VISION AND VESTURE

"The Widening Vision is Imperious."

The Spanish Gypsy

VISION & VESTURE

A STUDY OF WILLIAM BLAKE IN MODERN THOUGHT

BY

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MCMXVI

TO MY FRIEND

OSBERT BURDETT

WHOSE DIVINE COMEDY

"THE SILENT HEAVENS"

IS A SIGNIFICANT POSTSCRIPT TO

BLAKE'S "MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL"

PREFACE

THIS book was written for the most part before the war. Mindful how the war has affected the mental outlook of us all, I turned anxiously to its pages to see whether I might not feel obliged to re-write some of the chapters. But I found nothing I wanted to alter: the only difference the war made was to defer the publication for a few months, and these have enabled me to stand far enough from my work to view it objectively. I see, again, that its sub-title suggests many volumes; for viewed quantitively there was no reason why there should not be ten, fifteen, twenty volumes, and my imagination fainted at such a dreary prospect. But my instinct leads all the other way; and when I asked myself the question, how short my work might be, the small volume was the only answer.

Knowing that one's instincts are to be trusted, that is sufficient apology for my brevity, but to those who feel happier when a recognised authority can be quoted I will add, that August Strindberg has shown how much can be said in a small volume. Strindberg's self-revelation is not only complete but one can never forget it. Hardly can one say as much for Rousseau. When one lays down the bulky

volume of his *Confessions* one has a vivid remembrance of lurid passages, and a distressing consciousness that much of what one has read has slipped away. I might point to a greater than Strindberg, for are we not all coming to think that the greatest book of the eighteenth century was also one of its smallest—Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell?*

In dealing with modern thought I have preferred not to treat it in the lump. By tracing thoughts back to the thinkers the heavy lump dissolves into the fine essence of men's minds, and gathers colour and spirit from the individual thinker. And, therefore, I have dealt with persons—Goethe, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Shaw, Yeats. The one difficulty has been that of selection, so many names have started to mind. Here, too, I have followed my instinct, alighting on just those men and women who appeared to me to supply the necessary link in the chain of modern thought. Some may think that place might have been given to Browning, Tennyson, Morris, Maeterlinck. I must say that I do not think that they would have served my purpose. The only possible regret I might have is that I did not give a chapter to Samuel Butler; but even of this I will not repent, for I judged deliberately at the time that Butler lived again in Shaw, and in treating Shaw with some fulness Butler's value was not really overlooked.

Some six years ago I undertook to lecture on Blake in South Kensington. To equip myself I hastened to the British Museum to read through the Blake literature. It was a far greater undertaking than I had imagined, but I persevered and read about forty volumes. From this strenuous reading I discovered among other things, that most of those who have written on Blake have been men of letters approaching their subject from the literary point of view. While recognising the importance of their work, I think there is another side which is of exactly equal importance. Blake refers so often in his prophetic books to Wesley and Whitefield as to make it obvious that they entered into his mental life there to stay. Following up this hint, and happening at the time to be lecturing on eighteenth century evangelicalism, I saw suddenly that there were remarkable lines of convergence and divergence between Blake and his religious contemporaries, and that these points seized would prove valuable and illuminating. That is my sufficient reason for bringing Wesley and Whitefield forward to elucidate Blake, all the more as they are almost always ignored by men who hold a merely literary creed. At the same time it accentuates the religious side of Blake's nature, and that is of immense importance to the present generation. To pounce on Blake's poems and pictures, and to see in these only the works of a great creative artist is to miss half his

value. For Blake's glory and Blake's significance to our age is just this, that religion and art were passionately fused in his own soul, and it is only by doing full justice to both, and by presenting him and his message whole and undivided that one can hope to write worthily of a genius at once the most creative and the most religious produced by the western world.

CHARLES GARDNER.

NORTH END, HAMPSTEAD,
February 1916.

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VISION AND VESTURE

PART I

CHAPTER I

FUNDAMENTALS

WILLIAM BLAKE'S message is slowly remaking the world, says one of our modern writers who always knows what the best minds are thinking, and he adds: "No one can think, and escape Nietzsche; but Nietzsche has come after Blake, and will pass before Blake passes."

William Blake's was a voice crying in the wilderness of the eighteenth century. Arthur Symons' is one of a chorus that is shouting in the renascence of the twentieth. For it is being acknowledged on all sides that Blake has uttered the word we needed, and that he has cast a sufficient light for generations yet to come. Profound as has been the influence of Goethe, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, they but carry us to the threshold of Blake. Blake must draw us into his temple if we would have the "linked eye and mind" to understand our age.

To comprehend Blake, it is necessary to go to his fundamental axioms. These he has stated in a

little book, now in the British Museum, in a way that defines his position sharply and enables one to relate him to the teachers of the ages. The book being very short can be quoted entire.

THE ARGUMENT

Man has no notion of moral fitness but from Education. Naturally he is only a natural organ subject to sense.

I

Man's perceptions are not bounded by organs of perception, he perceives more than sense (though ever so acute) can discover.

II

Reason or the ratio of all we have already known, is not the same that it shall be when we know more.

III

From a perception of only three senses or three elements none could deduce a fourth or fifth.

IV

None could have other than natural or organic thoughts if he had none but organic perceptions.

V

Man's desires are limited by his perceptions, none can desire what he has not perceived.

VI

The desires and perceptions of man untaught by anything but organs of sense, must be limited to objects of sense.

THEREFORE

GOD becomes as we are, that we may be as He is.

I

Man cannot naturally Perceive but through his natural or bodily organs.

II

Man by his reasoning power can only compare and judge of what he has already perceived.

Here in a few words Blake sweeps away Natural religion, Rationalism, Deism, and all religions with an ethical basis. Like the greatest religious teachers he places regeneration as the first essential in order to spiritual perception and understanding. There is a unique element in Blake's teaching of regeneration which I will consider in the second chapter; here I want to compare the main features of his doctrine with that of his predecessors.

The finest statement of regeneration is in the third chapter of the Gospel which bears S. John's name. Evidently the author has grouped together all he knows about the new birth, from his own experi-

ence, from the teaching of Christ, from Philo, and Alexandrian Platonism.

" Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

" That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." And he says in effect, If a man would go to heaven, he must first be born from heaven.

" No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man which is in heaven."

S. Paul is equally emphatic. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians, Chapter i., he writes:

" What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."

" The Natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

" He that is spiritual discerneth all things."

In these great statements we get the gist of all that has been said of the necessity of regeneration, not only in Christendom, but also in India and Egypt. Catholicism has identified the new birth with Baptism, and so has made Baptism necessary to salvation. Protestantism has dissociated it from Baptism and identified it with conversion, thus

making conversion necessary to salvation. Radically there are two ways of regarding regeneration which I will name the apocalyptic and catastrophic. The catastrophic is best represented by Calvin. With him regeneration was a sudden new creation from without of a heart which was altogether depraved. This has been the teaching of Samuel Rutherford and the presbyterians, John Wesley and the Wesleyans, Whitefield (Blake thought highly of his two contemporaries, John Wesley and George Whitefield), the Plymouth Brethren, and the baptists, who were most consistent in their interpretation of Calvin, because they waited till a man was fully assured of his new birth and therefore of his election, before he made an open confession of it in Baptism. From such a view of regeneration many evils resulted. The converted man narrowed down his sympathies to those only who had the same lively experience as himself. He was apt to be contemptuous of the unconverted, since he was sure no good thing dwelt in him; and what was far worse, he regarded even his own children as little reprobates till they showed signs of God's grace.

The catastrophic view has also obtained widely in the Anglican, Greek, and Roman Churches. Here regeneration has been regarded as the miraculous gift of Holy Baptism. The system has not worked so badly as in protestantism, as it has taught Church people to regard their baptised children as children

of God. They have been able to include more in their sympathies than the Calvinists, though they have looked askance at the quakers; and the greatest of the Church's teachers—St. Augustine—said deplorable things about unbaptised infants.

The apocalyptic view of regeneration regards the new life as a renewed creation. Instead of a sudden miraculous new creation from without it recognises a gradual unveiling of what is within. This has been the teaching of all mystics whether inside or outside of the Catholic Church. It is certainly the teaching of the supreme mystic who wrote the fourth Gospel, since before speaking of the new birth, he recognised that there was a " light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." S. Paul probably held the same, though he has more frequently been understood to hold to the catastrophic. S. Polycarp, S. Ignatius, Origen, S. Clement of Alexandria, Justin Martyr follow S. John; so do catholic mystics like Tauler, Ruysbroeck, S. Teresa on to Rosimini; and protestant mystics like Tersteegen, Jacob Boehme, William Law, Jane Lead. The whole truth is that regeneration is the unveiling of what is within by the action of that which is without, but such a view can only be held by one who believes that God is both immanent and transcendent.

William Blake is emphatic. His sense-bound man (S. Paul's natural man) perceives only the

things of the senses. But most men and all children perceive at times something more than the senses can discover. Man can desire only what he has perceived, but his desires go beyond what the senses can supply. And that perception over and above the senses is a spiritual perception. It is the spiritual perception of the real spiritual man which is unveiled in regeneration and brought to sovereign control after prolonged mental fight. Thus the spiritual man who discerneth all things can discern the hidden man even in evil men—the soul of good in things evil—and the command to love one's enemies as well as one's friends becomes at least a possibility, and in the fully grown spiritual man an achievement. Above all it gives the right attitude towards children. Here Blake's prime teacher—Swedenborg—erred. He said that a child is born in a natural degree. Blake who had the heart of a child knew that the veil that hides the Real Man was very thin and transparent in children; he knew that a man's one chance of entering the kingdom of heaven was by becoming like a little child; he knew when his own heart was troubled that the voices and laughing of children could set it at rest.

When the voices of children are heard on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast,
And everything else is still.

For the Holy Child in the manger reveals our God and Baby's smile is His smile.

Sweet Babe, in thy face
Holy image I can trace;
Sweet babe, once like thee
Thy Maker lay, and wept for me.

Wept for me, for thee, for all,
When He was an infant small.
Thou His image ever see,
Heavenly face that smiles on thee!

Smiles on thee, on me, on all,
Who became an infant small;
Infant smiles are His own smiles;
Heaven and earth to peace beguiles.

Thus our childlike Blake in his teaching of regeneration follows confidently the best masters of the past; and he has added to them just one thing that is making all the difference to the modern world, but I must leave the unique element in his teaching to another chapter.

CHAPTER II

IMAGINATION

THE antithesis of art and religion did not exist for the great Hebrew prophets. The notion that they had a passion for righteousness and none for the beautiful is untrue to facts. It probably arose because the Jews painted no pictures and modelled no statues. The reason was obvious. The second commandment forbade anything of the kind, and so the Hebrew was obliged to find another outlet for his æsthetic craving. And he found it. Hebrew literature, Hebrew music, and Hebrew poetry have always been her glory. Even to this day the German appears to need an infusion of Jewish blood before he can bring his music to perfection. No nation has excelled in all the arts. It is much to master two; to master more than two seems to exceed the bounds of poetic justice. The Hebrew genius had a passion for morality, and this was inseparable from its perception of the beautiful. Our nineteenth century writers, with the notable exception of George Eliot, misread the Hebrew character. Had they listened to Blake instead of patronising him they would have known better. In the *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake asked Isaiah: " Does a firm persuasion that

a thing is so, make it so? " He replied: " All poets believe that it does, and in ages of imagination this firm persuasion removed mountains." . . . Then Ezekiel said: " The philosophy of the East taught the first principles of human perception. . . . We of Israel taught that the Poetic Genius (as you now call it) was the first principle and all the others merely derivative, which was the cause of our despising the Priests and Philosophers of other countries, and prophesying that all Gods would at last be proved to originate in ours and to be the tributaries of the Poetic Genius."

Whence it happened that the finest utterances of Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah were religion and art at their highest.

When religion becomes diluted it falls apart from art, and the two go separate ways. Art becomes soft and corrupt, religion hardens into laws and moralities. In protestant countries there springs up a curious attitude of religious people towards art. Protestantism hates the world, the flesh, and the Devil; art cannot prosper without them, nor can it breathe comfortably until it has succeeded in marrying heaven and hell. Protestantism produced a Wesley, a Whitefield and a Toplady who wrote some good hymns, notably *Rock of Ages*, and these men were orators; but in its vehement zeal for saving " immortal souls," it seemed impious and irrelevant to consider the

beautiful at all, and the gay licence of the Italian Renascence was still fresh in its memory. Protestantism at its height produced fine preachers, when waning, Pharisaism.

Blake was protestant of protestants in intention, though his ultimate scheme was not unlike that of catholicism. For him, as for the Hebrew prophets, the dualism of art and religion did not exist, because he held the apocalyptic view of regeneration, and that the hidden man unveiled in regeneration was the poetic genius.

Here let me quote his principles entire.

THERE IS NO NATURAL RELIGION

THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

THE ARGUMENT

As the true method of knowledge is experiment, the true faculty of knowing must be the faculty which experiences. This faculty I treat of.

Principle First

That the Poetic Genius is the true Man, and that the body or outward form of Man is derived from the Poetic Genius. Likewise, that the forms of all things are derived from their Genius, which by the Ancients was called an Angel and Spirit and Demon.

Principle Second

As all men are alike in outward form, so (and with the same infinite variety) all are alike in the Poetic Genius.

Principle Third

No man can think, write or speak from his heart, but he must intend truth. Thus all sects of philosophy are from the Poetic Genius adapted to the weaknesses of every individual.

Principle Fourth

As none by travelling over known lands can find out the unknown; so from already acquired knowledge Man could not acquire more; therefore an universal Poetic Genius exists.

Principle Fifth

The religions of all Nations are derived from each Nation's different reception of the Poetic Genius, which is everywhere called the Spirit of Prophecy.

Principle Sixth

The Jewish and Christian Testaments are an original derivation from the Poetic Genius. This is necessary from the confined nature of bodily sensation.

Principle Seventh

As all men are alike (though infinitely various), so all Religions, as all similars, have one source. The True Man is the source, he being the Poetic Genius.

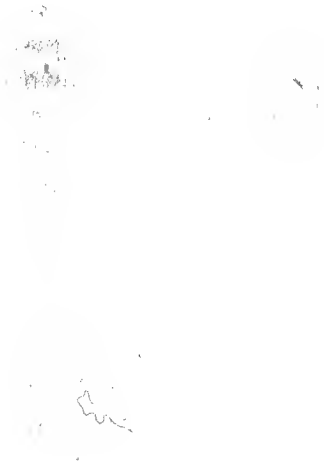
The Poetic Genius has one supreme faculty—imagination. Hence to be born again, for Blake, meant not only to pass from death into life with S. John, to be a new creature with S. Paul, but to be a man of imagination with Michael Angelo, Raphael and Albert Dürer.

The comparison with S. Paul is illuminating. Christianity liberated S. Paul from Judaism which had become a bondage. Massive spirits like Isaiah and Ezekiel escaped the bondage, but for the multitude there were the iron laws of the Decalogue and the thunders and lightning of Sinai. Conduct was so minutely organised that it lost all inspiration. The opportunity for spontaneous action was given to those alone who kept the whole law, that is, actually, to none. The Pharisees confident that they were righteous occasionally brought their choice offerings, but generally they evaded their one opportunity of a fine deed by an ingenious feat of casuistry. When the Christ looked back on a life of obedience not to the Law but to the Will of God working in Him, He brought His inspired oblation —He gave Himself. The unattainable ideal of the

Law was some comfort to the Pharisees who thought they had kept it, but to conscientious souls like Saul a terrible bondage. When Paul exulted in being born again in Christ, he was inebriated with his new-found liberty to follow the inspiration of the Spirit. This liberty was felt deep down at the springs of action, and he realised that he could do what the inner or new man willed, because his soul had seized hold of life. Blake, too, felt the dreadful bondage of the laws and codes and moralities of his time, and also he perceived that art had fallen to the same dead level as religion. It was tasteful plagiarism and not inspiration. One man alone dared to be himself and to express fearlessly his vision. His contemporaries saw nothing but "pictured moralities" which amused: it took a twentieth century to discover the true greatness of Hogarth. Thus Blake's long travail and mental fight was for the new birth and freedom of life and religion, philosophy and art, and he proclaimed that all these were the concern of the Real Man when fully awakened.

David, in his picture of the Baptism of Christ in Bruges, expressed the whole symbol of the Christian religion coming to consciousness in Christ. And he was right. In the unfolding of the spiritual life of Jesus of Nazareth there was a moment in the waters of Jordan when he realised that He was the Christ; and He created the Christian consciousness. When

S. Paul became a new creature he made conduct the fair fruit of inspiration. When Blake travailed mightily in pain to be delivered he brought forth the Real Man, which is our deepest modern consciousness. He not only maintained liberty of conduct, but he freed the imagination and thence the mind. Now we are at once Christians and free-thinkers, and we are determined to stand fast in our liberty.



CHAPTER III

VISIONARY MYSTICISM

THE Real Man has one all-powerful faculty of imagination. Blake in realising his Real Man became a spiritual-imaginative man. So far I have compared him to the spiritual leaders, now it becomes necessary to elucidate his use of the imagination by comparing him to the men of genius who wielded most mightily the magic power of imagination. Shakespeare will best serve the purpose.

Shakespeare's imagination runs over the whole natural man and the whole natural world. He revels in everything on which it rests, and proceeds to find perfect expression for what he sees. He can understand every kind of man but the saint, and every aspect of nature but the mystical. For him this world of Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter with its medley of men and women is the real world, and he invests it with astonishing beauty. But Shakespeare's real world was not Blake's. Blake regarded this world as a shadow of the real. He says:

> Rivers, Mountains, Cities, Villages,
> All are Human, and when you enter into their Bosoms you walk
> In Heavens and Earths, as in your own Bosom you bear your Heaven

And Earth, and all you behold, tho' it appears Without, it is Within
In your Imagination, of which this World of Mortality is but a Shadow.[1]

When one realises how much one invests the world with its properties from one's own imagination, it becomes not an insane question to ask whether the world exists at all. It appears substantial, but its apparent substantiality which is so hard to dissolve is really a proof of the absolute substantiality of the inner world which can never be shaken. This world appears everywhere to be bounded by outline; yet as every artist knows, the world has no outline, and the seeming outline is a sharp reflex of the City which hath foundations. To seek rest in this volatile fluxual world, is to seek foothold in the bottomless pit; to walk the streets of the Celestial City is to plant one's feet on the firm golden pavement that never permits them to slip. Just as Shakespeare's imagination roves at its sweet will over this world, Blake's imagination roved over the real world. Shakespeare's most beautiful passages have something of the inevitable vagueness of the world that passes away; Blake's most majestic figures and poems convey the sharpest impression of the most definite vision of real things. The supposed twilight of the mystics has no place in Blake. In his world the sun strikes with his fiercest light objects of awful and indissoluble reality, for

[1] *Jerusalem*, p. 71, lines 15–19.

the " Infinite alone resides in Definite and Determinate Identity."

Blake's Imagination, then, while seeing the Real World, far transcends the world of the senses, and that will serve as a definition of his visionary Mysticism.

The mystic has ever found an almost insurmountable difficulty in making clear to others what he has seen. Simple language has simple words which stand for direct impressions of the senses. The mystic moves in the world beyond sense, and for that reason, simple sense-words scarcely serve his purpose. It is true that the mystic deals frequently with the world of the senses for which he has a vocabulary ready to hand, and that it is just those parts of religion which overlap into the domain of the phenomenal world that can be expressed in accurate scientific language;—no one is simpler and more child-like than Blake when his subject permits—but the moment a mystic tries to explain what he sees beyond nature he is forced to use symbols, and they must be symbols with which his imagination is perfectly familiar. The mind of Jesus Christ was steeped in the apocalyptic literature of His country, hence it was natural for Him to express His direct vision of the truth by apocalyptic symbolism. When S. Paul laboured to proclaim his vision he used not only symbols borrowed from the religion of Gamaliel but everything that had soaked into his mind from

a Greek source while he was yet a boy at Tarsus. Dante had his direct vision, and was fortunate in living just at the time catholicism had become poetry and could supply him with beautiful symbols. Milton, by an amazing combination of puritanism and classicism expressed his vision in majestic symbols. Blake had stored his mind from many sources. Swedenborg was his first teacher. He had at his command all the symbols of the Christian religion; Paracelsus and Fludd came to him with much else through Jacob Boehme; he penetrated to some of the mysteries of ancient Egypt; Gothic architecture and Florentine art kept a permanent place in his mind; yet these were insufficient for his manifold vision, and finally he was driven to inventing a new symbolism.

In dealing with a mystic visionary a word of explanation is necessary. Visionary has been a term of reproach and is still of men who ought to know better. Formerly to say that a woman was visionary was to say she was hysterical, and a man that he was mad. Yet the long succession of visionaries includes the greatest names—Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Jesus Christ, S. John, S. Paul, S. Catherine of Siena, S. Teresa, Jacob Boehme, George Fox, Swedenborg—and not one of these can be overlooked.

It may be remarked first that each one of these visionaries expressed his vision in the terms of his own theology, and that some of these theologies are

very contradictory. From this it has been inferred that if one believes in S. Teresa's visions one must become a Catholic, or in Swedenborg's, a Swedenborgian, and therefore visions must be relegated along with over-beliefs to a very subordinate position, or dismissed altogether. But very little thought shows the shallowness of this procedure. The constant difficulty of the visionary arises from his acute consciousness that what he sees is unutterable, and yet he cannot rest till he has found imaginative utterance. Like S. Paul he is caught up into Paradise and hears unspeakable words which it is not possible for a man to utter. If he would utter his vision, it must be through the symbols and images with which his mind is most familiar. Again there is a further difficulty connected with the actual faculty of seeing. A visionary can see the things of the other world only in so far as they clothe themselves with the whole mental imagery of the seer. Thus the mystic sees more directly (though not nakedly) than the ordinary man, and he is compelled to find a further symbolical vesture for his vision or remain dumb.

Blake has spoken the sane word when he said that vision depended on will. Fénélon said that religion was a matter of will, and thus removed it far away from feelings and experiences, and from the excesses of quietism which he saw in his friend Madame Guyon. Blake by insisting that vision was dependent on will, saved it from the charlatanry of

his contemporary Cagliostro, and will steady us, if we hear his voice, amid the extravagant superstitions of our own time.

The consideration of Blake's special symbolism must be left to a later chapter.

CHAPTER IV

NATURE

How did Blake with his mystic vision regard Nature? Everywhere in his poetry one sees that he is passionately alive to her alluring beauty, and how the name of each object lingers on his ear with a loving cadence.

The barked oak, the long-limned beech, the chestnut-tree, the pine,
The pear-tree mild, the frowning walnut, the sharp crab, apple sweet,
The rough bark opens, twittering peep forth little beaks and wings,
The nightingale, the gold finch, robin, lark, linnet and thrush.[1]

But he also sees like S. Paul that the "whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain;" everywhere he sees cruelty, and his heart pities not only the fly devoured by the spider, but also the spider snapped up by the bird. He sees an immense difference in her animals. Nothing is more perplexing to one's scheme of life and religion than a visit to the Zoological Gardens. One is glad to deny with Spinoza all final causes, and to believe that the Almighty created the grotesques in a humorous mood for His own sheer delight. Blake immediately relates each animal to God or to man.

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night II. 175–178.

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.

The lust of the goat is the bounty of God.

The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of God.

The roaring of lions, the howling of wolves, the raging of the stormy sea, and the destructive sword are portions of eternity too great for the eye of man.

The fox condemns the trap not himself.

The rat, the mouse, the fox, the rabbit watch the roots; the lion, the tiger, the horse, the elephant watch the fruits.

The fox provides for himself, but God provides for the lion.

The tigers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction.

When thou seest an eagle, thou seest a portion of genius; lift up thy head!

The nineteenth century was too much preoccupied with the cruelties of Nature which appeared a stumbling-block to faith. Read Tennyson on Nature's red tooth and claw and then turn to a chance passage in Blake's *Four Zoas*:

Why does the raven cry aloud and no eye pities her?
Why fall the sparrow and the robin in the foodless winter?
Faint, shivering, they sit on leafless bush or frozen stone,
Wearied with seeking food across the snowy waste, the little
Heart cold, the little tongue consumed that once in thoughtless joy
Gave songs of gratitude to waving cornfields round their nest.
Why howl the lion and the wolf? Why do they roam abroad?
Deluded by the summer's heat they sport in enormous love,
And cast their young out to the hungry winds and desert sands.

Why is the sheep given to the knife? the lamb plays in the sun.
He starts: he hears the foot of Man! He says: Take thou my wool,
But spare my life: but he knows not that winter cometh fast.

The spider sits in his laboured net, eager, watching for the fly.
Presently comes a famished bird and takes away the spider.
His web is left all desolate that his little anxious heart
So careful wove and spread it out with sighs and weariness.[1]

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night I. 387–402.

It is clear that Blake was equally wide awake to the apparent cruelties of Nature, but he regarded her as a vegetable mirror of man's mixed condition. And, therefore, he blamed neither Nature nor God, but man, who but for his contracted vision would see through her instead of his own reflection.

Blake was attracted by Wordsworth though he considered him enmeshed by Nature. Wordsworth tried to climb to love of man through Nature, but he did not rise much above her.

The mystics had said: Know thyself, and the knowledge of the microcosm would reveal all the secrets of the macrocosm. But the only sure way has been S. John's. Little children, love one another. Love to another will give understanding of man, of self, and of Nature. To seek this understanding through Nature, like Wordsworth, is to risk being ensnared by her witchery.

Now Blake, while feeling the soft, alluring grace of Nature, saw through her. Nature binds man down to the five senses. Vision ranges far beyond. True vision sees Nature not separate but a part of man; not without but within man. Nature is the mirror of man's inner life. Hence Blake feels the ecstasy of the Hindoo mystic and

looks out in tree and herb, and fish, and bird, and beast,
Collecting up the scattered portions of his immortal body
Into the elemental forms of everything that grows.
He tries the sullen north wind, riding on its angry furrows,
The sultry south when the sun rises, and the angry east

When the sun sets and the clods harden and the cattle stand
Drooping, and the birds hide in their silent nests.
He stores his thoughts as in store houses in his memory.
He regulates the forms of all beneath and all above, and in the gentle west reposes where the sun's heat dwells.

Blake rises to the sun, he touches the remotest pole; he sorrows in birds, and howls in the wolf; he moans in the cattle and the winds, in the cries of birth and in the groans of death.

Wherever a grass grows
Or a leaf buds, the Eternal Man is seen, is heard, is felt,
And all his sorrows, till he reassumes his ancient bliss.

So long as man is unspiritual, the horrors of his contracted state will appear mirrored in Nature. When man reassumes his ancient bliss, Nature will become a sea of glass before the throne of God flashing back a resplendent image of the eternal delight of heaven

CHAPTER V

THE BRIGHT SCULPTURES OF LOS' HALLS

BLAKE'S vision of the real world and its inhabitants must not be confounded with modern Spiritualism. Clear vision of reality demands much preparation and self-consecration. Ezekiel's first vision of the Glory of the Lord overwhelmed him, and threw him, as it did Isaiah, Daniel and S. John, into the humblest attitude with his face to the ground. The Spirit entering into him set him on his feet; but he received the Divine charge to speak to the children of Israel with great reluctance. He went in bitterness and in the heat of his spirit. He needed to learn thoroughly the lesson he half learned at the first sight of the Glory of God. When the hand of the Lord was upon him and led him into the plain by the river Chebar, he again saw the Glory of the Lord and utterly yielded himself. His self-donation led him to clear vision. It was so with Blake. In his earliest years he saw clearly. Then came twenty years of cloudy vision which terminated with his farewell to Felpham and return to London. All through these twenty years he was learning the way of obedience and naked faith. The lesson learned, the vision returned and never left him again.

Ezekiel's and Blake's process is the reverse of that

of modern spiritualism. Blake lifted himself on to the spiritual plane, spiritualism seeks to draw spiritual beings on to the earthly plane; Blake required faith and imagination, spiritualism demands sight and contact; Blake saw with his inner eye, spiritualism sees with the bodily; Blake's method led to spirituality, spiritualism to materialisation; Blake's vision renewed the bodily life; spiritualism deranges it; Blake began in terror and ended in peace, spiritualism begins in terror and ends in madness. In the supreme act of Christian worship the heart is bidden to lift itself up.

Lift up your hearts.

And the response comes immediately

We lift them up unto the Lord.

For we are not to bring Christ down to our level, but to raise ourselves up to the heavenly places where with angels and archangels and with all the glorious company of heaven, we may laud and glorify God's Holy Name.

Every visionary knows the terror of passing out of space and time. This experience comes to many an imaginative child. In the night season when the child makes a vain attempt to awake, suddenly he becomes conscious of slipping out of time, and the present moment becomes charged with the horror of eternity. Opium can produce a like result, as we know from De Quincey. Blake was clearly familiar

with such an experience, and it helped him to conceive many of his designs, notably his illustrations to the words of Job in the Job series: "With dreams upon my bed thou scarest me and affrightest me with Visions." This is why many of Blake's designs seem to beginners like nightmares.

Blake fought his way beyond the terror till he beheld the bright sculptures of the Halls of Los. Here he saw everything he willed to see. He described Los's Halls in *Jerusalem:*

All things acted on Earth are seen in the bright Sculptures of
Los's Halls, and every Age renews its powers from these Works,
With every pathetic story possible to happen from Hate or
Wayward Love, and every sorrow and distress is carved here;
Every Affinity of Parents, Marriages and Friendships are here
In all these various combinations wrought with wondrous Art.
All that can happen to Man in his pilgrimage of seventy years.
Such is the Divine Written Law of Horeb and Sinai;
And such the Holy Gospel of Mount Olivet and Calvary.[1]

Los's Halls are familiar to mystics of all countries and ages. Theosophists call Los's Sculptures the Akashic Records. Nature's memory is stored in the Æther of Space, and the Seer can behold the sculptured records of the Past as veil after veil is lifted.

Mr. W. B. Yeats very simply calls Los's Halls the Great Memory, and he has said beautiful things about it.

The important thing to remember is that "every Age renews its powers from these Works." It is because Blake constantly dwelt in the Halls of Los

[1] p. 16, lines 61–69.

he has renewed our age. The Celtic Mystics of to-day —Yeats, A. E. and Synge—have learnt where to find these Halls, and so have produced beautiful and life-giving works.

Blake claimed that religion was renewed from the Halls of Los equally with art and literature. Every nation has had access there, and therefore "the antiquities of every nation under heaven are no less sacred than those of the Jews." Each nation has interpreted and coloured what it has seen according to its own genius. This is the religion of Jesus and the Everlasting Gospel.

Blake's perception of the Everlasting Gospel delivered him from all delusions and conceit of holding advanced views. He saw how one Church succeeded another, and he counted even twenty-seven Churches. The members of the twenty-seventh Church invariably pride themselves on being advanced and modern: in reality they have completed the circle and are about to enter the first Church again and so become not merely old-fashioned but out of date. It is difficult to jump out of the revolving wheel of the religions, but it can be done, and Blake by entering Los's Hall not only escaped cheap modernism, but saw that any renewal of religion, art or literature depended on those ætheric records in which no detail of the Past was forgotten. The Catholic Church has always felt this strongly and so insisted, sometimes with persecuting

zeal, that the Faith was once delivered to the Saints. It is a greater glory to preach the Ancient Gospel than a new Gospel. At best the New is but a re-interpretation of the Old.

We must not overlook the fact that there are strange guests in the Halls of Los. Besides the Imaginative Geniuses and inspired seers, the magicians have also the right of entry. The Alchemists and Rosicrucians, Paracelsus, and Eliphas Levi have practised their incantations with the definite purpose of beholding the Halls, and they succeeded in giving to unseen essences an ephemeral appearance which terrified the uninitiated. We are coming again to believe that the Egyptian magicians did verily by their Black Art call forth frogs, and locusts and lice.

Since there are such diverse visitors to the Halls, it is necessary to distinguish them. The magician desires knowledge and power, the true mystic love and service. The decline of true religion is the magician's opportunity. Jacob Boehme, Swedenborg and Blake, all three, knew the truth of magic and avoided it. They knew, like S. Paul, that one might " understand all mysteries and all knowledge," and yet entirely miss one's way; so they chose to follow after the more excellent way of love which not only builds up, but brings with it, in order, such understanding and knowledge as are necessary for perfecting the spiritual man.

CHAPTER VI

SEX AND HOLINESS

EACH event in Blake's life set him thinking furiously. Even the most trivial episode partook of the significance of eternity. Scholfield figures prominently in *Jerusalem*, not because Blake was petty and could not forget a personal injury, but because Scholfield immediately became in Blake's mind a symbol, and Blake never forgot a symbol.

Marriage was bound to colour Blake's mind deeply. Mr. Ellis has given a profoundly interesting picture of Blake's early married life, and he assures us that *Mary* and *Broken Love* are thinly disguised reminiscences of this time. It is my object not to repeat the story, but to draw out certain very important facts about Blake's temperament.

Blake had a full passionate nature, which made vehement demands. Like us all he had his pre-matrimonial notions which were quickly upset by his matrimonial experiences. The final adjustments were made, but not without a good deal of pain on both sides. The vehement demands of Blake's nature worked in two directions, and besides a difficult matrimonial adjustment to effect, he was forced to consider sex in all its ramifications, and

finally to enunciate a doctrine of sex, which has proved a great deliverance to the modern world.

Blake's great word is: "Whatsoever lives is holy." A comparison of Blake's conception of holiness with that of the old ascetics will make his word clear.

The ascetic monk mortified his flesh and all fleshly motions with the purpose of freeing the spirit. If one overcomes a lion one gains a lion's strength, and if one overcomes the flesh the strength of the flesh passes into one's spirit. The modern world is scornful of asceticism and probably needs such a powerful spirit—a John the Baptist—to teach it the old lessons. The genial Son of Man came eating and drinking, but His way was prepared by the strong ascetic in the wilderness; and even He who was called a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber was said to have fasted forty days in the wilderness. The ascetic principle is a specific principle for a specific end. As a gardener will nip many buds for the sake of one fine bloom, so the ascetic nipped the tender flesh in order to develop a spirit intense enough to call sinners to repentance. The highest ascetic has no grudge against the Bridegroom. "The friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice," and the Bridegroom testifies that the ascetic is a child of wisdom. "Wisdom is justified of all her children."

Unfortunately this lofty understanding was not maintained, and the hermits and monks were not content to go the way of John the Baptist, but they came to think in their hearts that it was the only way, and they bequeathed to us an unreasoning horror of sex. We are the victims of their fanaticism. Good men and women torment themselves and think themselves monsters because they are vital enough to have strong sexual motions: profligate men and women, who cannot think for themselves, tacitly accept the monkish ideal as true, and in their determination to ignore it bring utter confusion into their moral conceptions.

We have supposed that the ascetics succeeded in restraining desire. Blake wrote: "Those who restrain desire do so because theirs is weak enough to be restrained." This cannot have been the case with the majority. In the night season when the inhibitory powers are asleep amorous images are apt to become rampant. Blake, remembering how he suffered when his desires were restrained, wrote in *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion :*

> The youth shut up from
> The lustful joy shall forget to generate and create an amorous image
> In the shadows of his curtains and in the folds of his silent pillow.
> Are not these the places of religion, the rewards of continence,
> The self-enjoyings of self-denial? Why dost thou seek religion?
> Is it because acts are not lovely, that thou seekest solitude,
> When the horrible darkness is impressed with reflections of desire?

That is the average experience of the average man who restrains desire. But what are we to say of the Saints? When we remember the erotic language in which many constantly expressed their vision of divine things, can we believe that they had crucified the flesh as thoroughly as they imagined? It would be truer to say that while they aimed at holiness by the crucifixion of part of their nature, they actually transmuted passion into higher energy.

Blake's aim was clear. He would crucify no part of his nature but bring all the parts into order. The holy man is at unity with himself. Therefore he could not regard sex feeling either with horror or repugnance. Sex is simply Energy of Life. Just as Nature is not without man, but within, so "Man has no body distinct from his Soul, for that called Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age." Energy which " is the only life and is from the Body " is the Energy of the Soul itself and this " Energy is Eternal Delight."

Thus the sex power of the individual is his motor power. To kill sex—were it possible—is to rob the engine of its steam.

This point of view at once places the harlot in a new light. She is a frail vessel with immense energies, and therefore far nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than the religious pharisee. Blake was attracted by Mary Magdalene and he painted her

in ecstasy. Mary Magdalene, the seven-devilled harlot repentant at the feet of Christ had experienced the whole gamut of vital ecstasy from sex to religion and thereby her name became to Blake a symbol of the progress of a living soul. Passion is never without light as it contains much imagination. Mary the harlot had a lurid light on the mysteries of life, Mary repentant had a chequered light on the mysteries of the Kingdom, Mary the Saint had a white light by which she divined the mysteries of God and her soul, of man and the universe.

I speak of the genuine harlot. We have come to understand now that many a harlot is driven on to the streets, not by the strength of her energies, but by the iniquity of our social system. Nor is religion without blame. So long as religious people misunderstand the sex problem and remain wilfully ignorant of it, they will be helping to swell the number of harlots. Blake's daring paradox still remains terribly true: "Brothels are built with bricks of Religion."

Sex passion when it sweeps in with irresistible force has its rhythm, its beauty and its ecstasy. It transfigures all it touches, and beautifies the human body. For it nothing connected with the body is common or unclean. Raised to its highest power it sees in the human form a direct revelation of the divine; and when trusted leads a man as it led Michael Angelo to the Fountain source of Beauty

whence all forms are but partial manifestations. Here it is inseparable from religion. The Supreme self-surrender of the passionate soul to its Beloved is a drama of that other surrender of the soul to God by which it finds itself and enters on its true religious life.

Blake thus would not eliminate passion, but transmute it. Just as spirit transmutes pain to joyous energy, so it transmutes passion to finest beauty. It is only when the Real Man has passion as driving force that his genius becomes creative, and he grows wings strong enough to soar over the Aonian Mount.

CHAPTER VII

THE EVERLASTING GOSPEL

BLAKE's large, unsuspicious nature was most trustful of his fellow-men, and it laid him open to rude shocks and sudden resentments. How hopeful and glad he was at the beginning of Hayley's patronage at Felpham! And how hopelessly exasperating Hayley turned out to be after a few weeks!

> When H——y finds out what you cannot do,
> That is the very thing he will set you to do.
> If you break not your back 'tis not his fault,
> But pecks of poison are not pecks of salt.

Again:

> Thy friendship oft has made my heart to ache:
> Do be my enemy for friendship's sake.

But Blake's fiercest resentment was against Cromek:

> A petty, sneaking knave I knew. . . .
> Oh, Mr. Cromek, how d'you do?

No man appreciates being called gentle or harmless, and Hayley's gentle visionary Blake was naturally aroused to wrath. Blake, conscious of great powers of anger and resentment, cast about to see whether those were not essential qualities of a great man.

Another mental process is discernible in Blake

while at Felpham. From the time Mr. Matthews advised him to polish his verses on to Mr. Hayley's assumption of the office of spiritual director, Blake was much exercised in his mind as to whether he should order himself lowly and reverently to his " betters " or whether he should trust himself.

One remembers how terribly S. Teresa suffered at the hands of her spiritual advisers who did not understand her. She, at least, had the joy afterwards of being assured that she was right by her friend S. Peter of Alcantara. The sunny soul of S. Francis of Assisi became fearfully clouded when he started preaching corpse-like obedience to authority. Sunshine returned only when S. Clare brought him back to himself.

Blake's was a simple, childlike soul, and it was difficult enough for him to discern the path of true humility. Humility appears to dictate submission. Yet Blake knew well that to submit was to put an extinguisher on his genius, and he finally cut his way through the maze by trusting himself. He seems henceforth to have confounded humility with sneaking submission. Blake's self-confidence not only incurred the charge of egotism, but it soon made him a law-breaker. Could self-will be made to coincide with God's will? One may well doubt whether all the modern apostles of egoism do God's will; but there is no doubt about Blake. The self he trusted was the inner Real Man whose language

is ever: Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart![1]

The Will of the Real Man is the Will of God. Obedience to this Will is disobedience to the laws. Blake, finding these great principles working themselves out in his life, turned afresh to the Gospels, and there he saw in the story of Christ's life the sublimest setting forth of his own deepest experience.

The immediate cause of writing *The Everlasting Gospel* was resentment against Stothard. The joint behaviour of Cromek and Stothard in the production of *The Canterbury Pilgrims* infuriated Blake and he turned to Jesus Christ to justify his anger.

Was Jesus gentle? Nay the wrath of the Lamb was terrible. Was Jesus humble?

> This is the race that Jesus ran:
> Humble to God, haughty to man
> . . . . . .
> If thou humblest thyself thou humblest Me.
> Thou also dwellest in eternity.
> Thou art a man. God is no more.
> Thy own humanity learn to adore;
> For that is my spirit of life.
> . . . . . .
> Humility is only doubt,
> And does the sun and moon blot out,

[1] Psalm xl. 6-8.

Roofing over with thorns and stems
The buried soul and all its gems.

Was Jesus chaste ?

He from the adultress turned away
God's righteous law that lost its prey.

Was Jesus obedient ? He was crucified for breaking the laws. Thus Jesus was not humble or gentle, chaste or obedient. He was proud, wrathful, gentle to unchastity, and disobedient.

But as Blake studied this strange life deeper and deeper his spirit kindled. Jesus always forgave sins. Every sin was forgiven except that of the man who obstinately shut his eyes to the light. As Blake read and pondered he arose above his excrementitious resentments and gained the Christ level where he could understand everything and forgive. Henceforth he knew:

Mutual forgiveness of each vice,
Such are the gates of Paradise.

And this is the Everlasting Gospel.

The Everlasting Gospel is as ancient as the Halls of Los. Men receive it and by a deadly process harden it into laws and moralities. Then nothing but the defiance of the law-breaker can avail to renew the old, old Gospel. Here and there one may be found, but it is at the cost of all that he hath, if not of life itself.

Blake gave a new reading of Christ's life. His

contemporaries, Wesley, Whitefield, Toplady and Fletcher of Madeley, saw in the life of Christ a mechanical obedience to the law, and in His death a substitutionary atonement for the sin of their soul. Blake saw in His life a persistent disobedience to the law, and in His death the penalty of the rebel's obedience to the Will of God who by His agony and bloody sweat, by His Cross and Passion advances the Day of the Lord when the Kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdoms of God and of His Anointed.

CHAPTER VIII

ELECTION AND PREDESTINATION

WHEN Blake succeeded in marrying Heaven and Hell, he discovered in Hell a rich, unworked mine. He at once proceeded to rescue passion from Hell's clutches with fruitful results, and then seized such reprobate words as excess, exuberance, impulse, and found that they were excellent servants of passion.

The road of excess leads to the palace of Wisdom.
Exuberance is beauty.
Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules.

These aphorisms first shock, and then are discovered to be pearls of wisdom.

The business of life is to find out what the Real Man in us really likes and wills, and to follow his commands with unswerving loyalty. The first duty of a parent and schoolmaster is to educate (lead out) the Real Man. Samuel Butler in his masterly *Way of all Flesh* wrote a biting satire on the way they did it. No doubt schoolmasters are improving, yet even now headmasters can be found who have a fine capacity for suffocating the Real Man in their pupils, and cramming their tender minds with masses of irrelevant knowledge. The road of excess is an experimental way of discovering the Real Man. It is true what Blake says: "You never know what

is enough unless you know what is more than enough"—and a strong soul that yields to all temptations in turn soon knows what it likes and what it wills. But there are obvious limitations to this rule. We must not cast ourselves down from the pinnacle of the temple to see whether God's angels will bear us up. Here the written word of wisdom must be our guide. The road of excess, if it brings bruising or a general upheaval and not maiming or death certainly leads to wisdom; and while we are learning what we like, we shall at the same time rid our minds of many illusions and false values. So we may readily admit that this road is safe for elect souls, but how about the weak? Many undeniably stumble and fall and never rise to their feet again. "Let them," says a pupil of Nietzsche, "they are not wanted," yet Christianity has wanted them and generally uses them to confound the wise.

Blake's doctrine brings the old problem of election to view again, for in some form or other it must always reappear. The elect soul prospers in hell, and the reprobate turns heaven to hell. And why do they fundamentally differ? Since the difference does not depend on the will of man, then it must ultimately depend on the will of God "Who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." And so men may argue. But one must insist that life is greater than logic, and though election cannot be stated satisfactorily in terms of logic, it can be

known in the higher synthesis of life. Jeremiah, Jesus Christ, S. Paul, S. Augustine, Calvin, Blake, all believe in election. Yet how vastly different their treatment! Jeremiah is tender and firm, as he writes of God the Potter, and Man the Clay. S. Paul is harsh in the extreme in his Epistle to the Romans and can quote with equanimity, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated;" yet he catches the Spirit of Christ when he writes to the Corinthians: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; that no flesh should glory in His presence." Calvin is logical and grim. Blake's great name has been seized by a narrow coterie who fondly imagine they are elect. Blake's doctrine was balanced in his own mind, while he emphasised the value of excess, just because it was a truth that had been overlooked. History teaches a curious lesson of election. What contemporary dreamt that Shakespeare, Joan of Arc, Hogarth, Samuel Butler, Blake, was elect? And to whom did it occur as Christ hung on the Cross that He was God's Elect in whom He delighted?

It is true that the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom for it cuts away unrealities and conventions, and what value may lie hidden in a man it brings to the surface; but it also would lead many to destruction, whom it is the special glory of Christianity to save. S. Augustine came to wisdom by the road of excess; and so did Christ, but there was a wide divergence in the ways their excesses led them.

Blake divined Christ's secret of growth when he wrote that He acted from impulse. The man of impulse is always a power and attraction. The villain acts from impulse like Milton's Satan, and our imagination is rightly enthralled. The irritating person is the one stretching and straining far beyond his proper spiritual stature. He repels by his unnatural and abortive attempts to be other than himself, and therefore we love the impulsive villain and hate the plaster saint. Christ's native impulses led him to put aside His parents, to break the law of the Sabbath, to drive the money-changers out of the Temple, to denounce the Scribes and Pharisees in white-heat anger, to defy authority, and rather than submit to it to die. It was by trusting His impulses that He grew in favour with God and man. "Consider the lilies how they grow," He had said. The supreme attraction of Jesus has lain in the fact that He grew like the lilies of the field, and so His personality was inevitably beautiful.

CHAPTER IX

BLAKE'S SYMBOLISM

It is necessary now to return to Blake's symbolism.

Blake's symbolism had one great disadvantage, that much of it was new. A symbol is like wine, the better for being old. The eighteenth century had no fine old symbolism that had not been fully used. The nineteenth century was more fortunate, and Wagner seized the spoil of Scandinavian mythology and expressed his vision not in party terms of Schopenhauer and Roeckelian Socialism, but in symbols of a mythology which was old enough to have become of rich and universal significance.

Blake used the old Christian symbols freely and with great beauty, but his manifold vision and spirit of prophecy demanded a larger vesture, and he was compelled to create new mythic personalities. It is his elaborate new symbolism for which we have not a satisfactory key that makes him so difficult to follow and his prophetic books so crude to the taste.

Blake always paid a tribute to Milton's massive power. His own mental build was massive, and we must reckon him among the men of immense power like Michael Angelo, Luther, Oliver Cromwell.

Power without art becomes destructive and iconoclastic; united with art, it becomes creative not only of worlds on a colossal scale, but also of little flowers that grow at the foot of great mountains. Milton revelled in his huge Angels and Devils, in his abysses and immensities. These things were for him the revelation of the Infinite. We find very small things even to mites and microbes likewise a revelation of the Infinite. Blake loved equally with Milton the Titanic figures, but he also came to insist on the minute particulars and to feel that the enormous and the minute are interchangeable manifestations of " the Eternal which is always present to the wise." Urizen and Los, Luvah and Tharmas are Miltonic figures and move on a Miltonic scale.

Blake uses the old symbols and sometimes pours a fuller meaning into them. Thus Jesus is not only God, Saviour, Redeemer, Wisdom, Power, High Priest, Prophet, King, but also and pre-eminently Imagination, and Imagination is all these. Water is still the symbol of the new birth; and Bread and Wine are the food of the Real Man. Blake makes full use of the Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life, though he much prefers the Tree of Life. Hell is sometimes used to express the state of those who have no imagination and are therefore dead in trespasses and sins, but it also stands for excess, exuberance, impulse, vitality, energy, sex, passion, and all these are taken over by the Real Man.

S. Paul's famous pair, Law and Grace, received a wider application. S. Paul thought of the Moral Law which, unable to give life, increased the bondage and condemnation of those who did not keep it. Blake includes all that S. Paul meant, but he wanted a symbol to express also the mental processes of the rational man, his works from the making of the Law of the Decalogue to " the Prisons which are built with stones of Law," and the hard Philistine spirit which despises the works of the Imagination; and for this he created a terrible figure and called him Urizen. Thus Urizen is the false Jehovah. Urizen's opposite is soon comprehended. The Real Man, Imagination, Inspiration, these are the Eternal things wherein life and salvation consist. They are the sun in the spiritual heavens, the Sol which easily becomes Los.

In fallen man, there is an immense amount of feeling which is separated on the one side from divine love which has mind, and on the other from desire which always contains a measure of imagination. This unthinking, unimaginative love Blake called by the feminine word Luvah. Luvah ever tends to lull life into a deadly sleep. Just as Urizen is false Jehovah, so Luvah is false Christ.

Tharmas is another feminine word (perhaps derived from Tammuz, Ezek. viii. 14) to express Nature in her contracted form. Nature is the matrix, also the vegetable mirror of the natural

man bound by his five senses. Urthona is the regent of dark fire. He is vital material energy struggling for fuller life, and like the Holy Spirit seeks to bring order out of chaos. Los has four sons, Rintrah, Palamabron, Theotormon and Bromion. Many other symbols occur, as Bowlahoola, the region of digestion, Allamanda, the nerves of reason and reproduction, Entuthon Benython, solid abstract, Udan Adan, liquid abstract. Here I want to return to Blake's primary four. Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, and Urthona represent states, and states are eternal. Man may be in any state. If he is in the state of Urizen, he is a rationalist, in the state Urthona he is struggling with dark, vital passions. Man's redemption consists in being led by Los—imagination and inspiration—and so bringing the other states into their proper place. There is no expulsion required but regulation resulting in a man being at unity with himself. One may hate a state, but never the man that is in it. A clear vision of a man's state renders it quite easy to forgive him even to seventy times seven; and as to the state itself, there is safety in having something on which to spend one's righteous wrath.

Blake would offer little difficulty, if his symbols stopped here, but he has complicated matters enormously by introducing the names of innumerable places in the United Kingdom. Corresponding to Urizen, Luvah, Tharmas, and Urthona he

has Verulam, London, York and Edinburgh, also Battersea, Chelsea, London and Canterbury. Blake's feeling for place was intense, and to find a parallel one must go to the early Semitic peoples. German research has made it clear that they had highly organised, sensitive bodies, and undeveloped intellects. These sensitive bodies were excessively responsive to the unseen world, hence a Semite's normal approach to it was by physical means rather than intellectual. A place where an Israelite encountered a heavenly visitant became holy and another Israelite who might chance to alight on the spot would become conscious that it was charged with a divine Presence. Hence there were holy places like Bethel and Penial, a holy mountain like Horeb, a holy city like Jerusalem, a holy land like Palestine. These names became symbols, and at the same time Egypt, Babylon, Philistia took on reprehensible significance.

If a place could become charged with the Divine, this was much more so with a Tabernacle or a Temple. The Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle was not safe and no one could enter it except the High Priest " lest he die." The High Priest entered once a year after due precautions. The usual method to dissipate the Divine energy was by carefully regulated vibrations and this was effected by an arrangement of bells. For the same reason the Israelites might not touch the Holy Mount " lest they die."

And Uzzah in his rash attempt to steady the Ark died on the spot.

Gradually a change was effected. The intellect was pushed forward at the expense of the body, and by the time it had advanced sufficiently to produce an Isaiah, the body had become comparatively dull. Still even in Christ's time the Jews retained sufficient bodily sensitiveness to make them liable to possession. Since then we have pushed the intellect to the extreme, and little has remained of the old order except in the Sacraments of the Church, and in the Consecration of Churches and burial grounds.

There are signs that we are discovering again the lost power of our bodies. If we learn to approach Reality not only by our intellects but also by our subtilised bodies then there may soon be an immense advance in our spiritual consciousness.

Blake's strong feeling for place had every opportunity for development in his life. Both before and after his marriage he was a great walker. The rhythmic exercise of walking brought him, sensitive as he was to all rhythm, into immediate perception of the spirit of whatever place he might happen to visit. England entered into his mental strife, and he sought to find in Battersea and Chelsea, Highgate and Hampstead, London and Canterbury, symbols of man's states as simple to understand as the symbols Egypt and Goshen, Babylon and Assyria, Judah and Jerusalem to the spiritual Israelite.

The strange array of places in *Jerusalem* may at first repel, but Blake was on the right road in restoring a primitive instinct of place which, it is likely, will be very fruitful in the near future.

But did those feet in ancient time
Walk upon England's mountains green,
And was the Holy Lamb of God
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

Bring me my Bow of burning gold—
Bring me my arrows of desire;
Bring me my spear; O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my Chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,
Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
Till we have built Jerusalem
In England's green and pleasant land.

CHAPTER X

BLAKE'S ART

BLAKE'S vision was manifold, and he was richly endowed with a love for drawing, painting, poetry and music. This opulence was embarrassing, but he eventually found that drawing, painting and poetry supplied the most effective vesture for his vision, and the music fell into the background.

We have seen that religion and art were one in Blake's soul, that the Real Man perceives spiritual realities and works by imagination, and therefore of necessity when Blake's Real Man came to express himself, he used an art medium. That is Blake's unique glory as a mystic. The Hebrew prophets used prose and so transfigured it that it is almost indistinguishable from poetry. The great Christian mystics expressed themselves theologically; Blake's contemporary, William Law, had command of a very fine prose; but Blake himself by an inherent necessity uttered himself as an artist and thus not only inwardly but also outwardly effected the union of religion and art. This is sufficient to put Blake among the Gods, but he has not escaped the fate of the Gods. The human instinct which demands that a man shall be a synthesis of all human perfections

is a very old one. Religious orthodoxy in its attempts to see in the Son of Man the representative man has only succeeded in making Him unreal. Jesus cannot be all-inclusive man; it is the mystical Christ that, like the white diamond, contains a thousand facets each flashing the colour of some human perfection. Blake is very far from being an embodiment of even all our modern feelings and consciousness, and equally far from being a type of that all-embracing culture which admires everything without partiality. His prime value was his definite vision, and that resulted in his finest work and his fiercest resentments. His resentments against Titian, Rubens, and Sir Joshua Reynolds may in turn irritate us, and we shall need to keep in mind his finest work and his everlasting Gospel if we would forgive him.

Blake's art was rooted in his vision of the Real World of which this world is the vegetable mirror. All things pertaining to the Real World have the clearest outline which is only reflected in Nature's mirror. Since the function of Art is to pierce through to the Real World, then it follows that the Artist cannot be too definite in his outlines, and that good drawing is the foundation of all great art.

Blake was bound to formulate such a canon of art and to apply it without compromise to the Masters. Michael Angelo, Raphael, Albert Dürer remain; Rembrandt, Rubens and Titian are swept away. One is reminded of Tolstoï whose ultimate

definition of art allowed no room for Shakespeare and Beethoven among the Gods. Blake was wrathful at Rembrandt's blurred outline, and still more at his treatment of the minute particulars in which Christ generally figured like a brewer's drayman. Rubens' art was merely the blurred apotheosis of the flesh, and Blake was blind to the beauty of his fat Venuses. None of the Venetians, not even Correggio and Titian, could draw. They attained to an amazing harmony of colour—an over-elaboration which amounted to a fault in Blake's eyes. Blake would have raved in a modern art gallery. One can imagine his fierce denunciation of Monet and Manet, to say nothing of Gauguin and Van Gogh. Yet in one matter Blake might have appreciated at least the aims of the post-impressionists. He loved pure, unshaded colour. Colour was the soul of his figures and each elemental colour was a symbol—and so he might have been beguiled into involuntary admiration of the vivid pure colour effects of a Signac. It is to the Pre-Raphaelites and not to the Impressionists we must look for a parallel with Blake's aims. Like them he was reactionary, and for his technique he looked to the past, and he found in Michael Angelo all he needed to express his prophetic visions. His real love was for the old Florentines; yet a comparison with Michael Angelo will bring out certain important differences. Both loved working on a massive scale, and both created

immense figures, and by the side of their immense figures they loved to place lovely, slight, ethereal beings. Both showed a prodigious creative force and selected the same subject to exercise it—*The Creation of Adam.* Both met in the supreme value they set on outline, and here they separated. Michael Angelo aimed at solidity and depth, Blake at dignity by long unbroken lines. Michael Angelo appeared to work in three dimensions, Blake in two. Michael Angelo worked through a storm of passion excited by the human body till he beheld the Face of God; Blake saw God from the beginning and man the definite revelation of God. Michael Angelo ended by transfiguring the flesh, Blake gazed at the flesh till it became translucent and through it shone the Eternal definite world of the Imagination.

Blake's fierce creative power showed itself again and again, in the Ancient of Days, in the figures of Job, Ezekiel, Caiaphas, Nebuchadnezzar. In his picture of Nebuchadnezzar driven out into the fields, with the look of horrible madness in his eyes and mouth, one sees the inevitable climax when rationalism has run its full course. For sheer loveliness one must turn to such pictures as *The River of Life, Jacob's Ladder* and *The Nativity. Jacob's Ladder* is fine in conception and execution. The upward progress of the human spirit is by a series of spiral rounds, and it was a happy inspiration that made Blake first conceive Jacob's Ladder as a

spiral. In this picture the drawing and pure colouring are alike beautiful. *The River of Life* is almost perfect, yet Blake had an ineradicable dislike of technical perfection, and just when a picture was nearing completion, he would wilfully mis-draw a leg, or a foot or a forefinger and insist that the crooked finger was a road of genius. Rodin's word to Arthur Symons—" He should have looked again "—is just. Another look at the husband's leg and foot in the *River of Life* would have made the picture an irresistibly lovely masterpiece. *The Nativity,* which was the design for Milton's *Hymn for the Nativity,* is exquisite, and it is pure Blake. Blake saw all that his predecessors saw in Christmas and something more. The lovely figure of Nature lying in the snow and gazing with clasped hands at the Mother and Child is Nature rightly related to God, to Man, to the Mother, to the Child. With pure colours that Blake has learnt from Nature herself he paints a little world in whose bosom is the mystery of the Universe.

Blake did not found a school of art. His influence can be traced in the early works of George Richmond, Samuel Palmer, John Linnell and Edward Calvert and there ends. Yet he was not merely the tail end of the Florentines. He accomplished designs which were unique and adequate presentments of his unique vision; and as if that were not enough, he commanded another medium of expression, and in

the effort to convey his revolutionary message, burst through the traditions even of blank verse and made poetry a rhythmic vehicle of his highest inspiration.

Swinburne has written so finely of Blake's Lyrics that I shall not presume to add another word. I will only insist on the fact that Blake's love for "crooked roads" manifested itself from the beginning. His aphorism in reply to Mr. Matthews when he suggested that he should correct his poetical sketches was prompt and final: "Improvement makes straight roads, but the crooked roads without Improvement are roads of Genius." Blake's impatience of Titian's technical perfections and of the small perfections of polished verse was like our modern rebound from mere prettiness which has made some of our young artists deny that art is necessarily concerned with the beautiful. Blank verse appeared to Blake slightly artificial. He was supremely sensitive to rhythm for he was a magician, and rhythm is the evocative power in the magician's incantations, but he could not bear that the rhythm should be broken by regular lines, yet an unbroken rhythm like a fast spinning wheel maddened his brain, and he felt himself compelled to twitch at the wheel from time to time in order to maintain his mental equilibrium.

Blake naturally suggests a comparison with Walt Whitman who though half a century later was yet

before his time. Mr. Yeats (father of the poet) and Professor Dowden hailed the poet, but it was many years before the claims of Lowell gave place to Walt Whitman's. Walt Whitman sinned less than Blake. In both was the pulsing spirit of life. The rhythm of Walt Whitman's pulse was perfectly discernible in his irregular lines. Blake's vision of life of which his contemporaries had no inkling intoxicated his brain and made his pulse beat fiercely irregular.

Thus Blake in his designs looked to the past, and in his poetry to the future. Blank verse had become too strait for him. His widening vision imperiously demanded a wider medium, and his prophetic books are a challenge to us either to deny his pretentious claims or to hail him as the apostle of a new order of poetry.

CHAPTER XI

GOD AND MAN

BLAKE in all his Prophecies pressed vehemently towards the realisation of the great conception which possessed his mind—the conception of the divine humanity. His conception of God is in terms of Man. He has a horror of a God who is abstract, vague, or indefinite, for though God is infinite and all-present, yet He is terrible to the imagination unless he has outline. Man is God's outline. In the *Everlasting Gospel* [1] Blake hurls his word like a projectile: "Thou art a man, God is no more," and therefore, once for all, let it be understood that God is known only through man; man is the continuous revelation of God. Jesus said to Thomas: If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.[2] Blake heartily believed that word, and applied it more universally than theologians had hitherto dared. In every man there lies hidden the Real Man which is God's Image. Therefore as every man discovers his Real Man, he discovers God. The Real Man in every man is one in essence with the Real Man in all men, but he differs in identity, and therefore as each man discovers his real self, he unveils

[1] *The Everlasting Gospel*, 71. [2] John xiv. 7.

another letter in God's Name and ensures to humanity the progressive revelation of God.

In the natural or unregenerate man the Real Man lies bound hand and foot, and can scarcely make his voice heard from his prison house. Blake, who instinctively worked by symbols, turned to the symbolist Evangelist and took over Lazarus enswathed with grave-clothes as the symbol of the natural man. Throughout *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem* Blake is haunted by the language of S. John, and weaves in its every sentence and word as he describes the new birth and final judgment of man in his passage from death into life. But Blake never confines himself long to one image, and he passes with lightning speed from Lazarus and his charnel house, and sees fallen man as Albion fixed to a rock. Around him beat the storms and snows. " Howling winds cover him, roaring seas dash furious against him, in the deep darkness broad lightnings glare, long thunders roll." [1] And so Albion remains, hard, cold, contracted, opaque, isolated, miserable, asleep, till the Divine voice pierces to the hidden man and awakens him to eternal life.

Perfect man is a creature of four-fold vision: fallen his vision is quenched. Whereas he was able to explore the inner world of reality with inward vision, he finds that what is within is turned ruthlessly without. The heavens appear above, the earth

[1] *Jerusalem*, 94, 1–4.

around, and his body becomes the object of his five senses. He has now only the five senses to inform and instruct him. Therefore if he is driven to make a religion it is a natural religion, if a philosophy it is the sensual philosophy of Locke. Himself contracted, he is compelled to live in a contracted world. Yet he cannot rest satisfied, for deep within is the Real Man bound and almost inarticulate, and he has the crowning sorrow of vaguely remembering happier things. Mercifully there is a limit to this contraction, otherwise the real man would sink into eternal death never to rise again. Man's contracted state is called by Blake Adam. Blake endorses the great statements made by S. Paul concerning Adam, in the Epistles to the Romans and Corinthians:—

"Through the offence of one (Adam) many be dead."

"Judgment was by one (Adam) to condemnation."

"By one man's (Adam's) disobedience many were made sinners."

"In Adam all die."

"The first man (Adam) is of the earth, earthy."

Blake, while conserving all the values that S. Paul attaches to Adam, adds to the symbol. In the contracted man the place of the imagination has been usurped by the reason, and so Adam stands also for the unimaginative man governed by reason.

Besides being contracted fallen man has become

opaque. Perfect man is translucent. He is a stream of transparent depth hiding nothing. His simplicity, innocence, and guilelessness reflect the beauty of God. Opaque man loses the simplicity of Christ and its place is taken by the subtlety of the serpent. What is still worse, he loses fellowship by which Man lives. Fellowship is effected by the inter-penetration and flowing together of human spirits. Man's personality is not fixed but in the making. When he attains to true personality he flows into other spirits and yet retains his identity. In his capacity to live *in* his brother's bosom lies his capacity to live the more abundant life. Fallen man by his opacity has lost this power and become hard and exclusive. His isolation shuts him up in self-hood. Mercifully, again, there is a limit to opacity (Satan), otherwise the real man could never emerge from within his stone walls.

The natural man is always contracted and opaque, but his qualities vary according as one state merges into another. He may be a slave to corporeal passions, or follow a blind instinct of unthinking, unimaginative love, and in either case possess little reasoning power. Blake shows an immense variety of combinations in *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*. Generally, however, natural man is characterised by his reasoning power which has taken the leadership, reducing all the other qualities to servitude. Blake traces the origin of the reasoning power to the " two

contraries" with which every substance is clothed. Natural man calls these two contraries good and evil, and at once proceeds to make an "abstract" of them. This "abstract" is a negation, and negatives "every substance," "its own body," "every Divine Member," in short, "everything."[1] This is the "Holy Reasoning Power," and in its Holiness is closed "the Abomination of Desolation." The Reasoning power is man's spectre.

> Each man is in his Spectre's power
> Until the arrival of that hour,
> When his humanity awake;
> And cast his Spectre into the Lake.[2]

It is the part of reason to work on everything that is supplied to it by the inlets of the soul and body. In perfect man there are a thousand inlets, and the reason can exercise itself on those intuitions which have a far deeper origin than itself. But in natural man these thousand gates are closed, and he has only the five inlets of the senses. The Reason, with so little to work upon, is thus doomed to failure. Having lost the divine vision and in consequence faith, it is compelled to live by sight. It believes only what it can touch, see, and handle. It pursues the positive sciences and stamps out imagination and inspiration, calling them superstition. It sees a part and takes it for the whole. True, its part is immense, though but a small mani-

[1] *Jerusalem*, 10, 7–16. [2] *Jerusalem*, 41, 32.

festation of the Infinite. It can measure the earth with its compasses, but heaven is hidden from its downward gaze. It can explore the heavens with telescopes, but it finds not God. It looks at, not through Nature. It worships efficiency and despises God's gifts in others. Restlessly it works by demonstration, but is never satisfied with its demonstration. It is finally driven by its sense of an aching void to fashion a religion. With the aid of its religion it feels competent to run the world and steer humanity into a safe haven. One has only to think how stupendous are the works of reason, to realise how inevitably Blake personalised it. Urizen is a magnificent figure to be approached with fear and trembling and awful respect. He has many sons and daughters whose names tower in the history of mankind. Bacon, Newton, Locke, Rousseau, Darwin, George Eliot are formidable names among moderns, worthy of such an illustrious father. When Urizen is renewed, and his master, man, once more flings wide his gates, he will take his rightful place in the mental life of the Real Man; and his sons and daughters will be remembered in the sculptured halls of Los' Palace, because by giving body and substance to Reason, they enabled man to cast him out.

Man's reasoning power affects most of all his religion with disastrous results. "Man must and will have some religion; if he has not the religion

of Jesus, he will have the religion of Satan, and will erect the synagogue of Satan calling the Prince of this World, God; and destroying all who do not worship Satan under the name of God." [1]

Natural man begins his religion with ideas of good and evil. We have already seen that Blake held that every substance consists of two contraries which mutually exist. The natural man separates these contraries and calls them good and evil. He has varied ways of dealing with these distinctions, but he generally looks on the distinction as eternal and especially thinks of his abstract law of good as the eternal, unchanging law of God. In order to preserve the good, the evil must be destroyed. But this is impossible. Light and darkness mutually exist, and without darkness there can be no light. One does not destroy darkness to obtain light. When the light shines the darkness vanishes, but it is not destroyed, it has become the medium of the light. The same is true of all contraries. Joy and pain mutually exist. The pain is felt when separated from joy; when united, conscious pain vanishes, yet it is the medium by which alone joy takes possession. Natural man having abstracted his notions of good and evil, proceeds to elaborate a code of moral laws which he calls God's commandments. As such they must never be violated, and the penalty of disobedience must be severe to ensure

[1] *Jerusalem*, 52.

obedience. Yet obedience is impossible. "They are death to every energy of man and forbid the springs of life."[1] When the natural religious man breaks them he condemns himself, when he thinks he keeps them he condemns others, and in either case he is miserable. His failure urges him to repressive measures. He sets himself severe rules of self-discipline, fasting, and even self-chastisement. Occasionally, by sheer will, or by help of philosophy and reason, he succeeds in chaining his passions; but when these energies of life are very strong, they burst out afresh, and drive the natural, religious man to despair. The consequences are no better when he succeeds in his repression. The passions repressed turn to poison and mounting to the brain infect it with morbid fancies. The character that is ultimately formed by such a process is nerveless, self-conscious, studied, severe, and entirely lacking in sweet spontaneity, in beautiful impassioned words and actions, and in creative genius. Again and again the natural religious man goes through the agonies of repentance, and each time the iron is more riveted in his soul. His consciousness is now almost completely obsessed with the notion of sin, and in his despair he is driven to formulate a doctrine of atonement for his sin. He turns to God, but it is a God he has created in his own image by means of his senses and reasoning power. Since violation of

[1] *Jerusalem*, 35, 11.

the commandments must in his own code be severely punished, he necessarily thinks of God as the Avenger exacting the penalty to the last farthing. The debtor failing entirely to pay his debt, God at last provides for him a righteous substitute who meekly offers Himself to the Avenger of Sin, receiving on His head the lightning of God's wrath, and thereby satisfying His righteousness and His mercy. Thus the sinner comes to shelter himself under the vicarious sufferings of Christ. He is not purged of his sins, but his misery is dulled and made bearable. But liberty he has none. His reasoning power has already killed every happy inspiration, and bound his higher powers. No longer able to see through Nature, he is ensnared by her witchery; and God being the offspring of his own binding reason, he ends by falling completely into bondage to his God.

To understand Blake it is necessary to see what was his attitude to the great Evangelical movement of his time. In his prophetical books he always refers with approval to Wesley, Whitefield, and even Hervey whose *Meditations in a Country Church Yard* are now unreadable. These men and others—Venn, Fletcher, Beveridge, Romaine—taught as necessary to salvation a substitutionary view of atonement which Blake vigorously repudiated. The real point of contact with them was their insistence on the new birth. It was through their experi-

ence of the new birth and not through their doctrine of atonement that Blake believed they attained to liberty. John Wesley is a specially interesting case in point. At Oxford he was intensely religious, and full of prescribed good works. In after years he testified that he had known nothing of the new birth, nor did he till he went to America, and learned from Peter Böhler the truth that freed his soul. Wesley then at Oxford was confessedly only a natural religious man.

Blake's understanding and appreciation of the evangelicals and methodists can hardly have been reciprocated. Wesley never really understood mysticism. He designated William Law's book on the new birth as " philosophical, speculative, precarious, Behmenish, void, and vain! " Boehme was " fustian," and Swedenborg " one of the most ingenious, lively, entertaining madmen that ever set pen to paper." However, Blake was far too much before his time to be understood by his contemporaries. It is enough that he understood them, and did them full justice.

To return to Blake's natural religious man. Once one has grasped the prevailing characteristics of his mind, one sees how impossible it is for the gracious fruit of the spirit to grow out of such a soil. Self-condemnation and despair are the best fruits of the natural religious man's failure. There is a deep human experience, which repeats itself in every age,

and in all pronounced cases of conversion. When the good man is racked with bankruptcy and despair just then a door within opens. He becomes conscious of life and strength flowing in. He knows that the life does not originate from himself, he has nothing to bring; but as he remains quietly receptive, the new life takes hold of him and renews the springs of his being; and he sees in a flash that henceforth if only he can abide in this Life and this Life in him, he can go from strength to strength, from faith to faith, from victory to victory, from glory to glory, till he comes face to face with Him who renewed his soul. This was the experience of Wesley and Whitefield, and of many of their followers. They believed that it was in consequence of their faith in the atonement. But their distorted view of atonement was rejected by Blake. Happily saving truth is conveyed to lives even through misstated doctrines. The methodists and Calvinists looking to Christ on the Cross often grasped the Divine Love and Mercy which thus manifested itself in supreme self-oblation. They learned that man's highest life was a life of service, and they realised in the hour of their weakness and despair that life and power were not of themselves but of God. It is in a later stage of the regenerate life that a wrong view of the Atonement is apt to warp the life because it must always lead to a false conception of God. The methodists and Calvinists were compelled to realise

by their own doctrine their impotence and God's sufficient Life. The moment of that realisation was their delivery as they passed from death into life. Blake passed through the same deep experience without becoming entangled in an immoral version of the Atonement. Many convicted souls did not obtain to liberty. They took shelter beneath the Cross but were not renewed. They testified in public that they were saved, while their deeds testified against them. This was the side of methodism observed by Fielding, and which he was quick to satirise in his novels. Such results were bad enough, but they are far worse when the natural religious man is successful in repressing his passions and becoming virtuous. The virtues he cultivates are chastity, righteousness, self-control, economy, prudence, discretion, punctuality, regularity, utility and such like. Viewed closely these virtues are seen to be manufactured not grown. They bear the same relation to the fruit of the spirit, as the fruits of a Christmas tree to the apples of the orchard. And they also bring with them some ugly malignant growths. Pride, contempt, and condemnation of others spring up like toad-stools in the night. The natural religious moral man thanks God that he is not like other men; he despises God's gifts in others; he stamps out imagination and inspiration. He hates all innovators and rebels; he punishes offenders relentlessly; he upholds law,

custom, and authority; he worships efficiency; and the everlasting word on his lips is duty.

Like all other men the natural religious man cannot live to himself, for though his religion contracts and isolates him, yet he cannot fall out of his place as a unit in the social organism, and as such he affects society to its furthest limits. His first care is his own soul which he tries to save at all costs. He never realises that it can only be saved along with the society of which he is a member. The social organism may also react relentlessly on him, catching him up in its wheels and tearing him to pieces. He is much too intent on making virtues to be alive to the iniquities of the state. Next to himself the religious man is preoccupied with his family. His pride insists on his building his house. He seizes all the prizes he can for his sons and daughters, and his family prospers at the expense of others in a less favoured part of the social organism.

> Is this thy soft Family-Love,
> Thy cruel patriarchal pride,
> Planting thy family alone,
> Destroying all the world beside? [1]

There is a terrible nemesis to the man who seeks the good of his family apart from the good of society, as Job's sons learnt when they were crushed by the pillars of their own houses.

[1] *Jerusalem*, 27, 20.

A man's worst enemies are those
Of his own house and family;
And he who makes his law a curse,
By his own law shall surely die.

For Jerusalem the City of God can only be built when men and nations walk " heart in heart and hand in hand."

In my exchanges every land
Shall walk, and mine in every land,
Mutual shall build Jerusalem
Both heart in heart and hand in hand.

Next to planting his family the natural religious man is anxious to secure friends. These are what Blake calls " corporeal friends." They have nothing to do with the real man, they rather hinder him and therefore are spiritual enemies. They are useful when the time comes for launching the sons into the world; then their " interest " is often able to secure a high official place. They are also useful as patrons even to genius which ineffectually beats its wings for recognition without their help. True friends are meant for the evil days, as well as prosperous times, but it is here that corporeal friends fail. They come and preach patience, endurance, and indeed all the virtues which the religious man considers he has mastered. It may happen that they hold a mirror to the natural religious man of himself and drive him to desperation and curses like Job. He must then either perish or turn from his corporeal friends and cast himself on God. In the meantime man, with his

family and friends, having seized for himself a monopoly, some one has to pay, and in that way poverty is created in the social organism. With poverty comes a long train of evils—sickness, disease, misery, crime, prostitution; and the prosperous religious man becomes conscious that he has always the poor with him. He cannot be easy at their presence. He may even be vaguely aware of his real relation to them. His conscience is perturbed, and he seeks to soothe it and the poor by dealing out doles and organising lectures on thrift, hygiene and temperance. Then the churches are enlisted, and the clergy with the facility offered by the parochial system visit the houses of the poor, distributing the charities and exhorting the victims to repent. Repentance is seldom effected. The poor man continues to drown his cares in drink, and his persistent drunkenness satisfies the religious man that nothing more can be done with him. Then he must be handed over to the cruelties of the penal system. The religious man's family is endangered by the criminals at large and by the prostitutes driven on to the streets. For his family safety, he must build prisons for the criminals, and for his family purity, brothels for the prostitutes. That is not the end of the natural religious man's action on the social organism. The mind he has fabricated for himself is penal and forensic. Pity and forgiveness are slowly banished until he becomes quite "blind to the

simple rules of life." [1] He then " leaves the plough, and harrow and loom, the hammer and chisel and the rule and the compasses," and forges the " sword, the chariot of war, the battle-axe, the trumpet fitted to the battle," and all the arts of life he changes into the arts of death. Since there are thousands of natural religious men impressing continually their mentality on the social organism, the State necessarily becomes like a powder magazine, and then a spark is sufficient to precipitate a whole nation into revolution or war.

The natural religious man's development is now as steady as the Rake's Progress. Job's boils typify his shame, doubt, and despair. All the time there is a hardening process. His pride will not allow other men to differ from himself, and he will compass land and sea to make one proselyte. He is so accustomed to think of himself as the child of privilege that he invents a doctrine of election by which he can reject all but himself and his corporeal friends, and so becomes a bigot. His isolation and the shrinkage of his universe consequent on his undue simplification of life, concentrate the rays of his sun into one burning spot which kindles his eye, and betrays to the observer that he has become a fanatic. His zeal for the faith intensifies. He persecutes relentlessly all heretics, and when circumstance permits casts them into the fires which he has

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night VII. 660 etc.

kindled. The Christ within dies after a long crucifixion. But the man knows not that the hidden lamp in his temple has been extinguished. Without its light he calls evil good and good evil. When he comes face to face with the incarnate Christ, he shouts, Crucify Him, Crucify Him, and hands him over with fearful exultation to the cruellest death he can devise. Thus he and his corporeal friends sin against the Holy Ghost for which the Christ said there was no forgiveness. Thank God, that was not His last word. As he fell a victim to their bitter hatred He cried, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." To the natural religious man, Blake says as Christ said to the religious Nicodemus: "Ye must be born again." We have seen that the man who has followed the path indicated by his reason and five senses, brought through repeated failure to despair, finds in his last extremity that a door opens within, and he passes from death into life. This is a frequent way to the new birth, but it is not the normal or the most healthy. There are some like John the Baptist who are full of the Holy Ghost from their Mother's womb. In all cases there is something mysterious. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit."[1] There are very many (perhaps the greater number) who

[1] S. John iii. 8.

cannot put their finger on any crisis in their life and say when they were born again. That, of course, is not important. It is important that a man should know that he has been born of the Spirit, otherwise there can be no stability in his spiritual life. This knowledge comes sooner or later when the man gains the inward witness of the Spirit. The Spiritual birth then becomes as certain to him as his natural birth. Blake traces magnificently the course of the new birth in *Jerusalem.* "The Breath Divine Breathed over Albion. . . . He opened his eyelids in pain; in pain he moved his stony members. . . . Albion rose." To him troubled in conscience and affrighted, Jesus says: "Fear not, Albion, unless I die thou canst not live, but if I die I shall rise again and thou with me." . . . Albion replied: "Cannot man exist without mysterious offering of self for another? Is this friendship and brotherhood?" . . . Jesus said: "Wouldst thou love one who never died for thee, or ever die for one who had not died for thee? And if God dieth not for Man and giveth not Himself eternally for Man, Man could not exist, for Man is Love, as God is Love; every kindness to another is a little Death in the Divine Image, nor can Man exist but by Brotherhood." [1]

Here in a few sublimely simple words Blake reveals the true and innermost meaning of the Atonement, which is an eternal process, enacted in history,

[1] *Jerusalem*, 96, 1–28.

repeated in the spiritual life of every member of Christ, and when apprehended by conscience-stricken, pained, and despairing man enables him to take hold of Life and start on his upward course with peace, joy and hope in his heart, and the inward assurance of ultimate victory. The insistence on the new birth, then, was the great point which Blake had in common with his protestant contemporaries. His attitude to the natural man was, however, very different from theirs. Whitefield regarded the natural man as entirely depraved. He had not a spark of original righteousness. He was a goat, a tare, a vessel of wrath, a child of the devil. The man who had been born again was righteous in God's eyes, a sheep, pure wheat, an heir of grace and a child of God. The saved man who claimed to discern all things could infallibly decide who was saved and who lost. This sharply defined distinction between the saved and unsaved made the way of the evangelist very simple, for it was easy to say to a man: You are lost, I am saved, I will tell you how to become saved. But a price must be paid for this simple method. The saved saw no good thing in the unsaved. He was reprobate and as such the saved man must separate himself from his company; he must not touch him lest he be defiled; and when he took this pharisaic attitude it was only one step further to say: Depart from me for I am holier than thou. To this day many a protestant condemns

another as unsaved who is intrinsically better than himself. Blake saw that the Real Man lay hidden in the natural man, yet not so hidden but that he made his presence felt from time to time. It was just this recognition which softened the distinction between the spiritual and natural man which Calvinism had made so rigid. Because there is a limit to contraction and opacity, therefore Blake's natural man is not altogether depraved, his original righteousness is deeper than his original sin, and in his deeds there gleams fitfully the presence of the Real Man. A man may be sexually passionate, in which case the lightning of his Real Man striking his passion into flame will give him illumination and insight. For this reason the passionate man has more understanding of life than the cold intellectual, and he is nearer to the Kingdom. When he enters the Kingdom his passion undergoes transmutation, and as it penetrates his every thought and action makes them vital and beautiful. Again, sinners, tramps, thieves are natural men; but they often have more reality in them than natural religious men or settled men whose morality is merely imitative. This touch of reality makes them respond to the truth when they hear it. Therefore Blake, like all men of real spiritual-imaginative discernment, detected unerringly the Real Man in natural men. By seeing the inner beauty, he could love them, and his love at once put him into simple human relationship with them

which was wholly right and wholly Christian. To eat with publicans and sinners, for Christ, was neither to set a good example nor condescension, it was the swift detection of the pulse of life by Him who was the Life indeed. To have separated Himself from them would have seemed to Him the worst kind of self-righteousness and spiritual pride.

Blake's twice-born man is further to be distinguished from Whitefield's convert, though he approaches more nearly to Wesley's sanctified man. When a man is born again, he must pass on to holiness, or else his new spiritual life will dwindle away and leave him in a worse state than the first. Whitefield and Toplady were frightened at any doctrine of Christian perfection, and for many years Whitefield could not regard Wesley as a brother for teaching Arminian doctrine and Christian perfection. Wesley's doctrine of the "second blessing" or "entire sanctification" or "a clean heart," as it was variously called, when carefully sifted and restated was in reality a revival of the old catholic doctrine of sanctity. A Wesleyan saint was equivalent to a Catholic saint who had reached the unitive way. Like Wesley, Blake saw that the converted man might have a great deal of the old man in him, and the old man would ultimately prevail unless the converted man passed on to the life of unity. So far Blake's regenerate man and Wesley's are alike, but Blake brings out a difference of para-

mount importance. The imagination of his twice-born man has been set free from the tyranny of the reasoning power. His imagination urges him to music, art, poetry or sculpture, and when his life of unity is reached, the Real Imaginative Man takes the supreme control and starts on creative work. Between the new birth and this perfect liberty there is a long period of temptation and bitter conflict. Through this the man must win his way with all his courage and valour. He may pass through a horror of great darkness, he may faint many times, but if he carries on his mental fight manfully to the end, his dire conflict will resolve into victory and liberty; and then if he does not create a beautiful work of art, he will in any case hand down a beautiful legend of his life, and a life that has become a poem is the highest work of art a man can leave the race. In man's life there are two great spiritual crises which theologically are called conversion and sanctification. Either of them may be sudden or gradual. Usually conversion takes place at adolescence, and sanctification stretches over the remaining lifetime: but the realisation of the truth of conversion and sanctification is frequently in the flash of a moment.

In the Old Testament Scriptures there are many examples. Abraham's sanctification was immediately preceded by "a horror of great darkness" and a symbolical act expressing the complete sur-

render of himself by faith to God. He became father to the child of promise, and saw in vision the whole of the promised land to be possessed by his posterity. Jacob's conversion was effected by his vision of a ladder joining heaven and earth, and his sanctification began by his wrestling all night with an angel till the day dawned. From being Jacob the supplanter he became Israel the Prince with God. Subsequently his people in the person of Moses was taken into a high mountain, and shown the promised land. Having seen the blessed vision, he was taken down into the valley, and told to fight his way inch by inch until he should take possession. Isaiah was sanctified by his vision of the Glory of God which convicted him of uncleanness. A live coal off the altar of God pressed to his lips purged him, and he became God's spokesman. Ezekiel's gradual yielding of himself while the Hand of the Lord was heavy upon him, made him a sharp instrument in the Hand of the Lord. The classical exposition of the whole process of sanctification is in the story of Job. There through terrible afflictions we see Job stripped of his natural and patriarchal religion, brought through horrible suffering till at the vision of God he repents in dust and ashes. Blake in his Job series has seized every element in the story of Job, and because of its universal significance has been able to incorporate his own experience of darkness and mental fight till he had reached the life of unity.

In the New Testament the deeper experience is called the baptism of fire or of the Holy Ghost. The Christ's sanctification began in Jordan when the Heavens opened and the Spirit of God descended upon Him like a Dove. It was continued through the temptation and suffering in the wilderness; it reached its darkest hour in the Garden of Gethsemane; and was finally consummated on the Cross when he calmly committed His Spirit into the Hands of His Father.

The disciples entered on their sanctification on the Day of Pentecost. The change in their lives was speedily manifested in boldness, purity and power.

These two inward experiences were linked from the beginning of the Apostles' ministry with two outward rites—Baptism and the Laying on of Hands (Confirmation), and the Church, built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, has preserved these two rites ever since.

Catholicism has enriched the doctrine of sanctification in her doctrine of Saints. As usual catholic theology has systematised this part of man's spiritual progress with passionate precision. Whether we turn to the pages of the theological Saint Thomas Aquinas, to the mystical Saints John of the Cross, Teresa, Peter of Alcantara, or the modern Jesuit Poulain, we shall find mapped out every inch of the way to holiness which was trodden by the Saints.

Protestantism has added much of deep interest

to the literature of holiness. Jacob Boehme wrote fully of what he had known by experience. George Fox has revealed the history of his sanctification in his Journal. John Bunyan has given a harrowing account of his own " dark night " in *Grace Abounding*. Among Blake's contemporaries William Law, deepened by his study of Boehme, wrote his beautiful *Spirit of Love*, and *Spirit of Prayer*, dealing with the soul's passage out of the vanity of time into the riches of Eternity. For the most part, Calvinist protestants like Whitefield and Toplady were frightened at doctrines of Christian perfection. It is to Wesley that honour must be paid for reviving the old catholic doctrine, and making it practicable to many thousands of his followers.

Wesley called sanctification the " second blessing," or " entire sanctification " or " the clean heart." He seems to have experienced it without partaking of Job's terrors; but many of his followers were plunged into the dark night, and in their struggles through to light, they often learned much mysticism which was embodied in Charles Wesley's hymns, and has lived on to this day. Present-day religious movements like the Salvation Army and the Pentecostal League are really off-shoots of methodism. The Salvation Army distinguishes the two blessings of conversion and sanctification by the vivid symbols of blood and fire; and the Pentecostal League insists that man must be baptised

with the Holy Ghost and with fire before he can be endued with power for service.

This long dark period subsequent to the new birth, and leading to entire sanctification, is called by Saint Thomas Aquinas the way of purgation; by S. John of the Cross, the dark night of the soul; by Bunyan, the valley of the Shadow of Death; and by Blake, the Day of Judgment.

So far as I know, Blake is the first to call the purgative way the Day of Judgment, though mystics had always known that it was a process of judgment, as was shown in the Gospel according to S. John. Blake besides illustrating Job's day of judgment gives a whole *Night* of *The Four Zoas* to Albion's day of judgment. Here his language is largely taken from the Bible, and as in the Bible, he pictures it as a general judgment of the nations. But he leaves no doubt that he is dealing with an experience of Albion's inner life, and as such it is the way to his liberty and the building of Jerusalem.

The day of judgment begins with trouble. The man finds his sun darkened, his moon torn down, and his heavens cracked across. It is a terrible time when those things are shaken which he has always taken for granted. It seems then as if everything would go and he must find himself in the terrors of Non-existence. To add to his sufferings the fires of eternity fall with "loud and shrill sound of loud trumpet thundering along from heaven to heaven."

These fires are never quenched until they have accomplished their work by searching out every minutest particular in man's soul and body. The man is plunged without power to draw back into a baptism of fire. The fire flaming through all the intricate labyrinths of man's inward being releases all that the natural religious man has repressed. Passion flares up in a " fierce raving fire," and the man is pursued by the things he has oppressed. The trumpet continues to sound till everything in man starts forth trembling subject to the " flames of mental fire." All that has been built up by natural religion, which Blake calls mystery is cast into the flames, till " Mystery's tyrants are cut off and not one left on earth." Then the " living flames winged with intellect and reason " invade the Holy City of man's spirit. The man, his heart weak and his head faint, is distracted by the war within his members, and cries to his reasoning power (Urizen) to help him. He finds that no help is forthcoming. His eyes are sufficiently open to see Urizen in his real nature, and he denounces his self-destroying, beast-formed science, and curses him as the first author of war by his religion and destroyer of honest mind into confused perturbation, and strife, and horror, and pride. For Urizen devoured by the flame of judgment, nothing remains, unless he repents, but to be left " as a rotten branch to burn, with Mystery the harlot and with Satan for ever and ever." Urizen

is convicted of sin and weeps. He sees that in spite of all the cities and towers he has built, he has utterly failed to find pleasure, joy or wisdom. He has sought in "Spaces remote the eternal which is always present to the wise;" and "for pleasure, which, unsought, falls round the infant's path."[1] He, the labourer of ages, at last turns his back on the void which he has made, discovering that "Futurity is in this moment." He then ceases from all repressive measures, and releasing passion allows it to rage as it will. Urizen has persisted in his folly, till he has become wise. Shaking off his cold snows, he renews his radiant youth, and rises into the heavens in naked majesty. Thus the man passes through the first great phase of his day of judgment. Natural religion has been consumed, false methods of morality abandoned, and the youth of his reasoning power renewed.

Man is still very far from unity. The trumpet continues to sound, and the dead arise and "flock to the trumpet, fluttering over the sides of the grave and crying in the fierce wind round the heavy rocks and mountains filled with groans."[2]

There is a strange miscellaneous company, fathers, friends, and mothers, infants, kings, and warriors, priests, captives, slaves, merchants, warriors, tyrants. Here Blake is compelled to keep to the

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night IX. 169–173.
[2] *The Four Zoas.* Night IX. 241 *et seq.*

general language of the Day of Judgment since it is hardly possible to press it into the subjective experience of the individual man without being over-ingenious. Still one thing is very clear. After Urizen has ascended to the Heavens, and man's manifold powers are let loose, it must seem to the man that unity is further off than ever; and amid the wild confusion and mutual recriminations of his inimical powers, his brain reels till he hardly knows whether he has not gone mad.

The effort to keep sane must be made, for the renewed reason has a great work to perform. Urizen and his sons, who had originally forged weapons of war, now abandon " the spear, the bow, the gun, the mortar. They level the fortifications. They beat the iron engines of destruction into wedges." [1] The wars of this world are the outward manifestation of the lusts that wage in man's members. In spite of the fearful confusion, man has advanced a long way when he renounces the weapons of destruction. In their place the sons of Urizen seize the plough and harrow, the spade, the mattock and axe, and the heavy roller to break the clods. With the help of these peaceful tools Urizen proceeds to deal with the rocky, mountainous, and sandy parts of man's inner condition. In addition to the fire that rages all the time man is subjected to the plough and harrow, which can only seem to him

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night IX. 302.

instruments of torture. But Urizen having set his hand to the plough never turns back. He prepared the land; then seizing the trembling souls of all the dead who stand before him, flings them as seed into the universal field. After that, he and his wearied sons sit down to rest and quietly await the human harvest.

We have seen that, when Urizen removed his restraining hand, all the repressed powers of man rose up. Foremost among these was passion (Orc). At first passion rages with increased fury and regenerate man is tempted as never before. Every moment threatens to engulf him; and he feels himself plunged into the hell of voluptuousness. But Orc (passion) flaming encounters the mental flames, and he consumes himself " expending all his energy against the fuel of fire." [1] The man can then take Orc and hand him over to Urizen once more, who having learned the value of passion, no longer desires to repress it. Orc had set himself above the human form divine. From that high station he had been thrown down into dark oblivion. Then after " incessant pangs " and " stern repentance " he " renews his brightness " till he resumes the image of the human. He then co-operates in the bliss of man, obeys his will and becomes a servant " to the infinite and eternal of the human form." The supreme value of passion in Blake's teaching has

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night IX. 356.

become apparent. His havoc in unregenerate man may be terrible; but once a servant of the regenerate man, he becomes the best of all servants, serving in all man's mental pursuits, quickening all man's joyous perception of beauty, beautifying all man's social dealings with his brother.

Closely connected with Orc are Luvah and Vala. Luvah's victims are love-sick youths and maidens. The regenerate man is as susceptible to Cupid's arrow as the unregenerate; in many cases he is more so. The nerve centres of love and religion are next to each other, and what stirs the one stirs the other. Many a devout and conscientious youth is distracted because just when he is enjoying a sudden religious exaltation, his senses take fire, and his religious emotion degenerates into gross eroticism. This is well known to the saints; and man does not gain his liberty till he has passed through his day of judgment to the bitter end. Thus to his other woes regenerate man has added the pangs of love-sickness. He cannot sing or dance, he can only howl and writhe in shoals of torment and fierce flames consuming. To sharpen his miseries his love often takes a sadistic or masochistic form, when Luvah's daughters take " a cruel joy " in " lacerating with knives and whips their victims," and Luvah's sons indulge in " deadly sport." In this unveiling of hidden lusts effected by man's day of judgment, he comes face to face with palpable evil. He can make

no terms with it. Here resentment is his safeguard. The triumph of lust is the triumph of the satyr, the beast, the gargoyle, and the destruction of the man. With resolute scorn he must arise and cast out the beast if ever he is to attain to his divine humanity. In the first love affairs of youths and maidens, there is much innocence, poetry and beauty, but being largely based on curiosity they are also fleeting. It is not until men and women have been purged by the fierce fires of the day of judgment that they can form lasting attachments, in which they maintain mutual self-respect and reverence for each other's identity. Here, too, renewed Orc is a servant. By joining man and woman in pure passion, he contributes to their innocent joy, and crowns their happiness with fruit. For the reader to see Luvah and Vala renewed I must refer them to the surpassingly beautiful passages in *The Four Zoas*[1] where Blake shows them in their pastoral innocence. And so man's redemption draws near. Besides his natural religion being consumed, his false morality abandoned, and his reason renewed, he has made passion his servant, and instead of a torment love has become a joy in his life.

Throughout all his fiery judgment man is unlearning as well as learning; and unlearning is accompanied by terrors which contribute to the desolate misery of the overburdened man. The

[1] *The Four Zoas.* Night IX. 420 *et seq.*

natural man created God in his own image. The image of the natural man was fashioned by his reason working on what was supplied by the five senses. Hence his God was limited, contracted, wrathful, exacting, penal, sternly heaping his punishments on the disobedient even to everlasting punishment, and preparing rewards for the righteous even to everlasting bliss. When man is regenerate he is still for a long time impeded by worshipping a God with feet of clay, and by seeing his God only through the distorting medium of false religious doctrines. False religions are devils, and these devils are exorcised and cast into the deep only when the Day of Judgment has accomplished its work. Every false conception of God is an idol set up in the heart. In the "chamber of man's imagery" are engraven "every form of creeping things, and abominable beasts,"[1] while he himself stands in the centre swinging his censer to the creatures of his own hand. Man becomes like the image of his worship, but God is the true Image of Man's worship, and the false image must be melted and destroyed in the fires of the Judgment Day. While the image is melting man is terrified at the prospect of atheism, but all the time the Refiner of gold sits gazing into the turgid seething mass. He continues to gaze till the dross is purged, and His own Image reflected in the pure molten gold: then

[1] Ezekiel viii. 9–12.

He knows it is time to draw the gold out of the fires because the fires have done their work. Man's religious doctrines are judged one by one. His doctrine of substitutionary Atonement must go. Through this doctrine man saw a wrathful God propitiated by the death of His Son, and through Him induced to forgive the sinner who takes hold of the innocent victim and offers him in his stead. Such a God is wrathful, cruel, arbitrary, penal, vindictive; and He must be obliterated out of man's heart before man can see Him as everlasting mercy, forgiving sins always and sorrowing in all the pangs of His creatures. Christ hanging on the Cross finally teaches the judged man that God lives by self-oblation; that the Man who offers Himself to do God's will is ever the victim of the natural religious man—the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world;—and that the suffering Christ is the symbol of God's suffering till His creatures return to Him, and by living their lives joyfully in Him, put an end to the sorrow and crying of a world that has gone astray. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," and they see Him as a God whose love burns in judgment, till the fire becomes a fount of living waters. Again the fires of judgment deliver man from the bondage of the letter into the freedom of the spirit. While he is in bondage to the letter he is terrified at higher critics, and in the name of the letter denounces and persecutes men of the Spirit

as the worst enemies of religion. Yet it is the man who worships the letter who is killed by the letter, and he always has the fear of the letter giving way, and leaving him without a religion. Man has to learn the value of words, and the value of nominalism, but he has also to go behind the words and names of things, and until he does so, he cannot have fellowship with his brother who adopts different words and a different symbolism to himself. If a man lets go the letter of Scripture for its spirit, he will find that the spirit will ultimately give him back the letter. And so little by little the Day of Judgment releases contracted and opaque man out of his prison. No longer contracted, he no longer contracts God. His opacity imprisoned him, now he finds his prison was the hollow of God's hand. God is all-present, all-knowing, all-mighty. In that vision of God he has burst his fetters. He now knows that he is God's Image. In finding God he has found himself, and in finding himself he has found God. He can look back over the fiery way, and see that as his false conceptions of Incarnation and Atonement, of Resurrection and Ascension, of Inspiration, and of the Church were burned away, he gained a true conception of these things; and as no man's life can be right unless his beliefs are right, in purifying his beliefs he has purged his life of smoke and dirt, and made it a pure flame off the Altar of God.

One is compelled to deal singly with the parts of man as they are brought through the fire of judgment. But one must not be led into regarding man as multiple. All divisions of man into spirit, soul and body, or more simply into soul and body are useful only for purposes of analysis. Even man's body in Blake's teaching is a part of the soul discerned by the five senses, for man is one. After analysing him in parts, one must get back as quickly as possible to regarding him as a unit, for the breath of life escapes in an analytical process, and we should rapidly find ourselves working in an anatomy laboratory or an evil-smelling charnel house.

It is not easy—owing doubtlessly to perverse habits of thought—to think of man as one even when we come to deal with his self-hood. At once we find ourselves speaking of a higher self and lower self or a real self and a phenomenal self. Christ's reiterated words: " He who would save his life will lose it, and he who loses his life shall find it," avoid the duality but the words necessarily remain a paradox.

In modern thought the preaching of self-realisation easily becomes the worst kind of egotism, and to avoid misunderstanding one is driven back to the lower and higher self and to explain that the realisation of the lower self is egotism, even if as refined as Sir Willoughby Patterne's; and the realisation of the higher self is life and salvation, and the only thing ultimately that is of value to the social

organism. If I still use this language let it be clearly understood that I do not mean that there are really two selves. There is one self, and one desire. When the desire fixes on any object, immediately it draws into the self the essence of the object, and man is transformed into the image of that which he desires. The desire is a great thirst which remains unslaked until it centres in God. Then it draws God into the self, and the self is changed into the image of God. The Real-self loves God, desires God, gives itself to God, but ofttimes it is only after many false roads have been tried that it finds itself at last at the feet of God. During its passage it has taken the colour of its surroundings; if they have been low, it has appeared as a lower self, if its environment is God, it shines out in human majesty, and makes itself felt by its convincing reality.

The great work of the Day of Judgment is to deliver man from self-hood which binds him in a narrow prison; and to break down all barriers until man, one with the pulsing life of the universe and with God, attains to perfect liberty. Man's contracted and opaque state makes him appear to himself a detached unit. For a long time he never questions his detachment, and every political and religious step that he takes is dictated by this conviction. Politically he must always be conservative if he is fortunate in this world's goods, lest a change should endanger his possessions; if he is unfor-

tunate, he will be a radical or socialist, with the hope that his own condition will improve. Religiously, we have seen, his first thought is to save his soul, and his second to preserve his family. His religion need not be entirely selfish, it may make him zealous to help others to maintain themselves. His philanthropy is entirely directed to this end. His good works, his charities, even to bestowing all his goods to feed the poor, help to keep man from "losing himself." His religion and politics tend to isolate him more and more till all communication with the spirit of life in the universe is broken. No longer able to delight in the earth and sea, the sky and the clouds, the meadows and trees which cost nothing, he seeks artificial pleasures for which he pays a heavy price. His unnatural life tells on his health, and he goes on the first opportunity for change of air. If he is rich he goes to Monte-Carlo and enjoys the feverish excitement of gambling, forgetful of the blue depths of the Mediterranean. If he is not rich he goes to a popular watering-place. Through him the sea-side places are spoilt one by one. The popular sea-side resort reeks with an atmosphere which would quickly poison man's spiritual springs, were it not for the sea-breezes which happily he cannot escape. Blake knew well how priceless a little home by the sea might be, when he lived at Felpham. Even now Felpham is not spoilt, and much of it remains as Blake saw it. The sudden

transition from Felpham to Bognor is apalling as it makes one realize what man does with his favourite watering towns. Man's self-hood blinds him to the true value of things. He builds vulgar houses in which he can make an ostentatious display of wealth; he vitiates the cinematograph; he demands bad plays and kills good ones (and good playwrights!) by refusing to go to them; he devours sentimental novels, buys gaudy pictures, listens to luscious music, and leaves the creators of beautiful things to die by neglect.

Man's self-hood is slowly rent by the fires of judgment. The vision of One who died for him teaches him that God lives only by self-oblation which means God is love; and that he can only live on the same terms because man is love also. The self is finally lost " in the contemplation of faith and wonder at the Divine Mercy." [1] Even as he gazes his afflictions pass away, for the furnaces which tortured him, become Fountains of Living Waters flowing from the Humanity Divine. He becomes what he beholds. All barriers and all separateness are consumed. Man loses himself in the larger life of the universe. Yet just when his self-hood is torn to shreds he finds himself. For

The Lamb of God has rent the veil of mystery, soon to return
In clouds and fires around the rock, and thy mysterious tree.
And as the seed waits eagerly watching for its flower and fruit,
Anxious its little soul looks out into the clear expanse

[1] *Jerusalem* 96, 31.

To see if hungry winds are abroad with their invisible array.
So Man looks out in tree, and herb, and fish and bird and beast,
Collecting up the scattered portions of his immortal body
Into the elemental forms of everything that grows.
He tries the sullen north wind, riding on its angry furrows,
The sultry south when the sun rises, and the angry east
When the sun sets and the clods harden and the cattle stand
Drooping, and the birds hide in their silent nests. He stores his thoughts
As in store-houses in his memory. He regulates the forms
Of all beneath and all above, and in the gentle west
Reposes where the Sun's heat dwells. He rises to the Sun,
And to the planets of the night, and to the stars that gild
The Zodiacs, and the stars that sullen stand to north and south:
He touches the remotest pole, and in the centre weeps
That Man should labour and sorrow, and learn and forget and return
To the dark valley whence he came, and begin his labours anew.
In pain he sighs, in pain he labours, and, his universe
Sorrowing in birds over the deep, or howling in the wolf
Over the slain, and moaning in the cattle, and in the winds,
And weeping over Orc and Urizen in clouds and dismal fires,
And in the cries of birth and in the groans of death his voice
Is heard throughout the universe. Wherever a grass grows
Or a leaf buds, the Eternal Man is seen, is heard, is felt,
And all his sorrows, till he re-assumes his ancient bliss.

At last after long mental fight out of the fires of judgment Blake's Real Man emerges. He is the Ancient of Days, he is Job redeemed, he is Ezekiel, he is Blake himself, he is the beginning of new ages. Let us try to seize his salient characteristics.

Real Man is a unity containing four Mighty Ones. Foremost he has, more, he *is* a splendid imagination. His imagination is vision. Imagination is Eternal. Through imagination he feasts at Messiah's table, drinking the wine of Eternity.

Through imagination he enters the great communion of Saints, and with piercing vision detects brothers and sisters among the fallen and outcast. He has passed through the valley of the shadow of Death, and henceforth starts at no shadows, and neither tastes nor sees Death. Through imagination he ranges over all the Past, and in joy creates the Future. Every picture he paints is a window into Eternity; his poems are the wine of Eternity; his music the passion of Eternity; his architecture the grand forms of Eternity. Through Imagination he is Lord of Heaven and Earth and Hell, and these three are One. Through Imagination he is a child and a God. Besides Imagination he has Reason. His reason inspired by imagination becomes winged intellect. His intellect is swift and clean, and cuts like a sharp sword. It informs all his words making them the Word of God. It delivers him from abstraction and vagueness, from sentimentalism and softness, from woolliness and unreality, from fog, mist and dreams. Through his greatest love and pity, mercy and tenderness, his intellect gleams, assuring one that under all there is a hard steel-like quality which preserves him from becoming a mush of softness. His intellect discovers to him the comic even in himself, and as he laughs with hearty good humour he infects all with a spirit of cleanliness and health.

His imaginative intellect informs his affections and emotions. As he no longer lives to himself but

for his brother, he sanctifies himself for the sake of his brother. Having suffered from corporeal friends, he will bind to his bosom spiritual friends whose identity he will above all things respect. His friendships in the eye of the world may appear cold; but they will be cemented by the invisible fire of the spirit and able to defy space and time, height and depth, life and death, and be a perennial source of joy and bliss.

The Real Man is a sociable being. He does not imagine he can love all alike, but by keeping the central fire of his loves pure and passionate, there flows forth a stream of brotherly love, which, taking its rise from the Eternal Fount, never dwindles; and he is able to love his brothers according to the measure of their receptivity. In simple reality he and they have become essentially one, while each preserves his identity; and he never dreams of seeking his good apart from his brothers' welfare. He may differ in the social measures to be adopted; but the measures are always with a single eye to his brothers' well-being.

In his love he is a romantic, but never an erotic. His Real life began by self-oblation, and in his love he gives himself continually. The woman is frequently tempted to give even to her identity—to be as the dust beneath her Lord's chariot wheel, and the man too in his hot youth is in danger of letting love encroach on his identity. If he does, he forfeits

for a time his manhood; and for a few brief ecstatic days, lets slip the highest human prize. The Real Man gives his essence and guards zealously his identity, and is thereby enabled to maintain a high, chivalrous, romantic love, which, taking its rise in the imagination, is stamped and sealed with the permanent quality of the imagination itself.

The Real Man is above all things a creature of passion. When he learned in his day of judgment that passion was not to be repressed, he quickly gauged its real value. The mental fires fed by imagination caught the passional fires and purged them. The fire of passion then mounted like fiery sap into the imagination itself, into the intellect and the emotions until it penetrated every part of the Real Man. The man found he was not called to build up a laborious character, or compelled to do continually the things he hated, but to trust and follow his real instincts and impulses. At once his life began to grow like the lilies. He had at last found the thing which he passionately loved to do. There were incidental pains and unavoidable drudgery, but these were willingly endured by his passionate love of his work. There came, too, a note of spontaneity and mystery. No one could tell what he would say or do next. His words and deeds had gained an arresting beauty. He was much preoccupied with social service. He thought of himself among his brethren as one that serveth. And he had much to give. Yet all was

given in great simplicity. Nothing was calculated. He lived and thought, and spoke and acted with passion, and in that passion was created his own character. Whether or not he left works of art behind him, he was an artist in character. He was simple and guileless, understanding and forgiving, unchanging in love and quick to perceive; a lamb yet also a lion; meek yet capable of terrible wrath; a master of wit and God-like humour, of satire and tender healing words; of masculine force and maternal solicitude; and with all he kept the sweet, transparent innocency of a child who could never grow old.

Of recent years attempts have been made to throw out fresh conceptions of human values. At first vaguely and then much more definitely the new type took shape in Nietzsche's mind, and he called it superman. He claimed that superman was a better type than the Christ type; that if Jesus Christ had not died so young, He might even have lived to realise it Himself. In the name of this new conception a vigorous attack has been made on Christianity. I hope to show later on, that Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, made a capital mistake in confounding Christianity with Buddhism. In extenuation one might point out that Christianity has not been able to escape the fate which awaits all religions which make disciples. The disciples claim to have the mind of the Master, but even while the

Master is striving to pass on his message to his disciples, it becomes diluted and more diluted until a religious genius arises and restores again the Master's Gospel. If Christianity is what Nietzsche took it to be, it deserves all he said against it. But was Christ Himself like the portrait Christianity has given of Him? Christ has suffered in becoming a universal symbol; it has allowed Christians to make Christ in their own image, just as they have created God in their own image. Owing to this tendency and also to the fragmentary nature of the gospel according to the four Evangelists, it is extremely difficult to gain a clear conception of the Person of Christ. The higher criticism of the last hundred years has done much to make Him live again. Side by side with modern criticism, the modern type of superhuman value has striven to complete itself. In spite of blurred lines, and weaknesses and palpable extravagancies, its main lineaments stand out clear and beautiful. Now the startling fact is that on turning to Blake's long neglected Prophetical Books, all these lineaments are there discovered; and what is still more startling is that Blake claimed no new conception. He hacked his way through false Christianities which distorted the Image of Christ, until he saw the Face of Christ Himself, and at once he dedicated his magnificent imagination to delineating in his prophetic books what he had seen; and to portraying with all his

might the picture of Christ which stands out in strong relief in his *Everlasting Gospel*. By his power to enter into the sculptured Halls of Los' Palace, Blake renewed the blurred Image of Christ Himself, and this Image is the realised ideal of the modern superman.

PART II

CHAPTER XII

GOETHE, SCHOPENHAUER, NIETZSCHE, STRINDBERG

THERE can be no doubt that Nietzsche's influence in our time has been enormous. Our young men, whether they read him or not, are steeped in him; and in every country of the world where there is any pretence to culture he is read. Not only the young men, but men of renown in philosophy, literature, poetry and art all betray that Nietzsche has been a large factor in their mental development. In his *Ecce Homo* Nietzsche wrote of *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* " There is not a single passage in this revelation of truth which had already been anticipated and divined by even the greatest among men." He looked to Shakespeare and Goethe, Dante, and the priestly poets of the Veda, in vain, for a peer. No doubt Dante is seven heavens removed from Nietzsche; but Goethe on his Olympian Mount could have breathed in his atmosphere; and certainly the creator of the superman Caesar might have written not a few passages of the superman *Zarathustra.* In looking for a peer, Nietzsche over-

looked Blake, who, though a century before him, yet now looms larger, and has entered on a surer immortality. Nietzsche's great feat was the redemption of hell. Blake had done more than redeem hell, he had presented her as a chaste bride to heaven. It is this marriage which satisfies our modern need; and it is because Nietzsche falls short of it that he must, in our estimation, take a second place to Blake. The relation between the two men becomes much clearer if one studies Nietzsche's relation to his century.

The nineteenth century made one long effort and failed ignobly to effect a union of art and religion. The mightiest Christian artists had been much more than Christian. Michael Angelo and Leonardo da Vinci were children of the renascence of Greek culture: the most Christian soul—Fra Angelico—could paint exquisite angels, but not robust men. For the greatest artists need to look upon many things with love, from which the Giottos and Angelicos would have turned away with dismay. Art had flourished most just before the advent of the great religious reformers; and when Savonarola and Luther hurled their "Shalt nots," it was inevitable that they should be regarded as iconoclasts whose doctrines struck at the roots of all vigorous art. Christianity incurred the reproach of being the great negation. As the nineteenth century advanced it became clearer and clearer that great

art was a creation of great vitality, and that passion was the sap of vitality. To kill passion was to dry up the tree and render it unfruitful. The Christianity of the past had been hostile to passion, and the approved saints had crucified it. Hence it seemed only too clear to the nineteenth century thinkers that no passion meant no art, and that specifically Christian art was bloodless. Goethe was the first great example. He was brought up in protestantism. As his feeling for the beautiful grew more intense, his Christian conscience became uneasy and finally uttered its prohibition. At once he formulated the great dilemma which has persisted ever since. Either religion or art; and he chose art not only to satisfy his æsthetic cravings, but also to fill up the void left by religion. Goethe's immediate successor was Schopenhauer.

Schopenhauer took the dualism for granted. In him the fires of life were waning, and he was temperamentally compelled to declare that life was an unmitigated evil. Pain is inseparable from life, therefore cease to live. The world is the pictorial idea cast by the will of the observer, and so long as there is a will to live, it must persist. Kill the will to live and the universe dissolves into nothing. Schopenhauer was quite aware that his pessimistic philosophy was Buddhism, but he made the curious mistake of thinking that Christianity was nihilistic too in its essence—a notion he imbibed unthinkingly

from Goethe who had fallen into the error when he conceived that Christianity was antagonistic to art. Allowing for this mistake, Schopenhauer translated the dogmas of Christianity fairly accurately into the terms of his philosophy. The system was quite simple. Buddhism, Christianity and Schopenhauer aimed at the denial to live as a means to the peace of nothingness: till that was accomplished the pain of living must be cheated as much as possible. Schopenhauer cheated his pain by wine, cigars and the most seductive art. The process made the gulf between religion and art, heaven and hell, wider than ever.

Schopenhauer's mantle was taken up by Nietzsche and donned with youthful enthusiasm. By this time the divorce between heaven and hell was so wide that Nietzsche could not believe that heaven was more than a pious fiction, and he plunged into the fires of hell, and by its fires fashioned, after many years of horrible pain, his new creation—Superman.

Nietzsche having squeezed the utmost out of Schopenhauer transcended him, and that was his finest achievement. It was a transition from the denial of the will to live to the completest yea to life. With his yea to life he mounted with eagle wing till he accepted pain, reset tragedy, redeemed the past, and dancing with Bacchanalian gaiety shouted, Encore. Thus he accomplished a magnifi-

cent progress from a muling nay to life to a Dionysian Amen to the eternal recurrence of existence.

Nietzsche did not attain all at once to his passionate yea to life. When he overcame Schopenhauer he passed through a long positivist stage. His positivism was a reaction not only to the vague Christian idealism which still lived on in him unconsciously, but also to some centuries of German mysticism which had survived in philosophical form in Kant and Fichte, and which modern apostles of culture still read and rather liked. German mysticism from Tauler to Boehme and then to Novalis was vulnerable to criticism as were all mysticisms of the past. Henry Suso could enjoy his ecstasies almost continuously and remain rapturously unconscious of what was going on in the world. Besides this, he and the rest preached an unnatural doctrine of death to self. We may know, if we take the trouble to probe to the bottom of the mystics, that they aimed at death to self in order to attain to the real self; but their language was less clear than their aims, and those whose intelligence was unequal to piercing through the verbiage, caught up the language in its first and obvious meaning, and set about morbidly to kill self, and only succeeded in keeping it alive in its most disagreeable form. Jacob Boehme overcame the confusion; his disciple Gichtel was its victim. Nietzsche rebounded from these distortions

of nature, and protested against all idealisms as a denial of realism, against heaven as a denial of earth, against the supernatural as a denial of the natural, and against death to self as a denial of the only real value in each man. His hearty advocacy of earth brought a breezy atmosphere into his spirit, and delivered him from squeamishness. He delighted in the frank pagan earthiness of Petronius and pronounced him clean; he was drawn by the abounding energy of the Italian humanists, whatever direction the energy might take, and imagined with delight the possibilities with Cæsar Borgia as Pope. He was specially in sympathy with the intellectual cleanness of such a modern French atheist as Prosper Merimée. His grip of reality reminds one of Ibsen. It made him suspicious of all but positive values, and was at the root of his criticism of Christ. Dismissing with contempt Renan's explanation of the type of Jesus as the idea of genius and the idea of hero, he proceeds to accuse Him of an instinctive hatred of all reality, and as only able to be at ease in the unreal inner world of the Kingdom of God. The criticism is deeply characteristic of Nietzsche, but can hardly be proved of Jesus, as it depends too much on the gaps and silences of the Gospel story—omissions that have proved equally useful to the catholic reading of Christ. This sense for reality led Nietzsche to affirm the value of self. The doctrine is less revolutionary than appeared at the time. At

bottom it was the same recognition of the Real Self which Blake discovered by his experience of regeneration, which the German mystics had stumbled upon unwittingly, and which Jesus Himself had taught in His, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, and which He exemplified by His life of sublime egotism. Nietzsche did not stop at positivism, naturalism, realism, their values remained with him to the end, but he disengaged from them the spirit of rationalism; and when he came completely to himself in Zarathustra they had fallen into their right places, and the sentences of Zarathustra might easily be taken for the inspired utterances of a lofty mystic.

At this time, too, Nietzsche freed himself from the conception of absolute morals. He instanced Kant and George Eliot as examples of those who overthrow the Christian God and retain the Christian morals. His knowledge of George Eliot was superficial, and so he could not know that her ethical system was not Christian. Still it is quite true that Kant tried to keep Christian Ethics, and that many have failed to realize that if it is necessary to transvalue Christian dogmas, it is equally necessary to transvalue Christian morals; but the very fact that morals can be transvalued at once proves that though they are absolute in God,[1] in man they are evolving. Nietzsche's transvaluation is fine; but here again it

[1] *I.e.* in the Trinitarian God, the Unitarian God has no morals.

was hardly as original as he imagined. Nietzsche's morality (one cannot get rid of the word!) was a yea to life for each individual. The most vital man is the most moral. Practically whatever the wholly "living" man does is right. Some have taken exception to Christ's treatment of the Pharisees, to His treatment of His Mother, to His words to the Syro-Phœnician woman, to His angry cleansing of the Temple. The Catholic Church and Protestant Churches too, have insisted on His sinlessness. It would be difficult to defend His conduct by any known code of morals, or even by His Sermon on the Mount; but if these acts were examples of exuberant life, then from a Nietzschean point of view they were right, and a sinless Christ is once more given back to us. Apart from the Gospel story, however, many instances might be given of the tendency to antinomianism in the writings of catholic mystics, and of sound protestant evangelicals. Bunyan's dislike of the Town Morality is an instance; and when analysed the protestant's scorn of good works as dead works and his insistence on conversion preceding acceptable works, means that only the works of *living* men are good; and this doctrine is wonderfully like Nietzsche's.

Nietzsche's positivism was a stage to himself. Zarathustra is the yea to life carried to the creative point—the point in which all the human values are transvalued, and instead of man, there emerges

Superman. Schopenhauer in spite of his pessimism left one magnificent conception—the will to live. It was this will to live which freed Europe from the paralysing grip of Darwinism, for it made evolution depend, not on a mechanical law, but on will and life. Professor Hering of Prague and then Samuel Butler were the links leading to Bergson's fine conception—Creative Evolution. Nietzsche inherited from Schopenhauer the idea of the will to live, but finding life inseparable from power, he changed the phrase, and made his superman the creation of the will to power. Hence Superman is emphatically not a Darwinian. He is a new organ of the life-power which, having made many attempts and become dissatisfied with them, tries again, and produces something which surpasses man. Superman is rooted deep down in earth and is in consequence clean, sweet and real. He is always faithful to the Real Self, for how else could he find his work? This faithfulness delivers him from servility and weakness. He finds that not only self-pity but other-pity is enervating, and having passed through his Gethsemane gains the heights like Him on the cross who reviewing His life attains to the mystic union of tragedy and comedy as He utters His, It is finished. Having exorcised the spirit of gravity by the spirit of laughter, his feet become light and he dances; he turns from the sorcery of Wagner's music and sings to the sunnier music of the South. Should his

irrepressible mirth thirst for a melancholy draught, Chopin can give him exquisite delight. He is not understood, and the Scribes and Pharisees, the Priests and the Scholars deride him. He no longer inveighs against them with bitter tongue, but, having overcome all resentment, rises far above them by forgiving them. He disdains to be other than himself. Is he not conscious of a pulsing life? Are not his instincts to be trusted? The life within is strong enough to fashion him without his taking thought for his stature. One pauses. Is one dealing with the Saint or the Superman? Not the Saint. True, the Saint is elect, and Zarathustra believes in election, but in his self-election he becomes contemptuous. The herding mob is poisoned by resentment. It promulgates its socialisms and democracies to drag higher men down to its level. In his disdain Zarathustra cannot conceive that among the herd may be higher men crushed by the tyranny of circumstance. In his jealousy for the Superman he overlooks human values. Like Heraclitus he denies Being, and casts himself into the vortex of Becoming. He buries the dead God, but God always rises again the third day. He sees Him with his dimming vision and mistakes Him for his shadow. In the icy region of his superb spiritual isolation, his self-worship glows like a furnace. Dionysus or Christ? Nay, I—I am God, he shrieks, till the fires wane, and the frenzied God becomes a mild madman handed over

to the tender human hands of one who shared his flesh and blood.

Nietzsche's life work was an attempt to transvalue all values. That is the great need of our time, and Nietzsche brought the finest gifts towards its accomplishment. But he omitted some values of prime importance. We have seen that Nietzsche gained his first notions of Christianity from Schopenhauer, and that Schopenhauer confounded Christianity with Buddhism, and so conceived of it as nihilistic. As Nietzche's yea to life ascended, he came more and more to hate Christianity as the great nay to life, and to see in it a poor version of the twilight nihilism of Buddhism which had retained an afterglow of beauty, and was fitting for a race of decadents. He distinguished between Christianity and Christ and believed that Christ's teaching perished with Himself, but he made the Christ equally responsible for the nay to life. Late in life he read Tolstoï, and through Tolstoï arrived at a truer understanding of Christ. Christ had taken the great Jewish concepts of resurrection, judgment and life and transmuted them into present experience. *I AM* the Resurrection and the Life, The Kingdom of God is within you The kernel of Christ's teaching is in the words: I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more abundantly. This in reality makes Christ's teaching diametrically opposite to Buddha's. Both

teachers found pain in existence. Buddha said: Kill desire that you may get out of the wheel of existence, and so find peace. Christ said: Live more abundantly that your pain may vanish in a fuller life. Buddhism is negative and morbid; Christianity is positive and vital. Nietzsche saw something of this late in life, but it was too late to enter into the warp and woof of his mind. All his characteristic thoughts of Christ and Christianity are governed by his early conception. Had he realised twenty years sooner Christ's teaching that Eternal Life is a present possession, he would have seen Christianity in an entirely different light; the concept eternal life might have gained possession of his mind; and with its aid his attempt to transvalue all values might have been successful. Nietzsche's vitalism plunged him into the sensuous life of Becoming. Christ's eternal life connects this life with Being which Nietzsche denied. No one as yet has synthesised Becoming with Being, sensuous life with spiritual life. When this synthesis is accomplished (Blake came nearest to it!) it will be found that all Nietzsche's positive values were held in the hollow of Christ's hand, and can only be conserved so long as Christ's values hold the paramount place in men's minds. Without Christ all attempts are sterile. Nietzsche may insist on the innocence of voluptuousness, the relativity of morals, the value of selfishness, pride, and passion—in doing so he

redeems hell—but if he stops there, these values will be lost in the bottomless pit. Blake accomplished the redemption of hell and more. Starting with no arbitrary dualism of art and religion, on the contrary, these two things being mystically one in his own soul, he was able to see hell reaching up to heaven, and heaven bending down to hell till the two were one, and in his mystic marriage of heaven and hell made it possible as Nietzsche never could for us to get the utmost value out of art without sacrificing one jot of our religion.

The inner life of August Strindberg is an interesting commentary on the nineteenth century and its emergence into the twentieth. Strindberg started at adolescence as an ardent advocate of pietism which is well known to us in England as evangelicalism. When he surrendered his pietism he did not like so many of his predecessors pass through a stage of altruism, but jumped at once to Ibsenism and became an apostle of the ego. He then set about with evangelical earnestness to shape his ego on a Nietzschean pattern. He took over with a child-like spirit the nineteenth-century dualism of art and religion and strove to develop the art. It was not easy to obliterate the sharp moral distinctions which Christianity had left in his consciousness, but he did what he could, and was thoroughly disappointed with the results. He then read Kierkegaard who had also adopted Goethe's Either . .

or. As religion was the passion of Kierkegaard's life, he was able to sacrifice art with little compunction and to declare for an uncompromising religion. How hard and inhuman that religion was we all know from Ibsen's *Brand.* It was not possible that Strindberg could be satisfied with Kierkegaard's version of Christianity, and while he pondered on his Either . . . or, he received a happy flash of inspiration and exclaimed—*Both.* Kierkegaard persistently opposed ethics and æsthetics. Strindberg after endless struggles " discovered that work and duty are forms of enjoyment, and that enjoyment itself, well used, is a duty." By his union of the two, he overcame the dualism and surpassed Nietzsche. Any one following his development here might have exclaimed " Now we shall have a new Christ, a new Gospel and a new Church! " Blake with his understanding of the twenty-seven churches would have known better. There is not a twenty-eighth. When you leave the twenty-seventh, having completed the circle, you must begin again. Strindberg to the disappointment, no doubt, of many friends, looked long at medieval magic, and then allowed Swedenborg to bring him back to mystical Christianity.

Swedenborg is valuable when he is not regarded as the founder of a new church. Many of his thoughts have passed into the spiritual currency of Europe, and one cannot forget that he was Blake's first

teacher; but one must not forget either that Blake far surpassed him, and that his judgment of him though severe is just. "This Swedenborg boasts that what he writes is new, though it is only the Contents or Index of already published books. He shows the folly of Churches, and exposes hypocrites, till he imagines that all are religious, and himself the single one on earth that ever broke a net. . . . Swedenborg has not written one new truth. . . . He has written all the old falsehoods. Any man of mechanical talents may, from the writings of Paracelsus or Jacob Boehme, produce ten thousand volumes of equal value with Swedenborg's, and from those of Dante and Shakespeare an infinite number. But when he has done this, let him not say that he knows better than his master for he only holds a candle in sunshine." Finally—"Swedenborg is the angel sitting at the tomb." It is Blake himself who leads us away from the tomb which so many are willing reverently to guard, to a joyful resurrection and opened heavens, where we may see, as of old, angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

Thus as one looks back over the course of the nineteenth century one sees that it was mainly employed in an arid and thankless task of recovering lost values. Christianity had guarded heaven, while it kept hell only for lost souls and earth not at all. Hence there arose passionate votaries of earth and

hell who lost sight of heaven. The votaries were poets, philosophers, naturalists, novelists, dramatists; and they all, conscious that the fires of life were burning in them, were affectedly contemptuous of heaven, knowing that they could not be lost souls so long as they stoked and kept the fires ablaze. The one word which covers their ardent spirit is vitalism, and it was a vitalism rooted in earth and hell. Such being the case it is strange that they did not recognise that Blake confirmed most of their values in his hell. It is for us to see that by wedding hell to heaven he while including their values surpassed them; and we, if we are wise, will go forward where Blake, and not they, left off, our eyes already kindled by the wonderful things we shall see.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME VICTORIANS

BEFORE leaving the nineteenth century let us glance at some Victorians and see what they contributed towards modern thought. In the early part of the century there were mainly two schools of thought in the English Church, the High Church which had become dry and stiff, and the Low Church which was the declining after-glow of the vigorous though narrow Evangelical movement of the eighteenth century. Then came the Oxford Movement led by Keble, Pusey and Newman; and while the choice spirits in literature, poetry and art were yet in the heyday of youth, the only thing going was Tractarianism which offered to guide them mentally and spiritually, and to lead them back into the arms of Holy Mother Church where they might partake of her Bread and Wine to satisfy their hunger and thirst.

We can see now that the Oxford Movement has renewed the entire English Church, but only by dying again and again to rise into a fuller life. It restored the conception of the Holy Catholic Church; it bound its members together in social sacraments; it realised that the æsthetic side of man's nature was redeemed; it insisted on the importance of

Bishops and Priests, of theology and dogma, of ritual and form. But while saving for the English Church this priceless inheritance of the Church of the first four centuries, it was wholly uncritical in temper, and insularly blind to the widening vision which the best European minds had been winning through much travail and pain of thought during the last three hundred years. Through this blindness it lost to the English Church the best and strongest minds of the nineteenth century. Unfortunately the leaders of the Oxford Movement had no touch of genius with the exception of Newman, and he was lost to the cause.

Newman had personality and genius enough to compel attention. Every one watched his movements; and when he entered the Roman Catholic Church, the Roman question was once more thrust on men's notice in England. Some regarded Newman's conversion as the despairing surrender of a mind essentially sceptical. Others remarked on the gradual sophistication of his mind as it strove to believe what was alien to it. His refined and trenchant victory in controversy over Kingsley and Gladstone was keenly enjoyed. His *Apologia* was read by every one and praised for its style. Men waited for him to utter the word, and there came the wail of a soul "amid the encircling gloom" crying to the "kindly light" that he might take even one step forward through the darkness of the night. It was

not known then, as it has become plain to us through the pages of Wilfrid Ward, that Newman had conceived a great constructive work. Reviewing the past he had seen that once and again the Catholic Faith had known how to clothe itself in modes of thought other than those it had used at its birth. In the Middle Ages when Catholicism, Judaism and Islamism were fighting their way through a revived Aristotelianism, S. Thomas Aquinas had triumphantly used the modes of thought supplied by Aristotle to embody the Christian Revelation. Newman believed that he might adapt the Christian Revelation to modern thought without sacrificing one jot of Catholic tradition, and so accomplish a great service for his age and his Church. But as decade after decade passed in the bosom of the Holy Roman Church, it became reluctantly plain to him that Rome had no intention whatever of allowing him to fulfil his dream. She tossed him a Cardinal's Hat in his old age; but his was the bitterness of one who had seen the vision and tottered down to the grave with his vision unachieved.

Among Newman's listeners when he preached his memorable sermons at S. Mary's was Matthew Arnold. Already he had found Oxford religion and English thought too strait for him, and looking across the North Sea he hailed Goethe as a prophet. Arnold was strongest where the Oxford leaders were weakest, his critical faculty enabled him easily to

withstand the glamour of Newman to which so many young men succumbed. With Goethe as leader he became the apostle of culture and criticism—culture that should know the best that had been thought and said; criticism that should see a thing as it really is. There was still the need of a religion since criticism had killed with rapier thrust the notion of infallibility whether of the Church of Catholicism or of the Book of Protestantism. Goethe pointed to Spinoza. Arnold and many others adopted Spinoza and proclaimed pantheism and self-realisation as the best that could be done for the time being in the way of religion. He defined the modern mind as the imaginative reason which he thought had best been shown in the old world by Simonides, Pindar, Æschylus and Sophocles, and of which his own poetry and prose were admirable examples. Yet he realised fully that he and his contemporaries stood " between two worlds," and that though the one was dead, yet the other was " powerless to be born."

> The sea of faith
> Was once, too, at the full and round earth's shore
> Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd;
> But now I only hear
> Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
> Retreating to the breath
> Of the night wind down the vast edges drear
> And naked shingles of the world.[1]

Arnold believed that the sea of faith would again lie like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd round the

[1] Dover Beach.

shore of the new earth, but he knew that any attempt to compel the sea to come in was abortive, and that he assuredly should not see it in his own time.

Thomas Carlyle even more than Arnold soaked himself in German, and enthusiastically acknowledged Goethe as his master and teacher. With all his genius he was a mass of prejudices, deferential to obscure German authors, and heavily deaf to such divine singers as Shelley, Keats and Coleridge. His moral influence was greater than Goethe's, his insight far less sure than the serene Olympian seer's. With none of the sweetness and light of Arnold, his pantheistic gospel consisted of intermittent lightning, prolonged growling thunder, and much smoke.

George Eliot was another who passing from under a narrow and repressive Evangelicalism turned to Goethe and then to Spinoza for light. She looked at tractarianism from afar, and pronounced it "like Jansenism, a récherché form of piety"; and then tried like Arnold and Carlyle to build of pantheism a temple in which to worship. But she could not be contented with pantheism for long. Her one burning conviction which she never doubted was that only that religion was good which deepened human sympathy. She found that pantheism was not deepening hers, and that was sufficient for her, without any further metaphysical justification being necessary, to abandon pantheism, and to seek elsewhere for a religion. George Eliot's criticism of

pantheism is every bit as much needed now as then. Pantheism coupled with self-realisation leads to the worst form of egotism. Granted that self-realisation is the truth which the twentieth century has grasped, yet it has not yet learned that self-realisation must be balanced not with a pantheistic but a transcendent conception of God, for only thus can a man be saved from the worship of self to the worship of God.

George Eliot turned from Spinoza to Comte as she found in him the idealisation of human relationships. Compte fostered her human sympathy but kept her strongly rationalistic. It was not till many years later when she studied Judaism that she began to free her imagination from the thraldom of her reason. Spiritual Judaism had had a wonderful history especially in the Middle Ages. Jehudah ha Levi had shown how tradition could be adapted to the growing light and reason of the time without being sapped at ther oot. George Eliot henceforth declared that reason *and* tradition were the two lamps of life. Reason, modified by tradition which kept alive the finest memory of the triumphs of thought and imagination, gave her the finest hope for the future. In the symbolism of Blake Los was overcoming Urizen. George Eliot like Moses viewed the promised land from her high mountain, but she died before she could take possession.

Some of the great Victorian minds sought to retain

the Christian Spirit with as little dogma as possible. Charlotte and Emily Brontë took thankfully what food Maurice could give them out of his christened platonism. Tennyson and Charles Kingsley were glad to receive of the same. Ruskin drew of himself and the Bible what he needed. Browning, realising, perhaps, more than these the decomposing action of criticism, yet believed that the Christ-Face would grow.

> That one Face, far from vanish, rather grows,
> Or decomposes but to recompose,
> Become my universe that feels and knows.[1]

Carlyle, George Eliot and Matthew Arnold had Goethe for Godfather in the new faith before they finally diverged. George Eliot retained least of him, Carlyle worshipped him most devoutly but never saw his idol quite as he was; and Arnold assimilated both the pantheistic and pagan sides of his teacher.

Goethe's was the first great European influence of the nineteenth century, and after his was Schopenhauer's which at once reflected itself in literature. Schopenhauer's pessimism was Buddhism stripped of its picturesque oriental setting, and dressed in the sad weeds of a bereaved widow. Pessimism destroys the "sweet illusions" of life, revealing them as "effects of colour that we know to be made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags." [2] Christianity had ever been willing that illusions

[1] Epilogue. [2] *The Lifted Veil.*

should be pricked, believing that they were the shadows that proved the substance truth. Schopenhauer and Leopardi regarded truth as the last illusion which made it possible for man to drag on his existence. Schopenhauer's influence worked like leaven in Tolstoï's mind, and in England this leaven informs from end to end the novels of Thomas Hardy. At first one might rashly conclude that there is nothing but the ache of modernism in *The Return of the Native* or *Jude the Obscure;* in reality Hardy has accomplished the magical work of viewing life from the tragic point of view, and seeing it of an infinite sad loveliness. He has baptised it in the wine of his imagination till one would think the sadness must dissolve into joy. He has not redeemed tragedy like Nietzsche: he has composed the theme in the minor key in the symphony of modern thought preparatory to the joyous outburst of the wedding march at the nuptials of Heaven and Hell.

George Meredith was another novelist of finest imagination. From him came the full flower of Goethe's revived paganism. Paganism aimed at the perfection of the natural man. For it there was no dualism of body and soul such as a monkish Christianity exaggerated at a later date; and therefore it could see the flower of a spiritual life growing out of the natural man just as it saw a lily growing out of the soil. Meredith accepted and worshipped the soil. Earth was mother, renewer, sweetener.

The tendency of Christianity has been to despise earth.

> Each moment draw from earth away
> My heart that lowly waits Thy call. [1]

It has produced an other-worldly spirituality with poor thin sap in its veins. George Eliot had reacted against this other-worldly egotism and returned to mother-earth; but it was Meredith who wrote and sang of the paramount importance of earth in religion, finding in it his prime inspiration. He did not, like so many pagans, stop short of sensualism,—the senses were a stage to the spirit. "The spirit must brand the flesh, that it may live," [2] for "all life is a lesson that we live to enjoy but in the spirit." [2] The flower of the spirit is Love which "signifies a new start in our existence, a finer shoot of the tree stoutly planted in good gross earth; the senses running their live sap, and the minds companioned and the spirits made one by the whole-natured conjunction." [2] The guardian of this healthy growth is intelligence, which detects unerringly sentimentalism — "the pinnacle flame-spire of sensualism;" [2] which will not be mastered by appearances; which does not "like veterans in their armchairs strip the bloom of life by giving its sensations in the present;" [3] but which "casts an oblique light" [4] on men; on "whatever is out of

[1] Tersteegen.
[2] *Diana of the Crossways.*
[3] *Rhoda Fleming.*
[4] *The Comic Spirit.*

proportion, overblown, affected, pretentious, bombastical, hypocritical, pedantic, fantastically delicate; whenever it sees them self-deceived or hoodwinked, given to run in idolatries, drifting into vanities, congregating in absurdities, planning short-sightedly, plotting dementedly, whenever they are at variance with their professions, and violate the unwritten but perceptible laws binding them in consideration one to another; whenever they offend sound reason, fair justice; are false in humility or mined with conceit, individually or in the bulk;" and looking "humanely malign" on these follows "by volleys of silvery laughter. That is the Comic Spirit." Meredith's Comic Spirit is the finest, subtlest, and most spiritual product of Mother Earth. It is cleansing and healing; it is earth's sword by which earthiness is overcome; it robs tragedy and death of their sting and opens the gates of heaven; it is the eternal sweet laughter and sanity of God.

Swinburne was another who sought to restore pagan ideals. His ruling passions were a love of the beautiful and a desire for liberty. He, Meredith, and Hardy were later in date than Carlyle, Arnold, and George Eliot, and so further removed from the pietism on which they had been nourished and which coloured their minds to the end. Still they accustomed the minds of their younger brethren to liberty of thought; and Swinburne was quick to catch the infection and to strike for liberty of body as well as

liberty of mind. Meredith reacted against other-worldliness in his love for Mother Earth; and it was through his feeling for Earth that he approached and assimilated paganism. Swinburne reacted against a distorted view of the sexual instinct and perceived that the Greeks held what he was crying for. He was stimulated by modern examples as well as by ancient. As he looked across the Channel and inhaled the fragrance of Baudelaire's *Fleurs du Mal* it seemed to him that Baudelaire was sexually innocent to a degree impossible of attainment in England. It is for expert critics to decide whether Baudelaire's or Sappho's influence is strongest in the *Poems and Ballads*.

The pagan ideal is the perfection of the natural man. That meant much more than is apparent to modern ears for which natural is the exact reverse of spiritual. For the pagan who conceived of body and soul as one, the natural included the spiritual which was its fine essence. The pagan trusted his instincts, regarded his senses as instructors, aimed at harmony, and worshipped earth. His body was delicately responsive to the earth in all its transitions, to the seasons in all their moods. It was a musical instrument with many strings so that the pagan could pass easily from wistful sadness to light-hearted gaiety, and rejoice because life had its minor as well as its major key.

Christianity preached the foolishness of the

Cross to the Greek. The beautiful natural man must be born again. The Greek, though he could show a beautiful spirituality as the outcome of all his efforts, had carried the development of the natural man to the brink of deplorable degeneracy. Christianity, recognising the spiritual product, spoke to it, wooed it and begot on it a new man, a new creation, a new ideal — the ideal of the divine humanity. Once the pagan awoke to the Christian consciousness, there was no going back, he was marred for the pagan life. If he stood still he was a scarecrow of humanity; and there was no alternative but to press forward to the realisation of the new ideal. The fully-christened pagan knew that nothing had been lost of his former paganism. When he had yielded himself to the Christ-Spirit, the new life in him seized hold of all that it found, and transmuted it into the sweet blood of the new spiritual man. Christianity rescued him from the precipice of degeneracy and started him on a new beginning with infinite possibilities for the future.

Swinburne in his attempt to revive paganism presented the strange anomaly of a half-christened consciousness trying to forget and go back, instead of pushing forward to a complete consciousness which should include the pagan values. To go back is impossible. A whole pagan was a beautiful thing. A whole Christian is a beautiful thing, but all the intermediate stages in the painful transition from

one to the other are not beautiful save to prophetic eyes. Swinburne moving among Victorian half-bakes bewailed the "grey breath of the Galilean," not realizing that when the Galilean's breath accomplishes a complete work there is cause for nothing but rejoicing.

Swinburne rebelled against the notion that the sexual instincts were unholy. His reaction carried him far into ancient Greece. There is no more thorny and complex subject for us than sex: to the Greeks it was simple. Swinburne attempted to treat it again with pagan simplicity. For this great purpose he was equipped with two necessary qualifications, freedom of mind, and a quick unerring sense for the beautiful. If the subject is to be touched at all, the only thing that matters is how it is touched. Swinburne tracked it fearlessly along its broad streams and its side streams, in normal types and intermediate types, and in such poems as *Dolores, Faustine, Anactoria, Erotion* and *Hermaphroditus* showed that forms of lust which are filthy in filthy minds, repelling in scientific hand-books, were beautiful when treated by the glowing imagination of a poet who was determined to see nothing unclean in the pulse of life itself.

Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads* showed that he had plumbed the depths and scaled the heights of sex, and understood everything. In *Dolores* is seen the infinite pain that throbs at the heart of a

voluptuous life. In *Hermaphroditus* he lifts for a moment the veil which binds the " strong desire " and " great despair " which gnaw at the heart of the sexual invert. Out of the whirlpool of lust he seizes and brandishes those terrible symbols of sex—blood and the whip. Those who rashly plunge into the whirlpool find themselves quickly sucked down into the bottomless pit where they sink deeper and deeper as they make despairing efforts to strike a foothold. These are the depths. Yet Swinburne's all-seeing eye has searched the heights. The colour, the music, the song, the guilelessness, rapture and bliss are there also; and as he leads us upwards on passionate eagle wing, he soars to the point of light where sex has become religion, and the pang of the harlot the rapture of the saint.

One cannot leave Swinburne's treatment of sex without a glance at Walt Whitman. Both men were brought up by the side of the sea, and something of the liberty of the sea infected their spirits. Whitman even more than Swinburne lived in the open; and his long tramps when he was sixteen passed into the pulse of his rhythm, and the fresh open air of his songs. Like Blake and like Nietzsche, he accepted life passionately, and his yea to life led him to the freest treatment of sex as he sang of the " body electric." Swinburne admired Whitman's freedom; but his criticism that Whitman was lacking in chivalrous feeling towards woman will appear just to most

men, and to such the fire that burns in *Calamus* must seem unhallowed. Whitman and Swinburne were both reactionaries, for which they must not be blamed. They had as much right to recover some pagan values as the Oxford Movement some Church values of the first four centuries of Christendom.

They went back in order to go forward. Having rescued a clean and sane conception of sex, it is for us to offer their gleanings from pagan fields on the Christian Altar, that a pure flame may ascend to heaven from the holocaust of their earth-born fruits.

When we turn from Swinburne's poetry to his prose, there is the difference as between the exquisite movements of a classical dancer in undress to her overdress among her fellows.

Swinburne's unstinting admiration is in pleasing contrast to Carlyle's surly treatment of his contemporaries, though he has the Victorian way of writing of them as though he were writing their epitaphs. His abounding praise or dispraise of an author or poet was not the true measure of their value, but of the impulsive predilections of a creature all compact of imagination and fire, of an artist who distributed his light and shade with an eye to the ultimate effect of his picture. One sees him at one moment vigorously waving his cap to such immortals as Victor Hugo, Emily Brontë, Shelley, Coleridge and Keats, the next moment shaking hands with

Charles Reade, and then affectionately patting Anthony Trollope on the head. Always there is the revelation of a creature of many and varied human sympathies. George Eliot insisted that the only test of spiritual progress was a growing sympathy for individual men and women in their joys and sorrows. Such being the case it becomes a pressing question whether the man of imagination does not far outstrip the man of religion. Cardinal Newman had fine imaginative instincts, but he never trusted them far, and his sympathies became as narrow and intense as an old maid's. His religious impositions forbade him to hold fellowship with any but restricted co-religionists. Swinburne was boundless in his sympathies. His imagination unfettered understood and embraced every kind of woman from Sappho to Christina Rosetti, and every kind of man from Ezekiel to Gautier. Swinburne could have taken to his bosom the author of the *Dream of Gerontius :* the Cardinal would have washed himself and his clothes in holy water after such a defiling contact. Love is the final fruit of religion, a love that overflows and embraces all irrespective of creed and morals. Religion without imagination can never reach this goal, but soon turned aside degenerates into a loveless spirit hopelessly blind to true human values.

To Swinburne is due the honour of appraising Blake at something like his true value in a century

when it was the custom among savants to patronise him after a reading of the *Songs of Innocence* and an undiscerning glance at the Prophetic Books. No prominent religious teacher recognised Blake. Swinburne, the creature of impulse, instinct, passion, and imagination read Blake's secret where unimaginative religionists must have failed. We have seen that Blake built up the whole of his system on the doctrine of the new birth. The Real Man unveiled by the new birth was a mystic-artist and therefore could be approached by the mystic or the artist. Swinburne was so entirely the poet of the senses that we do not expect to find traces of the mystic in him. He had only the vaguest idea as to what the new birth meant except as it freed the imagination, and therefore he was not able to follow far Blake's religious teaching or mystical flights. A pure pagan would have been turned back at the threshold; that Swinburne penetrated so far is due to the fact that there was in his consciousness, deeper than his pagan sympathies, an immovable Christian deposit. The marvellous thing is that all that he really cared for, and much of which was condemned by his contemporaries, was contained and justified in Blake's Gospel. His passionate love of children revelled in the Songs of Innocence and Experience; his apprehension of the value of instinct, impulse, passion, disobedience, rebellion, revolt, was anticipated in the Proverbs of

Hell; and with his fiery imagination he caught much of the meaning of Blake's most difficult poem *Jerusalem*. We might have concluded that he gauged all that was possible, were it not that to-day, Ellis and Yeats, and Archibald Russell, have penetrated a great deal farther into its inmost meaning. Swinburne struck for many freedoms, most of all for the freedom of the body; this he found more than justified. It was proclaimed consistently throughout Blake's works that whatsoever lives is holy, that desire is holy and necessary. Swinburne, who had concluded that such a view of sex could only be held by a pagan, insisted that Blake was neither a Christian nor an infidel, that he was persistently and irretrievably a heretic. "He that is spiritual discerneth all things," wrote S. Paul. If this is true, the spiritual must include the imaginative. When the religious man pushes on to a full spiritual consciousness, and the imaginative man to a full imagination, then these two will become one, and discern all things in heaven and hell. That Swinburne discerned all things in Blake's hell and failed to discern all things in his heaven, is evidence of the limitations of the pagan consciousness which he had so zealously fostered.

To many paganism is the antithesis of Christianity. That is a fallacy. Paganism and Christianity hold in common the great doctrine of immanence, and our neo-pagans have grasped its full significance.

Jesus Christ whose master-phrase was "the Kingdom of Heaven" spoke of it as immanent in His early ministry. "The Kingdom of God is within you." In His closing ministry He presented it in the transcendent aspect. "Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power." These two conceptions, immanence and transcendence, stand sharply side by side in Christ's mind. The Greek Fathers of the Church seized the immanence and the Latin Fathers the transcendence. Paganism filtered into the Church through the Greek Fathers. Already in the Gospel according to S. John, Christianity had encountered Greek thought in Ephesus and christened it in its prologue. In the second century Justin Martyr when he became a Christian could not forget that he had been nurtured by the teaching of Socrates and Plato. Anxious for his beloved teachers lest they should have no part in the Christian salvation, he pondered till the sublime opening verses of S. John's Gospel explained to him that they, too, were partially illuminated by "the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world." By the end of the fourth century Plato's rich treasury had passed into the veins of the Christian Church. Then began a further process of assimilation. Aristotle's name became paramount in Europe. The Christian Schoolmen fell upon him,

and S. Anselm and S. Thomas Aquinas seized and preserved for the Church all that seemed to them of value in the pagan philosopher.

The Latin Church with its traditions of empire, law, organisation, took over such pagan virtues as fortitude and patriotism, but for the most part developed the Christian doctrine of transcendence, making much of sovereignty, law and retribution, while the Greek Fathers were proclaiming fatherhood, love and forgiveness.

A full Christianity must combine both. Our nineteenth-century thinkers carried immanence to the creation of man: Nietzsche to superman, till his head was lost in the clouds. Swinburne, like Shelley, scornful of Christianity, worshipful of Christ, regarded Man as earth's topmost blossom, scaling the sky because of the God that was in him. Leaving the Greek Gods for Hertha, the Teutonic Goddess of Earth, he sang:

> One birth of my bosom!
> One beam of mine eye;
> One topmost blossom
> That scales the sky;
> Man, equal and one with me, man that is made of me,
> man that is I.

That is the skiey height touched by our modern free-thinkers. There was one warning voice. George Eliot had ample opportunity of watching the effects of pantheism on those who embraced it ardently, and on herself while she sought in it for a religion.

It is an attempt to look at the universe apart from our relationship to it as human beings. " We must love and hate,—love what is good for mankind, hate what is evil for mankind." It begins by spiritualising man, and promising to enlarge his horizon, it ends by sapping his manhood and robbing him of God. The criticism is needed as much as ever. It is wearisome that man will not learn by the past. In every generation there is a waste of precious time and more precious thought while men are learning by slow and painful experience the truth which should be their starting point. In vain the Church protests. Christian Science rushes into Akosmism, George Tyrell into Jesuitism, Newman into Papism, Swinburne into Paganism, and almost all into a one-side Immanentism. There can be no further progress till our teachers recover the old Christian doctrine of transcendence, and then reach forward out of themselves to accomplish the work of God in the world.

CHAPTER XIV

BERNARD SHAW

BERNARD SHAW is the spirit of Industrial Revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries become incarnate. He stands where the nineteenth century merges into the twentieth, and faces both ways. He interprets the socialistic aspirations of the past by the latest philosophies of Germany and France. Like all truly religious people he looks forward to the future, but in his look forward his imagination is overweighted by the shackles forged in the mid-Victorian period which he yet so constantly derides.

The superman must combine all the qualities of the imaginative mystic and the earth-born positivist. He has not yet come. Yeats is an enchanting imaginative mystic who occasionally touches earth with the dainty step of the Sidhe, but is fearful lest the brightness of his imagination should be tarnished. Bernard Shaw is a breezy child of earth who occasionally touches the Empyrean, but who quickly flutters down lest his melting wings should cause him to drop to the derision of the Gods. Like Yeats he is an Irishman, and like all Irishmen, who do not live in Ireland, he is distinguished for his clean intellect. While Englishmen, terrified at their

thoughts at last send them out well wadded into the world, a word from Oscar Wilde or Bernard Shaw cuts through the wadding like a sharp sword; and men dazzled by the brightness of the steel mis-read the word and are sure that it does not mean what it says. That is why there are so many Bernard Shaws, while the real Bernard Shaw lives in obscurity. According to report he is an egotist, a braggart and a buffoon; a heartless intellectual, a scoffer and a blasphemer. He sits like Mephistopheles with his head in his big scarlet sleeve, and laughs at the victims he has hoodwinked and lampooned. How could it be otherwise when this brilliant man is—so they say—an atheist!

The real Bernard Shaw, obscured by his glitter, is a humble man of faith, simple, forceful, direct, of clearest eagle vision for this world and its affairs, and with fitful glimpses of heaven. Jonathan Swift, dreading hypocrisy, pretended to vices that were not his; Bernard Shaw, frightened at his humility, pretends to an immense pride and superiority in which his humble self may be sheltered from the cold blast. Like all really humble men he acknowledges readily his debts. He meekly confesses what he has learned from Bunyan and Hogarth, from Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Samuel Butler, from Ibsen and Tolstoï, and from Blake.

Bernard Shaw sees instinctively the effect of our social system on all sorts and conditions of men.

He has that most dreadful thing—a single eye, and he permits no romanticisms, sentimentalisms and idealisms to throw dust in it. Thus Tolstoï's terrible indictment of the state is inevitably endorsed by Shaw. It is in the remedy that he differs from Tolstoï. The Russian when fifty years old began a serious study of the Gospel. The Sermon on the Mount captivated him, and he read it in a way quite unapproved of by the Greek Church, but approved of by the doukhoborski and other quaker-like sects of Russia. His reading convinced him that Christ's central doctrine was non-resistance to evil. It was clear that such a doctrine practised would usher in a Kingdom of Heaven very different from the kingdoms of this world which stand by their armies and navies, that is, by force. Therefore states, since they can only stand by violence, are anti-Christian at their foundation. Tolstoï, unable to defend any kind of state, declared without compromise for anarchy, but it was an anarchy rendered perfectly harmless, as it was deprived of its bombs and shells by the application of the principle of non-resistance. In England Shaw has had the opportunity of studying the effect of Tolstoï's teaching in the settlements at Purleigh and Stroud.

Shaw's reading of the Gospel has doubtlessly been deeply affected by Tolstoï, but he does not apply it to the destruction of the state. He is convinced that anarchy is rendered impracticable by the law of

rent, and that it would depend on an unselfishness in human nature which is the exception rather than the rule. Well instructed in the principle of evolution as interpreted by Samuel Butler and Bergson, he believes in the orderly development of the social organism, and that the immediate phase to which it is tending is a social democratic state, the transition to which will be effected by the extension of municipal trading to all such social services as have become sufficiently highly organised to be ripe for public management, and sufficiently dependent on general consumption to make it an obvious advantage to the community to run them for its own benefit, rather than for a set of shareholders for whom profits and dividends take the first place. This socialised State, of course, cannot be final, but a necessary stage to a higher mode of government.

Herbert Spencer and Comte had believed in the evolution of the social organism; but they put a heavy drag on the evolution by their doctrine of obedience to the state. The state only evolves in proportion as its human units believe that duty to self is the first requirement. Duty to self may involve disobedience to the state. Progress is effected by the law-breakers, but the fruitful law-breakers are not lawless, as obedience to a higher law consecrates their rebellion. Shaw has learnt that the mystical life process, called evolution, is now working along the higher development of the self, and that if men

are to keep proper respect for this self, it can only be by working for a better social order than that in which they find themselves. For in the present order no one escapes. The money of the generous young man is tainted equally with that which maintains widowers' houses. Mrs. Warren and her friends on the street have been driven by a pressure far stronger than their passions. The present system shows no way out of the Doctor's Dilemma. And so with soldiers and ill-assorted couples, with the Devil's Disciple and Blanco Posnet, professional men and officials, clerks and artisans, playwrights and artists, Fanny with her first play, and children with their rights, rich spinsters and curates, as all are victims of the state, then they can only keep their self-respect by working for a new order where they shall not be victims that go under, but victors who overcome, and thus prepare the way for supermen who shall be able to grapple effectually with each difficulty as it arises, and in their turn lead the way to a golden morrow. For man cannot save his soul until the soul of the community in which he lives is saved also.

Bernard Shaw is no respecter of persons. His eye penetrates every corner in high life and low life like Hogarth's. Like Hogarth he does not blind his eyes by looking at the sun, but with hilarious good humour he tears away all official trappings and garments till the human animal stands in all his

ugly nakedness. Hogarth's realism forced him to paint ugly people; but nothing daunted, he made the beauty of his pictures depend on the fitness with which his wavy lines expressed his exuberant vitality. Bernard Shaw's realism has also compelled him to discard conventional effects, and the final impression of beauty which his plays leave results from the rude vitality of those of his characters who are real enough to burst the trammels of convention. These living people are always opposed by the respectable moralists in the play, and therefore Shaw in his burning zeal for a new morality cannot bear those who prate of the old morality as if it were the eternal law of righteousness.

Like Bunyan, Shaw sees that morals are snatched-up rags by which men try to cover their nakedness. Bunyan regarded the merely moral man as dead in trespasses and sins, feeling an instinctive dislike to him which was sound, and he explained his instinct by the great protestant principle that a man is saved by faith and not by works. This doctrine in Bunyan's keeping was quite safe, but when seized by the puritan rabble, it was interpreted so as to send the best people to hell, and to fill heaven with a disagreeable band of pusillanimous psalm-singers. So much have the tables been turned, that Shaw needed the Devil's Disciple to cut through this rabble, and restore heaven's reputation. Shaw's doctrine at bottom is the same as Bunyan's. The

converted tinker, when he had battled through the dark night of his soul, knew that he had passed from death into life. This new life compelled him to new deeds, and he was convinced that these new deeds were vitally different from the moral deeds of the unconverted man. Shaw too is conscious of being alive, and so he has been obliged to conserve the simple evangelical distinction between "dead works" and "living works." He has always declared for the "living works," and in consequence has put himself in antagonism with those whose morals are the sapless copies of dead values. Bunyan's public life of protest required the fine courage of a warrior. Shaw's protest is equally fine and courageous, and he has only escaped Bedford or Holloway Gaol because men do not believe he means what he says, or they have grown more indifferent than their forefathers of the seventeenth century.

Shaw's realism has made him a competent interpreter of Ibsen. Chesterton, whose name depends on his differing from Shaw, though he often says provokingly true things, claims to know the whole map of Shaw's mind and to understand him where others fail. The boast is idle, for Chesterton has no understanding of Ibsen, or of those parts of Shaw which he has learned from Ibsen.

Ibsen began under the cloud of Darwinism. He emerged only when he had learnt to affirm the self. Self-realisation alone can free man from being a

slave-puppet, and woman also, changing the doll in the house into a self-respecting woman for whom there is an unknown future. What suffocated men and women alike were the ideals they clung to. The main battle of Ibsen's life was between realism and idealism. Chesterton takes these words and uses them in a different sense from Ibsen's, and then proceeds boisterously to knock down both Ibsen and Shaw. It is obvious that men have an ideal way of thinking and speaking of marriage and war, life and death, which is simply unreal. Ibsen sweeps away all these ideal cobwebs, leaving men realities to grapple with. Just here Bernard Shaw is thoroughly Ibsenish. No doubt he sweeps away a great deal besides cobwebs — ornaments and flowers and household gods, and when his house is empty, swept and garnished, it reeks of sanitas rather than sweet lavender.

It is not clear, though Shaw has written hundreds of pages of preface, whether he identifies with God the life-force which is his constant theme. I think he knows no other God, and that is the grave defect in his philosophy, for it can only end in identifying George Bernard Shaw with God and himself becoming the object of his worship. God is not the life-force, and therefore the man, who is conscious of the life-force coming in like a flood, rather, the man who is a life-force can either insist on himself to the denial of God, or he can offer himself to God,

and find himself. The oblation of self to God is the one sublime romantic act out of which all romance grows. Shaw has included romance with the false ideals which must go. He has not been fair to himself, nor has he quite succeeded in explaining himself just as the Wagner of the letters and the real Wagner were not coincident. If Shaw has confused the life-force with God, he has not identified it with himself. Actually he has given himself to its onward sweep and so has largely won possession of his soul. That is why there is so much fine romanticism in him, and he can draw such an admirably romantic character as Tom Keegan in *John Bull's Other Island*. Shaw's real protest is against sentimentalism, for he is as convinced as George Meredith that it has its origin in the senses, and that sentimental ideals must be reckoned among the false values. His doctrine leaves a real idealism untouched. For as supernaturalism is to be found not outside nature but in the heart of nature, so idealism is not outside reality, but the very stuff of reality itself.

Shaw's faith in the life-force at once relates him to Nietzsche and superman. But one must insist that the Shavian superman is very different from the Nietzschean. The two might be taken for twins in their nonage. Both have struggled clear of Darwin. Both are intent on a higher organisation of the mysterious life-force. Both again are related to the Saint. The Nietzschean is the first to part with the

Saint, as he cannot believe in any one's election but his own, and himself is self-elect. That is the beginning of his isolation and disdain. The Shavian like the Saint cannot believe in any one's reprobation. He is sure that there are tens of thousand wage-slaves of the capitalist system who could rise to great things, could a superman be found to break their fetters. He only cares to be a superman that he may cry almost in the language of the Saint: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me." It is his concern for his brethren that keeps him with a human heart. As the Nietzschean becomes more and more inhuman and mad, the Shavian becomes more and more human and sane. The Shavian, losing sight of the Nietzschean, can still keep pace a while with the Saint. But the Saint has a longing desire for worship. He yearns to present himself and his children to the Lord and to fall down in speechless worship. The Shavian would like to worship but is confused as to the object. He raises his columns higher and higher until his towers reach unto heaven, but he can find no capitals for his columns, no roof to his towers. He will see that his brother the Saint has at last built a Temple in which many can worship, and his face is transfigured as he adores; but for those who look on it will become clear that with his infinite toil he himself has only raised another Babel. And when the mighty building rocks and he rushes out into the gathering

darkness, one can but hope he will meet the Saint who will assuredly take him by the hand, and gently drawing him into his Temple present him to the Lord.

Shaw's superman owes much of his sanity to Blake. To trace all Blake's influence in Shaw would be to repeat what was said in the chapter on Nietzsche. A text could be found for any one of Shaw's plays in the Proverbs of Hell. The Promethean legend has been tinged by Blake before being taken up by Shaw. Shaw is equally with Yeats the offspring of Heaven and Hell, but whereas Yeats takes after the father, Shaw is his mother's child. Perhaps more than all else Shaw has learned from Blake the value of passion. He takes the word in its widest significance, and finds it the propelling power of the life-force. Passion includes sex, and much more. There is a passion for truth, a passion for justice, a passion for social equity. There is a red-hot passion for humanity, besides which all other passions pale. This passion is of such priceless value that it must not be restrained. "Sooner murder an infant in its cradle than nurse unacted desires." Man's business is first to find out what he really wants. That is not always easy. Some only learn after they have shocked all their kith and kin, and have even been to prison. These come to the palace of wisdom by the road of excess. Others need to retire to the wilderness, and when they have been tempted forty days, they learn what they

must do. Others, again, just let themselves go. Instead of finding it easy to be splendidly wicked, they are driven to unsuspected heights of heroism. It is more difficult to become a Cæsar Borgia than a Francis of Assisi. When a man knows what he wants, let him act. "He who desires but acts not, breeds pestilence." Thousands are poisoned by their unacted desires: all life, to them, takes on a jaundiced hue. Let them be pushed into the open, even if they stumble at every step. Let them be rolled on a dung-heap that they may lick themselves clean. Blessed is he who has his own clear instincts to guide him. "No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings." Let not a man copy another. "The eagle never lost so much time as when he submitted to learn of the crow." Finally, "One law for the Lion and Ox is oppression," therefore let a man discover the law of his own life—let him find the Real Self—and having found it, keep it, for he has learned the secret of life, and it will carry him to the heights if he is not turned back by the opposition he has aroused.

Shaw's own passion is for social equity. Here, too, Blake has uttered the great word. "Prisons are built with stones of Law, Brothels with bricks of Religion." Blake realised the implications of his religion of life with unerring instinct, though he did not work them out in detail. He speaks the Word of God to his spiritual children, and leaves it to them

to interpret its meaning. Bernard Shaw, though he has not assimilated the heavenly side of Blake's teaching, has seized the social, and has worked it out with a consistent clearness which has proved invaluable to his conception of superman, for it has kept him human with his legs firmly planted on mother-earth.

Shaw has learned from other teachers — from Shelley and Goethe, and Wagner, and Morris, but we must not forget that he has a fine original mind of his own, and that driven by his passion for righteousness it has accomplished great things. The great attempt of Nietzsche's life was to transvalue all values. No one, now, can claim that he succeeded. At any rate he showed the necessity. It will require a catholic to transvalue catholic values, and he will " fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." Shaw is a protestant of protestants. He is not alone, and his afflictions are proportionately less. Whatever his sufferings he has too much of the gaiety of genius to let them spoil his happiness. Here and there he overlooks a protestant value of the past, but he has succeeded in transvaluing many of the values that protestantism has stood for, and what he contributes to superman's make-up is so sound that when he is come, he will be vigorous, sane and human, and able to keep himself intellectually and morally clean by his spirit of ringing laughter.

CHAPTER XV

W. B. YEATS

W. B. YEATS is the fair offspring of Blake's marriage of Heaven and Hell. He combines in himself the two streams which in the nineteenth century ran widely apart. He is the earnest of a completer type than himself. For though he has gained a wider and freer outlook than the Victorians, and his work is more beautiful, he yet lacks their robustness, deep humanity and freedom from pose.

The Victorians were before all else rationalists. Matthew Arnold's fine definition of the modern mind as "imaginative reason," in the light of Blake's four Zoas, exactly places the nineteenth century at its best. Urizen is reason and Los is imagination. Urizen and Los cannot dwell together unless Los is supreme. In the Victorians Urizen was supreme, and their fine imaginations were being continually overhauled and paralysed by the dire grip of their reason. Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, and Charles Darwin, were sons of Urizen; but Urizen's finest offspring was a woman, and George Eliot is the most perfect example of Victorian rationalistic utilitarianism. Rationalism ever enforces a utilitarian view of life and religion.

The best Victorians had deep human feeling, but

strong as it was, it clashed with their utilitarianism and there broke down. The man who proved useless to the state or social organism became the object of the wrath and denunciation of the man who nursed his indignation as the sap of his moral life. No one ever lived with more manifold power of human sympathy than George Eliot, and no one was ever more scornful than she at the sight of pure selfishness. While she can forgive almost all her characters, yet Tito, Rosamond and Grandcourt appear to have been created on purpose to preserve her moral self-respect.

Rationalism, Utilitarianism, and Altruism were the positive Trinity that were to take the place of the Christian mystical Trinity. But while the Christian dogmas were being quietly shelved, the Christian morals were maintained, after a little trimming, and were to be put entirely at the service of one's neighbour. We have already seen how altruism was a stage to Ibsen and Nietzsche with their assertion of the ego, and that Nietzsche's doctrine of duty to self brings us back to Blake whose Real Self was unveiled by the old Christian process of regeneration.

Whether we like or dislike the nineteenth-century spirit, its advent was inevitable. Idealists had been accustomed for so long a time to affirm the inner and deny the outer realities, that the affirmation of the positive values, even if the mystical values

vanished altogether, was forced out of man at a time when science was striding forward. Just as Goethe had said, Either religion or art, so they said, Either the Kingdom of Heaven or the earth, was the one reality. Strindberg resolved the first dilemma by saying, Both — which was Blake's solution; and Eucken has declared for the reality of both the inner world of Being, and the sensuous world of Becoming, and he sees man as the meeting ground of various grades of Reality. Our finest thinkers have rejected rationalism and its brood, and show clear signs of a renascence of mysticism. Thus we have started the twentieth century with a strong conviction that there must be a union of positivism and mysticism, for only so can we come to a sane and vigorous outlook on life which is at once spiritual and natural.

Yeats has hardly the positivism, but he has the mysticism, and mysticism which recognises the imagination as the supreme faculty. It is this which shows him to be Blake's spiritual child. There are over a score of definitions of mysticism. Here I use the word to express that direct vision of the truth which some few people possess. As we saw in an earlier chapter the mystic is compelled to imaginative expression of what he sees, or he must remain silent. Yeats is an Irishman with the unworked mine of Celtic mythology at his disposal. He has thus not only the mystic insight and imagination,

but also a beautiful symbolism. He is a true child of Blake, but by working through a different symbolism, he has woven a new and luminous vesture for the vision he has seen with the piercing insight of the mystic.

Celtic mysticism holds a place of rare beauty among the mysticisms of the past. It has had none of the metaphysical subtlety of the East, and has been splendidly free from barren abstractions. It has had the sweet breath of the earth in it, for it has loved the earth with its mountains and valleys, its seas and its lakes, its reeds and its sedge.

It has caught a glimpse in these things of a beauty which yet eludes it. Still more have lovers seen in the face of the beloved an alluring beauty which has filled them with a mighty desire to behold "the secret, far off, Inviolate Rose." Thus have they been drawn on to the rarer atmosphere of the things of the spirit while earth's winds and waves kept them clean and sweet. Yet there has been a sound as of keening from the lovers. There is a fund of sadness in Beauty's face. The lover could not endure to gaze on Beauty's unveiled face save for a moment, and that moment robbed him of his rest on earth. Then must he fight his battles, strike his lyre, sing his songs, hunt with his hounds, and feast with his comrades, till in his own land among the dead he might hope to gaze unflinchingly on the Inviolate Rose for ever.

Celtic mysticism is fully embodied in the stories of Irish heroes and seers whom Lady Gregory has made to live again in the imaginations of modern readers. Yeats has had a double approach to them. Through Lady Gregory he has made himself familiar with Conchubar and Cuchulain of Muirthemne; he has caught the spirit of Oisin and contrasted it with the spirit of S. Patrick's monkish Christianity; he has read the hearts of mild Deirdre and amorous Maeve, of pitiful Findabair and proud Emer, and understood the secret of their charm. In addition to his studies he has penetrated to the bright sculptures of Los' Halls, and there he has seen for himself the imperishable deeds of Ireland's brave warriors and fair women. Having thus renewed his inspiration from the Great Memory, he has given to his best poetry and plays that touch of perennial youthfulness which promises their immortality.

Yeats has drunk so deeply of Blake's spirit that it matters little to him whether he approach God through religion, or beauty. On the whole he prefers to think of God as Eternal Beauty and to imagine Him as the " secret, far off, Inviolate Rose." The faces of Deirdre and Aillinn are petals of the Secret Rose, and their insatiable lovers can never be satisfied but in death with that beauty they have seen in the face of their beloved. For beyond Death is the Land of Heart's Desire.

Where nobody gets old and godly and grave,
Where nobody gets old and crafty and wise,
Where nobody gets old and bitter of tongue.

Where beauty has no ebb, decay no flood,
But joy is wisdom, Time an endless song.

Yeats by his constant approach to God through Beauty reveals himself an artist. No one has understood better than he that it is the artist's calling to create beautiful things, or that the man wedded to causes, or possessed by party spirit or zealous to teach others will mar the beauty of his work. Yet the artist by discovering his conception of the Beautiful cannot help affecting the morals of those who receive his spirit. Yeats sees beauty wherever he detects life, and he detects life not in the " settled men," but in all manner of lawless people. That is the secret of Jesus Christ's preference for the company of publicans and harlots to that of scribes and pharisees. When any one is sufficiently soaked in Yeats' work to discover for himself the hidden beauty in outcasts and pariahs, his moral garment will be rent in twain; and in casting away his filthy rags, an inheritance from the Law, he will by faith put on a white linen garment which is the righteousness of the Saints. For Beauty like the word of God " is sharper than any two-edged sword, and pierces even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."

So while admitting that Yeats has no consciously didactic aim, he necessarily teaches, and we must

proceed to unfold the implicit teaching of his plays.

One must not forget that Yeats is one of a little band. He has always admitted how much he owes to Lady Gregory. Synge has influenced him, and the delicate porcelain beauty of A. E.'s poetry has penetrated his spirit. His teaching (one might say theirs) can be gathered best from two plays in which Lady Gregory gave much help. *Where There is Nothing* came first, but not satisfied with it, Yeats tried again and produced *The Unicorn from the Stars*. There the mystic seer is Martin Hearne. Martin knows the value of leisure, and will not let himself be made stupid by the dull routine of work. He has his vision, but it is only slowly he can piece out its meaning. At first the command seems to point to destruction. " Destroy, destroy, destruction is the life-giver." Yeats has a lingering tenderness for shattering. He has seen the secret Rose, and he has darted instinctively to the notion that there is no way to the Inviolate Rose but by the way of destruction. So his hero but half illumined calls from the roads (" the roads are the great things, they never come to an end ") the law breakers, the tinkers, the sieve-makers, the sheep-stealers. With their help, he would " burn away a great deal that men have piled up upon the earth," that men may be brought " once more to the wildness of the clean green earth." Then only when Law and State and Church are

destroyed will life become " like a flame of fire, like a burning eye." He exults when the sword with a sound like laughter has cut away everything, for where there is nothing—there is God. So much does Martin learn from his first vision. But another vision makes all things clearer to him, and he learns that his business is not reformation but revelation. He says, " I was mistaken when I set out to destroy Church and Law. The battle we have to fight is fought out *in our own mind.* There is a fiery moment, perhaps once in a lifetime, and in that moment we see the only thing that matters. It is in that moment the great battles are lost and won, for in that moment we are part of the host of heaven."

This fuller vision brings us back to Blake.

> Bring me my Bow of burning gold—
> Bring me my arrows of desire;
> Bring me my spear; O Clouds, unfold!
> Bring me my Chariot of Fire!
> I will not cease from *mental fight,*
> Nor shall my Sword sleep in my hand,
> Till we have built Jerusalem
> In England's green and pleasant land.

Yeats' inspiration has resulted from his power to enter Los' Halls, or as he would say, from his ability to link himself to the Great Memory. In children the separating veil is almost transparent, and their charm lies in their drawing from the Great Memory unconsciously. A difficulty arises when we are no longer children. Blake grew in child-likeness as the years advanced. A regular and steady growth in

spirituality would ensure the necessary child-spirit to the end. Then very little is needed to link on to the Great Memory. The wrong method is by incantations and magic. To the sensitive almost any rhythm is sufficient, the highest kind of rhythm being poetry. Yeats insists that all great literature is renewed from the Great Memory, and in so doing it returns to the primeval founts. This conception rules out the specious modernism which would make all literature ephemeral. Great literature is "written speech," and hence the value of words, style, and of drama. Yeats differs from the Victorians in insisting on Blake's great principle of forgiveness as an essential part of the creative artist's equipment. Forgiveness till seventy times seven is little more than theoretic in practical Christianity: in reality it is as necessary for the artist as the Christian. The moment the artist ceases to forgive the creature of his hand, he has stepped down from the Immortals, and his work can no longer be reckoned great literature. This principle rigorously applied would leave us little more than Shakespeare out of our English literature, and reminds one of Tolstoï's definition of art which left, when applied, not even Shakespeare. Still it is a counsel of perfection that the highest artist should forgive all his creatures and must allow himself no sort of resentment even against the worst.

These principles applied to the dramatist become

of extreme importance. Yeats has been explicit on the modern drama in *Samhain*. Its function is first " to excite the intellect; " second, to restore words to their sovereignty; third, to simplify acting and make everything subject to the words. Even the scenery must be largely called up by the words. Yeats has been guided by a sure instinct in this insistence on beautiful words. On the one side he is linked to the French stylists, on the other the rhythm of beautiful words has ever linked him speedily to the Great Memory; and when that is accomplished for any one, literature has fulfilled its purpose.

Drama deals with life itself. Blake has said, Whatsoever lives is holy, and therefore for the drama nothing is common or unclean. With a fine catholicity it seeks only to hear the pulse of life.

It cares for all live people without respect of persons. It is equally at ease with the sinner or the saint. It is zealous only to prune away what clogs the sap of life. It stands beyond good and evil by its yea to life. Thence it passes to flaming love. In this flame all things are consumed and there emerge only those clean, guileless children who reflect in their depths the eternal Beauty of God.

Thus Yeats unifies his religion, philosophy, and art, and sees these things as the flame-like expression of Life.

CHAPTER XVI

MODERN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

THEOLOGICAL polemic has completely changed its ground in our time. Formerly controversies more or less bitter were waged between Church and Church, sect and sect. Now the battle is being fought out between the younger members of each Church and its older members who adhere rigidly to the traditions handed down from their fathers. This civil religious warfare results in painful anomalies like the Wars of the Roses; but it will probably result also in purging the separate bodies and bringing them to a much closer union in the future.

The modern movement in religion is partly the outcome of the individual members of religious bodies feeling cramped within the narrow pen of their fold. Thousands were, of course, too narrow in heart and brain ever to perceive that the religious atmosphere was asphyxiated; but those who longed to stretch themselves and breathe a free air were bound to turn their attention to the work of the Higher Critics and to enquiries into the origin of Christianity. Among these were the leaders of the Broad Church School in the Church of England

sixty years ago. Three names stand out in clear relief, Dean Stanley, Robertson of Brighton, and Frederick Denison Maurice.

Dean Stanley was charming and vague; Robertson left the memory of a fine character and a few great sermons; Maurice, though persecuted by High Church and Low Church alike, has since his death influenced every section of the English Church.

The Oxford Movement was much too intent on reaffirming first principles to have anything to do with the modern movement. But as so often happens, in order to live it died, and rose again in the Lux Mundi School. The Lux Mundi men were a combination of Pusey and Maurice, and allowed themselves very cautiously to criticise the Old Testament. It has produced men like Bishop Gore, R. C. Moberly and Canon Scott Holland. This in its turn is being forced to yield to a younger school which has seen instinctively that it is impossible to remain in any half-way house; and that critical methods, if admitted at all, must be applied to the end, no matter what that end may be. The half-way men have been frightened to advance, lest a few more steps would take them out of Christianity altogether, and they have been as uncompromising in their attitude to the younger school, as the tractarians were to them. The dash forward made by the young men is leading to quite unexpected developments. Spiritual progress is not in straight

lines but in a spiral. The young men have completed a cycle, and find themselves in the very heart of Christianity again, able to comprehend the many forms in which Christianity has manifested itself in the past; able to understand without servility the best thought of to-day, and likely to renew with a fresh lease of life the Church of England which, however much sneered at, shows from time to time a surprising power of recuperation.

The modern controversy has shown itself most acutely in the Roman Catholic Church. Much that has been written by her modernist writers sounds to English Church ears a trifle stale since it had been said and said well by F. D. Maurice; but the Roman writers have been even more thorough than our Broad Church writers in digging down to the foundations and facing fearlessly results even if they touched their sacred doctrine of the Mass. Loisy has gone almost beyond the Germans in his ruthless criticism, and he has been tainted with the German malady of accommodating facts to a theory. George Tyrrell showed how devoutly and constructively the thankless task of criticism could be carried on. Baron von Hügel—the biggest mind of all—uniting profound learning with a humble and child-like spirit, has co-ordinated the best results of modern thought, and shown how they do not contradict but elucidate the best Catholic tradition when purged by criticism of adventitious

elements. Unfortunately modernism is dead—killed by the encyclical letter (" Pascendi Gregis ") of Pope Pius X. But it will rise again, and Tyrrell's vision of a new catholicism as far transcending the old catholicism as Christianity transcended Judaism may yet be realised, though we shall hardly live to see it.

The nonconformist bodies in England have also gone forward with more or less success. R. J. Campbell with less delicacy of touch than Tyrrell has stated his principles in his book, *The New Theology*. The book was much too hastily written, and Campbell did not do himself justice. No catholic writer would presume to write on the deepest questions of life and religion, and think to do it adequately in three weeks! [1]

The Bodies which deserve most honourable mention are the Primitive Methodists, and the Quakers. The Primitive Methodists have shown themselves quite extraordinarily free from prejudice; and the Quakers by their mystical instincts have always been able to separate the Spirit of Christianity from the symbol through which it might express itself.

What is this spirit working through the most advanced sects and the most conservative Church?

[1] Since writing the above I am informed that Campbell has joined the English Church, and that he is withdrawing his *New Theology*. We shall, doubtless, see fresh developments.

It is a great constructive spirit struggling to effect its purpose by setting free the human Imagination.

The frank acceptance of criticism has served to destroy the accretion of centuries which hid the figure of Christ. When at last the Christ began to emerge, it was found that He spoke mainly in images that had long ceased to be ours. At once foolish and learned professors announced that the Christian system was obsolete. But patient dealing with the apocalyptic imagery of Christ has made clear a principle of paramount importance. The great Hebrew Prophets were great seers, whose minds habitually worked in images. The mind of Jesus Christ was of the same order working at the highest creative pitch. The vision was His, the vesture was supplied by the apocalyptic language of the people. By compelling this material to clothe His vision, He showed Himself a supreme artist; He uttered a message which could be understood by the humblest of His hearers; and He could leave His Gospel of the Kingdom fearlessly to the future, knowing that if its symbolical vesture waxed old, the vision could clothe itself afresh in the popular imagery of any country where the word of the Kingdom should be preached.

Blake's influence has not been working at the back of the movement in the Churches; hitherto it has inspired those who have held themselves aloof. But now the Churches are beginning to

realize the place of imagination in the spiritual life they will discover that Blake has much to say to them; and that with his help their great task will be made easier—the task of Christening modern thought, and of showing that the modern ideal of human values was already imaged in the Person of Jesus Christ Himself.

The mysticism of Blake has of course many points of contact with our modern mystical movements. Foremost amongst these is the theosophical. Theosophy is new only in Europe; in Asia it has its roots deep and far in the hoary past. Its branches have stretched into every land, and in each land that has had any mysticism of native growth, theosophy has made itself at home. It is impossible to sum up in a few words the teaching of a cult that has had so many ramifications. Its main principles do not make it distinctive from other religions. Foremost it places the doctrine of brotherhood which it pursues with much gentleness and sweetness and kindness. The doctrine of Reincarnation is always associated with theosophy, but it has been held by many who were not theosophists, and it is not necessary to subscribe to it in order to become a theosophist.

In our own time theosophy has become more familiar through the tireless energy and eloquence of Mrs. Annie Besant; and as seen by us, it has reflected some of the phases of Mrs. Besant herself.

When Mrs. Besant, seeking help of Dr. Pusey and Dean Stanley to steady her tottering faith and finding none, came out of Christianity altogether, her reaction carried her very far into atheism. Her atheistic period was by no means wasted. Bradlaugh was a fine mentor for any woman; he insisted on thoroughness and accuracy in Mrs. Besant's intellectual pursuits, and these hard qualities were soon manifested in her lectures on the French Revolution. Her socialism was equally valuable as it led her to study economics, and the knowledge of economics has served her as it has served Bernard Shaw in the same way that the knowledge of anatomy served Michael Angelo.

Mrs. Besant did not escape the bitterness of all reactionaries, and for many years she was hostile to Christianity. Since she became a theosophist through the influence of Madame Blavatsky, she has been learning to see Christianity from within. With this fresh-gained insight the bitterness and hostility have vanished, until she has come very near to Christianity again, and with her she has brought her immense following who invariably show much goodwill and brotherliness to those who are really Christian. Mrs. Besant's *Esoteric Christianity* makes the attitude of modern theosophy to Christianity sufficiently clear. Much of what she says takes one back to the almost forgotten controversies of the first two centuries of Christianity when it was

defining its position as against gnosticism. Mrs. Besant, for example, takes the gnostic view of the Baptism of Jesus, that the Christ came upon Him from without, instead of the more beautiful and simpler catholic view that it was an unveiling of what was within.

There is little that theosophy would controvert in the teaching of Blake. It takes his apocalyptic view of regeneration, his doctrine of judgment as a present process; it finds like him that the Eternal is always present to the wise; and it understands far better than most Christians Blake's doctrine of all things being imaged in the sculptured Halls of Los' Palace. Theosophy calls the sculptured Halls the Akaschic Records, and claims that its seers have access to these Records, and thus gain a secret knowledge of things and events which is only possible for those in an advanced stage of spiritual consciousness.

But theosophy has not Blake's edge. Its eclectic instincts make it seek the common ground in all religions. It aims at impartiality and tolerance; and while leaving bigotry and persecution far behind, its virtues have been its bane. Impartiality paralyses, and tolerance easily becomes inertia. Theosophy has not yet understood the wrath of the Lamb. Its sweetness needs redemption. Just here, Blake was supremely right. Like Christ he proclaimed the power of mercy, gentleness, pity and

forgiveness, but like Christ he also carried a sword. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword;" was the astonishing word of the Prince of Peace. And again: "I am come to send fire on earth."

Theosophy must learn to grasp the Christian sword and kindle a pitiless fire if it would help to create a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

William Blake, it is admitted by all, was a Christian. If theosophy claims him too, there can be no real objection. Jacob Boehme was called the Teutonic Theosopher. In the strictest meaning of the word theosophy—the wisdom of God—we can gladly admit that Blake was the finest theosophist of modern times.

Among mystical movements Christian Science merits a place, in spite of the fact that Mrs. Eddy vigorously repudiated mysticism along with pantheism and hypnotism in *Science and Health.* Christian Science was fundamentally a search for unity as the basis of all things. Mrs. Eddy, revolting from the crude dualism of American protestant churches, and finding herself faced by two apparent entities, mind and matter, hastily denied matter, and affirmed the sole reality of mind. By this simple process she separated herself from pantheism which believes in matter, and arrived at basic unity; but the undue simplification overlooked stubborn facts,

and the facts are slowly and surely taking their revenge. Mrs. Eddy had little of Mrs. Annie Besant's great learning, or she would have known that, before Christ, Hindoo theosophists had alternately affirmed and denied matter for countless generations, and she might with patient study have found out all that results from denying matter, without plunging her million followers into a gulf before they could learn it by a prolonged and painful experience.

Since mind is the only reality, it followed quite logically that sin, sickness, old age and death have no real existence. Their apparent existence arises from the delusion of mortal mind. Hence, once a man affirms the reality of mind, and denies the reality of all else, he shakes himself free from illusory sin and disease, and enters into eternal life. Since Mrs. Eddy adhered to the Scriptures, there was no need to coin a new phrase like " Mortal mind," she might have kept to St. Paul's phrase—the mind of the flesh, *φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς*—and so have avoided some confusion. By denying matter, Mrs. Eddy discredited completely the evidence of the senses; she robbed the artist of any medium of expression; she refused to see that God was manifesting Himself in the swift advance of medical science as in other sciences; she struck at the roots of catholic theology which built itself up on the Word made Flesh; and the nervous tension pro-

duced by those who were striving to affirm mind and deny the evidence of their stubborn bodies, was sometimes more detrimental to health than the diseases they were trying to combat. These are negative results producing positive harm. Yet withal Christian Science has done an amazing amount of good. It has actually healed in tens of thousands of cases what it professed to heal. It has brought the knowledge of eternal life to all its adherents. It has found men and women listless, weary, useless, and made them contented, cheerful, efficient members of society. It is, of course, a heresy, that is, if pressed on it would end in subverting the truth, but like most heresies it has aroused the Church and set it thinking furiously; and itself has given birth to a movement which is far nearer to the fundamental truth of things.

Mental Science or Higher Thought is the offspring of Christian Science disinherited by its parent. The first teachers of Higher Thought had all been through the ranks of Christian Science and left it behind.

It is precisely in those points that Mental Science differs from Christian Science that it approaches towards the teaching of William Blake. Mental Science has reaffirmed the reality of matter. Matter may change its form a thousand times, and it is never what it seems, but it is, and matter and mind though apparent contraries mutually exist.

Mental Science has not bound itself down to defining what matter is, but it fits with perfect ease into the theory of electrons enunciated by Sir Oliver Lodge, and the dissociability of matter into ether taught by Dr. Le Bon. Again Mrs. Eddy in *Science and Health* defined man as a *reflection* of God. Mental Science thinks that if man is the image of God, he is something more than a reflection. There is a still more important difference. Christian Science works by a hard and difficult mental process of affirmations and denials, Mental Science works by a divine process of imagination. It is learning the creative power of imagination. By holding its patients in the imagination and seeing them whole, it sends out a life-stream to the sick in body, which reinforces the mysterious healing forces in nature, and often has power to make them whole.

By affirming the reality of matter Mental Science has run too precipitately towards pantheism. It might have learnt when it separated from its mother Christian Science that creation is parturition. When Mental Science, and Theosophy, and Bernard Shaw, and W. B. Yeats, and the host of modern thinkers at last learn the old Christian doctrine that creation is separation, and that the life of union with God is effected by the eternal separation of the Creator and the creature, then they will unite in one great front and go forward girt with their swords to do service for the Lord of Hosts.

We have seen in our study of Blake, the important place he gives to his doctrine of contraries; and that with him Imagination is the Real Man. It is Mental Science that has accomplished most by working with these great truths. By being loyal to these principles it should be enabled to make a rich offering to the spiritual treasury of humanity.

These movements have aroused the Church of England, and there has arisen in her a body called the Guild of Health which believes in healing of the body as a part of the Christian heritage, and is striving to place it on a sound theological basis. It has made amply clear that healing was part of the Gospel program of the first four centuries of the Church; that it has persisted through the Saints unbrokenly till to-day; that there is for it a sacrament of Unction, but that it is not confined to priestly channels but flows through the consecrated hands of many men and women who have dedicated their lives to God.

For many centuries till the nineteenth, theology had made the dualism of soul and body as sharp as possible. In its apologetics for immortality it had tried with all its might to prove the inherent immortality of the soul. As the body, by the most incontrovertible of facts, did not share in this immortality, and the soul could not be left without a body for eternity, it was necessary that the mortal body after death should be raised up again, that it

might be re-united with the soul and partake of its immortality whether in heaven or in hell.

As a consequence of this teaching, Christians in their striving for a spiritual life ignored their bodies, and claimed only for their souls the Life which Christ had said He came to give. This was specially the case among protestants who made the Bible the rule of faith, and were for ever reading it. Strangely enough, in the Gospel story Christ was constantly healing sick bodies; and His word, Thy faith hath made thee whole, applied even more often to the salvation of the body than the soul. But protestants were so obsessed with the soul that they spiritualised everything they read, and could not see that there was any message for the body at all. If Christ cleansed a leper, then quite clearly it was intended to teach that He could cleanse the sin of the soul. If He gave sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, it was to teach that the Saviour of the World could give sight and hearing to the spiritually blind and deaf.

The revolt against this artificial division of soul and body resulted in nineteenth-century rationalism. The rationalists were sure that soul and body were one; and as they supposed that the soul was a product of the brain, they thought it must necessarily perish with the body. At the same time science was dogmatically asserting as axiomatic the conservation of energy, and the indestructibility of matter,

and death was therefore regarded by the rationalists as the dissolution of the person into gas. Still there was the craving for some kind of immortality, and the old doctrine condemned as superstitious revived in an attenuated doctrine of subjective immortality. This was the teaching of Comte, George Eliot, and Samuel Butler, its finest expression being in George Eliot's positivist hymn.

> O may I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence; live
> In pulses stirred to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self,
> In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
> And with their mild persistence urge man's search
> To vaster issues.
> So to live is heaven.
> . . . . . .
> May I reach
> That purest heaven, be to other souls
> The cup of strength in some great agony,
> Enkindle generous ardour, feed pure love,
> Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
> Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
> And in diffusion ever more intense.
> So shall I join the choir invisible
> Whose music is the gladness of the world.

This was the inevitable rebound from a distorted doctrine of immortality, but it could never be the permanent solution of the time-honoured problem. Christian apologists have studied the ground of their hope afresh, and there is emerging a deeper and far more comprehensive doctrine of immortality than

has been held for many hundreds of years. For whether the soul is immortal or not Christianity, in the first instance, did not build on its immortality, but Christ enunciated a doctrine of eternal life which is startling in its originality, its simplicity and its comprehensiveness. " This is life eternal that they might *know* thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." [1] Eternal life, then, stands in the *knowledge* of God. This knowledge is latent in every man. When man is born again of the Spirit and his Real Man is unveiled, he becomes conscious that he has eternal life, and from this glowing consciousness arises his hope for the future. Having learned that his body and soul are one, he finds by experience that his body shares in the soul's quickening. On re-reading the Gospels he sees that Christ had set up no artificial barrier between the soul and body, and therefore the body could not fairly be excluded from the Life which was claimed for the soul. This involves the immortality of the body. Members of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, and later many mystical Christians having gone thus far, affirmed that they had overcome death, and therefore would pass like Enoch and Elijah to full glory. Out of this confusion it is becoming gradually clear that the real or spiritual body is built up by the spirit, just as the soul builds up its own appropriate natural (soulish) body; that

[1] John xvii. 3.

this spiritual body shares in the immortality of the spirit; that it interpenetrates and envelopes itself in an outer earthly body which is subject to a continual flux, but which is necessary so long as the Real Man has to function on this earth. While the outer body is thus tenanted it is quickened and strong to resist disease, but at death, the spiritual body is released, and the earthly body no longer needed returns to its mother earth, and falls rapidly to dust.

Thus there is a deeper and more spiritual view of immortality than our fathers knew, and at the same time there is a more passionate insistence on the body, allowing in a christened form the pagan worship of its form, the artist's vision of its beauty, and the saint's perception of its sweet fragrance.

Once more William Blake has uttered the illuminating word. He condemned as error the notion, "that man has two real existing principles, viz. a Body and a Soul." He affirmed that "Man has no Body distinct from his Soul, for that called Body is a portion of Soul discerned by the five senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age." [1]

From this results what Modernism and post-Modernism, New Theology, and Mental Science, Theosophy and Mysticism, Higher Thought and Modern Thought are striving to effect—the Marriage of Heaven and Hell.

[1] *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 4.

CHAPTER XVII

THE SAINTS OF THE FUTURE

DURING the course of our study of Blake and modern thought various types of man have emerged all more or less tentative. Each type is open to much criticism, and the general feeling is that the Real Man, the Pope Angelico, the world teacher, the superman is yet to come. At present we have the neo-pagan, the neo-mystic, the Nietzschean superman, the Shavian superman; and these have arisen because of the destructive criticism to which Christianity and its Founder have been subjected during the last hundred years. Once the Christ, the measure of man, the Judge, is deposed, then there is immediately the need for a new Man by which men with their thousand contrary impulses may know what they are, and to what they can conform.

Criticism began with the Bible. Here was a book regarded by catholics and protestants alike as plenarily inspired and therefore infallible. The first higher critics were excessively crude, and their methods were repellent; but they had sufficient vitality in them to evolve, and by the end of the first half of the nineteenth century, Strauss in Germany, and Renan in France, proved themselves imaginative critics of a fairly high order. Strauss' work showed all the German thoroughness, and was

relentless in its searching criticism. Renan was extraordinarily acute whether in his criticism of the Bible or of the Liberal Catholics of Saint Sulpice; and he was more than a critic. His fine interpretation of the *Song of Solomon* was creative; it was only when he tried to fill the gaps of the Gospel story that he wrote what he meant to be " true because 'twere pity if it were not."

The obvious shortcomings of Strauss and Renan gave the orthodox a handle to discount their true value. Nevertheless their truth has prevailed; and to-day, no one, unless he has strong religious prejudices, can read the Bible without having to face the real difficulties that were raised by Strauss and Renan.

The proved fallibility of the Bible was a terrible shock to protestantism, but for a long time it was thought that catholicism could hold out as it was not built on a Book. In reality the miraculous Book is involved with the miraculous Church, and one cannot touch her book without subjecting herself and her dogmas to the disintegrating fire of criticism. But the critics had no intention of stopping short of the Bible. They proceeded to examine one by one the foundation doctrines which were held by catholic and protestant alike, and one by one when taken literally they crumbled in their hands.

Infallibility whether of the Book, the Church or the Pope vanished like a fond dream. The doctrines

of substitutionary Atonement, everlasting punishment, the Virgin Birth, and the physical Resurrection and Ascension of Christ followed, and when the critics had gone thus far, they naturally declared that Christianity was played out. For a time the free-thinkers held on to the Christian morals, while abandoning the Christian dogmas. But eventually it was found that the dogmas involved the morals, and therefore in common consistency the morals must go also. This work of destruction was not left only to dry critics, it was carried on by men and women of fine imaginative gifts, Carlyle, Arnold, George Eliot, Meredith, Swinburne, Hardy, Samuel Butler, Oscar Wilde, and Bernard Shaw, not to mention a host on the Continent; and they have accomplished the work of destruction so thoroughly, that criticism finds itself out of work, and is about to resign its thankless task to the creative genius as soon as it shall please him to make his appearance.

When criticism had progressed so far that it could no longer be ignored, it made plain a fact which before had been less obvious. Catholicism and protestantism had an inner kernel and an outer shell, and both had regarded the inner and outer as one. The protestant who had experienced the new birth and the baptism of fire, testified of what he had seen and known. He knew that criticism could not touch his treasure, and therefore for a long time he ignored it. The spiritually-minded catholic also found that

every word and every letter of his faith stood for some truth which he had confirmed by experience, and he held on to every letter lest one drop of precious truth should be spilled. Many who attacked the shell had little knowledge of the kernel; but when at last criticism insisted on being heard, then those who possessed the kernel were forced to make a sharp division between the inward truth and its outward manifestation, between the vision and its vesture, and to inquire into the law which governs the clothing of the Spirit of Life in all ages. Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* was a fine contribution so far as it went; but necessarily the task demanded one who had a perfect understanding of the spirit of catholicism, who was inside, and who realised that though the Church is bound to be conservative, yet she is dynamic; and that therefore in every age there is a great work to be done in adapting her tradition to the growing light and reason of the time, without allowing any truth to escape which it is her business to guard. The attempt to meet this need has been made by a crop of modernists in the Roman Catholic Church. Realising that it was impossible to tamper with the creeds, they turned their attention to the nature of dogma, and declared that the dogmas of the Church were the best possible symbolical clothing of the spirit of truth which had been reached in the past. A dogma was an approximative and not an absolute statement, and

was therefore liable to be improved, and could not be argued about like positive literal statements. In a word the Creed is a symbolical and not a literal statement of the truth.

At once the modernists laid themselves open to a double attack. The Roman Church, which has always borne fine testimony to the paramount importance of the historical element in the Creeds, said that, regarded as symbol only, they quickly evaporated; and those who were in the modern symbolist movement, asked why a particular set of symbols should be adhered to, when they might be replaced by others more adequate. Here was an *impasse* and the Church of Rome has temporarily triumphed. But the question was much too big to resolve itself into a simple Either—or, like Goethe's Either religion or art. The Church of Rome is fond of simplifying to a peremptory Either—or, when in reality there is a third course. Here, she says, Either the whole letter or nothing. We beg respectfully to say that while all is symbol there is sufficient of the letter to allow of a strong historical foundation without accepting the whole. It is the work of the higher critics to decide the extent of the letter.

The higher critics have done much, perhaps all that is necessary. Beginning with the Bible, they have abolished all lazy thinking, which would say that the Bible is either history or allegory. The Bible contains history, myth, legend, poetry,

allegory and symbol, prophecies, letters, and revelation. It has an impassioned oriental love song which may be treated symbolically because love itself is a symbol. It has many statements beginning " Thus saith the Lord," but which, like all other statements, need to be tried at the bar of human experience. It has a fourfold presentation of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the first three aiming at a didactic presentation of the facts, and symbolical so far as they are true, and the fourth a symbolical treatment of the facts which has proved true in many ages of human experience. Thus while the Bible consists of heterogeneous elements, all the parts are symbolical, for everywhere we get the garments with which profound human experiences have clothed themselves.

The simplest Creed—the Apostles'—is also composite, and like the Bible gains its unity from its symbolical value. All its clauses are built upon three symbolical statements of belief—I believe in God the Father . . . and in Jesus Christ His only Son . . . and in the Holy Ghost. The first is a symbol taken from the primary human relation, and while falling short of the whole truth is the nearest to express God's relation to His creatures. The second is also borrowed from the human relation and adds a historical person Jesus, and a historical symbol Christ. A child can learn to know Jesus; the symbol Christ can only be fully understood after a prolonged historical study of the growth of the Messianic

idea through many prophets until it received its last interpretation in the mind of Jesus, and became through Him a symbol of world-wide significance.

The third is a symbol taken from man's subjective experience of spiritual good and evil, and hence the Holy Ghost. The historical elements of the Creed, then, centre around the Person of Jesus Christ. Every spiritual Christian whether a catholic or a quaker knows that Christ is born, grows, dies, rises again and ascends in him. Christ born in him is regeneration, and Christ ascended in him is Christ come to sovereign control and power over the soul after the darkness and conflict of its being crucified with Christ. To be united with Christ in the heavenly places is the highest flight of the Christian soul. Now are these experiences of the Christian merely subjective or have they their objective counterpart? The Creed states that Jesus Christ was born (Incarnation), that He died (Atonement), that He rose again (Regeneration), that He ascended (Sanctification). The first two statements are both historical and symbolical; the other two are of a different order. Not every one could see Jesus after His resurrection. " Their eyes were holden." There was need of heart preparation that they might know that it was the Lord. For this reason the test of the Resurrection is spiritual rather than historical, and the question that remains is whether the Resurrection and Ascension are objectively true. To this

Christianity demands the answer " Yes." Jesus the Christ who lived the Eternal Life, after He was crucified, was seen of His disciples; and they explained the mode of His appearances as well as they could from their Rabbinical lore. After that, Jesus Christ reached the goal of His spiritual self which included His body, and this goal was the place of all authority and power so that, instead of being limited by body to a little flock in Palestine, He could go forth unhindered and act intimately on the hearts of men and women from His unseen centre of life.

If the great events in the Lord's life commemorated by Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension Day in the ecclesiastical year are objective facts, then the creed is rooted in history, and it is relatively unimportant whether the remaining clauses are symbol or fact. The clause " Born of the Virgin Mary " cannot be put to any subjective test like the Resurrection. It is a question of history and evidence. Symbolically it is valuable because the persistent experience of the new birth of the Spirit which every Christian knows finds its antitype in the Christ who, though born of a human mother, has the over-shadowing of the spirit thrown back to the moment of His conception in His Mother's womb. Also the Virgin-Mother stands for the ideal of Virginity and the ideal of Motherhood in one; for the Church like her Divine Lord has always insisted that some are called to the virgin life, and therein find their highest blessedness.

The descent into Hades symbolises the eternal truth that human deeds have a transcendent value. The supreme act of Christ's life—His self-oblation on the cross—was not only the starting point for the Church militant here on earth, but it reached to the world beyond where human thoughts and aspirations, human deeds and failures are sealed and abide among the imperishable treasures of heaven.

The coming again to judge the quick and the dead means that Christ is still the measure or touchstone by which man is tried.

The Communion of Saints not only binds earth to heaven, but also gives one hope of the time when the saints on earth shall be bound together in joyous fellowship, without being persecuted for their loyalty to the truth.

Higher criticism has driven home to Christians the distinction between the inner and outer content of their faith. The inner spiritual treasure of the Church of Rome probably contains everything. Certainly there is nothing which the loftiest protestant mystic has learnt, which Rome does not know, and which she has not systematised. Those who are born in her fold can find and take whatever nourishment they please. But she has raised an impassable barrier to those outside with critical minds, by insisting on acceptance of all the letter before she will receive them to her bosom. And much of even Rome's letter kills.

Besides making a distinction between the inner and outer, higher criticism has taught us that they can be entirely separated. In reality the religious genius works like an artist, poet or mystic. He has his vision, and must clothe it in all the mental images available. It is clear now that Jesus of Nazareth clothed His vision mainly in the apocalyptic imagery of His country. His favourite images, the Kingdom of God, the Messiah, the Messianic banquet, the Son of Man, expressed for Him and His disciples His own special Person and message. Yet if His message had depended on the literal truth of His images, Christianity would have perished with its Founder, and it survived because already by the end of the first century the Messianic images had been translated into terms of another philosophy, and instead of the Messiah possessed by the Holy Spirit, S. John wrote of the Word become Flesh. This adaptation is the greatest Christianity has ever made. Its Platonic and Aristotelian borrowings of a later age were small in comparison. The fact that it could make such an adaptation without losing anything of its precious content was evidence that it was Life itself, and we need not doubt that this Life will be able to make such adaptations as may be called for by the twentieth century.

The shell or clothing of the Christian faith has suffered very severely, its inner kernel not at all. It

is because the garment is rent throughout, and any patching of the garment only makes the rent worse; it is because the old bottles are burst, and the new wine demands new bottles; it is because the Spirit of Life has outgrown its old symbols, that there has grown the urgent need for one to do to-day what Jesus Christ did in His day—fulfil the law and the prophets, and also weave a new garment for the spirit of life and truth. Hence the various tribes of superman; the Order of the Star in the East with its expectation of a world teacher; the advent of the Pope Angelico; the expectation of the Christ to be.

The neo-pagan ideal proclaimed by Swinburne, and still preached by Lowes Dickinson can survive only when transfigured by the Saint. Pure paganism even if realised, which is impossible, would be violently retrogressive. In every stage of orderly growth there is much beauty. Man's childhood is beautiful; a childish man insufferable. The pagan stage of man was first beautiful, and then rank, till Christianity seized hold of the degenerate pagan and regenerated him. The spirit of Christianity is the philosopher's stone, the everlasting *elixir vitæ;* and when it penetrated the spirit of the pagan, discarded what was valueless, and transmuted what could be preserved in the fibre of the new man. To become a pagan would effect an unnatural process of degeneration culminating in a worse sink than paganism because it would involve the disintegra-

tion of a higher consciousness. Neo-paganism will serve a good purpose if it reminds the Churchman of values to which he has a birthright; but there never was and never can be a Church of neo-pagans, and we can dismiss its apostles without more serious consideration.

Far removed from neo-paganism is the expectation of a world-teacher by the Order of the Star in the East to which so many theosophists belong. But why promise a world-teacher when the vast majority have not yet learned the elementary lessons of Christianity? It is like offering finer music to one who cannot appreciate the masters, more beautiful things to one with no idea of the beautiful; heaven to one who finds nothing to marvel at on earth. If large numbers of men and women experienced the wonders of Christianity's new birth, and pressed on to the fiery baptism of the Spirit, the cry for a world-teacher would immediately vanish; and sanctified men and women would arise and solve the pressing problems of the time as they arose. In any case the expectation of a world-teacher or a superman is an anachronism. From a thousand causes we have learnt to think corporately, I might say, telepathically. Instead of a solitary thinker in an isolated country laboriously studying and thinking as he burns the night oil, there is now a world-mind to which all thinkers in all countries instantaneously contribute; and this all-pervading world-mind

pressing downwards will incarnate itself not in one world-teacher, but in a thousand who will spring up simultaneously; and thus there may yet be realised on earth a Communion of Saints.

The Nietzschean superman is the finest attempt at transvaluation of modern times. Superman is rooted in earth, and however high his blossom, he never forgets nor spurns his mother. He realises early in his development that strength, growth, power, and beauty are effects of the Spirit of Life, and therefore he must, before all things, fan and nourish the flame of life in himself, and welcome whatever forms it shall throw out. His surest method is to trust his instincts, which are life's antennæ, and as he does so he finds that he is being transformed by a mighty power within which brings him into sharp collision with dead virtues, dead moralities, and dead conventions. Henceforth it is war, and superman becomes a valiant warrior. The crowd ignores his words or misunderstands them. Becoming vaguely conscious that the things by which it exists are despised by superman, it begins to hate him; and when he touches its religion, it cries, "Away with him!" Superman just here has thoroughly learned the Christian lesson. He must allow no resentment to overcome him. The moment he gives place to resentment, he sinks to the level of the crowd. Arising in his strength, he casts out the spirit of resentment once for all, and treats his

gainsayers with understanding, patience, and sweetness. Here, too, his imagination helps him, for he detects the comic spirit in the crowd and in himself, and the comic spirit delivers him from pessimism, cleanses his intellect, but alienates him for ever from the crowd which suspects his laughter. So far superman is entirely Christian and sane, but he is now at the parting of the ways, and it is the crowd that is his ruin. Every man of fine intellect must become acutely conscious of the stupidity of the mass. In his illusioned youth he may embrace all he meets with generous faith, and even evoke a reflex of his own exuberance; but as his intellect clears, his illusions are destroyed, and he is thrown more and more in upon himself, depending upon himself or the chance advent of a kindred spirit. Superman and Christ perceive that resentment is merely stupid, but how about contempt? Superman is too proud to be resentful, but his pride permits disdain, and henceforth he despises the vulgar herd, and declares that he will not be the herd's herdsman and hound, he will speak only to companions. The Christ fell back on that human nature which He shared with the least of His brethren. Human joys and human sorrows are ever new. He could enter into these, and see in them poetry, pathos and humour. More, He could pierce with His fiery vision to the inner self of the people and see infinite possibilities even in the worst.

The miracle of transformation would be wrought, if heavy-laden hearts could apprehend that there was One whose love for them was stronger than death. Whence it comes that whilst superman, the self-elect, despises the herd, Christ, the God-elect, dies for it.

And that is superman's utter and complete failure. Superman has been surpassed by the Son of Man, and we may dismiss him as a teacher, since he has no further value for us whatever; our only concern with him is to try and reach him in his spiritual isolation, and minister to him while his superb brain reels and finally collapses.

The Shavian superman has avoided the gulf into which Nietzsche fell by keeping a fast hold of the old Christian doctrine that human beings are members one of another. It is true that this fact involves much suffering and the apparent injustice of creating everywhere innocent victims, but it also involves man's highest glory, since if the sins of the fathers are visited to the third and fourth generation, and then nature winds up a bad concern, the deeds of God's lovers persist to a thousand generations, and men reap a rich harvest of those things they have not sown. It necessarily follows that no individual can attain to good apart from the social organism of which he is a member. Zarathustra's attempt to surpass man by holding himself aloof was fatuous. Shaw knows through and through that we are all victims of the social

organism, and we can only keep our self-respect by willing and working for a better social order. Thus the Shavian superman trusts life and instinct, follows the divine ego, and is magnificently free from resentment. With piercing intellectual vision he goes behind the outward show, and knows what is in man. He laughs at the human comedy, but not maliciously, for he has an immense faith that if men and women were not ground down by a cruel and relentless capitalist system they might arise to great things.

So far the Shavian superman while outstripping the Nietzschean is Christian, but his further development is a departure. Shaw is a vitalist, and for him the life-force, which throws out huge, ungainly, antediluvian forms, then man, and presently superman, is God. God is identified with the Spirit of life, and whatsoever lives is God. This is pantheism, and while at first sight it seems to promise infinite room to breathe in it ends in many negations. It not only reduces God to an impersonal life-force, but by identifying man with the impersonal God gives him personality for three score years and ten, and then dissipates him into impersonal energy. There are many pantheists who claim to believe in a transcendent God, but they only mean that the life of which they partake is greater than they, that the whole is greater than its part; and that is something much less than the Christian doctrine of trans-

cendence which believes that God is not only beyond man but separate from man, and that man's highest life is communion with One who is not himself and yet dwells in him. Religion begins when a man binds himself to One above him; eternal life begins when a man, born of the Spirit, communes with the Spirit which is not his Spirit; romance begins when man responds to God's love and gives himself to God; worship begins when man falls down and adores One who is utterly beyond him. Until superman adores a transcendent God, he has neither religion nor worship.

Superman's cult of the *ego* is as sectarian as the cult of the *alter* which it displaced. There is often great value in detaching a quality and placing it in a glaring light. It is a kind of work that can be accomplished by a generation or a century that has glided into a backwater. Thus the Victorians detached man's duty to his neighbour from the whole duty of man, and while distorting the doctrine brought out aspects of altruism which are apt to be forgotten because they are not generally apparent. George Eliot was the most zealous exponent of the religion of altruism; *Daniel Deronda* the greatest book it produced. Through the author, we know all about altruism; through the book we can weigh its merits and demerits. Mordecai was its prophet, Deronda its high priest: they have only to be placed by the side of Christ for one moment, and at once

they lose all significance. But one pearl of priceless wisdom George Eliot gave to us from her impassioned experience. Religion, philosophy, knowledge, culture, art, are only good and great as they lead to a vaster fellowship. By that test alone we can dismiss the superman, all sectarian religion, whether inside or outside the Catholic fold, pantheism, and many other cults from which the human values have been omitted.

Bernard Shaw has rightly coupled altruism and rationalism. In giving the precedence of duty to self to duty to neighbour, he may be right also, and therefore advanced as he likes to think; but his gospel of egoism is none the less sectarian. He and his gospel are in the limelight for our instruction, and we should be churlish not to be grateful to him for making clear what are the permanent values of duty to self. Duty to self is neither selfishness nor individualism, because as we have seen it involves the willing and working for a better social order, while it serves to that end by a passionate faithfulness to the Real Self which Christianity and Judaism have ever held to be made in the image of God. Only by duty to self can passion, power and inspiration come into a man's work and give it a lasting value.

Once we have studied man's detached duties to God, neighbour and self, we must forget our analysis and remember that these three duties are one and

co-terminate. Man can only find himself as he gives himself to God. These two realizations are simultaneous and involve one's neighbour. When we grasp the three-fold truth we have ceased to be sectarian and advanced, we hold the timeless truth which gives us a right to the name catholic. Those things which the sectarians threatened to rob us of, mystery, romance, glamour, miracle, are given back to us, and life becomes once more an adventure and an enchantment, and we go forth sword in hand, in love and laughter finding a God in every man, an angel in every bush, a fairy in every flower.

The Shavian superman outstrips the Nietzschean, but both have been surpassed by Blake's Real Man, which was confessedly an interpretation of Jesus Christ. It is time to abandon altogether the alluring idea of superman as being less than man, and to give our whole attention to Jesus Christ in order to discover the unplumbed depths that lie in man and what are his infinite possibilities. But first I would say a few words about Blake's system which he said he must build lest he be enslaved to another's.

Blake had no genius for system building. His genius was vision, and while he compelled all things to embody his vision, he had little of that reason whose province it is to build a coherent system. The system he ultimately built was not unlike that of Catholicism, but much inferior to it whether in its Anglican or Roman form.

Blake was so much on the immanentist side as to deserve the name pantheist. His pantheism arose from identifying the Real Man with God. This led to the doctrine of the relativity of morals and his repeated asseverations that whatsoever lives is holy. Blake was careless of consistency and did not probably follow the worst implications of his doctrine, which can be studied by us in Zarathustra's unequivocal utterances. The modern notion of the absolute relativity of good and evil is a flimsy foundation for the religious life; while the old conception of an eternal right which gave strength and dignity to the moral life appeared to be contradicted by the fact that there is one law to the lion, another to the ox; one to the child, another to the man; that even for man there is no invariable law of good and evil, that the best men are law breakers.

The truth is that deeds have no intrinsic merits, and cannot of themselves be called good or evil. Deeds are good or evil according to circumstance, and therefore it is impossible in the nature of things that a code of morals can be drawn up which shall be fitting for all ages and all men The commandments must be reduced to one, at the most two, if they are to approximate to an eternal law. Christ sums up the decalogue by two—Love to God and love to one's neighbour. Deeds are good and evil only as they are signs of obedience or disobedience to God's will. As man's knowledge of God's will

grows with the ages, the Saint with the fullest insight obeys God's will and breaks the law. Thus Jesus gave Himself in love to God. God's will was the inner law of His Spirit. By obeying impulsively and instinctively this will, He obeyed the eternal law of good, and broke every conceivable code of morals, ran counter to the traditions and conventions of man, and set aside all authority.

Obedience to God's will, then, is the eternal law of righteousness; and it will manifest itself in deeds which though good must often appear evil to men who are spiritually dying or dead.

Blake's other inference, "Whatsoever lives is holy," is not invariably true. Whatsoever lives is autonomous, and therefore capable of growing apart from Him who gave it life. Man who received in fullest measure the breath of life from God, can stray furthest from Him, and do the most evil. When in his divine restlessness, he at last returns to God, he then attains the highest life because it is the result of choice. Even a vegetable can grow contrary to God's will, because it is alive, and life includes will and choice.

But Blake did not follow pantheistic implications to the egotistic extreme of the modern superman. He conceives that he must give himself to the God-life pulsing in him, and his self-donation places him on the side of catholicism.

Blake's doctrine of outline, again, delivers him

from the excesses of pantheism. For him, the seeming outline of the world which is but a vegetable mirror, is a reflection of the City of God which hath foundations. The modern vapid talk of heaven being a state and not a place is merely the rebound from a materialistic view of heaven. Our idea of place is supplied by the material universe, whose apparent substantiality is a reflex of the real substantiality of heaven. Blake's doctrine unifies his religion and his art since he followed the Florentine tradition that good drawing is the foundation of good art, but it needs to be co-ordinated with other truths, else it leads to the negation of the great Venetians, of Rubens, of Rembrandt, and of modern impressionism, and the loss of these would be too dreadful for us to contemplate. Yet the idea, taken by itself, is magnificent, and helped to keep Blake sane. His couplet:

> God appears and God is light
> To those poor souls who dwell in night

is a scathing denunciation of our modern nebulous immanentism. The next gives us the truth which should be our deliverance:

> But doth a human form display
> To those who dwell in realms of day.

We have said thus much to show that Blake could not found a Church, or build a system, nor can we accept him as a teacher without qualification.

Our chief concern with him is to find out what he has passionately affirmed. He has affirmed the marriage of heaven and hell, of art and religion, and in so doing he professed to re-discover the genius of the great Hebrew Prophets which reached perfection in Jesus Christ; and who therefore is the supreme symbol of the imaginative religious life.

Before all else Blake saw in Jesus the law-breaker. "I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments. Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules." It follows that Jesus was a heretic and antinomian, or in modern phrase, "beyond good and evil." But as we have seen His rebellion was obedience to the higher rule of God's will.

Blake's full picture of Jesus corrects much of our early teaching of "Gentle Jesus meek and mild." There was gentleness and there was mildness, but gentle Jesus could be very terrible. At those moments when the inner fire which at once sustained and consumed Him broke through the calm of His exterior life His adversaries were struck as by lightning, and His disciples were dazed by the splendour of His inner life, which lay so entirely beyond their ken.

The anti-Christian movement which culminated in Nietzsche's fanatical attack on Christianity and Christ has brought to light a startling fact about Christ Himself. Men of imagination protested

against the ecclesiastical type of over-disciplined man. The man who lived by strict rule, and severely repressed his natural impulses, imputing them to the devil, ended by becoming much less than a man —bigoted, fanatical, harsh, and relentless to all natural men and heretics. The evangelical who was assured of his salvation and separated himself from the world and all sinners, developed the same qualities, and without knowing it, displayed the same temper as the pharisee of old. Many of Rome's approved Saints sacrificed half their nature to over-develop the visionary side, and became quite unfit for the simple duties of everyday life. There was something ugly and repellent in the strongly individualised products of earnest Christian devotion which was easily detected by the man of imagination; and he hastily concluded that it was learnt from the Master whom all Christians professed to worship. There have been thousands of men and women in the last eighty years brought up in strict Christian doctrines who on coming of age have shaken themselves free, and felt that they could breathe for the first time. A new ideal was gradually evolved which grew into Nietzsche's superman; and the choice was offered to men—Dionysus or Christ. Such a choice requires closest scrutiny of the types. Superman represented life, instinct, impulse, imagination, and will; Christ? The negation of all these? By no manner of means.

Christ is the supreme example of life, instinct, impulse, imagination, and will, and some other things, lacking which superman goes mad. Christ's life was one long conflict against various forms of the religious life which can all be paralleled in the various modern churches. The modern drama of the conflict between men of imagination and professing Christians is a faint reflex of the supreme drama when the God-anointed Man fought against His professing servants and sealed His valiant fight by His blood. Everything of value for which superman has striven is found in Christ, and so once again the vital question for the age is the same as of old: What think ye of Christ?

Tennyson called on the bells while ringing out the old and ringing in the new to "ring in the Christ that is to be." Since then there has been much talk of "the Christ to be." It is a loose manner of speaking, for in the nature of things there can never be another Christ.

The first conception of the Messiah formed itself very slowly in the minds of Israel's most lofty prophets. It was fostered by Israel's bitter experience in times of exile. It grew with the people and became the symbol into which it poured its deepest will, hopes, desires, and aspirations. The history of the Hebrews is unique among the peoples of the world, and therefore the symbol which embodies their deepest genius is unique also. But it does not

stop there. When Jesus of Nazareth came to the consciousness of His Messianic calling in Jordan's waters the national symbol began its last refining process, and it evolved in the mind of Jesus as He lived through the impassioned and unique days of His public ministry. Jesus recreated the national symbol, and in so doing broke down national exclusiveness. The symbol was not apart from Himself but became Himself. And so the Man Jesus Christ could stand up in the majesty of His manhood and invite all men to come unto Him, and in simple sublime egotism declare Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The Messianic call was God's unique call. The world has had many prophets, and priests and kings, many seers, apostles and poets; it has one Christ.

And what is our hope of the future? "Our finest hope is finest memory," and as we review the past, we see that from time to time men arise who call themselves the followers of Jesus Christ, and who not only recover the blurred image of Christ, but also unveil something more of the Divine Nature. Such men used to be called Saints, and with this precedent, we may look forward to the Saint of the future for whom is ready a great work.

What is a Saint?

To be like Christ has been the goal of the Saint. There have been two methods—imitation and transformation. The first has produced the exquisite

type of monastic Christianity seen in Thomas à Kempis. Though refreshing and marvellously helpful to young people at a certain phase, it is not robust and virile, or the testimony of one who has fought in the forefront of the hottest battle. It does not add to our knowledge of God, or touch the problems that arise in a complex civilisation.

The other method, transformation, seeks Christ-likeness by a new life process. Starting with the new birth of the Spirit it seeks to develop the Spirit of Life, by yielding to it and allowing it to transform it into the Christ-image. This is the real method for training Saints, the Saint produced being essentially a life product. When a Man follows fearlessly the Spirit of Life, he draws his first nourishment from the past, and for a long time there is nothing to mark him out from any particular past type. But there comes a time when the past having been assimilated fails him, and there is either an arrest in his development, or he must start on the real business of creating new values. This is the highest and most difficult task on which a man can venture, and he must be called to it, otherwise he will most certainly fall into the abyss. Hitherto he has grown in favour with God and man, now he is diverging from man's standards, and whereas he was admired, now he is resisted. The resistance will show what manner of man he is—whether he resents it or forgives it. If pride pos-

sesses him he will not resent but disdain the opposition and go the way of superman. If he is humble he will forgive and keep his spirit sweet, and go the way of Christ. His greatest trial is to be told by "good" people that he is quite wrong, for his humility will dictate submission, yet the moment he mistrusts his spiritual instincts he is plunged into darkness. He has one great consolation. The same thing happened to Jesus Christ, and he finds in the Gospel the very words he wants, such as "things new and old," "new bottles" and "old bottles," "new wine" and "old wine," "new cloth" and "old cloth," and a word shedding immense light, that while the Christ created new values, He declared: "Think not that I am come to destroy, I am come to fulfil." For the full rich message of the Master preserves the old in a new combination. Henceforth he finds himself on the side of Christ against those who call themselves by the name of Christ. His life is now out in the open seas battling with the waves, and he will not "swim to shore with a worship of shore." [1] A still greater difficulty lies ahead, and one that will demand his utmost valour and courage. Hitherto the map of Christ's life has guided him, but he soon finds that a host of questions arise, questions of life and conduct which can no longer be decided in the old easy way of following precedent, because they are different to those faced

[1] *Modern Love.*

by Christ; and his only way is to do what Christ did, follow the Spirit of life within fearlessly and go forward whithersoever it may lead. The darkness and conflict here may be terrible. Christ on the Cross doubted Himself and thought for a moment that His opposers might be right, and He cried out of His bitter desolation, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? " But the darkness passed; He knew He had fulfilled His calling, and calmly committed His spirit into the Father's Hands. If the Saint passes through this ordeal, he becomes a creator, he stands at the beginning of a new age, he attains to fruitfulness and begets a thousand children in his likeness, he unveils to his age a new feature of the Divine Face.

A Saint, then, is one who fulfils all past values by transvaluing them; who creates new values; who is at one with God and himself; at war with his relations and neighbours; who yet conceives it his highest privilege to serve them, and whose love for them is bounded only by their receptivity, who gives to his age a deeper understanding of the mind of God.

It is clear that there will be a strange and miscellaneous crowd of candidates to this high honour. Unsexed spinsters, crazy pastors, half-learned students, egotistic supermen, fanatical clerks, and hysterical visionaries will elbow and jostle the saint, till he may well doubt his high calling and think

perhaps that he is only one of them. Yet the Saint to be can never be as lonely as was Christ. He will be one of an army taking possession of the promised land, and he will utter healing words of mild wisdom in arresting contrast to the words of the supermen who have put themselves in the place of God.

We are now in a position to see what are the past values that the Saint must conserve. It is absurd, of course, to imagine that one man in himself can be an entire epitome of the past. Only a Church that reaches into the far past can be such a depository; and therefore to fulfil the past the Saint must belong to a Body with a Great Memory. He will draw from this Great Memory unconsciously, and when he wills; and it will serve to correct any erring bias in his own mind. Yet every Saint is a rebel. Christ died for resisting the institution that had nourished Him. The Saint is ever a heretic in the eyes of authority; and he is bound to face the question whether he will separate himself from the Church and start a new family. That is the easiest course to pursue, but it entails much loss because it cuts him off from the Church's Memory. Christ followed the heroic course of remaining in the institution where He was in collision with authority every instant. His conformity involved bitter conflict, but it resulted in transforming Judaism. Instead of Christianity being an entirely new institution late

in the world's history, it was transformed Judaism carrying in its veins the survival values of Judaism which before had carried within the rich contributions of Egyptian, Babylonian and Assyrian thought. The Saint of the future, then, will belong to an institution which is linked to the Apostolic Church and holds the richest tradition of the past values of many nations.

It follows that he will advocate organised religion. He will uphold as many sacraments as possible. He will defend Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

While adhering to the historical Church, he will startle the orthodox by his new values, especially moral values. Things which the orthodox hold as rigidly as the pharisees held to the law of the sabbath, he will overlook; and he will utter the right word on a host of matters now lying in hopeless confusion and reprobation. Qualities formerly attributed to hell will receive fresh beauty in him, for in his soul heaven and hell will be married; the beauty of his holiness will be the harmony of his parts. He will be filled with the Holy Spirit of Imagination. Imagination will unite in him Heaven, Earth, and Hell. Himself the creature of life, instinct, impulse, and imagination, he will draw a multitude because of the beauty of his life. And he will beget a multitude, for when he is ripe to create new values, he is also strong to beget a spiritual progeny. And therefore we may hope that Calvary

will not be repeated. It was prophesied of old, "He shall see of the travail of His Soul, and shall be satisfied." In the world drama Calvary comes in the third act, and the Communion of Saints in the fifth. The Saints have been disciplined by suffering, they must now be perfected by joy. Since the day for solitary saints has passed, we may look for the day when they shall spring up in all parts of the earth, and as each Saint is father of a spiritual family, a Community of Saints becomes possible, to which each Saint contributes his touch of intense colour, his line of beauty, and so helps to create the eternal pattern which has been God's dream through the ages.

We have been assured repeatedly that the age of miracles is past. The age of miracles is to come. The Catholic Church defends the miraculous as evidence of God's free will. The Saints are those whose wills have become free through redemption. The moment the will is really free it accomplishes acts which on this material plane can only be called miraculous. The deeds of the Saints will be marvellous, mysterious, beautiful. There will be no need to turn to art or religion, knowledge or culture, or to tales of genies and enchantment, fairies and gnomes to escape from the sordid realities of life; in the Community of Saints where there is abundance of life, it will be found that life itself contains all mystery and enchantment; and in an ever more

passionate yea to life, man will find that the dreams of his childhood were foreshadowings of reality, and that as with clear open vision he comes into the heart of Reality, love to God, love to man, and love to self will transfigure all things, and turn the waters of life into the wine of eternity.

"The Spiritual Man is Mad."
HOSEA.

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