

BOOK THE SECOND -- OF BELIEFS

2.1. MY PRIMARY ACT OF FAITH.

And now having stated my conception of the true relationship between our thoughts and words to facts, having distinguished between the more accurate and frequently verified propositions of science and the more arbitrary and infrequently verified propositions of belief, and made clear the spontaneous and artistic quality that inheres in all our moral and religious generalizations, I may hope to go on to my confession of faith with less misunderstanding.

Now my most comprehensive belief about the external and the internal and myself is that they make one universe in which I and every part are ultimately important. That is quite an arbitrary act of my mind. It is quite possible to maintain that everything is a chaotic assembly, that any part might be destroyed without affecting any other part. I do not choose to argue against that. If you choose to say that, I am no more

disposed to argue with you than if you choose to wear a mitre in Fleet Street or drink a bottle of ink, or declare the figure of Ally Sloper more dignified and beautiful than the head of Jove. There is no Q.E.D. that you cannot do so. You can. You will not like to go on with it, I think, and it will not answer, but that is a different matter.

I dismiss the idea that life is chaotic because it leaves my life ineffectual, and I cannot contemplate an ineffectual life patiently. I am by my nature impelled to refuse that. I assert that it is not so. I assert therefore that I am important in a scheme, that we are all important in that scheme, that the wheel-smashed frog in the road and the fly drowning in the milk are important and correlated with me. What the scheme as a whole is I do not know; with my limited mind I cannot know. There I become a Mystic. I use the word scheme because it is the best word available, but I strain it in using it. I do not wish to imply a schemer, but only order and co-ordination as distinguished from haphazard. "All this is important, all this is profoundly significant." I say it of the universe as a child that has not learnt to read might say it of a parchment agreement. I cannot read the universe, but I can believe that this is so.

And this unfounded and arbitrary declaration of the ultimate rightness and significance of things I call the Act of Faith. It is my fundamental religious confession. It is a voluntary and deliberate determination to believe, a choice made.

2.2. ON USING THE NAME OF GOD.

You may say if you will that this scheme I talk about, this something that gives importance and correlation and significance, is what is meant by God. You may embark upon a logical wrangle here with me if you have failed to master what I have hitherto said about the meaning of words. If a Scheme, you will say, then there must be a Schemer.

But, I repeat, I am using scheme and importance and significance here only in a spirit of analogy because I can find no better words, and I will not allow myself to be entangled by an insistence upon their implications.

Yet let me confess that I am greatly attracted by such fine phrases as the Will of God, the Hand of God, the Great Commander. These do most wonderfully express aspects of this belief I choose to hold. I think if there had been no gods before, I would call this God. But I feel that there is a great danger in doing this sort of thing unguardedly. Many people would be glad for rather trivial and unworthy reasons that I should confess a faith in God, and few would take offence. But the run of people even nowadays mean something more and something different when they say "God." They intend a personality exterior to them and limited,

and they will instantly conclude I mean the same thing. To permit that misconception is, I feel, the first step on the slippery slope of meretricious complaisance, is to become in some small measure a successor of those who cried, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." Occasionally we may best serve the God of Truth by denying him.

Yet at times I admit the sense of personality in the universe is very strong. If I am confessing, I do not see why I should not confess up to the hilt. At times in the silence of the night and in rare lonely moments, I come upon a sort of communion of myself and something great that is not myself. It is perhaps poverty of mind and language obliges me to say that then this universal scheme takes on the effect of a sympathetic person--and my communion a quality of fearless worship. These moments happen, and they are the supreme fact in my religious life to me, they are the crown of my religious experiences.

None the less, I do not usually speak of God even in regard to these moments, and where I do use that word it must be understood that I use it as a personification of something entirely different in nature from the personality of a human being.

2.3. FREE WILL AND PREDESTINATION.

And now let me return to a point raised in the first Book in Chapter 1.9. Is the whole of this scheme of things settled and done? The whole trend of Science is to that belief. On the scientific plane one is a fatalist, the universe a system of inevitable consequences. But as I show in that section referred to, it is quite possible to accept as true in their several planes both predestination and free will. (I use free will in the sense of self-determinism and not as it is defined by Professor William James, and predestination as equivalent to the conception of a universe rigid in time and space.) If you ask me, I think I should say I incline to believe in predestination and do quite completely believe in free will. The important belief is free will.

But does the whole universe of fact, the external world about me, the mysterious internal world from which my motives rise, form one rigid and fated system as determinists teach? Do I believe that, had one a mind ideally clear and powerful, the whole universe would seem orderly and absolutely predestined? I incline to that belief. I do not harshly believe it, but I admit its large plausibility--that is all. I see no value whatever in jumping to a decision. One or two Pragmatists, so far as I can understand them, do not hold this view of predestination at all; but as a provisional assumption it underlies most scientific work.

I glance at this question rather to express a detachment than a view.

For me as a person this theory of predestination has no practical value. At the utmost it is an interesting theory like the theory that there is a fourth dimension. There may be a fourth dimension of space, but one gets along quite well by assuming there are just three. It may be knowable the next time I come to cross roads which I shall take. Possibly that knowledge actually exists somewhere. There are those who will tell you that they can get intimations in the matter from packs of cards or the palms of my hands, or see by peering into crystals. Of such beliefs I am entirely free. The fact is I believe that neither I know nor anybody else who is practically concerned knows which I shall take. I hesitate, I choose just as though the thing was unknowable. For me and my conduct there is that much wide practical margin of freedom.

I am free and freely and responsibly making the future--so far as I am concerned. You others are equally free. On that theory I find my life will work, and on a theory of mechanical predestination nothing works.

I take the former theory therefore for my everyday purposes, and as a matter of fact so does everybody else. I regard myself as a free responsible person among free responsible persons.

2.4. A PICTURE OF THE WORLD OF MEN.

Now I have already given a first picture of the world of fact as it shaped itself upon my mind. Let me now give a second picture of this world in which I find myself, a picture in a rather different key and at a different level, in which I turn to a new set of aspects and bring into the foreground the other minds which are with me in the midst of this great spectacle.

What am I?

Here is a question to which in all ages men have sought to give a clear unambiguous answer, and to which a clear unambiguous answer is manifestly unfitted. Am I my body? Yes or no? It seems to me that I can externalize and think of as "not myself" nearly everything that pertains to my body, hands and feet, and even the most secret and central of those living and hidden parts, the pulsing arteries, the throbbing nerves, the ganglionic centres, that no eye, save for the surgeon's knife has ever seen or ever will see until they coagulate in decay. So far I am not my body; and then as clearly, since I suffer through it, see the whole world through it and am always to be called upon where it is, I am it. Am I a mind mysteriously linked to this thing of matter and endeavour?

So I can present myself. I seem to be a consciousness, vague and insecure, placed between two worlds. One of these worlds seems clearly

"not me," the other is more closely identified with me and yet is still imperfectly me. The first I call the exterior world, and it presents itself to me as existing in Time and Space. In a certain way I seem able to interfere with it and control it. The second is the interior world, having no forms in space and only a vague evasive reference to time, from which motives arise and storms of emotion, which acts and reacts constantly and in untraceable way with my conscious mind. And that consciousness itself hangs and drifts about the region where the inner world and the outer world meet, much as a patch of limelight drifts about the stage, illuminating, affecting, following no manifest law except that usually it centres upon the hero, my Ego.

It seems to me that to put the thing much more precisely than this is to depart from the reality of the matter.

But so departing a little, let me borrow a phrase from Herbart and identify myself more particularly with my mental self. It seems to me that I may speak of myself as a circle of thought and experience hung between these two imperfectly understood worlds of the internal and the external and passing imperceptibly into the former. The external world impresses me as being, as a practical fact, common to me and many other creatures similar to myself; the internal, I find similar but not identical with theirs. It is MINE. It seems to me at times no more than something cut off from that external world and put into a sort of pit or cave, much as all the inner mystery of my body, those living, writhing, warm and thrilling organs are isolated, hidden from all eyes and

interference so long as I remain alive. And I myself, the essential me, am the light and watcher in the mouth of the cave.

So I think of myself, and so I think of all other human beings, as circles of thought and experience, each a little different from the others. Each human being I see as essentially a circle of thought between an internal and an external world.

I figure these circles of thought as more or less imperfectly focussed pictures, all a little askew and vague as to margins and distances. In the internal world arise motives, and they pass outward through the circle of thought and are modified and directed by it into external acts. And through speech, example, and a hundred various acts, one such circle, one human mind, lights and enlarges and plays upon another. That is the image under which the interrelation of minds presents itself to me.

2.5. THE PROBLEM OF MOTIVES THE REAL PROBLEM OF LIFE.

Now each self among us, for all its fluctuations and vagueness of boundary, is, as I have already pointed out, invincibly persuaded of Free Will. That is to say, it has a persuasion of responsible control over the impulses that teem from the internal world and tend to express themselves in act. The problem of that control and its solution is the reality of life. "What am I to do?" is the perpetual question of our existence. Our metaphysics, our beliefs are all sought as subsidiary to that and have no significance without it.

I confess I find myself a confusion of motives beside which my confusion of perceptions pales into insignificance.

There are many various motives and motives very variously estimated--some are called gross, some sublime, some--such as pride--wicked. I do not readily accept these classifications.

Many people seem to make a selection among their motives without much enquiry, taking those classifications as just; they seek to lead what they call pure lives or useful lives and to set aside whole sets of motives which do not accord with this determination. Some exclude the seeking of pleasure as a permissible motive, some the love of beauty; some insist upon one's "being oneself" and prohibit or limit responses to exterior opinions. Most of such selections strike me as wanton and hasty. I decline to dismiss any of my motives at all in that wholesale

way. Just as I believe I am important in the scheme of things, so I believe are all my motives. Turning one's back on any set of them seems to me to savour of the headlong actions of stupidity. To suppress a passion or a curiosity for the sake of suppressing a passion is to my mind just the burial of a talent that has been entrusted to one's care. One has, I feel, to take all these things as weapons and instruments, material in the service of the scheme; one has to take them in the end gravely and do right among them unbiassed in favour of any set. To take some poor appetite and fling it out is to my mind a cheap and unsatisfactory way of simplifying one's moral problems. One has to accept these things in oneself, I feel--even if one knows them to be dangerous things, even if one is sure they have an evil side.

Let me, however, in order to express my attitude better, make a rough grouping of the motives I find in myself and the people about me.

2.6. A REVIEW OF MOTIVES.

I cannot divide them into clearly defined classes, but I may perhaps begin with those that bring one into the widest sympathy with living things and go on to those one shares only with highly intelligent and complex human beings.

There come first the desires one shares with those more limited souls the beasts, just as much as one does with one's fellow man. These are the bodily appetites and the crude emotions of fear and resentment. These first clamour for attention and must be assuaged or controlled before the other sets come into play.

Now in this matter of physical appetites I do not know whether to describe myself as a sensualist or an ascetic. If an ascetic is one who suppresses to a minimum all deference to these impulses, then certainly I am not an ascetic; if a sensualist is one who gives himself to heedless gratification, then certainly I am not a sensualist. But I find myself balanced in an intermediate position by something that I will speak of as the sense of Beauty. This sense of Beauty is something in me which demands not simply gratification but the best and keenest of a sense or continuance of sense impressions, and which refuses coarse quantitative assuagements. It ranges all over the senses, and just as I refuse to wholly cut off any of my motives, so do I refuse to limit its use to the plane of the eye or the ear.

It seems to me entirely just to speak of beauty in matters of scent and taste, to talk not only of beautiful skies and beautiful sounds but of beautiful beer and beautiful cheese! The balance as between asceticism and sensuality comes in, it seems to me, if we remember that to drink well one must not have drunken for some time, that to see well one's eye must be clear, that to make love well one must be fit and gracious and sweet and disciplined from top to toe, that the finest sense of all--the joyous sense of bodily well-being--comes only with exercises and restraints and fine living. There I think lies the way of my disposition. I do not want to live in the sensual sty, but I also do not want to scratch in the tub of Diogenes.

But I diverge a little in these comments from my present business of classifying motives.

Next I perceive hypertrophied in myself and many sympathetic human beings a passion that many animals certainly possess, the beautiful and fearless cousin of fear, Curiosity, that seeks keenly for knowing and feeling. Apart from appetites and bodily desires and blind impulses, I want most urgently to know and feel, for the sake of knowing and feeling. I want to go round corners and see what is there, to cross mountain ranges, to open boxes and parcels. Young animals at least have that disposition too. For me it is something that mingles with all my desires. Much more to me than the desire to live is the desire to taste life. I am not happy until I have done and felt things. I want to get as near as I can to the thrill of a dog going into a fight or the delight

of a bird in the air. And not simply in the heroic field of war and the air do I want to understand. I want to know something of the jolly wholesome satisfaction that a hungry pig must find in its wash. I want to get the quintessence of that.

I do not think that in this I confess to any unusual temperament. I think that the more closely mentally animated people scrutinize their motives the less is the importance they will attach to mere physical and brute urgencies and the more to curiosity.

Next after curiosity come those desires and motives that one shares perhaps with some social beasts, but far more so as a conscious thing with men alone. These desires and motives all centre on a clearly apprehended "self" in relation to "others"; they are the essentially egotistical group. They are self-assertion in all its forms. I have dealt with motives toward gratification and motives towards experience; this set of motives is for the sake of oneself. Since they are the most acutely conscious motives in unthinking men, there is a tendency on the part of unthinking philosophers to speak of them as though vanity, self-seeking, self-interest were the only motives. But one has but to reflect on what has gone before to realize that this is not so. One finds these "self" motives vary with the mental power and training of the individual; here they are fragmentary and discursive, there drawn tight together into a coherent scheme. Where they are weak they mingle with the animal motives and curiosity like travellers in a busy market-place, but where the sense of self is strong they become rulers

and regulators, self-seeking becomes deliberate and sustained in the case of the human being, vanity passes into pride.

Here again that something in the mind so difficult to define, so easy for all who understand to understand, that something which insists upon a best and keenest, the desire for beauty, comes into the play of motives. Pride demands a beautiful self and would discipline all other passions to its service. It also demands recognition for that beautiful self. Now pride, I know, is denounced by many as the essential quality of sin. We are taught that "self-abnegation" is the substance of virtue and self-forgetfulness the inseparable quality of right conduct. But indeed I cannot so dismiss egotism and that pride which was the first form in which the desire to rule oneself as a whole came to me. Through pride one shapes oneself towards a best, though at first it may be an ill-conceived best. Pride is not always arrogance and aggression. There is that pride that does not ape but learn humility.

And with the human imagination all these elementary instincts, of the flesh, of curiosity, of self-assertion, become only the basal substance of a huge elaborate edifice of secondary motive and intention. We live in a great flood of example and suggestion, our curiosity and our social quality impel us to a thousand imitations, to dramatic attitudes and subtly obscure ends. Our pride turns this way and that as we respond to new notes in the world about us. We are arenas for a conflict between suggestions flung in from all sources, from the most diverse and essentially incompatible sources. We live long hours and days in a

kind of dream, negligent of self-interest, our elementary passions in
abeyance, among these derivative things.

2.7. THE SYNTHETIC MOTIVE.

Such it seems to me are the chief masses of the complex of motives in us, the group of sense, the group of pride, curiosity and the imitative and suggested motives, making up the system of impulses which is our will. Such has been the common outfit of motives in every age, and in every age its melee has been found insufficient in itself. It is a heterogeneous system, it does not form in any sense a completed or balanced system, its constituents are variable and compete amongst themselves. They are not so much arranged about one another as superposed and higgledy-piggledy. The senses and curiosity war with pride and one another, the motives suggested to us fall into conflict with this element or that of our intimate and habitual selves. We find all our instincts are snares to excess. Excesses of indulgence lead to excesses of abstinence, and even the sense of beauty may be clouded and betray. So to us all, even for the most balanced of us, come disappointments, regrets, gaps; and for most of us who are ill-balanced, miseries and despairs. Nearly all of us want something to hold us together--something to dominate this swarming confusion and save us from the black misery of wounded and exploded pride, of thwarted desire, of futile conclusions. We want more oneness, some steadying thing that will afford an escape from fluctuations.

Different people, of differing temperament and tradition, have sought oneness, this steadying and universalizing thing, in various manners. Some have attained it in this manner, and some in that. Scarcely a

religious system has existed that has not worked effectively and proved true for someone. To me it seems that the need is synthetic, that some synthetic idea and belief is needed to harmonize one's life, to give a law by which motive may be tried against motive and an effectual peace of mind achieved. I want an active peace and not a quiescence, and I do not want to suppress and expel any motive at all. But to many people the effort takes the form of attempts to cut off some part of oneself as it were, to repudiate altogether some straining or distressing or disappointing factor in the scheme of motives, and find a tranquillizing refuge in the residuum. So we have men and women abandoning their share in economic development, crushing the impulses and evading the complications that arise out of sex and flying to devotions and simple duties in nunneries and monasteries; we have people cutting their lives down to a vegetarian dietary and scientific research, resorting to excesses of self-discipline, giving themselves up wholly to some "art" and making everything else subordinate to that, or, going in another direction, abandoning pride and love in favour of an acquired appetite for drugs or drink.

Now it seems to me that this desire to get the confused complex of life simplified is essentially what has been called the religious motive, and that the manner in which a man achieves that simplification, if he does achieve it, and imposes an order upon his life, is his religion. I find in the scheme of conversion and salvation as it is presented by many Christian sects, a very exact statement of the mental processes I am trying to express. In these systems this discontent with the complexity

of life upon which religion is based, is called the conviction of sin, and it is the first phase in the process of conversion--of finding salvation. It leads through distress and confusion to illumination, to the act of faith and peace.

And after peace comes the beginning of right conduct. If you believe and you are saved, you will want to behave well, you will do your utmost to behave well and to understand what is behaving well, and you will feel neither shame nor disappointment when after all you fail. You will say then: "so it is failure I had to achieve." And you will not feel bitterly because you seem unsuccessful beside others or because you are misunderstood or unjustly treated, you will not bear malice nor cherish anger nor seek revenge, you will never turn towards suicide as a relief from intolerable things; indeed there will be no intolerable things. You will have peace within you.

But if you do not truly believe and are not saved, you will know it because you will still suffer the conflict of motives; and in regrets, confusions, remorse and discontents, you will suffer the penalties of the unbeliever and the lost. You will know certainly your own salvation.

2.8. THE BEING OF MANKIND.

I will boldly adopt the technicalities of the sects. I will speak as a person with experience and declare that I have been through the distresses of despair and the conviction of sin and that I have found salvation.

I BELIEVE.

I believe in the scheme, in the Project of all things, in the significance of myself and all life, and that my defects and uglinesses and failures, just as much as my powers and successes, are things that are necessary and important and contributory in that scheme, that scheme which passes my understanding--and that no thwarting of my conception, not even the cruelty of nature, now defeats or can defeat my faith, however much it perplexes my mind.

And though I say that scheme passes my understanding, nevertheless I hope you will see no inconsistency when I say that necessarily it has an aspect towards me that I find imperative.

It has an aspect that I can perceive, however dimly and fluctuatingly.

I take it that to perceive this aspect to the utmost of my mental power and to shape my acts according to that perception is my function in the scheme; that if I hold steadfastly to that conception, I am SAVED. I

find in that idea of perceiving the scheme as a whole towards me and in this attempt to perceive, that something to which all my other emotions and passions may contribute by gathering and contributing experience, and through which the synthesis of my life becomes possible.

Let me try to convey to you what it is I perceive, what aspect this scheme seems to bear on the whole towards me.

The essential fact in man's history to my sense is the slow unfolding of a sense of community with his kind, of the possibilities of co-operations leading to scarce dreamt-of collective powers, of a synthesis of the species, of the development of a common general idea, a common general purpose out of a present confusion. In that awakening of the species, one's OWN PERSONAL BEING LIVES AND MOVES--A PART OF IT AND

CONTRIBUTING TO IT. ONE'S INDIVIDUAL EXISTENCE IS NOT SO ENTIRELY CUT

OFF AS IT SEEMS AT FIRST; ONE'S ENTIRELY SEPARATE INDIVIDUALITY IS ANOTHER, A PROFOUNDER, AMONG THE SUBTLE INHERENT DELUSIONS OF THE HUMAN

MIND. Between you and me as we set our minds together, and between us and the rest of mankind, there is SOMETHING, something real, something that rises through us and is neither you nor me, that comprehends us, that is thinking here and using me and you to play against each other in that thinking just as my finger and thumb play against each other as I hold this pen with which I write.

Let me point out that this is no sentimental or mystical statement. It is hard fact as any hard fact we know. We, you and I, are not only parts in a thought process, but parts of one flow of blood and life. Let me put that in a way that may be new to some readers. Let me remind you of what is sometimes told as a jest, the fact that the number of one's ancestors increases as we look back in time. Disregarding the chances of intermarriage, each one of us had two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, and so on backward, until very soon, in less than fifty generations, we should find that, but for the qualification introduced, we should have all the earth's inhabitants of that time as our progenitors. For a hundred generations it must hold absolutely true, that everyone of that time who has issue living now is ancestral to all of us. That brings the thing quite within the historical period. There is not a western European palaeolithic or neolithic relic that is not a family relic for every soul alive. The blood in our veins has handled it.

And there is something more. We are all going to mingle our blood again. We cannot keep ourselves apart; the worst enemies will some day come to the Peace of Verona. All the Montagues and Capulets are doomed to intermarry. A time will come in less than fifty generations when all the population of the world will have my blood, and I and my worst enemy will not be able to say which child is his or mine.

But you may retort--perhaps you may die childless. Then all the sooner the whole species will get the little legacy of my personal achievement,

whatever it may be.

You see that from this point of view--which is for me the vividly true and dominating point of view--our individualities, our nations and states and races are but bubbles and clusters of foam upon the great stream of the blood of the species, incidental experiments in the growing knowledge and consciousness of the race.

I think this real solidarity of humanity is a fact that is only slowly being apprehended, that it is an idea that we who have come to realize it have to assist in thinking into the collective mind. I believe the species is still as a whole unawakened, still sunken in the delusion of the permanent separateness of the individual and of races and nations, that so it turns upon itself and frets against itself and fails to see the stupendous possibilities of deliberate self-development that lie open to it now.

I see myself in life as part of a great physical being that strains and I believe grows towards beauty, and of a great mental being that strains and I believe grows towards knowledge and power. In this persuasion that I am a gatherer of experience, a mere tentacle that arranges thought beside thought for this being of the species, this being that grows beautiful and powerful, in this persuasion I find the ruling idea of which I stand in need, the ruling idea that reconciles and adjudicates among my warring motives. In it I find both concentration of myself and escape from myself; in a word, I find Salvation.

2.9. INDIVIDUALITY AN INTERLUDE.

I would like in a parenthetical section to expand and render rather more concrete this idea of the species as one divaricating flow of blood, by an appeal to its arithmetical aspect. I do not know if it has ever occurred to the reader to compute the number of his living ancestors at some definite date, at, let us say, the year one of the Christian era. Everyone has two parents and four grandparents, most people have eight great-grandparents, and if we ignore the possibility of intermarriage we shall go on to a fresh power of two with every generation, thus:--

Column 1: Number of generations.

Column 2: Number of ancestors.

3:	8
4:	16
5:	32
7:	128
10:	1,024
20:	126,976

30: 15,745,024

40: 1,956,282,976

I do not know whether the average age of the parent at the birth of a child under modern conditions can be determined from existing figures. There is, I should think, a strong presumption that it has been a rising age. There may have been a time in the past when most women were mothers in their early teens and bore most or all of their children before thirty, and when men had done the greater part of their procreation before thirty-five; this is still the case in many tropical climates, and I do not think I favour my case unduly by assuming that the average parent must be about, or even less than, five and twenty. This gives four generations to a century. At that rate and DISREGARDING INTERMARRIAGE OF RELATIONS the ancestors living a thousand years ago needed to account for a living person would be double the estimated population of the world. But it is obvious that if a person sprang from a marriage of first cousins, the eight ancestors of the third generation are cut down to six; if of cousins at the next stage, to fourteen in the fourth. And every time that a common pair of ancestors appears in any generation, the number of ancestors in that generation must be reduced by two from our original figures, or if it is only one common ancestor, by one, and as we go back that reduction will have to be doubled, quadrupled and so on. I daresay that by the time anyone gets to the 8916 names of his Elizabethan ancestors he will find quite a large number repeated over and over again in the list and that he is cut down to perhaps two or three thousand separate persons. But this does not

effectually invalidate my assumption that if we go back only to the closing years of the Roman Republic, we go back to an age in which nearly every person living within the confines of what was then the Roman Empire who left living offspring must have been ancestral to every person living within that area to-day. No doubt they were so in very variable measure. There must be for everyone some few individuals in that period who have so to speak intermarried with themselves again and again and again down the genealogical series, and others who are represented by just one touch of their blood. The blood of the Jews, for example, has turned in upon itself again and again; but for all we know one Italian proselyte in the first year of the Christian era may have made by this time every Jew alive a descendant of some unrecorded bastard of Julius Caesar. The exclusive breeding of the Jews is in fact the most effectual guarantee that whatever does get into the charmed circle through either proselytism, the violence of enemies, or feminine unchastity, must ultimately pervade it universally.

It may be argued that as a matter of fact humanity has until recently been segregated in pools; that in the great civilization of China, for example, humanity has pursued its own interlacing system of inheritances without admixture from other streams of blood. But such considerations only defer the conclusion; they do not stave it off indefinitely. It needs only that one philoprogenitive Chinaman should have wandered into those regions that are now Russia, about the time of Pericles, to link east and west in that matter; one Tartar chieftain in the Steppes may have given a daughter to a Roman soldier and sent his grandsons east and

west to interlace the branches of every family tree in the world. If any race stands apart it is such an isolated group as that of the now extinct Tasmanian primitives or the Australian black. But even here, in the remote dawn of navigation, may have come some shipwrecked Malays, or some half-breed woman kidnapped by wandering Phoenicians have carried this link of blood back to the western world. The more one lets one's imagination play upon the incalculable drift and soak of population, the more one realizes the true value of that spreading relation with the past.

But now let us turn in the other direction, the direction of the future, because there it is that this series of considerations becomes most edifying. It is the commonest trick to think of a man's descendants as though they were his own. We are told that one of the dearest human motives is the desire to found a family, but think how much of a family one founds at the best. One's son is after all only half one's blood, one grandson only a quarter, and so one goes on until it may be that in ten brief generations one's heir and namesake has but 1/1024th of one's inherited self. Those other thousand odd unpredictable people thrust in and mingle with one's pride. The trend of all things nowadays--the ever-increasing ease of communication, the great and increasing drift of population, the establishment of a common standard of civilization--is to render such admixture far more probable and facile in the future than in the past.

It is a pleasant fancy to imagine some ambitious hoarder of wealth,

some egotistical founder of name and family, returning to find his descendants--HIS descendants--after the lapse of a few brief generations. His heir and namesake may have not a thousandth part of his heredity, while under some other name, lost to all the tradition and glory of him, enfeebled and degenerate through much intermarriage, may be a multitude of people who have as much as a fiftieth or even more of his quality. They may even be in servitude and dependence to the really alien person who is head of the family. Our founder will go through the spreading record of offspring and find it mixed with that of people he most hated and despised. The antagonists he wronged and overcame will have crept into his line and recaptured all they lost; have played the cuckoo in his blood and acquisitions, and turned out his diluted strain to perish.

And while I am being thus biological let me point out another queer aspect in which our egotism is overridden by physical facts. Men and women are apt to think of their children as being their very own, blood of their blood and bone of their bone. But indeed one of the most striking facts in this matter is the frequent want of resemblance between parents and children. It is one of the commonest things in the world for a child to resemble an aunt or an uncle, or to revive a trait of some grandparent that has seemed entirely lost in the intervening generation. The Mendelians have given much attention to facts of this nature; and though their general method of exposition seems to me quite unjustifiably exact and precise, it cannot be denied that it is often vividly illuminating. It is so in this connexion. They distinguish

between "dominant" and "recessive" qualities, and they establish cases in which parents with all the dominant characteristics produce offspring of recessive type. Recessive qualities are constantly being masked by dominant ones and emerging again in the next generation. It is not the individual that reproduces himself, it is the species that reproduces through the individual and often in spite of his characteristics.

The race flows through us, the race is the drama and we are the incidents. This is not any sort of poetical statement; it is a statement of fact. In so far as we are individuals, in so far as we seek to follow merely individual ends, we are accidental, disconnected, without significance, the sport of chance. In so far as we realize ourselves as experiments of the species for the species, just in so far do we escape from the accidental and the chaotic. We are episodes in an experience greater than ourselves.

Now none of this, if you read me aright, makes for the suppression of one's individual difference, but it does make for its correlation. We have to get everything we can out of ourselves for this very reason that we do not stand alone; we signify as parts of a universal and immortal development. Our separate selves are our charges, the talents of which much has to be made. It is because we are episodic in the great synthesis of life that we have to make the utmost of our individual lives and traits and possibilities.

2.10. THE MYSTIC ELEMENT.

What stupendous constructive mental and physical possibilities are there to which I feel I am contributing, you may ask, when I feel that I contribute to this greater Being; and at once I confess I become vague and mystical. I do not wish to pass glibly over this point. I call your attention to the fact that here I am mystical and arbitrary. I am what I am, an individual in this present phase. I can see nothing of these possibilities except that they will be in the nature of those indefinable and overpowering gleams of promise in our world that we call Beauty. Elsewhere (in my "Food of the Gods") I have tried to render my sense of our human possibility by monstrous images; I have written of those who will "stand on this earth as on a footstool and reach out their hands among the stars." But that is mere rhetoric at best, a straining image of unimaginable things. Things move to Power and Beauty; I say that much and I have said all that I can say.

But what is Beauty, you ask, and what will Power do? And here I reach my utmost point in the direction of what you are free to call the rhapsodical and the incomprehensible. I will not even attempt to define Beauty. I will not because I cannot. To me it is a final, quite indefinable thing. Either you understand it or you do not. Every true artist and many who are not artists know--they know there is something

that shows suddenly--it may be in music, it may be in painting, it may be in the sunlight on a glacier or a shadow cast by a furnace or the scent of a flower, it may be in the person or act of some fellow creature, but it is right, it is commanding, it is, to use theological language, the revelation of God.

To the mystery of Power and Beauty, out of the earth that mothered us, we move.

I do not attempt to define Beauty nor even to distinguish it from Power. I do not think indeed that one can effectually distinguish these aspects of life. I do not know how far Beauty may not be simply fulness and clearness of sensation, a momentary unveiling of things hitherto seen but dully and darkly. As I have already said, there may be beauty in the feeling of beer in the throat, in the taste of cheese in the mouth; there may be beauty in the scent of the earth, in the warmth of a body, in the sensation of waking from sleep. I use the word Beauty therefore in its widest possible sense, ranging far beyond the special beauties that art discovers and develops. Perhaps as we pass from death to life all things become beautiful. The utmost I can do in conveying what I mean by Beauty is to tell of things that I have perceived to be beautiful as beautifully as I can tell of them. It may be, as I suggest elsewhere, that Beauty is a thing synthetic and not simple; it is a common effect produced by a great medley of causes, a larger aspect of harmony.

But the question of what Beauty is does not very greatly concern me since I have known it when I met it and since almost every day in life I seem to apprehend it more and to find it more sufficient and satisfying. Objectively it may be altogether complex and various and synthetic, subjectively it is altogether simple. All analysis, all definition, must in the end rest upon and arrive at unanalyzable and indefinable things. Beauty is light--I fall back upon that image--it is all things that light can be, beacon, elucidation, pleasure, comfort and consolation, promise, warning, the vision of reality.

2.11. THE SYNTHESIS.

It seems to me that the whole living creation may be regarded as walking in its sleep, as walking in the sleep of instinct and individualized illusion, and that now out of it all rises man, beginning to perceive his larger self, his universal brotherhood and a collective synthetic purpose to increase Power and realize Beauty...

I write this down. It is the form of my belief, and that unanalyzable something called Beauty is the light that falls upon that form.

It is only by such images, it is only by the use of what are practically parables, that I can in any way express these things in my mind. These two things, I say, are the two aspects of my belief; one is the form and the other the light. The former places me as it were in a scheme, the latter illuminates and inspires me. I am a member in that great being, and my function is, I take it, to develop my capacity for beauty and convey the perception of it to my fellows, to gather and store experience and increase the racial consciousness. I hazard no whys nor wherefores. That is how I see things; that is how the universe, in response to my demand for a synthesizing aspect, presents itself to me.

2.12. OF PERSONAL IMMORTALITY.

These are my beliefs. They begin with arbitrary assumptions; they end in a mystery.

So do all beliefs that are not grossly utilitarian and material, promising hours and deathless appetite or endless hunting or a cosmic mortgage. The Peace of God passeth understanding, the Kingdom of Heaven within us and without can be presented only by parables. But the unapproachable distance and vagueness of these things makes them none the less necessary, just as a cloud upon a mountain or sunlight remotely seen upon the sea are as real as, and to many people far more necessary than, pork chops. The driven swine may root and take no heed, but man the dreamer drives. And because these things are vague and impalpable and wilfully attained, it is none the less important that they should be rendered with all the truth of one's being. To be atmospherically vague is one thing; to be haphazard, wanton and untruthful, quite another.

But here I may give a specific answer to a question that many find profoundly important, though indeed it is already implicitly answered in what has gone before.

I do not believe I have any personal immortality. I am part of an immortality perhaps; but that is different. I am not the continuing thing. I personally am experimental, incidental. I feel I have to do something, a number of things no one else could do, and then I am

finished and finished altogether. Then my substance returns to the common lot. I am a temporary enclosure for a temporary purpose; that served, and my skull and teeth, my idiosyncrasy and desire, will disperse, I believe, like the timbers of a booth after a fair.

Let me shift my ground a little and ask you to consider what is involved in the opposite belief.

My idea of the unknown scheme is of something so wide and deep that I cannot conceive it encumbered by my egotism perpetually. I shall serve my purpose and pass under the wheel and end. That distresses me not at all. Immortality would distress and perplex me. If I may put this in a mixture of theological and social language, I cannot respect, I cannot believe in a God who is always going about with me.

But this is after all what I feel is true and what I choose to believe. It is not a matter of fact. So far as that goes there is no evidence that I am immortal and none that I am not.

I may be altogether wrong in my beliefs; I may be misled by the appearances of things. I believe in the great and growing Being of the Species from which I rise, to which I return, and which, it may be, will ultimately even transcend the limitation of the Species and grow into the Conscious Being, the eternally conscious Being of all things. Believing that, I cannot also believe that my peculiar little thread will not undergo synthesis and vanish as a separate thing.

And what after all is my distinctive something, a few capacities, a few incapacities, an uncertain memory, a hesitating presence? It matters no doubt in its place and time, as all things matter in their place and time, but where in it all is the eternally indispensable? The great things of my life, love, faith, the intimation of beauty, the things most savouring of immortality, are the things most general, the things most shared and least distinctively me.

2.13. A CRITICISM OF CHRISTIANITY.

And here perhaps, before I go on to the question of Conduct, is the place to define a relationship to that system of faith and religious observance out of which I and most of my readers have come. How do these beliefs on which I base my rule of conduct stand to Christianity?

They do not stand in any attitude of antagonism. A religious system so many-faced and so enduring as Christianity must necessarily be saturated with truth even if it be not wholly true. To assume, as the Atheist and Deist seem to do, that Christianity is a sort of disease that came upon civilization, an unprofitable and wasting disease, is to deny that conception of a progressive scheme and rightness which we have taken as our basis of belief. As I have already confessed, the Scheme of Salvation, the idea of a process of sorrow and atonement, presents itself to me as adequately true. So far I do not think my new faith breaks with my old. But it follows as a natural consequence of my metaphysical preliminaries that I should find the Christian theology Aristotelian, over defined and excessively personified. The painted figure of that bearded ancient upon the Sistine Chapel, or William Blake's wild-haired, wild-eyed Trinity, convey no nearer sense of God to me than some mother-of-pearl-eyed painted and carven monster from the worship of the South Sea Islanders. And the Miltonic fable of the offended creator and the sacrificial son! it cannot span the circle of my ideas; it is a little thing, and none the less little because it is intimate, flesh of my flesh and spirit of my spirit, like the drawings

of my youngest boy. I put it aside as I would put aside the gay figure of a costumed officiating priest. The passage of time has made his canonicals too strange, too unlike my world of common thought and costume. These things helped, but now they hinder and disturb. I cannot bring myself back to them...

But the psychological experience and the theology of Christianity are only a ground-work for its essential feature, which is the conception of a relationship of the individual believer to a mystical being at once human and divine, the Risen Christ. This being presents itself to the modern consciousness as a familiar and beautiful figure, associated with a series of sayings and incidents that coalesce with a very distinct and rounded-off and complete effect of personality. After we have cleared off all the definitions of theology, He remains, mystically suffering for humanity, mystically asserting that love in pain and sacrifice in service are the necessary substance of Salvation. Whether he actually existed as a finite individual person in the opening of the Christian era seems to me a question entirely beside the mark. The evidence at this distance is of imperceptible force for or against. The Christ we know is quite evidently something different from any finite person, a figure, a conception, a synthesis of emotions, experiences and inspirations, sustained by and sustaining millions of human souls.

Now it seems to be the common teaching of almost all Christians, that Salvation, that is to say the consolidation and amplification of one's motives through the conception of a general scheme or purpose, is to be

attained through the personality of Christ. Christ is made cardinal to the act of Faith. The act of Faith, they assert, is not simply, as I hold it to be, BELIEF, but BELIEF IN HIM.

We are dealing here, be it remembered, with beliefs deliberately undertaken and not with questions of fact. The only matters of fact material here are facts of experience. If in your experience Salvation is attainable through Christ, then certainly Christianity is true for you. And if a Christian asserts that my belief is a false light and that presently I shall "come to Christ," I cannot disprove his assertion. I can but disbelieve it. I hesitate even to make the obvious retort.

I hope I shall offend no susceptibilities when I assert that this great and very definite personality in the hearts and imaginations of mankind does not and never has attracted me. It is a fact I record about myself without aggression or regret. I do not find myself able to associate Him in any way with the emotion of Salvation.

I admit the splendid imaginative appeal in the idea of a divine-human friend and mediator. If it were possible to have access by prayer, by meditation, by urgent outcries of the soul, to such a being whose feet were in the darkneses, who stooped down from the light, who was at once great and little, limitless in power and virtue and one's very brother; if it were possible by sheer will in believing to make and make one's way to such a helper, who would refuse such help? But I do not find such a being in Christ. I do not find, I cannot imagine, such a being. I wish

I could. To me the Christian Christ seems not so much a humanized God as an incomprehensibly sinless being neither God nor man. His sinlessness wears his incarnation like a fancy dress, all his white self unchanged. He had no petty weaknesses.

Now the essential trouble of my life is its petty weaknesses. If I am to have that love, that sense of understanding fellowship, which is, I conceive, the peculiar magic and merit of this idea of a personal Saviour, then I need someone quite other than this image of virtue, this terrible and incomprehensible Galilean with his crown of thorns, his blood-stained hands and feet. I cannot love him any more than I can love a man upon the rack. Even in the face of torments I do not think I should feel a need for him. I had rather then a hundred times have Botticelli's armed angel in his Tobit at Florence. (I hope I do not seem to want to shock in writing these things, but indeed my only aim is to lay my feelings bare.) I know what love for an idealized person can be. It happens that in my younger days I found a character in the history of literature who had a singular and extraordinary charm for me, of whom the thought was tender and comforting, who indeed helped me through shames and humiliations as though he held my hand. This person was Oliver Goldsmith. His blunders and troubles, his vices and vanities, seized and still hold my imagination. The slights of Boswell, the contempt of Gibbon and all his company save Johnson, the exquisite fineness of spirit in his "Vicar of Wakefield," and that green suit of his and the doctor's cane and the love despised, these things together made him a congenial saint and hero for me, so that I thought of him as

others pray. When I think of that youthful feeling for Goldsmith, I know what I need in a personal Saviour, as a troglodyte who has seen a candle can imagine the sun. But the Christian Christ in none of his three characteristic phases, neither as the magic babe (from whom I am cut off by the wanton and indecent purity of the Immaculate Conception), nor as the white-robed, spotless miracle worker, nor as the fierce unreal torment of the cross, comes close to my soul. I do not understand the Agony in the Garden; to me it is like a scene from a play in an unknown tongue. The last cry of despair is the one human touch, discordant with all the rest of the story. One cry of despair does not suffice. The Christian's Christ is too fine for me, not incarnate enough, not flesh enough, not earth enough. He was never foolish and hot-eared and inarticulate, never vain, he never forgot things, nor tangled his miracles. I could love him I think more easily if the dead had not risen and if he had lain in peace in his sepulchre instead of coming back more enhaloed and whiter than ever, as a postscript to his own tragedy.

When I think of the Resurrection I am always reminded of the "happy endings" that editors and actor managers are accustomed to impose upon essentially tragic novels and plays...

You see how I stand in this matter, puzzled and confused by the Christian presentation of Christ. I know there are many will answer--as I suppose my friend the Rev. R.J. Campbell would answer--that what confuses me is the overlaying of the personality of Jesus by stories and superstitions and conflicting symbols; he will in effect ask me to

disentangle the Christ I need from the accumulated material, choosing and rejecting. Perhaps one may do that. He does, I know, so present Him as a man inspired, and strenuously, inadequately and erringly presenting a dream of human brotherhood and the immediate Kingdom of Heaven on earth and so blundering to his failure and death. But that will be a recovered and restored person he would give me, and not the Christ the Christians worship and declare they love, in whom they find their Salvation.

When I write "declare they love" I throw doubt intentionally upon the universal love of Christians for their Saviour. I have watched men and nations in this matter. I am struck by the fact that so many Christians fall back upon more humanized figures, upon the tender figure of Mary, upon patron saints and such more erring creatures, for the effect of mediation and sympathy they need.

You see it comes to this: that I think Christianity has been true and is for countless people practically true, but that it is not true now for me, and that for most people it is true only with modifications.

Every believing Christian is, I am sure, my spiritual brother, but if systematically I called myself a Christian I feel that to most men I should imply too much and so tell a lie.

2.14. OF OTHER RELIGIONS.

In the same manner, in varying degree, I hold all religions to be in a measure true. Least comprehensible to me are the Indian formulae, because they seem to stand not on common experience but on those intellectual assumptions my metaphysical analysis destroys.

Transmigration of souls without a continuing memory is to my mind utter foolishness, the imagining of a race of children. The aggression, discipline and submission of Mahomedanism makes, I think, an intellectually limited but fine and honourable religion--for men. Its spirit if not its formulae is abundantly present in our modern world.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling, for example, manifestly preaches a Mahomedan God, a modernised God with a taste for engineering. I have no doubt that in devotion to a virile, almost national Deity and to the service of His Empire of stern Law and Order, efficiently upheld, men have found and will find Salvation.

All these religions are true for me as Canterbury Cathedral is a true thing and as a Swiss chalet is a true thing. There they are, and they have served a purpose, they have worked. Men and women have lived in and by them. Men and women still do. Only they are not true for me to live in them. I have, I believe, to live in a new edifice of my own discovery. They do not work for me.

These schemes are true, and also these schemes are false! in the sense

that new things, new phrasings, have to replace them.

2.15.

Such are the essential beliefs by which I express myself. But now comes the practical outcome of these things, and that is to discuss and show how upon this metaphysical basis and these beliefs, and in obedience to the ruling motive that arises with them, I frame principles of conduct.

BOOK THE THIRD -- OF GENERAL CONDUCT

3.1. CONDUCT FOLLOWS FROM BELIEF.

I hold that the broad direction of conduct follows necessarily from belief. The believer does not require rewards and punishments to direct him to the right. Motive and idea are not so separable. To believe truly is to want to do right. To get salvation is to be unified by a comprehending idea of a purpose and by a ruling motive.

The believer wants to do right, he naturally and necessarily seeks to do