, and the way of his service is neither to pull up one's life by the roots nor to continue it in all its essentials unchanged, but to turn it about, to turn everything that there is in it round into his way.

The outward duty of those who serve God must vary greatly with the abilities they possess and the positions in which they find themselves, but for all there are certain fundamental duties; a constant attempt to be utterly truthful with oneself, a constant sedulousness to keep oneself fit and bright for God's service, and to increase one's knowledge and powers, and a hidden persistent watchfulness of one's baser motives, a watch against fear and indolence, against vanity, against greed and lust, against envy, malice, and uncharitableness. To have found God truly does in itself make God's service one's essential motive, but these evils lurk in the shadows, in the lassitudes and unwary moments. No one escapes them altogether, there is no need for tragic moods on account of imperfections. We can no more serve God without blunders and set-backs than we can win battles without losing men. But the less of such loss the better. The servant of God must keep his mind as wide and sound and his motives as clean as he can, just as an operating surgeon must keep his nerves and muscles as fit and his hands as clean as he can.

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Neither may righteously evade exercise and regular washing—of mind as of hands. An incessant watchfulness of one's self and one's thoughts and the soundness of one's thoughts; cleanliness, clearness, a wariness against indolence and prejudice, careful truth, habitual frankness, fitness and steadfast work; these are the daily fundamental duties that everyone who truly comes to God will, as a matter of course, set before himself.

§ 5

THE INCREASING KINGDOM

Now of the more intimate and personal life of the believer it will be more convenient to write a little later. Let us for the present pursue the idea of this world-kingdom of God, to whose establishment he calls us. This kingdom is to be a peaceful and coordinated activity of all mankind upon certain divine ends. These, we conceive, are first, the maintenance of the racial life; secondly, the exploration of the external being of nature as it is and as it has been, that is to say history and science; thirdly, that exploration of inherent human possibility which is art; fourthly, that clarification of thought and knowledge which is philosophy; and finally, the progressive enlargement and development of the racial life under these lights, so that God may work through a continually better body of humanity and through better and better equipped minds, that he and our race may increase for ever, working unendingly upon the development of the powers of life and the mastery of

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the blind forces of matter throughout the deeps of space. He sets out with us, we are persuaded, to conquer ourselves and our world and the stars. And beyond the stars our eyes can as yet see nothing, our imaginations reach and fail. Beyond the limits of our understanding is the veiled Being of Fate, whose face is hidden from us. . . .

It may be that minds will presently appear among us of such a quality that the face of that Unknown will not be altogether hidden. . . .

But the business of such ordinary lives as ours is the setting up of this earthly kingdom of God. That is the form into which our lives must fall and our consciences adapt themselves.

Belief in God as the Invisible King brings with it almost necessarily a conception of this coming kingdom of God on earth. Each believer as he grasps this natural and immediate consequence of the faith that has come into his life will form at the same time a Utopian conception of this world changed in the direction of God's purpose. The vision will follow the realisation of God's true nature and purpose as a necessary second step. And he will begin to develop the latent citizen of this world-state in himself. He will fall in with the idea of the world-wide sanities of this new order being drawn over the warring outlines of the present, and of men falling out of relationship with the old order and into relationship with the new. Many men and women are already working to-day at tasks that belong essentially to God's kingdom, tasks that would be of the same essential nature if the world were now a theocracy; for ex-

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ample, they are doing or sustaining scientific research or education or creative art; they are making roads to bring men together, they are doctors working for the world's health, they are building homes, they are constructing machinery to save and increase the powers of men. . . .

Such men and women need only to change their orientation as men will change about at a work-table when the light that was coming in a little while ago from the southern windows, begins presently to come in chiefly from the west, to become open and confessed servants of God. This work that they were doing for ambition, or the love of men or the love of knowledge or what seemed the inherent impulse to the work itself, or for money or honour or country or king, they will realise they are doing for God and by the power of God. Self-transformation into a citizen of God's kingdom and a new realisation of all earthly politics as no more than the struggle to define and achieve the kingdom of God in the earth, follow on, without any need for a fresh spiritual impulse, from the moment when God and the believer meet and clasp one another.

This transfiguration of the world into a theocracy may seem a merely fantastic idea to anyone who comes to it freshly without such general theological preparation as the preceding pages have made. But to anyone who has been at the pains to clear his mind even a little from the obsession of existing but transitory things, it ceases to be a mere suggestion and becomes more and more manifestly the real future of mankind. From the phase of "so things should be,"

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the mind will pass very rapidly to the realisation that "so things will be." Towards this the directive wills among men have been drifting more and more steadily and perceptibly and with fewer eddyings and retardations, for many centuries. The purpose of mankind will not be always thus confused and fragmentary. This dissemination of will-power is a phase. The age of the warring tribes and kingdoms and empires that began a hundred centuries or so ago, draws to its close. The kingdom of God on earth is not a metaphor, not a mere spiritual state, not a dream, not an uncertain project; it is the thing before us, it is the close and inevitable destiny of mankind.

In a few score years the faith of the true God will be spreading about the world. The few halting confessions of God that one hears here and there to-day, like that little twittering of birds which comes before the dawn, will have swollen to a choral unanimity. In but a few centuries the whole world will be openly, confessedly, preparing for the kingdom. In but a few centuries God will have led us out of the dark forest of these present wars and confusions into the open brotherhood of his rule.

§ 6

WHAT IS MY PLACE IN THE KINGDOM?

This conception of the general life of mankind as a transformation at thousands of points of the confused, egotistical, proprietary, partisan, nationalist, life-

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wasting chaos of human life to-day into the coherent development of the world-kingdom of God, provides the form into which everyone who comes to the knowledge of God will naturally seek to fit his every thought and activity. The material greeds, the avarice, fear, rivalries, and ignoble ambitions of a disordered world will be challenged and examined under one general question: "What am I in the kingdom of God?"

It has already been suggested that there is a great and growing number of occupations that belong already to God's kingdom, research, teaching, creative art, creative administration, cultivation, construction, maintenance, and the honest satisfaction of honest practical human needs. For such people conversion to the intimacy of God means at most a change in the spirit of their work, a refreshed energy, a clearer understanding, a new zeal, a completer disregard of gains and praises and promotion. Pay, honours, and the like cease to be the inducement of effort. Service, and service alone, is the criterion that the quickened conscience will recognise.

Most of such people will find themselves in positions in which service is mingled with activities of a baser sort, in which service is a little warped and deflected by old traditions and usage, by mercenary and commercial considerations, by some inherent or special degradation of purpose. The spirit of God will not let the believer rest until his life is readjusted and as far as possible freed from the waste of these base diversions. For example a scientific investigator, lit and inspired by great inquiries, may be ham-

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pered by the conditions of his professorship or research fellowship, which exact an appearance of "practical" results. Or he may be obliged to lecture or conduct classes. He may be able to give but half his possible gift to the work of his real aptitude, and that at a sacrifice of money and reputation among short-sighted but influential contemporaries. Well, if he is by nature an investigator he will know that the research is what God needs of him. He cannot continue it at all if he leaves his position, and so he must needs waste something of his gift to save the rest. But should a poorer or a humbler post offer him better opportunity, there lies his work for God. There one has a very common and simple type of the problems that will arise in the lives of men when they are lit by sudden realisation of the immediacy of God.

Akin to that case is the perplexity of any successful physician between the increase of knowledge and the public welfare on the one hand, and the lucrative possibilities of his practice among wealthy people on the other. He belongs to a profession that is crippled by a mediæval code, a profession which was blind to the common interest of the Public Health and regarded its members merely as skilled practitioners employed to "cure" individual ailments. Very slowly and tortuously do the methods of the profession adapt themselves to the modern conception of an army of devoted men working as a whole under God for the health of mankind as a whole, broadening out from the frowsy den of the "leech," with its crocodile and bottles and hieroglyphic prescriptions, to a skilled and illuminating co-operation with those who deal

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with the food and housing and economic life of the community.

And again quite parallel with these personal problems is the trouble of the artist between the market and vulgar fame on the one hand and his divine impulse on the other.

The presence of God will be a continual light and help in every decision that must be made by men and women in these more or less vitiated, but still fundamentally useful and righteous, positions.

The trouble becomes more marked and more difficult in the case of a man who is a manufacturer or a trader, the financier of business enterprise or the proprietor of great estates. The world is in need of manufactures and that goods should be distributed; land must be administered and new economic possibilities developed. The drift of things is in the direction of state ownership and control, but in a great number of cases the state is not ripe for such undertakings, it commands neither sufficient integrity nor sufficient ability, and the proprietor of factory, store, credit or land, must continue in possession, holding as a trustee for God and, so far as lies in his power, preparing for his supersession by some more public administration. Modern religion admits of no facile flights from responsibility. It permits no headlong resort to the wilderness and sterile virtue. It counts the recluse who fasts among scorpions in a cave as no better than a deserter in hiding. It unhesitatingly forbids any rich young man to sell all that he has and give to the poor. Himself and all that he has must be alike dedicated to God.

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The plain duty that will be understood by the proprietor of land and of every sort of general need and service, so soon as he becomes aware of God, is so to administer his possessions as to achieve the maximum of possible efficiency, the most generous output, and the least private profit. He may set aside a salary for his maintenance; the rest he must deal with like a zealous public official. And if he perceives that the affair could be better administered by other hands than his own, then it is his business to get it into those hands with the smallest delay and the least profit to himself. . . .

The rights and wrongs of human equity are very different from right and wrong in the sight of God. In the sight of God no landlord has a *right* to his rent, no usurer has a *right* to his interest. A man is not justified in drawing the profits from an advantageous agreement nor free to spend the profits of a speculation as he will. God takes no heed of savings nor of abstinence. He recognises no right to the "rewards of abstinence," no right to any rewards. Those profits and comforts and consolations are the inducements that dangle before the eyes of the spiritually blind. Wealth is an embarrassment to the religious, for God calls them to account for it. The servant of God has no business with wealth or power except to use them immediately in the service of God. Finding these things in his hands he is bound to administer them in the service of God.

The tendency of modern religion goes far beyond the alleged communism of the early Christians, and far beyond the tithes of the scribes and Pharisees.

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God takes all. He takes you, blood and bones and house and acres, he takes skill and influence and expectations. For all the rest of your life you are nothing but God's agent. If you are not prepared for so complete a surrender, then you are infinitely remote from God. You must go your way. Here you are merely a curious interloper. Perhaps you have been desiring God as an experience, or coveting him as a possession. You have not begun to understand. This that we are discussing in this book is as yet nothing for you.

§ 7

ADJUSTING LIFE

This picturing of a human world more to the mind of God than this present world and the discovery and realisation of one's own place and work in and for that kingdom of God, is the natural next phase in the development of the believer. He will set about revising and adjusting his scheme of life, his ways of living, his habits and his relationships in the light of his new convictions.

Most men and women who come to God will have already a certain righteousness in their lives; these things happen like a thunder-clap only in strange exceptional cases, and the same movements of the mind that have brought them to God will already have brought their lives into a certain rightness of direction and conduct. Yet occasionally there will be someone to whom the self-examination that follows conversion will reveal an entirely wrong and evil way

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of living. It may be that the light has come to some rich idler doing nothing but follow a pleasurable routine. Or to someone following some highly profitable and amusing, but socially useless or socially mischievous occupation. One may be an advocate at the disposal of any man's purpose or an actor or actress ready to fall in with any theatrical enterprise. Or a woman may find herself a prostitute or a pet wife, a mere kept instrument of indulgence. These are lives of prey, these are lives of futility; the light of God will not tolerate such lives. Here religion can bring nothing but a severance from the old way of life altogether, a break and a struggle towards use and service and dignity.

But even here it does not follow that because a life has been wrong the new life that begins must be far as the poles asunder from the old. Every sort of experience that has ever come to a human being is in the self that he brings to God, and there is no reason why a knowledge of evil ways should not determine the path of duty. No one can better devise protections against vices than those who have practised them; none know temptations better than those who have fallen. If a man has followed an evil trade, it becomes him to use his knowledge of the tricks of that trade to help end it. He knows the charities it may claim and the remedies it needs. . . .

A very interesting case to discuss in relation to this question of adjustment is that of the barrister. A practising barrister under contemporary conditions does indeed give most typically the opportunity for examining the relation of an ordinary self-respecting

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worldly life, to life under the dispensation of God discovered. A barrister is usually a man of some energy and ambition, his honour is moulded by the traditions of an ancient and antiquated profession, instinctively self-preserving and yet with a real desire for consistency and respect. As a profession it has been greedy and defensively conservative, but it has never been shameless nor has it ever broken faith with its own large and selfish, but quite definite, propositions. It has never for instance had the shamelessness of such a traditionless and undisciplined class as the early factory organisers. It has never had the dull incoherent wickedness of the sort of men who exploit drunkenness and the turf. It offends within limits. Barristers can be, and are, disbarred. But it is now a profession extraordinarily out of date; its code of honour derives from a time of cruder and lower conceptions of human relationship. It apprehends the State as a mere "ring" kept about private disputations; it has not begun to move towards the modern conception of the collective enterprise as the determining criterion of human conduct. It sees its business as a mere play upon the rules of a game between man and man, or between men and men. They haggle, they dispute, they inflict and suffer wrongs, they evade dues, and are liable or entitled to penalties and compensations. The primary business of the law is held to be decision in these wrangles, and as wrangling is subject to artistic elaboration, the business of the barrister is the business of a professional wrangler; he is a bravo in wig and gown who fights the duels of ordi-

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nary men because they are incapable, very largely on account of the complexities of legal procedure, of fighting for themselves. His business is never to explore any fundamental right in the matter. His business is to say all that can be said for his client, and to conceal or minimise whatever can be said against his client. The successful promoted advocate, who in Britain and the United States of America is the judge, and whose habits and interests all incline him to disregard the realities of the case in favour of the points in the forensic game, then adjudicates upon the contest. . . .

Now this condition of things is clearly incompatible with the modern conception of the world as becoming a divine kingdom. When the world is openly and confessedly the kingdom of God, the law court will exist only to adjust the differing views of men as to the manner of their service to God; the only right of action one man will have against another will be that he has been prevented or hampered or distressed by the other in serving God. The idea of the law court will have changed entirely from a place of dispute, exaction and vengeance, to a place of adjustment. The individual or some state organisation will plead *on behalf of the common good* either against some state official or state regulation, or against the actions or inaction of another individual. This is the only sort of legal proceedings compatible with the broad beliefs of the new faith. . . . Every religion that becomes ascendant, in so far as it is not other-worldly, must necessarily set its stamp upon the methods and administration of the law. That

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this was not the case with Christianity is one of the many contributory aspects that lead one to the conviction that it was not Christianity that took possession of the Roman empire, but an imperial adventurer who took possession of an all too complaisant Christianity.

Reverting now from these generalisations to the problem of the religious from which they arose, it will have become evident that the essential work of anyone who is conversant with the existing practice and literature of the law and whose natural abilities are forensic, will lie in the direction of reconstructing the theory and practice of the law in harmony with modern conceptions, of making that theory and practice clear and plain to ordinary men, of reforming the abuses of the profession by working for the separation of bar and judiciary, for the amalgamation of the solicitors and the barristers, and the like needed reforms. These are matters that will probably only be properly set right by a quickening of conscience among lawyers themselves. Of no class of men is the help and service so necessary to the practical establishment of God's kingdom, as of men learned and experienced in the law. And there is no reason why for the present an advocate should not continue to plead in the courts, provided he does his utmost only to handle cases in which he believes he can serve the right. Few righteous cases are ill-served by a frank disposition on the part of lawyer and client to put everything before the court. Thereby of course there arises a difficult case of conscience. What if a lawyer, believing his client to be in the right, dis-

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covers him to be in the wrong? He cannot throw up the case unless he has been scandalously deceived, because so he would betray the confidence his client has put in him to "see him through." He has a right to "give himself away," but not to "give away" his client in this fashion. If he has a chance of a private consultation I think he ought to do his best to make his client admit the truth of the case and give in, but failing this he has no right to be virtuous on behalf of another. No man may play God to another; he may remonstrate, but that is the limit of his right. He must respect a confidence, even if it is purely implicit and involuntary. I admit that here the barrister is in a cleft stick, and that he must see the business through according to the confidence his client has put in him—and afterwards be as sorry as he may be if injustice ensues. And also I would suggest a lawyer may with a fairly good conscience defend a guilty man as if he were innocent, to save him from unjustly heavy penalties. . . .

This comparatively full discussion of the barrister's problem has been embarked upon because it does bring in, in a very typical fashion, just those uncertainties and imperfections that abound in real life. Religious conviction gives us a general direction, but it stands aside from many of these entangled struggles in the jungle of conscience. Practice is often easier than a rule. In practice a lawyer will know far more accurately than a hypothetical case can indicate, how far he is bound to see his client through, and how far he may play the keeper of his client's conscience. And nearly every day there hap-

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pen instances where the most subtle casuistry will fail and the finger of conscience point unhesitatingly. One may have worried long in the preparation and preliminaries of the issue, one may bring the case at last into the final court of conscience in an apparently hopeless tangle. Then suddenly comes decision.

The procedure of that silent, lit, and empty court in which a man states his case to God, is very simple and perfect. The excuses and the special pleading shrivel and vanish. In a little while the case lies bare and plain.

§ 8

THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

The question of oaths of allegiance, acts of acquiescence in existing governments, and the like, is one that arises at once with the acceptance of God as the supreme and real King of the Earth. At the worst Cæsar is a usurper, a satrap claiming to be sovereign; at the best he is provisional. Modern casuistry makes no great trouble for the believing public official. The chief business of any believer is to do the work for which he is best fitted, and since all state affairs are to become the affairs of God's kingdom it is of primary importance that they should come into the hands of God's servants. It is scarcely less necessary to a believing man with administrative gifts that he should be in the public administration, than that he should breathe and eat. And whatever oath or the like to usurper church or usurper king has been set up to bar access to service, is an oath imposed

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under duress. If it cannot be avoided it must be taken rather than that a man should become unserviceable. All such oaths are unfair and foolish things. They exclude no scoundrels; they are appeals to superstition. Whenever an opportunity occurs for the abolition of an oath, the servant of God will seize it, but where the oath is unavoidable he will take it.

The service of God is not to achieve a delicate consistency of statement; it is to do as much as one can of God's work.

§ 9

THE PRIEST AND THE CREED

It may be doubted if this line of reasoning regarding the official and his oath can be extended to excuse the priest or pledged minister of religion who finds that faith in the true God has ousted his formal beliefs.

This has been a frequent and subtle moral problem in the intellectual life of the last hundred years. It has been increasingly difficult for any class of reading, talking, and discussing people such as are the bulk of the priesthoods of the Christian churches to escape hearing and reading the accumulated criticism of the Trinitarian theology and of the popularly accepted story of man's fall and salvation. Some have no doubt defeated this universal and insidious critical attack entirely, and honestly established themselves in a right-down acceptance of the articles and disciplines to which they have subscribed and of the creeds they profess and repeat. Some have recanted and abandoned their positions in the priesthood.

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But a great number have neither resisted the bacillus of criticism nor left the churches to which they are attached. They have adopted compromises, they have qualified their creeds with modifying foot-notes of essential repudiation; they have decided that plain statements are metaphors and have undercut, transposed, and inverted the most vital points of the vulgarly accepted beliefs. One may find within the Anglican communion, Arians, Unitarians, Atheists, disbelievers in immortality, attenuators of miracles; there is scarcely a doubt or a cavil that has not found a lodgment within the ample charity of the English Establishment. I have been interested to hear one distinguished Canon deplore that "they" did not identify the Logos with the third instead of the second Person of the Trinity, and another distinguished Catholic apologist declare his indifference to the "historical Jesus." Within most of the Christian communions one may believe anything or nothing, provided only that one does not call too public an attention to one's eccentricity. The late Rev. Charles Voysey, for example, preached plainly in his church at Healaugh against the divinity of Christ, unhindered. It was only when he published his sermons under the provocative title of "The Sling and the Stone," and caused an outcry beyond the limits of his congregation, that he was indicted and deprived.

Now the reasons why these men do not leave the ministry or priesthood in which they find themselves are often very plausible. It is probable that in very few cases is the retention of stipend or incumbency a conscious dishonesty. At the worst it is mitigated by

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thought for wife or child. It has only been during very exceptional phases of religious development and controversy that beliefs have been really sharp. A creed, like a coin, it may be argued, loses little in practical value because it is worn, or bears the image of a vanished king. The religious life is a reality that has clothed itself in many garments, and the concern of the priest or minister is with the religious life and not with the poor symbols that may indeed pretend to express, but do as a matter of fact no more than indicate, its direction. It is quite possible to maintain that the church and not the creed is the real and valuable instrument of religion, that the religious life is sustained not by its propositions but by its routines. Anyone who seeks the intimate discussion of spiritual things with professional divines, will find this is the substance of the case for the ecclesiastical sceptic. His church, he will admit, mumbles its statement of truth, but where else is truth? What better formulæ are to be found for ineffable things? And meanwhile—he does good.

That may be a valid defence before a man finds God. But we who profess the worship and fellowship of the living God deny that religion is a matter of ineffable things. The way of God is plain and simple and easy to understand.

Therewith the whole position of the conforming sceptic is changed. If a professional religious has any justification at all for his professionalism it is surely that he proclaims the nearness and greatness of God. And these creeds and articles and orthodoxies are not proclamations but curtains, they are a

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darkening and confusion of what should be crystal clear. What compensatory good can a priest pretend to do when his primary business is the truth and his method a lie? The oaths and incidental conformities of men who wish to serve God in the state are on a different footing altogether from the falsehood and mischief of one who knows the true God and yet recites to a trustful congregation, foists upon a trustful congregation, a misleading and ill-phrased Levantine creed.

Such is the line of thought which will impose the renunciation of his temporalities and a complete cessation of services upon every ordained priest and minister as his first act of faith. Once that he has truly realised God, it becomes impossible for him ever to repeat his creed again. His course seems plain and clear. It becomes him to stand up before the flock he has led in error, and to proclaim the being and nature of the one true God. He must be explicit to the utmost of his powers. Then he may await his expulsion. It may be doubted whether it is sufficient for him to go away silently, making false excuses or none at all for his retreat. He has to atone for the implicit acquiescences of his conforming years.

§ 10

THE UNIVERSALISM OF GOD

Are any sorts of people shut off as if by inherent necessity from God?

This is, so to speak, one of the standing questions

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of theology; it reappears with slight changes of form at every period of religious interest, it is for example the chief issue between the Arminian and the Calvinist. From its very opening proposition modern religion sweeps past and far ahead of the old Arminian teachings of Wesleyans and Methodists, in its insistence upon the entirely finite nature of God. Arminians seem merely to have insisted that God has conditioned himself, and by his own free act left men free to accept or reject salvation. To the realist type of mind—here as always I use “realist” in its proper sense as the opposite of nominalist—to the old-fashioned overexact and over-accentuating type of mind, such ways of thinking seem vague and unsatisfying. Just as it distresses the more downright kind of intelligence with a feeling of disloyalty to admit that God is not Almighty, so it troubles the same sort of intelligence to hear that there is no clear line to be drawn between the saved and the lost. Realists like an exclusive flavour in their faith. Moreover, it is a natural weakness of humanity to be forced into extreme positions by argument. It is probable, as I have already suggested, that the absolute attributes of God were forced upon Christianity under the stresses of propaganda, and it is probable that the theory of a superhuman obstinacy beyond salvation arose out of the irritations natural to theological debate. It is but a step from the realisation that there are people absolutely unable or absolutely unwilling to see God as we see him, to the conviction that they are therefore shut off from God by an invincible soul blindness.

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It is very easy to believe that other people are essentially damned.

Beyond the little world of our sympathies and comprehension there are those who seem inaccessible to God by any means within our experience. They are people answering to the "hard-hearted," to the "stiff-necked generation" of the Hebrew prophets. They betray and even confess to standards that seem hopelessly base to us. They show themselves incapable of any disinterested enthusiasm for beauty or truth or goodness. They are altogether remote from intelligent sacrifice. To every test they betray vileness of texture; they are mean, cold, wicked. There are people who seem to cheat with a private self-approval, who are ever ready to do harsh and cruel things, whose use for social feeling is the malignant boycott, and for prosperity, monopolisation and humiliating display; who seize upon religion and turn it into persecution, and upon beauty to torment it on the altars of some joyless vice. We cannot do with such souls; we have no use for them, and it is very easy indeed to step from that persuasion to the belief that God has no use for them.

And besides these base people there are the stupid people and the people with minds so poor in texture that they cannot even grasp the few broad and simple ideas that seem necessary to the salvation we experience, who lapse helplessly into fetishistic and fearful conceptions of God, and are apparently quite incapable of distinguishing between what is practically and what is spiritually good.

It is an easy thing to conclude that the only way to

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God is our way to God, that he is the privilege of a finer and better sort to which we of course belong; that he is no more the God of the card-sharper or the pickpocket or the "smart" woman or the loan-monger or the village oaf than he is of the swine in the sty. But are we justified in thus limiting God to the measure of our moral and intellectual understandings? Because some people seem to me steadfastly and consistently base or hopelessly and incurably dull and confused, does it follow that there are not phases, albeit I have never chanced to see them, of exaltation in the one case and illumination in the other? And may I not be a little restricting my perception of Good? While I have been ready enough to pronounce this or that person as being, so far as I was concerned, thoroughly damnable or utterly dull, I find a curious reluctance to admit the general proposition which is necessary for these instances. It is possible that the difference between Arminian and Calvinist is a difference of essential intellectual temperament rather than of theoretical conviction. I am temperamentally Arminian as I am temperamentally Nominalist. I feel that it must be in the nature of God to attempt all souls. There must be accessibilities I can only suspect, and accessibilities of which I know nothing.

Yet here is a consideration pointing rather the other way. If you think, as you must think, that you yourself can be lost to God and damned, then I cannot see how you can avoid thinking that other people can be damned. But that is not to believe that there are people damned at the outset by their moral and

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intellectual insufficiency; that is not to make out that there is a class of essential and incurable spiritual defectives. The religious life preceded clear religious understanding and extends far beyond its range.

In my own case I perceive that in spite of the value I attach to true belief, the reality of religion is not an intellectual thing. The essential religious fact is in another than the mental sphere. I am passionately anxious to have the idea of God clear in my own mind, and to make my beliefs plain and clear to other people, and particularly to other people who may seem to be feeling with me; I do perceive that error is evil if only because a faith based on confused conceptions and partial understandings may suffer irreparable injury through the collapse of its substratum of ideas. I doubt if faith can be complete and enduring if it is not secured by the definite knowledge of the true God. Yet I have also to admit that I find the form of my own religious emotion paralleled by people with whom I have no intellectual sympathy and no agreement in phrase or formula at all.

There is for example this practical identity of religious feeling and this discrepancy of interpretation between such an inquirer as myself and a convert of the Salvation Army. Here, clothing itself in phrases and images of barbaric sacrifice, of slaughtered lambs and fountains of precious blood, a most repulsive and incomprehensible idiom to me, and expressing itself by shouts, clangour, trumpeting, gesticulations, and rhythmic pacings that stun and dismay my nerves, I find the same object sought, release from self, and the same end, the end of identification with

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the immortal, successfully if perhaps rather insecurely achieved. I see God indubitably present in these excitements, and I see personalities I could easily have misjudged as too base or too dense for spiritual understandings, lit by the manifest reflection of divinity. One may be led into the absurdest underestimates of religious possibilities if one estimates people only coldly and in the light of every-day life. There is a subintellectual religious life which, very conceivably, when its utmost range can be examined, excludes nothing human from religious cooperation, which will use any words to its tune, which takes its phrasing ready-made from the world about it, as it takes the street for its temple, and yet which may be at its inner point in the directest contact with God. Religion may suffer from aphasia and still be religion; it may utter misleading or nonsensical words and yet intend and convey the truth. The methods of the Salvation Army are older than doctrinal Christianity, and may long survive it. Men and women may still chant of Beulah Land and cry out in the ecstasy of salvation; the tambourine, that modern revival of the thrilling Alexandrine sistrum, may still stir dull nerves to a first apprehension of powers and a call beyond the immediate material compulsion of life, when the creeds of Christianity are as dead as the lore of the Druids.

The emancipation of mankind from obsolete theories and formularies may be accompanied by great tides of moral and emotional release among types and strata that by the standards of a trained and explicit intellectual may seem spiritually hope-

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less. It is not necessary to imagine the whole world critical and lucid in order to imagine the whole world unified in religious sentiment, comprehending the same phrases and coming together regardless of class and race and quality, in the worship and service of the true God. The coming kingship of God if it is to be more than hieratic tyranny must have this universality of appeal. As the head grows clear the body will turn in the right direction. To the mass of men modern religion says, "This is the God it has always been in your nature to apprehend."

§ 11

GOD AND THE LOVE AND STATUS OF WOMEN

Now that we are discussing the general question of individual conduct, it will be convenient to take up again and restate in that relationship, propositions already made very plainly in the second and third chapters. Here there are several excellent reasons for a certain amount of deliberate repetition. . . .

All the mystical relations of chastity, virginity, and the like with religion, those questions of physical status that play so large a part in most contemporary religions, have disappeared from modern faith. Let us be as clear as possible upon this. God is concerned by the health and fitness and vigour of his servants; we owe him our best and utmost; but he has no special concern and no special preferences or commandments regarding sexual things.

Christ, it is manifest, was of the modern faith in

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these matters, he welcomed the Magdalen, neither would he condemn the woman taken in adultery. Manifestly corruption and disease were not to stand between him and those who sought God in him. But the Christianity of the creeds, in this as in so many respects, does not rise to the level of its founder, and it is as necessary to repeat to-day as though the name of Christ had not been ascendant for nineteen centuries, that sex is a secondary thing to religion, and sexual status of no account in the presence of God. It follows quite logically that God does not discriminate between man and woman in any essential things. We leave our individuality behind us when we come into the presence of God. Sex is not disavowed but forgotten. Just as one's last meal is forgotten—which also is a difference between the religious moment of modern faith and certain Christian sacraments. You are a believer and God is at hand to you; heed not your state; reach out to him and he is there. In the moment of religion you are human; it matters not what else you are, male or female, clean or unclean, Hebrew or Gentile, bond or free. It is *after* the moment of religion that we become concerned about our state and the manner in which we use ourselves.

We have to follow our reason as our sole guide in our individual treatment of all such things as food and health and sex. God is the king of the whole world, he is the owner of our souls and bodies and all things. He is not particularly concerned about any aspect, because he is concerned about every aspect. We have to make the best use of ourselves for his

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kingdom; that is our rule of life. That rule means neither painful nor frantic abstinences nor any forced way of living. Purity, cleanliness, health, none of these things are for themselves, they are for use; none are magic, all are means. The sword must be sharp and clean. That does not mean that we are perpetually to sharpen and clean it—which would weaken and waste the blade. The sword must neither be drawn constantly nor always rusting in its sheath. Those who have had the wits and soul to come to God, will have the wits and soul to find out and know what is waste, what is vanity, what is the happiness that begets strength of body and spirit, what is error, where vice begins, and to avoid and repent and recoil from all those things that degrade. These are matters not of the rule of life but of the application of life. They must neither be neglected nor made disproportionally important.

To the believer, relationship with God is the supreme relationship. It is difficult to imagine how the association of lovers and friends can be very fine and close and good unless the two who love are each also linked to God, so that through their moods and fluctuations and the changes of years they can be held steadfast by his undying steadfastness. But it has been felt by many deep-feeling people that there is so much kindred between the love and trust of husband and wife and the feeling we have for God, that it is reasonable to consider the former also as a sacred thing. They do so value that close love of mated man and woman, they are so intent upon its permanence and completeness and to lift the dear

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relationship out of the ruck of casual and transitory things, that they want to bring it, as it were, into the very presence and assent of God. There are many who dream and desire that they are as deeply and completely mated as this, many more who would fain be so, and some who are. And from this comes the earnest desire to make marriage sacramental and the attempt to impose upon all the world the outward appearance, the restrictions, the pretence at least of such a sacramental union.

There may be such a quasi-sacramental union in many cases, but only after years can one be sure of it; it is not to be brought about by vows and promises but by an essential kindred and cleaving of body and spirit; and it concerns only the two who can dare to say they have it, and God. And the divine thing in marriage, the thing that is most like the love of God, is, even then, not the relationship of the man and woman as man and woman, but the comradeship and trust and mutual help and pity that joins them. No doubt that from the mutual necessities of bodily love and the common adventure, the necessary honesties and helps of a joint life, there springs the stoutest, nearest, most enduring and best of human companionship; perhaps only upon that root can the best of mortal comradeship be got; but it does not follow that the mere ordinary coming together and pairing off of men and women is in itself divine or sacramental or anything of the sort. Being in love is a condition that may have its moments of sublime exaltation, but it is for the most part an experience far down the scale below divine experience; it is

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often love only in so far as it shares the name with better things; it is greed, it is admiration, it is desire, it is the itch for excitement, it is the instinct for competition, it is lust, it is curiosity, it is adventure, it is jealousy, it is hate. On a hundred scores "lovers" meet and part. Thereby some few find true love and the spirit of God in themselves or others.

Lovers may love God in one another; I do not deny it. That is no reason why the imitation and outward form of this great happiness should be made an obligation upon all men and women who are attracted by one another, nor why it should be woven into the essentials of religion. For women much more than for men is this confusion dangerous, lest a personal love should shape and dominate their lives instead of God. "He for God only; she for God in him," phrases the idea of Milton and of ancient Islam; it is the formula of sexual infatuation, a formula quite easily inverted, as the end of Goethe's *Faust* ("The woman soul leadeth us upward and on") may witness. The whole drift of modern religious feeling is against this exaggeration of sexual feeling, these moods of sexual slavishness, in spiritual things. Between the healthy love of ordinary mortal lovers in love and the love of God, there is an essential contrast and opposition in this, that preference, exclusiveness, and jealousy seem to be in the very nature of the former and are absolutely incompatible with the latter. The former is the intensest realisation of which our individualities are capable; the latter is the way of escape from the limitations of individuality. It may be true that a few men and

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more women do achieve the completest unselfishness and self-abandonment in earthly love. So the poets and romancers tell us. If so, it is that by an imaginative perversion they have given to some attractive person a worship that should be reserved for God and a devotion that is normally evoked only by little children in their mother's heart. It is not the way between most of the men and women one meets in this world.

But between God and the believer there is no other way, there is nothing else, but self-surrender and the ending of self.

CHAPTER THE SIXTH

MODERN IDEAS OF SIN AND DAMNATION

§ 1

THE BIOLOGICAL EQUIVALENT OF SIN

IF the reader who is unfamiliar with scientific things will obtain and read Metchnikoff's "Nature of Man," he will find there an interesting summary of the biological facts that bear upon and destroy the delusion that there is such a thing as individual perfection, that there is even ideal perfection for humanity. With an abundance of convincing instances Professor Metchnikoff demonstrates that life is a system of "disharmonies," capable of no perfect way, that there is no "perfect" dieting, no "perfect" sexual life, no "perfect" happiness, no "perfect" conduct. He releases one from the arbitrary but all too easy assumption that there is even an ideal "perfection" in organic life. He sweeps out of the mind with all the confidence and conviction of a physiological specialist, any idea that there is a perfect man or a conceivable perfect man. It is in the nature of every man to fall short at every point from perfection. From the biological point of view we are as individuals a series of involuntary "tries" on the part of an imperfect species towards an unknown end.

Our spiritual nature follows our bodily as a glove

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follows a hand. We are disharmonious beings and salvation no more makes an end to the defects of our souls than it makes an end to the decay of our teeth or to those vestigial structures of our body that endanger our physical welfare. Salvation leaves us still disharmonious, and adds not an inch to our spiritual and moral stature.

§ 2

WHAT IS DAMNATION?

Let us now take up the question of what is Sin? and what we mean by the term "damnation," in the light of this view of human reality. Most of the great world religions are as clear as Professor Metchnikoff that life in the world is a tangle of disharmonies, and in most cases they supply a more or less myth-like explanation, they declare that evil is one side of the conflict between Ahriman and Ormazd, or that it is the punishment of an act of disobedience, of the fall of man and world alike from a state of harmony. Their case, like his, is that *this* world is damned.

We do not find the belief that superposed upon the miseries of this world there are the still bitterer miseries of punishments after death, so nearly universal. The endless punishments of hell appear to be an exploit of theory; they have a superadded appearance even in the Christian system; the same common tendency to superlatives and absolutes that

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makes men ashamed to admit that God is finite, makes them seek to enhance the merits of their Saviour by the device of everlasting fire. Conquest over the sorrow of life and the fear of death do not seem to them sufficient for Christ's glory.

Now the turning round of the modern mind from a conception of the universe as something derived deductively from the past to a conception of it as something gathering itself adventurously towards the future, involves a release from the supposed necessity to tell a story and explain why. Instead comes the inquiry, "To what end?" We can say without mental discomfort, these disharmonies are here, this damnation is here—inexplicably. We can, without any distressful inquiry into ultimate origins, bring our minds to the conception of a spontaneous and developing God arising out of those stresses in our hearts and in the universe, and arising to overcome them. Salvation for the individual is escape from the individual distress at disharmony and the individual defeat by death, into the kingdom of God. And damnation can be nothing more and nothing less than the failure or inability or disinclination to make that escape.

Something of that idea of damnation as a lack of the will for salvation has crept at a number of points into contemporary religious thought. It was the fine fancy of Swedenborg that the damned go to their own hells of their own accord. It underlies a queer poem, "Simpson," by that interesting essayist upon modern Christianity, Mr. Clutton Brock, which I have recently read. Simpson dies and goes to hell—

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it is rather like the Cromwell Road—and approves of it very highly, and then and then only is he completely damned. Not to realise that one can be damned is certainly to be damned; such is Mr. Brock's idea. It is his definition of damnation. Satisfaction with existing things is damnation. It is surrender to limitation; it is acquiescence in "disharmony"; it is making peace with that enemy against whom God fights for ever.

(But whether there are indeed Simpsons who acquiesce always and for ever remains for me, as I have already confessed in the previous chapter, a quite open question. My Arminian temperament turns me from the Calvinistic conclusion of Mr. Brock's satire.)

§ 3

SIN IS NOT DAMNATION

Now the question of sin will hardly concern those damned and lost by nature, if such there be. Sin is not the same thing as damnation, as we have just defined damnation. Damnation is a state, but sin is an incident. One is an essential and the other an incidental separation from God. It is possible to sin without being damned; and to be damned is to be in a state when sin scarcely matters, like ink upon a blackamoor. You cannot have questions of more or less among absolute things.

It is the amazing and distressful discovery of every believer so soon as the first exaltation of belief is past,

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that one does not remain always in touch with God. At first it seems incredible that one should ever have any motive again that is not also God's motive. Then one finds oneself caught unawares by a base impulse. We discover that discontinuousness of our apparently homogeneous selves, the unincorporated and warring elements that seemed at first altogether absent from the synthesis of conversion. We are tripped up by forgetfulness, by distraction, by old habits, by tricks of appearance. There come dull patches of existence; those mysterious obliterations of one's finer sense that are due at times to the little minor poisons one eats or drinks, to phases of fatigue, ill-health and bodily disorder, or one is betrayed by some unanticipated storm of emotion, brewed deep in the animal being and released by any trifling accident, such as personal jealousy or lust, or one is relaxed by contentment into vanity. All these rebel forces of our ill-coördinated selves, all these "dis-harmonies" of the inner being, snatch us away from our devotion to God's service, carry us off to follies, offences, unkindness, waste, and leave us compromised, involved, and regretful, perplexed by a hundred difficulties we have put in our own way back to God.

This is the personal problem of Sin. Here prayer avails; here God can help us. From God comes the strength to repent and make such reparation as we can, to begin the battle again further back and lower down. From God comes the power to anticipate the struggle with one's rebel self, and to resist and prevail over it.

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§ 4

THE SINS OF THE INSANE

An extreme case is very serviceable in such a discussion as this.

It happens that the author carries on a correspondence with several lunatics in asylums. There is a considerable freedom of note-paper in these institutions; the outgoing letters are no doubt censored or selected in some way, but a proportion at any rate are allowed to go out to their addresses. As a journalist who signs his articles and as the author of various books of fiction, as a frequent *name*, that is, to any one much forced back upon reading, the writer is particularly accessible to this type of correspondent. The letters come, some manifesting a hopeless disorder that permits of no reply, but some being the expression of minds overlaid not at all offensively by a web of fantasy, and some (and these are the more touching ones and the ones that most concern us now) as sanely conceived and expressed as any letters could be. They are written by people living lives very like the lives of us who are called "sane," except that they lift to a higher excitement and fall to a lower depression, and that these extremer phases of mania or melancholia slip the leash of mental consistency altogether and take abnormal forms. They tap deep founts of impulse, such as we of the safer ways of mediocrity do but glimpse under the influence of drugs, or in dreams and rare moments of controllable extravagance. Then the insane become "glorious,"

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or they become murderous, or they become suicidal. All these letter-writers in confinement have convinced their fellow creatures by some extravagance that they are a danger to themselves or others.

The letters that come from such types written during their sane intervals, are entirely sane. Some, who are probably unaware—I think they should know—of the offences or possibilities that justify their incarceration, write with a certain resentment at their position; others are entirely acquiescent, but one or two complain of the neglect of friends and relations. But all are as manifestly capable of religion and of the religious life as any other intelligent persons during the lucid interludes that make up nine-tenths perhaps of their lives. . . . Suppose now one of these cases, and suppose that the infirmity takes the form of some cruel, disgusting, or destructive disposition that may become at times overwhelming, and you have our universal trouble with sinful tendency, as it were magnified for examination. It is clear that the mania which defines his position must be the primary if not the cardinal business in the life of a lunatic, but his problem with that is different not in kind but merely in degree from the problem of lusts, vanities, and weaknesses in what we call normal lives. It is an unconquered tract, a great rebel province in his being, which refuses to serve God and tries to prevent him serving God and succeeds at times in wresting his capital out of his control. But his relationship to that is the same relationship as ours to the backward and insubordinate parishes, criminal slums, and disorderly houses in our own private texture.

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It is clear that the believer who is a lunatic is, as it were, only the better part of himself. He serves God with this unconquered disposition in him, like a man who, whatever else he is and does, is obliged to be the keeper of an untrustworthy and wicked animal. His beast gets loose. His only resort is to warn those about him when he feels that jangling or excitement of the nerves which precedes its escapes, to limit its range, to place weapons beyond its reach. And there are plenty of human beings very much in his case, whose beasts have never got loose or have got caught back before their essential insanity was apparent. And there are those uncertifiable lunatics we call men and women of "impulse" and "strong passions." If perhaps they have more self-control than the really mad, yet it happens oftener with them that the whole intelligent being falls under the dominion of evil. The passion scarcely less than the obsession may darken the whole moral sky. Repentance and atonement; nothing less will avail them after the storm has passed, and the sedulous preparation of defences and palliatives against the return of the storm.

This discussion of the lunatic's case gives us indeed, usefully coarse and large, the lines for the treatment of every human weakness by the servants of God. A "weakness," just like the lunatic's mania, becomes a particular charge under God, a special duty for the person it affects. He has to minimise it, to isolate it, to keep it out of mischief. If he can he must adopt preventive measures. . . .

These passions and weaknesses that get control of

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us hamper our usefulness to God, they are an incessant anxiety and distress to us, they wound our self-respect and make us incomprehensible to many who would trust us, they discredit the faith we profess. If they break through and break through again it is natural and proper that men and women should cease to believe in our faith, cease to work with us or to meet us frankly. . . . Our sins do everything evil to us and through us except separate us from God.

Yet let there be no mistake about one thing. Here prayer is a power. Here God can indeed work miracles. A man with the light of God in his heart can defeat vicious habits, rise again combative and undaunted after a hundred falls, escape from the grip of lusts and revenges, make head against despair, thrust back the very onset of madness. He is still the same man he was before he came to God, still with his libidinous, vindictive, boastful, or indolent vein; but now his will to prevail over those qualities can refer to an exterior standard and an external interest, he can draw upon a strength, almost boundless, beyond his own.

§ 5

BELIEVE, AND YOU ARE SAVED

But be a sin great or small, it cannot damn a man once he has found God. You may kill and hang for it, you may rob or rape; the moment you truly repent and set yourself to such atonement and reparation as is possible there remains no barrier between you and God. Directly you cease to hide or deny or

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escape, and turn manfully towards the consequences and the setting of things right, you take hold again of the hand of God. Though you sin seventy times seven times, God will still forgive the poor rest of you. Nothing but utter blindness of the spirit can shut a man off from God.

There is nothing one can suffer, no situation so unfortunate, that it can shut off one who has the thought of God, from God. If you but lift up your head for a moment out of a stormy chaos of madness and cry to him, God is there, God will not fail you. A convicted criminal, frankly penitent, and neither obdurate nor abject, whatever the evil of his yesterdays, may still die well and bravely on the gallows to the glory of God. He may step straight from that death into the immortal being of God.

This persuasion is the very essence of the religion of the true God. There is no sin, no state that, being regretted and repented of, can stand between God and man.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTH

THE IDEA OF A CHURCH

§ 1

THE WORLD DAWN

As yet those who may be counted as belonging definitely to the new religion are few and scattered and unconfessed, their realisations are still uncertain and incomplete. But that is no augury for the continuance of this state of affairs even for the next few decades. There are many signs that the revival is coming very swiftly, it may be coming as swiftly as the morning comes after a tropical night. It may seem at present as though nothing very much were happening, except for the fact that the old familiar constellations of theology have become a little pallid and lost something of their multitude of points. But nothing fades of itself. The deep stillness of the late night is broken by a stirring, and the morning star of creedless faith, the last and brightest of the stars, the star that owes its light to the coming sun is in the sky.

There is a stirring and a movement. There is a stir, like the stir before a breeze. Men are beginning to speak of religion without the bluster of the Christian formulæ; they have begun to speak of God without any reference to Omnipresence, Omniscience, Omnipotence. The Deists and Theists of an older generation, be it noted, never did that. Their "Supreme Being" repudiated nothing. He was merely

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the whittled stump of the Trinity. It is in the last few decades that the Western mind has slipped loose from this absolutist conception of God that has dominated the intelligence of Christendom, at least, for many centuries. Almost unconsciously, the new thought is taking a course that will lead it far away from the moorings of Omnipotence. It is like a ship that has slipped its anchors and drifts, still sleeping, under the pale and vanishing stars, out to the open sea. . . .

§ 2

CONVERGENT RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

In quite a little while the whole world may be alive with this renascent faith.

For emancipation from the Trinitarian formularies and from a belief in an infinite God means not merely a great revivification of minds trained under the decadence of orthodox Christianity, minds which have hitherto been hopelessly embarrassed by the choice between pseudo-Christian religion or denial, but also it opens the way towards the completest understanding and sympathy and participation with the kindred movements for release and for an intensification of the religious life, that are going on outside the sphere of the Christian tradition and influence altogether. Allusion has already been made to the sympathetic devotional poetry of Rabindranath Tagore; he stands for a movement in Brahminism parallel with and assimilable to the worship of the true God of mankind.

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It is too often supposed that the religious tendency of the East is entirely towards other-worldness, to a treatment of this life as an evil entanglement and of death as a release and a blessing. It is too easily assumed that Eastern teaching is wholly concerned with renunciation, not merely of self but of being, with the escape from all effort of any sort into an exalted vacuity. This is indeed neither the spirit of China nor of Islam nor of the everyday life of any people in the world. It is not the spirit of the Sikh nor of these newer developments of Hindu thought. It has never been the spirit of Japan. To-day less than ever does Asia seem disposed to give up life and the effort of life. Just as readily as Europeans, do the Asiatics reach out their arms to that fuller life we can live, that greater intensity of existence, to which we can attain by escaping from ourselves. All mankind is seeking God. There is not a nation nor a city in the globe where men are not being urged at this moment by the spirit of God in them towards the discovery of God. This is not an age of despair but an age of hope in Asia as in all the world besides.

Islam is undergoing a process of revision closely parallel to that which ransacks Christianity. Tradition and mediæval doctrines are being thrust aside in a similar way. There is much probing into the spirit and intention of the Founder. The time is almost ripe for a heart-searching Dialogue of the Dead, "How we settled our religions for ever and ever," between, let us say, Eusebius of Cæsarea and one of Nizam-al-Mulk's tame theologians. They would be drawn together by the same tribulations;

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they would be in the closest sympathy against the temerity of the moderns; they would have a common courtliness. The Qurân is but little read by Europeans; it is ignorantly supposed to contain many things that it does not contain; there is much confusion in people's minds between its text and the ancient Semitic traditions and usages retained by its followers; in places it may seem formless and barbaric; but what it has chiefly to tell of is the leadership of one individualised militant God who claims the rule of the whole world, who favours neither rank nor race, who would lead men to righteousness. It is much more free from sacramentalism, from vestiges of the ancient blood sacrifice, and its associated sacerdotalism, than Christianity. The religion that will presently sway mankind can be reached more easily from that starting-point than from the confused mysteries of Trinitarian theology. Islam was never saddled with a creed. With the very name "Islam" (submission to God) there is no quarrel for those who hold the new faith. . . .

All the world over there is this stirring in the dry bones of the old beliefs. There is scarcely a religion that has not its Bahaim, its Modernists, its Brahma Somaj, its "religion without theology," its attempts to escape from old forms and hampering associations to that living and world-wide spiritual reality upon which the human mind almost instinctively insists. . . .

It is the same God we all seek; he becomes more and more plainly the same God.

So that all this religious stir, which seems so multi-

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fold and incidental and disconnected and confused and entirely ineffective to-day, may be, and most probably will be, in quite a few years a great flood of religious unanimity pouring over and changing all human affairs, sweeping away the old priesthods and tabernacles and symbols and shrines, the last crumb of the Orphic victim and the last rag of the Serapeum, and turning all men about into one direction, as the ships and house-boats swing round together in some great river with the uprush of the tide. . . .

§ 3

CAN THERE BE A TRUE CHURCH?

Among those who are beginning to realise the differences and identities of the revived religion that has returned to them, certain questions of organisation and assembly are being discussed. Every new religious development is haunted by the precedents of the religion it replaces, and it was only to be expected that among those who have recovered their faith there should be a search for apostles and disciples, an attempt to determine sources and to form original congregations, especially among people with European traditions.

These dispositions mark a relapse from understanding. They are imitative. This time there has been no revelation here or there; there is no claim to a revelation but simply that God has become visible. Men have thought and sought until insensibly the fog of obsolete theology has cleared away.

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There seems no need therefore for special teachers or a special propaganda, or any ritual or observances that will seem to insist upon differences. The Christian precedent of a church is particularly misleading. The church with its sacraments and its sacerdotalism is the disease of Christianity. Save for a few doubtful interpolations there is no evidence that Christ tolerated either blood sacrifices or the mysteries of priesthood. All these antique grossnesses were super-added after his martyrdom. He preached not a cult but a gospel; he sent out not medicine-men but apostles.

No doubt all who believe owe an apostolic service to God. They become naturally apostolic. As men perceive and realise God, each will be disposed in his own fashion to call his neighbour's attention to what he sees. The necessary elements of religion could be written on a post-card; this book, small as it is, bulks large not by what it tells positively but because it deals with misconceptions. We may (little doubt have I that we do) need special propagandas and organisations to discuss errors and keep back the jungle of false ideas, to maintain free speech and restrain the enterprise of the persecutor, but we do not want a church to keep our faith for us. We want our faith spread, but for that there is no need for orthodoxies and controlling organisations of statement. It is for each man to follow his own impulse, and to speak to his like in his own fashion.

Whatever religious congregations men may form henceforth in the name of the true God must be for their own sakes and not to take charge of religion.

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The history of Christianity, with its incrustation and suffocation in dogmas and usages, its dire persecutions of the faithful by the unfaithful, its desiccation and its unlovely decay, its invasion by robes and rites and all the tricks and vices of the Pharisees whom Christ detested and denounced, is full of warning against the dangers of a church. Organisation is an excellent thing for the material needs of men, for the draining of towns, the marshalling of traffic, the collecting of eggs, and the carrying of letters, the distribution of bread, the notification of measles, for hygiene and economics and such-like affairs. The better we organise such things, the freer and better equipped we leave men's minds for nobler purposes, for those adventures and experiments towards God's purpose which are the reality of life. But all organisations must be watched, for whatever is organised can be "captured" and misused. Repentance, moreover, is the beginning and essential of the religious life, and organisations (acting through their secretaries and officials) never repent. God deals only with the individual for the individual's surrender. He takes no cognisance of committees.

Those who are most alive to the realities of living religion are most mistrustful of this congregating tendency. To gather together is to purchase a benefit at the price of a greater loss, to strengthen one's sense of brotherhood by excluding the majority of mankind. Before you know where you are you will have exchanged the spirit of God for *esprit de corps*. You will have reinvented the *symbol*; you will have begun to keep anniversaries and establish sacra-

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mental ceremonies. The disposition to form cliques and exclude and conspire against unlike people is all too strong in humanity, to permit of its formal encouragement. Even such organisation as is implied by a creed is to be avoided, for all living faith coagulates as you phrase it. In this book I have not given so much as a definite name to the faith of the true God. Organisation for worship and collective exaltation also, it may be urged, is of little manifest good. You cannot appoint beforehand a time and place for God to irradiate your soul.

All these are very valid objections to the church-forming disposition.

§ 4

ORGANISATIONS UNDER GOD

Yet still this leaves many dissatisfied. They want to shout out about God. They want to share this great thing with all mankind.

Why should they not shout and share?

Let them express all that they desire to express in their own fashion by themselves or grouped with their friends as they will. Let them shout chorally if they are so disposed. Let them work in a gang if so they can work the better. But let them guard themselves against the idea that they can have God particularly or exclusively with them in any such undertaking. Or that so they can express God rather than themselves.

That I think states the attitude of the modern spirit towards the idea of a church. Mankind passes

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for ever out of the idolatry of altars, away from the obscene rites of circumcision and symbolical cannibalism, beyond the sway of the ceremonial priest. But if the modern spirit holds that religion cannot be organised or any intermediary thrust between God and man, that does not preclude infinite possibilities of organisation and collective action *under* God and within the compass of religion. There is no reason why religious men should not band themselves the better to attain specific ends. To borrow a term from British politics, there is no objection to *ad hoc* organisations. The objection lies not against subsidiary organisations for service but against organisations that may claim to be comprehensive.

For example there is no reason why one should not—and in many cases there are good reasons why one should—organise or join associations for the criticism of religious ideas, an employment that may pass very readily into propaganda.

Many people feel the need of prayer to resist the evil in themselves and to keep them in mind of divine emotion. And many want not merely prayer but formal prayer and the support of others, praying in unison. The writer does not understand this desire or need for collective prayer very well, but there are people who appear to do so and there is no reason why they should not assemble for that purpose. And there is no doubt that divine poetry, divine maxims, religious thought finely expressed, may be heard, rehearsed, collected, published, and distributed by associations. The desire for expression implies a sort of assembly, a hearer at least as well as a speaker.

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And expression has many forms. People with a strong artistic impulse will necessarily want to express themselves by art when religion touches them, and many arts, architecture and the drama for example, are collective undertakings. I do not see why there should not be, under God, associations for building cathedrals and such-like great still places urgent with beauty, into which men and women may go to rest from the clamour of the day's confusions; I do not see why men should not make great shrines and pictures expressing their sense of divine things, and why they should not combine in such enterprises rather than work to fill heterogeneous and chaotic art galleries. A wave of religious revival and religious clarification such as I foresee, will most certainly bring with it a great revival of art, religious art, music, songs, and writings of all sorts, drama, the making of shrines, praying places, temples and retreats, the creation of pictures and sculptures. It is not necessary to have priestcraft and an organised church for such ends. Such enrichments of feeling and thought are part of the service of God.

And again, under God, there may be associations and fraternities for research in pure science; associations for the teaching and simplification of languages; associations for promoting and watching education; associations for the discussion of political problems and the determination of right policies. In all these ways men may multiply their use by union. Only when associations seek to control things of belief, to dictate formulæ, restrict religious activities or the freedom of religious thought and teaching,

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when they tend to subdivide those who believe and to set up jealousies or exclusions, do they become antagonistic to the spirit of modern religion.

§ 5

THE STATE IS GOD'S INSTRUMENT

Because religion cannot be organised, because God is everywhere and immediately accessible to every human being, it does not follow that religion cannot organise every other human affair. It is indeed essential to the idea that God is the Invisible King of this round world and all mankind, that we should see in every government, great and small, from the council of the world-state that is presently coming, down to the village assembly, the instrument of God's practical control. Religion which is free, speaking freely through whom it will, subject to a perpetual unlimited criticism, will be the life and driving power of the whole organised world. So that if you prefer not to say that there will be no church, if you choose rather to declare that the world-state is God's church, you may have it so if you will. Provided that you leave conscience and speech and writing and teaching about divine things absolutely free, and that you try to set no nets about God.

The world is God's and he takes it. But he himself remains freedom, and we find our freedom in him.

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So I end this compact statement of the renascent religion which I believe to be crystallising out of the intellectual, social, and spiritual confusions of this time. It is an account rendered. It is a statement and record; not a theory. There is nothing in all this that has been invented or constructed by the writer; I have been but scribe to the spirit of my generation; I have at most assembled and put together things and thoughts that I have come upon, have transferred the statements of "science" into religious terminology, rejected obsolescent definitions, and re-coördinated propositions that had drifted into opposition. Thus, I see, ideas are developing, and thus have I written them down. It is a secondary matter that I am convinced that this trend of intelligent opinion is a discovery of truth. The reader is told of my own belief merely to avoid an affectation of impartiality and aloofness.

The theogony here set forth is ancient; one can trace it appearing and disappearing and recurring in the mutilated records of many different schools of speculation; the conception of God as finite is one that has been discussed very illuminatingly in recent years in the work of one I am happy to write of as my friend and master, that very great American, the late William James. It was an idea that became increasingly important to him towards the end of his life. And it is the most releasing idea in the system.

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Only in the most general terms can I trace the other origins of these present views. I do not think modern religion owes much to what is called Deism or Theism. The rather abstract and futile Deism of the eighteenth century, of "votre Être suprême" who bored the friends of Robespierre, was a sterile thing; it has little relation to these modern developments, it conceived of God as an infinite Being of no particular character, whereas God is a finite being of a very especial character. On the other hand men and women who have set themselves, with unavoidable theological preconceptions, it is true, to speculate upon the actual teachings and quality of Christ, have produced interpretations that have interwoven insensibly with thoughts more apparently new. There is a curious modernity about very many of Christ's recorded sayings. Revived religion has also, no doubt, been the receiver of many religious bankruptcies, of Positivism for example, which failed through its bleak abstraction and an unspiritual texture. Religion, thus restated, must, I think, presently incorporate great sections of thought that are still attached to formal Christianity. The time is at hand when many of the organised Christian churches will be forced to define their positions, either in terms that will identify them with this renaissance, or that will lead to the release of their more liberal adherents. Its probable obligations to Eastern thought are less readily estimated by a European writer.

Modern religion has no revelation and no founder; it is the privilege and possession of no coterie of disciples or exponents; it is appearing simultaneously

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round and about the world exactly as a crystallising substance appears here and there in a supersaturated solution. It is a process of truth, guided by the divinity in men. It needs no other guidance, and no protection. It needs nothing but freedom, free speech, and honest statement. Out of the most mixed and impure solutions a growing crystal is infallibly able to select its substance. The diamond arises bright, definite, and pure out of a dark matrix of structureless confusion.

This metaphor of crystallisation is perhaps the best symbol of the advent and growth of the new understanding. It has no church, no authorities, no teachers, no orthodoxy. It does not even thrust and struggle among the other things; simply it grows clear. There will be no putting an end to it. It arrives inevitably, and it will continue to separate itself out from confusing ideas. It becomes as it were the Koh-i-noor; it is a Mountain of Light, growing and increasing. It is an all-pervading lucidity, a brightness and clearness. It has no head to smite, no body you can destroy; it overleaps all barriers; it breaks out in despite of every enclosure. It will compel all things to orient themselves to it.

It comes as the dawn comes, through whatever clouds and mists may be here or whatever smoke and curtains may be there. It comes as the day comes to the ships that put to sea.

It is the Kingdom of God at hand.

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