or other animals, is the continued association of parents and offspring after the latter become self-supporting. From this point of departure, large human communities were built up through the affiliation of clans and tribes which traced their descent from a common ancestor, a Hellen or an Israel; and whether the progenitor of the race was an actual or a mythological figure, the belief in a common origin strengthened the people's feeling of solidarity. Although the conquests of ambitious rulers played an important part in the amalgamation of men into extensive empires and the growth of the doctrine of the brotherhood of all men; without the sentiments and attitudes which arose spontaneously in natural societies that were merely expanded families, these forcibly created societies could never have held together.

As social animals, we have the most diverse incentives for cultivating harmonious relations with those who surround us. There is the need of coöperation to supply our vital needs and ensure our survival. Through most of human history, there was the necessity of banding together for defense against rival groups—a motive which unhappily is far from obsolete. There is our craving for the approval of our fellows, and our shrinking from the feelings of shame and guilt which come from their detection of our mistakes and transgressions of accepted rules of behavior. Their is our spontaneous capacity to sympathize with their joys and sorrows, and our need of sympathy in return. There are friendship, love, and parental affection, which compel us to devote ourselves unstintedly to the welfare of others. So deep and powerful is this group of cognate sentiments that it cannot be confined by the narrow bounds of immediate kinship, but at last breaks through them to reach out

toward all mankind or all living things. For with growing insight we become aware that all men, and all life, form a single comprehensive society, united by common origin, mutual dependence, and common destiny.

Analysts of human nature have at times attempted to draw a sharp boundary between egoism and altruism; but when we contemplate our complex psychic organization acting through the intricate network of relations which bind us to other beings, this seems a fruitless endeavor. Whether we desire some purely selfish advantage or to help another, the desire is within us. The fulfilment of any impulse brings a sense of satisfaction, which obviously will be felt in the same consciousness where the desire itself arose. We often wish to benefit another person in a way that he cannot at once appreciate; so that if we carry out the contemplated service, it is ourselves rather than him whom we satisfy. When we view the matter in this light, it becomes evident that no man can voluntarily perform a service for another without pleasing himself; whence those who are loath to admit that we can be spontaneously generous easily build up a case for our huge selfishness. But the vast amount of labor and hardship which we sometimes endure for the often transiënt satisfaction of serving others, proves that this is a superficial manner of viewing the situation. In calling attention to a rather obvious peculiarity of our psychic organization, the doctrine of psychological egoism tends to distract us from the more profound truth that we are innately endowed with impulses to serve others no less than to preserve and fulfill ourselves.

The self-regarding motives and the other-regarding motives are complementary, and one set would be of

little value without the other. In the surprises and sudden reverses of life, especially in a state of nature, they are often needed simultaneously or in rapid alternation, so that they have become entangled and confused within us. Often we discover some selfish motive lurking beneath our most altruistic efforts; and conversely, we readily permit our small measure of strength to be diverted to the service of others, at the very time when it is most imperative for us to advance our own interests. Since it has grown out of the necessities and uncertainties of animal life, this entanglement of egoistic with altruistic impulses need cause us no shame. On the contrary, we should rejoice that we are so organized, and live in a world so constituted, that we can often fulfill and perfect ourselves through service to a larger whole. The process which makes us harmoniously integrated systems drives us by its own impetus to cultivate harmonious relations with the beings which surround us.

5. *The Basic Moral Intuition*

All our moral effort springs from this strong vital impulse to seek and preserve harmony, within ourselves and with our surroundings. The same innate need which makes us prefer harmony to discord makes us prefer the wider harmony to the narrower, the more perfect to the less perfect. So long as we remain under the domination of the disruptive passions and appetites forced upon animals by the struggle for existence, we often overlook this demand of our inmost nature; but in the measure that we cleanse our minds of these blinding passions, we become our true selves and moral beings. *This spontaneous recognition that harmony is more congenial to us than discord, hence*

the more ample and perfect harmony is preferable to the narrower and less perfect, is the basic moral intuition, which gives its character to all ethical endeavor, and from which all specific moral rules that are universally valid can be deduced. But the detailed deduction, if not apparent to the reader, must be left to a work devoted exclusively to ethics.

This fundamental moral intuition obviously does not first enter consciousness as a universal proposition or a verbal formulation of our preference for harmony. So far is this from being true that no one, so far as I can discover, has ever given an adequate statement of this innate foundation of all moral endeavor. On the contrary, it reveals itself as a spontaneous preference for harmony in the myriad concrete situations of our daily lives. We seek health, which is the harmonious coördination of all the parts and functions of the body, rather than disease, in which this harmony is impaired. In our thinking, we strive for truth and coherence, which are forms of harmony, because we are distressed by falsehood and confusion, which are modes of disharmony. In our surroundings, dwellings, apparel, and articles of daily use, we prefer beauty, which is the harmony of lines, masses, and colors, to ugliness, which is the lack of balance and proportion. In the arrangement of our possessions and the regulation of our daily activities, we prefer order and method to irregularity and confusion. In our relations with those around us, we seek love and friendship, which are modes of harmony, rather than enmity and discord. We cling to life, whose continuance depends upon a myriad harmonious adjustments, but dread death, which is the dissolution of all vital harmonies. If these innate, spontaneous preferences were reversed or lacking, no amount of

reasoning could make us moral beings; for they are not products of rational demonstration, but the vital motives to which reason must appeal.

Yet despite this almost universal preference for harmony, there has not been lacking in men, even those of a general healthy constitution, a craving for conflict and battle, not only that they might witness them as spectacles, but even that they might participate in them. This martial spirit has nowhere been better expressed than by Walter Scott in his stirring lines:

> Sound, sound the clarion, fill the fife!
> To all the sensual world proclaim,
> One crowded hour of glorious life
> Is worth an age without a name.
> (*Old Mortality*).

How can we explain this apparent exception to the general human preference for concord? Warfare has, at least until recently, been surrounded by many adventitious attractions, including the color and glitter of military costumes and accoutrements, the pomp of parades, the exaltation of the conquering hero in song and story, the prospect of rich plunder and the acquisition of slaves and the aggrandizement of territory. Yet in addition to all these extrinsic advantages, which might lure men into battle even though they detested it, those of the warrior type seem to experience intense delight in the actual fray, the fierce onslaught, the dealing and parrying of blows, the deadly thrust. In hand to hand conflict or the cavalry charge, which are the forms of fighting that have chiefly stirred men's martial ardor and been glorified by bards, success depended upon swiftness, strength, and endurance, the close coöperation of eye, sinew, and limb. In scarcely any other activity was the harmonious

functioning of the body as a whole raised to so high a pitch, and the warrior exulted in this proof of his courage and vital soundness. A respected adversary, who returned blow for blow rather than fled at the first onslaught, was the necessary condition for the development of this intense activity, in which the prospect of wounds and death was forgotten in the exhilaration of the present moment. If this analysis is correct, it was the experience of his own supreme adequacy which delighted the nobler sort of warrior; and the external opposition was merely the occasion for raising to the highest intensity this harmonious functioning of the whole organism. Now that war has become largely a matter of chemical and mechanical butchery, this one intrinsic attraction that it ever possessed for men who were not cruel and depraved, has all but disappeared from it.

Fortunately, the heat of battle is not the only situation capable of exciting certain elements of human faculty to their highest pitch and yielding the exhilaration which comes from the unstinted exertion of a healthy organism. The same challenge and stimulation are provided by games and contests of many kinds, whose success, far from springing from the hostility and divergence of aim of the opposing parties, depends upon their harmonious coöperation in a common endeavor, that of carrying on a game in which conformity to mutually accepted rules, earnest, skillful playing, and good humor are more important than winning. So long as these conditions are preserved, both sides emerge victorious; for they attain the ends for which the game was played. When angry passions are aroused and rules are flouted, the contest is a failure for all concerned in it. And what applies to the con-

testants holds also for the spectators, whose pleasure in the game, so far as they have not permitted their judgment to be warped by foolish partisanship, depends upon good and fair playing rather than upon which side happens to make the higher score. Nature, too, in forbidding snow peaks, the wilderness, and the sea, offers men opportunities to live with the intensity which can be experienced only by those who strain nerve and muscle to their limits. It is only men's poverty of imagination which prevents their finding many occupations scarcely less exciting than battle, and far less harmful.

Moral philosophers of the Intuitive School have pointed out that we spontaneously recognize certain motives of conduct or springs of action as higher or nobler than others; and James Martineau, in his *Types of Ethical Theory,* presented a table showing the hierarchial order of the springs of action. The act inspired by parental affection is of greater moral worth than that motivated by love of sensual pleasure; and deeds performed under the influence of sympathy or compassion stand above those done from ambition or love of gain. The relative height of these springs of action is determined largely by their power to bring harmony into life. The higher and more esteemed motives are just those which are most efficacious in building up extensive patterns of harmonious relations. As a result of a long ancestral experience, embodied in language and socially transmitted attitudes if not in hereditary modifications of the mind, men have come to recognize these differences in moral worth almost spontaneously, even in the absence of a detailed demonstration of the wider effects of giving free play to each of our so varied motives.

6. *Congruence between the Internal and External Directives*

All our moral effort, then, has this innate foundation, in the absence of which no amout of teaching, no learning by rote of maxims and decalogues, could make us moral beings. Not only are we so constituted by nature that we cannot avoid bending all our efforts to the fulfilment of our lives through the satisfaction of our deepest and most central impulses, whatever form they may take in consciousness; we may go further than this, and assert that it would be wicked and morally sterile to deny our inmost selves and look wholly beyond ourselves for the ultimate ethical sanctions. Yet at the same time, it would be stupid and futile to act in obedience to inner demands in utter disregard of the structure of the external world. Morality, as we said, must have both an intuitive and a cosmologic foundation, an internal and an external sanction. But suppose that these two directives were in radical opposition, so that we could not obey our primary moral intuitions without running counter to the dominant trend in cosmic evolution; and conversely, we could not follow the obvious requirements of the external world without committing acts against which our moral nature revolted. How then should we act?

Some cosmologies, including those of Hinduism, Empedocles, and the Stoics, have averred that the world is alternately created and dissolved through endlessly recurring cycles. Let us imagine that our contemporary world is entering upon the downward phase, which will lead to its return to a cloud of thinly diffused, unorganized matter, or even to its complete withdrawal from phenomenal existence. Such disso-

lution might conceivably occur in several ways; but we shall further suppose that the process of devolution is a more or less exact reversal of that of evolution, so that the highest structures and relations, which were the last to evolve, are the first to disintegrate. In these circumstances, orderly societies, and all those endeavors which we look upon as ethical, will be the first to feel the dissolving breath of time. To murder, to steal, to lie, to destroy, to be cruel, to be slothful, are acts demanded by the latest stage in cosmic history; for they hasten that dissolution of civilized society which is the first step in the return through savagery to yet earlier stages in the development of man; and all these phases must be traversed on a descending course as life shrinks to its humblest beginnings, as a prelude to the destruction of the earth itself as a separate and habitable mass of matter. To refuse to perform these disruptive acts, to persist in what we now call upright conduct, might be looked upon as wicked, because it tends to retard the coming dissolution of the cosmos; and in any case it is futile. But our moral nature is still unaffected by the approaching change; and we cannot be destructive, cruel, or unkind without violating our strongest convictions. Our situation is distressing in the extreme, because if we regulate our conduct by our understanding of cosmic history we become nauseous to ourselves; whereas if we obey the inner directive, we make ourselves absurd by withstanding the inevitable.

The contemplation of this hypothetical situation makes it clear that in the absence of some correspondence between the innate foundations of moral effort and the structure or dominant trend of the world in which we find ourselves, our ethics would be confused and sterile. If we had been formed complete in some

other world, organized in a wholly different manner, and thrust suddenly into this, we might find this correspondence lacking; so that our moral intuitions would be inappropriate to our actual situation. But since we are products of the same process that formed our world, and the principle which determines the whole determines each of its parts, this distressing incongruity could hardly arise. The process of harmonization which made a planet able to support life, and populated this planet with living things, not only created us but became the moral directive within us. Despite all the strife and destruction which incidentally arose from the very intensity of harmonization, there is a fundamental similarity between the world process and our own ethical strivings. Cosmic evolution is directed toward the synthesis of the crude materials of the world into ever more coherent, comprehensive, and harmonious patterns. Our own moral endeavor has the same goal, with the difference that it is chiefly concerned with beings that have already achieved a high level of organization rather than the more elementary materials of which they are formed. Hence it is at home in this world, belongs to it as its product, and is to a large extent supported by it, however much, to those who view things superficially, it may seem to be incongruous with our actual situation as animals engrossed in the struggle for existence. Hence, too, it makes little difference in practice whether we derive our ethical principles from within ourselves or from the consideration of the world around us. If our interpretation is correct, the systems of conduct derived by each of these methods will be much the same. If they spring from an adequate understanding of ourselves and of the larger world, an intuitive ethic and

a cosmologic ethic will be hard to distinguish as they work out in practice.

This correspondence between the external directive and the internal directive is often absent from so-called evolutionary ethics, for the simple reason that these systems are based upon a too superficial view of organic evolution. Although the broad current of cosmic evolution has a single direction, it meets in its course numerous obstacles that set up cross-currents, whirlpools, and backwaters, which in many places conceal the main flow of the stream. Especially in its superficial layers, which constitute the realm of life, are these deviations from the prevailing direction numerous and confusing. According to the particular part upon which we focus our attention, the living world seems to provide authority and sanction for the most diverse modes of behavior. Since parasites form a large and highly successful segment of the animal kingdom, an evolutionary ethic might advocate that men bend all their efforts to becoming a race of parasites. Or pointing to the marked success of ants, wasps, bees, termites, and other social insects, it might recommend a course which would lead to the submergence of all human individuality in a totalitarian industrial society. Since sharks are also an old and prosperous branch of the animal kingdom, it might with equal authority teach ruthless individualism. Usually evolutionary ethics lays great stress upon that survival of the fittest which is so often held to be the key to the whole course of organic evolution. Although it is obvious that unless we survive we shall realize none of our ideals, this doctrine fails to suggest what aspirations are capable of making survival precious to us. Hence it is only when, by penetrating beneath the surface, we discover of what universal trend all the varied

phenomena of life are particular effects, that the study of evolution can enlighten our ethical thought. It is not to organic evolution, so much as to the process of harmonization that underlies it, that we must look for moral guidance. And this external directive is acceptable to us only because it so closely corresponds with the internal directive, which in ethics is the final and supreme authority.

7. *The Intimate Relation between Virtue and Happiness*

In addition to this congruence between the inner source of moral endeavor and the external conditions it faces, a second correspondence appears to be indispensable to the moral life. As Lecky pointed out, every great system of ethics, religious or philosophic, has combined an ideal of virtue with a promise of happiness. Even Stoicism, for all its stern disdain of homely pleasures and satisfactions, was above all a system whereby strong men could preserve a calm cheerfulness, no matter what disaster befell them from sources beyond their control. The most fundamental and widely accepted rules of conduct are directed not so much to the increase of happiness as to the preservation of life and its essential supports; and on the whole it is only such rules that the laws of the state attempt to enforce. Humans are not only able to survive, but even to multiply with an almost perverse fecundity, in conditions most inimical to felicity. But just as few people are content with a life reduced to its bare requirements of survival and reproduction, so no ethical system which has appealed to men of finer sensibilities has made its goal bare animal existence. Whenever our principles of conduct aim at more than

the mere continuation of life and society, the happiness they bring to sentient beings appears to be the single criterion of their success; so that every system of ethics is in a sense a variety of eudaemonism, even when felicity is not its avowed goal. This applies even to those ethical doctrines, as that of Hartmann, which make the realization of values the end of moral effort. Certainly values are distinct from happiness; for we would see higher value in knowledge or justice than in unreflective bliss, even if this were a possibility for us; and an act of self-dedication which brings only pain may be valued above much thoughtless pleasure. But I believe that we must admit that, on the whole, a life filled with the higher values is a happy life; that the realization of values tends to increase human felicity; and that it would be fantastic if the more values we managed to experience, the more miserable we became.

Since even acts directed to the mere preservation of animal existence are related to happiness in that they tend to safeguard its indispensable foundation, life itself, we may without exaggeration say that the worth of all moral effort is measurable by the felicity it brings, or is intended to bring. And if we distinguish grades of happiness, the activity which tends to increase the higher forms of happiness is, other things being equal, of greater moral value. But when we undertake a finer analysis, and distinguish between the felicity which redounds to the doer and the benefit his deeds bring to others, we run into a perplexing problem. Undoubtedly, many of our earnest efforts to promote the welfare of others bring only loss and hardship to ourselves. The most virtuous man is not always the most carefree and smiling. Might we say, then, that one's moral worth is to be measured by his zeal in promoting

the happiness of others, with no regard for his own felicity, and even if this effort brings him much suffering? To admit this contention would lead us into an unexpected difficulty: for if the end and worth of moral endeavor is simply to bring happiness to others, then not only will it be true that the most virtuous men are not necessarily the happiest; but it might also follow that the greater the number of people who devoted themselves zealously to moral endeavor, the less happy would men on the whole become. For in this case the felicity of each would depend not so much upon what he does for himself as upon what is done for him by others; yet as a rule we are most successful in attaining our heart's desire when we rely upon our own exertions rather than upon other men. Moreover, even the sternest moralists, who deny that happiness is in any sense the goal of moral endeavor, often admit that virtue deserves to be rewarded by felicity; and in the situation we have supposed, in which each man's joy depends upon what others do for him, it would seem unfair that those who exerted themselves least but were best served by their fellows should have greater happiness than those who exerted themselves most strenuously but were perhaps neglected by their neighbors.

We are spared this embarrassing disjunction by the fact that happiness and moral endeavor have the same foundation, hence are organically related. The same process which determines our felicity likewise makes us moral beings. So far as it can, harmonization blends every aspect of our being, physical and psychic, into a coherent whole; and upon the degree of this coherence our happiness depends. But the process which establishes harmony among the materials and functions of the body drives us to strive for a similar concord among

those aspects of our lives more directly under our voluntary control, and to extend this harmony into our surroundings as widely as we can. Harmony is at the same time the goal of moral endeavor and the condition of happiness, so that the intimate relation between the two is not a matter of accident but has a causal connection.

If his endeavors to promote harmony were always successful, the most virtuous man should be the happiest, at least if he were free of organic defects that undermined the foundations of felicity; and even these he might by force of will partially overcome. For the virtuous man strives to promote concord among the beings which surround him and to live in harmony with them, and this is the condition of happiness. But it sometimes happens that he is born into a dissolute society, and his life cast among people who have little regard for rectitude of conduct and even selfishly exploit his benevolence. In these unfortunate circumstances, he shows his virtue by living in strict obedience to those principles of conduct which are the foundations of concord among men, even when all about him shamelessly flout them. Would he not, it will be asked, be happier if he threw his principles to the winds and followed the crowd? But it is impossible by an act of volition to cast from us principles which have their foundations in our inmost constitution. The most we can do is to repudiate our principles by an intellectual act which is unconvincing to ourselves and to violate them by our deeds; and this makes a conscientious man an abomination to himself. By remaining steadfast to his principles, he maintains his integrity in all that most intimately concerns him, however much those around him depart from justice and righteousness; and this integrity is the foundation of his happiness.

Moreover, he will be restrained from violating his principles by the reflection that his voluntary acts are the only things in his life over which he enjoys full control. He may at any moment lose, through no fault of his own, his property, his loved ones, his reputation, his health, his eyes or limbs, even life itself; but no one can force him to violate his principles. Accordingly, he is more careful to preserve that of which he enjoys secure possession than that of which his tenure is at best precarious and subject to a thousand mischances.

The life of such a man may not be so gay and carefree, so crowded with miscellaneous gratifications, as that of his contemporaries who follow the dissolute spirit of the times and disregard ethical principles. But it is absurd to suppose that by imitating them he could increase his felicity; for he is a different kind of man, whose mind has made closer contact with the Divine within him, and whose whole outlook has been altered by this experience. By remaining steadfast in virtue in the midst of vice, he enjoys the maximum of happiness that is possible to *him* in his actual circumstances. Whether or not his felicity is greater or less than that of his pleasure-seeking contemporaries is a question most difficult to answer; for we lack an infallible scale for the measurement of psychic intensities. But if we follow J. S. Mill[1] in assessing pleasurable feelings by their quality no less than by their duration and intensity, it would seem that his felicity is of a higher and more desirable kind; for it flows from the a higher and more desirable kind; for it flows from the organic foundation of happiness—whereas theirs consists merely of a series of disjointed pleasures, lacking

[1] *Utilitarianism,* Chapter II.

coherence. His is the deeper happiness, theirs the greater variety and intensity of pleasures. This is the truth of the contention of so many of the ancient philosophers, from Zeno to Boethius, that virtue is sufficient for happiness.

8. *Correspondences Necessary for a Firmly Established Ethic*

Men have on numberless occasions demonstrated their capacity to live in obedience to principles of conduct so little in accord with the structure of the world and their own nature that they could lead only to disaster. But it has become clear from our survey that the possibility of an ethical system at once fertile, convincing, vital, and enduring depends upon the concurrence of several factors which to the superficial view may seem wholly unrelated. In the first place, it is necessary that we be innately endowed with motives both for preserving and perfecting ourselves and for promoting the welfare of the beings which surround us. If these two sets of impulses stood in irreconcilable opposition, so that we could serve others only at the price of injuring our own highest interests, or contrariwise we could perfect ourselves only by a course of action hurtful to other beings, moral endeavor would find itself enmeshed at the outset in hopeless confusion. Further, it is necessary that the impulses and intuitions which are the foundations of the moral life, and to which all ethical reasoning and demonstration must ultimately appeal, should lead to conduct which follows the general course of cosmic evolution rather than opposes it. Not only should we doubt the validity of ethical principles which clashed with the obvious trend of the larger world; but our

moral endeavor would stand confused and helpless in a cosmos which did not, in the long run and on the whole, support it, however much resistance it might oppose in particular instances. Finally, it is necessary that obedience to our ethical principles should, again in the long run and on the whole even if not in every instance, bring happiness to ourselves no less than others, or that sense of contentment and fulfilment which comes from the satisfaction of our deepest impulses and can compensate for the absence of pleasures and even for many pains. We are so constituted that it is impossible for us to persist in any endeavor which brings us neither satisfaction nor the promise thereof.

The possibility of a convincing ethic depends, then, upon a certain congruence between our moral intuitions and the self-regarding or altruistic acts to which they prompt us, the structure of the world which supports us, and that psychic organization which determines the conditions of our felicity. It is most improbable that these several correspondences should have been fortuitously established. On the contrary, we have found many reasons for believing that the same harmonization which determines the course of cosmic evolution is the dominant process within us, forming our bodies and our minds, making our ethical endeavor a striving toward harmony not only in all the details of our conscious existence but in all the circumstances of the surrounding world which fall within our influence, and at the same time so constituting us that in the measure that we achieve harmony we are happy and at peace with ourselves. Morality is possible because all the pertinent factors are adjusted to each other, and this adjustment results from the fact that all are ultimately determined by the same creative principle, which is the Divine. The recognition of the

congruence of the internal and external factors upon which morality depends permits us to establish our ethical system foursquare, rather than balance it precariously upon a single foundation stone.

Chapter XIII

THE ETHICAL IDEAL

1. *The Primary Moral Maxim and its Implications*

We are now able to restate in more precise terms the question we raised at the beginning of the last chapter. Let us put it as follows: What must be the conduct of a being who is a product of harmonization and who finds himself surrounded by beings similarly constituted? Let us further recall that harmonization is a process directed toward perfection; for a compound being, such as a man, is perfect after its kind when all its constituents are harmoniously adjusted one to another, so that they form a coherent system; and this internal harmony cannot be wholly independent of its adjustment to its surroundings. Thus we might recast our question in this form: What must be the conduct of a being with a principle of perfection within him, who finds himself in the midst of beings containing a similar principle? Let us remember, too, that the principle is in fact identical in all beings, hence everywhere of equal intrinsic worth; although in some beings it has carried the process farther, and produced more adequate expressions of itself, than in other beings.

The answer is, I believe, fairly obvious. He must live in such a manner that as many beings as possible attain the highest degree of perfection that they can. Further, he should bear constantly in mind that he is one of those beings whose perfection is in question, of

neither more nor less intrinsic worth than the others, since he is a product of the same process as they. This addition seems necessary to forestall a fanatical dedication to the service of others, to the neglect of one's own growth in strength, knowledge, and understanding. Since we have greater control over ourselves than over other beings, up to a certain point a given amount of effort applied to improving ourselves produces greater results than the same amount applied to benefitting others. Moreover, we should not lose sight of the fact that until we have gained much wisdom and insight, our efforts to promote the welfare of others may be ineffective or even injurious to them. At the same time, it is true that we may in many ways develop ourselves through unselfish service to others; but until we have gained the understanding for which we strive, this can be safely done only under the direction of those wiser than ourselves.

Bearing in mind these two sides of ethical endeavor, we may, for ease of remembrance, state our conclusions in the form of a brief maxim: *I must so live that as many things as possible attain the greatest possible perfection, always remembering that I am one of the beings which I strive to perfect.*

In this maxim, which expresses our ideal of conduct, the broadly inclusive term "thing" is deliberately chosen. Our ethical interest includes not merely men, or animals, or living organisms, but all beings of whatever sort, living or non-living, which have form and structure, so that they might be injured or destroyed, and perhaps even improved, by us. The highest ethical principles grow out of a vivid awareness of our world in all its aspects with all its implications, so that we are led to act with constant regard not only for all living things from the greatest to the least, but for all

the beautiful creations of nature no less than for those of human art. As animals, we possess not only life and sentience but also form, which is perhaps the most fundamental of all; for life is largely dependent upon the maintenance of a certain gross form specific for each kind of organism, and underlying and supporting this are a number of microscopic and even sub-microscopic forms. This consideration, no less than the fact that non-living forms are as well as living forms products of harmonization, must lead us to respect them. Moreover, how we treat inanimate things, whether natural productions or works of art, is an expression of our character and in turn reacts upon it to fortify its good or bad qualities through the formation of habit; so that the concern for our own spiritual perfection, which is part of our ethical ideal, will inevitably lead us to respect form as such.

We need not, however, undertake to define the perfection of every being which might somehow be influenced by our activities. This would impose upon us an embarrassing and endless task, which happily we have no reason to pursue. Each natural entity defines its own perfection, which is the form toward which it tends in virtue of its inherent qualities under the influence of harmonization, and which it will spontaneously acquire if not impeded by external obstacles. Rather than attempt to interfere and bend all natural processes into conformity with our narrow and often distorted concepts, we should rather wish to allow natural entities to develop without interference from us. We recall that no one who might have taken an impartial view of our ancestors back in Mesozoic times is likely to have predicted a brilliant future for little quadrupeds so weak and unimpressive beside the great saurians which then ruled the earth; and we

humbly confess our inability to foretell from what contemporary stock, however low in the evolutionary scale it might appear to us, the highest form of life may ultimately spring—if only we refrain from crushing it out of existence. Hence it is only for our individual selves, and the children whose characters we are responsible for molding, that it becomes imperative to define the perfection at which we aim. There are some who question our right to choose ideals for our children; but it seems impossible to guide their development unless toward some determinate goal; and without early guidance from those older and wiser than themselves, they will never become capable of directing their own lives. Aside from our children, we may strive to influence our contemporaries by the example of a consistent and well-conducted life directed toward an ideal end; but we have neither the power not the right to compel them to accept our standard of perfection.

2. *The Pursuit of Happiness Compatible with the Ideal*

An ethical ideal which makes perfection its primary aim does not for this reason reject happiness as a legitimate goal of human endeavor. Contrary to a widespread impression, even the Stoics, who placed virtue above every other consideration, by no means despised happiness. Their ideal "wise man" was serene and joyous even in the most desperate circumstances; and they held that even to feel discontent was to detract from the perfection of a Universe whose integrity and smooth functioning was their first concern. Indeed, it is a psychological impossibility to reject the pursuit of happiness, although not that of pleasure;

and even those who professed to disregard their own felicity were seeking it at the moment of denying it. But it is the perverse habit of happiness to evade most consistently those who most frantically pursue it; while often it sheds its benign light upon others who are so intently engaged in some other endeavor that they scarcely have time to reflect whether they are happy or not—a truth which provides the theme of many an allegorical tale. Hence the prudent man will give his attention to the establishment of the known and definable conditions of happiness, its universal foundations, in the hope that if these conditions are fulfilled, those other, more elusive, factors which so largely influence our felicity will also be realized. Now the foundations of happiness are a sound and healthy body, a serene and contented mind, concord with those about us, an agreeable environment—in short, harmony in all things which concern us. But this is just what we mean by perfection; so that an ethic which takes as its goal perfection, in any natural and unstrained meaning of this word, lays the surest foundation for felicity.

Happiness is the elusive fragrance of the flower perfection. Just as the intelligent gardener who loves the scent of roses does not set about to cultivate odors but to grow rose bushes; so one who seeks felicity will dedicate his effort to the establishment of its causal antecedents rather than waste his time in vain pursuit of a thing intangible and unseen. Similarly, the parent who wishes to prepare his children for a happy life does not devote all his thought to finding pleasures and amusements for them, but rather strives to make them perfect in body, in mind, and in virtue. When we cultivate perfection as the prelude to happiness, we reveal our trust in causation and the orderly se-

quence of nature, which produces a given effect when the antecedent conditions have been fully prepared.

3. *Ethical Concern for the Foundations of All Life*

Our ethical ideal does not impose on us the Atlantean task of upholding the world upon our shoulders. We do not imagine ourselves to be gods responsible for directing the whole course of mundane affairs. Primarily, it is an avowal of our determination to perfect our own nature with the least possible interference with the beings which on every side so closely surround us. Certain measures for promoting this end are fairly obvious. The first is to reduce, so far as is consistent with health, the demands we make upon nature's bounty. Everything we eat, all our narcotics and alcoholic stimulants, practically everything we wear, a large share of the materials of which our dwellings are constructed, are torn from the living world. Not only do countless organisms surrender their lives to fill our needs and support our extravagances, the land on which these products are grown is in most instances made unavailable to the animal and vegetable life that originally occupied it. So crowded is this world with men and countless other forms of life, that for every particle of food we waste, for every rich dish or intoxicating drink we consume to our detriment, some other creature must go hungry. One who clearly understands the interrelations of all living things will lead a frugal life, avoiding all extravagance and waste; for nothing so well expresses our feeling of brotherhood with all that lives and breathes.

In the second place, we shall do everything that lies in our power to preserve in a flourishing state the

natural world, which supports not only ourselves but all other living things. If as farmers or lumbermen we are engaged in activities which directly affect the land and the forests, we shall strive to produce our crops without exhausting the fertility of the soil, or to extract our logs in a manner compatible with the continued productivity of the woodland. Otherwise, we shall as citizens and consumers of the products of nature insist upon procedures which conserve the soil, the streams, the forests, and all those other features upon which a healthy living community depends. These things are the foundation not only of life in its myriad forms but likewise of civilization and culture, including art, letters, science, philosophy, ethics, and religion. With the exhaustion of the soil or drying of the waters that support them, civilizations languish and decay; their intangible accomplishments vanish; while their more enduring artifacts become the curiosities of archaeologists or gather dust in museums. Conventional morality is most emphatic in forbidding us to kill or wound our fellow men; but it has lost sight of the fact, sometimes recognized in the laws of earlier cultures, that to destroy the fertility of an acre of land will in the long run take a greater toll of life than a few direct murders.

In the manifold stresses and conflicts between the innumerable forms of life, it is difficult for us to decide which are most worthy of our protection, so that we may favor them at the expense of competing organisms; and even if we should believe that one kind of animal, as "higher" or "nobler", makes greater claim to our support than its competitors, we might not know what measures will serve it best. But if, instead of devoting ourselves to the welfare of one or a few favored forms of life, we strive to maintain the natural

world as a whole in a flourishing state, then living things of nearly every kind will benefit. By no other course can we so effectively advance our ideal of regulating our lives in such a manner that as many things as possible can perfect themselves.

4. *The Example of Nature*

But it would be deplorable if, in our zeal to advance the welfare of other beings, we lost sight of the fact that we are among those beings whose perfection we are concerned to promote. We have a peculiar responsibility toward ourselves, arising from the circumstance that we are far more amenable than any other creature to our own direction. The task imposed upon us is not merely to eke out a mean and impoverished existence, denying ourselves all fruitful experience so that others may live more abundantly, but to perfect our own nature without opposing the similar tendency in other creatures. This additional requirement renders our task more difficult at the same time that it makes it more attractive. Fortunately, we can look for guidance in this endeavor to nature itself; for the whole course of organic evolution has been, from one point of view, the working out of means whereby an ever increasing number of living beings, including many of an advancing grade of organization, can co-exist upon a planet of finite dimensions. In brief, the method has been the diversification and specialization of organic forms and functions. If all organisms were precisely alike in structure and needs, they would all be forced to live in exactly the same conditions and contend with each other for the same kind of food. Without the process known as "adaptive radiation", all organisms would still be crowded

together in the original home of life—shallow coastal waters, or whatever it was—while vast expanses of land and sea remained unoccupied. But by acquiring new forms and fresh capacities, animals and plants were able to radiate outward from their first home in all directions; until today there is scarcely any niche able to support life, from the Equator to the arctic wastes, from the black depths of the sea, with their tremendous pressure, to the edges of the snowfields in the rarefied atmosphere on the summits of tropical mountains, which is not inhabited by animals and plants specialized for just this mode of existence.

Not only has adaptive radiation resulted in the occupation of every nook somehow able to support life; in each of the more generous habitats, as forest, meadow, brushland, and pond, it has created a great variety of forms to take advantage of the diverse opportunities which the situation offers. Thus a tract of forest supports an immense variety of mammals, reptiles, birds, insects, spiders, worms, and many other invertebrates. Among the woodland birds, some catch insects in the air, others eat fruits, some glean insects and spiders from the foliage, some hunt over the bark of trees, yet others scratch among the litter that covers the ground. Each presents peculiarities in the structure of bill, wings, feet, and internal organs, along with related habits, which equip it for its special mode of life. Taken together, habits and supporting structures represent a *special capacity,* which distinguishes one kind of life from related forms, and makes it possible for the several kinds to live together in the same area with a minimum of competition. It appears that no two species, however closely related and similar in size and form, occupy just the same habitat and subsist upon precisely the same diet; although there is

often a great overlap in their requirements. Thus every kind of life seems to have some special capacity, which distinguishes it from all others; although some of these capacities are far more noteworthy than others.

Few animals exhibit such remarkable special capacities as the hummingbirds, which so abound in tropical America that some naturalists, as Thomas Belt, have supposed them to comprise about half the total avian population of the forested regions. With their long, slender bills, their protrusile, tubular tongues, and their ability to hover motionless on rapidly beating wings as no other bird can, these glittering little birds extract nectar from blossoms so well enclosed that scarcely any other bird, and even few insects, can reach it. They supplement their sweet beverage by minute insects and spiders, so small as hardly to be noticed by other birds, which they pluck from the foliage or flowers, or deftly snatch from the air while they dart and hover with marvellous skill. Thus they scarcely compete for food with any other animal, and by the exercise of their special capacity, greatly increase the number of birds which a given area can support. If all the myriads of hummingbirds were suddenly to vanish from tropical America, there could be no considerable increase of birds of other families to replace them, because hummingbirds subsist largely upon foods unavailable to other birds; and the total life of the region would be correspondingly impoverished. If, on the other hand, the hummingbirds were to abandon the use of their special capacities to forage in the manner of tanagers, wrens, vireos, and other less specialized birds, these might decrease considerably in number because of the depletion of their food supply. It is the exercise of the special capacity which, by decreasing competition, permits an increase in the abundance and diversity of life.

Plants no less than animals have undergone a long course of adaptive radiation, acquiring a host of special capacities, which permit them to flourish in the most diverse habitats. Some of their adaptive modifications are fairly obvious, as the reduction or loss of foliage, the fleshy tissues that serve for water storage, the thick and impermeable epidermis, and the extensive root system that equip vegetables for life in arid regions; or the flexible stems, finely divided leaves, and thin cuticle which fit them for life beneath the water. Most of the special capacities of plants, however, are less evident than those of animals; for they take the form of physiological peculiarities, not apparent to external view, which adapt them to the vast variety of climates, soils, and exposures in which they severally flourish. The beneficent quality of these special capacities is, however, clearer in the case of plants than in that of animals; for whereas the peculiar modifications of animals serve in many instances for the exploitation of the other living things, animal or vegetable, necessary for their nourishment, only exceptionally, as with parasites and climbers, is this true among green plants. Hence the special capacities of vegetables, and especially of seed-bearing plants, permit life to flourish in a vast diversity of situations which but for them would be nearly or quite barren, and result in an absolute increase in the abundance and variety of living things, not only the plants themselves but likewise the animals that depend upon them.

Plants are on the whole far purer expressions of the Divine than animals; for growth, which so adequately symbolizes the Divine, is their most prominent feature; whereas those aggressive habits which bring so much

strife and destruction into the world are less pronounced in them, being confined largely to parasites and creepers; and disruptive passions are, so far as we can tell, quite absent from them. Because they have never been so estranged from the Divine by those explosive passions so prominent in many branches of the animal kingdom, plants appear not to seek the Divine consciously and intensely, as some animals do. It is no accident that man, who more than most living things has been led away from the Divine by the variety of his appetites and the intense hostility they can generate when thwarted, yearns for the Divine more ardently than any other living thing, so far as we can tell.

5. *Man's Special Capacities and their Beneficial Primary Effects*

Men are extraordinarily well endowed with special capacities, notable among which are our ability to think and to plan, to convey ideas by means of spoken and written words or other symbols, and to manipulate objects with highly modified forelimbs. All these capacities are closely interrelated and appear to have evolved together by a process of reciprocal stimulation, of which the point of departure was the possession of prehensile hands, inherited from arboreal ancestors, who had developed them for climbing. Every advance in intelligence of our remote ancestors increased the value of their grasping hands; and each improvement in the structure of the latter, enabling the animals who possessed them to make practical use of their insights, gave this intelligence greater value in the struggle to supply daily needs. At the same time, the growth of language, which by the communication of ideas made possible the close coöperation of several

individuals in a complex enterprise too great to be carried out by one, tremendously augmented the effective power of constructive thought and supple hands.

Upon this basic endowment of practical intelligence, speech, and manual skill, whose importance in the struggle for existence is such that its evolution is not difficult to explain by current theories, was gradually built a superstructure of less practical but greater spiritual significance. Men little by little began to love knowledge for its own sake, to value thinking as one of their most distinctive and satisfying activities, to formulate ideals toward which they could strive, to create beautiful objects with hands developed for more utilitarian pursuits, and to contemplate the beauties of nature and of art with senses sharpened by the quest for food and constant alertness to impending perils. It is far more difficult to account for the evolution of these secondary developments of man's special capacities than for that of the basic capacities themselves; for they seem to have evolved under the influence of some inner impulsion toward completion and perfection rather than by the generally recognized method of the selection of random variations which happen to prove useful in the struggle to survive. Yet it is just these secondary developments which are in the highest degree distinctive of man: supple hands, practical intelligence, and that close coöperation which speech facilitates, give men more efficient means of procuring the widespread animal necessities of food, shelter, and safety; but contemplative thought, the formulation and pursuit of ideals, artistic appreciation and creation, are ends which, at least in any noteworthy degree, seem peculiar to mankind. These, then, are par excellence our special endowment.

Well equipped with their more basic special capaci-

ties of supple hands, speech, and practical intelligence, although still pitiably confused by the uncontrolled course of their dawning thought, our ancestors gradually discovered how to produce for themselves indispensable articles, for which formerly they were wholly dependent upon the spontaneous bounty of nature. To be sure, their new procedures did not make them completely independent of nature; for all the practical arts are concerned with the transformation of natural products; but by coöperating with nature they could immensely increase the yield of some of the things most necessary to them. By cultivating the soil and sowing selected plants, they could produce on a fertile acre or two as much food as formerly they gleaned from an area of natural woodland or prairie a hundred times greater. By learning to spin and to weave, they could prepare garments to cover their bodies and keep them warm without tearing the skins from animals. Thus the primary effect of agriculture, weaving, and associated skills was to permit more individuals, human and animal, to live on a given area; for the clan that hunted over a hundred square miles might now produce its food and raiment on a few square miles of tillage, leaving the remainder undisturbed. One who farms at the edge of the wilderness is impressed by the fact that by his small cultivated fields his needs are supplied far more adequately than would be possible from the vastly greater area of surrounding forest, which but for his husbandry he would be driven to lay under tribute for its edible animal and vegetable products in order to subsist precariously, but which, thanks to his agriculture, he can leave almost undisturbed. Man's exercise of his special capacities tended to decrease the strife among living things and permit more to dwell together.

6. *The Need of New Pursuits and Values*

This primary beneficial effect of the development of special capacities was in the case of man, perhaps more than in any other animal, masked by certain secondary effects. One was the result of the slowness of the human rate of reproduction to respond to altered circumstances. With the greater security and length of life brought about by a fixed abode which permitted the erection of more adequate dwellings, a more dependable supply of food, and greater security from the few carnivores large and powerful enough to menace them, men no longer needed to produce so many babies; yet these continued to enter the world at about the same rate as formerly, which led to an excess of population, with the ensuing depletion of natural resources and fierce conflicts for the possession of productive land.

But far more deplorable in its consequences was man's slowness in discovering new pursuits and fresh values, to occupy the leisure given by his altered mode of life. Every living thing faces the problem of balancing its intake and expenditure of energy. When the outgo exceeds the income, the organism wastes away and succumbs. When successful in procuring food considerably in excess of immediate needs, it either stores it, usually in its tissues, or utilizes the resulting surplus of energy in pleasurable activities. Unlike many vegetables and not a few animals, the majority of men have no great capacity for the internal storage of food; active by nature, when well nourished and not under immediate pressure to prepare for future needs, they seek to expend their excess energy in various agreeable ways. As agriculture made life easier and gave more leisure, there was a pressing

need for wholesome amusements and constructive occupations not connected with subsistence. These were in part provided by the development of salutary sports, games, and spectacles, by the slow growth of the fine arts and literature, by the study of nature and the search for truth.

Yet these new occupations, absorbing as they can become to certain gifted individuals, have neither singly nor all together been adequate to fill the leisure of the masses of men. Countless humans could find nothing better to do with the leisure they had at such great pains acquired than to occupy it with those very activities which had, at an earlier stage, been forced upon them by the conditions of their existence. The old, indispensable animal pursuits of eating, drinking, mating, fighting, hunting other animals, acquiring possessions, were little by little tricked out with a new glamor and made to fill the empty lives of men no longer driven to apply most of their strength to the satisfaction of their vital needs. Savages squatting at their rude meal around the campfire were converted, in the course of a few generations, into lavishly attired patricians reclining about a festive board laden with vessels of precious metal and served by slaves with far more food and wine than was good for them. The hungry tribesman stalking with dart or arrow his elusive prey was replaced by the nobleman mounted on a richly caparisoned steed, pursuing his quarry with all the fanfare of trumpets, stalkers, and braying hounds. The ancient contests for the possession of productive lands became wars of conquest made attractive—for the victor—by rich spoils, strings of dejected captives, military honors, and the triumphal odes of hired bards. And when the growth of teeming urban populations made it impossible for the suppressed masses to engage directly in these exciting pursuits, they were permitted to indulge the associated passions by witnessing the spectacles of the arena, the bull-ring, and the cock-pit. Always it was the same old passions, forced upon men by the struggle for existence, lurking behind new masks, and now become a hundredfold more pernicious with the novel means for their unlimited gratification.

The continuance of pursuits which originally served to fill animal needs after these needs have been satisfied, the intrusion into the new leisure of occupations imposed upon men by the struggle to exist, the unlimited cultivation for sensual gratification of primary vital urges—this has been mankind's greatest tragedy. It springs from the failure to awake to the significance of our special human capacities and take full possession of our heritage as rational beings. These pursuits which, for all our superficial refinement, claim so much of our leisure at the present day, are not specifically human; for we share them with countless other animals. They are not the exercise of our special capacities, however much these capacities may be degraded to their service. Whereas the exercise of the special capacities of any organism tends to reduce the strife between living things; the exaggerated indulgence of widespread animal functions along with the wanton excitation of the associated passions intensifies the conflict between man and man, no less than that between mankind and the rest of the living world. By this route we shall never advance toward our ethical ideal, for we neither perfect our own nature nor permit other creatures to fulfill theirs. Mankind today faces no greater problem, social and ethical, than that of filling leisure in ways that are beneficial and constructive rather than harmful to self and others. The

more we succeed in equalizing wealth and reducing hours of toil, the more urgent this problem grows. Unless it is somehow solved, the economic easement of mankind can lead only to the return of the loathsome spectacles of the Roman arena, or other amusements equally degrading.

7. *Our Continued Growth Possible Only through the Cultivation of our Special Capacities*

Although the existence of any living thing depends upon the exercise of functions common to all life, such as nutrition, respiration, growth, its perfection lies in the highest development of those attributes peculiar to its kind. Thus the perfection of the tree is its stately form, of the flower its delicate beauty, of the bird its plumage and song and parental instincts, of the butterfly its painted wings, and of the bee its industrious hive. Our own most distinctive feature, which so far as we know distinguishes us from every other form of life, is our capacity for intellectual and spiritual growth. Almost equally peculiar to mankind, although to a limited degree certain birds and possibly animals of other classes share it with us, is our capacity for esthetic appreciation and artistic creation. It is no accident that these endowments peculiar to ourselves are just the ones we can exercise and develop with the least competition with other beings, whether of our own or of other kinds. So closely are we surrounded by other creatures that we can hardly take a step in the open fields without crushing the ant and the worm. We cannot increase our wealth or power without competing with other men who covet the exclusive possession of these same things, which then become sources of strife and contention between us. In the

material world, we cannot aggrandize ourselves save at the expense of others. But if we are on every side closely hemmed in by competitors, above us is the open sky, into which we may expand indefinitely without impinging upon any living creature. It matters not how many others are growing in the same direction, for the rule that two bodies cannot occupy the same space at the same time applies only to material entities. In the boundless realm of spirit, there is perfect mutual penetration.

If divided among too many, a loaf of bread satisfies nobody's huger; but the sustaining power of truth is nowise diminished by its unlimited diffusion. We are strengthened rather than weakened by the multitude of those who share our ideals and join us in the quest of enlightenment. The grain which if eaten would not provide a meal for one if planted and made the object of study may yield knowledge which benefits all mankind. The beauty of a woodland is soon spoiled if all who visit it pluck its flowers to carry home in their hands; but thousands who enjoy without touching may bear away the woodland beauty in their minds, yet leave it undiminished. In contrast to the material world, the realm of understanding and spiritual appreciation can never become too crowded to provide space for more; and the goods it yields can never be exhausted by the multitude who participate in them.

Nothing is more gratifying to a human being than growth in any natural form. The child loves to feel that he is becoming stronger, to be told that he has grown taller. The school child is gratified to hear that he is improving in his studies, while the scholar's increasing grasp of his subject is a source of intense satisfaction. The sage is happy as long as he believes that he is growing in wisdom; while the saint cares

little for wealth, pleasure, or honors, provided he feels his holiness increasing. Growth is the most distinctive activity of living things, that which makes them and that for which they seem to be made. As long as they continue to grow in any aspect, they cannot be diminishing in this same particular; but since nothing so delicately balanced as a living organism can long remain static, as soon as growth ceases slow alterations which lead to senescence and death supervene. Trees, and some animals, may continue to grow in bulk almost indefinitely; and this is the secret of their long lives; but our own capacity for growth in stature, strength, and corporeal beauty scarcely extends beyond our first two decades. Only in this brief, enchanted period can we enjoy the unique experience of growth in every aspect. Once youth has passed, we are strictly limited to growth in intellectual and spiritual stature; and this alone can compensate for the slow decline of physical strength and grace after life's middle span. But one who makes knowledge or understanding or the expansion of his sympathies his life's purpose may continue until an advanced age to grow; and decay, which is the contrary process, cannot take place in the spirit where growth prevails. When we make intellectual or spiritual perfection our goal, we may continue into our later years that same process which marked life's beginning, and bind childhood to old age by the constant exercise of this capacity, which is one of the most adequate expressions of the Divine. To carry forward into our latest years growth in any form is to unify our whole life by a single movement and a single goal.

8. *The Exercise of our Special Capacities Provides our Highest Happiness*

Thus by the unremitting cultivation of those quali-

ties of mind and spirit which most distinguish us from other forms of life and constitute in the highest degree our special human capacity, we may continue all our days to increase our own perfection, yet leave other beings free to pursue the same course for themselves, each in the way natural to it. By no other road can we so well advance toward our ethical ideal. And by this route we shall be most likely to find happiness, for we follow the example of nature. Whenever an animal has an outstanding special capacity, the exercise of this faculty appears to be a source of delight, apart from any utilitarian advantage it may bring. Thus porpoises line up and race before the prow of a steamer advancing at full speed, exulting in their swift passage through the sea; horses when well fed and rested gallop over the pasture, enjoying their strength and swiftness; gulls soar and glide on motionless wings in the updraught on a leeward shore, delighting in their mastery of the air; well-fed woodpeckers spend their leisure hammering and pecking over trees, amusing themselves by this occupation for which they are so well adapted. In each instance, the animal appears to find pleasure in an activity which its whole organization has fitted it to perform with ease and efficiency.

We humans are not so uniform in our innate endowments as many animals appear to be; and differences in environment and education accentuate our original diversities; so that it is precisely in our special human capacities that we find the greatest variation among individuals. Yet whenever a man is gifted with the capacity for constructive thought, for concentrated study, for artistic creation, for esthetic appreciation, or even with the aptitude for making things with his hands, he knows no greater happiness than

the exercise of his special endowment. Long ago the philosopher Attalus, Seneca's teacher, declared that it is more delightful to paint than to have a finished painting;[1] while in our own time Winston Churchill has more tersely expressed the same sentiment: "Just to paint is great fun."[2] That man or woman is to be pitied who has not himself experienced the happy absorption to be found in the most humble creative occupation, as in gardening, carpentry, fine needlework, weaving, or many another handicraft. As to the happiness derived from more purely intellectual pursuits, we are fortunate to possess the testimony of one of the supreme thinkers of all time—a man so conscientious in drawing conclusions that his very blunders, springing from the natural tendencies of the human mind still uncorrected by a Critical Philosophy, are illuminating to us. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (Book X, 7, 1177a 12-18) Aristotle wrote: "If happiness is activity in accordance with virtue, it is reasonable that it should be in accordance with the highest virtue; and this will be that of the best thing in us. Whether it be reason or something else that is this element which is thought to be our natural ruler and guide and to take thought of things noble and divine, whether it be itself also divine or only the most divine element in us, the activity of this in accordance with its proper virtue will be perfect happiness. That this activity is contemplative we have already said."

Finally, we must admit that the ideal of living in harmony with all things, and perfecting our own nature without thwarting the similar tendency in any other being, is not easy or quite possible to fulfill by creatures

[1] Seneca, *Epistulae Morales,* IX, 7.
[2] *Painting as a Pastime* (Odhams Press and Ernest Benn, 1948, p. 19).

such as ourselves living in a world like this. But no ideal capable of calling forth the best that is in us has ever been easy or even possible to realize. The ideal that we reach or overpass can no longer direct our efforts and becomes a dead issue with us. An ideal worthy of our constant allegiance is like a distant peak that guides an explorer in the wilderness; although he advances ever closer to it, its untrodden snowy summit continues to soar far above him, a perpetual challenge to his endeavor.

Chapter XIV

THE THREE STAGES OF RELIGION

1. *Religion Defined*

We have wasted our time in trying to find the Divine if we have succeeded merely in adding another concept to our minds, yet it has as little effect upon us as the discovery of another satellite of Jupiter or a new chemical isotope. The man who is spiritually alive cannot avoid being so deeply moved by his growing awareness of his intimate relation to the source of his being that his life is altered by this deepening insight. And one who is capable of this reorientation through growing appreciation of his relation to a larger whole is a religious man, whatever doctrine he may profess.

Of the many definitions of religion, some stress our feeling of dependence upon that which does not depend on us, others our awareness of a vast and inscrutable unknown, which encompasses and pervades the world revealed by sensation. This second point of view is well expressed by the picturesque hyperbole of Max Müller, who defined religion as "the perception of the infinite."[1] Obviously we cannot perceive the infinite in any literal sense; we cannot perceive even the whole of our little finite planet. Yet to the active, imaginative mind, every perception suggests more than it reveals. Every extended object beyond our reach has a farther side which remains unseen; every solid

[1] *Origin and Development of Religion,* Lesson I.

body has an interior inaccessible to our exploring fingers. The longest vista ends in a horizon beyond which sight cannot penetrate, but which challenges the fancy to proceed after sense has reached its limit. Beyond the earliest events of recorded history lies a more distant past which we bravely try to reconstruct; beyond the present moment lies a future whose issue we vainly strive to fathom. Every investigation, when pushed to its farthest limits, suggests something more which escapes us. And from this hidden beyond, whether in space or in time, stream influences which deeply affect our lives, yet which we are powerless to control. Hence our dependence upon that which does not depend on us. Combining these two thoughts, both of which contain too much truth to be neglected, we may define religion as *man's attempt to attain harmony by conciliating that which he can neither comprehend nor control, yet which profoundly affects his welfare.*

2. *Religion is More than Imaginative Morality and has Multiple Sources*

A radically different approach to the understanding of religion is that which attempts to derive it from the moral consciousness, and especially the sense of duty. This was the method of Kant, who believed that "All religion consists in the fact that in respect of all our duties we regard God (a mere idea) as the law-giver to be universally reverenced." To equate religion with ethics, or to regard it, in the manner of Hans Vaihinger, as a mere metaphysical superstructure, a fiction of the mind, erected to serve the needs of morality, is to lose sight of its historical origins no

less than of contemporary fact.[1] There is no lack of men with a high sense of duty, and fine regard for the welfare of others, who yet must be looked upon as irreligious, because they fulfill their obligations and perform their good deeds unimaginatively, or with an imagination which does not extend beyond the feelings of their beneficiaries into the encompassing unknown. They accept their kindly impulses as an unexplained fact, or perhaps as the outgrowth of early training and social influences, without trying to understand their relation to a larger whole. Were they to attempt to relate their moral consciousness to the whole of their nature and beyond it to the surrounding world, as we did in Chapter X, they might be led from ethics to religion, to which there are many approaches. But religion is more than "morality touched by emotion", more even than the highest morality so touched, although it can never be divorced from ethics. And just as a man of the most upright conduct may be deficient in religion; so a man whose attitude is essentially religious may be morally immature, because of faulty education and the failure to realize the implications of his beliefs.

Although we may, for the purpose of a preliminary orientation, define religion, we must be careful not to fall into the insidious error of assigning to it a single source, as we do when we say that fear made the gods, or that love, or gratitude for divine favors, or greed for more favors, or a feeling of helplessness, or any other single psychological trait, is the foundation of religion. Single factor explanations exert an almost irresistible fascination upon the human mind, which

[1] For an exposition of this point of view, see H. Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of 'As if'* (English translation by C. K. Ogden, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 2nd ed., 1935), especially Part III.

finds it extremely convenient to focus attention upon one conspicuous contributing circumstance, to the neglect of all the others. The farmer who believes that he can ensure a good crop by concentrating all his attention upon one outstanding requirement of plant growth, such as water, or the soil's fertility, or sunlight, while blindly neglecting all the others, often discovers to his cost that the situation is far more complicated than he imagined. Religion, broadly conceived, is the highest activity of one of the most advanced forms of life on this planet; for it is man's effort to achieve complete harmony with his total environment, conceived as consisting of more than we can see, touch, and manipulate; so that in addition to all our practical skills, and all our competence in ethics and government, something more is needed to win this harmony. It would be surprising if this highest activity sprang from a single motive, when even in many of our commonplace undertakings we find our motivation embarrassingly complex. So we must expect to find in the genesis of religion a subtle blend of fear and love, of greed and gratitude, of vital need and spiritual aspiration, of observation and imagination, of myth-making and symbolization. The further development of a religion consists in the cultivation of the higher of these incentives, while the lower gradually become obsolete.

3. *Religion Contrasted with Art and Morality*

The place which religion occupies in human life becomes clearer when we consider it in relation to the other major endeavors of men, art and morality. In this comparison we shall use the term "art" in its broad and ancient sense, as including all crafts and technical processes, all of man's efforts to improve upon nature

or adapt its products to his uses. The practical arts regard their materials as subordinate to man and of no importance save as they serve his ends, hence stuff to be dominated and transformed as he sees fit. Aristotle included the direction of slaves as a division of the art of household management; and consonant with this attitude, the bondsman, although he might be better educated and in other respects superior to his master, was looked upon as a being of a lower order, a mere chattel to be exploited. Similarly, warfare is called an art, and rightly; for not only in the possession of certain peculiar tools and techniques and the need of special training does it resemble the other arts, but also in its traditional view of the material upon which it operates, the enemy, as stuff to be applied to his own uses by the victor, with no regard for the rights and feelings of the vanquished.

In moral endeavor, on the contrary, we look upon the objects with which we deal, not as inferior material to be exploited, but as intrinsically equal to us, ends in themselves like us, whose existence and happiness is no less important than our own. This is true even of our treatment of children and animals, in so far as it is moral; for although they may be greatly inferior to us in intelligence, experience, or strength, we regard them as beings like ourselves, whose life and felicity deserve the same careful consideration as ours. Hence in moral effort we strive, not for domination, but for coöperation and mutual accomodation with the beings around us; and this is true even when, as in dealing with animals and children, we who are wiser must frequently impose our will upon them and demand obedience, not for our exclusive benefit, but for the welfare of all concerned. Moral relations are ideally reciprocal, a mutual give and take in order to achieve

a harmonious and enduring association. When they depart from this reciprocity in one direction they become tyranny, injustice, and callous exploitation; while on the other side they verge into charity, which is giving or serving with no expectation of a return of any sort. If we regard the state, not as a vampire which sucks its subjects' life blood, but as an association of men for the welfare of all regarded as ends in themselves, then the science of government must be classified as a division of ethics, but one so vast that in practice it stands as an independent discipline.

As in art we dominate and exploit materials which we consider inferior to ourselves; and in moral endeavor we coöperate with beings regarded as equal to us in intrinsic worth; so in religion we are concerned with that which so far exceeds us in power, duration, and beneficence that it is subject to neither exploitation nor compromise, and we must humbly submit to it as we find it. In the arts we bend our materials to our purposes, adapting our procedures to their own unalterable properties only so far as this is necessary to transform them in ways useful to us. In moral endeavor we do best when we strive for mutual adjustment; for both we and the beings which surround us possess attributes which are worthy of cultivation for their own sakes, not only as they serve somebody else. But in religion we confront something too great to be exploited or modified, so that we can improve our relations with it only by altering ourselves. All the higher religions demand this regeneration of the self as the means of approaching the deity; but one who has become aware of his own intrinsic worth consents to this modification of the self only because he recognizes that it leads to the exaltation and fulfilment

rather than the thwarting and debasement of that which is best in him.

When we have understood the place of religion with reference to art and ethics, it is clear that no life can be complete without religion; because without it our relation to a large segment of reality remains undefined and subject to hazard. Not only does the world contain raw materials, like clay and stone, which we can and must exploit in order to survive, and other living things, coördinate with ourselves, with whom we strive to attain harmony by a process of mutual adjustment, but likewise something older and higher than mankind, to which we owe our being, and to whose ways we must conform in a spirit of humble submission.

These distinctions between art, ethics, and religion required many centuries to become clear. In the earlier stages of culture we find mixed together, in an almost fantastic jumble, many phases of life which little by little became separate and distinct. It took men a very long while to acquire that attitude of acquiescence to what they could not change which is inseparable from the higher religions. Primitive religions often strove to bribe or cajole the gods to carry out the wishes of their worshippers. Savages, barbarians, and even civilized Romans, blasphemed, threatened, or even struck and broke, the images of deities who failed to oblige them; or else they turned to other gods who they hoped would be more complaisant—a habit which constantly provoked the wrath and denunciations of the Hebrew prophets. Thus these earlier religions, even apart from their magical accompaniments, tended to employ the method of art, that of compelling its material to serve men's purpose. We also find in religions, including some which still flourish, examples

of the method of mutual accomodation more appropriate to moral endeavor. An excellent instance of this is Abraham's bargaining with Jahweh (*Genesis* 18: 16-33) for Sodom, and obtaining successive reductions of the number of righteous men whose presence within the town would save it from destruction. In a similar vein, a Turkish account of Mohammed's ascension to heaven represents the Prophet as pleading with Allah, who had ordered that his faithful say fifty prayers in the course of a day and a night, and gradually reducing the number to five, on the ground that to command more would only lead men to sin by neglecting to perform the full quota. But at its highest, religion views the will of God as unalterable. The devout man accepts, in the spirit of religious submission and as part of the divinely ordained scheme, all those afflictions and annoyances which oppress him, and which cannot be removed nor altered by human means. Like Rabbi Gamaliel, the religious man, of whatever creed, tries to make his will as God's will, so that God's will may be as his will.[1]

4. *Man's Early Attempts to Assure His Vital Needs*

The fundamental need of each living thing is harmony: that harmony among all the parts and functions of the body which we know as health, that harmony with the environment without which this internal harmony cannot be preserved, and which the biologist calls adaptation. The simplest animals and plants can do little to alter their environment and make it more favorable to themselves. They must avail themselves of whatever organic adaptability they have acquired,

[1] *Pirke Aboth*, 2:4.

and when the limit of this usually narrow range of spontaneous adjustment has been reached, passively await some favorable alteration in external conditions, or some fortunate genetic variation, equally beyond their control, which will bring their descendants into closer equilibrium with their surroundings. But as animals increase in size and complexity, and especially when they learn to work together for their mutual welfare and that of their descendants, they no longer passively await fortunate accidents, but exert themselves to supply their own needs, to make the environment more favorable to themselves. Thus termites construct labyrinthine galleries, which provide protection from enemies and a favorable humidity; parasol ants cultivate edible fungi in subterranean chambers, which they excavate for themselves; while beavers construct dams and lodges for the triple purpose of laying up supplies of bark for the winter, providing shelter, and affording safety from their enemies.

Equipped with a mind fertile in expedients and restless hands to execute his designs, man, more than any other animal, has declined to wait passively for changes which would make the external world more favorable to him, for changes in his own hereditary endowment which would increase his efficiency in dealing with the world. Instead, he began, many thousands of years ago, to make some attempt to improve his condition through his own active efforts. He sought out caves which afforded shelter from rain and cold winds, and later constructed rude habitations for himself. Slowly he learned how to make tools, weapons, and clothing to protect his naked body; and with extreme slowness, as the almost unvarying type of his less perishable artifacts through long ages attests, he improved his products. At a relatively late date, and probably through

a series of fortunate accidents, he learned to cultivate plants and domesticate animals, thereby becoming less dependent upon the spontaneous bounty of nature for his food. Many other animals build habitations for themselves, a few insects cultivate food plants, and a few birds and insects use tools of the simplest sort; but no other animal does all of these things together, as man does.

5. *The Birth of Religions of Preservation*

For all our proud science and technology, our life and prosperity depend far more than we care to admit upon events and processes wholly beyond our control. We cannot change the length of the day or the night; we can neither hasten nor retard the procession of the seasons; we have made only the most feeble attempts to control the weather. Should the sun fail to rise tomorrow, there is nothing we could do about it. The earth shakes and our dwellings fall; great rivers rise and they are washed away; volcanic eruptions cover our cities and farms with cinders or barren lava. We sow our scientifically fertilized fields with the most carefully selected seed, but cannot control all the conditions necessary to ensure an abundant harvest. For all our medical science, epidemics sweep the land, and morbid conditions develop in healthy bodies while learned doctors look helplessly on.

Subject to all these uncontrollable hazards and many more, our forefathers were equally helpless to confront the greater of them and far less competent to deal with the minor ones. They could do nothing to prevent or arrest the plagues which periodically attacked themselves, their animals, and their crops. Without adequate analysis of their materials and control

of pertinent conditions, their simple industrial processes, as in metallurgy, ceramics, and the preparation of dyes, were subject to all sorts of unpredictable hazards which modern technicians have learned to avoid. And what was even more distressing in their situation, they did not know enough either to feel confident of the continuance of certain blessings, or to explain the aberrations of nature and their own failures. We do not pretend to control the earth's course around the sun, but we understand the total astronomical situation well enough to predict with some confidence that it will continue more or less as at present for many centuries. We can do nothing to prevent earthquakes, but we know that they are caused by the sudden cracking and shifting of rocks in the crust of a shrinking planet rather than by the stirrings of a buried giant. When we sicken or our crops wilt, we search for bacteria or other fungous growths rather than for maleficent spirits. When a metal casting does not turn out as it should, we look for impurities in the alloy rather than suspect the intervention of a goblin.

Feeling just as helpless as ourselves in the face of all the greater and many of the lesser manifestations of nature, early man, when he began to view his world somewhat imaginatively rather than with stolid acceptance, did not know what he could trust. When he tried to understand natural events, such as the daily course of the sun across the heavens, the winds, the rains, and the growth of vegetation, he could think of no explanation except that these things were somehow caused by beings akin to himself, at least to the extent that they possessed a will and the power of spontaneous activity; for an animal will acting through an animal body was the only kind of causality he could vividly conceive. So his exuberant fancy peopled the

earth, the sky, and the sea with spirits, gods, and demons, which at first possessed just enough of human personality to be effective agents, and in their most developed forms became shining deities clothed with glory. And having in this homely fashion solved the problem of causation by imagining spirits with a will and active power, he could hardly with consistency withhold from these supernatural beings the attributes which in his own experience always accompanied a will —appetites, passions, and human inconstancy. Thus, by an inevitable evolution, his groping thought had led him to a conclusion which could not fail to fill him with a sense of insecurity. The processes upon which his life depended, from the rising of the sun and the falling of the rains to the growth of his crops and the flight of his arrow, were controlled by beings, or subject to intervention by beings, who although far more powerful were hardly more reliable or temperamentally stable than himself. For all the sense of helplessness that sometimes surges over us as we contemplate our position in an immense Universe governed by inexorable natural laws, it is at least comforting to know that we are not the playthings of capricious gods and spirits. Primitive man lacked this assurance, at once so humbling and so sustaining.

With the increase in their capacity to think and to fashion things with their hands, men made an ever greater effort to control their environment and produce what they needed instead of waiting passively for nature's bounty. But what they could accomplish by their own exertions was at first pitifully small; and their welfare depended, even more than ours today, upon a thousand events and processes over which they exercised no control, or inadequate control. This was a most irritating situation. It seems most irrational

to concentrate all our effort upon things of minor importance while neglecting matters of great importance, to take great pains to control certain factors which affect a process yet leave other equally important factors to hazard. Modern man devotes much labor and ingenuity to heating and lighting his dwellings, yet never troubles himself about the vastly more important heating and lighting of the world; he painstakingly prepares his fields and sows his seed, but takes no steps to ensure the showers without which his labor would be wasted. Primitive man was more logical and consistent. He had not yet learned the limitations of human power, and he was too conscientious to leave these important matters to chance. By magic and religion, which in archaic cultures are mingled together, he would control these events so essential to his well-being. His magic was, as Frazer pointed out, the forerunner of our science; his religion led by gradual evolution to our religion. It was above all an effort to ensure his continued existence and that of his tribe by conciliating those mysterious powers which exerted so great an influence upon his welfare, but which he could not directly control. The earliest religions were religions of preservation.

6. *A Fruitful Insight and its Tragic Miscarriage*

The first reaction of the cultured modern man who reads a book on the beliefs and practices of savage and even early civilized man is likely to be one of mingled contempt, scorn, disgust, and abhorrence. The absurdly childish cosmological notions, the disgusting ascription of human form and passions to the powers which spread out the heavens and established the earth, the arrogant presumption that by any means at his disposal

puny man could influence these beings and thereby hold the sun in its course and maintain the procession of the seasons, the narrowness of outlook that made of the celestial gods partisans of one petty tribe and enemies of all others, the sumptuous ceremonial display contrasted with the squalor and misery of the masses of people, the cruel and senseless effusion of blood of countless innocent victims, the callous indifference to the sufferings of men and animals! The more powerful and prosperous a people grew, the more insanely extravagant were their ceremonials and sacrifices likely to become; until we can hardly read of the procedures at the great pyramid of México, or even at the restored temple of Zion, without becoming nauseated by the mingled scents of incense, and freshly spilled blood, and burning flesh, and putrefying carrion, which with the chants of the priests and the cries of the victims, seem at times to rise like a visible miasm from the pages of the old chronicles. Yet as we probe more deeply into the meaning of some of these ancient cults, we detect beneath all their excesses and perversions something noble and sublime: the notion that man must coöperate with cosmic processes in order to keep them going, the feeling of responsibility for the onward march and continued prosperity of the natural world. Here, for all its exaggerations and misconceptions, we find the germ of a magnificent idea, one of the great contributions of religious thought, which our modern religions, with their belittling of man by contrast to God, have tended to drop from sight.

Since the earliest religions were above all attempts to give stability and permanence to a society by propitiating those powers upon which its prosperity depended yet which could not be directly controlled, it

follows that their predominant interests would shift with advances in cultural level or variations in the physical environment. In addition to concern for those universal features upon which the welfare of every community depends, such as the daily and annual course of the sun and the succession of the seasons, everywhere the most precarious or least dependable of the circumstances which contributed to this welfare were singled out for special attention. Thus among the agricultural tribes of the arid southwest of the United States, ceremonies intended to ensure the return of the rains occupy a prominent position in the elaborate sequence of rituals. One gains the impression that the participants in the rain dances of some of the Pueblo Indians felt that they were actually coöperating with the celestial powers to gather the clouds from the clear desert sky and squeeze from them the life-giving showers; much as the child with his hand on the steering wheel believes that he is helping his father to drive the car. Hunting tribes everywhere developed rites intended to maintain the abundance of the animals upon which they depended for food and to ensure success in the chase; while agricultural peoples had bloody fertility cults to guarantee the growth of their seeds and the continued productivity of their fields.

However useless and senseless some of these ceremonies appear to the modern, scientific mind, they at least served to impress upon the people the need for exercising foresight and restraint with reference to the natural foundations of their communal life. Men who believe that the animals they hunt are protected by a powerful guardian who will resent and punish needless slaughter, or that their victims have souls which must be carefully propitiated lest they revenge themselves upon those who slew them, will hardly kill carelessly or wantonly, for the mere sport of the chase. Men who are convinced that they must carefully prepare and furnish lodgings for the accomodation of the spirits of the trees they fell in clearing land for their rice fields will make inroads upon the forest with foresight and moderation. Men who believe that their god has commanded them to give their ploughlands a periodic rest for the restoration of fertility are more likely to allow them to lie fallow than if this matter is left to their own far-seeing self-interest, in which most of us are deplorably deficient. In countless ways, from the belief that the gods could not preserve the world-order unless nourished by the sacrifices of the men whom they had made to supply their needs, to an array of rites and prescriptions regulating and controlling men's conduct toward the natural vegetation, the wild animals, the land, the domestic animals, and the waters, religions of preservation strove to improve man's relations with the natural world. For all the confusion of man's dawning thought and the wrong notions which inevitably arose from it, they exerted on the whole a beneficent influence upon these relations. The practices were in many instances far superior to the reasons assigned for them.

7. *The Failure of Religions of Preservation*

It was under the aegis of these old religions of preservation that our rude, illiterate ancestors, still with no experimental science but with the most distorted notions of the nature of their world, accomplished feats for which our admiration increases in the measure that we reflect upon and understand their significance and importance to ourselves. Above all,

they established agriculture, and founded it so thoroughly that for all our science and exploration and machinery, it remains essentially as they bequeathed it to us. For the food plants upon which humanity depends today were almost without exception discovered, brought under cultivation, and improved by men who lived so long ago that they left no record of their achievements; and our agricultural procedures, for all their recent refinements, are only adaptations of what they handed down to us.

Agriculture, more than any other single innovation, sealed the doom of that very system of beliefs, rites, and values which helped nurse it through its precarious infancy and childhood. In the first place, it changed the nomadic life of hunting clans to the more settled existence of cultivators attached to the fields they had laboriously cleared or irrigated, to stores of grains too bulky to be carried around by wandering families. By assuring a more constant supply of food, it relieved men of incessant preoccupation with the next meal and gave at least some of them leisure for sustained thought. By its demand for planning and foresight, for persistence and patience, of a quality which the hunter and food-gatherer does not require, it provided a great stimulus to this slowly maturing thought. It supported the growth of cities, and governments, and all the arts and sciences which require a continuity of effort and abode for their adequate development.

But, for a variety of reasons, agriculture, with the more secure and settled life it fostered, failed to bring men that inclusive harmony which is the primary necessity of each living thing, to provide which their religions had grown up, and for which they thirsted in the measure that they became thoughtful and sensitive.

For this failure there were many reasons, some external, others internal. The most obvious is that men still lived in small agricultural communities, each with its own ruler too often eager to extend his sway at the expense of his neighbors, each with its guardian deities, peculiar to itself and jealous of the gods of surrounding peoples, even as the people themselves were hostile to each other. The old law of internal amity and external enmity, inherited from the early food-gathering clans, persisted in the growing civilized communities, with effects the more disastrous in proportion as the originally petty states grew in strength, military skill, and destructive power. The primitive roving clans wanted only enough land to supply their vital needs; they would not have known what to do with more. The rulers of the new settled communities hungered for wealth and power. They coveted more adornments for their persons and palaces, more women for their harems, more slaves to toil for them, larger retinues to follow them in barbaric pomp through their dominions, more imposing temples and richer sacrifices for their gods. This avarice and hollow pride, added to the distrust which at every stage of civilization prevails between states whose relations are not regulated by some higher law, led to endless wars and all their attendant miseries: the sacking of cities, the massacre of whole populations, the merciless torture of prisoners, the lonely degradation of enslaved captives, and all those sad events which fill *ad nauseam* the ancient inscriptions and chronicles. And these woes were merely added to those which men had always suffered; sickness, decrepit old age, the loss of loved ones, periodic famines, exhausting toil, and the constant petty friction of neighbor with neighbor.

8. *The Origin of Religions of Emancipation*

This distressing situation led to a fairly abrupt about-face in man's religious development. There are glimmerings of the coming change as early as the second millenium before Christ, but by the middle of the first millenium the new movement had acquired strength and momentum from the eastern Mediterranean to India and China. The Jews, whose sacred writings have exerted so profound an effect upon the subsequent thought of the Western world, fell relatively late under its influence; and we detect only traces of it in some of the later books of the canonical *Old Testament*. Man's earliest religions were, as we have seen, concerned almost wholly with maintaining the foundations of his earthly prosperity by propitiating those dimly apprehended powers upon which it so largely depended, but which could not be directly controlled. This approach to the problem of bringing harmony into life had failed; and those very advances which might have mitigated man's situation, agriculture and a permanent abode, served only to throw into high relief the colossal magnitude of the failure.

To thoughtful men in Greece, in India, in China, and to a less extent in the intermediate countries, the outstanding reason for this failure was becoming increasingly clear. People were slowly augmenting their control over external nature, but they still had pathetically little control over those disruptive appetites and passions which for long ages had been fostered in the animal mind by the competitive struggle for existence. It was these distressing components of his own nature, far more than the hostility of the external world, which stood in the way of that happiness for which man so ardently yearned. Indeed, it had begun to appear that if he could achieve adequate control over his inner self, his desires, his passions, and above all his opinions, he would find that external happenings had little power to harm him. Thus there arose a new kind of religion, a religion of emancipation, first from the tyrannical appetites and passions within us, and through this purification from the tyranny of the external world. No greater contrast can be imagined than that between the new religions of emancipation and the ancient religions of preservation, which of course still persisted in full sway among the less thoughtful people everywhere.

This new development in religion grew out of the conviction that there is within each man, as within each animal or even each living thing, a spirit or soul whose origin is distinct from that of the corruptible body, and which accordingly is capable of surviving its dissolution. This belief was itself already old, at least as old as religion itself, and in the opinion of some scholars the starting point of religion.[1] Whether or not the doctrine of immortality represents the spirit's immediate intuition of its own certain destiny or is an outgrowth of such psychological phenomena as hallucinations, vivid memories, and dreams in which the dead present themselves to the sleeper as though alive, is a problem we cannot pause to discuss at this point. We can be sure, however, that it was not a deliberate fabrication of men fearful of annihilation or of priests scheming to strengthen their control over their people, however much the priesthood may have subsequently elaborated the notion to serve its own purposes. In its most primitive form, the belief in immortality had scarcely any moral significance: there

[1] See, for example, Grant Allen, *The Evolution of the Idea of God.*

was no segregation of the souls of the good and the wicked, no reward or punishment determined by previous conduct. The soul's survival was looked upon simply as an unexplained fact, like life itself, to be accepted because it was part of the scheme of things. Even today, peoples of primitive mentality, as the Gypsies, attach no moral significance to immortality; for them the good and the wicked fare equally well in the next world. But long before the period in religious development which now claims our attention, there grew up in the early civilizations, especially in Egypt, the belief that the wicked would receive special punishments in the land of departed souls, while the good enjoyed merited delights.

The new religions of emancipation seized upon this old notion that each man contains an incorruptible part, distinct in origin and destiny from the flesh, and made it the foundation of their doctrines. The fate of this enduring component of ourselves seemed too important to be left to hazard, while we devote our energy to the pursuit of transient benefits. If indeed our soul's welfare is determined by our own conduct, then it must be possible, by taking appropriate measures, to ensure its future tranquility. The ancient thinker, like his modern counterpart, saw all around him men madly scrambling for power, fame, wealth, luxury, pleasure, and other impermanent goals, yet subject all the while to a thousand unpredictable hazards, and at last dropping all his hard-won goods when death beckoned. He resented being tossed about by the winds of chance with no control over his own destiny. He yearned for a calm, serene existence, not untouched by a sober joy, and he wished to be assured of his tenure of it. He saw clearly that nothing external to himself could be a secure possession; his very body was the prey of

numberless ills, which even the strongest and wisest could not consistently nor permanently avert. Very well, like the far-seeing and prudent man he was, he would devote his efforts to the cultivation of that which no one could wrest from him or even injure—that part of him which was most truly himself.

The new religions of emancipation took diverse forms in different lands, in each instance determined by the temperament of the people and their own religious background; for a new doctrine, like a new living thing, never arises by spontaneous generation, but evolves more or less rapidly from an earlier type. In Egypt it took the form of the popular cult of Osiris, which promised to the common man that blessed immortal existence which the earlier cults were concerned in assuring only to the divine pharaoh and perhaps the nobility closest to him. In Greece it became the Orphic and Eleusinian mysteries, about the second of which we know all too little, because the initiates kept their vow of secrecy with a fidelity which historians find annoying. Platonism, Stoicism, and even in a measure Epicureanism, were philosophical versions of the same movement, which taught men how to enjoy the serenity of an emancipated mind even in this mortal existence. In China the new trend of thought was represented by Taoism, with its calm and kindly outlook on life. But it remained for the peculiar genius of the Indians to give the new point of view its fullest and most metaphysical development. In those delightful scriptures, the *Upanishads,* the earlier of which seem to have been written during the long interval between about 1000 and 300 B. C., the Hindu sages employed homely anecdote and allegory to bring home to men's minds and hearts the highest religious truths. In their view, the inmost Self of man, the Atman, is identical with

Brahman, the supreme reality, the uncreated ground of the phenomenal world; hence it is without beginning and incorruptible. The mind, with all the myriad modifications impressed upon it by the senses, by the changing bodily states, by its own faculty of imagination, is largely a creation of the body, contrasting with the Self, which like Brahman is pure consciousness. But until it discovers its distinctness from the body and takes appropriate measures to effect its release, the Self or soul is destined to pass from body to body in an endless round of incarnations, in each suffering the Karmic effects, pleasant or disagreeable, of its own past acts. The long road to final emancipation and the cessation of rebirths is above all the gradual dissipation of the ignorance which shrouds from the Self the realization of its own nature, its oneness with the Supreme Spirit.

The course prescribed by the *Upanishads* as the means of self-realization has many features in common with that of other religions of emancipation, and is essentially the mystic's self-discipline we have already discussed in Chapter IX. In the first place, there is the insistence upon right behavior, upon following the rules of morality and refraining from injuring living things. But far more important than overt conduct is the spiritual reconstruction for which it prepares. The mind must be freed of passions, delusions, and all desire for worldly advantages. All those disruptive attitudes forced upon it by the struggle for existence must be swept away, leaving it in its pure, original state, in which alone it can enjoy enduring bliss.

9. *Permanent Contributions of Religions of Emancipation*

Despite the unproved assumptions which religions

of emancipation have so freely accepted, despite the excesses of harsh asceticism and the neglect of measures to improve our earthly state for which they have been too often responsible, they have made great and lasting contributions to human life. Whether or not the benefits they have promised beyond the grave are finally realized, there can be no doubt that they have brought into our present existence benefits of the highest order. In teaching us how to prepare our souls for a future existence, they have at the same time shown us how to pass through this present life with the greatest advantage to ourselves and those around us. For countless generations men had striven to bring harmony into their lives by increasing their control over nature and propitiating those powers upon which natural processes seemed to depend; yet they were as far as ever from realizing that peace for which they yearned. Now it was discovered that by cultivating the spirit men could not only preserve a gratifying degree of inner calm amidst all the vicissitudes of the external world, but at the same time, and incidentally to their main objective, bring greater harmony into their external circumstances. For one of the chief causes of conflict between man and man, as between man and other animals, was the growing thirst for material possessions, which were never available in sufficient quantity to satisfy the demands for them. But in the measure that men became aware of the joy and beauty of the life of the spirit, the unquenchable thirst for external possessions died away; they became content with enough to sustain existence and ceased to contend with their neighbors for superfluous wealth.

This earnest quest for spiritual emancipation brought a wholly new ethical outlook. The most primitive men of which we know were certainly not devoid of morali-

ty; for they were capable of an admirable degree of coöperation with other members of their clan and of making great sacrifices for the common welfare. Their harsh religions often demanded restraints and sacrifices so severe that few moderns would willingly submit to them. But they had scarcely begun to wrestle with that difficult and perennial problem of striking a fair balance between the claims of the individual as an end in himself and the demands made upon him as an agent for carrying on the communal life. To them, a man was above all a tribesman whose existence was significant only as it contributed to the stability and continuity of the tribe. Hence they treated neither their neighbors nor themselves with the respect due to a spiritual being. Each deed, so far as we can now judge, was appraised by its external results rather than by its effect upon the doer. But when men began to look upon themselves as individuals whose significance is not limited by their contribution to the communal life, when they began to cultivate the spirit with a view to their emancipation from the accidents of contingent existence, they discovered that every act has a twofold effect. At the same time that it causes changes in the external world it reacts upon the doer, modifies his own character, and through the strengthening of habits makes him a freer man, or one more hopelessly enslaved to his passions. And inevitably this concern for the internal effect of the deed upon the doer led to an increased regard for its effects upon the inner life of those around him, rather than merely upon their external circumstances and material welfare. The new outlook upon life brought into ethics that concern for character, that habit of assessing conduct by its motivation and intention rather than solely by its outward

form and material effect, which claims so large a share of modern ethical thought.

10. *An Unfortunate Consequence of the New Religious Movement*

Yet with all the precious gains which the new religions brought to mankind, the turning of men's vision inward rather than outward had one deplorable consequence. There was a tendency to forget that greatest contribution which the older religions had made to human thought, that belief that men are somehow responsible for maintaining the order of nature upon which all terrestrial life depends. The practical effects of this turning away from the old insights varied greatly from land to land according to the genius of the new religion, the temperament of the people, and the extent to which the more primitive beliefs persisted along with the more advanced thought, especially among the less educated people who lived closest to the land, and whose attitude toward the natural world was in consequence of the greatest importance. The results were least disastrous in Hindu and Buddhist countries, where the new religions of emancipation taught the unity of all forms of life, where the practice of *ahimsa* or harmlessness to all creatures was an essential part of the discipline which led to salvation, where tender regard for all that lives and grows was so great that it led monks and nuns to restrict their travels to the dry season so as to avoid crushing the fresh herbage that sprouted along the paths when the rains returned, where the people were on the whole easy-going and pacific, more eager to dwell in harmony with nature than to exploit it in the struggle to amass wealth. That lands so old and densely populated,

where the pressure of mankind against its environment is at times so severe, retain so much of their original animal and vegetable life, is certainly due in large measure to their religions.

The loss of the old beliefs was more serious in Europe, where the new religion, a late development of human thought, saw an absolute difference in origin and destiny between man and other forms of life, where it lost sight of those provisions for the welfare of animals both domestic and free contained in that older canon which it still accepted as divinely inspired, and where in a more invigorating climate the people were more restless and aggressive in temper. But the decay of the old sense of responsibility for the preservation of the natural world had its most disastrous consequences when Christian Europeans invaded a New World, still largely unspoiled by its scattered primitive inhabitants, and in the absence of all restraints imposed by religion, in the absence, too, of those antique habits, attitudes, and social arrangements which in their ancestral home had done much to protect nature, proceeded to the merciless exploitation of the new continent, without much consideration for anything save the immediate material advancement of individuals. Here, in the course of a few generations, the European immigrants almost completely destroyed the greatest temperate zone forest on earth, exterminated whole species of animals which they had found in teeming abundance, mined the fertility of their fields, and only at the eleventh hour awoke to the fact that they could not continue this thoughtless, unrestrained attack upon the natural world without jeopardizing their continued existence as a nation, and in an almost frenzied concern for conservation, set about

to repair some of the evils for which they were responsible.

11. *The Third Stage of Religion a Synthesis of the Best in the Two Earlier Stages*

We must remain loyal to all that is good and true in our heritage from the more distant as from the more recent past. We are neither so wise, nor so successful in bringing harmony into our lives, that we can afford to cast away as worthless any of the valuable insights that form our patrimony. Even if they are buried under mountains of error and superstition, we must dig them out and develop them afresh in the light of fuller knowledge. A thousand wrong conclusions, carelessly or ignorantly drawn, cannot invalidate a true premise. We are convinced today that we are not obliged to nourish the gods with the hearts and blood of human or animal victims in order that they may have strength to carry on the processes of nature. We are confident that the sun will rise tomorrow, and for countless tomorrows, for all that men may do, or neglect to do. We know that neither imitative magic, ritual dances, prayers, nor incantations will bring rain to our fields; and we have discovered that freshly sprinkled blood is not necessary to restore their fertility or make our seeds germinate.

Yet beneath all these absurd and horrible practices of our ancestors a true insight, born of a strong vital sanity, was struggling to find adequate expression in the minds and practices of men still bewildered and disoriented by their new and imperfectly mastered gift of discursive thought. It was the sense of man's responsibility for the preservation of the natural world, for the continued prosperity of life in all its forms on

this planet where he was fast becoming the dominant animal. After a long period, in which for all our flourishing science and philosophy we all but lost sight of this pregnant truth, we are at last acknowledging it afresh, with a conviction reinforced by much sad experience and a whole array of scientifically attested facts. Let us humbly acknowledge that our modern conservation is merely a return to the point of view of those unlettered ancestors who founded agriculture, and founded it so strongly that the structure reared by them still stands and preserves us today, with only minor alterations and improvements. The responsibility for the natural world still remains ours, although we must discharge it by means somewhat different from those they adopted, and on the whole more modest. We cannot, and happily need not, undertake the grandiose tasks which their exuberant youthful fancy suggested. We cannot nourish the gods nor recall the sun from his solstitial retirement. Yet none the less, the prosperity of the whole living world, except possibly that part of it in the depths of the ocean, depends upon man's attitude and actions. By the exercise of foresight, wisdom, and restraint we can preserve it in a flourishing condition; by greedy, short-sighted, cruel exploitation, we can bring it down in ruin, our proud civilizations collapsing with the failure of their natural foundations.

By remaining faithful to the central idea of the old religions of preservation, we shall likewise be true to the spirit of the religions of emancipation which succeeded them. These religions, which include the major faiths of the modern world, have rather consistently taught, each in its own idiom, that our destiny is determined by our spiritual complexion or character, and this is in large measure colored by our acts. By loving,

generous, far-sighted deeds the human spirit is ennobled and liberated; by cruel and selfish acts it is degraded and profaned; so that even in this world it forfeits its birthright and is enslaved to its lusts and fears. While all the chief religions and philosophies of emancipation accepted this principle, they differed in its application. Those which viewed the matter narrowly placed their emphasis upon a man's treatment of other humans as affecting the quality and prospects of his spirit. But those which took the profounder view, from Taoism in China, Jainism and Buddhism in India, to Neo-Platonism, Neo-Pythagoreanism and in a measure Talmudic Judaism in Mediterranean lands, recognized that one's conduct toward all living things reacted in similar fashion upon his spirit. Indeed, we may go farther than this, and assert with confidence that not only how he treats other men, and animals of all sorts, and plants, but even lifeless objects, whether the artifacts of man or the productions of nature which have definite form and structure, is an expression of a man's character, and in turn reacts upon that character to fortify or weaken its tendencies. In the spiritual no less than in the physical world, Newton' third law holds true; and every outwardly directed action is accompanied by a reaction in the opposite direction. By the repetition of this process day after day, our minds are gradually shaped into noble or ignoble forms.

Our recognition that the same Divine creative energy, which acting within us causes us to form the ideal of a harmoniously integrated personality, is also working to bring order and harmony into the external world, forces us to acknowledge the equal claim upon us of these two endeavors. The spiritually awakened man will give precedence to the task of purifying and liber-

ating his own mind; for he is aware that until he has cast off the shackles of passion and selfishness he is not ready to labor effectively for the welfare of the surrounding world. But no matter how greatly a man simplify his life, so long as he breathes he depends upon the natural world to support his existence and comes in contact with it at many points. It is to his own advantage, no less than that of all mankind and indeed every living thing, to preserve this world in a flourishing state.

By combining the most profound religious insights of our more remote and our more recent ancestors, by recognizing that the task of achieving spiritual perfection must be carried on without neglecting our obligation toward the natural world that supports us, we bring religion to its third and highest stage. This final religion, formed by the synthesis of all that is of greatest worth in the earlier religions of preservation and of emancipation, might be called the religion of harmonization. When at last it is accepted by a substantial portion of mankind, as it must and will be accepted unless civilization decays, it will be the most balanced and consistent effort to bring harmony into life that the world has yet made. It will look to science to guide men's efforts to preserve in a prosperous state the natural world which supports all life, but to a science inspired by reverence and a moral purpose and a deep humility in the presence of forces which it cannot measure. The religious man is constantly aware of the presence, around and within him, of that which he can neither comprehend nor control, and he orders his life with reverent regard for the unseen power upon which it depends.

Chapter XV

RELIGIOUS APPRECIATION

1. *Modes of Acknowledging the Divine*

In the measure that men conceive their gods in their own image, they are impelled to serve and praise them as they would a powerful human being. The practice of sacrificing animals or fruits most probably grew out of the notion that the god required for his nourishment the flesh burnt on his altar, the blood poured out on it; and this belief lay at the bottom of the cruel Aztec rites. The theory put forward by Sallustius to support the Emperor Julian's renewal of the pagan ritual, that animal sacrifices are indispensable because only a living thing can serve as intermediary between a living man and the living god he worships, is obviously a later and more metaphysical development of the ancient theme. Similarly, the prostrations and genuflections, the approach to the deity in an attitude of abject submission, the prayer or supplication couched in the most flattering terms the worshipper knew, grew out of the habit of conceiving the god as the king of kings, the heavenly prototype of his earthly descendant and representative, the oriental despot clad in a purple robe, seated on a golden throne, and delighting in the praise and homage of his trembling subjects. Refine our religious notions as we may, it is scarcely possible to dissociate an anthropomorphic concept of God from conventional modes of worship. Prayer supposes a superhuman hearer, the bowed head

and bended knee one who must be approached in the attitude of submission demanded by human monarchs.

Since to say that God is transcendent is merely to admit our total ignorance of his attributes, we could have nothing to guide our approach to a transcendent deity. Although prayer and other forms of worship may be of considerable value to ourselves, as a constant reminder of our dependence upon an inscrutable power whose acts we must, to preserve our own balance, accept in a spirit of humble resignation, we cannot know whether adoration and ritual observances are demanded by the deity, or pleasing to him. It seems improbable that they are. Yet behind all the exaggerations and absurdities to which men have been led by the urge to worship lies a true insight, a fundamental need of the human spirit, which our ancestors, who had such difficulty in understanding and giving adequate expression to their own most central impulses, often interpreted in ways that we find puerile and crude. Although we cannot know whether God as transcendent desires our praise or our thanks for benefits received, we are sure that the Divine immanent in us impels us to cultivate the most intense awareness of its presence in and around us. We are driven by the very process that created us to acknowledge the Divine, to keep it constantly before us and seek union with it. This grateful recognition by the creature of the creative energy that made it is the culmination of the creative process, the final synthesis toward which harmonization spontaneously tends.

Although the Divine is ever within us, we are seldom immediately aware of its presence. The circumstances of animal life called for a mind directed outward, to face the constant threats to the animal's safety and to guide it to the satisfaction of its needs.

The most careful introspection fails to reveal to us how we perform the most elementary processes of thought, such as remembering and associating ideas; and for all our investigations and all our theories, we are ignorant of how the mind is connected with the body. The darkness which shrouds the foundations of mental life also hides from us the presence within us of that creative energy without which coherent thought, or any thought, would be impossible. Harmonization first impels us to cultivate harmony with the tangible beings which surround us, no less than among all our thoughts and feelings. The recognition of the origin of this striving arises late, as its flowering, the completion of the cycle which leads the mind back to its source. Just as we are scarcely aware of all that we owe to our parents until they have done so much for us that we no longer need their support and guidance, so we are not prepared for the full realization of the source of harmony until it has performed a vast labor in and for us. This final acknowledgement of our relation to the Divine is the fulfillment of the creative process.

In the mode of making this acknowledgement, philosophy differs from religion. When the philosopher has pointed out in terms that are conceptually clear our relationship to the force that created us, his task is done. We may reject his demonstration, or we may accept it as true much as we accept the proposition that the internal angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles, which may convince the intellect yet leave the spirit unmoved. Although undoubtedly of value itself, this intellectual recognition of the source of life is of far less value than a more complete response to it—a response which moves our whole being, carrying the intelligence and the emotions together in a single act of

grateful and loving acknowledgement. Such a total response is largely spontaneous, just as our assent to any mathematical or philosophic proposition is spontaneous, depending upon the mind's innate structure and its insight into the pertinent relations. Although we cannot by an act of will produce the response itself, we may deliberately cultivate the conditions which conduce to it. This, of course, is one of the purposes of the ritual of popular religions, in which music, ceremony, symbolism, and the impressive interior of the temple where these rites are performed, all conspire to sweep the worshipper along in a total emotional response. But one who does not believe the dogmas which underlie the ceremonials cannot vibrate in harmony with them. He may be moved as the spectator of a splendid theatrical performance in a magnificent architectural setting, but he can hardly ever experience that supreme exaltation which is reserved for the faithful alone.

2. *True Worship is not an Activity but an Attitude, Inspired by Beneficence rather than Power*

The value of religious worship lies not in the postures the worshipper assumes, nor in the words he utters, but in his spiritual attitude. If the ceremonials and prayers are of any worth, it is merely in so far as they serve to induce or strengthen the response; for apart from this inner attitude they are worthless. Only on the supposition that the worshipper is watched by a supernatural being jealous of his prerogatives, who demands this adulation and who judges men by their words and postures rather than by spiritual qualities, could genuflections, praises, and other conventional religious activities have any intrinsic value.

One who feels the Divine within him does not worship because he believes it desires adoration, but because he is impelled by the very impetus of the movement which created him to complete the process of harmonization by acknowledging his relation to it. The attitude thus engendered is one of grateful, reverent, and loving appreciation, akin to esthetic appreciation at its highest, yet distinct from it, so that we may distinguish it as religious appreciation. Such appreciation does not necessarily express itself in words or ritual acts, yet it gives a higher significance to all our deeds and all our speech. Like the glow of a roseate sunset suffusing the landscape, it imparts a heightened splendor to all that it touches, yet alters in no detail the familiar outlines of hills and trees and buildings.

This grateful acknowledgement of the source of all values is an emotional response rather than an intellectual recognition. It is not necessarily associated with some particular philosophic or religious interpretation of the world; for it may precede the acceptance of such a doctrine, and even survive its rejection. A religion that did no more than cultivate in its adherents a vivid consciousness of their relation to a whole greater and more enduring than themselves, along with a thankful recognition of all that they owe to it, would be worthy of our deepest respect. In fact, such a religion might be the best and safest of religions; for by dispensing with questionable dogmas and cultivating an emotional response to things immediately evident to us, it would be at once invulnerable to the acid of scepticism and incapable of persecuting men for doctrinal differences.

That which merits our veneration is not power but form, not the magnitude of forces but their harmonious coördination and the beneficent ends to which they are directed. Unless fully controlled by one whose in-

tentions we know to be wholly benevolent, vast power inspires dread and apprehension rather than reverence and gratitude. It was the attribution of power to beings whose good will they could not wholly trust that led our ancestors to develop religions in which sacrificial offerings, flattering praise, and submissive forms of worship were prominent features. Such ceremonials were often merely attempts to placate maleficent forces or divert them from the head of the supplicant. They were not expressions of grateful recognition so much as frantic attempts to appease powers beyond human control. Since the worshipper could neither deflect nor resist cosmic forces, he absurdly tried to mollify them through bribery and cajolery. When he could not by any means obtain the favorable response of the god, the savage supplicant sometimes proceeded to abuse or destroy his idol. Even as late as the time of Augustus, the statue of Neptune was solemnly degraded by the Emperor because the sea god had permitted the destruction of the Roman fleet. But the contemplation of harmony in form and movement engenders not fear but love, which in turn enlists the intellect in an effort to understand rather than to withstand. When the feelings thus stirred up within us pass beyond an attitude into activity, this becomes above all a striving to bring ourselves into closer concord with that which fills us with gratitude and reverence. The spirit of worship then becomes the guiding light of a life devoted to the cultivation of harmony.

3. *Religious Appreciation through Beauty*

The most frequent and commonplace situations of life may call forth religious appreciation. Indeed, it is the capacity to respond in this fashion to everyday

things which is the mark of the truly religious spirit. To salute with joyous gratitude the rising sun, to sit down to one's meals with grateful acknowledgement of nature's bounty, to look upon the fire that warms us in winter and the cool waters that refresh us in the hot season as the gifts of a beneficent power—these are the responses of the reverent and devout man; and whether, in the manner of the pious everywhere, he voices his thankfulness in prayer makes little difference, so long as the appreciative attitude is not lacking.

However, it is not those experiences so often repeated that their novelty is blunted, but the outstanding, unusual situations that have greatest power to move us and to stir to full intensity our religious appreciation. Above all, it is the highest creations of harmonization that possess this capacity; and it is most fitting that they do, for it is these expressions of the Divine in the world that most deserve our gratitude and love. It is in the pursuit and cultivation of such forms of harmony as goodness, beauty, truth or knowledge, and love or friendship, that the creative process reaches the highest levels that we know; and it is through the experience of them that religious appreciation is most perfectly realized. Such appreciation will, then, include those values which the ordinary, non-religious man finds in the given situation, plus others which only religious insight can discover. Thus it will comprise esthetic appreciation heightened by acknowledgement of the source of beauty, reverence of goodness along with awareness of its springs, love of creatures intensified by gratitude to the source of what is lovable in them, knowledge of phenomena illuminated by some understanding of the origin of those marvellous adjustments which knowledge reveals.

Perhaps some will take exception to the statement

that beauty, love, truth, and goodness are the highest expressions of harmonization, holding that we who experience or produce these things stand higher in the scale of creation. A little reflection, however, will make it clear that the experience of these modes of harmony, in the measure that we are able to experience them, demands animals as highly organized as ourselves plus certain additional factors. Thus the recognition of visual beauty requires, on the one hand, an external situation, let us say a garden, in which forms are balanced and colors blended with a certain proportion or harmony. On the other hand, there must be an animal equipped with eyes capable of producing sharp retinal patterns and a nervous system that can transmit these patterns to a central sensorium, where a clear and colorful image arises in consciousness. That external features which for the purpose of practical response, such as finding food or avoiding danger, need be represented in the mind only by a few meaningful signs wholly drab and unadorned, should somehow enter it endued with forms and colors which make them sources of delight, is one of the marvellous facts of sensation which our evolutionary theories are far from adequate to explain. And when we recall that what flows in through the pupils is merely a jumble of colorless vibrations, differing only in frequency and direction, we must recognize that the image which consciousness finally receives is due in very large measure to the activity, at first analytic and then synthetic, of our eyes, nerves, brain, and mind, working so closely together that we can hardly separate and acknowledge their respective contributions. The beautiful images that delight us, no less than the melody that soothes us and the fragrance that enchants us, are in large measure the creation of ourselves, as beings com-

pounded of body and mind. But they are not wholly our spontaneous productions; for if they were we might enjoy them quite independently of external sources; yet few men can produce such vivid mental images that they prefer them to the most beautiful productions of nature or of art. It requires our own marvellous organization, plus a certain fitting disposition of things in the surrounding world, plus the interaction of this external situation with ourselves, to produce the least instance of sensuous beauty. In this sense, beauty is one of the highest products of harmonization, higher even than the being who enjoys it, and as such one of the most perfect expressions of the Divine, fit to excite our deepest appreciation.

If one is at all capable of worship in its purest form, which is an intense and grateful appreciation of all that he owes to the source of his being, he should be able to make this response in the presence of the grand and beautiful productions of nature. Beneath the starry heaven we feel with wonder and awe the vastitude of the creative power and our own relative unimportance; but it was the incorruptibility of the heavenly bodies, and the perfect regularity of their movements, which caused them to be considered divine by the ancient philosophers, who lacked our modern conception of their great size and vast separation from us. The sea when calm impresses us with freedom and tranquility, and a sense of our own impermanence akin to that which we feel beneath the starry firmament. Nothing so well symbolizes the more enduring aspects of the cosmic order as a tranquil ocean beneath a cloudless nocturnal sky. In storm, when huge waves toss the greatest ships, the sea impresses us above all with power; so that unless we have great confidence in the sturdiness of the craft that bears us, we are more likely

to feel apprehension or terror than gratitude and reverence. But it is the living world which, with its endless diversity of forms and adaptations, most adequately displays the vast creativeness of the Divine. Nowhere do we feel this more intensely than in the tropical forest with its immense variety of animal and vegetable life, its stately trees, its delicate ferns, its fragrant scents, its lovely butterflies and birds. To stand in the midst of such a forest and behold, through a gap between the feathery crowns of palms that rise in majesty above one, the snowy summit of some distant mountain peak—as one looks upward to the Andean snows from amidst the palm trees of the eastern foothills—is to drink to the full the grandeur and sublimity of the world which harmonization has prepared for us. One who does not in such a setting thankfully acknowledge the Divine is incapable of religious appreciation.

If it is at all permissible to prop up our weak understanding by comparing the Divine to the human, we shall come closer to the truth by thinking of God as the Supreme Artist rather than as a King jealous of his majesty and power. The former conception will certainly lead us to more appropriate forms of worship or acknowledgement. An artist with a true conception of his office wishes above all to produce works which enhance the lives of those who contemplate them, refining their taste, exalting and purifying their feeling, causing them to live more richly and intensely. The highest praise that can be given an artist is just this response to his creations. He might be bored or embarrassed by fulsome praise of his genius; but he would be gratifed by the assurance that his works produced, in those who saw or heard them, the effects at which he aimed. One might imagine that an artist of sufficient power would create intelligent beings merely that they

might respond in this manner to his works—themselves not the least of his productions. Such a Supreme Artist would not desire praise or adulation, so much as fervent appreciation of the glories he had prepared for his creatures and the capacity for their enjoyment which he had given them. One who takes this view might make a prayer of these devout verses by George Russell:

O, Master of the Beautiful,
Creating us from hour to hour,
Give me this vision to the full
To see in lightest things thy power.

This vision give, no heaven afar,
No throne, and yet I will rejoice
Knowing beneath my feet a star
Thy word in every wandering voice.

(*Creation*).

4. *Religious Appreciation through Friendship and Love*

Just as the experience of beauty stands higher in the scale of creation than either the beautiful object or the enjoyer taken singly, so love and friendship represent an advance over the lover or the friend considered by himself. It requires a high type of animal to be capable of a lofty friendship founded upon a community of interests and tastes and respect for character; just as it requires a high type to be capable of love which adds to physical attraction respect for the loved one as a spiritual being and a fidelity that outlasts all the inevitable vicissitudes of feeling. But it may well be, and doubtless often happens, that there

arises a person capable of the noblest love or friendship who yet never finds an object worthy of his devotion; and conversely, there may be those who merit such love or friendship but fail to encounter one able to appreciate and respond to their excellent qualities. Thus the actual friendship or the mutual love represents a higher evolution, an advance of harmonization, beyond either of its parties in isolation.

Religious appreciation adds to friendship or love insight into its causal foundations. One gifted with this insight sees the loved one as a creation of the Divine, touched no doubt with our inevitable human frailties, yet not so heavily encrusted by them as to conceal those divine endowments which make him deserve this love. And he is further aware that that which makes him capable of the highest sort of love is identical with that which makes his beloved worthy of it. It is the Divine in each of us which makes us love and be loved. Although the proverbial attraction of opposites may increase the intensity or piquancy of the affection, the contrasting qualities, as strength and gentleness, generosity and prudence, are merely diverse expressions of the same formative energy; just as the stateliness of the tree and the delicate grace of the flower are divergent manifestations of the same creative process. The distinguishing feature of the noblest sort of love is that it is expansive rather than constrictive. Mere sensual passion may exhaust itself upon its immediate object; but a spiritual love spreads outward from the center of attraction to embrace a widening circle of neighboring beings. Such a love sheds its radiance upon all that surrounds it; and the highest honor we can give our beloved is to love all creatures the more because we love him.

5. *Religious Appreciation through Knowledge*

Like beauty and love, truth or knowledge carries the creative process to a higher level—perhaps indeed to the highest level it has yet attained. A comprehensive knowledge of the surrounding world is possible only to an animal well equipped with senses capable of fine discriminations, reporting their findings to a mind able to coördinate and combine a vast number of separate impressions; and such an animal is the product of a very long evolution. Moreover, to enjoy the calm leisure indispensable to study and the stimulus to discovery which comes from communication with its fellows, such an animal must live in a rather highly organized society; and this requires a further evolution, beyond that which produced the animal itself and endowed it with adequate senses and mind. Then there is the further slow development of attitudes and methods conducing to a sound understanding of nature.

Knowledge is never a mere copy of its object, a reflection as though in a mirror of the external world just as it is, but always a fresh growth, a new construction, at its best solidly founded upon the actual world of objective facts, but rising above it into a realm hitherto unoccupied. This is true even of our immediate perception of some external thing, as of a flower, and applies with increasing force as we ascend to higher levels of knowledge. The demand that an idea or impression in the mind be an exact copy of its external object places an insuperable obstacle in the way of any tenable theory of knowledge. How could we discover what resemblance our idea of the flower bears to the flower itself unless we could somehow pluck it from the mind, place it beside its original,

and view both at the same angle with the same illumination? As Berkeley insisted, only an idea can resemble an idea; so that the demand that an idea be an exact copy of its object leads inevitably to mentalism; and since this ontological view ascribes to a cosmic mind properties we cannot discover in our own minds, it involves us in hopeless confusion (cf. Chapter III, section 1). Thus, by making inordinate demands upon perception, we are brought to scepticism, or worse, irreverent, pragmatical, and even flippant treatments of truth.

All that we need assume to build a sound theory of knowledge is that our idea or impression bears a constant or determinate rather than an accidental relation to its external object, so that when we view the same flower at different times, under the same conditions of illumination and the like, (ourselves and the flower remaining essentially unchanged,) we receive the same impression. Thus we assume only the regularity of nature, or the constancy of causation, which is the presupposition of all attempts to understand nature and is indeed supported by our total experience. Further, we must suppose that the temporal sequence and the spatial order of our impressions correspond to external reality; so that the order of our ideas in time, and as referred to space, does not invert nor mix up haphazard the series of external events to which they refer. These are the minimum requirements of a theory of knowledge; and if we insist upon having much more, we shall end up with much less.

Thus, whenever we look at some external object, our mind produces something new, which did not previously exist. The image which springs up in consciousness, so swiftly and with so little deliberate effort on our part, is no mere copy of its original but a newborn

child, of which the mind is the mother and the external object the father. We suppose that the child bears some similarity to its sire; but we can never know the degree of this resemblance; for the father reveals himself to the mother only in their child, coming to her as though under the cover of darkness, as Eros to Psyche in the old Greek legend so beautifully retold in verse by Robert Bridges. Indeed, the uncritical mind is apt naïvely to confuse the child with its father, failing to distinguish between them. But even when she awakes to the distinction, the mother loves the child as her offspring, and the unknown father for the child's sake. We cherish the impressions that we trace to our senses because they are in a literal sense our own productions, generated by our mind's spontaneous artistry; and we love the external world because it yields the stimuli without which our minds remain vacant and sterile.

If even our immediate sensuous impressions are the mind's own creations, it follows that all the higher constructions of thought owe even more to its creative activity. The universals or general ideas under which we try to subsume all our impressions, as "man", "tree", or "violet", are never given to us by the external world, which invariably shows us only particular men, trees, and violets, but are distilled by the mind from its own experience. And the explanations, theories, and "laws", by which we strive to comprehend nature, are in an even higher degree products of the mind's creative power, based it is true upon the objective world, but rising above it into a distinct realm. That they somehow correspond or run parallel to the hidden course of the objective world, follows from the fact that when our theories are of the sort that we call "true" we can draw from them deductions or predictions, which we verify by their correspondence with

observed events; but they are not for this reason copies of anything that exists independently of the mind. To one who understands the implications of this, Plato's doctrine of eternal ideas, existing prior to all human thought in a changeless "intelligible world"—a notion which clings so persistently in the Realism of contemporary philosophy—is by no means so attractive as it appears at first sight; for it is a denial of the mind's creative power, hence a disparagement of our intelligence. If Plato's doctrine were true, our effort to understand would be merely, as he recognized, an attempt to seize or to recover that which already exists, rather than the radically constructive endeavor it is. Aristotle's doctrine of the actualization of the potential, at the first glimpse so much drier and less poetic than the theory of his teacher, is in reality the more inspiring view, for it recognizes the true creativeness of the world process.

Thus, in our effort to understand nature, we carry to a higher level the same constructive process which created us; and we are impelled to do this by the impetus of the very movement which made us, in body and mind, what we are. In the measure that we are successful, we add to the totality of existence a new "dimension" or realm, which rests upon and from one point of view duplicates the physical world of bodies and movements, but in another sense is a wholly new construction, our peculiar contribution to the total wealth and diversity of the Universe. We may, in the fashion of all too many scientists, carry on this endeavor blindly and unimaginatively, so engrossed in the little concrete facts we uncover that we fail to notice the relation of our modest effort to a larger whole; or we may pursue our investigations with understanding and some recognition of their wider significance. Conducted in this spirit, our studies become a sort of religious exercise, a mode of communion with the power that made us, a form of appreciation of the Divine.

6. *The Pythagorean Ideal*

Long ago, the followers of Pythagoras in Magna Graecia banded together in a kind of religious brotherhood, holding their possessions in common, leading a simple and abstemious life, obeying many rules intended to promote purity and virtue, guarding their more important doctrines from the profane, and dedicated to the study of mathematics; for they believed that numbers were the elements of which the heavens, the earth, and all that it contains were composed.[1] Although this cosmological doctrine, an understandable product of a fresh enthusiasm in the golden dawn of philosophy, was demolished by Aristotle, who showed that numbers are products of the human mind; the Pythagoreans nevertheless made basic contributions to mathematics and harmonics, and set an example which still contains much of value for us. For the successful investigation of nature demands many qualities which have always been associated with the religious life in its noblest form. The first of these is reverence for the object of study, which is not to be trifled with nor approached in a casual or flippant mood, but always with that seriousness in which the devout man approaches his God. The second is humility before the facts disclosed by investigation, which must never be distorted to fit a favorite theory, but received in a spirit of religious submission, as the saint accepts the

[1] Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers,* Book VIII, Chapter 1.

will of God. Thirdly, the understanding of nature demands a concentration of purpose which resists random distractions and foregoes alluring pleasures, to the end that the investigator may approach his studies with strength undissipated and faculties unimpaired—a concentration upon his major objective at times approaching the mystic's single-minded absorption in his quest.

That the spirit of the old Pythagoreans is not wholly dead in the modern world is attested by Newton's famous dictum that he was thinking God's thoughts after him, and by the attitude of the great naturalist, Louis Agassiz, who wrote: "The study of Nature is an intercourse with the highest mind. You should never trifle with Nature. At the lowest her works are the works of the highest powers, the highest something in whatever way we may look at it. A laboratory of Natural History is a sanctuary where nothing profane should be tolerated. I feel less agony at improprieties in churches than in a scientific laboratory."[1]

Inseparable from the ideal of constructing an edifice of knowledge which rests upon the natural world and whose form is controlled by it, yet which is in the fullest sense a new creation, is that of its completeness, not only in breadth and height, but likewise in detail. So long as any department of nature, or even any smallest division of a department, remains unexamined, our task seems unfinished and challenges us to fill in the gaps. To one who sees the creative power in the least of its works, a natural object or process which has never been studied is a neglected opportunity to appreciate the Divine through its productions. But no man, however indefatigable, can personally study more

[1] Quoted by Sir Richard Gregory in *Discovery: The Spirit and Service of Science* (Macmillan, N. Y., 1923), p. 43.

than a minute fraction of the natural world. Hence the importance of the specialist, who devotes his time to the investigation of some corner of this world hitherto overlooked. He may give the best years of his life to studies that to the unimaginative are intolerably dry and sterile, as to the examination of some minute organism of which they have never heard, or the investigation of some process which seems wholly irrelevant to human prosperity. But if he approach his undertaking in a spirit of religious appreciation, he in a sense worships in a private chapel, retired from all the world, performing holy rites which the profane can never understand. For to contemplate, study, or enjoy any object, however small, with awareness of its ultimate source, is a religious act, an acknowledgement of the Divine akin to worship.

But to realize their full significance, these results of special studies must not remain in isolation. Although men might collectively know every detail of the natural world, so long as this knowledge remains scattered in separate minds, we shall have no adequate understanding of nature. The highest and most comprehensive idea is always the possession of a single mind, and humanity as a whole can have no concept more adequate or perfect than that in the head of the man of broadest vision. Hence the need of synthesis, of combining the results of separate investigations into an ever more comprehensive unity, a task to which we are impelled by harmonization itself. In view of the immense range and variety of the subjects of modern study, this synthesis is necessarily performed in successive stages, by different students, each of whom offers up his results to another for further unification, until by philosophy the highest synthesis is effected.

As our knowledge increases in scope and completeness, we feel that we approach ever closer to the Divine through understanding of the harmonies it has produced in the world of phenomena. This mode of approach complements the effort to reach the Divine in the depths of our own being, which we discussed in Chapter IX. Each of the two methods is equally important, and necessary to correct the narrowness of view which so often results from exclusive concentration on the other. Both of these approaches together, even when supplemented by metaphysical speculation, fail by a good deal to bring us complete understanding of that which so far exceeds our power of comprehension; yet we feel richly rewarded by the least advance in the direction of our heart's desire. Of the several roads which lead from different sides toward the Divine, that through the infinite variety of nature is the one along which we can journey farthest without encountering an insuperable obstacle, or feeling that we travel through sterile wastes. As we continue our *progressus ad infinitum,* each pause that we make to contemplate, with appreciation and understanding of the process which created them, the wonderful, beautiful, and lovable things that greet us, is an act of devotion which binds us more closely to the Divine.

Chapter XVI

CREATIVE PARTICIPATION

1. *Creative Participation Compared with Religious Appreciation*

Awareness of the Divine takes two chief modes of expression, religious appreciation and creative participation. In the first, we acknowledge with gratitude and love what the Divine has accomplished in the world, what we owe to it not only for existence itself but for all that gives value to life. Yet we recognize that creation is an unfinished task, and are impelled by the creative energy within us to do the little we can to advance the process, which is what we mean by creative participation. Thus creative participation is the more active mode of response to the Divine, and bears to religious appreciation much the same relation as good works to worship and prayer in conventional religions. But the difference between participation and appreciation is in degree rather than in kind; for true appreciation is never wholly passive but requires a mental if not a bodily effort. Only in those situations where we ourselves contribute something are we capable of the highest appreciation. Religious appreciation must precede creative participation; for until we are capable of recognizing and acknowledging with gratitude the highest of the works which the Divine has already accomplished, we are not prepared to coöperate in the task of creation.

Appreciation tends to be extensive, participation in-

tensive. When our eyes have been opened, we detect beauty and goodness diffused through vast regions where our own efforts are unavailing; we love many things whose welfare does not depend on us; and we strive to understand things which we cannot influence. But in the relatively narrow field where our endeavors count, we may throw ourselves into creative work with an energy seldom called forth by the more passive appreciation. Thus these two modes of expressing our awareness of the Divine are complementary. We must cultivate religious appreciation to prevent that narrowness which so often overcomes one whose interests are confined to his own tasks; while creative participation counteracts the passivity which arises from appreciation dissociated from more active endeavor.

2. *Preparation for Participation Itself a Creative Endeavor*

We accomplish nothing of value without preparing ourselves for the task, and such preparation is itself a creative endeavor of the highest order. In addition to all the special knowledge or skill we might require to carry forward the work of creation in the particular field we choose, there is a more general preparation which no one can omit. We cannot become fruitful co-workers with the Divine unless we understand the Divine and ourselves, and bring ourselves into harmony with it. Without this understanding and self-purification, our best efforts may thwart rather than advance the cause to which we imagine we are contributing. As a result of the dual character of animal life to which we alluded in Chapter VIII, to distinguish our central or primary nature from all the

modifications which have been imposed upon it by the struggle for existence is no light task, and to divest ourselves of the passions and attitudes engendered by this struggle demands prolonged and consistent effort.

Because it is in general so much easier to serve others in a way which wins their approval than to improve our own character, and because the short-sighted greed of society gives higher praise to the man who works for its benefit than to one who devotes his best efforts to perfecting himself, we are often led to throw ourselves into altruistic endeavors before we are ready to engage in them fruitfully. That the value of our labors in behalf of others depends upon what we first make of ourselves is a truth too often overlooked, although it has long been recognized by the wise. We may recall the reply of Socrates to Crito, who as the sage was about to drink the poison had asked how his friends could serve him best: "Simply by doing what I always tell you, Crito. Take care of your own selves, and you will serve me and mine and yourselves in all that you do, even though you make no promises now. But if you are careless of your own selves, and will not follow the path of life which we have pointed out in our discussions both today and at other times, all your promises now, however profuse and earnest they are, will be of no avail."[1] Of similar import was the admonition which the Tibetan yogi Milarepa, when about to die, gave to his disciples: "One should not be over-anxious and hasty in setting out to serve others before one hath oneself realized Truth in it fullness; to be so, would be like the blind leading the blind. As long as the sky endureth, so long will there be no end

[1] Plato, *Phaedo*.

of sentient beings for one to serve; and to every one cometh the opportunity for such service."[2]

If self-knowledge and self-discipline were to be acquired solely through a man's own effort, unaided and unguided by others, we should expect savages to equal in these qualities members of more cultured and philosophic races; and everyone could gain them for himself, without the need of a master. Although the molding of one's character is above all a personal endeavor, demanding the most strenuous effort by the aspirant to perfection, it is scarcely possible to accomplish this without guidance; and at the outset, such direction is almost indispensable. The recorded wisdom of sages distant in time or place can help us greatly in this endeavor, but best of all is direct contact with one who already exemplifies in his own life that to which we aspire.

3. *The Teacher's Contribution*

It follows from what has already been said about the great importance of preparing oneself for creative participation that participation itself can take no higher form than the labors of the teacher, master, or parent who devotes his best effort to guiding the formation of character in the young; for thereby he prepares others to share in this high endeavor and make it more widespread. Even if we regarded men only as tools, we should assign a high order of importance to the labor of preparing them for the tasks they must perform. The recognition that every individual, however much he may serve to advance some great enterprise, is above all an end in himself, heightens our awareness of the supreme importance of helping him to develop a noble character. Unlike most lifeless tools, man is an instrument which improves rather than deteriorates with use in the tasks appropriate to him; and it is not impossible that this enhancement of the tool itself is the highest end of the labors to which it is applied.

[2] W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa* (Oxford University Press, 1951), p. 271.

To carry on its tasks, which require an ever increasing amount of technical knowledge and special skills, modern industrial civilization devotes to education more care and expense than most earlier cultures. Unhappily, the present zeal for education is directed largely to such studies as prepare youths for industrial activities and increase their capacity to earn. At the same time, we are losing sight of the older view of education as above all the formation of men and women of wide outlook and independent judgment, capable of choosing the ends of life because they understand themselves and their world and the background of their culture. Every age needs a Socrates to jog men out of their easy complacency, making them aware of the meanings of the words they so glibly use and causing them to reflect upon the essentials of a good life. The study of the sciences has an indispensable place in a liberal education; if only because, as Epicurus discovered long ago, nothing so frees the mind of superstition as the objective study of nature, which tends also to form the habit of viewing events calmly and dispassionately in terms of their causal antecedents, and of seeing in true perspective our place in the Universe. But for the clarification of the meaning and goals of life, there is no substitute for the study of the thought and literature of past ages. Those ideals and aspirations which lurk in substantially the same form beneath all the diversities of race and cul-

ture are most likely to reveal our inner nature and the true ends of our existence; and education has no higher task than to train us to recognize these fundamental similarities amid all their varieties of expression. Such understanding of ourselves is the best preparation for creative participation in all its forms.

4. *The Great Creative Tasks in Agriculture*

The more a youth feels the creative energy within him and recognizes its oneness with the creative force that pervades the Universe, the more he will be challenged by the greatest and most difficult of the tasks which the world faces. Creation is not merely the straightforward development of beings of increasing completeness and perfection. As it occurs in this world, where as a result of the very intensity of the creative impulse expanding patterns clash so violently together that at times it seems that budding harmony will dissolve in strife, a most important aspect of creative endeavor is the resolution of the conflicts which surge up on every side. Creative participation can take no higher form than the attempt to smooth out the disharmonies which constantly arise and threaten to block the advance of harmonization. This is a task for which human reason is peculiarly fitted. Without human aid, without so far as we can see the sort of foresighted guidance of which intelligence is capable, the creative energy, working always from within, has produced the most varied organisms, which win our admiration by their grandeur and beauty or the perfection of their instincts. But the process of harmonization finds difficulty in coördinating, and adjusting to each other, patterns which grow up from distinct centers. Only intelligence, which can include a number of entities in a

single survey, understanding the nature and the needs of each, can see the solution of these conflicts. Man, in whom intelligence is united with a sense of moral responsibility, seems to be an agent which the Divine has made for resolving some of the conflicts which arise as creation marches forward; and he can find for his peculiar gifts no more fitting use than their dedication to this end.

One who feels impelled to devote his strength and intelligence to this problem need not look afar for the field of his labors. To act as peacemaker between animals of diverse sorts, as the hawk and the sparrow or the lion and the antelope, which was one of the offices which the Hebrew prophets assigned to the Messiah, still exceeds human power. But the greatest disharmony in the living world is that between man himself and other forms of life, arising largely from the vast and complex demands which we make upon our environment. Man is the greatest present threat to the onward march, and even the continued prosperity, of life as a whole. Since we are the chief protagonist in this conflict, it would seem that we could do something to diminish its intensity. And since it is through their agricultural operations that men interact on the largest scale with the natural world, agriculture offers the most promising field for such endeavors.

One of the greatest tragedies in the history of mankind was the diversion of human interest from agriculture, soon after its foundations were securely laid. The steps by which men learned how to cultivate plants were, even at the dawn of the historic period, lost in the mists of antiquity; and we need not wonder that so many races ascribed to a god the introduction of this art, upon which all civilization rests. But to till

the soil has never been easy; so that clever men everywhere have used their wits to avoid this indispensable labor, forcing the brunt of it upon such of their neighbors as happened to be more brawny than intelligent, capturing slaves to till their fields, harnessing the horse and the ox to the plough, while they themselves engaged in the less laborious and more exciting occupations of warfare, commerce, politics, priestcraft, or in the more gifted civilizations, art, literature, science, and philosophy. At a certain stage in civilization nearly everywhere, to engage in manual labor was beneath the dignity of the well-born citizen; and agricultural tasks were considered fit only for serfs and slaves, frequently directed by an overseer who was himself a bondsman; while the landowner busied himself with pursuits deemed more worthy of a gentleman.[1] Satisfied if the toil and sweat of the many who lived miserably yielded an opulent leisure to a privileged few, the best minds only exceptionally took an interest in agriculture, whose rapid advance in Neolithic times, before this social stratification became pronounced and rigid, was followed by a long period of relative stagnation, in which many pressing problems remained unsolved.

Not the least of these problems was that of producing food with the minimum of strife between men and other forms of life, including both the domestic animals on the farms and the free animals which cultivation displaces from their ancestral lands. As was pointed out in Chapter XIII, section 5, man's effort to produce by his own exertions some of his prime

[1] Cp. Herodotus (Book V, 6) who wrote that among the Thracians "to be idle is accounted the most honorable thing, and to be a tiller of the ground the most dishonorable. To live by war and plunder is of all things the most glorious."

necessities, rather than tear them from the natural world in the manner of pre-agricultural savages, in itself tended to reduce conflict between himself and other living things; for he could now draw from a small area of tillage as much nourishment as he formerly derived from a much greater area of natural woodland or prairie. But agricultural practices have always included many disharmonies, which might have in large measure been removed, if through all the centuries of the historical period the keenest minds had taken a close interest in farming, instead of holding it beneath their dignity and turning their attention to other matters, which were in most instances less pressing.

This aloofness from the work of the farms did not prevent sensitive and observing men from becoming aware that much that took place on them was not well and might be improved. Before the Christian era, the Chinese sage Mencius told King Hsüan of Ch'i that the princely man keeps away from the cookhouse—where in a simple economy the farm makes contact with the dinner table—because he cannot bear to witness the bloody deeds that are done there.[1] The diligent compiler might collect hundreds of similar sentiments from the literature of both East and West through the intervening centuries; yet the situation remains much the same as that which distressed King Hsüan and Mencius, if it has not indeed deteriorated with the increasing mechanization of agriculture and the greater separation of the farm from the kitchen. The reason why there has been so little amelioration of man's relations with the animals on the farms is suggested by the sage himself. The higher sort of man too often turned his eyes away from the con-

[1] *The Book of Mencius,* translated from the Chinese by Lionel Giles (John Murray, 1942), pp. 26-28.

ditions which distressed him, instead of facing them squarely and bravely and employing his intelligence to remedy the situation. Yet the king and the philosopher, like professional men and city dwellers everywhere, cannot escape responsibility for what happens on the farms which produce the food which keeps them alive, even if they never see these farms and prefer not to think about all that takes place on them. By supporting these farms through the purchase of their products, they become morally implicated in the current practices of agriculture; just as one who knowingly purchases stolen goods shares the guilt with the thief.

Modern industrial civilization, whose prosperity depends so largely upon manipulative skills, is fast outgrowing the archaic disdain of manual labor. We no longer hold it degrading for the well-born to turn their attention to the meanest details of production, so long at least as this can be carried on under the guise of learned investigation and is well rewarded. Governments which make liberal outlays for agricultural research and development do not find it impossible to enlist in their projects men of high intelligence. But the attention of these experts is almost wholly directed to producing more food with less expense, and little effort is made to increase man's harmony with the other forms of life which agricultural operations affect. This must be left to those with the courage to tackle difficult problems, perhaps without remuneration, in the spirit of creative participation. Every increase in man's concord with the other living things which share the earth with him is a creative achievement, and nowhere can we work more profitably toward this end than on the farms.

5. In Industry

Next to preserving peace among ourselves and improving our relations with the rest of the living world, perhaps the most pressing task that confronts mankind is that of learning how to make what we need without that great sacrifice of the educative value of productive work which the factory system entails. There is no doubt that most kinds of manufactured articles are produced most cheaply in huge factories with many workers, each of whom performs endlessly some simple task, such as tending a machine; while only a few of the managers understand the whole process, and how it is related on the one hand to the available raw materials and on the other to the demand for the finished product. We appreciate such mass production, because it enables even the humbler ranks of society to enjoy necessities and even comforts which could scarcely be available to them under any other system, and which they can acquire with fewer hours of labor. But this gain has not been won without the loss of many features of great value in earlier methods of production on a smaller scale. The craftsman who makes an article by himself, or with a few apprentices, enjoys a richer and more varied experience, hence finds greater satisfaction in his work, than the laborer in a great factory. He uses both his head and his hands more completely, and in more diverse ways, than the attendant of a machine; for he must procure his raw materials, plan or design his wares, and finally market them; and at the same time he is often a teacher of apprentices and director of labor. In many crafts he can express his taste or artistry in his products; and nearly always he knows the gratification of seeing

something useful, and perhaps at the same time beautiful, take form under his watchful care.

Because his daily occupation afforded a more complete experience and was more satisfying to him, the artisan could remain contentedly at it for longer periods, and was less in need of miscellaneous diversions when his daily task was done, than the factory worker who spends seven or eight hours at some monotonous occupation, which affords slight opportunity to display either his manual skill or his capacity to plan and design. The true craftsman finds in his work the gratification which the factory hand seeks elsewhere, and with less success; for happiness, as Aristotle pointed out, arises neither from passive enjoyment nor possession, but chiefly from activity, from doing what we can do well without overstraining ourselves. There is no more pathetic fallacy than that the way to felicity is the accumulation of possessions. One who has fashioned things with his own hands knows that making yields more contentment than having; and perhaps only one who has made things himself is capable of fully appreciating and enjoying that which someone else has fashioned with loving care. When the possession of characterless articles fails to yield the expected satisfaction, the disappointed owner strives vainly to fill his empty heart by acquiring more and more, thereby stimulating the mass production of monotonous wares.

Moreover, the owner of a workshop, who buys his raw materials, elaborates them, and markets his products, learns the relation between means and ends, between effort and pecuniary return, in a manner quite impossible for the thronging workers in a huge establishment. Understanding how closely returns are conditioned by the effort put forth and how many obstacles must often be surmounted to win the rewards of honest labor, he is less likely to make exorbitant demands upon others, expecting an employer or the state to produce miraculous results with inadequate means. Men who watch vigilantly over the resources of their own enterprise usually acquire a sense of husbandry and economy which industrial civilization seems to be losing, and whose absence will bring disastrous consequences. Hence the artisan or shopkeeper is likely to be a better citizen than the worker in a great establishment, more capable of independent judgment because he must exercise it daily, less apt to be swayed by seductive propaganda, more insistent upon reason and measure in public expenditures.

These are the alternatives which the modern world faces: On one side an abundance of cheap goods, mass-produced by workers who find slight satisfaction in the performance of their monotonous tasks, hence are constantly hungry for cheap amusements, which themselves tend to be mass-produced; on the other side, fewer manufactured articles, but these produced by workers who enjoy making them, because they employ their faculties more completely and are themselves educated by their tasks, and who at the same time are less in need of miscellaneous excitements. On the one hand, more and cheaper goods; on the other, more rounded and happier men. To narrow the gap between these two alternatives is one of the greatest tasks which confronts modern civilization. One who contributes to the solution of this problem will perform a great constructive work, of far more value to mankind than the endless multiplication of inventions.

6. *In Government*

In the field of government, the modern world reveals the same tragic discrepancy between what is most expedient and what best conduces to the development of human faculty and character, that we have already recognized in industry. From the point of view of efficiency and economy in administration, the unification of vast territories under a single government offers many advantages. The great state requires fewer legislators and executives than would be necessary if it were divided into a number of small ones. Its public works can be carried out on a scale beyond the means of petty states; and such things as roads, canals, and flood control can be planned with a unity difficult to achieve when they must be completed under several jurisdictions. Commerce flows more freely when the same currency and law are in use over a vast territory and there are no international boundaries to be passed. A government which keeps a firm control over many cities and districts prevents constant petty strife, such as brought ruin to ancient Greece and was the bane of Europe in the Middle Ages. The large state as a rule finds it necessary to maintain a relatively smaller army, and to fortify relatively fewer places, than a small state whose frontier is longer in proportion to its area. But if the modern world contains fewer autonomous states which can fight each other, hence has fewer wars than the ancient world, this gain is offset by the vastly increased magnitude and destructiveness of recent conflicts, the greater expense of the military and naval establishments they require.

Opposed to these gains from the amalgamation of many districts into a single large state is the loss to the individual citizen in his greater distance from the

government and the smaller part he plays in its deliberations. In a despotism, it may be indifferent to the subject whether the realm in which he resides is large or small, for in neither case has he a voice in public affairs; but in a democracy the citizen will feel the difference. Democracy grew up in states, such as the city-states of ancient Greece and Italy, so small that the citizens could attend in person the legislative assemblies, make their voices heard in public discussions, and cast their votes directly for or against each proposed measure. Since in ancient times democracy implied the direct participation of citizens in the government, ancient democracies were necessarily small; and it was not until the development of representative government in modern times that a country could be at once extensive and democratic. As democracies became greater and more populous and enfranchised a larger proportion of the whole population, each citizen was not only farther removed from the central government, but even from the man he selected to represent him in it; for it is impossible for a representative to know personally, and be known by, the tens or hundreds of thousands of his constituents. With his greater distance from the government, with his vote diluted by thousands of others often carelessly cast, with the growing complexity of public issues and the difficulty of learning all their implications, the citizen tends to lose the sense of personal responsibility for the course of national affairs and to become careless of the welfare of his nation. How to combine the manifold advantages of great countries with the greater participation in government and feeling of responsibility that was possible in an ancient city-state, is a problem whose solution is not immediately apparent; and for this very reason it should challenge

those who aspire to contribute largely to the advancement of mankind.

7. *In the Fine Arts*

The artist is perhaps the most direct and revealing expression of the creative energy in man. As many who aspire to produce work of value in art or literature learn to their sorrow, such productions do not depend wholly upon force of will and intensity of application—although these, too, are necessary—but to a large degree upon innate endowments, which no one can win for himself nor by taking thought procure for his children. The true poet or artist is an instrument which the creative energy has chosen for itself, sometimes most capriciously, it seems, and with little regard for its over-all adequacy; so that he is often like a ship laden with more precious cargo than it can well carry, like a wire charged with more electric current than it was intended to conduct, and in constant peril of foundering or burning out. Ideally, we should have artists and poets all of whose endowments are proportioned to their outstanding gift, so that they may bear their genius with ease, grace, and balance, with satisfaction to themselves and to those about them. Actually, this only exceptionally occurs; the gifted one all too frequently lacks a corresponding strength of body or such mental qualities as balance and restraint; his genius is a source of tribulation to himself and peril to society, a sort of divine madness, as Plato recognized long ago.

The arts, whether in the form of such spontaneous artistry as birds display in their songs or the more labored productions of men, are the flowering of the creative process, the triumphant culmination of a long

evolution. Not until an extensive foundation of utilitarian structures and functions has been laid can life express itself in beautiful forms, colors, and sounds, which contribute much to its worth but nothing to its survival. They represent an excess of energy and vitality, over and above what is needed for mere existence; and when life languishes, they are among the first of its expressions to decay.

Many aspire to adorn the tree of life with its loveliest blossoms; but unless they are born with gifts which can be neither purchased nor won by patient effort, this high privilege is denied them. In art and literature it is the rare and outstanding which is significant and wins wide attention. No matter how high the general level of excellence in painting or writing poetry may become in a community, it will still be the few who rise above their contemporaries who make the valuable and lasting contributions. But those who lack the special gifts required for such artistic creation may at least serve by helping to maintain the sort of civilization which stimulates and encourages the artist's efforts. In order to flower from time to time, a tree must have many roots drawing water and salts in the darkness beneath the ground, many green leaves patiently elaborating food in the sunlight.

Because of the need of special endowments not to be had for the asking, it is not given to everyone to carry creation to higher levels through the work of the artist. And those who feel the creative energy stirring within them, driving them to give it expression in works of beauty and truth, often cannot help but be its agents, although in many instances they might lead calmer and happier lives if they could pluck the creative urge from their spirits and cast it far away. Willing or unwilling, they seem to be the chosen instru-

ments of some higher power. Their *voluntary* contribution to the creative process, then, is not so much their genius and the imperious need to give it play, for this has been in a manner thrust upon them, but the determination to give their special powers such direction that they will make the greatest possible contribution to creation as a whole. The artist may, indeed, give such a turn to his productions in obedience to a wholesome instinct and sound vital impulses which he has never stopped to analyze. But he will be far more apt to make the best use of his exceptional endowments, if he has a clear conception of the relation of artistic creation to the creative process as a whole and to other human endeavors.

In Chapter III we pointed out that harmonization, the process which formed a world fit to support life and builds up all the organized beings it contains, including ourselves, does not cease abruptly when it has molded a human body and brought it to maturity. Like most processes, it acquires a momentum which resists sudden stoppage. With us, this forward impetus leads to certain activities, analogous to growth in that they consist in building up harmonious patterns with heterogeneous materials. Among these activities are the quest of knowledge or truth, which consists not only in accumulating facts but perhaps even more in giving coherence to the manifold contents of experience; moral endeavor, which consists in striving to bring order and harmony into our dealings with all the beings that surround us; religion, which is above all a striving to attain harmony with a comprehensive whole, conceived as extending beyond the phenomenal world and embracing it; and art, which is the creation of beauty by the harmonious blending of diverse materials, as lines, masses, and colors in the case of painting,

tones differing in pitch, quality, and intensity in the case of music. Thus art, like moral endeavor and religion, is a segment of harmonization, a particular development of this universal process at its higher levels. Beauty, whether produced by art or by nature, is a mode of harmony, like truth, friendship, and goodness.

The clear vision of the relation of his special endeavor to the whole process of which it is a part, and to those other branches of the process that are coördinate with it, should give the artist a fresh conception of his function and his contribution to life. In the first place, he is concerned with beauty, primarily in its creation, but in hardly less degree with its appreciation and interpretation, as in leading us to see and respond to beautiful aspects of nature which but for his keener vision we might overlook. The whole function of the artist is to enhance our lives and refine our sentiments by heightening our awareness of beauty in all its forms. To neglect this high calling for some other endeavor, as to teach morals, religion, patriotism, or natural history, is to abandon the peculiar office of the artist and encroach on other fields. Although he may lend powerful support to these endeavors, he must accomplish this without compromising his primary purpose; for to be false to the principles of one's art in order to promote some other interest, as morality or patriotism, is not only to cheapen and degrade art but to give a weak and unwholesome support to the second interest. It is often not so much through teaching as through association that art can best serve allied endeavors. It has, for example, been from an early period closely linked with religion, which has inspired much of its finest work. Yet it is not the duty of art to teach religion—although it may do this

incidentally—but rather to bring to it that intensification and exaltation of feeling which supreme beauty is capable of stirring up in us, and which by flowing over to the associated religious doctrines and practices strengthens our attachment to them.

Art, then, may serve religion, morality, natural history, civic virtue, or any other human endeavor, so long as it can do so as an equal partner zealously guarding its own integrity, never as a minion effacing its own personality before an imperious master. In such a free alliance, both partners are strengthened, art by acquiring fresh themes and powerful motives, the associated endeavor by the vividness and intensity of feeling which art brings to it. Art, however, is under no compulsion to join forces with any other discipline; for even alone it contributes abundantly to human life. Yet it is of the utmost importance that art avoid conflict with these cognate activities. It would be tragic if the highest modes of harmony clashed together, and each tended to cancel the beneficial effects of the other. Whatever his medium, the artist strives to blend discrete elements into a harmonious composition; and the greater his success, the more perfect the beauty he gives us. Yet his production, whether a painting, a statue, a melody, or a poem, does not float free in the void, but arises in the midst of a society which simultaneously strives to advance itself in other directions, as through moral, religious, civic, and scientific endeavors. When these languish and decay, art commonly declines along with them. Hence the very thirst for harmony which inspires the artist's work should lead him to cultivate friendly relations with these other endeavors.

As a picture loses much of its appeal if mounted in an inappropriate frame or hung against a background

of the wrong color, so an artistic production is weakened by clashing with the highest aspirations of the culture that gave birth to it. If art is under no compulsion to subordinate itself to morality, it must at least avoid conflict with the best ethical judgment of its time. Although its primary office is not to teach lessons of any kind, other than the exalting lesson of beauty, it should not clash with the established knowledge of its age. When the artist sets about his work with a keen awareness of the close relation of art to allied expressions of harmonization, he makes the maximum contribution to the life of his generation, and perhaps of succeeding generations; when he loses sight of the wider connections of his work and his obligation to a comprehensive whole, he tends to produce those meaningless absurdities which we so often associate with the irresponsible doctrine of "art for art's sake." It would be strange if art could make good a claim to independence which cannot be granted to religion, ethics, philosophy, or science, none of which is significant in isolation, but only as it serves life as a whole.

8. *Final Considerations*

One of the greatest of the creative tasks that face mankind is the establishment of perpetual peace among nations. Ideally, this should take precedence over every other endeavor; for universal peace would afford the optimum condition for the advancement of all the other efforts we have been considering. Whether we strive to ennoble human character, to dwell in greater harmony with the rest of the living world, to produce the essentials of life in a manner that does not mechanize men, to make the people in the highest degree self-governing, or to advance knowledge and

the fine arts, war is the greatest obstacle that confronts us. It stirs up all those ugly, disruptive passions that we struggle to subdue. It forces us to tear vast quantities of materials from the natural world, with a haste that overrules foresight and compassion. It demands of industry an immense volume of costly weapons and equipment, which must be turned out with an urgency that precludes attention to the educative values of productive labor. It drives the belligerent governments to request or arbitrarily assume an increase in their powers, avowedly for the duration of the emergency, but often with effects which are difficult to undo after the return of peace. It diverts attention from the pursuit of the arts and sciences, other than those of immediate use in warfare, and may lead to national exhaustion, followed by intellectual and spiritual degeneration.

Yet if ideally we should first establish peace as the solid foundation for all our highest creative endeavors, perhaps practically we must be content if it comes at the end, and push forward our other tasks as well as we can, with all the difficulties and recurrent setbacks which war imposes. For it seems doubtful that we shall have peace until men become a great deal better than they are: wiser, more generous, more self-controlled, with a truer appreciation of values. It appears also useless to hope that peace will ever be achieved, if we wait for governments to bring it about through their usual channels of negotiations, treaties, diplomatic conferences, and international assemblies where representation is by national states. For the whole tradition of governments, from the earliest times to the present day, is so steeped in international distrust, intrigue, and military affairs, that they are not likely soon to purify themselves of these obstructive attitudes; and, moreover, the men who rise to be heads of governments are on the whole too avid of power to be true friends of peace. In creating a pacific world, the initiative must come directly from the people of all the nations together, who show such strong determination to dwell in harmony with each other that their governments will find it futile to oppose their will. Before men can bring peace into the world, they must bring it into their own hearts; and they must somehow manage to do this in spite of recurrent wars, with all the hatred and insensate fury they breed.

Most of the creative tasks we have considered in this chapter are as difficult as they are vast and urgent, so that we must await men of exceptional ability to show us how to advance them. Yet once such leaders arise, they will need the support and encouragement of multitudes; so that all will enjoy the privilege of contributing to these great undertakings under their guidance. Meanwhile, the opportunity for creative participation in humbler ways is not lacking to each of us. To plant a garden, a tree, or a flower; to drop a true and exalting thought into a receptive mind; to ease the drudgery of man or beast; to cultivate our own higher nature and bring concord into our personal relations—these are constructive tasks within reach of all. And perhaps if enough of us would participate in creation in these more modest ways, the solution of the larger problems would become clear and easy.

Chapter XVII

THE CHILD'S SPIRITUAL TRAINING

1. *Should We Wish to Give Life to Others?*

I can imagine that as he approaches the end of this book, the reader who is a parent will find certain difficulties in our doctrine. "It is all very well," he will say, "for an adult with a trained mind to orient his life by a deity who reveals himself as a constructive process rather than a person. The concept of the Divine is not without a certain appeal; for it makes us aware of the intimate relation of our own best impulses to something widely diffused in the world and indeed its governing principle, and it spares us many of the insoluble perplexities of conventional theology. But what shall I teach my children? Can they conceive divinity except as a person? Can the notion of a process, however grand and inspiring it might appear to a cultivated intelligence, make an appeal to a child just learning the alphabet? If it is true that in mental no less than corporeal development the individual more or less closely repeats the evolutionary history of its stock, must not the child first learn to fear an anthropomorphic god such as his ancestors worshipped? Would it not be better to teach the little one to love and pray to a god he can understand, even if he must picture him as a reverend old gentleman in the sky, and then little by little, as his mind develops, modify his concept of deity to conform with our more philosophic views? And if I cannot implant in my

child's breast fear of the Lord, because the Divine you would have him acknowledge is wholly beyond his comprehension, how can I instruct him in the fundamental rules of morality, which for generations have been taught to us as divine commandments, and derive their compelling authority from that view?"

These criticisms are not without force. Since the tree grows as the twig is bent in its earliest and most pliable stage, nothing so influences the human mind as the impressions it receives in childhood. In the present chapter we shall undertake to clear up some of these difficulties. But first let us consider in what circumstances we should wish to beget children, and the extent of the obligation which parenthood imposes upon us. All too commonly parents bring children into the world with less careful forethought than they use in planning a banquet, arranging a journey, or investing money. Yet of all human undertakings, that of rearing children is the most onerous and solemn. When we beget offspring, we become responsible not only for fostering the growth of a healthy animal and training an intelligence, but also for guiding a spiritual being on the first uncertain steps of its long journey, and for adding a useful member to society.

Whether or not a man and a woman deliberately decide to beget children must depend largely upon their own experience of life. If one is generous, his eagerness to give life to others should be directly proportional to his own satisfaction in living. If he has found life sorrowful and dreary, a burden that he yearns to shake off, it would be most inconsiderate of him to wish to pass on this heavy load to others. But the unselfish man, finding life a pleasant or at least an interesting adventure, wishes to bring successors into the world that they may likewise enjoy it. Such a man feels that

he owes a debt for the gift of life, an obligation that can be fulfilled only by repayment in kind; and since he cannot repay his parents in this fashion, he cancels the debt through his offspring. Moreover, the thoughtful, conscientious person would not deliberately bring children into the world until he had seen enough of life to decide whether it is an experience that he would wish to repeat, even vicariously. If of a cautious disposition, he may, like the ancient Greeks, feel that it is imprudent to pass judgment on his life until he has seen the whole of it, and delay making a decision as to the fairness of giving existence to others until that decision has become inconsequential. Hence, from the point of view of the preservation of the species, it is fortunate that most people beget offspring at that period when the full, strong current of life carries them along so swiftly that they can hardly pause to assess its joys and sorrows.

Parenthood, as Bertrand Russell pointed out, should be welcomed as a source of happiness.[1] Moreover, it is an experience necessary for the rounding out of our own life in all its aspects through the fulfillment of one of the most powerful of vital urges, and an opportunity for spiritual and mental growth. But these considerations are not in themselves sufficient to induce the conscientious person deliberately to beget children. He will first try to decide whether life will be a boon to them. Moreover, he will not base his decision merely upon the accidental circumstances of his own life, but approach the question from a more fundamental point of view, with some regard for ultimate values beyond accident. Some lightly say: "Life has been good to me; so far as it has gone, it has been

1 *The Conquest of Happiness* (Horace Liveright, 1930), Chapter 13.

an agreeable and exciting adventure; I have enjoyed satisfactory health and have not lacked money; I have a comfortable house, a good and faithful wife, and charming friends. I see no reason why my circumstances should deteriorate as I grow older." But such a one cannot be sure that he will not tomorrow lose all those external benefits which have made life pleasant for him, as by war, a natural cataclysm, a financial debacle, or an incurable disease; far less can he guarantee that his children will not be crippled, poor, desolate, and friendless. Such mishaps frequently befall the progeny of the wealthiest and most fortunate of men. Unless we can detect in life some significance and value independent of the vagaries of fortune, we shall have no answer if our child some day asks us bitterly: "Father (or Mother) why did you bring me into this world of misery and woe?" Only if we hold that there is within us something which, when fortified by sound principles, can pass inviolate through the worst that the world can do to us, shall we be able to meet without flinching the reproachful gaze which our child turns upon us. On the whole, the higher religions, and religious philosophies like Stoicism, have taught that something of great value, even the highest value, can by adequate effort be salvaged from the most desperate external circumstances into which men can fall; but sceptical and pragmatic systems of thought have been unable to afford this assurance. Perhaps, then, only a religious view of life can justify the thoughtful, conscientious man or woman in giving existence to others.

2. *Are We Fit to Be Parents?*

In addition to these general questions, there are certain more special ones which the thoughtful man

and woman will consider before deciding to become parents. Although on the whole human life may be an experience worth repeating, few people would contend that its value is quite independent of its conditions and circumstances. A defective constitution, physical or mental, an unfortunate environment in childhood, may oppose obstacles to happiness which the most resolute mind can hardly overcome. Even worse, they may make it impossible for the child to acquire those principles and cultivate those virtues which, as certain religions and philosophies have contended, enable the mature man to rise victorious over the most atrocious outrages of fortune. Hence the prospective parents will consider whether in their actual environment and economic situation they can give their children a promising start in life. Such forethought has indeed become fairly widespread among the more prudent classes. But what is perhaps more rare is a searching appraisal of the personal qualifications of those who contemplate becoming parents; for no ethically responsible person would wish to transmit to others defects which have seriously impaired or embittered his own life. Whether we create with our minds, with our hands, or with our bodies, we should wish to produce nothing that is not sound and perfect of its kind.

Not only is there the question of a sound constitution, in body and mind, but the even more searching one of moral fitness for parenthood. We cannot too often ask ourselves in our youth "Am I good enough to be a parent?" Child psychologists tell us, what indeed we may vaguely remember from our own childhood, that the little one looks upon his father or mother as a god or goddess, a perfect being, wise,

powerful, just, and good.[1] The thoughtful youth or maiden, who hopes some day to be a parent, will take this as a challenge to be worthy of the character which may one day be ascribed to him by his child; and if he cannot, so far as is humanly possible, fill this inevitable role, he may prefer to remain childless rather than place himself in a false position. Moreover, the consideration that gratitude for all that his parents have given him, no less than that reverence for them which has nearly everywhere been held as one of the foremost virtues, make the dutiful child hesitate to criticise the shortcomings of his parents, should cause the latter to be exceedingly careful to avoid the occasion for such criticism. Life has few disillusions so cruel as that of growing up to find that the father or mother we once in childish innocence and trust looked upon as godlike is not even one of the nobler types of manhood or womanhood.

This self-appraisal of one's adequacy for parenthood presents obvious difficulties. Those who in mind and character are least fit to raise children are just the ones who will beget them without considering their own qualifications, and beget them in greatest numbers. Those whose ideals are highest will be most acutely aware of their own shortcomings, and perhaps refrain from rearing children who in every respect would have been well above the average. The prospective parents might ask their friends to help pass judgment upon their qualifications; but since one's intimates are as a rule of about the same quality as oneself, where a negative judgment is most needed it would be least likely to be forthcoming. Moreover, perhaps it would require the blunt forthrightness of a Diogenes

[1] Jean Piaget, *The Moral Judgment of the Child* (English translation by Marjorie Gabain, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1932), Chapter IV.

to tell one's friend that we deem him unfit, especially morally unfit, for parenthood. Most of us, I fear, would attempt to sidle out of such a question. If, in view of these difficulties, we make the state arbiter of who is fit to be a parent, we might prepare the way for an intolerable tyranny. A bureaucracy might determine, in accordance with certain specified standards, physical adequacy for parenthood, but it would hardly be competent to assess moral adequacy. As to the latter, one's own conscience must be the final court of appeal; and just where a vetoing decision is most called for, it is least likely to be given.

Life seems bent upon perpetuating itself at all costs; and the circumstances that make human life least attractive at the same time that they threaten its extinction, as war, plague, and direst poverty, are the ones which stimulate its most rapid increase, as though as a precaution against the extermination of the race. We must humbly accept this situation, without which we might not be here; yet at the same time we should not forget that the impulse to rise to a higher and more perfect form is no less an expression of life than the urge to perpetuate itself at any price. It is by the combination of these two tendencies that all higher types evolve; and since we can safely leave to blind vital impulses the perpetuation of mankind in sufficient quantity, we must as moral agents concern ourselves largely with its elevation in quality.

3. *The Child More Receptive of Attitudes than of Concepts*

The parents' obligation to the child is fourfold: fostering the growth of his body, training his mind, developing his character and spiritual outlook, and

at the same time giving him a happy childhood. Although we may consider all of these requirements to be of equal importance, they do not impose equal demands upon the parents' own judgment and wisdom. If given a fair opportunity, nature will take care of the body's growth; and if things go wrong, we do better to consult a physician or a dietician than to experiment with home cures. In most civilized communities, the state takes adequate measures for training the child's mind; at least, it teaches him what is most necessary for the practical affairs of a commonplace life, and prepares him to advance into the higher realms of thought if he has the aptitude for this. But nature, which develops such marvellously adequate systems of innate behavior in many other animals, lays only the bare foundations of human conduct, character, and spiritual life. The separation of church and state is an admission by the latter that spiritual matters are too complex, uncertain, and individually variable to be controlled by legislation. Hence the parents are almost wholly responsible for directing the child's spiritual growth; and whether they undertake to do this themselves or entrust the task to some established religious organization, depends upon their uncoerced decision and is their peculiar responsibility. Providing for the child's physical welfare and secular education are obligations in fulfilling which the parents, in the majority of civilized communities, can safely follow the standards there prevailing; guiding the child's spiritual development is a more delicate matter, which imposes a greater burden upon their own wisdom and insight. Yet the effort to meet this obligation, exacting as it is, will bring its own reward; for there is scarcely any other activity which so helps a man to de-

velop his own character as that of guiding the formation of his child's.

Nature, moreover, gives us a hint as to how we should proceed to lay the foundation of the child's spiritual life. Montesquieu long ago remarked: "People have it generally in their power to communicate their ideas to their children; but they are still better able to transfuse their passions."[1] It is far easier to influence the child's attitudes and stir up his emotions than to teach him abstract principles or even concrete facts. He adheres to a cause through imitation long before he is ready to inquire into its reason or justice; he acquires loyalties by contagion, but is impatient of formality and ritual. Hence it so commonly happens that children become passionately patriotic, while their conception of their country includes hardly more than the vicinity of their home and school; they are the most devoted adherents to their father's political party, although quite ignorant of its aims; they become warmly attached to the ancestral church, without the least understanding of its doctrines. They may, with parental encouragement, pride themselves on being good children, while still lacking the rudiments of ethical judgment.

This propensity of children to imitate the mental attitudes no less than the actions of their elders has been of the greatest importance in the evolution of social life; for it cements the group together; but it has dangers no less than advantages. Too often parents try to ease the burden of training their children by playing upon this natural clannishness of childhood. By fostering blind allegiance to particular groups with all their dogmas and shibboleths, they

[1] *The Spirit of Laws*, Book IV, Chapter 5.

evade the problem of developing the child's character so that eventually he will be able to form, or at least to evaluate, principles of conduct, and guide his life with discrimination. If dull and uninquiring, the child may grow up intensely narrow and bigoted, a fierce partisan of causes and creeds he is incapable of understanding. At the other extreme, he may outgrow and throw off his allegiance to doctrines and institutions, without having elaborated principles for his own guidance. Our safest course is to foster the child's adherence to only the broadest and most universal principles —to those most generally accepted by honest and thoughtful men everywhere and least open to doubt. If we observe this precaution, it will be unlikely that in future years, when questioning the validity of some particular creed or dogma, he will at the same time cast aside the fundamentals of right conduct.

4. *A Religious Attitude Should Precede Religious Concepts*

Although the plasticity of the child's attitudes constitutes a grave danger to himself, leaving him vulnerable to all sorts of unwholesome influences, it at the same time offers to the wise guardian the readiest means of laying the foundations of his spiritual life. If sometimes love grows out of understanding, perhaps more often it leads to an effort to understand. That which by its amiable qualities wins our devotion or admiration often stirs up in us the desire for fuller knowledge; for by understanding what we love we bind it more closely to us and make it more truly ours. But since the Divine is not an object among objects to be perceived through the senses, nor is it a concept easy for callow minds to grasp, we can scarcely expect chil-

dren to love it as an idea, as Aristotle loved that child of his intense intellectual labor, his Unmoved Mover. Hence we must lead up to the love of the Divine through love of its creations. We should in the first place strive to cultivate in the child an affectionate appreciation of all that we spontaneously call beautiful and good: flowers and trees, verdant meadows and sparkling brooks, the blue sky of day and the starry firmament of night, the mother love of animals of all kinds, the sheltering home, the generous and heroic deeds of men. Since the child so readily contracts the attitudes of those whom he trusts and respects, the parents' feeling toward these things, as revealed by their daily lives, their manner of treating or speaking of them, will influence him more strongly than much formal teaching or preaching. Thus the surest and safest approach to the Divine is that suggested by the well known verses of Coleridge:

He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small.

When the child has begun to love the good and beautiful things which surround him, to be grateful for the blessings of his home and his parents' love, to serve with unselfish devotion his family and playmates and animal friends, it is time to lead his thoughts toward the source of all that he values and enjoys. As soon as he is old enough, we might try to make him understand that nothing comes by chance, but there is a cause of all things, and the ultimate source of all things good is the same. This we call the Divine, or simply God. Something so great and powerful is not readily grasped by a child who still does not understand the structure or mode of operation of the machines that serve him every day, of what causes the changes in the seasons and the weather, or the history

of his country, or how to solve a simple problem in arithmetic. If he strengthens and disciplines his mind by trying to understand some of these things, he will be better able to conceive the greatest of all things—that which is not really a thing, but the source of things that have name and form.

Meanwhile, although the little child cannot yet comprehend what we mean by the Divine, he may be brought to feel its presence everywhere. Whenever he loves any being, and especially when this love is strong enough to impel him to thoughtful and helpful acts, it is the Divine which causes this love within him; and through it he begins to know God, who is most adequately revealed to us as love. Whenever he sees beauty, especially in some form that strongly arrests his attention, he may be reminded that the Divine is the source of all beauty; and wherever he recognizes goodness, there also he should be led to acknowledge the Divine as its primary cause. Thus, little by little, we inculcate into the child a grateful and reverential attitude toward the source of his own life, of the lives of all he knows and loves, and of all that gives value to life. And this, I believe, may be accomplished without encouraging the growth in his mind of a concept of deity so anthropomorphic or schematic that we know it to be ridiculously false or inadequate. For it is not a theological *idea*, but a religious *attitude* to life, that we are striving to cultivate.

5. *A Challenge to Discovery*

Behind this attitude, beyond all those objects and situations which encourage its growth and toward which it is immediately directed, lies a great Unknown, for which the name "Divine", or "God", or any other

that seems convenient, stands as a symbol and a constant reminder. We should be exceedingly careful that for the child the name does not denote a dogma but suggests a mystery—a challenge to increase his understanding through his own experience. Although he can never fully understand the nature of the Divine, he may advance ever closer to it through his own unremitting exertions. The more devoted his effort, the more willing he is to forgo advantages of less worth for this insight of supreme value, the nearer he will come to an adequate knowledge of the Divine. If at the beginning of life he were granted full insight into this greatest of mysteries, he could find no other endeavor of equal importance to stimulate his exertions, and his life would lose much of its significance. Hence he should not be dissatisfied nor feel cheated that knowledge of the Divine is not vouchsafed to him all at once, even before his mind and character are formed; but rather he should be grateful to have before him this supreme endeavor, which more than all else can give high purpose to life's brief span.

I believe that children, so highly impressionable to ill-defined ideas of things beyond their power of conception, whose attitudes are so readily influenced, may be taught to reverence something whose only stated attributes are duration, extension, and beneficent power far exceeding their comprehension, and which is the primal source of all they love and value. Or if this notion be beyond their grasp, let them at least learn to repeat with respect some name for the Divine, which will be to them as a mystic symbol, and a constant reminder that beyond the impressions of their senses lies a region they may never know yet can never afford to forget. Reverent regard for a Cause upon which his being depends, yet whose nature transcends the

grasp of his dawning intelligence, is an attitude so broad and fundamental that it is hardly possible that the child should ever outgrow it. No matter what religion or what philosophy worthy of the name he may in later years espouse, if he bring to it this feeling he will have a secure foundation on which to build his spiritual life. Such an attitude of spirit is like a precious metal in its native form, which we may guard for years without fear of deterioration, knowing well that whatever figure or coin we eventually decide to cast with it will be sound and enduring. But teach the child to believe in a god of dogmatically given attributes, whether taken from the Greek, Hebrew, Hindu, or any other theology, and he may all too soon discover that it is an image of clay, which he shatters with a critical hammer into a thousand fragments that he deems of too little value to be gathered up. Let us, then, refrain from attempting to convey to unformed minds a concept which demands the greatest exertion of a disciplined intelligence; let us rather persuade them that the highest purpose of their existence is to prepare themselves for this understanding.

Moreover, we should help the child to hold faith that some ultimate good lies beyond all the trials, disappointments, hardships, and even sufferings, which with advancing years are apt to come increasingly to him. Love, reverence, devotion, a faith which need not conflict with reason—these form an adequate foundation for a good and religious life; and with wisdom and patience we can cultivate them without teaching a single arrogant dogma. Because such an attitude is not confined to the intellect but pervades the whole personality, it is not easily destroyed. Although it might by a long course of bitter experience be transmuted into a quite different attitude, it is almost in-

vulnerable to argument, because it does not rest upon the acceptance of doctrines or supposed facts which transcend experience. Thus it is the firmest foundation for a religious life that we could possibly lay. But if we support our religious teaching upon some alleged historical event, or some precarious metaphysical speculation, we have built upon a foundation which may some day crumble under the hammer blows of a critical intelligence, resulting in the collapse of the whole edifice we have so carefully and lovingly raised.

Above all, it is unwise lightly to invoke the name of God in the training of children. It is a dangerous and scarcely pardonable practice to persuade them to perform their little duties so that "God will love you," to dissuade them from naughtiness by alleging that "God will be angry," or "God will not like you." Not only do such loose statements encourage an anthropomorphic concept of God; they imply an easy familiarity with him, an intimate knowledge of his wishes, that can only cheapen and degrade the idea of the Supreme. Should the child with increasing years develop a perspicacious mind, he may come to link the idea of God with ignorant pretensions to knowledge; and because associations formed in childhood are difficult to unbind even with the aid of all the arguments a more mature understanding may bring to bear, such an association may become extremely harmful. It is far better that the parents so cultivate the affection of their child that to hold the love of his father or mother will be a sufficient incentive to good behavior; or this failing, the judicious application of the rod will leave less harmful after-effects upon the little one's body than the injudicious use of the name of God upon his mind.

6. *The Approaches to Ethics*

Religion is nearly everywhere joined by the closest bonds to a code of conduct which derives its sanction from the supreme object of its worship, and is in turn used to support the religious edifice. In their inclusion of an ethical content, religions have found great difficulty in striking a proper balance and have often been most inconsistent. If, on the one hand, they take the point of view that man's relation to the deity is independent of his conduct toward creatures, then their moral injunctions seem superfluous with reference to their primary endeavor; and it might increase their efficiency to concentrate their effort upon the direct approach to their god, leaving ethics to be pursued as a wholly independent discipline. If, on the other hand, they hold, in the manner of all the higher religions, that man's relation to his god is profoundly affected by his treatment of creatures, then if consistent they must recognize that this is true with regard to *all* cretures; for all are, in their own view, creations of the god. Although a civic or a utilitarian ethic might confine itself narrowly to men's conduct toward other men, a truly religious ethic cannot without inconsistency be so circumscribed. If religion includes ethics at all, it must by its own presuppositions recognize that how we act toward trees, flowers, animals, springs and brooks, the soil, and perhaps even such productions of man as books, pictures, statuary, and buildings, affect our relationship to the deity hardly less than this is affected by our dealings with our human neighbors.

We shall greatly facilitate the moral education of children if we clearly distinguish the two stages in the ethical development of the individual. The first is the

recognition of values, the appreciation of the aims or ends of conduct; the second is the understanding of the consequences of our acts. The first is largely affective and synthetic; the second, intellectual and analytic. If we were to give a big and substantial meal to a man dying of hunger, our aim would be ethical but our procedure unethical, resulting from ignorance of the harmful effect of a large quantity of food ingested all at once by a stomach that has long been empty. These two aspects of morality are commonly recognized by our separate appraisal of motives and their consequences.

In nurturing the child's religious attitude in the manner we have already suggested, we have at the same time laid the foundation of his morality, possibly without teaching him a single ethical injunction. Those things which he loves he will cherish and protect, he will wish to see well and whole and happy. The members of his family, the servants, his teachers and playmates, are for him the representatives of mankind. His pets, the farm animals, the birds and squirrels among the surrounding trees, form almost his whole conception of the animal kingdom. The azure sky, the neighboring hills and streams, the flowers in his mother's garden, the ornaments in the house, the pictures on the walls and in his books, are his immediate experience of beauty. Truth for him consists largely in the accurate reporting of his own conduct and that of his playmates. Those acts which win the approval of parents and teachers are right—he has no other criterion. This is the little world in which the child must lay the affective foundations of righteousness, cultivate his sense of values, and develop his ethical judgment. He has already begun to love the things about him which provide pleasure, amusement, or a

feeling of well-being and security. Now we must help him to understand how some of his acts benefit, others injure, the things he loves. When something he cherishes is made happy, improved, or strengthened, he will be glad; when it is pained, impaired, or weakened, he will be sad—if wise, we shall attempt to intensify these spontaneous reactions. As his understanding improves, we shall help him to follow the consequences of his deeds through ever longer sequences, demonstrating how acts that he supposed to be innocent may have baneful effects that he failed to foresee, how acts apparently harmful lead at times to unsuspected benefits.

When we have fostered the child's love of good in all its forms and trained him to follow the causal sequences set in motion by his deeds, we have endowed him with something far more precious, because more universal and flexible, than any set of rules that may be thoughtlessly recited. Instead of drilling him to repeat, parrot-like, a few words, we have taught him the alphabet of ethics, with which numberless words can be compounded. His future growth in moral stature will then depend upon the widening of his sympathies, the growth of his experience, and the maturation of his intellect. Given kindness toward other living things, love of beauty and truth, and reverence for the Divine, the more science he has and the more he can reason from cause to effect, the more moral he will be; without this affective background, the more he knows the more dangerous to society he may become.

There are other approaches to ethics which might be used to supplement or reinforce that which we have briefly outlined. In a subject so important to the happiness of the individual and the welfare of society, no enlightening philosophy and no fortifying attitude

should be wholly neglected; and children vary so much in temperament that considerations which bear great weight with some may be almost ineffective with others. There is the approach of intelligent self-interest—certainly the most direct and common-sense method of bringing home certain elementary moral truths, although perhaps not one capable of the highest development. If I steal my neighbor's bicycle, he may steal mine—which would be most annoying. If dishonesty becomes prevalent, no one will be able to trust his neighbor; and our whole economic structure, based largely upon a system of credits, will crumble, to everyone's hardship and distress. It will certainly do the child no harm to be aware of these utilitarian arguments, yet with most children I would not stress them. I should leave only the hardest and least affectionate of them to learn some of the rudiments of profitable social conduct in the old, bitter school of an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. This method of teaching ethics would make us more selfish and calculating than we naturally are. It seems far better to develop the pride of speaking truly, touching only what is our own, acting with justice toward all men and kindness to all creatures, simply because conduct of this sort is in accordance with our nature and congenial to us. It is helpful, too, to foster the attitude that lying, cheating, blaspheming, and all the other sins and peccadilloes are "not cricket"—not playing the game as men by long experience have learned that they must play it, in order to live together with some semblance of decency.

7. *The Child's Debt to His Parents*

Not the least of the charms of rearing children is

that we can, in many instances, go a long way toward making them what we ourselves aspired to be, and were perhaps prevented from becoming by the harsh necessity of supporting ourselves in a grasping, competitive society. We can often train them to be kind, gentle, generous, frank, and cheerful, to love what is beautiful and noble, to entertain lofty sentiments. But unhappily the day will come when, to be fair to our children, we must begin to modify our work, toning down some of the attitudes we have encouraged in them. It would not do to have their

> gentleness too rudely hurl'd
> On this wide earth of hate and fear.[1]

The openness, the trustfulness, the unselfishness, which rest like a wreath of flowers upon the child in the bosom of the home, might prove the undoing of the man in the hard world of business. Without destroying these precious qualities, we must enclose them in the steel armor of reserve, self-interest, suspicion, and distrust, before we permit the youth to sally forth into the battle of life. And he will be fortunate if this defensive attitude remains superficial, a mask to face the world, and does not little by little penetrate to the underlying qualities of character; until at length his whole spirit has become indurated like his outer integument.

Widespread in the ancient world was the view that the child owes his parents, especially the father, a debt almost too great ever to be repaid in full. Thus *Ecclesiasticus* (7: 29) asks: "How canst thou ever recompense them for what they have done for thee?" And Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics,* 1163b, 14-28) held that a son owes his father more than he can pos-

[1] Matthew Arnold, *Switzerland,* 3.

sibly repay. Ancient Hindu literature contains many similar sentiments. The law of Solon which relieved of the duty of supporting his parents in their declining years the son to whom they had not taught some remunerative vocation, was an early step in the mitigation of the ancient stringency of filial obligations. In modern times, opinion has swung far in the opposite direction; and there are fathers who hold that their children are in no sense under obligation to them. The just view seems to lie between these two extremes. For mere existence, I believe that the child owes nothing to the parents, who perhaps did not intentionally give him a life which certainly he never requested. In begetting offspring, men are often the involuntary agents of vital forces too deep and strong to be resisted; ultimately, it is to life itself, rather than to any particular organism, that each living thing owes its existence. Or if we prefer to believe that an obligation is incurred for the boon of living, in giving birth to a child the parents merely cancelled the debt which they owed to the grandparents and could not otherwise repay. The debt which each individual owes for life can be wiped out only by giving life to another individual, not by service to his forebears. Life is a stream whose current can never be reversed, and the chief obligation it imposes upon us is to maintain the full volume of its flow.

Men whose parents gave them nothing more than existence have perhaps greater reason to hate than to love them; for the life of one who in childhood enjoyed neither loving care nor an adequate education is often so difficult that he may well wish that he had never been born. For physical care the child also, I believe, owes nothing to his parents. In the view of society, the parents in begetting children have incurred

the obligation to provide adequate food, clothing, and shelter; and often the state insists that this obligation be fulfilled. For an education of the minimum standard set by law, the child is for the same reason not indebted in any way to his parents.

But for the inestimable blessing of the kind of happy childhood which is scarcely possible without the loving devotion of parents or those who stand in their stead, and for that spiritual training and guidance which is not demanded by society or the state but is given by the parents from the fullness of their love, the child is indeed under a debt of gratitude to his father and mother. These two benefits are complementary, and one is of little value in later life without the other. A joyous childhood devoid of spiritual discipline and moral training is not likely to be followed by a happy and prosperous manhood or womanhood. On the other hand, nothing so gives a man or woman confidence in life as the memory of early years passed pleasantly in a secure, well-ordered, and affectionate home; without this cheerful background, the best formal training is likely to be soured by a melancholy or distrustful disposition. For a happy childhood and the cultivation of the spirit, the son's or daughter's debt to the parents is immeasurable; yet the whole relation between parent and child would be cheapened and dishonored if any specific repayment were set or expected. Piety and love are spontaneous fruits of the sort of early nurture that merits gratitude, and these will find expression in ways prompted by the heart alone.

Chapter XVIII

IMMORTALITY

1. *Psychological Foundations of Belief in Immortality*

"What may I hope?" is the last of the three comprehensive questions of the human mind, and that which intensifies our interest in the other two; for what we may reasonably hope is certainly dependent upon what we can know and what we ought to do. And the answer to this supreme question is obviously dependent upon how long we may expect to endure as persons. At least, to be sure that our consciousness and personality are extinguished when the body dies would set a definite limit to our hopes; although the certainty that some essential portion of ourselves will survive the body's dissolution might not be accompanied by such knowledge of our future state as would serve as a basis for definite expectations. Hence the great and perennial interest of the problem of immortality.

We cannot begin to appraise the doctrine of immortality without a clear understanding of the origins of this belief. There is a shallow notion widespread in the world today that it is just another example of "wishful thinking", that men imagine themselves to be immortal because this notion comforts them. Whether true or false, we can be sure that the idea of immortality is not to be so simply explained, and we cannot lightly dismiss it as an empty fantasy of autistic thought. The psychological foundations of belief

in the persistence of consciousness after death are multiple; for it rests in part upon the very structure of human thought, and in part upon certain inferences from mental phenomena which even if false were spontaneous and almost inevitable.

If in no other way, belief in immortality might have arisen from the very character of our thought processes, which in turn are an expression of the mind's innate structure. Psychologically, this doctrine has the same status as those of the infinitude of space, the eternity of time, and the infinite divisibility of matter or anything else which has extension, all of which have been defended, separately or conjointly, by some of the most profound thinkers, not because they had observational evidence upon these points, nor because these views opened up a promising future for them, but simply from an inner necessity of thought. The four doctrines we have mentioned spring from the fact that thought is an on-going process which cannot put an end to itself. The smallest particle of matter we can picture is still divisible in imagination into two equal smaller particles, and so on *ad infinitum*. Before the most remote moment of past time that we imagine, we can think—indeed, are compelled to think—of some preceding moment, and so on indefinitely; and beyond any given instant in the remote future, our thought posits the continued flow of time, nor can we by any effort conceive a final moment. If we imagine space as limited or finite, we can also picture ourselves as arriving at its uttermost boundary. As we stand there in thought, we ask ourselves: "Can I stretch forth my arm ahead of me, or can I not?" If I cannot, there must be some wall or shell opposing my effort to stretch my hand forward: we can think of such an obstacle only as material; and matter for us

always occupies space; so that space continues beyond the limit we have assigned to it. If, on the contrary, there is nothing material before me as I stand at the world's farthest boundary, I can certainly stretch forward my arm because there is nothing to oppose it; and that which permits motion is what we call space. Thus neither by assigning to space a material nor an immaterial boundary can we picture it as finite. Those ancient thinkers who, like Plato and Aristotle, declared the Universe to be finite and to occupy the whole of space took a bold step; for it ran counter to the spontaneous course of human thought. Aristotle, in particular, required weighty arguments to support this view.

Just as we can imagine no limit to space, time, nor the divisibility of matter, so we cannot conceive the cessation of our stream of consciousness, which of course is different from recognizing as reasonable the proposition that it will some day come to an end. I can, indeed, picture myself as lying dead and carried to the grave; but as I do this there is some less substantial part of myself that looks on, an unseen witness of my own obsequies. To imagine the extinction of this surviving ego, I must set apart a survivor in the second degree, and so in endless sequence. To conceive the cessation of my consciousness requires an act of my consciousness, and this act perversely carries my thought of myself beyond the required point.

It does not follow from our incapacity to imagine finite time or space, indivisible matter, or the cessation of our own stream of consciousness, that we can clearly conceive their opposites, infinite space, eternity, endless thought, or the infinite divisibility of matter. To conceive in its fullness any one of these things we should need to continue the mental exercise for all

eternity, whereas we tire of it in a minute or two. Hence none of these questions can be settled *a priori*. We are not compelled by the nature of thought itself to believe in the reality of infinity or eternity in any form, as we must accept some self-evident propositions, like the statement that the whole is equal to the sum of its parts, because their denial would constitute the repudiation of the mind that denied them, and by refusing to accept them we confess our incapacity to think coherently.

Yet it is highly significant that our latest scientific investigations, far from flatly contradicting the doctrines of the infinitude of space, the eternity of time, or the infinite divisibility of matter, support them increasingly; although it seems intrinsically impossible that they should positively prove them to be true. The more powerful the telescope the astronomer points into the heavens, the more the Universe expands in his view; and although it is now held to extend more than a thousand millions of light years in every direction, its limit is not yet in sight. The doctrine that space is finite but curves around on itself is an interesting speculation which taxes our power of conception almost beyond its limits. The more we know of the history of the earth or the cosmos, the older we must suppose it to be; although even some billions of years is far short of eternity. The more physicists and chemists investigate the structure of matter, the more the atom, whose very name denotes an indivisible, indestructible unit, dissolves into smaller and smaller parts. Positive science can tell us nothing about the immortality of the spirit, because consciousness is undemonstrable by its methods; yet no attested scientific fact flatly disproves its possibility. But the fate at the hands of science of the three psychologically related

doctrines provides at least a presumption in favor of the fourth.

2. *Origin of the Belief in Primitive Modes of Thought*

Although it seemed worth our while to point out that because thought is essentially an on-going process we are as little able to imagine the cessation of our consciousness as the limit of space or the beginning or end of time, it is not probable that this difficulty was responsible for the origination of the notion of immortality, even if it does help to strengthen the belief, once we start to think about it. It was not the impossibility of thinking the extinction of his consciousness, so much as the ease of imagining the continued existence of deceased relatives and acquaintances, which led primitive man to believe that they somehow lived on after death.

We who are accustomed to ascribing to each person a single soul, or perhaps to denying the existence of spirit as distinct from body, can only with the greatest difficulty reconstruct the mentality of our archaic progenitors, who detected souls and spirits everywhere and in great numbers. Without the capacity for abstract thought, without the ability to explain in physical terms the most commonplace of natural phenomena, yet already with that thirst for explanations which was to make scientists and philosophers of his descendants, primitive man was driven to make an entity of every attribute or process that strongly attracted his attention, and to prop up all his imperfect conceptions with hypostases. As we have already pointed out (Chapter XIV, section 5), since an animal will similar to his own was the only sort of causal agent that the savage could vividly apprehend,

in his efforts to explain the phenomena of nature, from the blowing of the wind to the daily course of the sun, he was led to ascribe to the most diverse objects something corresponding to his own volition, until earth and sky were peopled with spiritual beings. So strongly ingrained in the human mind is this mode of thinking that some of the most critical thinkers of antiquity looked upon the stars, and even the Universe as a whole, as living beings, each provided with a soul.

Thus to early man the forests and waters and air and sky were so full of spirits of many sorts, that he was easily led to believe that he himself might contribute another to the elusive company. Many things in his experience helped to strengthen this conviction. The shadow which followed him over the sunny meadows, now growing and now contracting in length, seemed a sort of double of himself, an elusive soul which walked foot to foot with his body. Bending over a still pool in the woodland glades, he was greeted by a reflection that mocked him with the suggestion that some effluence had gone forth from himself and now returned his puzzled gaze. While optics was still an unborn science, how could the savage with an inquiring but untrained mind explain shadows and reflections, except upon the supposition that some less substantial double followed him about and appeared to him in these forms?

Many savages were led to ascribe several souls to each individual, some external, revealing themselves to their owners as shadows and reflections and to distant friends as dreams or phantoms, others internal, situated at the vital centers of the body. Frazer, whose great work *The Golden Bough* is a vast treasurehouse of these beliefs so revealing of the spontaneous working of the uncritical human mind, states

that the Caribs supposed that there was one soul in the head, a second in the heart, and others at points where the pulsations of an artery were prominent. Other savages ascribed varying numbers of souls to each individual, up to thirty among the natives of Laos, who placed them in the hands, the feet, the eyes, the mouth, and so on.

But it appears to have been above all the phenomena of dreams that convinced men that each possessed a soul which was in the fullest sense a double of himself, and readily separable from his body. In vivid dreams this effluence seemed to sally forth from the sleeper and pursue an adventuresome career of its own. If the soul were forcibly detained at a distance, or if the sleeper were inconsiderately awakened before it could return at its own good time, the soul would continue to wander homeless about the world, while the body deprived of this essential component would languish and die. Likewise the appearance in dreams of deceased relatives and acquaintances must have vastly strengthened the belief that their spirits survived the disintegration of their bodies. It is amazing what influence dreams have exercised upon human thought. In former times even the most learned supposed that they provided a clue to the course of coming events, and today the psychoanalysts depend upon them to reveal facts about ourselves not otherwise discoverable. It almost seems that there has been a conspiracy among men to value these vagaries of the sleeping mind above the best products of the fully collected intelligence.

Although belief in immortality may have grown out of false inferences and careless thinking, we can be sure that it is not a product of wishful thinking. There is no ground for viewing the doctrine as a deliberate invention of primitive men oppressed with the thought of the briefness, the insecurity, and the trials of their mortal span. As late as Classical times, the poets often depicted the abode of the shades as a gloomy, hollow land, inhabited by gibbering shadows, who were far from being complete spiritual personalities and found scant satisfaction in their disembodied existence. Even the godlike Achilles became in Hades a pitiful shade who, in the *Odyssey* (Book XI), confessed to Ulysses that he would rather be the living thrall of a poor farmer than king of all the dead.[1] Unlike many of his descendants indoctrinated by the dogmas of a religion of emancipation, early man was as a rule not eager to cast off the flesh, with all its pains and temptations, and fly to the abode of spirits. The moral aspect of the doctrine of immortality, the rewards and punishments determined by past conduct, and the ingenious elaboration of both the pleasures of the blessed and the torments of the damned, are relatively late refinements, many of which bear the stamp of deliberate invention by poets eager to adorn their tales or by astute priests to facilitate their control over a wayward flock.

Thus man's belief that his spirit can exist apart from his body is far older than those relatively modern religions which give the doctrine of immortality so prominent a position in their teachings. It springs spontaneously from the mental processes of primitive man, or of untutored man in any age or region. It arises from the difficulty of clearly distinguishing mental images and hallucinations from the immediate reports of the senses, and these percepts from the ex-

[1] It is perhaps but fair to add that in the view of Erwin Rohde (*Psyche,* Chapter I) the eschatology of the Homeric epics is not typical of Greek thought at either an earlier or a later period.

ternal agents which, we have good reason to believe, evoke them. The critical analyses of modern philosophers have served above all to emphasize the difficulties in making these distinctions, which are so great that some thinkers have been led to deny the reality of the material world, while others ascribe a sort of objective reality to dreams, hallucinations, and perceptual illusions. Need we wonder that childlike men believe in the continued existence, as spirits or wandering phantoms, of those deceased friends who seem to revisit them in dreams, or whom in their waking hours they may remember with a convincingly vivid representation? A propensity to doubt that some, or even all, of the mind's lively pictures denote external realities may be without serious consequences to the civilized philosopher in his armchair; but to the savage whose life depended upon his skill in dodging substantial stones and in escaping the material fangs of tigers and wolves, such scepticism might speedily have proved fatal. We can afford to forgive our remote ancestors their lack of critical discrimination and the errors that arose therefrom; had they devoted more time to ontological analysis, they doubtless would have left no descendants to look with indulgence upon their misconceptions.

3. *Biological Significance of Belief in Immortality*

An examination of the grounds of man's belief that his spirit will survive his body cannot afford to overlook the theory that, wholly apart from its truth, it has biological value. Bergson regarded primitive religion as in large measure the outcome of a defensive reaction of nature against the depressing effects of the representation by man's dawning intelligence of

the inevitability of death.[1] Other animals apparently do not look much beyond the present nor trouble themselves with thoughts of what might or will happen to them, hence have no need of compensatory illusions. But when we begin to think of all the dire accidents that might befall us, and above all of that loathsome dissolution which soon or late will inevitably overtake every living thing, we are sometimes oppressed almost beyond endurance with dark forebodings. If as sensitive to such misgivings as some of his descendants, primitive man would be even more weighed down by them, because of his far inferior capacity to control his environment and postpone or avert impending disaster, and because he lacked a developed philosophy or religion to reconcile him to the inevitable. Hence any beliefs, however fantastic, that increased the illusion of his ability to govern the course of nature and strengthened his confidence in the future, might be of value in dissipating numbing terrors and fortifying active endeavor. It is even conceivable that in the absence of such comforting delusions the burden of his fears might induce in the savage a fatal apathy to life. If this proved true, any chance mutations in the structure of the mind or the course of its thoughts that intensified these cheering illusions would, by propping up the will to live, bring greater success in the struggle for existence, thereby leading to the intensification of these psychic traits in succeeding generations.

We are familiar with many deceptions displayed by animals to increase their chances of survival. Certain harmless caterpillars bear on their foreparts a pair of large, dark spots, resembling eyes, which sometimes

[1] Henri Bergson, *The Two Sources of Morality and Religion* (English translation by R. Ashley Audra & Cloudesley Brereton, Henry Holt, 1935), Chapter II, "Static Religion."

frighten the bird or other animal that hungers for them. Butterflies that might be relished by birds escape capture by their close resemblance to other species protected by an unpleasant taste—the well-known phenomenon of mimicry. A variety of insects escape detection by their close resemblance to leaves, lichens, sticks, moss, spines, and other inedible objects. Harmless snakes when threatened adopt the attitudes of serpents protected by venomous fangs, thereby making themselves appear more formidable than they actually are. A variety of animals, from insects to mammals, assume the limpness or rigidity of death as a means of escaping enemies which would attack them the more readily if they were active. To be sure, all of these deceptions, including even the last, seem to be unconscious; and they are practiced upon creatures of other kinds rather than upon the animals to which they appear to give some measure of safety. But it is not beyond the reach of organic variation, directed by natural selection, to develop modes of thought which deceive the minds in which they occur, if this promoted in any creature success in living and reproducing its kind.

Whether a deceptive belief in the spirit's survival, if it can be proved to have arisen, should be looked upon as benign or cruel, depends upon the value one sets upon the experience of living; and we need not pause here to discuss the point. What concerns us is the question whether such an illusion is in fact necessary to offset the depressing effects of some of the representations of nascent intelligence; for if it could be proved that a mistaken faith in immortality possessed "survival value", this would provide a presumption against the truth of the belief far stronger than our earlier demonstration that it arose from certain

spontaneous tendencies of human thought. In the latter case, we might regard crude early ideas of immortality as so many groping attempts to give a conceptual dress to a vague yet somehow true intuition; and this would place such notions in the same class with a number of other dimly felt truths, including some of those most fundamental to religion, which men have always found it exceedingly difficult to express in intellectually acceptable terms. But if belief in immortality arose merely because of its survival value, it probably bears no more correspondence to reality than the false eye-spots of a *Papilio* caterpillar to eyes capable of vision.

The effect upon feeling or action of some object or situation presented to the mind, whether immediately or by recollection, is not unvarying but relative to certain internal conditions, which may lie below the level of consciousness. Whether the thought of a certain sweet dish fills me with desire or repugnance depends upon the state of my health and appetite. Whether we fear death or long for it likewise depends upon certain psychic conditions extraneous to the thought of death itself. It would have been simpler, in the sense of requiring less extensive modifications of man's whole constitution, for nature to have kept his thirst for continued life within limits compatible with his actual condition, rather than to allow it to become excessive, and then compensate for this overgrowth of an innate desire by the growth of an illusion. And being simpler, this is the course which evolution would probably have taken.

Although the instinct of self-preservation, by which we mean merely the whole body of innate habits and reactions tending to preserve the life of the individual, is necessarily strong in any stock which has survived

all the perils that beset it through thousands of generations, it is not at all times equally powerful, but everywhere adjusted to the whole pattern of life of the species and especially to its mode of reproduction. We know nothing about forebodings of death in non-human animals; but we can be sure that in certain situations some of them act in a manner that reveals the dominance of drives which, far from leading to the preservation of the individual, impel it to certain destruction. The absolute predominance of the instinct of self-preservation might inhibit salmon from fighting their way up turbulent mountain streams to spawn and perish, and prevent eels from going down to the ocean to lay their eggs and die. It would repress the nuptial ardor of scorpions, spiders, grasshoppers, bees, and many other invertebrates among which mating is attended by grave danger to the male or inevitably brings about his destruction. It would weaken or suppress the defence of the hive or young by ants, bees, birds, and other animals. One might cite many other instances of the decline or failure of self-preservative drives when this conduces to the prosperity of the species as a whole. It seems to be a general rule that the emotions and reactions which promote the survival of the individual, far from being invariably in the ascendancy and leading animals to seek unlimited existence, cease to be compelling when the death rather than the survival of the individual best serves the welfare of the species. In all these instances, we have no reason to assume that the animal foresees its end. But even if it did, this knowledge of the imminence of death, ordinarily so terrifying, might be neutralized by the mere weakening of the will to live; as many another powerful appetite is attenuated or extinguished when this serves the welfare of the species.

We need only to recall how birds, which ordinarily eat so frequently, may in some cases cover their eggs for days or weeks together without taking food.

To a generation trained to look upon natural selection as the all-sufficient explanation of all the peculiarities of all organisms, the biological guise of this theory of the origin of our belief in immortality renders it dangerously seductive. As we have suggested, it is highly improbable that at any stage in the evolution of mankind apprehension of death should have become so vivid and terrifying that by inhibiting self-preservative activities it increased men's susceptibility to that which they most dreaded. The prompt elimination of any individual in whom such paralyzing fears arose as a mutation would sternly repress such an evolutionary tendency; so that natural selection, far from fostering an illusion which counteracted such a fatal psychic development, would never permit these debilitating forebodings to become widespread in the human stock. The situation which Bergson contemplated could arise only if the hope of immortality grew up simultaneously with the fear it counteracted, rather than after the dread had become acute; and this seems improbable.

It is difficult to conceive how man's false view, if such it is, of his whole destiny could contribute to the welfare of his kind, viewed as a species of animal struggling to maintain itself in a competitive world. It is improbable that an animal will strive harder to preserve its life when it believes that the most essential part of itself is indestructible than when it supposes that a fatal mishap to its mortal body will bring about its total extinction. Whatever worth the doctrine of immortality may possess, it is hardly a purely biological value, in the sense of conducing to the preservation

of the individual and the multiplication of the kind; for it frequently leads to carelessness of life and indifference to reproduction. Savages are often driven to commit suicide by provocations which, in the view of civilized men, scarcely call for so drastic a remedy, and with a readiness that might prove disastrous to a species of animal less firmly entrenched in the world than mankind. This propensity of primitive men, which has been noticed by Malinowski and other anthropologists, hardly supports the view that fear of death long ago became so acute in the human mind that it required an illusion to counteract its depressing effects.[1]

We do not know whether the Melanesian who, when publicly reproached for his misconduct, leaps to his death from a tall coconut tree, is supported in his resolution by hope of a future life; but we can be sure that among races somewhat more advanced in culture, the promise of immortality leads to contempt of life in the flesh. Anticipating a more blessed existence after they had shed their corruptible body, religious zealots have not only been careless of death but have actually courted destruction, sometimes in a sort of mass madness, such as was exhibited in the most loathsome fashion by the fantastic sect of Circumcellions in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era. Assured that if they died fighting for the true faith they would be transported to the paradise of seductive houris, the followers of Mohammed entered battle with a fierce abandon which was successful against weaker foes, but could not avail against the warlike Franks of Charles Martel. Many an army of devout believers in immortal life has with fanatical zeal

[1] Bronislaw Malinowski, *Crime and Custom in Savage Society* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1926), Part II, Chapter 1.

hurled itself to destruction against a cooler and better organized, if less aspiring, adversary.[1] Add to this the countless men and women, adherents of all the major religions of emancipation, who for the sake of their immortal spirits have retired into convents and hermitages and died without progeny, and one will be convinced that the doctrine of immortality, far from promoting the biological success of the human species, has exerted a precisely contrary effect. Only an animal able to sacrifice without serious consequences a considerable proportion of its reproductive potential could have withstood for many generations such a drain upon its resources.

Without any diminution of our prosperity as organisms, our minds might be so constituted that we should neither expect nor hope for the continuation of consciousness after our body's dissolution; and especially after passing middle age and the period of greatest social usefulness, we might with advantage to our species look forward not only complacently but eagerly to our total extinction, in body and spirit, as some men now profess to do. If belief in immortality is a deception that nature has implanted in the human mind, it is a cruel and unnecessary delusion, bringing no worldly advantage that might not have been obtained by less deceitful means. Even for the purpose of enforcing a moral code by promise of blessed reward and threat of direst punishment in a future life, the doctrine of immortality has been far less effective than

[1] Cp. Julian (*The Caesars,* 327D), who places these words in the mouth of Trajan: "I subdued the Getae, the most warlike race that ever existed, which is due partly to their physical courage, partly to the doctrines that they have adopted from their admired Zamolxis. For they believe that they do not die but only change their place of abode, and they meet death more readily than other men undertake a journey."

might have been anticipated by one unfamiliar with the difficulty most men experience in controlling their appetites by contemplation of the more remote effects of indulging them; and those with the highest conception of man's moral nature find it superfluous. Whatever significance belief in the spirit's survival may have for us, it cannot lie in its capacity to promote the biological success of the human animal, but must have reference to the welfare of the spirit itself. Either it somehow represents the mind's intuitive awareness of its own destiny, or it is a psychic aberration, a miscarriage of evolution of the most pathetic sort.

4. *Varieties of Immortality*

Just as men frequently deny that God exists without first taking the trouble to ascertain which of the many concepts of deity they are rejecting; so without awareness of all the possible forms of immortality, they often dogmatically assert that it is impossible. As with all problems which for many centuries have engaged the thought of men of the most diverse temperaments and philosophical backgrounds, that of the spirit's survival has been answered in many ways. Views founded upon such varied presuppositions can hardly be accepted or rejected en masse, but the careful thinker will wish to examine each separately and judge it on its own merits. Before we can begin to assess the probability of immortality, we must distinguish between the kinds which have been contemplated. Let us make a list of these before we begin to discuss them.

VARIETIES OF IMMORTALITY

1. Impersonal
   a. Objective
   b. By participation in eternal truth or value
   c. By reabsorption into cosmic mind or spirit
2. Personal
   d. With transmigration
   e. Without transmigration
      e′ With a resurrected body
      e″ Without a resurrected body
3. Quasi-immortality (stoic).

5. *Objective Immortality*

Even if we regard as a picturesque myth Plato's changeless realm of eternal ideas and later variations of the same theme, in this world of ceaseless flux itself nothing is ever wholly lost. The same particles of matter enter into endless combinations and become the support of countless forms, each of which in perishing passes on its constituents to its successors. The same energy performs a thousand different kinds of work as it flows through the Universe. Every event is a member of an endless causal sequence, at once the effect of its predecessors and the cause of its successors. As complex links in these tangled causal chains, each of us is the focus of innumerable such sequences, every one of which might be traced, if we knew enough, to a vastly remote past. We accept these manifold contributions from the past and, by virtue of that integrative activity which is the characteristic feature of life and mind, fuse them into a new and unique synthesis, a particular concrescence in the midst of the flux of existence. From this center of events which each of us is, through our deliberate or unconscious

activities, new series of events are constantly flowing forth on every side. In one sense they are merely the continuation beyond us of the causal sequences which made us; but many of them are so transformed by our own peculiar personality that in another sense they may be looked upon as new. Certainly our presence in the world gives to a few of its multitudinous sequences of events a character which but for us they would never have. Each day we stir up waves which will lap against the farthest shores of time. Just as the ripples aroused by dropping a pebble into a pool become fainter as they recede from the center; so the causal sequences which we initiate, or at least that component of them for which we are directly responsible, become less pronounced as with the passage of the years they mingle with countless others; but so long as the world endures, they will form part of its texture. Hence the incalculable importance of all our deeds and even all our speech. In the words of Whitehead, who saw in the endless flow of causal sequences a sort of immortality, "as we perish we are immortal."[1]

If in this sense we may be considered immortal, so is every flower that blooms and every raindrop that falls; for each is a link in endless causal sequences. But in addition to the purely physical "immortality" that we share with every other body, great and small, we enjoy as living beings certain special kinds of continued existence. In a way, we live on in our descendants. In the *Symposium,* Plato compared the desire for progeny with the yearning for immortal life; and fond parents have called their children their "earthly immortality". It is easy to exaggerate our contribution

[1] Alfred North Whitehead, *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (Philosophical Library, 1948), "Process and Reality," pp. 87-90.

to the life of our descendants. If current biological interpretations are correct, in begetting offspring no parent, animal or vegetable, contributes anything peculiarly its own to them; for this would imply the inheritance of acquired characters, for which there is a dearth of evidence. The germ plasm, which determines the forms and functions of living things, flows on from generation to generation, changing in ways peculiar to itself, but beyond the control of the organism that at the moment bears it. We might compare it to a rootstock, as of a Solomon's seal or an iris, creeping year after year unseen beneath the ground, and sending up a succession of leafy shoots, each representing a generation, which flourish, flower, and decay, meanwhile providing nourishment for the rhizome, but not determining the course of its growth. Our children are, as organisms, not products of ourselves so much as products of the same current of life that formed us. It is not through physical parenthood, but rather by cultivating their mind and character, that we live on in our children; for only in this way can we transmit to them anything peculiarly ours, the fruit of our own endeavor to perfect ourselves. An adopted child, or even one we have taught or trained, is more truly the "earthly immortality" of his foster parent, guardian, or teacher than of the parent who begot him but contributed nothing to his nurture and education.

Doubtless to look upon oneself as an integral part of a vast and magnificent process, without beginning or end so far as we know, helps us to reconcile ourselves to our transient earthly existence. And to cultivate a vivid awareness of the endless consequences, in the human world and even beyond it, of our good and evil acts, imparts to our lives significance and

dignity which is often lacking to those who view only the shallow present. Perhaps if we were always successful in transmitting to posterity our cherished ideals and best accomplishments, we should consider such objective survival sufficient, and hold it ignobly selfish to yearn for a more personal sort of continued existence. But we seldom succeed in passing on to future generations that which we desire to give them, or even in becoming ourselves all that we wish to be. Hence it is neither short-sighted nor selfish to hope for continued opportunity to fulfill and perfect ourselves.

6. *Immortality by Participation*

There is a second kind of impersonal immortality, particularly attractive to the philosophic mind, which we may briefly designate as "immortality by participation". Truth, or at least certain kinds of truth, have long been held to be eternal. I hear at the moment a wren singing at the edge of the forest; and it will always be true to say that, at a certain hour of a certain day and year, the wren sang there. If even the truth about fleeting occurrences is in a sense eternal, a far higher degree of eternalness attaches to the timeless truths, as those of mathematics and logic. So long as there are triangles, embodied in matter or represented in thought, it will be true that the sum of their internal angles is equal to two right angles; and the principle of contradiction will certainly be valid as long as minds like ours think. Not only truths, but values, which we recognize by feeling rather than by pure intelligence, are held by many thinkers to be somehow eternal; so that they are exemplified rather than created by passing events; and when we respond to

the beauty of the rainbow, or recognize the moral worth of a noble or generous deed, we are not in the act adding something to the total spiritual wealth of the world, but experiencing or realizing an eternal value.

To one who has devoted his best energies to the discovery of truth, it is highly gratifying to believe that, whatever happens to him, certain of the thoughts which he thinks will be for ever true.

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

sang Clough. We experience something of this attitude when, in gazing upon some grand snow-capped peak, or even some noble relic of antiquity, we reflect with satisfaction that long before our birth it existed much as we see it, and will be there long after we have passed on—although we do not imagine any material object to be literally eternal.

To certain philosophers, as Spinoza and Whitehead,[1] immortality has meant hardly more than just such transient possession or awareness of eternal essences, truths, or values, by a mind which does not, as an individual entity, survive the dissolution of its body. This is very clearly propounded by Spinoza, who in Proposition XXI of the fifth book of the *Ethics* states: "The mind can only imagine anything, or remember what is past, while the body endures." Yet Proposition XXIII seems to contradict this quite positive assertion of the mind's transience by affirming: "The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but there remains of it something which is eternal." This discrepancy is cleared up in the following Proof and Note, which assert that there neces-

[1] *Op. cit.*, "Immortality," pp. 60-74; cp. Santayana, *The Life of Reason*, Reason in Religion, XIV, "Logical Immortality."

sarily exists in God a concept or idea which expresses the essence of the human body, which likewise, by Spinoza's doctrine of parallelism, corresponds to the essence of the human mind; and in God this idea is eternal. Since our mind possesses for a while an idea which expresses this eternal essence, it is accordingly eternal.

To call one's mind eternal merely because it has thought a timeless truth, possessed for a brief period an idea which expresses an eternal essence, or transiently enjoyed a value which in a highly metaphysical fashion partakes of eternalness, seems to me to be much the same as if we should hold ourselves to be royal because we once beheld a king, or should consider a cardboard box to be incorruptible because it contains something made of incorruptible gold. Moreover, whether there are indeed eternal truths is a debatable question. So long as the Euclidean geometry was believed to be the only possible method of dividing up space, its truths could be looked upon as eternal. Now we know that there are alternative systems of geometry. The Euclidean system is that most natural to our minds; but one of the other methods might be more congenial to a mind otherwise constituted; and it is not inconceivable that to such a mind the propositions of Euclid would appear false. Since knowledge is relative to the knower, whether there can be eternal truths would seem to depend upon our answer to the question whether a mind or minds similar to ours will always exist. And the same, *mutatis mutandis,* would apply to values. Far from the contemplation of eternal truths or essences imparting a sort of immortality to the mind that thinks them, it appears that the eternalness of the truths themselves depends upon the everlasting existence of a mind. This was recognized

by Leibniz, who argued from the necessity of eternal truths to the existence of God, in whose mind these truths for ever reposed.

7. *Immortality by Reabsorption into Cosmic Mind*

Despite endless discussions by philosophers and psychologists, ancient and modern, and the laboratory investigations of recent scientists, we are far from understanding how mind and body are related. The view that gained increasing prestige during the nineteenth century, that consciousness is a function of the physical brain, as hormones are the secretions of glands, can be neither proved nor quite disproved at the present time. If it is true, matter is primary and mind cannot exist apart from it. On the other hand, many able thinkers have contended that mind is primary and matter an appearance produced by it; while yet others hold (what seems to me best to accord with the present state of our knowledge) that mind and matter have equal and coördinate status, both apparently depending for their existence upon some ground or substratum which cannot properly be called mind or matter, but which manifests itself to us in these two contrasting forms.

From the first of these ontological views, which we call materialism, it seems to follow that separate minds are wholly independent of each other in origin and destiny. Consciousness, as we know it, arises *de novo* as matter is organized by vital processes into a brain; and each separate stream of consciousness is completely extinguished when the functioning of that brain is stopped by death. But on the second view, mentalism or idealism, and the third, dualism, there might be a far more intimate connection between the minds or

consciousness of individual animals and plants, if we admit that the latter are in some measure sentient. Mind might be everywhere continuous, the same in you and me and the swallow that circles overhead. If this is true, the separateness of which we are at times so acutely aware is an illusion, caused by the intimate association of one part of this mind with a distinct mass of matter organized into a living body, upon whose special needs it must so concentrate its attention that it loses sight of its wider connections. Or we might compare the cosmic mind to the sun, whose rays on a dewy morning penetrate a myriad trembling dewdrops, each of which refracts them in its own manner, changing their direction and giving them scintillating colors not evident in the original sunbeams; so that it is easy to imagine that each is an independent source of the darting rays it emits. If we could not see the sun itself, but only the dewdrops, it would be easy to believe that they were so many original sources of light.

However we interpret the relation of mind to matter, it is evident that in any individual the successive states of consciousness are in large measure determined by the structure and condition of that particular parcel of matter with which it is at the moment most intimately connected. In ourselves, for example, the contents of consciousness are determined by our sensory organs and the objects which happen to be exciting them, the state of our health, our past experiences as stored in memory, and so forth. If we admit that mind or consciousness is everywhere fundamentally the same, then it follows that all its modifications are determined by the peculiar properties of the bodies with which different parts or regions of it happen to be associated in the guise of individual minds. If it could escape from the body, or even while

remaining attached to it divest itself of the impressions imposed upon it by the senses and shake off the illusion of its separateness, it would know itself in its pure, unmodified form, as absolute consciousness. But the undisciplined individual mind is so constantly agitated by sensuous excitations, by desires, hopes, and fears arising from its intimate association with a body, that it never awakes to its own true nature.

In the view of the Eastern philosophies and religions which chiefly hold the doctrine we are now discussing, ignorance and desire were the causes of mind's immersion in matter; and this yearning for sensuous experience leads it, upon the dissolution of the organic body it at the moment inhabits, to pass in succession to others, in an endless round of incarnations. But by a proper course of discipline, the portion of mind in a human body can extinguish desire and dispel the dense mist of ignorance which veils from it its true nature as part of the cosmic mind. It then experiences pure consciousness, devoid of all transient modifications; and when death severs its bonds with its latest body it may, if it is pure and has freed itself from the Karmic effects of all past misdeeds, rejoin the cosmic mind, from which it was never really separated, but only estranged by the illusion of distinctness engendered by its attachment to a body. Then it partakes endlessly of the pure, unclouded joy of the Universal Mind, whose attributes, as Brahman, are *sat, cit, ananda*—existence, consciousness, bliss.

Unlike the preceding kinds of immortality, this doctrine of the reabsorption of the purified individual mind into the cosmic mind, from which it only imagined itself to be separated, which is essentially the teaching of the *Upanishads* and the Vedanta philosophy, promises the indefinite survival of consciousness, which

is what we usually mean by immorality. But it is not a *personal immorality;* for the process of enlightenment and purification, which brought back the straying ray of consciousness into the parent sun, disburdened it of all those particular modifications which give its character to an individual mind. The return to the cosmic mind is just the cancellation of all the distinctions which separate finite minds; so that the redeemed spirits will all be the same spirit; and the bliss they so abundantly enjoy will be common to all. Since we possess no calculus of happiness, it is useless to speculate whether the one great felicity of the common mind surpasses or falls short of the sum of the little joys which countless spirits might separately experience. From many points of view, it is salutary for us to contemplate the loss of our precious ego along with our earthly sorrows, in that perfect equipartition of the supreme good which is the highest goal of moral endeavor.

But this doctrine of emanation and reabsorption, which in a somewhat different form was taught by Aristotle and from his writings became familiar to mediaeval Christianity and Islam, has one insuperable difficulty. It divests the world process of its highest significance. But whatever Himalayan blunder the cosmic mind became entangled in matter or the illusion thereof, its utmost effort is just to correct this original mistake, the cause of incalculable suffering, and by freeing itself from contingent existence regain its pristine, undifferentiated purity. The ray of the cosmic mind, which by straying from its source became an individual mind, at long last returns to its fount just as it came, nowise improved by its manifold experiences. The theme is regress rather than progress, and we may distinguish those religions of emancipation which hold

the view we are now discussing as "religions of regress". Although to win release from the bonds of body demands sustained and often heroic effort, through which character is inevitably formed, this character is not held to possess permanent value nor to be an enhancement of the world's total spiritual wealth; for it is necessarily a modification of mind rather than pure, undifferentiated mind; and all modifications are so many impediments which separate the individual from the blissful cosmic consciousness.

8. *Personal Immortality, its Meaning and its Varieties*

Our survey of the several forms of immortality which men have conceived and held to be probable has led us to concentrate our attention upon personal immortality, for it is in this that our interest chiefly lies. Although objective immortality and immortality by participation are, at least to certain philosophers, satisfying turns of thought, they do not conform to the ordinary meaning of the word "immortal," which to most of us denotes the continuing existence of a mind or spirit, rather than the endless flow of impersonal causal sequences or the eternal existence of some idea which that mind has thought. The impersonal immortality of a cosmic mind, of which individual minds are rays, comes nearer to what we usually mean by immortality; but this doctrine denies the constructive character of the world process. When we see somebody making an effort, however slight, we conclude that he expects to derive some advantage from it. Similarly, when we behold an aeonian process on an immense scale, we cannot help but ask what ultimate good will come of it. We can be sure, from the vast

amount of suffering of the creatures caught up in the world process, that it cannot be for the purpose of yielding them unclouded joy. One answer to our question is that the world serves as a school for the formation of character—that, as Keats[1] so well expressed it, it is a "vale of soul-making" by conscious beings who are called upon to exert their best efforts, who are tried and tested, by the baffling predicaments into which they are plunged. But if this is so, we might expect that the spirits ennobled through their own unremitting endeavors, which are, so far as we can tell, the highest products of this vast process and perhaps its reason for being, would be something more than evanescent formations in the endless flux. And it would give a meaning to the world process if at least the finest of its spiritual products were somehow enduring, as we are sure no material configurations can be enduring, however indestructible the matter which enters into them may itself be.

Since personal immortality signifies the indefinite continuance of personal identity, it will repay us to pause at this point and consider precisely what we mean by continuing identity. To be absolutely self-identical, an entity would need at all times to consist of precisely the same components; and it would seem also to be necessary that, in the case of a compound entity, its elements be always arranged in the same order or pattern; for by placing the same elements in a different order there may be formed an entity which bears little resemblance to the first; as by transposing the letters in the word "ode" to make the word "doe". It is evident from this that continuing self-identity, in the strictest sense, is incompatible with growth and

[1] In a prose passage quoted by Dorothy Hewlett in *Adonais: A Life of John Keats* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1938), p. 256.

development, and even with life; for no living thing contains in successive hours precisely the same elements arranged in exactly the same way. Save possibly in the deepest dormancy of seeds and spores, there are in organic bodies continuous slight changes in the disposition of the component parts and constant interchanges with the environment. Obviously, in the strictest sense, the boy is never identical with the man he becomes; and similarly we could scarcely expect that any spiritual component of ourselves which might survive our body's decay would be absolutely self-identical with our earlier selves. A mind or spirit which in all phases of its existence remained strictly self-identical would be incapable of development, and this would deprive effort of its highest meaning and the world process of human significance.

Yet when we say that the great tree is the same as the tiny seed from which it sprang, or that the man is the same as the boy he once was, we recognize a continuity of identity through all the changes which have occurred during growth and maturation. In precisely what does this sameness consist? In the first place, there is the continuity of a process, in which each phase determines the succeeding phase. Even if none of the materials which composed the seed persist as parts of the mature tree, there has been no abrupt and complete substitution of materials; but at every stage in the process of growth, there remained enough of the older elements to determine the disposition of the new materials which entered the organism. Throughout the whole period of existence of any living thing which we call an individual, it manifests a genetic continuity of form and functioning, which is the foundation of its persisting identity.

Like the physical organism, the mind grows and de-

velops, often continuing this process far longer than the body to which it is conjoined. Although, at least in its earlier stages, this mental growth is concomitant with increase in size and changes in the cellular organization of the associated brain, the precise relation between these two processes is obscure. As we know it, mental or spiritual growth is not, like the body's growth, the accretion of ponderable matter, but the enrichment of experience, the deepening of insight, and the maturing of attitudes. Even in the absence of memory, hence of recoverable experiences, the mind might preserve a certain individuality and self-identity merely by virtue of the continuity of its attitudes and habits of thought, which at each stage in its history are the outcome of the attitudes and habits of the immediately preceding stage, as modified by the latest influences from outside; just as the successive forms displayed by an organism in the course of its development are determined by the preceding forms. In this case, the mature mind of the man would be the same as that of the child he once was, in the same sense that the butterfly is the same individual as the caterpillar and the egg from which it arose. Just as the naturalist, who has followed the development of the winged butterfly from the egg, recognizes it as the same individual, although the insect itself may well be unaware of its past history; so if we were devoid of recollection, our continuing personal identity might be obvious to some superior intelligence which had followed our spiritual development, but it would be hidden from ourselves. In the absence of conscious memory, we would at each instant view the world as with a mind freshly created, even if this mind is in fact the product of a long period of slow development.

Although persisting personal identity, in the sense

of continuity of mental development, is conceivable in the complete absence of recollection, the awareness of personal identity is limited by the reach of our memory. Without pausing to analyze all the obscurities lurking beneath the familiar concept of memory, we might say that we know ourselves to be the same as our earlier self so far as we can remember that earlier self in the unique way which distinguishes personal memories from the recollection of events that we know merely through the reports of other people. Although as psycho-physical entities we are formed by many events in our own past history, including a long course of embryonic development, of which we preserve not the slightest conscious memory, our recognized personal identity is coextensive with our remembrance. Events in our own history of which we retain no recollection might, from the subjective point of view, as well have happened to somebody else. Hence we should consider it most unjust to be punished for things we did but cannot remember, and receive with all the surprise that accompanies undeserved good fortune reward for good deeds that we have wholly forgotten.

From the foregoing discussion, it follows that personal immortality can be conceived in two ways. In either case there must be persistence of consciousness, (without which our "immortality" would be hardly distinguishable from the kind of eternal existence which Democritus ascribed to his indestructible, insentient atoms); and the states of this continuing consciousness must be somehow related to the spirit's previous history and to the character formed in the earlier stages of its existence. But these fresh states of consciousness might or might not be accompanied by recollection of the experiences we enjoyed while in the

flesh. Although we can conceive of the persistence of character or spiritual attitudes without remembrance of the experiences through which they were shaped, and we often respond in a characteristic way to a given situation without at the moment recalling any of the past events which determine our response; in this life character and some traces of memory appear to be inseparable. Our earthly strivings to perfect and purify our spirits would lose much of their significance if in a subsequent state we remembered nothing of them, although we bore their effects. Although we might not care to preserve for ever the whole of our earthly memories, so many of which are ugly, painful, or trivial, it might be precious to us to retain some purified residue of them—a condition which Dante achieved in the Garden of Eden by drinking successively the waters of Lethe, which washed away all evil thoughts, and of Eunoë, which ensured the permanence of every good impression.[1]

Personal immortality, then, means the continuance of personal identity, which is above all the persistence of at least the more important spiritual or mental traits of the individual. Although this seems possible without the retention of definite recollections, it is more likely to be accompanied by at least some memories. Various forms of personal survival have been conceived by different religions and philosophies. One of the most curious is that of the Stoics, who held that the individual soul retains its identity for some time after the body's dissolution, longer in the case of the good than the wicked. But eventually it assumes a fiery nature as it is received into the world soul or the seminal intelligence of the Universe, a process

[1] *Purgatorio,* Canto XXVIII.

necessary lest the air or the stars become in the course of time overcrowded with souls.[1] At the longest, the good individual soul could survive until the next subsequent dissolution of the world, when everything, including even the lower gods, dissolved into universal fire, and only the supreme Deity preserved his identity. Commenting upon this doctrine, Cicero remarked that in the Stoic view the soul is not immortal, but merely long-lived like a crow; and he questioned why, if capable of existing for a while apart from the body, it could not continue in this state indefinitely.[2]

Of the doctrines which have ascribed everlasting life to the spirit, some have supposed that each soul is in the course of its existence associated with a single body, while others have contemplated its passage through a long series of bodies, the character of each of which is determined by conduct in the previous incarnation. The dogma of transmigration, which we have already met in connection with theories of impersonal immortality, is equally, or rather more, compatible with personal immortality, as we find it, for example, in the teachings of the Indian theologian Ramanuja. It has also been associated with personal immortality by Western thinkers, from Pythagoras and Plato to the present; but its popularity in Christian countries waned after it was declared a heresy by the Church. But Christianity and Mohammedanism, although they dislike the name, have their own peculiar doctrine of reincarnation; for they teach that after inhabiting a single body on earth, the immortal soul will at last be reincarnated in the same body in heaven, so that it may enjoy experiences hardly possible to a disembodied spirit.

[1] Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations,* Book IV, 21.
[2] *Tusculan Disputations,* Book I, 31-32.

By assigning to the everlasting spirit a mode of existence not greatly different from that with which we are familiar on earth, the dogma of the resurrection of the body makes it far easier for us to picture the conditions of its eternal life, at the same time that it makes the joys of heaven more vivid and attractive to those who always found greater gratification in the sensations of the flesh than in more spiritual experiences. But it involves the doctrine of immortality in grave difficulties, which are avoided by those who take a more spiritual view of the future life. The resurrected body would seem to be subject to the same laws, physical and biological, which governed the existence of the original body: as ponderable matter, it would need a place to rest; it could not be active without a source of energy; it would, like any organism, require an atmosphere, and temperatures within a certain narrow range, and other special conditions essential to all organic bodies. Where, except on the surface of a planet not greatly different from ours, it could find an ambient to support it, is a question which apparently has not been seriously considered.

9. *Immortality and Ontological Theory*

In view of the great difficulties which envelop the subject, it seems premature to attempt to decide which of the several doctrines of personal immortality is more likely to be true. Before trying to learn whether the spirit is associated with a single body or passes through a succession of them, it will be well to examine the possibility of its existence apart from the organism to which it was attached in the first instance. Obviously, unless capable of at least a brief period of existence apart from an animal body, it could not pass

from one to another in the manner assumed by the doctrine of transmigration. There are thinkers who have roundly declared that immortality is intrinsically impossible. The ground for this brusque dismissal of man's most cherished aspiration has often been the ontological view they accepted. The perennial problem of the fundamental constituents of the Universe, and of each sentient being in it, certainly has great relevance to the problem of immortality; yet it is easy to show that the answer to the question, especially with regard to some form of personal immortality, does not follow automatically from our ontological theory. Mentalism, which holds that the primary stuff of the Universe is mind or spirit, and dualism, which maintains that mind and matter are cosmic components of coördinate status, appear at the first glimpse to be far more favorable to the doctrine of immortality than materialism, which sees in matter the single ground of all that is. If mentalism is true, and mind is itself the ground of body, it is as little destroyed by the body's dissolution as the water which constitutes a snowflake is annihilated with the melting of the snow. But the snowflake which dissolves as it falls into the sea loses the form and unity which made it a separate entity, becoming indistinguishably mixed with a great mass of water, whence innumerable other snowflakes may with time be derived. As water, the snowflake is in a sense immortal, but not as an individual crystal with a delicate form and beauty of its own. Similarly, the indestructibility of mind, which follows from the primacy assigned to it by mentalism, is no guarantee of personal immortality, although it is favorable to the sort of impersonal immortality which we discussed in section 7 of this chapter.

In its bearing upon the problem of immortality,

dualism hardly differs from mentalism. In this case, too, all those qualities which distinguish an individual mind may result from the close association of a part or ray of the cosmic mind with a living body organized in a particular way. Upon the dissolution of the animal body, its mental component would then become an undifferentiated part of the general mental component of the dualistic Universe, whence other individual minds are in turn derived through the association of this diffuse mind with suitably organized masses of matter. From the point of view of personal survival, I see little to choose between such a situation, in which the individual spirit is reabsorbed into a general cosmic mind whence in turn there issue other minds, numerically distinct, and that which most naturally follows from the materialistic interpretation of the world. For, on the latter view, our spirit is extinguished when our body dies and its material components are scattered and indistinguishably mixed with the general fund of matter, whence in turn are formed other bodies, which through their functioning generate anew other minds like ours, this process continuing indefinitely. In both cases, there is a constant succession of similar individual minds; but in neither case does any single mind preserve for long its identity and continuity of experience. As Rohde pointed out, it is significant that Anaxagoras, who first of the Greek philosophers developed a decisive and conscious dualism, did not deduce therefrom the permanence of the individual spirit.

Just as mentalism and dualism, although certainly more congenial to a doctrine of personal immortality than materialism, do not without some further assumptions form an adequate foundation for such a doctrine; so materialism, although at the first glimpse

so inimical to belief in immortality, is by no means wholly incompatible with it. Since our notions as to the ultimate nature of the sensible Universe have been changing so rapidly in recent years, it is exceedingly difficult at this stage to give an adequate definition of matter, which seems a necessary prerequisite to the definition of the doctrine which holds this matter to be the single ground of all that exists. But we may recognize the materialist as one who accepts as primary constituents of the Universe only the things revealed to him by his five corporeal senses, either directly or as assisted by the instruments he constructs. Since consciousness, although the *sine qua non* of all sensation, is never an object of sensuous experience, it is by his presuppositions excluded from consideration as a fundamental component of the world. For the materialist, mind or consciousness can exist only as a property or emanation of material bodies; and its very existence anywhere in the Universe save in his individual self is admitted merely by inference and conjecture. Even in himself, paradoxically, he does not know consciousness as a property of matter, (we do not recognize our minds as qualities of our bodies in the same sense as their configuration, hardness, and color), but rather as the ground of the possibility of his awareness of matter, including his own body.

We need not be prejudiced against materialism on the score that it leads to mean and sordid views of human life; for some of the noblest idealism that the world has known has been associated with a materialist ontology; while, on the other hand, an outlook highly materialistic, in the popular meaning of this word, has often been linked with dualism or mentalism. Yet despite its long history of noble associations and its undoubted service in the advancement of the natural

sciences, materialism is, in my opinion, a philosophically untenable position. But it seems worth while to point out at this stage that, even admitting all its presuppositions, it need not destroy belief in immortality, or at least a long period of conscious survival after the body's dissolution. The world described by science includes things which contrast sharply with the ponderable matter of earth, rocks, and our own bodies. There are, for example, a great variety of imponderable emanations, including light waves, heat waves, Hertzian waves, X rays, and others. In the vastitude of space, some of these radiations may continue indefinitely upon their course, and under optimum conditions might be eternal. With his more powerful telescopes, the astronomer sees stars so distant that their light has been speeding toward his position in space for a thousand million years; and in all this time, while traversing such inconceivably vast distances, it has so maintained its self-identity that it is capable of interference, a phenomenon never observed with light from separate sources. When we strike a match beneath the open sky, the light from its evanescent flare continues to advance through space long after the hand that struck it has turned to dust.

Facts of this sort compel us to recognize that it is by no means impossible that at the moment of death, or soon after, there issues from the body something analogous to a complex train of waves, which carries out into space not only consciousness but memories and the foundation of personality, continuing indefinitely to preserve all that is essential to a spiritual being. Indeed, it is so difficult to account for the fate of all the manifold constituents of a human body, that it would require almost impossibly exacting measurements to prove that there does not escape from it, at

the instant of death, a minute quantity of ponderable matter, carrying with it the spirit to continue its conscious life in another realm. When we reflect upon the vast complexity and marvelous potentialities of a fertilized mammalian ovum, scarcely visible to the naked eye, we must admit the possibility that a few milligrams of matter, or even less, might serve as the bearer of human personality. Such matter might form an astral or subtile body, such as, in the view of the Theosophists and various Indian thinkers, carries the spirit through certain stages of its long journey. Without attaching too much weight to any of these suppositions, we must recognize that none can be ruled out by contemporary science; and until they have been more thoroughly investigated, it would be rash and dogmatic to assert that, even on the materialistic view of the Universe, the survival of consciousness is impossible.

10. *The Problem of Immortality beyond the Province of Science*

We often hear it said that biology affords no evidence for the existence of a "soul", and the most careful dissection reveals no such component of the human or animal body. The most cursory reflection should convince us that this negative evidence contributes nothing at all to the clarification of our problem, and that for the question of immortality, biological investigations are absolutely worthless. The problem under consideration is whether consciousness, which in the present context is what we mean by "mind", "spirit", or "soul", survives the death and dissolution of the body. Now consciousness is never an object of cognition nor an observable property of a material

body; and as the elder Huxley clearly demonstrated, the biologist cannot prove, by the accepted methods of his science, that any animal, even if it be his own brother, is sentient. However certain we may be that the living things around us are conscious, this is not a matter of observation nor demonstrable by scientific means. The most meticulous dissection fails to uncover sentience, and even with the newest microscopes it remains invisible to us. Neither the zoologist nor the psychologist can yet tell us in a convincing fashion how memories are stored in the living mind, whether as modifications of the brain's minute structure or, as Bergson held, in some less material fashion. If, then, the biologist cannot observe nor prove the existence of consciousness even where we are most certain that it is present, is he not talking wildly when he tells you what happens to this imperceptible thing when the animal dies? The biologist, like anyone else, is entitled to his opinion on the question of immortality, so long as he recognizes that it is merely an opinion. But the moment he pretends to possess any observational evidence on this point, he ceases to be a scientist and becomes a charlatan, and might be compared with the portrait painter who offers us an authentic likeness of Adam or Noah, or with the astronomer who would publish maps of the whole surface of the moon.

Although science provides no acceptable evidence, favorable or contrary, on the question of immortality, the rapidity of its recent advances, in both its pure and applied branches, should lead the man with a modicum of imagination to keep an open mind on this difficult subject. The earth receives from the sun electro-magnetic waves which were unsuspected by the foremost astronomers of a generation ago. The actively dividing cells of one vegetable tissue stimulate

cell division in another tissue placed a short distance away. Recent investigations of extra-sensory perception raise many questions which we can hardly begin to answer. We have only recently become aware, through scientific demonstration rather than conjecture and poetic fancy, of the great variety of emanations which surround and penetrate us and influence our lives; and the number known to us is constantly increasing. When I reflect that the cabin in which I write is filled with music, signals, and voices in many languages, which I cannot hear because I lack a radio receptor to make them audible to me, I find it easy to believe that I am surrounded by unseen spirits, perhaps of the aboriginal inhabitants of this valley, of which I remain unaware merely because my mind is not attuned to them. We have missed the grandest lesson modern science has to teach, if it has not made us impatient of all dogmatic negations and unimaginative limitations of the possible.

The fact that neither I nor any acquaintance has knowingly communicated with the spirit of a deceased friend or relation does not, in my opinion, weigh heavily against the doctrine of immortality. Such failure of communication is just what we should expect from a consideration of the relation of mind to mind among the living. Except possibly in the imperfectly understood instances of telepathy or direct transference of information, one mind can make contact with another only indirectly, by means of signals which it transmits with the aid of its body to one or more of the five corporeal senses of the recipient, as happens when we convey information by speech or gesture, or when we exhibit joy, sorrow, or some other emotion by means of facial expression or bodily attitudes. A spirit is nothing if not conscious, yet we have no im-

mediate awareness of the quality or even the presence of consciousness anywhere in the Universe save in our own individual minds. Making due allowance for telepathy, a capacity which in most of us is at best rudimentary, so long as a mind is enmeshed in a body other minds can communicate with it only through signals which affect that body. This would seem to hold true whether the second mind is incarnate or an incorporeal spirit. The latter might lack the ability to originate disturbances in the material world which, as signals, could affect the corporeal senses of the living. Could the dead communicate with the living, they would need to be something more, or less, than pure spirits.

Or the spirits of the departed might be restrained from attempting to communicate with the living by the knowledge that such interference from beyond is not wholesome for them. The formation of character, our most important enterprise in this present life and perhaps the indispensable preparation for any superior form of existence, is accomplished largely through making choices and decisions on the basis of our own experiences and feeling for values; and if we contracted the habit of looking for direction to the superior insight of those who have passed into a higher realm, we might grow old with the mentality of little children, who expect their parents to guide them through all their difficulties. The incarnate mind is a lonely being, which must develop itself without the direct assistance of beings of a higher order, if such there be, and often indeed with little help from other minds of its own status. This isolation of each mind from other minds, which at times causes us to complain bitterly of our loneliness, is the condition of its freedom and growth in strength.

11. *Immortality and the "Supernatural"*

When I reflect that I have no faculty which reveals directly to me the quality of consciousness even in those other minds most closely joined to me by bonds of mutual sympathy and interest, I become poignantly aware of the inadequacy of my equipment for the apprehension of the whole of reality. Consciousness, wherever it occurs beyond our individual selves, forms for each of us a transcendent realm, and is indeed our most readily understood example of such a realm; and unless I suppose myself the only sentient creature in the Universe, I cannot logically deny the reality of such an order of being. The dogmatic materialists brand as "supernaturalists" those who seriously entertain the notion of a realm of being not revealed by our senses, with or without the aid of scientific instruments. In a civilization whose high priests are the scientists, the word "supernatural" rings as harshly as "heresy" in the days of the Inquisition. Yet those who declaim most vehemently against the supernatural rarely take time to enlighten us as to the precise meaning of this puzzling word. Supernatural might mean: (1) that which occurs capriciously, according to no rule or law, without adequate causation, possibly in defiance of the "laws of nature"; or (2) that which belongs to an order of being not accessible to our senses. It is scarcely possible to prove that there are supernatural occurrences in the first sense. The event which seems to occur in defiance of all law may merely obey laws we do not yet understand. The facts of heredity seemed most capricious, as though determined by the interference of tricksy daemons, until Mendel and others demonstrated the rules which govern them. Even the vagaries of the weather, so inconstant that

our ancestors attributed them to the arbitrary decisions of supernatural beings, are slowly, with the advance of meteorological science, becoming understandable and predictable. We must take it as a working hypothesis that everything which happens occurs in response to adequate causes and in conformity to definite rules or laws, of the same order as the "laws of nature", although they remain to be discovered by us. Our minds revolt at any other conclusion. There can never be enough evidence to prove a miracle, or departure from the orderly sequence of events; for the reason that the occurrence of a single miracle would invalidate all observational evidence, whose cogency is strictly dependent upon the regularity of nature. It is extremely doubtful whether there is anything supernatural in the sense of being capricious or contrary to the laws of nature.

If only weak and confused intellects believe in the "supernatural" in the first sense of the word, only petty, unimaginative minds deny the reality of the "supernatural" in the second sense. When by "supernatural" we mean aspects or attributes of our Universe, continuous with our familiar world of sensuous impressions, interpenetrating it, and interacting with it according to definite rules or laws, yet not revealed to us through our senses—in short, a portion of our same world that is hidden from our view—then anyone who impartially weighs the evidence must admit the possibility, nay the certainty, of this transcendent region of reality. Scarcely any of the world's great thinkers has denied the existence of this vast, unexplored territory, although often by attempting to describe it too minutely, on the basis of inadequate evidence, they have weakened rather than strengthened their case.

When we view the "supernatural" world in this light, we recognize that the boundary separating it from the "natural" world is not fixed but mobile, and that for some centuries the latter has been encroaching upon the former. A considerable segment of what for Aristotle and Archimedes, and even for Galileo and Newton, was the "supernatural" realm has with the advance of science been brought within the expanding limits of the "natural" world. We need think only of such things as Hertzian waves, cosmic rays, electrons, bacteria, chromosomes, and many other recent discoveries, revealing aspects of reality of which the ancients, for all the penetration of their intellects, hardly even dreamed. Inventions like the radio and the electron microscope have in effect given men new senses, disclosing to them regions of existence hitherto unapproachable. Only absurd conceit and an impoverished imagination will suppose that our five special senses, supplemented by a few devices developed only yesterday, are adequate to make us aware of the whole of reality. Had we a hundred senses, each as different from the other as taste from sight, they might not suffice for the exploration of every aspect of our world. Year after year, migratory birds find their way over vast expanses of the earth's surface, travelling largely by night, and apparently guided by senses that men lack. Recently it has been suggested that they enjoy direct perception of the earth's magnetic field and of Coriolis forces caused by the planet's rotation; but this interpretation has not been adequately established; and the annual movements of the birds still remind us forcefully of the density of our ignorance. It is not unlikely that even with the aid of our newest instruments, the greater part of reality remains unexplorable by man's sensory equipment, by

which all his scientific knowledge is limited. And since all that we know of the Universe points to the conclusion that it is one integrated system, I see no reason to doubt that my own being is permeated by, and extends into, this vast segment of reality that is not revealed to our corporeal senses. To reduce the possibilities of my existence to its sensuously demonstrable aspects, would be to deny the reality of the only portion of myself of which I have complete knowledge—my conscious mind, which for every other mind occupies the "supernatural" realm. The man who wilfully gouges out his eyes is no more stupid or perverse!

12. *Recapitulation*

Before proceeding to draw conclusions from our survey, it may be profitable to glance rapidly back over the ground we have already traversed. In the first place, we learned that man's belief in immortality arose, not from "wishful thinking" or to create a region of escape from the perils of life and the darkness of death, but inevitably from the nature of his mental processes. We know that our spontaneous habits of thought, when uncorrected by the most rigorous criticism, have been a fertile source of errors; this may or may not be one of them. A delusory belief that some important part of itself would survive its body's dissolution would seem to bring to an animal no practical advantage, in the struggle for existence, that could not be more readily attained by simpler means. The aspiration for immortal life has on the whole tended to depress rather than to increase man's biological efficiency; and there is little reason to suppose that nature has tricked us into such an

illusion in order to strengthen our position as a species of animal in a competitive world.

Next we went on to consider the several kinds of immortality which men have contemplated, and found that, of these, personal immortality alone imparts any high and lasting significance to the world process and man's attempt to perfect his character. Of the three chief ontological doctrines, mentalism and dualism are most favorable to belief in some sort of spiritual survival, but do not, without some further assumptions, provide a sufficient foundation for *personal* immortality; whereas materialism, although often held to rule out the possibility of immortality in any form, is not wholly incompatible with the persistence of consciousness after the body's dissolution. Since science admits its inability to demonstrate the presence of consciousness in many places where we have every reason to believe that it exists, the problem we are discussing is beyond its province; if it can provide no proof of the spirit's survival, it can certainly give no cogent disproof. The very rapidity of its recent advances in many directions leads us to believe that there are vast segments of reality of which it still knows nothing. It provides certain analogies which give us reason to suspect that personal immortality is by no means an extravagant fantasy.

Each man's knowledge of all minds other than his own is wholly indirect and inferential, founded upon signals he receives from other bodies. Hence he can make no incontestable judgment as to the quality of consciousness in these minds, and far less is he able to assign a limit to the duration of this consciousness. Each mind's awareness of itself is direct and immediate, in a category quite distinct from its knowledge of all those entities which are brought to its notice by

the senses. Hence no inference drawn from sensuous experience can be validly applied to the mind, to ascribe a limit either to its duration or the range of its possible experience. It follows that all denials of the spirit's immortality which are based upon empirical knowledge of the realm of matter are worthless because categorially inapplicable. The same consideration casts grave doubt upon the spiritualistic "medium's" alleged communications with the souls of the deceased, when these take the form of sights, sounds, and other sensuously perceived signals. It leaves open the question of mystic or non-sensory evidence of the continued existence of the spirits of the dead. Since we lack adequate criteria for the evaluation of experience of this last sort, those who have enjoyed such revelations must assess them by their own standards, and those who lack them had best refrain from passing judgment.

Thus, in the present state of our knowledge, it is equally dogmatic to assert that the spirit of man or any other animal is immortal, as to declare that it is extinguished when the body perishes. Perhaps it is to our advantage that knowledge of our spirit's destiny has been so effectively concealed from the human mind. If we were assured that blessed everlasting life were unconditionally in store for us, we might too readily relax our efforts to improve ourselves in this present life, while passively awaiting our translation to a happier state. Thereby we should miss that growth and self-discipline which might well be an indispensable preparation for a more advanced stage of existence. Or if we had proof which admitted no doubt that our future welfare depended upon the accomplishment of certain clearly defined tasks, the selection of ends and values for ourselves, which plays so important

a part in the formation of an autonomous mind, would be taken away from us; and we should become puppets, enjoying at best the illusion of freedom. On those questions which most affect our destiny, we require not certainty so much as faith in a reasonable probability. In this life, we embark upon our most momentous undertakings with no more than this.

13. *Should We Desire Immortal Life?*

There are men, including philosophers, who disclaim the desire for immortality. "One world is enough," they assert. This attitude, if not a mere expression of "sour grapes", disdain of that which they have no hope of achieving, seems to me to be both irreligious and an avowal of failure. One may be in sympathy with those who prefer not to pass through another life such as this present one—although a truly adventurous spirit might welcome even this opportunity—but the more advanced doctrines of immortality have never pictured immortal life as the mere endless continuation of the kind of existence we experience on earth. At the lowest, they have promised the intensification of our earthly joys undiluted by the recurrent sorrows of our present state, as in the Mohammedan paradise of luscious fruits that never cloy, drinks that never inebriate, and large-eyed consorts who remain always virgin. At the highest, as in the philosophic visions of Plato, Plotinus, Dante, and Aquinas, the blessed immortal spirit enjoys the unclouded vision of the highest truths, residing in sight of the deity, and seeing reality as God sees it. To find no aspect of our present life so precious to us that we would wish its indefinite continuance, if this were possible without the pains and apprehensions

which now assail us, reveals a radical dissatisfaction with existence which is irreligious. It is to reject wholly and unconditionally the boon of life, as containing nothing of permanent value; and this is to be deficient in gratitude to the source of our being.

Those who sincerely love truth hope for a form of existence which will bring them closer to it; those who appreciate beauty long to experience it with less alloy of ugliness than in our actual world; those who reverence goodness desire a mode of being in which it is possible to be more consistently good; those who love intensely yearn for an object worthy of their highest devotion. To declare that we would not seize any of these advantages, even if it were within our reach, reveals a spiritual poverty, an absence of imagination and aspiration, which excites profound pity. For one to proclaim that there is no aspect of his experience that he would wish to prolong indefinitely, even under the most favorable conditions he can imagine, is an admission of failure to discover enduring values in life. Perhaps, also, this disdain of immortality springs from weakness of the imagination, which can fancy no mode of existence with joys enhanced and all annoyances smoothed away. A Creator-God, I suspect, would be offended by hearing his creatures avow that they had no desire for existence indefinitely prolonged, even in the best possible conditions. He might take it as a reflection of his own failure to create a world containing some truly enjoyable features, or to form creatures with adequate capacities for enjoyment. For a philosopher to confess that he would not care to live in the eternal contemplation of truth, somewhat in the manner imagined by Plotinus and others, seems to reveal a deficient regard for the ends of philosophic

endeavor. To prefer mortality to immortality is to hold Non-being as superior to Being.

14. *Ethical Consequences of Belief in Immortality*

Belief in immortality is so widespread and persistent among mankind, and has taken such various forms, not only because it is a spontaneous product of the human mind, and because most men prefer Being to Non-being, but also because of its undoubted moral value. Perhaps the least of the ethical advantages of the doctrine is that only if it turns out to be true we can hope for the eventual equalization of happiness and moral worth. The highest type of man does not persist in righteous conduct because he hopes to be rewarded on earth or in heaven, but rather because he is impelled from the depth of his being to do the right thing as he sees it and such conduct is wholly in keeping with his nature. Virtue is its own recompense, and to perform a good deed because we expect some extraneous reward is to transform morality into commerce. Moreover, as was earlier pointed out, by steadfast adherence to his principles of conduct, the virtuous man experiences the greatest happiness that *he* can hope for in the actual circumstances of his life; and his felicity is apt to be greater than that of another man who, by abandoning rectitude of conduct, crams more pleasures into a life which lacks that coherence and integrity which is the indispensable condition of happiness.

None the less, the good too often suffer, and the wicked prosper, in a manner which makes men doubt that a moral order pervades the world. Only if our conscious existence exceeds our span of organic life is it conceivable that this disparity between moral worth

and felicity should ever be corrected. Since faith in the moral governance of the Universe is fundamental to religion, no higher religion has been able to dispense with belief in immortality, or at least in the persistence personal identity far beyond the limits of a single earthly life. Buddhism, in its purer form, knows nothing of God; but by combining the doctrine of rebirth with that of Karma it has, as we saw in Chapter X, section 2, provided a means for the equalization of happiness and moral worth. In the West, scarcely any philosopher of modern times has developed a sterner concept of duty than Kant; yet even he taught that we should strive by good conduct to be worthy of happiness. Following the Kantian doctrine, the best type of man will endeavor to merit felicity, even if he expects never to enjoy it; yet never to receive what one deserves would, it seems, indicate a certain incompleteness and deficiency in the totality of things.

A far more momentous ethical consequence of the doctrine of immortality is that it accustoms us to the thought that there is some part of ourselves which is absolutely inviolable, or at least can be injured only by acts which we ourselves have willed. Nothing so strengthens our moral resolution as this conviction of our essential inviolability. That even in the absence of belief in immortality one may cultivate this attitude is demonstrated by the Stoics, whose admission that the human soul preserves its distinctness for at least a limited period after the body's dissolution appears to have been a concession to modes of thought current in ancient times rather than an integral part of their philosophy. The Stoic owed his strength in the face of adversity not to assurance that he bore within himself an immortal spirit so much as to his unwavering

reliance upon the power of his will. His doctrine that nothing is evil which happens according to nature, or may befall the good man and the wicked alike, could be maintained only by refusing to recognize as misfortunes many accidents, such as disease, mutilation, the loss of wealth or a loved one, which men spontaneously lament. Hence he was obliged to attribute everything to opinion, and to declare that nothing is really evil unless we consider it so. Such exaltation of the power of judgment may make a strong-willed man strangely immune to external accidents, so that he may laugh at the tyrant's most hideous instruments of torture and face death with perfect serenity.

But even in ancient times, the Stoic's perfect Wise Man was an ideal rather than an actuality; for few humans are endowed with the unswerving will which the consistent practice of Stoicism demands. It is especially difficult to preserve our conviction of our essential inviolability on the slender doctrinal foundation which Stoicism provided for it. Moreover, the despots and tyrants of the ancient world, with their racks, iron bulls, and dungeons, were feeble amateurs in the art of breaking the human will. It remained for our modern dictators, assisted by trained psychologists and having recourse to a vast array of drugs unknown to the ancients, to achieve scientific precision in the annihilation of men's power of resistence. And if the despot who holds me captive in his dungeon can reach and sully every part of me, what can I preserve from profanation? What avails it for me to defy him to the end?

Our power of resistance, whether to pleasures and temporal advantages which tempt us to stray from the path of virtue and duty, to natural calamities, or to human persecution, is immensely increased by the con-

viction that we bear within ourselves an essential part which is absolutely indestructible, and can be profaned only through our own failure to cherish it as it deserves. When a man firmly believes that he guards within his breast some sacred entity inaccessible to his tormentors, he may defy the rack and the stake of the Inquisition and walk serenely into the gas chamber of the dictator. Thousands of martyrs have suffered incredible tortures and died, without bringing general conviction of the truth of the dogmas for which they surrendered their lives. But have they not proved, almost with the force of a demonstration in physical science, a grander and more fundamental proposition about the human spirit: that at its highest it is beyond reach of the tyrant and the torturer, remote, inviolate, and when sustained by firm principles, subject to profanation only through acts which it has itself willed? Thus the blood of countless Christian martyrs bore testimony to the central truth of an earlier Pagan philosophy whose impersonal coldness repelled them. When the martyr amidst the flames can remain true to his doctrine of forgiveness and apply it even to his persecutors, he has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt the looseness of the mind's dependence upon bodily states. Although such independence is not proof of the spirit's ability to survive the body's dissolution, it perhaps affords a presumption of it.

The hope for personal immortality is sometimes looked upon as an egregious expression of self-love, an over-growth of the animal instinct of self-preservation. This somewhat shallow mode of viewing the matter fails to account for the spiritual force which belief in immortality often gives to a man under torture or in the extremes of adversity, when egoism

withers and higher forces, if any, come into play. It is not selfishness nor the animal will to survive which gives us strength in the most desperate circumstances, but simply the conviction that, whatever may be done to our body, we are still in possession of something worth defending. It is contrary to the nature of all animals, including man, to continue to struggle and resist when nothing remains to preserve. The bird which so valiantly shields the nest that cradles its young, loses interest when the nest is empty; bees no longer defend the hive which has lost its queen. Without stopping to ask whether they are immortal, men, like other creatures, will bravely die in the defense of something sacred to them—their homes and loved ones, or their country. But since idea first clashed with idea, innumerable men have been put to the extreme test of spiritual fortitude in isolation, or in such circumstances that their resistance could neither help their friends nor advance their cause; so that unless they were convinced that they still guarded within themselves something unprofaned, they had nothing worth defending. Perhaps in the very highest form of Stoic idealism, which surpasses even that of Socrates and the Christian martyrs, men may preserve faith in the inviolability of a spirit which they believe to be perishable; but on this supposition, such steadfastness is far more difficult to achieve.

The third and most valuable ethical consequence of belief in immortality is that it serves as a great stimulus to human effort, especially when this is directed to ends of the greatest spiritual worth rather than mere animal survival, for which nature has provided a sufficiency of other incentives. Our disinclination to work for things we have no prospect of attaining may well be a product of natural selection, for it would be dis-

astrous to any creature to dissipate its strength in endeavors which bring no return. The effort we devote to any enterprise is in general proportional to its expected fruits and the period over which we hope to enjoy them. No sane man gives to the preparation of a night's encampment the same care and expense which he bestows upon the house where he plans to dwell for many years; nor will he prepare himself for some office which he will hold for a day with the same painstaking care that he dedicates to training himself for his life's profession. From the moral point of view, our most important enterprise is the perfection of our character, which we achieve in the measure that we make all our thoughts, attitudes, habits, and modes of response conform to the central determinant of our being, which ever impels us to increase harmony in all its aspects. Since the struggle for existence has forced upon the human stock deep-rooted attitudes and passions which clash violently with this central impulse, the cultivation of a harmonious character is a long and arduous task, not to be completed in a day or a year. Just as in all other human undertakings, so in this supreme endeavor the effort evoked tends to be proportional to the probable permanence of the result. Merely to suspect that in cultivating spiritual perfection we are laying the foundation of something which will endure indefinitely, drives us to dedicate our best efforts unstintedly to the most momentous enterprise which confronts us.

The contemplation of space and of time affects the human spirit in much the same manner. Just as we are oppressed when our physical vision has for a long period been hemmed in by enclosing walls, so are we dejected when our mental horizon is narrowed by a brief time available for the realization of our hopes.

On the other hand, the prospect of ample time, like the survey of vast spaces in open or mountainous country, elevates the spirit, excites the fancy, may even bring us feelings of exhilaration and enhanced energy, and stimulates our best effort. Our hopes, when rosy, stretch before us in endless perspective. A blind wall anywhere ahead of us, no matter how great its distance, chills and depresses us. In order to preserve our spiritual tension unimpaired, each occurrence and stage in our lives must lead on to another, there must be no final term of our inner discourse.

Yet it is not always essential that we contemplate ourselves as participating personally in the indefinite advance which we visualize, so long as we are represented by something with which we have been intimately associated, and which is dear to us. We should pity the man so bound up in himself that his best efforts are not elicited by devotion to his descendants, his art or science, his country, or humanity as a whole. By identifying himself with something which he is certain will go marching on long after he has dropped from the ranks, he is spared that prospect so depressing to the human mind, the total nullification of effort. Some of the sting of death is removed by the conviction that others will carry forward the task we have left unfinished, even if our own personality is extinguished; for thereby something of ourselves will survive us. But all men do not have the good fortune to find associates who will carry on their enterprises. Many have fought their fiercest battles in solitude, or thought their truest thoughts in opposition to the general temper of their age; so that except for the faith that their own spirit would rise victorious over death, they must contemplate the final extinction of the cause for which they stood. To the last representative of an

expiring line, the sole adherent to a lost cause, the lone defender of a city overwhelmed, death is doubly bitter—unless he is convinced that some part of himself is indestructible.

Whether belief in immortality is true or mistaken, to hold it is like building one's house upon a hilltop. It expands our outlook, exalts the mind, and calls forth the fullest exercise of our highest capacities. If this mortal life be only a stage in our advance toward some more ample existence, as the creeping larval state is only a phase in the whole life of the winged insect, there may yet be time for the realization of those larger aspirations for spiritual growth, for which our earthly span appears at times so pathetically brief and inadequate. The man who has no desire for further existence has not felt the stirrings of his spirit, which seeks to break forth from the narrow chrysalis that encloses it and spread its wings beneath an ampler sky.

15. *We Should Live as Though Immortal*

Our long survey has shown that man's belief that his spirit survives his body springs from spontaneous habits of human thought. It may represent the spirit's intuition of its own destiny that has gropingly clothed itself in a variety of concepts, which can at best be approximations to the actuality. Although we lack convincing evidence that our conscious existence extends beyond our organic life, we must admit that this is not impossible, so far as our present knowledge goes. We have no better foundation for denying that the spirit is immortal than for asserting that it is, and we must learn to view dogmatic negations with the same distaste that we have for dogmatic affirmations. Whether in itself true or false, belief in immortality

is, as an opinion, a positive content of the mind, which cannot fail to influence profoundly the lives of those who entertain it. In particular, it is a source of moral strength and a stimulus to effort in the most important endeavor which confronts us, the perfection of our character, upon which in turn all social and political improvements ultimately depend. Although certainly not indispensable to a high degree of ethical endeavor in favorable external conditions; under the most adverse circumstances, when every other incentive for remaining faithful to our ideals is absent, it provides a support to our noblest resolutions for which there is no substitute. Although we may call up many thoughts to strengthen us in the bosom of a congenial society, the doctrine of immortality seems to be the only one, or almost the only one, able to reinforce our moral resolutions in whatever circumstances we may be thrown, including the most forlorn. Since a universal religion must contain elements to sustain us in every possible predicament in which we may find ourselves, how desperate soever, this belief appears to be an indispensable constituent of a universal religion, as opposed to a cult developed in response to certain special social conditions and needs.

In view of the vast importance of belief in immortality coupled with our uncertainty of its truth, what stand must we take in regard to it? *I believe that the wise and prudent man will live as though his spirit will survive his body.* He will not regard immortality as a mere fiction, whose consequences he accepts although he recognizes the premise as false; as legal decrees are sometimes based upon unreal assumptions. On the contrary, he will accept immortality as a working hypothesis, whose truth is to be tested by the outcome of the great experiment of living. He will live in hope

and faith that the best part of himself is far more enduring than his corruptible body, and he will do all in his power to make it worthy of a blessed eternal existence. Whether he will actually enjoy such an existence, only the future can decide. Even if the hope of spiritual survival should prove illusory, one who lives with this goal constantly before him will undoubtedly enjoy a more rewarding earthly existence, becoming a nobler man and a more productive member of society, than one who takes a narrower view of his own potentialities. We have everything to gain, and little to lose, by treating our spirit as though it were indestructible.

We should further keep in mind the possibility that spiritual existence is not an inevitable sequel of animal or even human life, but a condition to be achieved. A mind wholly taken up with corporeal pleasures would appear to have nothing for which to exist if separated from the flesh; so that except upon the highly improbable assumption that it will eventually be equipped with a resurrected body, its subsequent existence would be vapid and devoid of content. It would be a forlorn spirit dragging out an inane existence. It appears more probable that spiritual survival depends upon the cultivation in this present life of interests which lead the mind forth from its fleshly habitation, and it seems hardly possible that a rich and meaningful spiritual existence could be achieved in any other manner. Hence the man who lives in hope of immortal life will strive above all to enrich his mind with truths having reference to things beyond and more enduring than his perishable body, and especially with such truths as are most universally valid. He will cultivate the love of all things beautiful and good; for these, however transient in themselves, are revelations of a permanent

component of the world. He will also spare no effort to develop loyalty and allegiance to things beyond himself and his little circle of personal interests, and above all to the cause of the Divine, which is always and everywhere at work bringing harmony into the world. Such an extension of interest, love, and devotion may be the indispensable condition of immortal life, as it certainly is of a satisfying spiritual existence.

Even if the spirit survive the flesh, it does not follow that it will have a blessed rather than a painful existence. To be worthy of a *happy* immortal life, we must in this present life be careful to bring no avoidable pain or hardship to any creature, and so far as we reasonably can, to ease the burdens and promote the welfare of all that surround us.

All too frequently, the hope of eternal life has led men to despise the world and shrink from its polluting touch; for they looked upon all things terrestrial as so many obstacles to the attainment of heavenly bliss. This attitude follows naturally from the view that organic life, and perhaps the whole phenomenal Universe, is the outcome of some tragic cosmic blunder, without meaning or purpose, whose unhappy effects upon ourselves should be cancelled by severing contact with all things earthly as promptly and thoroughly as we can. But one who finds significance in harmonization cannot consistently cultivate this negative attitude toward the world which it pervades. If we view all parts of our existence, however far it may extend, as successive stages in a single formative process, we must look upon earthly life as a preparation for any further life which may be in store for us—as a school in which our spirits are prepared for a higher stage. The good pupil does not run away from his school, but studies its lessons carefully. Not by turning dis-

dainfully from the world, but by accepting gratefully everything beautiful, good, and true it holds forth to us, by looking upon its toils and tasks as so many opportunities for training and disciplining ourselves, are we most likely to become worthy of an ampler existence. Such acceptance of the world must be not undiscriminating but selective. We have neither time nor capacity to absorb all its multitudinous offerings, hence must choose those of highest worth; and through such choice character is formed and tested. Contact with matter, harsh and resistant as it so often is, need not pollute nor degrade the spirit, but if wisely controlled may discipline and fortify it. Matter can contaminate spirit only when spirit misuses matter. The wise man looks upon the material world, not as a delusion or a snare, but as the harsh abrasive against which the roughness and imperfections of his character may be worn smooth.

16. *Static Perfection or Continued Growth?*

To picture a future life exceeds the mind's power. All imagination is merely the recombination in novel patterns of elements given by experience; and our present life in the flesh provides scarcely any foundation for prefiguring a purely spiritual existence, except that we should expect it to contain more of thought and feeling, less of sensation, than our earthly life. Poets, when they write of the future state, are obliged by the demands of their art to give us pictures vividly colored with hues already familiar to us; and religious accounts of the joys of heaven, as of the pains of hell, all too often reveal a radical materialism and lurking mistrust of the potentialities of spirit. The paradise proffered to the faithful is commonly

an existence wherein all of earth's soft and fleshly delights are intensified, while its toils and pains are eliminated and its opportunities for growth are wholly absent. A heaven of this sort has little attraction for one who has formed a true conception of the life proper to spirit.

More congenial to the thoughtful mind are the philosophical visions of the future life as not only a state of serene, unclouded happiness, but one of deepened insight, in which truths we now dimly perceive are viewed in clearest light—a condition expressed by such phrases as seeing or knowing God, living in constant view of the Good or the One. But it need not follow that we pass at once from our present state of striving and becoming to one of static perfection, from which all effort is absent and all further advance precluded. The eager spirit could ask for no higher boon than the opportunity to grow indefinitely through its own endeavor, perhaps under conditions somewhat more propitious than this world offers to most of us. We should be satisfied never to reach the pinnacle of perfection provided we could climb for ever, making of our whole existence, under however varying forms, one uninterrupted *progressus ad infinitum*. To us who are pervaded by a principle of development, growth is more congenial, more accordant with our nature, than any stationary condition, however high; and through growth we may experience a degree of happiness that no static perfection could yield us. The tragedy of our present life is not the demand it makes upon us for constant exertion, not even its pains and sorrows, bitter as they can at times be, but the fact that we must leave it while still so far from our highest aspirations. The hunger for more intense pleas-

ures indefinitely continued, for a further life which is merely a more luxurious and enervating version of this present one, to which religious eschatologies so often cater, is doubtless merely an expression of our animal appetites; but the demand for completion to which we here refer springs from a deeper source, hence is more likely to be the revelation of some cosmic power, which has provided the means for its fulfillment.

To picture the shades of the departed as engaging in games or martial exercises, feasting, singing, or even mating, as in various views of the future state current or outmoded, strains our credulity. Yet when we adopt the purer and philosophically more acceptable view of the future life as a time for the continued growth of the emancipated spirit, we still face difficulties, which it is hopeless to attempt to solve on the basis of available information. How, for example, can the spirit continue to grow in knowledge and insight without a single one of the five senses, which in this life are the gateways to the mind, yet which are undoubtedly lost along with the body, to which they appertain? But to reject the notion of continued spiritual existence merely because we cannot imagine all its details would reveal a short-sighted perversity of which we should be ashamed. Neither the babe in the womb nor the chick in the shell can have the slightest foretaste of the experiences which await them after they emerge into the outer world, yet as a rule they adapt themselves to it very well in due time. The Universe contains so much of which we can form no adequate conception, that this inability cannot be held to weigh against any mode of existence. Far from being alarmed by the prospect of unimagined experiences, the brave spirit is exhilarated and allured by them.

17. *Spiritual Existence and Cosmic Evolution*

If the thirst to complete and fulfill ourselves were our strongest ground for expecting a future life, we might dismiss such expectation as a fantasy born of our own unquenchable desire. But the whole grand process, of which our lives are infinitesimal yet representative parts, demands some sort of spiritual existence for its completion. We have seen that the whole Universe, like every organized being in it, is pervaded by an energy which, so far as we can tell, has throughout all space and all time been at work giving order to its contents, striving to arrange them in one comprehensive yet infinitely varied harmonious pattern. There is no evidence for the existence of any contrary power opposing this universal tendency; we could discover no principle of evil, however many evil events may occur as a result of the clash of patterns made inevitable by the very universality of the impulsion toward goodness. Yet we know from experience that no harmony among material objects can be enduring, for all compound entities are subject to change and decay. And among living things, which we take to be the highest products of the world process known to us, perfect harmony is made intrinsically impossible by the energy relations upon which life is established: they must compete for food or materials, and they often destroy each other to supply their needs.

Hence if there is no higher order of being, beyond the phenomenal world, the dominant power of the Universe seems doomed to endless frustration, unable ever to achieve that toward which it always and everywhere strains; and this not because it is thwarted by some opposing power, but by the very nature of its undertaking. We find it difficult to accept this gloomy

conclusion; yet the only alternative seems to be that the phenomenal world is a medium in and through which something is prepared for a more enduring order of being, where perfect harmony is not the vain aspiration that it is on the surface of this planet. Of all the known components of our familiar world, the most promising candidate for this higher order is the human spirit, which is not only immensely broadened and deepened by its experiences here, but yearns intensely for a more harmonious existence. There may, of course, be other entities which in this difficult school are prepared for a higher existence, as the spirits of animals or at least the more advanced of them, and even beings of which we know nothing. Our foremost interest is in learning what we can accomplish, not what other beings, which we know only superficially, cannot accomplish.

The same reasoning which leads us to conclude that only in a spiritual realm of being can the world process reach fulfillment, leads us also to believe that only in personal rather than collective immortality can such realization be found. As Spencer demonstrated, the whole trend of cosmic evolution is from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity. More simply stated, the world process is directed toward the production of harmony in diversity, which is separated by the whole breadth of cosmic history from the harmony of a perfectly homogeneous substratum. The more complex and diverse the entities among which concord prevails and the more freedom each enjoys, the more difficult is this harmony to establish and the more rare and precious we recognize it to be. The harmony among the leaves of a plant, which by their own movements arrange themselves in a mosaic which permits each to receive

a maximum amount of sun-light, is more admirable than that among the leaves of a book, which lie flat and in contact with each other simply because they were placed that way and lack the power to crumple themselves. The coöperation among the freely moving members of a beehive or an anthill is of a higher order than that between the wheels and levers of a machine, which work together to a common end only because they have been so disposed by the machine's builder. And the harmony among free citizens, who live in concord only in so far as they can understand each other's needs and make concessions to the common welfare, is worth far more than that between slaves or soldiers on the drill field, who are kept in order by fear of their overseer or superior officer.

The greater their capacity for choice of ends and means, the more rare and valuable the harmony among individuals becomes. The process which transforms an originally homogeneous substratum, how free soever from all strife and discord, into a society of free beings dwelling in harmony because of their love or respect for each other and for concord itself, has added something new and precious to the totality of things, of such great worth that it may be held to justify all the pain and struggle which seems to be inseparable from the production of such intelligent, autonomous beings. But the complete loss of individuality by these beings, such as would result from their fusion or reabsorption into a single cosmic mind or world spirit, would appear to annul the whole process, divesting of meaning, hence of moral justification, all the pains and toils which it involved. No matter how ineffable the bliss of the undifferentiated cosmic consciousness, it would correspond to the beginning, not the end, of the world process, whose grand cycle in running its

aeonian course accomplishes nothing of lasting value, but merely brings things back to their primal state.

Although men aglow with love and devotion seek fulfillment in inseparable union with the object of their desire, they often fail to see that such fusion would destroy that which is most precious to them, including their love and devotion itself. The highest forms of value are generated by the striving to overcome the distinctness of separate entities, yet would be destroyed if this effort could be brought to a successful conclusion; so that their very existence involves a constant state of tension. The lover yearns to become one with his beloved; yet could he fulfill his aspiration, the distinction of lover and beloved would be lost and love extinguished. Thirst for knowledge impels the mind to unite itself with some object; and it fondly imagines that the more intimately it could fuse itself with the object, the more adequate would its knowledge become. Yet complete identification of the mind with its object would destroy knowledge, which is not unity of being, but the representation of one thing by another. To be good does not mean to become indistinguishable from the beings which surround us, but to dwell in harmony with them; so that goodness itself would become impossible if all distinctions between entities should disappear. A spiritual realm wherein all distinctions between individuals had been transcended would seem also to be devoid of all value, hence deprived of the highest spirituality, which is above all the appreciation of values. Tension is not conflict, but the force that binds together any harmonious association; and without it there could be no harmony, but only insipid uniformity.

Thus, from whatever angle we view the problem, some sort of spiritual existence, in which personality

is not wholly lost, appears necessary for the fulfillment of the world process no less than of our individual lives. Yet, except vaguely by abstraction from the material conditions of our present life, we can form no concept of such an existence. We have no assurance of immortality, but recognize it as a possibility, and aspire to it for the perfection of our being. In living as though the most essential part of ourself is immortal, we not only prepare ourselves for whatever higher state awaits us, but make the best possible use of all the opportunities our present life offers for growth, and the enjoyment of the highest values, and service to a larger whole. Even if it should turn out that there is no order of being higher than that which we now know, so that the world process can never fulfill itself in that perfect harmony toward which it strains, we could not for that reason relax our effort to advance this process to its furthest possible limits. We are impelled by the very forces which made us to realize the fullest and richest harmony of which we are capable, and we cannot disregard this impulsion without denying and in a sense nullifying ourselves. The tree that attains the full majesty of its stature through a thousand years of steady growth never pauses to ask itself whether it will stand for ever. It continues to grow year after patient year according to the laws of its nature, without fear of the future. So must each living thing, including ourselves, develop in accordance with its nature, in the faith that when it is true to its inmost self all will be well with it. There is no alternative course.

Chapter XIX

CONCLUSION

The concept of the Divine that we have been developing will be scorned by those who believe that the things most important for men to know have been so well concealed that the human mind is incapable of discovering them by its own efforts, but must rely upon supernatural revelation, which is granted on rare occasions to a small and favored portion of mankind. Not only does such revelation invariably come in a form which is looked upon as too sacred for examination and a rational assessment of its credentials, but it is held to be wicked and blasphemous to subject it to the same searching criticism that we apply to less important events of history. Thus this view springs from a radical distrust of intelligence and its capacity to guide our lives.

Reason, it is true, is neither a primary source of information nor a motive for action. Knowledge comes to us through experience, both of the external world, by way of the senses, and of the mind's own responses to life's so various predicaments. The limited experience of each individual is supplemented by that of others, preserved in writing or more directly communicated by speech. Reason is as little the primary source of our religious insights as it is of the other beliefs we hold as true. One who demands a "reason"for everything he believes, including the reality of his direct experiences, exiles himself to the sterile wastes of infinite regress and can never take

the first step in any constructive intellectual endeavor, whether it be mathematics, science, ethics, or religion. But reason is our only instrument for comparing and assessing the often conflicting testimony we receive from such varied sources; and the only test of truth which it possesses is the congruence of any particular perception or opinion with the accumulated mass of tested beliefs. What we call reasoning is above all the mind's attempt to achieve that coherence of all its contents which is the prime requisite for its successful activity, just as the harmonious integration of all the organs and processes of the body is the basic condition of life and health. To deny reason's right to carry out this function, with respect to every opinion which we receive, is to repudiate that process of harmonization which formed us in body and mind, and to abandon ourselves to impulse, whim, and uncontrolled imagination. The man who refuses to examine in this fashion every opinion which he accepts, and above all those which most powerfully influence his life, but divides his mind into watertight compartments labelled "empirical facts" and "religious truth", voluntarily consents to the fragmentation of his own personality.

Our concept of the Divine will likewise fail to appeal to those who for their spirit's ease must worship a god so powerful that he creates merely to display his might, and does not require the aid of his creatures in carrying forward his work. To those who yearn to throw themselves into the arms of some saving power, abandoning all active endeavor, it will appear cold and sterile. It will be as little acceptable to those who shrink from the responsibility of personal decisions on the most important questions and look to some infallible authority for guidance in matters of faith and conscience. Those who distrust the effi-

cacy of human effort and believe that only by some miraculous intervention from beyond can our world be much improved, will likewise find nothing attractive in our doctrine.

There are many, however, who do not dread responsibility and welcome rather than shrink from strenuous endeavor, yet find themselves alone, confused, and without guidance. Failing to recognize the continuity of their ethical and religious aspirations with the process which created us in body and mind, they look upon these sentiments as stray outcasts in a hostile world, which will neither acknowledge nor support them. Lacking leadership and a doctrine at once credible and fortifying, they hesitate, fearing to commit themselves to any course which may make them ridiculous in the eyes of contemporaries who deem themselves wise merely because they lack all firm convictions and will commit themselves to nothing. They are eager to do whatever they can to help the world on its forward way, to fight the good fight; but they lack a banner about which to rally, a leader to guide them. To those who, being of such a temperament, find themselves in such a plight, our doctrine of the Divine should prove welcome. It demonstrates how our yearning for perfection, both for ourselves and the world in which we live, is a natural and inevitable development of that same process which formed the cosmos and ourselves, hence is not foreign to the world, but an expression of its dominant trend. When we strive to increase friendliness, beauty, and truth, to advance harmony in any form, the creative energy that brought order into the Universe is with us and working through us. It needs the help of intelligent beings like ourselves to overcome the obstacles inherent in the creative process, and through this help

we not only further the cause of the Divine but fulfill our own nature.

If the Divine as we have endeavored to portray it seems to lack the majesty, the intimacy, and the warmth of the more conventional gods of religion, it may be because the reader has not yet grasped all its implications. No doctrine of this sort can be fairly appraised in the same ready manner as one checks a mathematical operation. It must, of course, contain no logical inconsistencies, no discrepancies with the best scientific evidence of our day. But even if free of these defects, it may not bring immediate conviction nor be capable of arousing a warm response. Properly to evaluate a doctrine such as this, one must neither accept nor reject it out of hand, but meditate upon it, permit it to seep through the intellect into the depths of one's being, strive to live for a while in its light. Then, but not before, if it makes no appeal and fails to become a fresh source of strength, it may be rejected as worthless.

Finally, it is necessary to repeat that we have not presumed to give a complete and exhaustive account of that highest Power, whatever it is, which men commonly denote by "God" or some equivalent term. We have confined our attention to the immanent aspect of deity, to God as revealed to us through the world of which we ourselves are parts; and this is what we designate as the Divine. To what extent God is also transcendent, we have no means of knowing; and far less can we imagine the attributes of a transcendent being. Indeed, to be transcendent means to have no attributes; for attributes are the properties by which things are known to us. Thus the Divine may be merely one aspect or facet of a being that far exceeds the claims we have made for it. In the present ex-

position, it seemed best to restrict ourselves to points on which some definite evidence was available, to risk falling short of the limits of human insight rather than to weaken our argument by a vain attempt to exceed them.

Doubtless Spencer was right when he contended that the human mind has definite limits, to which it is our duty to submit with all humility, rather than perversely to rebel against them. Yet his own doctrine of evolution might have suggested to him that these limits are not fixed irrevocably for all time, but are capable of gradual expansion. What is today beyond our power of comprehension may tomorrow become clear to us. All that we have attempted to do in the present work is to fix a starting point and set a course, in the hope that by advancing along it others may go farther than I and gain a more adequate understanding of the Divine. I suspect that many are blessed now and then with glimpses of divinity that seem to reveal far more than we can express. The difficulty is to understand the meaning of these fleeting insights, to relate them to our store of tested knowledge. To draw vast conclusions from the lights we vaguely detect struggling through the mists that shroud our mental horizon is a dangerous practice, which too often leads to mad enthusiasm or congealing dogma. The only rational method is to look upon these stars which glimmer at the very limit of visibility as challenges to future discovery.

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