

# THE TREE OF LIFE

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A STUDY OF RELIGION

BY

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*The leaves of the tree were  
for the healing of the nations*

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TO  
ANDREW LANG

DEAR MR. LANG

*It was a book entitled "Myth, Ritual, and Religion" that initiated me into these studies. The debt thus begun has accumulated unacknowledged, with many items from this and other subjects, among which I chiefly note Homer, Helen of Troy, the Reverend Mr. Gowles, and the ingenious Mr. Merton.*

*It is a pleasure to inscribe this volume to you, though in several of its matters we are of different minds.*

ERNEST CRAWLEY

Abingdon  
10 October, 1905

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## PREFACE

**I**T may assist the reader if I state briefly the reasons which have led to the writing of this book. In a somewhat lengthy study of primitive religion and culture, the problem of the origin of religion naturally came forward from time to time. Before attempting the solution of such a problem, it was necessary to examine the origins and development of some one at least of the higher religions, its methods and results, its theology and its practice, from the psychological and the sociological points of view. It became increasingly clear that the problem of origin involves the problem of the function of religion. The whole inquiry was suitably completed by an analysis of the contending forces, which have produced the present religious crisis; and here, curiously enough, may be gathered up several clues supplied by primitive religion, and since lost sight of.

I am encouraged to make the attempt at a solution of the combined problem by several considerations—the lack of unanimity in the existing theories of religion, and the vagueness as to first principles shown in the present crisis by friends and enemies of religion alike, the general interest which is now being taken in these subjects, and the kind reception which has been accorded to my previous work in an allied study. But I have found my chief incentive in the new light thrown upon religious origins by the researches of Messrs. Spencer and Gillen among the natives of Central Australia. It is not too much to say that the remarkable culture of this people is a revelation to the student of the human mind.

In the confusion which still obtains on the subject of religion—both in scientific speculation and social practice—it is to be expected, as is the case, that an adequate defence of religion should be wanting. My own view of the sociological importance of religious beliefs has led me to cast this essay into such a form as may, it is hoped, supply the want.

A word may be added on the title of the book. Medieval mysticism, returning to a permanent instinct, saw in the figure of Christ on the Cross an incarnation of Life in the midst of Death, the Tree of Life nailed to the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Later ages have forgotten the tradition that the Cross was made from the wood of the Tree of Knowledge, as they have forgotten the symbolism of its divine burden. They have, in more senses than one, made an error of identification, and have taken the Tree of Knowledge for the Tree of Life.

ERNEST CRAWLEY

1 October, 1905

# THE TREE OF LIFE

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

**T**WO generations of scientific criticism have resulted in a more or less complete surrender, or at least a profound modification, of every traditional standpoint in the Christian religion. This result is no isolated phenomenon, but the most striking of several aspects under which we are witnessing the completion of one long evolutionary process. In its various forms this has now reached a definite crisis, on the issue of which the future both of Christianity and of religion in general undoubtedly depends.

But when we analyse this evolution, we find that the change in which it culminates has a wider significance. In the first place, so radical a transformation of those ultimate beliefs on which all individual action is founded must inevitably influence the future of humanity itself, and more profoundly than any political or industrial or social revolution. In the second place, it is obvious from the previous considerations, as the psychological evidence will abundantly prove, that those who would confine the significance of the change to the social sphere, and regard it merely as the result of social factors and the promise of social ideals, are making a profound mistake as to the meaning of religion and the nature of society. The present crisis is indeed a Revolution, but one which concerns the individual alone.

Lastly, a study of the phenomena of the movement in the light of comparative hierology indicates unmistakably that the change is something more than the decay of supernatural and dogmatic religion resulting from the development of science. This is its superficial aspect. If we analyse the facts impartially, ignoring the temporary interests of religious and social politics which shorten the view, and discarding the traditional terms and classifications which conceal identity, we realize that the final significance of the present movement is psychological. It is not a case either of mere decadence in one direction, or of mere intellectual progress in another. It is far more than this. It is a change and development of the whole psychic functions, involving a readjustment of mental standards and a shifting of the centre of reality, but no less certainly a deepening and strengthening of the soul of man. We have before us a new and a greater Reformation—a Reformation, however, not of Theology, not even of Religion, but of Mind and Soul.

If this is the true significance of the crisis, its historical importance is unique, and it will deservedly mark a new division of human history into two great periods.

The psychological aspect of the transformation of Christianity will be evident to any one who will read between the lines of the present inquiry. The discussion of religious origins will show it explicitly; we shall, in fact, find reason to conclude that “religion” is ultimately not a thing in itself, that the “religious impulse” even is not specific—psychology has already disproved the existence of separate faculties in the mind—but that what we term “religious” marks a psychical predisposition of a biological character, which is of supreme evolutionary importance. When, however, we have reached this conclusion, we shall be able, with a fuller knowledge of what religion is, to readmit the traditional terms, and to suggest that the two great epochs of social evolution now being brought into view will be regarded by posterity, not as the Religious and the Non-Religious, but as the Age of the Old Religion and the Age of the New.

It is characteristic of the present stage of psychical evolution that the study of religion has become a part of sociological inquiry. The tendency to unification which followed the immense scientific development of the nineteenth century is nowhere more marked than in the sciences which deal with man.

Religion is now the province of the anthropologist and the psychologist, and their results are taken over by one comprehensive science—Sociology—which is to us what Theology was to Aquinas and Philosophy to Aristotle. Its conclusions, thus based on the results of subsidiary studies, are intended for practical application—the supreme object of the science being the improvement of the social organism and the development of the individual.

It is therefore an obvious necessity that the inferences of Sociology should be true to the permanent principles of human life. This necessity is the more imperative, when we are confronted with such a difficult and complex problem as that which religion presents. To take an instance: the history of religious phenomena exemplifies in the most striking manner the continuity of modern and primitive culture; but there is a tendency on the part of students to underestimate this continuity, and, by explaining it away on a theory of survivals, to lose the only opportunity we have of deducing the permanent elements of human nature.

Religion has been well described as “the weft which everywhere crosses the warp of history.” The magnitude of its influence has been so extra-ordinary that one may almost assign to it the rank of a cosmic process. The following estimate of its influence, from the pen of a distinguished student, is by no means exaggerated. He describes it as “one of the mightiest motors in the history of mankind, which formed as well as tore asunder nations, united as well as divided empires, which sanctioned the most atrocious and barbarous deeds, the most cruel and libidinous customs, and inspired the most admirable acts of heroism, self-renunciation, and devotion, which occasioned the most sanguinary wars, rebellions, and persecutions, as well as brought about the freedom, happiness, and peace of nations—at one time a partisan of tyranny, at another breaking its chains, now calling into existence and fostering a new and brilliant civilization, then the deadly foe to progress, science, and art.”

An historical force which shows such a strange contrast in its results is likely to present a difficult problem. And, in fact, this remarkable contrariety in the social results of religion is curiously paralleled by the diversity of opinion which still exists as to its nature and origin. More books have been written and more thought has been expended on the theory and practice of religion than on all other subjects of human interest put together; yet no subject, perhaps, has been less understood. There exist at the present moment fully a score of definitions of religion, theories of its origin, and explanations of its function. There is no subject, indeed, of equal importance about which there exists so much confusion; and when we examine these theories and definitions, many of which are mutually exclusive, it is difficult to find a tendency towards ultimate agreement, or a clue that promises success.

It cannot be denied that this is a remarkable state of things. We must remember, however, in the first place, that religion was one of the last subjects to submit to the analysis of science; until quite recent times it was either taken for granted, or regarded as a matter too sacred to be questioned or discussed. Fifty years ago there was no such thing as a science of the subject: to-day that science is still tentative and immature. Secondly, religion is one of the oldest forms of human thought and action. In the third place, its unique character creates special difficulties; for religion is an isolated phenomenon—there is nothing with which it can be compared. Yet even these considerations do not fully account for the remarkable obscurity which prevails upon the subject.

For the sake of clearness, we may state at once the main object of our investigation. This is to attempt the solution of two connected problems, or rather of one problem which has two aspects—the origin of religion and its function in human history. It will also conduce to clearness if we note at the same time the main principle of the method to be followed in this inquiry. Assuming that the material in which religion subsists is consciousness, we regard the history of religion as part of the history of the human mind. It follows that the problem cannot be placed in a scientific light, except by a comparison of the human mind with itself at different stages and in different conditions of development. Such a comparison

has been rendered possible in recent years by the evidence which anthropologists have accumulated as to the mental habits of the lower races, and by the results of the newer methods of psychological research. To anthropology, therefore, if duly employing its essential instrument, comparative psychology, we may look with some confidence for a solution.

But before we proceed to apply this method, we have to consider religion in another aspect—that of its present position in society. This aspect is the social side of the change which we have viewed in its psychological bearings. It may be said that there is even more confusion in the practical than in the speculative position of religion. In modern times religion has to face both deliberate antagonism and apathetic indifference; it is no longer taken for granted or regarded as too sacred for discussion. Its enemies have developed the opposition of science and religion into a deadly struggle, and the opinion is everywhere gaining ground that religion is a mere survival from a primitive and mythopœic age, and its extinction only a matter of time. At the present day a large proportion of the uneducated and a still larger proportion of the educated classes ignore religion altogether, as if it were an anachronism in a mechanical age. To quote the description of an acute observer, writing of a few years past: “The majority of people were absorbed in the practical problems of the struggle for existence, striving . . . to realize a purely worldly ambition. The very leisure which seems necessary for the contemplation of spiritual things and the cultivation of religious thought was denied to the mass of the people. Far from professing to serve God as well as Mammon, the average man had grown to regard God as an abstraction, bearing no relation to the affairs of . . . actual life. . . . The statistics of church attendance compiled in a London newspaper merely proved by figures what was already known as a substantial fact—that the temples of supernatural faith were becoming more and more deserted. No one can have been surprised to learn that only one person out of nine, on the average, attended a place of public worship in London. . . . The power of the Church has waned with that of the Bible. . . . The Church has abandoned authority for apologetics.” Religious apologists find their task more and more difficult; the older methods of defence, such as those of Butler and Paley, are discredited, and among the newer there is hardly one which carries scientific conviction. Yet many thoughtful minds still hold instinctively that religion is indispensable to national life.

Now may it not be suggested with some confidence that both the vigour of the attack and the feebleness of the defence are due, in no small measure, to ignorance of what religion really is? On every side we see indications that the nature of religion is not yet realized; and this is clearly the explanation of the confusion in the speculative sphere. Indeed there would seem to be no other way in which to explain the coincidence that scientific inquirers on the one hand, and on the other the opponents and defenders of religion, all alike exhibit a mutual misunderstanding and confusion as to first principles.

The fact is that the various phenomena to which we have referred are causally connected. The rejection of traditionalism and the social decay of religion on the one hand, and on the other the contrariety of scientific opinions as to the meaning of religion, and the interest now being taken in the subject—these features, by which the present crisis is distinguished, are obviously the two sides, the social or practical, and the intellectual or speculative, of one movement.

It will not therefore appear incongruous to combine in one discussion an account of the anti-religious movement and a speculative inquiry into the origin of religion. One is constantly struck by the way in which one phase of attack throws light on some aspect of origin, while some factor of origin explains this attack or that defence. The whole history of religion shows that the two aspects of the problem, the speculative and the practical, are essentially correlated and interdependent. The practical man himself has a personal interest in the speculative problem; in the first place, the scientific inquiry into the origins of religion leads up to its actual function in history, and in the second place there are here involved such practical questions as these: Is religion in itself a blessing or a curse, or is it one of those forces which are beneficial for a time, but in the end deleterious? Is it merely a survival, or is it inevitable under any



conditions? Is it founded on an illusion which we are outgrowing, or on some eternal fact from which we cannot escape? We shall learn from both discussions that the essence of religion is a necessary and permanent expression of human nature. The present study, accordingly, is apologetic.

In the following pages, therefore, the scientific and the practical issues will be kept in close contact, and we shall attempt not only to answer the two main speculative questions—What is religion? and, What is its function in the evolution of humanity? but also to base on the answer a new defence of religion in general, and of Christianity in particular.

## CHAPTER II

### THE RATIONALIST ATTACK

**W**E have suggested, and the sequel will prove, that the conflict between religion and rationalism is causally connected with critical and speculative inquiry into religious origins, both movements being aspects of one process. It is convenient to treat the former movement as a struggle between opposing forces, but we must bear in mind that this view of it is after all superficial, though for practical politics the struggle is real enough. Criticism of records and beliefs, resulting in the rejection of pre-scientific views, is merely a late stage in the history of this struggle or evolution, reached when the mind is becoming scientifically conscious; the comparative study of religions and speculative inquiry into religious origins is a still later term in the series. The end of the intellectual line is reached when the speculative problem is solved. The present discussion will follow the actual course of the evolution with which it deals, and we shall treat of the practical before attempting the speculative question.

Our survey of the anti-religious or rationalist movement is naturally confined to Christianity and the sphere of Western civilization. It is note-worthy, at the outset, that, except perhaps in the "ages of faith," Christianity has always been on its defence. In its earliest years it was treated with passionate hostility both by Jews and Pagans, a proceeding, it will be observed, analogous to what is taking place to-day. This opposition on the part of the old Pagan religion was in remarkable contrast to the tolerance with which so many new religions of varying tenets were admitted into the Roman world. Gibbon suggested five causes to explain the rapid success of Christianity, but there still seems to be something unexplained, some hidden characteristic of the new faith itself, which enabled it to inspire such bitter animosity while achieving such extraordinary success. This early campaign has considerable psychological interest; some of its methods are reproduced in modern controversy: thus, one of the earliest objections to Christianity centred on its morality; Celsus anticipated Renan in his explanation of the Resurrection; Eusebius argued that the Pagan religions were a preparation for the gospel; Cyril found in Julian an objector of the theistic school, and Arnobius laid the foundation of Christian evidences.

The modern critical movement falls into two periods. In the former of these the humanists of the Renaissance, inspired by Greek and Latin ideals, opposed culture to Christianity, and revived pantheistic and Epicurean theories of the universe. Far more important, however, was the Reformation itself. The main stream of Rationalism derives from the critical process begun by the Reformers. Later the English deists contrasted the unique claims and the supernatural contents of Christianity with a "natural religion," which they regarded as the truth of which Christianity was a perversion, but which was really an artificial abstraction of their own intelligence. The French sceptics argued that religion was invented and maintained by priestcraft and priestly imposture.

The second period, with which we are chiefly concerned, occupies, roughly speaking, the last seventy years. It began with a hostile exploitation of the results of German criticism against the traditional view of the Bible, and, in particular, the records of Christian origins. The attack was then developed all along the line, taking up the scientific arguments against revelation which had been previously employed, and which were continually being reinforced. These latter consist of demonstrated contradictions of the cosmology of the Bible and of the miraculous and supernatural elements in the Christian system; they are still, perhaps, though regarded as obsolete by modern apologists, the most popular weapons of the secularist, and the most fruitful source of scepticism even in cultivated minds. The attack was still further strengthened by the conclusions of the Darwinian theory and other evolutionary research, and has been completed in the last few years by the application of the results of anthropology. The various movements

of course have overlapped, or proceeded simultaneously, or have been repeated; each of them still influences certain minds: none can be regarded as obsolete.

The ancient attack upon Christianity was not made from the point of view either of scientific thinking or of commonplace secularism—its opponents were themselves still religious; but the modern attack is essentially rationalistic, and has been developed side by side with the progress of scientific discovery and critical research. The term Rationalism has been applied to scientific criticism of the Christian documents, and in particular to the naturalistic method often employed by Biblical critics; but the Rationalism considered here, and otherwise known as humanism, naturalism, and secularism, has two essential characteristics: it is anti-religious, and it starts from the results of modern science. Its growth has been traced by historians, and the conflict between science and religion has been chronicled; but, we may submit, neither historian nor chronicler has expressed the real meaning and importance of the struggle.

We shall now enumerate in some detail the more salient and plausible arguments employed by the modern rationalist, selecting them not only from general literature, but from party propaganda. If we read between the lines of these arguments and of the theories of religion to be afterwards discussed, the conviction will gradually force itself into view that there is in the whole question of religion something unexplained, some obvious point missed, some knowledge unrealized and still subconscious, while many considerations appearing by the way will lead up naturally to an explanation of the origin of these arguments and theories, as well as of the religious facts with which they deal.

There are five points from which the attack is directed: physical science, historical and documentary criticism, ethical theory, biology, and anthropology. The ethical objections are derived from biological results, and therefore the struggle has all the appearance of a conflict between religion and science.

The ancient Hebrew theory, which is paralleled in many religions, regarded the earth as the physical and moral centre of the universe, created for God's pleasure, as the home of his chief creation—Man. To this purpose everything was subordinated; sun, moon, and stars (mere lamps in the solid vault of the sky, or apertures through which the radiance of heaven streamed) were intended to supply man with light and warmth and changing seasons. With "the stars for lamps and eternity for background," the earth was the central stage for the human drama. This geocentric theory was demolished as long ago as the foundation of modern astronomy. The telescope has removed the distinction of the world above and the world below; the firmament is no longer a solid vault of sapphire, distant a few miles from earth, and intended to keep the upper waters from flooding the world, and to serve as a dome from which the universe was lighted. The literal Heaven of the New Testament, together with the possibility of "ascension" and "assumption," has been replaced by the infinite abyss of impalpable ether. "Astronomy," said Schopenhauer, "has given the Lord God his *congé*"

The beginning thus made was followed up by the evidence of geology and biology, the result being that the whole of the Hebrew cosmology and anthropology was discredited. "It is certain," says Laing, "that the sun, moon, stars and earth were not created as the author of Genesis supposed them to have been created, and that the first man, whose palæolithic implements are found in caves and river gravels of immense antiquity, was a very different being from the Adam who was created in God's likeness and placed in the Garden of Eden. It is certain that no universal deluge ever took place since man existed, and that the animal life existing in the world, and shown by fossil remains to have existed for untold ages, could by no possibility have originated from pairs of animals living together for forty days in the ark, and radiating from a mountain in Armenia." It has been pointed out that in the Biblical account darkness is an entity, from which light has to be separated; that the sun is created not before but after the appearance of vegetation, and even after the creation of light. Emphasis is laid upon the inconceivability of creation out of nothing. In reply to the untenable defence that the days of Creation are intended to represent immense cosmical and geological periods, it is noted, among other discrepancies which result, that the

reason for the sanctity of the Sabbath is thereby removed. The story of the Fall of Man is said to be contradicted by the facts of biological evolution; man has ascended, not descended, and, though examples of degeneration are common, the degeneration-theory as a whole is exploded. It is argued, lastly, that the disproof of the Fall removes all ground for the Redemption of man and for the whole scheme of Salvation.

The Biblical narratives of the supernatural and the miraculous are similarly contradicted on scientific grounds. Miracles, once regarded as necessary to prove the truth of Christianity, now themselves require proof; miracles “do not happen,” or only happen among those who are already convinced of their possibility. Hume’s verdict is repeated: “No testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavours to establish.” “There is not to be found in all history any miracle attested by a sufficient number of men, of such unquestioned goodness, education, and learning, as to secure us against all delusion in themselves; of such undoubted integrity as to place them beyond all suspicion of any design to deceive others; of such credit and reputation in the eyes of mankind as to have a great deal to lose in case of their being detected in any falsehood; and, at the same time, attesting facts performed in such a public manner, and in so celebrated a part of the world, as to render the detection unavoidable; all which circumstances are requisite to give us a full assurance in testimony of men.” Even the Bible, we are reminded, admits that miracles can be performed without God; therefore the miracles of Christ, it is urged, actually fail to prove that he was God, or sent by God. Again, they should have been wrought in the midst of unbelievers, if the object was to prove his mission, but, on the contrary, Christ refused to perform them except with those who already had faith. Other religions, again, have proved their truth by miracles; are we to credit these also? The belief in witches and in a demoniac world adds to the scientific errors of the Bible.

Prayer, faith, the religious view of the soul and its immortality, and the doctrine of bodily resurrection, are found to be not only inconsistent with the axioms of science, but contradictory in themselves. It is irrational, we are told, to appeal to an omniscient Being for what must be *ex hypothesi* an alteration of his purpose. Scientific determinism, and even religious predestination, nullify the principle both of prayer and of free-will. Belief, again, is not a matter of will, but rests on the force of evidence alone. Positive science knows nothing that gives the faintest glimmer of hope for the immortality of the soul or the resurrection of the body; it knows nothing of spiritual existences, nothing of the existence of a God, whether personal or immanent in nature. The voice of conscience, the moral law, even the existence of mind, are also gradually being brought into the processes of biological evolution. Reason, it is emphatically urged, finds no more sanction for these last positions of the religious or supernaturalist defence than it does for the Mosaic cosmogony, the Fall, Original Sin, the doctrine of the Trinity, the Redemption, the Miraculous Conception, or Eternal Punishment; and reason is our only criterion; we must reject intuition, which is contradictory, except when applied to self-evident truths, and neither the truth of Christianity, or of any religion, nor even the existence of God, is self-evident. Human testimony which, in the case of the Bible, is so full of discrepancies and scientific errors, must equally be rejected. “All science,” says one writer, “is a supersession of religion”; science stands for modern and better-informed thought; theology represents and embodies ancient and inaccurate thinking. But the old faith is bound up with the old scientific view of life and the world, and if the easier part of the traditional view is discredited, why, it is asked, should we maintain that it is correct in the more difficult sphere?

The Bible thus stands convicted of innumerable historical and scientific errors. But the Bible and Christianity are often defended on the ground of their high morality. Here it is retorted that they are rather guilty of moral perversity. For instance, it is not consistent with the character of an omniscient and merciful God to entangle Revelation with scientific blunders, and so to hinder the progress of civilization,

nor with the mission and claims of the Saviour of Mankind to perpetuate them. To the latter count are added such details as the belief held by Christ and his disciples as to the approaching end of the world. The early Christians were accused by the Romans of "hatred of the human race," and their religion was described as "a vile superstition," disgraced by licentious enormities; they were hated for their "abominations." It was alleged again and again that one feature of their central rite was the immolation of infants, who were covered with flour or dough, their flesh and blood being partaken of by the communicants. In modern times the Eucharist has been described as a refinement of cannibalism. Morison and others attack the morality of Christianity as being of a low type. Nietzsche, in his violent onslaught, condemned Christianity as a religion of slaves, including in his condemnation the whole of modern ethical practice and theory. Worship of pain, even of death, is found in Christianity. As to the Greeks, so to many modern thinkers, the Crucifixion is "foolishness"; the "dead limbs of gibbeted gods" supply an ideal which does not make for elevation of character. Even Christ's behaviour on the Cross is contrasted unfavourably with the bearing of Socrates. The infidel Vanini proudly compared his own defiant heroism under torture with the despairing cry of Jesus. Objections on particular issues are numerous; Morison, Nietzsche, and Haeckel alike insist that Christianity sets itself against human nature and natural virtue. They endorse the remark of Pascal that "disease is the natural state of a Christian." Haeckel asserts that it belittles and contemns self, love, woman, the family and civilization; Nietzsche that it taints our ideas of reproduction and of motherhood. Woman was the devil's first victim, and thus brought sin and death into the world. The Bible regards her as inferior and subject to man. The Christian Fathers vie with each other in inventing terms of abuse for the female sex. With this estimate is compared what Maine says of the liberty and dignity enjoyed by married women under Roman law: "Christianity tended from the first to narrow this remarkable liberty. No society which preserves any tincture of Christian institutions is likely to restore to married women the personal liberty conferred on them by the middle Roman law." Christ himself is said to have commended the renunciation of family ties, and even self-mutilation. Polygamy and slavery are authorized by the Bible; the Mormons based on it their practice of polygamy; in Abolitionist days American pulpits rang with scriptural defences of slavery. The Bible, it is urged, through the command in the Mosaic law, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," has been responsible for the judicial murder of hundreds of thousands of innocent women. It is only two centuries ago that this blot on European civilization was removed; yet Wesley said, "To give up witchcraft is to give up the Bible." Many details of the sacred history are condemned for immorality; for instance, the peopling of the world by incest, which was inevitable if Adam and Eve were the first human pair; the approval of Jael's act of treachery, and Jephthah's fulfilment of his vow; the imposition of the death penalty for trivial offences, such as breaking the rules of purification; the massacres commanded and carried out in the extermination of the heathen of Palestine by the chosen race; the punishment of the innocent for the guilty, as in the case of Ham and Canaan; the murder of Saul's innocent sons; the decimation of the people for the sin of David, and the scheme which condemns all mankind for the sin of one, and allows the death of one innocent man to atone for the sins of the world. "The conception of sacrifice in all its forms is morally irreconcilable with the doctrine of divine justice and goodness . . . and with the doctrine of salvation by sacrifice falls the doctrine of salvation by faith." Personal reward for virtue is represented as immoral; reward for mere belief still more. The doctrine of forgiveness of sins is contrasted unfavourably with natural morality, in which real sin is inevitably punished by inexorable laws, forgiveness and mercy being absolutely excluded. Bad results upon character and upon the race are alleged to result from the Christian doctrine; it is the chiefest sinner who *ex hypothesi* is most welcomed on his return to the fold. Christianity fails to produce virtue or prevent crime; it merely stimulates repentance. Finally, in the moral code of the Bible, acts and thoughts are immoral because they are forbidden, not forbidden because they are immoral. There is a further point: the Biblical code imposes the penalty of death for religious heresy.

“The Bible,” someone has said, “is the persecutor’s textbook.” As soon as Christianity triumphed, it proceeded to carry out literally the Mosaic command of “no toleration,” and even within the Christian pale one sect has persecuted another with terrible malignity. Even Luther urged the massacre of the rebel serfs; Calvin hounded Servetus to the stake. The butcheries of Alva, the massacre of St. Bartholomew’s Day, the fires of Smithfield, and the horrors of the Inquisition are written on the pages of history in letters of blood. Science has been persecuted by religion as ferociously as any heretical sect; there has been many a martyr of science since Bruno died. Tacitus tells us that the early Christians were characterized by their hatred of the human race; a modern writer puts it that Christians show their love of God by their hatred of man.

Such acts are involved, we are told, in the principle on which the scheme of salvation is based, namely, that right and wrong are the expressions of an arbitrary will, as is illustrated, for instance, in the story of the Fall. Persecution is thus a result of the doctrine of salvation by faith. Damnation is the punishment for unbelief, and therefore the sanction of belief. Man, owing to original sin, is in a warped and impaired condition, very far removed from grace, and very prone to unbelief. The heretic poisons the soul, and the welfare of humanity requires that he be cut off from the people. But damnation for unbelief is condemned as wanton cruelty, and, where unbelief has had no message, as savagely unjust, and in view of the psychological unreality of a will to believe—belief being mechanically dependent upon demonstration—irrational. It has been said that the Jehovah of the Old Testament is nothing if not jealous of his prerogatives, and that this characteristic is the only new element in the Decalogue. For in morals religion never innovates, but only incorporates. The doctrines of universal love and the brotherhood of man, popularly supposed to be the exclusive creations of Christianity, were known before; Christianity applied them only to those who believed, and even in this narrowed sphere they have never been carried out.

Every theistic system is condemned on similar grounds. Butler’s reply to the deists who objected to the cruelties of the God of the Bible, and pointed by contrast to the God of Nature, was that the latter is no less cruel—an argument which, of course, is turned round upon Christianity. As in Mill’s dilemma, God is either not all-good if he created pain and evil and allows them to exist, or not all-powerful if he cannot prevent them. “If there is anything at the back of this vast process with a consciousness and a purpose in any way resembling our own—a Being who knows what he wants and is doing his best to get it—he is, instead of a holy and all-wise God, a scatter-brained, semi-powerful, semi-impotent monster. Habitually a bungler as he is, and callous when not actively cruel, we are forced to regard him, when he seems to exhibit benevolence, as not divinely benevolent, but merely weak and capricious, like a boy who fondles a kitten and the next moment sets a dog at it.” The theory of biological evolution has raised anew the question as to the moral government of the universe; the struggle for existence, and the suffering it entails, the continuous massacre which is characteristic of nature, “red in tooth and claw,” make the problem of pain and evil still more mysterious.

So far from the existence of morality being a proof of the truth of religion or of the existence of God, as Kant held, it is precisely the fact of such supernatural sanction that is regarded as condemning all theistic ethics. Theology has set round morality a halo of superstition, but in origin and in actual practice morality has nothing to do with theism or theology; the distinction of good and evil is arrived at through natural causes; the real legislator is man. Utilitarian and evolutionary morality has, it is said, enough sanction in human reason and experience.

Lastly, as Kant showed, there is no argument for the existence of God which will bear analysis. One of the best, the argument from design, has yielded to the theory of natural selection.

As to the problem of the ultimate origin of the universe, an absolute beginning or ending is inconceivable, and involves an infinite regression. Even the suggestion that we are still as far off as ever from the discovery of the origin of life or of universal substance, and that these must have been due to

creative acts, is met in the same way. We are reminded that chemical research is gradually bridging the gulf between the living and the not-living. The burden of proof rests on those who deny the power of natural causes to produce a given result.

Christianity, finally, it is said, has always stood for the hindering of progress. It has opposed every new method of alleviating human suffering, as it opposed the introduction of vaccination and anæsthetics; it has resisted every new departure in scientific knowledge, though it always ends by admitting them, as it becomes less and less able to tyrannize over the soul of man. Though professing to save and reform the world, it has always set its face against the only salvation that is justified by experience. The case of ancient Egypt is brought forward as a warning: after reaching a certain level of culture, religious reaction set in; everything unconventional, everything new was forbidden, and theology turned her to stone. Most theologians think, as did Luther, that the free exercise of reason leads to unbelief, and that free-thinking thus inevitably issues in immorality. But without freedom of thought neither science nor progress is possible. The ages of faith were “a night of mental and moral darkness,” Lecky writes; “not till the education of Europe passed from the monasteries to the universities, not till Mohammedan science and classical freethought and individual independence broke the sceptre of the Church, did the intellectual revival of Europe begin.” Centuries later Newton’s philosophy was condemned as being infidel, as was Darwin’s later still. And while thus obstructing progress, this religion which promised the regeneration of mankind, is found to have always failed to reform the world. If it was not suited to ancient conditions, it is far less suited to modern. One of its own English prelates is quoted to the effect that “it is not possible for the State to carry out all the precepts of Christ. A State that attempted to do so could not exist for a week.”

In Biblical criticism, the work begun by men like Baur and Colenso has been vigorously carried forward by a host of scholars, whose results are exploited against Christianity. In brief, these results amount to this: the books of the Bible did not appear in the traditional order; many of them were not written by the authors whose names they bear, nor at the dates assigned, and the narratives are full of discrepancies and historical errors. The earliest books are Amos and Hosea, dating from the ninth century before Christ. The whole of the Hexateuch is a late compilation. None of the Psalms can have been written by David. At least two writers are responsible for the book of Isaiah. Most of the books coincide with the exilic or post-exilic periods. The book of Daniel did not appear until the second century before Christ; it refers to the persecution of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes, and is a good instance of the ancient method of fathering works on famous names. Babylonian influence is detected in the cosmology and law of the Hebrews; Persia moulded their later religious doctrine. “It is impossible to doubt that the main conclusions of critics with reference to the authorship of the books of the Old Testament rest upon reasonings the cogency of which cannot be denied without denying the ordinary principles by which history is judged and evidence estimated.” An important result is the new view of prophecy. It loses its old characteristic of prediction, and becomes rather interpretative. “The characteristic of the prophet is a faculty of Spiritual intuition. . . . There is no reason to think a prophet ever received a revelation that was not spoken directly to his own time.”

The traditional view of the New Testament is still more profoundly modified. The Gospels were not written by their reputed authors; they are the result of a continued process of accretion and selection. The early Christian tradition seems to have been embodied in countless narratives; the fabrication of Gospels, which were attributed to Apostles, was a favourite literary practice. Only after a considerable interval did the four Gospels emerge as superseding in authority these innumerable writings. Even so, the three Synoptists form, historically speaking, only one document; for Matthew and Luke each used a collection which is incorporated in Mark. The fourth Gospel is, “in effect, the earliest commentary on the Synoptists,” and has less historical value. The obvious difference between the Christ of the Synoptists and

the Christ of John has been often noted: "If Jesus spoke as Matthew represents Him, He could not have spoken as John makes Him speak." Thus the authority of the Gospels is reduced to a minimum; the discrepancies between the various accounts, their self-contradictions, and the admixture of the supernatural, are of such a character as to leave nothing but a very minute residuum of fact. To take an instance which concerns a central feature of Christianity, the Resurrection: in Matthew the disciples are commanded to go into Galilee, where they were to see their risen Lord; the meeting takes place on a mountain. Luke, however, states that they were forbidden to depart from Jerusalem, and it was there that they saw the appearances. But the oldest manuscripts of Mark omit the last twelve verses of that Gospel, and thus there is no mention of any appearance at all. Orthodox critics have practically dismissed the credibility of the Virgin-Birth and the Resurrection; while "the traditional figure of Christ is dissolving rapidly. Its most familiar and striking features are gone beyond recall. The Gospel story of his life is a late-written biography, full of contradictions and interpolations, or 'layers of tradition.'" Even the Sermon on the Mount is mainly a compilation of existent Jewish teaching. Some authorities hold that none of the Pauline Epistles is authentic.

The Bible is at last recognized as a body of Oriental literature, which grew up as other literatures have grown. Other religions have their Bibles—the Koran, the Avesta, the Vedas, the Jain writings, the King, and the Book of the Dead. Which of these, we are asked, is the true revelation? None can be admitted as such until we are assured of the veracity and the knowledge of the writers; this assurance is lacking from all. "On the face of it, then, the Bible is doomed. A book of which all these things can be said, without the slightest fear of contradiction, must, sooner or later, be dropped as the Word of God. It will be recognized as a human composition." The rationalist notes that the orthodox admit the chief results of criticism as well as those of science; he notes that the old mechanical theory of inspiration, which so long forbade criticism, is given up, and that a theory of general inspiration has taken its place: the Bible *contains* the Word of God. But he insists once more that we cannot stop here; that inspiration of this sort is in no way different from the natural phenomena of mental action. Both God and his revelation are "defecated to a pure transparency."

There is, however, one interest with which Biblical criticism has to do, of such importance to Christianity as to necessitate a fuller consideration. This is the question of the life and personality of Jesus Christ. The general tendency of criticism has been to prune away everything supernatural and self-contradictory, and to keep the residue as historical fact. This process of exhaustion is best exemplified in the great work of Strauss, which is the real foundation of all criticism of Christian origins. His originality, says Pfleiderer, "lay in the merciless acumen and clearness with which the discrepancies between the Gospels and the difficulties presented to the critical understanding by their narratives were laid bare, and with which all the subterfuges of supernaturalist apologists, as well as all the forced and artificial interpretations of semi-critical rationalists were exposed, thereby cutting off all ways of escape from the final consequences of criticism." It is only just, however, to recognize the importance and originality of the other side of his work, the constructive method known as the famous "mythical theory." Probably there has never been a critic possessing more sanity and judgment, dignity and learning, than Strauss. His deficiencies are those of the age in which he wrote; there were not enough materials for a criticism of the origin of the documents; there was no anthropological evidence available; when he pushed his theory too far he was perhaps influenced by his idealistic philosophy. As he himself says, "the essence of the Christian faith is perfectly independent" of his criticism. "The supernatural birth of Christ, His miracles, His resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts. The dogmatic signification of the life of Jesus remains inviolate. The certainty of this can alone give calmness and dignity to our criticism, and distinguish it from the naturalistic criticism of the



eighteenth century, the design of which was, with the historical fact, to subvert also the religious truth, and which thus necessarily became frivolous.”

The chief principle of the *mythus* theory is that the Gospel account of the life of Christ was built up by the legend-making impulse of the early Church, out of the current aspirations of the Jews concerning the Messiah. The primitive Christian tradition was bent upon glorifying Jesus and seized every opportunity of turning unconscious fiction into fact. Men regarded their inferences as historical realities, but this was done in all good faith. The Jewish aspirations, the basis of the *mythus*, were chiefly located in the Messianic texts of the Hebrew Scriptures; wherever, then, the Gospel narratives have the words “that the Scriptures might be fulfilled,” we are to suspect the touch of the myth-making instinct. But Strauss does not confine himself to this source; more important are the popular conceptions, which were afloat at the Christian era, and the ideas of the Rabbis. He also makes use of Creuzer’s principle that myth is often invented to explain ritual, and at times he approaches the comparative method, and draws upon psychological and historical material. To take examples: Jesus, being the Messiah, must have done what the Messiah was expected to do; therefore he did it; such was the subconscious argument; as the Jews put it, “what the first Goel did, would be done by the second.” Thus Moses, the first Goel, gave the people bread from heaven; the second did so, both in miracle and in the Eucharist. Philo says the Divine Word nourishes the soul. It was prophesied that Christ would be born at Bethlehem, accordingly the Evangelists who narrate the birth place it there, though their accounts are contradictory. At the advent of the Messiah an outpouring of the Holy Spirit was expected; the Jews conceived the substantial hypostasis in a concrete form; the Spirit of God “hovering” over the face of the waters was compared to a dove, and this bird, also sacred in Syria, was a recognized symbol of the Holy Ghost. The son of pious parents was supposed to be conceived by the divine co-operation; the Messiah was to be so born. To this has been added as a later source St. Paul’s phrase, “the Son of God according to the spirit of holiness.” The Kings of Israel were regularly styled Sons of God; Israel itself was *filius Dei collectivus*. The appearance of a star in the East was believed by the Jews to be a sign of the Messiah’s coming. The Messiah was expected to reform the laws of Moses, and to repeat his miracles. As the first Law was given from Mount Sinai, so the new code is the Sermon on the Mount. The accounts of the institution of the Eucharist are explained as ætiological myth. The number of the twelve apostles and of the seventy correspond to the number of the tribes and of the nations of the world, as envisaged by the Jews. Much of the teaching of Christ falls under this principle. The Rabbis gave the relation of God to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as a guarantee of immortality; the new birth or new creation was a familiar Jewish image, especially used to denote the conversion of an idolater to the worship of Jehovah; the proselyte was compared to a new-born child. The Jews believed that disease and misfortune were due to sin; no cure was possible unless preceded by remission of sins. As is well known, the Lord’s Prayer is entirely made up of Rabbinical sayings, but, as Strauss sanely notes, the selection and allocation of the petitions are entirely original. The Golden Rule was familiar: it is also paralleled in many earlier religions. The sufferings of Jesus were drawn from the Prophets and the Psalms. Reference was made to the ritual of the Paschal Lamb, no bone of which might be broken. According to the early Jews the obscuration of the light of day was the mourning garb of God; the death of great teachers was compared with the sinking of the sun at noon; if such men were not honoured at their death, the sun would be darkened. The Rabbis held that a pious man could conduct those present at his death to Paradise. In the second “Life” Strauss shows how history was after all reflected in the myths—the history of the religious consciousness of the Christian community.

Renan’s “Life of Jesus” is full of sympathy, sentimentality, and romance. It is art, not history; a pastoral idyll, not scientific biography. Its æsthetic charm “has been purchased at the price of its historical solidity.” New features are the emphasis laid on the enthusiasm of the disciples as explaining the supernatural elements (for instance, the Resurrection is explained as a subjective vision due to the fervid

imagination of Mary Magdalene), and the sympathetic picture of Galilean society. Palestine was one of the most backward countries, most in arrear in the science of the day; the Galileans were among the most ignorant of its inhabitants; the disciples of Jesus might be reckoned among the most simple Galileans. He traces Ebionism in the Galilean ministry, “only the poor can be saved.” He notes further parallels between the teaching of Jesus and that of Philo, Hillel, and others. He compares the compilation of the discourses of the fourth Gospel to that of Plato’s dialogues of Socrates. The book of Daniel, he notes, gave final expression to the Messianic hopes. The Messiah is there no longer a king of the type of Cyrus, but a Son of Man who would inaugurate the Golden Age; the Saoshyant of Persia, the great prophet who was to prepare for the reign of Ormuzd, may, he thinks, have assisted towards the notion. The belief that two ancient prophets were to herald the coming of the Messiah, a notable part of the Jewish belief, is found in the Persian religion. He accepted the possibility of Buddhist influence on the formation of Christianity—for instance, in the rite of Baptism.

The work of Strauss has had great influence upon criticism, and has done much to shape cultivated thought on the question of Christian origins, while that of Renan has rather guided sentiment into new channels. For rationalists generally, the main conclusion is that the Saviour of the World is reduced to an ethical teacher or religious founder, differing in no respect from others.

Many, however, now go much further, and take the step from legend—which is what Strauss meant by “myth”—to myth proper, from that which has an historical nucleus to that which has none, but is merely the baseless fabric of a dream. The principle of Strauss is applied to the parallels which meet us in the Græco-Roman religions, already syncretized before the Christian era. A process of borrowing from these cults, or a similar development in a similar psychological atmosphere, is suggested to explain Christian “mythology.” The points of contact between Christianity and the Pagan worships of the Roman Empire, historically known in the later development of the Church, are placed at its inception. Christianity is made out to be a syncretistic blend of Jewish and Græco-Roman ideas; and the existence of Christ as an historical character is practically denied. Robertson applies the method of Strauss not only to the life, but even to the teaching of Christ. Employing the principle of Creuzer, that myth comes from ritual, of which it is an explanation, he assumes the existence of early Christian dramatic representations like the mediæval mystery-plays. “The Gospel story of the last Supper, Passion, Betrayal, Trial, Crucifixion, and Resurrection, is visibly a transcript of a Mystery Drama, and not originally a narrative.” Many apparent difficulties are on this theory at once resolved “when we realize that what we are reading is the bare transcription of a mystery-play, framed on the principle of ‘unity of time.’” For example, the traitor Judas and his actions are *a priori* improbable; there was nothing for him to betray—Christ must have been well known, openly teaching in Jerusalem while his arrest was being arranged. Dramatic necessity would explain the improbability. Judas originally would be a generic figure, typical of the hostile Jews, as Ioudaios the “Jew.” A bag to hold the blood-money would be a dramatic accessory. It is significant that in the *Gospel of Peter* “the twelve disciples wept and grieved” after the Crucifixion, and there is no hint of a traitor. The story of the Crucifixion may be a myth invented to explain the Eucharist, a rite common to many of the pagan cults, though the story of the slain God may have been reinforced by the memory of the execution of some obscure thaumaturge, such as Jesus the son of Pandera (the Talmudic Jesus), or of a series of such heretics. The mystery-drama assumed by Robertson, “is demonstrably (as historic demonstration goes) a symbolic modification of an original rite of human sacrifice, of which it preserves certain verifiable details.” As to the teaching of Christ, Schmiedel admits only nine credible texts; Robertson explains away the whole body of utterances as “myths of doctrine,” imposed upon the figure of a “teaching God.” The culmination of these views is reached in the evidence which anthropology supplies as to savage and barbarous religious belief and practice. The mythological theory we have just mentioned

forms a link between the “mythical” theory and the anthropological. The latter now remains to be considered.

## CHAPTER III

### THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ATTACK

THE foregoing sketch of rationalist arguments suggests the reflection that the critical study of religion, alone among human interests, inevitably results in skepticism and hostility. The fact that this is so itself strengthens the rationalist position. Religion is apparently a growth which cannot survive examination, and withers at the touch of criticism. When the study of it becomes comparative and is guided by anthropology back to the sources, its case seems to be finally dismissed; previous criticism apparently proved it to be an illusion; anthropology shows the illusion in its origin and growth.

The early Christians were confronted with remarkable parallels between the pagan religions and their own; modern Christians have to face an array of still more remarkable analogies drawn from a stage of culture nearer the beginning. The comparative science of religion has not only shown us in great systems like Buddhism and Zoroastrianism, a development very similar to that of Christianity, but has amassed from savage and barbarous culture a list of analogies in doctrine and ritual which apparently explain features long supposed to be peculiar to the Christian faith, and the combined evidence seems not only to show the process by which religion in general originated and developed, but in particular to enforce the conclusion that the story of Christ and his mission, and the Christian beliefs generally, derive from ideas and practices more or less universal among the lowest savages, and are an inheritance or survival from primitive times. As Tylor has pointed out, "the thoughts and principles of modern Christianity are attached to intellectual clues which run back through far pre-Christian ages to the very origin of human civilization, perhaps even of human existence." The close resemblances to the higher systems and to Christianity which the earliest stages of religion present, are thus commented on by Frazer:—

"The philosophical student of human nature will observe or learn without surprise that ideas thus deeply ingrained in the savage mind reappear at a more advanced stage of society in those elaborate codes which have been drawn up for the guidance of certain peoples by lawgivers who claim to have derived the rules they inculcate from the direct inspiration of the deity. However we may explain it, the resemblance which exists between the earliest official utterances of the deity and the ideas of savages is unquestionably close and remarkable; whether it be, as some suppose, that God communed face to face with man in those early days, or, as others maintain, that man mistook his wild and wandering thoughts for a revelation from heaven."

The following examples of the parallels with which we have to deal are selected as being typical of a large body of facts. We begin from the subjective side of religion.

The doctrine of the soul is of world-wide extension, and is an important factor in religious belief. Tylor's classical study of animism has made us familiar with most of its forms, and it would be superfluous to give other illustrations. The lower races generally believe also in a future life; the Karens hold that the spirits of the dead are able to return and reanimate their bodies; savages as a rule suppose that the soul of a dead man haunts the relics of his body. The continued existence of the soul is a widely spread feature of savage belief. Most of the lower races believe both in a qualified immortality and in the non-reality or unnaturalness of death. The soul, however, is not yet regarded absolutely as immortal; it dies when it is forgotten. The early theory of re-embodiment, "the belief in the new human birth of the departed soul," illustrated by the common notion, which is assisted by family or accidental likeness, that ancestors are reincarnated in children, a belief "which has even led West African negroes to commit suicide when in distant slavery that they may revive in their own land, in fact amounts, among several of the lower races, to a distinct doctrine of an earthly resurrection." The Central Australian theory of birth is simply the

reincarnation of an ancestral spirit, and the Luritcha believe that men come to life again. This latter is a common belief. In the higher religions resurrection is more explicitly conceived, as in the Rig-Veda "the dead is glorified, putting on his body; the pious man is born in the next world with his entire body." The Chinese have some notion of a resurrection. In ancient Peru the doctrine was: "Know that all persons who are born must return to life, and the souls must rise out of their tombs with all that belonged to their bodies." The soul, however, being of a vaporous, corporeal nature, is "capable of carrying on an independent existence like other corporeal creatures," and resurrection is often identifiable with the transmigration of the soul. The "continuance theory" then passes into the "retribution theory"; the Nicaraguans held that if a man lived well his soul ascended to dwell with the gods, but if ill, he perished with his body. The belief in a spiritual world, deduced from the belief in human souls, is generally diffused. The Indian of British Guiana supplies a somewhat extreme instance: "His whole world swarms with beings. He is surrounded by a host of them, possibly harmful. It is therefore not wonderful that the Indian fears to be without his fellow, fears even to move beyond the light of his camp fire, and when obliged to do so carries a fire-brand with him, that he may have a chance of seeing the beings among whom he moves." The belief in "guardian angels" and "patron saints" is not uncommon; familiar instances, such as the *nagual*, are found in America. In higher religions the belief is very frequent; the *genius natalis* of the Romans, and the "guardians" of the Mohammedans are well known.

The thought of most early races is saturated with ideas of the "supernatural" and the miraculous. Not only the sorcerer and medicine-man, but all men alike are "supposed to be endowed more or less with powers which we should call supernatural, and it is plain that the distinction between gods and men is somewhat blurred, or rather has scarcely emerged." To early man "miracle is merely an unusually striking manifestation of a common power." Makers of wind, rain and sunshine are to be found in most savage communities. The story of Joshua is repeated by the Fijian who prevents the sun from going down by tying a bundle of reeds together. The New Guinea native effects the same result by saying, "Sun, do not be in a hurry; just wait till I get to the end," and the sun waits. New Zealand, Tahiti, Hawaii, Samoa and India provide similar accounts. In the Buddhist Canon (reduced to writing about 100 B. C.) we read of a pious layman who walks on the water while he is full of faith in Buddha, but who sinks as soon as his mind is turned away from him. Buddhist ascetics may, by holy living, acquire the power of rising in the air, of overturning the earth and stopping the sun. It is related in the 78th *Jataka* that Buddha once fed more than five hundred persons with one cake, and that so many cakes remained over that they were thrown into a cave near the gateway of the monastery. Rabbinical tradition tells of a very holy man in whose day the smallest quantity of shew-bread miraculously sufficed for the priests. Parallels in folk-lore (and in fact) to the Biblical story of the "Three Children" have been collected; the practice of fire-walking and the immunity of the performers are well attested in Fiji and Tonga. Many a Biblical story of a wonderful rather than a miraculous nature is similarly repeated elsewhere.

Spiritual "grace" finds its analogue in the *wakan* of the Dacotahs, the *ngai* of the Central African, and many a similar conception, of which the Melanesian *mana* is typical. *Mana* is "that invisible power which is believed by the natives to cause all such effects as transcend their conception of the regular course of nature, and to reside in spiritual beings, whether in the spiritual part of living men or in the ghosts of the dead, being imparted by them to their names and to various things that belong to them, such as stones, snakes, and indeed objects of all sorts. Without some understanding of this it is impossible to understand the religious beliefs and practices of the Melanesians; and this again is the active force in all they do or believe to be done in magic, white or black. By means of this men are able to control or direct the forces of nature, to make rain or sunshine, wind or calm, to cause sickness or remove it, to know what is far off in time and space, to bring good luck and prosperity, or to blast and curse." The belief in this power is the foundation of the religion and the magic of the Melanesians. They have, however, no order of priests or

sorcerers—every man of importance possesses *mana*. To give a boy a start in the world a kind man will put his hand on the boy's head to impart the mysterious force. Here we have transmission by the "laying on of hands." *Mana* can heal at a distance. Something like the gesture of Benediction is also found; for it can be transmitted by touch and by extending the fingers. In reference to miracles, we may note that healing by the use of saliva and other physical vehicles of *mana* is common amongst savages.

The idea of sin is very real among the lower races; examples are frequent throughout the religions of Africa, Asia, America, and Australia. It is chiefly expressed as a breaking of taboo. A parallel may here be seen to the first form of sin in the Biblical story—disobedience. The belief in retribution for sin is no less real. "*Tapu* is an awful weapon," says an observer of the Maoris. "I have seen a strong young man die the same day he was tapued; the victims die under it as though their strength ran out as water." An Australian black, finding he had broken, by no fault of his own, a taboo of ceremonial uncleanness, took to his bed and died in a fortnight. Punishment is thus actualised by conscience; a better instance of the existence of this faculty in early culture could not be found. The belief that sickness is due to sin and the breaking of taboo is no less widely diffused.

The savage notion of purity is well defined, but materialistic. As I have put it elsewhere, "If we carry primitive ideas to their logical conclusion, the perfectly pure person is one who should not only avoid contact with the functional effluvia of others, but all contact with persons also; and, moreover, to obviate pollution from his own functions, should abstain not only from sexual, but from nutritive processes as well. It is the ascetic ideal of the perfect Buddhist."

Closely connected with these ideas is the savage parallel to the rite of baptism—the ceremonial washing of the infant. The New Hebrideans remove "uncleanness" after birth with cocoanut milk, or sweep it away by drawing a branch over body and limbs. The Maoris and Fijians remove this taboo by water, the Malays by water or fumigation. The practice is very widely spread; as examples in the higher religions we may cite the cases of the Peruvians, Mexicans, Hindus, Parsis, Tibetans, Japanese and Chinese. Baptism among the ancient Romans was much like our own ceremony: the child was lustrated with holy water and received its name. Holy water is employed in the ritual of many religions. The Yumanas and Maoris give the child its name at baptism; in the latter case there is added a "dedication" of the child, with the object of making it a brave man. The Sioux have a custom called "the transfer of character" at the naming of a child; a man selected for his bravery and goodness breathes into the infant's mouth. In ancient Norway and Iceland there were two ceremonies of baptism, the one pagan and civil, the other religious and Christian. In most other European cases, however, Christianity absorbed the previous rite. In Australia there are men who stand in a relation much like that of god-parents to the boys whom they attend at initiation. They seem to be "proxies," in all the primitive meaning of that word, for the real parents. For part of the meaning the Wetarese custom may be compared, according to which the parents may not name the child, "for it would thus be liable to illness." The churching of women has its counterpart in the well-known purification of the mother from the "uncleanness" of child-birth ("holiness" among the Ovaherero), which is a universal feature of early belief.

The well-known practice of "initiation," so called, is more or less universal among savages, and is the lineal ancestor of confirmation. At the age of puberty the boys and girls are introduced to the state of manhood and womanhood with certain ceremonies, sometimes dramatic, the object of which is moral instruction, the putting away of childish things, and a preparation, often accompanied by physical processes, for the life of maturity. The candidates frequently receive a new name, a practice known in Catholicism. The taint of maternal influence is removed from the boys, and tests of manly endurance are imposed. There is implicit in many cases the acquisition of strength, sometimes physical, sometimes spiritual. Sympathetic magic supplies materialistic methods for this. For example, Australian boys are made to drink the blood of men. It is at this time that in totemistic societies the boy is made part of the

totem, which here may be described as a sort of “mystical body.” Elsewhere he receives a tutelary spirit, the Chippeway his *manitou*, as a Catholic receives his patron saint. The North American youth generally fasts in order to obtain this “medicine.” He sees it in a vision or dream—it may be an animal or plant, a feather or shell, a stone, knife or pipe; this becomes his protector through life. A remarkable example is the *sulia* of the Salish Indians.

The Christian doctrine of regeneration, “the new birth,” connected with baptism, confirmation, and conversion generally, might be supposed far above the capacity of the humble savage. It is well known that Brahmans at a certain stage of holiness become “twice-born,” and that in Mithraism, so popular during the early years of the Roman Empire, the worshipper was rendered *in æternum renatus* by the sacrament of *taurobolium* or *criobolium*, in which he was drenched with the blood of a slain lamb or bull. But the idea, together with rites embodying it, is rather common even amongst the lowest savages. The Australian natives, usually considered to be the lowest of existing types, show this belief in a very clearly defined form. In New South Wales, Queensland, Central and South-East Australia, the boy is supposed to be killed and restored to life. In the last-named district the doctrine is emphasized by a pantomime in which one of the old men is buried and rises from the grave. In the Congo region of West Africa it is supposed that boys and girls when initiated die and revive. At the end of the confirmation they take new names and pretend to have forgotten their former lives, not even recognizing their parents and friends.

A similar belief is held by the Dacotahs in connexion with admission to one of the religious associations so common among the North American Indians. In the same way among the Congo peoples the candidate for the office of fetish-man is supposed to be born again. The Hindus have a well-known ceremony in which the person to be regenerated is passed through an image of the *Yoni*. When a Central Australian is made a medicine-man he is supposed to be killed by a spirit who removes all his internal organs and supplies him with a new set. After this the man returns to life. One is reminded of the “new heart” of the Christian. The Kaffir word used to express the initiation of a priest to his office “means ‘renewal,’ and is the same that is used for the first appearance of the new moon, and for the putting forth of the grass and buds at the commencement of spring. By which it is evidently intended to intimate that the man’s heart is renewed, that he has become an entirely different person from what he was before, seeing with different eyes and hearing with different ears.”

Lastly, we find, as in Christian Baptism and the Eucharist, a combination of two ideas, the washing away of sin and the giving of new life. Thus in the Seminole rite of the “black drink,” the drinking was a “solemn ceremonial act; it was supposed that it had a purifying effect upon their life, and effaced from their minds all the wrongs and injustice they had committed, that it possessed the power of imparting courage to the warrior and of rendering him invincible, and that it had a tendency of binding closer the ties of friendship.” Confession and absolution were regular features of the Aztec religion, and in a lower culture we see the beginnings of the practice in the well-known ceremonies of “expulsion of evils.”

Marriage is attended, both in the higher and lower culture, by ceremonial which is essentially religious. One of the most widely spread rites is the act of eating and drinking together, ceremonially performed by the bride and bridegroom. It is in one aspect a crystallization of the love-charm of exchanging food, and in another the breaking of the taboo which forbids men and women to eat together, a breaking which results in union and makes the pair of one flesh. The analogy with the Catholic wedding communion is very clear.

Burial services of a religious character are of world-wide diffusion, and form one of the best-known features of savage as of the higher religions. A rude sort of communion with the dead is frequently found. After a Chippeway funeral “the offering to the dead” is prepared, consisting of meat-soup or brandy, which is handed round to those present, while the portion reserved for an offering is thrown into the fire, and is supposed to be accepted by the ghostly self of the departed. The Aru Islanders drink the humours

of the decaying corpse, “to effect,” as they say, “union with the dead man.” The same practice is found in Timorlaut, the Kings-mills, and Australia. In this practice, communion with the dead is most exactly reached, and the identity of eating with a person and eating him most clearly shown. The Central Australian, whose numerous ceremonies are connected—though we are told he has no religion—with the spirits of his ancestors, believes that at his death he will be in communion with them.

Fasting and continence, the latter being still practised in Lent by Catholics, are customs widely spread in all religions. The North American Indian fasts in order to induce ecstasy, or to secure the revelation of his *manitou*. The natives of Hayti fasted to obtain knowledge of future events, the Malays to find good omens. The Eskimo candidate for the office of *angekok* goes through a very stringent course of fasting. “So long,” says Tylor, “as fasting is continued as a religious rite, so long its consequence in morbid mental exaltation will continue the old and savage doctrine that morbid phantasy is supernatural experience. Bread and meat would have robbed the ascetic of many an angel’s visit, the opening of the refectory door must many a time have closed the gates of heaven.” Various notions seem to be combined in the origin of the practice. The early Christians gave the reason that food and drink were a favourite medium for the entrance of devils into the body. Many cases from savage custom seem to be intended to prevent the entrance of deleterious influences.

A corollary to this in higher culture is the idea that fasting renders a man more worthy, because more pure, to enter into the presence of his deity, or to receive his body. Fasting always precedes those rites of Communion which are so marked a feature of all religions. Thus the Burmese fast from July to October, during the time of ploughing and sowing, before the communion of the first-fruits. Frazer regards Lent as a continuation under Christian auspices of a similar agricultural ritual practice. Continence is often practised by the savage in order to secure victory in battle, or, as is the case with fasting, to promote the growth of the crops. The idea behind the first custom is, that he thereby retains his strength; in the second there is added the principle of sympathy, which is often applied to the opposite method, in which the act of procreation is supposed to influence sympathetically the propagation of the seed.

There is no doubt that prayer is one of the essentials of religion, and that its practice has been universal, though among the lower races prayer to a supreme being is hardly known. Sacrifice, on the other hand, which is popularly supposed to be the chief characteristic of heathen religions, is rarely met with below the higher savage strata—among the lowest savages it does not occur. We do not hear of it among the Australians or the Fuegians. Human sacrifice, whether as atonement or as the killing of a god, is, with a few exceptions, such as the Meriah of the Khonds, only found at a comparatively high level of culture, as amongst the Aztecs and Semites.

Turning now to the objective side of religion, we may first deal with some analogies to Christian cosmology and eschatology. The belief in a Being who created the world is, as we shall see later, probably universal. At present we may note that it is a very frequent article even in the creed of the lowest races. The natives of Victoria believe that the earth was made by Pund-jel, the bird-creator. The Bushmen say that Cagn, the mantis-creator, “gave orders and caused all things to appear”; the Pimas relate that the earth was made by a powerful being, and at first appeared “like a spider’s web.” The Ahts have a demiurge Quawteaht, who is also their forefather, the first Aht. This identification is common. The Mordvins, Dyaks, the Yaos, and many African peoples, the Quiches, Winnebagos, and many American tribes, believe in a creator, who is also a Supreme Being. The Maoris speak of creation from nothing. In *Manu* we read of the “self-existent Lord who with a thought created the waters, and deposited in them a golden egg in which he himself is born as Brahm, the progenitor of all the worlds.” In the Parsi belief, the Good Principle, Ahura-Mazda, having by strategy got rid of the Evil Principle for a time, created the sky, earth, water, vegetable and animal life, in a period fixed at three hundred and sixty-five days.



The creation of man from dust or clay is a belief found among the Maoris, Samoans, Pelewans, Tahitians, Dyaks, Kumis, Kaffirs, Pimas, and Eskimo. In Mangaia, "the woman of the abyss" made a child from a piece of flesh cut from her own side. The Biblical Eden may be connected with the Persian, situated in Iran and of matchless beauty. We may compare with the story of the temptation of Eve the belief, so widely diffused through all stages of culture, in the "demon lover" who takes the form of a snake. Buddhism has its story of the Fall: men were glorious beings until "the unhappy hour when, tasting a delicious scum that formed upon the surface of the earth, they fell into evil, and in time became degraded to eat rice, to bear children, to build houses, to divide property, and to establish caste." The common practice of giving and sharing food as a love-charm may be analogous to the story of Eve and the apple. The result, knowledge of good and evil, receives here a psychological parallel in the primitive theory of the union of the sexes. Many savage myths, such as those of the Dog-rib Indians, the Cingalese and Congo races, and the Australians, ascribe the origin of death to the breaking of a taboo, thus showing, as does all savage and early thought, the idea that death is not natural to man. Here, too, is to be noted the first conception of sin as disobedience. Blackfeet Indians relate of their Creator Napi, "All things that he had made understood him when he spoke to them—birds, animals, and people"; man and woman were created out of clay; "the folly of the woman introduced death."

The Andamanese, Society Islanders and Fijians, say that the world was once drowned because of the wickedness of men. Traditions of a great flood are common in many parts of the world, as in Australia, South-West Asia, New Guinea, Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia, North and South America. Andree considers the story not universal; in Africa it is lacking, and in Europe it is only found in Greece, where it is probably of Semitic origin. In Hindu myth, Manu, the ancestor of the human race, was rescued by Vishnu from the universal deluge. In the form of a fish the god towed the ark through the water and secured it to a crag until the flood abated. The representation of the Flood on the Deluge Tablets of Assur-bani-pal is well known; as also that of the Ark on coins of Apamea in Asia Minor.

The rainbow is often regarded in early story as a bridge to the upper world. Australians and Winnebagos identify the sky with Heaven. In higher culture we have beliefs like that of German folklore, in which the souls of the just are led by guardian-angels across the rainbow to Paradise. A Central African people has this description of the Supreme Being—"God in space, and the rainbow-sign across." As a rule, though the sky is Heaven to many races, human souls do not live there after death. North American Indians, South Sea Islanders, Maoris, and Zulus regard the sky as a solid firmament, much like the ancient Jewish conception, "strong as a molten mirror, with its windows through which the rain pours down in deluge from the reservoirs above, windows which in late Rabbinical tradition were made by taking out two stars." The Dantesque account which Virgil gives of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory, was derived from Plato, who learnt the belief from the Greek mysteries. Brahmanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam have their heavens and subterranean hells of purgatory and punishment. According to the Hindu doctrine the spirit is led before the judgment seat of Yama, and is there confronted with his Recorder, who reads out his good and bad deeds, by which he is judged. Similar is the teaching of the Avesta. The judgment and weighing of souls before Osiris is familiar to us in the Egyptian "Book of the Dead." The belief in Heaven and Hell was well defined in ancient Mexico and Peru. Plato's doctrine of purgatory is found in Buddhism: the torments of hell do not last for ever; but after a time the souls pass into the bodies of animals and gradually mount upwards till they reach the human state. According to the North American belief the Great Spirit receives good warriors after death into his heaven. The Rarotongans have an ancestral deity to whose heaven the dead find their way. The retribution-theory, however, is hardly found in the lower stages of culture, and Hell, as a fiery abyss, is entirely unknown in savage belief.

In Brazil we see the underworld God, who places good warriors in Paradise, contrasting with Aygnan, the evil deity, who removes base and cowardly souls. Here we come to Dualism, which is well recognized

in various forms throughout human culture from the earliest period. The Yaos have an evil angel, “a child or subject of Mtanga,” the Supreme Being. The North American Indians believe in two opposing principles, the Good Mind and the Bad Mind. The Great Spirit, *Kitchi Manitu*, and the Evil, *Matchi Manitu*, are perhaps due to missionary teaching. The Malagasy have two creative Gods—Zamhor, the creator of good, and Nyang, the creator of evil, and offer supplications only to the latter. The Australian Pund-jel had his enemy, the Crow; the American Yehl, his Khanukh, just as Osiris was opposed by Set. The Larrakeah tribe in Australia believe in a good creator Marrangarra; in some accounts he has a demiurge, subject to him—a belief resembling that of the Gnostics. “It is curious,” says Lang, “to observe how savage creeds often shift the responsibility for evil from the Supreme Creator, entirely beneficent, on to a subordinate deity.” In West Africa the belief in a Power of Evil is well defined, while all over the world we come upon multitudes of mischievous spirits. There are dualistic myths of two brothers among the Red Indians and in Pentecost Island. Farrer ingeniously suggested that the common motive of the tales of Cain and Abel, Romulus and Remus, found also in Tonga and the Hervey Islands, in India, and among the Eskimo and Iroquois, is an attempt to account for the obvious dualism of nature. The Hebrew Satan, it is generally held, was borrowed by the Jews during the exile, together with the belief in angels and the doctrine of the Resurrection. Persian Zoroastrianism supplied the standard example of dualism in religious theory, with its Ahura-Mazda, the Principle of Good, and Anra-Mainyu, the Principle of Evil.

Before dealing with theistic analogies, we may refer to the traces of sun-worship which have been pointed out in the Christian system. A good view of the chief of these and of the typical rationalist inferences from them is furnished by Dupuis. He quotes a passage from the “Avesta,” which speaks of evil having been brought into the world. This evil, he infers, is winter, and he adds, “Who is to redeem us from winter? The god of spring, or the sun, when it enters the constellation *Aries*, the Ram, that is, the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. True it is that the Jewish fable does not assert that the snake caused winter, killing life in nature, as the Persian does, but it is stated that man felt the need of clothes and was obliged to work. . . . The god of day is the offspring of the winter solstice, born at the moment on 25 December, when the day begins sensibly to wax. Mithras and Christ are born on the same day, the sun’s birthday; Mithras in a grotto, Bacchus and Jupiter in a cave, and Christ in a stable, or according to some apocryphal Gospels, in a cave. The *magi*, priests of the Sun, worship the Saviour; a star, astronomy being their science, acquaints them of the birth of the God, and this God, the Lord Jesus Christ, rests in the arms of the Heavenly Virgin (*Virgo Cœlestis* of pagan cults), whose constellation rises on 25 December. Here the young God is combined with her. Thus she bears him, remaining a virgin. The vernal equinox is the time when Christ triumphs and repairs what men have suffered by winter. The Easter feast is therefore called among Jews and Christians the feast of the Passover, for in the sign of the Ram the rule passes over from the god of darkness to the god of light, and the star of light, restoring life to nature, reappears in our hemisphere. The spring feast, Easter, fell originally on 25 March. On the 23rd Christ died, and on the 25th rises again. This death and this resurrection recur in all solar myths. Osiris loses his life through Typhon, and is revived by Isis. Adonis has his death and resurrection, likewise Bacchus and the Phrygian Attis, and always at the same season, the commencement of spring, of the transition to the victory of light by longer days over shorter nights. *Agnus occisus ab origine mundi*, although the Egyptians and Persians had the bull where we have the lamb, because in the course of time the equinox has become displaced by its precession from the lamb, or *Aries*, to that of the bull, *Taurus*. The Lamb is the most ancient image of the Christian God, the Lamb at the foot of the Cross. Not until the year 680 was it determined that it should be the Man upon the Cross.” Christ, in a word, is the Sun, and the Twelve Apostles are the Signs of the Zodiac.

We shall not have occasion to refer to this hypothesis again, and may therefore criticize it here. The work of Dupuis is interesting, but is discredited along with the extravagances of the solar mythologists

whom he anticipated. It is now recognized that sun-worship proper is of comparatively late and rare occurrence. One of the most perfect examples of a cult of the sun, that of the Mexican god Quetzalcohuatl, is thus dismissed by Tylor: "The author, after ten years' more experience, would now rather say more cautiously, not that Quetzalcohuatl is the sun personified, but that his story contains episodes seemingly drawn from sun-myth." Mythology is not religion. This remark is applicable to many similar cases; in most of these, it may be suggested, there are two sources of solar influence. In the first place, we have an early mode of calendar-making, which thus imposed upon various deities various meteorological attributes; in the second place, there is a reverent recognition of the source of light which prompts many a custom, afterwards wrongly ascribed to sun-worship, and which is one of many similar psychological phenomena in early thought. Further, it is at least doubtful whether any deity originated from a personification of natural objects. We may thus compare with the orientation found in Christian worship the Sioux custom of looking towards the sun when they smoked, and of presenting the calumet to him, saying, "Smoke, Sun!" The Natchez chiefs at sunrise smoked to the East. The Brahman adores the sun every morning. But none of such customs is sun-worship proper. The Ainos, Guarayos, Yumanas, and some Australians bury the dead with the face turned to the East. Criticism has explained the mode in which Christianity, always ready to take over from the pagan systems any custom that was innocuous, adopted the Roman winter-solstice festival as the birthday of Christ, and the day of the Sun, *dies Solis invicti* of Mithraism, as the Christian Sabbath.

The belief in one Supreme God, long supposed to appear only at a high stage of culture and to be confined to a few of the great religions of the world, is not uncommonly found obtaining among lower races. The Australians of the South-East, the Bushmen and Hottentots, the Andamanese and the Fuegians, all of the lowest types of humanity, acknowledge one Supreme Being; the Polynesian Tangaroa, the Melanesian Qat, the Unkulunkulu of the Zulus, the Torngarsuk of the Eskimo are familiar expressions of monotheism. The Tongans and Fijians, the Kamtchadales, the Dinkas, Dahomans, Bechuanas, Ovaherero, and the Fangs have the belief well defined. The "Great Spirit" of the North American Indians has been to some extent discredited by Tylor, as a loan from missionaries, but there would seem to have been some substratum of the belief before it was developed by Christian teaching. The Central Australians, however, cannot certainly be credited with a definite belief in a Supreme Being.

The metaphysical conception of the Christian Trinity was formed under the influence of Alexandrian philosophy. Philo defines God as a Trinity. Lao-Tsze in China worked out a metaphysical trinity in unity. The Kabbalah speaks of grades of Triads and Trinities; the highest Trinity of Triads, which comprises all the *Sephiroth*, or Intelligences, consists of the mystical Crown, King and Queen. The Talmud makes frequent use of the principle; for instance, it explains the three letters of the name of Adam as standing for Adam, David, and the Messiah. Three is universally a sacred number, the idea being confirmed by many a fact ranging from the combination of father, mother, and child up to the tripartite "ideas" of Hegel. Many a religion has its Holy Family. In the "Gospel of the Hebrews" Christ refers to the Holy Ghost as His mother. Early psychology often arranged the personality of man in three divisions. The arrangement of deities in triads is frequent in theology, as amongst the Babylonians, Egyptians, Etruscans, the Finns and Teutons, Greeks and Neoplatonists, but a triad is not a trinity. The famous Hindu *trimurti* is a better parallel. It consists of Brahma and Sarasvati, Vishnu and Lakshmi, Siva and Kali, three persons with their consorts. Brahma is the creator, Vishnu the preserver, and Siva the destroyer. The poet Kalidasa thus attempts to show their connexion in a style similar to that of the Athanasian Creed:—

"In these three Persons the One God was shown,  
Each first in place, each last, not one alone;  
Of Siva, Vishnu, Brahma, each may be  
First, second, third, among the Blessed Three."

The early conception of the spiritual world shows several points of connexion with the completed Christian doctrine, as may be seen in the account of the soul. Some discussion of the connexion will be given later. Meanwhile, we may note the prevalence of two early ideas, that the soul appears in the form of a bird, and that wind or breath is a manifestation of the soul and of spiritual agency generally. The old Syrians worshipped the dove. In Egyptian belief "the spirit of life" hovered in the form of a bird above the body of Osiris.

The belief of the ancient Hebrews in the power of the name of God, *Shem Hamphoras*, the ineffable name, of which their conception was no less concrete than the savage notion of the personal name as an entity, is brought out in the stories of Jacob and Manoah, in the commandment forbidding the taking of God's name in vain, in the working of miracles by the name of God in Talmudic accounts and by the name of Jesus in the New Testament. The power of the divine name is recognized in the same way by the Hindu, Mohammedan, and ancient Egyptian religions. The Jews conceived of the wisdom of God and the breath of God as divine hypostases; this idea, together with that of the Christian Logos, has analogies in the savage doctrine of *mana*.

As the early apologists pointed out, the pagan Greeks and Romans had their Sons of the Gods. Most "heroes," such as Prometheus, and many gods, such as Asclepius, were Sons of God. In Philo's system the Logos is the First Begotten Son of God. On temple-inscriptions at Ephesus, which St. Paul may have seen, Augustus is styled "the Son of God." The belief is found not rarely in the lower races. The Kamtchadales say that the first man was the son of the Creator, much as Adam according to Holy Writ was the Son of God. The Kurnai Tundun, who presides over the initiation ceremonies, is the son or deputy of their Supreme Being. The Fijian supreme god Degei has sons who are mediators.

The Greeks too and Western Asiatics had their Saviours. Attis is called in inscriptions *sahularis*, a term reminding us of the "saving victim." In the second half of the first century a Saviour for the Roman world was confidently looked for from the East, and was generally identified with Vespasian. Hammurabi was the Akkadian Saviour destined to come again. It is curious that his laws, the oldest code in the world, have recently been brought to light. The Zoroastrian Saviour will end the strife between Ormuzd and Ahriman. Mithra is a Saviour and a Mediator. The Hindus regard Krishna and Buddha as Saviours. Buddha will come again to complete the redemption of the world. The Hindus believe that Kalki, an incarnation of Vishnu, will appear at the close of the fourth or *Kali* age, when the world has become wholly depraved, for the final destruction of the wicked and the restoration of a new age of purity. He will be revealed in the sky, seated on a white horse, with a drawn sword in his hand. The belief in a Saviour obtained among the Babylonians and Peruvians, and in systems like Orphism and Neoplatonism. Philo describes the *Logos* as the Advocate for Man with God; he is the true High Priest, and delivers mankind from Sin. There are similar conceptions among lower races. The Messianic hope that the culture-hero will return after his death or disappearance occurs amongst the Delawares, the worshippers of Quetzalcohuatl in Mexico, of Kukulcan in Yucatan, of Viracocha in Peru, and similar stories are known in Europe, as in the legends of Charlemagne, Frederic Barbarossa, the Emperor Henry the Third, Charles the Fifth, and King Harold.

It is necessary here to return to the subject of incarnation, a belief which connects the subjective and objective sides of religion. Inspiration, which in various stages of belief is sometimes a link with incarnation, is produced in two chief ways, either by drinking blood or by inhaling the smoke of a sacred tree. Thus the priest in North Celebes drinks the blood of the sacrifice and then prophesies. But it can be produced without a special process. A Fijian priest, inspired by Degei, explained the fact thus: "My own mind departs from me, and then when it is truly gone, my god speaks by me." Inspiration and possession are practically identical with temporary incarnation, which reveals itself as supernatural knowledge or power. "This," says Frazer, "is world-wide, and a good instance is found in the priests of Mangaia, who

were called god-boxes, and delivered oracles." Bali and Cambodia supply similar cases. "The idea," he says, "of a god incarnate in human form has in it nothing very startling for early man, who sees in a man-god or a god-man only a higher degree of the same supernatural power which he arrogates in perfect good faith to himself." He distinguishes two lines along which the idea of a man-god is reached; firstly, the savage thinks a god can become incarnate in his own person; secondly, according to the world-wide belief in magic, a man-god of the magical sort is merely a man who has higher powers than other men, and from a sympathy with nature can control her. He adds that we cannot trace the distinction "with precision in practice." As to a corollary of this belief, Frazer observes: "Miracles are not regarded at this stage of thought as breaches of natural law. Not conceiving the existence of natural law, primitive man cannot conceive a breach of it. A miracle is to him merely an unusually striking manifestation of a common power." In the Marquesas there was a class of deified men who could give and withhold good harvests, and received sacrifices accordingly. Frazer regards the savage witch-doctor and sorcerer as embryo gods. Permanent incarnation is often ascribed to kings and chiefs, as in Fiji; "I am a god, Tuikilakila would say, and he believed it too." So the kings of Raiatea, Tahiti, Loango, Benin, Fernando-Po and Quitera, the Inca, the Pharaoh, the Pontiff of Iraca, the Korongs of Pelew, the dairymen of the Todas, the princes of India and of the Battas, the chiefs of Iddah, the Hovas and the Betsileo, were all divine persons, deified during their lifetime. Montezuma, himself divine, thought Cortes was an incarnation of Quetzalcohuatl. The Dalai Lama is worshipped as a "true and living god, an eternal and heavenly father." The Chinese and Japanese emperors are familiar examples, the latter monarch, the Chitome of the Congo and the high pontiff of the Zapotecs, are peculiarly instructive types; with their mystic powers and responsibilities, they are beings whose every movement influences the course of the world. Natural law is here envisaged as the arbitrary expression of personality in its most exaggerated form. Yet these persons are not autocrats; in the most literal sense they are the servants and saviours of the people. Important in connection with Christian origins are the pontiff-kings of Asia Minor, who ruled great cities like Zela, and divine incarnations, such as Attis, whose annual sacrifice was so conspicuous a feature of the religions of Western Asia. King and Priest, Man and God, all meet in this early notion of incarnation. It is well known that many Christian sects held that Christ was incarnate in every believer; a view which often comes to the surface in orthodox thought—"It is not I that speak but Christ who dwelleth in me." In the "Apocryphal Acts" one of the commonest motives of legend is the sudden transfiguration of a saint or apostle into a complete identification with Christ; in a moment of enthusiasm the believer stretches out his arms in the attitude of Christ on the Cross, and becomes for the moment, feature for feature, Christ Himself. Similarly the Brahman who performs the regular sacrifices becomes "one of the deities; he who is consecrated draws nigh to the gods and becomes one of them." In modern times self-styled Messiahs are as frequent as they were in the early centuries; the phenomenon is not always deliberate imposture, nor is it ever a "survival," but is due to the same primitive ideas, working in an unbalanced and uncritical consciousness.

As a rule man feels an instinctive need to include among his objects of worship some ideal of womanhood or motherhood. In Catholicism this want is satisfied by the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Greeks had their *Mater dolorosa* in Demeter. The *Virgo cœlestis*, Venus, Isis with the Infant Horus, are divine nursing mothers. Greek and Roman syncretised religion is full of such. Virginity is commonly ascribed to these mothers. Al-Lat, the mother of the gods, was the great goddess of the Arabs; she was a virgin or unmarried mother, and was worshipped in connexion with her son Dusares. Cybele is a familiar classical example. Artemis was both virgin and mother. Many an ancient statue of Isis and Horus is to be found in continental churches, playing the similar rôle of Mary and the Child Jesus. India has representations of Krishna nursed by his mother Devaki.

One of the commonest beliefs in all stages of culture is that of conception through intercourse with spirits. At Epidaurus, a temple-inscription states that a barren woman, in answer to her prayer, conceived by the god Asclepius. In the Aru and Babar Islands women are afraid of the evil spirit Boitai, who is wont to take the form of their husbands. In Nias, a pregnant woman who has been seduced will assert that she was ravished by a spirit.

The belief in the virgin-birth of divine persons is widely spread. It is generally regarded by students as due to a natural instinct for magnifying and investing with the marvellous the entrance into life of earth's greatest men. To be born by the ordinary physiological processes "would have seemed derogatory" to their dignity. Attis, Mithra, Buddha, and Krishna were born of virgins. Miraculous details were related of the birth of Confucius, Laou-tze, Zoroaster, Plato, and Mohammed. The belief that Augustus was born of a virgin formed part of the divine apparatus which was connected with his worship soon after its institution. In lower culture the idea is frequent. Heitsi-Eibib, the Hottentot god, was born of a virgin, who conceived by eating a certain kind of grass. In early thought no contradiction is felt in the belief that a man can have two fathers, one human and the other divine. This belief is seen in the cases of Hercules, Alexander and Augustus. Some savage races explain the birth of twins in this way; and we may compare the story of Hercules and his twin brother. The Central Australians, we are told, do not regard sexual intercourse as the direct cause of conception; it "merely, as it were, prepares the mother for the reception, and birth also, of an already formed spirit-child." They believe that the "spirits" of their remote ancestors went after death into the ground at certain defined spots, and from time to time, as opportunity offers, enter into women who pass by, whereupon conception takes place and reincarnation ensues. The folklore of all races is full of stories of miraculous conception. We must certainly add to the motive already assigned the idea that sexual functions are impure, and therefore a god or hero must be conceived and born without them. This idea appears in the story of Buddha. At his birth the trees bent over his mother, and angels assisted the delivery. On entering the world he took seven steps forward and exclaimed, "I am the chief of the world; this is my last birth." On the seventh day after his birth his mother died. The body that had contained a Buddha must run no chances of defilement. An aged saint, warned by these portents, was guided to Kapilavastu to see the Wonderful Child, and prophesied that he would become a Buddha. Of the birth of Confucius, legend relates that as his mother was ascending a hill the leaves of the trees and plants all erected themselves, and bent downwards on her return. That night she dreamed that the Black Te appeared to her and said to her: "You shall have a son, and you must bring him forth in a hollow mulberry tree." Another account places his birth in a cave; portents attended it, and fairies ministered to him. When he was born this inscription appeared on his breast: "The maker of a rule for settling the world." Of the philosopher-founder of Taouism it is related that his mother conceived him in consequence of the emotion she felt at the sight of a falling star; that for eighty-one years he remained concealed in the womb, and that at length he was born with grey hair, and possessed of divine intelligence. The popular legend of the birth of Zarathushtra is that an angel presented his father Poroshup with a glass of wine, having drunk which his wife Doghda conceived. The mother of Mohammed is said to have felt none of the usual inconveniences of pregnancy; an angel appeared and told her that she bore in her womb the Lord and prophet of her people.

A common motive in myth and legend is that the Wonderful Child is exposed to danger after birth. The Magi prophesied that the child of Cambyses' wife would dethrone Astyages. The king accordingly sent to slay him. It has been noted that Jewish Messianic thought at one time centred on Cyrus. Similar stories were told of Telephus, Perseus, Romulus and Remus. The bad king figures in the parallel story told of Krishna. Besides the wonder-demanding tendency, there is here a further reason to be found in a more normal tendency of early thought. This, in a late form, is seen in the modern Egyptian fear that the evil eye may injure the young child. There is a world-wide apprehension that evil spirits may injure both

mother and child. The Javanese infant is carried about by female relatives, while a stone cylinder dressed up in its clothes occupies the cradle. Sexual taboo has played its part in forming this tendency. In the Aru Islands and Amboina men are excluded at childbirth, the reason given being that their presence hinders delivery. Similar ideas have produced the curious practices of the Couvade and Teknomy. The Erukala-Vandhu husband puts on his wife's clothes to protect her during childbirth; and the Bechuanas called Mrs. Livingstone Mrs. Robert after the birth of her son of that name. These ideas are obviously generated by the critical nature of the phenomena with which they deal. Anxiety creates concrete and personal danger. The Innocents find an analogy in the islands between Celebes and New Guinea, where soon after the birth—at the name-giving, for example, or if the child is sick—the children of the village are invited to the house and feasted. The Watubella mother bathes ceremonially shortly after delivery, accompanied by eight or ten children. These shout continually, “in order to divert the attention of the evil spirits from the child.” The Thlinkets, at a ceremony similar to baptism, hold a festival “in honour of children.” Slaves to the number of the children concerned are set at liberty. In these last cases we see the working of the principles of substitution and sympathy. Parallels to the flight into Egypt are found in many stories of wonderful or divine children; an analogy may be perhaps detected in the common custom according to which the wife runs home soon after marriage. A similar custom is called “the flight” by modern Egyptians.

The most salient feature of Frazer's “Golden Bough” consists in the analogies there presented to the Atonement and Death and Resurrection of Christ. In his theory of killing the divine king or god-man there are combined two principles which he ascribes to early religious thought and practice. The first is that, as our life depends on that of the divine person whose virtue alone gives us our being and keeps the world together, it is very important that his powers should not be allowed to decay. The only method of preventing the natural enfeeblement of age is to kill him while he is still vigorous, just as some savages commit suicide before old age comes on, in order that their life in the other world, a replica of this, may not be impaired by decrepitude. It is no less important, however, that his soul should be transferred to a vigorous successor. Though no direct proof of this transference is forthcoming, we may compare the transmission of Roman imperium from kings to consuls, and from consuls to emperors, the transmission of divine right—*le roi est mort, vive le roi*—and that of spiritual power in the apostolic succession. The other principle is the world-wide desire for deliverance from evil and sin, and the belief that sin and evil can be transferred to others. The killing of the divine being is exemplified in the case of the Chitomé of West Africa. “The people of Congo believed that if their pontiff the Chitomé were to die a natural death, the world would perish, and the earth, which he alone sustained by his power and merit, would immediately be annihilated. Accordingly, when he fell ill and seemed likely to die, the man who was destined to be his successor entered the pontiff's house with a rope or a club and strangled or clubbed him to death. As soon as the king of Unyoro falls seriously ill or begins to be decrepit, he is killed by his wives; for if ever the king should die a natural death the throne will pass away from the dynasty.” Similarly in agricultural worships the spirit of vegetation is killed either in a human incarnation or in effigy, by way of getting rid of the old god, or of the decrepit half—winter or death—of his dual personality, for he is both the old and the new corn, and a new incarnation or effigy is necessary for his revival. Thus Adonis was slain each spring and rose again the next day, and Attis, either incarnate in the priest who bore that name, or in effigy, was slain each 28th of March, “the day of blood,” and his effigy was attached to the sacred pine tree, one of his symbols or “bodies,” and kept till next year. The same was the case with Osiris, who died and rose again each spring, and whose pillar the *Ded*, with cross pieces at the top—in which some may see a parallel to the Cross of Christ—seems to have been originally a tree, like that of Attis. It was called his “backbone.” Dionysus died a violent death each year, and rose again. His image was a stake, originally a tree. Proserpine died and rose again yearly. The closest analogies are to be found in a

well-known custom of the Khonds, and the human sacrifices of the Aztecs. The *Meriah* of the Khonds, a human victim, who was killed to make the crops grow, was regarded as divine. He had to be purchased, bought with a price, and devoted to his fate when a child. The parents were consoled with these words, "Your child has died that all the world may live." On the day of sacrifice he was taken in a procession. As it was essential that he should offer no resistance, he was drugged with opium. (One thinks of the "willing victim" that "opened not his mouth," and the offering of wine and myrrh on the Cross.) He was tied to a post, anointed and crowned with flowers, and adored. After being killed, his flesh was cut up and buried in the fields to fertilize the soil. "Nowhere," says Frazer, "does the custom of killing the human representative of a god appear to have been carried out so systematically and on so extensive a scale as in Mexico. For example, at the annual festival of the great god Tezcatlipoca, which fell about Easter or a few days later, a young man was chosen to be the living image of Tezcatlipoca for a whole year. He had to be of unblemished body, and he was carefully trained to sustain his lofty part with becoming grace and dignity. During the year he was lapped in luxury, and the king himself took care that the future victim was apparelled in gorgeous attire, "for already he esteemed him as a god. . . . All who saw him fell on their knees before him and adored him, and he graciously acknowledged their homage. . . . For five days before the sacrifice divine honours were showered on him more abundantly than ever. The king remained in his palace while the whole court went after the destined victim. . . . On the last day the young man, still attended by his pages, was ferried across the lake in a covered barge to a small and lonely temple, which, like the Mexican temples in general, rose in the form of a pyramid. As he ascended the stairs of the temple he broke at every step one of the flutes on which he had played in the days of his glory. On reaching the summit he was seized and held down on a block of stone, while a priest cut open his breast with a stone knife, and plucking out his heart offered it to the Sun. His head was hung among the skulls of previous victims, and his legs and arms were cooked and prepared for the table of the lords. His place was immediately filled up by another young man, who for a year was treated with the same profound respect, and at the end of it shared the same fate,"

It follows from the nature of the case that the real divine being would find or have found for him some way of escaping his doom. Two of such methods are employed: the custom of setting up a temporary or mock sovereign, and that of putting the king's son to death in his stead. The former of these is a widely spread custom; but of course neither occurs in the more primitive stages of culture, where kings and chiefs are yet unknown. Once a year the king of Cambodia abdicated for three days, and in his stead King February reigned. This man was distantly akin to the royal family. He wore a mock crown and regalia, and paced in procession round the capital. The Siamese appoint a temporary king for two periods of three days annually. In the first he has the right of plundering the shops, and the duty of cutting the first furrow. In the second he has to stand on one foot for three hours, the successful performance of which duty is a good omen and portends stability to the state and the throne. In Upper Egypt, on to September, the governor is deposed and a mock king administers judgment in his stead, to be burned in effigy after three days. In Jambi a temporary king occupies the throne for one day at the beginning of a new reign. He is of a family akin to the royal house. The Saturnalia of ancient Rome, as is shown by the case of the Christian Dasius at Durostolum, originally ended with the sacrifice of a mock king, who was paraded with all pomp and ceremony beforehand. The sacrifice of the first-born, whether in theory or practice, was common amongst the Semites. Examples of the royal and popular practice are to be seen in the story of the king of Moab and the passing of children through the fire to Moloch. Later the first-born were redeemed. Frazer deduces the origin of the Passover from a Semitic custom of annually sacrificing the first-born. "The nights of the Passover," he says, "must have been like the nights called Evil on the West Coast of Africa, in Dahomey and Ashantee, when the people keep indoors because the executioners are going about the



streets and the heads of the human victims are falling in the king's palace." The lamb would be substituted later for the first-born son.

Frazer regards the reality of this human sacrifice as certain. The evidence, however, is not convincing, and it seems better to suppose with Wellhausen and Robertson Smith that the "redemption of the first-born does not prove previous sacrifice." There is no doubt that the idea of substitution is of very early origin and of universal prevalence, while human sacrifice arises comparatively late in well-developed cults, and is only sporadic and abnormal. It would be very natural on the part of later writers to infer from the sacrifice of effigies and proxies and the "redemption" of those chiefly concerned, that a royal sacrifice lay behind the effigy, the sacrifice of the first-born behind that of the substitute.

The custom of the periodical expulsion of evils, either immediate or by means of a scapegoat, is abundantly illustrated in "The Golden Bough." This expulsion is frequently annual, and is sometimes preceded by confession of sins, as among the Iroquois, and attended by Saturnalian proceedings and general festivity. Good examples are to be found in Bali, Cambodia, Tonquin, among the Hos and the tribes of the Hindoo Koosh. The scapegoat is sometimes an animal, sometimes a human being. The people of Kumaon use an animal; the lamb of the Madis is probably a scapegoat. A tribe on the Niger annually sacrificed two human beings to take away the sins of the people. The human scapegoat of the Gonds is protector of the crops, and is annually slain in order to take away the sins of the community. The Jalno of Lhasa is doubtless the successor of a temporary king and a substitute for the Dalai Lama. "Thus," says Frazer, "through the mist of ages unilluminated by the lamp of history, the tragic figure of the pope of Buddhism—God's vicar on earth for Asia—looms dim and sad as the man-god who bore his people's sorrows, the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for the sheep." The Greek word for "passion" is regularly applied to the sufferings and death of divine victims like Dionysus-Zagreus, Osiris, Attis, and Adonis. The human scapegoat is often beaten, the object probably being to dispel malignant influences. Thus the criminal in ancient Babylon who played the part of the god was scourged before being crucified. Similar accounts of beating the scapegoat are found in connexion with Greek human sacrifices of sin-dispelling intention.

There are, however, a great many festivals of the Saturnalian type in which there is no idea of a substitute for the real monarch. In such cases the scapegoat is no reflex of a king, but acquires a sort of elevation from his circumstances. He is a proxy for the people as a whole; he is their substitute, who takes their calamities upon him. There is here a double idea: he represents them on the principles of substitution and make-believe, he takes away their troubles on the same principles, and because of the desire for a periodic change of life and of personal identity. Why is he mocked and ill-treated? The actual word "mock," with its double meaning, preserves the answer. They deserve the reviling for their sins, but he as their proxy will receive it; it is a convenient method of transference of responsibility. Moreover, by a natural confusion, he represents these evils in his own person, particularly those such as disease, which easily admit of identification with a person; as such he is to be scourged and mocked, as they would gladly treat the actual evils. Finally, it may be noted, as a principle important for the social aspect of religion, that these Saturnalia, with their inversion of all social rules and positions, are in their earliest form a periodic breaking of taboo, the inner meaning and issue of which is, first, the taking up of a new life, and, secondly, the promotion of union and harmony; the eating of new food securing both results.

The striking theory of Frazer as to the Crucifixion is an application of these Saturnalian customs. Wendland had noted the similarity between the treatment of the Christian soldier Dasius at Durostolum, when chosen to represent the Saturn of the year, and the treatment to which Christ was subjected before his death. A typical example of a Saturnalia with a mock king is found in the Sacæa of ancient Babylon. During this five days' festival "masters and servants changed places, the servants giving orders and the masters obeying them. A prisoner condemned to death was dressed in the king's robes, seated on the

king's throne, allowed to issue whatever commands he pleased, to eat, drink, and enjoy himself, and to lie with the king's concubines. But at the end of the five days he was stripped of his royal robes, scourged, and hanged or crucified." This festival may have been continued in Persia, and thence taken over by the Jews as their feast of Purim. At any rate, Purim itself has all the marks of a regular Saturnalia. The Book of Esther was obviously written to explain the origin of Purim. The festival was held the 14 and 18 Adar, corresponding to March, and was preceded by a fast. Even so late as the seventeenth century the rioting and licence were described thus: "Men and women exchanged clothes, and ran about like mad, in defiance of the Mosaic law." There was an old saw as to drinking at Purim, "till one could not distinguish between 'Cursed be Haman' and 'Blessed be Mordecai.'" The effigy of Haman was burnt or destroyed. Honorius and Theodosius passed a decree forbidding the burning of these effigies on a cross, because it seemed a parody of the death of Christ; and when we read of the riot which occurred in 416 at Inmestar between the Jews and Christians, because the former pretended to crucify a Christian child, and remember the repeated accusations brought against the Jews from early down to comparatively recent times, of ritual murders perpetrated chiefly at Easter, it seems a plausible inference that some human victim took the place of Haman at Purim and was hanged or crucified. He would be a malefactor as at the Sacæa. We need not follow out the intricacies of the argument, but will merely note that Haman represents the "temporary king or mortal god who was put to death at the Sacæa"; and "his rival Mordecai represents the other temporary king, who at the death of his predecessor was invested with the royal insignia, and exhibited to the people as the god come to life again." The analogy of similar rites necessitates the resurrection of the dead god. Now the passion of Christ resembles very closely "the treatment of the mock king of the Sacæa." The description of the mockery by St. Matthew is the fullest. It runs thus:—

"Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. And they stripped him and put on him a scarlet robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head. And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe from off him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."

Compare with this the treatment of the mock king of the Sacæa as it is described by Dio Chrysostom:—

"They take one of the prisoners condemned to death and seat him upon the king's throne, and give him the king's raiment, and let him lord it and drink and run riot. . . . But afterwards they strip and scourge and crucify him."

Frazer justly observes of the Gospel narrative: "There are so many scattered hints and indications of something unusual, so many broken lines seemingly converging towards the cross on Calvary, that it is worth while to follow them up and see where they lead us." He suggests then that the Jews may have "regularly compelled a condemned criminal to play the tragic part, and that Christ thus perished in the character of Haman. The resemblance between the hanged Haman and the crucified Christ struck the early Christians themselves."

As to a further point, he continues: "If Jesus was the Haman of the year, where was the Mordecai? Perhaps we may find him in Barabbas." What, he asks, was the reason of the custom of releasing a prisoner at the festival? It might very well be to perform the ignominious service of "going about the streets rigged out in tawdry splendour, with a tinsel crown on his head and a sham sceptre in his hand, preceded and followed by all the tag-rag and bobtail of the town hooting, jeering, and breaking coarse jests at his expense, while some pretended to salaam his mock majesty, and others belaboured the donkey on which he rode." Thus "the Beardless One," the mock king of old Persia, may have paraded. A remarkable story given by Philo is to the effect that "when Agrippa, the grandson of Herod, had received the crown of

Judæa from Caligula at Rome, the new king passed through Alexandria on his way to his own country. The disorderly populace of that great city, animated by a hearty dislike of his nation, seized the opportunity of venting their spite by publicly defaming and ridiculing the Jewish monarch. Among other things, they laid hold of a certain harmless lunatic named Carabas, who used to roam the streets stark naked, the butt and laughing-stock of urchins and idlers. This poor wretch they set up in a public place, clapped a paper crown on his head, thrust a broken reed into his hand by way of a sceptre, and having huddled a mat instead of a royal robe about his naked body, and surrounded him with a guard of bludgeon-men, they did obeisance to him as to a king, and made a show of taking his opinion on questions of law and policy. To point the jest unmistakably at the Syrian king Agrippa, the bystanders raised cries of 'Marin! Marin!' which they understood to be the Syrian word for 'lord.'"

The mockery closely resembles the mockery of Christ; and the business would receive point if its perpetrators were familiar with a "Jewish practice of setting up a sham king on certain occasions," and if also the lunatic was himself a Jew. The conjecture, then, is that Carabas, being meaningless in Hebrew, is a mistake for Barabbas, and that one of the titles of the mock king of the Jews was regularly Barabbas. "It was customary, we may suppose, with the Jews at Purim, or perhaps occasionally at Passover, to employ two prisoners to act the parts respectively of Haman and Mordecai in the passion-play which formed a central feature of the festival. Both men paraded for a short time in the insignia of royalty, but their fates were different; for while at the end of the performance the one who played Haman was hanged or crucified, the one who personated Mordecai, and bore in popular parlance the title of Barabbas, was allowed to go free. Pilate, perceiving the trumpety nature of the charges brought against Jesus, tried to persuade the Jews to let him play the part of Barabbas, which would have saved his life; but the merciful attempt failed, and Jesus perished on the cross in the character of Haman. The description of his last triumphal ride into Jerusalem reads almost like an echo of that brilliant progress through the streets of Susa which Haman aspired to and Mordecai accomplished; and the account of the raid which he immediately afterwards made upon the stalls of the hucksters and money-changers in the temple, may raise a question whether we have not here a trace of those arbitrary rights over property which it has been customary on such occasions to accord to the temporary king." Barabbas, "the Son of the Father," would be a natural title for a man who died as a substitute for his father, the king. Originally the Haman would bear this name, but the two characters being originally one, the first as dead and the second as rising again, the substitute, "whether in sober fact or in pious fiction," would still be the Barabbas or "Son of that divine Father who generously gave his own son to die for the world." As is well known, some accounts give Jesus as the forename of Barabbas.

One principle which appears in this explanation was long ago recognized by the great theologian Baur. He inferred that the execution of criminals, as a sanguinary expiation for the people, belonged to the essential significance of the Passover, as a feast of expiation; hence the custom, noticed by the Evangelists, of liberating a prisoner at the feast, was only the reverse side to the execution of another, presenting the same relation as that between the two goats and the two sparrows in the Jewish offerings of atonement and purification. Olshausen also noted the analogy between Christ and Barabbas—"all that was essential in the Saviour appears in the murderer as caricature."

Thus the crucifixion, with its preceding mockery, was not "a punishment specially devised for Christ, but was merely the fate that annually befell the malefactor who played Haman." Frazer claims that his suggestion "appears to go some way towards relieving the Gospel narrative of certain difficulties." Thus there was nothing to hinder Pilate, who had the power of life and death, from saving an innocent man. It was not likely, again, that in the reign of the sombre and jealous Tiberius a Roman governor would venture even in mockery to put up a superscription relating to a "King of the Jews."

The theory also helps to explain the remarkably rapid diffusion of Christianity in Asia Minor, for there “the mournful death and happy resurrection of a divine being appear to have been annually celebrated” in many parts. The step by which the Jews crushed Jesus “impressed upon what had been hitherto mainly an ethical mission the character of a divine revelation, culminating in the passion and death of the incarnate Son of a heavenly Father. In this form the story of the life and death of Jesus exerted an influence which it could never have had if the great teacher had died, as is commonly supposed, the death of a vulgar malefactor. It shed round the Cross on Calvary a halo of divinity which multitudes saw and worshipped afar off; the blow struck on Golgotha set a thousand expectant strings vibrating in unison wherever men had heard the old, old story of the dying and risen god.”

An attempt has been made to invalidate this theory of the Crucifixion by pressing the difficulty of the dates, and to refute the whole conception of the “slain god” by pointing out the incompleteness of the evidence as to the actuality of the custom of Deicide. The Purim-theory itself, however, having a twofold basis, can rely on the psychological analogies if the historical links are proved wanting. But in the wider theory there are two points which apparently have been overlooked. When we study these customs of slaying the divine man we find that the purpose which Frazer infers, namely, to enable his life to continue vigorous and unimpaired in a successor, is rarely even implied, while comparative evidence shows that the normal object of such murders is to *transfer the life of the god, not to a successor, but to his worshippers*. It is a firm principle in the mind of the savage, an inevitable fallacy due to the instinct of possession, that the life of anyone slain by him becomes his own property. According to early logic, when a man is killed, his life, now invisible, must have passed into the slayer, who, if he desires its acquisition, will ensure it by drinking the blood of the dead man, or by performing some similar act. Put in another way, the idea is this: while a man still lives his life is difficult to control and handle; one cannot absorb a man’s life except by eating him, and in order to eat him he must first be killed. The main point is that the killing is for the sake of the worshippers. When a Watchandi kills his first man the spirit of the dead takes up his abode near his liver, and becomes his servant and monitor of future events. The facts of “head-hunting,” so called, well illustrate this. It is believed that the original owner of the head becomes the minister of his slayer, in some cases that he will serve him in the life to come. The Red Indian puts the life of an enemy at the disposal of a dead friend by placing his scalp over the grave. This principle, it may be noted, is perhaps the original source of sacrifice. It is here mentioned merely to draw attention to the earlier and more regular course of primitive religious ideas. In the second place, it is very doubtful whether a real king or real god (as distinguished from effigies and proxies) is ever regarded as a scapegoat, who bears the sins of the people. Lastly—to return to the Purim-theory—it is to be borne in mind, when we consider the elusive nature of the evidence, that the theory itself, like the theory of Jewish human sacrifice, may be a piece of scientific myth-making. Tylor tells a good story of the Paulicians. About the year 700 they were violently accused by the Patriarch of Armenia; he alleged that they worshipped the sun, “that they mix wheaten flour with the blood of infants, and therewith celebrate their communion, and when they have slain by the worst of deaths a boy, the first born of his mother, thrown from hand to hand among them by turns, they venerate him in whose hand the child expires as having attained to the first dignity of the sect.” Now the good patriarch had got hold of an account of what was really a game, the prototype of the well-known *petit bonhomme*, and with a remarkable lack both of knowledge and humour, inferred that it was an actual rite. One can imagine a similar mistake arising about the festival of Guy Fawkes, and it is not impossible that the horse-play of Purim has been similarly misunderstood.

We may thus take it that the death or ritual slaying of the divine man has for its primary object the acquisition of his qualities by communion in his flesh and blood. But as for its secondary object, atonement, effected by substitution and by putting upon him the sins of the people, we cannot include this. It belongs to a parallel, but not identical notion. If we combine these ideas, however, and include

the resurrection of the god in each worshipper, the whole series of beliefs becomes a complete working system, in which the interests of both human and divine participants are fully satisfied and mutually dependent. Lastly, to sum up the hints we have interspersed in the discussion of theophagy, we may put it that, in the normal practice, the sacrifice is not originally a god or divine person, but is divinized after being slain. The reason for this divinization is to be found in the psychical reflex resulting from the assimilation of his flesh and blood.

Analogies to the slaying of the man-god have been already given. The rule, illustrated by Frazer, that the divine king must not touch the ground, but is suspended, as it were, between earth and heaven, may be compared with the Crucifixion: "I, if I be lifted up." We have noted the sacred tree of Attis and the pillar of Osiris. The Mexican sacred tree, on which a figure of the slain god was placed, was called "the tree of our life and flesh." The Paschal Lamb, it would appear, was suspended, during its preparation, from a sort of cross, resting upon the shoulders of two men. The exponent of the mythical theory might see in this another source of the crucifixion between two thieves, to add to the Messianic passage, "he was numbered with the transgressors." The prohibition against breaking the bones of the Paschal Lamb is noteworthy, in connexion with the *crurifragium* mentioned in the Gospel narrative. The attempts to show a phallic origin for the Christian Cross, as derived from the *crux ansata* or the like, are misguided, and rest upon very flimsy coincidences.

An Orphic poem uses the identical phrase, "the descent into hell," of certain Greek Saviours, as it was used of the slain Attis. In the latter case the effigy of a young man was attached to his sacred tree; it was buried on "the day of blood," and the resurrection which followed was celebrated by "the Festival of Joy." The victim in the Athenian Diipolia was supposed to rise again. So Osiris and Adonis rose from the grave, the latter the day after his death, and then ascended into heaven in the sight of his worshippers.

In connexion with the former case, the scarab was a symbol both of an only-begotten divine son and of resurrection. Epiphanius uses of Christ the striking phrase "the *scarabæus* of God," while Firmicus anathematizes the *Adonia* as a diabolic anticipation of the Resurrection, and exclaims *habet Diabolus Christos suos*. "The idea that the God thus slain in the person of his representative comes to life again immediately, was," says Frazer, "graphically represented in the Mexican ritual by skinning the slain man-god, and clothing in his skin a living man, who thus became the new representative of the godhead." Buddha, Dionysus, and Herakles were believed to have ascended into heaven.

These ideas of general religion culminate, as do the Christian, in communion of the body and blood of the slain god-man. Theophagy of a well-developed type is found in Africa, North America, India, and Arabia, and amongst the Todas (to mention cases we do not refer to elsewhere), and in one form or another may be regarded as universal. Flesh and blood are universally held to be more or less sacred, as containing the qualities and virtue of the owner, and therefore his "soul." Thus by partaking of them his power is communicated to the eater. Especially potent and sacred is the blood of divine or remarkable persons. It is unnecessary to quote examples of such universal beliefs and practices, which are now so generally understood, as the savage custom of eating the flesh of lions or brave men to acquire their courage. In the agricultural stage of development, bread as the type of food and wine as the type of drink are sacramentally consumed; bread becomes known as the flesh of the Corn-spirit and wine as his blood, and certain animals are regarded as embodiments of divinity.

As we have already observed, the original form of the practice is rather different, and suggests one line along which the belief in deity developed; the exaltation induced by food leads to a divinization of the things eaten.

We may also point out here, in the first place, that the ceremonial eating of the totem animal as a sacrament of communion, which Robertson Smith looked for, and which some theologians have taken as an accepted part of early religion, has never been found to occur. The Central Australian custom is not,

as some suppose, a case of it; totemism here is absolutely different in kind from other totemism; there is no worship, and the sole object of eating the animal is to enable the eater to have more control over the supply of the animal by being brought into sympathy with it. In the second place, we must bear in mind that the so-called worship of vegetation-deities, common though it is, does not belong to the normal course of religious development, but is really a side effect, while the divinity of many a Corn-spirit, especially in the earlier stages of culture, is an inference on the part of students due to a mistaken interpretation of the facts.

Returning to our analogies, we find that the Greeks communicated in the body of Zagreus under the form of a lamb or kid. The Madis eat a lamb, the blood of which is sprinkled over the people. We know that at one time a lamb was eaten in the Christian Eucharist; the Pagans accused the Christians of eating a child which was covered with flour. If there is any kernel of truth in this charge, it is probable that they ate loaves made in the form or stamped with the image of a man, the diminutive size of the object leading to the inference that it was a child. Similarly, the Catholic wafer is stamped with the image of a lamb. This fiction is common; thus the Aztecs made an image of the God in bread, which was eaten reverently, and portions were taken to the sick and infirm. Here we have both forms of the rite, for they also ate a real man as the representative of the god, the same who paraded as a mock king. It is not to be inferred, however, that the former custom is a later piece of symbolism, just as we cannot infer the prior practice of human sacrifice from sacrifice in effigy. Savages who have never known or thought of human sacrifice are yet habituated to the use of effigies. Further, we may mention the practice of fasting or taking emetics before eating the sacred food, as amongst the Creeks and Seminoles, and the general belief in the power of new food to give new life, as seen in festivals of first-fruits. The idea that blood washes away evil and sin may be noted in connexion with communion, though in practice the baptism of blood and the drinking of blood are kept distinct. The *taurobolium* of Mithra is a familiar case of the former; Roman ladies might often be seen returning home from the ceremony literally bathed in blood from head to foot. The Dyaks wash away moral guilt with the blood of pigs; “washing away the sin” is the phrase they use. The belief that the god is present under the form of bread or wine, flesh or blood, is well defined in many cases.

A regular result of such feasts is union between the worshippers. Those who eat the same food become of the same flesh, and therefore closely knit together. So the Wakamba, the Battas, the Kyans, and the natives of the islands between New Guinea and Celebes, make peace by slaying an animal and eating its flesh together. The “black drink” of the Seminoles bound closer the ties of friendship. The Abchases and Madis regard social union as the result of such festivities. The Central Australians drink each other’s blood at meetings of reconciliation. Various customs contain the same idea; in the northern districts of Central Australia a Saturnalian festival is definitely stated to have as its object the promotion of harmony and union; in Amboina lovers drink each other’s blood as “a real sacrament.” Lastly, we have “communion with the dead,” a frequent practice in savage custom. Throughout the series then, we find both communion with the god and communion of the worshippers with each other—we have, as it were, both an altar and a table.

Briefly summing up the results of this survey, we see the essential principles of the higher religions and of Christianity in particular, paralleled in the closest way by beliefs and practices which are carried up from the most primitive races, through barbarism into civilization. The rationalist argument is that since Incarnation, Resurrection, Atonement, the Virgin Birth, and other essential principles of Christianity, including Theism itself, can thus be traced to their sources in the natural processes of human thought, Christianity is “brought down to the level of the other religions of the world. Here is the explanation of Christianity; what can be more clear? Christianity has taken all these things out of beliefs which were current among men before; and in reality, all that is miraculous in Christianity is to be

explained as legend arising from beliefs which are found all the world over." It must be admitted that the parallelism between the workings of the human mind, in all circumstances and at all stages of development, conclusively proves the essential unity of human religion. "The world has never really had more than one religion—of many names, a single central shape."

But, again, as Frazer remarks, "It is inevitable that the battery of the comparative method should breach these venerable walls, mantled over with the ivy and mosses and wild flowers of a thousand tender and sacred associations." Anthropology has apparently struck the final blow "at the foundations of those beliefs in which, as in a strong tower, the hopes and aspirations of humanity through long ages have sought a refuge from the storm and stress of life." This attack is the last term in the series, closely following up the biological criticism of Huxley and Haeckel and the exploitation of Darwin's theories against the Bible and revealed religion, and the parallel movement which was initiated by Herbert Spencer's application of the principle of evolution to the whole body of our knowledge. Not only does it complete the rationalist attack as a whole, but it coincides remarkably with the most important of the other lines of inquiry, namely, the criticism of the Christian documents; the anthropological evidence seems to round off the critical work begun by Strauss, and to corroborate his mythical theory by a body of living instances. The result of both processes is apparently to undermine the authority of the Bible and the religion it incorporates. Every scientific argument that can be brought against the veracity of an historical composition, every critical test that can be applied to the traditional view of its structure has been used with relentless and successful precision. The historical foundations of Christianity seem shattered, and even the last refuge of Theism is in danger.

As a final step, rationalists combine the critical and anthropological evidence to discredit the historicity of Jesus Christ. The central feature of the Christian religion is the last term in the evolution of human sacrifice. The Eucharist and the Crucifixion are the final forms which the primitive customs of theophagy and "killing the God" have respectively taken. The Catholic "host" is the pagan *hostia*. "If to die as a human sacrifice" (Robertson sums up) "for human beings be to deserve the highest human reverence, the true Christs of the world are to be numbered not by units but by millions. Every inhabited land on this globe has, during whole ages, drunk their annually shed blood. . . . Thus have nameless men and women done, millions of times, what is credited to the fabulous Jesus of the Christian Gospels; they have verily laid down their lives for the sin of many, and while the imaginary sacrifice has been made the pretext of a historic religion during two thousand years, the real sacrifices are uncommemorated save as infinitesimals in the records of anthropology." Some will doubtless find in the story of the Crucifixion an ætiological myth derived from the Purim festival, and invented to explain it, thus improving on Frazer's theory; others may argue that some similar folk-rite, some Jewish custom of human sacrifice, the Passover itself or a modification of it, developed into the Christian Eucharist, and that this subsequently produced, as myth explaining ritual, the whole story of Christ's life and death. There were historical facts which would help to give a concrete form to the mythical figure; for instance, the crucifixion of Jews, that of Cyrus, a Messianic hero, and of Antigonus, all of which made a great impression on the popular mind, and, in the Gentile world, the murder of Julius Cæsar. These conditions would strongly reinforce the popular interpretation of Messianic passages of the Bible, and numerous other details of belief, such as those connected with Joshua, the high priest, in the book of Zechariah. Further possible precedents may be found in the execution of Jesus ben Pandera, in the custom which the names of Jesus Barabbas and Jesus the Son respectively conceal, the latter in connexion with the "redemption of the first born" at circumcision. There is also a possibility of the influence of other cults, such as Mithraism, and of vegetation-worship, as in the case of Tammuz, "the son of life" "the only son," and it is worth noting that John of Damascus describes the face of Christ as being wheat-coloured, and that according to the letter of Lentulus his hair was of the colour of wine. More suggestive still is the probable existence of private

sacramental meals among the Jews and Samaritans. We can thus understand how “Christianity told men precisely what they were ready to believe,” and may actually count off every element necessary to the story, whether Jewish or Gentile or universal, whether indigenous or borrowed. “In fundamentals Christism is but paganism reshaped; it is only the economic and the doctrinal evolution of the system—the first determined by Jewish practice and Roman environment, and the second by Greek thought—that constitute new phenomena in religious history.” “As man has made his Gods, so he has made his Christs, it would be strange indeed if the faculty which wrought the one could not create the other.”

The general argument from evolution is strengthened, in this case, by historical contact. It is necessary, however, to point out that borrowing proper cannot be proved (except perhaps in some few accidental details) to have taken place before the practical completion of the Christian system. Subsequent absorption of cults is a different matter. It was once the fashion to explain Christianity as the result of wholesale loans from Buddhism, Krishnaism, or Parsiism, but anthropology shows that the most striking analogies can be worked out independently by the religious consciousness, and that at least in the earlier stages man is averse to borrowing in religious matters, he is, on the contrary, intensely secretive about his religious beliefs. The loan-hypothesis is really a scientific myth, an *idolon* common to the race, and is the same phenomenon as appears when a worshipper in a pre-scientific age meets with some feature in another religion which is identical with this or that in his own, and at once infers that it was borrowed.

But these analogies, like Achilles’ spear, have a double power, and can heal the wounds they have inflicted; for their great value is not that they explain religion away, but that by explaining what religion is they lead us to its permanent sources.



## CHAPTER IV

### METHODS OF DEFENCE

**W**E have grown so accustomed to these attacks upon the faith which is regarded as the foundation of western civilization, that we are apt to view them without surprise. But their recurrence and their gradually increasing weight are one of the most remarkable features of human history, and certainly the most important. It is remarkable enough that Christianity should have been singled out for hostile treatment by the ancient world, and the fact is important for our inquiry; but the significant point is that the antagonism should have continued after the successful establishment of the new faith, and have increased side by side with the development of the culture which it founded. The scientific rationalist, however, denies that religion is the basis of culture, and regards the hostile movement not only as an inevitable evolution—here he is right—but as the gradual supersession of all religion by science or a scientific morality, a supersession inseparable from human progress. Here we venture to say that he is wrong, though the whole tendency of the facts seems to be in his favour.

We may here remark that the scientific students and critical historians who have built up our knowledge of nature and of man, and have explained the methods and development of earlier and less exact knowledge, have themselves, with rare exceptions, had nothing to do with the anti-religious use of their results. That this should be the case, and that most men should expect it to be so, generally crediting the keener minds of their age with a religious bias, makes us pause in our contemplation of the gradual supersession of religion, which, we are told, is imminent and inevitable.

The most striking feature of the social history of the last generation is the rapid and general decline of religious feeling and religious practice. It is the other side of the Rationalist movement. Agnosticism, which points to the mystery beginning where empirical science ends, and which rests upon the dogma “we do not know,” or, in its Spencerian form, “we cannot know,” is a direct result of the contradictions of Revelation by science, and is gradually taking the place of the old faith in serious minds. In the less serious strata of thought there is an increasing indifference to religion in any form. This tendency, though parallel to Agnosticism in time and in result, is connected in the lower classes of society rather with certain forms of social pressure and degradation than with Rationalism. Indifference in the higher strata is not at all considerable, and has been unduly emphasized. Yet everywhere there is noted a decay of the sense of sin and of other traditional forms of religious feeling; everywhere, we are told, men live without religion. Many influential exponents of the modern spirit agree with Goethe’s aphorism, that if a man has art and science he does not need religion, and with Guyau’s affirmation of the “non-religion of the future.” The question of the moment, in fact, seems to be not so much the continuance of one religious system, or indeed of any religious system, as the continuance of the religious impulse itself.

On a superficial view, the whole array of the Rationalist arguments we have enumerated has great plausibility. But although, as we have suggested, these attacks are only apparently destructive, the movement being really a process of psychical reconstruction, there is no little danger that we may in the process lose sight of the essential necessities of human expression, that we may, amid the stress of criticism, ignore the real meaning of that which is criticized.

The first point to be insisted upon is this: that during the greater part of his history—in fact, until the present epoch—man has not only failed to understand what religion is, but has even been unconscious that he is religious. In the “ages of faith,” so called, this unconsciousness was most profound. The consciousness of religion may be said to have first been stirred at the time of the Reformation, but it is only in a positive and scientific age that a full realization is attained. Doubt is inseparable from knowl-

edge; as we struggle into consciousness there is a period of storm and stress, and some time must elapse before harmony is regained. If this be so, we may conclude that man is only now reaching a complete consciousness of religion, and that the present age of disturbance and change is not the twilight of the gods, but the dawn of their resurrection.

These considerations suggest that many forms of attack and many phases of scepticism are merely the result of this development of consciousness; man recognizes at last the unique fact of religion, but cannot explain its meaning; he regards it as an anomaly, and makes premature efforts at a solution, the evidence being enough to produce scepticism, but not enough even for a legitimate statement of the problem. As the scientific stage proceeds the mind reflects and criticizes its own functions; and it is inevitable that, sooner or later, every form of its activity should submit to this criticism. The process, we repeat, by which man becomes conscious of religion and criticizes it, now condemning and now reforming, until at last he reaches a complete synthesis, is a stage in the evolution of the human mind.

Against the attacks we can set certain revivals. As the Reformation expressed to some extent a reaction against Humanism, the revival under Wesley a reaction against Deism, and the Oxford movement a reaction against the beginnings of criticism, so in recent years we find a new enthusiasm represented by the Salvation Army, and renewed energy on the part of the Catholic and Protestant Churches, the aim of each being chiefly to stem the tide of indifference and social degradation among the lower classes. From time to time we note the recurrence of organized missions, the avowed object of which is to stimulate the religious emotions. The result of such Revivalism is temporary and abnormal, but it points to the universal need of religious expression, and to the fact that this is not satisfied by the Churches. Finally, the most significant reaction against the scientific attack is to be seen in an altered Agnosticism, which is really religious, and is practically the old Christianity with all dogma and ritual omitted, and the supernatural element excluded.

Turning now to the defensive methods by which the Rationalist attack has been met, we find that in the case of scientific discovery the Churches have again and again resorted to the same tactics. The defence is begun by a categorical denial of the newly-found fact or theory; but it would not be correct to say that such denial is representative of the best intelligence of the orthodox body. It is rather the less thoughtful minds which begin the defence in this way. After a time the new idea gradually permeates the defending ranks, and finally there is some reconstruction of traditional preconceptions, and the Church accepts the new knowledge as being after all not inconsistent with Revelation. A well-known case is the reception of the Darwinian hypothesis. It is significant to note in all this the alternation of inertia and movement. The first impulse of the traditionalist is to stand to his tradition; he then reconciles it with the new view; thus he comes back to rest. Meanwhile the orthodox view of Revelation is gradually liberalized by this process, and the doctrine of plenary inspiration modified, but neither is surrendered. This procedure, though it is of course merely reconciliation, is yet inevitable, and, so far as it goes, is valuable and sound. Reconciliation of this sort is now generally based upon an evolutionary view, which asserts an original Divine impress, including all subsequent evolution.

There is a powerful argument, which is an answer to refutations of the literal historical truth of Revelation. It is one application of the familiar allegorical view, but it would be more conveniently termed the idealist-theory. It is as old as Origen, but became most conspicuous when Strauss' criticism had had its full effect. A phrase of Spinoza well illustrates this view: "To know the historical Christ is not necessary to felicity, but only to know the ideal Christ." As Strauss says, "the history" (even if it were true) "is not enough, is not the whole truth." Froude puts it in an eloquent analogy: "The idea is the life; the organized form is assimilated out of the opinions and desires already floating in the minds of mankind. Some root in fact there may be. But the facts which can be seen and handled and verified by experience are infinitesimally small. Accidental conditions may be needed to quicken an idea into an active force. But

when once the idea has begun to grow and organic tissue to be formed, the sole source of nourishment is again the spiritual—*air*.” “Theological critics,” he adds, “are throwing away valuable effort over the facts supposed to underlie the origin of Christianity. . . . The historical inquirer demands evidence such as would satisfy a British jury in a criminal case; to the early Christian the life and death and resurrection of Christ were their own evidence, each detail of it the symbol of some spiritual reality, and every event of it intrinsically probable as it availed for the edification and elevation of the human soul. . . . Religion, as a rule of life, neither is nor can be a record of events which once occurred on a corner of this planet.”

As a defence of religion generally, the idealist-theory is of permanent value; its share of psychological truth gives it a completeness and reality which in its early allegorical form it could not claim. As a critical method it contradicts the survival-theory, and is the antipodes of the naive “naturalism,” of which Paulus is the notorious exponent. The “naturalists” explained the Fall as the result of eating a poisonous plant, the Tree of Knowledge, the constitution of man being thereby permanently impaired. They reduced the Temptation to a series of offers made by an artful Pharisee; the angels who ministered to Christ were really either reviving breezes or a caravan with provisions. As Pfleiderer remarks, “The Gospels are deprived of their choicest treasures of ideal truth and poetic beauty, and this only for the sake of securing instead miserable commonplace stories.” The latest theological inquiry, it may be noted, still explains, rightly or wrongly, certain of the miracles of Christ as cases of faith-healing. To return to the idealist theory, with all its merits it has grave defects; it tends, while elevating the religious life, to leave the facts of religion in the mists of metaphysical or ethical mysticism, out of touch with a true psychological method, and it unduly depreciates the historical question.

This last defect is shared by the most recent method of defence, a development of the conciliatory process already noticed—the argument from evolution. Theologians are now beginning to realize that religion, in common with other phenomena of human history, is subject to the laws of orderly development. The conception is found in Eusebius, and the opponents of the Deists argued that natural theology, instead of being the truth of which Revelation was the perversion, was itself presupposed by Revelation, and should carry the mind onward to accept it; the main teaching of the Bible itself is to the effect that the Jewish religion prepared the way for Christ. Many a thinker, from St. Paul to Temple, had hinted that Revelation may be progressive, and that God fulfils himself in many ways. This recognition of evolution in the history of religion is a great scientific gain, and is of higher value, perhaps, as a defence than any other which has been put forward. It affirms that Revelation and inspiration are progressive, and themselves subject to evolution, in which case science itself is a part of Revelation. Such theories, therefore, as the Mosaic account of Creation or of the Noachian deluge, are scientific according to the standard of an early age, the science of which differs from ours, not in kind but in degree, and mark an early stage of Revelation. This is a far more scientific solution of the difficulty than the naturalistic method of such reconcilers as Dawson, who suggests, for instance, that Noah described what he saw, a wide expanse of water bounding the horizon, and inferred from this a world-wide inundation, or such arguments as that the “days” of creation are meant for “periods of time,” or—a method which merely sets the problem further back—the allegorical interpretations, which explain stories like that of the Fall as being apologues after the manner of “The Pilgrim’s Progress.” In fact, it marks a real advance in both the orthodox and the scientific conceptions of religion; apologetics begins to use the comparative method, and to recognize evolution in religious thought. This method thus supplies, as far as it goes, a solid answer to the anthropological attack, on the ground that savage and barbarous religions are revelations suited to the stage of culture in which they appear. The value of the method, as giving a scientific conception of religion, is illustrated by the welcome it frequently receives from the scientific Agnostic. It is instructive to observe how ready he is to return by some rational path to the main beliefs of Christianity. This

tendency was seen in Comte and in Haeckel, and the inference is legitimate that, even where the cleavage between religion and science is apparently most marked, yet man cannot do without religion.

We may, however, be reminded that the provinces of religion and science are absolutely distinct, and that where religion has been contradicted by science, the former suffers for having undertaken to solve a problem belonging to the province of the latter, and vice versa; the cosmology of "Genesis," for instance, would be a case where religion has trespassed upon the scientific domain. This view is emphasized by Herbert Spencer, and has considerable vogue, precisely because it is a part of the popular recognition of a dualism between science and religion. It has a further measure of plausibility, since it ends with a reconciliation of science and religion in the presence of the Unknowable, the recognition of which as an insoluble mystery Spencer regarded as the beginning of religion and the last word of science, the one ultimate fact behind both. But, as we shall see, though there does exist a unity underlying religion and science, it is not this, and though there is a distinction between religion and science, it is not absolute, nor are they essentially antagonistic.

However that may be, there is no doubt that many difficulties, such as those involved by the morality of the Bible, by the doctrine of inspiration and by the general results of the criticism of the Christian documents, are satisfactorily solved by this method. Of particular importance is the conclusion that the beliefs of primitive religion lead up by a regular process to Christianity. The Christian, of course, regards Christ as the climax of the development, but need not regard the climax as a cessation of progress; he may rightly argue, in the words of Newman, "Religion is ever changing in order to remain the same." When the Rationalist points out that the inference should rather be: Christianity is merely a development from other systems of folklore, and is therefore equally illusionary and false,—it may be argued justly that no religion is absolutely false, there are elements of permanent truth in every religion. But when he insists that even the highest religious beliefs and practices are inconsistent with the highest civilization, and are mere useless survivals, the evolutionary defence breaks down.

The answer it needs was suggested by Herbert Spencer in these words: "To suppose that these multifarious conceptions" (the beliefs of religion) "should be one and all absolutely groundless, discredits too profoundly that average human intelligence from which all our individual intelligences are inherited." More exactly, the answer is to the effect that religious beliefs are rooted in human nature, from which they are a natural and inevitable growth. This view is beginning to be put forward, but no proof, except the valuable though partial evidence of Starbuck, is as yet forthcoming. Its a priori probability is to the student of history very strong, but what is needed is a demonstration from the facts of comparative psychology, and this we shall attempt in a subsequent chapter. We shall hope to find in anthropology the evidence necessary to form a constructive defence of that against which, to all appearance, it supplies the most deadly weapons of attack.

Reconciliation, it must be remembered, is not defence. It fails to account for religion, and therefore cannot justify it. And until religion is so justified, the antagonism will always tend to recur. For a positive apologetic, we cannot return to Berkeley and his negation of the reality of "matter," or to Paley and his argument from design, now over-shadowed by biology, or to Butler and his argument of probability, suggestive as it is in its parallelism between natural and revealed religion. A priori and metaphysical arguments of any sort are out of touch with positive science. A metaphysical system must indeed be constructed, but only after a scientific theory of defence has been tested and approved by scientific criticism, not before. Again, to take our stand upon the Christian documents is to rely upon what is merely internal evidence, and thus to put off indefinitely any hope of obtaining the serious attention of the modern critical intelligence. Such a method, even when allowing all the results of Biblical criticism, is merely a vicious circle; it is a form of the fallacy which proves a thing by itself. As for the Christian "evidences" which are offered from time to time to the popular intelligence, a set of disconnected

metaphysical and probable arguments, these, though claiming a cumulative effect, can offer no serious resistance to the critical and anthropological attacks. But every defence that has been made, whatever its method, is vitiated by one prejudice—religion is taken for granted, there is no conscious knowledge. Instead of examining the nature and condition of the foundations, and thus assuring themselves of the safety and permanence of the structure, the defenders shore it up at unimportant points, or attempt to prove the objective truths of religion, neglecting its psychological sources. Thus Kidd, in his “Social Evolution,” argues that the function of religion is to supply a supernatural sanction for the conditions of progress, just as many others have defended it as supplying a supernatural sanction for morality. Of course, religion has this function, but in so far as the argument is a defence, it defends religion merely as being socially expedient. Kidd himself admits that the phase of evolution to which the argument applies is only temporary, and if our view of what is expedient alters when the social system enters upon a new phase, we may then discard what once was useful. Mallock, on the other hand, recommends the retention of religion from the point of view of the individual. Though his argument applies properly to one system only, the Romanist, it may be allowed for the moment an extended range, for it simply pushes to a logical conclusion a feeling which is universal. He notes that when we insist upon the literal significance of the chief affirmations of science and religion, when we eschew compromise and take statements in their obvious meaning, we cannot fail to see an absolute opposition. He insists, as did Spencer, on an essential antagonism between religion and science. Having drawn up a list of direct contradictions between the scientific and the religious views of the universe (uncritically combining scientific and metaphysical arguments), he despairs of any *rapprochement*, and advises us for our individual comfort to grasp at certainty by an unquestioning acceptance of the infallible pronouncements of the Church. This is precisely what has been done by millions since the Gospel was first preached; the advice is simply one more affirmation of the consolations of religion. Of course, religion has this consoling function, but this function is not all. We may also ask why, if we must make a choice, does he not advise us to grasp at certainty by accepting the pronouncements of science, as Lucretius advised his age? The reason is—and it is instructive for our purpose—that he too assumes the necessity of religion, and unconsciously admits that science has no consolation for the human soul. If, again, as he implies, we are bound to accept the results of science as well, then he leaves us in a hopeless dualism, to serve two irreconcilable masters. There is here a vicious inconsistency, as there is in the whole of the deadlock existing at the present day, of which this is a luminous instance. Balfour takes a somewhat similar standpoint, the need for authority in life; but we may ask, Why not select science as our authority? Again, many apologists hold that the great question is still between naturalism and supernaturalism, and many an Agnostic would accept Christianity if stripped of its supernatural garb. Accordingly, there are many who look for solid results from investigations, such as those of the Society for Psychical Research, into the phenomena of subconsciousness, telepathy and “spiritual” manifestations, but such results, if they ever appeared, would only emphasize once more the expediency of religion. They could not prove its origin, whether in the race or the individual consciousness, for objective results would be explained as merely proving new modes of force and energy. Additional illustration of subjective beliefs would be valueless, for, as we shall find reason to believe, religion is not primarily concerned with the “spiritual” in the ordinary meaning of that term. We may lastly note, as steps in the right direction, James’ analysis of religious experience, and Starbuck’s statistical study of conversion. These results, however, need checking and supplementing by the comparative method, otherwise they lead to no absolute conclusion of historical value, expressing as they do merely the tendency of one infinitesimal period, and giving, moreover, no means of deciding what is due to education and the influence of Christian surroundings. We may also welcome Lang’s suggestion of a primitive monotheistic belief, though we need not accept any hypothesis of degeneration from this. Wallace has made an interesting attempt to reinstate the geocentric theory by employing astronomical

evidence to show that our earth may after all occupy the centre of the universe, and may be the only world which has been capable of supporting life. His arguments, however, do not seem to recommend themselves to astronomical experts.

It goes without saying that many, if not all, of these attempts at defence, possess some fraction of truth which will take its place in the sum when the chief factor has been worked out; but there is no doubt that religion has suffered from many a hasty, ill-considered, and fallacious defence. It is no less true, however, that those who have forced science into a hostile attitude towards religion have injured science in its turn. The fact is that each side has, from beginning to end, been led into hostilities simply through ignorance of the real nature of that over which they contend. Science has attacked religion not for being what it is, *but as if it were another and a hostile form of science*; religion has attacked science not for being science, but *as being a sort of false religion, or negation of religion*, an Antichrist. Opponents and defenders alike are habitually guilty of the fallacy of *ignoratio elenchi*; they confuse the issue, or direct their arguments towards non-essential points. For example, religion is continually attacked for its irrational character, and rationalism for its failure to satisfy emotion. Both sides are partly right and partly wrong. It is true that religion may be and is modified by scientific results, and even inspired with the spirit of science, while science may be, and is, and perhaps will tend more and more to be, prosecuted in a religious spirit, but it is not the case that modern thought is a scientific structure erected upon the ruins of religion; the figure should rather be that of a scientific structure erected on religious foundations. And if the figure be true of thought, it is doubly true of civilization. We shall be in a better position to prove this new form of an old view when we have found what the essence of religion is.

Our main argument as to the origin and function of religion will claim sufficient range to cover the various points of attack, but, by way of clearing the ground, it will be well to subject these first to a preliminary criticism, as even in the present state of the controversy they have many weak places which a general investigation will lay bare.

The humanism of the Renaissance was a case of culture carried to excess. As such it was abnormal, and its exponents failed to see life steadily and whole. This tendency is a frequent infirmity of the philosophic mind. The Deists mark a stage of progress in mental evolution. They were the first thinkers to realize that a problem existed; they noted for the first time the unique character of Christianity, and on the other side they reached a firmer recognition of the uniformity of nature. The evidence available was not, however, sufficient to enable them to solve the religious problem. The attack of the French sceptics was less scientific, but had some justification in political history. Priestly imposture led them to mistake the abuse of a function for the use of it, and even for the origin. It may be said that they first realized the existence of a political problem, but they confused it with the religious. We now know that religion exists in primitive peoples before the rise of a priesthood. Again, Hume's axioms on the question of miracles are rendered beside the point by the comparative evidence, which shows that the problem to be explained is not the occurrence of miracles, but the mental phenomena which cause them to be demanded and believed. Apologists themselves have gradually come to see not that Christianity is to be believed because of the miracles, but the miracles because of Christianity. Their view, however, requires considerable qualification and explanation of terms. It is analogous to the opinion frequently held, as against the charge of anthropomorphism, that the real point is not the anthropomorphic nature of God, but the theomorphic possibilities of man. Here anthropology comes to our aid, showing that to the primitive religious mind, as to the early Christian, a miracle is not, as it is now, a breach of the laws of nature, but merely a work of power (as indeed is implied in the Biblical view), intended to illustrate the greatness of a divine person. Much of the modern objection to the Christian miracles is due to this unconscious change in the meaning of the term. The serious mind, when contemplating some irresistible natural force, is in exactly the same case as the disciple who saw his Master perform a "mighty work." It

is one of the most noticeable of the discrepancies in the Gospel narratives that Christ consistently refused to give a “sign,” while his reporters tell us of so many.

As to the scientific errors of the Bible, no one would now venture to maintain the literal scientific accuracy of the Mosaic account of Creation, or of the Deluge and of similar narratives. The arguments of Huxley and Laing in this matter can no longer be resisted. It is doubtful, however, whether the work thus completed was at all necessary; thoughtful believers would have come to the same conclusion in favour of science by a natural process, and the religious instinct, with its clear grasp of what is essential, would not have been led, as in many cases it has been led, to lose faith in the Bible as a whole. As it is, the scientific critics of the Bible have misled many by the fallacy that the discrediting of a part is the discrediting of the whole. The obvious truth, however, is coming to be more and more clearly recognized, that the Bible teaches not science, but religion; and the religious authority of the Bible has not been weakened by the purely scientific attack. Further, we may observe that the critical method of Huxley, Laing, and Haeckel is really pre-scientific; it is criticism of that early type, which, as Jowett says, “consists almost entirely in adapting the past to the present, in obtruding the notions of a later age upon an earlier one.”

It may, in fact, be said that the exponents of evolution neglect to apply evolutionary principles to the subject of their attack. They would doubtless reply that their aim is to expedite progress and to further human development by getting rid of obsolete survivals. The survival theory of religion therefore claims some notice here. It is one of the first results to appear upon the application of the comparative method, and is commonly put somewhat in this way: we find in modern culture beliefs and customs and even institutions, which are evidently not of a piece with the civilization characteristic of the age, and are actually proved to have flourished in primitive times. They are now, therefore, practically meaningless anachronisms, and are only kept up by the inertia of familiarity and by a fear of “changing the luck.” Now this view is itself a survival of the legal method of historical inquiry, according to which institutions were established in the early ages, either by Revelation, fortuitous circumstance, or social compact, and their subsequent existence was thus, as it were, secured by charter. A notion of the depravity of human nature coincided with legalist prejudice to produce a complete neglect of the possibility that the institution corresponds to some permanent need of human nature. Thus, in the case of marriage, the institution was supposed to have been organized by primitive legislators with the purpose of counteracting the evil effects of promiscuity, and to have continued to subsist, not because human nature needs and demands it in every generation and in every stage of culture, but because it was once made the law. It is further implied that the history of the institution has been a continued struggle on the part of the law-abiding to preserve it, and on the part of the more primitive members of society to break the bonds and return to communistic unions. Similarly, the institution of government was supposed to have been brought about by definite legislation in some far distant age. Mankind agreed to delegate their “natural” rights by a form of social contract. Since then government has continued, not because it is an essential expression of human nature, but because it was once instituted. These last vestiges of Rousseauism are brushed from the path by the plain evidence of comparative psychology, and it may be finally asserted that nothing which has to do with human needs ever survives as a mere survival.

It is necessary, lastly, to discuss a question which idealist and evolutionist thinkers, whether friends or enemies, are apt to pass over, while the average Christian, with a truer instinct, unconsciously feels its importance. This is the question, firstly, of the historicity, and secondly, of the character of Jesus Christ. Whether in attack or defence, the idealist holds that his personality though it may be unhistorical is yet ideally true; the evolutionist ignores it in either aspect, amid tendencies and organic processes where individuals do not count; but the ordinary believer, naively but justly, requires that Christianity shall be literally true, and its Founder both God and Man. The question is one where anthropology and criticism

meet, and since, in dealing with it, both attack and defence have shown perhaps more liability to error than in other subjects of their quarrel, it demands some fulness of treatment. Being an historical problem, and therefore outside the main lines of our inquiry, we shall discuss it separately.



## CHAPTER V

### THE HISTORICITY OF JESUS CHRIST

**T**HE mythical theory of Strauss and the later anthropological argument coincide in supplying a plausible *prima facie* case against the historical existence of the founder of Christianity. Apologists are often ill-advised in beginning their case at the wrong end; in this instance particularly it is necessary first to prove historicity (which they are apt to take for granted), before dealing with the further question of the traditional character of Christ.

In this inquiry there are one or two crucial tests—often neglected—before which the rationalist arguments break down. In the first place, the object of historical criticism being to separate the historical from the legendary and mythical, it must be careful not to destroy the historical residuum, if such there be. Of course, “criticism can prove no fact, it only yields probabilities; the only sure results of criticism are negative”; but it must not be forgotten that there is nothing more than this probability for the reality of any historical fact whatever. The evolutionist is apt to ignore everything but the process; he regards “the evolution of usages as if it were an organic development analogous to the growth of a plant; we hear of the life of words, of the death of dogmas, of the growth of myths. Then, in forgetfulness of the fact that all these are pure abstractions, it has been tacitly assumed that there is a force inhering in the word, the rite, the rule, which produces its evolution. This is the theory of development of usages and institutions, which, starting in Germany, has dominated all the special branches of history.” To this fallacy the idealist is as liable as the evolutionist; he forgets that “the idea” of an institution is only a metaphor—an abstraction; his view of “the Christian idea” is as unscientific as Lamprecht’s “soul of society.” It has the merit of being a reaction against the old legal conception of history on the one hand, and on the other against the Euhemerism of early method, but its application is equally fatal to historical science. “As a defence against this deceptive mythology a single rule will suffice. Never seek the causes of an historical fact without having first expressed it concretely in terms of acting and thinking individuals.” The evolution in question is what we know as Christianity, and “in order to ascertain the causes of an evolution, it is necessary to study the only beings who can evolve—men.” In the second place, “a series of all the states of all societies and of all their evolutions would not be enough to exhaust the subject-matter of history. There remains a set of unique facts which we cannot pass over, because they explain the origin of certain states of society and form the starting-point of evolutions. In human evolution we meet with great transformations which have no intelligible cause beyond an individual accident. . . . Importance, however, is not to be measured by the initial fact, but by the facts which resulted from it.” We cannot, therefore, deny *a priori* the action of individuals, however incalculable the results may be. We must examine “whether a given individual was in a position to make his influence strongly felt. There are two cases in which we may assume that he was: (1) when his action served as an example to a mass of men and created a tradition, a case frequent in art, science, and religion; (2) when he had power to issue commands and direct the actions of a mass of men, as is the case with heads of a state, an army, or a church.” To these *a priori* considerations put forward by the best teachers of the science of history, we may add the evidence of anthropology and comparative religion. We have seen the logical necessity of an individual nucleus, possessing the potentiality of all the subsequent development; anthropology shows us, as one of its permanent and undoubted conclusions, the existence of a great world-wide religious material, an *Ur-religion*, out of which particular systems and the great historical religions were formed, while the comparative study of religion proves that no systematized religion ever came into existence without a founder.

But the rationalist argues that mythological science has proved that Dionysus and Apollo, and countless other sons and incarnations of gods, never existed historically. Dionysus and Apollo also have their religions, and precisely the same stories are told about founders as about the gods they served. Therefore Buddha, Zoroaster, Confucius, Laou-tze, Moses, and Christ must be mythical. We reply to this, firstly, that Mohammed and the Bab, for instance, are founders of whose historicity no doubt is possible; secondly, that Dionysus and Apollo are never represented as founders of religions any more than is Jehovah. In fact, the line between gods and founders can be distinctly drawn. Nor is there any difficulty in distinguishing between original gods and founders who have afterwards attained divinity, such as Buddha; in cases where the mists of antiquity obscure the critical vision, the benefit of the doubt must be assigned accordingly. Thus the evidence for the historicity of founders like Buddha and Zoroaster is as strong as for any historical fact, and this is admitted by the best students of the respective systems. There is a further point of importance: in spite of the “primitive” character of the culture in which Christianity arose, the period was too late for the free formation either of divine or of historical personalities by the mythopœic imagination, even when supplied with Messianic material; and the fact, more and more clearly brought out by Biblical criticism, that the divine nature of Christ was not recognized at first, a fact well known in the case of Buddha, is one which should have great weight. Robertson, indeed, while arguing against the historicity of Jesus, stultifies his case by admitting the historicity of “another person of the same name,” the Jesus ben Pandera of the Talmud.

In discussing the historical problem it is best to confine our attention to external evidence, leaving the Christian documents entirely out of account. Now, within two generations of the traditional date of Christ, Suetonius (who confused the Christians with the Jews) speaks of a riot at Rome in the reign of Claudius, which was stirred up by one Chrestus; he also describes the Christians as a class of men professing “a strange and pestilent superstition.” The only value of this evidence is the presumption it gives of a belief then obtaining throughout the critical world in the historical existence of a Jewish popular leader, bearing the name of Christ. Chrestus may be genuine; the form is mentioned by the Fathers, and derives from a play upon the adjective *χρηστός*, as applied to the Saviour. Pliny’s famous letter to Trajan is absolute proof of the diffusion of Christianity in Asia Minor at the beginning of the second century, of the main features of Christian worship and of the Christian belief in Jesus Christ, “to whom they pray as to a God.” Tacitus gives further details; he tells us that Christ—*auctor nominis huius*—was put to death in the reign of Tiberius by Pontius Pilate the procurator, and that his religion, a deadly superstition (the Christians being characterized by their hatred of the human race), though crushed for a time, burst forth again, not only throughout Judæa, in which it arose, but even in Rome, the common reservoir of all the streams of infamy and wickedness.” He also, like most classical writers, confused the Jews and the Christians, but apart from this natural view—the first Christians were of course a Jewish sect—there is nothing to indicate that the account is not both authentic and genuine. It has the stamp of a verified historical datum, and cannot be regarded as containing any less objective truth than the same historian’s record of Tiberius. The famous passage of Josephus is as follows:—“At that time appeared a certain Jesus, a wise man [if indeed he may be called a man; for he was a worker of miracles, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with joy], and he drew to himself many Jews [and many also of the Greeks. This was the Christ]. And when at the instigation of our chief men Pilate condemned him to the Cross, those who had first loved him did not fall away. [For he appeared to them alive again on the third day, according as the holy prophets had declared this and countless other marvels of him.] To this day the sect of Christians called after him still exists.” Some scholars regard the whole passage as an interpolation, others only the bracketed sentences. In another passage Josephus records the murder of James, “the brother of Jesus, called the Christ.” It is argued that the longer passage could not have been written by the apostate Jew whose Messiah would be Vespasian. But there is no critical reason whatever for the bracketing of certain

sentences; the passage is either spurious as a whole or authentic as a whole, though there is some doubt as to its exact place in the chapter where it occurs, and Origen does not mention it. On the whole, there is a good deal to be said in favour of the old view that the entire passage is authentic. There are no other examples of interpolation by Christians of classical writings, the common belief in such being based on this very instance. Nothing is alleged against its being in the style of Josephus. The main argument for interpolation is precisely a reason for deciding in favour of authenticity; for the fact that Josephus was an apostate Jew is at least a proof of liberal views; and the period from the fall of Jerusalem to Bar Cocheba and Rabbi Akiba was one in which, as the events of that movement indicate, there were many Jews who became, as it were, Gentile Christians. This being so, the passage has even more claim than that of Tacitus to be a record of objective fact. It is to be noted that all these writers, Celsus included, flourished at a time not too distant for the historical mind to be practically sure of the historicity even of a Jewish teacher; and though the age was not an age of criticism, we cannot deny its historians some critical judgment; at least, there is no case where an historian of that period has been shown guilty of such a mistake. Euhemerism had not become a habit of mind, and when employed at all was only applied to accredited members of the Pantheon. Then, as always, the distinction could be kept in view between a God who was later supposed by criticism to have been really a man, and a man who was later supposed by popular thought to have been a God. It is to be observed that these accounts, like the Christian tradition itself, always mention the humanity of Christ first, the belief in his divinity is added as an example of popular illusion or as a recognition, common in that age (Augustus being a familiar instance), of the divine potentiality of remarkable men.

The "True Account" of Celsus, on which Froude wrote one of his most brilliant essays, is known by the excerpts quoted by Origen in his refutation. The author is supposed to have been a distinguished Roman, of the time of Marcus Aurelius. Froude infers from his work that he was "a clear-sighted, honest, proud, and powerfully-minded man, unlikely to concern himself with vice and folly. His method of thought was scientific in the strictest modern sense. He disbelieved evidently that the order of nature was ever interrupted by supernatural interference . . . and held that superstition could only be mischievous in the long run. Sorcerers, charlatans, enthusiasts were rising thick on all sides, pretending a mission from the invisible world. Of such men and such messages, Celsus and his friends were inexorable antagonists...." Such a friend was Lucian, whose words in his dedication to Celsus of an exposure of the religious impostor, Alexander, are those of a modern rationalist: "In vindication of our master, Epicurus, who was a *saint* indeed; who was *inspired* in the highest sense; who alone combined, and taught others to combine, the good with the true, and was thus the deliverer and *saviour* of those who would consent to learn from him." Celsus is supremely interesting as showing the attitude of cultivated Romans towards Christianity. His description and estimate of the new faith involve a knowledge of the main facts of the Gospel narrative; but he also supplies, in the words of a Jew whom he introduces to explain the refusal of his countrymen to acknowledge the Messiah, the chief features of the Jewish traditional account of Jesus, which was to reappear in the Talmud. The Jew thus addresses Christ:—

"You were born in a small Jewish village. Your mother was a poor woman who earned her bread by spinning. Her husband divorced her for adultery. You were born in secret, and afterwards carried to Egypt, and were bred up among the Egyptian conjurers. The arts which you there learnt you practised when you returned to your own people, and you thus persuaded them that you were God. It was given out that you were born of a virgin. Your real father was a soldier named Panther. The story of your Divine parentage is like the story of Danaë. You say that when you were baptized in Jordan a dove descended upon you, and that a voice was heard from heaven declaring that you were the Son of God. Who saw the dove? Who heard the voice, except you and another who suffered as you suffered? The prophets have foretold that a Son of God is to come. Granted. But how are we to know that they referred to you? They

spoke of a glorious king who was to reign over the world. You we know only as wandering about with publicans and boatmen of abandoned character. You tell us that the wise men of the East came at your birth to adore you; that they gave notice to Herod, and that Herod killed all the children in Bethlehem to prevent you from becoming king. You yourself escaped by going to Egypt. Is this story true? and if it be, could not the angels who had been busy about your birth have protected you at home? When you grew up, what did you accomplish remarkable? What did you say? We challenged you in the Temple to give us a sign as your credential. You had none to give. You cured diseases, it is said; you restored dead bodies to life; you fed multitudes with a few loaves. These are the common tricks of the Egyptian wizards, which you may see performed every day in our markets for a few halfpence. They, too, drive out devils, heal sicknesses, call up the souls of the dead, provide suppers and tables covered with dishes, and make things seem what they are not. We do not call these wizards sons of God; we call them rogues and vagabonds.”

Then addressing the Jews who had become Christians, he says: “What madness can have possessed you to leave the law of your fathers? Can you conceive that we, who were looking for the coming of the Messiah, should not have recognized him, had this been he? His own followers even were not convinced, or they would not have betrayed and deserted him. If he could not persuade those who daily saw and spoke with him, shall he convince you now that he is gone? He suffered, you pretend, to destroy the power of evil. Have there been no other sufferers? Was he the only one? He worked miracles, you say—he healed the lame and the blind, he brought the dead to life. But, oh light and truth, did he not himself tell you, is it not written in your own books, that miracles could be worked by impostors? He calls Satan a master of such arts, so that he admits himself that they are no evidence of divine action. Are you to argue from the same works that one man is God, and another a servant of Satan? Why is one a servant of Satan more than the other? To what can you appeal? You say he prophesied that he would himself rise from the dead, and he did rise. The same is said of many besides him. Zamolxis told the Scythians that he had come back from the dead. So Pythagoras told the Italians. Rhampsinitus pretended to have played dice with Ceres in Hell, and he showed a golden handkerchief which Ceres had given to him. Orpheus, Protesilaus, Hercules, Theseus, all are said to have died and risen again. But did any one ever really rise?—really?—in the body in which he had lived? Or shall we say that all these stories are fables, but that yours is true? Who saw your prophet after he rose? an hysterical woman or some of his own companions who dreamt of him, or were deluded by their enthusiasm. All the world were witnesses of his death. Why were none but his friends witnesses of his resurrection? Had he desired to prove that he was God, he should have appeared to his accusers and his judge, or he should have vanished from the cross. We hope that we shall rise again in our bodies and have eternal life, that he will be a guide and example in the resurrection, and that one who is to come will prove that with God nothing is impossible. Where is your prophet now? that we may see and believe. Did he come among us that we might reject him? He was a *man*—such a man as truth shows him to have been and common sense declares.”

The Jewish tradition, we observe, is contrasted with the Christian claims, as fact with fiction. The name Panther reappears in Epiphanius, who gives it as the name of Joseph’s father, and in John of Damascus, who says that he was Mary’s grandfather. It is noteworthy that the “vision-theory” of the Resurrection, now so much in vogue, is here anticipated. Lastly, Celsus speaks of Christ as a “man who lived and died a few years ago.” It is evident that he had obtained very precise information, both of the Christian and Jewish traditions.

The Jewish tradition, from which Celsus drew, was later incorporated in the Talmud, and later still amplified and altered in the medieval “Sepher Toldoth Jeschu.” The following are the chief details of the Talmudic account. Jeschu, as the name is written, the omission of the *ain* changing the meaning to “his name and remembrance shall be blotted out,” is described either as Ben Stada, the son of Stada, or Ben Pandera, the son of Pandera. By Stada, Miriam (Mary) is implied; she is described as a dresser of women’s

hair and a sinner. Pandera, a Roman soldier, was her paramour and the father of her child. Her husband, Paphos ben Jehuda, divorced her. Jeschu became a disciple of Rabbi ben Perachia, and fled with him to Egypt when Alexander Jannæus persecuted the Pharisees and crucified eight hundred of them. The date of this works out at about 87 B.C. From Egypt he “brought sorceries in his flesh”—that is to say, he concealed magic formulas in incisions made in his skin. Egypt was still regarded as the home of magic. He became a heretical teacher, who deceived and seduced Israel. The whole account implies that he had great influence, and the numerous calumnious epithets employed show clearly that he was strong enough to make the Rabbis try every means to discredit him. “He who burnt his food” is a phrase equivalent to “idolater”; the name Balaam is often applied to him, as an enemy and seducer of Israel. He is a mere magician and impostor; he is *ha Nozri*, “that man,” “he who was hanged,” “the perverse one.” When deprived on one occasion of his magic, he fell from a high place and became lame. He worked miracles of healing—a practice to which the orthodox Jews were always strongly opposed; “those,” they said, “who heal by miracle have no part in the Kingdom of God.” His disciples also healed in his name. Five are mentioned—Matthai, Neqai, Netzer, Buni, and Thoda. Another passage adds Jacob of Cephar Sethania, in connexion with whom are recorded a quotation by Jeschu from Micah and an original saying of great interest, the authenticity of which we have no reason to doubt, “son and daughter shall inherit together.” Jeschu was condemned for heresy. One account mentions a curious detail: two witnesses were hidden behind a curtain during the trial in order to give evidence against him out of his own mouth; a lamp was so placed that they could see his shadow, while the judges induced him to speak blasphemy for the witnesses to hear. After the verdict, “a crier went before him for forty days, making proclamation: ‘This man comes forth to be stoned, because he dealt in sorceries and persuaded and seduced Israel; whosoever knows of any defence for him, let him come forth and produce it.’ But no defence could be found; therefore they hanged him on the eve of the Passover.” The execution took place at Lydda. Another account adds that “Balaam (Jeschu) was thirty-three years old when the robber, Pinchas (Pilate), put him to death.” His disciples were condemned and executed at the same time. A curious story adds that they were condemned by the meaning of their names, to which the judges applied suitable passages of Scripture. The Resurrection is hinted at, as in the words, “Woe to him who through the name of God raises himself from the dead.”

The various editions of the “Sepher Toldoth Jeschu,” medieval compositions on a Talmudic basis, the first publication being in 1681, add many details, mostly extravagant, but some valuable, as giving the full meaning of several Talmudic data. For example, Bethlehem is mentioned as the birth-place. All the trees had been “charmed” not to furnish wood for the Cross, which was at last made from a cabbage-stalk. This is the well-known motive of the myth of Balder. Judas is an emissary of the Jews, who became a disciple of Jeschu in order to betray him. If, as some suggest, the Gospel narratives show no need for the betrayal, they may note that in the “Sepher” Judas suggests that Jeschu and his attendants should dress alike, “so that no one may be able to recognize the Master.” A full account is supplied of the method of Jeschu’s magic, and his use of the ineffable name *Shem Hamphoras*, stolen by him, written on paper and concealed on his person.

Laible has given a satisfactory explanation of the names Stada, Pandera, and others. These names of the parents of Jeschu, he points out, do not occur elsewhere, and he shows that they are caricatures of names in the Christian tradition. The practice of playing upon names is a marked feature of Jewish literature, and is especially employed against enemies of Israel. Thus the name of Bar Cocheba, the false Messiah, means “son of the star,” but was turned into Bar Cozeba, “son of lies.” “Evangel”—that is, the personified Gospel of Christ—is changed into Awon-Gillajon, “the book of sins.” Similarly, Ben Stada is doubtless a perversion of a Christian name, Ben Stara, “son of the star,” formed in reference to the Messianic prophecy of the star of Jacob, and its meaning, “son of a harlot,” refers to the Jewish calumny,

repeated so often in the Talmud, that Jesus was the son of an adulteress, and born in sin. The name occurs in another form, Ben Sotda, which would arise thus: a Christian title for Mary, *Em Sotera*, “mother of the Saviour,” suggested *Ben Sotda*, “son of a harlot.” Mary, it is suggested, was confused with Mary the sinner; the occupation of dressing hair was a disreputable one. Pandira, or Pandera, is probably a caricature of *παρθένος*, “the virgin”; the panther being a type of lust, the name “son of the virgin” was caricatured as “son of lust.” The profession of Pandera, the Roman soldier, is selected as being the lowest which could be conceived of by a Jew, lower even than that of publican. There is nothing but caricature-legend in the names, and nothing but Jewish prejudice and misconceptions due to Jewish environment, that is different from other accounts. Thus the impudence of the claim to be “Son of God” is constantly referred to. “The school of Ben Pandera is the gallows.” A story is told that when Jacob, the disciple of Jeschu, offered to cure a man who had been bitten by a snake, his friends preferred to let him die rather than that “his soul should be made unclean” by a cure in that hated name. Noteworthy is the objection that Jeschu cannot have been the Messiah, for his countenance had not the splendour of the countenance of Moses, to say nothing of the higher splendour expected in the Messiah. This looks like a tradition deriving from fact. The important point, however, is that the main facts of the story are derived, as the evidence of Celsus shows, from a Jewish tradition at least as early as the beginning of the second century. So far, it corroborates the chief data of the Gospel narrative, as shown in the original documents. The calumnies as to the birth are later additions; they could not, it is to be noted, have arisen until Christianity spoke Greek—the words *σωτήρ*, *παρθένος*, *πανθήρ*, *ἄστήρ*, on which so much depends, show this. The chronology of the Talmud is notoriously wild; the epoch of Jeschu varies between 100 B.C., the beginning of the second century, and the reign of Tiberius. He is once reckoned as an ancestor of Haman. Paphos ben Jehuda and the Rabbi Eliezer are known to have been contemporaries of Akiba eighty years after the traditional date of the death of Jesus. Eliezer is described as being tainted with Christian doctrines, and a conversation of his with Jacob of Cepharsethania is recorded. The placing of the Crucifixion at Lydda, a seat of learning which took the place of Jerusalem, and at the beginning of the second century was to the Jews a second Zion, completes the inference that the increased animosity against Christianity, which was connected with the action of Bar Cocheba, and which centred at Lydda, called for a revised edition of the Jewish misrepresentations of Christ, and in this were incorporated contemporary facts from this second Jewish persecution of the Christians.

It was long ago satisfactorily shown that the Talmudic Jesus is the Jesus of Christianity. Laible adds conclusive proof of this, but considers the whole account useless as a document for his life. Yet as a document tending to prove the *historicity* of Christ, the Talmudic account is of supreme value. It is a priori improbable that learned Jews, living in the same country and in the same historical atmosphere, should have neglected a whole series of continuous opportunities to show that the Christian Jesus never existed; and a comparison of the account with those of the classical historians results in showing not only an independent line of Jewish tradition, but one historical source of fact for all the divergent streams of tradition, both Jewish and Christian.

Even on a still more negative view, the historicity of Christ would be proved, either as one of a series of heretics each bearing the name of Jesus, and each condemned to the cross—an absolutely inconceivable coincidence—or as one victim of the annual sacrifice of human scapegoats or divine incarnation, a rite which cannot be proved to be a part of Jewish ritual. We have, however, it is hoped, given a more reasonable estimate of the external evidence, sufficient to justify a positive inference, and now that we have reached this conclusion, further results follow inexorably. Given an historical Jesus Christ, he was the founder of Christianity. It was therefore necessary for him to be in a position to make his influence strongly felt. That he was so placed is admitted by the Talmud. Neither an obscure charlatan, nor a mere sacrificial puppet could be, as such, the founder of a great religion.

This being granted, we are prepared to expect something remarkable about the life and personality of one who wielded such influence. Romanes observes: "If we estimate the greatness of a man by the influence which he has exerted on mankind, there can be no question, even from the secular point of view, that Christ is much the greatest man who has ever lived." The less extreme rationalists regard Christ as a Rabbi of extraordinary power and originality. Renan speaks of him as the one who has enabled the race to make its greatest step towards the divine. But, as Strauss remarked, a Christ who is only a distinguished man creates indeed no difficulty to the understanding, but is not the Christ in whom the Church believes. The old dilemma of Ullmann still remains—whether the Church created the Christ of the Gospels or he the Church. Both propositions, as Strauss notes, are tenable. The Christ of the Gospels may be the creation of the faith of the Church, but this faith is an effect of the personality of the historical Jesus. But this is not enough, for he is still reduced below the estimate of the Church, and, as Pfleiderer points out, it is the second question which is the more important. How did he create the Church? Here we must perforce call in the aid of the New Testament.

This is not the place to discuss, even if it were possible, the whole results and the methods of New Testament criticism, but a few reflections are necessary to the argument. The old theory of literal inspiration, which had no warrant in Scripture, has been given up, and a view more in accordance not only with science and human nature, but with a reverent conception of the divine methods, has taken its place. It is perhaps worth noting, firstly, that the difficulties of the old theory began with the questions, Which of the MSS., which reading of that MS., and then which interpretation was correct? and, secondly, that the Evangelists do not claim to be inspired, but merely to set down what they saw and heard. Criticism, then, must make allowance for the errors due to the age. It was an age without science, an age saturated with a belief in the marvellous, the miraculous, and the supernatural, which were of such common occurrence as to discount their remarkable nature. Even natural events were believed to be divine intimations, as were the omens of the Greeks and Romans. Again, we are reminded of "the petty prosaic spirit of Jewish interpretation which the Evangelists shared without any fault of their own. With the Jews to comprehend a fact or doctrine was not to reconcile it with consciousness and reason, but to bring it into harmony with Scripture." It is admitted that Strauss' mythical theory is in many cases a *vera causa*, and that the best established results of criticism cannot be disputed. The fact is, as Edersheim remarked, that the materials for a life of Christ do not exist. It is hardly possible, then, a priori, to give full credence to the statements of the New Testament writers. But where they are corroborated by external evidence they are to be accepted; and when we have found such a basis for study of their further assertions, we may, from their own unconscious admissions, reach a probable inference as to the authenticity of their facts and the growth of their narratives. In this particular case, it is admitted that the belief in the divinity of Christ was lacking in the original sources of the Gospel story.

Romanes remarks, "Whether or not Christ was himself divine would make no difference so far as the consideration of Christianity as the highest phase of evolution is concerned, or from the purely scientific point of view. From the religious point of view it would, of course, make a great difference." In this case (as in the passage from the non-moral to the moral, and from the non-mental to the mental), the process "may have been *ultimately* due to divine volition, and *must have been so due on* the theory of Theism." There is no difficulty, if Theism be once granted, in admitting the divine character of the Son of God; the question, like that of Theism, is metaphysical, and therefore beyond the range of criticism and science alike.

## CHAPTER VI

### THEORIES OF RELIGION

WHEN we turn to the speculative side of the problem, we are at once struck by the fact, an extremely significant fact, that religion is so variously defined. "There is probably," says Frazer, "no subject in the world about which opinions differ so much as the nature of religion, and to frame a definition of it which would satisfy every one must obviously be impossible." This variety of opinion goes far to show, as we have already suggested, that the nature of religion is not understood, and the probability is increased by the vagueness and confusion which mark the more important definitions and theories of origin. But, as the reader will remember, there is perhaps a further reason both for the lack of unanimity and the misunderstanding behind it. If, that is, "religion" is not a thing in itself, it is obviously incapable of precise definition, and the would-be definer faces an impossible task.

We need not do more than mention partial descriptions of a literary or popular order, according to which religion is mysticism, or superstition, or essentially reasonable; a perversion of sexuality or asceticism, a savage product, or the highest reach of the human mind. Others are still more obviously partial, as that it is dogma, or ritual, or mythology, or morality. Frazer reminds us of "the immense variety and complexity of the forces which have gone towards the building up of religion . . . and of the futility and inherent absurdity of any attempt to explain the whole vast organism as the product of any one simple factor." These more or less unscientific guesses serve to illustrate the confusion in which the problem is at present involved.

One of them perhaps may claim further notice, namely, the view that morality is the essence of religion. A distinguished authority divides the religions of the world into nature-religions and ethical religions; Matthew Arnold defined religion as "morality touched with emotion"; Huxley as "reverence and love for the ethical ideal and the desire to realize it in life." Of course, religion as "a way of living" is conterminous on one side with morality, but morality does not properly include such essential factors of religion as the sacramental principle, the doctrine of sin, or the practice of prayer. The view, as a matter of fact, is generally the result of a reaction from supernaturalism in religion, just as the tendency of the more ethical cults, like the Hebrew, was a reaction from materialism. Again, the religions of the lower races, though not unethical, are in many essentials unconnected with morality.

Hegel's definition, "the knowledge acquired by the finite spirit of its essence as an absolute spirit," had been hinted at before, and has inspired many others, such as those of Max Müller, Tiele, Caird, and Jastrow, in which religion is a perception of or relation to the infinite or the universe. Some of these have won credit, but their reference to metaphysical ultimates, while showing the complexity of their subject, prevents them from being anything more than cases of *obscurum der obscurius*. In so far, however, as these attempts hint at a psychological origin of religion, they are steps in the right direction.

Bain regarded the religious sentiment as a combination of the tender emotion, fear, and the feeling of the sublime. If this analysis implies that these feelings are directed towards an object, the Deity, it begs the question and is merely a description of theistic belief expressed in emotion. In any case, however, it is psychologically impossible for these emotions to co-exist at the same moment.

One of the most popular one-key theories, from Lucretius down to modern times, is the derivation of religion from fear. Many phenomena doubtless are due to this emotion, but Bain found it necessary to include its opposite, love; fear of God and love of God are both essential. Jevons points out that there is "an adoration of the great and bountiful as well as a sense of the maleficent in the origin of religion," and Robertson Smith thus describes the primitive God: "He stands to his votaries on the whole in a kindly



and protecting relation”; if he is angry, his anger is paternal; he is a Father. In one form of this view Theism is assumed; in a more popular form the fear in question is the fear of the ghosts of the dead. But the origin of the belief in both gods and ghosts needs first to be explained.

A theory which has much vogue is that the earliest phase of religion is ancestor-worship, deriving from the animism of dreams. It is chiefly connected with the name of Herbert Spencer. In one place he speaks of the emotion resulting from the contemplation of the Unknowable, into which as into a mystery all cosmical questions resolve, but he does not develop this source of religion. No doubt he conceived of it as one psychological factor, but he preferred to explain religion by a theory of ghosts. This explanation is a narrowed form of the animistic theory, and is a true proximate cause of certain developments of religion, but does not reach to its source. A man whose character wins for him in life the fear and respect of others is a likely object of worship; but why only after his death? There certainly is a tendency in the human mind to “deify” great men whether alive or dead, but the occurrence even of this is irregular, and the tendency to deify anything, of course, first requires explanation. Again, neither fear nor worship is the central fact of religion, and there are countless phenomena which cannot be traced back to the respect paid to ancestors or ghosts. It would be easy to show that no god known to science was an ancestor; even the hero-worship of the Torres islanders, as Haddon proves, has nothing to do with the worship of ancestors; among these savages the skulls of the dead are kept, but for affection only they are not worshipped. This case explains all so-called ancestor-worship that is not systematized; observers confuse affection and reverence with the ritual of a cult, as they have done in the parallel case of sun-worship. Fetishism and taboo, sun-worship and tree-worship, are growths from the root of religion, but they cannot be derived from the worship of departed spirits. Grant Allen, indeed, attempted to show that the worship of vegetation spirits arose from the worship of the dead, primitive man observing the luxuriance which characterized the graves of his kindred, but the theory has received no serious support. This author, however, developed the ghost-theory into a form which helps to bring out its essential defects; he held the worship of death to be “the basis and root of all human religion. The fear of the ghost results in the worship of a god; the concept of a god is nothing more than that of a dead man, regarded as a still surviving ghost or spirit, and endowed with increased or supernatural powers and qualities.” Jevons has pointed out that the primitive attitude to the dead is not worship; and we may add that it is not merely fear of maleficence. It is already a complex emotion in which grief and affection have an important share, while the fear of death resulting from the contemplation of it becomes immediately a fear of infection, and thus a part of the force of taboo. Taboo, in its most intense form, is not inconsistent with affection.

A similar misconception of the normal course of religious evolution is to be seen in the popular views which trace religion back to totemism, fetishism, taboo, nature-worship, or the like phases of religious experience. Such explanations at most would only show us stages of development—not its beginning; the evidence, however, proves that the normal course of development is not even through such stages, but that these are, with one exception, taboo, mere shunting-places off the main line of evolution; or, to change the metaphor, they are lower branches, which, though growing from the main trunk, do not much affect it, but wither and fall while the tree of religion develops upward. There are, however, one or two points worth noting in these offshoots. It is now recognized that in the worship of nature it is not the natural object but the power or spirit behind it that receives veneration. We can, however, go further than this and demonstrate that human relations have more to do with religion than have the relations of humanity to nature.

Fetishism is an application of animism to curious objects—the talisman is a recrudescence of the belief and practice. The savage is assisted herein by the same reasoning as leads to magic, and by the analogy of the utility of weapons and tools. As a tendency fetishism has probably been very widely spread;

the modern European has the germ of it still, and it is of common occurrence in the pathology of the emotions.

Totemism is a special growth, by no means universal. Its range has recently been very closely restricted since Tylor delivered his warning against the indiscriminate application of the term. In its origin the totem would seem to be merely a kindred-name, our surname. This kindred-name was then applied, as we apply blood-kinship, to the regulation of social relations, in particular of marriage. The reverence for the totem is due, I would conjecture, to the same personal or family pride and self-respect which cause a modern noble to consecrate, as it were, his family or shield. The myth-making impulse is found at work very soon in both cases. It is noted of the Torres islanders that the sacredness of totems is very limited, "merely implying a family connexion." In particular there is nothing whatever to show that a god ever grew out of a totem. Hero-worship and totemism are closely connected in the Torres Straits, but we are assured that the heroes have not developed from totems.

Taboo, in the narrower sense of a negative code of morality, is, of course, not conterminous with religion; in its wider meaning, which includes the beliefs which led to the code and, in particular, the positive conceptions of its philosophy, it is very far-reaching, but it is still rather a primitive mode of thought than the origin of religion. We shall have reason to see that the universal ideas and practices which it embodies are a direct result of the ultimate impulse which is the source of religion.

Before we discuss the theories of Tylor and Frazer, it will be well to mention two views which, though not scientific, are so popular and so constant that they must be reckoned with. A further estimate of their significance will be given in the sequel of our argument. The first is the view that religion has to do with and is a belief in the supernatural alone. In the second place, there is the popular opinion that God created the religious impulse or revealed religion to man. It is worth noting that St. Paul himself did not derive religion from revelation. The opinion is found in a more scientific form—that religion is caused by the belief in God and in the existence of the soul. With these two forms of one view, the other—namely, the supernaturalist or spiritualist—is generally combined.

Now it can be shown that religion may arise and subsist without any belief either in God or the soul: though further search will explain the apparent paradox. Tylor has proved the old stories of savage tribes living without a vestige of religion to be mere travellers' tales; and there is only one set of aborigines in the world, namely, the Central Australians, to whom anthropology denies a religion. To this case we shall frequently recur. Now in perhaps the majority of these lower religions there are no traces of what can properly be termed a God, and therefore Tylor is right in excluding this term from his definition of religion, substituting the term spirits. It may be argued, however, that the difference between spirits and a God is simply one of degree, and at present we will relinquish this point. But we know that among many early peoples who believe in a Supreme God there is nothing more than a belief. There is no propitiation, or sacrifice, or prayer, or even coercion; in other words, it seems that their religion, if admitted as such, has nothing to do with their theistic belief, the latter being simply a philosophy, not a rule of life. Thus the tribes of South-East Australia have a Supreme Being, the Kurnai, for instance, their Brewin (whom an intelligent native once imagined must be Jesus Christ), but they have no other relations with him. The Zulus have no relations with their Unkulunkulu, nor the Dahomans with their Supreme Being. We hear the supreme deity of the Fijians characterized as "dull and otiose." The Arunta of Central Australia are atheists. Buddhism, lastly, was in its origin an atheistic system.

The other view, the spiritualist or supernaturalist, suffers from the vagueness of its terms. But on any interpretation the theory fails. When we examine the supreme gods and spirits of various grades, not only among savages, but even in higher culture, we are constantly surprised to find that they lack every popular characteristic of "spirit"; in fact, the gods of most peoples are not spirits at all, but material persons, superhuman men, possessed of body, parts and passions, they rarely show themselves to human

eyes, that is all. This concrete notion, of course, has not been moulded by ancestor-worship or Euhemerism. Children, again, universally conceive of God as a material personality. It appears also that many a so-called "spirit" in primitive belief is not only material but is entirely without personality, being rather a concrete force than a superhuman being. The term "supernatural" has no meaning in an age of astronomical science. If it is taken as equivalent to "spiritual," we are reduced to the old question of the material and the immaterial; interpreted as superhuman, it fits the facts better, but reduces the popular theory to a primitive or childish level.

Lastly, we may apply to the combined opinion the case of Positivism. Excluding all Theism and every trace of the "spiritual" and the "supernatural," Positivism is still undoubtedly a religion, and the sincere Positivist is a religious man. Romanes, indeed, remarks that though a religion of humanity may be said to exist if we begin "by deifying humanity," yet we are in such a case merely using a metaphor. "To speak of the Religion of the Unknowable, the Religion of Cosmism, the Religion of Humanity, and so forth, where the personality of the First Cause is not recognized, is as unmeaning as it would be to speak of the love of a triangle or the rationality of the Equator." Yet he himself speaks of religion as having "exclusive reference to the Ultimate," and many an Agnostic claims to be religious. Various theological definitions of religion, such as that of Martineau, fall to the ground with the more popular idea. We thus find that neither the God-idea nor the belief in the "supernatural" or "spiritual" is essential to religion; and, in the second place, that where these beliefs occur, their object is not necessarily, certainly not originally, spiritual or extra-natural in any scientific sense, if such be possible.

Tylor, whose classical study of Animism is the most important contribution ever made to the science of religion, deals with the subjective side of the question alone, the only sound point of view for the inquirer, and never blinds himself to the normal course of development by exaggerating the importance of side-issues or sporadic growths. He first made clear the fact of religious evolution by insisting on "the connexion which runs through religion from its rudest forms up to the status of an enlightened Christianity"; and he also was the first to set in order the comparative science and place it on a sound basis. "No more can he who understands but one religion understand even that religion, than the man who knows but one language can understand that language." "The time," he says, "may soon come when it will be thought as unreasonable for a scientific student of theology not to have a competent acquaintance with the principles of the religions of the lower races, as for a physiologist to look with the contempt of fifty years ago on evidence derived from the lower forms of life, deeming the structure of mere invertebrate creatures matter unworthy of his philosophic study"; "few who will give their minds to master the general principles of savage religion will ever again think it ridiculous, or the knowledge of it superfluous to the rest of mankind." No one has carried out more thoroughly his own principles, that "nowhere are broad views of historical development more needed than in the study of religion," and that "scepticism and criticism are the very conditions for the attainment of reasonable belief."

Tylor gives as a minimum definition of religion "the belief in spiritual beings," and he outlines the development of religion from a source in animism, "the deep-lying doctrine of spiritual beings, which embodies the very essence of spiritualistic as opposed to materialistic philosophy." The theory of animism divides, he says, into two great dogmas, forming parts of one consistent doctrine, the first concerning the souls of individual creatures, the second concerning other spirits, upward to the rank of powerful deities. It is "an ancient and world-wide philosophy, of which belief is the theory and worship is the practice." He gives the following questions as marking the origin of animistic beliefs:—What makes the difference between a living body and a dead? What causes waking, sleep, trance, disease, and death? What, again, are those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions? He also noted the materiality of most conceptions of the soul, "the later metaphysical notion of immateriality could scarcely have conveyed any meaning to the savage"; but he seems to distinguish the lower from the higher stages of belief by a

cleavage on this question:—"The divisions which have separated the great religions of the world into intolerant and hostile sects are for the most part superficial in comparison with the deepest of all religious schisms, that which divides Animism from Materialism." We shall subsequently have occasion to refer to this view. Lastly, the general theory of "spirits" is a corollary of the theory of human souls, on which it is modelled.

It will be observed, in the first place, that his definition is a scientific form of the popular view we have just mentioned, that religion is the belief in the supernatural or the spiritual world; and, in the second place, that while he excludes supreme gods who are not envisaged as spirits, he includes many a superstitious belief in ghosts and bogies that is hardly of a religious character. Besides these objections, it is difficult to see how either a departmental deity or a supreme god can be derived from a horde of spirits. The whole theory is, moreover, involved in the same confusion as the popular opinion: the terms "soul" and "spirit" have no precise psychological value. Something has already been said as to the difficulty thus produced, and we have seen reason to think that the source of religious feelings and their constant support is not the belief in "spirits." Indeed, many essential facts of religion, even in its highest stages, seem to have no other reference to "spiritual" beliefs than the purpose of correcting them. Finally, the schism between animism and materialism which Tylor emphasizes serves to remind us that most of the world's animized products are *material*; while, if we assume that personality is intended by the term animism, then the animistic definition of religion once more fails. The derivation of animism from the subconscious mental phenomena of dreams and waking visions is the chief merit of Tylor's research, but there is something still to be added to this derivation.

Frazer understands by religion "a propitiation or conciliation of powers superior to man, which are believed to direct and control the course of nature and of human life. In this sense it will readily be perceived that religion is opposed in principle both to magic and to science." "Religion assumes the world to be directed by conscious agents who may be turned from their purpose by persuasion." This definition does not limit religion to a belief, but includes religious practice. The "powers" in which religion believes are personal agents, not vague "spiritual" or "supernatural" beings.

This is the best definition as yet given, but, as before, we note that it fails to include atheistic Buddhism and Positivism, and many phenomena which are religious in everything but the assumption of personality or consciousness in the object. Again, in the theory of Christian theology there is no conciliation or propitiation of God. The "sinner must begin by making his peace with God. But this is not because God needs changing, but because the man needs changing." In the sequel we shall attempt to show that religion is not derived from an objective belief at all.

When we pass on to the corollary of the definition which relates to magic, we are met by numerous difficulties. In the first place, it seems impossible to separate magic and religion in their early forms, though in Frazer's view there is a fundamental distinction and opposition between them. Maspero remarks of Egyptian religion that magic was its "very foundation," and Codrington says that in Melanesia religion and magic are based on the same ideas. Indeed, the practical meaning of magic, when worked in connexion with religion, is control of the supernatural, which is thus not superior to man. Further, even the French peasant believes that the priest can coerce God; the Brahman breathes life into the image of his god; the negro beats his idol if it does not bring him luck; the Ostyak threatens his if his hunting fails; and the Chinaman has been known to roll his god in the dirt. These are, *ex hypothesi*, powers superior to man; the reply would be that magic survives and is often combined with the later product, religion; but in all the last-cited cases but one, there is no hint of magic. Again, when we consider such an essential of religion as Communion, even the Christian Eucharist in its normal form presents features which are difficult to separate from magic; a manual act and prayer on the part of the priest are the means, though not properly the cause, whereby the elements become mystically but really the Body and Blood of Christ.

Is, then, the Eucharist in every sense but the Zwinglian to be excluded from religion? Further, it can be argued that psychologically there is no essential distinction between prayer, if included under persuasion, and the principle of sympathetic magic. Prayer, in one aspect, is the application of one will to another by telepathy; in another, it is a rehearsal in the mind of what we intend to put into action, precisely as the savage rehearses a result by magical methods in order that it may occur. Tylor, indeed, conjectured that prayer was the origin of charms. "Charm-formulas," he says, "are in very many cases actual prayers." Frazer might argue that charms are the origin of prayer. Again, in practice as in psychology, there is no real distinction between propitiation, persuasion, and coercion. The last, as we noted, is often applied to a deity, even at a high stage of culture, without any magical connexion at all. The definition would be improved by including coercion.

"Magic," again, in Frazer's view, "as representing a lower intellectual stratum, has probably everywhere preceded religion." Originally, man fancied, as the Central Australian still fancies, that he could control nature by magical processes, which depend on the principle that a result may be brought about by imitating it; but when, as in arid and unfertile districts would soon be the case, he found that his power failed, he concluded that there must be some personal force or forces, invisible but very powerful, that thwarted his efforts, or rather possessed the ultimate control of nature. He therefore gave up magic, and began to propitiate these Beings. This view begs the question by assuming that magic represents a lower intellectual stratum. Man has always felt that he can control nature to some extent, and modern science proves that he can. This view also implies that magic, by its failure, is the cause of religion. It is a curious and interesting fact that, even in modern minds of the highest cultivation, the failure of science, which is modern magic, to answer certain questions, has often produced or revived religious beliefs. But this is not the case with the Central Australians. Lang points out that they inhabit the least fertile district of the continent, where magic was bound to fail; yet magic, contrary to expectation, still flourishes there. It might, of course, be argued that they are beginning to give religion a trial; and there are, indeed, many traces of religion in their culture.

We shall now examine these traces, as being all important not only for the present question, but for our further inquiry. We shall first consider them in their bearing upon the opinion of Spencer and Gillen that the Central Australians supply us with a unique example of a people without religion, and upon the implied view of Frazer that they never had any. These savages spend a considerable portion of the year in the performance of magical ceremonies. The object of some of these, the *intichiuma*, is to ensure the food supply; in some cases to promote the increase even of pests, like flies and mosquitoes; in others to accelerate the growth of their children; the object, again, of others is the initiation of the younger members to the duties of mature life—here we see an essentially religious rite connecting with the magic of the *intichiuma* last mentioned. In all of these, as in many miscellaneous ceremonies not mentioned here, one is more struck by the dramatic and ceremonial character of the performances than by their magical purpose. In fact, we may say that they are to the black fellows very much what the drama was to the Athenians. "It is astonishing," say Spencer and Gillen, "how large a part of a native's life is occupied with the performance of these ceremonies. The sacred ceremonies which appear very trivial matters to the white man are most serious matters to him. The portion of his life devoted to matters of a sacred or secret nature . . . becomes of greater and greater importance to him. As he grows older he takes an increasing share in these, until finally this side of his life occupies by far the greater part of his thought." Very noticeable is the solemnity with which the ceremonies are performed, and the sincerity of the performers. Our authorities "purposely avoid the use of the word religious, preferring the term sacred or secret," and evidently have a preconceived idea of what religion is. Those who more or less identify religion with morality will credit the natives with religion when they read of the moral instruction given at initiation; while those who accept Tylor's definition will note that these ceremonies are connected with "the great

ancestors,” and that the native believes that his spirit “will, after death, be in communion with them.” Every birth that takes place in a tribe is a reincarnation of an ancestral spirit. Imaginative men, we are told, can see spirits. The natives believe that their “spirit-parts” (to use Spencer and Gillen’s curious phrase) wander about in dreams. Here, surely, is a doctrine of the soul complete enough to satisfy Tylor’s definition of religion. But these people actually can be brought under Frazer’s definition; for a study of their sacred stories about the spirit ancestors shows that *superhuman* powers are believed to have been possessed by them. In one tribe a man “sings” to the good spirit to be made well, yet Spencer and Gillen say there is no conciliation about it. But it is certainly prayer, and prayer addressed to a power superior to man. The members of another tribe, the Warramunga, are said by our authorities to exhibit in the ceremony connected with the great snake-totem Wollunqua, “a primitive form of propitiation,” . . . “persuading or almost forcing the Wollunqua to remain quietly at home.” So near are the issues of prayer and control, of magic and religion. Lastly, we have a very interesting phenomenon: the Great Spirit, or Supreme Being, known as Baiame or Daramulun in other Australian tribes where he superintends initiation, is found here also, and is sincerely believed in by the women and boys. The Urabunna women thus believe in Witurna, whose voice is the sound of the bull-roarer. Among the Arunta the boys and women are taught the same lesson about Twanyirika. Much the same belief occurs among the Anula and Warramunga. Now the Kaitish boy is told *bona fide* that the noise of the bull-roarer pleases Atnatu; but the men of most of the tribes are too rationalistic for this, and after initiation the young man is actually taught by the elders “that the spirit-creature, whom up to that time as a boy he has regarded as all powerful, is merely a myth, and that such a being does not really exist, and is only *an invention of the men* to frighten the women and children.” There is, therefore, say Spencer and Gillen, no equivalent of Baiame and Daramulun; the people “have no idea of the existence of any supreme being who is pleased or displeased,” the only exception being Atnatu, who is pleased with the sound of the bull-roarer. The case, it may be remarked, is precisely the same with many intelligent youths in our modern civilization, who in childhood learn, chiefly from a mother’s lips, the Christian doctrine of God, and believe in the same until manhood is reached, when the prevailing rationalism exerts its influence, and the old belief is gradually dissipated into doubt or indifference.

We now apply these considerations to the view that religion has its origin in magic. Oldenberg himself, who held the opinion that magic is prior to religion, insisted that a belief in spirits was part of the raw material of magic, and we have seen that magic adheres to religion even in its highest development. If we assume that religion is developed from magic, how should there be a fundamental antagonism between them? An impartial survey of the Australian evidence results in a *prima facie* case against the theory. There are, indeed, one or two points which might be taken to indicate the reverse, namely, that magic comes from religion. If we are justified in assigning the same course of development to religious beliefs both in the race and in the individual, and psychology justifies us in this, the case of the Arunta boy who passes from religion to magic, compared with that of the European who supersedes religion by science, may at least render it probable that magic does not necessarily precede or originate religion. We have noted several cases in which the savage resorts to coercion of his god when conciliation has failed. Worth noting also is a habit common in all but the highest stages of culture; “the adherents of one religion are apt to ascribe to magic the beliefs and wonders of another, as the Christians held Odin and the Romans Moses to have been mighty enchanters of ancient times. The Jews ascribed the miracles of Christ to sorcery; and the general question of the Gospel miracles cannot be studied without taking this habit into account. There is nothing derogatory in the accusation, except the implication that the wonders are due to the man’s own ability and not to God. Compare the Australian, who knows that he cannot work magic, while wishing he could, and believing that other men can. Such phenomena certainly do not prove the priority of magic. It is important also to observe, in reference to the opinion so generally

held that the Central Australians represent the most primitive type of humanity known to science, that Lang and Durkheim show good cause for inferring that the Arunta really stand on a higher level of culture than most Australian tribes. Their marriage system is unusually complex; their cosmology, with its conception of the self-existence of the universe, their belief in the reincarnation and transmigration of souls, and, we may add, the peculiarities of their "atheism," are all far from primitive.

But there is one crucial point which practically settles the whole difficulty. The question is no longer whether these savages are entirely without religion, but whether they are beginning to form religious ideas, as is implied in the theory of Frazer, or, on the other hand, to discard them. Now we have seen that Twanyirika, in whom the women and boys believe, is actually a myth to the grown men, and the point we would insist upon is this: it is both a priori inconceivable, and opposed to all experience, that a mere bugbear who is known to be unreal and is practically an object of ridicule, should ever grow into a god, sincerely believed in, and regarded as a real person. No instance exists of such a development. We know that savages frequently invent a bogey for the purpose of keeping the women and children in order. But to hold, as Frazer does, that these bogies are the originals from which gods have developed, is to return to the unhistorical guesswork of the French sceptics, and to regard religion as originating in imposture. Caricature is impossible without a person to caricature. The opposite development is one of the most familiar and best-attested facts in religious history. It seems, therefore, most reasonable to suppose that among the Central Australians, as might be expected in view of their isolation, a peculiar line of evolution has been followed, and that their religion, more or less embryonic, has become saturated with magic, while in one direction only—belief in a God—it has crumbled away. The latter belief, we must remember, is ultimately metaphysical alone; we are here merely criticizing that definition which makes it the centre of religion. On the general question we may conclude that religion and magic are very easily fused; only in theory, or after a long separate development, can antagonism be established. This is true also of the modern antagonism between religion and science; artificial opposition is here assisted by mutual misconception. Religion, in fine, is not derivable from magic, nor magic from religion. The true source of religion lies beyond all differences of expression, as we shall now attempt to show.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE ORIGIN OF RELIGION

OUR examination of the prevailing theories thus results in showing their inadequacy. It now remains to take a new survey of facts which are accepted as religious, and to eliminate, if possible, one invariable factor, which will explain all the phenomena. If we find this, we shall have reached the origin of religion. Herbert Spencer has affirmed “the universality of religious ideas, their independent evolution among different primitive races, and their great vitality,” characteristics which prove that “their source must be deep-seated and not superficial,” and that religion expresses “some eternal fact.” Starbuck has shown that religion is a normal growth. The anthropological data corroborate these positions, but we have still to discover the source of religious ideas, the eternal fact in consciousness from which they spring. No analysis either of civilized psychology or of the theology of the higher religions adequately reveals this; but the savage, so long supposed to be a misguided wretch who “in his blindness bows down to wood and stone,” a worshipper of devils, and the incarnation of all that is bestial, criminal, and degraded—this much misunderstood waif and stray of evolution, who once supplied an object lesson on the story of the Fall, and is now pointed to as the type from which we have risen, may guide us to the object of our search.

When we penetrate at all deeply into the life and thought of savage man, we are struck by the presence of elements which, so far from being devil-worship or superstition, are of a relatively high “religious” character. It was a rash remark of Huxley that among the lowest savages “theology is a mere belief in the existence, powers, and dispositions, usually malignant, of ghost-like entities who may be propitiated or scared away; but no cult can properly be said to exist. And in this stage theology is wholly independent of ethics.” But anthropologists are frequently found to endorse his statement, though they are not agreed as to what religion is. Religion is certainly not morality, nor even worship, yet we must admit that even the “sacred and secret,” magico-ethical sociology of the lowest savages aims at and attains a really high standard. Howitt, our best authority on the Australian natives of the south-east, an initiated member of several tribes, says: “It can no longer be maintained that the Australians have no belief which can be called religious—that is, in the sense of beliefs which govern tribal and individual morality.” He adds, “under a supernatural sanction,” but the Central Australian evidence may cancel this qualification. Whether cancelled or not, the fact that certain beliefs govern morality remains true of all races; the beliefs need not be superstitious or theistic in order to be religious. When the Kurnai, Howitt remarks, found that their lads were becoming corrupted through association with the whites, they exercised additional and particular severity in their initiation or confirmation ceremonies. The Leh-tas, so the Karens say, have no laws or rulers, and do not require any, as they never commit any evil among themselves or against other people. “The sense of shame amongst this tribe is so acute, that on being accused of any evil act by several of the community, the person so accused retires to a deserted spot, digs his grave, and strangles himself.” It would be easy to multiply similar accounts of tribes who have not associated with Christians or Mohammedans. On the whole, the savage compares favourably with civilized man, the chief difference being that the former is less capable of breaking his code, be it moral, magical, or religious.

If we continue our investigations, we also find, as the anthropological evidence we have previously given shows, that the religion of savages, both in theory and practice, is essentially similar to that of civilized men. Travellers, always on the look out for contrasts, and contemptuous of “niggers,” have often over-emphasized the superstitious accidents to the neglect of the religious substance. The savage,



moreover, is very secretive about his religion; in fact, like most of us, he hardly understands what it is, and cannot express it articulately, though he is communicative enough on the subject of ghosts, witchcraft, mythology, and other theosophical apparatus of the religious idea; but there are few savage tribes who do not teach and practise most of the Christian virtues, few who do not possess in subconsciousness the essence of Christian theory.

If we go still further we realize that, like the Jew, the Puritan, and the early Christian, the savage not only has religion, but apparently has nothing else. His philosophy of nature and of man, his magic and science, his politics and sociology, his medical practice, his ethics and morality, his everyday thought and action, behaviour and etiquette, even the processes of sense, emotion, and intellection, each of these bears a religious stamp. This assertion need not be misunderstood; the fact is simply this, that when we compare his culture with others, we do find that his whole expression of himself is of that kind which in higher cultures we describe as religious. The following examples, both general and particular, will illustrate the analogy, and bring the main question once more into relief: "The political and religious governments of the Kaffir tribes are so intimately connected that the one cannot be overturned without the other; they must stand or fall together." The *tabu* of Fiji is "a religion in itself." The Polynesian *tapu*, especially in Hawaii and New Zealand, was "the basis of society"; it was the support of all religious, moral, and social institutions, for all of which it supplied a supernatural sanction. Every Maori gentleman was permanently *tapu*. Among the Melanesians the doctrine of *mana* is the basis both of their religion and their magic. The life of the Central Australian is dominated by the habit of dramatic ceremonial and the theory of magic.

Before we leave these general accounts and proceed to details, we may provisionally justify our grouping together of religion, *tabu*, *mama*, magic and ceremonial. We do not yet know what religion essentially is; we must therefore, in the meantime, consider facts alone, and ignore arbitrary terminology. To the unprejudiced observer, the Central Australians, the Melanesians, the Polynesians, the Kafirs, the Jews, the early Christians, and the Puritans would all present one and the same specific character, no matter what term he chose for its designation. The higher systems are, of course, organized and stereotyped, and it is possible for the mind to abstract their religion from the social substance, and for evolutionary processes to effect this result in actuality. But in the lower amorphous religions, without a dogmatic apparatus, it is impossible to separate religion from ordinary life. The fact itself gives some presumption that religion, as we have already hinted, is not a thing in itself.

We have now to mark off from generic religious states some invariable cases of religious expression. They are as follows: Birth is a "taboo" state throughout the world; in one African tribe it is described as "holy." The curative methods of the savage doctor, whether for body or soul, are religious or magical, or both. Puberty and initiation, courtship and marriage, death and burial, are invariably attended by something sacred, or secret, by "taboo" or "religious" ceremonial. Prayer before eating and drinking is a widely spread custom, but the potentiality of prayer is a universal concomitant of serious action. The "religious" accompaniments of hunting and war, seed-time and harvest, are a familiar feature of primitive life. Ordinary contracts between individuals and communities bear a "religious" stamp. The exchange of love-tokens is no less sacramental than the rite of marriage. The Battas attribute emotions, such as anger, to "spiritual" agency; the Yorubas and Ewe peoples explain love as a "possession." Kinship is a "religious" bond.

All these are expressions of religion in the current meaning of that term; but in some cases such expression is not ascribed to belief in gods or spirits, to *tabu* or to magic, while in others it apparently is. With regard to both cases, we have shown some reason for regarding religion as not deriving from spiritualistic or theistic belief or from taboo or magic, and we may suggest two inferences which will carry us a stage further. We find when we compare savage society with that, for instance, of the Jews and early

Christians and with sporadic cases from elsewhere, that *almost any subject of human concern and interest may be religious in character*; to the Pythagoreans even mathematics was a department of religion. Put in another way, the various principles, known as religious, so far from belonging to one department, actually belong to several, dissimilar and disconnected both in origin and purpose, and only bound together by the scarlet thread of religion. Thus the belief in God belongs to metaphysics; the redemption of man and personal salvation are sociological questions; the doctrine of sin is ethical, that of the soul is psychological. Many details of savage and even higher religion belong to medicine; services like those for the Burial of the Dead, the Churching of Women, and Holy Matrimony, seem to be simply ceremonial, and intended to solemnize the crises of life. Many “mysteries” are apparently merely social and on a line with Masonic and other secret societies; others belong to the drama. Certain sacraments, lastly, are magical—that is, they are applications of primitive science. We may well ask, What is religion? It is at any rate clear now that it is *not a department, but a tone or spirit*.

A good deal of confusion is removed by viewing religion thus. Most inquirers, regarding religion as a department like law or science, are bound to presuppose a special subject-matter for it to deal with, and thus, when they find it extending its sphere of influence, they are apt to put it in a false position, while testifying to its wide range and paramount importance. In the second place, there is this much truth in the ordinary view, namely, that the spirit of religion is permanently simple, flowing from one source, and does tend to confine itself to one main channel.

Now, the cases we have quoted, and others still to be mentioned, show what this channel is. It is the *elemental part of life*. Religion, it is certain, chiefly concerns itself with *elemental* interests—life and death, birth and marriage, are typical cases. Here we make our first definite step towards a solution of the problem of origin.

The life of the savage can hardly be said to have any other sphere than the elemental; his rudimentary culture is almost entirely bounded by the elemental facts of existence. Let us now compare the case of the civilized religious man. When it is once understood that religion deals with the elemental in life, analysis even of civilized religious psychology becomes easy. We find that a man’s religion does not enter into his professional or social hours, his scientific or artistic moments; practically its chief claims are settled on the one day in the week from which ordinary worldly concerns are excluded. In fact, his life is in two parts; but the moiety with which religion is concerned is the elemental. Serious thinking on ultimate questions of life and death is, roughly speaking, the essence of his Sabbath; add to this the habit of prayer, the giving of thanks at meals, and the subconscious feeling that birth and death, confirmation and marriage are rightly solemnized by religion, while business and pleasure may possibly be consecrated, but only metaphorically or by an overflow of religious feeling, and we have a very fair presumption that religion, both in lower and higher cultures, essentially has to do with the elemental and with nothing else. The fact explains the general truth that the more primitive stages of culture are more religious than the later.

We may therefore narrow our search by confining it to this sphere, and by looking for the source of religion in the elemental material variously sanctified under the names of religion and magic, superstition, animism, and taboo. A glance backwards at the multifarious facts cited, the varying theories discussed, and the elemental manifestations of religion both in early and late culture, may suggest the possibility that religion is the expression of something so obvious, so universal, and so permanent, that it is one of the last things to be recognized by man, something analogous in this respect to gravitation or the atmosphere.

The Central Australians, supposed as they generally are to be without religion, will serve us for a starting-point. Admitting for the moment that they represent a lower plane of evolution than other tribes, and that they possess no religion proper, we may perhaps find in their psychology the material from which religion is made. If they have a rudimentary religion, as we have seen reason to suggest, our task will be the easier. We are told that they have no belief in a God or in spiritual beings, only in the “spirit parts” of

themselves and their Great Ancestors, no worship or propitiation of these, no sacrifice, no temple, no priest; "magic" for them takes the place of religion.

In passing we may notice the turn these people have for ceremonialism. This tendency is, of course, the practical side of the consecrating tendency. To this extent we may compare with the Australian case systems like Freemasonry, which still possess a firm hold over human imagination. Freemasonry is the frame of a religion. Now, we must here insist that the chief characteristic of these ceremonies is not so much magic as *sacredness*. An unprejudiced reading of Spencer and Gillen's full descriptions cannot fail to justify this assumption. Moreover, this sacredness attaches not only to the dramatic ceremonies, but in a special degree to the *churinga*, of which Central Australia may be called the home. Each tribe has a collection, and each man a few of these sacred bull-roarers; they are treasured like heirlooms and regalia and it is not too much to say that tribal and personal welfare is bound up with them. Of all the instruments ever used in ritual, sacred or profane, the *churinga* is the most remarkable and the most interesting. Neither sacred books, nor rosaries, nor prayer-wheels, nor mystic caskets, have had such importance to worshippers as these curious prototypes of a modern toy have to the Australian. His chief fund of solemn and sanctified emotion is spent upon them; the word *churinga* is actually used as a synonym for "sacred." Analogy at once suggests that such feelings are religious, but we need not yet assume this. The fact remains that *sacredness* is the characteristic of the ceremonial (whether dramatic or in connexion with the *churinga*) which so largely fills their lives, and that it is here we must look for their religion, whether decadent or embryonic.

It is a curious fact that neither the Greek nor the Latin language has any comprehensive term for religion, except in the one, *ἱερά*, and in the other *sacra*, words which are equivalent to "sacred." No other term covers the whole of religious phenomena, and a survey of the complex details of various worships results in showing that no other conception will comprise the whole body of religious facts. Sacramentalism, the reader may be reminded, is generally regarded as the essential part of religion. We conclude, therefore, that "sacredness" is a result of the application of religious impulse, and of nothing else. Put in another way, the inference is that the religious emotion is no separate feeling, but that tone or quality of any feeling which results in making something sacred.

We have already narrowed the sphere of religion to the elemental, and we now add that the consecration—the making sacred—of elemental facts, so noticeable both in primitive and civilized life, is the normal result of the religious impulse, and of this alone. We thus advance a further stage in the inquiry, and the result throws light upon a difficulty which we often find in accounts of early races. Observers note the differences which mark off their "religion" from ours, and cautiously apply some other term, describing the beliefs and ritual as magical or taboo, secret or sacred. The essential characteristic of each of these, however termed, is sacredness, but the influence of traditional terms and stereotyped dogma prevents the inquirer from seeing that here is religion in the making.

We now require some one psychological factor of the most fundamental and permanent character which shall be sufficient to explain this normal result in all its phases. What is it that makes the facts we are dealing with sacred? Why is sacredness applied to the elemental sphere alone? Whence comes that heightened tone of organic feeling in which we are to find the religious impulse? To take the case from which we started, What makes the Australian *churinga* and the Australian drama sacred?

Now it cannot be any magical meaning that produces sanctity, for it is found in ceremonies which are merely dramatic, as in the representation of the *Kurdaitcha* (the avenging of blood), a representation which has no magical purpose whatever. Still less possible is it to derive it from the dramatic emotion. Seriousness, not sacredness, is the emotion inspired by a scientific experiment or a scenic performance. "Spiritualistic" belief is excluded on the authority of those who supplied the facts of Central Australian life; but they tell us that the *churinga* is a sort of sacramental vehicle for the "spirit-part" of an ancestor,

and that the drama has to do with the production of food. What is this “spirit-part?” Our authorities are not very explicit, but the native belief that birth is a reincarnation of a “spirit-part,” that sexual congress has nothing to do with conception, which results from the entrance not of a “spirit” but of a spirit-part, gives us a clue. Let us now compare with this isolated fact those phenomena in the elemental sphere which are most deeply and permanently sacred.

Child-birth is everywhere sacred; both mother and infant are holy, sacred, or taboo. The young Australian at puberty is *narumbe*, sacred—a widely spread notion. Sometimes boys and girls at this crisis are so sacred that they may not see the sun or fire, as in Fiji and Halmahera. Betrothal and marriage are sacred; even the crude Australian process has this character; elsewhere marriage is a sacrament. Among the Malays the wedding ceremony, “even as carried out by the poorer classes, shows that the contracting parties are treated as royalty—that is to say, as sacred human beings.” They are called *Raja sari*, the sovereigns of a day. Certain functions are regarded by many races in such a way as to warrant the inference that they are sacred. In many cases eating and drinking and sexual congress are so treated. These functions are probably universally viewed in this way, though of course chiefly in subconsciousness. The custom of performing them in secret is very widely spread. The natives of Baram eat in secret. “They are very particular about being called away from their meals, and it takes a great deal to make a man set about doing anything before he has concluded his repast.” The “religious” application is added by the fact that they consider it *wrong* to attack even an enemy whilst he is eating. We may here recall the connexion of secret and sacred which is used to describe Australian religion. The people of Kumaon use a special room for eating, into which nothing unclean may come. The cook may not touch any one after he has begun his operations. The Brahmanical rules of Manu contain many details which show that eating is almost a ritual act. Food is, in primitive culture, more often than not regarded as being itself a sacred thing. Prayer before such functions is a very common practice. Sexual functions, though from the nature of the case and from the universal secrecy (itself a mark of sacredness) in which they are involved, it is not easy to prove in detail, are more or less consciously regarded as sacred. The well-known Semitic oath is a case in point. *Manu* gives many rules proving the sacredness of bodily functions. The Malays and Siamese regard the head as sacred. If a Maori touched his head, he had to put his fingers to his nose “and snuff up the sanctity which they had acquired by the touch, and thus restore it to the part from which it was taken.” He could not blow the fire, for his breath communicated sanctity. Various parts of the body and certain secretions have everywhere this character. Blood is generally sacred; the drinking of human blood and the eating of human flesh is always regarded as a sacrament. Even the name of a man is a sacred thing.

It seems that there is only one hypothesis which avails to colligate these and similar applications of sacredness to elemental crises. All these phenomena are concerned with one fundamental fact, and this is—*Life*. Throughout primitive habit it is the fundamental processes of organic life that are invariably the subject first of secrecy and then of consecration. As soon as they produce a reflex in consciousness the application is made. One of the first expressions of this is to be seen in the seriousness which elemental facts inspire. Thus a very large expenditure of form and ceremony is lavished by the Central Australians upon any event which they deem important. Again, the mere privilege of existence, according to the incarnation-biology of these people, depends upon the continuous transmission of the vital principle from their ancestors through generation after generation (a sound enough view, of course), the guarantee, or rather the vehicle, of this being the *churinga*. Their drama, moreover, is essentially concerned with elemental facts, especially with the provision of food.

Life, then, we may take it, is the key to our problem. The vital instinct, the feeling of life, the will to life, the instinct to preserve it, is the source of, or rather is identical with, the religious impulse, and is the origin of religion. Amid the elemental sphere with which religion deals life is the central fact, the

paramount concern; upon life is concentrated the best of that sacredness to which the sense of life gives rise. Sacredness is the result of the religious impulse; the feeling of life is the cause. In its primary form the impulse is the psychological reflex of the vital processes; then it becomes a normal expression of the feeling of vitality and of the will to life—unconscious at first, then subconscious, and in critical moments conscious.

Before we estimate this conclusion and illustrate its results, we may consider the direct confirmation it receives from the facts last cited, and then adduce some further evidence. They all refer to physical life, its seat or source, many to its chief crises, and to the functions with which the vital processes are concerned. One of the earliest unwritten and written laws is, "Thou shalt do no murder." The blood is the life; in savage medicine life and health are transmitted to the sick by blood or semen. Life is immanent in flesh, and in the food and drink which give life to man. Blood is sacred for both reasons, hence the prohibition to shed it on the ground. We can see the process by which it becomes sacred in Australia; the natives "have no fear of it, or of the sight of it." It is drunk to acquire strength; blood is given by young men to old men to strengthen them. There are many considerations to be drawn from physiology and psychology which confirm our hypothesis; while the facts of religion, whether higher or lower, magical, taboo, spiritualistic or ethical, do not seem in any single point to militate against it; on the contrary, they invariably converge upon life. The feeling of vitality is produced by eating, as the lowering of vitality due to hunger causes the instinctive desire for life. So the Homeric hymns attribute inspiration to food, and tell us how men when feasting feel ageless and immortal. The divine Soma of the Hindus, the Haoma of the Parsis, and the wine of Bacchus had the same result. The desire for increased vitality is the ultimate reason behind the use of drugs, like *mescal*, in certain abnormalities of religion. That inspiration can be produced by drinking blood is a familiar belief. Various psychical results of increased blood-pressure are cases in point; not a little of the effective influence of prayer upon the consciousness may be due to the attitude which drives the blood to the head. Conversion, as Starbuck has shown, is a normal result of adolescence, and is thus connected with that profound change which takes place in the foundation of the organism at puberty. It is a "period of rapid physiological transformations; the voice changes, the beard sprouts, the proportions of the head are altered, the volume of the heart increases, that of the arteries diminishes, the blood-pressure is heightened, and the central changes are those in the reproductive system which make the child into the man or woman." It is impossible, he notes, to "obtain a deep revelation, except from the central channels of one's nature." "Physiological hunger widens into appropriateness . . . hungering after righteousness is an irradiation of the crude instinct of food-getting." Again, primitive man is brought more closely than his successors, face to face with the elemental facts and needs of life. He has to make his struggle for existence directly, as it were, with the sources of existence. We may say that to the savage sin against life is the sin against the Holy Ghost. The food-quest provides the earliest illustration of the way in which he lays hold on life. It is the most engrossing fact of primitive existence. It forms the staple of conversation, and takes precedence of every interest. Man's daily bread thus becomes the object of innumerable acts of caution and superstition. Payne has suggested, on philological grounds, that the distinction between good and bad first arose in connexion with food. The instinct of possession, applied in physiological hunger, is a result of the will to life, showing its serious and strenuous character. When we find the emotion of shame expressed by the Bakairi on the breaking of a rule about eating, we see a disturbance of the very foundation of being. The hunger and thirst after righteousness of the religious soul is more than a metaphor. Turning to the case from which we set out, we note that the typical dramatic performances of the Australians are concerned with the food supply, and the vital instinct invests this with a ceremonial halo, which actually is the result of economic pressure. The "play," in fact, is early man's strongest expression of seriousness; and here we are at the

beginnings of the ceremonial instinct. The development and complement of the nutritive impulse is the sexual; and sexual hunger and thirst show the same instinct in a more complex form.

In other problems it is often necessary to emphasize the fears of primitive man, but here the positive side of his consciousness is the more important. Yet it is inevitable that fear and caution should be found simultaneously with this, the negative with the positive aspect. Thus we have seen with what religious care the savage treats the great crises of life, birth, puberty, marriage, and death. There is a mystery about them, but this is not the primary cause of anxiety and awe. These states are at once invested with sacredness, because in them life is at stake; not that death is here consciously expected, the subconscious feeling would rather be that the sources of life are exposed. Tregear showed profound insight when he suggested that the savage rules concerning menstruation were intended to prevent any “monkeying with the fount of life.” The average civilized man, when brought in contact with these elemental facts, unconsciously regards them as sacred; his feeling is much the same as that of the savage, though, if it rise into consciousness, he will realize more clearly than the savage does their connexion with life, as well as their normal character. Mental culture has brought him, by the way of reason, nearer in consciousness to the elemental than was his primitive ancestor. We have noted that it is at one of these crises, puberty, that the religious impulse is born, or rather re-created.

Innumerable religious usages indicate the care of life. Taboo in its simplest forms not only isolates the mother and infant and controls various physical crises, but also consecrates many vital functions. It invests with sanctity the persons of those engaged in dangerous business, hunting or war, and sometimes the whole personality of individuals. The Christian term “saint” simply means “consecrated”; every Christian was once a saint, because his *life* was made sacred; just as the Papuan becomes *helaga* and the Maori *tapu*, as opposed to *noa*, or “common.” Savage society is full of “sacred men.” The Latin word for a religious man is *sanctus*. The soul in early thought is, as we shall see, simply the essence of life. Life is here and there safeguarded by the external soul, which has been fully illustrated by Frazer. As he says, “It is capable of being seen and handled, kept in a box or jar; so long as this object which he calls his life or soul remains unharmed, the man is well.” On the principle of make-believe, as common with savages as with children, a man pretends his life is in such and such an object, or is a particular object. In South Celebes, while a woman is being delivered, her soul is in the doctor’s house, in the form of a piece of iron. The soul is often placed in a tree for safe keeping. The navel-string and placenta are often regarded as external souls. We have noted, and shall discuss further, the fact that what gives the *churinga* their sacredness is their connexion with life, a connexion more normal and much earlier than that of the “external soul.” Similar ideas are found in the sex-totems of Australian tribes and the *nagual* of Central America. The principle of polytheism was never more thoroughly developed than by the ancient Romans; among the gods of the *indigitamenta* there were deities who presided over man from conception to birth; others were deities of birth; others looked after mother and child; there were gods of infancy, gods of youth, gods of wedlock, and gods who protected a man through life. The savage has also numerous religious ceremonies, the ultimate object of which is to renew or restore life and strength. At many of the physical crises we have mentioned, this principle is applied. The name is often changed at puberty. A Dyak changes his name on recovery from illness. The principle of make-believe is seen in the Corean custom; on the fourteenth day of the first month, one who is entering upon a climacteric year makes an effigy of straw, dresses it in his clothes, and casts it on the road. “Fate is believed to look upon the individual in new clothes as another man.” After an expulsion of evils new food is taken, as by the Cherokees. At the initiation of Australian boys, blood is poured over the candidates; the young Masai on probation spends whole days in eating—beef is his food, and blood and milk his drink. The great ceremony of *Engwura* is supposed by the Central Australians to have the effect of strengthening all who pass through it, and the boys are told that the ceremony will promote their growth. It is no mere coincidence that the savage

“priest” has been termed the “medicine-man.” The folklore of the Middle Ages is full of quests to find the elixir of life, and of curious attempts to renew life by extracting the life of victims; so the Jews were accused of crucifying children by way of obtaining their life on the principle they attributed to Christianity.

We have already spoken of the primitive doctrine of the new birth and the new life; it is especially connected with initiation ceremonies, but appears also in various solemnities, such as feasts of first-fruits, at which the new food is eaten as a sacred observance. The people of Buru eat the “soul of the rice” at a sacramental feast which ends the harvest. The Chams solemnize this custom before the rice harvest begins. The Kaffirs eat the new fruits at the beginning of the year; death is the penalty for eating them before the time. Typical Saturnalian proceedings attend the feast; and the belief is that by partaking a man is “sanctified” for the whole year. At the Creek festival of first-fruits the people fasted to “purge their sinful bodies.” The fasting was assisted by the use of the emetic “Black Drink.” An oblation for sin was offered, and new fire purged away the sins of the past year. The new corn was rubbed on the faces and breasts of the people. The Natchez, who belong to the same stock, have a similar festival. Frazer concludes that the “new fruits are regarded as instinct with a divine virtue,” and “that the eating of them is a sacrament of communion.” From these and the similar cases of animal sacrifice we can understand why the victim must be unblemished; it is because his flesh is to be eaten. It is a remarkable fact that many such festivals, the principle of which is the new life, fall in spring, when growth is quickened by the increased actinic energy of the sun. An old Indian says that the time to talk about spirits is winter, when ice and snow prevent them from hearing, while “in spring the spirit world is all alive, and the hunter never alludes to them but in a sedate and reverent way.”

The sacramental idea is a special application of the principles of religious sacredness. When human instincts crystallize into sacraments, religion is becoming codified, but the original intention of acquiring or transmitting life and health and strength is still present, and often still explicit. It is not the spirit of the corn and vine, as such, but the life-giving virtue of bread and wine that is the essence of the sacrament. On the lowest plane, food is sacred because the vital instinct affirms its importance; on a higher plane, the meaning is still the essence of life, eternal life with a risen body hereafter, and now grace and spiritual strength in a purified body, and the virtue proceeds from the body of Christ. To eat the flesh of the Son of Man and to drink his blood gives eternal life. On the surface, there is also, as Havelock Ellis has suggested, a consecration of food as the means of life.

A last corroboration is supplied by the primitive view of death. Man’s affirmation of life is so strong, that in spite of all experience the primitive mind regarded death and sickness as unnatural, and the modern Christian, in spite of scientific analogy, believes, sometimes against hope, that death is not final, but is the gate to a higher life. The Biblical view is that death does not belong to man’s perfect state, but was brought into the world by sin, and the whole Christian system is intended to redeem man from that sin and its effects—in other words, to regain that perfect life of Eden. Many early peoples place food on or within the graves of the dead; they still believe that the departed must be living, though in some shadowy way; they hold communion with them, and talk to them. A belief in immortality or a continuance of life must be allowed to be inherent in human nature, and it springs from the consciousness of life. In ancient Egypt it is the dead who are emphatically the living, because their life is everlasting. The Torres Islanders perform a religious dance at burials, the object of which is to assure the survivors that their dead still live. Religion, indeed, if we may employ the metaphor, is in this application the earliest form of life-assurance. Grant Allen remarked that when civilized men express a belief in the resurrection of the body, what they really mean is the immortality of the soul. But we can show that the consciousness of life and its consecration is earlier than the conception of the soul; and the truer and more primitive view is the apparently materialistic Christian belief. The dualism between soul and body was bound to supervene, but early man made no such distinction. Simpson and Grant Allen have essayed to prove that religion is

“the worship of death.” The origin of such a misconception is obvious; it is a wrong inference from a true premise, namely, the instinctive refusal to believe that death is real; and we may observe that men do not worship their dead merely because they are dead—imagination with nothing but memory to feed upon simply increases the affection, respect, or fear they felt for them when alive. It is far more true to say that religion is the worship of life; “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

On a higher plane the original affirmation of life still persists. The great influence exercised by the Greek Mysteries was solely due to their promise of life. The same attraction was conspicuous in the Oriental worships which flooded Italy at the Christian era. The idea is most explicit in Christianity itself. Much of Christ’s teaching seems to emphasize the sacredness of the physical no less than of the spiritual life. His greatest works were the healing of the sick and the raising of the dead, and by his own resurrection he reaffirmed in the most absolute way the reality and persistence of life. Now, to the Jews it was the fact of his *death* that was a stumbling-block. “Toldi” (he that was hanged), their term of derision, emphasizes not the ignominy of execution so much as the liability to death. The Koran holds that Judas was slain in his stead by a mistake of the infatuated Jews; and the Christian credited his Master with such intense vitality that he could not be killed—death had no dominion over him. This would have been the primitive view also. The original idea recurs again and again: the Holy Ghost is “the Lord and Giver of Life”; “a savour of life unto life”; “he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life”; “in him was life, and the life was the light of men”; “I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” The Cross gives the Christian his promise of life; the Central Americans called their cross “the tree of our life and flesh.” The doctrine of the *Logos* completed the metaphysical possibilities of the primitive conception. Religion begins and ends with the affirmation and consecration of life. The first chapters of the Bible describe the original gift—“man became a *living soul*”; the last book tells of its restoration and of the new life in the world to come. Ever since the Fall, by which death entered into the world, man has been trying, like some Tantalus, to take of the fruit of the Tree of Life. For Christian symbolism, the King of the Wood has been found once more in the Cross; and in all cults alike, religious feeling, with an unfailing rhythm, returns to, as it set out from, this central hope of Life.

There is still much to be cleared up in the details of our hypothesis; but as its general shape is now complete, we may pause to consider its first results. It is hoped that it finds some warrant in the facts. We may claim at least that it brings everything into line, that it explains many difficulties hitherto found in the problem of religion, and that it finally disposes of the subjective side of the rationalist argument. We are not here, of course, concerned with the metaphysical question, but in so far as our psychological analysis may apply to ontological inquiry, it will at least strengthen the metaphysical arguments in favour of theistic and Christian belief. With regard to our present purpose, it does not seem necessary to show in detail how the various rationalist attacks are frustrated by the theory; some cases will be noted in passing, but the reader will find its application an easy task. In particular, the parallels drawn between primitive religion and Christianity receive a very clear explanation, for our theory supplies us with a permanent psychological source of religious feeling, and proves thereby that religion is an eternal fact of the human consciousness. It may be said that man is religious in the lowest sense, because he is an animal; religious in a higher sense, because he is a man. The material of religion, in fact, seems to have been already existent before man emerged from the brute-stage. It is perhaps fanciful to say so, but we can hardly deny the germs of religion to the animal world. However that may be, this religious material fills so completely the narrow elemental channel of primitive life from which all our civilization flows, that we may alter a famous phrase and say that, if we except the blind forces of nature, nothing moves in this world of ours that is not religious in its origin.



## CHAPTER VIII

### LIFE AND THE MASTER OF LIFE

#### SECTION I

**W**E have identified the sacredness which attaches to the workings of *mana*, magic, and taboo with the application of the religious emotion, and shall now attempt more fully to show that the conception which underlies them is the same as that which is the motive force of religion, namely, the conception of the essence of life, the vital principle. By so doing we shall confirm our main hypothesis, and show further reason for regarding some variously termed primitive systems as being real religions, though in an elementary form. We need not recapitulate the characteristics of *mana*, that invisible but material force which inheres in all the religious and magical objects of the Melanesians, and in the Melanesians themselves. The doctrine is typical of primitive thought, and supplies a standard by which we may readily test the facts with which we are to deal.

Let us first consider by this standard the motive power which is immanent in the ceremonial instruments of the Australians. The influence of the *churinga* is many-sided, but chiefly beneficent. Their touch heals wounds. When a man is ill he will scrape his *churinga*, mix the dust with water and drink it. The dose is strengthening. "Virtue" passing out of them makes the grass grow. In the ceremony of "softening the stomach," a *churinga* is pressed hard against the man's body, and by transmitting its virtue relieves the "knots" caused by emotion due to thinking of his ancestors. To lessen a man's selfish appetite he is prodded with a *churinga* of exceptional weight. Its application can "give sight to the intestines," thus enabling a man to detect infidelity in his wife. Again, the noise made by whirling these bull-roarers is believed by women and boys to be the voice of a spirit; as they are sounded, the boys are told that the spirit is coming. It is very probable that wind or breath is regarded as an emanation of the virtue of the *churinga*, for the Torres Islanders actually employ the bull-roarer in wind-making. The rationalist may compare "the rushing mighty wind" by which the Spirit was manifested at the first Pentecost. Now breath is for early thought a manifestation of the principle of life; curative miracle shows that a man can transmit his own vital power by breathing.

The Australians believe that the "spirit-parts" of ancestors, which are *en rapport* with the *churinga*, travel in whirlwinds. The Anula say that the *churinga* were developed out of the whirlwind. The *churinga*, as we saw, acquire their sacredness from these "spirit-parts," and additional virtue from every person through whose hands they pass. Owners are constantly rubbing them to extract their properties. But the most important function connected with these instruments is the transmission of life in conception and birth; they are the vehicles of the germ-plasm. These facts corroborate the identification of *mana* with the force inhering in the *churinga*, and consequently with that which underlies magical processes generally. The word is actually a synonym in the languages of Central Australia for magical power, as it is for sacredness. We have now some clear conception of what is meant in native thought by these terms.

It is worth while pausing here to note that the characteristics we have seen ascribed to the magical and sacred *churinga* cover with remarkable precision almost the whole field of religion as we know it; in particular, they remind us at nearly every point of the workings of such a property as the "grace" of Christian belief.

A good deal of what is roughly classed under "magic" is really a religious process, that, namely, of *making a thing sacred*. In transferring the life of a spirit to the image, the rule is to repeat its name; but this is not magic, it is an invitation to the spirit. In Madagascar and British Columbia the sorcerer is a

“worker.” Magic has always used the words “do” and “make.” But words equivalent to “do” are often used of sacrifice and sacrament, which themselves mean “a thing made sacred.” The word fetish is itself derived from a verb meaning “to make.” As showing how ceremonies may be misunderstood and described as magical, we may cite the death-dance of the Torres natives, which, though resembling ordinary magical saltation, is merely intended to assure the survivors that the dead still lives. We must draw a line between the magical and the dramatic or emotional. As a rule, the word magic and its equivalents are applied to *evil* influence—much as hostile critics will give the name of magic to a hostile religion—but now and again the identity of good and evil magic is revealed. The *intention* of the agent makes the difference. In very serious cases of illness the Central Australian sorcerer projects his magic power, which he carries in a stick worn through his nose, into the patient; this “counter-acts the evil magic which is causing the illness.” So the Central African medicine-man can give the power of good or evil to objects. The *arungquiltha* or evil magic of the Central Australians is thus the bad side of the same force which is beneficent in the *churinga* and the nose stick, even as human force is both good and bad. This is shown by the fact that *churinga* are actually used in evil magic. “Singing” is the one method employed for both results. For comparison there is the *boilya* of other Australians, which is extracted by a sorcerer from his body, and then passed into that of the patient; it is used both in good and in evil magic. The natives of the Torres Straits illustrate the action of magic by the fascination of snakes. Our own phrase “personal influence” embodies the idea of a material projection of vital force. Primitive man can endue an object with power by “charming” or “singing” it. A Torres sorcerer explained that in order to make the paint for arrows magically poisonous it is necessary to “think hard” while pounding the shell. Of course, this is how every man impresses his own mind upon the outer world. The subjective process familiar in religion, by which a man strengthens his will, is illustrated by the curious fact that the Australian can “sing” or “charm” himself. This is instructive in connexion with the relations between magic and religion.

Other examples of this vital force or *mana* are the *daulat* of the Malays, which “inheres in sacred things”; the *wakan* of the Dacotahs, which is both good and bad; and the *wong* of the Gold Coast (this last is the name for a fetish spirit, but the negro says both that “in this river, or tree, or amulet there is a *wong*,” and that “this river, etc., is a *wong*”); the *kalou* of Fiji, the *ngai* of Central Africa, which we hear of chiefly as divine; the *kamui* of the Ainos, and the power underlying the *augud* of the Torres natives. This is probably what they term *unewen*, a word used in their translation of the Gospels as the equivalent of “spiritual power,” and known to be synonymous with the *mana* of Oceania. Haddon notes that the properties of the Torres sacred things resemble those of the *churinga*. In Christianity we have its highest development. The “virtue” that goes out of a man and the spiritual “grace” which is infused into him are the same essence of life.

We here pass from magic to taboo. The mysterious force underlying the state known as *tabu* is now well understood. It has been compared to electricity, but its action throughout is rather that of personal vital magnetism. It would be superfluous to prove what has been proved elsewhere, that it is identical with *mana*, and therefore with the vital essence and the personal influence of human beings. It is good or bad, like other manifestations; thus the *wakan* of the Dacotahs is the mysterious force emanating from the menstruous state, but is also the power of the Christian missionary, his Bible, and his Church; this is good *wakan*.

We may now regard it as fairly well established that this substantial power is the same in magic, taboo, and religion, that its source is the vital principle of the human subject himself, and that the feeling of vitality alone gives rise to the conception.

Lastly, it seems clear that this essence or substance of life is the earliest form in which divine power is recognized, and is not the least important factor in the development of the idea of God. Even the

Australian evidence suggests this conclusion. In the first stage the mysterious substance is thought of as projected by human volition, "hard thinking." In the second stage the substance of life, thus freed, persists in space, behaving, if we may use the simile, like some gaseous element. In the third stage it forms centres of influence, later identified with personal quasi-human spirits or gods, who in turn transmit "grace" or divine force (always material) to natural objects and to human beings. As breath, or blood, it is brought still more closely to its human origin. The divine thus originates in the human, and to the human it tends to return.

The conception is subjected very early to philosophical refinement. We have quoted examples of a common belief which illustrates this, and which is most explicit in the case of food. The people of Cochin say there are "two things in food, first the substance, and then the accidents of quantity, quality, smell, taste, etc." A Jesuit remarked that it would not be difficult to prove to them the mystery of the Eucharist. This distinction is known to the Maoris, Mexicans, and Hindus, who say that spirits eat the essence of food. Of course, the substance which underlies food is the nutritive or life-giving element. The theory is worked out no less clearly in the case of the human body. *Mana* may be acquired, the Melanesians hold, by eating human flesh. The blood is the life; many other parts and secretions are identified with the essence of vitality. Every emotion is to some peoples an inspiration; and inspiration is in effect the result of a transmission of concentrated life. The idea will be further illustrated, as we shall see shortly, by the completed doctrine of the soul. In later culture it is applied to the Universe, "Whose body Nature is, and God the soul." In fact, we have here the oldest and most permanent of all physical theories. Both Haeckel with his doctrine of substance, and Torricelli with his comparison of matter to an enchanted vase of Circe serving as a receptacle of force, would have been intelligible to primitive man. The religious conception of vitalism is the root from which both magic and religion spring; on one line it develops into the doctrine of vitalism still held by some students of science, and such theories as the doctrine of substance; on another, into the doctrines of the soul, of the Sacraments, and of divine immanence.

It is unnecessary to repeat Tylor's theory of the development of the belief in the soul. The present hypothesis treats of the soul in an earlier form, when it is one simple principle of life, vaguely conceived, but strongly felt. We will here merely give illustrations of the way in which vitalism passes into animism proper. First we must note a common fallacy of the animistic theory of religion, namely, that it is the soul which gives life. The truth is that the life is the soul; and a good deal of confusion is avoided if we bear the fact in mind. *Anima* precedes *animus*. Frequently the identity of life and soul is explicitly stated, as by the Chuses, the ancient Hebrews, and many Greek, Roman, and mediæval thinkers. Tylor, indeed, recognizes again and again the identity of life and soul, but does not speak definitely on the question of priority, except to lay emphasis on the phenomena of sub-consciousness in dreams. This point of view, it would seem, should be taken later; the two psychological factors, the vital reflex and the inference from dreams, do combine, but not originally. The former is proved to be the earlier, both a priori and by experience.

Certain curious details illustrate much of what has been said: the Caribs connect the pulses with spiritual agency; they have one word, *iouanni*, for life, soul, and heart. According to the Tongans, the soul exists through the whole extension of the body, but especially in the heart. They compare the soul to the essence of a flower. A Karen demon is supposed to devour the *la*, or vital principle; thus, when it eats a man's eyes the "material" part remains, but they are blind. The Nicaraguans explained that the vital essence is not precisely the heart, "but that in them which makes them live and that quits the body when they die." The low murmur, squeaking, chirping, or whistling, often attributed to the spirits of the dead, connect with the view that breath is the life. Life, indeed, is not seldom regarded as a sort of compressed air, which supplies motive force. The savage would consider the steam or explosive gas of an engine as its life and soul. The soul, again, is sometimes identified with fire. To the Jews and Arabs, Karens and

Papuans, the blood is the soul. The shadow, the filmy replica of the man, the echo, the “man in our eyes,” the visualized idea seen in the brain, all these are outside our main inquiry, as results of the higher senses of sight and hearing.

Here, however, there are one or two facts by which the accepted history of animism is to be supplemented, and, as the psychological processes which they embody react upon the normal working of the original vitalistic instinct, it is necessary to put them forward. When we pass to the higher senses of sight and hearing we leave the lower strata of religious material. The physiological thought resulting from the vegetal senses is essentially materialistic, but that due to sight and hearing at once involves the possibility of a higher conception of reality. This possibility is due to the peculiarities of these functions. The photographic images and phonographic records stored in the brain form an inner world, intangible but real. Things seen and heard are reproduced from within and combinations of these images are formed subconsciously by the automatic action of the brain. These reflex results of sight and hearing condition the whole of the mental and nervous system, and in them we see the beginnings of “spiritual,” “supernatural,” and “ideal” beliefs. Such results are from time to time confirmed to the intelligence of early man by the not uncommon defects of these senses, which produce the phenomena of illusion and hallucination.

When, however, we note that here is the beginning of the ideal and the spiritual, there is an important distinction to be drawn between the primitive and the mature consciousness. These mental images are apt to be regarded by children and by savages as real occurrences. Dreams are believed to be actual events in which the man himself or his soul takes part, and children often wonder if they are real. But this is also the case for early man with the mental sights and sounds of the waking imagination; a visualized scene or a sound-image is regarded as objectively real—a physical, not a mental appearance. A large field of possible development is opened when the image comes from the subconscious memory. We are not entitled, however, to infer that primitive life was a sort of continuous hallucination.

In this process we can distinguish two stages: in the first there is no clear distinction between subjective and objective fact, between mental and physical reality, while, conversely, objective reality takes over some characteristics of the subjective; in the second the distinction is drawn, but (and this is the fact of supreme importance) the mental reality tends to be regarded not as a result of the action of the brain, but as a “spiritual reality”—a fact of another and a higher world, but a world which is none the less real, though apparently not conditioned by time and space. This spiritual is still material, this supernatural is still natural, but of another and higher order. Even to a civilized race like the Greeks, the supernatural was still a part of nature. It is only by deliberate metaphysical abstraction that the impulse of the mind to the concrete can be overruled.

These mental processes have had a curious influence upon the belief in the miraculous. The peculiarities of miracle repeat the characteristic peculiarity of mental pictures, which change and succeed each other like the photographs on a screen. The mental image of a person goes through a series of adventures, without the intervals and delays necessary in actual life. He leaves one place to appear instantaneously in another; locomotion is omitted; what he seems to will is performed without the intervention of action; in one scene he dies, in the next he is alive. When, therefore, an uncritical and child-like intelligence reproduces events in his imagination, the miraculous method will be used, being an inevitable result of the mental process. Lastly, such mental scenes are apt to be regarded sooner or later as possessing a higher and more lasting reality from their recurrence, their permanence, and their superiority to change and decay and to the conditions of time and space.

It is noteworthy that with these later developments the “soul” becomes less material and more “spiritual,” till often it is defecated to a pure transparency; and we then see it as personality, the moral soul, or the pure immaterial spirit of Calmet. This result, however, is essentially abnormal and a negation

of religious philosophy. In the normal course of religious development the soul always remains a real entity and more or less material. The Warramunga imagine that the spirit is very minute—about the size of a small grain of sand. The more usual conception of it is as a fluid or a gas. In most of the highest conceptions it is attenuated matter. Here Christianity is at one with primitive belief and with the metaphysical necessity of monism. In the doctrines of the Incarnation, the Resurrection, and the Eucharist, which, as Kant implied, involve the materiality (we might say reality) of all existences, it firmly negates that excess of spiritualism which is as harmful as its opposite. The supernatural and the idealist views of the soul alike tend to ignore no less than does the spiritualist the connexion and identification of phenomena and noumena, the assertion of which is one of the essential characteristics of religion. The sacramental principle is the true *palladium* of the Faith. Quakers and Zwinglians, in over-emphasizing idealism, simply repeat the fatal error of the Manicheans, and stultify the Incarnation. The essence of life is the only “supernatural” entity that primitive thought recognizes; but even this is not only within the natural, but is its actual centre. Religious monism at once removes all false dualism from our metaphysics. To religion, in its final as in its primitive form, the “supernatural” is rather a part of the natural—its higher plane. We owe the word and much of the confusion it has caused to scholastic pedantry.

Lastly, we may look at what Lang calls “the priceless gift of animism,” the belief in the immortality of the soul. It would be more correct to ascribe this to the vital instinct, with its affirmation and consecration of life, rather than to spiritism. Primitive religion, we have seen, disbelieves in death, and the will to live always contradicts the eternal teachings of experience. Religion stands for permanence in this matter as in everything else: “if in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.” Christian monism here again refuses to dally with a false dualism, and insists on the resurrection of the body. Soul and body cannot be separated in thought, and in death they are not divided.

## SECTION II

There is another dualism which has from time to time forced itself into view during our inquiry, and must now be dealt with fully. Anthropologists seem to be agreed that the primitive conception of the force which underlies tabooed persons and things, and which we here identify with the sacred essence of life, is an undifferentiated idea; that while we should call some of the persons and things to which “sacredness” attaches holy, and others unclean, early man made no such distinction. “The uncleanness, for example, of girls at puberty and the sanctity of holy men do not to the primitive mind differ from each other. They are only different manifestations of the same mysterious energy which, like energy in general, is in itself neither good nor bad, but becomes beneficent or maleficent according to its application.” Many a term, translated “unclean” in the Bible, is to be interpreted in this way. So far we agree, but when we are told that “what is sacred is dangerous,” we must not unduly emphasize this point of view. Concentrated vitality is in itself neither good nor bad, but for practical purposes it is a blessing, if only it can be safely guided into the proper channels. It is also extremely important to avoid a confusion, which naturally results from a superficial survey of the facts. Take the case of the sick or of the dead, who are also “sacred” and taboo. The evidence even of language does not here fail us; the Dacotah speaks of good and bad *wakan*; but he should not, and I do not think he does, ascribe *wakan* to things diseased or dead. There undoubtedly is a dualism here, the neglect to notice which has caused such views as that religion is the worship of death. Death is in a sense sacred, because life is endangered; but death is not life. Take, again, the case of eating flesh, whether in the ordinary or the sacramental mode: we do not hear of men acquiring life by consuming the decaying humours of a corpse. There must be a limit, even in savage logic, to the retention of life in flesh. It has been suggested that this practice is intended to keep the life in the

family. The Australians, however, say it is due to affection. Affection ultimately coincides with the primary nutritive impulse, as the psychology of love shows clearly. But this is not the point. The point is whether early thought ascribed vitality to dead substance. The innumerable superstitions which cause the avoidance of the sick and of the dead incontestably prove a dualism; and there are many parallel facts which press the conclusion home. Disgust, for instance, is universally felt with regard to human excreta or anything that appears to have the contagion of what is not-life. The influence of death is connected with sacredness precisely because *life* is in danger, and chiefly the life of the survivors, who know it to be infectious. All through religion we have the antithesis of life and death, strength and weakness, health and disease; and the fact seems to be conclusive against a theory which is chiefly based on the very natural deficiencies of savage terminology.

It is now easily seen how the belief arose that sickness is due to sin, and that sin brought death into the world. Sin and grace form a dualism—the development on a higher plane of the original dualism between death and life. An allegory of the Khordah-Avesta well illustrates the subconscious association of sin with death; an evil-smelling wind accompanies the ugly maiden who is the representation of man's evil deeds. The link between the two stages is found in the sacramental theory; in primitive ritual sickness is washed away by water, and, in a higher, sin is sacramentally purged by water and the Spirit. Cleanliness is next to godliness. In the lower religions life is given by the *mana* of food; in the higher, not only eternal life, but grace and the power to resist sin are transmitted by the flesh and blood of Christ.

This dualism is frequently envisaged in a way not merely metaphorical, as the contrast between light and darkness. All the higher religions employ this opposition in their ethical teaching. Tylor has illustrated the development of orientation in Christianity, and well remarks “how deeply the association in men's minds of the East with life and warmth, life and happiness and glory, of the West with darkness and chill, death and decay, has from remote ages rooted itself in religious belief.” Christian doctrine recognizes this. “In him was life, and the life was the light of men.” God is the ultimate Lord and Giver of life, the sun is the chief proximate instrument of transmission.

### SECTION III

To the religious mind it may seem paradoxical to exclude, as the facts have obliged us to exclude, the recognition of God from the origin and the first stages of religion. But even the phenomena of modern conversion force us to accept the inference as being correct, both for the race and the individual. It is proved by statistics that in the mind of the converted, though familiar with the idea of God from childhood, yet the recognition of his influence is almost absent. Love of God or of Christ occurs in only two per cent of the cases. We have seen that the Arunta show such traces of a belief in Twanyirika as prove a prior belief in him as a Supreme Being, and that many early races have some knowledge of a God as distinct from the departmental deities of polytheism. But the Torres Islanders do seem to supply a real case of the absence of the belief, a case which has been so carefully studied that we can depend upon the fact.

Recognition and knowledge of God are, however, proved by the psychological evidence to be inevitable and indispensable to religion. How, then, did man come to his belief, first in departmental gods or spirits, and afterwards in a supreme God? This is how the science of religion has usually put the question, regarding the belief in a Supreme Being as the latest term of a series; but there are indications that monotheism is not necessarily later than or derived from the other belief. Lang has argued that the belief in spirits could not give rise to the belief in a Supreme Being, because the latter is not at first a spiritual existence, but a material person. Yet he might have been derived thus, for early spirits are

material. The current views are, that one spirit, tribal or departmental, gradually took precedence of others (henotheism), or that a fusion of spirits took place, the precise mode being left unexplained. But henotheism only occurs in the case of developed departmental deities, which are in a sense Supreme Beings already. I would conjecture, first, that departmental gods are not prior to the monotheistic god, but, on the contrary, later in origin; and secondly, that originally they are not gods at all, nor spirits, but simply concentration-points of the vital essence which very soon was recognized as pervading most of the natural world, and, even when apparently developed, their personification is either a result of poetry or of theology, as may be seen in Hesiod, or is not a fact at all, but a late inference from the analogy of the already existing creative superhuman person. Thus Tylor's way of putting the process, "a belief in the animation of all nature rising at its highest pitch to personification" is simple in appearance, but involves endless difficulties, and therefore cannot be accepted in either of the two cases in question.

What happens is, as hinted previously, that the recognition of his own life by the thinking subject, and the belief that he can project it outward, lead to the inference of a vital force permeating space; this is personal, because man's first knowledge of life comes from his own vital sense, but not a person. We are hinting, it will be seen, that doctrines like that of the Trinity are not superimposed upon monotheism, but are implicit already in the primitive mind. Thus, simultaneously with his inference of an invisible though concrete personal life in nature, man recognizes, from the instinct of causation, a superhuman person, frequently an ancestor, who created all things, but is not life nor the 'Lord of Life.' This inference is due not so much to the metaphysical need of assuming a primal cause, as to the sense of causality inherent in every human act and volition. This sense is, of course, a form of the vital feeling. We cannot, however, assume that the sense of causality produced this result while still in its form of subconscious feeling, as the vital feeling produced the hypostasis of life; the anthropological data are against this assumption, and the feeling in this form is not so definite or controlling as is the vital instinct on the one hand or the metaphysical idea of causation on the other. Theoretically distinct, these two, a personal force and a person, are, in the final stage, inevitably identified, and we get, as a type of the normal view, terms like "Master of Life," used by the North American Indians. Moreover, even before the stage at which human life is inferred to be one with the life pervading nature, observation of the power and permanence of his own vital essence, leads man to feel that, under certain conditions (for instance, after the satisfaction of hunger or thirst), he is, as it were, more than man, man raised to a higher power, a god-man, and the conception leads to theories of incarnation. Here we arrive at that combination of two conceptions which is the foundation of the idea of God, the feeling of life, a biological idea becoming what we term religious, expressed first subjectively and then objectively, and causation, a scientific or metaphysical idea, but originally a vital feeling. We thus have a divinizable humanity, an essence of life, and a causation God; one substance, one vital principle being shared by each person in the primitive Trinity. The analysis may help to explain the confusion which primitive monotheism has presented to students.

The view of Comte, however, has some psychological importance. Deities, he says, "differ from fetishes (animated objects) in their general and abstract character; the similar vegetation of different oaks led to a theological generalization from their common phenomena; the abstract being thus produced was no longer the fetish of a single tree, but became the god of the forest." From the particulars is inferred the species, and the species becomes a departmental god. Thus the Samoans hold that a god is incarnate in the owl; if an owl is killed the god who is incarnate in owls does not die, but continues to exist in other individuals of the species. Now a supreme god might be supposed to arise in the same way. But the fact is that early man in such cases does not really abstract the species from the individuals, and cannot conceive of oak, or owl, or man in the abstract; in his view not only can the species not be thought of apart from the individual, but "the individual" is not an abstraction either, and the species *inheres* in this and that and the other individual only. Take away all the individuals, and no conception of the species remains.

The other view suggested by Tylor for the origin of monotheism, the logical necessity for a First Cause, is indispensable, but not the sole cause; we have already admitted it, but it must be qualified according to the further evidence we possess as to primitive reasoning. Early, like Greek thought, is generally content to view creation as a propagation or birth, and, when pressed further, admits an infinite regression, finding no difficulty in the logical necessity for a Creator to create the Creator, and so on. The original metaphysical need for an explanation of the existence of things led very soon to the conception of a Creator, but he was neither a spirit nor an abstraction, but a superhuman man. The evidence shows this, and it is what we should expect a priori, man being the chief or only "maker" known to man. In early thought, therefore, God is not Nature personified. This conclusion naturally leads up to the view, hinted at by Frazer, that the sorcerer, or medicine-man, is the original or one original from which the conception of God was developed.

Many cases are known where such persons, or divine kings and priests, have actually believed themselves to be "gods." The belief is sincere, but we must remember the necessary qualifications. Such a person does not believe himself to be a supreme deity, nor a creator of the world; he merely implies that his *mana* gives him extraordinary power and magical influence. In early thought man is, in one sense, very near to God. This way, no doubt, lies the theory of Incarnation, but not the theory of God. We are misled by a wrong use of terms, the primitive connotation of which is very different from the modern. The same error was noted in the case of "spirits." To the savage "spirit" means something both more and less than it means to us. The same is true of "god"; the term in early language is more of an adjective than a noun. The idea of God is complex; the sorcerer, as an "embryo god," has a share in its formation in the way we have suggested, but not an exclusive or even definite influence.

Another possible view may be mentioned, which is also connected with the so-called magical stage of thought. It may seem a plausible inference, that as "man creates God in his own image," anthropomorphizing him in thought, so the first form of god was literally created by man, as an image, a fetish-doll, which he himself has made. The adherents of one religion have often been accused by those of another of thus worshipping the work of their own hands, mere senseless idols as contrasted with the living God. The fetish-worshipper is a case in point, and numerous religions have a corner for similar practices. The Hindu, for instance, takes his god with him to protect him in danger. The obvious first question that arises is, How can a man sincerely worship a thing he has himself made? The answer, of course, is that he does nothing of the kind; whether the idol be a fetish, or a doll by which sympathetic magic is to be worked, the owner worships the spirit which is in it or can enter it, or of which it is a symbol. In degeneration, Tylor argues, the idol may come to be actually worshipped for itself, but there are psychological reasons against this being possible. There is no such thing as Idolatry, pure and simple. On the opposite view, suggested by Frazer, a thing made for a vehicle of magic, an apparatus of primitive science, came in time to be worshipped in the same way as the bogey, invented to frighten the women, ultimately came, according to Frazer, to be worshipped sincerely as a god. This process also is inconceivable, and opposed to psychological fact.

In the next place, many of the lowest races, though acknowledging a Supreme Being, have no relations with him. Even when the god is at last recognized, some interval may elapse before he becomes the object of religion. We have now to consider the process by which he is finally brought into religious relations with man.

Before the development of any theistic conception, there is already in the mind a tendency to the outward projection of instincts. This is due to the character of the reflex action induced by physiological processes. It may be described as a demand for reciprocity or an end; it really is the result of the completion of the nervous circuit. The emotions are thus universalized, but since their return to the centre is not yet recognized by the mind, they are conceived as being directed to and resting in an external



end. The child subconsciously directs the vague gratitude, which is a necessary result of satisfying its hunger, towards its mother or father. But this same gratitude in the grown man, when he obtains his own food, becomes universalized for want of an object. The Natchez at the festival of first-fruits looks up to heaven and says, "Give us corn." The Basutos exclaim, "Thank you, gods, give us bread to-morrow also." The word "god" in this connexion has no more precision than it has in profane swearing. Popular language, even in theistic and monotheistic culture, shows a mere universalization of emotion when thanking "the gods"; no actual Being is definitely thought of. Now the very want of an object tends to supply an object through the imagination; and this will be either the vital energy inherent in things, or the reflex of the human father, who once satisfied his needs. So, in Aryan religions, the supreme god is a Father, Ζεὺς πατήρ, Diespiter, Marspiter, Ahura-Mazda is a Father. This analogy, it is to be noted, joins with the vital instinct through the inference that a man owes his life and being to the earthly father who begat him. Another analogy shows the relationship of brother and friend, as in the case of Mithra. The conception of a Lord or King is later—a reflex of autocrats like the Semitic kings—but Christianity combined this with the earlier, while the analogy of the Roman Cæsars renewed the later view. The beliefs which centre upon the Chinese and Japanese Emperors show an interesting combination of the results of universalized emotion, and of the making a representative of the people to serve them as their deified pawn. Similarly with prayer; there are many cases in savage psychology where "the soul's sincere desire" is made, as it were, to an unknown God. "In great danger an Indian has been observed to lie prostrate on his face, and, throwing a handful of tobacco into the fire, to call aloud, as in an agony of distress, 'There, there, take and smoke, be pacified, and do not hurt me.'" The psychology of prayer in the modern consciousness bears this out. Even the most self-sufficient of rationalists prays to "something" without knowing it, and the act "strengthens his courage and excites his hopes." In both these instances of the universalizing of emotions, the analogy of human affairs inevitably tends to direct the emotion to a *personal* God. The address of personal spirit to personal spirit is similarly originated in sacrifice, in faith, in repentance, and in love. Indeed, every human emotion can be and is thus directed, a fact which at once explains the wide range of religion, its immense power, and the difficulty of tracing it to its source in the vital instinct. In a late stage of culture, when the ethical side of religion tends to supersede the sacramental, God is envisaged as abstract goodness, the power that makes for righteousness; but once we are at pure idealism and spiritualism, we lose religion, and, if we may encroach for a moment on objective facts which do not come into our argument here, we lose the true knowledge of God also.

Further, the permanent source of religion, the instinctive affirmation of life, inevitably tends, like the channels of emotion which it feeds, to absorb, the atmosphere of logical elements which point to a personal Cause, a Living God, on whose life ours depends, or rather of whose life ours is a part. The result may be an excessive vaporizing of the idea, as is seen in pantheism, or the opposite, as is seen in the case of sorcerers and false Messiahs; but the normal course of religion keeps the proportions correct by adhering, as does primitive religion, to a personality, not ourselves, who is both Creator and Father, Spirit of Life, and the Lord and Giver of it.

A later form of this factor in the process is to be seen in the action of will. The consciousness of will is one of the first developments of vital feeling, and is closely connected with, or is rather the other side of, the sense of causality. Recent philosophy and theology have, in the analysis of Schopenhauer and Ritschl respectively, assigned to will a deeper meaning than it possessed in the old psychology and theology. They speak of Will as comprising or subsuming every other activity. The point here is that the outward projection of will inevitably produces the recognition of a "power" not ourselves, but greater than ourselves, and the realization of union with this power. We have but to take one step backwards, and we come to the blind will to life, the vital instinct, the ceaseless urge of the world in its physical becoming, and in its religious being the permanent aspiration of the soul.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE FUNCTION OF RELIGION

**I**F the present hypothesis be well founded its results should clear away some misconceptions which have both obscured the scientific study of religion and hampered religion itself in its struggle with rationalism. These results emphasize the original characteristics of religion; both in the race and the individual it is a normal psychical development from the primal instinct of human nature. From this we infer, firstly, that religion, in its original form, is permanent, that it exists and will always exist, whether we recognize the fact or not; and, in the second place, that its essential concern is with the elemental side of life.

We may here call attention to the conclusion, which all the evidence bears out, that religion can only retain a normal and healthy tone by preserving its original impress. It is very significant that most religious and even theological controversies, when analysed, are found to turn on this point; and these quarrels, by throwing the extremes into relief, have enabled religious common sense to keep the proper course. Again, Christianity has preserved the original characteristics of religion in a unique degree; though overlaid with dogmatic and ethical accretions, they are still distinguishable. It sums up the essential elements in a way which justifies its claim to be absolute religion; and when we recognize, as the anthropological evidence enables us to do, that it is rooted more firmly than other systems in the good ground of human nature, and that its vital principle is the instinct for life in its purest form, we have, I think, secured a new method of defence which is both positive and scientific; it is, at any rate, based on a rational explanation.

When we view the evolution of religion in the light of this explanation, we can see a deeper meaning in the parallelism which forms so remarkable a bond between Christianity and the lower religions. These analogies from savage culture show that religion, everywhere and always, is a direct outcome of elemental human nature, and that this elemental human nature remains practically unchanged. This it must continue to be so long as we are built up of flesh and blood. For instance, if a savage eats the flesh of a strong man or divine person, and a modern Christian partakes sacramentally of Christ's body and blood under the forms of bread and wine, there is evidently a human need behind both acts which prompts them and is satisfied by them, and is responsible for their similarity. These analogies show, finally, when we consider the characteristics of elemental human nature, and realize their inestimable importance to the future of the race, that Christianity is better suited than other religions to the balanced character of the progressive races, and is necessary to them precisely because it possesses the most universal and constant forms of vital expression, from which, moreover, the coarser and abnormal features alike have been refined away. Christianity is no survival from primitive religion, but a higher development from the same permanent sources. These are constant, and the beliefs to which they lead are constant also, recurring spontaneously, or rather through the action of the same functional causes; tradition simply supplies them with a groove. Science can thus endorse the words of a thoughtful writer, who says in reference to this parallelism: "These rites and beliefs declare eloquently that there are spiritual needs common to the whole of mankind, that the need of an Incarnate Saviour, of a Triune God, of a Sacrament of Communion, are fundamental aspirations of the human race crying imperiously for satisfaction, and that He by whom alone they can be satisfied completely is in no mere phrase, but in very truth, the 'desire of all nations.'" It is not the least merit of the Church of England that she has kept more closely than other Christian Churches to a *via media*, which does more than represent the essence of Christian doctrine, for it also preserves the best elements of primitive religion. Yet, as the dogmas of one age are not suited to

another, and as it is precisely here that modern Christianity is misunderstood both by her servants and her enemies, it is very necessary that the Church of a progressive people should remould her system without losing the essence of religion, and re-create her formulas in harmony with the knowledge of the age. It is, moreover, not only incongruous, but a source of weakness that spiritual advisers, as the clergy primarily are, should be without a competent knowledge of psychology and the comparative science of religions.

It is admitted that in the Gospels the intellectual side of religion is but rarely and exceptionally brought forward. When Christ taught his disciples to take example by innocent children, and pointed out that the truths of the Gospel had been hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes, he not only implied the necessity of a new birth, but emphasized the elemental and subconscious character of religion. St. Paul glories in the fact that the weak and simple things of the world had overthrown the wise and mighty. The chief lesson of the history of heresy is that religion can only avoid extremes, like Gnosticism, which both fail to satisfy normal humanity and discredit religion in the eyes of thinkers, by keeping within that elemental sphere with which from beginning to end it is concerned.

It seems at first paradoxical that our highest imaginings should be rooted deep in our animal nature, but the conclusion becomes a truism as soon as it is formulated. Even in the details of Christian worship this characteristic is evident. Here religion has its points of contact with literature, oratory, music, and art generally; but when we analyse these, we find that their form and content are alike elemental. The Psalms, for instance, owe their unrivalled influence to a poignant use of the elemental emotions; and a simple hymn has more power than the highest flights of philosophical and mystical poetry to reach the heart of man. It is an accepted fact that women are, in the general sense, more religious than men. Their life is kept by organic peculiarities nearer to the primitive. Woman is always more interested in the flesh and blood of life than with its later growths; she cares more for health and strength of body and character than for rationality of thought and extension of knowledge. When a mother inculcates the duties of religion, she is unconsciously affirming life. Here is to be found a germ of truth in Bachofen's notion that primitive woman had a higher moral ideal than primitive man, a notion by which he explained the so-called Matriarchate. It is also noteworthy that, while the over-cultured man and the abstract thinker so often discard religion, simpler and actually more complete souls cleave to it with an instinctive faith. But every man, when he happens to be brought down face to face with the eternal realities of existence, birth and death, hunger and thirst, *ipso facto* becomes a religious subject.

It has been observed by a scientific thinker that throughout the teaching of Christ there is nothing inconsistent with modern science and modern thought. The reason of this is that it is concerned with the elemental alone. From this point of view many an argument of the early days of rationalism receives its common-sense refutation. In the elemental view of life every scientific error of the Bible may be regarded as a truth. It is true, for instance, that the sun rises; and not even the most pedantic rationalist will employ a more scientific phrase. Similarly in the case of miracles; for elemental science miracles do happen, even in the practical world of to-day, as common language and common thought admit. As Renan remarked, the sun is a miracle, because science has never explained the sun. In the elemental, as in the religious world, the dominant fact of human life is not that man became a rational thinker, but that "man became a living soul."

We can now estimate with more clearness the relations between science and religion. That most profound of all antagonisms, as Spencer describes the opposition, proves to be an illusion or an *ignoratio elenchi*. In a comparison of primitive and modern culture the historian may draw a useful distinction between religion and science. But, on a wider survey of human nature, the distinction disappears and is merged in a higher synthesis. In the same way a distinction may be drawn between the individual and society, or between the intellect and the emotions, or between self-realization and altruism; but all such

distinctions are provisional and abstract, and must never be regarded as absolute. It is significant that the anti-religious movement should style itself Rationalist. To exaggerate the interaction of such opposites into a bitter conflict and look for the victory of one or other, is a profound error. We should rather, with Laing, apply the conception of polarity: the struggle between opposite tendencies is a necessary condition of healthy life and growth; it provides a rhythm and balance of forces in the same way as the interaction between two political parties prevents stagnation and stimulates the national life. The so-called conflict between religion and science is a play of forces, positive and negative, elemental and scientific, old and new, and marks the vitality and healthy growth of the civilized mind. Ultimately it is part of the process of psychical evolution. For practical purposes, however, some real opposition between science and religion must be admitted for modern times. It is chiefly due to the fact that men have become conscious of science, but not yet conscious of religion or of the relation between religion and science. The religious spirit is naturally always in favour of the present state of things, and is opposed to change. This is not merely a result of the conservative inertia, so often attributed to religion; it is that religion affirms not morality, nor altruism, nor science, but health and strength of body and character, physical and moral cleanliness and decency, deference to age, experience and position, principles which are bound up with the elemental view of life. Such an attitude is at first sight fatal to progress, but in reality it supplies progress with a test, and by bringing each new departure to the touchstone of life, it not only enables science to discard the false, but to secure permanence for the true. It is objected to religion that it has opposed every new movement which in the end made for human development and happiness. This is true, and it is well for humanity that it is. Everything that is new needs testing, and the best test is that of the permanent in human nature. It is no less true that in the end religion has accepted every new movement which has been made for human development and happiness. The suppression of the slave-trade, the extension of the suffrage, the education of the masses, the doctrine of evolution, have been thus opposed and finally accepted. There is no friction or bitterness in this opposition, except in the minds of abstract thinkers and ignorant partisans; the interaction, as of two parties, is both a criticism and a source of vitality, and the result is the certain gain of humanity. But to the end, scientific thought is but a part of the whole, just as reason is but a part of the whole mental and nervous organism; and the true expression of the whole is still the religious spirit. *The end of science is knowledge, the end of religion is life.* The true opposite of religion is not science, but that triviality which holds nothing sacred; the negation of science and of religion alike is degeneration. But the relation is more than this, as it is more than polar opposition. Even if the vital instinct be not the source of religion nor the elemental its sphere, it still remains indubitable that *there* is the foundation of all activity, civilization, and progress. But if religion does originate as we have conjectured, then religion, being inseparable from the vital instinct and the elemental conditions of life, is, as the spirit of these, the foundation of human welfare. Religion stands for progress; not only is it the permanent foundation of character, but it is bound up with the roots of being. Christianity thus gives the promise, as it also has the aim in its Messiah and its theomorphic ideal, of the "over-man," for whose coming its brilliant opponent Nietzsche tried to prepare; meanwhile, it guarantees permanence and soundness. Reason has always a tendency to interfere with the normal, and the tendency is kept in check by religion. Primitive and civilized men alike are religious, not in proportion as they are unscientific, but in proportion as they are elemental in character. There is a fundamental harmony beneath religion and science, but the harmony is life.

In close connexion with the elemental limit of religion is the fact that its action generally takes place in the mysterious twilight of subconsciousness. This is one reason why man is so slow to realize, so chary of discussing, and so tenacious in holding what is to him a sacred possession. The impulse itself, which makes us regard a thing as sacred, is a radiation from the religious impulse. It is linked on the one hand to the high seriousness, characteristic of the greatest men, and on the other to the individualism,

characteristic of the ablest. From this point of view religion is the universalization of the serious egoism of the elemental emotions.

It is time, however, that we recorded what has been already implied, that the primary function of religion is to affirm and consecrate life. The very ambiguity of the term *life* in its religious usage shows the continuity of the physical and the psychical forms of the idea. By this affirmation religion ensures the integrity of the vital forces, and preserves them from disintegration. Secondly, it consecrates and preserves elemental conditions such as the family, a fact illustrated by the history of the word "pious." Religion consecrates also the means of life, and the facts and interests which make up the elemental side of our activities; it surrounds with an insulation of taboo those critical moments and periods in which the sources of life are in danger—birth, puberty, marriage, sickness, and death. The sane and normal member of a civilized community shows in a hundred details that the foundation on which his modern culture is reared is of the same primitive character as the elemental life of the savage; and he instinctively feels the importance of preserving that foundation healthy and sound; and this is what religion aims at when exerting its consecrating force. Sober thinkers often complain that in a mechanical age there is an ever-increasing tendency "to leave nothing sacred." Now religion insists on the sacred character of everything that promotes life, health, and strength, and sets her face against everything that disintegrates the vital forces. This is the reason why religion has always been so severe in condemnation of sexual immorality. It has been well remarked by Romanes in this connexion, that aberrations of conduct have more to do with the origin of unbelief than has rational scepticism. To the spirit of religion the body is veritably a temple of the Holy Ghost, the Giver of Life. Starbuck has shown the connexion between the sexual life and the awakening of religious feeling in adolescence: "The central thing underlying all these phenomena of conversion seems to be the birth of the reproductive life. It is the time when the person begins vitally and psychologically to reach out and find his life in another. . . . The chief temptations at this period are sexual." By preserving sexual integrity, and by consecrating this secondary source of life, religion performs a service on which the vitality of the race depends. The history of religion is in its primary aspect the history of man's conception of life, and of his care in its transmission. The religious emotions spring from the same primary source as do the sexual; there is a curious analogy to be found in what may be called the shyness of religion. On both subjects, sex and religion, the normal healthy man, whether savage or civilized, is profoundly reticent and secretive. The resentment shown by religious persons when their deepest convictions are doubted or attacked, is an instinctive recoil from danger threatening the sources of being. Its first phase, especially in the young, is shyness; but the emotion, when complete, is surpassed in strength only by the physical instinct of self-preservation.

It may be useful to mention here a view, which is more often hinted at than expressed, to the effect that religion is a perversion, or at least a result of the sexual instinct. The existence of phallic worship, so called, is cited in proof. Phallic worship proper is, however, extremely rare, if indeed it ever occurs; veneration, it is true, is frequently found, but this, like many a so-called cult, is simply an affirmation of the sacredness of life. No student of anthropology now regards as serious the many attempts which have been made to raise such cases to the rank of organized "phallic religions." It is of course true, and the fact is another confirmation of our hypothesis, that the pathology of the emotions can show examples of interchange between the religious and the sexual impulses, and even in the normal subject there must be points of contact between the two dominant expressions of vital force.

The next conclusion to which we are driven is that religion is primarily individualistic. If ever a conviction seemed to be mortised in adamant, it is perhaps the belief that religion is essentially altruistic. But the facts unmistakably point to the exact opposite. The origin of the illusion is rather a subject for ethical discussion; but we can here point out that the most powerful instinct in human nature could hardly be expected a priori to show in its second stage such a reversal of type; and the psychological study

of the modern religious consciousness, far removed from the beginning as it is, is even more convincing than the anthropological evidence. Of the motives present at conversion the altruistic show one of the smallest percentages, averaging only 5 per cent. Starbuck concludes that it is untrue to say "the trend of life is simply away from the self-enlargement motives towards the altruistic." As for the primitive stage, Spencer and Gillen have made out a very strong case for the origin of Australian morality in the selfishness (or shall we say individualistic foresight?) of the older men. Even Christianity shows a firm basis of individualism. "Be thyself," is Christ's teaching. He emphasized, as no one has done before or since, the importance of personality, and the paramount claims of the individual soul. The affirmation of life, the protection of life, the laying hold upon life, form the dominant motive in the Christian harmony; there does not exist a more self-centred principle of conduct than the doctrine of personal salvation. We shall not be far from the truth if we surmise that a good deal of the animosity which the ancient world showed against the Christians was due to their unbending egoism. Marcus Aurelius, who probably knew them well, denotes their chief characteristic as *ψιλὴ παράταξις*, "sheer obstinacy." It is at least curious that similar phrases are used of Christ himself in the Talmud. The early Christians refused many social and civic duties; and it was in reference to this that they were accused of hatred of the human race. It was natural that opponents should take this view of an access of individualistic power, which was a new thing in the history of consciousness. Kidd is profoundly mistaken when he speaks of the intense altruism of the early Christians, and of the flood of altruistic emotion which Puritanism and the Reformation let loose upon the world. Gibbon rightly noted the intense egoism of the Christians; their altruism was confined to their own family, as it were; and Wakeman rightly speaks of the stern, uncompromising individualism of the Puritans. This increase of vitality is illustrated by the martyrs, both of the early Christian and Reformation times.

Much of what is vaguely termed altruism is simply a recognition of the claims of competing individualisms, and not a little of this is fear of individualism. It should be unnecessary to argue that individualism alone can produce progress, and that mere altruism, as exploited by abstract thinkers, is impossible for society. Human life is a mutual give and take, but it is the individual who gives, the individual who takes. You cannot do good to your neighbour unless you have done good to yourself. Self-realization is completed, not begun, by merging the self in others. Christ taught, "Do unto others as *ye would they should do unto you*"; "Love thy neighbour *as thyself*." Christianity has been censured for trying to reform society by beginning with the individual, but it is right to do so. There is no other way. True altruism is a part of human nature, of course, but normally it is shown in two ways only. The original and permanent sphere of altruism is the *family*. This is where it first emerges from individualism; it is here applied to the extension of a man's self, first in his wife, and secondly in his children, to whom he transmits the torch of life. A further extension of the *ego* is made by religious bodies, such as the Christian family, with its motto, "He that doeth the will of God, the same is my brother and sister and mother." Secondly, altruism is an overflow of generous individualism on the part of the strong. This is actually the final virtue of Nietzsche's ideal individualist and of Aristotle's perfect man, but it is no less the crown of the Christian character. It is rather the self-extension than the self-negation or mutilation of a noble personality. It is the act of an individualist, not of a socialist; it is altruism coming out of, not preceding or belittling, an exalted individualism; it is the flower, but not the root. Only a true individualism enables a man to lay down his life for his friend; it was no socialist who died upon the Cross.

As in the Gospels the "poor" are personalities, as the zeal of the Reformers showed the assertion of private judgment and individual responsibility, so even the cruelties of the Inquisition, the tortures and the burnings, were really another expression of the same access of strength. The lesson of religious cruelty, like the lesson of martyrdom, is that if religion, the permanent expression of vitality, can show such invincible strength of cruelty on the one hand, and of endurance on the other, the fact is due to an

increase of vitality. We inherit, to our inestimable gain, the spirit and strength of persecutor and martyr alike; the resource, the endurance, the zeal, and the power of our best men are due to that spirit and the human force which it revealed. The power of man gradually passes into the intellectual sphere as evolution advances; man becomes more capable both for good and for evil as progress goes on; his individualism becomes deeper, and his altruism, in the true sense of that word, wider but though all these developments tend to be intellectualized, their permanence must still depend upon the soundness of their physical and elemental foundations. Political concession and social equalization are ultimately due to religion as an expression of vitality, but the proximate cause is not a sentimental altruism, but an enlightened liberal view, the result of a deeper and wider individualism, which combines a love of fairness with a realization of the facts that men, when free and possessed of opportunities, do better work, and that such conditions often bring out ability which would otherwise have been lost.

Pity, as expressed in almsgiving and charity, assists those who are losing or have lost the battle of life. Charity, quite unconsciously, really supports the present conditions and affirms their excellence, though deploring their defects; charity prevents a readjustment of the social system, and indefinitely postpones socialistic reform by blinding the successful to the evils of the present system, and by making the unsuccessful content with it. Charity thus seems a fatal error, but as a matter of fact the thinker cannot find a more just or a better way of solving the social problem. Competition must go on, and the weakest, but only the weakest, must fail; it is a truly individualistic, a truly altruistic feeling which, with infallible though unconscious logic, thus justifies human nature in both its spheres. *The socialist proposes to alter the whole organization of society because a small fraction of the whole is defective.* The proposal is not only illogical, but is a stultification of human nature. It is often made an accusation by Radicals and Socialists against established churches and the creeds they represent, that religion is used by the holders of power and privilege to control and check the masses, and that thus the true liberties and just aspirations of the people are suppressed, and progress is delayed. By progress here is implied unconsciously not real development, nor even equalization of opportunity, nor the bringing down of the weak from high places and the raising of the strong from the dust, but an unfair bestowal upon the weak of larger rewards than they deserve. There is, perhaps, more truth in the accusation than there is in the view that religion lets loose the abundant waters of altruism, so as to break down every obstacle in the way of socialistic advance; and a broad survey of human history and an insight into human possibilities might enable us to maintain with no little justice that such a use of such a means of control as religion is entirely right and furthers the best interests of the race. For the weaker and less successful members of any community are apt to attribute their grievances to the present social system, whereas they are due to the laws of evolution and the inevitable working of natural selection. When the masses combine the balance is righted, through the generous action of individualism on the part of the strong.

It is a curious feature of that primitive society, in which so many human possibilities are revealed, that in its earliest stages there is no formal government. The familiar chief or head-man even does not exist. But this is no anarchy in which every man does that which is right in his own eyes—or, rather, every man does so, but his eyes see only that which is right in the sight of others. Taboo, with its supernatural sanction, enforces the elemental rules of religion; but Custom, thus expressed, is but the affirmation of elemental human nature; and besides this, there is a human sanction also. Both Bagehot and Kidd are mistaken in this, as also in supposing the primitive state of society to be one of war. As recent research has shown, the elder men of a savage tribe, in an informal and natural way, take into their hands, unbidden and generally in secret, the duty and responsibility of supporting the tribal code and of punishing the rare infringements of it which may occur. There is no such stringent discipline to be found as that of these belated runners in the race of human progress. The old men of a tribe include those of middle age, and a man must be well tested and approved before he becomes a member of their informal

councils. It is natural that experience and the shrewdness it supplies should thus have a predominance. As Homer says, the Erinyes accompany the old. Proverbially the elder members of a community are supporters of the present and opposers of innovation. They thus represent the permanent, the physical, and the elemental features of humanity. But their conservatism is open to wise reform when circumstances demand it, and an adequate test has been applied. Even in a more or less primitive tribe like the Arunta of Central Australia, the old men discuss reforms at their tribal assemblies, and adopt such as seem wise. This disproves the common notion that savage custom is absolutely stationary.

This result, not of socialism but of individualism, in primitive politics is repeated in later history, when the tendency is for government to pass from control and exploitation to organization and management, as may be seen by comparing the Tudor government of England with the present system. It would seem that the normal tendency is to the organizing form of government, and that the periods of real control are abnormal. In the normal state the people are not exploited for the benefit of the monarch or ruling classes. These supply, by position, inherited privilege, experience, and ability, the organization necessary for the well-being of the state. This result is as old as humanity, and is a direct outcome of religious individualism. Its significance may be realized by an analogy from the insect-world.

Ants and bees have often supplied sentimental philosophers with an ideal for mankind. But the chief feature of the remarkable organization of these insect communities is not an intelligent co-operation and division of labour, but a mechanical or rather organic differentiation of *function*; and there is a significant distinction between the two cases. The members of these communities have been divided by biological processes into what are practically not distinct species, but distinct parts of an individual. An insect community is simply one magnified insect. The special work performed by each part secures, it is true, the welfare of the community, but the inherent defect of the system, namely, the differentiation of function, absolutely prevents originality and progress. Contrast with this the division of labour in a human society. Here, at first sight, we have the same feature, special work performed harmoniously by the various groups composing the whole, so as to secure the general welfare, but a closer inspection reveals a profound distinction. The workers in different departments are one and all complete men, possessing every function of man. In this fact we have the possibility, the permanent possibility, of indefinite progress; for not only is it the case that those do the best specialized work who have a general capacity for any work, the power of the brain depending on the completeness of all the senses and functions of the organism—take away one of these and the brain suffers—there is also the possibility of transition from one employment to another, and from class to class—in fine, the possibility and the aspiration of reaching a relatively higher standard of the conditions of life. As long as every worker is a complete human unit, so long will there be the possibility of intellectual and moral development; as long as each unit possesses not only equalized opportunity, but the opportunity and capacity for living a complete life, physically and intellectually, as long as he has a home and a family, and a stake in the country, all dependent on his own exertions, and, lastly, the chance of securing the rewards possible to self-realization, so long will he possess the stimulus and the vitality without which progress is impossible and degeneration imminent. And religion, the expression of this vitality and of this self-realization in completeness of life, is a force to which we may look, especially if physical evolution has ceased in man, for the prevention of any such retrograde movement.

There is an old alternative which may occur to the reader. An aristocracy of complete individuals might conceivably produce great results by exploiting a subordinate population of workers with more or less specialized functions, due not to biological development, but to a forced degeneration. The well-known commonplace that all progress is due to aristocracies may seem to support this. But there are fatal objections to this arrangement, as there are to the civilizations based on slavery. It would fail not only from degradation in the workers, but from lack of men to organize them. The ancient empires had no



means of recruiting the ranks of the upper classes, and it seems to be a fact that there are fewer births in the most cultivated portion of any community, a fact perhaps due to the neglect of our elemental nature. Secondly, no development of wealth would be possible; the creation of a surplus depends on ability in the worker no less than on ability in the employer.

The converse view labours under no less a disadvantage. The Socialist looks for a time when all, aristocrats and masses alike, are the servants of the community. They are so now, in the best and only possible sense; but the Socialist means specialized work authoritatively imposed, without the possibility of an indefinite reward for ability and exertion. As we have seen, this strikes at the roots of vitality, not only by discouraging the able, the result of which would be the cessation of that surplus wealth without which such a regime is impossible, but by defrauding the lower strata of society of their ambition; in other words, Socialism prepares the way for degeneration by checking natural selection. It may be said that the ultimate decision rests with the masses; but a discontented minority must not be confounded with these. Objection may be taken here to an unwarranted hypothesis that there are impulses generated in a mob, for instance, which are inexplicable by reasoning from the individual. It is the false analogy of the "social organism" once more. It cannot be too emphatically asserted that there is nothing in the social totality which is not to be found in the individuals composing it. What does happen is that one or two elemental feelings, of individualistic origin, which are bound to appear in times of agitation, and which, no less necessarily, are universal and prominent in the race, are emphasized in such cases by unanimous adoption. The "increasing subordination of the individual to society" which Kidd foresees, is quite unsupported by the biological science on which he relies. There may be further organization of activity, but that is all.

There is a moral result of religion which is of supreme importance in evolution, By imposing rules and taboos upon action it checks physical domination, and thus gives non-physical strength the opportunity needed for development. Without this, intellect and character would have been helpless, and man would hardly have progressed above the brute. In the origin of morality there is indeed to be seen some fear of one's fellows and fear for one's self, and the strongest are not exempt from this. The balance between the individual and society is thus conditioned, but this condition is not the cause; nor does it prove that the primitive, non-moral state of man was a reign of terror, as is commonly supposed, and as the meaning given to the word "savage" would imply. It is necessary to realize this, and to understand that morality, by keeping the balance between the individual and society, simply prevents a development towards extremes, when we consider the plausible theory as old as Thrasymachus, and now revived by Nietzsche, that morality is invented by the weak to defend themselves against the tyranny of the strong. To Nietzsche the moralization of Europe means the taming of the great blonde animal, the Aryan aristocrat, and he deplores the result. As we have suggested, morality is as much due to the strong as to the weak, if not more so, since the expression of vitality, of which morality is a part, is stronger and deeper in the strong. The view is closely connected with the fallacy that the natural man is a physical ruffian; the opposite theory of Rousseau that he is perfect is no less fallacious. The latter view leads to the paradox of an impossible altruism, the former to the paradox that anti-social crime is the flower of individualism. The truth is that morality enables the strong to do more, for by it not only are the weak protected and thus rendered more efficient, but the strong are themselves protected against strong and weak alike.

It is a well-known view that there is no essential connexion between religion and morality. This is one of those errors which the search for truth often involves. Morality is one of the results of the religious impulse. The essence of the moral law in its individual and social aspects is a codification of those subconscious regulations which the vital forces of humanity find necessary to their security and growth. Some of them will always meet with the censure of abstract thinkers, but they all coincide with the permanent elements of human nature, from which they emerge. In these categorical imperatives of

morality religion asserts human instinct and co-operates with natural law. We can distinguish in modern civilization two codes of morality: the morality of elemental human nature, with which, remarkable as the fact may seem, the old "imperfect" morality of religion is identical; and secondly, the morality elaborated by abstract thinkers. These often contrast the ideal perfection of the new morality with the imperfections of the old. They deprecate as immoral the forgiveness of sins. What it does is, of course, if we may put it so crudely, to get as much efficiency as possible out of the weak. Such theorists make the most of the dualism of good and evil, and insist that God must be either not all-powerful or not all just, if he allows the existence of evil, misery, and pain. They deny free-will. But they forget that these two details of theological doctrine are properly concerned with the practical life alone; and in the practical life the very inconsistency of these beliefs, as it seems at first sight to be, both asserts and helps to strengthen the vital force of humanity. Pain and evil exist to stimulate action; we are conscious of free-will, though ultimately it seems to disappear; man's consciousness of it gives him power—*possunt quia posse videntur*. The very defects, if such they be, of the old morality prove its suitability to the needs of elemental human nature. It is, moreover, only mistaken pedantry or sentimentalism to regard them as defects at all; as we have suggested, the most important duty of man, especially in modern civilization, when so many artificial conditions threaten his vitality, is to preserve intact the sources of life.

There is a further objection arising from these partial views, and from ignorance both of the meaning of religion and of the importance of the elemental in our nature. It is urged that, however useful religion may have been in the infancy of the race, its best results have been incorporated and its work is done; it must therefore be relegated, like other things outworn, to the limbo of lost hopes and forgotten ideals. But the right conclusion would seem to be that, so long as we are made of flesh and blood, and so long as our development is rooted in our physical nature, we must expect to have ideas corresponding; and if, as there is every reason to believe, such ideas are not only inevitable, but are the one criterion by which we can distinguish the healthy and complete organism from the degenerate animalized man on the one hand, and the abstract thinker on the other—then religion must certainly continue to exist. Not only so, but it must be of a type most suited to its origin and function; and this is not to be found in a religion of altruism, or of duty, or of æstheticism, or of humanity, or of science. We need fear no lack of progress, nor any check to the development of intelligence; but the reasonable soul can only truly and permanently subsist, when it subsists harmoniously with the human flesh.

In this connexion the Ethical and Socialistic societies of the day afford a curious example of the errors to which abstract thought may lead. Discarding the Christian religion as inconsistent with science, they announce a new moral dispensation, the ideals and precepts of which are based on an irrational and unscientific altruism. Its exponents have the laudable desire to improve and elevate mankind, but they forget the elemental part of man's organism; they do not see that it and it alone is the real basis of progress. If they had taken this into account, they would have had two alternatives: either to retain religion as the only complete expression of this human nature (and knowledge of the facts would have restricted the choice to Christianity as being best suited to progressive humanity), or to put in its place some such worship of man as the Positivists have done. This form of worship has been tried and has failed. One main reason would seem to be that though heroic greatness always obtains the admiration of mankind, yet human nature demands something more; the religious spirit, it is true, itself exalts the living strength of man, but in its most characteristic expression it does not forget its human pride, which, not inconsistently, conceives of its human heroes as specialists, if one may say so, not universalists like a God-man. No allowance, moreover, is made for the inference from causation, as to the ultimate supreme cause of the universe; nor for the sacramental tendency in human instinct. Morality takes the place of religion. The failure of these systems to satisfy human nature is perhaps unexampled for completeness in

the history of practical Ethics. Positivism, as has been said, is Christianity with the Catholicism left out, the Ethical movement leaves out everything.

We have attempted to show that religion is the foundation of civilization, and have suggested that without it no progress is possible. There are other lines on which the connexion may be drawn out. One great difference between human and animal action is the absence of doubt from the latter. The animal goes straight to its end without previous wavering. This difference involves for man, in a curious combination, the possibility of deterioration and the possibility of improvement. The growing complexity of the nervous organism makes reflex action increasingly difficult; hesitation ensues, and directness of reaction is often lost; but the struggle for readjustment produces a higher synthesis, which is fuller, deeper, and more conscious. The process is one both of mental and moral growth. Progress, both in knowledge and in character, depends on the failure of the original synthesis. This fall from and return to self-confidence is remarkably illustrated in conversion; and thus for every soul there is a psychological repetition of the Fall and the Redemption. The story of Eden is a real psychological document. The sense of sin is the first moment in conversion; a strange sense of guilt and imperfection fills the mind. The religious foundation of our powers is here shown by the fact that this sense of sin is perhaps stronger in the pure and guiltless than in those who have been led into vice. But when subconsciousness has done its work, there supervenes a sense of peace, of readjustment, of union with God. The renewal of self-confidence is faith in God. Starbuck remarks of this sub-conscious process at conversion, "Let one do all in his power, and the nervous system will do the rest—God helps those who help themselves." We can perhaps see in this passage from the direct reflex automatism of the child through doubt and hesitancy to a new direct action, part of the secret of that marvellous development of personality which the first Christians revealed. The ancients were, equally with barbarians and primitive folk, religious without knowing it; but in Christianity man made a great step towards becoming conscious of religion, though not yet able to penetrate to its source. The Fall was a necessary prerequisite of Christianity. Not until the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil has been tasted does man recognize the importance of the Tree of Life.

The fear of the senses, found in religion at various stages, is, in one aspect, connected with this process. The mind makes grooves for itself, but sensation is always opening out new possibilities of strange wanderings, fresh vistas outside the narrow way, of which the soul is naturally curious but shy. Being unfamiliar, they are credited with danger. And in actual fact they are dangerous. The legislation of normal religion has never prohibited anything which did not involve the disintegration of life. And here it may be observed that scientific meliorism, in view of the failures with which the path of civilization is strewn, agrees with Christianity in emphasizing the necessity of redemption; the story of the Fall of Man may be unhistorical, but socially it is a fact, even more terribly true than as recorded in the Bible.

The same process of mental growth through hesitation and recovery is seen objectively in the formation of institutions. Marriage, for instance, is found among the higher animals in a phase hardly differing from human unions. But human marriage becomes at an early date an institution—that is, it is safeguarded by taboos and rules, man's affirmations of his knowledge of nature and of her importance. This cementing of what is already built is not unnecessary, since mental progress in each generation involves doubt as the first step. Such rules assist nature against possible results of that doubt; if human action were still reflex and unchanging nature would need no help. The same is seen in other early institutions, and especially in those remarkable rules of personal taboo, the function of which is to safeguard the individual life and strength.

Thus from the objective, as well as from the psychological side, sin receives its opportunity. Sin came because of the Law, without the Law there had been no sin. It is a grave error to suppose that primitive man before the rise of institutions revelled in crimes to which those institutions at last put a stop. The

institutions existed potentially, as they do among the higher animals. He did not indulge in murder and incest before the law against those crimes was passed; the law in the institution simply revealed their possibility. Man becomes more capable of good and of evil alike the more he advances in civilization.

The doctrine of original sin, then, is the expression of a profound psychological truth. We have, first, the hesitation involved in the development of consciousness generally; secondly, we see from savage custom and other psychological facts, not only the idea of the possibility of disobeying nature, or the supernatural sanction of taboo, or the Supreme Being, but also the notion that sin is closely connected with certain functions, a notion half reflex and accidental and half the result of affirmation of life and its sources. In the Christian doctrine the original sin of our first parents is generalized as disobedience, but its quality is perhaps sexual; it is concerned at least with the animal part of our nature, and may well be regarded as inherent in our flesh and blood. There is thus in the old theological doctrine a curious glimpse of biological theory, and the process of eliminating original sin coincides with human evolution—the *elimination of the monkey from man*.

The Christian doctrine of sin is well put by Gore in reference to that aspect of it which we have to consider. "It is common to all the anti-Christian views of sin that at the last resort they make sin natural, a part of nature. It is characteristic of Christ's view of sin—of the scriptural view of it—that it makes it unnatural. It is characteristic again of the non-Christian view that it makes the body, the material, the seat of sin. It is essential to the Christian view to find its seat and only source in the will." Now this account applies exactly to the primitive conception; the savage, like the Essene, regards sin as a transgression of nature. Sin breaks taboo, and is so far, in Lang's happy phrase, a "mystic misdeed." But the taboo is intended to preserve the integrity of human nature, to keep intact the sources of life. Sin is thus essentially a violation of what is absolutely sacred; inasmuch as it arises from a perversion of the will and a corruption of the vital instinct, which is the source of religion, sin is a crime against life.

A further reference to the subject of faith will fitly close this part of our subject. Its identity with a renewed self-confidence has been mentioned. Here we have to note, firstly, that the psychological conflict which ends with faith in God, produces in the scientific sphere the assurance of the uniformity of nature and the permanence of force; and, secondly, that faith in the proper sense is not belief, but a tendency, a bias; and this tendency is a tendency to life; it is the result of a healthy vital instinct, and only gives way under influences which disintegrate vitality. With regard to belief and the rationalist criticism of it, it is enough to note that it never implies acceptance of what contradicts reason. The Agnostic complains not that the Christian doctrines are contradictory of reason, but that they involve matters which we do not and, perhaps, cannot know. The Christian *believes* them because he does not *know* them. In itself this is a course which is perfectly sane and logical. But there is more to be said: the Christian has an instinctive bias to believe these facts because they in turn justify his sense of life, his healthy vitality. Psychologists are now agreed that instinctive tendencies have paramount influence over our mental processes; if the former are sound, the latter will be sound also. The Roman Catholic opinion that the truths of Christianity should first be examined by reason before they are accepted requires considerable qualification. Theistic and Christian pre-possessions are often derided by rationalists; but there is sound human nature behind the instinct, as we may properly call it, which leads men to distrust an "atheist."

The physical reference of religion has been emphasized at many points of our argument, but it must not be supposed that we depreciate its spiritual aspect. The elemental has two planes: in the first are comprised the reflexes of the primary organic functions, which may roughly be described as the body; in the second are the more complex processes of the higher nervous centres, the soul.

Many a misconception has been due to neglect of the subjective realities of the spiritual life, still more to neglect of its physical side. Religion is materialistic, in the proper meaning of the term, or, more exactly, realistic. There is no paradox about this; the evidence shows that just as religion in its practical

application is mainly concerned with the elemental, so in its philosophical outlook it asserts from first to last the reality of phenomena no less than of noumena. Though not careful of metaphysical precision, it affirms reality, without falling into the materialistic or the subjective-idealist extremes. Its philosophical monism is unique in so far as it will not define. The sane religious view cares nothing for the trivial quarrel about the terms matter and mind; it simply asserts that matter is real, though not the absolute, for it is to be superseded by a higher form of substance, which is no less real, different and yet the same, as the risen body compared with the mortal; it asserts also that mind is real, though not the absolute, nor yet merely ideal. Its monistic assumption is no metaphysical sophistication, but an immediate inference from the self-evident fact of existence. Religion proper involves no dualism; even in its conception of sin it discards the Manichean view that matter and the body are essentially evil. The one principle of religion on which its integrity of type depends, the sacramental, is opposed to subjective idealism and to crude materialism alike; and to bring religion nearer to the former is no less erroneous than it would be to identify it with the latter. Herbert Spencer suggested that the basis of religion and the ultimate fact behind both religion and science, at which science ends and religion begins, is the recognition that the existence of the universe is an unknowable mystery; it would be more correct to speak of the *recognition of the reality of the universe*. It is worth noting that, like the term miracle, the meaning of the word "mystery" has altered. To the early Christians and to primitive religion generally, as to the Greeks themselves, mystery meant almost the opposite of what scientific thought has made it mean now; it signified a profound but *self-evident* truth, which was only to be recognized by or divulged to the highest grade of the initiate, and by them to be kept secret. The "secret and sacred" rites of Australia are mysteries in the proper sense. In this sense of the word the mystery of life is the great secret of religion.

Religion, then, is primarily concerned with the body, but in no mere materialistic way. Nietzsche is wrong when he accuses Christianity of neglecting and despising the body. What it does is to preserve vitality by insisting on self-control. Both animalism and asceticism are incompatible with true religion. The sense of vitality, we need not explain, is deepened by a sane continence, which secures the effectiveness and well-being of individual and family life. The idea behind such continence touches, as we have hinted, the sacramental and the vitalistic principles. Of all sins against life, wanton abuse receives the severest condemnation from religion. Suicide and sexual immorality, so prevalent at the time when Christianity appeared, were the first offences which this new faith in "the life of men" set itself to stamp out.

Before we leave the subjects of philosophy and of morality, a word is demanded by the popular formula—the supernatural sanction of morality. Few phrases have been more pregnant of misconceptions. The word "supernatural" is a survival of scholasticism, the word "sanction" of legalism; neither has now any relation to fact, nor any meaning for theory. It is necessary to note this, as the phrase is frequently used as if it represented not merely a true cause in human evolution, but an ontological reality.

Religious emotion and theological doctrine alike trace a curve which begins from and returns to the physical; but the first and last result of religion is to raise human nature to a higher power. The vital instinct consecrates in thought what was common, and the psychological processes of religion themselves actually develop human capacity, by a sort of continuous "make and break." The development is illustrated by the two chief meanings of the word "life": first, the principle on which existence depends (in early thought life and its principle are identical); second, the manner in which that existence is employed. Starbuck has remarked that a persistent element in religion is the reaching out after fuller life. The two notes of existence, lower and higher, form a chord; religion sounds the octave of life. The Maori gentleman is permanently sacred, the Melanesian is instinct with *mana*, the Christian is holy; the Brahman by performing certain *elevatory* ceremonies, as they are significantly called, becomes divine. We have already noted the connexion of this feeling of exaltation with the development of the idea of God.

We may add, that every elemental fact of life, every function even, is subjected to this elevatory process. To the religious mind every meal is a Eucharist; every marriage is a divine union; every home contains a holy family; every mother is a Madonna, every babe a son of God. Now this view of man as a “spiritual” being, in the proper sense of the term—that is, as a consecrated living person—is a reflex result of emphasizing life, and is primarily, as is all such psychic expansion, an assurance of the reality, an asseveration of the importance, and *ipso facto* a deepening of the present life; but, secondarily, it is an aspiration towards a higher reality, both in the present and in the continued life hereafter.

One of the strongest arguments for Christianity is the way in which it corresponds with infallible precision to the psychological needs of man. Idealist theology has illustrated the process by which the soul is crucified with Christ, and must die in order to live. To be perfect, man must experience sorrow as well as joy. Christ is perfect man and perfect God, and the Christian strives to approximate his own life to this ideal. After conversion, says Starbuck, the *ego* is lifted up into new significance; there is a sense of newness and of reality, but also an active sympathy with the world outside, and an unselfing of consciousness. Obedience is thus the rule for children; in adolescence the command is “be thyself,” after conversion “lose thyself.” This higher life, lastly, is consummated by the phenomena of ideation; in the sphere of ideas thus attained, the infirmities of matter and the limitations of time and space, which have weighed down the wings of the soul, are at last removed, and the spirit soars untrammelled in the air of a new eternal world.

The whole process forms one great stage in psychical evolution, the development of religion. To round off our argument, we may remind ourselves that the next great stage shows humanity struggling towards analytical consciousness of this result; the negation of religion, inseparable from this awakening, will gradually disappear in a deeper and more permanent faith.

## CHAPTER X

### CONCLUSION

**F**OR practical human politics, as for religious elementalism, this earth is still the centre of the Universe, and man the Lord of Creation. Any force, therefore, which is permanent, and which tends to the elevation of mankind, cannot be lightly ignored. If we confine our attention exclusively to the source of religion in the springs of life, we may assert that the whole of civilization, the whole of human activity, flow from it. We cannot, however, say this unconditionally—the religious spirit always tends to separate from the rational and to confine itself to the elemental sphere of human energy, while the rational tends to break away from the vital instinct (and here the potentiality of a conflict between religion and science resides)—but we can say that religion, becoming itself a cause, has guided and influenced the whole of human evolution. Institutions, when once formed, are preserved by the religious impulse which produced them, and their life is then protected by a veil of religious mystery, covering what is holy and not to be defiled. This is the case with the family, the marriage system, and the more fluid, yet no less permanent, unwritten regulations of the social organization. The chief significance of religion, however, resides in the fact that it has always performed, and still continues to perform, the important duty of guarding those elemental forces, upon the soundness of which the permanence of civilization depends, and, in particular, to consecrate the life of the individual and the institution of the family, the two ultimate bases of progress.

The various spheres of human activity are undifferentiated in primitive culture; they are all religious. But when we consider a barbarous stage, such as that of many early Mohammedan and Christian peoples, we find differentiation begun in practice, though not always as yet in theory. Politics and science, for instance, lose their religious character, but everything is still controlled by and subservient to religion; the faith sets limits and prescribes methods. We see, however, from time to time a remarkable recurrence of the primitive lack of differentiation, in the way in which religion takes the place of nationality, or rather extends the idea of the family. The early Greek empire, and such offshoots from it as the Jacobites, Maronites, and Nestorians, supply examples of this; citizens of the Byzantine empire regarded themselves not as such, but as members of the Orthodox Church. This alone was the tie between them. Even in our own country now, when the word “Christian” is used in ordinary parlance, it is a synonym for a true Englishman. But in modern civilization the process of differentiation has gone further, and the religious sphere is narrowed down until it embraces, as a rule, merely the subconscious life of the average individual and the domestic relations of the family circle, and not all of these, but only such part as is not concerned with practical life. Much of this result is due to the modern tendency to turn religion into subjective idealism. Yet even here religion asserts its origin and enforces its primal claim over the elemental sphere; it is regarded still as the basis of character, and therefore as controlling the whole life of the man. Even in cases where the influence of rationalism or expediency has completely excluded religion from the consciousness, yet the material from which it may grow still remains, and gives rise subconsciously to principles which are essentially, though not consciously religious, as in the relations of domestic life, the personal rules of honour and decency, duty, commercial and social: religion still inspires these. In such cases religion has become subconscious once more, and when we are told that sane and normal characters do actually live without religion, the reply is that they are still religious, subconsciously, and in many cases have turned against the ancient faith through some misconception of its meaning.

The average individual is rarely conscious of the ultimate motive of his acts; the most careful introspection hardly enables him to see further than the occasion or the proximate cause. Thus the

Pythagoreans abstained from flesh-meat for a fanciful reason, and from beans for a grotesque corollary of that reason. Primitive humanity, whether viewed in the savage or the child, supplies many cases of this. Such being the state of the average mind, when consciousness demands at least a temporary sovereign in man's "kingdom of ends," various partial motives usurp the throne. Patriotism, conservatism, altruism, human progress, thus may obscure the claims of life, the individual and the family, whose triple crown is religion. Similarly, the mass of mankind supports institutions, just as a minority attacks them, for a wrong reason, the prejudice in favour of the present and of the old ways. Such support gives permanence to the elements of life, but supplies the far-sighted elder, priest, or other ruler, with a weapon by which he can quell discontent and check innovation. Often, it is true, both in modern and primitive times, the selfish and unscrupulous have used this weapon for their own ends, but such cases are really exceptional; in most of them the very desire for self-assertion is but the conscious expression, showing indeed a certain narrowness of vision, of what is subconsciously the true religious spirit, the affirmation of what must needs be permanent. A ruler or priest may thus be following, without knowing it, a true and beneficent impulse. The case is not dissimilar when, as so often happens, a statesman is bound to give a false reason for action, simply because the people are unable to understand the true. Political irony of this sort is no less inevitable and no less useful to the subjects of it than that which experience demands in the education of the young, where religion fulfils towards the immature its function of safeguarding life and strength undoubtedly better by the use of its veil of mystery than it could by premature revelation.

Kidd has argued that the present phase of human evolution is not primarily intellectual. He compares the average modern intelligence with that of ancient Greece. But Greece was an abnormal case. A small aristocratic population was able, thanks to slavery and the absence of commercial stress, to devote itself to culture. It is a mistake to regard the whole population as being above the average. But in spite of the achievements of Greece, her thought had one fatal defect. It dealt with science, but was not really scientific, and could make no permanent progress in science because of its abstract nature and artistic bent. Science was to Greece a rhetorical exercise; applied and experimental science were impossible, for the Greek mind was fatally æsthetic. Other races, as the Jews, have shown a genius for morality, but morality, though a condition, is not a cause of progress.

If we can point to any one cause that more than others doomed the ancient civilizations to failure, it is perhaps the absence of the qualities of mind necessary for exploiting nature and the means of existence, and for developing and applying experimental science, or perhaps, rather, the absence of opportunities for exercising such qualities. These qualities are a fusion of intelligence and religion, for they are essentially vital and elemental, strenuous and practical. We may in this respect assert with confidence not only that the average intelligence and ability of the present age is higher, because more essentially positive than that of ancient Greece, but that it is undergoing a marked development. The extraordinary increase of wealth in the last hundred years is primarily due to increased ability. The still more extraordinary advance of science is another proof. A further proof is to be found in the general mental development which is the explanation of the apparent decay of religion. But more important for our purpose is the fact of the increased efficiency of all the producing classes in general ability and intelligence. All this can point to no other conclusion than that the human intellect is undergoing a remarkable development. It is a natural and prevalent error to confuse artistic or rhetorical achievement with ability; the essence of all ability is the practical positive element. It is remarkable how consistent is the association of religion and ability in our best men.

A curious feature of recent social history is a movement which is perhaps of no great importance in its aim, but which reveals a tendency that bodes ill for progress. When Christianity first appeared, men observed with astonishment that the movement was organized by the poor and the lower classes. "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" asked the Jew, and the Greek and the Roman echoed his question



in more general and philosophical terms. The fact, as we have seen, is not surprising in view of the real meaning and origin of religion, its connexion from first to last with the elemental nature of man. The cultured are always apt to carry to an extreme their control of human nature, much as the philosopher of the proverb is apt to forget his bodily necessities; they do not recognize the fact that the highest human activity depends on the proper use and development of the lowest. The energy of the lower classes, on the other hand, is necessarily more or less restricted to the physical sphere. The result is that in the lower intellectual strata of a community we have a permanent criticism of the higher.

The curious feature to which we refer is the opposite of what happened at the beginning of Christianity; the bitter attack upon religion and Christianity, some arguments of which we have surveyed, is chiefly the work of a socialistic party exploiting the claims of the lower classes. Militant "freethought" arises from the very same strata whence in an earlier age Christianity was evolved. Its leaders find the indifference to religion, which is increasing in the lower strata of society, a useful fulcrum for the social lever. The object is to discredit the national religion as the abode of privilege, and the clergy as its depositaries and representatives.

For this purpose its leaders force the usual opposition between science and religion, and make the most of what seem to them the defects of the latter. "The hope of the cause of reason," says one of them, "lies with the political ideals and movements which best promise to save the democracy, and to elevate the mass. It is hopefully significant that the most systematic and scientific of these movements are pronouncedly rationalistic; and it is safe to say that ultimate success depends on their rationalism." The present inquiry supplies some explanation of the curious connexion between socialism and non-religion.

Now the danger, if danger there be in such a movement, does not lie so much in its aims as in the possibility that in its chief method the hand is being lifted against human nature and the sacredness of life. If its leaders have no substitute arising from the same source as the old religion, serving the same needs, and fully satisfying the same eternal elemental cravings, then the movement is either a mere phase of discontent, which will pass away, or—and this is the danger—a symptom of impaired vitality and degeneration. If the movement possessed a truly religious programme, then it would be clear that its object was the sound one of asserting the needs and claims of the vitality of the masses. But there is nothing of the kind apparent. The movement may, it is hoped, be nothing more than the extreme or perversion of the mental development which is at present transforming religion; but it is necessary to record a warning that the permanent elements shall not be lost.

Rationalists argue that theology causes stagnation; historians, on the other hand, make it a commonplace of history that the decay of religion is a chief cause of the decline of nations. And the latter view, though religious decay has never occurred in any important degree, shows the instinctive good sense of human nature. But, though it is not decay, the stagnation which results when the theological expression of religious truth becomes stereotyped, is more dangerous. If man is to progress, his theology must be elastic. True religion cannot live, and cannot be understood for what it is, unless its forms are continually changing. On this change its essence depends. As a matter of fact, however, should religious decay ever occur, it would be not the cause of national decline, but a chief result of that cause. Irreligion is thus a symptom of deterioration. We must exclude here those cases where some catastrophe, such as conquest in the old style, attended by decimation and oppression, has overtaken a nation; such cases are not real instances of national decay. Real decay is the degeneration—physical, moral, and intellectual, of the great mass of the people.

There are some interesting cases in which variation has been checked by some peculiarity of custom which deadens originality and keeps activity in too confined a sphere, or by another which, being more closely concerned with the physical facts of life, renders the stock too homogeneous, as a whole or in some of its parts, for variation. An example which illustrates the combination of both sets of customs is the

population of India. The system of caste having been for so many centuries enforced both in occupation and marriage, has undoubtedly been responsible for that lack of variation and of progress which marks the Hindu. There are numerous instances, again, from savage races, of a custom which has prevented physical and therefore mental variation. This is, curiously enough, the intermarriage of cousins. Savage marriage-law, in its lower forms, does not recognize the relationship of cousins, and where, as in the typical savage tribe, the population is divided into two intermarrying sections, which are probably the two families, now much enlarged, from the union of which the tribe arose, cousin-marriage is practically the rule. The Fijians and Australians supply good examples of this bisecting exogamy. One obvious feature of such communities is the sameness of physiognomy and physical characters generally. Sameness in the mental sphere follows. Such in-breeding probably accounts for the persistence, so marked in early peoples, of the characteristic racial type. Now we need not deny that, to some extent, in-breeding is beneficial in building up a healthy stock—it certainly has had this effect in Fiji; but it seems to be a recognized fact that crossing is sooner or later necessary. A judicious combination of crossing and in-breeding is required. Where religion has gone further in regulating marriage, as it has with the more successful peoples, cousin-marriage has been the exception, and the result is variation. This is the case with the Teutonic races.

As for the physical and mental decay which constitutes real degeneration, it has rarely, if ever, appeared in the history of the world. Many cases, which have been carelessly assigned to it, are nothing of the kind. Some are examples of racial inferiority, whereby one people is outstripped by others, and in the stress of rivalry loses all opportunity. Spain is perhaps an instance. As for ancient Rome, we can distinguish in its history two stages, neither of which is national decay. The first coincides with the fall of the Republic. A political system, which did well enough for a small city-state, failed to cope with the responsibilities of a world-empire, and fell before a military despotism, chiefly because it was not democratic enough, and supplied no equalization of opportunity to encourage ability and produce solidarity. Such cases are merely political revolutions. The fate of an oligarchy is generally the same; paradoxically speaking, an oligarchy can only subsist by being democratized. The second stage, the decline of the Imperial system, presents the same features. The system failed for lack of men; but the Italians were not degenerate. Doubtless a section of their lower classes was so, and had been so at the end of the Republic, but on the whole the decline and fall was simply a change of rulers and a partition of the empire into kingdoms. The ruling section seems to have been subject to a growing despair, and could not and would not offer any resistance. There was no religious decay, properly speaking, in either stage. Culture to some extent filled the place of religion in a section of the upper classes, but true culture always shares the religious spirit. Stoicism, a religious rather than a philosophical movement, had largely taken the place of the old polytheism in the upper and middle classes. With the lower class there was, at the end of the Republic and onwards, a catholic reception of numerous Oriental cults, such as those of Isis, Mithra, Attis, and Judaism. Christianity was later to emerge into prominence from among this medley of imported worships. In each of these there was an increased vitality; but the Latin temperament was not of the stuff to resist the demands of the Teutonic invaders. Nor is Greece a case of real national degeneration. Her history shows us a dissipation of energy due as much to the want of organizing power as to the defects of national character we have suggested. Greece could colonize—she has colonized the world of thought—but she could not found. Decrease of population is not in itself a proof of decadence. In the case of France, so often cited, the phenomenon chiefly belongs to the peasant class, and is doubtless a form of thrift, for they are the best peasantry the world has seen. On the other hand, an excessively cultured class tends to have fewer births. Want of prudence in this matter is a mistake, for it exaggerates the stress of life, but the use of artificial methods of decreasing the population is deleterious, because it impairs the nervous system, and tampers with the vital sources.

A real instance of the beginnings of degeneration may be seen in the population of South Russia, the neurotic condition of which is so remarkable. Its most curious result is the perversion of the religious impulse which gives rise to so many new forms of grotesque worship. It is also probable that we have another instance in our own lower classes; and there is good reason for believing that the irreligion, which is there so prevalent, is due to a disintegration of vitality. A sign of impaired vitality may be found in the drunkenness which has recently taken so strong a hold upon the working classes. Drunkenness, like other vices, is not a cause of degeneration, but an effect, though in its turn it strengthens the predisposing cause. The failure of religious and other influences to cope with this evil does not prove that it is due to congenital degeneration, but there can be no doubt, though the fact seems to be ignored, that this vice is the result of lack of vitality. It is the feeling of loss of power that causes the desire for stimulants, and the excessive use of stimulants both increases the desire for them and proportionally decreases vitality. It is, however, but a small section of the community that is thus threatened, and it is perhaps inevitable that some such defect should accompany a vast complex organization. It is probably ultimately due to economic pressure. But its further results in perversion of what vitality remains increase the evil. Horseplay and obscenity, wife-beating and hooliganism seem to be the characteristic expressions, in pastime and in family life, of the virility of our degenerates. Better housing, better nourishment, better opportunities for recreation, will restore vitality.

Archdall Reid has shown that races long subject to a disease have grown resistant to it, and that races "afflicted by alcohol or opium have grown increasingly temperate by the elimination of those inclined to excess. Races that have longest dwelt in cities are now, of all races, the most capable of resisting the evils of their surroundings. In no single instance do we see the least sign of real degeneracy." He is here referring particularly to heredity, and concludes that "it is necessary only to improve the conditions under which people dwell in towns to enable the race in a single generation to regain its pristine vigour." But in the case of alcoholism the race has had a fairly long period in which to grow resistant or temperate; it has not, however, attained either result, at least in its lower strata, to which we particularly refer.

It would seem that religious decay is but a result of general decadence. It is a symptom of a lowering of the vital forces. As it so closely concerns the lower and middle strata of a nation, where is the basis of elemental humanity on which progress depends, the symptom demands careful inquiry.

The chief sources of danger to civilization and progress would seem to be, in the first place, the neglect of the principles of heredity and the encouragement of such practices as produce nervous degeneration, and, in the second place, the realization of abstract theories like socialism. There is nothing to fear from excess of culture, for the Anglo-Saxon mind, at least, is not likely to press this too far, thanks to the well-balanced vitality which regards it as a higher recreation; nor from capitalism, in spite of apparent tendencies, for the masses can now, thanks to political equality, always adjust the balance; and, besides controlling the demand for commodities, can, if necessary, regulate the mode of supply. The real dangers, we repeat, are those which threaten the individual and the family in the elemental sphere of human energy. Pessimism, whether in practical or philosophical thought, is a mental reflex of loss or perversion of vitality. Religion in its normal form is inevitably optimistic. Buddhism itself, philosophically pessimistic, has been overlaid with a veneer of religious optimism. When Christianity is accused of refusing aid to such as are not willing to believe its truths, the fact is that by the willing Christianity means those who have some vital force, and some serious view of life. It cannot be gainsaid that there is something more strenuous, and something higher than the average, in the character which is attributed to the Christian.

I do not propose to hazard conjectures as to the meaning or possible developments of social evolution. In all likelihood social arrangements will alter but little to the end of time from their present form. It is a false analogy to suppose that the remarkable results of evolution in the physical sphere are to be or can

be repeated in the social. The latter sphere is capable of organization only; progress is not to be confused with its conditions. Intellectually, progress will be enormous. Science will see to the positive advance; religion, being itself positive, will supply a permanent test of the reality of this progress, so as to ensure that it is grounded in the elemental facts of life. The soundness of society rests upon individual health and vitality, and the security of the family; of this result religion is the chief symptom and the chief cause. Religion will still apply the elemental test to all developments, thus keeping them from abstract extremes. It will oppose itself to science without friction, and will keep the balance of individualism and socialism.

Religion will remain the basis of education. Even if we take the view, abstract and unsound as it is, that man outgrows religion, yet we must allow that the young at least remain primitive, and therefore need primitive truths to impress upon them, at the plastic age, the reality and importance of life. But not only is the modern child primitive, but the modern man also, in his elemental nature. The fact is no discredit, but a source of hope. It is not possible to outgrow this condition, as some visionaries suppose; and we must, therefore, regard it as the foundation of all progress, and consecrate it to that end. We must not forget that in the physical and mental expansion of the organism at puberty, not only is there the beginning of the higher life of imagination and character and the development of idealism, probably it is just here that the potentiality of human progress resides. Biologically the organism degenerates from this point, or rather reverts to a lower type, while the mind, by a curious contrast, develops. When we compare the facts of puberty among the lowest and the highest races we note in the latter, not only that puberty is later and that full growth is not attained till several years have elapsed (a fact which implies a higher development), but also that marriage is deferred. Now it is at puberty that originality begins, even in the lowest types of humanity, and if mental development chiefly depends on diverting the sexual or rather the physically vital impulse into other channels, then we may infer that the deferring, both natural and artificial, of the sexual life, is one of the chief factors of progress. In this matter religion has played an important part. These considerations have an important bearing upon the principles of education. It is, perhaps, not out of place to insist at the present moment that the only effective religious teaching is that which is conducted by parents themselves. It should be the fundamental principle of religious education that the responsibility of it rests upon the fathers and mothers of our families. No scholastic system has any importance as compared with this method, nor any chance of success if this method does not precede it. Religion should not be taught in schools; the schoolroom is as little suited for the teaching of religion as it is for the teaching of love; it degrades a sacred subject. The vital secrets of religion should be imparted in the home and celebrated in sacred edifices. Further, religious instruction should not begin with the highest precepts; it should emphasize individualism before altruism, the importance of physical before that of ideal or eternal life. Its teaching should be closely connected with hygienic instruction in such a way as to impress the imagination of the young with a serious recognition of the fact that vitality depends on both.

Self-congratulation is an easy habit, but when there is good reason for it, the healthy mind claims no credit, but is rather encouraged for future effort. From the previous discussion we may infer that our social system, in spite of inevitable defects, is on the whole the soundest that has yet been developed. The wear and tear of evolution has, so to say, brought the necessary elements into their proper places by a natural process, the motive forces of which we have attempted to describe. Even in the political evolution of the British Empire the same may be seen. All the elements of government are to be found in it, and have been wrought into a complex whole, in which each element is most efficient and has most perfect expression. England is not imperial, nor monarchical, nor aristocratic, nor democratic; it is all of these at once, a complete and successful instance of the "mixed government" of the old political science. Even the best elements of feudalism and militarism and other systems still subsist in that part of the structure where they are still useful. It is a remarkable fact and more than a coincidence, that the traditional Christian ideal of

the organization of the universe is so closely parallel, both socially and politically, if the phrase may be used, to our own. Each is the best expression of the best tendencies of human nature.

Much is said by “advanced,” or rather abstract thinkers, in condemnation of the reaction they find at the beginning of the new century. Renan once compared reaction to digestion; and reaction is the best proof that progress is being made permanent, for it brings it into the sphere where the elemental forces of human vitality have control. The commonplace of abstract history—“the more ancient an idea or institution is, the more likely is it to be wrong”—has some truth when applied to science, but none whatever when the ideas or institutions in question are such as belong to the eternal facts of life.