FIRST AND LAST THINGS

A CONFESSION OF FAITH AND RULE OF LIFE

By H.G. Wells

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INTRODUCTION.

Recently I set myself to put down what I believe. I did this with no idea of making a book, but at the suggestion of a friend and to interest a number of friends with whom I was associated. We were all, we found, extremely uncertain in our outlook upon life, about our religious feelings and in our ideas of right and wrong. And yet we reckoned ourselves people of the educated class and some of us talk and lecture and write with considerable confidence. We thought it would be of very great interest to ourselves and each other if we made some sort of frank mutual confession. We arranged to hold a series of meetings in which first one and then another explained the faith, so far as he understood it, that was in him. We astonished ourselves and our hearers by the irregular and fragmentary nature of the creeds we produced, clotted at one point, inconsecutive at another, inconsistent and unconvincing to a quite unexpected degree. It would not be difficult to caricature one of those meetings; the lecturer floundering about with an air of exquisite illumination, the audience attentive with an expression of thwarted edification upon its various brows. For my own part I grew so interested in planning my lecture and in joining up point and point, that my notes soon outran the possibilities of the hour or so of meeting for which I was preparing them. The meeting got only a few fragments of what I had to say, and made what it could of them. And after that was over I let myself loose from limits of time and length altogether and have expanded these memoranda into a book.

It is as it stands now the frank confession of what one man of the early Twentieth Century has found in life and himself, a confession just as frank as the limitations of his character permit; it is his metaphysics, his religion, his moral standards, his uncertainties and the expedients with which he has met them. On every one of these departments and aspects I write—how shall I put it?—as an amateur. In every section of my subject there are men not only of far greater intellectual power and energy than I, but who have devoted their whole lives to the sustained analysis of this or that among the questions I discuss, and there is a literature so enormous in the aggregate that only a specialist scholar could hope to know it. I have not been unmindful of these professors and this literature; I have taken such opportunities as I have found, to test my propositions by them. But I feel that such apology as one makes for amateurishness in this field has a lesser quality of self-condemnation than if one were dealing with narrower, more defined and fact-laden matters. There is more excuse for one here than for the amateur maker of chemical theories, or the man who evolves a system of surgery in his leisure. These things, chemistry, surgery and so forth, we may take on the reputation of an expert, but our own fundamental beliefs, our rules of conduct, we must all make for ourselves. We may listen and read, but the views of others we cannot take on credit; we must rethink them and "make them our own." And we cannot do without fundamental beliefs, explicit or implicit. The bulk of men are obliged to be amateur philosophers,—all men indeed who are not specialized students of philosophical subjects,—even if their philosophical enterprise goes no further than prompt recognition of and submission to Authority.

And it is not only the claim of the specialist that I would repudiate. People are too apt to suppose that in order to discuss morals a man must have exceptional moral gifts. I would dispute that naive supposition. I am an ingenuous enquirer with, I think, some capacity for religious feeling, but neither a prophet nor a saint. On the whole I should be inclined to classify myself as a bad man rather than a good; not indeed as any sort of picturesque scoundrel or non-moral expert, but as a person frequently irritable, ungenerous and forgetful, and intermittently and in small but definite ways bad. One thing I claim, I have got my beliefs and theories out of my life and not fitted them to its circumstances. As often as not I have learnt good by the method of difference; by the taste of the alternative. I tell this faith I hold as I hold it and I sketch out the principles by which I am generally trying to direct my life at the present time, because it interests me to do so and I think it may interest a certain number of similarly constituted people. I am not teaching. How far I succeed or fail in that private and personal attempt to behave well, has nothing to do with the matter of this book. That is another story, a reserved and private affair. I offer simply intellectual experiences and ideas.

It will be necessary to take up the most abstract of these questions of belief first, the metaphysical questions. It may be that to many readers the opening sections may seem the driest and least attractive. But I would ask them to begin at the beginning and read straight on, because much that follows this metaphysical book cannot be appreciated at its proper value without a grasp of these preliminaries.

BOOK THE FIRST. — METAPHYSICS.

1.1. THE NECESSITY FOR METAPHYSICS.

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

There is a popular prejudice against metaphysics as something at once difficult and fruitless, as an idle system of enquiries remote from any human interest. I suppose this odd misconception arose from the vulgar pretensions of the learned, from their appeal to ancient names and their quotations in unfamiliar tongues, and from the easy fall into technicality of men struggling to be explicit where a high degree of explicitness is impossible. But it needs erudition and accumulated and alien literature to make metaphysics obscure, and some of the most fruitful and able metaphysical discussion in the world was conducted by a number of unhampered men in small Greek cities, who knew no language but their own and had scarcely a technical term. The true metaphysician is after all only a person who says, “Now let us take a thought for a moment before we fall into a discussion of the broad questions of life, lest we rush hastily into impossible and needless conflict. What is the exact value of these thoughts we are thinking and these words we are using?” He wants to take thought about thought. Those other ardent spirits on the contrary, want to plunge into action or controversy or belief without taking thought; they feel that there is not time to examine thought. “While you think,” they say, “the house is burning.” They are the kin of those who rush and struggle and make panics in theatre fires.

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

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

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

This persuasion is a very important thing in my mind.

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

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

1.2. THE RESUMPTION OF METAPHYSICAL ENQUIRY.

It seems to me that the Greek mind up to the disaster of the Macedonian Conquest was elaborately and discursively discussing these questions of the forms and methods of thought and that the discussion was abruptly closed and not naturally concluded, summed up hastily as it were, in the career and lecturings of Aristotle.

Since then the world never effectually reopened these questions until the modern period. It went on from Plato and Aristotle just as the art of the seventeenth and eighteenth century went on from Raphael and Michael Angelo. Effectual criticism was absolutely silent until the Renaissance, and then for a time was but a matter of scattered utterances having only the slightest collective effect. In the past half century there has begun a more systematic critical movement in the general mind, a movement analogous to the Pre-Raphaelite movement in art—a Pre-Aristotelian movement, a scepticism about things supposed to be settled for all time, a resumed inquiry into the fundamental laws of thought, a harking back to positions of the older philosophers and particularly to Heraclitus, so far as the surviving fragments of his teaching enable one to understand him, and a new forward movement from that recovered ground.

1.3. THE WORLD OF FACT.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

So my world of fact shaped itself. I find it altogether impossible to question or doubt that world of fact. Particular facts one may question as facts. For instance, I think I see an unseasonable yellow wallflower from my windows, but you may dispute that and show that it is only a broken end of iris leaf accidentally lit to yellow. That is merely a

substitution of fact for fact. One may doubt whether one is perceiving or remembering or telling facts clearly, but the persuasion that there are facts, independent of one's interpretations and obdurate to one's will, remains invincible.

1.4. SCEPTICISM OF THE INSTRUMENT.

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

I realised the inadequacy of the senses first. Into that I will not enter here. Any proper text book of physiology or psychology will supply a number of instances of the habitual deceptions of sight and touch and hearing. I came upon these things in my reading, in the laboratory, with microscope or telescope, lived with them as constant difficulties. I will only instance one trifling case of visual deception in order to lead to my next question. One draws two lines strictly parallel; so

(two horizontal and parallel lines.)

Oblique to them one draws a series of lines; so

(a series of parallel and closely-spaced lines drawn through each horizontal line, one series (top) sloping to the right, the other (bottom) to the left)

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

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

endanger the lives of the beings labouring under such infirmities, they would tend to be eliminated from among our defects.

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

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

The senses seem surer than they are.

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

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

1.5. THE CLASSIFICATORY ASSUMPTION.

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

"M is P,

S is M,

S is P,"

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

"S1 is more or less P,

S2 is very similar to S1,

S2 is very probably but not certainly more or less P.

Let us go on that assumption and see how it works."

That is to say, I was constantly reasoning by analogy and applying verification. So far from using the syllogistic form confidently, I habitually distrusted it as anything more than a test of consistency in statement. But I found the textbooks of logic disposed to ignore my customary method of reasoning altogether or to recognise it only where S1 and S2 could be lumped together under a common name. Then they put it something after this form as Induction:—

"S1, S2, S3, and S4 are P

S1 + S2 + S3 + S4 +... are all S

All S is P."

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

A mind nourished on anatomical study is of course permeated with the suggestion of the vagueness and instability of biological species. A biological species is quite obviously a great number of unique individuals which is separable from other biological species only by the fact that an enormous number of other linking individuals are inaccessible in time—are in other words dead and gone—and each new individual in that species does, in the distinction of its own individuality, break

away in however infinitesimal degree from the previous average properties of the species. There is no property of any species, even the properties that constitute the specific definition, that is not a matter of more or less.

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

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

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

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

Greek thought impresses me as being over much obsessed by an objective treatment of certain necessary preliminary conditions of human thought—number and definition and class and abstract form! But these things,—number, definition, class and abstract form,—I hold, are merely unavoidable conditions of mental activity—regrettable conditions rather than essential facts. THE FORCEPS OF OUR MINDS ARE CLUMSY FORCEPS AND CRUSH THE TRUTH A LITTLE IN TAKING HOLD OF IT...

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

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

This real vagueness of class terms is equally true whether we consider those terms used extensively or intensively, that is to say whether in relation to all the members of

the species or in relation to an imaginary typical specimen. The logician begins by declaring that S is either P or not P. In the world of fact it is the rarest thing to encounter this absolute alternative; S1 is pink, but S2 is pinker, S3 is scarcely pink at all, and one is in doubt whether S4 is not properly to be called scarlet. The finest type specimen you can find simply has the characteristic quality a little more rather than a little less. The neat little circles the logician uses to convey his idea of P or not P to the student are just pictures of boundaries in his mind, exaggerations of a natural mental tendency. They are required for the purposes of his science, but they are departures from the nature of fact.

1.6. EMPTY TERMS.

Classes in logic are not only represented by circles with a hard firm outline, whereas in fact they have no such definite limits, but also there is a constant disposition to think of all names as if they represented positive classes. With words just as with numbers and abstract forms there have been definite phases of human development. There was with regard to number, the phase when man could barely count at all, or counted in perfect good faith and sanity upon his fingers. Then there was the phase when he struggled with the development of number, when he began to elaborate all sorts of ideas about numbers, until at last he developed complex superstitions about perfect numbers and imperfect numbers, about threes and sevens and the like. The same was the case with abstract forms; and even to-day we are scarcely more than heads out of the vast subtle muddle of thinking about spheres and ideally perfect forms and so on, that was the price of this little necessary step to clear thinking. How large a part numerical and geometrical magic, numerical and geometrical philosophy have played in the history of the mind! And the whole apparatus of language and mental communication is beset with like dangers. The language of the savage is I suppose purely positive; the thing has a name, the name has a thing. This indeed is the tradition of language, and even to-day, we, when we hear a name are predisposed—and sometimes it is a very vicious disposition—to imagine forthwith something answering to the name. WE ARE DISPOSED, AS AN INCURABLE MENTAL VICE, TO ACCUMULATE INTENSION IN TERMS. If I say to you Wodget or Crump, you find yourself passing over the fact that these are nothings, these are, so to speak mere blankety blanks, and trying to think what sort of thing a Wodget or a Crump may be. You find yourself led insensibly by subtle associations of sound and ideas to giving these blank terms attributes.

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

1.7. NEGATIVE TERMS.

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

(the letter A inside a circular boundary, together with the words Not A, all inside a bigger circular boundary.)

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

(the word Not, followed by the letter A inside a circular boundary, followed by the letter A)

with no outer boundary. But the logician finds it necessary for his processes to present that outer Not-A as bounded (Vide e.g. Kayne’s “Formal Logic” re Euler’s diagrams and Immediate Inferences.), and to speak of the total area of A and Not-A as the Universe of Discourse; and the metaphysician and the commonsense thinker alike fall far too readily into the belief that this convention of method is an adequate representation of fact.

Let me try and express how in my mind this matter of negative terms has shaped itself. I think of something which I may perhaps best describe as being off the stage or out of court, or as the Void without Implications, or as Nothingness, or as Outer Darkness. This is a sort of hypothetical Beyond to the visible world of human thought, and thither

I think all negative terms reach at last, and merge and become nothing. Whatever positive class you make, whatever boundary you draw, straight away from that boundary begins the corresponding negative class and passes into the illimitable horizon of nothingness. You talk of pink things, you ignore, as the arbitrary postulates of Logic direct, the more elusive shades of pink, and draw your line. Beyond is the not-pink, known and knowable, and still in the not-pink region one comes to the Outer Darkness. Not blue, not happy, not iron, all the NOT classes meet in that Outer Darkness. That same Outer Darkness and nothingness is infinite space and infinite time and any being of infinite qualities; and all that region I rule out of court in my philosophy altogether. I will neither affirm nor deny if I can help it about any NOT things. I will not deal with not things at all, except by accident and inadvertence. If I use the word "infinite" I use it as one often uses "countless," "the countless hosts of the enemy"—or "immeasurable"—"immeasurable cliffs"—that is to say as the limit of measurement, as a convenient equivalent to as many times this cloth yard as you can, and as many again, and so on and so on until you and your numerical system are beaten to a standstill.

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

1.8. LOGIC STATIC AND LIFE KINETIC.

There is another infirmity of the mind to which my attention has been called by an able paper read this spring to the Cambridge Moral Science Club by my friend Miss Amber Reeves. In this she has developed a suggestion of Mr. F.C.S. Schiller's. The current syllogistic logic rests on the assumption that either A is B or it is not B. The practical

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

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

1.9. PLANES AND DIALECTS OF THOUGHT.

Finally; the Logician, intent upon perfecting the certitudes of his methods rather than upon expressing the confusing subtleties of truth, has done little to help thinking men in the perpetual difficulty that arises from the fact that the universe can be seen in many different fashions and expressed by many different systems of terms, each expression within its limits true and yet incommensurable with expression upon a differing system. There is a sort of stratification in human ideas. I have it very much in mind that various terms in our reasoning lie, as it were, at different levels and in different planes, and that we accomplish a large amount of error and confusion by reasoning terms together that do not lie or nearly lie in the same plane.

Let me endeavour to make myself a little less obscure by a flagrant instance from physical things. Suppose some one began to talk seriously of a man seeing an atom through a microscope, or better perhaps of cutting one in half with a knife. There are a number of non-analytical people who would be quite prepared to believe that an atom could be visible to the eye or cut in this manner. But any one at all conversant with physical conceptions would almost as soon think of killing the square root of 2 with a rook rifle as of cutting an atom in half with a knife. One's conception of an atom is reached through a process of hypothesis and analysis, and in the world of atoms there are no knives and no men to cut. If you have thought with a strong consistent mental movement, then when you have thought of your atom under the knife blade, your knife blade has itself become a cloud of swinging grouped atoms, and your microscope lens a little universe of oscillatory and vibratory molecules. If you think of the universe, thinking at the level of atoms, there is neither knife to cut, scale to weigh, nor eye to

see. The universe at that plane to which the mind of the molecular physicist descends has none of the shapes or forms of our common life whatever. This hand with which I write is, in the universe of molecular physics, a cloud of warring atoms and molecules, combining and recombining, colliding, rotating, flying hither and thither in the universal atmosphere of ether.

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

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

It will perhaps give a clearer idea of what I am seeking to convey if I suggest a concrete image for the whole world of a man's thought and knowledge. Imagine a large clear jelly, in which at all angles and in all states of simplicity or contortion his ideas are imbedded. They are all valid and possible ideas as they lie, none incompatible with any. If you imagine the direction of up or down in this clear jelly being as it were the direction in which one moves by analysis or synthesis, if you go down for example from matter to atoms and centres of force and up to men and states and countries—if you will imagine the ideas lying in that manner—you will get the beginnings of my intention. But our instrument, our process of thinking, like a drawing before the discovery of perspective, appears to have difficulties with the third dimension, appears capable only of dealing with or reasoning about ideas by projecting them upon the same plane. It will be obvious that a great multitude of things may very well exist together in a solid jelly, which would be overlapping and incompatible and mutually destructive when projected together upon one plane. Through the bias in our instrument to do this, through reasoning between terms not in the same plane, an enormous amount of confusion, perplexity, and mental deadlocking occurs.

The old theological deadlock between predestination and free will serves admirably as an example of the sort of deadlock I mean. Take life at the level of common sensation and common experience and there is no more indisputable fact than man's freedom of will, unless it is his complete moral responsibility. But make only the least

penetrating of scientific analyses and you perceive a world of inevitable consequences, a rigid succession of cause and effect. Insist upon a flat agreement between the two, and there you are! The instrument fails.

So far as this particular opposition is concerned, I shall point out later the reasonableness and convenience of regarding the common-sense belief in free will as truer for one's personal life than determinism.

1.10. PRACTICAL CONCLUSIONS FROM THESE CONSIDERATIONS.

Now what is the practical outcome of all these criticisms of the human mind? Does it follow that thought is futile and discussion vain? By no means. Rather these considerations lead us toward mutual understanding. They clear up the deadlocks that come from the hard and fast use of terms, they establish mutual charity as an intellectual necessity. The common way of speech and thought which the old system of logic has simply systematized, is too glib and too presumptuous of certainty. We must needs use language, but we must use it always with the thought in our minds of its unreal exactness, its actual habitual deflection from fact. All propositions are approximations to an elusive truth, and we employ them as the mathematician studies the circle by supposing it to be a polygon of a very great number of sides.

We must make use of terms and sometimes of provisional terms. But we must guard against such terms and the mental danger of excessive intension they carry with them. The child takes a stick and says it is a sword and does not forget, he takes a shadow under the bed and says it is a bear and he half forgets. The man takes a set of emotions and says it is a God, and he gets excited and propagandist and does forget; he is involved in disputes and confusions with the old gods of wood and stone, and presently he is making his God a Great White Throne and fitting him up with a mystical family.

Essentially we have to train our minds to think anew, if we are to think beyond the purposes for which the mind seems to have been evolved. We have to disabuse ourselves from the superstition of the binding nature of definitions and the exactness of logic. We have to cure ourselves of the natural tricks of common thought and argument. You know the way of it, how effective and foolish it is; the quotation of the exact statement of which every jot and tittle must be maintained, the challenge to be consistent, the deadlock between your terms and mine.

More and more as I grow older and more settled in my views am I bored by common argument, bored not because I am ceasing to be interested in the things argued about, but because I see more and more clearly the futility of the methods pursued.

How then are we to think and argue and what truth may we attain? Is not the method of the scientific investigator a valid one, and is there not truth to the world of fact in scientific laws? Decidedly there is. And the continual revision and testing against fact that these laws get is constantly approximating them more and more nearly to a trustworthy statement of fact. Nevertheless they are never true in that dogmatic degree in which they seem true to the unphilosophical student of science. Accepting as I do the validity of nearly all the general propositions of modern science, I have constantly to bear in mind that about them too clings the error of excessive claims to precision.

The man trained solely in science falls easily into a superstitious attitude; he is overdone with classification. He believes in the possibility of exact knowledge everywhere. What is not exact he declares is not knowledge. He believes in specialists and experts in all fields.

I dispute this universal range of possible scientific precision. There is, I allege, a not too clearly recognised order in the sciences which forms the gist of my case against this scientific pretension. There is a gradation in the importance of the individual instance as one passes from mechanics and physics and chemistry through the biological sciences to economics and sociology, a gradation whose correlations and implications have not yet received adequate recognition, and which does profoundly affect the method of study and research in each science.

Let me repeat in slightly altered terms some of the points raised in the preceding sections. I have doubted and denied that there are identically similar objective experiences; I consider all objective beings as individual and unique. It is now understood that conceivably only in the subjective world, and in theory and the imagination, do we deal with identically similar units, and with absolutely commensurable quantities. In the real world it is reasonable to suppose we deal at most with PRACTICALLY similar units and PRACTICALLY commensurable quantities. But there is a strong bias, a sort of labour-saving bias, in the normal human mind, to ignore this, and not only to speak but to think of a thousand bricks or a thousand sheep or a thousand Chinamen as though they were all absolutely true to sample. If it is brought before a thinker for a moment that in any special case this is not so, he slips back to the old attitude as soon as his attention is withdrawn. This type of error has,

for instance, caught many of the race of chemists, and ATOMS and IONS and so forth of the same species are tacitly assumed to be similar to one another.

Be it noted that, so far as the practical results of chemistry and physics go, it scarcely matters which assumption we adopt, the number of units is so great, the individual difference so drowned and lost. For purposes of enquiry and discussion the incorrect one is infinitely more convenient.

But this ceases to be true directly we emerge from the region of chemistry and physics. In the biological sciences of the eighteenth century, common-sense struggled hard to ignore individuality in shells and plants and animals. There was an attempt to eliminate the more conspicuous departures as abnormalities, as sports, nature's weak moments; and it was only with the establishment of Darwin's great generalizations that the hard and fast classificatory system broke down and individuality came to its own. Yet there had always been a clearly felt difference between the conclusions of the biological sciences and those dealing with lifeless substance, in the relative vagueness, the insubordinate looseness and inaccuracy of the former. The naturalist accumulated facts and multiplied names, but he did not go triumphantly from generalization to generalization after the fashion of the chemist or physicist. It is easy to see, therefore, how it came about that the inorganic sciences were regarded as the true scientific bed-rock. It was scarcely suspected that the biological sciences might perhaps after all be TRUER than the experimental, in spite of the difference in practical value in favour of the latter. It was, and is by the great majority of people to this day, supposed to be the latter that are invincibly true; and the former are regarded as a more complex set of problems merely, with obliquities and refractions that presently will be explained away. Comte and Herbert Spencer certainly seem to me to have taken that much for granted. Herbert Spencer no doubt talked of the unknown and unknowable, but not in this sense as an element of inexactness running through all things. He thought, it seems to me, of the unknown as the indefinable Beyond of an immediate world that might be quite clearly and definitely known.

There is a growing body of people which is beginning to hold the converse view—that counting, classification, measurement, the whole fabric of mathematics, is subjective and untrue to the world of fact, and that the uniqueness of individuals is the objective truth. As the number of units taken diminishes, the amount of variety and inexactness of generalization increases, because individuality tells for more and more. Could you take men by the thousand billion, you could generalize about them as you do about atoms; could you take atoms singly, it may be that you would find them as individual as your aunts and cousins. That concisely is the minority belief, and my belief.

Now what is called the scientific method in the physical sciences rests upon the ignoring of individualities; and like many mathematical conventions, its great practical convenience is no proof whatever of its final truth. Let me admit the enormous value, the wonder of its results in mechanics, in all the physical sciences, in chemistry, even in physiology,—but what is its value beyond that? Is the scientific method of value in biology? The great advances made by Darwin and his school in biology were not made, it must be remembered, by the scientific method, as it is generally conceived, at all. His was historical research. He conducted research into pre-documentary history. He collected information along the lines indicated by certain interrogations; and the bulk of his work was the digesting and critical analysis of that. For documents and monuments he had fossils and anatomical structures and germinating eggs too innocent to lie. But, on the other hand, he had to correspond with breeders and travellers of various sorts; classes entirely analogous, from the point of view of evidence, to the writers of history and memoirs. I question profoundly whether the word "science," in current usage anyhow, ever means such patient disentanglement as Darwin pursued. It means the attainment of something positive and emphatic in the way of a conclusion, based on amply repeated experiments capable of infinite repetition, "proved," as they say, "up to the hilt."

It would be of course possible to dispute whether the word "science" should convey this quality of certitude, but to most people it certainly does at the present time. So far as the movements of comets and electric trams go, there is no doubt practically cock-sure science; and Comte and Herbert Spencer seem to me to have believed that cock-sure could be extended to every conceivable finite thing. The fact that Herbert Spencer called a certain doctrine Individualism reflects nothing on the non-individualizing quality of his primary assumptions and of his mental texture. He believed that individuality (heterogeneity) was and is an evolutionary product from an original homogeneity, begotten by folding and multiplying and dividing and twisting it, and still fundamentally IT. It seems to me that the general usage is entirely for the limitation of the word "science" to knowledge and the search after knowledge of a high degree of precision. And not simply the general usage; "Science is measurement," Science is "organized commonsense," proud in fact of its essential error, scornful of any metaphysical analysis of its terms.

Now my contention is that we can arrange the fields of human thought and interest about the world of fact in a sort of scale. At one end the number of units is infinite and the methods exact, at the other we have the human subjects in which there is no exactitude. The science of society stands at the extreme end of the scale from the molecular sciences. In these latter there is an infinitude of units; in sociology, as

Comte perceived, there is only one unit. It is true that Herbert Spencer, in order to get classification somehow, did, as Professor Durkheim has pointed out, separate human society into societies, and made believe they competed one with another and died and reproduced just like animals, and that economists following List have for the purposes of fiscal controversy discovered economic types; but this is a transparent device, and one is surprised to find thoughtful and reputable writers off their guard against such bad analogy. But indeed it is impossible to isolate complete communities of men, or to trace any but rude general resemblances between group and group. These alleged units have as much individuality as pieces of cloud; they come, they go, they fuse and separate. And we are forced to conclude that not only is the method of observation, experiment, and verification left far away down the scale, but that the method of classification under types, which has served so useful a purpose in the middle group of subjects, the subjects involving numerous but a finite number of units, has also to be abandoned in social science. We cannot put Humanity into a museum or dry it for examination; our one single still living specimen is all history, all anthropology, and the fluctuating world of men. There is no satisfactory means of dividing it, and nothing else in the real world with which to compare it. We have only the remotest ideas of its “life-cycle” and a few relics of its origin and dreams of its destiny.

This denial of scientific precision is true of all questions of general human relations and attitude. And in regard to all these matters affecting our personal motives, our self-control and our devotions, it is much truer.

From this it is an easy step to the statement that so far as the clear-cut confident sort of knowledge goes, the sort of knowledge one gets from a time-table or a text-book of chemistry, or seeks from a witness in a police court, I am, in relation to religious and moral questions an agnostic. I do not think any general propositions partaking largely of the nature of fact can be known about these things. There is nothing possessing the general validity of fact to be stated or known.

1.11. BELIEFS.

Yet it is of urgent practical necessity that we should have such propositions and beliefs. All those we conjure out of our mental apparatus and the world of fact dissolve and disappear again under scrutiny. It is clear we must resort to some other method for these necessities.

Now I make my beliefs as I want them. I do not attempt to distil them out of fact as physicists distil their laws. I make them thus and not thus exactly as an artist makes a picture so and not so. I believe that is how we all make our beliefs, but that many people do not see this clearly and confuse their beliefs with perceived and proven fact.

I draw my beliefs exactly as an artist draws lines to make a picture, to express my impression of the world and my purpose.

The artist cannot defend his expression as a scientific man defends his, and demonstrate that they are true upon any assumptions whatsoever. Any loud fool may stand in front of a picture and call it inaccurate, untrustworthy, unbeautiful. That last, the most vital issue of all, is the one least assured. Loud fools always do do that sort of thing. Take quite ignorant people before almost any beautiful work of art and they will laugh at it as absurd. If one sits on a popular evening in that long room at South Kensington which contains Raphael's cartoons, one remarks that perhaps a third of those who stray through and look at all those fine efforts, titter. If one searches in the magazines of a little while ago, one finds in the angry and resentful reception of the Pre-Raphaelites another instance of the absolutely indefensible nature of many of the most beautiful propositions. And as a still more striking and remarkable case, take the onslaught made by Ruskin upon the works of Whistler. You will remember that a libel action ensued and that these pictures were gravely reasoned about by barristers and surveyed by jurymen to assess their merits...

In the end it is the indefensible truth that lasts; it lasts because it works and serves. People come to it and remain and attract other understanding and enquiring people.

Now when I say I make my beliefs and that I cannot prove them to you and convince you of them, that does not mean that I make them wantonly and regardless of fact, that I throw them off as a child scribbles on a slate. Mr. Ruskin, if I remember rightly, accused Whistler of throwing a pot of paint in the face of the public,—that was the essence of his libel. The artistic method in this field of beliefs, as in the field of visual renderings, is one of great freedom and initiative and great poverty of test, but of no wantonness; the conditions of rightness are none the less imperative because they are mysterious and indefinable. I adopt certain beliefs because I feel the need for them, because I feel an often quite unanalyzable rightness in them; because the alternative of a chaotic life distresses me. My belief in them rests upon the fact that they WORK for me and satisfy my desire for harmony and beauty. They are arbitrary assumptions, if you will, that I see fit to impose upon my universe.

But though they are arbitrary, they are not necessarily individual. Just so far as we all have a common likeness, just so far can we be brought under the same imperatives to think and believe.

And though they are arbitrary, each day they stand wear and tear, and each new person they satisfy, is another day and another voice towards showing they do correspond to something that is so far fact and real.

This is Pragmatism as I conceive it; the abandonment of infinite assumptions, the extension of the experimental spirit to all human interests.

1.12. SUMMARY.

In concluding this first Book let me give a summary of the principal points of what has gone before.

I figure the mind of man as an imperfect being obtaining knowledge by imperfect eyesight, imperfect hearing and so forth; who must needs walk manfully and patiently, exercising will and making choices and determining things between the mysteries of external and internal fact.

Essentially man's mind moves within limits depending upon his individual character and experience. These limits constitute what Herbart called his "circle of thought," and they differ for everyone.

That briefly is what I consider to be the case with my own mind, and I believe it is the case with everyone's.

Most minds, it seems to me, are similar, but none are absolutely alike in character or in contents.

We are all biassed to ignore our mental imperfections and to talk and act as though our minds were exact instruments,—something wherewith to scale the heavens with assurance,—and also we are biassed to believe that, except for perversity, all our minds work exactly alike.

Man, thinking man, suffers from intellectual over-confidence and a vain belief in the universal validity of reasoning.

We all need training, training in the balanced attitude.

Of everything we need to say: this is true but it is not quite true.

Of everything we need to say: this is true in relation to things in or near its plane, but not true of other things.

Of everything we have to remember: this may be truer for us than for other people.

In disputation particularly we have to remember this (and most with our antagonist): that the spirit of an utterance may be better than the phrase.

We have to discourage the cheap tricks of controversy, the retort, the search for inconsistency. We have to realize that these things are as foolish and ill-bred and anti-social as shouting in conversation or making puns; and we have to work out habits of thought purged from the sin of assurance. We have to do this for our own good quite as much as for the sake of intercourse.

All the great and important beliefs by which life is guided and determined are less of the nature of fact than of artistic expression.

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-determinisn 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, remorses 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 episodical 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 houris 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 idiosyncracy 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 darknesses, 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 la t 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 Mahommedanism 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 Mahommedan 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 right. If he fails to do right, if he finds he has done wrong instead of right, he is not greatly distressed or terrified, he naturally and cheerfully does his best to correct his error. He can be damned only by the fading and loss of his belief. And naturally he recurs to and refreshes his belief.

I write in phrases that the evangelical Christianity of my childhood made familiar to me, because they are the most expressive phrases I have ever met for the psychological facts with which I am dealing.

But faith, though it banishes fear and despair and brings with it a real prevailing desire to know and do the Good, does not in itself determine what is the Good or supply any simple guide to the choice between alternatives. If it did, there would be nothing more to be said, this book upon conduct would be unnecessary.

3.2. WHAT IS GOOD?

It seems to me one of the heedless errors of those who deal in philosophy, to suppose all things that have simple names or unified effects are in their nature simple and may be discovered and isolated as a sort of essence by analysis. It is natural to suppose—and I think it is also quite wrong to suppose—that such things as Good and Beauty can be abstracted from good and beautiful things and considered alone. But pure Good and pure Beauty are to me empty terms. It seems to me that these are in their nature synthetic things, that they arise out of the coming together of contributory things and conditions, and vanish at their dispersal; they are synthetic just as more obviously Harmony is synthetic. It is consequently not possible to give a definition of Good, just as it is not possible to give a definition of that other something which is so closely akin to it, Beauty. Nor is it to be maintained that what is good for one is good for another. But what is good of one's general relations and what is right in action must be determined by the nature of one's beliefs about the purpose in things. I have set down my broad impression of that purpose in respect to me, as the awakening and development of the consciousness and will of our species, and I have confessed my belief that in subordinating myself and all my motives to that idea lies my Salvation. It follows from that, that the good life is the life that most richly gathers and winnows and prepares experience and renders it available for the race, that contributes most effectively to the collective growth.

This is in general terms my idea of Good. So soon as one passes from general terms to the question of individual good, one encounters individuality; for everyone in the differing quality and measure of their personality and powers and possibilities, good and right must be different. We are all engaged, each contributing from his or her own standpoint, in the collective synthesis; whatever one can best do, one must do that; in whatever manner one can best help the synthesis, one must exert oneself; the setting apart of oneself, secrecy, the service of secret and personal ends, is the waste of life and the essential quality of Sin.

That is the general expression for right living as I conceive it.

3.3. SOCIALISM.

In the study of what is Good, it is very convenient to make a rough division of our subject into general and particular. There are first the interests and problems that affect us all collectively, in which we have a common concern and from which no one may legitimately seek exemption; of these interests and problems we may fairly say every man should do so and so, or so and so, or the law should be so and so, or so and so; and secondly there are those other problems in which individual difference and the interplay of one or two individualities is predominant. This is of course no hard and fast classification, but it gives a method of approach. We can begin with the generalized person in ourselves and end with individuality.

In the world of ideas about me, I have found going on a great social and political movement that correlates itself with my conception of a great synthesis of human purpose as the aspect towards us of the universal scheme. This movement is Socialism. Socialism is to me no clear-cut system of theories and dogmas; it is one of those solid and extensive and synthetic ideas that are better indicated by a number of different formulae than by one, just as one only realizes a statue by walking round it and seeing it from a number of points of view. I do not think it is to be completely expressed by any one system of formulae or by any one man. Its common quality from nearly every point of view is the subordination of the will of the self-seeking individual to the idea of a racial well-being embodied in an organized state, organized for every end that can be obtained collectively. Upon that I seize; that is the value of Socialism for me.

Socialism for me is a common step we are all taking in the great synthesis of human purpose. It is the organization, in regard to a great mass of common and fundamental interests that have hitherto been dispersedly served, of a collective purpose.

I see humanity scattered over the world, dispersed, conflicting, unawakened... I see human life as avoidable waste and curable confusion. I see peasants living in wretched huts knee-deep in manure, mere parasites on their own pigs and cows; I see shy hunters wandering in primaeval forests; I see the grimy millions who slave for industrial production; I see some who are extravagant and yet contemptible creatures of luxury, and some leading lives of shame and indignity; tens of thousands of wealthy people wasting lives in vulgar and unsatisfying trivialities, hundreds of thousands meanly chaffering themselves, rich or poor, in the wasteful byways of trade; I see

gamblers, fools, brutes, toilers, martyrs. Their disorder of effort, the spectacle of futility, fills me with a passionate desire to end waste, to create order, to develop understanding... All these people reflect and are part of the waste and discontent of my life, and this co-ordination of the species to a common general end, and the quest for my personal salvation, are the social and the individual aspect of essentially the same desire...

And yet dispersed as all these people are, they are far more closely drawn together to common ends and common effort than the filthy savages who ate food rotten and uncooked in the age of unpolished stone. They live in the mere opening phase of a synthesis of effort the end of which surpasses our imagination. Such intercourse and community as they have is only a dawn. We look towards the day, the day of the organized civilized world state. The first clear intimation of that conscious synthesis of human thought to which I look, the first edge of the dayspring, has arisen—as Socialism, as I conceive of Socialism. Socialism is to me no more and no less than the awakening of a collective consciousness in humanity, a collective will and a collective mind out of which finer individualities may arise forever in a perpetual series of fresh endeavours and fresh achievements for the race.

3.4. A CRITICISM OF CERTAIN FORMS OF SOCIALISM.

It is necessary to point out that a Socialism arising in this way out of the conception of a synthesis of the will and thought of the species will necessarily differ from conceptions of Socialism arrived at in other and different ways. It is based on a self-discontent and self-abnegation and not on self-satisfaction, and it will be a scheme of persistent thought and construction, essentially, and it will support this or that method of law-making, or this or that method of economic exploitation, or this or that matter of social grouping, only incidentally and in relation to that.

Such a conception of Socialism is very remote in spirit, however it may agree in method, from that philanthropic administrative socialism one finds among the British ruling and administrative class. That seems to me to be based on a pity which is largely unjustifiable and a pride that is altogether unintelligent. The pity is for the obvious wants and distresses of poverty, the pride appears in the arrogant and aggressive conception of raising one's fellows. I have no strong feeling for the horrors and discomforts of poverty as such, sensibilities can be hardened to endure the life led by the "Romans" in Dartmoor jail a hundred years ago (See "The Story of Dartmoor

Prison" by Basil Thomson (Heinemann—1907).), or softened to detect the crumpled rose-leaf; what disgusts me is the stupidity and warring purposes of which poverty is the outcome. When it comes to the idea of raising human beings, I must confess the only person I feel concerned about raising is H.G. Wells, and that even in his case my energies might be better employed. After all, presently he must die and the world will have done with him. His output for the species is more important than his individual elevation.

Moreover, all this talk of raising implies a classification I doubt. I find it hard to fix any standards that will determine who is above me and who below. Most people are different from me I perceive, but which among them is better, which worse? I have a certain power of communicating with other minds, but what experiences I communicate seem often far thinner and poorer stuff than those which others less expressive than I half fail to communicate and half display to me. My "inferiors," judged by the common social standards, seem indeed intellectually more limited than I and with a narrower outlook; they are often dirtier and more driven, more under the stress of hunger and animal appetites; but on the other hand have they not more vigorous sensations than I, and through sheer coarsening and hardening of fibre, the power to do more toilsome things and sustain intenser sensations than I could endure? When I sit upon the bench, a respectable magistrate, and commit some battered reprobate for trial for this lurid offence or that, or send him or her to prison for drunkenness or such-like indecorum, the doubt drifts into my mind which of us after all is indeed getting nearest to the keen edge of life. Are I and my respectable colleagues much more than successful evasions of THAT? Perhaps these people in the dock know more of the essential strains and stresses of nature, are more intimate with pain. At any rate I do not think I am justified in saying certainly that they do not know...

No, I do not want to raise people using my own position as a standard, I do not want to be one of a gang of consciously superior people, I do not want arrogantly to change the quality of other lives. I do not want to interfere with other lives, except incidentally—incidentally, in this way that I do want to get to an understanding with them, I do want to share and feel with them in our commerce with the collective mind. I suppose I do not stretch language very much when I say I want to get rid of stresses and obstacles between our minds and personalities and to establish a relation that is understanding and sympathy.

I want to make more generally possible a relationship of communication and interchange, that for want of a less battered and ambiguous word I must needs call love.

And if I disavow the Socialism of condescension, so also do I disavow the Socialism of revolt. There is a form of Socialism based upon the economic generalizations of Marx, an economic fatalistic Socialism that I hold to be rather wrong in its vision of facts, rather more distinctly wrong in its theory, and altogether wrong and hopeless in its spirit. It preaches, as inevitable, a concentration of property in the hands of a limited number of property owners and the expropriation of the great proletarian mass of mankind, a concentration which is after all no more than a tendency conditional on changing and changeable conventions about property, and it finds its hope of a better future in the outcome of a class conflict between the expropriated Many and the expropriating Few. Both sides are to be equally swayed by self-interest, but the toilers are to be gregarious and mutually loyal in their self-interest—Heaven knows why, except that otherwise the Marxist dream will not work. The experience of contemporary events seems to show at least an equal power of combination for material ends among owners and employers as among workers.

Now this class-war idea is one diametrically opposed to that religious-spirited Socialism which supplies the form of my general activities. This class-war idea would exacerbate the antagonism of the interests of the many individuals against the few individuals, and I would oppose the conceiving of the Whole to the self-seeking of the Individual. The spirit and constructive intention of the many to-day are no better than those of the few, poor and rich alike are over-individualized, self-seeking and non-creative; to organize the confused jostling competitions, over-reachings, envies and hatreds of to-day into two great class-hatreds and antagonisms will advance the reign of love at most only a very little, only so far as it will simplify and make plain certain issues. It may very possibly not advance the reign of love at all, but rather shatter the order we have. Socialism, as I conceive it, and as I have presented it in my book, “New Worlds for Old,” seeks to change economic arrangements only by the way, as an aspect and outcome of a great change, a change in the spirit and method of human intercourse.

I know that here I go beyond the limits many Socialists in the past, and some who are still contemporary, have set themselves. Much Socialism to-day seems to think of itself as fighting a battle against poverty and its concomitants alone. Now poverty is only a symptom of a profounder evil and is never to be cured by itself. It is one aspect of divided and dispersed purposes. If Socialism is only a conflict with poverty, Socialism is nothing. But I hold that Socialism is and must be a battle against human stupidity and egotism and disorder, a battle fought all through the forests and jungles of the soul of man. As we get intellectual and moral light and the realization of brotherhood, so social and economic organization will develop. But the Socialist may

attack poverty for ever, disregarding the intellectual and moral factors that necessitate it, and he will remain until the end a purely economic doctrinaire crying in the wilderness in vain.

And if I antagonize myself in this way to the philanthropic Socialism of kindly prosperous people on the one hand and to the fierce class-hatred Socialism on the other, still more am I opposed to that furtive Socialism of the specialist which one meets most typically in the Fabian Society. It arises very naturally out of what I may perhaps call specialist fatigue and impatience. It is very easy for writers like myself to deal in the broad generalities of Socialism and urge their adoption as general principles; it is altogether another affair with a man who sets himself to work out the riddle of the complications of actuality in order to modify them in the direction of Socialism. He finds himself in a jungle of difficulties that strain his intellectual power to the utmost. He emerges at last with conclusions, and they are rarely the obvious conclusions, as to what needs to be done. Even the people of his own side he finds do not see as he sees; they are, he perceives, crude and ignorant.

Now I hold that his duty is to explain his discoveries and intentions until they see as he sees. But the specialist temperament is often not a generalizing and expository temperament. Specialists are apt to measure minds by their speciality and underrate the average intelligence. The specialist is appalled by the real task before him, and he sets himself by tricks and misrepresentations, by benevolent scoundrelism in fact, to effect changes he desires. Too often he fails even in that. Where he might have found fellowship he arouses suspicion. And even if a thing is done in this way, its essential merit is lost. For it is better, I hold, for a man to die of his disease than to be cured unwittingly. That is to cheat him of life and to cheat life of the contribution his consciousness might have given it.

The Socialism of my beliefs rests on a profounder faith and broader proposition. It looks over and beyond the warring purposes of to-day as a general may look over and beyond a crowd of sullen, excited and confused recruits, to the day when they will be disciplined, exercised, trained, willing and convergent on a common end. It holds persistently to the idea of men increasingly working in agreement, doing things that are sane to do, on a basis of mutual helpfulness, temperance and toleration. It sees the great masses of humanity rising out of base and immediate anxieties, out of dwarfing pressures and cramped surroundings, to understanding and participation and fine effort. It sees the resources of the earth husbanded and harvested, economized and used with scientific skill for the maximum of result. It sees towns and cities finely built, a race of beings finely bred and taught and trained, open ways and peace and freedom from end to end of the earth. It sees beauty increasing in

humanity, about humanity and through humanity. Through this great body of mankind goes evermore an increasing understanding, an intensifying brotherhood. As Christians have dreamt of the New Jerusalem so does Socialism, growing ever more temperate, patient, forgiving and resolute, set its face to the World City of Mankind.

3.5. HATE AND LOVE.

Before I go on to point out the broad principles of action that flow from this wide conception of Socialism, I may perhaps give a section to elucidating that opposition of hate and love I made when I dealt with the class war. I have already used the word love several times; it is an ambiguous word and it may be well to spend a few words in making clear the sense in which it is used here. I use it in a very broad sense to convey all that complex of motives, impulses, sentiments, that incline us to find our happiness and satisfactions in the happiness and sympathy of others. Essentially it is a synthetic force in human affairs, the merger tendency, a linking force, an expression in personal will and feeling of the common element and interest. It insists upon resemblances and shares and sympathies. And hate, I take it, is the emotional aspect of antagonism, it is the expression in personal will and feeling of the individual's separation from others. It is the competing and destructive tendency. So long as we are individuals and members of a species, we must needs both hate and love. But because I believe, as I have already confessed, that the oneness of the species is a greater fact than individuality, and that we individuals are temporary separations from a collective purpose, and since hate eliminates itself by eliminating its objects, whilst love multiplies itself by multiplying its objects, so love must be a thing more comprehensive and enduring than hate.

Moreover, hate must be in its nature a good thing. We individuals exist as such, I believe, for the purpose in things, and our separations and antagonisms serve that purpose. We play against each other like hammer and anvil. But the synthesis of a collective will in humanity, which is I believe our human and terrestrial share in that purpose, is an idea that carries with it a conception of a secular alteration in the scope and method of both love and hate. Both widen and change with man's widening and developing apprehension of the purpose he serves. The savage man loves in gusts a fellow creature or so about him, and fears and hates all other people. Every expansion of his scope and ideas widens either circle. The common man of our civilized world loves not only many of his friends and associates systematically and enduringly, but

dimly he loves also his city and his country, his creed and his race; he loves it may be less intensely but over a far wider field and much more steadily. But he hates also more widely if less passionately and vehemently than a savage, and since love makes rather harmony and peace and hate rather conflict and events, one may easily be led to suppose that hate is the ruling motive in human affairs. Men band themselves together in leagues and loyalties, in cults and organizations and nationalities, and it is often hard to say whether the bond is one of love for the association or hatred of those to whom the association is antagonized. The two things pass insensibly into one another. London people have recently seen an edifying instance of the transition, in the Brown Dog statue riots. A number of people drawn together by their common pity for animal suffering, by love indeed of the most disinterested sort, had so forgotten their initial spirit as to erect a monument with an inscription at once recklessly untruthful, spiteful in spirit and particularly vexatious to one great medical school of London. They have provoked riots and placarded London with taunts and irritating misrepresentation of the spirit of medical research, and they have infected a whole fresh generation of London students with a bitter partizan contempt for the humanitarian effort that has so lamentably misconducted itself. Both sides vow they will never give in, and the anti-vivisectionists are busy manufacturing small china copies of the Brown Dog figure, inscription and all, for purposes of domestic irritation. Here hate, the evil ugly brother of effort, has manifestly slain love the initiator and taken the affair in hand. That is a little model of human conflicts. So soon as we become militant and play against one another, comes this danger of strain and this possible reversal of motive. The fight begins. Into a pit of heat and hate fall right and wrong together.

Now it seems to me that a religious faith such as I have set forth in the second Book, and a clear sense of our community of blood with all mankind, must necessarily affect both our loving and our hatred. It will certainly not abolish hate, but it will subordinate it altogether to love. We are individuals, so the Purpose presents itself to me, in order that we may hate the things that have to go, ugliness, baseness, insufficiency, unreality, that we may love and experiment and strive for the things that collectively we seek—power and beauty. Before our conversion we did this darkly and with our hate spreading to persons and parties from the things for which they stood. But the believer will hate lovingly and without fear. We are of one blood and substance with our antagonists, even with those that we desire keenly may die and leave no issue in flesh or persuasion. They all touch us and are part of one necessary experience. They are all necessary to the synthesis, even if they are necessary only as the potato-peel in the dust-bin is necessary to my dinner.

So it is I disavow and deplore the whole spirit of class-war Socialism with its doctrine of hate, its envious assault upon the leisure and freedom of the wealthy. Without leisure and freedom and the experience of life they gave, the ideas of Socialism could never have been born. The true mission of Socialism is against darkness, vanity and cowardice, that darkness which hides from the property owner the intense beauty, the potentialities of interest, the splendid possibilities of life, that vanity and cowardice that make him clutch his precious holdings and fear and hate the shadow of change. It has to teach the collective organization of society; and to that the class-consciousness and intense class-prejudices of the worker need to bow quite as much as those of the property owner. But when I say that Socialism's mission is to teach, I do not mean that its mission is a merely verbal and mental one; it must use all instruments and teach by example as well as precept. Socialism by becoming charitable and merciful will not cease to be militant. Socialism must, lovingly but resolutely, use law, use force, to dispossess the owners of socially disadvantageous wealth, as one coerces a lunatic brother or takes a wrongfully acquired toy from a spoilt and obstinate child. It must intervene between all who would keep their children from instruction in the business of citizenship and the lessons of fraternity. It must build and guard what it builds with laws and with that sword which is behind all laws. Non-resistance is for the non-constructive man, for the hermit in the cave and the naked saint in the dust; the builder and maker with the first stroke of his foundation spade uses force and opens war against the anti-builder.

3.6. THE PRELIMINARY SOCIAL DUTY.

The belief I have that contributing to the development of the collective being of man is the individual's general meaning and duty, and the formulae of the Socialism which embodies this belief so far as our common activities go, give a general framework and direction how a man or woman should live. (I do throughout all this book mean man or woman equally when I write of "man," unless it is manifestly inapplicable.)

And first in this present time he must see to it that he does live, that is to say he must get food, clothing, covering, and adequate leisure for the finer aspects of living. Socialism plans an organized civilization in which these things will be a collective solicitude, and the gaining of a subsistence an easy preliminary to the fine drama of existence, but in the world as we have it we are forced to engage much of our energy in scrambling for these preliminary necessities. Our problems of conduct lie in the world

as it is and not in the world as we want it to be. First then a man must get a living, a fair civilized living for himself. It is a fundamental duty. It must be a fair living, not pinched nor mean nor strained. A man can do nothing higher, he can be no service to any cause, until he himself is fed and clothed and equipped and free. He must earn this living or equip himself to earn it in some way not socially disadvantageous, he must contrive as far as possible that the work he does shall be constructive and contributory to the general well-being.

And these primary necessities of food, clothing and freedom being secured, one comes to the general disposition of one's surplus energy. With regard to that I think that a very simple proposition follows from the broad beliefs I have chosen to adopt. The general duty of a man, his existence being secured, is to educate, and chiefly to educate and develop himself. It is his duty to live, to make all he can out of himself and life, to get full of experience, to make himself fine and perceiving and expressive, to render his experience and perceptions honestly and helpfully to others. And in particular he has to educate himself and others with himself in Socialism. He has to make and keep this idea of synthetic human effort and of conscious constructive effort clear first to himself and then clear in the general mind. For it is an idea that comes and goes. We are all of us continually lapsing from it towards individual isolation again. He needs, we all need, constant refreshment in this belief if it is to remain a predominant living fact in our lives.

And that duty of education, of building up the collective idea and organization of humanity, falls into various divisions depending in their importance upon individual quality. For all there is one personal work that none may evade, and that is thinking hard, criticising strenuously and understanding as clearly as one can religion, socialism and the general principle of one's acts. The intellectual factor is of primary importance in my religion. I can see no more reason why salvation should come to the intellectually incapable than to the morally incapable. For simple souls thinking in simple processes, salvation perhaps comes easily, but there is none for the intellectual coward, for the mental sloven and sluggard, for the stupid and obdurate mind. The Believer will think hard and continue to grow and learn, to read and seek discussion as his needs determine.

Correlated with one's own intellectual activity, part of it and growing out of it for almost everyone, is intellectual work with and upon others. By teaching we learn. Not to communicate one's thoughts to others, to keep one's thoughts to oneself as people say, is either cowardice or pride. It is a form of sin. It is a duty to talk, teach, explain, write, lecture, read and listen. Every truly religious man, every good Socialist, is a propagandist. Those who cannot write or discuss can talk, those who cannot argue

can induce people to listen to others and read. We have a belief and an idea that we want to spread, each to the utmost of his means and measure, throughout all the world. We have a thought that we want to make humanity's thought. And it is a duty too that one should, within the compass of one's ability, make teaching, writing and lecturing possible where it has not existed before. This can be done in a hundred ways, by founding and enlarging schools and universities and chairs, for example; by making print and reading and all the material of thought cheap and abundant, by organizing discussion and societies for inquiry.

And talk and thought and study are but the more generalized aspects of duty. The Believer may find his own special aptitude lies rather among concrete things, in experimenting and promoting experiments in collective action. Things teach as well as words, and some of us are most expressive by concrete methods. The Believer will work himself and help others to his utmost in all those developments of material civilization, in organized sanitation for example, all those developments that force collective acts upon communities and collective realizations into the minds of men. And the whole field of scientific research is a field of duty calling to everyone who can enter it, to add to the permanent store of knowledge and new resources for the race.

The Mind of that Civilized State we seek to make by giving ourselves into its making, is evidently the central work before us. But while the writer, the publisher and printer, the bookseller and librarian and teacher and preacher, the investigator and experimenter, the reader and everyone who thinks, will be contributing themselves to this great organized mind and intention in the world, many sorts of specialized men will be more immediately concerned with parallel and more concrete aspects of the human synthesis. The medical worker and the medical investigator, for example, will be building up the body of a new generation, the body of the civilized state, and he will be doing all he can, not simply as an individual, but as a citizen, to ORGANIZE his services of cure and prevention, of hygiene and selection. A great and growing multitude of men will be working out the apparatus of the civilized state; the organizers of transit and housing, the engineers in their incessantly increasing variety, the miners and geologists estimating the world's resources in metals and minerals, the mechanical inventors perpetually economizing force. The scientific agriculturist again will be studying the food supply of the world as a whole, and how it may be increased and distributed and economized. And to the student of law comes the task of rephrasing his intricate and often quite beautiful science in relation to modern conceptions. All these and a hundred other aspects are integral to the wide project of Constructive Socialism as it shapes itself in my faith.