IS CHRISTIANITY UNIQUE?

IS CHRISTIANITY UNIQUE?

A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE RELIGIONS

(WILDE LECTURES, OXFORD, 1935)

BY

NICOL MACNICOL, D.LITT., D.D.

Author of

The Living Religions of the Indian People

etc.

STUDENT CHRISTIAN MOVEMENT PRESS

58 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

TO
THE FACULTY AND STUDENTS (1934-35)
OF
HARTFORD THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION,
HARTFORD (CONN.)

First Published April 1936

Printed in Great Britain

PREFACE

THIS book consists—with some alterations and additions—of the third course of lectures, delivered in May 1935, in connection with the Wilde Lectureship in Natural and Comparative Religion, at the University of Oxford. Part of the material was also used in lecture courses delivered in Columbia University, New York; in Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey; in the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky; and in the Canadian School of Missions, Toronto.

The two earlier courses of Wilde Lectures have been published under the title, *The Living Religions of the Indian People*. The third course forms a natural sequel to those that preceded it, being directed towards a more general survey of the world faiths and an attempt at an appraisal of their religious value. In this investigation as in the earlier studies the religions are viewed, as far as possible, as living factors in the life of to-day, I myself having had specially intimate contact for many years with the religions of India, and in particular with the most venerable and comprehensive of them all, which we may describe as Hinduism, but which might almost be called " the Nameless of a hundred names."

There are no barriers to-day separating off religion from religion, and as they throng and press within our narrowed world it becomes obviously desirable that we should come to an understanding as to their relationships. The erosion of the centuries has worn down many of the sharpest angles of contrast between them, and as we view them in the lives and aspirations of their followers we cannot fail to mark the common humanity present in them all, revealing their kinship. There

remain, however, differences, profound and ineradicable, and these we must scrutinise if we are to determine on which side truth lies.

Two facts of human experience may be cited as among those elements entering into the religions, of which account must be taken and by which they must be tested. The one is the fact of the world's extremity. The passage of time has not eased the tragedy of things or stanched that flow of tears that seemed to the Buddha more than the waters of the four oceans. The cure for this ill cannot come about by ignoring it or denying it, but by taking, as Thomas Hardy says and as he himself tried to do, " a full look at the Worst." And side by side with the fact of evil and all its brood of woe stands the fact of good as ultimate. To reach beyond good is to pass into the region of illusion. " When workmen strive to do better than well," Shakespeare warns us, " They do confound their skill in covetousness." These two facts determine the starting point and the goal of religion. They form the two poles about which the scheme of man's deliverance must move and by which its depth and finality may be tested. Thus in a religion that we can accept as true we look for a deliverance from evil that will be adequate to the tragic facts, and that will at the same time bring us to good, a good that is rich and full and in which we can find our lost and desolate selves.

EDINBURGH
February 1936

ABBREVIATIONS

ERE.—Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics.
S.B.E.—Sacred Books of the East.

CONTENTS

IS CHRISTIANITY UNIQUE?

I

INTRODUCTORY

THE circumstances of the present time seem quite clearly to demand of us that we should review our convictions in regard to the relation of Christianity to the other religions which in the past have claimed and obtained men's allegiance, as well as its relation to those new religions that are making that claim to-day. It is a subject to which a good many people both within and outside of the Christian Church are giving consideration, and it is no longer possible for us to ignore them and go on our way unaffected by the fact that opinions difficult to reconcile with the Christian tradition are being widely accepted.

There is, indeed, a deep desire among men of good-will in the world about us that prejudice and misunderstanding should no longer create conflicts between the followers of different faiths, and that arrogance and "imperialism" should be recognised as incompatible with the high spiritual ideals which such faiths proclaim. The motives that are impelling people to peace-making among the religions are, no doubt, of many different kinds, and we cannot undertake the task of investigating them. Out of the large variety of motives, however, that are influencing the minds of many in the direction of a broad and, perhaps, undiscriminating religious tolerance three that appear to be specially significant may be mentioned. One type of tolerance

is that which proceeds from a deep-seated scepticism which despairs of ever reaching any stable truth, and holds that the most that we can hope for is a provisional hypothesis. In the opinion of many this is an attitude that is characteristic of "the modern mind," and it is obvious that there is no room in such a mind for absolute claims on behalf of any religion. A second type of tolerance is found among those who conceive religion to be not so much a body of definite convictions as a sentiment and aspiration that is almost necessarily vague and fluctuating. It would not, perhaps, be unjust to attribute this attitude to many of those who are promoting at the present time the excellent project of a "world-fellowship of the faiths." We may quote in illustration of it the words of Sir Francis Younghusband describing the aim that this "world-fellowship" has before it. He hopes, he tells us, that by this means "human fellowship will accentuate itself into divine communion." Those who gather together in such fellowship, he goes on, may "put themselves in tune with the universe—with the whole great, living, throbbing, rhythmic universe of which each lowliest man is an absolutely necessary constituent part."[1] The musical metaphor makes it possible to conceive of the discords "rushing in" so that "harmony may be prized,"[2] and suggests that such harmony is an easy and all-embracing thing. A third point of view is to be seen manifesting itself among some who may be described as devoted lovers and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are those who find the dominion of his spirit over them

[1] *World Fellowship of Faiths*, p. 14.
[2] Browning, "Abt Vogler."

leading them to a mood so unaggressive, so sympathetic with human ignorance and error, that they shrink from any interference with the religious life and beliefs of their fellow-men. Perhaps we may say that they would love them and let them do as they please. It is not easy to state what precisely this sensitive spirit of devotion signifies, but the words of one who may be included in this class and who is seeking to help the primitive Gonds of Central India may be quoted. "I live among the Gonds," he writes, "and love them. I have never interfered with their religion and when any of them ask me to make them Christians, I refuse. I think myself that it would be better for all to adopt a similar attitude of detachment and leave their ancestral faith alone." [1]

It is plain that such attitudes as these—and indeed any "attitude of detachment" in this particular connection—are widely different from that which the tradition of the Christian Church has enjoined upon the followers of Christ through the centuries, and widely different from that which St Paul and those who followed after him adopted in their ministry. None of these views has been hitherto accepted by any of the great Churches of Christendom. At the same time, it is true that even within the Churches that have identified themselves fully with the missionary obligation, changes of a noticeable kind are taking place to-day as to the methods of approach of the Christian messenger to the followers of the non-Christian faiths. It will be sufficient to illustrate this change by a few simple illustrations. In most of the

[1] Rev. Verrier Elwin, in *Indian Social Reformer*, vol. xlvi. (2 Nov. 1935), p. 136.

hymn-books of the evangelical Churches of the West Bishop Heber's hymn, "From Greenland's icy mountains," has long had an honoured place and has been sung with enthusiasm by many generations of Christian congregations to express their missionary purpose and hope. Now, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to invite congregations to sing the whole hymn. One verse is especially out of tune with the Christian sentiment of to-day, the verse which describes man in a "heathen" land as "vile" and as bowing down in his blindness to wood and stone. Another fact significant of change is that in 1913 there was published by Dr J. N. Farquhar, a distinguished missionary of the London Missionary Society, a comparison of Hinduism and Christianity bearing the title, *The Crown of Hinduism*. Dr Farquhar's book is important not only because of its accurate learning, but also because it crystallised and, as it were, precipitated into actual missionary policy views that were widely held and were gaining increasing recognition. Thus, because it formulated in terms what was in many minds, this book may be said to have initiated a new missionary era.

But perhaps the most striking demonstration of the psychological change that has come about within the last generation, causing a new orientation of the missionary movement, is to be found in the official attitude adopted by the International Missionary Council at its Jerusalem meeting in 1928. At that meeting there were assembled, under the Chairmanship of Dr John R. Mott, representatives of the older Protestant Churches of England and America, that is, the missionary Churches, along with representatives of the young

Churches of the mission-lands, of Asia and China and Japan and Africa. One of the main aims that this gathering had before it, as stated in its programme, was the examination of the "religious values" of the non-Christian religions in the light of the Christian faith, and one of the resolutions that it adopted called upon the members of these religions to co-operate with the Christian Church throughout the world in resisting the assaults of those who deny God and the world of spirit. "We call," they say, "on the followers of non-Christian religions to hold fast to faith in the unseen and eternal in face of the growing materialism of the world and to co-operate with us against all the evils of secularism." Again, to quote another significant passage, "We would repudiate," they say, "any symptoms of a religious imperialism that would desire to impose beliefs and practices on others in order to manage their souls in their supposed interests. We obey a God who respects our wills and we desire to respect those of others."[1] It is, I think, obvious that in enunciating these principles the International Missionary Council was approaching an attitude towards the non-Christian religions which has features not unlike those that seem to be indicated by the proposed Congress of the World Fellowship of Faiths.

Still another example may be adduced of this present-day trend in missionary work, and this time an example direct from the non-Christian world and affecting non-Christians as well as Christians. In recent years there have been formed in India, often but not always under Christian leadership, what are called International Fellowships. These are groups of people who, being

[1] *The World Mission of Cheistianity*, pp. 14 and 10.

deeply aware of their need of what religion is believed to supply, come together, each holding by his or her own religious convictions, but all agreed as to their common sense of need, and, thus coming together, they seek to have fellowship in a common spirit of worship and aspiration. In so coming together they do not aim at winning any victory for any faith, but at the exchange, as adherents of different faiths, of a sincere religious experience. Mr K. T. Paul, an outstanding Christian of India, described the aim of this movement as "an inter-religious coming together in the earnest, open-minded, humble, prayerful search for a higher unity and a deeper harmony. It is no cheap, sluggish feeling of natural tolerance but a real human aspiration."

That is the ideal this International Fellowship has before it, but it need hardly be added that it is an ideal that is seldom realised. Nevertheless it represents something that the Christian missionary has often passionately longed for—the attainment of an atmosphere that is outside of dispute and contention, when Hindu, Muslim, Christian will have fellowship in the deep places of the spirit, reaching out to each other to help each other towards the God whom all alike so desperately need. There certainly should be no "spiritual imperialism" here, nor that "philanthropy" either which is another cloak beneath which our pride often hides.

The central source of this new aspect in which the missionary task is viewed is, we cannot but believe, a deeper understanding of the mind of God. Nor is the new outlook indeed really new; it represents rather a return to a world-outlook that had been for

a time forgotten and neglected. But, in addition, there are causes at work in the Christian environment that have helped towards this clarifying of vision. These causes are so numerous and, indeed, so obvious that they need not be referred to in any but general terms. There was the discovery, as we may say, of the great world religions and their literature. We may date this era from about the year 1879, when, under the guidance of Max Müller, the long and imposing procession of the Sacred Books of the East began. It is not necessary to elaborate the significance of this appearance in the sky of a whole fleet of new planets. But this revolutionary discovery has been accompanied or immediately followed by a change in our relationship with the other races. The fact of our contiguity, the fact that the world is now, as we are told, a neighbourhood, has produced many reactions between race and race, reactions that are evil as well as good; but it has caused this at least, that we cannot proceed on our way wholly disregarding our neighbours and their thoughts.

The effect of our finding our lot cast in so changed a world is bound to be such as our fathers or our grandfathers hardly contemplated. We cannot any longer practise a supercilious contempt of the spiritual gropings and aspirations of other people.

> What but the murmur of gnats in the gloom
> Or a moment's anger of bees in the hive?

They are too near us now for that. So we are having to-day a renewal of the Oriental invasion of the West that took place about the beginning of the Christian era. But while that invasion is being repeated the invader comes from lands further east than those from

which the earlier invasion issued. Within the pale of the Church and its organisations—in Great Britain at least—these Oriental incursions receive little attention, but outside of those boundaries they are having a widespread influence of which we should be aware. What is here emphasised as important is that these external changes are often found co-operating with a deepened sense of the significance of the divine Fatherhood with the consequence of arousing in many Christians a sense of the need that we should face this situation and realise more definitely—not as foreign missionaries but as Christians—our relation to the other faiths. We must have a relation to them that is not just a denial of them. Is there any meaning—any really Christian meaning—in the phrase "the fellowship of the faiths"?

Of course, as has been already noted, this is not something quite new in the Church's history. Justin Martyr held that those who lived with reason, as Socrates and Heraclitus did, were Christians, and Clement of Alexandria maintained that philosophy was a "paidagogos" to bring the Greeks to Christ, even as the Law was for the Jews. We need not be surprised to find much "Christian" mysticism in Rabindranath Tagore seeing that we find it in Plato and Plotinus; indeed it is a great deal less surprising to discover that the fine mind and sensitive insight of the modern Hindu poet is steeped in sentiments and ideas which he breathed in with the air about him as he grew up and which he could hardly distinguish as being Christian or non-Christian. The perplexity lies just at this point—to make up one's mind whether Christianity is no more than an influence, an atmosphere

which we may draw in with our breath and which we go out to foreign lands (shall we say ?) to disseminate, or whether it is not that, but something quite different. It is just here that the test for us lies and here that the dividing line must be found unless our Christian faith is to be dissolved by " the acids of modernity."

The purpose in all this narrative of facts has been to construct some outline of the situation within which we find ourselves in the religious context of to-day, in order that we may realise how much the question of the fellowship of the faiths is pressing for an answer. We are not dealing with remote and fossilised Vedic speculations which we can study with detachment in the Sacred Books of the East nor with the Wisdom of ancient China. This is something that is round about us to-day, and that is drawing many men's hearts to it. A.E., the Irish poet, was laid under a spell by India. Romain Rolland seems to believe himself to be a Hindu, and Professor Irving Babbitt was more attracted to Buddhism than to any other of the great religions. In the Germany of Hitler two of the main sources from which the " German faith " draws its inspiration are the works of Meister Eckhart, who comes nearer sometimes to the monistic religion of the Hindus than, perhaps, any other great Christian teacher in all Christian history, and the Bhagavadgītā. These things—and many other things like them—being so, how are we to view the faiths ? Are we to bite our thumbs at them, or should we shake hands with them and make friends ?

Let us look more closely at what fellowship of the faiths implies. That anything of this kind has its dangers, men being what they are and average Christians

being what they are, must be obvious to us all. In the case of most of us there is little precision and sharp discrimination in our thinking. We are easily persuaded to adopt sentimental attitudes in matters of religion, to be ready to believe the best of other religions and to gloze over differences with an easy tolerance. There is an immense amount of facile talk about religious tolerance among people to-day, and it does the world little good. It might even be better for us, if it were possible, that we should see the ethnic faiths and their followers, as Dante saw Virgil, left desolate in the Limbo of the unbaptised, stretching their hands in a hopeless longing. There are in the region of life and thought occasions when intolerance is demanded, when, in the phrase of one group of thinkers of to-day, our word must be not "both-and" but "either-or." Archbishop Söderblom, one of the few real students of the ethnic religions among the Christian teachers of our time, says of one of the non-Christian faiths that its greatness lies in the fact that its founder was able to utter an intolerant "No" to evil. Every Christian ought to be able to do that, to discern between these two irreconcilables, right and wrong, true and false, and to know which ought to be chosen and followed.

That is one watershed that divides the universe of the spirit, and there are others that are equally divisive. Are we, then, back in the old antagonism among the faiths, the old conclusion that one is of God and all the others of the devil? That need not be our conclusion. It may be well before entering upon our discussion of the religions to state without argument a conception of the fellowship of the faiths that it may

be possible for a Christian to maintain and to rest in. There can always be a fellowship that is indeed a fellowship of faith when it is a fellowship of human creatures—Christians or Hindus or Muslims—adrift in the dark, men and women who are ever seeking God, stretching out lame hands to Him. If only we could all draw together on these terms, as seekers, in sympathy and the desire to help one another, how near the Kingdom of God would be. That is something we must ever strive for, whether by Congresses or International Fellowships or personal friendships or by whatever way is open to us. Can we mean by the fellowship of the faiths anything more than that, if we are to remain loyal to the truth we have received? Religions, obviously, cannot have fellowship with each other. They are not hungry hearts, but static things. The differences between them remain and must be recognised and not enveloped within a haze of debilitating sentiment.

Thus the objective differences between the religions must not be concealed or forgotten, while the subjective unity of those who are sincerely endeavouring to exercise faith in the unseen is at the same time fully realised. If the religions were all of them humanisms, then it would be proper enough for us all to produce our spiritual possessions and combine them in a common store. But we cannot thus use what is not ours but God's, His gift to us. There is a core of adamant in our Christian faith that is not anyone's private property to barter or to buy or sell. General Evangeline Booth expressed in a single sentence a profound Christian conviction when she said recently that what matters in religion is " not the immovability

of our faith, but rather where we have fastened it." We may set beside that a common saying of the Hindu peasant, and indeed of many as well among ourselves, "Where faith is, there God is." Between these two sentences, fully understood, there lies a dividing chasm which simply cannot be bridged. What the core of adamant in religion exactly is, where it begins and where it ends, we may err in determining; we may mistake a nimbus of cloud that our minds create for the reality. Nevertheless there is that reality, that revelation, those acts of God on which our religion rests. "The palace of my soul," says Von Hügel in one of his letters, "must have somehow two lifts—a lift that is always going up from below, and a lift that is always going down from above." [1] The palace of the Christian Church has two lifts also. "He who comes from above is far above all others; he who springs from earth belongs to earth and speaks of earth; he who comes from heaven is far above all others." [2]

There is, then, among the religions, and must be, a limit, a watershed. And there is a Gospel to be preached to all nations, a message of what God has done for men, a word, but a Word made flesh. Truth and falsehood are, and shall remain till the end of time, "embattled opposites." A formula cannot be devised which includes them both. And the ultimate truth by which men can live is a gift from above which we can only receive. If man is his own star, then the gulfs will wash us down. Thus we affirm, thus we believe, if we believe in God manifested in Christ

[1] *Selected Letters*, p. 354.
[2] John iii. 31 (Moffat's translation).

Jesus, the Word made flesh. Believing this, we have a message to the world which we cannot do otherwise than proclaim. "We cannot live without Christ and we cannot bear to think of men living without Him." [1]

[1] *The World Mission of Christianity*, p. 11.

II

THE RELIGIONS: FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES

THUS it appears that at the present time there is a real need to consider in some of its primary aspects the relation of the great world religions with one another with a view to determining whether, and for what reasons, Christianity has a unique place among them. In the attempt that is here made to conduct such an investigation the practical aspects of the problem will be given prominence, though, of course, we cannot avoid examination of the theory that lies behind, and affects, all practice. The main test that will be made use of in order to form a judgment of the religions will be that of the life-values which their history demonstrates as accompanying them and issuing from them. The tenets and practices of a living religion should be judged pre-eminently by the quality of the life they create in men. Philosophies can be compared and estimated in accordance with arguments and standards which are purely of the reason. Such a procedure cannot profitably be followed in the case of religions, seeing that the primary aim of religion is not idea but purposive action, the creation of a certain kind of conduct and of the character that produces that conduct. In pursuing that aim they are concerned with what reaches out beyond reason no less than with the rational; they seek, that is to say, an object of worship and obedience. Seeing, then, that their sphere extends to super-nature they cannot,

in view of that fact, be submitted to the sole arbitrament of reason. Their criterion is the value of the life they produce. "The ultimate significance of any man," someone has said, "is his creativeness in the lives of others." That is no less true of any religion. This creativeness and its value will determine whether the religion producing these effects is intrinsically real or not. That is the test of reality and authoritativeness which will be applied here to the religions that are at the present time competing for the control of the lives of men, and by the use of that test we shall seek to make plain what the place of Christianity among them is.

In this discussion it is not intended to include any examination of the person of Christ or any interpretation of his significance in the Christian religion. If this task were undertaken at the beginning of the inquiry and if the position were claimed for Christ which the Christian believes to be his due, the conclusion of our investigation would at once be reached. The question would have been already decided. We cannot, indeed, in justice to the other faiths, attribute uniqueness to Christ or supremacy to his religion until we have acquainted ourselves with his rivals and their credentials and formed some judgment of the values that the other religions actually have, and that they have been able historically to produce. Our business, then, is to consider Christianity as one religion among others, possessing a history and development, as a building of the human, as well as of the divine, Spirit, upon which finally Christ is set as crown, the headstone of the corner. Our convictions as to Christ and his message to men must not be obtruded as

unverified convictions into the argument; they must not be cast as such into the scales with which we weigh the other faiths. By their fruits, not by any anticipatory judgment of their worth, they have a right to be known and judged.

To such a review the present time certainly calls us. In this department of thought, as in so many others, we find ourselves required to consider afresh where we stand, to reorientate ourselves as Christians in the whole religious context. The condition of the world in which we live, the interchange of ideas that is continually proceeding between race and race and between continent and continent, the recovery by some of the old religions of life and energy, and the consequent challenge that they are bringing to what had often been taken for granted as the acknowledged supremacy of Christianity—these facts, and along with them the emergence of new attitudes to life and its meaning that are assuming the authority that has hitherto been given to religion, would appear to demand a re-examination of the religious world-situation and of the place that Christianity has a right to claim within it. What is attempted here can be no more than a limited review of a problem so profound in its implications and so wide in its range.

In initiating such an investigation it is necessary that we should first of all determine what religions have a right to be considered as rivals to Christianity since they are actually in a position in the modern world to arrogate to themselves a similar authority and to aspire to the control of the lives of all men? No one, of course, will make any such claim on behalf of the ancient animisms and polytheisms that still

hold sway over those races which remain at what we may call the primitive level of civilisation. Some of the Oriental religions, however, that have a long history behind them and represent much travail of the human spirit are in a very different position. They are far from being negligible as rivals of Christianity and as claimants, like it, to dominion over the minds of men. Some of them, indeed, not only have survived through the centuries but are obtaining something of a rejuvenescence, while they orientate themselves anew in the midst of the modern world and form surprising alliances with some of the forces that are at work there. That is true especially of the Hindu-Buddhist types of religion which have behind them a philosophy that has not a little in common with some influential tendencies of thought in the West. In a different way and for different reasons Islam also is challenging Christianity. Alongside of these religions, sometimes entering into partnership with them, sometimes strongly hostile to them, are what may be called the new political and economic systems that are arising and taking control of men's lives, and that in some areas and among certain classes are usurping the place that in the past has been claimed for Christianity. These may be described as religions or as having the effect of religions, if we understand that word, in agreement with the definition of a modern philosopher, as "that consciousness in which a man takes up a certain attitude to the world and gathers to a focus the meaning of his life."[1] In that understanding of the term modern "secularism" and humanism, and even nationalism can be said to be, in the completeness of the control

[1] E. Caird, *The Evolution of Religion*, i., p. 81.

that they often have of men's lives and thoughts, actually new religions. In the various shapes that these religions have taken in the world of to-day secularism or naturalism is almost always the foundation on which the system rests, whether it be the "free man's worship" of Bertrand Russell, or the Humanism of Lippmann, or the various Fascisms and Communisms that seek to include religion along with every other department of life within the totalitarian state.

We cannot undertake to bring these new religions within the scope of our discussion except in so far as some of them have relation to the historic faiths and illustrate their influence. Little more can be done here than to draw attention to this feature of the contemporary religious situation as something that must increasingly occupy the attention of those who are concerned with the future of the human race and to note some of the interactions between the new religions and the old. What especially requires to be emphasised is that these are claiming the residuary rights over men's lives of what they would describe as a dying Christianity. One difference between them and the historical religions aggravates the hostility of their attitude to the Christianity which they are so determined to destroy. The ancient ethnic faiths, for the reason that they were in their origin the creation of men's spiritual strivings as they sought God and were sought by God, have in them elements of truth which bear testimony to the fuller revelation to which they unconsciously point forward. They are not simply the enemies of Christianity; they may be its allies, if it is the case, as the Christian believes, that they are in large measure prophetic of its coming. But

the upstart religions of to-day, which involve a more or less conscious rejection of the Christian revelation and are built largely upon such rejection, are in a different position. They are in essence hostile; and the old religions, as they form alliances with them, are in danger of becoming transformed from being religions of seekers to become, along with them, religions of deniers. The Bhakti religions of India, as well as Zoroastrianism and Judaism and Islam, have a common ground with Christianity in their acknowledgment of the need of the human heart for a God whom it can worship. But these new religions or pseudo-religions and the transformed attitudes that many of the adherents of the old religions are learning from them to-day are agreed in rejecting God and would centre men's lives in human and egoistic objects of desire. If that be so, then from these religions of to-day Christianity must expect antagonism and nothing but antagonism.

Let us now turn to these religions, whether old or new—but considering primarily the old, historical ones —and endeavour to range them in their relation to one another and to Christianity and to determine what explicitly differentiates them from Christianity in particular. What shall we select as the *articulus stantis vel cadentis religionis*, the vital centre which in the case of each of these systems will exhibit to us its falsehood or its truth? This may be sought in the relation that the religion teaches as existing between God and the world, or between the Natural and the Supernatural, or between the eternal and the temporal. In general we may say that there are two distinctive views of God's relation to the world, that to which He appears

as immanent in the world and that to which He appears as transcendent over it. If He is only immanent, then there can be no fellowship with Him in any real sense of the word, but merely an identity of nature; if He is only transcendent, then in that case also, communion of fellowship is barred out. For a real fellowship both these extremes must be avoided and the middle road discovered. This distinction may be indicated in another aspect if we borrow the language which Dr John Oman uses to describe it. According to him there are two types of religious development, one which views the natural as the veiling of the supernatural, the other which views it as its revealing. "In the former case the religious task is to be rid of the illusion of the many and the changing, both in our concrete world and in our concrete individuality, and to penetrate to the one and the eternal; in the latter, the task is to find in the evanescent abiding meaning and endless purpose."[1] Of these two types, "the redemption of the one," Dr Oman goes on, "is what we may broadly call mystical, the hope of the other is always, in some form, apocalyptic."[2] "The former seeks the eternal in one unchanging reality which the evanescent as illusion only hides, the latter (seeks the eternal) in the meaning and purpose of the evanescent itself."[3]

If we classify the historical religions, other than Christianity in accordance with these principles of division, we have in Hinduism and Buddhism by far the most notable and commanding examples of the

[1] John Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 405.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 408.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 371.

first of the two types described by Dr Oman, while the religion of Israel and its development in Christianity are, of course, the most notable examples of the second. A third religion of this second kind, less important historically, but possessing a peculiar interest of its own, is Persian Zoroastrianism. Similarly at the one extreme of the pantheistic religions stands the Hinduism of the Advaita Vedanta, that is, in western nomenclature, acosmic monism; at the other extreme —that of a rigid transcendence—stands the religion of Islam; and these extremes tend, if judged by the ethical values they produce, to meet. A pantheism for which God or Brahman or the Absolute alone exists and the region of time is illusion, produces much the same ultimate effect upon the lives of those whom that view controls as a worship of a God so transcendent that the world and human life shrink to unreality before Him, and His eternal will leaves no sphere or scope in which any temporal will may operate. Between these two extremes various religious resting places are possible and have been found by the spirit of man in its long history, but Christianity, it may be maintained, occupies a central position which avoids the extremes of either error and approaches near to that delicate balance which, if the extremes are alike false, may be found to be the truth. Pascal indeed distinguishes the two extremes, perhaps too summarily, as atheism and deism: "two things," he says, "which the Christian religion abhors almost equally." It abhors them and seeks, in contrast to them, to show men the path, "narrow as a razor's edge," which leads to moral and spiritual life, and which does so just because it alone maintains that

tension between the temporal and the eternal which is essential to the growth of the soul and which reveals its purpose and destiny.

Before we can reach that conclusion we must, however, consider more carefully what it is that creates this contrast which appears to separate Christianity so radically from the other religions. Before we can justify the claim made in its behalf it is necessary that we should examine the differentia of the ethnic religions and make clear to ourselves what it is in them that falls short on the one hand or on the other of the spiritual achievement which is claimed for the Christian faith and discipline. Whether or not we are able to pronounce a decisive judgment upon the religions and to appraise the values that they create in human life and character, we can at least distinguish them from each other as maintaining certain views as to what the world is, what man is and what God is.

First of all, what do these great religions maintain as to the reality of the world? Dr Oman has been already quoted as contrasting two types of religious development, that on the one hand which views the natural as the veiling of the supernatural, and that on the other which views it as its unveiling, its manifestation. The former class is represented in its most rigorous form by the Indian religion of Advaita, that is, the Hinduism which adopts an illusion doctrine of the world. The unreality of the world follows from a conviction of the sole reality of the ultimate Brahman-Atman, the subject-object, the undifferentiated unity, the One without a second. The inevitable consequence of any such type of spiritual monism which climbs upwards by the way of negation, emptying the

world of significance as it reaches out to an abstract Absolute, is that it denies the reality of the world, from which accordingly it is necessary to separate oneself altogether, if one is to reach the Real, the Abiding.

This Advaita doctrine, which may be said to be the central core of the long Hindu religious development, may be described as pantheism or as mysticism, according to the point of view from which we estimate it. It is not, obviously, an immanentism, in the strict sense of the word, seeing that there is no world in which God can dwell; but it is a pantheism seeing that it affirms that God is all that is. It is accordingly best described as an acosmic pantheism, and as such it is to be distinguished from the classical pantheism of Spinoza. Spinoza denies the reality of the world, but he denies its reality only as apart from God. When he goes on to affirm that God is nothing apart from His manifestation in the world the difference that separates him from the Advaitist becomes evident. Again we may use the ambiguous word Mysticism to describe this attitude if we accept Dr Edward Caird's account of what it implies. "God, for the Mystic," according to him, "is the One who is presupposed in all, God as God, as the unity above the difference of subject and object, to which everything is related and which itself is related to nothing. . . . For Mysticism the negative so decisively preponderates over the positive relation that God and the world cannot be included in one thought."[1] If that is a true account of something so difficult to define as Mysticism, then the most logical Mysticism would seem to be that

[1] E. Caird, *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, ii., p. 233.

which describes the world as māyā. If Plotinus, whose Mysticism Dr Caird is expounding, fails to take this step it would seem as if the logic of his position demands it. For we are left otherwise, Dr Caird tells us, with " the strange paradox that the Being who is absolute . . . leaves the relative and the finite in a kind of unreal independence, an independence which has no value and yet from which it, as finite, cannot escape." [1] It may be that the religious realism of the Neoplatonists had deeper roots in the soul than that of the Indian thinkers, and that, for that reason, they dared not take a step which, they realised, involved either a denial of man or an abandonment of God. As a matter of fact, through the centuries many Indians who are intellectually travellers by the Advaita road, try at the same time, as men of religion, to hold on to the reality of both God and man, being convinced that something deeper than reason demands this.

But whether or not the whole road is travelled and the world definitely denied, in either case the world is conceived of as a veil that conceals God and that has to be rent and trampled under foot if God is to be reached. Even the consciousness of self must be abandoned, how much more all the beauty and the moral wealth of human life and its relationships, if there is to be any hope of attaining to Him. He is indeed so withdrawn from the world that He cannot be said to be its God at all. The ecstacy of Plotinus that climbs beyond self-consciousness to the Alone is the same in essentials as the samādhi of the Vedantic sage.

There may seem to be little kinship between the

[1] E. Caird, *Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, ii., p. 232.

views that the Vedantist holds and the view of Muslim theology with its exalted monotheism, and yet they are in large measure in agreement as to the resulting aspect that the world presents. Muhammad was far from being a metaphysician. His religion is no construction of the reason, but a legalism, proceeding from, and centring in, a remote and solitary Will. And yet it is difficult to see how a divine Will, so absolute in its demands and overshadowing all else, can fail to swallow up within its reality whatever is not it, making thus by contrast the world and human life trivial and unreal. The Qur'an affirms that "everything is perishing except the face (reality) of Allah." R. A. Nicholson finds in that sentence and others like it the germ of Sūfī pantheism, with its quite Advaitist conclusion that Allah is the one real Being, the true Self that is reached by the loss of self-consciousness.[1] As a result there arose within Islam its Sūfī extremists, "supremely indifferent to the shadow-shows of religion and morality in a phantom world."[2]

In this fashion the doctrine of the transcendent and omnipotent Allah travels full circle until it meets the "One without a second," and both find agreement in condemning to unreality all created being and all human experience. An exclusive transcendence and an acosmic monism both lead alike to māyā. We see the same consequence arising—though the logical conclusion is not accepted—in the speculations of such an extreme Calvinist as Jonathan Edwards. His Calvinism, as Leslie Stephen points out, "logically

[1] The passage quoted (Qur'an, xxviii., 88) and others closely similar are cited by R. A. Nicholson in *ERE*, xii., p. 11.

[2] R. A. Nicholson, in *ERE*, xii., p. 12.

developed, leads to pantheism," [1] and sin itself, as well as the other occupations of the human creature, is revealed to be illusion. In such a world there is no reality, and therefore no revelation of God, and man and God can never meet unless it be in such a void as that where the atman dissolves into the Brahman even as the dewdrop dissolves into the silent sea.

We turn now, in the second place, to consider what those religions teach in regard to the freedom of the human personality. It is obvious that where personality itself is an illusion freedom must be an illusion likewise. It might not seem to be necessary to proceed further, were it not that modern Vedantists are much concerned to demonstrate that within their doctrine there is room for self-determination. When, as in the case of the Advaitist, a doctrine of acosmic pantheism is united with a doctrine of karma it is difficult to see how such a claim can possibly be maintained. According to any thoroughgoing pantheism

[1] Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library* (Second Series), p. 86. He goes on, "The absolute sovereignty of God, the doctrine to which Edwards constantly returns, must be extended over all nature as well as over the fate of the individual human soul." Dr A. M. Fairbairn goes so far as to say the same of Calvin: "Calvin was as pure, though not as conscientious or consistent, a Pantheist as Spinoza" (*The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 164). Dr N. P. Williams, who quotes this passage, goes on in a summary of later Augustinianism to say: "It is not unfair to conclude this summary of the Augustinian anthropology, as republished and developed by the leaders of the Reformation, with the remark that, in the hands of Melancthon and Calvin, at least, who make God the ultimate author of evil, it would seem to have transformed itself into precisely that unmoral Hindu monism—that belief in a God or an Absolute who transcends the distinction between good and evil—which . . . is one of the Fall doctrine's two traditional foes: a curious revolution of the wheel of thought" (*The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, p. 437). This may be too strong and too unqualified a statement, but the tendency is in the direction indicated.

man's life is a necessary process, a part of a determined whole; it is not a truly individual striving. In such circumstances there cannot be that choice in which freedom discovers its reality. If at the same time the pantheism is acosmic then there is a twofold denial of freedom, even apart from the bondage which the karma doctrine itself creates. We must know evil to be real if we are to seek to conquer it and to chose freely a good that is no less real. If the world and our human life are unreal, whether with the uncompromising unreality of Vedantic māyā or with the sense of triviality and insignificance that overshadows life when God is as remote from it as Allah is, then the Vedantist and the Muslim are both alike enslaved and can attain no freedom. The only semblance of deliverance from this bondage for which the Vedantist can hope is that which is reached by self-hypnotism; and the Muslim, strange as it may appear, has perforce to choose the same road, blending all things into an undifferenced unity and saying with the Sūfī:

I am the loosed and the bound, and the wine and the cup-bearer.
I am the treasure, I am poverty, I am my creatures and my Creator.[1]

Where, as in the case of the ordinary believer in such a Deism as that of the orthodox Muslim, the sole will that shapes the universe is that of a God who remains ever far off from men, there is no escape from fatalism. Man's bondage is not due indeed to a natural determinism, such as that of the materialist or of the believer in karma, but he is none the less in chains because it is the will of Allah that is the only operative will in the universe. Accordingly, as the

[1] Quoted in Christopher Dawson's *Enquiries*, p. 183.

name Islam signifies, "resignation" or "abandonment" to God is what the teachers of Islam prescribe to the believer. But it would seem to make little difference, in the case of a deity so remote from man and man's concerns, whether we call him Allah or Force or the Immanent Will. This is a view which, whether it appears in Islam or in an extreme Calvinism or under a materialist reign of law, in the words of Leslie Stephen, "conquers or revolts the imagination."[1] It is true, also, as the same writer reminds us, that it sometimes proves to be "a mental tonic of tremendous potency," but rather to strengthen the Ghazi to throw away his life than to enable the sinner to forsake his evil ways. To achieve the latter end God must be nearer at hand to help and to deliver.

The reality of the world and the freedom of man seem, accordingly, to be denied by one type of religion, that which fails to recognise that man stands midway between two realities, God and the world, and finds his true life in his relation to them both. They are both affirmed as real, on the other hand, by such a theism as Christianity, as well as by the religions of Israel and Zoroastrianism. That this difference ranges the two types as true and false may or may not be claimed, but at least it sets them definitely apart and facing in opposite directions. They represent two views that are radically discordant. This is all the more striking in the case of Zoroastrianism seeing that it springs originally from the same root as the Hindu system, and later on in its history encountered a pantheism not unlike that of the Vedanta and definitely

[1] Leslie Stephen, *Hours in a Library* (Second Series), p. 73.

rejected it. It chose instead as its portion the religious tradition that is concerned with the worship of a personal God in a real world of free men. It emphasised this choice further by the boundary of separation that it set up between good and evil, and by its call to men to range themselves, by a choice that it was within their power to make, on the side of good. The recognition of this radical distinction and of its depth and significance holds the two religious types widely separated and sets them in sharp contrast to each other.

In this respect Zoroastrianism is in close agreement with the religions of Israel and Christianity. All three are religions primarily dwelling, as Archbishop Söderblom describes the faith of Zarathustra, not in the atmosphere of speculation but in that of "the fateful and deadly contrast between good and evil." In this regard they stand at the opposite pole from the group with which we have been comparing them. The Archbishop, indeed, writing with the authority of one who has made a careful study of the Zoroastrian system, admits that Zarathustra "had not fathomed the misery of human life nor the secret of evil" nor "penetrated to the problems of the soul." [1] He did not realise the evil of sin as did Christianity or the misery of life as did Buddhism. But from Vedantic monism on the one hand and the religion of Islam on the other the three theistic religions stand in this respect far apart. To Vedantic monism evil is, at worst, ignorance, an illusion that a deeper insight would dispel; in Islam it tends to become, along with good, the decree of the omnipotent will of Allah. "God," says the

[1] Söderblom, *The Living God*, p. 210.

Qur'an,[1] "leads astray whom He pleases and guides whom He pleases." In neither case is it to be considered an enemy to be overcome. There is no place for that conflict in the soul by which men grow.

Thus the affirmations that the world is real and that man's life is real, that it is not a stage-play but a grim struggle towards high and enduring ends by those who are free to choose and to reject, characterise the one group of religions in contrast with the other group which on their part deny or ignore what these affirm. When we turn now to ask what these religions teach as to God and His nature we discover once more the same alignment. We are here, indeed, at the source and spring of the discordance between the two religious groups. What God is for any religion determines what the world is and determines what the value is of our human lives. The differentiation depends ultimately upon the question of the character and nature of this final reality, whether, for example, God is a process or a person, whether He is related to human striving in a relationship which has something in it which suggests what may be described as fatherhood, or whether He is, for man, a phantom, a negation, aloof from, and unconcerned with, the laws that control our human lot.

When we apply this test to these two types of religion we discover how truly the conception that they have of God is the watershed that divides them. Thus, for example, for Vedantic Hinduism the ultimate Brahman cannot indeed be described as either a process or a person, but is certainly a negation, a remote Unknown, wholly removed from relationship with

[1] xxxv., 9.

man as he lives and suffers upon earth. And if we descend from that altitude where no human spirit can live and breathe to the lower region to which Śankara, the great teacher of Advaita, had to come down in order that he might worship, we find that there, though gods are named—Śiva, it may be, or Krishna—the real finality, the numinous centre in which religion centres, is karma, the process of law by reason of which the wheel of samsāra, of continuous rebirth, goes on revolving endlessly and to which the gods themselves are subject.

> No village law is this, no city law,
> No law for this clan or for that alone;
> For the whole world—ay, and the gods in heaven—
> This is the law.[1]

That is the shadow beneath which not the Buddhist Sister, Kisā Gotamī alone, whose words these are, but the whole Hindu family, from Śankara to the humblest villager, have lived their lives through the centuries until to-day.

Accordingly we have a right to describe such a man as Śankarāchārya when he adopts for himself the worship of the popular deities as an idolator, if idolatry is to be understood as the worship of what is lower than the highest of which the worshipper is aware. And along with the great Vedantist must be ranged those modern philosophers who distinguish between God and the Absolute and who concede the worship of the former, in a fashion not dissimilar to that of Śankara, as being "the worship of an Appearance," a worship, therefore, belonging to the sphere of māyā.[2]

[1] Mrs Rhys Davids, *Psalms of the Sisters*, p. 107.
[2] See C. C. J. Webb, *God and Personality*, pp. 260 ff.

The intercourse of religion, which implies a fellowship in knowledge and in love, cannot be a reality unless the object to which it is directed is in some sense what we mean by personal; and, at the same time, we have no right to prostrate our spirits before any Being than whom we are able to conceive One that is higher. Shall we say that the modern philosophers of the Absolute have less courage than Buddha had, or less insight into what religion implies, if they think that they can retain a God for men to worship while they declare the Absolute to be impersonal?

The God of Islam, again, can hardly be said to be an Ultimate either for the reason, the conscience, or the heart. The relation of Allah to these three departments of human life is fluctuating and unstable. His decrees are arbitrary and, we may say, individual. There are no secure ties uniting him to men or integrating their human faculties with his being. It is the theistic religions that recognise that down the various roads of human need God must come if He is to be found by men, and that at the same time He must be one God in whom the whole man shall find fulfilment. And among the theistic faiths it is Christianity especially that can claim to bring near to men One of whom with reference to every department of their being they can say, "Our sufficiency is from Him."

Among the consequences that follow from the theistic conception of God, as distinguished from those that we find in rival theories, two may be emphasised because of their vital significance for religion. Both have reference to the relation of God to time and history. First, in regard to time past, the theistic

religions, in recognising personality in God, recognise evil as sin. They recognise accordingly that evil is not, as the other type of religion would affirm, something inevitable, something that can only be cured by the extinction of personality, but that it is something that, just because it is what we may call the personal concern of a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, can be overcome and "forgiven." For the pantheist or the humanist, whether he belongs to one of the ancient or to one of the modern religions of that type, who looks with candid eyes at his fellow-men, life is something evil, and pessimism his inevitable judgment on the human lot. When optimism is found in association with such a creed, as in the case of Emerson or of Vivekananda, it may be said to be a personal idiosyncracy. Buddha may be said to have been a great humanist, and he was certainly no optimist; the one cure for life's ills in his case, and in that of all those who share what we may call his Oriental outlook, was escape from life itself, and their peace a peace of extinction. Nor is the case different in the case of that monism of the transcendent will which is Islam. And to-day neither in humanism nor in "the free man's worship"[1] is it possible to escape from this grim conclusion. Walter Lippmann tells us that it has begun to occur to the disillusioned, or perhaps we should say the "mature," man of to-day that it is a great deal of trouble to live at all. As for the neo-Stoicism to which others have resorted, it may suffice to note Professor Santayana's account of "the strangely unreal and strangely personal religion" of Bertrand Russell. He describes it as "a ghost of

[1] Bertrand Russell, *Philosophical Essays*, pp. 59 ff.

Calvinism" in which "the Calvinistic God has lost His creative and punitive functions, but continues to decree groundlessly what is good and what is evil. . . . Meanwhile the reprobate need not fear hell in the next world, but the elect are sure to find it here."[1] Life has evidently little value left if these interpretations of it are accepted.

The doctrine of the divine grace, with what seems to the Christian to be bound up with it, a belief in God's concern for men and in Incarnation and Redemption, the Christian sees confirmed and established by what God has revealed Himself in history to be. Nor is such a faith his possession only; it has come to others as well, who accept the theistic premiss, though to them it comes as little more than a shadowy hope. So it came to the Persian Zarathustra, and even, perhaps, to Plato. "More than two thousand years ago," writes Professor A. N. Whitehead, "the wisest of men proclaimed that the divine persuasion is the foundation of the order of the world, but that it could only produce such a measure of harmony as, amid brute forces, it was possible to accomplish. This, I suggest, is a plain anticipation by Plato of a doctrine of grace seven hundred years before the age of Pelagius and Augustine."[2]

If we turn finally to view the effect of the theistic belief in a "living God" upon the future of humanity, we find that here also there is a marked contrast between the two religious groups. For those religions that are monistic and deistic, that is, those in which the world is lost in God and those in which the world is

[1] *Winds of Doctrine*, p. 153.

[2] A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 205.

never found by God, humanity has no future that can be discerned. Theism, on the other hand, in the well-known definition of William James, implies "the affirmation of an eternal moral order and the letting loose of hope." How little hope there is in the outlook of the monistic religions is indicated in the account that Professor Sorley gives of their world-view. The members of the human race "have no reason to expect that the illusory turmoil in which their lives are spent will lead to a better order of things, or to think that now or in the future the world is or will be more in harmony with the moral order than it was at any previous epoch."[1] Where, however, God is recognised as the ground of all reality, the prospect is different. The God of Islam cannot be so described, and the world in the case of any such deism, as also of any pluralism, is a world "of chance happenings and unstable relations," and, in consequence, there can be no assurance of ordered and purposive progress.

The religions of India and the speculations of Greece are agreed in a view of the world's history that leaves it ever pursuing an unmeaning circuit and advancing nowhere. The tedium of existence when so conceived envelopes their whole outlook, as it does the outlook of the naturalistic thinkers of to-day. The dividing line between the religions lies here, in the fact that there is not an unbridged gulf between God and man, that human life is not illusion but is infused with the divine purpose and has become the sphere of divine grace, and that man finds in the fulfilment of the divine will at once his freedom and his tranquillity.

[1] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 402.

The Christian, St Augustine declares in his *De Civitate Dei*, is able to turn away his mind from the weary and futile round that paganism pursues only when he follows the straight road which is Christ.[1] God has come into time and by His presence there has at once made evil infinitely darker and made possible an ultimate triumph of good. For He has made possible the co-operation of His Spirit with the spirit of sinful men, uniting them to Him in a love which, being His own nature, both redeems mankind and "moves the sun and the other stars." "O blessed race of men," says Boëthius, "if the love by which the sky is ruled rules in your hearts."

[1] *De Civitate Dei*, XII., xxii.

III

THE RELIGIONS: THE FRUIT THEY BEAR

THUS far we have sought to measure the religions against each other, using the "yard-stick" of some of their main philosophical and theological conceptions. We have sought to refrain from pronouncing judgment upon them, but, rather, simply to use their differences in these respects for the purpose of discriminating between them and classifying them. It has not, it is true, been possible in making this presentation altogether to divorce theory from its practical consequences or to exclude occasional estimates of the emerging values. In such matters complete detachment can scarcely be achieved and is not, indeed, to be desired. Our endeavour now will be to take deliberate account of the consequences that issue from the theory and to proceed to pronounce judgment upon the religions, examining and estimating them in terms of their life-values. In attempting to do this the impartiality of indifference will be still less possible than before. At the same time one must seek to base the claim of worth in one system as over against another upon those elements in our life which are universally recognised as precious. We must beware of giving undue importance to narrow human interests or needs, and must see to it that our appeal is to a court than which there is none higher. Professor Pringle Pattison, in illustration of the error to be avoided, has pointed out the danger of resting our belief in the

character of the ultimately real upon the hope of individual immortality. Similarly we must guard against a hasty deduction from the facts of human suffering. The hope of immortality certainly enters into the case for Christianity as over against the non-Christian systems; and similarly there are arguments that can be properly urged in behalf of Buddhism because of its deep sense of the *lachrimæ rerum*, the sadness of the human lot, and in behalf of Hinduism because of the explanation that it finds for the inequalities and woes of our mortal life in the karma-transmigration hypothesis. Nevertheless we must agree that the argument from value must have a much wider scope and must probe much deeper into the moral import of man's condition if it is to carry conviction. It is not in the value that it has for this individual man or that that a religion's real worth consists, nor is it by the achievement of personal ends that it is to be judged. But where, for example, our very freedom to live the life of moral beings and our belief that there are such things as good and bad, and that it is not just thinking that makes them so, are involved, these are bound up with the whole system of values, making its existence possible, and so upon them the very being and nature of any religion, we believe, depends. " Ye shall know them," said Christ, speaking of the false and the true, " by their fruits."

1. We can scarcely err, accordingly, if we begin our investigation by applying this criterion to such a religious view as that of acosmic pantheism as seen in Advaita Hinduism or even to the approximation to that view which Islamic monotheism reaches towards. To the former the realm of time and sense is, without

qualification, illusion; to the latter in the fierce blaze of Allah's will it shrivels to complete insignificance. "Rotten rags and dirt—that is your life," said the Prophet. In neither case is human life a scene where real moral effort and achievement are possible. In a world of māyā moral struggle is all the time a sham fight; nothing really happens; shadows we are and shadows we pursue. If such a view is accepted religion must die of inanition. So also in a world from which God is so withdrawn as to be only a remote spectator —just as in the world of materialism where no God is at all—there is nothing that can inspire hope of better things for humanity, no inducement to moral effort. The individual Muslim may obtain paradise, but this is a purely individual achievement, and it does not depend upon or call forth moral striving. Islam has much in common, in its account of the relation of God and man, with eighteenth-century Deism in England, which was, in the words of Dr W. P. Paterson, "a seriously impoverished version of the Christian religion," and, through its Unitarianism, "entails," to quote the same writer again, "a diminution, not only of religious zeal, but also of humanitarian energy."[1] The religion of Islam creates zeal enough, but it is not religious or humanitarian zeal.

Professor A. E. Taylor has summed up in a sentence the consequence that issues alike from each of these religious theories, widely separated from one another though they seem to be. "In plain language," he says, "we break with the presuppositions of the moral life equally whether we eliminate the natural or the supernatural from our conception of things. To think

[1] *The Rule of Faith*, pp. 319 and 321.

of the moral life adequately, we must think of it as an adventure which begins at one end with nature and ends at the other with supernature." [1] We cannot dispense, that is, with either a living God (that is, a God who is related to our lives and to the world) or a real world, if room is to be found for a life of moral effort and spiritual attainment. The equilibrium between the two that most fully realises these supreme ends is to be found, we claim, in the Christian religion. There they are so related that victory can be attained " over life's evil and evanescence."

If that is indeed a true account of what Christianity achieves it has, as tested by the values it creates, a place definitely apart from and above religions of either of the other types. Another witness may be cited in support of this view of the true Christian attitude in relation to these two aspects of the universe. No one has striven more faithfully in recent years than Baron von Hügel to impress upon the Christian teachers of his time the need of a just balance between transcendence and immanence, the true relation to each other of the eternal and the temporal. One of his impressive utterances on this subject may be quoted. " The central conviction and doctrine of Christianity," he writes, " is the real prevenience and condescension of the real God—is the penetration of spirit into sense, of the spaceless into space, of the eternal into time, of God into man. . . . The lower is here the occasion—for us poor men, in this our little dispensation, the necessary occasion—is the nidus, spring-board, material, vehicle, of the higher and the highest. The higher bends down to, attracts, the lower; the lower rises

[1] *The Faith of a Moralist*, i., p. 124.

on tiptoe towards, thirsts after, and finds and wills, the higher." [1]

This assurance, that the Christian must cling to, of the reality of time and of the penetration of the temporal by the eternal, should deliver him from the over-anxious fear of the secularisation of religion which troubles some of our contemporaries, even as it should keep us on our guard against the complementary danger of a quietism that paralyses action. There is a real peril on the one hand in saying, "Let us stop trying and be quiet and wait," [2] just as there is a no less real peril lest we come to identify religion with social service and the pursuit of health and comfort—those things which to Karl Barth appear to be the supreme goods of the Humanist. A rightly balanced Christianity should enable us to sail safely between both these dangers, and so to avoid an unadventurous flight from the duties of our secular life on the one hand and an equally unprofitable surface busyness on the other. One can see in the history of Christianity the danger that sometimes threatens its message from failure to maintain a true balance and to do justice alike to the seen and temporal and to the unseen and eternal. Thus we have Lutheranism, which a critic has described as "the Protestant way of despairing of the world and of claiming victory for the religious ideal without engaging the world in combat." [3] We have also Calvinism, which by the opposite path arrives, if Canon Barry is right, at the same point. It strengthened the

[1] *Essays and Addresses* (Second Series), p. 107.

[2] Macmurray, *Freedom in the Modern World*, p. 65.

[3] Niebuhr, *Does Civilisation need Religion?* p. 110; quoted by F. R. Barry, *The Relevance of Christianity*, p. 27.

personalities of its adherents but, because of its removal of God so far outside of the world, it allowed their activities to remain secular and unrelated to the religious life. As in the case of Islam there was zeal but not a zeal so infused with humanitarian purpose as to avoid the injustices that accompanied the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Capitalism.

Thus whatever view it may be—whether within Christianity or without—that separates God and His world, making Him unapproachable and distant, it empties religion of its power to transform the world. And the same consequence follows—whether within Christianity or without—in the case of such an immanentism as that which makes God a subjective feeling and so a part of the world itself. In either case the religion is impotent to achieve fully those values which are the very fruits by which it manifests itself, and apart from which human life has no significance.

Professor A. E. Taylor has admirably indicated the central place in this matter that is occupied by Christian theism. He addresses the absolute idealists, the pantheistic philosophers of our time, in these words: "The whole poignancy of human life arises from the fact that it is an unsolved tension between the temporal and the eternal in which the eternal, though steadily gaining on and subduing the temporal to its purposes, never absorbs it. To suppose that I can understand my own life without recognising the temporal everywhere is to repeat the old error of Lucifer who mistook himself for God."[1] If we rewrite the latter of these two sentences of Professor Taylor, we can apply the

[1] *The Faith of a Moralist*, ii., pp. 308 f.

passage equally to describe the opposite and complementary error of those who so exaggerate *the divine* transcendence as to remove God outside *of all relation* with the life of men. "To suppose," we may say to the super-Calvinists, "that I can understand my own life without recognising the eternal everywhere is to repeat the old error of Muhammad who denied that God could become incarnate."

Another method has recently been proposed in order to explain how God can be related to the world sufficiently closely to secure the divine co-operation in the moral conflict to which man is called. It would make God no more than a *primus inter pares* among humanity, one who struggles along with them for their perfection. Here again we have the same error that we found in both immanentism and its deistic opposite. The criticism upon both such views which Dr James Denney makes emphasises once more the poise and equilibrium of Christian truth, the middle course between Scylla and Charybdis by which it steers the Christian voyager. "The believers in a merely struggling God," he writes, "seem to me to give up religion in the interests of morality; just as high Calvinists and idealist philosophers have often sacrificed morality to what they count religion. It is in the tension between the two that we keep our feet in the spiritual world."[1] A religion which fails to promote moral ends and a morality which has not behind it the power that religious faith supplies are, whatever they may be called, sub-religions.

The importance of this aspect of religion as affirming the reality of the temporal while it at the same time

[1] *Letters of Principal Denney to his Family and Friends*, p. 188.

partakes of the eternal cannot be too strongly emphasised. The realisation of the divine which such a religion creates delivers men from that desolation of which Buddhism is so fully aware as inevitably produced by the conception of our life as being—to quote Baron von Hügel's description—"the mere slush of change." It delivers them equally from the sense of it as a static thing, pulseless and dead. History becomes real when it is revealed in its inward significance and purport. "Time is not," says von Hügel again, "a barrier against Eternal Life, but the very stuff and means in and by which we vitally experience and apprehend that life." [1] That is at least the Christian conception of the relationship in which the human and the divine stand to each other, and it is this relation that an ethical theism must always uphold against a denial either of the reality of the temporal or of the reality of the eternal. We see in the story of Hindu India the tragic consequences from the paralysing influence upon men's wills of the pantheistic doctrine. It is well that we find in recent times such Indian teachers as Swami Vivekananda and Sir S. Radhakrishnan seeking to reinterpret Hinduism in a sense that will make moral struggle and effort a reality, but to accomplish this the whole system requires transformation. If Christianity were only true to itself it could transform the world; unless Hinduism is splendidly untrue to itself, as one must hope it will be, its world will remain to the end unredeemed. A. E. Taylor, speaking of the consequences from pantheism as seen in Spinoza's system and in his charge to men to see all things "under a form of eternity,"

[1] *Eternal Life*, p. 386.

makes the comment that to do so on Spinoza's understanding of what eternity means "reduces real action to a string of 'configurations' and a mere configuration has no history, except by a misleading metaphor." [1] "Spinoza's recommendations," he says in another place, "are likeliest to lead to the dull apathy which wiser men know as *acedia* and reckon among deadly sins." [2] Whatever Hinduism has been—and it has been many things—it has never in all its long history escaped wholly from this petrifying influence which follows pantheism in all its forms like its sombre shadow. That this is so is written all over the history of the Hindu people and is revealed in their ideals which represent a life of moral indifference as the highest sainthood, and the supreme attainment as a peace of stagnation and death. The witness of a Hindu Indian professor of physics which Principal Oman reports is surely the simple truth. "The Western World," he said, "plays with pantheism and perhaps then pantheism may not do much harm, but the Eastern takes it seriously and it sucks the blood." [3]

It is hardly necessary to emphasise further the gravity of the peril with which this whole attitude threatens those who come within the range of its powerful attraction, an attraction that is specially powerful in its influence over those who are seeking for a solution of the mystery of things. While Greece was never brought under the dominion of this view to the extent to which India was, much of Greek thought was deeply dyed with its presuppositions.

[1] A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, i., p. 77.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 221.
[3] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 116 n.

Thus through the channels of Stoicism and Neoplatonism it invaded Christianity and threatened at times to destroy its reconciliation of the temporal and the eternal. Gnosticism, which combined Oriental mysticism and Greek philosophy, proved to be one of the most formidable enemies that the Christian faith in its early period had to encounter. Its fascination, indeed, lay in the escape from reality that it provided, and in the transference of emphasis to metaphysical questions from those of life and its struggles and victory or defeat. Here one of the centres of contention was the question of the value of history, not merely as a symbol of ideas, but as a happening in the sphere of time. If Christianity had surrendered to Neoplatonism it would have abandoned its power to transform the world by the presence of the spirit of God Himself working within it. Of Neoplatonism Dr Caird writes: "Its last word was escape, not reconciliation, the deliverance of the soul from the bonds of finitude, and not the conversion of the finite itself into the organ and manifestation of the infinite." [1]

This struggle left its mark upon the Christian Church. Clement of Alexandria, one of its most illustrious teachers, yielded in some measure to the subtle miasma that was abroad; but for him and for the Church Christ never ceased to be the centre, and in that fact, then as in many other crises of peril, lay the Church's security against the invasion of errors that might well have proved fatal to it. "If Christianity had depended on the Logos," writes T. R. Glover, meaning by that the immanent reason, "it would have followed the Logos to the Limbo whither went Æon and

[1] *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers*, ii., p. 370.

Aporrhoia and Spermaticos Logos. But that Logos has not perished is due to the one fact that with the Cross it has been borne through the ages on the shoulders of Jesus." [1] We can find a further example of the dangerous character of this Greek and largely pantheistic element that had entered into Christianity in the history of the Greek Orthodox Church, which has lived a separate life of its own—largely isolated from other external influences—ever since the eleventh century. In it, much more than in Western Christianity, Greek thought has remained as a scarcely challenged inheritance. The consequence in its historical development is thus described by a Dutch theologian who is intimately acquainted with the Church as it is to-day: "In so far as Orthodoxy is a child of Greek speculation, it has definitely accepted certain monistic and even naturalistic categories of thought. But it has never let itself be defeated by Hellenism. Rather has it attempted to arrive at a perfect balance between the two traditions." [2] It has never yielded to pantheism, but some of the consequences from the pantheistic elements that have entered into it can be traced in the static and unprogressive character that it has borne through the centuries. "To turn," writes Dr Edwyn Bevan, "from the wearying transitoriness of earthly things to contemplation of the eternal and unchanging—that seems widely to have been felt in Eastern Christianity as the core or the highest goal of religion—renunciation and tranquillity—though this is hardly anything distinctively Christian, but common to Eastern Christianity with

[1] *The Conflict of Religions*, pp. 303 f.
[2] W. A. Visser 't Hooft, *Anglo-Catholicism and Orthodoxy*, p. 94.

Neoplatonism and Indian religion." [1] This may not be a quite just account of a religious development which it is difficult to sum up in a sentence. Dr Visser 't Hooft tells us that the Eastern Church glories in its success in maintaining theocentric and anthropocentric tendencies in perfect balance, and that it conceives that to be the heart of Christianity. It is clear in either view that the peril that has threatened this Church and perhaps maimed it is that which came to it from Greek and Oriental pantheism.

2. The difference between Christianity and the other religions, as shown by the moral consequences that are the fruits they bear, is revealed in a slightly different aspect when we consider the place that the human will has within each of them. If there is no room for free choices life becomes a mere puppet-show. If we are to measure the religions by the values that they create in human personality, it needs no argument to demonstrate that an acosmic monism that simply reveals to us that we are God, though perhaps we did not know it, and an exalted monotheism where the divine will is all, are at one in the consequences that follow for the volitional centre of personality. Neither leaves " room for the newly-born to live " in any sense of the word that has moral value. " The doer and the Causer to do are one," says the Hindu peasant, and so saying accepts and justifies everything that happens, whether it be called good or ill. What the Muslim says may be differently phrased, but it has the same effect. If we are born subject to the rigidly predestined and quite arbitrary will of a remote deity, then the same apathy will result from despairing acceptance of what is

[1] *Christianity*, p. 141.

written on the forehead, as follows in the other case. The religions of Hinduism and of Islam may be poles apart in their conceptions of the universe, but moral stagnation is in the main the consequence from both the religions alike, and this is due to the pall of unreality that hangs over the life-interests of both. There are, of course, at the same time differences in the manner in which this consequence of despair affects different racial types, such as the Hindu on the one hand and the Arab on the other. It is true, also, that Pantheism, saying to the individual, "Thou art that," and revealing his divinity, may inflate him with a spiritual arrogance of which India can give many examples. And similarly Muhammadanism may create in its followers a sense of a high destiny and a divine commission that may sometimes make them irresistible, if also ruthless, in battle. But in general the effect of pantheistic determinism and Islamic fatalism is to leave men with no ideal of good for them to strive to attain to, except that of dispassion or "ataraxia" on the one hand, and a blind submission to the inscrutable will of Allah on the other. Weighed in moral scales neither ideal can be said to present a high type of goodness.[1]

It would appear from our survey that the consequences that follow from a denial of the reality of the world and those that result from a denial to the individual of the power in any real sense to determine his own course in the world are in both cases closely similar. Such beliefs cut the nerve of effort. An unreal or an immovable world cannot be made better, nor can a bound and helpless will attempt to make it better so long as it is left thus bound and helpless,

[1] See note at end of chapter.

" in God's contempt apart." These errors and their effects in human life are seen writ large in the civilisations over which Hinduism and Buddhism and the faith of Islam have exercised their sway. We have seen how the view which treats life with contempt because of its unreality or of its futility can be discerned in other contexts and even within Christianity itself, exercising its baneful influence; and similarly doctrines of determinism have been accepted in various religions and philosophies and have at times exercised an influence also upon Christian thought and life.

The nearest approach, perhaps, that Christian speculation has ever made to such a pantheism as that of the Indian advaitist with its denial of freedom is found in the thirteenth-century mystic Eckhart, and the nearest parallel at the other extreme to such a view of the bound will as we find in Islamic monotheism makes its appearance in some extreme forms of Calvinistic predestinarianism. Eckhart came under the condemnation of Pope John XXII. and his pantheistic doctrine would seem to have merited this censure. So also such a Calvinism as that of Jonathan Edwards would appear to leave the individual prostrate and helpless beneath a divine doom. And yet in neither case do we see such a consequence as might have been expected actually being exhibited. Eckhart's quietism does not result in " the set, grey life and apathetic end," though that is so often the consequence in the case of the Vedantist. For Eckhart its consequence actually was, we are told by Dr Rudolf Otto, " active creativity." That scholar, in his valuable examination of Eckhart's teaching and of its fruits as seen in Eckhart's own

spiritual aspirations,[1] describes as follows the life of the soul as this mystic, for all his theoretical pantheism, conceives it: "It breaks forth in temporal works, without ceasing, 'without wherefore,' without compulsion, without seeking for reward, without secondary purpose, in the free outpouring of a new and truly liberated will; and it is as incapable of resting as the creating God." In regard to predestinarianism, similarly, we find Professor A. E. Taylor making the strong assertion that "all experience shows that in fact even belief in absolute predestination, the so-called *fatum Mohammedanum* of which Kant speaks, does not paralyse human effort." The facts, if they are examined, will be found to demonstrate that that is a far too sweeping statement, but Professor Taylor is probably basing his generalisation upon Christian experience. What he says is true of the high Calvinisms within Christianity. Calvinism instead of proving an anæmic influence actually put iron into the blood of its adherents: it made them resolute and active rather than apathetic. What is the source of this correction of the error and the exaggeration contained in both these opposite doctrines? There seems little doubt that the corrective consists in the presence in both these contexts of the personality of Christ Jesus. We have excluded specific consideration of the significance of the person of Christ from our examination of the value of the Christian faith. But it illuminates the whole Christian situation to note here how his presence within Christianity and the revelation of God that his life conveys, by the fact that his life illustrates and illuminates the conception of God as both transcendent and immanent,

[1] *Mysticism, East and West.*

preserves that balance which is so essential to true doctrine, guarding it against that falsehood of extremes to which we are so prone. In Eckhart's case here is what happens, as Dr Otto describes it. "The soul" —intoxicated with Eckhart's pantheistic ambitions— "wishes that she might be God Himself, and there might be neither herself nor any creature. But it occurs to her that then God would not be love! Were the creature to disappear love would be torn from His heart." Eckhart is far too truly Christian to follow that deceiving track. His Christian faith and Christian experience save him from disaster. So also with Augustine and Calvin and Jonathan Edwards. The will of the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ is very different from the will of Allah, and because of what it is submission to it is not bondage but freedom. It is a will which while it is transcendent and even in a real sense prevenient is not arbitrary but in accordance with man's deepest being. The unresolved tension— the balance, to which reference has already been made in a somewhat different connection—that Christianity seeks to maintain and that is necessary to moral health, is here a tension between the divine purpose and human freedom, a balance between the sovereign and the surrendered will. As such it is central to the life of the Christian and can best be expressed in terms not of philosophy or theology but of religion. Thus we find Baron von Hügel affirming that "faith will turn Fate itself into a means for the soul's growth in likeness, not to Fate, but to God, Free-willing Spirit."[1] And Professor James Denney, an inheritor himself of the Calvinist tradition, describes the soul's relationship with

[1] *Eternal Life*, p. 135.

God as "co-operation with a goodness which is on the throne and which perfects that which concerns us."[1]

3. There is a third aspect of the religions which again reveals a radical divergence among them, a divergence that follows the same lines of cleavage as we have already become aware of, and which affects similarly the spiritual values which they create in men. The theistic religions—the religions of Israel, Zoroastrianism and Christianity—have an outlook upon the future which, however inadequate may be the forms in which human imagination and human dreams have clothed it, is a hope, under the divine guidance, of better things to come. Professor Edwyn Bevan, in a lecture published under the title *The Hope of a World to Come underlying Judaism and Christianity*, claims this, as surely the theist must claim it, as a hope that is integral to his faith. It issues from the theist's belief in the reality of the temporal order and of God's real manifestation of Himself in it and through it. When Dean Inge denies that the hope of temporal progress is part of the Christian religion he is in danger of following Plotinus in exiling God from His world and His world from Him. His emphasis on the words "the world passeth away and the lust thereof" has to be balanced by the Christian confidence in the eternal purpose of God. There can hardly be any dispute that a true theism, and certainly Christian

[1] Denney, *Letters to his Family and Friends*, p. 188. Compare also Professor A. E. Taylor's conviction that "the source of Spinoza's actual piety towards God and the happiness it brought him" . . . is to be found "in deep impressions of early life based on intimate membership of a Jewish family . . . familiar with utterances of psalmists and prophets who most emphatically did not identify Deus and Natura" —*The Faith of a Moralist*, i., p. 221.

theism, aims at the creation of moral personalities. "If," as Dr Bevan points out, "this world is intended by God to be 'the valley of soul-making,' there must be a state of things when souls are made. Any view of the time-process which construes it as purpose must therefore be essentially eschatological; it must rest on the belief in some consummation still future to which the process is leading." [1]

We have here one of the distinctive characteristics of the Christian world-view, setting it sharply in contrast with that of Hinduism, as with that of Græco-Roman thought. To both of these—to the Hindu and to the Stoic—the outlook on the future of mankind is that of an endless recurrence of ages, a continuous running down to evil and then a re-beginning. This prospect must inevitably beget in any thinking man such world-weariness as finds expression in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius and in the resolve of so many Indian sages to decline to co-operate any longer with life. Suicide is indeed in Indian religious theory a recognised avenue to that beatitude of Nirvana which is above time and consciousness. On the other hand there are streams of theistic thought that emerge from widely separated sources and flow together through the ages towards a great anticipated consummation that is yet to be. In the case of Zoroastrianism it is to the prophetic figure of Zarathustra that we must mainly attribute the fact that this development, in spite of its origin, is conceived as ethical and theistic instead of being metaphysical and pantheistic. The Zoroastrian outlook embodies, as Söderblom puts it, "the idea implied in the Word *history*, that is to say 'something

[1] *Christianity*, p. 61 f.

happens in what happens,' so that the intricate mass of events has a meaning and a goal beyond the actual combinations and situation." [1]

The harvests which these two contrasted spiritual soils produce maintain the same divergence which we have already noted in relation to other aspects of the religions which have come before us. An existence where all is eternally static and nothing happens in what happens is an existence upon the star of the god Rephan, and that is a star which breeds moral death and not a life of moral growth. The religion of the Christian calls upon men to "burn and not smoulder, win by worth." Within Christianity, when the balance is not justly maintained between God's purpose and man's effort, when God is made subordinate to a law and the fact that He is free to break in upon human history in the fulness of His moral energy is forgotten, the power of this hope fails us and we are apt to decline towards the apathy and listlessness of the pantheist. When God is subordinate to His own laws, then men's faith in God and their ardour for the advancement of humanity inevitably wane, hope dwindles to a flicker and the promise fades. The sky becomes drab and leaden and the springs of inspiration and of ardour cease to flow. When such conditions arise the Christian religion is no longer to be called Christian; something that is of its essence, as distinguishing it from the religions that are content with stagnancy and that have before them as their aim the negation of life, has died within it. Baron von Hügel quotes Rickert, a distinguished student of the philosophy of history, as maintaining that it was this element in

[1] Quoted in Bevan, *The Hope of a World to Come*, p. 1.

Christianity, with its emphasis on the unique significance of human history, " which decided the victory in favour of the Christian philosophy as against Hellenism, with its ever-increasing insistence upon the Universal and upon indefinite repetition or at least repeatableness." [1] More definitely Dr Rudolf Otto declares that " the expectation of the Advent, in humble reserve and in supplicating expectation, in view of the final breaking forth of the ' wholly Other,' is the soul of (Christianity) from the days of the original Church on." [2]

The " Proximate Futurism " of Jesus, as von Hügel calls it, is one of the characteristics of the religion that marks it as separate from, and as towering far above, all the other religious systems. So Professor A. N. Whitehead declares that " the greatness of Christianity consists in its ' interim ethics.' " He goes on: " The founders of Christianity and their earlier followers firmly believed that the end of the world was at hand. The result was that with passionate earnestness they gave free rein to their absolute ethical intuitions respecting ideal possibilities without a thought of the preservation of society. The crash of society was

[1] *Essays and Addresses*, ii., p. 31.

[2] Otto, *India's Religion of Grace and Christianity* p. 71. Karl Barth also, in spite of his strongly Calvinistic view of the divine sovereignty, emphasises the reality of the moral struggle, side by side with the supremacy of God. Commenting on the great eschatological passage in 1 Corinthians xv. 20-28, he writes: " Because *God* reigns and designs to reign in Christ, Christianity is a serious affair: *that* is the meaning of faith. . . . That God is all in all *is* not true, but must *become* true—Christian monism is not a knowledge that is presently possible, but a *coming* knowledge. If it is to be genuine, it must only be comprehended now as Christian dualism, as the tension between promise and fulfilment, between ' not yet ' and ' one day,' and it may *not* be anticipated "—*The Resurrection of the Dead*, p. 179.

certain and imminent. 'Impracticability' was a word that had lost its meaning."[1] Faith in the power of God to intervene at any moment, not aimlessly or wilfully, but in accordance with His eternal purpose of good, was thus preserved, and courage and hope kept high and clear. This "Proximate Futurism," to quote Von Hügel again, "stands out massively against all pure Immanentism, all evolution taken as final cause, and not merely as instrument and method. . . . The magnificent massiveness of the anti-pantheism here is a permanent service to religion of the first magnitude."[2]

It is just the avoidance of the falsehood of extremes that makes this outlook so practically valuable in thrusting men forth to labour for the relief of their neighbours' woes and for the coming of the Kingdom of God.[3] There is danger on the one hand of accepting "the inevitability of gradualness" and subsiding into spiritual anæmia, or, on the other hand, of folding our hands and leaving all to God and awaiting listlessly His good time. A. E. Taylor refers in his Gifford Lectures to a contemporary Italian philosopher, Aliotta, who rejects theism because "to admit the existence of God is equivalent to converting the 'good fight' into a mere parade manœuvre, since, if God is, the issue of the combat is already decided and hence history

[1] *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 19.

[2] *Essays and Addresses*, i., p. 132.

[3] Other examples could be given to show how often Christianity in its history has erred by turning aside from the road along which Christ leads it. Thus, according to Dean Inge, when its ideal world became materialised, "the popular pictures of heaven and hell, as places of future retribution, in time sucked the vitality out of secular interests more completely than the contemplative life of Greek philosophy had done" (*God and the Astronomers*, p. 81).

becomes a mere pageant."[1] The facts, as Professor Taylor shows, contradict this theoretical expectation of the philosopher; faith in God the Father strengthens the arm to fight and to endure. At the same time it cannot be doubted that this is so only because God is known as the Father of the incarnate and the crucified Christ. The relation thus established between man and God is one that reconciles God's purpose and man's freedom, and makes it possible for man to believe himself a real fellow-worker along with God, under God's victorious banner.

We set out to measure the comparative stature of the various religions by the values that they produce in the lives and characters of men, that is, by their moral creativity. This at least would appear to be clear, that to the Christian life cannot be unreal or empty; it is filled with a divine meaning and purpose. We shall probably all agree with Dr Bevan that we can endure to see life tragic, but we cannot endure to see it trivial, and triviality—whether the triviality of the hopeless or of the frivolous—is written across the world both of the pantheist and of the fatalist. Christianity may not solve the problem of free will or the problem of pain. God remains still, for it, in many aspects of His dealings with men, a *Deus absconditus*; but it inspires men with an assurance and an ardour that enable them to overcome their fears and it brings to them as a divine gift the power which enables them to grow. "The divinity accessible to man," to borrow the language of A. E. Taylor, is "not *deity* but *deiformity*, transfiguration into a character which is not ours by right of birth, but is won by an effort,

[1] A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, i., p. 27.

and won as something communicated from another source, where it is truly underived and original." [1]

We may illustrate the difference, measured in human values, between the Christian religion and that Indian rival which may be taken as representing the chief alternative through the ages to the Christian interpretation of the universe, by a restrained and confident comparison made by a British Civil Servant in India. "To the Hindu philosopher," writes Mr Arthur Mayhew, "all religions may be equally true; the administrator, comparing a Christian settlement with the pariah village at its gates, has good reason to know that they are not equally effective." [2] Christian nations have produced, and indeed produced in the name of Christianity, things even more hateful than the pariah village of India. But if that can be affirmed to be the very offspring of the spirit of Hinduism, as that which by its nature drains life of all significance and poisons its springs, whereas on the other hand the gross and evil things that Christians have fashioned flout the whole purpose and challenge of their faith, then the choice between the two types of religion may be in fact a choice between what is false and what is true, between the type of religion that denies the values that enrich life and that which seeks to conserve them. This at least we can say with confidence, that if the pariah village or the Hindu ascetic, "musing and fasting and hoping to die," [3] is a just symbol of the conclusion as to the worth of life reached by the one group of religions, then in our quest we must turn elsewhere than to them.

[1] *Op. cit.*, i. p. 124. [2] *Christianity and the Government of India*, p. 14.
[3] Sir Alfred Lyall, *Verses Written in India*, p. 45.

NOTE

The fatalism of Islam is discussed by Baron Carra de Vaux in his article on Fate (Muslim) in *ERE*, v., p. 794. He recognises that Muslim teachers have striven to reconcile belief in the all-powerful will of God with the moral significance of life. The emphasis, however, upon the divine decrees along with "the psychological tendency to fatalism of Eastern peoples" has made the apathetic submission to fate a characteristic of most Muslim peoples. At the same time one has to recognise that, in the words of H. D. Griswold, "the belief in fate is robbed to a considerable degree of its sting by a belief in Allah, the author of fate" (*ERE*, ix., 814). The personality of the supreme Despot brings him into a real relation, though it be a distant one, with men, his subjects.

The place of fore-ordination or fatalism in Zoroastrianism is discussed by Lewis H. Gray in his article on Fate (Iranian) in *ERE*, v., p. 792. "In genuine Zoroastrianism," he says, "fatalism has no place. . . . And yet fatalism came to be an important doctrine of later Zoroastrianism. What was the source of this new factor—philosophical speculation, the malign influence of Babylonic astrology, the crushing of the national spirit by the foreign dominion under which the Zoroastrians passed, or a combination of all those—it is not easy to tell; yet there is at least a curious and suggestive analogy between the rise of fatalism in Iran and that of karma in India, which seems to have been evolved from a combination of philosophical speculation with the religious beliefs of the aborigines of India."

IV

ORIENTAL INFLUENCES IN THE WEST

In examining the relations of the religions of the world to each other and seeking to determine their comparative values, our primary concern has been with the truths they contain and their significance for the lives of men. The theology and the ethics that they teach and the philosophy that they explicitly or implicitly convey may have little relation that is obvious to the history, or to the national or racial characteristics, of the human families among whom they have had their origin or over whom they have exercised their chief influence. And yet a consideration of these secondary matters may well prove useful to us in reaching those conclusions which are our main objective. Scientific or religious truth is indeed, as all men recognise, super-racial and super-national. At the same time ideas do not come to birth in vacuo and their development is profoundly affected by the kind of mind that thinks them and by the circumstances and conditions in which they are thought. There is, we may all agree, a real, though indefinable, difference between the Indo-Germanic, the Semitic and the Mongolian racial types, and the thoughts of those who ponder the mysteries of existence in the valley of the Ganges have another shape and colour from those of the Bedouin tribes who tend their camels in the Arabian desert. Human needs, it is true, reach down to profound depths where the effects of such

contrasts and antipathies as these names suggest no longer matter, but the fact that such differences have had to be, and have been, thus overcome has a significance of which we must take account. We must avoid the error of neglecting the relation of our theories to human conditions and of failing to note the effect that such relationship inevitably produces. We are all children of time and place, and that fact affects our spiritual as well as our natural existence. Semite and Aryan, Asiatic and European, each breathes a psychological atmosphere of his own. The Jew has not always proved attractive to the non-Jew, and the hostility between them is far even now from being overcome. And yet to this race, in the sphere of religion, other races have gladly acknowledged their immeasurable debt.

Of the differences that separate the races, whatever the sources may be from which they issue, there are few that are more evident than those that create the familiar contrast of East and West. It should accordingly be worth our while to review in their wider aspects, however inadequately, some of the products of the spiritual intercourse that has come about through the centuries between these two broadly distinguishable regions and to consider whether these products, as they present themselves to us, must be reckoned as good or as evil. The reasons surely deserve study which have overcome those powerful natural forces of prejudice and estrangement that so often have kept the races apart, and which have been able to overcome them because one race or family of mankind was believed to possess something supremely precious that it could bestow upon another.

When we attempt to estimate these spiritual exchanges it is often the custom to sum up in a formula or a single generalisation the qualities of a people or a race or the essentials of a religion. Such simplifications are apt to be misleading. There is, of course, no such thing as racial purity, and as little can the varied characteristics of a people or the essential nature of a developing religion be condensed into a single word or phrase. Least of all is it wise to attempt in this way to distil the spirit of a continent made up of elements so heterogeneous as those that are comprised within the limits of Asia or Europe. Thus when Professor Irving Babbitt makes the assertion that "the primacy of will over intellect is Oriental," [1] he is making a generalisation which is contradicted by large elements of much significance within Asia. Even if one should admit this primacy as a characteristic of Buddhism, which is chiefly, no doubt, in his mind when he makes the statement, it is necessary to do so with large reservations in view of the historic origins of Buddhism and of elements due to that origin that have always remained within it. But while we may not be able to agree with Professor Babbitt in his selection of one mental characteristic as specially to be described as Oriental, we can agree with him that there is "an underlying divergence in the temper of the Asiatic as compared with that of the European." [2] This difference is often said to consist in the fact that Asia is more religious than Europe. This is probably true with some exceptions if we consider the Oriental peoples as a whole, and we find confirmation of its

[1] *Democracy and Leadership*, p. 6.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 158.

truth in the Oriental origin of all the great historical religions.

We may take this fact as a sufficient explanation of the invasion of Europe about the beginning of the Christian era by Oriental worships. These worships, of which, of course, Christianity was one, had their headquarters for the most part in the nearer East. The question of ultimate origins need not concern us. Of the actual invaders of the Græco-Roman world the religion that had travelled furthest was that of Mithra, but it came, not from Persia nor from its Vedic home, but from the recruiting-grounds of Cappadocia and Pontus. Syria and Judea and Egypt were the chief centres from which these influences issued forth, travelling thence along the main highways of commerce and of government that linked Europe and the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire. We need not examine the causes that had at that time produced so much confusion and unrest in the minds of those who had obeyed so long the laws of Numa and paid at least a formal reverence to the Olympians. Whether we describe the change as one for the better or for the worse, that a change had come about in the conscious religious needs of great numbers of people cannot be doubted, nor that to this new sense of need the Oriental religions were by their nature more fitted to furnish satisfaction than was the worship of the elder gods. Of the "new quality" that these religions possessed Professor Gilbert Murray has given an account and estimate. It is as marked, he says, "in the Gnostics and the Mithras-worshippers as in the Gospels and the Apocalypse, in Julian and Plotinus as in Gregory

and Jerome." His description can hardly be meant to apply in all its particulars to all these types of religion. It may be accepted, however, as true of the invasion as a whole and we may agree accordingly that it brought with it "indifference to the welfare of the State," while it caused at the same time "a rise of asceticism, of mysticism, in a sense, of pessimism." There was, Professor Murray's description goes on, "an intensifying of certain spiritual emotions, an increase of sensitiveness, a failure of nerve." [1]

It is impossible to examine here the evidence as to the real character of this religious agitation which, without question, was in large measure caused, or at least rendered more active, by the meeting of the spiritual waters of the West and of the East. All that can be attempted is to distinguish in the most general terms the elements that we find intermingling. It can hardly be doubted that from the East there came, even at that early period, ideas and beliefs which because of their source are generally described as belonging specifically to the Oriental outlook upon life. Such are the beliefs in ascetic practice as a means to enlightenment and "salvation," a pessimistic estimate of the meaning and worth of human life and human conditions, and the acceptance of methods of ecstasy as means by which the divine goal, which is beyond our furthest reach, may yet be attained. These beliefs imply a conception of God as beyond reason and speech and as One to be attained through a discipline that is non-moral and that turns away—to adopt Rohde's description of

[1] *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 155.

Orphic asceticism—"not from the moral lapses and aberrations of earthly life but from earthly existence itself."[1]

The value of this invasion, however, consisted not in those specific contributions that it made to the religion of the Græco-Roman world, but in the fact that behind them lay at least an intense concern for the discovery—remote though it might be—of the divine source of life and power. "With all their quackeries," writes Professor Gwatkin, "these Eastern worships answered the craving for a higher life and for the communion with unseen powers in a way the old, unspiritual worship of the State could not."[2] Whether we approve or disapprove the change that came about by the coming together of Asia and Europe will depend on what we account the most precious elements that go to the making of human life, whether a pilgrimage that leads men through dark places and through storms may not, however long the journey and however rough the road, do something to bring them at the last into a wider fellowship than that of the State and a richer life than that of the good citizen or the self-sufficing Stoic. What these religions contributed possessed at least a negative value. They did not open to men the right way, but they revealed the tragedy and the failure that await those who seek, however resolutely, to journey to God by a road that only leads to deeper darkness and that tears our very life up by its roots. Despair and the dark night of the soul await those who venture on this trackless track. What they reached was most frequently the

[1] Rohde's *Psyche*, quoted by Capelle in *ERE.*, ii., p. 81.
[2] *The Knowledge of God*, ii., pp. 143 f.

dark conclusion to which Schopenhauer came by a similar road on a later day, that life is wholly evil, and the deduction of the futility of all endeavour that so many others have accepted as its consequence. Those struggles of the spirit at least bear witness to the depth of man's longing and the tragedy of his failure. There were, indeed, emergences of individuals into peace, but it was "a forced and desperate peace"; and by the majority of those who turned to Isis and Mithra and the Orphic mysteries what was obtained was the doubtful gift of the strengthening of emotion in the face of the unappeased terrors of the unseen world.

Such were some of the influences that the religions of the nearer East conveyed to southern Europe at the beginning of the Christian era, overturning the old altars and preparing the way for the coming of the conquering Galilean. They were bringing about, as a Christian historian—in the opinion of Professor Murray—might claim, "a necessary softening of human pride, a *Præparatio Evangelica*." [1]

The Asia from which these forces issued during this early period was, of course, a narrowly limited Asia, and even within that restricted area friendly intercourse did not long continue. The exchanges between East and West for many centuries consisted mainly in exchanges on the battle-field between the forces of Christendom and the forces of Islam, whom the Christians dismissed as "Infidels." One exception to this scornful dismissal is to be found in the influence of Arabic philosophy in the creation of Christian scholasticism, "of which," in the words of

[1] Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 156.

Mr H. O. Taylor, "it was, so to speak, the collateral ancestor." [1]

The renewal of the Oriental invasion, as an invasion far wider in its scope and far more formidable in its intellectual pretensions than the earlier one had been, may be dated from the opening of the nineteenth century. The Romantic Movement which had its beginning at that time, and which was a movement backwards to what is called "primitivism," received a powerful impulse from the teaching of Rousseau, and continued to find varied expression throughout the succeeding century. Professor William Wallace in his brief monograph on Schopenhauer, himself one of the most notable and characteristic figures of this whole development, describes in a sentence its attitude and its aim. "Romanticism," he says, "turned its back upon science and modern civilisation to seek the homes of the natural life in the medieval world, in the mysterious East, in the so-called superstition of the fireside and the vulgar." The "anarchic individualism" which issues forth on this quest is due—as was the case in the age of Buddha and in the age of the invasion, which has just been described, of the Mediterranean lands by the Oriental faiths—to man's weariness of control by his merely rational nature. He gives free rein to his unsatisfied self-will and urges it hither and thither in search of some secret of deliverance and of hope. The consequence that followed in the case of many is described by Bourget in his essay on Flaubert. "All those who took the romantic promises at their face value," he writes, "rolled in abysses of despair and ennui." In agreement with this is Brandes'

[1] *The Medieval Mind*, ii., p. 390.

account of the inward world of Novalis, "with its strange, nocturnal gloom, in which he melts down everything, to find at the bottom of the crucible as the gold of the soul, night, disease, mysticism, and voluptuousness." [1]

The discovery of the greatness of man is the starting-point of this whole movement. Failure to recognise the source of that greatness and to take account of his helplessness explains its reaction towards despair. "We may define romantics," writes T. E. Hulme, "as all who do not believe in the Fall of Man" [2] In their pursuit of the endeavour to discover a clue to the spiritual chaos in the midst of which they found themselves some turned to "the mysterious East," now opening wider to the world the stores of her ancient wisdom. The pioneers in this direction in Germany were the Schlegel brothers, one of whom, Friedrich, published in 1808 his *Language and Wisdom of the Hindus*, a book whose influence on the Romantic Movement in Germany is said to have been profound and far-reaching. A still more notable event, however, in the history of this development was Schopenhauer's discovery of a Latin translation of the Upanishads made from a Persian version of these ancient Scriptures by the French scholar Anquetil du Perron. These utterances of the Indian spirit seem to have so affected him as to determine from thenceforward the direction and tone of his teaching. He has himself described how profoundly he was affected when this new planet swam into his ken, even though those voices of the Indian sages reached him as a dim echo in a version

[1] Brandes, *Main Currents of European Literature*, ii., p. 188.
[2] *Speculations*, p. 256.

that was twice translated, first from the original Sanscrit into Persian and then from Persian into Latin. "How thoroughly," he writes, "does the Oupnek'hat breathe the holy spirit of the Vedas. And how does everyone, who by diligent perusal has familiarised himself with the Persian-Latin of this incomparable book, feel himself stirred to his innermost by that spirit. . . . And O! how the mind is here washed clean of all its early ingrafted Jewish superstition! It is the most profitable and most elevating reading, which (the original text excepted) is possible in the world. It has been the consolation of my life, and will be the consolation of my death." [1]

Schopenhauer's teaching and influence, which owes so much to Indian thought, centres round two convictions, which, no doubt, if not actually derived from that source, were confirmed by what he found there. The one of these is his sense of the unreality of the whole context of time and history as a creation of māyā, something perceived through "a veil of deception, which causes mortals to see a world of which one can neither say that it is or it is not"; while the other is the sense that "all life is essentially suffering." With the second goes a conviction that the way by which to journey through such a scene is the way of asceticism and self-renunciation, while, in view of the limitations of his outlook, this is for him an asceticism, as Baron von Hügel describes it, of "dervishes and fakirs." For these central conceptions of his system Schopenhauer was certainly indebted in large measure to India, but perhaps more to the teaching of Buddha,

[1] Schopenhauer, *Parerga*, ii., p. 185, quoted in Wallace's *Schopenhauer*, pp. 105, 106.

whose bust, we are told, stood always by him on his table, than to what he found in the Upanishads. Because of these beliefs that he has accepted he goes on to make the claim that "atheistic Buddhism is much more nearly related to Christianity than is optimistic Judaism and its variety, Islam." [1]

Baron von Hügel in his examination of Schopenhauer's teaching in his *Eternal Life* attributes to his ideas a remarkable influence even at the present time. Among those who at an earlier date found inspiration in his sombre message he includes Richard Wagner, Leo Tolstoy, and Friedrich Nietzsche. It is easier to trace the Oriental ideas that ruled Schopenhauer in the first two of these than in the third. Certainly Nietzsche does not agree with Schopenhauer and Buddha in exalting the virtues of pity and gentleness, but on the contrary he, in the words of Clement Webb, makes Schopenhauer's devil, the "will-to-live," into his god.[2] He seems to have had a violent revulsion from the glamour that for a while Schopenhauer had cast upon him as also upon Wagner. Under the influence of that revulsion he wrote of Wagner, "There is nothing exhausted, nothing effete, nothing dangerous to life which has not secretly found shelter in his art. . . . He flatters every nihilistic (Buddhistic) instinct." [3]

It is scarcely necessary to indicate how fully Tolstoy, in spite of his later occupation with Christ and the Gospels, was controlled in all his wayward history by certain conceptions which he owed in large measure to the teaching of Schopenhauer and which can be de-

[1] Quoted in von Hügel, *Eternal Life*, p. 252.
[2] *History of Philosophy*, p. 230.
[3] Nietzsche, *The Case for Wagner*.

scribed as characteristically Oriental. Of Schopenhauer in 1869 he wrote, "I am confident that he is the greatest genius among men." Solovyev sums up in a sentence what may be said to be Tolstoy's controlling idea when he says that Tolstoy's Kingdom of God "is only an arbitrary and vain euphemism for the Kingdom of Death."

Our purpose, however, in the present study is not to trace in any detail the elements that, conveyed from Eastern lands, have influenced the thought and life of Europe, but to take note of points at which the Asiatic tradition in some of its most significant expressions has entered into European culture, and the general character of the effect it has produced. The primitivism and subjectivism of the Romantic Movement opened the sluices for an inflow of the Lethean streams of Indian thought. Even of Heine, Semite though he was, Brandes claims that "his spiritual home was on the banks of the Ganges."[1] This attraction towards Oriental mysticism and religion continued to manifest itself in Germany throughout the succeeding generations. Even at the present time, in spite of powerful currents in that country that seem to be setting away from what Eastern religions in the main represent, it appears to be the case that Oriental pantheism is still making its conquests and that theosophical and anthroposophical and neo-Buddhist cults continue to exist and to obtain a following.

One strange indication of this *drang nach Östen* is to be found in what is called the "German Faith Movement." The "German Faith" apparently reckons as two of its main sources of inspiration the Indian

[1] Brandes, *Main Currents of European Literature*, vi., p. 126.

Bhagavadgītā and the teaching of Meister Eckhart, the latter being one who, in his mystical speculations, approaches nearest of all the mystics of the West to the acosmic monism of India. Rosenberg, indeed, the apostle of this "German Faith," is said to claim Eckhart as "the creator of Aryan religion and the reincarnation of Odin." [1]

But it is not in Germany only that Oriental modes of thought and feeling have been extending their sway during the past century. A characteristic example of the spell that Indian ideas can cast upon some minds is revealed in the *Journal Intime* of Henri Frederic Amiel. Of the subjectivism that is so marked a feature of this period from the time of Rousseau onwards Amiel is a typical representative, and in his case, as in the case of others as well, the gloom that gathers round this subjectivism has its sombre colours intensified by the fascination exercised upon him by the pessimism and nihilism of the sages of the East. The value of the revelation of his inner struggle which he gives us in his *Journal* is due not to any achievement which he reached or any influence which he exercised, but to the fact that, as Mrs Humphrey Ward says in her Introduction to the English translation of the *Journal*, "he speaks for the life of to-day as no other single voice has yet spoken for it." [2] Mrs Ward wrote these words at the beginning of the closing decade of the nineteenth century. It is not, therefore, a haphazard choice if we cite this Genevan Professor to bear witness to the profound inward conflict and division that

[1] See a letter by Professor F. M. Powicke, in the *Times Literary Supplement*, 18 July 1935.

[2] Amiel's *Journal* (English translation), p. xliii.

characterised that age and that, in this case at least, was due to a considerable degree to the infection of Oriental dreams and despairs.

How far this malaise from which Amiel suffered had its roots immediately in the teachings of the Indian sages it is not possible to judge with any confidence. His continuous ill health and other depressing influences that sapped his strength must be taken into account, but, whatever its ultimate source, there was in him what he himself calls "a Buddhist tendency" which increasingly as the years passed seems to have dominated him. It was not unresisted. In the opinion of Mrs Humphrey Ward his whole life and thought were steeped in Christianity, and, in particular, "he retained throughout his life the marks of Calvinism and Geneva." If that was indeed the case we must recognise as all the more remarkable the seductive power of those ideas which laid such a grasp upon him. Writing of Schopenhauer he says, "It has struck me and almost terrified me to see how well I represent Schopenhauer's typical man for whom 'happiness is a chimera and suffering a reality,' for whom 'the negation of will and of desire is the only road to deliverance.' . . . The individual is an eternal dupe who never obtains what he seeks and who is for ever deceived by hope. My instinct is in harmony with the pessimism of Buddha and of Schopenhauer."[1] His instinct is at war with his moral being and his heart, and he cannot, apparently, escape from questionings which, he recognises, drain his innermost life-blood and deprive him of the power of action. Brahma and māyā exercise, it would seem, a continual fascination upon him.

[1] Amiel's *Journal*, pp. 159 and 161.

After many expressions of hesitation and uncertainty he sums up in what appears to be a considered estimate his position as he stands between East and West. "There is a great affinity in me," he writes, "with the Hindu genius—that mind, vast, imaginative, loving, dreamy and speculative, but destitute of ambition, personality and will. Pantheistic disinterestedness, the effacement of the self in the great whole, womanish gentleness, a horror of slaughter, antipathy to action—these are all present in my nature, in the nature at least which has been developed by years and circumstances. Still the West has also its part in me. What I have found difficult is to keep up a prejudice in favour of any form, nationality or individuality whatever. Hence my indifference to my own person, my own usefulness, interest, or opinions of the moment. What does it all matter?" But as he comes under the influence of these "Brāhmanic aspirations," with their power to benumb, he is recalled from the snares of māyā by the thought of duty. "The problem set before us," he goes on, "is to bring our daily task into the temple of contemplation and ply it there, to act as in the presence of God, to interfuse one's little part with religion. So only can we inform the detail of life, all that is passing, temporary, and insignificant, with beauty and nobility. So may we dignify and consecrate the meanest of occupations. So may we feel that we are paying our tribute to the universal work and the eternal will. So are we reconciled with life and delivered from the fear of death. So are we in order and at peace." [1]

This passage deserves to be quoted in full as revealing

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 224 f.

to us a conflict which has distracted the heart of man in all ages of his history and which has not ceased to create within him strife and unhappiness. Amiel's "oscillations" between the personal and the impersonal, between pantheism and theism, reflect an uncertainty that is written across the history of man's pilgrimage down the centuries. It is well for us to be aware, as he was fully aware, of the consequences from these mutually hostile views of man's life and God as these are revealed by what happens for the making of men from the adoption either of the solution of Christianity on the one hand or of that which we may call the solution of Asia on the other. There is a sense in which we may agree with Amiel when he says that "it is perhaps not a bad thing that in the midst of the devouring activities of the Western world there should be a few Brāhmanising souls."[1] But these are those who experience what he calls "psychological peace," not "the moral peace which is victorious over all ills . . . and able to face whatever fresh storms may assail it."[2] This moral peace is obtained, as he realised more and more as the end of his long strife drew near, by surrender to the will of God—the God who to him, in all his wanderings, remained still the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. In one of the last entries in his *Journal* he writes: "One thing only is necessary—

> Garde en mon cœur la foi dans ta volonté sainte,
> Et de moi fais, O Dieu, tout ce que tu voudras."[3]

[1] Amiel's *Journal*, p. 269. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 207.

[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 294. It is interesting to learn that Amiel's *Journal* has been translated into Japanese and has passed through many editions in Japan, retaining there a popularity that it can hardly be said now to have in the West.

Of the witnesses that can be called to testify to the consequences that follow in the soul of man when he chooses as the elixir of life "the drowsy syrups of the East" two other groups may be cited as possessing each a special interest of its own. Their traditions and the environments that have helped to mould them are widely different, but in each case the influence of the "ideologies" of Asia has made a considerable contribution to their fashioning and has bestowed upon them certain unmistakable characteristics. The first of these groups belongs to the Irish literary renaissance and has as its central figures W. B. Yeats and George W. Russell, best known by the designation A.E.[1]; the other is an earlier company that in America found expression through such diverse voices as those of Emerson and of Walt Whitman.

The Irish renaissance had, no doubt, various roots from which it sprang. What each contributed to the efflorescence that took place in the closing decades of last century cannot be investigated here. In this movement, as in earlier ones in Europe at which we have glanced, there were present elements of primitivism and romanticism. It might be said that Ireland was, by the circumstances of its history, nearer to the "Celtic twilight" than its contemporaries in Europe. W. B. Yeats has affirmed the opinion that literature can only be reborn as it is "constantly flooded with the passions and beliefs of ancient times." Much of the secret of Yeats's own inspiration consists in this imaginative return to nature, in the primitivistic dreams that he weaves, "the heaven's embroidered cloths," "the blue and the dim and the dark cloths."[2] That Yeats has

[1] Or Æ.

[2] W. B. Yeats, "The Winds among the Reeds."

found an affinity between his spirit, in some at least of its expressions, and that of India, is evident, but we need not suppose that he derives primarily from that source the pensive and melancholy tone that pervades so much of what he writes. It is not specifically the māyā of India that casts its shadow across his sunshine; it is rather the sense of hopelessness and vanity that is inevitable when there seems to be no stable centre in an ever-changing universe. His deity is, indeed, as shadowy as the "qualityless Brahman" and as remote from the challenges that duty and the demands of life bring day by day to everyone for whom life is a moral conflict.

> And God stands winding His lonely horn;
> And time and the world are ever in flight,—
> And love is less kind than the grey twilight,—
> And hope is less dear than the dew of the morn.[1]

The Celtic twilight bears an unmistakable resemblance to the night of Brahman. Both are regions of gloom and both are regions that lie beyond good and evil. Yeats is himself fully conscious of this affinity of his spirit with India, and indeed it might be one of the ancient Indian sages who calls upon the "weary heart" to "come clear of the nets of wrong and right." All the same the Irish poet is more an Irishman and a poet than an Indian sage; his interest is rather in words and symbols than in ideas. The case of A.E. seems to be different. He has allowed himself to be bound more completely by the spells of India. He acknowledges frankly his debt to the Indian scriptures and seems, like others among the Dublin mystics who had a part in creating the Irish literary renaissance, to have

[1] W. B. Yeats, *The Celtic Twilight*, p. 211.

found in the Theosophical Movement Oriental elements that, mingling with the Celtic inspiration that at that period was surging upwards in so many minds, transformed it to something different, widening its horizon and making it more truly religious. The sincerity of his outlook breathes in all his poems, but it is a sad sincerity as he himself is aware. In the preface to his *Collected Poems* he writes with evident emotion of the new insight that has come to him. "When I first discovered for myself how near was the King in His beauty I thought I would be the singer of the happiest songs. Forgive me, Spirit of my spirit, for this, that I have found it easier to read the mystery told in tears and understood Thee better in sorrow than in joy; that though I would not, I have made the way seem thorny and have wandered in too many by-ways, imagining myself into moods which held Thee not."

In his case we see the colours of beauty that had been kindled for him from old Celtic fires becoming blanched into "rare vistas of white light." The twilight and the dusk obscure his vision. He glimpses "through the mists of māyā" deep gulfs of nothingness towards which he journeys. There is no clear prospect before him, and when the effect of the opium of his emotional rapture has passed the sense of melancholy returns upon him reinforced. "Religion," says Professor Whitehead, "is what we do with our solitude." No doubt that is a large element in religion, but in the case of A.E. and all who journey for deliverance along the path of pantheism, what happens is that when they awake from their submergence in the All they find their ego still there and still in control. There is no escape. "The soul," he has to conclude, "is

its own witness and its own refuge." His songs, he tells us, were made by him when " filled ever and again with homesickness." And this " infinite, indeterminate desire " remains to the end unquenched.

There is another kind of pantheism which has found a place in Irish poetry alongside of this pallid Indian sort which bleaches out of our world all the beauty of its colour and drains from it its activity and purpose. This is a pantheism which preserves indeed the warmth and glow of nature, but loses as completely as the other does the reality of the life of the spirit. Ireland is traditionally the " Isle of Saints " as well as " the Rose of all the world," and Roman Catholicism has produced at least one Irish Catholic who has sought to unite his Christian faith with the still more ancient tradition of Celtic animism. In his poem, " I see His blood upon the rose," Joseph Plunkett has dissolved the figure of Christ into the world of nature in a fashion which removes the divine Lord far off from men and makes him shadowy and unreal, instead of bringing him near and making him more dear.

> All pathways by His feet are trod ;
> His strong heart stirs the ever-beating sea ;
> His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn ;
> His Cross is every tree.

If the Cross is every tree then it is none, and he who is said to have died there is a phantom, an illusion. The Incarnation dwindles to a dream of the heart's desire. The pantheism that says " God is all " and the pantheism that goes further, saying " Nothing is " and " God is naught," agree in their ultimate conclusions. They make both human life and God twin unrealities. It is not around the God and Father of

the Lord Jesus Christ but around Brahman that the Celtic twilight naturally gathers. Further evidence that this is so could be provided by the witness of a very different product of the Celtic renaissance, George Moore. In his novel *The Brook Kerith* he represents Jesus as having survived the Cross and as meeting St Paul and expounding to him his revised Gospel. God, he says, " is not without but within the universe, part and parcel not only of the stars and the earth, but of me, yea, even of my sheep on the hillside." As Paul listens he realises that this doctrine is the same as was being preached by some monks from India to the shepherds among whom, according to this tale, Jesus was living.

Some kinship of nature between the Celtic Aryan and the Vedic Aryan reinforces, perhaps, the fascination that such dream-shapes seem to exercise upon these spirits groping in the twilight. Thus we find A.E. confessing,

> I could no longer know
> The dream of life from my own dreams.

But when one turns to the witness that America bears to this widespread resort to the East and its Ancient Wisdom the causes that are at work in this very different environment must be largely of another kind. That Thoreau, Emerson and even Walt Whitman were attracted by certain elements in the teaching of the Oriental sages is indeed proved by their own testimony. The first two certainly read the Vedas and the Upanishads, and Thoreau himself tells us that " the pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges." In the case of Whitman it is more difficult

to produce evidence of such indebtedness. He seems to have been aware of an affinity between his own exuberant unification of all things and the conceptions associated with the two Indian figures whom he describes as "old, occult Brahma" and (a description that sounds hardly adequate) "the tender and junior Buddha," but there was a great gulf separating his mental outlook from theirs. Whitman is essentially the primitivist, seeking in his own way, like the neo-Celt or any other neo-Pagan, to escape from the complexities of civilisation and the bewilderment of a baffled intellectualism. The mysticism of Emerson, on the other hand, dwells more in the region of ideas and so discovers more easily a kinship with the abstractions of Oriental thought. He may not actually owe the term "Oversoul" to the Paramātman of the Sanscrit scriptures which it almost translates, but it is much the same tenuous thing that both the words represent. He is drawn to the speculations of the Indian sages because he finds there the same thirst which, if less urgently, moves him as also moved them—the thirst for an ultimate unity of things. In that quest he stretches the idea of God beyond personality to something that becomes as impalpable and unreal as Brahman itself. Henry James describes him in his later years as being "utterly unconscious of himself as good or evil." "He had no conscience, in fact, and lived by perception, which is an altogether lower or less spiritual faculty." [1]

It is easy to understand how one who saw the universe with these eyes would find much that would appeal to him in the Upanishads. "Pantheistic

[1] Quoted in Perry's *Emerson To-day*, p. 130.

reverie" is the atmosphere that broods over much of his writings, and we are told that he displayed no evidence of possessing the essential Christian virtue of humility.[1] There was no occasion for such an experience in his universe, as there is not in any universe that has no place within it for a holy God and that, in consequence, is not peopled by sinful men. The absence from his outlook of such conceptions as these might go some way to account for the optimism which was so characteristic of him, but which seems so unusual in one whom we describe as a pantheist. When one sets him beside his friend, Thomas Carlyle, one can hardly fail to be startled by the contrasted estimates of the worth of existence that are deduced by them from closely similar premises. One reason, no doubt, was that Emerson was a son of the America of youth and hope, while his friend was burdened with all the sorrows of the European Werther. The cave of the self which the European romanticists explored was such a haunted place as Novalis possessed within his heart. Indeed to follow the course of emotional romanticism from Rousseau to the present time is, in the words of Mr Irving Babbitt, "to run through the whole gamut of gloom." But American transcendentalism was able to set itself to a more cheerful tune. It was the same spirit transplanted, but transplanted to a different soil and a different climate. Emerson could understand what *Brahma* signified:

> Far and forgot to me are near:
> Shadow and sunshine are the same:
> The vanished gods to me appear,
> And one to me are shame and fame.

[1] I. Babbitt, *Democracy and Leadership*, p. 167.

But to him shadow and sunshine were not levelled down to a common unreality but were levelled up to a common divinity. His pantheism did not result in fatalism but in self-reliance. He accepted one half of the doctrine, that all things are divine; but not the other half, that the divine is negation. "What is there of the divine," he asked, "in a load of bricks? What is there of the divine in a barber's shop? Much, All."[1]

He does not travel the whole way along the pantheistic road; he refuses to face its grim conclusions. His belief in the divinity of man exhilarates him, but he fails to take account of the narrow limits of that divinity. Both he and Whitman belonged to a nation rapt by the spirit of the pioneer, and neither of them was a constructive thinker. Religion was indeed in Emerson's blood, and that a religion which brought along with it some of the strength that lies in Calvinism. We find a similar mood in the Indian teacher Swami Vivekananda, who attempts to combine his traditional Vedanta with the spirit of American enterprise. William James has described his monism as undergoing, under that influence, in spite of its antecedents and its logical consequences, a transformation into a determined optimism, "the very sumptuosity of security." The vigour of the Swami's affirmation of his confidence seems often, indeed, to betray the fears he is so resolutely controlling. Emerson's eclecticism had achieved at an earlier date an equally remarkable, and, we may add, an equally ephemeral, synthesis. He was the ancestor of the modern humanists, but he

[1] Perry, *The Heart of Emerson's Journals*, p. 85.

was a humanist who still believed in " the still, small voice," and that voice, he added, " is Christ within us." [1]

Emerson was not a systematic thinker. For him intuition had an authority of its own and created in his soul, not a " strange, nocturnal gloom," but the genial outlook that so exasperated Carlyle. But when he identifies " the law of gravitation with purity of heart," [2] and heat with love, he himself may indeed be levelling up, but another is more likely to level down. For the pantheist there is no moral standard against which ethical terms can be so measured as to ensure to them a meaning such as they have to the Christian. They had a fully ethical meaning for Emerson because in his case there was always behind them a Christ who was to him a historical person even more than an eternal idea. We can quote again Professor Babbitt, a humanist with a more philosophic mind than Emerson, as setting in contrast to each other the love and grace of the Christian with its " sharp exclusions and determinations " and this naturalistic love. This is a kind of love in virtue of which Walt Whitman views not merely men and women, good, bad and indifferent, but " elder, mullein and poke-weed," as all on the same level.

A final instance may be cited from the present day to indicate how some of those whom M. Romain Rolland calls " the eaglets of Europe " are " returning to their eagle's nest in the Himalayas." [3] Mr Fausset in his book, *A Modern Prelude*, tells how he has travelled from orthodox Christianity by way of " the Celtic twilight " to find in " the inspired pantheism in which the vision

[1] Perry, *Emerson To-day*, p. 301. [2] *Divinity School Address.*
[3] R. Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, p. 468.

and teaching of the Vedanta culminated" what could at last purge and content his unquiet self.[1] There "the personal God" was completed in "the impersonal God," there also "the 'Christos' or divine self" was, he declares, "known and expressed" long before the birth of Jesus.

As one listens to such statements as these and watches the progress of this honest traveller one becomes convinced that Mr Fausset—like Emerson—is all the time carrying along with him from his inherited Christianity that which makes it possible for him to find satisfaction in Brahman. He, indeed, in the end comes near to admitting this. His *Prelude* closes with a backward glance. He finds that there is more truth than he had at first thought in the view that the Vedas encouraged "the ordinary man at least" to aim "rather at negative identity with the Absolute than at a positive incarnation of love." "Satan cannot cast out Satan. A negative self-will cannot destroy a positive self-will. For it is merely an inversion of it."[2] This "pantheistic love" has indeed no real power to heal the scars of the soul. "Love for yourselves," says Vivekananda, "means love for all, for you are all one."[3] So the shadow remains still upon our sunshine, the shadow of ourselves; and, as Mr Fausset finally concludes, "the knowledge of God is in the last resort self-knowledge."[4]

These various utterances from among many that have found expression since the beginning of the

[1] *A Modern Prelude*, p. 258.
[2] *Op. cit.*, pp. 291 and 299.
[3] Rolland, *Prophets of the New India*, p. 454.
[4] Fausset, *A Modern Prelude*, p. 301.

nineteenth century have been selected in the belief that they are representative of a continuous and significant movement in the lands of the West. Their common characteristic consists in the fact that they represent in close association with each other two processes, the one an uprush through the often shallow crust of Christian civilisation of primitive instincts and fears and dreams, and the other a resort to Oriental ideas and Oriental interpretations of life, a resort that may be said to be due to such a "failure of nerve" as, at the beginning of the Christian era, caused a similar Oriental invasion. These consequences follow, no doubt, from many causes, but chiefly from the fact that religion had become an arid intellectualism with little relation to the facts of life and to the inward experience of those who professed it. The cure for the extravagances of mysticism and pessimism and Orientalism must be sought in a satisfying harmony of the mind and heart and a submission of the personality, thus unified, to its Lord, who is realised as at once "wholly other" in His moral transcendence and yet immanent through His self-manifestation in and through the soul of man. The extremes on the one hand of a religion that revels in "asthenic emotion" or that seeks to submerge the self in an ocean of vaguely palpitating being, and, on the other hand, of a religion of post-rational scepticism and traditionalism bearing a religious label must both be escaped if the spirit of man is to travel forward with courage and hope. The Vedanta, Mr Fausset says, is "what a God-intoxicated spirit has spun, like some inspired spider, out of itself." But the God with whom this spider is intoxicated is

the spider's ātman, its own self. The web of this spider has thus no range beyond its own conjecture, the guess of a worm in the dust. If the soul is " its own witness and its own refuge," as A.E. sadly concludes, then the sadness that he experienced and for which he blamed himself is, we must conclude, inevitable.

V

CHRISTIANITY AND BUDDHISM

In our study of the types of religion that history presents to us, and our discrimination between them, we have made reference most frequently to Indian acosmic monism and to Christianity as illustrating those characteristic qualities which divide the religions into two groups which appear to be in irreconciliable contradiction to each other. This discordance shows itself especially in the conceptions that they have of the world in its relation to God, of man as a moral being, and of the meaning and purpose of human history. The acosmic monism of India—otherwise known as "advaita Vedanta"—possesses a particular interest as supplying an unflinching presentation in its logical consequences of the type of system which, all through history, has been, and is still, the most formidable enemy of such an ethical theism as we have in Christianity. While these two represent alternative interpretations of the significance of human life, between which men, whether by conscious deliberation or not, are continually choosing, there are and have always been other religious views which have halted, or attempted to halt, at some point between these, sometimes nearer the one and sometimes nearer the other. Thus Christianity has often drifted towards monism when immanentism has dominated men's outlook, or again, the doctrine of a human God is made use of to mitigate the ethical bleakness

of monistic extremism. Among the historical religions the most notable example of an attempt to moralise acosmic monism, and to retain for it at the same time energy and purpose is to be found in Buddhism. It may accordingly prove useful for our study of the relation of Christianity to the other religions if we examine this religion somewhat more particularly and note how it is related to advaita Vedanta, from which it may be said to have issued, and how also it touches Christianity at certain points while it is at the same time so alien to it. This examination will deal with Buddhism in its earliest form, as that is traditionally believed to have been shaped by the Buddha himself. It will not deal with the religion in any detail, but will consider those aspects of it only which give it, as far as we can judge, its dominating characteristics.

To understand the significance that this new religion bore when it appeared, it is necessary that we should have some conception of the situation into which it was born and which helped to give it its character. We can perceive quite definitely, in spite of the obscurity which involves the whole of that early period, that the future Buddha grew up in the midst of much religious agitation and unrest. It would seem that a great variety of doctrines had at that time obtained prevalence, and wandering mendicants who professed them were numerous everywhere. Their outlook was dominated by the doctrine of karma, with which was associated belief in "the weary wheel" of rebirth, revolving endlessly with no hope—as far as any ordinary human outlook could extend—of any cessation or deliverance. The shadow that these ideas

cast lay over the lives of those who thought at all of the meaning and the end of life, and drove many forth into the jungle to brood and speculate. One Buddhist scripture records sixty-three different philosophical schools as existing in the time of Buddha. It was chiefly the problem of deliverance from this bondage to rebirth that engaged their attention and impelled many, abandoning other interests, to devote themselves wholly to the search for some way of escape. There arose accordingly a multitude of wanderers and beggars among whom there must have been many, then as now, who were no better than idlers and charlatans. We know, indeed, of one such, Gośāla, whose followers were called Ājivikas. He seems to have been one of the most thoroughgoing of materialists and a complete fatalist. Nothing, he held, depends upon one's own efforts or the efforts of others. Another sect, earlier in its origin than Buddhism, and much more reputable in its character than that of Gośāla, is the sect or religion of the Jainas.

The intellectual anarchy that seems to have prevailed so widely at this time, provoked, it may be, in large measure by revolt against the claims to spiritual superiority made by the Brāhmans, as well as by their elaborate requirements of ritual and sacrifice, must have laid heavy burdens upon the spirits of the serious and earnest among the seekers after truth and driven them to strive within their own souls for some sure road to enlightenment and deliverance. It would also impel some "men of commanding personality," such as Mahāvīra, the Jaina, and the Buddha himself, to organise these shepherdless sheep, so that they might be guided towards a definite goal in accordance

with a definite discipline. Buddhism seems, as far as we can judge, to have had in its original environment two chief enemies against whom its opposition was most strongly directed, the Lokāyatas or (as they were called later) Cārvākas, that is, the materialists or fatalists, on the one hand, and the Brāhman priesthood on the other. Both Jainism and Buddhism are non-Brāhman movements, led by non-Brāhmans and directed against certain elements in the religious situation which the Brāhmans represented. In the arguments and discussions in the Buddhist books in which Brāhmanism is assailed it is not its philosophy that is opposed. The Brāhmans are attacked as the champions of sacrificial performances, of caste, and of the worship of Brahma. In the opinion, however, of Professor Berriedale Keith it is the systems that either dealt with life purely materialistically or that were fatalistic or that denied the possibility of any knowledge, to which Buddha exhibited the most resolute opposition. There is sufficient evidence, Professor Keith holds, that the schools which the Buddha assailed " were not visionary foes, but holders of doctrines popular and widespread among thinking men." [1] " It is in a Vedanta," says A. Barth, the French Orientalist, " which has lost all faith in the Brahman that we think the point of departure for the ideas of Buddha must be sought. We must believe in the Absolute in order to feel as deeply the emptiness and imperfection of finite things; we must have believed in it and have found the vanity of this belief, in order to ignore it with a resolution as calm and inflexible." [2]

[1] A. B. Keith, *Buddhist Philosophy*, p. 135.
[2] A. Barth, *Religions of India*, p. 117.

It was into some such condition of religious confusion and intellectual anarchy that the future Buddha was born towards the close of the sixth century B.C. The situation in India may have been not dissimilar to that which existed, on a far smaller scale, in Greece when, a century later, Socrates was born there. Like Buddha he grew up in the midst of a ferment of disputation in which many points of view were represented, those of the sceptical sophists, of the Pythagoreans, of the Ionian thinkers. The anarchy of opinion and the insincerity and pretension that characterised many of the debates were common to both the Athens of the post-Periklean age and the India in which Buddha strove after and achieved enlightenment, and sought to guide others along the same path by which he had himself travelled. We may find a parallel even in the reaction that the confusion and helplessness of the times provoked in the case both of the sage of Greece and the sage of India. It would seem as though they passed through similar experiences and were driven by them to accept not dissimilar spiritual objectives. "I have not elucidated," Buddha is represented as saying, "that the world is eternal or that the world is not-eternal, that it is finite or that it is infinite. . . . And why have I not elucidated this? Because this profits not nor has to do with the fundamentals of religion. . . . Misery have I elucidated, the origin of misery, the cessation of misery have I elucidated . . . because this does profit."[1] So Socrates also, turning away from quests that he found to be unprofitable, set himself to discharge his task of convincing men of

[1] *Majjima Nikāya*, LXIII. 431; in Warren, *Buddhism in Translation*, p. 122.

their ignorance of all that it most becomes man to know and of the supreme importance of "tending their own souls."[1] This was the one "taste" of his *Dharma*, even as the "taste" of Buddha's was Deliverance.

This point of view, which is central to the religion of Buddha in at least its earliest forms, emphasises at once its close kinship with the religious tradition from which it issued, and at the same time its divergence from it. Buddha accepts in the main the karma-rebirth doctrine, which by that time was firmly established in its control of the Indian outlook upon life. For him, as for so many Indian thinkers, this is accepted as an axiom of which the whole of their conception of conduct and of destiny must take account. It was this sense of bondage and of the inescapable flux of things that set to him his problem of salvation. That outlook demanded a flight from the region of the phenomenal to a region which must of necessity be beyond knowledge, since it is beyond the reach of the consciousness that dwells in the process of unreality. Thus far he is controlled for the most part in thought and aspiration by the Indian religious tradition. Where Buddha differs radically from the Upanishad teaching is in regard to its affirmation of the Brahman as the Absolute and as the Supreme Soul which is at the same time identical with the individual soul. From these speculations Buddha turns resolutely away. As we have seen, he concentrates his own attention, and he desires to concentrate the attention of his followers, upon the solution of a practical problem and to exclude from their view questions that were irrelevant and insoluble and that would only tend to confuse and bewilder them. It is not

[1] A. E. Taylor, *Socrates*, p. 79.

that he does not know the solution of these problems; apparently he does—though this may be rather a belief of his followers than a claim of his own. But, however that may be, these questions were deliberately excluded. "The matter does not tend to advantage, to the principle of the religious life, to aversion, absence of passion, cessation, calm, comprehension enlightenment, Nirvana." [1]

Guided by this rule Buddha turned decisively away from the tradition to which he belonged and introduced into his religion an atmosphere of a quite different kind from that of the Vedanta. Buddhism, in consequence, is essentially not a metaphysic or a theology, but a "vehicle" for man's salvation. It avoided the extreme of unfruitful speculation, just as it avoided also that of bloody ritual and cruel asceticism. In the interest of religion, Buddha ignored Brahman, denying, like Socrates, "divinely the divine." It may be also that his reason for denying—or refusing to affirm—the permanent self was, as Professor Keith suggests, that he considered such denial to be "the most effective therapeutic" against the disease of rebirth.

It is more significant, however, to see in Buddha's limitation of his horizon and his rejection of metaphysics an insight that was aware, as his Vedantic forerunners were not, that religion must give central consideration to the production of character and conduct. Thus it is true to say that Buddha and the Upanishads differ as to their main concern. They face in opposite directions. Buddha's aim is clearly indicated as different from that of the Upanishad sages in such an account of

[1] *Majjima Nikāya*, LXIII. 431; in Warren, *Buddhism in Translation*, p. 122.

it as we have in this significant passage: "Ignorance was dispelled, knowledge arose. Darkness was dispelled, light arose. So is it with him who abides vigilant, strenuous and resolute." The stress is here upon that "mortal, moral strife" which is of vital consequence to true religion. The *bodhi* which is the key to Buddha's new discovery, consisted in large measure in a realisation of the unethical character of the roads of knowledge and of asceticism by which his predecessors had mainly travelled. This *bodhi*, in contrast with the goal sought by means of *tapas*, of sacrifice and of knowledge, is something primarily ethical and to be reached by "moral conduct, meditation and insight." The asceticism that Buddha rejected appeared to him to bear along with it all that was useless, "even as punting-pole and steering-pole may bring along a water-snake."

It is not, indeed, his theory and the principles which lie behind the practice which he enjoined that give its high place to the religion of Buddha. It is rather, as has frequently been noted, the spirit that it embodies and that is exhibited in the personality of the Founder. What it is that constitutes that spirit is, in the opinion of Baron Von Hügel, "that intense sense of the mutability and unsatisfyingness of all contingent life which saturates Primitive Buddhism." That might be said to be a spirit that it shares with the religion of the Upanishads, but in the case of Buddhism it takes control of the whole situation with a completeness that we do not find in the rival movement. That this sense of instability and change is so closely associated with the one religion rather than with the other, is, no doubt, in large measure due to the fact that it is presented through

the personality of Buddha and is conveyed with much impressiveness and reality by means of his character and his words. He appears before us, journeying through "the ever silent spaces of the east," as one who is vividly aware of human mortality and who is deeply moved by it. "He saw souls whose eyes were scarcely dimmed by dust and souls sharp of sense and souls blunted of sense, souls of good and souls of evil disposition; souls docile and souls indocile, some of them living with a perception of other worlds of wrong-doing." "Beings there are whose eyes are hardly dimmed with dust, perishing because they hear not the truth." [1]

To this man of a profound compassion there came a great liberating experience, a deeply spiritual insight, which did not drive him away from men, but bound him to them, enriching and not emptying life. In this respect it was an experience altogether different from any that advaita teaching could convey. Its character is indicated by the fact that it had to be made known to men in order that all might share it. For the truth of which an insight had come to him was, as he is repeatedly said to have described it, "lovely in its origin, lovely in its progress, lovely in its consummation." "Fare ye forth, brethren," he therefore says, "on the mission that is for the good of the many, for the happiness of the many, to take compassion on the world, to work profit and good and happiness to gods and men." [2]

Canon Streeter, in his Bampton Lectures, *The Buddha and the Christ*, makes the statement that "for the philosophy of religion it is of the utmost importance to realise that the barrier which separates the Buddha

[1] *Digha Nikāya*, XIV. 22. [2] *Op. cit.*, do.

from the Christ is due, in the last resort, more to the intellectual theories which he inherited than to disagreement in the findings of his very original moral insight."[1] The fact that this is the case is of special significance in our study of the religions and has been already emphasised. We have in primitive Buddhism an attempt—which has repeatedly been renewed in similar circumstances since—to combine a monistic theory such as Vedanta Hinduism supplies, with a humanistic religion which treats the life of man with seriousness as directed towards moral ends. But these are two interpretations of life that are implacably hostile to each other and cannot be comprehended in a single system. There is no logical continuity between advaita Vedanta and the religion of Buddha any more than there is between timeless mysticism or the Absolutism that seeks a unity that is beyond good and evil and the religion that has at its centre Christ and his Cross. There are hostilities in all these cases which cannot be assimilated together within any satisfying harmony. This disharmony between the background of idea out of which Buddha emerges and the way of escape which he discovered placed him at once at a disadvantage in the proclamation of his message. He does not come in "the fulness of the times" as Christ came. Apart altogether from any estimate of the personalities that dominate the two religions there is this obvious difference between Christ and Buddha, that the one appears in a line of prophets who have prepared the way for his coming and made his revelation for that reason intelligible to those to whom he brought it, while the other is an isolated individual, set in an alien context.

[1] Page 71.

Buddha had no one before him to make his path straight, and, in consequence, he accepted as part of his message doctrines that were in fundamental conflict with the religion of compassion and of a moral deliverance that he sought to bring to men. Thus it appears that his religion, viewed in its place in the Indian development, is a thwarted thing, a partial reformation that destroyed some evils and revealed some messages of good, but that was always baffled and encumbered by the false theories that it accepted from the past. This, no doubt, was one of the main reasons for its ultimate defeat in the land of its birth. Throughout its whole history it is, like the Bhakti tradition within Hinduism, continually struggling in behalf of the religious solution that the human needs and instincts that are so deeply represented within it cry out for and cannot abandon, while it is at the same time continually defeated in this aim by the hard shell of Hindu pantheistic idea and of Hindu karma-rebirth tradition that encases it. Karma is essentially an atheistic theory, as Buddha realised, making God superfluous, and no true religion can be created, even by so deeply religious a personality as Buddha, on the foundation of a denial of God. Christ, on the other hand, appears in the context of an ethical theism that had been built up during many centuries by the inspiration of the law-givers and prophets of Israel on the foundation of a divine manifestation to men. He found many things in the tradition that it was necessary to condemn and to annul, but its central elements he came not to destroy but to fulfil.

It is not necessary to say more of the effect upon Buddhism of the conception of the world order that it accepted from the old tradition. Its effect was to

abolish God and prayer and penitence and the hope of divine fellowship. When Mahāyāna sought to summon these back as necessary to the life of a fully articulate religion, this could only be accomplished by attaching a theism of some kind to it. Buddhism seems, indeed, to demand by its whole spirit a personal God such as theism affirms, and its history reveals this as its logical implication. "There is no other certain sanction of goodness" in Buddhism, writes Mrs Rhys Davids, "beyond the driving force of pain waiting on immoral living, and the pleasures rewarding moral living, now or in the long run. . . . When the saints end the story of salvation with the refrain, 'Done in the Buddha's bidding!' the term used is not that for a despot's order, but for the instructions of a teacher."[1] It might well be not a "despot," but God, the Father, who forgives the penitent, and the spirit of Buddhism suggests such a God, but no room for such a one can be found within a Buddhism that accepts the consequences from a karma doctrine.

The combination in Buddhism of its karma inheritance with what we may call either its atheism or its agnosticism, reminds us of the likeness, that can hardly fail to impress us, between this religion and modern materialism or "scientific humanism." They agree in their denial of God or their failure to affirm Him; they agree often as well, we may say, in their ethical seriousness and in their spirit of compassion. Further, the kinship between karma and the reign of an immutable law in a world in which there is no higher power than nature is obvious, and the consequences that follow from this conception are in both

[1] Mrs Rhys Davids, *Buddhism*, p. 121.

cases closely similar. The world outlook, which in both cases naturally and almost inevitably follows from such a doctrine is one that relegates all life and all experience—as well as the soul and God—to the realm of phantasm. If Buddhism denies the world and materialism denies spirit, then the inevitable consequence, sooner or later, is that both the world and spirit are discovered to be empty of reality. Reality, as we have seen, requires the interaction of these two elements, and to treat either the one or the other as unreal is to destroy both. The reason for this denial of both God and the world, says Dr Oman in an examination of the situation created by karma in Buddhism and of the similar situation created by modern materialism, " in both cases is the same. *The world does not exist for any worthy end,* either of education by it or victory over it by which the soul or God could have significance." [1]

The question that emerges urgently from both the ancient system created by the deep insight and sympathy of Buddha and these modern counterparts to it, so different in their origin and purpose, and yet retained through the influence of their Christan inheritance within a not dissimilar moral climate, is whether the lack of correlation between the two aspects of truth that we find united in each of these systems does not inevitably inflict a fatal wound upon them. Can modern materialism retain the reality of moral effort, even while it is governed by philosophical premises that seem to deny that reality? Professor Irving Babbitt was deeply concerned that humanism should have within it such an " inner check " as he found in Buddhism,

[1] John Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 230.

and as appeared to him to be necessary for the preservation of civilisation. "Buddha," he says, "had a sense of the flux and evanescence of all things and so of universal illusion keener by far than that of Anatole France; at the same time he had ethical standards even sterner than those of Dr Johnson."[1] Is that, we must ask, a combination that can be maintained? Will it be possible to build up a moral order that can preserve the hope and courage which are the cement of the future of the race if either God or the world is denied reality?

Two examples may be cited from the intimate writings of modern European men of letters who may be taken as representative of the outlook we are considering, and who at the same time may be assumed to be more deeply conscious of the significance of the *milieu* to which they belong because they, through their exceptional gifts of insight, are somewhat removed from it and lifted above it. Checkov, the Russian dramatist, in a letter to his family, written 1892, pronounces a deliberate judgment upon the spirit of his time which has an important bearing on our study of this aspect of the religions, and which may therefore be quoted with some fulness. "Science and technical knowledge," he says, "are passing through a great period now, but for our sort it is a flabby, stale and dull time. . . . The causes of this are not to be found in our stupidity, our lack of talent or our insolence. . . . We lack 'something,' that is true, and that means that, lift the robe of our muse and you will find within an empty void. Let me remind you that the writers who, we say, are for all time or are simply good, and who

[1] *Rousseau and Romanticism*, p. 377.

intoxicate us, have one common and very important characteristic; they are going towards something and are summoning you towards it too. . . . You feel, besides life as it is, the life that ought to be, and that captivates you. And we? We paint life as it is, but beyond that—nothing at all . . . flog us and we can do no more! We have neither immediate nor remote aims, and in our soul there is a great empty space. We have no politics, we do not believe in revolution, we have no God, we are not afraid of ghosts, and I personally am not afraid even of death and blindness. One who wants nothing, hopes for nothing, and fears nothing cannot be an artist." [1]

The other witness to this sense of the futility and meaninglessness of existence gives evidence in the language he employs of the influence upon him of Oriental thought. In both cases, indeed, whether the writers are conscious of it or not, it is that view of reality which Oriental thought has most resolutely explored which is in control of their minds. D. H. Lawrence belongs to the present generation more fully than Checkov, and was in some respects a markedly individual figure, but that does not prevent his being typically representative of the withdrawal of a large class at the present time from the Christian conviction of the divine foundations of man's life and of its government by a purpose which issues from the divine mind. "Lawrence's dislike of abstract knowledge and pure spirituality," in the view of his friend, Aldous Huxley, "made him a kind of mystical materialist." [2] In these respects he differs radically from Indian thought,

[1] Checkov's *Letters to his Family*, pp. 319 f.
[2] *Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. xviii.

but at the same time his affinity with the Buddhist spirit can hardly be denied. The dislike that he expresses of Oriental "spirituality" and his unwillingness to look closely at the consequences from Buddhist religion may confirm rather than disprove the fact of this affinity. Two passages from his more personal writings illustrate his religious attitude. Writing to his sister he describes it as follows: "There still remains a God, but not a personal God: a vast shimmering impulse which moves onward to some end, I don't know what—taking no regard of the little individual, but taking regard for humanity. When we die, like raindrops falling back again into the sea, we fall back into the big, shimmering sea of unorganised life which we call God." His "doctrine of cosmic pointlessness" is expounded by him as follows: "There is no point. Life and Love are life and love, a bunch of violets is a bunch of violets, and to drag in the idea of a point is to spoil everything. Live and let live, love and let love, flower and fade, and follow the natural curve which flows on, pointless."[1]

These descriptions, as the modern non-Christian of the West discerns them, of man's fate and of the way by which he should travel towards it are in large agreement with the prospect to which Buddha and those who followed him had to reconcile themselves. To both the ancient Indian and the modern European there would appear to be little trustworthy evidence of any meaning in a universe which has either wholly lost God or retains Him only as a "shimmering impulse." If there are no cosmic vistas then life becomes "an empty void." One view may recommend that we

[1] *Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, p. xx.

"follow the natural curve," another that we draw our being up within ourselves as, in the old Vedic simile, a tortoise gathers its limbs to itself. "Like a lion not trembling at noises, like the wind not caught in a net, like a lotus not stained by water, let one wander alone like a rhinoceros." [1] Such a conception of life's isolation and insignificance points towards death, and to choose death, as Professor Gilbert Murray says of the Stoic solution, "is not to solve the riddle of living." [2]

The Stoicism of D. H. Lawrence, as also of Bertrand Russell's "free man's worship," is really an attempt to retain hold of some ghost of purpose while discarding God without whose will purpose is only a word. Professor Murray sums up the message of Diogenes of Oenoanda in the words, "Fear nothing, desire nothing, possess nothing, and then life with all its ingenuity of malice cannot disappoint you." He sums up the doctrine—whether Stoic or Epicurean—of this type of Greek teacher in four verses, "Nothing to fear in God: Nothing to fear in Death: Good can be attained: Evil can be endured." There seems a kinship—which is not revealed in the words so much as in the spirit they exhibit—between these resolute words and this epitome of Buddhism: "Not to commit sin, to do good, and to purify one's mind—that is the teaching of (all) the Awakened." [3] No one can do otherwise than honour and reverence the austere and disciplined minds from which such courageous utterances issue, but are they building upon realities when they build such a

[1] *Sutta Nipāta*, I. 3, 37.
[2] *Five Stages of Greek Religion*, p. 121.
[3] *Dhammapada*, XIV. 183 (SBE. X.).

structure with their own hands and within the limits of their own souls? Checkov, proceeding from closely similar premises and using almost the same words as have been quoted above as expressing the temper of a brave Epicurean, reaches a different conclusion. One who has no wants, no hopes and no fears, he says, "cannot be an artist." We may go further and say that such a prospect is not likely to create good men or men ardent for the service of their fellows. Humanism indeed, from the days of Buddha on has sought to combine a sense of duty to one's fellows with this "anarchic individualism." The last message that Buddha is said to have given to his disciples is well known. "Therefore, O Ananda, be ye lamps unto yourselves. Be ye a refuge unto yourselves. Betake yourselves to no external refuge. Hold fast as a refuge to the Truth."[1] But the doubt remains whether the Truth or Law (Dhamma) has any reality or any authority if it is the product of finite minds and not the thought or purpose that exists in the mind of a living God, who is the ultimate reality of the universe.

Alongside of these negations, so ineffective, so empty of all hope, we may place the utterance of a Christian saint of India, inheritor of the tradition to which Buddha also belonged, but who turned from it to Christianity. Panditā Ramābai, a remarkable Marātha Christian, in words that seem to echo Diogenes and Checkov, but that are so different in their significance and their context as uttered by her, sums up the conviction of the Christian theist. "Trusting altogether in our Father, God, we have nothing to fear from anybody, nothing to lose, and nothing to regret." There are two ways

[1] *Digha*, XVI. ii. 26.

of attaining the great Indian goal of the *jivan mukta*, the soul set free. There is that of Buddha and the Stoic, which is, to borrow Professor Murray's word, the way of death. There is also this other way which we may claim to be the way of life, a life enriched and abundant.

With all his profound and moving sense of the world's sorrow Buddha fails—and fails, we may say, as almost a necessity of his birth in the India of his day—to realise the true depth of that sorrow. The worst woe to him is *Dukha*, those floods of tears which are "greater than the waters of the Four Great Seas." It is the fact of the sadness of human existence, along with the tragic assurance that "one knows no escape from this mass of pain," that especially oppresses him and drives him to take the road to Nirvana. The Bodhisattva, the Buddha-to-be, only begins to find out the way of deliverance when the thought comes to him, "Wretched is it that this world has come about." Archbishop Söderblom quotes approvingly a saying of Dion Chrysostom to the effect that Zoroaster had experienced and understood more of the beauty of God than the poets and wise men of Hellas, and yet, in spite of that fact, it was not he but Buddha who, because of his deeper insight into the world's suffering, became "the light of Asia." The power of a religion, Söderblom holds, is to be judged by its experience of the misery and darkness of life.[1]

Because of that experience Buddha's place as a religious teacher is and must remain among the very

[1] *Cf.* "Who holds that if way to the Better there be, it exacts a full look at the Worst" (Thomas Hardy, *In Tenebris*).

greatest, but because it pauses with suffering and does not discern the root of suffering to be moral alienation, as the theist and especially the Christian theist does, it falls short of the truth. Von Hügel gives Buddhism a great place, not as religion in the fullest sense of the term, but as furnishing, by its sense of human tragedy and of the transitoriness of all existence, what he calls "a prolegomenon to all religion." A sense of "the flux and evanescence of all things" does not, however, provide that stable element either for righteousness as a supreme standard by which to guide our conduct or for faith to lay hold of and rest upon, lacking which religion cannot in its full significance exist. Buddha and the modern humanist both declare, "Self is the lord of self. Who else can be the lord?"[1] But that self also belongs to the region of the unreal, and hence its lordship, too, is an illusion.[2] We have already seen how Professor Babbitt, humanist as he was, was conscious of the fatal weakness in his doctrine which lies here. It must fail unless it can provide a moral authority that challenges the evil in us. With his expression of his doubts we may leave the humanism both of Buddha and his modern followers. "I hold no brief," Professor Babbitt writes, "for the dogma of original sin, yet there is evidence that the discarding of it has meant the loss of something so essential that on its recovery in some form may hinge the very survival of our civilisation. So vital is it to our being that we

[1] *Dhammapada*, XII. 160 (SBE. X.).

[2] "Nagarjuna in his commentary on the *Prajnā-pāsamitā-sutra* observes: 'The Tathāgata sometimes taught that the ātman exists and at other times that the ātman does not exist'" (Radhakrishnan in *Hibbert Journal*, xxxii., p. 355).

should have a faith in a Lord of the conscience who is not merely our own wavering desires, but before whom our mortal nature doth tremble like a guilty thing surprised."[1]

[1] Irving Babbitt, *On Being Creative*, p. xxxix. Compare what Sir A. Lyall in his *Asiatic Studies* (ii., p. 39) represents Vamdeo Śastri as saying: "Christianity, whatever may be its philosophic basis, does at least come with an imperative mandate that is wholly wanting in Brāhmanism. 'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord, 'I will repay it,' is just the kind of bold, authoritative declaration that I wish the fine-drawing Hindu brain could ever be got to accept without argument or analysis."

VI

CHRISTIANITY AND THE RELIGION OF NATIONALISM

THE judgment seat before which we have been attempting to arraign the religions is that of their spiritual fruitfulness. If any religion is to pass the test to which we would submit it, it is necessary that it should possess within itself a dynamic quality; it must be a source from which issues creative energy. But alongside of creativity there must be at the same time a power of control. It is not the tumult of the soul that the gods approve, but something that, accompanying its activity, may be described as its depth, an inward concentration and restraint that directs that activity towards an appointed goal. The necessity for this second element, if religious ends of the highest quality are to be attainable, has been already indicated in reference to such a historic faith as that of Islam. Zeal and ardour this religion has achieved in abundance, but it fails to provide the "inner check," without which these energies are likely to be soon dissipated. It may be worth our while to investigate a further instance of the consequences that follow from such onesidedness. For this purpose we shall select Nationalism, which in some of its modern phases may quite properly be described as a religion, and indeed as one of the religions that at the present time are replacing in their authority over men's lives the old historic faiths.

Nationalism is not, it is true, a new factor in human

history, but it has extended its sway in recent years widely over large areas of the world, and seems to be continually annexing new regions of influence. It has infected every department of our lives, so that we may suffer from economic nationalism, political nationalism, literary nationalism or religious nationalism, or, indeed, from all of these combined and other forms of the disease as well. As is apt to be the case with diseases as virulently infectious as this one is, in its diffusion it even lays hold of those who have no desire to be its victims, but who are compelled to succumb to it because it has extended its control so widely that escape from it is impossible. When the fever is at its maximum such nationalism may assume, because of its intensity and the grasp it lays upon its victims, a quasi-religious character. Its votaries are to be found among all races, and their fervour finds ardent expression at the present time at once in some of the highly progressive countries of Europe and in countries of Asia with markedly different traditions. India provides a typical example of the powerful influence that it exercises and of the spiritual consequences that follow from it, and it is, accordingly, to the fruit that Indian nationalism bears that we shall direct our attention in this investigation.

Some may question the propriety of making use of the word religion to designate this particular attitude and influence. In our study, however, what we have been primarily concerning ourselves with is not so much what religion in its essence is as what issues from it. Viewed from that angle religion can be suitably defined as that which unifies a man's life and governs his outlook upon the world about him. Whatever it is that

does that for us is certainly accomplishing one of the central purposes of religion. It has adopted its prerogatives and is in fact discharging its characteristic functions. We can say without hesitation that in contemporary Germany and contemporary India in the case of very many—and these the most influential classes—nationalism more than any other single force is what governs their lives. In its scales life's values are weighed. It has become that which gives life its meaning and purpose and which strengthens the members of the nation to make sacrifices for it. Thus it comes about that for them the nation is clothed with the vesture of the Eternal, and, assuming a "numinous" quality, receives and, we may say, demands a religious devotion and performs the office in men's lives of a religion. It was when such an atmosphere had been created in Bengal that Bepin Chandra Pal could say of the popular deity Kali or Durga that she was a representation of the eternal spirit of the Indian race. Another Bengali leader, who is greatly venerated by his countrymen, Arabindo Ghose, made a similar pronouncement from the midst of the conflict of that period. "Nationalism," he said, "is a religion that comes from God. Nationalism cannot die because it is God who is working in Bengal. God cannot be killed. God cannot be sent to gaol."

Before proceeding further it is advisable that we should make clearer to ourselves what we mean by the word nationalism. A nation cannot be defined by the elements that constitute it. Its members need not belong to a single race, or speak one common language, or all profess the same religion. Sometimes, it is true, these unifying elements may enter into nationalism and

increase its coherence and strength. Thus Nazi Germany has been at pains to emphasise a real or imagined racial unity, and such a fanatical nationalist as Count Ludendorf is reported as declaring, in a defence of German nationalist policy, that "only that people can survive which declares its loyalty to racial principles." There must in any case be some possession or quality common to the members of the nation that draws them together into one, some common heritage from the past and some common hope or purpose for the future. The most diverse elements may be, and often have been, wrought by some such centripetal force into a close-knit unity. For this reason we may say that the determining influence in creating a nation is an element that is psychological. In the words of a distinguished student of psychology, what we encounter here is "a spiritual being; its existence is a mental or a spiritual fact, though it requires certain physical or biological conditions." [1]

The characteristics of a nation which we are endeavouring to emphasise may be brought into clearer relief if we distinguish it from the state. By a state is generally meant a nation so organised that it rules itself and guides its national destiny. The elements that go to the making of the nation are more imponderable than those which are required for the ordering of the life of the state. India, indeed, admirably illustrates the distinction we are making. It is a country which does not yet quite fulfil the definition of a state, but many people would not hesitate to affirm that it is already a nation. It certainly possesses physical and biological conditions which help in their measure

[1] W. MacDougall, *The American Nation*, p. 5.

towards nationhood—a population that have lived together for many centuries, that share in the main the same traditions, and that are separated off from the rest of the world by formidable barriers, the sea on one side and the tremendous boundary wall of the Himalayan mountains on the other. But among the characteristics that unify the inhabitants of this region the most important is their possession of certain spiritual attributes that, imponderable as they are, possess immense significance for the creation of a sense of national identity—common memories and common aspirations which draw them instinctively together and mark them off decisively from other nations.

This, then, is nationalism, a temper and outlook in the members of a nation or potential nation impelling them, as the sense of their unity in the possession of common traditions and of a community of sentiment draws them together, to seek to express this unity in forms of government to which they are ready to submit themselves. The strength of this temper and outlook will be the measure of the coherence together of the members of the nation. Religious differences need not, as many examples prove, prevent such singleness of sentiment and purpose as is required if they are to be made, and to remain, truly one. In the case of India it has to be recognised that one serious danger to the unity of the nation lies in the fact of the deep cleavage that separates the Hindu and the Muslim. A question that the future alone can answer is whether identity in race and, in large measure, in culture and tradition will prove stronger as forces holding the people together than the importance that the Muslim attaches to his religion and his religious ambitions will prove

as forces driving them apart into two hostile camps. It cannot be doubted that India will encounter here one of the most crucial tests of the power of nationalism over disruptive forces of another order. There are influences at the same time in the case of India that tend to strengthen and inflame nationalist ardour, and these have to be taken into account as well. Of these one that is specially significant arises from the fact that India is under foreign control, and so unable to choose freely her own course. Such a sense of constraint tends inevitably to increase nationalist enthusiasm till it attains the intensity of passion.[1] It should accordingly be of value to us in our study of the religions to examine some of both the good and the evil consequences that are issuing from the upsurgence of this spirit in the people of that land, especially if we consider these consequences in their effect upon religion and upon the influence and authority of religion.

In lands situated as India is at the present time any interest that is closely associated with the nation's life tends to become reckoned as sacred, and this is seen to be so especially when it is touched by the sacrilegious hands of the foreigner. Thus a few years ago someone asked a Chinese student, " What is the most living religious question in China to-day ? " The reply that was immediately given was, " The question of extra-territoriality." Such a cause as that in China, or swarāj (self-rule or independence) in India, a cause, that is, with which the country's honour seems bound up, awakens intense emotion and makes men and women

[1] Similar influences have been at work in Germany, creating its intense National Socialism.

in these lands willing to sacrifice everything for it. The quasi-religious ardour so aroused may be more powerful in its control and may possess more ideal content in the circumstances of these lands than when the European in Africa appeals to the privileges of "the white man's religion." In the latter instance it is a more personally selfish emotion that is aroused, but both are emotions of the same kind and quality. One may be better than the other, but neither issues a summons that is lofty or ennobling. Slogans such as "Rule Britannia," or—in India—"Bande Mātaram" ("Hail to the Mother") may be quite harmless and useful means to express national enthusiasm and to draw the members of the nation together, but we know that often they become expressions of national arrogance and cupidity, and suggest and create jealousy and hostility towards other nations. It is just when these feelings obtain control of the national mind, possessing it like a frenzy, that they usurp the place of religion, becoming, indeed, an inverted religion that bears poisonous and evil fruits. The nationalism that we have been describing is the fine emotion of patriotic loyalty inflamed with evil passion, flown with insolence, rattling its sabre at any imagined insult to its honour or interference with its rights.

What we see in the case of the violent and uncontrolled nationalisms that have arisen in so many lands both of the East and of the West in recent years is that they take to themselves in their arrogance the authority that belongs to God only, and claim the supreme lordship over men's lives. Such a nationalism has been transformed in large measure into a religion. If this is the situation that we find in India, it has arisen there in

large measure because this evil seed has been sown in other lands and India has seen in the world all around its harvest. We must admit than an Indian Christian was saying no more than the truth when he declared bitterly, a few years ago, that there were three great religions in India — Hinduism, Muhammadanism and Europeanism. It is the fact that that is so that goes far to explain, if not to justify, the passionate outburst of the new political leader, Jawaharlal Nehru—who has during the last few years been drawing to himself the hearts of young India—when he cried " Rebellion is my religion." We can understand and even sympathise with this mood, and we shall see in the facts that lie behind it how true is Dr A. D. Lindsay's description of nationalism as " one of the most powerful religions of the world to-day," while at the same time it is, as he goes on to say, " a very depraved form of polytheism." [1]

The evil consequences from nationalism, when it is elevated to such a position of divine authority, are open and manifest. They are apt to conceal from us the real benefits that the nationalist spirit, properly used, may well bring along with it. There is a danger lest we forget that, like the formation of the family, the formation of the larger aggregate of the nation is a natural and healthy consequence of the progress of the human race to higher levels of development. The family may form a selfish and predatory group, but that is not what it is meant to be nor what it ought to be. So also with the nation. Its members form a unity which holds together for their comfort and defence those who constitute it, and which at the same

[1] *The Essentials of Democracy*, p. 80.

time provides a training-ground for their service of the wider world of which they form a part.

An illustration of the need for such a narrow discipline if the wider lesson of world brotherhood is to be rightly learned, may be found in recent Indian experience. A generation ago the educated and enlightened leaders in Indian reform—men of vision and resolution, like Mahādev Govind Rānade, the great pioneer in reform at that time—were eager internationalists with a far-reaching world outlook. But during the last twenty years the vision that they had has faded, and this much narrower but more intense spirit has taken possession in its stead of the minds of those who occupy a similar position to theirs and exercise a similar influence. One of the most notable representatives of the earlier school of thought, Sir Rāmkrishna Bhāndarkar, was aware of this change that had come about, and expressed on one occasion the bewilderment it produced in him. "Why is it," he asked, "that no one now talks of internationalism as we used to do?" Perhaps the reason why the old internationalist ideal faded was that it had little reality in actual duty and experience accompanying it. Thus, we are told that seldom, if ever, were any of the outcastes to be seen at the religious services of the Prārthanā Samāj, the Theistic Church, which these high-caste leaders in reform attended, and where the lofty ideals of internationalism were held up before them. The theory had not yet been put to any real test in practice. To-day, however, the spirit of nationalism is binding together in a true fellowship the members, high and low alike, of the nation, and is awakening many of the higher-caste people, who have so long oppressed

these despised outcastes, to a vivid sense of the wrong that they have perpetrated. "Their shame and ours," says Mr Gandhi. It is the sense of kinship with them within the nation that has effected in his case, as in the case of many others besides him, this change of outlook and brought about this awakening. "Yes, they *are* my brethren," many would say now in India, as Thomas Carlyle said in his day in England, "hence this rage and sorrow." The earlier internationalism was ineffective because it was not rooted in the sense of the nation's kinship. Only, it would seem, when that narrower brotherhood has been made real in the sharing of common tasks and purposes and hopes, can the rightful place be found for the wider loyalties that all men owe to one another as members together of the human family.[1]

If we are to understand aright the passionate sentiment that nationalism has awakened in India, and to form a true judgment in regard to it, we must realise in this way the good elements that are mixed in it as well as those that are evil. If it awakens men and women from mental lethargy and moral inertia, then it has so far advanced them to be wise. It is certainly true, as we have seen, that the Hinduism that is so large a part of the heritage of the Indian people has the effect of an opiate drugging their energies, teaching them that life is unreal and that the moral relationships that should be reckoned among its supreme possessions

[1] Compare Professor Knut B. Westman's account (*International Review of Missions*, xxii., p. 550) of the aim of National Socialism in Germany: "In the vocabulary of national socialism there is a word *Volksgemeinschaft*, which is not easy to translate. It means something like 'inner unity of the nation'—a spirit of constructive citizenship wherein all individuals of all classes co-operate for the benefit of the beloved nation."

are only part of that illusion and therefore are unworthy of their effort. Their own best leaders are aware—apart altogether from political aims and ambitions—that if India is to have any future, her children must somehow recover energy and purpose; they must, they realise, get more iron into their blood. They have been already seeking this through a revivified Hinduism, but with little prospect of any rapid achievement of success. But now from a wholly different quarter what they desire is being realised beyond all expectation. The new wind of nationalism has swept down upon them, filling their sails, and threatening to become a tempest. It has come "shaking the torpor from their creed," making them (to continue the quotation) "prepared to die, that is, alive, at last." In this respect nationalism appears to be attaining for India at least one aim that is greatly needed and greatly desired. As a sin against national unity and national self-respect their treatment of the outcastes has been brought home to their bosoms through the quickening power of this new religion that not only is professed but actually moves and governs their emotions and their acts.

If nationalism accomplishes this aim in the case of the Hindu population, it will have gone far to justify the religious fervour which it has aroused. "The dream of Indian nationalism," one of the South Indian leaders has declared, "will be realised fully with the passing away of caste from our land." This particular leader, when he made that statement, had specially in mind a movement which was organised in that part of the country with a view to the recovery by the people of their self-respect. We have here a second consequence

from nationalism which is significant. It bids men stand up upon their feet, giving them a common cause to serve, of which they can be justly proud. It helps to deliver them from what Dr Rabindranath Tagore calls "the Sudra spirit," that is, the spirit that cringes. Dr Tagore traces this ignoble attitude to what he calls "the shibboleth of the Gītā"—a famous text[1] which reveals the temper and attitude upon which the caste system rests, appointing to each caste its proper station and duty, and discouraging any exploration of duty beyond that limit. The same South Indian rebels against tradition and against Brāhman domination have gone the length of expressing in a resolution their lack of confidence in Mr Gandhi because of "his undermining the sense of confidence and self-reliance in the people by his deliberate invocations of God in all his acts and utterances." They want, it is evident, beyond all else, a religion that will give them back their manhood, and that, they think, only the religion of nationalism can accomplish.

These are some of the excellent things that may be reckoned as products of the spirit of nationalism, but there are evils that more than balance the account. Like so many other things that we call good, those that have been named are good when used in the service of a good end, but, if not so used, may be far from good. They are good, too, in respect of what they affirm, but often evil in respect of what they deny or oppose. Energy is excellent, but to judge its quality we must

[1] *Bhagavadgītā*, XVIII. 47. The difference in their attitude to nationalism between Dr Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi is seen in the attitude of each to this text. Mr Gandhi, as quoted below, bases his *swadeshism* in religion upon this "wise saying" (see note on p. 130).

know how it is going to be employed. We have still to discover the character of the ideal which it serves and by which it is guided and controlled. An obvious limitation to the ideal in this case is, of course, that it is narrow and exclusive in its scope.

We cannot but be aware that there is in this "religion" a jealous and partial temper that inevitably blinds its devotee to many precious things that are outside of the national limits within which he confines his good. This is so, for example, in regard to Gandhi's "religion of swadeshi." "Swadeshi," he says, "is that spirit within us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote."[1] Applied to material things we have here a principle of self-sacrifice to which must be accorded the highest praise. The simplicity of Mr Gandhi's own life, brought down as near as may be to the level of the Indian peasant's, is an evidence of his deep sympathy with the poor and his desire to bear their burdens. But this rule cannot apply to spiritual gifts which are free for anyone to

[1] C. F. Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 120. In justice to Mr Gandhi, whose various utterances on this subject are not always easy to reconcile with each other, one or two other statements made by him should be quoted. Thus he says in another place of himself, "Believing as I do in the influence of heredity, and being born in a Hindu family, I have remained a Hindu. I should reject Hinduism if I found it inconsistent with my moral sense or my spiritual growth" (Andrews, *op. cit.*, p. 359). On another occasion he explains his position as follows: "The Gītā has very wisely said that the performance of one's own religious duty is preferable to the carrying out of the religious duty of others. This religious duty, which we call by the untranslatable word 'Dharma,' appears to me to include the environment wherein we are placed at birth by God. It connotes our seeking to live in harmony with those birth conditions and not rebelling against them or seeking to overpass their limitations, either for individualistic or selfish reasons" (*op. cit.*, p. 129).

take and, lacking which, our souls are impoverished. Applying his *swadeshi* rule Mr Gandhi says, "In the matter of religion I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion, that is, the use of my immediate surroundings in religion. If I find my religion defective I should serve it by purging it of defects." It is evident that in such a case nationalism may become a means by which the soul is starved and stunted. No one has any right to deny himself virtue or to deny himself truth. If even Mr Gandhi yields to this jealous impulse, as though religious truth, or indeed any truth, was confined within national boundaries and was one thing to one nation and another thing to another, then how much more is it likely to be the case that a nationalism that is held passionately by the ordinary man will make him blind and deaf to what is true and good for every man.

Nationalism, indeed, as is to be expected, goes much further in the case of many lesser men in India at the present time than it has gone in the case of one so fully controlled in his impulses by lofty aims as is Mahatma Gandhi; and in their case what is constantly happening is that their nationalism impels them to uphold that which is wrong and which they know to be wrong, for no higher reason than that it is part of their national tradition. Thus while it is true, as we have seen, that national feeling and the sense of common brotherhood in the nation's life is proving a powerful motive for the breaking down of caste barriers, at the same time, if caste is attacked from without by a foreigner, the instinct of nationalism is up in arms at once to defend it, even while it is realised that it represents an evil and an unjust order. Similarly we

frequently find men of high education and enlightenment joining in the primitive worship of a village idol, constrained to do so by their desire to have fellowship with their own people and to share with them the long tradition of their fathers' faith. This impulse that they yield to is not something to be viewed by us with a superior scorn, as though their civilisation had been only a veneer and they had " gone native," as we describe it. It is representative of a profound and universal hunger, the upsurgence in the form of nationalism of our need for one another. The individual, aware of himself as rootless and alone, must discover again and possess anew that fellowship without which our life is desolate.[1]

With this recognition of the serious moral dangers that may accompany a change of tradition we must feel the deepest sympathy. The process of exchange by which the spiritual environment in which a tribe or race has lived and by which its thoughts and purposes have been ordered for generations is replaced by one radically different must be a gradual one if moral catastrophe is to be avoided. " It is no part of your call, I assure you," Mr Gandhi said on one occasion to a company of Christian missionaries—and this probably represents his real mind on the subject of " proselytisation "—" to tear up the lives of the people of the East by the roots." [2] But a process of change that is sudden

[1] Compare Byron's account of himself, in exile and forlorn, at Missolonghi :

> The fire that on my bosom preys
> Is lone as some volcanic isle ;
> No torch is kindled at its blaze,
> A funeral pile.

[2] Andrews, *Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas*, p. 96.

and radical at the centre need not, and should not, work dangerous havoc upon the wider spiritual context in which the life of a people is lived. The problem of such a transformation is one that calls for all the wisdom that can be commanded, but that it may be solved without destruction of that which is precious in a people's heritage we must believe, if we hope for an ultimate human harmony which includes within itself, and transcends, those differences that have in them elements that are eternal. In order to preserve what is less than the best and what is merely " tribal " one must not refuse the best, like him of whom Shakespeare says that he " threw away the pearl, richer than all his tribe."

There are many ways, however, in which the desire of the members of the nation to stand together in the old paths and to share in the heritage of their long ancestry may, it is obvious, prove a hindrance in the way of reforms that are urgently needed. A single example may be cited of the manner in which this spirit operates in the case of nationalist India, poisoning the springs of progress, and thwarting the efforts of her own wisest sons. One of the chief evidences that Hinduism has carried along with it through the centuries a civilisation of a high order has always been found in its emphasis upon what is called *ahimsā*. This is a doctrine which—while the word literally understood simply means " non-killing "—has often been interpreted in modern times as enjoining love, and that not only to one's fellow-men but to the lower animals as well. In consequence, the Hindu religion has been in the main through many centuries deeply opposed to the sacrifice of animals. Mr Gandhi is

not by any means exceptional as a Hindu in the detestation that he expresses at the sight of the rivers of blood that flow at Kali Ghat in Calcutta, though he feels the evil and horror of it more deeply than most. Such a spectacle, we may claim, is altogether alien to the true spirit of Hinduism. And yet we are told that there has been in recent years a marked revival, even among the higher classes, of this practice of an older and a darker age. At Brāhman centres, both in South India and in Western India, such sacrifices are reported as being once more publicly offered and on a large scale. "It is," one Hindu journal writes, "an irony of circumstances that when the caste Hindus were planning an orgy of animal sacrifice in Ellore, the Harijans of the same place" (that is, the outcastes who more than any other class have clung to this barbarous practice) "were reported to have resolved to give up animal sacrifices." The motives behind this reversion to barbarism on the part of the higher classes are mainly those that nationalism supplies—a return to the religion of the ancient days and of the ignorant, on the one hand, and a desire on the other hand, by the eating of meat, to restore virility to the nation in a day when might matters more than right. "We must," says one of their religious leaders, "strengthen Hindu muscles," and how otherwise, they think, than by abandoning a principle which, they would have claimed yesterday, was central to their religion.

But the most serious count of all against nationalism, when it attains in men's eyes the dimensions of a religion, is that it is a non-moral power. It is amazing how much strength it reveals in those of whom it takes possession. We may have been inclined to despise

them before as timid, flaccid, apathetic creatures, possessing no virility. But let this passion awake in them and we see them throwing away their lives in reckless defiance, or dying inch by inch by hunger-strike, rather than yield to those whom they defy and hate. But we see this new strength at the service of a wholly unmoral deity. Neither Mother India, nor Britannia, nor any other national deity, scrutinises the moral quality of the offerings laid before her upon the altar. Murder is a consecrated rite when done in the service of those deities, and the assassin becomes a martyr in his country's sacred cause. The whole course of the national struggle in India throughout recent years has been perverting the moral instincts of the Indian people, Hindu, Muslim, Christian, making wrong seem right to them and falsehood truth. That is what so often happens in a struggle such as this which engages men's passions and fills their hearts with a devotion that says at once "odi atque amo," that is compounded both of love and hate. Young men and young women who are seeking, as youth should, for a cause that can fill their hearts are finding it here, and are doing battle with their fellows instead of doing battle, as they are meant to do, with the dark powers of evil that encircle us all and are our common foes. They are saying, in the words of one of them, "We must learn to kill and to kill scientifically." Out of such a situation as that issue many tragic histories. Who can draw aside the cloak that hides the flame that in many youthful bosoms burns inwardly, turning so much ardour to ashes and to bitterness? No one can contemplate without a deep sense of its tragedy the waste of what is so precious and what was meant

to be used for ends so different and so much more noble.

Thus to those in India who ask for bread of the spirit the nationalism of these harsh and cruel times offers a stone. Nor is this a consequence created by circumstance, but something that belongs to the essential nature of this religion. It can create the whirlwind but it cannot command it. It often, indeed, by its violence dethrones a rival religion—such as the theism of the Brahmo Samāj—that may be worthier in its ideal, but is less deeply felt. Many Indians whom it has swept away no doubt persuade themselves that they still hold the creed of Hinduism, just as many who suffer from a like malady in other lands persuade themselves that they are Christians. But its effect in India, in the case of many who come under its dominion, is to create in them an aversion to the religion of their fathers and, in consequence, to all religion. "Personally," Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru declares, "I have no faith in, or use for, the ways of magic and religion," and an ever-increasing number from the new generation are following him along the path that leads to secularism and anti-religion. They believe that it is Hinduism more than anything else that has brought them to their present condition of misery and degradation, and they cast away with violence not merely Hinduism but all of which for them it is representative. When they reach this goal of unbelief they find that nationalism, just because it inflames the spirit but neither cleanses it nor brings to it a higher guidance, is in full agreement with their new environment. It suffices for them for a time at least as a religion, unifying their lives and silencing those scruples that

paralyse and weaken. No moral compunctions need interfere with the adoption of the methods that nationalism prescribes and no lofty aspirations or wide vistas draw it aside from its narrow and essentially selfish aims.

The good is often, we are told, the enemy of the best. It is so certainly when it claims to be better than the best. If it were the case that Christianity must be described as a Jewish or Semitic product, just as the religion of German National Socialism is, or is said to be, "Aryo-German," then each of them is no more than an example of the polytheism of a warring and disordered universe. To rest in any such doctrine is to be content with a truncated truth and to do despite to the questing spirit of man. To the theist, and especially to the Christian theist, this is the sin against the Holy Ghost. It is to deny that ultimate conviction which has been created within him and which he dare not abandon, the faith that God holds him by the roots of his being. It would mean that ultimate restriction of our human life within "these two narrow words *hic jacet*," and the rejection of such symbols of the Infinite as are found in the moral imperative within us and the firmament above us. Nationalism may intoxicate; it cannot supply the bread by which men live.

We have recognised that this earthly religion applies a spur to the stagnancy of nature, creating self-respect and even strength for a limited sacrifice. But it cannot be denied that Christianity supplies a motive that effects this at a far higher level of purpose. Pride in the nation's flag may enable the patriot to refuse to

kowtow to an emperor; but faith in an Almighty Father sends men forth to face far harder ordeals. "Ye are bought with a price," wrote St Paul to the Christian slaves of Corinth—"be not ye the servants of men." "Here stand I," said Martin Luther at Worms to Charles V., "I cannot do otherwise." "There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland," said Andrew Melville to James I., "and in the one the king is no more than God's silly vassal." Those who said these things were such as received from the glimpse granted them of the most high God, not a reinforcement of their pride but a "given" strength that enabled them to be sacrificed and save. The religion that gives this to men gives them values that are supreme and eternal.

We may describe them as eternal values, for they are linked not with the period of the individual's, or even of the nation's life, but with an eternal God. The Kingdom of God is too often represented to our minds as a Utopia that we may dream of or a League of Nations that our political architects may fashion. Because we believe—"fallen of fallen" though we may be, as an Indian theist of the seventeenth century[1] describes us—that God has not wholly cast us off but still speaks within us, our dreams are not mere illusion and the poor fabrics of our Leagues have in them some breath of the Divine. But the Kingdom of God infinitely transcends all these, and when it comes it comes as the gift to us of God Himself. It is not the flowing together of mankind in brotherhood, though it will surely include that. It is a new creation by the Creator God, a new

[1] The Bhakti poet, Tukārām.

humanity of His making, "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond, nor free, but Christ is all, and in all."[1] That was St Paul's intuition of this transcendent reality.

[1] Colossians iii. 11.

VII

THE LIMITS OF SYNCRETISM

We have sought to range and classify the religions, and to distinguish them by their fruits. The thesis that has underlain all that has been said is that those religions that enrich life, that give it a moral meaning and exhibit as running through it a high purpose which is also a sustaining hope, are by these very facts proved to be more nearly related to the truth of things than are the religions of which these things cannot be affirmed. This we believe to be so because the religions of the latter sort, it would seem from our survey, send forth inevitably, as a consequence from the principles upon which they rest, and actually, as the evidence of their history demonstrates, a miasma of despair and death. It may, indeed, be maintained that these consequences, even if held proven, do not suffice to convince us that the religions are either true in the one case or false in the other. Truth may be bleak and benumbing and yet have to be accepted as true on grounds of reason alone, even though it brings desolation to our souls. Thus the comfortable theism that we cling to may all the time be a cheat. It may even appear to us to be a heroic thing that we should shut our ears to these beguiling voices and set our faces like a flint towards our fate. Such an attitude may indeed seem to be magnificent, but are the arguments which suggest it really in accordance with the demands of reason, a reason which includes within it the highest

intuitions that come to us? Are not beauty and love, the will that chooses the most ennobling good and that turns away resolutely from the evil that degrades, the glow that warms and illuminates the surrendered spirit—are not these realities that should have their weight also, along with the deductions of the understanding, in the scales of truth and untruth? If the eternal values—"the fruits of the Spirit," which are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control"[1]—are among the products of the one kind of religion, while only the wind-flowers of the intellect are the harvest of the other, then can we doubt which of these two contains within it the presence and the power of the living God? God is Himself the home of these eternally precious things, and in Him men live and move and have their being. Reason cannot deny that God, who is the source of reason, and, if it is blind to Him, even in its blindness it proclaims Him. The whole being of man cries out for this God of its life, and that cry, we are persuaded, has not remained unanswered. If reason, unassisted, cannot lead us into this realm of conviction, yet reason takes its place side by side with the deepest yearnings of the heart, with the imagination's dreams and hopes of beauty and of order, and with the necessities of a will that demands a Master, and all of these together present their demand for such a faith. They have, we believe, obtained a divine response. Our ultimate assurance rests upon faith, but it is a faith that is not hostile to reason but in agreement with its profoundest testimony.

We shall now turn aside from our endeavour to

[1] Galatians v. 22, 23.

demonstrate the supreme worth of the Christian religion as a power creative of good to give some consideration to the question of what place, if our argument be accepted, Christianity must take in relation to the other faiths. Must it stand solitary, apart from them, a system closed and complete, wholly unrelated to them except by contrast? Is that the claim that we must make on behalf of the Christian system, or is there a second solution of the problem that we may prefer? Should we not rather admit that it is only relatively excellent and that it does no more than, in association with other efforts of human striving, contribute its share, even if a large one, to what may emerge as a comprehensive, syncretistic faith? Or is there a third view of the place that Christianity holds, which may be found to be better grounded than either of these alternative views, that, namely, of a religion that is centrally and inalienably Christian, and yet, outside of these limits, is free to adjust itself to the environment of thought and life of one race or civilisation or another? If this is the position which, it appears to us, must be assigned to Christianity, as well as its right relationship to the world of life and thought in the midst of which it stands, then our next endeavour must be to distinguish at least some of those elements in the religion which appear to us to be centrally and inalienably Christian from the rest which belong to the outskirts and so may be modified or abandoned. It may be possible—though it will be far from easy—to distinguish that in it which is super-human, super-natural, eternal, from that in it which belongs to the human intellect and to human choices and preferences, and which, in consequence, may take varying forms and colours according to the

period in which it emerges or the nature of those who profess the religion. Christianity, as we have seen, is not a body of impersonal ideas, unrelated to the conditions and necessities of humanity. Its central clue is the Incarnation, its controlling *mantra* (if we may borrow a term from another religion) is, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In the words of Baron von Hügel, "God is the God of Nature as of Grace. He provides the meal as well as the yeast." [1] One consequence, if this be so, will be that it may be possible to discriminate in some measure between that which surges up from beneath and that which, descending from above, brings to humanity new power and new life. We may be able at least to make clear to ourselves the general lines of such a discrimination as we desire, and may be helped accordingly to assign to the world faiths alongside of Christianity their positions and their relationships, as great prophetic utterances of the human spirit.

When we proceed to examine those three conceptions of what Christianity is and of its relation to its religious rivals, the first of them may be set aside at once. No one of us can delimit the bounds of Christianity with such certainty as to say that all that lies within them is from God and therefore without qualification to be accepted as true. To do so would be to declare a creed that men had framed to be infallibly inspired. But the creeds are acknowledged, just because very fallible men framed them, to be fallible compositions. Are we, therefore, to accept the second choice that is open to us and conclude that Christianity is, or ought to be, a syncretistic product? Is it, perhaps, a stage on the

[1] Von Hügel, *The Mystical Element in Religion*, ii., p. 366.

way to an ideal Christianity which when it arrives will be the consequence of the fusion together of selected elements from the various religions that men have followed? This synthetic product may be described as a harmony by those who approve of it or as a concoction, "a patchwork mantle," by those who do not. However we designate it, if this is something deliberately fashioned, made up of a mosaic of such ideas as are accounted true or noble, it can hardly prove satisfying. The name syncretism itself, according at least to its supposed derivation, suggests a mixture, an artificial compound which, from the manner of its production is likely to lack the unity of an organism, a living whole, able both to grow itself and to be a source of life and growth to those who accept it. Whether this kind of patchwork is what Christianity has actually been in its history —as some would claim—and whether, therefore, it may justifiably be called a syncretism can hardly be fully investigated here. Our judgment in the matter will largely depend on the extent of the syncretism that is alleged, on the particular elements that are said to have entered into it, and on the manner in which they have come together.

A single example may, however, be referred to as indicating how Christianity in its historical development adjusted itself at one critical period to the influences that surrounded it. In the third century, Dean Inge tells us, "Christianity was developing rapidly into a syncretistic European religion, which deliberately challenged all the other religions of the Empire on their own ground and drove them from the field by offering all the best that they offered as

well as much that they could not give." [1] But if we are to form a judgment as to the extent of this Hellenisation and so as to whether Christianity was actually transformed into " a syncretistic religion," it is necessary that we should know what it was that Christianity offered which, as we are told, " the other religions could not give." Dr Inge, in fact, himself recognises that there were limits beyond which a religion, " whose roots were planted in Semitic soil," [2] could not go in accommodation. Dr Inge is of opinion that Neoplatonism " from the time of Augustine to the present day has always been at home in the Christian Church," [3] and yet we cannot but remember that it was in the Christian Church that Augustine found what made it a home in which his spirit could abide, while Neoplatonism was only a tarrying-place for a night. Not even Plotinus could enter the Christian Church without a surrender that he would not make and without acceptance of truths of which he was not convinced. Dr Inge is ready to admit that Christ demands a modification of Platonism which he calls " all-important." This does not suggest that the Christian religion, even at that early period, was a religion in the making, with all its gates open to the invader.

At the same time by the principle that it maintained all through its history of the kinship of the Creator with the creature, even if the creature be fallen, Christianity has remained always exposed to the peril of surrendering what cannot be surrendered seeing that it is part of its life or of admitting from without a deadly enemy. That was never a danger more real than it

[1] *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, i., p. 60.
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 66. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

is to-day. To some contemporary observers it seems that syncretism is not merely a distinctive characteristic of Christianity but that it is a main source of its strength and the explanation to a large extent of its survival. Probably that is the view, for example, of two students of religion, Mr E. E. Kellett and Sir S. Radhakrishnan, who have in recent publications so described Christianity. Nevertheless that there are limits to its hospitality to other religious ideas, even they would probably be quite ready to admit. It was not for the sake of political advantage, or from fear of the success of a rival that it opened its doors from time to time to other doctrines or cults. At periods when faith burned low it sometimes gave proof of its weakness by admitting within it alien and unworthy elements, but it can be claimed in general that it was never guilty for long of a betrayal of its central principles, and that it could always be trusted to utter an intolerant "No" to what was positively evil.

We are brought accordingly to the third conception suggested above of what Christianity is in its relation with the other religions and of the manner in which it bears itself towards them. It is unquestionably intolerant in certain of its relationships; its core, consisting of what is believed to be in a special sense given, remains ever immovable—there are in it things which cannot be shaken—but as regards things less essential, which belong to its circumference, change and accommodation are possible and are demanded. Von Hügel has illustrated its strength and its elasticity by a somewhat prosaic comparison of it to the Eiffel Tower, "so ethereal-looking and yet so strong," so "elastic

in its live resilience," and yet so steadfast among all storms. But we can most justly estimate the relation of these qualities to each other in its development if we glance at some of the periods in its history when the demand for accommodation with rival religions pressed most urgently upon it. One of these has already been referred to. Another—and one of the most critical of such periods—was when in the second and third centuries Gnosticism brought to bear upon it influences that could not be simply and peremptorily dismissed. The time had come when it was a necessity for the Church that it should "philosophise": in face of the Greek world it had to find and formulate a reason for the faith that was in it, and that Gnosticism seemed able to supply. Thus in regard to the Christian Gnostics Dr Burkitt tells us it is essential that we should recognise that they were "striving to set forth the living essence of their religion in a form uncontaminated by the Jewish envelope in which they had received it and expressed in terms more suited (as they might say) to the cosmogony and philosophy of their enlightened age." [1]

Why then, should Christianity have in the main rejected Gnosticism? The reasons which, in the face of so much that was tempting, as being likely to obtain for it a far wider range of influence, convinced the Church that it must refuse to pay the price that Gnosticism demanded may guide us in an attempt to distinguish the essential from the inessential in the Christian system. Professor H. M. Gwatkin has summed up the choice that the Church had to make and that it, with whatever hesitations, made in the end decisively. "The

[1] *Church and Gnosis*, p. 28.

contest," he says, "was vital. Gnosticism undermined Christian monotheism by its distinction of the Creator from the Supreme, Christian morals by its opposition of the philosopher to the unlearned, Christian practice by its separation of knowledge from action; and it cut away the very basis of the Gospel whenever it explained away its history. In every case it had got hold of truth on one side—the reality of evil in the world, the function of knowledge in religion, the difference between the letter and the spirit; but fragments of truth are not enough for a Gospel which is false if all truth is not summed up in Christ. Therefore there could be no peace between the Gnostic 'illuminati' and the Christian Churches."[1] To deny the reality of the temporal and the centrality to religion of the moral struggle is, as we have seen, to sever the arteries by which the very life-blood of Christianity flows, and whatever system, whether in the second century or the twentieth, maintains a position that has such consequences is placed thereby at once outside of all parley with the faith of Christ. Here Christianity must always be wholly uncompromising. By its attitude to Gnosticism it proved itself to be, as by its attitude to faiths that bear similar fruits to-day it must still prove itself, no syncretistic system. It yielded indeed in some directions to the temptation "to conciliate the natural man, but it had more in it," to quote Professor Moffatt, "than an indiscriminate selection or an anxious imitation, such as syncretism usually exhibited."[2] It had in it a vital force which enabled it to master and assimilate to itself many elements that came from without, but what was hostile in essence to

[1] *Early Church History*, ii., pp. 68 f. [2] *ERE.*, vi., p. 157.

its central spirit and was directed towards contradictory ends it resisted instinctively and instantly. Between it and Gnosticism, therefore, there could be no alliance.

It was for similar reasons that Christianity, while deeply influenced both for good and for evil by Neoplatonism, refused, as we have already noted, to come to terms of accommodation with it also. We have already referred to St Augustine's testimony from his own experience to what this noble philosophy lacked. While by Neoplatonism he was deeply and permanently influenced, he has described in a famous passage the intractable discord of which he was aware between the view of God and the world that he abandoned when he became a Christian and that which replaced it. He did not find in the one the revelation of the Word made flesh, the coming together of the divine and the human with all the consequences of inward moral cleansing and of unquenchable hope that that conveyed; he found these things at the centre of the other.[1] In the battle between Christianity and the rival claimants of that day for dominion over the soul of man the Cross was "horos," we are told,[2] the boundary line separating Christianity decisively from all such doctrines as those of the Gnostics and the Neoplatonists; and it is so still, because it was planted,

[1] *Confessions*, vii., p. 19.

[2] "The old Gnostics called the Cross 'Horos,' the Boundary or Dividing Line. The Gnostics were a peculiar people, but they were right here. On this side of the Cross all history is, or ought to be, a different thing to what it is on the other, and everyone who carries the Cross, in so far as he carries it, is a better citizen, a better philosopher, and a better man than he would be otherwise" (C. Bigg, *The Church's Task under the Roman Empire*, p. xv.). For whatever reason, they recognised the Cross as central. See Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, pp. 46 f.

with all the significance it bears, in a world of reality, and testified to, and symbolised, a moral conflict and a moral victory. The truth of the Incarnation "does not seem," according to Dr Inge, "to be incompatible with the ground-principles of Neoplatonism."[1] Dr Inge writes as a disciple of Plotinus and interprets his teaching in a spirit which seeks for the Christian possibilities in it, but it is difficult to see how some of the doctrines that he finds there can be reconciled with a conviction that the Word was made flesh, or how, if "the doctrine of reality as a kingdom of values is not explicit in Plotinus,"[2] his teaching is in harmony with a message that finds in Christ crucified the power and the wisdom of God.

What is significant here, as defining the limits within which alone syncretism is admissible as a method for Christianity to use is the insight which discerned those central things that bear within them the truth and the power of the religion and which therefore refused to make any terms or admit any compromise. As regards this vital core of its message Christianity is quite intransigent. It says, "Stand thou on that side, for on this am I." The two ways between which choice has to be made are, on the one hand, that of "seeking the eternal by a higher possession of the evanescent,"[3] which is the Christian way, and, on the other, that of seeking it by escape from the evanescent, by the way, that is, of negation, which leads to apathy and moral stagnation. St Augustine had his mystical hours, as at Ostia with his mother, Monica, when it seemed to him that they reached together in ecstasy

[1] *ERE.*, ix., p. 319. [2] *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, ii., p. 20.
[3] Oman, *The Natural and the Supernatural*, p. 404.

the realm of "the Wisdom, by whom all things are made," "in Whom 'to have been' and 'to be hereafter' are not, but only 'to be' for She is eternal." That is not the way by which Christ leads his children into the joy of their Lord. It is not the way that Augustine in another hour of illumination was aware of when he heard him whose word is, "Come unto Me all ye that labour." Instead of the "impassable roads" of which he was aware, leading through the bleak, timeless regions of Neoplatonic ecstasy, it is now possible for him "to keep on the way to the country of peace, guarded by the Court of the heavenly King."[1] While it is true that St Augustine sometimes —under the influence of his conviction of an overwhelmingly transcendent God—seems to forget the Father and "strikes a chill as contact might with a being from another planet,"[2] and while lesser teachers than he have erred in one direction or another through the centuries, leading the Church into the errors that a syncretistic accommodation or a onesided emphasis upon a partial truth may produce, yet in the main the course that Christianity has followed in the midst of the other religions has been by the road—straight as a rule can make it—that leads through the incarnation of the eternal Son towards the establishment of the Kingdom of God. "By this sign," says Harnack, "it conquered; for on all human things, on what was eternal and on what was transient alike, Christianity had set the Cross."[3]

The significance of the contrast that we find demarcating so rigorously the bounds of Christianity in

[1] *Confessions*, vii., p. 21. [2] Edwyn Bevan, *Christianity*, p. 100.
[3] *Expansion of Christianity*, ii., p. 468.

distinction from its early rivals, and excluding any attempt at syncretism within them, is confirmed still further when we consider the prevailing religious tendencies that divide the world at the present time into two hostile camps between which a choice has to be made, and, indeed, a choice not dissimilar to that which was made then. An alert and objective observer of religious movements who has been already quoted concludes his survey of the religions with a diagnosis of the modern situation as he sees it. On the one hand are those who in one sense or another can call themselves Christians, "on the other hand there seems," he says, "to be an increasing number of persons who have been led by natural and acquired sympathy to adopt in some form one of the Eastern religions."[1] Archbishop Söderblom has drawn a similar line of distinction between the religious influences that he notes as widely dominant over men's minds at the present time. "On one side timeless mysticism; on the other the historical, the very fact, the saving fact."[2] The decay of the Roman Empire has been described as the West expiring in the embrace of the East. That would seem, in the opinion of some observers, to be a danger that is threatening the West to-day also. It is not, however, in reality a conflict between points of the compass, but between two markedly different and wholly irreconcilable views, divided from each other by a cleft which reaches to the furthest depths of our being. Whether these views can meet and blend in any syncretism or whether such a peaceful solution of this spiritual conflict is beyond attainment may perhaps be tested in the

[1] E. F. Kellett, *A Short Study of Religions*, p. 567.
[2] *The Living God*, p. 348.

circumstances of to-day by attempts that have recently been made by leaders of Indian religious thought to build a bridge between these two sharply opposed solutions of the riddle of the universe.

India, as we have already noted, has evolved a philosophy which is the most fully elaborated form of "timeless mysticism" that has anywhere obtained control over men's lives. Much of it is built upon foundations of human thought that have crumbled with the ages. The old doctrine is accordingly to-day little more than a majestic ruin. Yet certain of its main principles remain and can be reconstructed into a system that appears reasonable, that wins respect, and that is in agreement with tendencies that are widely prevalent in the thought of the modern world. They may indeed be reconstructed into a philosophico-religious system such as may attract men of all lands, a system reaching forth beyond responsibility, beyond freedom and beyond God. What may emerge if these efforts prove successful, is something that can be described in the words of one of the Western evangelists of a closely similar doctrine as "religious wisdom transposed into the key of a pure and complete naturalism." [1]

There are outstanding personalities in India at the present time who are seeking to find their way towards such a syncretism as might come to terms with the Christian religion. They would create a new Hinduism which shall still be the inheritor of the ancient Hindu tradition, but shall share with Christianity some of the spiritual fruits which it is more naturally fitted to bring forth. Thus both Dr Rabindranath Tagore and Sir S.

[1] Middleton Murry, *God*, p. 291.

Radhakrishnan, the most outstanding representatives of the demand for the re-making of the old tradition, desire to graft a more vigorous activity in behalf of good upon that gnarled stem, re-interpreting Advaita, for example, as " the love, the oneness with All and with God." [1] Similarly Sir S. Radhakrishnan is certainly striking a new and a greatly needed note in Hinduism when he issues this summons: " Let us become soldiers on the march, soldiers of truth, soldiers fighting with love as our weapons, overturning the universe until the reign of God is established on earth." [2]

It may be doubted, however, whether these brave efforts will find a response within Hinduism, so long as these eclectics halt half-way in their reconstruction of their people's faith. It is obvious that they reject the traditional doctrine of māyā ; a world of unreality can never be a world worth fighting for. But while māyā is no longer understood by them as illusion, but only as " mystery," [3] the Absolute or Brahman (whichever name he may bear) remains as completely out of relation with the world as he was before. It would appear, accordingly, as if the moral struggle was either, as the old Advaita tradition taught, an unreality, or that it was at best a struggle that led to no moral victory. There seems also to be still no reason why the Absolute should create and there seems no bond possible between him and created things or beings. For that reason Sir S. Radhakrishnan, in the manner of the early system-makers of his land has to have recourse to two Beings—a higher and a lower—one who is the Absolute and the

[1] Rabindranath Tagore, *Letters to a Friend*, p. 71.
[2] *East and West in Religion*, p. 125.
[3] Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 344.

other who is God, a human creation, "the Absolute from the human end."[1] Even Plotinus does not escape this ambiguous solution of a problem that, as he and his Hindu parallels approach it, seems insoluble.[2] There are those who in the West to-day also are betaking themselves to this method of bringing the Absolute and the world together. It is a method that can hardly satisfy the demands of the mind and its consequence must be, as it is in the case of these modernisers of the old doctrine, the resubmergence of all phenomenal existence, "God" included, in māyā, and the re-emergence of the sole-existent and quality-less Brahman. "As an essentially human phenomenon," says Sir S. Radhakrishnan, "religion insists on the 'otherness' of God."[3] "Religion" demands this, but reason, it would seem, demands something else. Religion can hardly retain its reality and its power over the souls of men if it is "essentially human," and so, it is evident, essentially illusion.

The inescapable conflict between two types of principle reappears here once more. With the return of māyā the hollowness of the whole process of reconciliation is revealed, and the course that must commend itself to those who are caught in this tangle of unreality will continue to be, as it has been in the past, that, not, in spite of Sir S. Radhakrishnan's brave summons, of soldiers fighting for the reign of God on earth, but of fugitives from life itself. Once more we perceive that, just as the great truth of the Word made flesh which Christianity proclaims can be incorporated

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 344.
[2] See Inge, *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, ii., p. 115.
[3] Radhakrishnan, *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 340.

in Neoplatonism only if Neoplatonism can be reconstituted, God and the Absolute being made one and time and history accepted as fully real—so also is it in the case of Hinduism as over against Christianity. These represent two contradictories that cannot be syncretised. Is there any Reality that is higher than love; any entity that is beyond existence or that includes in a "mystic" oneness both good and ill? Which of the two is dealing with ultimate Reality—Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane saying, "Abba, Father," or the Hindu ascetic of whom it is told that in the "Mutiny" days he turned his dying eyes upon the British soldier who had bayoneted him, saying, "And thou, too, art He"? Is the ultimate unity a unity of filial love and obedience or a unity of absorption? There is no reconciliation possible between these two conceptions of life and its meaning and end.

Sir S. Radhakrishnan is to be honoured for his serious and resolute attempt to act as liaison officer—as Mr Joad calls him—between East and West, bringing together what he accounts best in each. But so long as he rejects what is the keystone of the Christian arch his bridge will not bear mankind to any realm of eternal values. Our choice has still to be between an account of the universe which is aware, as Jesus was, of a gracious and transcendent Will behind it and above it, to whom he could say, "Father," and that which knows only, without as within, an "Urging Immanence,"[1] a moving tide upon which the human soul floats, calm indeed, but inert. The good and the evil effects upon character of the latter, which is the Hindu

[1] Thomas Hardy, *The Dynasts*, p. 518.

outlook upon life, may be indicated as serenity on the one hand and indifference on the other; or, again, as patience and the capacity for endurance on the one hand and feebleness of effort and moral inertia on the other. The serenity and patience that are the finest fruits of Hinduism are, indeed, beautiful and gracious qualities. At the same time there are, we perceive, two kinds of serenity, one, that of a strong, steadfast dependence upon a divine will of love and holiness, the other, that which proceeds from an indifference to all things because they have no significance in their context and no worthy goal to which they point, and, in consequence, are undeserving of our concern. There are two kinds of patience, one, that of faith in the overcoming power of goodness and of God, the patience, in which, as Christ says, we win our souls [1]; the other, the patience that looks round wearily, but with a forced resignation, upon a world that has no moral purpose and no moral end. The first of these two alternatives is that which the Christian seeks, the second is that of the Hindu. Between the two and dividing them from each other lies a whole moral universe.

Thus we stand with Christianity in a region that is above syncretism, a region of immovable things which, being correspondent with reality, cannot be adjusted or compromised. Hinduism at the same time, and Buddhism—as well as every genuine human discipline —have valuable subsidiary elements which they contribute to the making of the human garment into which Christianity is woven, to the envelope of human experience which the Christian revelation takes possession of and which it does not in so doing destroy

[1] Luke xxi. 19 (R.V.).

but re-create, giving it a new splendour. What in the second century was being sought through the conflict with Gnosticism was, as Professor Burkitt points out, the transference of the Gospel from a Semitic environment "into the cultivated, scientific, philosophical civilisation of the Græco-Roman world."[1] The same task has to be undertaken again and again as Christianity enters into new environments. Thus at the present time as it makes for itself a place in India or in China, it has to exchange many of the temporary and local fashions of Europeanism for those of Asia which make it more intelligible there and acclimatise it to its surroundings. The treasure is one and inviolable, but the earthen vessel that contains it may have the shape and the colour of its time and of the environment to which it has to be adjusted, and may well by such means offer its own contribution of beauty and seriousness to that which it bears within it. But the transcending power belongs to the Creator God.

What the "desirable things" are that each nation and each religion brings with it from its inheritance cannot be estimated by a stranger. This, however, can be laid down without challenge as the test to be applied —can Christ have his place among them? We have seen how his presence in a onesided development of Christianity that leans too far, perhaps, towards transcendence or towards immanence, often restores the balance and corrects the error. So also we have to make use of this infallible criterion that by its means we may distinguish what in the heritage of a people is precious and worthy to endure. In India, for example, there may be, and indeed must be, some lesson of value

[1] *Church and Gnosis*, p. viii.

to be learned even from the social structure of the caste system. That, as it is to-day, it is at variance with the whole spirit of Christ, and his message cannot for a moment be questioned, and yet in its history and in the idea it embodies we can perceive elements of preciousness—as Sir S. Radhakrishnan would maintain —elements which may yet be recovered and consecrated, and these should not be lost. In Buddhism, as we have already noted,[1] Baron von Hügel sees one great negative good which it proclaims with power. From being, he says, "penetrated with a sense of mere change and hence of pure desolation," it proclaims to the world the sense of the Abiding so deeply implanted in man and so "is quite magnificent as a prolegomenon to all religion."[2] Such a prolegomenon all natural religions, in so far as they represent a real striving, must furnish in some respect to the divine revelation which comes forth to meet them. The religion of the Old Testament, with an equal depth of experience, strikes a similar note to that of Buddhism, but without the Buddhist's agonising hopelessness. It shares with Buddhism at the same time another conviction that that religion seems to owe to its Founder, and that gives it, even when it turns away from God, a place of special eminence. This is Buddha's realisation, in spite of the hostile heritage which he accepted from his people's past, of the moral significance of human life. He knew the will to be the charioteer of the soul, even while he denied the soul. Hence it comes about that, as Professor Pratt bears witness, "the qualities of mercy, sympathy, fellow-feeling" lie deep in Buddhism, so deep, he goes on "that even in the most degenerate

[1] See p. 116 above.

[2] *Selected Letters*, p. 364.

Buddhist monasteries of to-day the scent of this choice rose still hangs around the broken vase." [1]

Thus one part of the Christian missionary's task to-day is to discover and appreciate the "spiritual values" that lie within the non-Christian religions, and that must not be lost. These should live on, not as elements in a new syncretistic faith, which will include and transcend Christianity, but as foreshadowings and therefore confirmations of the truth of the historic revelation, that have been planted by the Divine Spirit within that humanity that was created in the image of God and that its rebellion and its fall have not wholly effaced. Such "bridge-building" must go on, seeing that men of all races and all times are children of God in whose hearts linger echoes of His love. It was this conviction, and no abandonment of belief in the unique eminence of the Christian revelation, that inspired such a missionary as J. N. Farquhar, and many others like him, in recent times in their sympathetic study of the ancient Indian systems. Two examples of this altogether commendable syncretism may be cited from among a multitude. A French Jesuit missionary, Father Johanns, has sought to demonstrate how, "if we eliminate the atheistic and pantheistic elements," the Visishtadvaita doctrine of Ramanuja and the Advaita of Sankara give us between them "a theism that is not far from being correct." [2] The qualifications of this statement are far-reaching, but the researches that these two great Hindu system-builders have so resolutely pursued in different directions combine undoubtedly to predict the true way by which God can discover Himself to men

[1] *The Pilgrimage of Buddhism*, p. 38.
[2] *Vers le Christ par le Vedanta*, p. 37.

and by which He has discovered Himself. Similarly Dr A. G. Hogg, in his *Redemption from this World* (pp. 245 ff.) has drawn an interesting parallel between Advaita Vedanta and Jewish apocalyptic as—each in a manner suitable to the mind of one or the other of two very different races—agreeing in their "condemnation of the existing system of experience in its entirety as being only imperfectly divine," and as "seeking under a similar spiritual influence a similar satisfaction." The spiritual discipline and the spiritual experience that were obtained in all resolute and serious explorations of the unknown and in the adjustment of life to the conclusions, however imperfect they may be, that were reached by means of them, form a precious possession for the race or the people to whom these things have come as a heritage from the past. Such precious elements as these must not perish. These things belong, however, to the penumbra around that central illumination. Christianity must be finally intransigent because it has within it something which cannot be modified or adjusted, which time cannot wither.

VIII

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE RELIGIONS

We have now considered the chief world religions in some of the main respects in which they differ from each other as well as in the fruit that they bear and by which their value can be judged. We have also glanced at the influence that historically the religions that are generally designated as Oriental have exercised when they have journeyed beyond their borders and invaded the lands of the West. In the survey that we have made it has been inevitable that comparisons have been instituted and judgments pronounced. This has been especially the case when we have proceeded to consider the limits within which alone the Christian religion is at liberty to admit modifications or accessions from the teaching and experience of the other faiths. All these considerations have been bringing us inevitably to the question of the relation of Christianity, as the bearer of a missionary message, to the other world faiths and of the attitude that as such it must adopt towards them. If it be the case that the values it has in its power to produce are higher than those towards which the other religions are directed, then what conclusion follows from that fact? Is its eminence sufficient to justify a claim that it should displace its rivals in their authority over men's lives, or should it only claim to live among them and to be willing to let them live likewise? We are bound to

proceed to a further consideration of the rights and duties that the religions—and specially Christianity, since it is only on its behalf that we have any right to speak—possess in their relation to one another, and to examine in particular the authority of the Christian religion as a missionary religion.

The question as to what the ultimate authority for truth is, is one that cannot be examined here. Lord Balfour in his *Foundations of Belief* contrasts authority and reason, claiming that the former stands for a group of non-rational causes, moral, social, and educational. We shall take for granted rather that what we rest ourselves upon as our authoritative guide in the spiritual world is a whole in which reason and conscience, along with many allies, have their appointed part and form a harmony. When Jesus was asked by what authority He fulfilled His vocation, His answer was directed to probe the moral insight of those who challenged Him. A just estimate of the value of the message of John the Baptist could issue only from the spiritual discernment of awakened personalities. Such a discernment is the criterion which is placed at the disposal of each one of us that by its wise use we may prove and try all spiritual claims.

We are called at the present time to such a discrimination. "By what authority?" we, too, are asked. It is required of us that we be convinced of the supreme excellence of our message if we are to call upon men, brought up in the fellowship of other faiths, to prefer that which has been committed to us. It is true that the authority that was sufficient for the greatest of those who have gone before us on this road from St Paul on, the authority of the divine call in the soul,

the authority of our "marching orders," still has its right over us. There is none higher, the testimony of the word of God speaking to us within. The Logos of God is Christ and he is the Lord of the conscience. No one can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Spirit, and it is, we believe, by that power constraining us that we have submitted ourselves thus to him. But we must proceed further and ask, "In what sense is Jesus Lord?" Is it no more than that he is the highest we know or have experienced; or have we a right to go beyond that and say that there is no higher than he possible? Can we say that his authority is final?

The difficulty of answering that question lies in the fact that for us to speak of finality is to speak of what is beyond our compass. We can recognise God and worship Him, but we cannot delimit His boundaries or the boundaries of His truth. There is a saying that is often quoted, "Finitum non capax infiniti": a saying that is, perhaps, somewhat ambiguous in its meaning. It is, of course, true in the sense at least that we cannot contain, and thus go beyond, the Infinite. So when Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God" what his cry meant is what a human cry in such a Presence must mean. It meant, "Here is One who outgoes me so overwhelmingly that I can only surrender myself wholly to him and worship him. Here is One to whom I can trust myself for time and for eternity." That means the finality of Jesus for each one who so discovers him, and we may claim that that means for the universal man. He is adequate to all human contingencies and needs.

Our right to go as far as to make that claim will

probably be questioned by many. In making it we may be reaching out beyond the logical understanding. We have certainly no natural right in ourselves to advance further. In order that we may do so we shall require a reason "out of nature." Thus it comes about that faith can venture a leap beyond the bounds of reason and can say, "I know him whom I have believed and I am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day—and against every possible day." Christ then ceases to be treated simply as an object of reasoning and becomes an experience of inward conviction. This is an affirmation of faith made because of our confidence in God and made to God. At the same time it must not be held to imply a judgment upon other religions, which must be examined by themselves and must stand or fall by what they bring to men as their message of God and duty.

But if this be a true account of what Christ is to the Christian, we cannot pause here; other questions demand answer. We are compelled to the wider inquiry. We must ask, What, on the principle of this conviction as to Christ's Lordship over us, is the relation of his Gospel to the other gospels that men believe? Can I say without further question that no one stands beside him, that every one else whom men revere is, by the nature of things, on a lower plane? We cannot say that until we have reviewed what he and they represent, what he and they signify in the divine order. There are, indeed, at least three alternative answers which are possible for us to that question. We have to see which of the three is the true answer in the light of what Christ is in our

experience, and of what that implies as to God and man and their relationships to each other.

First, then, are we to say that we are just one company among many human companies that are seeking to help each other in a common darkness, all of us coming up together out of the night, with Christ leading us, while Buddha and Muhammad lead other companies? Is that how we are to range ourselves and others? Or, to take the second alternative, are we to claim that the only light in the whole dim world has shone on us and on none besides us, so that we have a right and duty to go to these benighted ones with a gift that is wholly strange to them, a gift of One who is wholly Other than all the best that they have ever thought or hoped? Are we to go to men with that tremendous responsibility, as those who are thrust forth by that tremendous urgency? Or, again, is there a third answer possible, this, namely, that Christ is indeed the true Light, Light of Light eternal, while all of us, children of men, have had kindled within us—just because we are children of men—flickering candles, smoking flax, lit all alike at the first by the divine Hand, but now poor, dim, guttering lamps that can only shine again if they are kindled anew, if they can have their oil replenished from the Source?

If we are to choose from among these answers which is the right one, we can only do so justly and with authority, as has already been suggested, if we test the religions—our own as well as the others—by what they tell us God is and what they tell us man is and what is the relation to each other of God and man. We have no right to answer the question of how we

are to deal as Christian messengers with the other messages unless we have some insight into these matters, and especially into what God is as the religions reveal Him, for from what He, the ultimate Reality, is, all else proceeds.

We have already been considering some of the questions to which an answer must be given before the relation of Christianity to the other religions can be determined finally. We have found what seemed to us to be good reasons why we may claim that the Christian message as to God and man and their relation to each other has a value and a power that give the Christian religion a pre-eminent position among them all. As a theism it has a moral value and effectiveness which no non-theistic religion can lay claim to, or indeed aims at attaining. We have also seen reason to maintain with confidence that in Christ Jesus we have at the centre of the religion a power which gives Christianity an unchallenged eminence among the theistic faiths. Further investigation and comparison along these lines may still be required. It may, however, be worth while at this point to turn aside to examine two specific attitudes that have been adopted by influential groups in reference to the missionary authority of Christianity and to consider whether either of them satisfies us. Each states concretely a position which is powerfully supported to-day and deserves careful study. We may thus be enabled to clear our minds in regard to the whole problem and to discern in more definite outline the traditional claim that Christianity has made through the centuries. Of the two views that we shall consider the one is, perhaps, to the right and the other to the left of the central tradition of the Church throughout

its history. If that is so our examination of them may make it easier for us to discover the middle road which leads us to the truth.

The first of the two points of view which we shall consider is one which approximates to the second of the modes of relating Christianity to the other faiths which have already been stated. It is that which has been proclaimed with much power and effect in recent years by Karl Barth in Germany. We shall begin with an account of what appears to be his attitude specifically to this question of the relation of Christianity to the non-Christian religions.

In an address given some years ago[1] and directed primarily and specifically towards some modern movements in the West which may be described as "religions," but referring also to the old historic, non-Christian faiths, he declares emphatically that to Christianity these religions can be nothing but foes, nor can Christianity be anything else to them. He goes on, "Does Christendom know how near to her lies the temptation, by a slight betrayal of her proper business, to escape such an imminent conflict with these alien religions? Does she know that this must not happen? We can only ask, Does she know that under no circumstances must she howl with the wolves?" Again he says, "Three years ago we had the experience of seeing an International Missionary Conference assembled in Jerusalem bothering their heads for a whole week, not so much about what the Gospel means as about the 'values' of the non-Christian religions!" "Such bridge-building," he

[1] Translated (as a "Lutterworth Paper") under the title "Questions to Christendom." It was apparently delivered in 1928.

goes on, " must be abandoned without reserve. Christendom should advance right into the midst of these 'religions,' whatever their names may be, and, let come what will, deliver her message of the one God and of His compassion for men forlorn, without yielding by a hairbreadth to their 'dæmons.' " " Dare and can Christendom's reply to these religions be anything other than simply the missionary campaign, which tells men what God has revealed and what therefore they are obliged to hear for God has revealed it?" " If the Church hears the word of God, then she has a mission, that is to say, a sending. Then she has to say what men must hear. She need not be silent then; in fact she dare not. Then she can give 'offence,' for she must."

No one can listen, it seems to me, to such words as these without being stirred as by a trumpet. This prophet is saying things that we realise that we were waiting for, things that too long had been unuttered. It is true that he has primarily in mind " religions " like Communism and Fascism and what he calls Americanism (that is, I suppose, Humanism)—religions, that is, that have come into existence expressly as enemies of Christianity. These are foes in a sense in which it can hardly be said that the historical, ethnic religions are foes, and perhaps we should not take all that he says as applicable without qualification to them.

In another address[1] delivered in 1932 at Berlin at a missionary conference Barth had certainly before him the foreign missionary problem, and he addresses

[1] The quotations that follow are taken from a French publication, *Le Monde Non-Chrêtien*, issued in December 1932, by *Foi et Vie*. Dr Barth's article is entitled " La Theologie et la Mission â l'heure presente."

himself directly to it and to the very questions that we are considering here. He emphasises the audacity of the missionary enterprise of the Church. "It ventures a leap at the point where all reasonable people would recommend the building of a bridge and where in the judgment of all clever people its task is simply impossible." "As a missionary message," he says, "the missionary message is not a recommencement but a commencement. It is proclaimed in the void, hoping against all hope. In preaching this good news one must not parley but simply announce. One must not count upon the development of elements already present, but upon creation out of nothing. One does not proclaim healing to the sick but resurrection to those who are dead."

That is a trumpet which certainly gives no uncertain sound. There is no mistaking what Karl Barth means here, whether we can accept its absoluteness or not. The authority of the missionary message is nothing human; it needs no human ally or human vindication. It is a word of God which men have only to hear and obey. To Barth it appears that what he calls the "Anglo-American" missionary method takes far too easy and optimistic a view of human nature, and has far too superficial a conception of "the Gospel of the Kingdom of God." The message of the Jerusalem Meeting and what he calls Anglo-Saxon faith in progress are just, in his opinion, variations upon "the ancient and seductive melody of the serpent, 'Grace does not destroy nature, it perfects it.'" The missionary, he holds, must not add to his Christian preaching "the doctrine of a point of contact, of a natural revelation preceding the Revelation." There is no continuity

between God and man, and so the missionary will proclaim the divine grace "as a miracle, not as a bridge that one builds, not as a sublimation of nature."

He concludes this missionary address with a reference to a charge made against the Dialectic Theology, that it is paralysing missions. "We accept that reproach," he goes on, recalling the fact "that there was a Biblical personage who had to be paralysed and to consent to be so, that so he might learn obedience and receive the name of Israel." He evidently conceives that it is his business to lead the Church and the missionary enterprise through a similar experience in order that it may achieve a greater success than it has yet achieved.

We have given these views of Barth so fully in the belief that they should have a cathartic power upon us, bringing us back to a viewpoint which is central, and which we have been in danger of neglecting for points of view that are lower and less commanding in their range. We have here a conception of God's place which is exalted and exalting, and which is exalting because it is so humbling. We may be helped to see what Barth is doing for us if we have before us three statements in regard to his predecessor and inspirer, Kierkegaard, who was still more intransigent than he. Kierkegaard had a deep mistrust of the Hegelian philosophy, which tried to iron out all the contradictions of thought and reconcile them—even the contradiction of good and evil. This pantheism or Absolutism has infected the minds of many and is powerful still. Its formula of "both-and," says Kierkegaard, must be replaced by "either-or." Again, he holds that "it is a chief wonder in Christianity

that the Holy One seeks fellowship with the guilty," and that "the person of the God-man, in whom the Eternal comes among us, is paradox pure and simple." Again, "Conversion means that God has broken all continuity in man's life and called into being what is in fact a new personality." "There can be little doubt," says Professor H. R. Mackintosh, "that Kierkegaard's paradoxes were insisted on with a clear, didactic intention of stirring up an age of flat and craven rationalism."

That, indeed, is what Karl Barth is doing also. He is calling us back to the reality of God, God who is not an idea of ours or a subjective experience that we have had, but who is a supreme Other than we, over against us in His infinity and in His grace. What Barth offers us, Professor Mackintosh says, is "the theology of a great volcanic soul that had trembled at the Word of God, bowing before that objective revelation which is as much above our jurisdiction as the stars in the sky. He is compelling us afresh, as believers, to put aside all mere immanentism, to face sin and death, and to listen to God speaking." It must be good for us all, it certainly is needful for us all, to be constrained to face anew these facts. If we do so we shall not be made less zealous in our calling as missionaries but much more so. At the same time we cannot go all the way that he goes. No one can believe with Kierkegaard that conversion is the calling into being of a new personality, but that is a view to which Barth seems to approximate. There is present in a new birth the creative power of God—of that Creator God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness—but that does not mean that the image

of God in man has been wholly obliterated by the Fall. "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation."[1] The consequence from this great alliance we believe in, the recreation it brings, the infusion of new power from God. But to believe that this means the obliteration of all that was before and that was from God would be to believe that man can have no consciousness within him even of his need of God. Dr Barth suggests that those who disagree with him in this matter are semi-Pelagians. Would he call Pascal, whom Sainte Beuve describes as "the least pantheistic spirit that can be conceived," a semi-Pelagian? And yet Pascal represents God as saying to man, "Thou wouldst not seek Me if thou hadst not already found Me."

We are told that on this point Dr Brunner, one of Barth's ablest disciples, has separated himself from his teacher, and indeed there are signs that may indicate that Barth himself is modifying his extreme position.[2] The danger of Barth's position is that it may lead to quietism and inaction, and that is why many in Germany have feared that his influence might paralyse missions. There is, however, no evidence of any such apathy or

[1] 2 Corinthians v. 17 (R.V. margin).

[2] Compare, for example, the following sentences in his commentary on Romans iii. 22: "The faithfulness of God is the divine patience according to which He provides at sundry times and at many divers points in human history occasions and possibilities and witnesses of the knowledge of His righteousness. Jesus of Nazareth is the point at which it can be seen that all the other points form one line of supreme significance. He is the point at which is perceived the crimson thread which runs through all history. . . . Consequently in spite of all our inadequacy we are able to recognise the veritable possibility of the action of God in all His divers witnesses in history. . . . By the knowledge of Jesus Christ all human waiting is guaranteed, authorised, and established" —*Romans* (English Translation, p. 96).

akedia in him himself. Nor is there any evidence of an inclination to withdraw from the world as wholly evil and, indeed, unreal, such as a doctrine of extreme transcendence might be expected to produce in natures less filled than his with the recreative power of the divine Spirit.

I shall quote as embodying what is precious and what we must make our own in Barth's teaching on this subject some sentences from a careful statement by one of Barth's ablest followers, Dr Visser 't Hooft. "To evangelise," he says, "means to announce the reign of God. It says, 'God is and you are His.' Evangelism is not bringing oneself, not 'sharing' of experiences, but always pointing to something or to someone else." That is a statement of a truth that is central to Christianity and of primary significance for the Christian missionary. Also it is a truth that is not only Barthian, but Pauline. "We are ambassadors in behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us."[1] That is, we are not to parley, but to deliver a divine message which has the authority of God behind it. It may be of interest to have before us as endorsing this attitude another testimony, that of the Chairman of the American Laymen's Commission, Dr Hocking of Harvard. In one of his books, published some years earlier than the appearance of that Commission's Report, he says, "The function of religion is not to prove God, but to announce God. For this reason its doctrine is stated as dogma; and the fundamental dogma of religion is *Ecce Deus*, Behold, *this* is God."[2]

To return to Dr Visser 't Hooft, he proceeds with

[1] 2 Corinthians v. 21 (R.V.).

[2] *Human Nature and its Re-making*, p. 403.

his exposition as follows: "Evangelism is not to take our start from a 'point of contact' but from God's call. But how can we hope to be understood unless there is something in men that we can appeal to, that is, a point of contact?" He then enumerates some of the points of contact that are commonly recognised by us, such as reason. "The trouble," he goes on, "with all these points of contact is this, that they succeed in giving the impression that God exists for men, instead of men for God. God in calling us does not so much answer our old questions, but asks us new questions. The Gospel is not true *because* it fits our need, but our needs are true needs if they fit in with the Gospel.

"There is, therefore, no ready-made theory of a general point of contact. There is no clever human strategy which will produce infallible results. In real evangelism God speaks a new word which puts man before new questions. . . . It is true because it is God's word. Man is not the starting-point but the goal of the Gospel."

This is what all Christian missionaries and evangelists have need to be reminded of by Karl Barth lest they have been forgetting it. There is danger lest we should put our trust in strategy, lest we should forget that this is the work of God and not of man; that man's wisdom, even as man's folly, man's search for God and man's failure to find Him, only provide the opportunity that God may of His grace make use of for the demonstration of His creative power. God's generosity and His power can never be measured by man's need or even by man's sense of his sinfulness. Baron von Hügel had, perhaps more than any one in recent times, a

clear sense of the divine relationship to us as at once, and chiefly, that of a transcendent Being, but as also that of one who is at the same time immanent in us, and he has admirably expressed what Dr Visser 't Hooft is emphasising. " Christianity never can, never ought to, satisfy just simply what men of this or that particular race desire, that and nothing else; Christianity is extant chiefly to make us grow, and not simply to suit us with clothes fitting exactly to the growth already attained by us." That is God the Creator making man what He would have him be.

The danger of this great and greatly needed message of Karl Barth is not only that in others than himself it might induce apathy and accidie, but that it tends to represent the world and its concerns as illusions, as being the veil that conceals God instead of being a medium by which He reveals Himself. Certainly no words are strong enough to represent the poverty and hopelessness of fallen sinful man apart from God; but he is never wholly apart from God. " This poor little shelter of reeds," says von Hügel, " with the Absolute ever burning down upon it; this poor little paper boat on the sea of the Infinite. . . . God took, as it were, sides with His own handiwork against Himself and gave us the rampart of His tender, strong humanity. . . . The creature is not the Creator, either in quantity or quality; it is not a little god: and yet, though it is indefinitely lesser, the Creator respects its inferior and different nature." He gives us in nature, even in fallen nature, " religion's materials " and the means to its " divinely intended tensions." [1]

Thus in spite of Karl Barth's warnings we may,

[1] *Selected Letters*, p. 93.

and must, go on building bridges, which are yet at the same time not our building but God's, bridges which this God of creation and of redemption may in His great grace make use of, drawing near to men and making Himself known to their narrow minds, coming down from His Absoluteness and Transcendence, and renewing for Hindu and Buddhist and Animist the miracle of His incarnation.

But now we must turn from our attempt to survey the limits that we are to observe in one direction to consider what the limits are in another. God, the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, is not the Alone, the wholly Other; but neither is He the wholly ours. We cannot say to one another, "Thou art That." We can only say that if God is not given to us, but is of our own fashioning, our subjective projection, our highest ideal, and Christ the leader of our company of dreamers, while Buddha leads another and Muhammad and Zoroaster others still. If this is what God is, then bridge-building should be our main occupation, for in the pooling of our resources is our best and highest hope.

It would not be fair to give that as an accurate account of the attitude of the authors of the Report published by a commission of American laymen called *Re-thinking Missions*, but it would not be unfair to say that they lean decidely in that direction. For that reason they seem to consider the task of the missionary to be rather to pool his religion along with the other religions than to announce it as a word of God. "Perhaps the chief hope," they say, "for an important deepening of self-knowledge on the part of Christendom is by way of a more thoroughgoing sharing of

its life with the life of the Orient. . . . The relation between religions must take increasingly hereafter the form of a common search for truth" (pp. 46, 47). They want "co-operative religious enquiry through give and take" (p. 47). "Hence all fences and private properties in truth are futile; the final truth, whatever it may be, is the New Testament of every existing faith" (p. 44). That means, it would appear, that Christianity as well as Hinduism and Buddhism are the Old Testaments of a truth, as yet undiscovered, which men are in process of finding or fashioning.

All this, it is obvious, is a matter of human search, by the method, as we are told, of self-knowledge, not of revelation (though, perhaps, they would deny the opposition between these two). The foundation on which this emerging truth is to be built is "the inalienable religious intuition of the human soul." "The God of this intuition is the true God; to this extent universal religion has not to be established, it exists" (p. 37). It is obvious how different the spirit that inspires this view of the missionary task and duty is from that which we found to inspire the message of Karl Barth. To him "man in the service of God is a poor thing who has not discovered God and never will discover Him, but can only wait all the time for God to disclose Himself to him." There is a danger there, as we have seen, lest this should lead one to be content to sit with folded hands and stagnant minds waiting for God to act. But is there not at least as great a danger from this other attitude? There is no doubt that it also, as the American laymen frankly admit, "tends to lessen the apparent need, and certainly the insistent urgency of haste, of the work of the foreign

preacher and philanthropist." "The Westerner," to quote an American comment, "is in danger of being robbed of that stoutness of heart and finality of conviction that are the indispensable equipment of the conqueror and the propagandist alike."

But that, after all, is not a valid reason for rejecting any account of the missionary motive and of the missionary method, if the account be rightly based. Can that be said of this statement of the case? Not surely on the premisses of Christianity. Christianity is not, and surely never has been, a view to which men have climbed, even under the leadership of Christ. It is a Revelation of which he is the centre. That, we claim, is what we begin with in our religion and cannot dispense with. Christianity is not an ideal which others have partially attained, but a continuous disclosure of Himself by God through a long process which reaches its climax in the Incarnation. Let us turn to the account of the Christian message as given by the Jerusalem Meeting for which Karl Barth has so much scorn. "The Gospel is not our discovery or achievement; it rests on what we recognise as an act of God." "Our message is Jesus Christ. . . . Jesus Christ, in his life and through his death and resurrection, has disclosed to us the Father, the Supreme Reality, as almighty Love, reconciling the world to Himself by the Cross." It is not necessary to set out here the whole of this notable statement. Love is "the final reality of the universe," the Absolute Value, and God in Jesus Christ is that. There we have what, as it appears to the Christian, cannot be transcended. If God in Christ is the Absolute Value manifested, then there can never be any Newer Testament than

that which has come to us through him. It may be that love is an illusion; it may be that the gulfs will wash us down. Our universe rests upon faith, faith in God, the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If these are Christian convictions, axioms of the Christian's faith, they scarcely appear to be compatible with the view of the Christian motive and the Christian message that the authors of *Re-thinking Missions* present. But, further, the Christian believes in man as, though fallen and sinful, yet not abandoned by God, who holds him still by the roots of his being. He is in helpless bondage, indeed, unable of himself to turn to God, but God has never left him to himself. It is not the ancient melody of the serpent to believe that the grace of God is present even in fallen men. "God is not only inalienably immanent in man by virtue of the first creation; He is also redemptively active in man through Christ."[1] The Cross of Christ makes any easy optimism in regard to human sin impossible, but it also assures us that beneath and beyond even that evil thing stretches the love of God. A lady once said to the Christian scholar and saint, Rabbi Duncan, "The more I see of myself, I see nothing so properly mine as my sin." He replied, "Well, you do not see deep enough. There is something far more properly yours than your sin; and your sin is improperly yours. It is a blot in your being, which, if you do not get rid of it, will never cease to be unnatural to you. No; the image of God is more properly yours, though you had no share in the production of it."[2]

In that fact we find our authorisation for bridge-

[1] D. Mackenzie in *ERE.*, xii., p. 164.
[2] Quoted in *ERE.*, xii., 163.

building. "We rejoice to think," says the Jerusalem Report,[1] "that just because in Jesus Christ the light that lighteneth every man shone forth in its full splendour, we find rays of that same light where he is unknown or even rejected." "We recognise as part of the one truth that sense of the majesty of God and the consequent reverence in worship which are conspicuous in Islam; the deep sympathy for the world's sorrow and unselfish search for the way of escape which are at the heart of Buddhism; the desire for contact with ultimate reality conceived as spiritual which is prominent in Hinduism; the belief in a moral order in the universe and consequent insistence on moral conduct which are inculcated by Confucianism; the disinterested pursuit of truth and of human welfare which are often found in those who stand for secular civilisation but do not accept Christ as their Lord and Saviour." Surely to say these things is not to utter dangerous heresies but what is in accordance with a truth but for which man would be an outcast from the mercy of God. Does not Karl Barth say much the same thing when he says in his *Romans*, "Redemption and resurrection, the invisibility of God, and a new order, constitute the meaning of every religion"? The possibility of the bridge that God has built for us in Christ Jesus rests upon the fact that there is that living meaning, still present, not wholly dead, in every child of humanity, however fallen.

There is a single sentence in this fine statement on the Christian message, which was issued from Jerusalem, in regard to which there may be legitimate

[1] The Report of the Jerusalem Meeting of the International Missionary Council, 1928.

hesitation in some minds. "We call on the followers of the non-Christian religions to co-operate with us against all the evils of secularism." There is a certain ambiguity in this invitation which awakens a doubt similar to that which has been felt by some in regard to an attempt which has been made in India to bring the adherents of the different religions together in an endeavour in common fellowship and meditation to draw near to God. If it is a sincere and simple desire to seek and to maintain the highest things that are in the hearts of those who come together, then it is well that they should do so. But the risk in both cases is that what has attracted some at least of those who co-operate is a lower impulse. If those who have come together—whether they are Christians or non-Christians—have come in the hope of gaining support against secularism for the championship of what is in reality a selfish cause, then the motive behind this co-operation is nothing better than a common hostility. The Laymen's Report has described quite fairly and impartially (though it does not agree with them) the point of view of some Christians who hestitate to ally themselves with Hinduism and Islam against the common foe of all religion. "If in the Orient," the Report says, "the word 'religion' to the coming generation is to mean Hinduism or Buddhism, perhaps the whole affair will be relegated to the dust-heap; perhaps this is precisely what is happening. In that case the hope would be that Christianity, instead of tying itself to the sinking hulks, would hold itself clear and give a distinctive version of what religion in its purity may mean." There certainly is substance in that argument, and the example of what happened in

Russia when what religion stands for was interpreted through the corruptions of a degenerate Eastern Christianity that had become the champion of an evil social order, must be a warning to us. In a recent discussion among Christians and non-Christians in India on the subject of the teaching of religion in schools and colleges one young Hindu professor said that he regarded atheism not as an evil, but as a necessary step in passing from superstition to true religion. There are perils in all bridge-building, and the engineers must seek ever for wisdom lest they build amiss.

Perhaps our examination of these widely divergent attitudes held by two Christian groups, of which one may be described as holding a very strongly transcendent, and the other a onesidedly immanent view of God, may help us to set our feet upon that *via media* between these extremes which once more we discover to be the way of truth, the way that brings us to the living God and even makes it possible for us to be made partakers with Him in His great redemptive work.

IX

THE FINAL CLEAVAGE IN THE RELIGIONS

DR ALBERT SCHWEITZER, in the course of his first lecture in the second series of his Gifford Lectures on "The Problem of Natural Theology and Natural Ethics," is reported[1] as making the statement that "the two great problems of modern philosophy are world and life affirmation and ethics." These are truths, in his view, that are so necessary to us that we cannot abandon them without abandoning our spiritual being. It is not our aim here to examine these problems and to discover their solution. What we have been seeking to do, however, has been, accepting the conviction to which our own nature and our experience irresistibly impel us, that our life is bound up with the reality of these things, to make use of them as tests by means of which we may assay the religions, separating the precious metal in them from the alloy. The eminence of Christianity among the world faiths we view as being in large measure due to its clear affirmation of the reality of the world, and of the infinite significance of human life, as also to its immense ethical seriousness. We have seen how, measured by this rule, the religions divide themselves into two widely contrasted groups. We have seen also that this differentiation shows us Christianity and the other theistic faiths ranged on one side, while

[1] In the *Scotsman* newspaper. The lectures were being delivered at the time when this was written.

over against them stand those which may be designated as Oriental seeing that typical examples of them are philosophic Hinduism or the Vedanta and Islam, each in its different fashion producing similar spiritual fruits. These are the broad lines of our discrimination and we have sought to illustrate the divergence that we are emphasising by noting the consequences in the creation of power and in purpose directed to high ends, that appear in the case of one group, and the consequences in a loss of spiritual vitality, a despair of human progress, a static or anarchic civilisation that appear in the case of the other group. This latter outlook we have sometimes described as Oriental because its theory has been elaborated more fully in the East than in the West and its consequences are written more obviously in the long history of Oriental civilisations than, as yet, in that of the civilisations of the West. There are indications, however, emerging ever more widely, making it plain that the consequences of indifference and despair that have shown themselves in lands like India and China may equally be exhibited in Europe and America as well if similar influences are brought to bear upon the peoples of these continents. Secularism and materialism and pantheism have long been operative forces controlling the lives of large numbers of people in the West no less than elsewhere, but they have hardly, until recent times, been deliberately adopted as formulated creeds by which they shape their conduct because they believe them to provide a final interpretation of their universe. That has been the case, in effect, in Eastern lands. Only when this is so and when the lights by which men had more or less instinctively guided themselves have

been extinguished, do they become aware that they have been walking in the dark, and, in consequence, fall into despair of life.

When we view these two religious groups in the contrast of their most typical representatives it is not difficult to mark their divergence or even to form a convinced judgment as to the causes within them that give rise to spiritual effects so opposite in character and value. The religions of the one sort are so constituted as to produce in those who follow them an enrichment of life; the others bring about its impoverishment. The very fact which has been noted already in our investigation that there are no rigid lines determining the boundaries of such a religion as Christianity, that, while it contains a divine revelation, no one can lay down with authority that here the human ends and the divine begins; that very fact is significant of this type of religion, for it aims specifically at the education of man's spiritual nature. It requires of him that he exercise his powers of spiritual discernment, distinguishing between the false and the true, disciplining his nature under divine guidance for the recognition of truth. In these ways the spiritual growth which is man's distinctive mark is fostered.

> 'Tis life of which our veins are scant,—
> More life and fuller,—that we want.

Just here we discover the key-note of the one kind of religion. The religions of this order are vanward and eager, ever reaching onward and upward. The others have to be described as religions of death and immobility. For them the springs of life are poisoned.

It is easy to make these affirmations, but less easy to demonstrate their truth. Perhaps one way of doing so is to point to the evidence of mystical experience. The various kinds of mysticism show us the nearest approach that has been made by these two religious types to each other. In the pantheism that lies behind so many forms of mysticism we have something that relates them to the static, immobile religious type, while when the mysticism is centrally Christian then, in spite of all hostile influences, it remains dynamic, creative of new life. Both kinds—and indeed all religions—seek peace, but there are two kinds of peace. The difference that lies here has been clearly enunciated by the great Christian mystic of the fourteenth century, Tauler. He speaks of "two types of love that are as like as two hairs of the head; but in their inward meaning they are wholly alien." The one kind among the lovers of God desire a peace that is reached by "emptying oneself of imaginations and impulses." "Let a man," he goes on, "but separate himself from all contingencies and from all works and there will come over him in this state of emptiness a peace which is very great, lovely and agreeable and which is in itself no sin since it is part of our human nature. But when it is taken for a veritable possessing of God or unity with God, then it is a sin; for it is in reality nothing else than a state of thorough passivity and apathy untouched by the power from on high, which a man can attain without special grace of God. It is a purely negative state from which (if we in arrogance call it divine) nothing follows but blindness, failure of understanding, and a

disinclination to be governed by the rules of ordinary righteousness." [1]

We have here a distinction made with much insight by one who was fully aware of the danger that threatens this type of religion. On the one hand what is "a purely negative state," "a state of thorough passivity and apathy," and on the other hand an experience which a man cannot attain "without special grace of God"—the one a "part of our human nature," the other a "veritable possessing of God or unity with God." In this contrast we are shown the opposite effects from the two types of religion, due to a controlling immanentism in the one case and to the transcendent and vitalising grace of the living God on the other. William Blake was a mystic of a very different type from Tauler, but both are in agreement as to their sense of "the temptations on the right hand and on the left" to which Blake knew himself to be exposed. His tempter was Urizen, "the maker of dead laws and blind negations." Urizen's is the road which in all lands and in all ages has attracted the mystic's steps, a road which leads "down among the dead men." Blake was poignantly aware of this peril and struggled to avoid it. "I labour," he says, "incessantly: I accomplish but one-half of what I intend, because my abstract folly hurries me often away when I am at work, carrying me away over mountains and valleys which are not real, into a land of abstraction where spectres of the dead wander. This I endeavour to prevent; I with my whole might chain myself to the world of duty and reality." "Who can

[1] This passage is quoted by Professor Hocking in *The Meaning of God and Human Experience*, p. 576.

describe," he concludes, " the dismal horrors of such a state."

" The land of abstraction where the spectres of the dead wander " is the land which is frozen into immobility by the deliberate pantheism of the philosopher or by the unconscious immanentism of so many of the mystics. The throb and activity of life are gone, for the living God and His grace are no longer recognised. There is not, in the words of von Hügel, " that all-important oscillation of the religious pendulum . . . that material for the soul to mould and in moulding to develop itself, that alternate expiration and inspiration upon which the soul's mysterious death-in-life and life-in-death so continuously depends." [1]

Von Hügel was in full sympathy with a mysticism that was centrally Christian, but he was quick to recognise the deep gulf that separates a mystical religion, however intense in its fervour, which leaves the earth to lose itself in such a realm of abstraction as Blake describes from one which, as Dom Cuthbert Butler claims to be true of " Western Mysticism," is " an experience " which " finds its working expression, not in intellectual speculation, but in prayer." [2]

Thus we find within mystical religion, even when it is called Christian, the same cleavage that we have found to divide the religions of the world. According to Dom Butler the main channel through which what we have named Oriental conceptions invaded Christianity was the writings of the pseudo-Dionysius. This " mysterious personage," he says, " is now recognised as a Christian Neoplatonist, probably Syrian,

[1] *Mystical Element in Religion*, ii., p. 337.
[2] *Western Mysticism*, pp. 188, 189.

of the early sixth century, especially indebted to the Neoplatonist Proclus." He distinguishes Augustine, Gregory the Great, and Bernard as Christian mystics of the pre-Dionysian type, while Eckhart, for example, is one of a number of later mystics "whose experiences in contemplation have been coloured by the philosophical and theological theories of Dionysius." [1] We have seen how deep this dye was in the case of Eckhart.[2] Similar influences, whether they have had their origin independently in Western minds or can be traced back to a source far off in the East, are continually making their appearance within Christianity and affecting its character in such ways as have already been noted. Within the Christian system as without, wherever influences are present that so diminish the value of the world and human life as to prevent them from becoming what, rightly used, they should be, means by which the spirit lives and grows, there such infiltrations are at work, sapping the effectiveness of the Christian faith and frustrating its purposes. Like the Neoplationists and the Gnostics and the Hindus, new and old, there are still to-day those who, in the interest of metaphysics, separate between God and the world and, as a result, deprive religion of God. The object that religion seeks is not the unification of all things in the One, but the coming together in worship of the spirit of man and the Infinite Divine Spirit, so that separation is overcome and the prodigal is once more in the Father's house. The end of religion is not to see all things as one or all things as many; that is something that the intellect seeks by a lonely journey. Religion seeks to overcome disunity by another and a higher

[1] *Western Mysticism*, pp. 180, 181. [2] See pp. 58 f. above.

road, reconciling hostile wills, to the end that the good Will shall "take to Himself His great power and reign." If the Absolute and the world of men are set wholly apart then the one is reality and the other unreality, and there is nothing that has any significance for us beneath the visiting moon. If on the other hand man is his own star, identical with God (if indeed God is to be brought into the matter at all) then—if not at once then presently—the same emptying of man's world inevitably ensues. "The Renaissance," writes a wise Russian, "began with the affirmation of man's creative individuality; it has ended with its denial. Man without God is no longer man." [1] Again, if we choose the solution of equating God and the world, then we have here a unity or an alternative —*Deus sive natura*—within which, as in the case of the Absolute alongside of a world of unreality, there can be no change and so no improvement, no growth in good or decline to evil. It is obvious that this place is no "vale of soul-making," it is a valley in "the star of the god Rephan." [2] "Freedom and purpose"—to quote Professor Sorley—"disappear together and we must either falsify experience by saying that the existing world is perfect, or confess that the so-called moral order has not a valid place in reality." [3] Thus all these solutions by their onesidedness bring us to

[1] N. Berdyaev, *The End of our Time*, p. 54.

[2] No want—whatever should be is now;
No growth—that's change and change comes—how
To royalty born with crown on brow?
Nothing begins—so needs to end;
Where fell it short at first? Extend
Only the same, no change can mend!
(Robert Browning, *Rephan.*)

[3] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 402.

the same conclusion of impotence and despair, and bar out religion in any sense in which we understand the word. As Dr Inge says, "One cannot worship the *a* privative."[1] Nor will a phantom of unreality be willing for long to engage in a phantom worship; any more than a man, however real he believes himself to be, will bow for long before an idol of his own mind's making. And yet deep in our nature persists invincibly the sense that our spirits are not orphans in the universe, but somewhere we can find our Father and our Home.

Within these phases and fashions of Christianity we find repeated with greater or less emphasis that contrast, which we have found already present among the world religions, of two religious types each of which is in sharp opposition to the other, but each showing blurred outlines that make it difficult to say of them, "This is true Christianity and that is false." If we may dare to say that Christianity was created for the end of glorifying God by the re-creation of sinful men in the image of God, then we can say also that it seeks to secure the intercourse of personalities in freedom, for only so are men thus re-created. "The soul," says Dr Inge in his exposition of Plotinus, "lives in the consciousness of purpose."[2] By the intercourse of men with one another and their adjustment of their personalities to each other they grow as moral beings, but only if they, in that intercourse, are guided by the purpose of God, in whose will, therefore, is their peace. If pantheistic modes of thought, coming upon the scene, have frozen into rigidity the conception of

[1] *The Philosophy of Plotinus*, ii., p. 115.
[2] *Op. cit.*, i., p. 252.

God or of the life of man, then, so far forth, the invading pantheism is depriving that religion of its power to promote the growth of spirits. This power of spiritual growth is not something that comes by nature.

> It is not growing like a tree
> In bulk that makes man better be.

What does this is growth by struggle, by the overcoming of evil, for evil has entrenched itself within man's will, and the succour of God is needed for its expulsion. These, Christianity affirms, are facts of man's life and it sees—or has had its eyes opened to see—God guiding and controlling all this anarchy of evil along the way of His will towards the creation of His children. Everything that blurs the discernment of the human mind and heart, frustrating its choice of the good and acknowledgment of the true, is hostile to the fulfilment of the divine end. And nothing has entered into the constitution of the universe that thwarts that end except sin and the fruits of sin. How sin has come we cannot clearly understand, but we know that it is not there by the divine choice, and all else is framed and ordered for the overcoming of that enemy within man's soul and for his remaking as his divine Father would have His son to be.

Christianity seeks these ends, and whatever has been brought into Christianity in opposition to these ends has betrayed it. They are ends that cannot be achieved by men without God's help—His redemption, His grace, His coming in His creative power. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness"—the Creator Spirit—"hath shined in our hearts to give

the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ."[1] In that sentence lies the sum of the Christian faith as St Paul experienced it and proclaimed it. How we are to distinguish the divine in this process from the human and whether there is anything in man—except evil—that he does not owe to God, are questions that are beyond the scope of our discussion here. We see dimly, which is all that human seeing can ever be, that certain things in us are human and feeble and blind, and in the case of other things we are aware, at times at least, that God is there, that His voice speaks to us in them, that His power is given to us through them.

It has been suggested, for example, that there are two kinds of love, one from beneath and the other from above. The one, we may say, is ἔρως and the other ἀγάπη. Of the deep distinction that these two words suggest in their general significance no one can have a moment's doubt, but can we demarcate their territories, and say that here the one ends and the other begins, that just this is man's and that is God's?

Thus Karl Barth says of the love, the ἀγάπη, of the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, "Where it is, man is known of God, and God Himself enters as the positive element, the truth in knowledge. . . . *Cogitor, ergo sum*, 'I am thought of, therefore I am,' it may mean then."[2] This love is thus from God, but has it community or kinship with the human ἔρως? Is not the *via maxime vialis*, "the most excellent way," a way on which God Himself has become a pilgrim, and so, by His footprints on it, made it indeed *maxime*

[1] Corinthians iv. 6.

[2] *The Resurrection of the Dead* (English translation), p. 49.

vialis? We have rejoiced already in the prophetic power and insight of Karl Barth's statement of the Christian message and its majesty: "Thou dost not bear the tidings, but it bears thee; it does not need thee but thou needest it; here thou hast no right to enforce, but here right is enforced against thee."[1] These are splendid facts of the Christian faith, that by our insolence in setting ourselves by the side of the transcendent One we were forgetting. But at the same time human love with all its error and its stains is of the same stuff, and ultimately derives from the same source as the divine love. The Otherness of God does indeed show our love to be a poor helpless thing, but it does not make it māyā. He does not quench the smoking flax.

We can indeed say of this divine love that for it the Cross is *horos*, "the boundary line," and understand by that, that we have in the Cross a standard by which all natural and human love is tested. We know that the divine love is revealed in the Cross and all love—if it were even Siva drinking of the poison to save mankind—that is of the same stuff as that and so that passes its test, is in its measure divine likewise. But beyond that we cannot go in judgment. Our part is to be unwearied in seeking to learn from the Source of all love what love may be. In Æschylus's *Choēphorœ* one of the choruses has this striking and beautiful passage, as translated by Professor Gilbert Murray:

> O may the desire of God be indeed of God!
> Is it not strong in the chase?
> On all roads with dark issue a burning rod,
> It guides man's mortal race.

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

If the desire of God is not "of God," then whence has it come? Thus through all the religions and all the aspirations of men we can discern the guiding hand of God. "The desire of God," the intuition not only of *cogitor* but of *amor*, not only "I am known of God" but "I am loved by Him," that God has implanted in His children in all ages, is the sound of the footfall of Him following, strong, indeed, in the chase of His wayward and far-wandered children. We cannot, therefore, say of any religion that it has no eternal values within it or that it alone possesses divine revelation. By the help of reason and our conscience we are to prove and weigh all things in the religions and so, learning more and discerning more truly, to grow. This "burning rod" is held up before us by God Himself, and to the end of time we shall have to go on using the human compass with which He has equipped us, that we may find our way, but never ceasing to correct that compass by the stars and by the sun that He of His grace has caused to arise and shine upon us.

The fact that God's hand reaches forth so far, still holding men—fallen as they are—by the roots of their being, may be said to be proved by their own witness. Jalaluddin Rumi, the Sūfi mystic of the thirteenth century, bears this testimony and we have no right to reject it. God says to him,

> That calling "Allah" of thine was my "here am I,"
> And that pain and longing and ardour of thine my messenger.[1]

So also it is Ahura's revelation that makes Zarathustra a prophet. There is no reason why we should refuse

[1] Whinfield, *Masnavi*, p. 192.

to accept these testimonies any more than we reject that of Amos or Isaiah. And so we cannot say that the religions are to be divided into one religion in which God speaks and all the others where there is only "subjective knowing," "a series of broken beginnings, apparently talking into the void."[1] We are drawn irresistibly to the conclusion, on the one hand, that there is a divine revelation, a divine and absolute truth laid up with God and manifested by Him in His infinite mercy to men; and on the other hand, that to distinguish that message that comes from the realm of values from human opinion, from the guess of a worm in the dust, we are to make use of our reason and our conscience, as these have been enlightened and disciplined by the central divine manifestation which we find in Christ Jesus. For he is himself the *Via maxime vialis*, the straight road for our feet.

> I'll not reproach
> The road that winds, my feet that err.
> Access, approach
> Art Thou, Time, Way and Wayfarer.[2]

The fact that there is a "realm of values" and that it is not "a fiction of imagination" is, Professor A. E. Taylor tells us, sufficiently met "by the memorable utterance of Pascal: 'Thou couldst not have sought me, if thou didst not already possess me. Therefore quiet thy heart.'"[3] With our hearts thus assured we can commit ourselves to this God who satisfies the heart and quickens the conscience and kindles hope.

[1] K. Barth, *The Resurrection of the Dead* (English translation), p. 49.
[2] Alice Meynell. [3] *ERE*, Article *Theism*, vol. xii., p. 286.

This conclusion, which seems to be bound up with the conviction of the Christian faith, has certain consequences that require examination if we are to make clear to ourselves that the claim that is made for Christianity among the religions is justified. Our view of Christianity undoubtedly implies a claim that that religion is pre-eminent among the faiths that men have professed and followed, that it alone corresponds with the deepest facts of the universe, showing it to be a moral universe and enabling men to "win their souls" in the highest sense that we can conceive. It implies a claim, in fact, that this religion opens the way to truth and so is, we may affirm, true. But at the same time this religion is something—as we know it—that not only God has made but men, and our business in this discussion has been, just as our business to the end of time will be, to distinguish the one from the other, the imperishable gold from the wood, hay, stubble that the flame of God's judgment, and indeed also the smouldering fire of human mortality, must consume. The fact that there is this mingling must make us patient and tolerant with other people's errors, even as we hope for patience and tolerance for our own. But tolerance cannot extend to the condoning of what conscience tells us clearly is evil or the acceptance of what our minds tell us is untrue. "Intolerance," says Whitehead, "is the besetting sin of moral earnestness." We have need, therefore, to be on our guard and to restrain the utterance of our *sæva indignatio*, remembering that we ourselves are dust. And yet at the same time, for our own soul's salvation we have also both to be true to the light we have received, and to see to it that that light is not darkness. There is

no intellectual error that we are so prone to, and there is none that so obscures the light which we are called to walk in, as that pantheism that so subtly invades our thoughts, deceiving us by its gracious tolerance, but at the same time blinding our eyes to evil and paralysing our spiritual growth. We have seen already how this spirit controls some of the great ethnic religions, and how the fact of that control separates them decisively from Christianity, and indeed from all the theistic faiths. We can see at the same time how it has often sought to usurp control of the theistic faiths also and to transform them into its own likeness. That fact could be illustrated from the history, for example, of the noble theistic message that Zarathustra taught to his people. It will serve our purpose more effectively, however, to study some of the pantheistic invasions that Christianity has had to repel, and not always with entire success.

Let us accordingly select the Logos conception and consider some of the consequences that have come about, historically, within Christianity when the import which the word bore in the usage of the author of the Fourth Gospel was misconceived by later interpreters. Before this word was adopted into the Christian system it had had a long history in the sphere of Greek philosophy and especially in the pantheistic constructions of the Stoics. To them it was the immanent reason of the world, but not that alone. It was also "the principle of law and righteousness," and as such it was to be worshipped. Cleanthes sings its praise: "Thou makest order out of disorder and things that strive find in Thee a friend. . . . There is no greater thing than this, for

mortal men or for gods, to sing rightly the praise of universal law (λόγον)." [1]

It is evident that we have here a power that was recognised as higher than the gods of the inherited tradition and that sometimes even won devotion. But it was essentially a Law, a Principle of reason, and not a Person. When this Logos was taken over by the author of the Fourth Gospel his intention was far from being to make use of it to depersonalise Christ: his intention was, on the contrary, to establish His incarnation as reasonable and His humanity as real, in the face of Gnostic and Docetic heresies. He sought by the use of this idea to acclimatise the Christian religion in the wider world to which it had now come, replacing the central Jewish conception of the Messiah by what was one of the notable products of Greek reflection; but in doing so he seems, unconsciously, to have given a new colour and direction to the religion which he was expounding, producing a bias towards Greek intellectualism which sometimes in the later development threatened the springs of its life. The aim with which the Gospel was written, it is believed, was, specifically, to emphasise the reality of the earthly Jesus, but when the evangelist adopts this far-reaching and illuminating category of Greek thought its effect upon his thinking is such that the Jesus whom he is commending is lifted by it into another realm than that of religious experience and human history. "The Gospel wavers throughout," Dr E. F. Scott points out, "between two parallel interpretations of the life of Christ—that suggested by the history and that required by the Logos hypothesis," two conceptions

[1] *ERE*, viii., p. 134.

which, Dr Scott believes, are so disparate that they cannot be brought into any real harmony.[1] This appears to be the case because to the Logos idea was given the metaphysical interpretation that it mostly had in Greek usage, and because it was not interpreted in relation primarily to the Living God of the Jewish Scriptures and the Father of Jesus. It certainly cannot be denied that these two conceptions of what the Logos conveys were not fully reconciled with one another through the later generations. Dr E. F. Scott describes the devious course by which the Church travelled in succeeding centuries, because of its misconception of the deeply religious purpose of the writer of this Gospel. "With the adoption of the Logos doctrine God was defined in terms of being: the work of Christ was made to consist in the mysterious process whereby human nature is transmuted into divine. We cannot but feel that for centuries afterwards the mind of the Church was set in a wrong direction." [2]

The question as to whether this tendency which the Logos idea suggests may at times have borne the Christian Church too far away from those truths that to it must ever be central, and may have weakened in consequence its testimony, cannot be further considered, but that that testimony, if it is to be true to its purpose and effective, must place its emphasis primarily upon the will and its control and upon life and its springs, and only secondarily upon the interpretation in idea of the framework in which these are set, has to be made quite plain. Christianity is Good

[1] *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 174.
[2] *The First Age of Christianity*, p. 226.

News of what God has done for men and of what God is in His love towards them. It involves a metaphysic, but it is not one. Its salvation is the consequence in men of what God in time has done for them, so showing Himself to them as to win their hearts.

The choice here is between an interpretation of the world in terms of the intellect with the ethical element largely drained out of it, and an interpretation of it in terms of the struggle between good and evil and of the victory over evil to which a way has been opened. The desire to "transmute local and temporary ideas about the Incarnation into a more universal and spiritual form," which Dr Inge finds in the Logos doctrine[1] has to be guarded—as it is fully guarded in the Gospel itself—against the grave error of detaching the spiritual form from what was local and temporary and for that very reason gave to the spiritual form its richness and reality. This danger to the life and strength of Christianity has showed itself from time to time in its history and is a danger still. This is especially the case at any period when those who are seeking to understand Christianity—as was the case in the days of Stoicism and Neoplatonism, and as is the case to-day among peoples permeated by the Hindu spirit—approach that religion, bringing along with them their pantheistic prepossessions. That those who in India are deeply dyed with the Vedantic type of thought should read into Christian teaching many of their inherited ideas is not surprising. It is interesting to find that for that reason—among others—the Gospel of St John possesses a peculiar attraction for many Indians and has been expounded from their own point of view by learned

[1] *ERE*, viii., p. 137.

Vedantists. This can be all the more easily contrived because of the importance that this Gospel gives to knowledge and the secondary place that it seems sometimes to assign to history. It is possible so to read the Gospel as to miss its constant emphasis upon the facts as real happenings in time and place and to find its message in those eternal truths of which the incidents are presented at the same time as symbols. That one who has inherited the Hindu outlook on the world as māyā should have a bias towards such a reading of this record is natural. Indeed, in the view of some Christian scholars the author of the Gospel, though writing with the aim of refuting the Docetic doctrine of the unreality of the earthly life of Jesus, has himself been unconsciously influenced by it. If this should have to be admitted it would only give evidence of the subtlety of this infection which pantheism spreads and of the necessity that the Christian should be ever on his guard against it, as indubitably a deadly enemy of the Christian Gospel, emptying it of the springs of power that lie within it.

This characteristic mode of approach by the Vedantist to Christianity is well described by an Indian Christian, Mr P. Chenchiah. "To the Hindu," he writes, "a historic fact is a temporal manifestation of an eternal idea. Behind the person of Jesus is the immutable eternal idea of which He is the embodiment. . . . The Hindu wants to be in touch with the Logos which became Jesus—with the Holy Spirit which is the immanent Christ—rather than Jesus of Nazareth." But to the Hindu that eternal idea is in himself no less than in Jesus of Nazareth: it is a timeless, general, impersonal truth. If Jesus is only a symbol, then

the historical significance of his life ceases and he ceases to be an object of faith. The Christian view of Christ is that he is at once a messenger and a message from God, revealing something about God which, once manifested, is assured for all time. Jesus Christ is the Word of God, not in any Stoic or metaphysical sense, but as God's purpose in redemption made manifest. "The 'historical Jesus' is a corpse," says Dr Brunner.[1] And equally he could have said, "The Christ of idea is a phantom." Each of these alone is an abstraction with no life or power in it for men. What is the source of spiritual power to men is the revelation in time of the very mind and heart of the eternal God. One of the chief reproaches brought against the Christians by Celsus was that "they believe in a kind of myth, that of Christ, which 'will not permit an allegorical explanation'; in other words, it is presented as genuine history." "Must we not say," comments Professor A. E. Taylor, "that what Celsus alleged as a reproach against the spirit of Christianity . . . is in fact its glory?"[2]

Christianity has thus to exercise an eternal vigilance

[1] *The Word and the World*, p. 88.

[2] *Faith of a Moralist*, ii., pp. 326, 331:

Professor A. E. Taylor dealing in his *Faith of a Moralist* (ii., p. 117) with modern attempts to "reduce the Cross to the status of a mere symbol," in the belief that "its spiritual power for the regeneration of human life would remain unaffected," sums up his conclusion as follows: "The whole 'power of the Gospel' to remake human personality is intimately bound up with the conviction that the story of the passion and exaltation of Christ is neither symbol nor allegory, but the story of what *has been done* for man by a real man, who was also something more than a real man, a story of a real *transaction* at once divine and human. You cannot cut the motivation conveyed by such words as '*if* God so loved we ought . . .' out of practical Christian life without destroying *that* specific kind of life at its root."

lest pantheism, laying its petrifying grasp upon it, chills its ardour and robs it of its source of power. We have in the Bhakti movement within Hinduism a moving example of the helplessness of a religion of intense emotion to deliver man when pantheistic presuppositions are draining all the time his spiritual vitality. There is not here, we may say in the manner of St Augustine, the cry of the penitent, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Nor is there the utterance of thanksgiving: "I thank God through Jesus Christ my Lord." No dawn of hope beckons the pantheist in his static universe. "Immanental Ethics," writes Troeltsch, giving his measured and considered judgment, "without reference to a final, all-englobing, all-determining end, grows flat and aimless." [1]

There is another consequence from the pantheistic world view which distinguishes it from Christianity and which because of its wide prevalence requires to be considered. There is no more frequent claim made by persons who discuss religion at the present time in all countries than that which affirms that all religions are equally true. Thus the Report on the Missionary situation called *Re-thinking Missions* expresses the hope that "the names that now separate men may lose their divisive meaning." [2] That this comfortable plea is being advanced by so many is undoubtedly due to the subtle infiltration of pantheism into so much of the thinking of to-day. Pantheism maintains that "each particular, in its grade and place, is a manifestation of the One which is also All. . . . Everything is

[1] Quoted by von Hügel, *Essays and Addresses*, i., p. 156.
[2] *Re-thinking Missions*, p. 58.

necessary in its place: mind and matter, man and worm, saint and sinner."[1] It is easy to see how, wherever such a conception of the universe is prevalent, even if its consequences have only been very partially realised, this "inter-religionism," with its easy tolerance of every religious opinion will be prevalent also. We may take as a modern example of how this point of view is commended a statement by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, who, as we have seen already, is actively engaged in commending to the West a revised and reconstructed Hinduism. He is the better fitted to this office as being fully equipped with knowledge of Western philosophy, much of which has affinity with the ancient pantheism of India on which Sir S. Rahakrishnan has been nurtured.

He describes as follows the way in which the religions, as he views them, are related to each other: "The different traditions are like so many languages in which the simple facts of religion are expressed. Speech may vary, but the spirit is the same. There is significance in all forms of worship, however crude and foolish they may seem to us. . . . Any name, any form, any symbol, may set the whole being astir, and the divine in the heart of the seeker lifts him up and accepts the offering."[2] This, though the utterance of a Hindu philosopher, is in close agreement with what the philosophy of Spinoza teaches. Thus Professor Sorley describes the experience by which, according to Spinoza, one becomes merged in the infinite whole, as follows: "Anything whatever—whether we call it good or evil in our experience—can be made contri-

[1] W. R. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 390.
[2] *The Idealist View of Life*, pp. 119, 122.

butory to this mystic union. We have only to understand it as proceeding from God, and the understanding moves us to joy and love." [1]

In both the modern Hindu's account of this religion and in that of the Jewish philosopher of Amsterdam a warm glow that Professor Sorley recognises as "religious" suffuses the consequences that issue from their pantheism. It is easy to see how on their presuppositions all religions have an equal place because each one is an account of something which proceeds from God—as all things proceed from Him—or of something which is somehow a symbol of Him; and when this relation is recognised, religious consequences follow automatically. The modern Ramakrishna movement in India describes very frankly by the lips of the remarkable pantheistic seer who is its progenitor, how this outlook, whatever its religious or emotional value, levels the heights and depths of the moral life into a monotonous Flatland. "I have now come," Ramakrishna Paramhamsa himself declares, "to a stage of realisation in which I see that God is walking in every human form and manifesting Himself alike through the saint and the sinner, the virtuous and the vicious. Therefore when I meet different people I say to myself, 'God in the form of the saint, God in the form of the sinner, God in the form of the unrighteous, and God in the form of the righteous.'" He who has attained to such realisation goes beyond good and evil, above virtue and vice, and realises that the divine is working everywhere. It is obvious that to one who has climbed to such an eminence there is no scale of values by which religions or religious teachers can

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 403.

be classified as bad or good, higher or lower. God is equally to be reached in and through them all. He is, as the pantheist poet puts it, "as full, as perfect in a hair as heart." Kali or Christ or Allah—there is no difference. Tolerance is axiomatic on such premisses as these. The monks of the Ramakrishna sect are ready to join in any worship. They observe the birthdays alike of Christ and Krishna, and have requested to be allowed to join in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

One consequence from this pantheistic presupposition is, therefore, a broad tolerance towards other religions. There is quite evidently no occasion here for the proclamation of one's faith, since every faith is of equal value with every other one. Though Sir S. Radhakrishnan would certainly not endorse the view expressed by Ramakrishna in the words just quoted, he also advocates a tolerance of which the limits are not defined—what he calls Hinduism's "attitude of comprehensive charity instead of fanatic faith in an inflexible creed."[1] "Nothing," he declares, "is so hostile to religion as other religions."[2] Instead of such an attitude, what God wills, he believes, is "a rich harmony, not a colourless uniformity."[3]

It is clear that what is emerging here is the same irreconcilable divergence between two conceptions of which we have become already aware. This "comprehensive charity" is not possible for a religion which accepts the ultimate reality of certain distinctions, as Christianity does, for "comprehensive charity," as here understood, would involve a willingness to acquiesce

[1] *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 37. [2] *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 44.
[3] *The Hindu View of Life*, p. 59.

in the denial of the reality and value of time and history and of the difference between good and evil. This comprehensiveness is possible when the world is judged to be unreal and so all our judgments are meaningless, or when everything in the world is equally an organ of God. Sir S. Radhakrishnan's doctrine, according to his friend and interpreter, Mr Joad, is that "the more diverse the facts that are integrated in a whole, the richer the whole," and Ramakrishna, no doubt, teaches the same. That is, the object of our search is not a supreme value, goodness or truth, but all things good and evil, right and wrong, truth and error united in the All,

> Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
> With stones and rocks and trees.

It is plain that we have here two views which once more we perceive to look in opposite directions and so to be irreconcilable. Not because Christianity is metaphysical—which, strangely enough, Sir S. Radhakrishnan considers to be an obsession of "the Semitic faiths," including Christianity—but because of its concern with spiritual values it cannot bring within its "rich harmony" a view which is so inevitably destructive to its very being and essence. We have here confronting each other what Hamlet calls "the fell incensèd points of mighty opposites."[1]

Hinduism is true to one of the deepest demands of the human spirit when it seeks to bring all the discords of our universe to an ultimate unity, but that end must not be reached by a short-cut, but by the long road of spiritual striving into which God Himself of His

[1] *Hamlet*, V. ii. 62.

infinite grace has entered. No facile and abstract monism can satisfy the mind and heart of man, but such a spiritual monism as finds the beginning of all things in God and the end and crown of all in His ultimate victory, a victory which He invites His children to share with Him. To be admitted to this august partnership it is required of us that we surrender all the energies of our spiritual being to the leadership of the Captain of our salvation and love God with heart and mind and soul and strength. No languid indifference or easy acquiescence will suffice here. Christianity is not a call to an eternal truce; it is a call to battle, and there is no discharge from that war. To this such an Indian as Kabir can be called as witness, for he is one who learned to reach above a doctrine of immanence to that of a transcendence that is closely akin in some of its aspects to Christianity. He accordingly does not speak peace when there is no peace, but warns us that "the truth-seeker's battle goes on day and night; as long as life lasts it never ceases." [1]

Christianity can never remain satisfied, as Sir S. Radhakrishnan seems to be, that the warfare for the Kingdom of God should be under the banner of a secondary God. What Sir S. Radhakrishnan is attempting in his effort after reconciliation is something which has again and again been attempted both in the East and the West. He is attempting to hold together in his mind a metaphysical explanation of the universe which enfolds all things in a unity which includes both good and evil, and at the same time a conscience of these two as final and unappeasable hostilities. This

[1] Rabindranath Tagore, *One Hundred Poems of Kabir*, p. 45.

is an achievement that the human mind forbids. Such a labour of reconciliation, whoever the Sisyphus that attempts it, will always prove impossible, for it demands that that which is at the same time is not. Sankarāchārya in India in the seventh century of our era held them together by the device of admitting that men's worship and men's moral struggles, however real to them, were all the time illusion—a game that men might dream that they were playing, while the reality was the dreamless sleep of Brahman. To such a modern Indian Vedantist as Radhakrishnan it is rather the monistic deity, the Absolute, that, while recognised, is ignored, and "God as He seems to us," [1] the Lord of the conscience, who is to be obeyed. This is the attitude, no doubt, of most of the modern adherents of this school of thinking in the West. A recent report on current American modes of life and thought, which appears to be considered authoritative, informs us that the God of whom the urban American now approves is "the conception which well-known scientists and philosophers have recently been discussing under such terms as Creative Co-ordination, Holism, Creative Synthesis or the Integrating Process at work in the universe." Some of these names, as they are understood, represent, no doubt, something not widely different from Brahman. It is probably that, whatever the name they select may be, they have an idol, probably a highly moralised one, by means of which, like Śankarāchārya, they guide and stabilise their daily life. Some of them may even believe that they can retain Christ in this place and worship him. This lower deity, whatever his real authority, retains

[1] *An Idealist View of Life*, p. 108.

his place meantime as the Lord of the conscience. H. G. Wells is surely quite unjust to the late Lord Haldane when he charges him with having been indifferent to the harsher aspects of life while he pillowed his head upon "that bladder of nothingness, the Absolute."[1] Without question he and many others like him retained, whatever their theory of the ultimate Reality might be, an ideal of duty and a conscience of right that thrust them towards the fulfilment of their demands upon them, however much these might be all the time rootless things in the universe of their thinking, "flowers in the sky," as the Upanishad seer might call them. Such a working religion is often, indeed, no more than what is sometimes crudely called a "hang-over" from a faith that has been abandoned. But a conscience so uncertainly established is, we may be sure, only a lingering voice that is not likely to echo long in the empty corridors of the human spirit.

More than a century ago Sainte Beuve wrote in his *Port Royal* of the rigid and destructve grasp that the recognition of the supremacy of material law over all man's life is apt to lay upon humanity. It is an intellectual obstacle perhaps impossible to dislodge from the spirit in which it has once been established, and, as it were, naturalised. "The great enemies of Christ," he goes on, "enemies alive now and always likely to remain so, are these embodiments of nature, the god Priapus and the god Pan. The first may be overcome sooner or later, but Pan remains an enemy to the end in the case of those who have once come under his control."[2]

[1] *Experiment in Autobiography*, vol. ii.
[2] *Port Royal*, ii., p. 479, note.

We are certainly still in conflict with the ancient pagan deity, and the conflict will continue. Not only is the materialism of the scientific and industrial civilisation of the West ready to fight under this pagan banner, but the East is at the same time contributing the reinforcements of its Ancient Wisdom. Professor Christopher Dawson sees, indeed, a possible alliance between these forces with a view to the creation of a new alternative to Christianity. " The complete secularisation of Western culture may be followed by its gradual dissolution and by the reassertion of the traditional religion-cultures of Asia which have been temporarily overshadowed by the European world-hegemony." [1]

Here, indeed, is to be found, it would appear, the final cleavage among the religions; here are ranged the hostile forces of the ultimate Armageddon of the spirit. On the one side stand those religions and philosophies which view all things as holding within themselves a purpose and significance that may be discovered and realised and that, therefore, we conclude, are maintained by the will, and enshrine the thought, of a living God; on the other are those for which, sooner or later, life is accepted as being no more than a chaos of unreality, a region of night and death. That between these lies humanity's choice is the conclusion to which the American Humanist and Christian, Mr Paul Elmer More, has come as he surveys the developing religions. " Beat about it as we will," he writes, " there are only two conclusions in which the philosophic mind can abide. Either, as the Hindu in his more courageous moods taught, the whole

[1] *Sociological Review*, Jan. 1934.

thing, this globe and this life, are utterly without design, a phantasmagoria in which we can detect no meaning and to which we have no right to apply any interpretation, not even that of chance, a huge illusion of ignorance which simply vanishes into nothing at the touch of knowledge; or else, if we see design in the world, then there is no holding back from the inference of the theist."[1] And once we accept the inference of the theist the way lies straight before us to the Christian faith, though to reach it the philosophic mind must be willing to submit itself to a guidance that passes beyond philosophy. The eternal has laid upon itself the bonds of time; the Logos has become flesh and dwelt among us. "Time is the mercy of eternity,"[2] and to reject the Incarnation is, we may say, to shut the gates of mercy on mankind. The ethics of redemption that gather around the Cross of Christ represent a real conflict and reveal a promise of victory in which it is possible for man to share. This is the way to a Christian monism, a monism to which faith points and hope, and which love achieves. The monism to which it is the divine purpose to lead at last the world of men for whom Christ died is of another sort than the Brahman of the Indian sages or the Nirvana

[1] *Christ the Word*, pp. 286 f. Compare Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, ii., p. 247:

"Philosophies such as Epicureanism, Indian pantheism, Persian dualism, modern pluralism, agnosticism, seem to me to resist any attempt to Christianise them. It would clarify our ideas about Christianity if we recognised that it is based on a definite view of the world. . . . We should then be able to distinguish between the vital part of Christianity and the superstructure." Dr Inge may be right in including in his list "Persian dualism," but surely not if he had called it Zoroastrianism and so had not identified this ancient faith with a dualism which has no necessary connection with the religion of the founder.

[2] Blake's *Milton*.

of Buddha or than any modern synonym for these spheres of silence and of emptiness. It can best be described in such a word of Christ as "My Father's house"[1] or "The kingdom of my Father."[2] Of its emergence when time shall pass into eternity St Paul had one supreme and splendid glimpse. "Then cometh the end when Christ shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father . . . that God may be all in all."[3]

[1] John xiv. 2 [2] Matthew xxvi. 29. [3] 1 Corinthians xv. 24, 28.

INDEX

Printed by
Turnbull & Spears, Edinburgh

दिनांक Date	उधारकर्त्ता की सख्या Borrower's No.	दिनांक Date	उधारकर्त्ता की संख्या Borrower's No