THE
TERRIBLE CRYSTAL

STUDIES IN KIERKEGAARD AND MODERN CHRISTIANITY

By

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AD GENTILOS

" And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the colour of the terrible crystal . . ."—(*Ezekiel* i, 22.)

" When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."—(*St. Luke* xxi, 28.)

" Test act, morality, custom, thought in Thermopylae. Love war because of its horrors, that belief may be changed, civilization renewed. We desire belief and lack it. Belief comes from shock and is not desired. Belief is renewed continually in the ordeal of death."—(W. B. YEATS.)

" *Νὺξ δ' ἤδη τελέθει· ἀγαθὸν καὶ νυκτὶ πιθέσθαι.*"

(*Homer* II, vii, 282.)

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PROLOGUE

This book consists of studies in a certain type of modern Christian thought and feeling deriving from and attuned to conditions of terror and catastrophe. It has been called *The Terrible Crystal* since no other phrase seems so well to epitomize the common quality which makes of the various thought which is here considered one movement of the mind.

There is indeed much in the apocalpytic vision of Ezekiel from which the phrase is taken which, like the cognate vision of El Greco so many centuries later, curiously mates with the modern mood. But the conception of the celestial firmament " as the colour of the terrible crystal ", a crystalline purity as of white fire or ice in which all conflicting or component elements are fused and therefore terrible to look upon, seems, in particular, to typify this conception of Christianity as of a new life reborn from " dread and trembling ", disaster and death, which is characteristic of the thought of such as Kierkegaard and Karl Barth —the religion of a terrible and intense candour of spirit wrought to a diamond-like induration and brilliance by a poignant inner experience of catastrophe.

For all these thinkers Christianity, in its traditional form, is in the melting-pot ; all are acutely conscious of a common psychological climate of crisis and catastrophe ; all alike are striving towards a type of thought which may best be termed " existential " and a faith which shall be the affirmation, not of any one

faculty, but of the whole man, of which the criterion is, not logic but existential reality.

It is an attitude which presents a " Shibboleth " likely to separate those for whom this book and its theme may have some significance and those for whom it will probably have none. For here is a type of thought about religion for which crisis and catastrophe are the very stuff of religious reality. It is a thinking conceived in, interknit with and orientated towards catastrophe. Catastrophe is the magnetic north of its needle.

And it is precisely this conception and conviction of catastrophe which seem most radically to bisect modern consciousness. On the one hand are those for whom catastrophe is the very climate of their consciousness ; on the other those for whom it is, in the main, remote and unreal.

The axiom underlying the thought discussed in this book is that this climate of crisis and catastrophe is also the essential climate of real religion, that the rhythm of religion and reality is essentially, inevitably, and eternally catastrophic, a rhythm from beyond the compass and running counter to the familiar systole and diastole of the human heart and its history, that the *vraie vérité* of life lies " beyond the tragic climax ".

Such a conviction is evidently war-born. No man will admit the inevitability of catastrophe or sacrifice his comfort of body and mind unless he must. For those to whom the catastrophe of the " Great " war and its sequels to-day are, not a death of the spirit, but incidents, however inconvenient, of history, it is not

to be wondered at, therefore, that this sense of catastrophe as the very loom of reality should seem both inconceivable and unacceptable.

It seems as idle to pretend that this cleavage of modern consciousness does not exist as to suppose that it can be bridged by debate. For as I have tried to show in the essay which I have called " The Gentile and the Jew ", that cleavage is one, not of logic, but of psychology. Those who live in this climate of catastrophe and those who do not, live, in fact, in foreign countries of the mind and speak tongues which are, for the most part, incomprehensible across that psychological frontier.

It is a cleavage of consciousness which is strikingly dramatized in Mr. T. S. Eliot's play, *The Family Reunion*, where the essential conflict is between those who dwell in a " hither " world of common sense, tradition, and logic, and those who know a " nether " world of spiritual reality, catastrophe, and crisis, who have passed

> " . . . the frontier
> Beyond which safety and danger have a different meaning."

Between such " hither " and " nether " worlds there is, in fact, no possibility of parley. The catastrophic religion which is considered in these pages will, therefore, be of small significance to those for whom catastrophe is itself a chimera.

It seems no less idle to discuss how far this conviction of catastrophe as a fundamental factor of religion and reality is a true or a distorted reading of reality. That

it is an integral element of more modern consciousness is clear and to question the constant reading of our own psychological compass is to abandon our arms in the battle of truth. Every consciousness revolves upon an axiomatic attitude towards life created by its own peculiar conditions. We can but accept such conditions and axioms of our consciousness as given, and revolve upon our own axis, recognizing that, where these are concerned or in question, argument and compromise are equally vain.

To address the traditional theologian with a book by an amateur layman upon such a theme would be impertinent; to address the traditional Christian superfluous. These have no need of such physic as these pages may contain. This book is addressed rather, therefore, to those for whom the conviction that both reality and religion are alike fundamentally catastrophic cannot be escaped, and for whom any religion which may survive our own conditions of crisis and catastrophe must be re-centred upon that conviction, to the great and growing multitude who are as sure that traditional religion is not enough, as that, by a real and a reborn religion alone, can the ruin of our world be averted.

To such an audience it will, perhaps, be unnecessary to apologize for the fact that the writer has brought to this task a wider knowledge of life than of scholastic theology and scholarship and that theology will here be found in the unaccustomed and vagabond company of life and letters.

The exacting and exalted standards of pure scholarship are beyond question; to the best of a limited

ability I have tried to obey them. But I know too well that the excellence of such a scholarship demands a single-mindedness and a large leisure which a many-sided and exacting life have denied to me.

Yet, where the re-relation of religion to reality and the quest of an " existential " faith are concerned, it seems possible that a wide experience of life may be of more avail than a meticulous and specialized scholarship.

Such an " existential " approach demands an integrity of its own, an unflinching sensitiveness, a ready response, a wide awareness to as many of the multiform aspects of our life as a single consciousness can encompass, a constant will towards their correlation, an integrity of the entire consciousness rather than of the intellect alone, a macroscopic rather than a microscopic eye, allied to a humble and fearless zeal for the truth.

That integrity is, indeed, that rare and radiant virtue, the scholar's honour, come down into the market-places of men. However much I may have failed of that high mark, I have at least kept it before my eyes. It is my sole justification for attempting such a task as this. It is with such an integrity that I have tried to see and to such an integrity of the whole consciousness that I submit this book.

However varied the subjects of which it treats it has had, for the writer, a unity and a single aim which may perhaps give it a unity for the reader. These studies cover a period of some ten years of acute concern with their theme of " existential " religion, during which the drums of the Barthian dialectic and the crescendo of crisis upon crisis have seldom ceased

to beat upon my brain. The " Theology of Crisis ", driving me back to its source in the strangely seminal thought of Soren Kierkegaard, has constituted my own crisis. I believe that my experience has been also that of very many minds to-day for whom the issue of religion is also the most urgent issue of life.

The progress of my reactions towards this " existential " religious thinking has therefore been something of a " pilgrim's progress ", passing from the strong bias of first contact with the dynamic and revolutionary thought of Karl Barth and his followers, through a more critical phase, back to Kierkegaard, and so to a rekindled reading of Christianity, to a condition of more balanced assessment of its significance and the cloudy conception of a Christianity of " inwardness " and the spirit, yet born of blood and brain, emerging from the ruins of religion and that " dark night of the soul " which is our day.

I have not so much tried to criticize the men whose thought I have studied here as to understand them and to expose their significance in this quest for " existential " religion. I have found in them no finality and no finality is pretended for this commentary upon their work. Their work and words, like this commentary, as I conceive that all of them would agree, are no more than " prolegomena " to that revitalized religion for which all the world waits ; as such they have the urgent value of a " Kerugma ", a heralding of the new dawn. For it is, so I believe, from the harrowing of such " existential " religious thought as this alone that such a rebirth of religion can ensue.

Many of these studies have appeared in the pages of the *Hibbert Journal*, the *Congregational Quarterly*, and the *Modern Churchman*; it is by the courtesy of the editors of these journals that this matter is republished in this form. I have also to thank the Oxford University Press, the Lutterworth Press, and Messrs. Nisbet and Co., for permission to quote so extensively from their publications to which I have referred.

I have prefaced them with a study of Kierkegaard, "Denmark's Dead Man," since this great man seems to me to be, not only the *fons et origo* of the type of religious thought which is here mainly discussed, but also still to surpass his successors and disciples in the profundity and suggestiveness of his thought.

I have ended them with an essay upon "The Gentile and the Jew" since this itself concludes with a suggestion of the attitude towards religion from which alone, so it seems to me, a rebirth of real religion is to be expected. In the words of Kierkegaard—"First death, then life."

M. C-P.

South Leigh,
Oxon.
January, 1939.

THE
TERRIBLE CRYSTAL

I

DENMARK'S DEAD MAN

(*Kierkegaard*, by Walter Lowrie, D.D., Oxford University Press-L. *The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard*, edited and translated by Alexander Dru, Oxford University Press, 1938-J. *Philosophical Fragments*, translated by David F. Swenson, Oxford University Press, 1936-P.F.)

§1

THREE years before he died, Soren Kierkegaard wrote in his *Journal*—" Denmark has need of a dead man." " My life," he said again, " will cry out after my death." (J., p. 467)

With the publication, eighty-three years after his death, of his *Philosophical Fragments*, of Dr. Lowrie's voluminously documented study, of Mr. Alexander Dru's translation of his *Journals*, his " cry of alarm " sounds seriously in England.

His startling modernity, the sinister fulfilment of his prophecies, his acute diagnosis of a disease of spirit which is now an open pestilence, give a peculiar pertinence to-day both to his diagnosis and to the " radical cure " which he proposed.

Both diagnosis and cure were nothing if not radical. He conceived it to be his task to " liberate men from the conceit that they are Christians " and to " depict Christianity " as he believed it to be. He condemned contemporary Christianity (L., p. 557)

and culture root and branch and proclaimed that
(L., p. 525) " Christianity does not exist ". Of the disease which he diagnosed so soon and so surely he said
(L., p. 173) that " Christianity is the radical cure ".

For English ears his name and the echo of his thought have recently become increasingly familiar through, in particular, the writings of Karl Barth, Karl Heim, and Miguel Unanumo. All have frequently acknowledged their debt to him, and it is evident that he has richly fertilized their thought. His main works have long been available in French and German translations, and are now about to appear in English. The volumes already available and cited are, however, sufficient material for a preliminary survey of the man and his message.

The circumstances in which the work of Kierkegaard has at last come to the light of common culture are themselves significant for Christians. This " word " came, not from the acknowledged centres of culture, but from an inconspicuous country from which no " great thing " was to be expected. Partly owing to the deliberate design of its author, partly to the fact that it was expressed in a language which few could read, it has remained, for the most part, incognito, conveyed, hitherto, through the mouths of other men. The parallel with the Palestinian " Word of God ", with the Aramaic Gospel of Galilee needs no elaboration.

No author, least of all so personal an author as Kierkegaard, can be adequately appreciated

without some knowledge of his circumstances and career. In the case of Kierkegaard, the drama of whose life is almost wholly of the spirit, the tale is soon told.

It was, in its outer aspect, singularly uneventful. His family derived from the peasant stock of Jutland. He was born in 1813 in Copenhagen, the son of a wool merchant who had made a moderate but comfortable fortune at his trade, and was already 56 when Soren was born. He was the youngest of seven children, only two of whom survived their father. His mother was a servant of the peasant class whom his father had married before the full mourning for his first wife had been completed. She appears to have had no influence on his life; that of his father, alive and dead, dominated him to the end.

The latter was a man of powerful virility and personality, and of profound and austere religious feeling. He was haunted throughout his life by a sense of guilt. As a child it seems that he had cursed God and he could not forget what he conceived to have been an unforgivable sin. Nor could he forgive himself for the incontinence of his second marriage. His son Soren inherited in full measure this overmastering sense of guilt.

The effect of these antecedents upon Kierkegaard are manifest both in his life and thought. A sense of Nemesis and inevitable expiation brooded over him from the cradle to the grave, inhibited his life and dominated his thought and faith. The typical offspring of elderly parents,

he was physically weak almost to the point of deformity, acutely hyper-sensitive and over-burdened with brain. The fact that the polarity of family life from which alone a balanced psychology can emerge, was, in his case, so strong on the paternal and so weak on the maternal side, clearly inclined him to a religion strongly patriarchal in type. It seems, moreover, more than possible that to the lack of maternal influence may be ascribed much of the tragedy of his solitary love-affair and a marked aversion from the feminine and domestic elements in life.

In fact, Soren Kierkegaard, like many another genius, was distorted and deformed both physically and psychologically. He constantly referred to a " thorn in the flesh " which, his references to it suggest, was both physical and psychical. These factors, whatever value may be ascribed to them, cannot be neglected in a just estimate of his thought. This philosophy of paradox evidently emanated from a source verging upon the pathological ; but the study of genius, that pearl festering in the oyster of normality, suggests that, in most cases, when the element of pathology is eliminated, that of genius is apt to disappear.

He was educated according to the custom of his class in Copenhagen. During his schooldays he showed, together with the inability to adjust himself to the normal life of boyhood and a solitariness which might be expected from such a temperament, a marked fondness and propensity for Latin and Greek grammar. This

bias is observable throughout his life, and seems to have influenced the form of "dialectical" thinking which he afterwards made so peculiarly his own.

He passed, in due course, to the University of Copenhagen and, by his father's wish, studied in the faculty of theology with a view to entering the Lutheran ministry. He did not take his examination till ten years later.

During the first part of his university career he passed through a phase of undergraduate æstheticism. He seems to have read voraciously, but in history, literature, and philosophy rather than theology. He established a reputation for irony and wit and lived with a youthful irregularity, which, after the fashion of penitents, he seemed inclined to over-stress in later life. His attitude towards religion at this time appears to have been one of ironical scepticism.

In the spring of 1838, at the age of 25, he experienced a form of conversion. He speaks in his *Journal* of an "indescribable joy"—a joy (L., p. 120) which, in spite of his congenital melancholy, he never lost. From that time onwards he strove towards a Christian "truth in the inward parts", a Christianity growing ever more inward and intimate.[1]

In August of the same year his father died, after some kind of profound rapprochement with his son to which the religious experience of the spring had been partly due. Soren never ceased

[1] *Vide*, L., p. 168.

to refer to his father with a profound gratitude, or to acknowledge that his religion was rooted in that relationship.

Two years later he met and became engaged to Regina Olsen. In the following year, in spite of her protests and his own scruples, he broke the engagement, and did his utmost, with some success, to make the cause of the rupture appear to be his own frivolity and unworthiness. The real reasons appear to have been the sense of his own separateness and dedication to the cause of Christianity, of the guilt and curse which he conceived to lie upon his family, the necessity which he felt for sundering himself from the life of the world, and her own incompatibility. " I was an eternity too old for her," he wrote eight years later.

(J., p. 249)

He never forgot or ceased to love her and the renunciation of Regina and, in some degree, of his own virile self-respect, were always, for him, symbolical of a more profound mortification of the flesh. " When I left her," he wrote, " I chose death."

(J., p. 201)

" Ce n'est pas Regine Olsen seulement, c'est le monde entier qui s'est transformé pour Kierkegaard en une ombre, en une fantôme," says Monsieur Leon Chestov. Professor Ernst Haeckel speaks, in this regard, of " a woman's loving lack of understanding ". This was undoubtedly the crucial point of his life. Regina became, for him, the embodiment of the world which he must deny if he were to be true to himself.

(Kierkegaard et La Philosophie Existentielle, p. 55)

(Soren Kierkegaard, p. 5)

The wreck of his happiness and the rejection of Regina seems to have given him the sense of immeasurable release. "I am again where my soul longs to be," he writes, "where the ideas seethe and foam like the elements in storm, where the thoughts rise up like the nations in the great migration . . . where each moment I risk my life, each moment lose it, and again win it." In that element of risk and pullulating ideas he remained for the rest of his life. Marriage and the domesticities could but have emasculated his mind; however his repudiation of Regina and all that life of nature which she embodied for Kierkegaard may be judged by the standards of normal life, there can be small doubt that it saved his spirit for posterity. (P.F., pp. xix & xx)

From this time onwards, for the remaining fourteen years of his life, he lived the life of a secluded writer and poured out a constant stream of books and pamphlets delineating his conception of a Christianity growing ever more "inward" and expressing a criticism of the established Christianity and culture of Denmark and Christendom growing ever more virulent.

Until 1848 he wrote mainly under pseudonyms, as, in his own phrase, a "Christian poet and thinker". His pseudonymity was scrupulously calculated and had, for him, a profound spiritual significance. Until he conceived himself to be integrated in a re-born self, he retained the masks of a multiple personality.

After 1848 his attitude and his own conception

of his rôle seem gradually to have changed. He wrote thereafter increasingly "in propriâ persona". After the death, in 1855, of Bishop Mynster whom, as his father's and his own friend and spiritual director, he had always revered, he published a series of signed articles in open and violent criticism of the established Church in general and Bishop Mynster in particular. He seems to have felt that now, at last, he was authorized, and, indeed, "under compulsion" to speak in his own name.

In the matter of Bishop Mynster, as in that of Regina Olsen, he seems to have sacrificed his own feeling in a manner almost masochistic. He had a passionate love for Regina; he had a deep affection and veneration for Mynster; the claims of loyalty in each case commended the opposite course to that which he took; in each case his sense of "responsibility to God" overruled the dictates of his heart and the scruples of a fastidious sense of decency.

His attack upon Bishop Mynster and established Christianity continued from May to September, 1855; in November, 1855, he died in, it appears, a mood of profound melancholy shot with an assurance of great inner peace and beatitude. His financial resources, since he had lived upon the capital of his modest inheritance, were then at an end.

Throughout his life he had flirted with the idea of becoming ordained. His inability to consummate what was evidently a deep desire seems

to have been largely due to an increasing distaste for parsons and for what he called the " curiously oppressive air which we find in Christianity ", his final refusal to do so to have been prompted by the same necessity to separate himself from the world which actuated his conduct toward Regina and Mynster. (J., p. 22)

During his life he provoked and incurred what he has called the " martyrdom of laughter " in the press by his bitter polemics against all the gods of the market-place and by his own personal eccentricities. He achieved a " succès de scandale " by his final frontal attack on the establishment which had little immediate result and, after his death, a slow subterranean influence upon succeeding thought which has steadily mounted in volume and power.

Although he came ultimately to commend asceticism of life, he does not seem to have practised it, but rather to have lived in a somewhat extravagant style. He believed that only so could he fulfil his self-imposed task.

Apart from his personal contacts with his father, his brother Peter, who as a minister of the established Church accepted a conformity which he himself came increasingly to condemn, Regina, Mynster, and a few personal friends, the main external influences in his life were those of books. Socrates was, to the end, his master and his model.[1] He emulated his martyrdom, his irony, and his dialectic, and his own pseudony-

[1] *Vide* J., pp. 385 and 488.

mity seems to have been suggested by that of Socrates. He discusses this point in an illuminating
(J., p. 533) passage. " He is not a third person in the sense that he avoids going into danger. . . . But actually in danger he has an objective attitude to his own personality. . . ." He has the objectivity of the great artist to his art, who can be objective to, detached from, his own subjective life.

Apart from the Bible his writings give no evidence of any other strong positive literary influence in his life. In philosophy, Hegel, and in theology, Luther powerfully impressed his thought, but rather, for the most part, by repulsion than by attraction. Like many a modern mind he seems to have repudiated almost the whole of post-Renaissance religion, philosophy, and " progress " as a gradual decline to a wholesale humanism and paganism which he foresaw and unconditionally condemned.

It is peculiarly characteristic of his foresight that, for him, and from first to last, Hegel, the master-thinker of his age, was the arch-enemy. His rationalized spirituality, his academic dialectic and his " religiosity " were anathema to Kierkegaard. For him, that wisdom lacked the one thing most needful, the knowledge of how to live, and made of men, not immortal spirits but no more than reasoning animals.[1] He condemns him as a " don ", than which he has no more bitter term of abuse.[2]

[1] *Vide* J., p. 175.
[2] J., p. 371.

Such is the scanty record of the impact of the exterior world upon Kierkegaard. The problem of his personality and the rôle to which he believed himself to be called was one with which he was himself constantly and anxiously occupied. What he has styled his " terrible introversion " (J., p. 375) has starred his *Journals* from start to finish with attempts at self-portraiture, an exercise for which he shared something of the obsession and the insight of a Rembrandt and showed a psychological subtlety anticipatory of a " deep " psychology, which, in his day, had not yet dawned.

His nature and his life are as paradoxical as his thought ; it is from a constant clash of contraries that the spark of a co-ordinated spiritual personality is eventually kindled. He is an intensely introverted æsthete of genius driven by an inner compulsion to strive with circumstances of a peculiarly pedestrian kind. He is a " religious " at odds with an artist, a poet at grips with a stubborn dialectician. He is a Socrates enthralled by Christianity, by an " inwardness " of spiritual life which he has himself brought to birth. His inborn sense of dread drives him to a severity alien to an innate gentleness. His own acute sense of humour and irony endures the martyrdom of mob-mockery. His fastidiousness is " trampled to death by geese ". His gusto for life is subjected to a denial imposed by a conscience which, in Newman's phrase, is a " monarch in its peremptoriness ". His passion of love is sacrificed to

a shadowy but imperious scruple of the spirit ; like Ignatius he cries :—

"ὁ ἐμὸς ἔρως ἐσταύραται."

That inner conflict cleaves all his conduct and his contacts. Throughout his *Journals* we are conscious of an appalling inner discord and complexity lapsing at rare intervals into an exquisite simplicity and peace. To adapt the phrase of Gerard Manley Hopkins who, a generation later, so closely matched his mood :—

"We hear his heart grate on itself" . . .
"... this tormented mind
With this tormenting mind tormenting yet."

That, in this clash of contraries, there was an element of self-torture, and, in his criticism of Christianity, of caricature, he was conscious.[1] Masochism was, for him, a form of martyrdom and hyperbole the explosive vehicle of truth. Such an indifference to the claims of normality in feeling and thought is consonant with his whole attitude towards Christianity and life. The consciousness and mind of man had, for him, no validity of their own. Their only value was as the vessel, a vessel to be discarded in due season, of the inborn life of the spirit and the paradoxical truth of Christianity. Since the only being and truth which mattered lay beyond the death of human life and the explosion of human philosophy, such masochism and caricature were to "take the Kingdom of Heaven" by violence.[2]

[1] *Vide* J., p. 271. [2] *Vide* J., p. 551.

It is the inexorable and terrifying logic of a catastrophic Christianity.

So slight a story and his own intense introversion require the consideration of internal rather than external evidence, of the main trends and traits of a rare and complex temperament for a just criticism of his thought. For his history and drama, though intense and tragic, are, almost wholly, a saga of the clash and conflict of inbred conceptions and intuitions, a ghostly but titanic conflict in an interior world of the mind and spirit.

> " With a Knight of ghosts and shadows,
> I summoned am to Tourney :
> Ten leagues beyond
> The wide world's end ;
> Methinks it is no journey."

Tom o' Bedlam's song sounds the authentic note of Kierkegaard's spiritual saga. This intangible world of the mind and spirit is, for him, the real world of which he well knew his citizenship.

He is alone in spirit in a limitless world of the spirit where ghost-like he consorts with ghosts.[1] ". . . I only have pale, bloodless, hard-lived midnight shapes to fight against to which I myself give life and existence," he wrote. (J., pp. 87-8)

In that inner warfare he was both an aristocrat and an artist as well as a theologian and philosopher. He envisages himself as a " knight ", a " knight of infinity ", a " knight of infinite

[1] *Vide* J., pp. 220 and 334.

resignation" and, at last, although with an extreme diffidence, as a "knight of faith". In one of his cryptic and flashing phrases he says:
(L., p. 267) "The knights of infinity are dancers and possess style."

His claim to the knightly style in these spiritual lists will be clear to all who know his quality. In this dim and remote but, none the less, terrible war of the spirit he was manifestly of the order of knights errant, a Don Quixote to his contemporaries, a paladin for posterity.

His frequent and characteristic allusions to the "dance" of life and of ideas are symptomatic of the springs of his spirit; they were to be echoed by a later "knight" of the spirit, Nietzsche, with whom he shared much in temperament though little in conclusion. ". . . lost be the day to us," said Nietzsche, "in which a measure has not been danced."

There is a Bacchanalian element in his being which gives to his dialectic and his inner agony a rhythmic quality and a capacity for auto-intoxication in which, perhaps, lies the secret of his arresting vitality. He speaks of his rôle in
(P.F., p. 3) life as ". . . a sort of nimble dancing in the
(P.F., p. xx) service of thought". ". . . long live the dance in the whirl of the infinite," he cries in the first intoxication of his freedom from the bonds of matrimony.

For Kierkegaard this "dance" of ideas and feeling seems to have induced a "kenôsis" of consciousness and that state of "dread and

trembling" which was, for him, the threshold of real religion.

What was, for him, a blind but brilliant guess, although a guess upon which he staked his sanity, the psychology and research of to-day tend increasingly to substantiate. "The purpose of the ecstatic dance," says Professor W. O. E. Oesterley, "is to effect union with a superhuman spirit: the body temporarily emptied of consciousness is believed to be entered by the god or spirit in whose honour the dance takes place." "To dance," says Mr. Havelock Ellis, "is to take part in the cosmic control of the world."

(The Sacred Dance, p. 135)

(The Dance of Life, p. 37)

We are increasingly accustomed to-day to seek in rhythm for the roots of culture and religion and in philosophy for a dance of ideas of which the measure is often of more moment that the matter; it is a clue which Kierkegaard had caught a hundred years ago.

It is not surprising to find this Corybantian strain in Kierkegaard allied to an enthusiastic appreciation of music and, in particular, the music of Mozart. It is notable that, for him, music conveys not merely consolation and peace, but also that self-annihilation, dread and catastrophe which are the pre-conditions of revelation and redemption.[1] In a very revealing passage he apostrophizes Mozart:—"Immortal Mozart! Thou to whom I owe all, to whom I owe it that I lost my reason, that my soul was in a maze, that I was dismayed in my inmost being."

(L., p. 249)

[1] *Vide* L., p. 250.

It is to this fervent æsthetic feeling that Kierkegaard believes that he owes his freedom from the tyranny of the rationalism and humanism which he condemned in Hegelianism, in science, in Protestantism and most of all, in " dons ", and his apprehension of the " dread " which was to play so fundamental a part in his thought, for in this mode of feeling and being he seemed to tap a living reality denied to the insulated processes of intellect and reason.

He appears to identify this side of his nature with the erotic and speaks of the " musical-erotic ". It is also, for him, of the same nature as that which he calls " immediacy ", a term which, for him, seems synonymous with spontaneity, the spontaneous life of the world and the flesh. He evidently realizes that, in his own case, this " immediacy " or spontaneity has been inhibited by the peculiar circumstances of his childhood and speaks, in an obviously autobiographical vein, of the case of the child who is not allowed " to play innocently with holy things " as bound to suffer from this inhibition of " immediacy ".

It is evident, too, that he contemplated a spontaneity or " immediacy " beyond conflict
(L., p. 316) and conversion which he describes as " immediacy after reflection " or " the immediacy of the new man ", and that, in flashes, in " immortal moments ", he believed that he had experienced such a second spontaneity of being.

Thus, though he recognizes the necessity for

the death and re-birth of this "immediacy", it is to this immediate contact with reality that he ascribes all that is most vital and radical in his life and thought. It is in this soil that his peculiar conception of Christianity is rooted.

"Immediacy" is, in fact, his conception of "existentialism" applied to life rather than to thought and it is, perhaps, his lack of natural "immediacy" which enforced its merit upon his mind. He has missed much of the spontaneous life of nature; he seeks above all else a religion radically related to and rooted in life. At the age of 22 we find him deliberately setting himself the life-task of finding a personal and subjective truth upon which he could live and die.[1]

The only truth, the only religion, which he values, therefore, is that which has thus sprung from his own entire being. He expresses this conviction in images of the crudest concreteness. "... the poetical," he writes, "had to be evacuated." (L., p. 249) A curiously modern echo of this conception is to be found in the Letters of D. H. Lawrence, who writes nearly a century later that "one sheds one's sicknesses in books—repeats and presents again one's emotions to be master of them". (The Letters of D. H. Lawrence, p. ix) He speaks of letting his thoughts "appear with the umbilical cord of their first mood. . . ." From such a feeling it is a natural transition to conceive, as he does, of faith as a "passion" and religion as a "lover's story". (J., p. 48)

Such a conviction spells subjectivity and

[1] *Vide* L., p. 109.

suffering in life and explains why, in his life, he chose, not to mitigate but to magnify a natural hypersensitivity, to intensify an awareness already acute. He believed it to be his duty to " make men aware " and it is again remarkable how consonant is his attitude in this respect with the consensus of modern opinion. ". . . life evolves," Mr. Gerald Heard has recently written, " by sensitiveness and awareness, by being exposed not by being protected, by nakedness not by strength. . . ." " Self-transcendence," writes Mr. Aldous Huxley, " is through self-consciousness." Kierkegaard assiduously cultivated his sensitivity and awareness ; it would seem, too, that he attained to some measure of self-transcendence.

(The Source of Civilization, p. 71)

(End and Means, p. 328)

No " adult sophisticated modern " was more aware of the cost of consciousness than Kierkegaard. " I choose suffering," he wrote early in his life. The extant accounts of his final phase suggest that he came to know something of the transcendence of suffering through suffering of which the Docetic Acts of St. John tell : " Know thou suffering and thou shalt have the power not to suffer."

In fact, the most cursory review of the life, thought, and temperament of Kierkegaard reveals the patent and surprising modernity of the man and his message. It is a modernity which is significant to-day far beyond the diminishing pale of the Churches ; it is significant not only for religion but for life. This century-dead Dane, in his tortured and divided consciousness, in his

ruthless candour, in his loathing for "dons", "parsons", and all that is "academic" and "official", in his profound "awareness", in his fear of the flesh and of the bonds of personality and "careerism", in his suspicion of "humanism" and post-Renaissance thought and culture, in his sense of the value of rhythm and "dance" both in life and thought, in his masochistic search for salvation through suffering, in his delight in the self-transcendence which danger and speed bestow upon their devotees, in his encompassing sense of "dread and trembling", bears about him the predominating marks of the modern spirit.

It would be easy to find many modern parallels to this mood. Perhaps the most salient and significant is that of the late T. E. Lawrence, whose recently-published Letters are a quarry for specimens of similar phobias, a similar division and conflict of consciousness, the same flight from the imprisonments of personality and career, the same corrosive candour, the same haunting sense of guilt and expiation, of impending catastrophe and dread, the same tendency to self-immolation, the same lust for living reality and loathing for dead formula and its priests, which are so typical of Kierkegaard and from which his "existential" thought and faith derive.

It is as easy to find modern parallels to his criticism of life, both destructive and constructive, as to his life-attitude. In his dialectical thinking he anticipates the Marxians, in his "existential"

philosophy the most recent vogue of thought, in his doctrine of the " Instant " and " Repetition " the most modern theories of time as formulated by Ouspensky and popularized by such writers as Mr. J. W. Dunne and Mr. Priestley, in that of the " leap " of emergence as opposed to the " gradualism " of the evolutionary school, the latest findings of physics and biology, in his reaction from Romanticism the neo-classicism which finds its leading English exponent in Mr. T. S. Eliot, in his self-awareness the conclusions of a psychological science which, in his day, was in its infancy.

In his theology he has supplied the fuel for the most advanced thought in both Catholic and Protestant camps, for both Thomists and Barthians. In his political outlook he foresaw the advent and the *raison d'être* of totalitarianism. In his insistence upon " inwardness " in religion, he is at one with the latest trend of Christian thought. In the Hibbert Lectures of 1938, Professor W. E. Hocking stressed, in the very spirit of Kierkegaard, the vital importance for modern religion of the method of " Induction ", of a " striving for the essence of the matter ", the method of deepening rather than widening Christianity.

There are few of his strictures upon society, culture, and the Churches, which are not secretly or stridently maintained to-day, his distrust of the " don " and the " parson ", of officialism and the established sanctities, his nausea at the

" strange stuffy atmosphere which we encounter in Christianity ", his protest against the overweening pretensions of science, his hatred of Hegelianism, of liberalism, and the " bourgeoisie ", of " careerism " and the domesticities, his damnation of democrats and romantics. His passion for an uncompromising Christianity and a Christ unconfined by ecclesiasticism is as general to-day as it was particular to him a hundred years ago. His criticism of contemporary Christianity echoes the latest cry of Miss Vita Sackville-West : (L., p. 112)

" Short cuts I scorn ; the Church's offered haven,
Dictated faith and mild security." (Solitude)

Over eighty years ago he proclaimed what Mr. John Lewis proclaimed yesterday : " The Church must die to be born again as the Holy Spirit of a righteous social order." (Quoted by Dr. Needham in *Christianity and Communism*)

He proclaimed war upon Christendom and preached a re-born Christianity rooted in doubt, despair, and death, and, in accents strangely modern, acclaimed catastrophe as the crucible of such a phœnix-faith. It is notable that, not long since, W. B. Yeats voiced the same feeling for our own time.

" Test act, morality, custom, thought in Thermopylae," he wrote, " Love war because of its horrors, that belief may be changed, civilization renewed. We desire belief and lack it. Belief comes from shock and is not desired. Belief is renewed continually in the ordeal of death." It was such an " ordeal of death " that Kierkegaard (*The Vision*, pp. 52–3.)

dared. " Periissem nisi periissem " was his self-chosen motto.

It is a conception which, though prevalent in and cogent for our death-haunted day, is far from new ; it was formulated many centuries ago by Jalàlu'd-dìn Rùmì :—

" I died as a mineral and became a plant,
I died as a plant and rose to animal,
I died as animal and I was a man.
What should I fear ? When was I less by dying ? ''

That catastrophic and courageous philosophy, so pertinent to our conditions, was epitomized by Kierkegaard in one of the latest and most terse of his aphorisms :—

(L., p. 476) " First death, then life."

Kierkegaard's spirit and accent are, in fact, those of the twentieth rather than of the nineteenth century. But while the psychological *mise-en-scène* is so similar the denouement is different. Kierkegaard claims to have ridden the rapids of catastrophe and passed beyond them to a more profound and serene ocean of spiritual integrity. Where the modern spirit, for the most part, as in the case of T. E. Lawrence, finds itself baffled and bogged in despair, Kierkegaard seems to have broken through ; where these reach a dead end, he finds a new beginning, where the contemporary consciousness appears to begin and end in conflict, Kierkegaard seems to begin with conflict but to end with co-ordination.

Here is a Christianity which professes to have

found the reconciliation, the synthesis, the " lusis " of Christ beyond and within the " tragic climax " of life and states it in terms strangely attuned to the mood of our time. It is a Christianity which in no whit diminishes or evades the tragedy and dread which all men now know in some degree, rather it faces them to the full. " There comes a midnight hour when all men must unmask," he wrote ; it is a rune which we are all being forced to read to-day. (L., p. 80)

Kierkegaard at least that dread leaves undismayed. For " Spirit is to live as though dead ", he declares. There is a life of the " spirit-self ", a self re-born in the dread, despair, death, and dialectic of paradox and the " Instant " which, for Kierkegaard, is essential and existential Christianity. (J., p. 548)

So remarkable and significant a modernity in the man suggests that his message of a Christian co-ordination of conflict to be attained through an intensified spiritual " inwardness " and " awareness " may have a peculiar value for the modern man in his own " midnight hour ".

§ 2

Kierkegaard's " criticism of life " and Christianity is, in a singular sense, the distillation of his spirit, his experience, and his personal passion. His theology, like that of St. Augustine and Luther, is passionately personal ; it is only through the mask of his personality that his utterances sound with their full significance.

His thought is best studied, therefore, in close relation to the man and in the sequence which it followed for him, from negative and destructive to positive and constructive criticism. That sequence is lavishly illustrated in his *Journals*.

He began, after the Socratic formula, by destroying the pretensions to truth with which his age confronted him, and worked inwards from the circumference to the centre of Christianity. His criticism of contemporary Christianity and culture are as devastating as that of any modern Marxian. For Protestantism, more especially in the Lutheran form with which he was familiar, established and "official" Christianity, "parsons," mysticism, and confessional Christianity alike he has, for the most part, only a sardonic scorn, and from this loathing for provincial Christianity he passes to a denunciation of all Christendom. "Christianity does not exist," he declares.

(L., p. 525)

His attack upon contemporary culture is no less caustic, intransigeant, and comprehensive. In the hey-day of the romanticism and nature-worship fathered by Goethe and the Jena Romantics such as Fichte, Novalis, Schelling, and the Schlegels, Rousseau, Wordsworth, and the Lake Poets, he writes that "romanticism implies overflowing all boundaries" (a stricture significantly echoed nearly a century later by the late T. E. Hulme in his dictum that "romanticism is spilt religion"). In a strangely anticipatory passage he predicts the reaction from romanticism

(J., p. 25)

(*Speculations*, p. 118)

(J., p. 31)

and liberalism to authoritarianism and totalitarianism which is now coming to pass. Humanism ("vaporised Christianity"), rationalism, "dons", and professors living, so he conceives, on the suffering of live men after their death and emasculated of the paradox which, for him, alone gives life to thought, nationalism, democracy, the bourgeoisie and the press, the married state and woman herself, all come under his lash. (J., p. 437)

Such a catalogue of Kierkegaard's condemnations is still incomplete ; it is sufficient to demonstrate the width, violence, and modernity of his criticism. In an essay which seeks rather to expound than to criticize, it is enough to note, in passing, certain considerations which may qualify a counter-criticism of this destructive element in his thought.

In the first place, it is to be observed that the criteria of this criticism are constant and absolute, an absolute truth which cannot tolerate hypocrisy, an absolute self-sacrifice which cannot tolerate self-seeking, an absolute actuality which cannot tolerate less than living being, an absolute excellence which will not tolerate mediocrity or compromise either in himself or others.

If such a criticism seems, at first sight, unchristianly uncharitable, it may be well to bear in mind the Gospel injunction—"Be ye therefore perfect". Moreover the criticism of Christ of His conditions would seem to have been based upon criteria of a no less uncompromising kind. Such criticism indeed, like all prophetic and

undiluted Christian criticism of life, seems to be essentially catastrophic, a criticism gauged by the canons, not of the " strophe " or " antistrophe " of human temporal judgment, but by those of " catastrophe ", a divine and eternal judgment striking across those minor rhythms of mortality.

Again, it is to be noted that Kierkegaard's most pointed shafts were aimed at himself.
(L., p. 103) " When I want to spit," he says, " I spit in my own face." It is manifestly true. Nor does this severity of condemnation seem to be naturally
(J., p. 381) congenial to him. " To put an end to coquetry," he writes, " I had to introduce severity. . . ." One must not communicate a merely negative result." Nor does he suppose that there is not another and a kinder aspect of Christianity than this of
(J., p. 397) " severity ". " It is my firm conviction," he says, " (and I have never understood Christianity differently) that severe as it is, it is equally gentle."

It should, perhaps, also be noted that this view of the primary and essential severity of Christianity is one typical of our own day. It is perhaps pertinent to note that in his *Unto Cæsar*, published in 1938, Mr. F. A. Voigt, one of the most modern and representative of our journalists, writes, in just this mood, of ". . . the remorseless criticism of fundamentals without which Christianity is inconceivable."

But where contemporary criticism of life too often remains at this stage of wholesale demolition or fills the vacant shrines with tribal or fertility

gods, Kierkegaard passes, with an agonized intensity of faith and " awareness ", to what he conceives to be a more profound and real reconstruction of Christianity. This reconstruction was, for him, the greater part of his task ; he had, so he believed, not only to act as a " corrective " to Christianity, but also to " depict " it.

The picture of Christianity which he evolved from his inner conflict emerges gradually and with infinite travail in his writings as thought and feeling deepen ; to employ his own phrase, it is a " troubled truth ".

Its foundation is " dread ". Upon this " dread " all his religion rests. From dread comes despair, from despair the sense of sin, from the sense of sin the " instant " of choice, from the choice of Christ, faith itself and the immortal life of the spirit with its sequelae from an initial " severity " to gentleness, grace, peace, and the love of God.

This sense of dread was inborn and is evidently connected with his inherited sense of guilt, an inheritance which, for him, exemplified the concept of " original sin ". At the age of 26 he writes : " The whole of existence frightens me, (J., p. 72) from the smallest fly to the mystery of the Incarnation. . . ." For his thought it becomes that dread of the absolute familiar to such minds as those of Pascal or Kant, that which he calls, in a phrase reminiscent of the " dark night of the soul " of the mystics, the " Night of the Unconditional ".[1]

[1] *Vide* J., p. 499.

(J., p. 105) He seeks to analyse it. ". . . dread is a desire for what one fears . . . an alien power which takes hold of the individual. . . ." In this definition it is noteworthy that, in the first place, this " primum mobile " of dread is, for him, no self-engendered sentiment, but a wholly alien and objective force, and, in the second, that it is an experience wholly individual. The conception would seem to have much in common, in a negative sense, with the " Numinous " of Professor Otto ; its nature gives to Kierkegaard's theology its dominant notes of transcendence and individuality.

This dread is not only a dread of life and the (J., p. 272) absolute ; it is also dread of Christianity. " I felt (J., p. 321) a dread of Christianity and yet felt myself so strongly drawn to it," he writes.

(J., p. 567) In his sketch, *Nebuchadnezzar*, he tells of the same dread in a passage evidently bitterly autobiographical. " My thoughts terrified me, the thoughts in my mind, for my mouth was closed, and none could hear ought but a cry like that of a beast."

Dread is succeeded by despair, and, at this point, for Kierkegaard, the element of choice enters in. Despair is itself a matter of choice. (L., p. 90) " Choose then despair, for despair itself is a choice."

Dread is, for him, the dawn of consciousness, and with consciousness, and therefore in both sin and salvation, will and choice are concerned. Consciousness itself is sin, for the unredeemed consciousness of man is compact of pride and

rebellious will.[1] Despair, Christianity, immortality, self are all subject to this choice, conditioned by dread. The choice of despair is therefore also the choice of the true self. . . .[2] That choice is absolute—either sensuality and despair or Christianity, Mammon or God.[3]

Salvation is thus, pre-eminently, a matter of choice and will. The moment of such a choice is the " instant ", a conception which is crucial to his thought, and supplied the title of the series of tracts with which, in the last year of his life, he challenged the established church under his own name.

The " Instant " is " not an atom of time but of eternity " ; in a sense it is eternity. It is related to a process of mind which he calls " repetition ", a movement forward to eternity, instead of, as in Greek and Eastern thought, the movement back to eternity through remembrance. " Repetition : Recollection are the same movement only in opposite directions." It is a reversal of the natural movement of human thought as revolutionary as the process of conversion. In fact " repetition " is, for the mind, what conversion is for the soul, a complete *volte-face*. Thus the " Instant " is both eternal and a matter of free choice. It is itself both true freedom and real eternity, for the choice of self is the choice

(L., p. 121)

(P.F., p. xx)

[1] *Vide* L., p. 412.
[2] *Vide* L., p. 90.
[3] *Vide* L., p. 173.

of freedom and true " repetition " is an eternal dimension.[1]

Eternity, the eternity of the eternal " Instant ", is thus not a matter of duration but of fullness of time. " Such a moment has a peculiar character. It is brief and temporal indeed, like every moment; it is transient as all moments are ; it is past, like every moment, in the next moment. And yet it is decisive and filled with the eternal . . . let us call it the fullness of time."

(P.F., p. 13)

It is a conception strikingly in tune with the most recent speculation on the matter. " In the deepest and truest sense of the word ' Eternity ',"

(*Time and Eternity in Christian Thought*, p. 172)

said Dr. F. H. Brabant in his recent Bampton Lectures, " we find that the emphasis is much less upon lastingness or duration than upon completeness or perfection."

The " Instant ", this moment of eternity between two moments of time, is thus a moment of choice, and that choice is a " leap ". The progress of the soul is not an evolutionary progress. It is a conception of the nature of being and becoming which the latest findings of research both in physics and psychology seem to support.[2]

This " leap " of choice is a leap to " paradox ". The " instant " implies paradox. " If only the Instant is posited, the Paradox is granted," that paradox in which time and eternity meet in the " Instant " and God and Man in the Incarnation, in Christ. Paradox is, in fact, the intellectual counterpart of that tension between time and

[1] *Vide* L., p. 259.

[2] *Vide* L., pp. 130 and 312.

eternity which is the "Instant" and between sensuality and the spirit which is the "choice". It is the "tension of truth", the paradoxical, the "absurd", truth which is struck out from the conflict of "Yes" and "No". "Belief and doubt are opposite passions." (P.F., p. 68)

In all these allied conceptions a fundamental polarity of opposites from the clash of which life, fact, and truth proceed in actual existence, seems to be postulated. Such an emergence, in the "Instant", in the Incarnation, in paradox, is far from the smooth Hegelian synthesis; it is rather a catastrophic rebirth.

For Kierkegaard, therefore, the conception of paradox is integral to Christianity. Paradox is Christian thought in distinction from pagan philosophy, and, for him, therefore, there can be no compromise between Christianity and philosophy. For "the idea of philosophy is mediation—Christianity's is the paradox". (J., p. 89) Christianity, Christ, are themselves paradox which no philosophy can resolve, for, since personality and paradox are of the same order, a faith such as Christianity which is primarily a life rather than a doctrine and a Word incarnate in a Person rather than mere wisdom is one which no philosophical system can co-ordinate or contain.[1]

Paradox and personality, and, in particular, the Personality of Christ, are thus intimately interrelated. Personality (or "individuality" as

[1] *Vide* J., p. 357.

Kierkegaard normally termed it) is itself paradox, and paradox is the mode in which the existential life of personality expresses itself. It cannot be proved ; it can only be believed.

(Kierkegaard, p. 33) Paradox is thus a mode of thought and being of its own. " La foi est une nouvelle dimension de la pensée," comments M. Leon Chestov. (J., p. 193) ". . . the inexplicable, the paradox, is a category of its own." It is a divine category, divine as (J., p. 376) opposed to human thought. " The paradox in Christian truth is invariably due to the fact that it is truth as it exists for God." But it is only paradox or contradiction from the human angle. When eternal truth and temporal existence meet, when truth enters time, then man beholds paradox.[1] That strange conjunction is indeed itself both paradox and miracle.

It is a mode of thought founded, not upon abstract concepts, but upon actual existence with its condition of passionate polarity. ". . . paradox is the passion of thought . . ."[2] ; he who thinks without paradox is like one who loves without passion. Paradox is begotten of the passion or suffering of life and it begets suffering, the suffering of the sacrifice of natural reason, of the crucifixion of mind upon paradox.[3]

In pure thought this mode of paradox is dialectic, the tension and polarity between the " Yes " and the " No ", and the Christian (J., p. 243) dialectic is the fabric of faith. ". . . to believe

[1] *Vide* L., p. 319. [2] L., p. 335.
[3] *Vide* L., p. 450.

means precisely that dialectical hovering which, though in fear and trembling, never despairs. . . ." Faith is the spark which that " dialectical hovering " engenders. It is the leap into the dark abyss between the opposing lights of the " Yes " and the " No ". This is the choice, the act of will with which the " Instant " confronts the individual. It is a wholly individual act, the supreme act of personal freedom. In that act, that choice, faith is born. There is no possible rational justification for that choice ; it is blind faith in life and in the Incarnation, in Christ.

It is evident that, for Kierkegaard, this act of faith involved an immense mortification of the mind, the abandonment of logic for " the absurd ". ". . . to become a believer everyone must be alone with the absurd," he writes. (J., p. 386)

". . . the believer lies constantly out upon the deep, with 70,000 fathoms of water under him." (L., p. 317)

It is therefore primarily an act of will, ". . . not a cognition but an act of freedom . . ." and is reborn from a death of the mind. (L., p. 316)

But the act of will is not faith ; faith follows the act ; ". . . I ventured out so far . . . now I believe." (L., p. 394) The act of will is made by man ; faith is given by God. ". . . when it is dark as the dark night . . . then comes the life-giving Spirit and brings faith. . . ." (L., p. 477)

Why then should a man make this initial act of will ? Kierkegaard has no explicit answer to give. ". . . I choose ; that historical fact means (J., p. 368)

so much to me that I decide to stake my whole life upon that if. . . ." That is, Christ means so much to him that he is prepared to risk all, even to immolate his mind, for Him. There is the initial point ; the rest follows.

(J., p. 250) And that initial point—Christ—is a divine datum. " The best proof for the immortality of the soul, that God exists, etc., is really the impression one gets in one's childhood . . . it is quite certain because my father told me so."

Here, then, we seem to reach bed-rock. Christ, the knowledge of Whom he has received from his father, that is, from life, is his datum. He is Himself Paradox ; from the human angle, the Incarnation, the God-Man, is absurd. That paradox can only be received by a mind in which the arrogance of reason has been put to death. The initial act of will is the acceptance of the paradox of existence which is incarnated in Christ. Here is the corner-stone of Kierkegaard's Christianity—faith is the paradox of life and the Incarnation derived from dread and generated in " the Instant ". That which follows from this foundation—faith is in the nature of corollary.

§ 3

Kierkegaard's Christianity is based upon an act of faith in the paradox of being which is identified with the paradox of the Incarnation, an act of choice and will which is a " leap in the dark "

and must be constantly renewed. From that initial act of faith the remainder of his theology proceeds; its corollaries and implications are only explicable in relation to it.

It is evident that, for Kierkegaard, this act of will is a genuine act, a real, an agonizing and a constant choice. Here, in this "leap", this "Instant", is the "point of contact" between God and man, the superhuman and the human; a man can choose or refuse to make contact with Christ. Whether or not this is a real choice, whether he who has met Christ has any real choice is not an issue which seems to have concerned Kierkegaard. For him, at all events, it was both a real and an agonizing one.

It is to be observed that this question of "free choice" which was a postulate for Kierkegaard, is a problem for his followers. It is here that the Barthian theology joins issue with him, but here too that Berdyaev finds the corner-stone of his thought. "God expects from me a free creative choice," writes the latter in the preface to his "Freedom and the Spirit".

It is clear, however, that this conception of an initial act of will does not, with Kierkegaard, lead to Pelagianism. Man can choose or reject Christ; he cannot, by his own will, change from sinner to saint, nor can he forge his own faith. All that follows that primary "leap in the dark" is the act of God. The self and the faith which ensue from that "leap" of initial faith are both God-born.

(P.F., p. 13) ". . . a change takes place like the change from non-being to being . . . the disciple is born."

For this choice of Christ is also a choice of

(J., p. 128) "self". He speaks of the sequence as ". . . despair and the choice of self."

But it is the choice of a self of which only the soil exists in the individual soul. It implies a recognition both of that unfertilized "possibility of self" and of an "infinite self" whence falls the seed upon the soil.

(L., p. 124) "In order to will in desperation to be oneself there must be consciousness of the infinite self." This "infinite self", however, is only "the abstractest possibility" of self, the, so to speak, seed-plot of the real self. By choice of self the individual both mortifies an ephemeral and "creates" an eternal self.

Again we confront the "point of contact". There is in man, not only the capacity for choice; there is also "the abstractest possibility of self".

It seems clear, moreover, that this "creation of self" which, in the passage cited, seems to have an ominously humanistic and Pelagian ring, has, for Kierkegaard, no such intention. "It is the Spirit's gift." Rather, for him, in Martin Buber's

(*I and Thou*, p. 82) words, "creation burns itself into us, recasts us in burning—we tremble and are faint, we submit."

All that follows that initial act of faith is the work of God—God Himself, the life of the spirit,

(J., p. 273 & 519) grace, peace, holiness, and joy, and the "double

danger", the redoubled doubt and suffering which accompany them. First "severity", "the martyrdom of faith", then "gentleness".

That this choice is the choice of death Kierkegaard continually declares. Christianity inexorably demands martyrdom. ". . . the nervous system of Christianity meets in the reality of martyrdom". "God is spirit—only one who is dead can speak that language at all." (J., p. 498) (J., p. 470)

The self which is thus created by God from the death of self is, for Kierkegaard, "spirit," a new birth from the contact of divine dread and human will. "Spirit is the self." This "spirit-self" is delivered in dread; dread is its birth-pang. It is as existential and essential to that birth as the pains of labour to the birth of nature; it is a "dread emerging at the moment when the spirit is about to constitute the synthesis of soul and body. . . ." (L., p. 411) (L., p. 129)

It is not imposed upon human nature from without; it is born in the womb of time and human nature, it is born from within. "Man is a synthesis of the soulish and the bodily. But the synthesis is unthinkable where the two are not united by a third. This third is spirit." This "spirit-self" therefore is not a stranger and alien in our being or something hostile to human nature; it is born of blood. (L., p. 129)

It is a synthesis of opposites, a co-ordination of contraries, of "infinitude and finiteness, of the temporal and the eternal, of freedom and necessity. . . ." Therefore, like faith born of the

polarity of denial and affirmation, like the existential truth delivered from the dialectic of "Yes" and "No", like Christ, the co-ordination of God and man, like Christianity and the doctrine of the Incarnation, the synthesis of the divine and the human, from the human and temporal angle this "spirit-self" is absurd, is paradox.

Nor is it a departure from or a distortion of reality. In that re-birth alone does man really become man, attain to his full and pre-destined (L., p. 304) stature, emerge from unreality to reality. "It is (L., p. 90) God-relationship which makes a man." "It is myself in my eternal worth . . . it is freedom." Then only is self at one with eternity and God and delivered from time and death.

Nor is this re-birth of the spirit-self a denial of or escape from life; it is the final affirmation, the fulfilment of life. It is not a cowardly abandonment of the burden of being; it is the supreme adventure, the supreme risk from which, "in the frailty of our mortal nature," all men shrink. It is that very risk which conditions faith. (L., p. 318) "Without risk, no faith."

It is inevitably a birth in suffering. For "spirit"-being implies solitude and isolation, a sundering from the warm intimacies of human life and carnal happiness. Yet it seems clear that Kierkegaard believed that these are essentially birth-throes and "growing pains" of the spirit from which, in due season, it will be delivered.[1]

[1] *Vide* L., p. 230.

It is, moreover, the birth of true individuality and, for Kierkegaard, " individuality " is integral to real Christianity and real faith. At the age of 22 we find him emphasizing its significance and sanctity and even equating " individuality " with the " Unknown God ".[1] It is a conception which survives his conversion. " The whole development of the world," he writes in 1847, " tends to the importance of the individual ; that, and nothing else, is the principle of Christianity." (J., p. 193)

". . . the doctrine of Christianity," he writes again in 1851, " is the downfall of the race and the resurrection of the individual." (J., p. 433) The saying was something of a commonplace at the zenith of individualism ; to-day it is a challenge to the prevailing mood of mankind.

That, in his generation, he should have appreciated individuality is not surprising ; the foresight (or insight) with which he saw beyond and through individualism to a collectivist reaction which is characteristic of our own day is sufficient token of his prophetic status. For, as has already been seen, he seems elsewhere to regard individualism as a transitional phase characteristic of the romantic period, to be succeeded by a re-embodiment of the individual in the state and the church. It is a conception which, though he was of a genius to conceive it, he does not seem to have thought through. He seems rather, with a typical existentiality, to have " accepted his conditions ", the prevalent individualism of

[1] *Vide* J., p. 19.

his age, and to have concentrated upon the significance of a real individuality for a real Christianity.

It is noticeable, moreover, that, although he draws a clear distinction between a man's " own self " and the " self which he desires to be " and also predicates an " infinite self ", he, for the most part, uses the term " individual " as well for the pre- as for the post-conversion self. Only once is the term " personality " to be found in the documents under consideration, and then it appears to be equated with individuality.

(J., p. 151) " It is really the conscience which constitutes a personality," he writes. " Personality is an individual decision. . . ."

There appears to be a hiatus in his thought at this point which can only be explained by the inference that he had not thought through the distinction between " individuality " and " personality " but, for the most part, employs the term " individuality " both for the original and for the reborn " self ". In spite of his psychological insight he does not seem to have grasped or grappled with the problem of the psychology of personality.

It seems clear, however, that the hiatus is rather one of terminology than of conception and that, in point of fact, in his own mind he discriminates very definitely between the " individual " prior to the " Instant " and the " individual " Christian who is created after it.

The point is, however, a vital one. For the line

which divides both this rudimentary and this re-created self from the individual self and the cosmic Self of Gnosticism and much Oriental wisdom is a very tenuous one. And the doctrine of such "wisdom" leads directly to that of a higher humanism and self-culture which Kierkegaard would certainly have been the first to deplore. If the "inner self of self" is a thing flawless, universal, indestructible, and, when released, omnipotent, it is also identical with God and there are no limits to the self-culture and humanism which can be built upon the basis of such a belief. It is the basic faith of all such "gnostic" wisdom, a gnosticism very fashionable to-day but very foreign to any genuine Christianity. "The Supreme Being," so runs the Upanishads, "is like unto your own soul." And again, ". . . the Self shines by its own light." For such a "wisdom" the inference is that, in the first place, this occult Self and God are identical and, in the second, that this divine Self abides intact in every man, only awaiting the discovery of illumination.

A "self" which is no more than, in Kierkegaard's words, "the abstractest possibility of self," the mere soil for self awaiting the divine seed, and a "Self" equatable with God Himself, which "shines by its own light", are two wholly different conceptions leading to wholly different conclusions. The one leads direct to a secular humanism, the other to Christianity.

In spite of the ambiguity of his terminology

there seems small reasonable doubt that, for Kierkegaard, the original self is, indeed, no more than the seed-plot of the divine Self and that the
(L., p. 166) seed is from God. " A man who lives in God," he writes, " stands therefore in the same relation to the ' natural man ' that a waking man does . . . to a dreamer. . . ." He has been " born again ". ". . . yet with him it is not as with a child which when it is forgiven becomes the same child again. No, he has become an eternity older, for he has now become spirit. . . ."

Here is rather the new birth of the Johannine gospel. It is a conception integral but not peculiar to Christianity. " He will infuse into your soul a new Soul," said the Mohammedan mystic, Jalàlu'd-dìn Rùmì. It is only indefeasibly Christian when that re-birth is caused by Christ and by Christ alone. There can be little doubt that this was Kierkegaard's faith.

A Christianity fixed upon such foundations of personal choice, of " martyrdom " and of re-birth carried its own inescapable corollaries. Since it was set in " individuality " and " subjectivity "
(L., p. 303) it implied " inwardness ". " . . . only when the individual turns in upon himself . . . does he become aware of God and find himself in a condition to see Him . . . truth is inwardness."

He recognizes, however, the facile snare of such " inwardness ". " The modern method," he writes in 1849, " is humbug, by transforming faith into pseudo inwardness." Yet he returns to the conception of the necessity for deepening

rather than widening Christian doctrine and faith. "The norm," he writes in 1851, "is for every degree of grace the law must also be made more severe in inwardness." And in the year before his death he affirms that "Luther set up the highest spiritual principle: pure inwardness". It is notable, however, that he qualifies the affirmation by drawing attention to the ease with which such "inwardness" may degenerate into "the lowest of lowest paganism", a degeneration which "cannot happen in Catholicism" which recognizes that "we men are pretty well rascals". (J., p. 436) (J., p. 513)

A Christianity which is thus founded upon "severity", mortification and the "cruelty" of Christianity necessarily inclines towards asceticism, celibacy of the priesthood and even monasticism, and an unadulterated damnation. "Christ was an ascetic," he declares. (J., p. 502)

"Back to the monastery out of which broke Luther—that is what must be done." ". . . it is no good unless we can get back hell, eternal punishment again." (J., p. 501)

But this "severity" is the beginning but not the end of the story. His faith and feeling are as paradoxical as his thought. The picture of Christianity which begins with such a "severity" ends with a glowing gentleness; in his inner life this hammer of hypocrisy is a lover and a child; from his divided consciousness comes a rare simplicity, from his dread and despair a radiant love and hope. His personal prayers are, for the most part, a pure passion of praise.

(J., p. 350) "God is gentle," he writes.

(J., p. 397) "It is my firm conviction . . . that severe as it is, it (Christianity) is equally gentle."

(L., p. 441) "This relationship to God is the experience of a happy lover . . . this love-story. . . ."

(J., p. 86) For him the fatherly love of God is "the one unshakable thing in life, the true archimedean point".

(J., p. 120) "God is certainly love, but not love to sinners."

(J., p. 394) "His love is a spring which never runs dry."

(J., p. 478) Renunciation is "simply a lover's understanding with God". Two years before his death he writes a rhapsody of the divine love which he has known of which the refrain is—

(L., p. 563) "how endlessly thou art loved."

§ 4

Such, in outline, were Kierkegaard's main affirmations of faith, the "troubled truth" which emerged at last from the travail of his negative phase.

Since the purpose of this study is, not criticism, but exposition, with a view rather to the lay than to the clerical mind, a brief summary of their salient points couched, as far as possible, in general rather than theological terms, may clarify their significance, not merely for theology, but for life.

He affirmed an "existential" mode of judgment delivered, not by the intellect in isolation, but by the full consciousness, passing,

by a " dialectic " of its own, from an initial unmitigated " dread ", in an " Instant " distinct from historical time, by a " leap " of individual choice independent of the process of logic, to the affirmation of the fundamental paradox of being (for Kierkegaard incarnate in Christ) and to a re-birth of the essential self and a faith engendered by the same process in the same " Instant ". This reborn spirit-life involves, for him, a real and absolute dying to and detachment from the phenomenal and sensual world and, therefore " severity ", suffering, a " double danger " (since both natural and spiritual life are risked), " separateness " and " martyrdom ". Its matrix is an extreme " inwardness ", subjectivity and individualism. But, although this re-birth is actuated by individual choice, it is generated and matured by a power other than human. This reborn spirit-being passes from a natal " severity ", " dread ", and wrath to an eventual " gentleness ", love, and peace.

It will be seen from this summary that, in the first place, the constructive thought of Kierkegaard, however profound and pregnant, is wholly abstract and unrelated to concrete historical conditions, in the second, that it is emphatically and inalienably a " twice-born " creed.

Kierkegaard did not, indeed, overlook or underestimate the ethical issue of Christianity ; he has, in fact, defined the problem as how to " comport oneself absolutely with regard to the

absolute 'telos' and relatively with regard to the relative". He did not attempt, however, to relate this recondite Christianity to the conditions and dilemmas of the common man.

It may seem that such an intense and "inward" spirituality, whatever its ultimate validity, can be no more than the preserve of the "religious genius", the "extraordinarius" which he knew and confessed himself to be.

The hiatus between faith and works is plainly a yawning one. For the celibate, the unmarried and unencumbered, for those detached by circumstance from the "immediacy" of life in the world, Kierkegaard's uncompromising Christianity may be conceivable. What of the vast majority who are not so circumstanced but inextricably attached to a competitive and unchristian life in the actual world?

Kierkegaard (like, it may be observed, his Lord) has left no formula, other than the most abstract, for the solution of such concrete ethical problems. "... to relate oneself to God personally, as an individual, is the formula for being a Christian," he writes. Elsewhere he answers such queries with a question. "Can one be a Christian without being a disciple?"

(L., p. 525)

(L., p. 538)

Nevertheless he emphatically repudiates the suggestion that the uncompromising Christianity which he had come to apprehend and to depict is anything but a potentially universal salvation. "... I cannot abandon the thought," he says, "that every man, absolutely every man ... can

(J., p. 361)

. . . grasp the highest, namely religion. . . . If that is not so, then Christianity is nonsense."

Again, it is evident that the element of conversion and " new birth " both of mind and spirit of the most comprehensive and radical kind is integral to Kierkegaard's conception of Christianity, that it is indefeasibly a " twice-born " Christianity. To eliminate or minimize this feature is to emasculate his faith of all that empowers it.

It would seem, indeed, that this *sine qua non* of a " new birth " of the spirit is the crux, not only of his own faith and of his condemnation of the official Christianity and Christendom of his day, but also of any modern estimate of its significance.

For between the " twice-born " and the " once-born " religions there is a great gulf fixed which neither reason nor charity can readily bridge. The type of conventional Christianity which he assailed so vehemently must certainly have contained at least a core of a genuine " once-born " religion ; it seems probable, indeed, that Bishop Mynster, whom he both revered and reviled, was an exemplary exponent of such a religion.

For Kierkegaard all such " once-born " religion, however apparently meritorious, seems to have been no more than mere fertility-faith, a " Baalism " which he could only loathe and condemn with a hatred of all its " high places " as ardent as that of Jeremiah.

It seems, indeed, probable that to this " twice-born " quality of Kierkegaard's Christianity may be ascribed, not only his lack of sympathy with conventional and established Christianity, but also his failure to attempt to correlate his creed with the conditions of common existence.

It may well be that, in the difficult correlation of the " twice-born " religion of the prophetic few with the " once-born " Christianity of the majority of " men of good will ", the ultimate problem of religion rests. However that may be it was not in Kierkegaard either to make it or even to acknowledge that the problem was a real one.

He evidently did not conceive that such a correlation concerned him ; he was concerned only to expound the central reality of Christianity as he had come to conceive it, confident that, when that central reality is made manifest, correlation with life will follow.

This intransigeant attitude, this fanatical concentration upon first principles, is one which, while it may not satisfy theology, seems to increase his significance for the modern layman, for whom all principle is in doubt, and whose primary concern is not with the corollaries but with the fundamental postulates of faith.

His influence upon the world of theology and the Churches has been of a strangely seminal and pervading kind. He founded no sect and formed no " school " of theology. Yet every Christian Church and every vital movement in

modern theological thought from the " Sophism " of Eastern Orthodoxy, the " Thomism " of Western Catholicism, the " Lundensian " theology of the Church of Sweden to the new Protestant orthodoxy of such writers as Brunner, Heim, and Gogarten or the " German Faith Movement " of such as Emmanuel Hirsch, is impregnated with his ideas.

But the world of the confessedly Christian and still more of the theologically-minded is a minority rapidly diminishing both in scope and authority. It seems, indeed, sometimes more probable that the world will convert the Church than the Church the world to a revitalized religion. The significance of Kierkegaard and his teaching for the average layman of goodwill outside the pale of the Churches seems, therefore, a matter of far greater moment to-day.

When reduced to their elements, his attitude, mode of thought and axioms of faith seem peculiarly pertinent to such a lay consciousness and, more particularly, to the consciousness of the Anglo-Saxon race, the process of which has always been of that existential order which Kierkegaard raised from the plane of affairs to that of ideas.

His attitude is one, moreover, which seems especially cogent to our conditions. For, though problems of doctrine and casuistry may concern the Churches and schools of theology, the need of the majority of men is for some primary standard of life, some co-ordination of existence

and idealism, some attitude towards life which may be adopted with candour and confidence.

(*T. E. Lawrence*, by His Friends, p. iii)

" There is an ideal standard somewhere and only that matters and I cannot find it," wrote the late T. E. Lawrence recently. He voiced the *cri du cœur* of a generation disfranchised of faith.

For such, conventional Christianity of the " once-born " type is, rightly or wrongly, devoid both of vitality and value. Whatever religious validity such a faith may have for ages of comparative calm, settled tradition, and crystallized convention and conviction, only such a " twice-born " faith as that of Jeremiah, Augustine, Luther, and Kierkegaard is likely to speak with conviction to such conditions of crisis, catastrophe and chaos of traditions, creeds and conventions as those of to-day. Only a religion of re-birth can appeal to an age dominated by death.

It would seem, in fact, that the need of the modern secular world is not so much for the rehabilitation of the Christianity of the Churches as for the reconstruction of faith from its foundations.

The trend of modern thought and feeling, alienated by some deep psychological aversion, as Kierkegaard himself seems to have been, from the " strange stuffy atmosphere " of traditional Christianity and piety, profoundly antipathetic to the sterile unreality associated with " dons " and " parsons ", in love with an

unclerical Christ but out of love with clerical Christianity, impatient of compromise, inured to the " dread " and " severity " of a catastrophic age, suspicious of all evolutionary and mediating thought and disabused of the Messianisms of materialism, avid for an existential truth, tuned to the concepts, both of an extra-dimensional mode of being and of the leap of life rather than the smooth transition of " progress ", and instructed by psychologists and publicists in the value of " awareness ", seems in the full flood of a return to a religion re-related to reality, and curiously akin to the characteristic traits of Kierkegaard's thought and faith.

It is to such a mood and to a consciousness congenitally " existential ", at a time when the climate of crisis and catastrophe most congenial to its fertilization is impending upon it, that the word of Kierkegaard comes, of an essential " spirit "-being, not alien to but born from blood and brain, not denying the life of nature or the value of the individual soul in some religious totalitarianism, but redeeming, renewing, and justifying them in a Christian synthesis and co-ordination.

It is a word which seems, not to evade, but to place in an intelligible, and therefore endurable, life-context the conflict, catastrophe, " dread " and death of contemporary conditions, to supply the metaphysic of a more profound and vital Christian democracy and give to the rudderless modern mind an " ideal standard ", a life-attitude

not irrelevant to reality or incompatible with candour which it so conspicuously lacks and craves.

Such would seem to be something of the significance of the word of Kierkegaard for the modern Western consciousness, to which now, at long last, it comes in its own tongue, the significance of a fundamental metaphysic of life rather than of a system of theology or ethics.

But, however congenial such a metaphysic may seem, however, when reduced to its elements, it may, at first sight, seem to afford a metaphysic not necessarily or specifically Christian, a closer consideration cannot escape the conclusion that it is, in reality, inalienable from an absolute faith in a transcendant divine reality and in the fact of the Incarnate Christ.

That foundation-faith was Kierkegaard's corner-stone ; it is the core of his metaphysic ; in that fact alone is it centred, fulfilled, manifested, and justified. If the Incarnation of Christ was not fact, the metaphysic of Kierkegaard is no more than fiction ; its " existentiality " depends upon the real existence of the Incarnate Christ. If that metaphysic can, as seems conceivable, supply the foundations for a reconstituted and revitalized religion acceptable to the modern consciousness, its corner-stone can but be Christ.

II

THE THEOLOGY OF CRISIS [1]

§ 1

THE title of " Theology of Crisis " which has been adopted or accepted by the group of Swiss and German theological thinkers who follow the standard of Professor Karl Barth, is characteristic in the paradox and challenge which it implies.

To an age for which " crisis " is a fact which none can escape and a catchword on the lips of every publicist, the " Theology of Crisis " offers a Christianity built upon crisis of a keener, more profound, and more searching kind. To our sick consciousness of crisis in every phase of our life and our sense of impending doom, this theology presents a view of religion which is, in its essence, ever-present and inescapable crisis, and a doom ever-pending in its eschatology, ever-met in its scheme of redemption. To the acute and almost unbearable tensions of our life it brings a tension yet more intense—the tension of absolute faith. " If it seems unbearable to anyone," says Karl Barth, " he should ask himself how the tensions of human life, of which we know more than in other ages, are to be encountered except with the greater

[1] This essay was written in 1933.

tension of faith," which, he affirms afresh, " Pauline theology, Pauline Christianity, with the word of resurrection at its centre, shows to us." The claim of this theology to cure crisis with keener crisis, tension with greater tension, is itself a paradox, and the dialectical method which it pursues is poised upon paradox.

The challenge which it throws down to our modern ways of thought is startlingly wide and uncompromising. For it asserts bluntly that our life and thought, both collective and individual, are wrong at root and have been going increasingly astray for at least the last two hundred years. Here is no Christianity flirting with the spirit of the age or indulging in amiable pourparlers with science and philosophy, no theology setting to partners with modern evolutionism and secularism. Nor is this a theology confined to theologians ; it is a " word " addressed to all men. It is theology militant, declaring war *à l'outrance* upon all that is most characteristically modern and fashionable. It criticizes with an equal intransigence the idealism of the school of Hegel, that " philosophy of the Spirit " which animates modern Italy under Croce, the evolutionary thought of such as Bergson, Alexander, and Lloyd Morgan, the trans-Atlantic humanism of which Irving Babbitt was the high priest, the psychology of Freud and Jung, the behaviourism of Pavlov and Watson, the " theology of experience " of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, the eschatology of Schweitzer and Weiss, the " numinism " of Otto, the romanticism popularized by Rousseau, neo-Thomist classicism, modernism, orthodoxy, and fundamentalism in more

popular religion, democracy, nationalism, and Bolshevism in politics, individualism and secularism in life. Its " hand is against every man " ; this theology stands " *contra mundum* " in clear and uncompromising opposition to the way of our world. Its significance, therefore, is far from being circumscribed by theology as that term is generally understood ; it throws its own light, in Barth's phrase, its " horizon-light ", upon every aspect of our life. To this theology all these alike are " Mammon " ; in exchange for these creeds, in which it perceives only " false gods ", it offers once again no more and no less than God, that *démodé* reality, unmodernized, undiluted, and undiminished.

This movement in theology is also known under the alternative title of the " Barthian theology " ; but its originator, prophet, and leader, Professor Karl Barth, would be the first to disclaim such a naming, for he is equally averse to personal publicity, movements, and names. " No better method can be devised," he has said, " of keeping away the truth than to stamp it with this or that name." It was he, however, who sounded the trumpet-call of this theology with his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, in 1918, when a young pastor of the Reformed Church at Safenwil, in Switzerland, and his influence remains paramount in its ranks. The work contained all that was most paradoxical, provocative, and challenging in his thought and caused an immediate sensation. Barth awoke to " find himself famous ". Since then it has seen five editions, has been translated, and become a burning topic of theology in all the Protestant

countries of Europe in particular, although Rome also has taken it to heart, and at long last, with a typical British deliberation, appeared in an English translation in 1933. In each successive edition its author has to some extent modified earlier extremities of thought and expression or abandoned positions, mostly inessential, which, on more mature consideration, he has found untenable. But the gist of his argument and the force of his challenge remain unabated.

The book was the fruit of his own practical preaching experience. Confronted with the duty of preaching the " Word of God " to his people, he found that he had only an impotent and emasculated theology to give them. He set to work to review the first sources of Christianity in the light of this practical necessity ; of that self-set task the " theology of crisis " is the issue. That quest, so unsatisfactory seemed to him the state of current theological thought, soon became an all-engrossing claim upon his life and powers, and one to which he proceeded wholly to devote himself. From chairs of theology at Göttingen and Münster, he passed to the more important professorship of Reformed theology at Bonn in 1929. In addition to the now-famous work on the Romans he has published several volumes of addresses, including one containing much of his most characteristic thought, translated into English under the significant title of *The Word of God and the Word of Man*, commentaries on the Corinthians (containing his thought on the crucial subject of the Resurrection) and the Philippians, and, finally, the first volume of a monumental work on *Church Dogmatics*, in which he proposes to review

the whole field of theology or, as he now prefers to call it, *Dogmatics*, in five volumes. In view of his unique influence in and beyond the field of theology proper and of the condition of crisis which grows increasingly acute in that sphere itself, whether to adherent or opponent, this great and bold undertaking is of the utmost significance and an event upon which theological thought of every complexion waits with an anxious attention. So far he has done little more than outline his position, but it seems clear that his thought is now ripe and ready for the harvest and no longer in process of gestation. " I know where I mean to come out," he has said in the Preface to the first volume of the *Dogmatics*, " if the Lord will."

Karl Barth is a Bernois Swiss, of the Reformed Church, and is now forty-six years of age. These facts are of considerable importance in estimating his outlook and the influences which have shaped it. As a Swiss whose early maturity was spent within sound of the guns of the Great War, in his native Alps, as Romain Rolland has put it, " above the battle," with the tides of war and death beating upon every frontier of his fatherland during his formative years, it is a little wonder that the sense of doom and crisis dominates his thought. His native love of and familiarity with the mountains colours both the manner and the matter of his theology. " The mind, the mind has mountains," wrote Gerard Manley Hopkins ; the mind of Karl Barth has both its mountains and its abysses. Images of mountain and abyss are, indeed, frequent in his phraseology. He speaks of the " impassable frontier of death, the

unbridgable chasm before which we are called to a halt", of man "standing on the edge of a precipice daring the swing into the uncertain, the bottomless, and there, swinging over the gulf . . . taken hold of by the hand of God". When he sees Paul, he sees behind him a "mountain-high, marvellous secret". To the mountain-background of his mind and life are clearly attributable much that gives vigour and unique grandeur to his prose and that strong feeling for dialectic, the contrasted heights and depths of thought, which is the very fibre of his mind.

Switzerland has always been a clearing-house for the thought of Europe; during the War years her neutrality intensified that tendency, for in her hospitable boundaries the refugee-thinkers, of whom Lenin is a type, found sanctuary. Barth was therefore, as a young man, in close touch with all that was most vigorous, significant, and advanced in the thought of Europe. As a Swiss-German, trained for the pastorate in the theology which traces back through Hermann and Ritschl to Schleiermacher and finds its foundations in the Reformation theology of Luther and Calvin who, in their turn, mined in the rock of Augustine and Paul, he was in close touch with all that was most vital in modern European theological thinking, firm-set in the basic principles of the Reformers, and sufficiently akin in mind to appreciate to the full that desperation in the mind and heart of post-War Germany which found a voice in Spengler's *Decline of the West*. Barth inherited a bankrupt theology, a darkly pessimistic philosophy, and a world-view clouded with crisis and the sense of doom. His thought was

shaped in a cyclone of " crisis " which, in its slow but ineluctable march, is only now touching our western shores. The influence of these factors is evident throughout his work and no just estimate of its significance can be attempted without bearing this unique background in mind.

With Barth are associated in the " Theology of Crisis " and, in the main, in agreement, a group of Swiss-German and German theologians for whom he is the acknowledged leader and whose mentality has been subjected to forces similar to those which have shaped his own mind. Among these the most prominent are Professor Emil Brunner, of Zurich, whose more philosophical bent and lecturing activities have spread the gospel in England and America, Professor Bultmann, of Marburg, and Doctors Gogarten and Thorneyson, all of whom have published works of the same general tendency, built upon what may be called the Barthian foundations. The " Theology of Crisis " also finds important periodical expression in a theological review with the characteristic title of *Zwischen den Zeiten—Between the Times.* But it is in the writings of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner, many of which have been translated into English, that the main trend of the movement may best be studied. An examination of the meaning given by these writers to the key terms of " crisis " and " theology " is a pre-requisite to such a study.

By derivation the term " crisis " implies " separating " or " judgment ", and it is with this double significance and in its application both to man in general and to man in particular that it is employed

by these writers. In the wide meaning of Barth and Brunner the word connotes at once the turning-point of an illness, reorientation of a movement of thought or life, logical discrimination between conflicting ideas, moral decision in ethics and, supremely, the demand made upon man by the " Word of God " which is, in itself, both a separating, a " dividing asunder ", and a judgment. For this theology the note of crisis is the authentic and inalienable note of the religion both of the New Testament and of the Old, and one which is resounded and reheard whenever Christianity is rediscovered in its stark reality. " The note of crisis," says Professor Brunner, " with its repeated emphasis on NOW and TO-DAY . . . sounds like a bugle-note all through the prophets, and through the New Testament, and through the works of the Reformers." That " bugle-note " is the " kerugma " of the " Word of God ", the heralding of a way of life contrary to and wholly other than the natural way of life. In the thought of these writers this note of crisis is the essential feature of real religion ; it reaches its climax in the Christian revelation in the fact and witness of the Resurrection.

But the Resurrection concept is not limited to the historical event of the resurrection of Jesus for this thought. In the words of Professor Brunner, Resurrection is " a movement from above, in which eternity invades time " and is Barth's " most significant expression for that crisis in which the ' Word of God ' comes to a man ". It is an " encounter with the Word of God in the moment between time and eternity, which sets before a man the alternative of ' either-or ',

and requires from him immediate decision". "Resurrection" and "crisis" thus tend to become almost synonymous terms for this theology. "The affirmation of God, man, and the world given in the New Testament," says Professor Barth, "is based exclusively upon the possibility of a new order absolutely beyond human thought; and therefore, as pre-requisite to that order, there must come a crisis that denies all human thought."

It follows that this conception of crisis as inseparable from Christianity and the concept of the Resurrection-life is closely associated with that of conversion, of a drastic reorientation and change of life and thought. The new life is a life utterly other than the old life; but all men are enmeshed in the old life; therefore a clean break, a complete turn-about of thought and life, are necessary for the man who would be "born again" into this "new order", this new resurrection-life which is Christianity. Crisis is inescapable for the real Christian; he becomes Christian through crisis and, as a Christian, he lives a life of crisis. Therefore this theology would seem emphatically to preach a Christianity of the "twice-born", of those who have been "born again", who have encountered and embraced this "crisis" which is thus considered to be the very core of the Christian life, and here too it seems clean of compromise.

The crisis which thus, as ever, according to this conception, confronts the individual soul to-day is, in the view of this theology, identical in its essence with that which confronts the modern world. Man's way of life, his arrogant and God-forgetting humanism,

has come once more to the abyss of crisis, of separation, of judgment. Over against it stands, in clear and unequivocal opposition, God's way of life in Christianity. To-day, Society, like the individual soul, is confronted with that stern and ultimately inescapable "either-or" which is crisis, either the way of life of modern humanism and secularism with the ever-deepening scepticism which increasingly shadows them, or the "wholly other" way of life revealed in Christ. There is no middle way; this theology will not "serve God and Mammon".

For this theology, moreover, the connotation of the term "theology" is as peculiar to it as its use of that of "crisis"; it is, again, something sharply distinct from the current and debased conception of the term as a branch of thought occupying at best an equal status with other human "logoi" such as psychology, science, or metaphysics. This theology is concerned with the Word of God alone; those are concerned with the Word of Man. Theology here is not the elaboration of human thought about God; it is the exposition of God's thoughts about men. Since the Word of God is only revealed through the veil of imperfect human thought and expression, the divine absolute in the human relative, there can, therefore, be no perfect or satisfactory human theology; theology must ever go clothed in an utter humility. God has "reserved the perfect theology to himself", says Professor Barth.

Here again, in contrast with current views of theology, is an unbridgeable abyss between sharply-conflicting conceptions. A comparison with this view of theology

of pronouncements as to the nature of theology by representative modern writers will best mark the radical contrast between such conceptions and that of the Theology of Crisis. " . . . the theology of to-morrow," says the modernist Professor Kirsopp Lake, " . . . will be based on observation, not on authority, on the facts of religion, as perceived by the individual, not on biblical or ecclesiastical revelation." " The dogmas of religion," says the distinguished modern scientist and philosopher, Professor A. N. Whitehead, " are the attempts to formulate in precise terms the truths disclosed in the religious experience of mankind. *In exactly the same way*," [1] he adds significantly, " the dogmas of physical science are the attempts to formulate in precise terms the truths disclosed in the sense-perception of mankind." For these modernist writers theology is thus a science limited by the mind and psychology of man and on a par with all other human sciences.

Over against such conceptions of a theology based upon human experience and observation, the Theology of Crisis stands in uncompromising opposition. For the true theology such data, in Professor Brunner's words, " have significance only for the knowledge of man, not for the knowledge of God." " Theology is concerned with a knowledge of God which in no way is founded in man, which by no means is obtainable by man through his religious or metaphysical faculties or through his religious experience . . . knowledge of God from beyond all human possibilities—truth which is given in the event which constitutes revelation."

[1] The italics are mine.—M. C. P.

Theology is a divine, not a human science and the distance between this divine and that human science is as wide and impassable by human reason at that between God and man.

Such a conception of the nature and function of theology, while marking its necessary humility before God, raises it, before man, once again to that " high estate " which it enjoyed before the modern age as the " queen of the sciences ". The beggarly theology of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, reduced to a state of servitude to science and the " higher criticism ", reassumes her royalty in this Theology of Crisis, but it is the royalty of the servant of God.

This theology, moreover, is equally opposed both to orthodoxy on the one hand and fundamentalism on the other. For it the Word of God is, in the phrase of Pascal, a " *livre scellé* ", a sealed book. In Professor Barth's words, " the absolute reveals itself in the place of the relative." Therefore the revelation is neither the static revelation, " once-for-all revealed to the saints," of orthodoxy, nor the identification of the hidden Word of God with a book, the verbal inspiration doctrine of Fundamentalism. " The weakness of orthodoxy," says Barth, " is not the supernatural element in the Bible . . . it is rather the fact that orthodoxy has a way of regarding some objective description of an element such as the word ' God ', as if it were the element itself. But the fact is, that a man cannot believe what is simply held before him. He can believe nothing that is not both within him and before him. He can believe nothing which does not reveal itself to him, which has not the power

to penetrate to him. Only the God Who reveals Himself is God." In the view of this theology, therefore, orthodoxy and fundamentalism alike, in diverging fashions, have based their faith on a Word which is not living but dead, on Scripture, dogma, or human history, abolishing the distinction between Scripture and Revelation, between the word of man and the hidden Word of God, enshrining a dead human word or thought for the living and ever re-revealing, but ever ultimately hidden Word of God.

This conception of theology, provided that the revelation remains supreme over the logic of the human mind, has no quarrel with the criticism of the text of the Scriptures in which the hidden Word is conveyed to man through the imperfect medium of his thought and language. On the contrary such a criticism, such an industrious mining into the word of man for the Word of God within it, is an imperative duty. The saying of Luther, " the Scriptures are the crib in which Christ is laid," is quoted with approval ; " . . . faith is compatible," says Professor Brunner, " with even the most radical criticism of the Biblical tradition concerning the life of Jesus." And again, " It is quite as possible to be a Christian with the new world-view, say with the teaching of Darwin, Einstein and Planck, as it was to be religious with the Babylonian three-storeyed universe." " Historism must be allowed its say out with reason and right as to Biblical text " ; " we know that the Bible is one thing, revelation another," says Barth. For this theology religion is freed from the dilemma which for so long seemed to be imposed upon it, of obscurantism

on the one hand or bottomless scepticism on the other. Reason, when subject to revelation, is untrammelled ; theology breathes once more in an air of chartered freedom.

Such a view of and such claims for theology are evidently dependent for their validity upon the revelation upon which they take their stand, and that revelation upon the God Who reveals. It is in its doctrine of God that this theology is seen in its most uncompromising and paradoxical form. Where the whole trend of post-Renaissance thought has tended increasingly to seek a God immanent in life and the experience of man, the Theology of Crisis stands firm upon the absolute transcendence of God. God is on the far side of the abyss ; He is a God hidden from the mind of man save for that revelation of Himself which He has granted to man, a " *Deus absconditus* " ; He is wholly other than man, " *totaliter aliter.*" In Barth's words He is " the Unknown God Who dwells in light which no man can approach unto, the Holy One, the Creator and Redeemer ". " God stands in contrast to man as the *impossible* in contrast to the *possible*, as *death* in contrast to life, as eternity in contrast to time." " The only way between God and man is that which leads *from* God *to* man." Except through the mediation of Christ there is no way from man to God. Revelation is the free gift of God, not the acquisition of man. The revelation, the " Word of God ", that which is spoken by God to man and not by man about God, has been revealed through the channel of a special revelation, firstly through the unbroken line of prophecy of the Old

Testament, secondly and supremely through Christ the Incarnate Word of God, and thirdly through the Church which is the community of those who have been called by God and enlightened by His Spirit. But this special revelation of God does not necessarily exclude the possibility of a more general revelation. "God can speak," says Barth, "through Russian Communism, through a flute concert, or a blossoming branch, or a dead dog."

This is no new doctrine of God; but it is an unfashionable and forgotten one. That this is so a comparison with a few representative modern utterances upon God and revelation will readily demonstrate. "God," says Professor Whitehead, "is the lure for feeling, the eternal urge of desire"—a God who is human desire deified by man. "God . . . is the means of securing values against their disappearance into the biological flux . . . a calculus for accurate description," says Mr. Middleton Murry—a God who is man's convenience. Of the revelation of truth Professor Whitehead says that "religious truth must be developed from knowledge acquired when our ordinary senses and intellectual operations are at their highest pitch of discipline". That is, truth is to be won by man, not to be given by God. "In the Magic Flute, in Christ, in all men and things that make us aware of divinity, the Word is utterly made flesh," says the late Mr. Clutton-Brock. That is, the hidden Word of God is "utterly", wholly, or perfectly revealed not only in Christ but also "in all men and things that makes us aware of divinity", while the secondary position allotted to Christ in

this egregious scheme of revelation is specially significant. " It is only within ourselves," says Professor J. S. Haldane, " that we find the revelation of God " ; God is dependent upon man's experience. " . . . all written words are equally open to inspiration from the eternal fount and equally subject to error from the mortal imperfection of their authors," says Mr. Bernard Shaw in his recent religious extravaganza, *The Adventures of the Black Girl in her Search for God.* There is, therefore, no special revelation of God. Finally, to quote an author who is a classic of the English school of Hegelian idealism, Professor J. Caird, " that which enters the heart must first be discerned by the intelligence to be true " ; the " intelligence " of man is the test and judge of the truth of God.

It will be seen that in such statements we have the exact converse of the Barthian position that the revelation which enters the heart of man is a truth carrying its own guarantees and proving itself. " What manner of God is he who can be proved ? " asks Barth, " Revelation means . . . truth recognized as being true only by him who permits it to be told to him. It is truth carrying its own trustworthiness within itself. . . . It is, as Calvin expresses it, autopistic." God is hidden ; His truth is veiled, but in faith man holds to it, not as a relative but as an absolute truth apprehensible by faith though beyond the " measure of man's mind ". " I do not know it and do not understand it, but sounding from above and ringing in my ears I hear what is beyond the thought of man," said Luther, in a saying quoted by Karl Barth as

indicative of the right attitude towards the revelation of God. It is evident that such an attitude is far from being either modern or fashionable.

How then is such a revelation of a hidden God, revealed in a veiled Word, receivable by man whose mind that word thus utterly transcends? It is the root problem of knowledge upon which we strike with this question. The answer of Barth is again utterly opposed to the whole trend of modern thought since Descartes, upon whose bedrock saying that philosophy is built—"*Cogito, ergo sum*"—I think; therefore I exist; my consciousness is the measure of reality. The reply of Barth is characteristically epigrammatic and paradoxical. "*Cogitor, ergo sum.*" he says—I am thought by God; therefore I am; God is the measure of my reality, not my consciousness. In that riposte lies the whole gist of the antithesis posed by the Theology of Crisis to the thesis of modern thought. "From first to last, the work is God's, not man's." [1] "A man does not create his faith or test the reality of the revealed Word himself; the Word creates it in him through the Spirit of God." "God speaks and man hears."

But even to hear man must have the capacity to hear. But, according to this theology, the *imago dei*, the pristine image of God which was in him in creation, is utterly destroyed by sin; therefore of himself he cannot even hear. "This is the depth of human distress," writes Professor Brunner, "that we are separated from God, that our communion with Him is destroyed." This doctrine of the *imago dei* is the

[1] J. McConnachie, *The Barthian Theology.*

test of every theology and it is significant that it is upon this point that Professor Barth and Professor Brunner differ. It is the point, moreover, upon which, ultimately, the Roman Catholic and Protestant theologies are opposed. For Roman Catholicism there is an *analogia entis*, a likeness of being between God and man. Upon that foundation doctrine the Roman Catholic Church erects all her majestic system of the perfectibility of the soul and the attainment, with the aids of grace, of the " Beatific Vision ". For Barth, as for the Reformers, this is the poison-root of humanism, of the perilous vaunt of mystical attainment of God by the human spirit, of the idealistic erection of an idea of God by reason. He will have none of it. In fallen man there is no point of contact with God ; it has been utterly lost through sin. " It is the Revelation itself which creates the necessary point of contact." There is no *analogia entis*, but there is an *analogia fidei*, a likeness created through and by faith. " The believer by faith becomes like God and able thus to receive the Word of God." It is so that Barth interprets the saying of St. Paul : " Now that ye have come to know God, or rather to be known of God." " *Cogitor, ergo sum* " ; God thinks me, therefore I become alive again in His thought and my dead " point of contact " with God is reborn in me.

Brunner is less extreme and less emphatic on this point, but he stops far short of the Roman *analogia entis*. " In man *qua* creature," he holds, " there resides (not a likeness to God) but the possibility or capacity of man for God, which discovers itself in man's question after God, as well as in his science,

and art, morality, civilization and religion." [1] The fact that Brunner is of the Lutheran, Barth of the Calvinist branch of the Reformed Church, probably accounts in some part for this divergence of view. That divergence, however, seems of more importance for the problems of Christian living than for the fundamentals of Christian faith. On the view of Brunner a place remains more evidently in the Christian life for a humanism subject to revelation ; according to Barth's doctrine it is not easy to see what value can be attached to a humanism which is, *ipso facto*, utterly corrupted by sin and within which revelation can find no place. For both, however, it remains the essential truth that there is no way from man to God apart from the grace of God which is His free gift and is to be found only by faith. By faith alone we are " justified ", made able to receive the revelation of God and to live it. Again it is no new doctrine. It is the word of Luther upon which the Reformation turned. " *Ergo sola fide justificamur.*" It is also the word of Paul—" being justified by faith " ; " man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ " ; " that we might be justified by faith."

Since the Word of God, revelation, is only knowable by man in and through faith, the conception of faith in this theology is its corner-stone. " Faith is the venture," says Professor Brunner, " by which one trusts the truth of a word, not because one is courageous and tries it out for once, but because one cannot do otherwise under the constraint of the word." " Faith,"

[1] McConnachie, *The Barthian Theology.*

says Professor Barth, " means seeking not noise but quiet, and letting God speak within," and again, " the faith of man is the will for empty space . . . the leap into the unknown, into the dark, into empty air." It is an act caused, conditioned, and fulfilled by God alone. It is not belief in a doctrine or in a book or in a church ; it is faith in God and in the Word of God as the *vraie vérité* to which the revelation we know relates, the Absolute revealing itself " in the place of the relative ". " I never believed in a creed of the Church," says Professor Brunner, " and hope never to do so. I believe in the Word of God and in nothing besides, for I do not wish to commit idolatry." On such a knife-edge between the Word of God and complete scepticism hangs this faith. Moreover, faith is the act, not of any part of a man, of his mind, or his spirit, or his intuition ; it is the decisive fact of the whole man. " Faith is neither a psychological function," says Professor Brunner again, " nor a combination of such functions ; it is the life-utterance of the total self in its unanalysable unity . . . the totality-act of personality."

Such a drastic, unyielding conception of faith may be compared with conceptions of faith of the modernism upon which this theology wages so implacable a war. " . . . religious faith," said Professor Hastings Rashdall, a leading light of English modernism, " means the deliberate adoption by an effort of the will, as practically certain for purposes of action and of feeling, of a religious belief." " The religious man," says Dr. Edwyn Bevan, " chooses to take the good and the beauty revealed in the human spirit at its highest

and best as giving the real purport and meaning of the Whole." For Professor Rashdall faith was, therefore, an act of the human will, for Dr. Bevan an act of intellectual discrimination and choice. How great a gulf divides such conceptions of faith from the " leap into the unknown ", the " totality-act ", the " *sola fides* " of the Theology of Crisis !

§ 2

The act of faith and the life of true religion, for this theology, is a totality-act, a totality-faith. Therefore any invidious discrimination, in the manner of paganism on the one hand and asceticism on the other, between spirit and nature, soul and body, becomes for it an impiety. " There is no absolute opposition," says Barth, " between spirit and nature, soul and body. . . . We are called to a unity. . . . We sin with soul and body, soul and body are reconciled, soul and body are to be redeemed. . . . There is no need for you to grow wings." Again such a Christianity, thus conceived, is seen to resolve in its own profounder paradox an antinomy which otherwise man cannot escape. For the natural man, soul and body are for ever at war ; for the reborn man, that war is at an end, for it is the whole man and not part of man, his soul *or* his body, which is redeemed.

On the same principle this " totality-faith " claims to resolve the dualism inherent in our time-series of time and eternity. " The resurrection," says Barth (and in the resurrection he perceives the crux of Christianity), " is the assertion . . . not of a duality

of life here and life to come, but of an identity of the two." It is the resurrection, moreover, which resolves the dualism of life and death. "The dead: that which we are," he says again; "the risen: that which we are not . . . the resurrection of the dead involves that that which we are not is equivalent with that which we are: the dead living, time eternity, the being truth, things real." It is therefore on the fact of the resurrection that, for the Theology of Crisis, Christianity is based. When that foundation-faith is undermined, the whole superstructure shakes.

For Barth Resurrection means no less than "the new world, the world of a new quality and kind" breaking in upon our natural world. In that fact we know that this other world is real and existent; in the appearances of the risen Christ we have once and for all the revelation of that life. "The Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead," says Barth, "is clearly at bottom really nothing else than the appearance in a way which points to the ultimate—and the cognition of this Kingdom of God, of a life that is God's own, not centred in the human self. . . . In the resurrection the new world of the Holy Ghost touches the old world of the flesh." But just because, in the Resurrection, we have the world of God, which we can only know by faith, impinging on our world of sense, therefore this fact is only knowable by and in faith. It is a fact within history and yet from without history; therefore it cannot be judged by any "historical method". It is a "historical divine fact, which as such is only to be grasped in the category of revelation and in none other". "The resurrection cuts clean through

the life and death of man, it is salvation-history which cleaves its own way through the other histories." "Out of what psychology of religion," says Barth with, given his premises, unanswerable logic, "can one derive the presuppositions for this belief? Does not this belief transcend every known organ, every capacity for such an organ or such a function?"

Moreover, for this theology, the Resurrection is not only the crux of revelation; it is also the crucial fact of the Christian life. Crucifixion and resurrection, death in the natural life, resurrection to the new life in Christ are real facts of that way of life; that this ineluctable sequence was followed by Christ in the realm of fact (not of symbol) is our "sure and certain" revelation that these facts are facts and that this way is the way of a real reality which we cannot avoid but which by that token we can survive. The risen life, the real Christian life, is not to be found within but beyond natural life. "Resurrection," says Barth, "takes place on the far side of the Cross, new life follows death." The risen life is the Christian life; but the risen life is the sequel, not the prelude to death; it is the fundamental law of the life of the soul to which the Resurrection as fact is the ultimate and only testimony. Therefore if the Resurrection is not fact, Christianity is fiction; if the Resurrection is fact, Christianity is terribly and marvellously true. This, in Barth's graphic words, is "the icy train of thought which threatens to shake Christendom". "In the controversy over the Resurrection two worlds clash." The heart of the mystery lies here.

In the fact of resurrection this theology sees the

solution of all our dualism, " . . . the absorption of all this and that, all here and there, all once and now into the solemn peace of the One." For the Theology of Crisis there is, on the one side, this " mountain-high, marvellous secret ", on the other, nothing at all which, for those who have come to this crisis of thought, is of any value or significance. Here is the choice between Life and Death unmitigated and unmodernized. " Beside the impossible, unbelievable, inaccessible gospel of the Resurrection," says Barth, " there is left only the abyss of an utterly radical scepticism towards everything divine, even towards everything that is humanly highest." Here Christianity centres, culminates, commences, concludes. Here, once for all, the world of God, " the righteousness of God, far, strange, high," breaks in upon the life of the world, with its inexorable dilemma and challenge.

In closest and indissoluble connection with this view of the Resurrection is the conception of the Theology of Crisis of the vexed question of eschatology. Nor is that conception confined to the eschatological teaching of Christ ; for this theology the whole of Christianity is an eschatology. " A Christianity," says Professor Barth, " which is not altogether and utterly eschatological, has altogether and utterly nothing to do with Jesus Christ." Barth " thinks in terms of Beginning and End, of Source and Goal ". His doctrine rests on [1] " the infinite qualitative distinction between time and eternity ", an eternity which " is not to be confused with the endlessness of time ". " Eternity is not a phenomenon of time at

[1] J. McConnachie, *The Barthian Theology.*

all. Eternity is the eternity of God, of His Reign, which presses into time and determines the present, in that it compels men to decision. Time as such is finite, being limited by eternity. Beyond is God Who is both Beginning and End, at once the Source and Goal of time and history. . . . We live in the moment, the interval, between Eternity and Eternity . . . in this eschatological Now."

To such an all-embracing eschatology, the eschatology of Christ is incidental and to be expected, since Christ is God and Himself both Beginning and End. For Him, conscious of the in-breaking of the " last things " of God and of God's eternity into the human world of history and time in His own incarnation, it was true that the " end was at hand ". For the Christian, who, if he is indeed a Christian, " lives and moves and has his being " in God Who is that eternity where first and last things are one, it is also always true that the end of natural life and the coming of the Kingdom of God is ever " at hand ". Eschatology conditions the Christian life and Christian thought from beginning to end.

The conception of eternity and time which begets this eschatology is clean contrary to all nineteenth century conceptions of historicity and progress. It would seem to have possible and yet unexplored affinities with more modern thought on the subject. But whether or not reason can or will endorse this conception of God's eternity and Christian eschatology, it is integral in the Barthian view and based not upon logic but upon the fact of the Resurrection.

For the Theology of Crisis there is thus no continuity

between God and man, between the Kingdom of God, God's eternity, and the kingdom of man. That eternity, that Kingdom, that life, is not another plane of existence higher than that of which we know to which by some Platonic, mystical, intellectual, or spiritual discipline and struggle we can attain at last, but a life as distinct, different, other than our human life as the God of this theology is other than man, and it is at this point that the clash occurs with the whole of our modern evolutionary mode of thought. For that thought life is moving from lower to higher or at all events more refined and complex levels of being. In its less scientific and more idealistic forms life is conceived as a progress from the animal to the spiritual, from the human to the divine. When that thought is applied to theology, as Mr. Middleton Murry has recently attempted, we have the conception of the life of Christ, of God, as forms of life which have " broken through " from the biological to a " meta-biological " plane, an ascent from man to God, a conception closely allied to that of Professor Alexander's " emergent " deity.

To all such theorizing the Theology of Crisis presents a direct opposite. " It is not a matter of e-volution," says Professor Brunner, " but of in-gressio, ingression, a breaking into the world of something beyond, something foreign and transcendent." Natural life may indeed be evolving ; it is a matter of comparative unimportance to this theology which does not in the least affect its main principle that the real life, the life in God, the life of the soul, is subject to no such law, is distinct and separated from that life by the

gulf of death and resurrection which no evolution can bridge. God breaks through downwards to man ; man does not break through upwards to deity.

This conception of " ingression " of the divine into the natural life as diametrically opposed to that of evolution from the natural life to the divine life, moreover, plays immediate havoc with the various theories as to the possibility of a species of " soul-life " generated in certain isolated cases of genius such as Keats, Goethe, Shakespeare, or Jesus from some difficult " marriage " or synthesis of Mind and Heart (to employ the terminology of Keats often used in this connection), evolving by some " metabiological " transubstantiation or hypostasis into a new " significant variation " of life, a new " wholeness ", such as Mr. Faussett, Mr. Lawrence Hyde, and Mr. Middleton Murry have recently explored and adumbrated.

For the Theology of Crisis, that such a " variation ", such a new " holism " may occur is still of no eventual significance. The spirit of man may conceivably attain to such a new wholeness, such a " soul-life ", but it will still be something infinitely removed from that " new life " which is the gift of God and the revelation of the Christian faith. Such a process of the evolution of the human spirit may be similar, may follow the same fundamental laws of life ; since God is Creator as well as Redeemer it is, indeed, to be expected that it should ; it may be yet another analogy of the divine life such as those of which Jesus showed the eternal significance ; it will never win release from the " wheel of life " and being or cease to be

sundered by the gulf which no conceivable evolution can bridge, between the real human and the real divine life. Not through any " ekstasis ", Dionysian, mystical, metaphysical, or æsthetic attempts to stand outside or achieve a hypostasis of his humanity in ecstasies of passion, art, or thought, will man win to that " eternal life " of the reborn soul which this Christianity claims. Such an hypostasis of the human spirit, even if it has occurred or is to be anticipated, remains linked to the life of Nature, soiled with the corruption of sin and still subject to Nature's doom in the view of this theology—an hypostasis utterly other than that which Christianity conceives, claims, and reveals. Here, too, even in this hypothetical state of hypostasis, human life would still confront for ever the abyss between God and man.

Such a theology of uncompromising opposites and clean-cut antinomies is inevitably paradoxical in form and wedded to the method of dialectics. It would seem, indeed, as though paradox and real religion were inevitably and always allied. It is a platitude to speak of the paradoxical nature of the sayings of Jesus ; His paradoxes have become world-proverbs : " he that loseth his life shall save it " ; " the humble shall be exalted " ; " whosoever will be great among you let him be your servant ". Wherever wisdom is most profound it is most paradoxical. And the reason, from the point of view of the Theology of Crisis, is not far to seek. For the Word of God must suffer translation into a medium opposite and contrary to it, the word of man ; the result of such a translation can, therefore, only be paradox. " Like a rod in water,"

Professor Brunner says, " God's Word is broken in the element of the world ; just as Christ could only reveal the glory of God through the form of a servant, so all speech concerning God, if in the sense of this revelation, is necessarily ' paradoxical '. . . . Dialectical thinking is the mode of thinking which defends this paradoxical character, belonging to faith-knowledge, from the non-paradoxical speculation of reason."

Once again, however, in this emphasis upon the necessity of dialectical thinking concerning religion, the Theology of Crisis makes no new discovery. The dialectical method,[1] " the juxtaposition of an opinion in apparent agreement with another opinion alongside of it, implicated with it," to " counter the No by its opposite Yes ; the thesis by its antithesis ", scepticism by scepticism of scepticism, is a familiar method of philosophy from Plato downwards. " By doubting we come to inquiry, by inquiring we perceive the truth," said Abélard, the medieval dialectician. " The spiritual world . . . is a world the harmony of which can be understood only as a perpetual play and reconciliation of antagonisms, as the harmony of discord," says Professor Caird. " Dogmatic thinking," says Barth, " is conversational, questioning and answering, answering and questioning, and only in this movement producing knowledge." Such is the method upon which the Theology of Crisis relies and consistently adopts.

It may, perhaps, be advanced with pertinence that

[1] Birch Hoyle, *The Teaching of Barth.*

the dialectical method is the method of life, that wherever we touch a real and profound reality in life, there we plumb down to paradox, to diction and counter-diction and contradiction. Paradox would seem indeed to be the prevailing colour of our deepest intimations of reality and wherever and whenever passion rules. Passion is paradox, and, in the words of one whom Barth hails as master, Kierkegaard the Dane, " faith is a passion." It is with the paradoxes of the passion of faith that the Theology of Crisis is concerned, and therefore its method is perforce that of dialectics. It may be noted by the way that it seems to bear a significant resemblance to the tough, recalcitrant, complex, contradictory, and unsynthetisable quality of reality as, in our life, we know it. This theology does not " prophesy smooth things " or speak with a smooth tongue ; it would seem to be some token of its approach towards reality that it does not do so.

The uncompromising quality which marks its dogmatics colours no less strongly the ethical outlook of the Theology of Crisis. A Christian, on this view, is one called out of the life of man into quite another life, other and contrary to it, the life of God. He is one of God's *klêtoi*, His " called " ones, and as such, one of the community of *klêtoi*, the *ekklêsia*. As such he must walk another way than that of the world. " You must not accommodate yourself to the fashion of this world," says Barth, " must not adapt yourself to it, must not be one with it . . . bear witness on the one hand against the form of this world, and on the other, in favour of the form of the coming world,

against the dominance of this life-impulse." The Christian is one who is conscious that " he is a man on guard, who knows what is at stake ". He is freed, by the grace of God, from " the deadly captivity of natural man outside the community of the risen ", but he is to beware of that captivating power ; he will not be immune from it on earth.

But such a mind and spirit will not lead him to deny the world in which he lives. On the contrary, " We shall first then quite naïvely have to accept the world as it is." We must understand it, " understand our times and their signs, and also understand ourselves in our own strange unrest and agitation. To understand means to have the insight of God that all this must be just as it is and not otherwise. To understand means to take the whole situation upon us, and in the fear of God to enter into the movement of our era." Armed with that fear and in " the power of the resurrection ", " we shall maintain towards the world, toward men and ourselves, a grateful, happy, understanding patience—better indeed than do the others who know nothing of the opposition. We can permit ourselves to be more romantic than the romanticists and more humanistic than the humanists." Moreover, in such a spirit, the Christian will see life as it is, with a detached and objective view unclouded by the subjectivity of those whom it imprisons and dooms. " Only that man can speak as Jesus speaks who stands over against life in a rôle *absolutely* critical . . . who in perfect peace can recognize in the *worldly* the analogy of the *heavenly* and take pleasure in it." This view of the life of the Christian, in, but not of the world, this

" far-seeing happy patience in which all things transitory, even in their abnormal forms, are seen in the light of the eternal ", this Christian detachment, would seem to have its significance not only for religion but for art and criticism also, and to suggest the possibility of a Christian humanism the full implications of which remain to be explored, and the view of Brunner as to the " point of contact " in revelation to justify rather than that of Barth.

Such a Christian humanism, however, is as disparate from the humanism which is limited by the poles of human being and is preached in America as the cure for the evils of romanticism, as is the Christian conception of life from the pagan. Again the gulf yawns wide. No Christian humanist in this sense could affirm with Irving Babbitt that " the law of measure is the supreme of life ", for he knows the law of God. The humanism of the school of Babbitt seems *au fond* to be a counsel of desperation by which a man is enjoined to follow a " golden mean " between extremes of conduct and thought which go out into the dark of a primeval fear, placing man in some little centre of dubious light and classic sobriety between the former and the nether nights. It is the philosophy of an enforced and insecure cheerfulness and moderation poised perilously upon a " mean in all things " arbitrarily determined by man himself. But Christianity, in Dr. Bevan's words, " runs to extremes " ; Christianity places God and not man in the centre ; Christianity does not shun a primeval dark, a primeval terror of blind force in Nature and man, for it knows that God is the Beginning and

End of life ; for Christianity the law of God, not the law of a man-made measure, is the supreme of life.

If the humanism suggested by Barth is very other than this genteel trans-Atlantic moderation, it is still more opposed to that Promethean humanism which, in Russia and elsewhere, would make man into God. Against such a humanism, frequently to be met with in our day, the attitude of the Theology of Crisis is that of an endless hostility. Such a humanism was vividly suggested by Dostoieffsky in *The Brothers Karamazov* in a passage which reads curiously like a prophecy of the polity so soon to dominate his country. " Men will unite," he wrote, " to take from life all it can give, but only for joy and happiness in the present world. Man will be lifted up with the spirit of divine Titanic pride and the man-god will appear." The " man-god " would seem to have made his appearance in Russia ; for this Christianity he is a " false god ", the apotheosis of man's cardinal sin of pride and self-sufficiency and as such to be fought to the end.

The Christianity which this theology envisages is therefore an all-militant faith, asking and making no terms with the enemies of God, seeing the world to be as full of " false gods ", under other names, now as of old, the gods of religiosity, of man-centred humanism, of nationalism, of communism, of the new Islam. " Why should Christianity be parleying if she believes in a revealed truth ? " asks Barth. " The Christian message," he affirms, " needs to be sounded out very purely, completely detached from those ' religions '."

" Christendom puts in question the divinity of all ' gods ', and at the same time questions the seriousness of all religiosities." This theology takes up on every front the battle which, in Professor Brunner's words, " was fought between Jesus and the Pharisees, between Paul and the Judaisers, between Luther and the Romanists—the battle between God and the selfish will of man, between grace and self-righteousness." It does not lack for foes and it will not treat with its foes.

This vigorous re-vindication of what it deems to be an essential and uncorrupted Christianity is evidently and consciously representative of one of those two main currents of Christian thought the course of which can be traced throughout Christian history, which parted at the Reformation. The Theology of Crisis derives its main inspiration from the faith and doctrine of the great Reformers. From these wells it draws its fundamental principles, and beyond and through them from those of Paul, Augustine, the Gospels and the prophets, doctrine which it believes to be unmuddied by subsequent Protestantism and modernism. That regress is conscious and deliberate. We have it on Barth's own authority that his " ancestral line runs back through Kierkegaard to Luther and Calvin and so to Paul and Jeremiah ". In this line of doctrine he sees an unbroken affirmation of a principle which he regards as essential to a true Christianity, " that man is made to serve God and not God to serve man," a principle which he finds adulterated in what he considers to be the religious humanism of Rome, in the " Thomismus " of St. Thomas Aquinas both in

its pristine and in its modernized forms, and in the whole trend of modern Protestantism. " The negation and loneliness of Jeremiah's life in opposition to that of the kings, princes, people, priests and prophets of Judah—the keen and unremitting opposition of Paul to religion as exemplified in Judaism—Luther's break with the piety of the Middle Ages—Kierkegaard's attack on Christianity ; all are," in his own words, " characteristic of a certain way of speaking of God. . . ." It is the way of the Reformers who claimed in their turn, as Barth claims, that it is the way of real religion.

It would seem, indeed, as though this " way of speaking of God " and the contrasted " way of speaking of God " which is that of Rome with its catholic and sanctified humanism and mechanism of spiritual redemption, denote a deep and essential polarity of thought, such as may be seen in the opposing and interacting poles of Classicism and Romanticism in art and Conservatism and Radicalism in politics. Such a polarity seems to be universal and unescapable in the human scene and a frank recognition of its existence in some degree to justify Barth's realistic refusal of compromise and his addiction to dialectics, and to account for a certain polemic emphasis. For the dialectical method of thought is that which recognizes and accepts this polarity and, with a commendable realism, seeks the truth within this given condition of our thinking. Such a realism, such a recognition and acceptation of this vital polarity, seem more likely to beget wisdom in their play and interplay than attempts at coalition or synthesis which ignore or seek to

disguise it. Indeed, for Barth, such a seeking for synthesis beyond man's scope is but another form of the " hubris ", the vaunting pride and self-confidence of man in which he sees the root of his sin against God. " The synthesis we seek," he has said, " is in God alone and in God alone can we find it." Of synthesis between those poles of thought in religion which the Roman and Reformed theologies represent, these " mighty opposites ", the same may, perhaps, be said with wisdom.

This thought of the essential and beneficial polarity of thought seems, within reasonable limits, a just line of defence of this theology against the frequent charges of paradox and " lack of balance " with which its many critics assail it. If the use of the dialectical method in theology is justified, paradox is to be expected ; if this theology is loyal to its given polarity of thought, its over and under emphasis of these or those aspects of doctrine will find their complement in the theology which proceeds from the opposite pole. Moreover, a doctrine militant against a world of thought in arms must employ rather the loud alarums of war than the moderate pipes of peace to gain its objective. It is the business of the critic to discount those elements of too-strident paradox and over or under emphasis which, in the nature of the case, there is every reason to expect and to decide whether that which remains as constant is worthy of attention. That residuum will be the value of this theology for a comprehensive faith. Its main stress, in an age which seems forgetful of these things, lies upon such realities of religion as the transcendence and wrath

of God, the fact of sin, the call to repentance. It seems beside the mark to complain that the truths of immanence or of the love of God which it believes to have been too long overstressed are not emphasized in a theology which seeks to give to an age of crisis a faith of and for crisis. This theology seeks rather to recall man's attention to facts of faith which he has forgotten than to reiterate truths which it believes to have been thrust forward out of all proportion. In Barth's phrase the function of theology is to be a corrective of faith, and it is as such a corrective that this theology can alone be rightly estimated.

Another line of criticism sees in this theology a " gesture of intellectual impatience " and " a grasping at the practical need for certainty ". Since the need of our time is so patently the need for certitude and the Theology of Crisis offers certitude, this criticism seems both plausible and serious. To be maintained, the onus would appear to be with the critic to show, firstly, that this theology gives proof of such impatience and, secondly, that it offers certitude for the sole sake of certitude. A theology so patient, exhaustive, and thorough in its scrutiny of foundations, so purposed to offer, not the nostrums of some " new theology ", but the old medicine of an ancient faith to an age which ever welcomes " some new thing ", may well be acquitted on the first head, while the fact that, for one dim certitude held precariously by a faith void of all rational anchorage, this theology demands as its price the abandonment of all other certitudes and the most exacting of all standards of life, seems to go far towards rebutting the second charge.

To whatever pole of thought the individual critic may incline, whatever his conclusions may be as to the doctrine which the Theology of Crisis presents, it will be evident that this strange and significant stirring among the " dry bones " of Reformation doctrine is a force to be reckoned with. It has already produced a powerful fermentation among the Protestant churches of Europe and Scandinavia and even at long last of England and a large and rapidly increasing literature. Its invigorating influence upon theological thought is already in evidence, of which the recent publication of the very significant application of what may be styled the Barthian formula to the essential and vital cleavage between " Agape and Eros " and their issue in life and thought, by Dr. Anders Nygren of Sweden, is a token. It seems, too, that the working of this leaven is already to be seen in the active life of religion in such movements as that of the Oxford Groups within whose surprising vitality much of the Barthian thought would seem to be implicit. The seed is evidently taking root both in thought and life.

This theology, moreover, has proved a challenge not only to Protestant but also to Roman Catholic thought. In the uncompromising logic of their respective positions, in their strong affirmation of an Absolute God and revelation against the relativities of our time, and in their common ancestry in the Pauline doctrine, this theology and that of Rome have many points of contact. The Barthian theology has met with a respect from Rome which is rarely accorded to Protestant theology, while Barth has recorded his esteem for the many aspects of Roman doctrine and

worship which seem to him to be both true and Christian. In spite of suggestions to the contrary, however, there seems no likelihood whatever of these extremes meeting. They are utterly opposed upon fundamentals. "I hold the *analogia entis* (the doctrine of likeness between the creature and the Creator) to be the discovery of antichrist," Barth has said, "and consider that on that ground alone one cannot be a Roman Catholic." In the clash of these two re-invigorated theologies, however, rather than in any unreal coalition between them, it seems conceivable that real religion may be reborn in our time.

It is not, however, only in the sphere of theology that this thought is significant. Its message seems peculiarly opportune and apt for a civilization sick with crisis and its appeal is wide-cast. To a generation weary of autonomy and democracy, turning, in its despair, to any form of heteronomy, even when embodied in a Hitler, which offers itself, this thought offers a heteronomy paying allegiance to an authority beyond the reach of that corroding scepticism which doubts the validity of all human authority. To an age turning from an individualism which has been tried and found wanting to sundry unsatisfactory forms of collectivism, this thought presents once more and with a new power the collectivism of Christ. To those who could associate themselves neither with a modernist Protestantism which seemed to offend their integrity of mind nor with a Roman Catholicism which seemed to emasculate their reason, this theology offers a Christianity demanding neither mutilation and yet proffering an absolute authority. To a scientific

thought grown less bigoted than of old and increasingly conscious of the arbitrary nature of its presuppositions and the immateriality of its beginnings and ends, this faith offers presuppositions no less incredible and no more hostile to the scientific spirit than those of materialism. Finally, to the menace and religious fanaticism of Bolshevism this militant Christianity seems ready to stand armed with a faith at least equal to that of its foes in the passes of Christendom.

This is, in any case, a trumpet which sounds " no uncertain note ", a champion of Christianity which throws down no equivocal challenge. Once again it has re-stated the old dilemmas of religion in modern terms with an inexorable " Either-Or ". The philosophy of evolution—or—the faith of the " ingression " of God ; a " breaking-through " upwards from man to God—or—a " breaking-through " downwards from God to man ; the Word of God—or—the word of man ; Christianity—or—secularism ; absolute faith—or—absolute scepticism ; the One God—or—the tribal gods of nationalism, communism or comfort ; a God transcendent and " wholly other " than man—or—the man-God of the various humanisms ; the " resurrection-life "—or—that death to which all natural life is doomed.

Is this one among the many despairing reactions and atavisms of which our modernity has of late been so prodigal—reactions to Rome, to the classic norm, to paganism, to the " dark unconscious ", to the primitive or the past, and here to the Reformation, in search of a power and an authority of which our present grows more and more destitute ? Or is this

a reaffirmation of a reality, a real Christianity, to which we had grown blind, claiming either uttermost allegiance or utter denial. This is the critical question with which the Theology of Crisis confronts our crisis.

This theology offers to our crisis only the " Word of God ", not the word of a Church, not the word of the Bible, but, in Mr. T. S. Eliot's phrase, " the Word without a word," the absolute word of God veiled in the relative word of man. It is an audacious thought, this of a " Word of God " unguaranteed by any human authority, of church or book or man, guaranteed only by a God Who is hidden from men's eyes, comprehensible only by His Spirit dwelling within the soul, by faith only—*sola fide*. Faith in church or book or man is a little thing beside this all-surrendering, all-risking faith, this veritable " leap into the dark ". But where *all* is surrendered, *all* risked, so claims this theology, the All is found. This is the Word, so this theology dares to claim, of which Plato darkly dreamed in a strangely prophetic utterance. " We must take," he said, " the best and most irrefragable of human doctrines, and embark on that, as if it were a raft, and risk the voyage of life . . ." ; it is the wisdom of humanism speaking. But Plato has a wistful addition to make to this last word of human wisdom. " Unless," he adds, " it were possible to find a stronger vessel, some Divine Word, on which we might take our journey more surely and securely." Such a " Divine Word " the Theology of Crisis has the boldness to offer.

III

THE THEOLOGY OF ECLIPSE [1]

PROFESSOR BRUNNER'S weighty book [2] *The Mediator* is, in the main, a rendering of the prophetic utterances of Professor Barth in the terms of a more lucid and "popular" theology. In this exposition theological implications less obvious in the original become salient and freed from the glamour of genius.

That this book pales in comparison with, for example, the fire of Professor Barth's commentary on *The Epistle to the Romans*, seems "as moonlight unto sunlight, as water unto wine" in such a context, cannot fairly be laid to the charge of Professor Brunner. What prophetic fire does not dim when imprisoned in the earthen lamps of systematic theology? If that wild-fire is to be made serviceable to the majority, this diminishing process is unavoidable. It could hardly, in this case, have been undertaken by more pious, devoted, and scholarly hands.

But the process is of peculiar interest and importance in this book, since it seems to have elucidated a certain life-denying trend in the "theology of crisis" less obtrusive in the utterances of Professor Barth. That

[1] The references to the book under review and to Karl Barth's commentary on *The Epistle to the Romans*—marked "R-B."—are, in each case, to the English translations of these works.

[2] *The Mediator*. Emil Brunner (Lutterworth Press).

trend becomes here so marked that the theology expounded in *The Mediator* becomes rather a " theology of eclipse " than of crisis.

For it becomes plain in Professor Brunner's book that, for this type of theology—and it is one which has a peculiar attraction for a dark age—every natural and mundane light is ruthlessly condemned and extinguished and man is left in a darkness of eclipse lit only by occasional flashes of a lightning-light of revelation. For this theology the spirit of man is far from being, in Cudworth's phrase, " the candle of the Lord " ; it is the candle of the devil. It has short shrift at the hands of this Judge Jeffreys judgment. It is brusquely extinguished, and man is thereafter illuminated by divine revelation alone, and by what Professor Barth has called the " wisdom of the night ".

There will be few who can appreciate the macabre grandeur and heroic realism of Professor Barth's vision, who will not readily agree with him that " the Night, too, has its wisdom " and that this is a wisdom of which our night stands desperately in need. Whether there is not also a complementary but not therefore un-Christian wisdom of the day, of light as well as of darkness, of life as well as of death, is the crucial question which this book seems to pose. That the " theology of crisis " contains a real revision of a real aspect of Christianity is hardly now in question. It is all the more urgent that a balanced criticism should consider its implications dispassionately and seek to separate the enduring flame of vision from its enveloping smoke. It is not easy to view the passion of Professor Barth dispassionately ; for the opportunity

of a more calm review of its implications we have to thank Professor Brunner and this book.

The claim is made for this theology that it is based upon " existential " thinking ; it seems just and right, therefore, that a criticism guided by such " existential " thinking should be applied to it. " Existential " thinking, to quote from the Translator's Note to Professor Brunner's book, is " a mode of thought which appeals not merely to the intellect but to the whole personality of the man who accepts it ". And faith, says Professor Brunner elsewhere, is " the totality-act of personality ". In other words, in estimating the value of a " word " we are to ask ourselves how far it seems to " ring real " to the whole and undivided personality. It is a test which may well be applied to this book.

The crucial question of life-denial or life-acceptance is involved in its subject. Professor Brunner has called his book *The Mediator*. But many of the conclusions at which he arrives appear to contradict the conception of " mediation " with which he begins. For to mediate is to form a link between two disparate realities. But what mediation is possible between that which is real and that which is unreal, between that which really exists and that which only seems to exist, or is doomed to immediate extinction ? The " Mediation " which Professor Brunner contemplates is the most momentous of all mediations, the mediation between God and man. Yet it would appear that, for this type of theology, the life of man is wholly worthless, unreal, and doomed, fit only for some cosmic incinerator ; that only when the life of man

is a " void " or a " vacuum " can this Mediation occur.

That this conception of the necessity of making of human life a " void ", that is, it would seem, of utterly mortifying, annihilating, and destroying it, is not alien to the sources of this theology a few quotations from Professor Barth will suffice to show. The community of the Church is, for him, " the void in which the Gospel communicates itself " (R-B., p. 36). In the " apostle " a " void becomes visible " (R-B., p. 33). " Genuine faith is a void " (R-B., p. 88). " The new man seems no more than a void " (R-B., p. 149). The conception seems uncommonly like a religious attempt at making a desert and calling it peace.

This " Mediation " of which Professor Brunner tells, therefore, is the establishment of a link between that which is and that which is not, or at least that which must be made " void " before the link can be established. Then this would seem to be rather, as it were, a theological version of the miracle of the Indian rope trick than " mediation " in the proper meaning of the term. The " Mediation " of which Professor Brunner has so much to say appears to be, *au fond*, not mediation at all, but annihilation followed by recreation, and the Christ Whom he envisages not a " Mediator " but primarily a Destroyer and secondarily a Creator of a " wholly new and other life ". The concept of a real mediation seems still to elude these 619 pages of patient pursuit.

The metaphor of bridging an abyss is employed ; it is one which seems aptly to fit the facts of our human

state. But we are asked here to conceive of a bridge of which one pier is a " void " and, again, of a relinked chain of which one-half is a " vacuum ". This may be miracle, but it can hardly be called mediation. It seems clear that this theology has not yet attained to any valid concept of mediation and its inability to do so, in spite of the skill and immense labour of Professor Brunner, seems a very significant fact.

For, in that failure, the radical weakness of this doctrine is suggested. It involves life-denial. For in the life of man, of nature, and of the world is, as it were, but a doomed and burning Troy, and Christ (if one may, without irreverence, employ such an analogy) a celestial Aeneas rescuing a remnant from the flames for immediate export elsewhere. The fitness of such an analogy, indeed, leaps to the mind on a reading of the Romans Commentary.

Tum vero omne mihi visum considere in ignis
Ilium et ex imo verti Neptunia Troia.

The city of Mansoul is in flames ; Troy is burning. It is the burden of this prophecy. Therefore the Greeks, the Hellenists, the school of life and light in theology are for ever accursed.

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

It is with such an abhorrent fear that Professor Brunner waves aside all " modern " thought as the " fatal endeavour to be modern and Christian at the same time " (p. 89), " the unedifying story of an impossible compromise " (p. 56). The knot of reality is a Gordian knot ; only some magic blade, some trenchant " either . . . or " formula, can sever it.

That formula is everywhere in evidence. *Either* the "fact of Christ" is "unique and absolute, *or* it is only relative"; *either* it "transcends history" *or* it is "something within the sphere of history" (p. 86); *either* "we must admit that evil is natural and . . . not a moral fact at all, *or* . . . it is a moral factor and . . . inexplicable" (p. 124); *either* "Autonomy, the principle of immanence", *or* "the real communication of the Logos" (p. 211). *Either*, to revert to Barth's succinct statement of the formula, the "Word of God" *or* the "word of man".

The desperate reliance upon this clean-cleavage formula seems to lead inevitably to an unreal schism of life; the fact that it leads to a denial of the life of this world seems clear. We are told that the life of faith is "not positive, in its essence it is negative" (p. 512), that "the wood of this world is unfit for the building of what is new" (p. 512), that Christ "stands in the world as the One Who endures and tolerates it" (p. 513). The only reality that matters is "wholly other"; the only history of importance is "super-history, eschatological history" (p. 583); the only knowledge of any real value is "faith knowledge". "History, in the human sense, is a matter of indifference for faith. It is flesh" (p. 309). "Jesus," we are told, "did not take any interest in intermediate conditions" (p. 420).

Thus Reality, the Reality of God, is relegated to a "fourth dimension" where "super-history", "faith-knowledge", the "new man", are, incidentally, immune from all mere three-dimensional attack. Here, in this dimension, is the new "Rome" of these

fugitive Trojans, in the " dimension of revelation ", (p. 561) whence the advent of Christ was " a breaking-through out of another dimension into the sphere of history " (p. 246).

Except for this fleeting visitation of Christ into this mundane dimension which He can but " endure and tolerate ", a visitation which, it seems to be suggested, was as abbreviated as the divine purpose would permit, there is no real contact between this " other ", " wholly other ", dimension and our own. There is thus a clean " break in the world-order " (p. 485), an unbridgeable abyss between the old life and the new, between knowledge and faith, between history and " super-history ", between man and God. This fourth-dimensional Reality is not only other ; it is " wholly other " than our damned three-dimensional sphere. This conception, when denuded, as in this book, of the prophetic nimbus with which Professor Barth surrounded it, seems something very other than the full Christian doctrine of the Incarnation. This theology may affirm and fortify the " new life ", this fourth-dimensional life beyond death ; it seems clear that it denies the life we live.

Such a creed is not without its comfort. It is humiliating enough indeed ; but most of us to-day would rather be humiliated than insecure, and this drastic formula carves out a comfortably neat and clean-cut ethic and theology. In effect it says, as has so often been said before—Deny this life and win the life of the Kingdom. Deny this world and migrate to a " wholly other " world. Such a faith is no new version of the Christian gospel and it has never lacked

fanatical followers. It is a four-square doctrine, upon which one knows well where one stands, and that, in so shifting a world as ours, is a comfortable, if a lowly stance. Such " Romes " beyond our stormy seas of speculation have ever had their lure for the tired hearts of men, and this fourth-dimensional Barthian " Rome " has much in common with the papal Rome. Its lure is very similar and there are many who, weary of " the wandering fields of barren foam ", will welcome such a Lotus-isle of surety, such an " island-home ", " far beyond the waves " of dubiety, and sighingly assent that—*Hic amor, haec patria est.*

Such logical lucidities are alluring enough to tired minds ; their satisfaction of that " whole personality " to which this theology makes its appeal is perhaps less sure. Certainly these " root and branch " doctrines are always a little suspect to the English temperament, a temperament the reaction of which to life, for all the defects of its qualities, is yet a peculiarly " whole " reaction, a composite " practical " judgment in which feeling, experience, reason, instinct, and intuition combine and no one faculty predominates unduly, in fact, very much that " existential " judgment which this theology desiderates. It seems therefore not a little significant that in England this logic should have been generally taken " with a pinch of salt ". When tested against such a composite, " whole," " existential " judgment this " either . . . or " blade-edge seems to turn against the now tough, now yielding stuff of reality. The attractive simplicity of this *either* " the word of God " *or* " the word of man " formula

seems an over-simplification which, like all over-simplifications in life, leads right on to impossibly complex conclusions.

That such a reaction of the " whole " temperament to this doctrine is not without foundation, a calm consideration of its actual basis would seem to corroborate. For when one probes down to the quick of this life-denying faith, one arrives, as does all theological thought in the final issue, at the root problem of the " point of contact ", the *imago dei*, the *analogia entis*. And just here it will be found that this theology grows confused and contradictory.

For assuming that this " faith-knowledge ", this " revelation-truth " is wholly " given ", the question remains—what is it in man which is able to recognize and to receive it? Barth with no, and Brunner with little, compromise stoutly affirm that this very ability to recognize and receive is also God-given and not in any degree man-engendered. But how do they know that it is God-given? What is it which affirms this still more remote truth or " word " when it hears or perceives it? For if one says that this faculty of apprehension is itself not human at all but God-given, one is only driven a stage further back to ask what apprehension it is in us which knows that it is thus God-given, and so on *ad infinitum*. In the end there is always some faculty within man which cannot only apprehend truth, but also judge it to be true, however slight and limited that apprehension and judgment may be.

Therefore, in spite of Professors Brunner and Barth, there seems always to remain some eye of the soul

which can be " constrained " by the truth, which can recognize, however dimly, God and His Truth when it encounters them, and when these theologians castigate such pronouncements as that of Dean Inge, that " at the core of our personality is a spark lighted at the altar of God ", with such vehemence, they are, it would seem, at the same time castigating that very faculty of apprehension and judgment by the light of which they find such " findings " false.

We cannot, in fact, get beyond that initial, basic human " judgment " and " apprehension ". He who asserts that there is no such thing, or that it is some divine meteorite fallen into a human " void ", is, at that very moment, also tacitly asserting that there is in him a valid faculty which knows or judges that it is so.

But if, however remote, however infinitesimal, however distorted, the apprehension, there is something in man which can apprehend the divine and the true, there must be in him some faculty, some likeness to the divine which can make that apprehension and judge it to be true, a " point of contact " which is also an *analogia entis*. For how could that apprehend the divine or the true which did not partake of the divine and the true? Can seed germinate in a soil which has not within it vitalizing powers not alien but akin to that of the seed which falls upon it?

But, for Professor Brunner, this divine truth " enters the arena as an alien force " (p. 107), " life depends wholly on grace " (p. 610). " God must do everything " (p. 299), and, for Professor Barth, " the truth . . . is not accessible to our perception " (R-B., p. 98),

" faith is, as it were, creative of divinity " (R-B., p. 143).

But it is to be noted that these trenchant pronouncements are not consistently maintained. On this ultimate and vital issue there is a significant confusion of tongues. " The Will of God," says Professor Brunner elsewhere, " is made known to the human will " (p. 589) ; " this word is addressed to one who, although he no longer possesses the word, when the word is once more given to him is able to recognize it as the original word " (p. 151) ; " reason is not without a knowledge of God " (p. 151) ; " even outside the Christian revelation of the Bible man is not without God nor without truth " (p. 414) ; " so long as there is a trace of humanity left in a man there also some ray of light from the Divine Image is still visible in him " (p. 493) ; man is " one whose deepest self is at bottom identical with the divine " (p. 608). Similarly Professor Barth's other voice speaks of " that thing of soul and sense which we call faith " (R-B., p. 63) ; " as a tumbler sings when it is touched so we and our world are touched in faith by the Spirit of God," he tells us (R-B., p. 157) ; " religion is the ability of men to receive and to retain an impress of God's revelation " (R-B., p. 183) ; " we become aware of the impetuous roaring of heaven " (R-B., p. 272).

Thus this void or vacuum which man is or should be, for which God is " an alien force " and " must do everything ", to whose perception truth is not accessible, yet is able to recognize the word and has memory of the " original word " ; is " not without knowledge of God ", " nor without truth ", nor without a " ray

of light ", in his " deepest self " is " identical with God ", can " sing " in response to the divine touch ; has ability to " receive " and " retain " and " become aware ". In such a juxtaposition of conflicting statements the fundamental confusion of thought seems to become evident.

This theology buttresses what thus seems to be a radically unsound architecture with the Calvinistic conception of " autopistis ". This " revelation-truth ", they say, is " autopistic ", that is, it conveys its own confirmation ; it corroborates itself. At first hearing this seems to ring very real, for we know well enough how certain " words " do seem in fact to prove themselves. They seem manifestly true and beyond argument, as though indeed they were " autopistic ". But to stay at that point is to evade the real problem. For again we come to the question of what it is in us which accepts this self-testimony, which knows, beyond argument, that this or that is a true word. For that knowledge, however little reason may seem to enter into it, is none the less still a judgment of the " whole personality ". If the process of apprehension of truth were indeed wholly and solely autopistic, the " word " could convey its " pistis " no further than itself.

If this conception of " autopistis " is carefully examined—and so much is balanced upon this slender point that it is imperative that it should be examined—it seems really to imply, not that man is wholly passive to such truth, but that the nature of his response to it, his acceptance, his judgment of it, is something other than mere intellectual assent. It is, in fact, an immediate, unhesitating, judgment of the whole man

under the " constraint of the word ", as distinct from the slow, tentative, and dubious judgment of the intellect. It is judgment made for and evoked by life, rather than judgment made for and by thought alone. It is, in fact, " existential " judgment. But it is still judgment and it is still man, or some element of the divine in him, which forms that judgment.

Here then, upon this problem variously posed as the " point of contact ", the *imago dei*, the *analogia entis*, " *autopistis*," we seem to come down to bed-rock, and here, it seems, that the majority of Christians must part company with this theology. For when the matter is thought and felt out, it seems impossible to maintain this drastic elimination of all human mediation from the initial act of apprehension of God. It is indeed quite possible to say—it is undoubtedly the Christian faith—that the " Word " is the only Mediator between God and man, but this fact does not necessarily rule out a subordinate mediation between the human soul and that " Word ", for the only possible or conceivable " mediation " between the " Word " and the human consciousness must in the end dwell in that consciousness. This " point of contact " in the soul is not, therefore, merely a *tabula rasa*, a blank and dead surface for the writing of the Holy Ghost. That *tabula* must, no doubt, be made blank from sophistication and clean from all pride of possession before it can receive that Word. But there is that within its substance which can conceive and germinate that holy seed.

The analogy of the soil or of feminine conception would seem, indeed, to be a far more apposite and

significant one—that which receives the seed of life with an utter passivity, which is yet not a lifeless but a vital and frequent passivity, able to germinate that seed into a new organism of life. That analogy has never, perhaps, been as fully developed as it might be in this connection, but, without attempting to develop it further here, it seems at least clear that it fits the reality of this apprehension far more closely than the analogy of a lifeless substance, since it is an analogy from life to life.

But it is as a lifeless substance that this theology seems to conceive of the soul in the fact of faith, containing no life to respond to the Life poured out upon it in this impact of the Divine Word, or, if it be living, to be deprived of all life of its own before that Life can deal with it. And here we seem to detect its fundamental flaw. For this, so our " existential " thought affirms, is not the way of life, and, if it were, then the manifestation of the Life and Love of God recorded in the New Testament is in absolute opposition to it.

We arrive, then, at what seems to be the only possible Christian conclusion upon this matter, that, in this act of apprehension, there is, contrary to at least some of the conflicting findings of this theology, life, and a germinating life at that. God does not, according to the Christian revelation of Him, first kill the soul in order to remake the soul. He beats down, with the terrible and tender force of His searching passion, all that resistance which prevents His Word from reaching that " ground of the soul " where it can take root and live ; He slays the unreal in us in order to

make alive that which is real. There is in man, then, not only a " soil " able to receive the seed but properties in that soil able to germinate the seed when it has been given.

The initial act of apprehension is not, therefore, also the final act, and therefore the idea of " continuity " and development cannot be condemned as completely as this theology demands. If it were the final act, that seed of the Word could never come to birth or to fruition. It is undubitably true, for any real Christianity, that, save for the continuing grace and fostering love of God, that faith, that " Word ", that seed, must die, that it is utterly dependent upon that grace, just as the seed in the soil or the embryo in the womb must die if unprotected and unnourished. But it seems no more true to say that the soul has no further part in that birth, has but to present a dead passivity, than it is to say that the earth has no more to do than submit when the seed is sown or the mother no pains or care to give after conception. Again, this seems most evidently neither the way of life nor the way of that God Whom Jesus revealed.

This conception of the primary and fundamental apprehension of God and truth by man and of the nature of " autopistis ", which we have found fallacious and un-Christian, is of the utmost moment since upon that conception rests the whole " root and branch " offensive of this theology against all that it condemns as " humanism ". When that axiom is moderated it would seem that the indiscriminate fury of this attack must also be moderated. For, in the light of

what seems to be the more truly Christian and apostolic conception of " autopistis ", the essential difference between Christian and non-Christian knowledge becomes, not, as the theologians of crisis seem to suggest, that between judgment and what is not judgment but passive receptivity, but, in the first place, between two different species of judgment, and, in the second, between two different reactions in life to that judgment.

The first point, that both species of judgment, " autopistic " or otherwise, are still judgment and human judgment at that, seems unavoidable, and with that conclusion the dictum of Professor Brunner that " God must do everything " falls to the ground. The second point seems to mark the real difference between Christianity and the un-Christian humanism which this theology so stoutly and justifiably assails. For, in the intellectual judgments of the latter type of humanism, the intellect does not make the judgment and then abdicate the judgment-seat to a truth seen to be greater than itself. On the contrary, it continues to judge ; the truth thus received does not thereafter assume the sovereignty of the soul which apprehends it ; it remains still subordinate and subject to the further findings of the human reason. This is, it would seem, that pagan humanism which Barth and Brunner condemn rightly, it must be believed by Christians, although, as we have tried to demonstrate, upon wrong grounds.

For, in the apprehensions or judgments of " faith " in the Christian sense, the reaction to such primary apprehensions is very different. Here the " word "

or truth which has been apprehended, being apprehended and judged true, assumes the sovereignty of the soul, and reason and all other faculties of the soul thereafter own themselves subject to that " word " which they have apprehended. In the former type of judgment man finds his own truth ; in the latter he finds Truth (or Truth finds him—since he is able to be found the difference seems immaterial to the issue of the moment) and owns that Truth as the Lord of his life. The Christian recognizes that which is initially apprehended or judged by himself, or which confronts him, as divine and, as such, he submits himself wholly to its direction ; the humanist regards such findings as the " treasure trove " of his omnipotent mind and remains the lord and owner of them. The Christian bows to a Reality greater than himself ; the humanist will not recognize that superiority and therefore will not bow to anything or anyone but himself.

But such a conclusion, although the whirlwind attack upon modernism and humanism of this arrogant type remains justified, seems to draw the fangs from that sweeping and immoderate condemnation which this type of theology metes out to every kind of " modernism " or " humanism " which, in any degree, professes the " idea of continuity ". For the idea of continuity, although subject to revelation, is thereby readmitted. For, if that totality of man's faculties which is the human soul is able to know and receive God when it encounters Him, by what logic is the complete denial and rejection of all those faculties held to be the right sequel to that apprehension ?

Why should an arbitrary " clean break " be made at this point ? It can only be made good if the doctrine of the complete and dead passivity of the soul in the initial apprehension of God can be made good. It would seem that it is for this reason, and owing to a well-justified but unbalanced fear of a prevalent pagan type of humanism, that the attempt, confused because unconvinced and unconvincing, is made by this theology to posit as an axiom this dead passivity of the soul.

In point of fact, as has been seen, no such " break " can really be made ; to extirpate " the idea of continuity " is to extirpate life from religion. The soul which can vitally receive God can continue to a continually fuller and more vital conception of Him, a process which all history and experience of religion corroborates. Therefore the wholesale excommunication of the " idea of continuity " which this book proposes cannot be maintained. There is a continuity of human and religious development, as there is a human culture, not at variance, so long as it is subject to the sovereignty of God, with the Christianity of Christ.

The real choice, therefore, would seem to be, not between Christianity and all humanism of every complexion, as Professor Brunner proposes, but between a true Christian, God-centred, and God-ruled humanism, and a false, pagan, and man-ruled humanism. That post-Renaissance humanism has become increasingly of the latter kind may still justify the bulk of the invective which this theology launches against it ; it does not justify an indiscriminate

condemnation of all humanism. Here, too, this book raises an issue of the most vital importance for our time.

It follows, further, from the same conclusion, that the wholesale life-denial doctrine which this book seems to reveal, is equally untenable. That our human life, that the life of the world and our age, is damnable enough, no Christian dare deny. But if, all too conscious of that radical and all-pervasive evil, we pass to the conclusion that all natural and human life is wholly and inherently evil, it seems that we go very far beyond any fundamental premise valid for Christian or any " existential " thought. A humanity which can conceive God is not " wholly " evil. The life of man is not in itself damnable ; it is damnable because and in so far as it is sundered from that Life of life which is God and is at variance with that Life.

Such has always been the Christian faith. Barthian, Calvinist, Augustinian attempts to improve upon this onus of damnation, to go one better in an acknowledgment of evil already sufficiently horrifying, seems to saviour of a masochism born of fear. If we do not declare that there is no good thing at all in man, so this trend of thought seems to run away with bit in teeth, we run the impossible risk of declaring, with the " delicate-minded disciples of Rousseau ", that man is naturally good. And that must not be. From that fear springs the terrible and debasing logic of the more extreme forms of this type of theology. It is a perennial fear and it issues, ever afresh, in a perennial theology of this kind. It is always particularly

epidemic in an age such as our own, ridden by the fear-complex.

But when it is closely scrutinized, this " fearful faith " seems consonant neither with Christianity nor with the mind of Christ, nor, as we have tried to demonstrate anew, to be based ultimately on any " existentially " tenable logic of life. For Christ, for Christianity, the natural life is not in itself damnable. To pronounce it so is to blaspheme the God who created it. It is damnable in so far—and it is very far—as it is at odds with that primal, ultimate deep life of God, and it is at odds so radically that it needs God Himself to link up the broken chain in a real mediation. But it is glorious in so far as, by the grace of God through the mediation of Christ, it can return to that greater life and recover that greater original rhythm of its being. Man is not a *massa perditionis* ; his heart is abominably evil, but there is within his being a golden grain of glory.

It follows, then, if this life-denial axiom be abandoned, that it is for man to " deny " his corrupted, egocentric life, but to affirm that fundamental, deep-buried soul-life which he has from God and which, at the touch of God's finger, may spring to life again within him. The release from this dismal doctrine seems to lead to a Christianity for which there is a " wisdom of the Day " of God's Light and Love as well as that " wisdom of the Night " of His Wrath, however little it may be possible to perceive it in a " Day of Wrath ".

The conclusion is a vital one, as well for Christian ethics as for Christian theology, for if the initial

perception of God proceeded through, was mediated (in spite of Professor Brunner) by man's latent but not wholly lost *imago dei* rekindled by the flame of God in man's inmost soul, the growth and development of the perception will continue to be so mediated. Such a conviction must issue in a strenuous, heroic, and humble rather than a supine, craven, and self-satisfied Christian living. Faith will continue to be something received only through a labour and agony of soul which is itself a mortification, an agony relative to the being and conditions of the believer. The knowledge, the insight, the fire of faith does indeed, we must believe—and all religious realism affirms it—fall like manna from God ; the form of faith, the expression of faith in life, is for our human fashioning and subject ever to our human fallibility.

Such is the faith which seems to ensue from the alternative and, we believe, true conception of the *analogia entis* which we have opposed to that of this theology—a theology of light and life for a theology of eclipse and death. It is a faith, moreover, which would seem to be that of the majority of Christians throughout the ages, its antitype more often that of a masochistic minority.

The criticism which has here been outlined may seem to lack the quality of appreciation and even of a balanced justice towards a theology which has done and is doing so much to galvanize modern Christianity. The omission is due, not to lack of appreciation, but of space. Appreciation has not been lacking ; a cogent criticism seems overdue. The qualities of this theology are so conspicuous that it is all the more

urgent that its defects should not be overlooked. The value of Professor Brunner's book, whether or not it be held to offer an acceptable doctrine of Mediation, may be gauged by the challenge which it conveys and the protest which it provokes.

IV

TRANSCENDENCE

(*God Transcendent.* Karl Heim. Nisbet, 1935. *Spirit and Truth.* Karl Heim. Lutterworth Press, 1935.)

In the inevitable process of our life, the flux of faith presently sets into formula, the spate of prophecy into systematic theology and priestly codes. Something of the same process seems to be at work upon the oracular utterances of Karl Barth at the hands of his ἔπιγονοι such as Professors Emil Brunner and Karl Heim. But where the former seems still to be " among the prophets ", the approach of the latter is suggestive rather of the codifier and the theologian.

In the work of such epigonous students, the post-War repudiation of the " idea of progress " and the vital, if sometimes incoherent, reaction from nineteenth century immanentism and evolutionism, which found voice in the lightning-lit but fuliginous prophecy of Karl Barth, with his " trumpet-call " of divine transcendence, falls indeed below the Barthian sublimity, but also passes beyond the Barthian obscurity, from prophecy to philosophy, from poetry to prose. The dominant theme of Barth's thought is that of the transcendence of God ; in his *God Transcendent* Professor Heim offers a rationale of Barth's divinings ; in his *Spirit and Truth* he pursues their major implications for life.

The importance for modern theology and religion of both attempts can hardly be exaggerated. That the problem of divine transcendence, which Barth propounds and Heim expounds, and its co-ordination with the reality of immanence which has been the main contribution to our consciousness of post-Kantian thought, is the crucial problem for modern religion is becoming increasingly apparent and recognized.

Such was the finding of Professor Clement Webb in his recent judicial survey of *Religious Thought in England from 1850*. He concludes there that it is the prime task of the theology of the future " to do equal justice alike to the self-existent Reality apart from which what is called ' religious experience ' is no revelation of God and to the religious experience apart from which the self-existent Reality must remain for ever unrevealed " [1] ; or, in other words, to co-ordinate the findings of both the immanent and the transcendent approaches to reality.

It is no less clear that this problem of the nature, correspondence, and co-ordination of immanent and transcendent reality is the crucial problem, not only for religion, but also for life to-day. For the problem of immanence and transcendence in theology is that of materialism and idealism, of monism and dualism, in philosophy, and that of secularism and sacerdotalism in life.

Life is the heir of thought. What one generation thinks the next will act ; it is not the peculiarity of our own time that our " fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge ".

[1] Page 79.

The immanentism against which philosophy is now in reaction has to-day fructified in such avowedly monistic, materialistic, and secularist polities as those of contemporary Russia, Italy, and Germany. Such fruit, revealing the real nature of the thought which begot it, is to be seen in twentieth century Russia where, in the words of Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb,[1] " the Worship of God is replaced by the Service of Man," and there would seem to be no power on earth which can check the logical further fruition of the pure doctrine of immanentism in such a " Brave New World " as Mr. Aldous Huxley has so ironically and remorselessly foretold.

On the other hand, the reaction from immanentism, the fruit of which thus grows grossly evident, leads to an intransigent " other-worldliness " in the Roman Church and its congeners in England, or in the exaggerated " *totaliter aliter* " transcendentalism of the extreme Barthian school. If, for the one, " the Worship of God is replaced by the Service of Man," for the other, the service of man tends to be replaced by the worship of God.

In a world in arms the conflict and contradiction between these opposing poles of thought tends to become increasingly exacerbated. Such a marshalling of the hosts can but lead to war ; only by means of some re-co-ordination of their battle-cries of immanence and transcendence can peace be ensued. But— " Blessed are the peace-makers," in thought as in life.

There are, however, not wanting those of a mediating

[1] *Soviet Communism*, p. 113.

mind, who, unfrenzied by such fanaticisms, hold fast to the sense, however little they may rationalize it, that the reality neither of the immanentists nor of the transcendentalists contains the whole of Reality, that these contrasted intimations of reality are, not so much, *sub specie aeternitatis*, contradictory as waiting for a fuller co-ordination. There are still very many for whom neither Moscow nor Rome are the ultimate " City of the Soul " of the complete and co-ordinated spirit of man.

Such a mediating mood has ever been at home in England, where the full impact of continental movements, when at length it finds our shores, tends to lose its first fury. It is not less so in this regard in a country where, for fifteen years, the " trumpet-call " of Barth was not even translated. It seems true to the type of this English temper of mind that in England to-day the call for some " Via Media " between the extremes of immanentism and transcendentalism, some principle of polarity between them, should be most vocal and, perhaps, most conscious where least coherent. It seems, then, that a pacifying and co-ordinating theology is that to which an English Christianity is peculiarly called, and Professor Heim's prolegomena to such a theology are the more worthy of our attention.

The problem is plainly no new one. For the deepest and richest religious sense, the Reality which Religion worships and serves is both immanent and transcendent in its epiphany. The " Kingdom of God " is both " within " and yet " not of this world ". It is the abiding paradox of all full religious experience.

In what sense is it true, can it be true, that God is a

God Who speaks from a " thick darkness " [1] and yet a " God who will walk among you ",[2] a God whose ways and thoughts are higher than our ways and thoughts " as the heavens are higher than the earth " [3] and yet a God Who " pitieth his children like a father ",[4] a God Who " was made flesh ",[5] and yet Who " dwelleth not in temples made with hands ",[6] a God Who, for Professor Barth, is " pure negation " and " wholly other ",[7] and yet, for Professor Mac-Murray, " is the reality of the temporal *in the temporal* . . . not another reality," [8] a God Who, for Tennyson, is " closer than breathing and nearer than hands or feet ",[9] and yet, for Gerard Manley Hopkins—

" . . . . master of the tides,
Of the Yore-flood, of the year's fall,
The recurb and recovery of the gulf's sides,
The girth of it and the wharf of it and the wall " ? [10]

So ancient and so modern, so perennial, is this problem !

Between such antipodes of religious faith and feeling flickers the spirit of man and the flame of religious faith from age to age ; the " existential judgment " and the mediating type of mind sense a certain " *vraie vérité* " in each. Where is the formula of thought and theology which can wed these contraries for our time ? The call for such a re-co-ordination seems the " S.O.S." of the distressed ship of our civilization to-day.

Although it is upon some such re-co-ordination that

[1] Ex. xx, 21.
[2] Lev. xxvi, 12.
[3] Is. lv, 9.
[4] Ps. ciii.
[5] Jn. i, 14.
[6] Acts vii, 48.
[7] *Ep. to the Romans*, p. 141.
[8] *Creative Society*, p. 93.
[9] Higher Pantheism.
[10] The Wreck of the Deutschland.

our peace and the very future of religion depends, the immediate task would seem to be rather that of estimating the residual and constant value of the Barthian reaffirmation of a transcendent Reality. For only by a well-founded faith in such a transcendent Reality can the mad monism of our age be corrected. The reality which the immanentist view reveals is not seriously in dispute to-day; the reality of transcendence waits to be re-established.

It is this primary task which Professor Heim essays; he lays his axe to the root of the problem in his preface. "What is the truth about the transcendence of God," [1] he asks, and "How is this transcendence different from any transcendence within the sphere of this world?" Is there, after all, that which the spirit of the age denies, "a Reality . . . transcending the whole order of things in which we live?" [2] "How is it that we, who live in the Copernican age, we, for whom the world has lost its centre and its bounds, can still hold to the idea of the Transcendent?" [3] In other words, how can the twentieth century believe in God?

Upon this conception of Divine Transcendence all real religion rests; yet it is an idea which "has become impossible for countless people". [4] If we abandon that conception and faith, we abandon the world to "the chance interplay of its own immanent forces" [5]; if we hold to it, we must restate it in post-Copernican terms.

[1] *G.T.*, p. xviii.
[2] id., p. 9.
[3] id., p. 38.
[4] id., p. 35.
[5] *G.T.*, p. 35.

It is this situation which Professor Heim acutely diagnoses and this radical problem which he confronts with fortitude. He deploys the troops of his theology on a new front, seeking for the mortal type of the transcendence which he defends, not in physics but in psychology, and attacks the problem, no longer with the trumpeting "*ipse dixit*" of prophecy, but with, for the most part, a quiet and careful pursuit of the inductive method.

Transcendence implies boundary, and Professor Heim delimits his problem by differentiating between the "boundary of content" [1] dividing "quantitatively limited magnitudes within a space" and the "boundary of dimension" which divides "two infinitudes",[2] "two infinities which meet, two magnitudes which have neither beginning nor end", each of which is a "separate and infinite manifold".

In evidence that such a "boundary of dimension", such "co-existence of spaces", are facts of existential experience he instances, in particular, the "whole paradoxical secret of the co-existence of spaces" [3] revealed in the extraordinary fact that a thing may have several sides, which can be regarded only by passing from one to another, as the spectator moves around, and the fact that the three-fold world of consciousness, with its dimensions of "I", "Thou", and "It", is divided by boundaries, not of content (since they evidently co-exist) but of dimension.

The fact is of prime importance for the problem and is the foundation-stone of Professor Heim's new apologetic for transcendent reality. For the I-world

[1] id., p. 67. [2] id., p. 58. [3] id., p. 65.

is an " unbroken, self-contained continuum " [1]; the fact is no less true of the world of another than of our own consciousness-world. Yet " it is impossible to indicate any boundary at which my world ends and yours begins ".[2] The boundary between them is, firstly, dimensional, and secondly, " will permit of description only in paradox." [3]

This phenomenon, the significance of which, when evidenced, is inescapable, every man knows, not by any process of logic but rather by an " existential judgment ", the validity of which becomes therefore of fundamental importance. In a letter quoted by the editor, Professor Heim attempts to define what he means by " existential ". " A proposition or truth " (he writes) " is said to be *existential* when I cannot apprehend it or assent to it from the standpoint of a mere spectator, but only on the ground of my total existence." [4]

It seems evident that an act of faith in the validity of such " existential " judgments is integral for this theology.

But the type of " intra-mundane transcendence " instanced in this relation between the " I " and the " Thou " worlds of consciousness contains a further significance for religious thought in that the mutual recognition of such " infinite manifolds " implies a " place of meeting ". Otherwise how were it possible for " a second infinitude to manifest itself within the first " ? [5] Upon examination it is seen that this

[1] *G.T.*, p. 86.
[2] id., p. 75.
[3] id., p. 87.
[4] *G.T.*, p. 75, note.
[5] id., p. 95.

" place of meeting " is the " Word " by means of which alone " the Other and his consciousness-world is disclosed to me ".[1]

Moreover, that " Word " of revelation " can only take place between two persons when they are in action ".[2] . . . " The Word breaks the barrier of silent action." Thus contact between two such consciousness-worlds requires a " Word ", and a " Word " requires action and is born of decision. Thus the " theology of crisis ", with its insistence upon the sacramental value of the Word and the religious significance of " crisis " or decision, is fortified with a new relevance to our common " existential " experience.

" For my consciousness, You are transcendent. Nevertheless I have knowledge of You." That knowledge is mediated by a " Word " and that " Word " is begotten of and in action and decision. Such is the fundamental and, if the " existential judgment " be accepted, the undeniable fact upon which the new concept of transcendence rests. Here, for the faith which accepts that premise, is the type of that extra-mundane transcendence which religion affirms. Here, it seems, we have the rudiments of a new " Analogy of Religion " conforming to the cosmology of our time.

The type of divine transcendence is thus, for this theology, no longer a spatial or physical but a psychological transcendence or " otherness ", and the whole issue is removed from a thought-world in which it no longer makes sense. In a Copernican universe we

[1] id., p. 168. [2] id., p. 170.

can no longer think of God as " wholly other " in any spatial sense ; we can conceive of Him as at least no less " other " than our neighbour without violating our knowledge of life. On the contrary such a concept of transcendence is wholly within our psychological experience and one which every man can appreciate for himself as readily as, in an earlier age, every man could appreciate the fact that the heavens transcended the earth. Transcendence, expressed in these terms, is no longer an impossible conception ; armed with this analogy, the theologian need no longer fight for his faith with weapons defunct or condemned.

Theology is, in fact, once more furnished with a temporal type of transcendence which remains real, and illuminates much of contemporary thought and feeling with a potentially Christian significance. In the light of this correspondence with the conditions of our being, such sayings as that of Professor Whitehead that peace involves " a grasp of infinitude, an appeal beyond boundaries " [1] or that of the non-Christian mystic " AE " of a " super-structure which rises, a tower of heaven, above the depths where we move ",[2] seem to echo the analogy which Professor Heim has elaborated.

Przywara has recently defined divine transcendence as " lying beyond consciousness ".[3] Just so the " I "-consciousness lies beyond the " Thou "-consciousness. The pertinence of the analogy is plain. Why not, then, a divine transcendence which, in its turn, lies beyond both " I " and " Thou " and the entire

[1] *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 367. [2] *The Candle of Vision*, p. 38.
[3] *Polarity*, p. 5.

consciousness of our human world? And if, in the human "word" which reveals a new world to the "I", contact between two worlds is established, why should not the "wholly other" world of the "Kingdom of God" have been revealed, just so, in the "Word" Which was Christ?

Such, in broadest outline, is the fundamental apologetic of Heim for the prophetic affirmation of divine transcendence of Barth. The majestic pyramid of that faith is thus based upon, in the words of St. Augustine, "*ista et usitata et abdita*" [1] of our common experience. Its appeal is made to and its type is taken from, not physical but psychological experience, and is consonant, not with a Newtonian but with an Einsteinian cosmology.

The mystery and paradox of Christianity are again conceivable for the modern mind when considered from this aspect. Whether or not they are credible is evidently contingent upon certain postulates which Professor Heim legitimately assumes, but which it will be for the theology of the future to examine.

In the first place we have to ask ourselves whether the "existential judgment" which affirms both the existence and the transcendence of such intra-mundane infinitudes as the "I" and the "Thou" worlds of consciousness is a judgment valid for such an issue. And, in the second place, we must inquire whether the transference of the type of transcendence which such a judgment affirms in the intra-mundane sphere can justifiably be made to an extra-mundane sphere by a valid analogy.

[1] *Confessions*, XI, xxii.

Moreover, while Professor Heim is content to assume that the " place of meeting " between such consciousness-worlds in the " Word " of human speech is a valid analogy for the Logos-doctrine of Christianity, this again involves an act of faith ; failing other support for such an analogy, such a " Word " is not necessarily or in itself a proof of the reality of the incarnate Christ. The analogy is equally applicable to a " Wisdom "-faith or Gnosticism for which the " Word " has never finally or fully been " made flesh ".

Such strictures are made only to mark the evident fact that the work of Professor Heim does not pretend to cover the ground of a full " dogmatik " or metaphysic, that it makes certain assumptions which all religious faith must make and that it leaves a vast area to be explored. They do not, in any way, diminish the high value of the new orientation of Christian thought which he suggests.

When examined, this new " analogy of religion " is found strongly to buttress the Barthian theology. If the postulates assumed by Professor Heim are granted, it will be seen that the characteristic dicta of Professor Barth take on a new relevance to life and a new significance in the light of it. " . . . two planes intersect, the one known and the other unknown " [1] ; just so the plane of the I-consciousness intersects the plane of the Thou-consciousness. " To those who have abandoned direct communication, the communication is made " [2] ; just so is communication made between the I and the Thou consciousness in our common

[1] Romans, p. 29. [2] id., p. 41.

experience. "The Kingdom of God is a foreign country" [1]; not less foreign is the "Thou-world" of which we become aware in the light of the revealing Word. "The truth has encountered us from beyond a frontier which we have never crossed" [2]; the truth which is true for our neighbour is encountered by us across a frontier no less impassable.

Professor Heim assumes the postulates which have been noted and proceeds, in "*obiter dicta*" in his *God Transcendent*, and more deliberately and exhaustively in his *Spirit and Truth*, to elaborate the implications of a doctrine of divine transcendence which such an analogy suggests. Such implications, however tentative and debatable, are yet of an obvious importance for a theology thus orientated to a new analogy of religion.

That analogy suggests a re-formulated conception of Time. For it follows that "in the place of a time-continuum arrived at by thinking away the Ego (as in pure idealism and monadology), we must put a conception of Time which sees it permeated with Ego, alive with the Ego through and through. This is a real Time; Time as we actually live it . . . a real-lived Time from which we cannot sever ourselves even for a moment".[3] Moreover, on this analogy, "Time flows into Eternity," [4] as the I-consciousness into the Thou-consciousness. It is a conception of Time which suggests a theology not incompatible with the thought of such moderns as Alexander, Whitehead, and Einstein.

[1] id., p. 263.
[2] id., p. 38.
[3] *G.T.*, pp. 120–1.
[4] *S. & T.*, p. 169.

The idealistic isolation of the Ego from the objective world is, on this analogy, no longer tenable. Rather, upon such a view of transcendence, " I am not the creature of a different sphere from the objective world set over against me. I am a ' piece of World '." [1] Thus " the Platonic conception is superseded " [2] and the way seems to be pointed towards some form of Christian " totalitarianism ".

The analogy has a vital bearing both for education and psycho-therapy, in that it emphasizes the crucial difference between the " I-Thou " and the " I-It " relationship. If this analogy is valid in these spheres, the treatment of pupil or patient as " an object of education " [3] or a " case " for psycho-therapy is a violation of the laws of life. That both pupil and patient shut themselves up " against being ' understood ' in this fashion " [4] is a fact so evident to the practising teacher or psychologist as to suggest the " existential " value of the analogy.

Again, we have a " new dynamic world-picture " [5] which " comes about as soon as the dimensional contrast between the still-molten state of Becoming and the fixed state of the Already-become is recognized as the ultimate and supreme contrast to which all other distinctions must be subordinate " ; such a distinction seems to be inalienable from the recognition of a " boundary of dimension ". Thus, upon such an analogy, " Reality no longer consists of stationary entities which enter into relations, but of an activity

[1] *G.T.*, p. 140.
[2] id.
[3] *G.T.*, p. 156.
[4] id., p. 157.
[5] id., p. 181.

in transition by which everything that exists is for ever being created anew." [1] Thus " the primary Reality . . . is altogether dynamic and living action ", and the Vitalism of such as Bergson and Driesch finds a sanction not necessarily incompatible with Christianity.

The " fellowship " which such as Professor MacMurray pursue in thought and movements such as the " Group Movement " in practice, finds a new relevance to life if this analogy be accepted. For " the relation between will and counter-will, the tension between active and passive, is essentially implied in the contact between the ' I ' and the ' Thou '. Every fellowship of wills has for us, therefore, the quality of bringing happiness and freedom ".[2] Upon this analogy, Professor MacMurray's " Creative Society " seems founded upon the same psychological fact as a theology of this type.

Such a concept of transcendence, again, negates the pure doctrine of evolutionism. For if, on the analogy of the " otherness " of the " I " and the " Thou ", the " otherness " of God is again a factor to be reckoned with in life, we are once again concerned with another and that a supreme force other than the evolution of " intra-mundane " consciousness. " It may quite well be that our task is the hard one of swimming against the current of evolution as it has hitherto flowed." [3] Judging by the latest eddies of that turbid stream it may well be that the task of swimming against it is overdue.

This new analogy of religion seems, on the other

[1] id., p. 184. [2] *G.T.*, p. 166. [3] id., p. 197.

hand, to provide a rational critique of more extreme Catholicism and to suggest a revitalized Protestantism. Professor Heim is not alone in perceiving in " the giant organism of the Roman Church " [1] a " molten core " of the " mystical ἐρώς of Plotinus ", a " mystical longing for experience, for immediacy ", an affirmation of human ecstasy, suggesting a hidden humanism for which the Church is not, at heart, " other " than the world.

Professor Anders Nygren has differentiated Ἀγάπη as " the downward movement of the self-giving Divine love " and Ἔρως as " the upward movement of the human soul to seek the Divine ".[2] There would seem to be some justification for regarding the system of the Roman Church, in its emphasis upon beatification, as essentially a cultivation of the " upward movement of the human soul " in ἐρώς.

But, for a faith founded upon such an analogy as that which Professor Heim elaborates, the plane of ἀγάπη of an " extra-mundane " consciousness co-existing with and yet " other " than our intra-mundane and " erotic " consciousness, and intersecting it, assumes a new significance. If this transcendent ἀγάπη exists independently of our human activity, as the " Thou " consciousness exists independently of the " I " consciousness, and yet interpenetrates it, it is also evidently of a more transcendent importance than the system of catholic piety seems to suggest.

For a faith which accepts the ἀγάπη plane as truly transcendent " cannot find God through a state of ecstasy ".[3] Rather, for such a faith, for which the

[1] *S. & T.*, p. 19. [2] *Agape & Eros*, p. vi. [3] *S. & T.*, p. 101.

" place of meeting " in the " Word " is the heart of religion, " we can find God only in profound solitude and complete lucidity of mind." [1] For the " Word ", forged by action and decision, itself begets comprehension of that " other " plane of consciousness to which it is the key. But for the comprehension of such a " Word ", this all-important act for a transcendentalism of this type, solitude and a lucid and still mind are pre-requisites, and " mass-suggestion " and " ecstasy " are deterrents. Thus this analogy demands, in clear contrast to the Roman way, solitude and lucidity of spirit and points to an " Either-Or " which seems to demarcate the essential difference between the Catholic and the Protestant approach to religious reality, and to mark the real cleavage between a Catholic and an Evangelical Christianity.

" Either," says Professor Heim, " the heavenly ecstasy experienced by these personalities (the Catholic saints) is real contact with God. . . . Or we are able to reach God only in a solitary, spiritual act." [2] Whether the antinomy thus posed is as final as Professor Heim suggests, whether a valid distinction cannot be drawn between an earth and a heaven-induced " ecstasy ", whether the approach of the Catholic Church toward religious reality is as radically or exclusively " erotic " as Professors Heim and Nygren suggest, it seems clear that here is, for the modern consciousness, the real dividing-line between the Catholic and the Evangelical approach, the opposite poles of the religious consciousness. Whether a principle of co-ordination between these poles, as

[1] *S. & T.*, p. 101. [2] id., p. 107.

between those of immanence and transcendence, can be found, is a further though no less urgent problem for theology. For the moment, and for Professor Heim, we are primarily concerned with a restatement of the essential Evangelical faith and the concept of transcendence.

For an Evangelical Church, a Church of the " Word ", therefore, first solitude and then lucidity of spirit are required. The emphasis upon solitude as radical to real religion has already been stressed, from a very different angle, by Professor Whitehead. " Religion," he has said, " is what the individual does with his own solitariness." [1] It is a dictum which is evidently at the heart of Protestantism, as of Hebraic prophecy, and one which this analogy seems to establish upon a more modern foundation. " Not by night, nor by power (nor, so Professor Heim would add, by ' ecstasy ') but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." [2] And the Spirit only makes itself known, if Professor Heim's analogy is accepted, through the " Word " of revelation in solitude. But a religion which begins and ends in solitude is very other than the religion of Rome. The Protestant counter case to Rome seems here to be placed upon a new and firmer footing.

When we examine Professor Heim's second imperative, the absolute necessity of " lucidity " of mind, however, we seem to encounter a confusion which suggests an insecure foundation for this theology and a trend of thought which, if pursued to a logical issue, leads to a rationalism far-removed from religion.

[1] *Religion in the Making*, p. 16. [2] Zech. iv, 6.

For we are told that " we are able to reach God only in a solitary, spiritual act " ; but to this is added the perilous qualification, " when our *minds* are lucid and clear." [1] Catholic ecstasy is decried because " then the understanding, the whole intellectual capacity of our soul takes a secondary place in our life ".[2] Again we are told that " if we blind ourselves and renounce our own independent judgment, then we are extinguishing the light which *alone* makes it possible for us to see God and to apprehend Him ".[3] This " *exaecatio* " would seem to be, for Professor Heim, almost the " sin against the Holy Ghost ". Again we are told that " we can find God only . . . in profound solitude and complete lucidity of *mind*." [4]

If these dicta are taken at their face value and in isolation from other statements which suggest a certain fundamental confusion of thought upon this vital point, the whole argument would seem to be that salvation is to be attained, not through sensation or " ecstasy ", however induced, but by mind or reason alone. It seems clearly to be suggested, in fact, that the " solitary, spiritual act " is equivalent to intellectual apprehension.

That Professor Heim himself is very far from allying himself to the rationalism which such language suggests is sufficiently evidenced by a further pronouncement which has the appearance of a complete *volte-face*. " Where God does not choose to make Himself known," he says in a later passage, " all philosophical argument

[1] *S. & T.*, p. 107 (the italics are mine.—M. C. P.).
[2] id., p. 108.
[3] id., p. 112.
[4] id., p. 101.

is a vain attempt to fly over the frontier." [1] Then lucidity of mind, intellectual capacity, and independent judgment are, in the ultimate act of faith, wholly vain, a conclusion which it is not easy to equate with those which have been examined.

In point of fact the bracketing of this "spiritual act" with "minds" which are "lucid and clear", "intellectual capacity" and "independent judgment" seems to betray a radical confusion of thought. This emphasis upon reason is, moreover, far from being an inevitable conclusion from the analogy which he has adopted. It would seem, in fact, to be contrary to it. For the "existential" judgment upon which his analogy depends, by which the consciousness-world of another is apprehended, is by no means a solely rational or intellectual judgment; it is rather the judgment of the "whole man" in action. And the judgment of the whole man in action is the judgment, if any term can fully express that mysterious act, not of his intellect alone, but of his "spirit".

The prime necessity for the examination and definition of "existential thinking" which has been emphasized earlier in this essay, is thus made the more cogent by the confusion into which Professor Heim seems to have fallen at this point. But that confusion, as has been seen, invalidates neither the analogy which he has, so significantly, made, nor the essential line of demarcation between the catholic and the evangelical poles of religion which he has drawn. That analogy is no less and no more pertinent, and that contrast is no less convincing, if the term "spirit" is everywhere

[1] *S. & T.*, p. 154.

substituted for those of " mind ", " intellectual capacity ", and " independent judgment ".

Given his postulates and subject to the provisos which have been noted, Professor Heim's " new analogy " seems to justify his conception of a re-established Evangelical Church, or Church of the Word or Spirit, which he advocates so passionately in the conclusion to his more polemical work under review.

Upon these premises such a Church, " wholly independent of the world and the world's ways," [1] " contrasted with all other types of community " [2] and " composed of a unique brotherhood ",[3] for which " all spiritual sources of salvation " are " absolutely free ",[4] which will eventually " render itself superfluous " and " abandons the last means by which a church may dominate and attract the natural man ",[5] ministered to by pastors " without any supernatural nimbus ", is a conception congenial to those for whom Rome is no refuge from our storms and a secular Communism spells a betrayal of Christ, and one which, if this analogy be accepted, need not violate their intellectual integrity.

For such a Church the Word of God is the supreme sacrament, " something which is purely spiritual, and cannot be localized . . . something which can be received only in spiritual fashion, namely by faith." [6] " The Church of the Spirit, in which the true worshippers of God worship Him, not in Jerusalem or

[1] *S. & T.*, p. 190.
[2] id., p. 188.
[3] id., p. 184.
[4] id., p. 181.
[5] id., p. 177.
[6] id., p. 190.

Samaria, not in Lourdes or Rome . . . but in spirit and in truth."

That conception, one peculiarly congenial to the English temperament, seems the only effective antidote to the secularism which invades our world or the obscurantism which opposes it. It can only be truly founded upon that doctrine of transcendence, which Professor Heim has striven to reconstitute, " . . . a more profound ' beyond ', an idea of transcendence which has nothing to do with spatial distance, a divine word which, like the atmosphere, surrounds us invisibly on every side." [1]

The urgency of the task to which Professor Heim has thus set his hand and our debt to him are to be measured by the morass into which an unbridled immanentism has led us to-day in religion and life ; it is for the theology of the future to complete it. But when the concept of divine transcendence has been re-established, only half the task of that theology is done. It remains to find a co-ordination between the reality of immanence which we have inherited from the nineteenth century and that of transcendence, which the twentieth century seems about to rediscover, which the modern mind can accept without violation of its integrity. A twentieth century " Analogy of Religion " remains to be written.

[1] *S. & T.*, pp. 168–9.

V

BARTH AND BEYOND

It is now eighteen years since the thunders of the Barthian theology first broke upon the " Waste Land " of post-war Europe and nearly four since, with the publication of Sir Edwyn Hoskyn's translation of the *Romerbrief*, they seriously troubled the placid provincialism of English theological thought.

The first fury is now spent. Professor Barth seems, in his latest work, to be passing from a prophetic to a priestly phase of piety and the time to have come for some perspective of his " prophecy ".

Such a perspective can only be formed against a background of contemporary thought and feeling. It is in the over- and under-tones of, in particular, artistic expression that the temper of an age is most finely registered and to these, therefore, that we must look in order to formulate such a view.

When seen in such a perspective, it seems doubtful whether that prophecy was as strange to the real mood of the post-war world as, at first sight, it seemed, whether it was not rather the sudden combustion of a general and long-gathering reaction against the over-weening immanentism of nineteenth century evolutionary thought and Karl Barth, in the main, a modern Luther pitted against the Papacy of Science.

For the pith of his prophecy was the reaffirmation of a transcendentalism which scientific and secular humanism increasingly denied. The time was evidently over-ripe for a turn of the tide of thought and, on a closer examination of the contemporary mood, Barth seems rather to have taken that tide at the turn than, as at first it seemed, to have opposed it.

The fact, if indeed it be so, does not necessarily detract from his right to prophetic status, for at least one function of the prophet is to utter the deeper wisdom of his age, to act the midwife to its own more profound consciousness and to bring to the birth in his word its own immanent truth.

It is the function of what may be called a " minor " prophecy ; a " major " prophecy adds to that immanent wisdom a transcendent truth of which it is no more than the muffled echo in the heart of man. That further truth will tell not only of the wisdom which lies buried in the contemporary consciousness, but also of that which is to come upon it, not only of things that are, but also of things to come.

That Barth is, in this sense, a " minor " prophet there seems small doubt ; that in this sense, he is also a " major " prophet seems less certain when his prophecy is seen in perspective.

Any such attempt to estimate a title to prophetic status may well be prefaced by a reminder of what real prophecy is. That strange and rare phenomenon has never been more forcibly phrased than in a poem of Pushkin's which Mr. Maurice Baring has thus rendered into English.

" With fainting soul athirst for Grace
I wandered in a desert place,
And at the crossing of the ways
I saw the six-fold Seraph blaze ;
He touched mine eyes with fingers light
As sleep that cometh in the night ;
And like a frightened eagle's eyes
They opened wide with prophecies.
He touched mine ears and they were drowned
With tumult and a roaring sound :
I heard convulsion in the sky
And flights of angels hasten high,
And beasts that move beneath the sea,
And the sap creeping in the tree,
And bending to my mouth he wrung
From out of it my sinful tongue,
And all its lies and idle rust,
And 'twixt my lips a-perishing
A subtle serpent's forkèd sting
With right hand wet with blood he thrust,
And with his sword my breast he cleft,
My quaking heart thereout he reft,
And in the yawning of my breast
A coal of living fire he pressed.
Then in the desert I lay dead,
And God called unto me and said :
' Arise, and let my voice be heard,
Charged with My Will go forth and span
The land and sea and let My Word
Lay waste with fire the heart of man.' "

That of such a nature as this is real prophecy, that for such a prophetic " Word " our " Waste Land " waits, few readers of this essay are likely to dispute, or that the " Word " which Karl Barth uttered and the manner of his utterance have evidently very much in common with such a conception. How far his

" Word " was as well the transcendent wisdom of the " major " as the immanent wisdom of the " minor " prophet it is for a perspective view to estimate.

From such a perspective it is clear that the trend towards transcendentalism which Barth so vehemently voiced has been for some time past and is to-day manifest in a score of directions where the impact of Barthian theology can hardly be suspected, and an equal estimate of the abiding value of that theology must take account of this general tendency and note its manifestations in other fields of thought and feeling. It is not difficult to show that it is, in fact, present in all the vanguards of art, literature, and philosophy as well as in theological speculation much of which cannot be ascribed to the Barthian movement.

The latest mode in æsthetics is of much the same mind, although its concept of the transcendental element which it seeks is very different. In his curious but, in this context, significant defence of the Surrealist school in painting, M. André Breton quotes the saying of Baudelaire—" La soif insatiable de tout ce qui est au delà " as a key to the surrealist mystery, and, in a series of statements, demonstrates his faith in a reality beyond reality, a reality " au delà ".

" The secret of surrealism," he says, " lies in the fact that we are persuaded that something is hidden behind them (i.e. houses, volcanoes, empires)." [1] Again he affirms that " the mind talks obstinately of a future continent ".[2]

That, for M. Breton and his fellow enthusiasts, the reality towards which they reach seems to be rather

[1] *What is Surrealism ?* p. 29. [2] id., p. 16.

sub- than super-real, is of small matter here. They too know this rumour of a reality transcending the normal and natural tempo of human life, and the very violence of their invective against God (" Everything that is doddering, squint-eyed, infamous, sullying and grotesque ") [1] suggests that the idea of a transcendent Deity is not quite so phantasmal to them as to their forerunners.

This suggestion of a general groping towards " the expression through sense of something beyond sense " [2] is increasingly prevalent in the art of the moment. Of this trend of sensibility towards the apprehension of a reality beyond, behind and other than the reality known to science and sense, a reality breaking in upon our world in thunder, eclipse, and catastrophe, the growing revival of a vogue for such art as the ecliptic art of El Greco and of the macabre art of Brueghel, seems to be symptomatic. Something is sought beyond the extremities of human thought, sight, and endurance, which only catastrophe and excess, extreme agony, horror, and death can reveal. The search itself seems to signify a mounting faith in a transcendent reality " au delà ".

A striking picture entitled *The Nativity* recently exhibited by Miss Nadia Benois seems aptly to illustrate this tendency. For this artist the Birth of God, or, in other terms, of such a transcendent Reality, in our world is envisaged in a crashing contrast and conflict of human indigence and natural or supernatural scenery. In a nook in a riven and

[1] *What is Surrealism?* p. 22, footnote.
[2] A. C. Bradley, *Oxford Lectures on Poetry.*

wildly contorted mountain-side, cupped in twisted and precipitous crags whose rims are silhouetted in an unearthly light of eclipse, is set the subject of this picture, a diminutive white croft, so small that it seems lost in its Titanic landscape, and yet, with a fine art, so significant that the picture pivots upon this pin-point. Before it, dimly seen and vaguely delineated, are the faint forms of a peasant, his wife and babe.

Fantastically scrabbled across the cataclysmic scene run devious mountain tracks ; along one of these ride three horsemen. To the left of the central scene stand two dark Lombardy poplars, discordant chords jarring upon and yet blending with the arresting cacophany of the whole conception. A few faint willows edged with a green iridescence are all the verdure of which this waste land permits. The scarps are tinged with unnatural hues of ochre and mauve. Beyond the eclipse-light with which the ridges are rimmed is a dark-blue and thunderous sky cleft, here and there, with spaces of translucent azure and radiant cloud-edges.

Here is, emphatically, a world beyond the world, a rhythm which is neither the strophe nor the anti-strophe of our mortal music, but catastrophe, a transcendental reality breaking in upon, running counter to the rhythm of our life, a " Waste-Land " which is yet pregnant and lit with a light " that never was on land or sea ". It is an apocalyptic world of precipice and eclipse such as that to which the Barthian language has accustomed us ; this picture might, indeed, well figure as a frontispiece to the *Romerbrief* which Miss Benois has probably never read. It seems

typical enough of the transcendental trend of the painting of our time.

That a similar note of catastrophe, discord, and dialectic is to be detected in modern sculpture and in the more modern music could probably be as pertinently maintained; it can only be properly pursued by experts in those arts, but such contemporary masters as Epstein, Eric Gill, Stravinsky, and Scriabine seem, even to the inerudite eye and ear, to betray a catastrophic or cacophonic strain of the same kind.

When we turn to the field of literature this anti-evolutionary, transcendental trend of thought is found to be explicit where, in the other arts, it seems implicit. It is to be found especially wherever the novel-form is most advanced and philosophic.

Mr. Aldous Huxley, for example, is discovering, with a certain *naïveté*, the insufficiencies of scientific knowledge. "Known truth," he proclaims through the mouth of one of his most recent characters and in his latest novel, "isn't the same as scientific truth. There ought to be two distinct words." [1] The Barthians have long since attempted such a subdivision with their contrast of "faith-knowledge" and scientific knowledge.

Mr. Huxley's recognition of a dualism of knowledge which the Vatican of Science, in the prime of its power, would certainly have condemned, is echoed in a contemporary novel by Professor George Santayana. "There are only two radical alternatives open to human faith," asserts one of his characters when commenting on the modern scene, "... the broad

[1] *Eyeless in Gaza*, p. 124.

and obvious path of human philosophy . . . the alternative . . . to believe in the human heart, to believe in the supernatural. . . ."[1]

That is, upon this view, the choice for our time lies between humanism and a transcendentalism for which the "human heart" is equated with "the supernatural". Such an equation of human and superhuman is evidently in the air. "The eternal," says Professor MacMurray, in significant echo from another angle, "is the reality of the temporal *in the temporal*."[2]

A third recent writer of the philosophical novel, Mr. L. H. Myers, is to be found voicing the same sense of a reality beyond scientific and sensuous reality, the same suspicion of ratiocination and the same nausea at Selfhood which are the constant themes of the Barthian thought. "This world," says a character, Cosmo, who seems to personify this modern mood, "is a caricature, a changeling, substituted by some ugly trick. We are not in the real world ; . . . I go for ever stalking the old reality, as by flashes it reincarnates itself."[3] Such an "old reality" is the avowed objective of the Barthian dialectic reality".

"One cannot build straight roads in the country of the human mind,"[4] says a character from another work of this writer ; Barth has never ceased to point out how crooked and deceptive are those roads which humanism has attempted to construct. "All were homesick in Selfhood," says another character, "all

[1] *The Last Puritan*, p. 239.
[2] *Creative Society*, p. 93.
[3] *The Orissers*, p. 16.
[4] *The Root and the Flower*, p. 174.

were whimpering for reintegration in the Universal. . . . How could he make himself believe that the renunciation of Self was a victory and a glory, instead of a surrender and a dishonour?" [1] Barth gives an incisive answer to such "whimperings"; "the pronoun 'I'," he says, "spells judgment." [2] Self-nausea and the trend towards that which transcends self are again in evidence.

The most modern poetry, where, perhaps, the filaments of feeling are most sensitive, sounds a similar note. For Mr. T. S. Eliot :—

> ". . . Only
> The fool fixed in his folly, may think
> He can turn the wheel on which he turns." [3]

A transcendent "Turner of the Wheel" is thus inferred and the Barthian denunciation of the worship of the "Man-God" passes from prophecy to poetry.

Mr. Eliot's St. Thomas seems to incarnate the Barthian "word" in modern drama. He darkly apprehends that which is "out of life, out of time"; his Chorus fears that which though "beyond death is not death",[4] and learn again of a peace "not as the world gives".[5]

Mr. De La Mare, again, hears for a moment, instead of the faint airs of his familiar world of faery, "The grave-toned trumpets of eternity" [6]; for Professor Barth these trumpets are seldom silent.

Mr. W. B. Yeats, voicing in poetry an apprehension

[1] *The Orissers*, p. 486.
[2] *Ep. to the Romans*, p. 85.
[3] *Murder in the Cathedral*, p. 24.
[4] id., p. 70.
[5] id., p. 48.
[6] *Divine Delight*.

which Barth has reiterated yet more oracularly and insistently, tells us to-day that :—

> " Between extremities
> Man runs his course." [1]

and epitomizes in ironic lines which seem but to versify the Barthian invective, the beggary of the Higher Criticism of the nineteenth century :—

> " The true faith discovered was
> When painted panel, statuary
> Glass-mosaic, window-glass,
> Amended what was told awry
> By some peasant gospeller." [2]

" Only the dead can be forgiven " [3] and " wisdom is the property of the dead ",[4] he says again. " Life emerges," says Barth, " at the point of mortification." [5]

He sounds the knell of humanism which Barth resounds :—

> " We that have done and thought,
> That have thought and done,
> Must ramble and thin out
> Like milk spilt on a stone." [6]

The younger poets seem, for the most part, to voice some such new preoccupation with a transcendental Reality in the very violence of their repudiation of its claims. Of such a mood, already observed in the exasperated outburst of M. André Breton which has been quoted, Mr. Day Lewis seems representative.

[1] *Vacillation.*
[2] *Wisdom.*
[3] *Dialogue of Self and Soul.*
[4] *Blood and the Moon.*
[5] *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 294.
[6] *Spilt Milk.*

" Then a voice rose in the land, and an indignation
from among the people,
Saying, ' Who is he
That mocks, with flash talk of the spirit outshining
death, us who
never received a permit to live ? .' " [1]

And again :—

" The stars in the bright sky
Look down and are dumb
At the heir of the ages
Asleep in a slum." [2]

A generation ago young poets did not waste their breath or their wrath upon defunct ideas of transcendence and eternity and it begins to seem a little doubtful whether ideas so desperately denied are as defunct as such poets prefer to pretend. But Mr. Day Lewis' scorn of " flash talk of the spirit " and Barth's loathing of " religiosity " are plainly of one brood.

The same undertone may be caught in the talk of modern men of letters. " Christ was right," wrote D. H. Lawrence in 1917, before his nostalgia for a Reality beyond our realities frittered away in the deserts of fertility-faith, " It is necessary to go beyond the outer life, to the life of death and creation, and take one's stand there, and let the world which intervenes have its own, merely secondary place . . . only the world of pure being matters." [3] It is to such a " life of death and creation " that Barth continually reverts.

More lately Mr. Middleton Murry has recognized,

[1] *A Time to Dance.* [2] id. [3] *Letters*, pp. 404–5.

with something of the Barthian wrath, " the stubborn refusal of the human soul to admit the reality of phenomena which, if admitted to be real, destroy the hope of an order in the universe which can satisfy the demand of the human imagination." [1] Thus the very rearguard of Romanticism joins in the general chorus of denial of the pretensions of secular humanism in which the Barthian bass is so dominant.

The trend of literary criticism and poetic feeling towards transcendence with the younger generation may be illustrated from his prose essay, *A Hope for Poetry* by the same young poet, Mr. Day Lewis, whose verse vilifications of a spurious transcendence have already been noted.

" The poet is an artificer by profession, an architect experimenting with a variety of materials," he says. " Then suddenly," he goes on, " perhaps in one window only in the last of many houses he has built, a light shows. An unearthly visitor has taken up possession, the pure spirit of poetry. . . . The pure spirit that comes to possess him, for one minute may be in twenty years, comes from regions over which he has no control." [2]

Again the Barthian theme of transcendent visitation is found and the comparison of this affirmation of faith in a " pure spirit " with the same young writer's diatribe against " flash talk of the spirit " seems significant of the instability of his secularism.

That Science has now capitulated to the same tendency the pronouncements of such leaders as Professors Eddington, Jeans, and Whitehead sufficiently

[1] *Shakespeare*, p. 266. [2] *A Hope for Poetry*, pp. 76–7.

testify and are too familiar to call for citation. Professor Einstein, it may be noted by way of illustrious example, has affirmed " the firm belief, bound up with deep feeling, in a superior mind revealing itself in the world of experience ".[1]

In the world of politics the same movement seems no less marked. However secular it may seem, Russian Communism is also plainly profoundly apocalyptic and catastrophic in tendency. Fascism and Nazism deify a transcendent Humanity, assign superhuman status to their Cæsars and seek in " blood-baths " of cruelty and the catastrophe of war a reinvigorated virtue of the race. British democracy reverts with a mystical monarchism to the apotheosis of a bourgeois John Bull.

On every hand it would seem that a return to transcendentalism is in motion and that increasingly, for men of all minds in the modern world, the conclusion of Professor Wittgenstein that " the solution of the riddle of space and time lies outside space and time " [2] is one towards which all minds tend to-day.

As the citations which have been made will serve to show, this general trend towards transcendence is also of two types. Some envisage an intra-mundane, some an extra-mundane transcendence, a " wholly other " power ; of the former are those who find that transcendence in a social solidarity, in a " Man-God ", in a Leviathan State, or in the human subconscious ; of the latter are those who look for it in some quarter " wholly other " than our mortal and mundane being.

[1] *The World as I See It*, p. 131.
[2] *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, p. 185.

But the conception of some reality transcending human reality is clearly a lowest common factor of all these movements.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that both types of transcendentalism are akin in a common expectation, not of the smooth evolutionary progress of the nineteenth century, but of some immanent catastrophe, whether cosmical, political, or psychological. The most modern thought, art, and politics are thus evidently apocalyptic in grain. Of such an apocalypticism it would seem that Barth was rather the exponent than the propounder, and that his prophecy was rather its chorus than its cause.

For the chief reasons for this consensus of feeling are not far to seek. The war, for those who passed in person through those fires of Moloch, and for those of the next generation who have received the baptism of their spirit, brought a universal sense of immanent catastrophe and, occasionally, catharsis. Such spirits, the sparse survivors of a hecatomb of spirits, have passed forth from the Egypt of Victorian formalism and propriety through a Sea "Red" indeed, into a wilderness where only a nomad law prevails and life has once again to re-fashion the form of its new spirit. Such as these are well-accustomed to catastrophe; they were born in a light of eclipse. The rhythm of their blood is the rhythm of catastrophe, a counter-rhythm striking from lightning skies across the familiar rhythms of natural life.

The watchword of this war-born generation, like that of Barth, is—wait! "We must wait upon that darkness," says the hyper-sophisticated Mr. Sacheverell

Sitwell, " and watch it flower into light." [1] " What we have to do," says Professor MacMurray, " is to wait and be quiet." [2] For Karl Barth, it will be remembered, similarly, faith is " a shattering halt in the presence of God ".[3] This new war-born world waits in an awed silence for the catastrophe in which it was cradled to descend. It is the general word on all these lips and, for all of these it is as true as for Barth that " when we have eyes to see, the darkness in which we stand becomes a torment ".[4]

Such are evidently the prime causes of the mood of the moment ; of neither those causes nor that mood was Karl Barth more than the exponent. To complete the perspective of his prophecy the more salient effects of that mood in contemporary life must be considered.

The most obvious effects of this war-born mood seem to be a revulsion from all previous rôles and forms of life and an allied repudiation of " personality " and impotence to achieve it. The pre-war age set a premium upon personality ; the post-war age eschews and escapes it.

Of such a revulsion the year 1936, in the course of which both T. E. Lawrence and King Edward VIII, to quote the significant phrase of the Archbishop of Canterbury, " left our shores in darkness," afforded two notable and typical examples. Both of these men were of the war-born generation ; both were natural leaders of men and knew it ; to both, as both must have known, their kind looked for leadership ; both

[1] *Dance of the Quick and the Dead*, p. 29.
[2] *Freedom in the Modern World*, p. 64.
[3] *Epistle to the Romans*, p. 39.
[4] id., p. 173.

preferred to abdicate rather than to assume a rôle and rule.

For that Lawrence's almost frenzied flight from any static rôle in life, his dread of, in Henry James's phrase, " the dreary duty of being a personality," of which his ever-changing alibis seemed symptomatic, and Edward VIII's no less profound distaste for the more rigid rôle which was thrust upon him, were signal specimens of that deep-seated sickness of the post-war spirit seems sufficiently self-evident.

It is to be noted, however, that in both these typical examples of this modern refusal of rôle, the denial of the existential forms which life had assumed is complemented by a no less evident and eager avidity for life itself. Edward VIII was no " *roi fainéant* " ; Lawrence was no devitalized degenerate.

Moreover, if, in such instances as these, we may detect manifestations of the modern mood in reaction, evidence of that mood in action are not wanting in an eager experimental creativity, freed from formalisms, but fashioning form after form, however bizarre or extravagant, " till fit some fashion sit," of which all the arts afford evidence.

The quest for and faith in some remote reality beyond the bounds of our knowledge and the " *flammantia moenia mundi* " seem, again, to be expressed in those youthful adventures in the antipodes of the known world which are so familiar a feature of our time. Mallory on Everest, " Gino " Watkins in the Arctic, Peter Fleming in the coasts of Cathay, Bertram Thomas in Arabia Felix, youth at the Poles, at the Equator and in the air, seem finely symbolic

of that spirit, and significant of a mood, not weary of life or despairing of reality, but rather in quest of some more recondite reality than our familiar life affords, beyond its frontiers and the edge of endurance, which only a real, if unformulated, faith could thus impel and empower.

Yet this spirit of adventure, exploration, and experiment seems to be as yet for the most part abortive. Here is, indeed, not denial of life, but rather denial of forms of life which seem, to this impatient spirit, to be dead or decadent. It is accompanied and, in part, caused by a certain cleansing but often paralysing candour. In fact, it would seem that, to spirits which the war has thus stripped so bare of the traditional clothing of " character " and custom, only this cathartic candour and the inexorcizable memory and foreboding of catastrophe, a malaise ever re-creating catastrophe from its own inner disease, remain.

But it is well to note that this panic flight from the confines of " personality " is no new mood of the human spirit. It was voiced more than a millennium ago in the Koran. " Verily," says the early scribe, " we proposed to the Heavens and to the earth and to the mountains to receive this trust of personality, but they refused the burden and they feared to receive it. Man alone undertook to bear it."[1] It is of the same sense of its intolerable burden that Luigi Pirandello has told to-day. " Life is the wind," he has said, " life is the sea, life is fire, not the earth that crusts over and assumes a form. We are all beings

[1] *Koran*, xxxiii, 72.

caught in a trap, severed from the flux that never ceases and fixed for ever by death."[1] Such sayings seem poignantly expressive of the mood of abdication which has been considered.

As might be expected, the fruit of this fear of form has been a wide and deep-seated " futilitarianism ". Not only " personality " but all the creeds, codes, conventions, custom, and " character " of that antediluvian world seemed, to such as these, corrupt and abominable, and no new forms of being were yet forthcoming. There was " nothing new and nothing true, and no matter ".

This mood of abdication and " futilitarianism " was an abortion of the war, but it begets an ever-propagating brood of the spirit and the cancer eats down from thought to life and from the " intelligentsia " to the masses of mankind.

Denial of the forms of life all too readily turns to denial of life itself, a further denial of which the falling birth-rate is a sign in our skies. The mood which Mr. Eliot's Sweeney voiced in 1920 is becoming the life-attitude of an ever-widening multitude.

" You'd be bored
Birth and copulation and death.
That's all the facts when you come to brass tacks :
Birth and copulation and death.
I've been born and once is enough." [2]

Here is the mood of futilitarianism and abdication in action and we can be sure that the Sweeneys will multiply. For the downward filtration of feeling in a

[1] *La Trappola.* [2] *Fragment of an Agon.*

society so interknit, so meshed with message-bearing wires from stratum to stratum as our own is more swift to-day than ever before and in a sick society infection travels fast.

And while the half-educated and the uneducated must inevitably catch this mood, the poison seems also as though it were burning ever more deeply into the sophisticated consciousness. A younger poet of to-day takes up Mr. Eliot's earlier "mournful numbers", adding to its burden but a more bitter sense of a more imminent catastrophe.

> "The planets rush towards Lyra in the lion's charge. Can
> Hate so securely bind? Are they dead here? Yes
> And the wish to wound has the power. And to-morrow
> Comes. It's a world. It's a way." [1]

This mood reacts in like manner towards established religion; pre-war religious forms and terminology, redolent to it of hateful hypocrisies, are suspect and unreal. Such as these, with a war-born callous candour, tend to turn

> "in hatred
> From every thought of God mankind has had." [2]

Such a reaction towards religion seems, at root, to be at one with Barth's declaration that "religion must die".[3]

Such, as illustrated in such representative sayings and types as have been cited, seem to be the salient characteristics of the modern mood, with its notes of

[1] W. H. Auden. Epilogue from *Look Stranger*, 1936.
[2] W. B. Yeats. *Ribh conceives Christian Love insufficient.*
[3] *Ep. to the Romans*, p. 238.

catastrophe, crisis, flight from form and personality, abdication, " futilitarianism," incipient and tentative transcendentalism. When they are thus collected and collated it is evident that all these notes of modern feeling are equally salient in the Barthian writings. " Crisis " and catastrophe are the very stuff of the Barthian dialectic, and, as the theatre for the action of transcendence, as welcome as to any communist eager for revolution ; no " adult, sensitive modern " can out-roar Barth on the theme of the futility of modern life, and the transcendentalism towards which modernity moves is the point from which the Barthian movement debouched.

Thus far, therefore, the utterances of Barth and his school of prophets seem to be neither original nor, in any " major " sense of the word, prophetic.

That he has, in the sense of " minor " prophecy, been a " midwife " to this monstrous birth of the modern mood, such an examination makes abundantly clear. He has revealed the real character of our condition and lit with his prophetic flares the grim landscape of the " Waste Land " in which we walk ; he has delivered a " Word " which, whatever may be its source, whether the abyss of the human consciousness or the deeps of God, has indubitably " spanned land and sea " and " laid waste with fire the heart of man ". He has been a Baptist in the wilderness of the post-war age.

Whether or no his " word " is a word not only of an immanent but also of a transcendent truth, the importance of this " minor " prophecy which has thus released and revealed to our age its own

deeper knowledge, is hard to over-value ; he who can tell to an age its own truth is, in a very real sense, its prophet. With a prophetic boldness he has condemned, what in heart we have known to be the " false gods " and corrupt high places of secularism and homocentric humanism, of " religiosity " and fertility-faith, of an arrogant evolutionism and a minimizing modernism. He has faced both crisis and catastrophe with clear and candid eyes. He has preached again the " vanity of vanities " ; he has pointed both to death and to a life beyond death, to our own reality and to a Reality beyond our realities ; in the midst of a darkness and disillusionment which he has unflinchingly faced to the full, he has heralded again and with an unfaltering faith, the coming of a Kingdom of God. He has revealed to us our own deep dialectic and duality, and while he has neither concealed nor mitigated the conflict, he has sounded " no uncertain note " of ultimate conquest. Where all faith has faltered, he has been clear of compromise ; he has kept the faith intact, and it is with no minimized Christianity that he confronts crisis and catastrophe, the full measure of which he knows full well.

On all these counts Karl Barth is to be numbered among the prophets. He is, at the least, of those " minor " prophets who have revealed to their age its own unconscious wisdom. But when we turn to his theology and inquire whether, after the fashion of the rare " major " prophets, he has a truth not only of our time but also from beyond our time, a truth not only from the past but also for the future, we seem to be upon less sure ground. For Barth and his

followers have indeed pointed to a way out of our wilderness, but it would seem to be a way back rather than forward, a way of escape rather than a way of victory. It is a way " wholly other " than the ways of this world, a way which does not so much lead out of the " Waste Land " in which we wander, as offer an escape, as it were, by translation to another world. It involves the total rejection of the world we know and live in and of the natural life of man.

From that attitude of wholesale repudiation of human life as such Barth has never wavered for seventeen years, from the *Romerbrief* of 1918 to the *Credo* of 1935. In the *Romerbrief* he announces that " there is in this world no observable righteousness " [1] ; in the *Credo* he reiterates that " God never and nowhere becomes world. The world never and nowhere becomes God ".[2] There is thus, for this theology, no bridge, other than a wholly transcendent " Word of God ", a Word from a " wholly other " world, between the immanent life we know and the transcendent life of which we are told.

That this is the pure and undefiled Barthian " word " we are left no room to doubt ; that it is not a theology which can minister to the mind and conscience of the twentieth century seems no less sure. For the modern mind has at least one article of faith which it cannot deny without a " lie in the soul ", that, in Tolstoy's words, " to know God and to live are one. God is Life." [3] To deny life is to deny God. But this Barthian beatification is based on a denial of life.

[1] *Ep. to the Romans*, p. 75. [2] *Credo*, p. 34.
[3] *A Day in Spring.*

The more closely we examine this transcendentalism, indeed, the more it seems to the modern mind, in some of its aspects, the most sublimated of " escapisms " and the most radical of reversions to an Augustinianism and Calvinism which are of little avail for the needs of the twentieth century mind, rather a way back from our " Waste Land " than a way forward. That behind its terminology lies the eternal truth we can readily believe, but the task of our theology to-day is precisely and primarily the task of re-translating its terminology into the modern tongue ; a Tridentine or Calvinist terminology and theology will not do for the mind of to-day. The Barthian theology seems as foreign to our " business and bosoms " as its prophecy is pertinent.

Such would seem the only possible verdict upon the Barthian theology (as distinct from the Barthian prophecy) by those for whom life-denial is also life-betrayal. That there is a profound truth in this " *totaliter aliter* " doctrine the general revulsion from the way of life which the watch-fires of the war lit up all too balefully itself testifies. A way of life which men can live with self-respect is indeed something " wholly other " than that way. But this is a difference of quality rather than of kind. The Barthian theology points, not to a natural life made divine, but to a natural life wholly destroyed and the escape of a remnant to some " Ultima Thule " of the spirit. It will not do ; if religion bids men repudiate life they will the rather repudiate religion, and an existential wisdom can but approve the essential sanity of such a choice.

At this point, therefore, where it appears to fall back upon a theology unintelligible to our time, it would seem that the Barthian prophecy, which has been so real an illuminator of our night, must be abandoned by those for whom the obscurantist is the " embusqué ". This is an eschatology and theology of the past ; it is to the future that we must face. Barth has preached repentance and the coming of the Kingdom ; we await the Star which shall lead us out of our " Waste Land ". But to those who have ears to hear he has not spoken in vain ; he has read to us the riddle of our own hearts and taught us that true " waiting posture " to which alone the truth can come.

And, beyond Barth—" Watchman, what of the night ? " We are not wholly without sign that " the morning cometh ". Where the Barthian doctrine of transcendence seems to fail us, there are indications that a new theology of transcendence is in formation. Beyond Barth come those who are no less sure than he of an extra-mundane transcendence which may yet be found in the matrix of our own immanence.

In the speculation of Karl Heim the suggestion of such a conception of transcendence in immanence which matches our existential experience and the outline of a new analogy drawn from psychology, rather than physics, have been seen.

That tenuous theme of a transcendence maturing in the very womb of our immanence, within it and yet not of it, is echoed in England where Professor MacMurray is found telling us that " . . . we are both transcendent of experience and immanent in it ", that

" the union of immanence and transcendence is a peculiar and defining characteristic of all personality, human and divine ",[1] and Sir Arthur Eddington speaking of the " stirrings of consciousness . . . from something which, whether we describe it as beyond or deep within ourselves, is greater than our own personality ".[2]

Such are a few among many minds tracing, though as yet tentatively enough, the outlines of a new theology of transcendence which, it seems, may yet co-ordinate a real transcendence with a real immanence in terms intelligible to the mind of the twentieth century. In any case, it seems clear that a return to faith in transcendence is abroad, that the types of a new concept of transcendence seem to be forming, that along such pioneer and untrodden tracks as these lies the way out of our wilderness, and that by such faint before-dawn lights we may perhaps dare to apprehend the dawn of a new day and a revitalized and re-interpreted religion.

Meanwhile the night is yet with us. But, as Barth has said, " the Night too has its wisdom " ; we shall do well to learn that wisdom.

In the light of the Barthian prophecy some such reading of that rune as this seems to emerge. Till we have unlearned everything, till we have learned terror, till we have accepted catastrophe and crisis as the climate of rebirth, till we have looked the agony, horror, cruelty, stupidity, and futility of life, as revealed by the war, full in the face and learned by heart that

[1] *The Field of Religious Experience*, p. 38.
[2] *New Pathways in Science.*

lesson, till we can embrace suffering, disaster, and death to the uttermost, we shall learn nothing and look for regeneration in vain.

The Kingdom which we seek will not come save in the throes of catastrophe; the new life for which we look will be born in the death-grapple of our own duality, in the travail of an ever-tautening tension, or not at all.

"Religion must die"; we cannot change or minimize the reality of Christ and of His Incarnation; but we cannot reconstitute a pre-catastrophic Christianity. The Truth will abide; the religion of a new age will fashion its own theology in its own time. Nor can the new wine of the new spirit which seems to be at birth be put into the old bottles of pre-war codes and customs and types of character and personality. The new life must fashion its own forms; it will not do so at once or without anguish—for that too we must learn to wait.

But they who, wise with this wisdom of Barth, thus watch and wait in this "dark night of the soul", but look beyond Barth for the manifestation of the transcendence of which he tells within the soil of our mundane immanence, and for the light of the eternal in the night of time, will be fain to fortify themselves with a further steeling of the spirit.

Though they will stand firm upon his foundation of an Incarnational Christianity, they will also suspect and shun every armour of specialized attitude towards life and God, all moral and religious reversions, formalisms and terminology, all soporifics of an insentience which the fear of life faced to the full

too readily begets ; they will the rather maintain, at all costs and all hazards, an awareness ever more acute, a consciousness ever more alive and sensitive to the manifold variations and visitations of the spirit of life, quick to catch and eager to welcome the first rustlings of the winds of dawn.

Such, when seen in a fuller perspective, would seem to be the enduring " wisdom of the night " which the prophecy of Barth conveys or suggests to modern minds for whom religion spells reality. Though we may discount the more reversionary traits of its theology, the *Romerbrief* remains a book which marks, if it does not make, an epoch.

VI

GUIDANCE AND MAGIC

THE doctrine of "guidance" has always been, and must ever be a pivotal doctrine for all real religion. The "Group" and other similar movements in modern religion have made it salient and challenging. But it is not only a pivotal doctrine for religion; it is also the *raison d'être* of magic, and as narrow as is the dividing line between religion and magic, so narrow is the division between a religious and a magical conception of "guidance". An examination of the significance of guidance in magic will afford some gauge for its manifestations in the religious life.

Although in practice it may not always be easy to distinguish between a magical and religious doctrine of "guidance", there can be little doubt about the fundamental distinction between them in principle. Since the conception of guidance implies a guiding power other and greater than man, it involves also contrasted conceptions of that power and of the mode of its guidance which may be broadly distinguished as, on the one hand, that of natural, and, on the other, that of, in the Christian connotation of that term, revealed religion. The former looks to a power which, though infinitely greater and more potent than human nature, is still of the order of nature and

natural life; the latter looks to that which is both natural and supernatural, both transcendent and immanent. The characteristic approach towards the power invoked by the former is that of magic, the placation and exploitation of its forces by means of spell, sorcery, exorcism, and mimetic ritual; of the latter, ethics, a conversion of heart and will and a reunion of human life with the life of God.

For Sir James Frazer magic is the "*fons et origo*" of religion—a conclusion which has latterly fallen into dispute. It may be said that the tendency of modern anthropology is rather to consider religion and magic as parallel, though interacting and overlapping activities, than as derivative, the former from the latter. However this may be, in his broad delineation of the nature of magic he is at one with what would seem to be the general consensus of modern opinion upon this matter.

In magic, he says, "... man essayed to bend nature to his wishes by the sheer force of his spells and enchantments before he strove to coax and mollify a coy, capricious or irascible deity by the soft insinuation of prayer and sacrifice." [1] "By magic," says Professor Julian Huxley, "is meant the idea that mysterious properties and powers inhere in things and events and that these powers can be in some measure controlled by appropriate formulas or ritual acts." [2] "... the key-note of all magical belief," says Professor Malinowski, "is the sharp distinction between the traditional forces of magic on the one hand and the

[1] *Golden Bough*, pt. i, vol. i, p. 284.
[2] *Science and Religion.*

other forces and powers with which man and nature are endowed." [1] And again, "Magic is akin to science in that it always has a definite aim intimately associated with human instincts, needs and pursuits. The magic art is directed towards the attainment of practical aims." [2]

Thus, whatever difference of opinion may exist as to the relationship between magic and religion, it will be seen that, as to the salient characteristics of magic, these high authorities are agreed. Magic supposes a certain dark power in life the aid of which, so primitive experience suggests, can be enlisted for the use of man in certain ways and in certain contingencies. This power is superhuman, and so far magic marches with religion.

But there the community of conception seems to end, for, in pure magic there is no suggestion that this power is supernatural or divine in the Christian sense, that is, that it proceeds from a Being Who both comprehends and transcends the life of this world. On the contrary, the power which magic seeks to placate or invoke seems rather to be the unknown powers of that life itself, a "life-force" which, from his limited experience of life, the magician has every reason to suppose will be capricious, cruel, dangerous, and violent, and no cause to imagine that it will be actuated or can be approached either by reason or love. The conception seems to be rather that of a terrible and mighty magnification of the natural life man knows too well, "other" than the life he knows

[1] *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 72.
[2] id., p. 97

only in the sense that it is infinitely greater, not in that it is essentially other in kind and motive.

That this is so the character of the fertility cults and deities with which it is ever closely associated seems to corroborate. This dark power is natural life itself, all that unknown ocean of life and occult potency which surrounds the little known islet of human consciousness. It is assumed that, though on a scale awful to contemplate, it corresponds with the life that is known, since, though infinitely greater, it is eventually the same in kind. " What happens within, happens also without him ; and what goes on within him, also takes place without him." [1]

Hence he has what M. Lévy-Bruhl has termed a "*participation mystique*" with this dark power (a power which Professor Jung would seem to correlate with his " collective unconsciousness "), and, by virtue of his inner correspondence with it, can, though with dread, draw upon its resources by mimetic and dramatic representation, in the microcosm of his own consciousness, of the sequence, the life and death rhythm of the mighty forces of the dark macrocosm beyond his ken. Since his experience of life gives him no reason to suppose that this greater life will respond to any rational appeal, his invocation of it is confined to such mimetic and dramatic representations and to such word and action patterns as have been found efficacious in the past, patterns which tend to become continually more formal and fixed. The more man lives under the sway of magic the more full and perpetual is his "*participation mystique*" with this dark power.

[1] C. G. Jung, *Contributions to Analytical Psychology*, p. 113.

Again, the end of magic is essentially, not spiritual or intellectual or moral, but material amelioration ; it is a means of manipulating an otherwise obdurate life-force to man's will ; life is sought for the maintenance or intensification of life. Thus magic is mainly concerned with such diurnal and practical matters as rain-making, success in battle, the fertility of crops and herds and women, in fact, with the promotion of prosperity in man's life and affairs in accordance with the ancient formula—" Out with Famine, in with Health and Wealth." Hence its close connection with fertility cults and phallic worship.

Both in the art and end of magic, therefore, reason is at a discount and critical doubt taboo. For magic is essentially a practical art with much use for traditionally efficacious spell and formula and rite and little for reason, which (given the magical premise) is rightly regarded as a dangerous and subversive presence at essentially non-rational invocations and exorcisms. And, since the occult power which it invokes is applied rather to problems of living than of being, where contemplation and thought are concerned, magic is rarely in evidence, and, where magic rules, thought and contemplation tend to be obscured ; the trend of magic is always rather towards extraversion than intraversion. Therefore magic always tends to set strongly towards anti-intellectualism and the deprecation of rational inquiry.

It is to be noted, moreover, that magic demands passivity rather than activity in its votaries. In full magic the rôle of man is restricted to the due performance of the fixed traditional ritual or formula

which sets the magic in motion. He cannot, while the magical force is in the field, either aid (save by a full surrender to or "*participation mystique*" with its power) or hinder the forces which he has thus released and which, he trusts, will fight for him in that dark region where his arms are unavailing.

In a more partial magic, where the entry of this dark power into the field of human consciousness is limited to the indication of its will by signs, omens or oracular utterances, his activity is strictly circumscribed by the occult direction which he has received, and his intellectual effort limited to the correct interpretation of that direction, of which he becomes, thereafter, rather the automatic instrument than the active ally. In no sense and at no time is he ever the friend or ally of this dark power ; he is either its helpless victim or its sycophantic servant. The conception of magic of this relationship is ever rather that of possession by than of co-operation with this power with which magic is concerned.

Thus "righteousness", for magic, consists, not in co-operation or identification with the action and life of God, not, strictly speaking (since action is free) in action at all, but rather in an obedient passivity which renders the human organism more and more the mere channel for the flow of this more-than-human power.

Finally, there would seem to be a close connection between magic and a certain unthinking and irresponsible cheerfulness. The cause seems not far to seek ; when magic is in the field and faith in its power sufficiently strong, man is released both from his fear of the dark and from the onerous necessity of

continuing the struggle in his own strength. The primitive man, whose magic seems propitious and magicians efficacious, is a cheerful and irresponsible soul, and the craving to return to so desirable a state of mind would seem to be a chronic form of racial infantilism. For magic this happy insouciance is a virtue. The greater the optimism, the greater the faith; the greater the faith, the greater the power of the magic. Thus, to quote Professor Malinowski again: "The function of magic is to ritualize man's optimism." [1]

To sum up, the salient characteristics of magic would seem to be, first, faith in a certain dark power in life which is presumed to be similar in kind though infinitely greater in degree than the natural life man knows, a power which is deemed to be capricious, violent, and dangerous; second, faith in a correspondence between man and this power which can be exploited for his own ends; third, a primarily utilitarian and practical employment of the power of magic; fourth, an entirely non-rational machinery for the purpose; fifth, and in consequence, a marked and constant anti-intellectualism; sixth, a passive response to the action of this power; seventh, a cultivated optimism.

Such is magic. What is the magical equivalent to "direct guidance"? From the foregoing survey of the characteristics of magic, it seems clear that the intervention of the power which it invokes in human affairs is of two kinds, either a full intervention in which this dark power takes the control of his life out

[1] *Science, Religion and Reality*, p. 83.

of man's hands, while he can only wonder and wait till the visitation is at an end, or, more commonly, a partial intervention in which, by omen, divination or oracle, man received a hint of the dark will which it is his business to interpret as clearly as he can and fulfil as punctiliously as he may.

The former type of intervention can hardly be described as guidance, but it is to be noted that it is the condition towards which magic seems inherently to aspire, that is, towards complete possession by the power. The latter type, though it may cogently be argued that in reality this too is rather of the nature of direction than guidance properly considered, affords the closest parallel to that which religion means by divine guidance. And of this second class the oracular medium of intervention is that which is most clearly analogous to " direct guidance ".

The term " oracle ", as its derivation suggests, properly implies speech. The oracle is either itself the message from the power invoked, or the medium of such a message. In the form of oracle that power, invoked by various magical mechanisms, intervenes partially and sporadically in human affairs. Here man is used as its instrument but the oracle is rather in the nature of command than counsel. Its truth, if only it can be comprehended, is beyond dispute ; the exercise of man's understanding is confined to the unravelling of its meaning, and his will to its execution.

The oracle or message is conveyed by many means, by direct, if cryptic speech, by omens or by divination of many kinds. In each case the fundamental conception is the same ; whether by the flight of

birds, by the entrails of animals, by water, by rod, or by words, the unseen power conveys its direction to man who seeks its aid, and in each case a certain traditional, irrational, and magical procedure is necessary to evoke it. It is with verbal oracles that we are here particularly concerned.

Such verbal communications from the dark power are conceived to be either mediate in some natural object or person, or immediate, a voice "from heaven", such as the "Bath Qôl" of S. Mark i, 11. But such immediate utterances are rarely met with and when they occur, they are usually, as in the case of the "Bath Qôl", composed of oracles previously mediated through persons in earlier prophecy. In earlier animistic phases the voice is identified with the natural object in which the power is conceived to be present, as in the speaking trees and wells of Semitic mythology; in later phases the utterance is conveyed through a human medium at a particular spot or in a particular condition, and it is just here that the dividing line between magic and religion becomes most difficult to demarcate.

Magic manticism and religious prophecy are not easily distinguished, and are constantly found to be intermingled. There can be no doubt that the greatest of the Hebrew prophets believed themselves to be the mere mouth-piece of Jahvé, that the oracular element is prevalent even in the most sublime of their utterances, and the conception and state of ecstasy and possession more or less common to them all. In what then lies the essential difference between religious prophecy and magic manticism?

There can be no doubt, to quote Professor T. H. Robinson, that " the Ecstatic was the direct ancestor of the Prophets ",[1] or that the sublimest utterances of Hebrew prophecy are in lineal descent from those of such as the " kâhin " of primitive Semitism, the man with the veil, who, hiding his face from the world, sought the dark and secret wisdom, or the ecstatic " nâbi " of the age of Samuel. " There is no discontinuity," pronounced Dr. J. Skinner, " in the development of prophecy from the older Nabi'ism of the period from Samuel to Elisha, to the new type of prophecy inaugurated by Amos." [2]

Nor does there seem to be any essential difference, in the manner in which the power delivers its utterances, between the " dream-oracles " of Greece and the trance-visions of Ezekiel. It cannot be affirmed with any fidelity to the known facts that, with the progress of religion, the element of ecstatic possession and impersonal utterance, although it may perhaps be shown to have become a subsidiary mode, is ever entirely eliminated.

The Pauline phenomenon of " speaking with tongues " and the many instances in the Acts of the reputed reception of the most precise injunctions upon the most practical matters are a further clear testimony to the contrary. Ecstatic possession, the reception of oracular messages, are a constant, if perhaps a diminishing element in the history of religion, as we know it, as of manticism and magic. It would be a dubious and dogmatic judgment which would

[1] *Prophecy and the Prophets*, p. 35. Professor T. H. Robinson.
[2] *Prophecy and Religion*, J. Skinner.

venture to assert that the condition of ecstasy, trance or dream, of apparent suspension of the normal faculties and personality, may not be, as less sophisticated ages have always believed, a peculiar, if rare, vehicle for the divine wisdom, and one not necessarily alien to religion. The possibility, even the desirability, of such " direct guidance " for religion cannot therefore be arbitrarily scouted.

There is this to be observed, however, and it is an observation of importance, that while for religion, prophecy has tended to be the main and manticism the minor channel of divine communication, in pagan cults in which the magic element is predominant, the reverse has been the case. The characteristic medium of revelation for religion has been and still is, a mediate prophecy, and therefore a form, not of direct or absolute, but of indirect or relative guidance, the speaking forth by the prophet in his own tongue and through the medium of his own personality and experience, of the divine counsel ; the characteristic medium of revelation for the pagan cults dominated by magic is the person or thing possessed by the power. The history of Hebrew prophecy is the history of a continual and conscious separation of the prophet from the mere ecstatic. For religion, ecstasy is the abnormal mode by which the divine counsel is conveyed ; for magic it is the normal mode in which the direction of the dark power is ascertained. For the one the trend is towards prophecy, for the other to continue and to stereotype manticism.

But the main difference lies in the conception of the power which the oracle voices. For religion it is

a God who becomes more and more distinct from the fertility-baals, the dark life-force, of magic, a God Who demands increasingly love, a " contrite spirit " " and a clear life ensuing ", rather than placatory sacrifice or mimetic power-inducement ; for magic and fertility cult that power remains a life-force to be invoked and placated, making no demands upon men other than a curious and punctilious " *participation mystique* ". It is significant that the earliest of the Greek oracles of which we know are associated with a vent in the earth through which it was supposed that the earth-goddess, Gaia, made known her will. It is apparently, to such a life-force, such an earth deity, immanent in life, to which magic makes its appeal ; religion turns to the Life of life, a God Who is not only immanent but transcendent.

Moreover, where the phenomenon of ecstatic utterance occurs in religion it is a rare and not a general phenomenon, the acme of a life of intense dedication in persons of rare calibre, and is, so far as our records show, unaccompanied by any of the paraphernalia of magical rites and formulae. It was with a passionate emphasis that Hebrew prophecy disassociated itself from the " schools of the prophets ", for whom such ecstasy was deliberately induced by mechanical means, and conceived to be at the call of all who would or could employ them.

Thus the main characteristics of magical and pagan as distinct from religious oracles would seem to be, first, that, for the one, wholesale possession by the power is the rule, for the other the exception ; second, that while the one tends to remain in a static state of

manticism, the other shows a dynamic movement which is, on the whole, away from manticism and towards prophecy; third, that, for the former (as indeed for the latter also) direct oracular guidance is held to be the prerogative of exceptional persons in exceptional states and never the perquisite of the majority of believers; fourth, that the former is almost invariably accompanied by set ritual acts or formulae, located in certain numinous sites and limited to prescribed states, while, for the latter, the element of ritual inducement and fixed locality or state grows progressively less pronounced; fifth, that while the one calls upon some power analogous to the modern conception of a life-force for material boons, the other turns to a God both immanent in and transcendent to the life of man primarily for forgiveness of sin and urged by a " hunger and thirst after righteousness ".

Upon this examination, the following general characteristics would seem to be common both to certain quasi-religious doctrines of " guidance " and to those of magical cults—a tendency to conceive the source of " guidance " as an occult power from which brief, precise, and oracular messages can be received by means of a certain stereotyped procedure which tends to become standardized and invariable, the invocation of this power mainly for practical and material purposes, a marked anti-rationalism, a predominantly passive and receptive attitude towards a state of " possession " by the power, a carefully cultivated cheerfulness and optimism.

The transition or reversion from religion to magic is ever an easy one; an age of doubt, disillusionment,

and insecurity, such as our own, is evidently peculiarly prone to it. Where such characteristics of magic are present and prominent in the teaching and pursuit of "guidance" it seems, therefore, not unjustifiable to suspect the presence of one more aspect of what is undoubtedly a strong proclivity of our time towards the "re-instatement of an earlier condition" and reversion to a former level of culture. Such a reversion is so wholly contrary to real religion and so disastrous in its ultimate issue that now, as ever, it would seem that we can hardly guard against the insidious invasion with too scrupulous a care.

VII

FACILIS DESCENSUS AVERNI

(*Apocalypse*, D. H. Lawrence. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, edited by Aldous Huxley. *In Defence of Sensuality*, J. C. Powys. *Autobiography*, J. C. Powys.)

THE transition from religion to magic is facilitated by the common foundations upon which each are erected, in a mutual faith in the superhuman, however the respective concepts of this force may differ, by the fact that both call in a power other (if not "wholly other") than man at the point where he confesses himself beaten in the battle of life, and both require surrender, obedience and, in some form, self-renunciation as the condition of participation in this superhuman power, however variously the nature of such surrender, obedience, and self-renunciation may be conceived. The nature of this transition and of the forms which it assumes to-day are evidently matters of major moment for an age seemingly set towards reversion in thought, art, and life.

The passage from religion to magic is not only an easy one; since it absolves the passenger from that effort to co-operate with the divine power which religion demands of him, it is a tempting one. "Magic readily passes into religion," says Professor Marett, "since supernaturalism provides a raw material common to them both" [1]; the converse would seem

[1] *The Threshold of Religion*, p. 30.

to be even more true " because it equally belongs to the sphere of the occult and supernatural ", says Professor Marett again, and because it tends to be conceived as an affair of wills, magic, though distinct, has something in common with religion, so that interpenetration and transition are possible between them.[1]

Nor is a reversion to magic solely a religious phenomenon. It would seem, in fact, to be a characteristic movement of the present time and the affinity which what has been called the magical conception of guidance bears to modern non-Christian speculation and life is noteworthy and demands our study.

The conception of magic postulates a " dark power " other than normal human life with which man has, in the phrase of M. Lévy-Bruhl, a certain " *participation mystique* " and with which he can obtain effective contact by the due employment of set rites and formulae regulated, not by reason, but by traditional experience—a dark power which is capricious, and unaccountable and, if not properly placated, cruel and devastating.

Such a conception is obviously likely to gain ground whenever, for one reason or another, life appears more than usually to assume such a capricious, cruel, and unaccountable aspect and we may therefore expect a recrudescence of magic to-day. The present age with its grim, dark, and ghost-ridden background of the Great War would thus seem to provide a peculiarly fertile soil for such a growth.

The most cursory scanning of modernity seems to

[1] *The Threshold of Religion*, p. 30.

afford significant specimens of such a trend. Perhaps the most representative figure of the post-war period was the late Mr. D. H. Lawrence. He has all the fluid hyper-sensibility to the currents of thought and feeling of his time which makes of the artist so delicate a barometer for the student of history. For him, as for many of his more sensitive and thoughtful contemporaries, the fact of the war seemed to have destroyed the last pretensions of orthodox religion, leaving him, however, with a strong flow of uncanalized religious feeling. How conscious he was of this rudimentary religious feeling his recently published letters amply attest.

" Primarily I am a passionately religious man," [1] he writes to Edward Garnett in 1914, and it is impossible not to credit the statement. " Pure religion and undefiled," as he conceived it, is plainly the dominating passion of his life to the bitter end of it. " You must learn to believe in God," he says in 1915, " . . . we shall unite in our knowledge of God—not perhaps in our expression of God—but in our *knowledge* of God." [2]

He is more conscious than many Christians of the radical nature of sin. " . . . it is surgery we want . . . there is in us . . . ' proud flesh ' . . . the powerful malignant will," he writes in 1915, again under the impact of the war. From the terrible visible world he turns to the invisible. " One must put away all ordinary common sense and work only from the invisible world. The visible world is not true," he declares later in the same year.[3]

[1] *Letters*, p. 190. [2] id., p. 227. [3] id., p. 259.

It is evident that such perceptions are fundamentally religious—the very raw stuff of which real religion is fashioned. He stands on that sub-soil of realization of the reality of evil, of the greater reality of the " invisible world ", of the urgent necessity for self-mortification which has been seen to be the bed-rock of both magic and religion.

The direction in which he turns from this position is of the highest significance in our context. Already, late in 1915, we find him affirming that " we should find reality in the darkness " [1] and earlier in the same year what may be called his first flirtations with the idea of magic appear. He looks towards manticism for revelation, seeing in a " special race of women " a mystic channel for the passage of the " dark power " through whom the " truth came as through a fissure from the depths and the burning darkness that lies out of the depth of times ". The transition to the tripod, the divine ecstasy, the gnomic oracle, seems near.

From the end of 1915 onwards the transition towards magic seems to gain momentum. In December of that year he announces that " we must grow from our deepest underground roots, out of the *unconscious* ".[2] Seven years later it seems that the full transition has been achieved. " Turn again," he says, " to the dark gods, which are the dark promptings and passion-motions inside you, and have a reverence for life." [3] Here is the magical version of " conversion " and its logical corollary in the " fertility-cult ". Two years later he calls for a " return to the older vision of

[1] *Letters*, p. 279. [2] id., p. 290. [3] id., p. 558.

life . . . a great *yielding*, rather than an act of will : a yielding to the darker, older unknown . . . the natural mystery of power ".[1]

It seems clear that we are now full-launched on the " perilous seas " of magic and not far from the full-blown fertility-cult and phallic mystery-faith. Four years later we find it. In 1928 he is declaring that he writes " direct from the phallic consciousness " [2] . . . " I feel one has still to fight for the phallic reality." [3] Sun-worship now appears, the constant accompaniment of the fertility-cult. His " phallic " novel, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, is " the direct *nocturnal* connection of a man with the sun—the path of the dark sun ".[4]

The final position at which he arrived at the time of his death in 1930 may be best illustrated from his brilliant, erratic, and highly-significant posthumous work, *Apocalypse*.

" God " is now entirely rejected ; even the " little gods " are overthrown. " . . . the very ancient world," he postulates (dubiously enough in view of the trend of modern anthropological research), " was entirely religious and godless." [5] " God and gods enter when man has ' fallen ' into a sense of separateness and loneliness." [6]

The concept of creation is thrown overboard. " . . . the vast heavens (in this new ' golden age ' of his nostalgia) lived of themselves and lived breast to breast with man." [7] In order to buttress this assumption, he affirms, quite arbitrarily and

[1] *Letters*, p. 605.
[2] id., p. 708.
[3] id., p. 710.
[4] id., pp. 747–8.
[5] *Apocalypse*, p. 179.
[6] id., p. 180.
[7] id., p. 183.

uncritically, that " . . . the cult of dying and reborn gods started all over the old world, about B.C. 600 ".[1] Christ, the " Heavenly Man " conception, " that strange mysterious figure whose presence," according to Miss Jessie Weston,[2] " hovers in the shadowy background of the history of the Aryan race," is thus conveniently ushered out of Lawrence's ideal cosmos as a theological parvenu, and this uncritical " wish-fulfilment " in an honest and cultured man seems symptomatic of the psychological trend.

In place of these deposed deities the " cosmos " now becomes the object of worship. " We and the cosmos," he writes,[3] " are one." The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still the parts. This " cosmos " is and begets natural life, " . . . the divine power that came to man from the vivid cosmos, from the starry green dragon of life." [4] It is older and greater than God or the gods, a restatement, it would seem, in the main, of Swinburne's *Hertha*.

" I am that which began ;
Out of me the years roll ;
Out of me God and man ;

" Before God was, I am."

It is the living cosmos, the cosmos that was not created, that had yet no god in it because it was in itself divine and primal.[5]

With this " cosmos ", this apotheosis of natural life, " we are unnaturally resisting our connection." [6] " . . . we have to get back to the cosmos ". . . . " What

[1] *Apocalypse*, p. 184.
[2] *From Ritual to Romance*, p. 58.
[3] *Apocalypse*, p. 50.
[4] id., pp. 198–9.
[5] id., p. 186.
[6] id., p. 221.

we lack is cosmic life." [1] What we need is "the old Chaldean cosmic knowledge".[2] That "cosmic knowledge" is knowledge of, correspondence with, natural life, man's "living wholeness and . . . living unison".[3] "For man," he declares, "the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive." [4] "What we want," he says in what was probably almost his final utterance, "is to destroy our false, inorganic connections . . . and re-establish the living organic connections with the cosmos." [5]

His conclusions "upon the whole matter" lead straight to all the phantasmagoria of the fertility-cult and pagan religion. We have sun-worship. "The sun has a great blazing consciousness, and I have a little blazing consciousness. When I can strip myself of the trash of personal feelings and ideas, and get down to my naked sun-self, then the sun and I can commune by the hour, the blazing interchange, and he gives me life, sun-life, and I send him a little new brightness from the world of bright blood . . . the sun, like a lion, loves the bright red blood of life, and can give it infinite enrichment if we know how to receive it." [6] "We can only get the sun," he pronounces, "by a sort of worship: and the same with the moon." [7]

We have the cult of the horse, "the symbol of surging potency," "the beginning of our godhead in the flesh" [8] and are back with our dim forefathers who carved their fetish of power on the White Horse Hill.

[1] *Apocalypse*, p. 52.
[2] id., p. 183.
[3] id., p. 222.
[4] id., p. 222.
[5] id., p. 224.
[6] id., p. 48.
[7] id., p. 53.
[8] id., p. 110.

Animism comes back to its own. " To the ancient consciousness, Matter, Materia, or substantial things, are God. And why not? . . . A great rock *is* God." [1] The Magna Mater, Rhea, Cybele-Agdistis, is re-enthroned, " the great cosmic Mother robed and splendid . . . essential to the scheme of power and splendour," [2] " the woman of the cosmos wrapped in her warm gleam like the sun." [3]

It is the unashamed worship of the power of natural life, the " dark power " which all magic invokes. " Power is there," he proclaims, " Accept it, recognize the natural power in the man, as men did in the past, and give it homage. . . ." [4] This is a frank and fully conscious turning from not only Christianity, but also Platonism and Buddhism to " the old worship and study of vitality, potency, power ". [5] The test is now solely that of " vital consciousness ". Culture and civilization are tested by vital consciousness. [6]

No doubt is left as to the nature of this " vital consciousness ". It is " sensual awareness ", " sense-knowledge ", " a great depth of knowledge arrived at direct, by instinct and intuition, . . . not by reason ". [7] This form of consciousness is that to be sought; " mental consciousness " is to be deplored as the root of all our modern woes. " . . . the emotional consciousness of man has a life and movement quite different from the mental consciousness. The mind knows in part, in part and parcel, with full stop after every sentence. But the emotional soul knows in full, like a

[1] *Apocalypse*, p. 94.
[2] id., p. 153.
[3] id., p. 158.
[4] id., p. 26.
[5] id., p. 66.
[6] id., p. 83.
[7] id., p. 86.

river or a flood." [1] In fact, for such a " consciousness ", the mind ceases to exist ; " the mind has no existence by itself." [2] Therefore we must follow the logic of action rather than of reason.[3]

So headlong in this hunt of the hated mind and all its works, that one is a little reminded, in Lawrence's later works, of the famous dictum of the Queen of Hearts—" Off with their heads ! " This " vital consciousness " has much use for bodies but little for heads, much for emotion but little for minds, and in this fierce and fashionable pogrom against mind and reason, seems to have much in common with many popular movements of the modern age.

It cannot be gainsaid, and D. H. Lawrence would be the last to gainsay it, that here at least is nature-worship, life-worship, power-worship, fertility-cult, magic, in full bloom. Its anti-Christian corollary is not burked. " Jesus is a back number." [4] " The Christian doctrine of love even at its best was an evasion." [5] " The Christianity of Jesus applies to a part of our nature only." [6] The " whole nature is essentially collectivist and therefore un-Christian." " Pure Christianity . . . cannot fit a nation, or society at large. . . . It can only fit individuals. The collective whole must have some other inspiration." [7] But " men fall naturally into a collective wholeness, since they cannot have an individual wholeness. In this collective wholeness they will be fulfilled ".[8] " The State cannot

[1] *Apocalypse*, p. 205.
[2] id., p. 223.
[3] id., p. 97.
[4] *Letters*, p. 462.
[5] *Apocalypse*, p. 22.
[6] id., p. 24.
[7] id., p. 38.
[8] id., p. 212.

be Christian." [1] And for the nurture of this " collective wholeness " there is only this " religion of power " ; the religion of love is futile.

It is a religion which, *ipso facto*, negates the religion of love. " To yield entirely to love would be to be absorbed " . . . " . . . the individual cannot love " . . . " the Christian dare not love." [2] Therefore out with love, in with " power ". " As a citizen, as a collective being, man has his fulfilment in the gratification of the power-sense." [3]

Such is the reversion to which this representative modernity, this anti-intellectualism, this " vital ", " emotional ", " collective " consciousness leads. For Lawrence it is a deliberate and conscious reversion. " . . . the consciousness of man always tends to revert to the original levels," he says, " though there are two modes of reversion : by degeneration and decadence ; and by a deliberate return in order to get back to the roots again, for a new start." [4]

However that may be, whatever " new start " might have ensued for Lawrence from these very " original levels " there can be no question that here is precisely that form of natural religion and magic against which the Jewish and Christian religion has fought to the death throughout history and with which it can have no parley.

That antithesis has been well illustrated by the following typical utterances. " The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit," says Isaiah in the accents of real religion. " O Ishtar what shall we give thee ? " reads

[1] *Apocalypse*, p. 216.
[2] id., pp. 218–19.
[3] id., p. 217.
[4] id., p. 194.

a Babylonian text, "Fat oxen, plump sheep, give unto me the stately appearance of the women, the beauty of the men," [1] Ishtar is made to reply. It is the reply of Lawrence at last and it is to Babylon and beyond that he has come. "*Facilis descensus Averni.*"

Another typical modern, no less equipped with a strong rudimentary religious feeling, may be cited in further illustration of the same tendency, Mr. J. C. Powys, who has lately been preaching his gospel of neo-Epicureanism. ". . . this living soul in us," he says, "lives on the nourishment of little, simple sensations, and on the secret art of being passive." [2] With him the element of magic, sorcery, and idolatry is even more fully conscious. "The happy person," he says, in open reversion to love-magic, ". . . is the person who with the creative energy of a true magician . . . has managed by psychic sorcery, to hypnotize his mate. . . ." [3] Idolatry follows. "It is best to worship the 'little gods' . . . what we should really aim at is to become idolaters." [4] Here too the phallic element is overt and acknowledged. ". . . the true basic rhythm and secret reciprocity of contemplation is nothing less than a sublimation of erotic ecstasy," [5] and the fertility-cult is manifest—". . . this psychic-sensuous ecstasy that I am defending," he affirms, "is a direct embrace of life." [6]

He, like Lawrence, is fully conscious of the reality and radical nature of evil. "Christianity," he says,

[1] Craig, *Rel. Texts*, ii, 9.
[2] *In Defence of Sensuality.*
[3] id.
[4] id.
[5] id.
[6] id.

" . . . turned away from the slavery . . . not of the flesh . . . but of the remorseless, unmitigated erotic nerve." [1] Here is the " dark power " recognized and avowed ; but its force must be placated and employed rather than resisted or sublimated, by the wise man. " Its energy can be used," he declares, " to create and sustain a world or it can be used to blight and destroy a world." [2] What is this but the " Yezer ha-ra " of Jewish ecclesiasticism, the " *massa peccatio* " of St. Augustine, the " grain of evil seed . . . sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning " of II Esdras, the *φρόνημα σαρκὸς* of St. Paul ?

But where religion seeks to sublimate this evil lust, magic seeks to placate and employ it. " Satan and Yezer and the Angel of Death are one," says Rabbi Simon bin Lakish. Christ shall deliver him from " the body of this death ", says Paul. But Lawrence and Powys seek to make terms with it, and it is noteworthy that Powys fully recognizes the capriciousness of this dark principle, " the mad freakishness of real reality." [3] Here is the unaccountable " dark power " of magic, recognized as the principle of natural life to be placated and used by means of magic and the fertility-cult. Here too, it would seem, is that " libido " which the Freudians find to be the life-principle and seek to placate and control with the modern magic of science.

In these two representative modern instances, spirits fine enough to record in their mercurial mental phases, though not, it would seem, great enough to master, the prevailing flux of the age, barometric

[1] *Autobiography*, p. 35. [2] id., p. 35. [3] id., p. 136.

prophecies of the spiritual climate which we may expect may be read. The needle is set hard towards reversion to magic, and the way on which the feet of those who mix magic with religion is set is made clear.

" One must put away all ordinary common sense and work only from the invisible world." " Turn again to the . . . dark promptings inside you." " Return to . . . a great yielding, rather than an act of will," to the " secret art of being passive ". Where such doctrine led D. H. Lawrence and J. C. Powys we have seen ; their gods are very other than the God of Christianity.

It may be said, and said with some cogency, that this reaction from the mental, intellectual, and spiritual approach to religious reality, this return to the " dark unconscious ", the " emotional consciousness ", to a more primitive, vital, and whole contact with reality is, in itself, a healthy reaction from a mode of religion grown anæmic, over intellectualized and spiritualized. Has not such a return to the primitive sources ever been the sign of a returning sanity ? Is not the history of Jewish and Christian religion marked by a long succession of such reactions as these to a primitive simplicity, a revolt from sophistication, a " desert purity " ? Is not the " direct guidance " and reliance upon feeling rather than reason just such a virile and sane reaction to an Apostolic Christianity, a re-dipping of religion in its original wells ?

It is clear that Lawrence preached his " return " to " the dark unconscious " under such a persuasion. So evident is the need of modern life and religion for

some such shedding of sophistication and return to the unmuddied springs of life and faith that the claim of such reactions as these to be, in fact, such a return, is both specious and tempting, and, in so far as they achieve such a simplification and return, modern religion and life have much to learn from them.

It cannot be denied that both have much to teach to our time. That real religion should be, and most modern religion emphatically is not, in Professor Brunner's phrase, a " totality-act of personality ", the fruit of the reaction to reality of all our faculties and not of some only, to the atrophy of the remainder, is a proposition which few modern thinking and feeling Christians would oppose, or that some such broadening and simplification of the psychological and vital bases of religion as both Lawrence and Powys advocate in their respective fashions is indeed an urgent need to-day. Each after their kind is evidently impelled by a healthy, heroic, and admirable desire " of fire to reach to fire " [1] which religion can but welcome and emulate if it can.

But this is not the real issue. Is the return variously attempted in the " secret art of being passive " of Powys, in the " yielding " to " dark promptings " of Lawrence, a return to the gods of magic or the God of Christianity? For the history of religion is at least as prolific in instances of the former as of the latter, and the process, in its initial stages, is not easy to discriminate. Judaism is found constantly reverting to a magical baalism, primitive Christianity to the ubiquitous mystery-cult.

[1] G. Meredith, *Hymn to Colour*.

It is in the final issue of these respective modes that the fundamental and insuperable antinomy becomes clear. Magic leads to the " dark power " of natural life, to the natural " cosmos " itself, by way of the " nocturnal ", " emotional ", " collective " consciousness of D. H. Lawrence, the " erotic ecstasy ", the " remorseless unmitigated erotic nerve " of J. C. Powys, the Jewish " Yezer ha-ra ", the Pauline *φρόνημα σαρκὸς*, to the life-gods, sun-gods, and moon-gods and fertility-baals. Christianity leads, by way of a dogged wrestling with this very " Yezer ha-ra " and armed with the love which is, not *ἔρως* but *ἀγάπη*, to the " Jahvé " of the prophets, the " Father " of Jesus, Who may never be identified with this life-god and to Whom magic and fertility-cult is for ever an abomination, Whose service is real religion and, not servitude to any " Ba'al ", but " perfect freedom ".

For the one " guidance " seems to be sought through magic, of which the characteristics are some form of life-immolation, fixed, irrational, and traditional formulae and rites, blank receptivity and initiate-exclusiveness on the part of the guided, distrust of mind, servile obsequiousness to absolute oracles, while, for the other, " guidance " is rather an intelligent co-operation with a God Who is the Father of men and the Divine " Friend behind phenomena ".

" By their fruits ye shall know them."

VIII

BEYOND THE TRAGIC CLIMAX

THE theme of an existential Christianity is tragedy; the creed of such a Christianity concerns that which lies beyond the tragic climax, the λύσις, the reconciliation of the δέσις of that tragic conflict which, to a Christian realism, our life is. For Christianity that δέσις is the Cross; the λύσις is the Resurrection. In great tragedy therefore there is that which, to the existential view, may illuminate the darker profundities of Christian theology, and we shall have most likelihood of such enlightenment from the study of a tragedy couched in the idiom of our own age. In Mr. Bernard Shaw's *St. Joan* we have what is, perhaps, the most salient example of tragic art in modern English, and an examination of the play from this angle reveals a striking significance for such a theology.

In his *St. Joan* Shaw not only reached the climax of his powers but surpassed them. There is something here, a lucid note breaking through the familiar complexities of twisted thought and inverted feeling, which is new, something, it seems, more majestic than its maker. The most insensitive of readers can hardly fail to catch some glint of this "visionary gleam" in the play. But it is a glory cunningly concealed.

If this is the climax of Shaw's life-work, it is in the VIth Scene that the climax of the play is to be sought. Until it is plumbed, it seems that the dramatic climax is rather to be found in Joan's great " daring " speech in Scene V, and it was, indeed, upon this scene and speech that Miss Sybil Thorndyke concentrated her art on its first production.

But a fuller consideration suggests that perhaps this scene and speech, so flamboyant in dramatic appeal, were, in fact, dexterously posed to " tickle the ears of the groundlings " and to mask the true climax, the muted but immense tension of the succeeding act in which Joan confronts the Inquisitor. In Scene V Joan is set in melodramatic conflict with the world, the flesh and the devil ; she is almost the heroine of Victorian melodrama ; in Scene VI we have instead a clash of spirit with spirit, of time and eternity, of Law and Love, a Joan caught between the " fell, incensèd points of mighty opposites ", opposites more mighty by far than any which are staged in Scene V or, perhaps, than Shaw had envisaged when he chose his theme. In the Epilogue it is as though, tongue in cheek, he had attempted to stage that which can neither be staged nor expressed, the λύσις, the reconciliation of opposites beyond the " tragic climax ".

There seem, in fact, to be two conflicts or " agonies " in the play, that between Joan and time-history, and that between Joan and eternity. In the first we behold the making of a martyr, in the second the sacring of a saint. It is in this " second intention " that, for once, Shaw seems to let fall his masks and show a glint of a more real or, perhaps, new self and of a

knowledge only half-known in the face of which he falters and flinches back into buffoonery.

It is, then, in this VIth Scene of the play that we are to seek the " flash-point " of this intolerable tension between flesh and spirit, time and eternity, life and death mounting behind the façade of a more mundane tragedy. Here Joan and the Inquisitor, for all the chattering mob of clerics, assessors, politicians, and soldiers, are, dramatically and essentially alone, *vis-à-vis*. The rest are a decorative back-cloth, a muttering chorus of time, designed to display to greater advantage, for those who have eyes to see, this sombre and eternal tragedy of the spirit.

In Joan a primal simplicity and spontaneity, rough, rude, and unsophisticated as a wild flower, " unspotted from the world," from a mundane reality with which she never really comes into contact, confront a sanctity and spontaneity of a wholly other order, arctic, desert, dead, flickering up and out from the mortified being of the Inquisitor.

Through the Inquisitor there seems to speak, with an appalling impersonality, some inevitable utterance of eternal law. He is a Matterhorn of a man, bleak, dark, bare, stripped, menacing, and yet annealing and restoring, a " Death-in-Life " set against a lurid sunset of deliberately over-coloured human passions, pride and pettiness, the emanations, shot with the borrowed lustre of Joan's tragedy, of the proud and pompous Cauchon, the rabid Stogumber, the fanatic Courcelles, the pitiful Ladvenu.

His utterances, when he speaks in character as Inquisitor, are impassive, remote, even inhuman, as

though they were fate, "*fata*", the immutable accents of eternity. Yet, with a fine touch of art, Shaw gives gleams, through the frozen calm of this Buddha-being, of Lemaître, a weary, infinitely compassionate old man, with a rending and terrible compassion falling from him like drops of blood, a compassion which hopes nothing and desires nothing from the flesh, ἀγάπη, not ἔρως. But as Inquisitor, the herald of "unalterable law", he is beyond good and evil, beyond passion, beyond even pity. And, being utterly impersonal, he touches an absolute and far simplicity which answers that of Joan like an echo across an abyss. Between him and Joan, deep speaks to deep, the deeps of a simplicity innocent of and of a simplicity far-fetched from beyond sophistication.

That undertone of simplicity and spontaneity, the simplicities of innocence and experience, is a "still small voice" sounding low through the stormy passions and politics of the scene, like that quiet and limpid melody which flutes through the "Sturm und Drang" of Beethoven's Vth Symphony. To convey that occult and phantom melody, that intense inner drama, across the footlights, through the blare and blaze of the temporal scene, Shaw seems deliberately to have caricatured and over-stressed the remaining characters in contrast, making them "all-too-human", trowelling on all the colours of the spectrum of human passion. Thus, in particular, Cauchon, hot, human, carnal, proud, becomes a slightly grotesque counterfoil to the sombre and selfless serenity of the Inquisitor. He has gained his life; Lemaître has lost it.

When we become conscious of this inner "second

intention " in the play, the VIth Scene assumes a sacrificial character, as of an eternal, ever-recurring sacrifice of sinlessness for sin. For Joan is sinless ; as the Inquisitor says to the astonishment of the purblind Cauchon, she is " quite innocent ". For Cauchon, Warwick and the rest, Joan suffers death because she is religiously, morally or politically guilty ; it is only the Inquisitor (and his author) who know that she must suffer, not because she is guilty, but because she is " quite innocent ". As such, as a " lamb without spot ", she is " devoted ", a fit subject for supreme sacrifice. In his condemnation the Inquisitor is not penalizing sin ; he is " devoting " sinlessness.

His intoned judgment is a medieval version of an age-old formula, of the "*esto sacer*" (" be thou devoted " or " sacred " or " sanctified ") to the gods. It is indeed very notable that it is intoned. So, immemorially, were intoned all divine utterances or "*fata*" of the high gods.

Shaw is, in fact, at grips with the mystery of " sanctity " ; his genius, whether conscious or unconscious, grasps at the essential clue of Joan's innocence. At the burning-point of the play in this VIth Scene, the real and intrinsic conflict is posed. Again extremes meet, but now not merely the political, ethical or historical extremes which have filled the foreground, but the polar opposites of spiritual and eternal being. And, in the kindling clash of crisis, they meet ; they seem also to fuse, so that, for an immortal moment, innocence and experience, sin and sanctity are equated. What is sin to Cauchon is

sanctity to Lemaître ; what the Inquisitor condemns to the fire as sin he knows to be also sanctity.

A clue to the paradox upon which Shaw has stumbled here is, perhaps, to be found in etymology. For the Latin *sacer*, like the Greek ἅγιος, signifies not only " holy ", but also " accursed ". The " sacred " thing or person is, originally, that which is set aside or " devoted " from the common life of men to a divine purpose. Both extreme sin and extreme sanctity are beyond the pale and polarity of human life ; both are, in some sense, " devoted " to Fate or the gods ; both take upon themselves the sin of the community and are sacrificed for society ; in each case a man (or woman) dies for the people ; such victims are also " scapegoats " and outlaws from society.

Thus sin and sanctity meet full circle, the scapegoat and Christ-conceptions are fundamentally akin, and Joan the sinner is one with Joan the saint. Cauchon and Warwick on the one hand, and Lemaître on the other, are equally right ; Joan is both sinner and saint. She is " sacred ", devoted, and whether she be styled saint or sinner is, *sub specie aeternitatis*, a matter of point of view. To say that she is " quite innocent " is only the divine obverse of the world's verdict of utterly guilty.

It is upon this profound paradox, this mystery of sanctity, that Shaw fell when he chose, in the tale of Joan, the theme of sanctity and sacrifice. He is plainly often out of his depth ; he fumbles his way through this " wood beyond the world " by sheer blind genius. Perhaps, as Professor Jung would say, he taps some " collective consciousness " in the sudden surprising

insight of the Inquisitor's "Oh, quite innocent". Enough that he has broken through into a timeless world for a moment. That he cannot abide there is but to say that he is mortal. He shrinks behind the mask of the buffoon : "*Procul, o, procul este profani.*"

Yet the underlying motif of the play, and particularly of the VIth Scene, is indeed this tremendous theme of sanctity and sacrifice, however conscious Shaw may or may not have been of the fact. And it is significant that this was, from him, the first-fruits of the sacrificial war-years. Thus this VIth Scene has a curious clairvoyance ; it is as though the author were subject to a consciousness more majestic than his own. Here the cosmic sacrifice is consummated again and, for a moment, the mummery and the mockery are stilled. Before Joan is led to the fire, the Inquisitor, the spokesman of Eternity, has already "sacrificed" her, made her "*sacra*", holy, devoted. And, obscurely, she knows it and is glad. Her spirit, veiled in reeling mind and will, sings to the salutation of death, leaps forth to meet the "cleanness of death" rejoicing. She knows not why, yet this speech with which she repudiates her recantation is a pæan of triumph and exultation with which the Inquisitor who, in a moment, must condemn her to an agonizing death, joins in a terrible and silent antiphony. In a flash, in a glance, these polar opposites, these extremes of sanctity, meet and fuse. In that flash and fusion Joan the Maid dies ; she is dead before they lead her to the stake ; St. Joan is born, and Lemaître knows that his work is done, that, he too, may "depart in peace".

Such an examination of the play seems to reveal

an exercise in essential Christianity by a modern and much emancipated mind of vital significance for a modern theology; it is perhaps not the least of its significance that in its high and halting guess at the mystery of the λύσις or "resurrection" life, an apprehension plainly puritan in bias meets on these deeper levels, and mates with the Catholic comprehension of Christian reality.

IX

THE GENTILE AND THE JEW

" Be it known unto you," said Paul to his Roman Jews, " that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it." The saying, in the whirligig of history, rings as true now as then. The " Gentile " man and woman of the world are as manifestly ripe for " the salvation of God " as they are repelled by the religion of the " religious ".

The *mise en scène*, the grouping of sociological and cultural elements in our world is curiously like that of the first century—a " Gentile " majority for whom, for one reason or another, whether or not they pay a superficial and perfunctory allegiance to established religious custom, Christianity seems a remote and unreal mystery, a comparatively small minority of the congenitally or traditionally " religious ", the " Jews " of our day, and, in the flux, floating and as yet unattached germ-cells of a renascent religious sense, freed from and untainted by the fixations of ecclesiasticism and traditional theology. Although each is seen to be feverishly seeking after " reality " from opposed poles, the contrast and psychological clash between " Jew " and " Gentile " becomes ever more pronounced.

This dichotomy of men, on a religious analysis, into "Jew" and "Gentile", is as old as religion. The dividing line is the "Law", that customary form into which the original life of religion crystallizes. The "Jew" lives within the pale of that "Law"; the "Gentiles" are, for him, however charitably he may look upon their alien status, the "lesser breeds without the law". A mist of antipathy ever tending to thicken into antagonism and suspicion, often unrecognized but very real, broods and abides between them.

The "Law" which breeds the "Jew" is of many varieties, a political, artistic, ethical or religious legalism, a constitution, a canon of criticism, a "code of good form", a "Law of God", but to the "Jew", whatever form his "Law" may assume, that "Law" is life; within its limits he lives and moves and has his being. He thinks, feels, sees and judges in the terms of it. It is an invisible and invariable standard in his mind, a rigid frame within which alone he can perceive life. And legalism outlives the Law. The fixed habit of mind and vision which such "Law" engenders long survives it; the legalist mode of mind lives on in those for whom the "Law" whence it derived no longer runs.

Thus the "Jew" is, for better or worse, at one remove from that raw life which he has tamed into the terms of his "Law". He lives within a "fenced city"; he is a settled citizen in life whose life-purpose it is to defend, to develop and to cultivate his inheritance, that parcel of life which his "Law" encircles and fortifies.

But the "Gentiles", those "without the Law",

both unfettered and unfortified by law, are a nomad race, their base in life undetermined, their frontiers undefined, their coasts undefended by any fixed faith, their pride the desert freedom, their zest assault upon the settlers. The "Gentile" nomad at once despises and covets, and yet cannot comprehend the life, language, and law of the "Jews" in their strong and stifling habitations. He walks through their ways, like a Bedouin in a bazaar, wondering, bewildered, desirous, and scornful; but he will not easily be tempted to lie down within those walls of law.

In static times, when the Law, whatever its form may be, is dominant and strong, the majority are "Jews"; in times of disruption such as our own, there is a constant secession from within those walls of law to the "Gentile" wilderness without, and within the walls the wafted infection of lawlessness breeds bigots and waverers.

In the religious life of to-day, what the "Law" was to the Jew of the time of Jesus, a certain traditionally Christian habit of mind would seem to be to the modern man. That habit of mind and life has suffered the ever-deepening corrosion of three centuries of scepticism, till, with the final break-up of the Victorian age, it has become a city of life growing more and more derelict and deserted. With every generation fewer are born within its confines and more find its language and outlook upon life incomprehensible and its atmosphere unbreathable. For such the very terminology of traditional Christianity is increasingly a foreign tongue and its mode of thought remote and curious.

It would seem, however, that this religious atmosphere which is so alien and suffocating to the " Gentile " is rather the character which Christianity has assumed in the course of time than the life which Christianity is. It is not by Christ but by the Christian that the Gentile is " repelled ". It is the manner rather than the matter of Christianity which he cannot stomach, and beneath his quarrels with doctrine may often be sensed this more profound psychological aversion.

That aversion, or at least sense of foreignness, is most evident in the well-nigh impassable gulf which seems to sunder the official representative of established religion from the " Gentile ". The clerical voice, the clerical manner, the whole " religious " approach to life, the very language and accent of religion jar upon the " Gentile " with a vague unreality and offence. Real human intercourse or interchange of vital idea between the " parson " (however earnest and sincere he may be) and the " Gentile " (however fundamentally religious and liberal-minded he may be) is rare. The psychological barrier between them seems as opaque as that which once at least separated the sexes. On the entry into a " Gentile " company of either a woman or a clergyman of the old régime there are few " Gentiles " who do not immediately cease to be themselves.

While these intangible but intractable barriers remain the evangelistic efforts of the Churches fall, for the " Gentile ", upon deaf ears ; its preaching is, in the main, a preaching to the converted, to those in whose veins already runs the blood of the " Jew ".

There must be few ministers of the Church, eager to preach Christ and not yet tone-deaf to these undertones of feeling, and few "Gentile" men and women of the world, avid for real religion and yet subtly estranged from the missionaries and manner of religion, who are not strongly if vaguely conscious of this impalpable division and of their inability to dissipate it.

This antipathy between "Jew" and "Gentile" is, no doubt, in no small measure due to that interweaving between an established social order and an established religious order which seems to baffle the most anxious efforts to disentangle it; the reaction from the one seems unavoidably to involve the other, and it may be that only some very radical and drastic disestablishment could mend the breach at this point.

But the roots of difference seem to run deeper than this. It is a life-difference. The "Jew" and the "Gentile" are fundamentally at odds in their respective relations to life. The "Jew" is, as it were, fenced off from immediate contact with reality by the system or code of law with which his life is encircled, a system of thinking and feeling which, once supple, plastic and in vital contact with life, has grown set and formal. As his "Law", which once issued, a hot and living lava from immediate experience of life, sets and hardens with time, so he tends to become remote and shut-off from such immediate life-experience, and he to deny and his "Law" to obstruct the same life which, from age to age, pours forth its living lava in the present contact of men with reality.

It is a process exceedingly hard to prevent or

mitigate; the very virtues of the "Jewish" temperament enhance it. The legalist psychology persists with a formidable tenacity even amongst those who may be most conscious of it and most eager to rid themselves of its disablement and to recover a more immediate contact with life.

For the "Gentile", the psychological position is reversed. From whatever cause, he has never accepted or has become emancipated from the trammels of the "Law". So, in our twentieth century, the "Gentile" has shaken himself free in mind, as incumbent upon his obedience, from the laws, social, ethical, and religious, to which his Victorian forefathers submitted as of an absolute and unquestionable authority. However he may conform to it from expediency he no longer conforms to it as absolute law. He has gone forth into the desert of immediate, unmitigated, unregulated life-experience. His freedom is also his fatality, for he confronts life unfortified by any protecting code, "point of view" or system of ideas and behaviour which he can recognize as either absolute or impregnable.

Thus, while, for the "Jew", the test of religious truth is—does it tally with the Law?—for the "Gentile" it is rather—does it tally with life? Under such a criterion it is little to be marvelled at that the creeds and apologetic of modern Christianity often appear to the "Gentile" to be "vain, unutterably vain", a talk divorced (though he may find hard to say why) from life and reality as he knows it, the tough, unyielding, harsh, inexorable reality which he confronts in the "skin game" of life, which he meets

in the approach to reality of modern science, mechanics or mathematics, which he encounters, to his cost, in the war.

What, except for those for whom they have been re-related to reality, has the " blessed mutter of the mass ", the facile " release " and optimism of conversion-Christianity, the comely and comfortable decorum of " Middle Christianity ", to do with this fierce and frightening fact with which, day by day, he wages his mortal war ? In that cock-pit of reality the jargon of theology and the spiritualities of the pious seem a " tinkling cymbal " utterly remote from any reality which, in his life-wilderness, he has " proved upon his pulses ".

But, in his wilderness-life, the " Gentile " has not only learned to fear life ; he has also learned to love and respect it, the hot and heady life which leaps in his blood and in the rank, raw world about him, the " clean rigour of the game " of life, the tough, sinewy, unsentimental facts with which he tries his falls. And, in one way or another, this " religion-business " seems, whether explicitly or implicitly, to deny that life, offering some sentimental " other life ", some relaxed and exotic " other " mode of apprehension and attainment for that seasoned and athletic life which arms him for his private struggle. From the fierce life he has learned to fear, it seems a futile and contemptible " funk-hole ", from the life he loves a disloyalty.

That the " Gentile " is as prejudiced and irrational in his antagonism to what he deems to be religion, as is the " Jew " in his legalistic attitude towards life,

goes without saying. But, while this psychological antipathy exists, all the apologetics and "sweet reasonableness" of the Churches seem powerless to heal this deep-seated psychological schism. And, when the wound is probed, it seems that it is in this polar opposition in attitude towards life that the real root of it is to be found. The "Jew" will not or dare not go out into the wilderness of life beyond the "Great Wall" of his "Law"; the "Gentile" will not imprison himself within the walls of "Law" or credit that within those walls there may yet be a buried life.

The dichotomy of type which is indicated here is one which can be applied rigorously to no one individual; it cuts across individual as across social psychology. There is a "Jew" and a "Gentile" in every civilized modern with a religious sense, and in this respect also it may be said that our age is one of a divided consciousness. But it seems true to say that in every modern who has felt the current revulsion from traditional Christianity the "Gentile" mood is present and often predominant. In one way or another, whatever allegiance he may pay from some grudging sense of obligation or expediency to "Law", that "Law" irks him and consciously or semi-consciously he is in revolt against it. The "Jew" who not only submits to the "Law" but also finds in it his "delight" is a comparatively rare phenomenon to-day.

It has been suggested that the root of this psychological schism in our religious life is to be found in a maladjustment of both "Jew" and "Gentile" towards the greater life or reality which comprehends them both. The "Jew" can only find life in the

" Law " and the past, the " Gentile " in the present and the life of the lawless world. The remedy would seem to lie, therefore, in a fuller and more sacrificial return to a more real life on both sides, the Jew to that larger life which lies behind and beyond his " Law ", the " Gentile " to that more profound reality behind and beyond the engrossing " life " he knows. It is upon that remote common ground of reality and inmost life that alone these twain may meet.

Perhaps for each it may involve some such denudation from prejudice, preconception, and dogmatics, such an ascetic stripping of soul and yielding to a reality more ultimate and more universal than the " Law " of the " Jew " and to a Life more profound than the " life " of the " Gentile ", as the late Mr. W. B. Yeats suggested in a recent poem.

" Then my delivered soul herself shall learn
A darker knowledge and in hatred turn
From every thought of God mankind has had.
Thought is a garment and the soul's a bride
That cannot in such trash and tinsel hide.
In hating God she may creep close to God." [1]

Such is the searching and perhaps prophetic diagnosis of the " Gentile " mood of our time by a great poet. The " Gentile " of to-day has indeed turned " in hatred " from " every thought of God mankind has had " ; there seems indeed often to be far more hatred than mere intellectual dissent in that turning away. And, so hating the God of traditional religion he seems often enough to " creep close " to a God

[1] *Ribh conceives Christian Love Insufficient.*

and a Reality more real ; our literature teems with such tentative approaches towards religious reality.

Such a κενώσις of traditional life-attitudes, thought, and theology may be something of a pastime for the " Gentile " ; it is a passion for the " Jew ", a passion towards which many noble " Jews " are steadfastly setting their faces to-day. For them, since this " Law " is their life, it is a veritable losing of life to save it. It is a way which has been trodden before.

Beyond that denudation and mortification is, for both " Gentile " and " Jew ", the ultimate surrender to Reality, a surrender in which the sheltering " Life " of the " Gentile " and the " Law " of the " Jew " must be cast aside before a greater Life which subsumes them both. The great poet is sometimes also a great physician of the general soul ; Mr. Yeats went on to chant, in profoundly religious numbers, the sequel to such a shriving from the " trash and tinsel " of law and life.

" At stroke of midnight soul cannot endure
A bodily or mental furniture.
What can she take until her Master give !
Where can she look until He makes the show !
What can she know until He bids her know !
How can she live until He bids her live ! " [1]

Do we, in this night of our tribulation, near such a " stroke of midnight " ? Dare " Jew " or " Gentile " keep that tremendous tryst ? It is the tryst with Life, that greater Life which, each in their own fashion, both " Jew " and " Gentile " fear and evade, the Life which, for the Christian, is Christ.

[1] W. B. Yeats.

EPILOGUE

THIS book was completed and the Prologue to it written during the aftermath of the Munich crisis of 1938. It has been revised for publication when, nearly a year later, the long-drawn-out phase of "crisis" has finally culminated in catastrophe. Its contents seemed to offer to those who could accept its main argument, a certain very cogent wisdom for conditions of crisis; a re-reading suggests the need for a further gleaning of whatever "wisdom for the night" (to employ the Barthian phrase) these pages may contain for the phase of calamity and catastrophe upon which the world is evidently now embarked. Therefore this Epilogue is essayed.

In spite of the first strangely muted movement of the war it seems clear that it is now no longer a matter of expecting or remembering but of encountering chaos and catastrophe upon what will probably be an unprecedented scale. That element of catastrophe which is the "leitmotif" of this book and of the type of Christianity which it discusses is now neither a past nightmare to be forgotten nor a future menace which may yet be averted. "Chaos is come again"; we behold a "revolution of destruction" even now assaulting our civilization with gathering momentum and unpredictable might and on all hands "distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and waves roaring;

men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth ".

For those who have experienced the onset of a cyclone the menacing hush of this opening phase of war is ominously reminiscent of the terrifying stillness and unnatural arrest of motion which presages such a phenomenon. There seems, indeed, good reason to suppose that we are on the verge of the most mortal struggle in our history, of no mere conflict of opposing powers or groups of powers, but of an onslaught of chaos itself against our civilization.

The barbarian is at the gate and within the gate. Barbarian hordes mass upon every frontier and, within our walls there is already to be felt the subterranean stirrings of that other host of barbarians which, as Dean Inge once warned us, we ourselves have bred. The " revolution of destruction " moves from abroad and from within and already the structure of our civilization trembles under the impact.

It may be that once again it will survive the storm and that the forces of chaos will be again controlled ; to an unwishful observation it seems more probable that we are entering again upon a phase of history where

> " . . . eldest Night
> And Chaos, Ancestors of Nature, hold
> Eternal Anarchie, amidst the noise
> Of endless wars. . . ." [1]

Whatever the eventual issue, for the moment the slow and ponderous massing of these immense forces gives us still a brief breathing-space, but there seems

[1] Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book II.

all too good reason to suppose that before this book is in print the full force of the storm will be upon us.

It is thus as though in such a before-storm stillness and brazen eclipse light that, in this brief interlude, we may seek some " helmet of salvation " and " sword of the spirit " with which to encounter the " fiery darts " so soon to rain upon us.

For those for whom religion is reality the need is both urgent and real. For it is clear that this " revolution of destruction " will assail not only institutions but dogmas and ideas, that very soon few of the customary codes, systems, associations, and conventions within which the spirit of man has been wont to find shelter from elemental reality will remain standing and that only spirits equipped for the full rigours of disaster, storm, and solitude are likely to survive.

Moreover the conflict which impends upon us seems, for all the materialism and mechanism with which it is invested, to be fundamentally and to an almost unprecedented degree, a conflict of abstract principles and powers. It seems strangely true to-day that " we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers in high places ", with—

" . . . Tumult and Confusion all embroiled
And Discord with a thousand various mouths." [1]

This war has, indeed, a curiously apocalyptic character. It is almost as though we beheld some titanic conflict of elemental forces, dim gigantic forms as of demi-gods—

" Orcus and Ades, and the dreaded name of Demogorgon . . ." [2]

[1] id. [2] id.

looming in the darkness and confusion of the fighting. The real protagonists seem rather to be principles than persons, and " polar opposites " and contrary forces in human nature and politics than particular human or political foes. We label such opposing principles inadequately enough by such terms as those of totalitarianism, and democracy, authoritarianism and humanism, transcendence and immanence, but so fluid and undefined are these concepts that their strife is like a conflict of clouds.

It seems too as though all these opposing principles and ideas, all these minor conflicts were, in reality, but varying manifestations of a single dualism and of a single conflict, of that eternal " clash of contraries " whence is struck the spark of civilization, as though, like Titans, these forces were beyond our human categories and our good and evil, and as if neither of the opposing hosts in our mundane strife were strictly to be identified with either pole of this cosmic dualism.

For rarely have the ideal issues in war been so confused. The conflicting principles appear impartially in either camp until no soldier can be sure whether he fights for nationalism or for democracy, for Communism or for the anti-Comintern, for Christ or for Anti-Christ. The democrat turns totalitarian, the Nazi Communist and the Communist Imperialist till he who must fight can be sure only that he fights because he must or to defend his kith and kin and his hearth and home against this unparticularized " destructive element " which, once at large, threatens all men equally.

It seems, in fact, as though, at all events in this

initial phase of war, we confront not so much any determined conflict as chaos itself, as though that co-ordination of the contraries of our being which we call civilization were collapsing and some such titanic and primordial conflict of elements, long quiescent and subdued, had been suddenly unleashed.

Such a reading of the contemporary situation, when seen in the light of the " existential " and " catastrophic " Christianity outlined in this book, suggests certain conclusions and a certain attitude and discipline of mind and spirit to those who perceive and feel in this fashion.

It is, perhaps, characteristic of the paradox of such a conception that a " full look at the Worst " in such a light seems, at the first, to wring comfort of spirit from disaster. For he who believes that Christianity is essentially catastrophic, however in his " mortal frailty " he may recoil from the contact, will not, in spirit, be dismayed when catastrophe comes upon him. Rather he will rejoice, for he will know that he has passed from the tempo of time to that of eternity.

" When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh."

Again, the Christ Who, so he believes, was conceived and crucified in catastrophe, will seem more near to him in chaos than in the comforts and security of civilization and more visible to him in the " light of eclipse " than in that of our " common day ".

Moreover, since he believes that the essential conflict is beyond our human good and evil and the real issues as yet beyond human judgment, and that

the scope of his personal decision, if indeed any choice remains to him, is not, therefore, some mighty and debatable issue, but simply whether or not he must fight in defence of his folk and his "*lares*" and "*penates*", in that degree his action will be simplified and his spirit and will set free for a deeper decision and a profounder sacrifice. He who serves not because, in some agony of choice, he chooses to do so, but because he must, is saved from much "expense of spirit in a waste of shame".

Where there is no choice it is an easier task to "accept one's conditions". The first step is made without individual volition, however arduous and exacting may be that fuller and inward acceptance which can alone give freedom from the bondage of those conditions.

If he is satisfied, moreover, that the conflict in which, by no act of volition of his own, he is embroiled, is one which, by his own act and effort, he can neither prevent nor control and in which no great or coherent issue comprehensible by man has yet emerged, he will be released from the agony of mind which seeks to comprehend the incomprehensible and of a will cleft by some irreconcilable clash of loyalties.

It will, in fact, be possible for him to regain something of the singlemindedness and simplicity of the soldier, like Lear cleansed by calamity and the "pitiless elements", to recover, if he will, the simple reactions to life of unsophisticated souls, taste again the sweetness of an uncomplicated courage and compassion, carry, if he can conceive it, his own inner peace into the battle, and find, in a servitude

so absolute that it were idle to resent it and so stupid that, within its limits, a mind and spirit over-strained by an unchartered freedom may find an unwonted ease, a summary cure for that divided consciousness which, under civilized conditions, seemed so incurable and a leisure of mind and spirit which the exactions of civilized existence seem so implacably to deny. It would seem, indeed, as though the standardization and servitude of totalitarianism and the mechanism of modern war which enslave the body and the mechanic mind can, under certain conditions, and if accepted in a certain spirit, set free the soul.

So far the premises that Christianity is essentially catastrophic and this war essentially a conflict of elemental contraries transcending our categories seem to lead those who can accept them to curiously consoling conclusions. In catastrophe such spirits may find themselves more at home than in civilization ; in chaos they may come more close to Christ than in security ; in war they may secure a peace of spirit which the conditions of an armed peace oppose ; in servitude to a state they may find freedom of spirit.

But between the possibility of such an attitude and its real acceptance as a life-attitude by a constantly reiterated act of decision and will there is a " great gulf fixed " ; it is only to be bridged by agony and mortification, for each several acceptance of such conditions and each act of will and decision will be a little death.

For he may not drug his consciousness into any oblivion as to what it is he accepts or what he does ;

rather, if he is to fulfil his sacrifice he must go to the altar with a heightened and intensified awareness; it is a "living" sacrifice which such a faith requires. To accept an apparently futile subjection to a monstrous machine which we can but abhor, to subdue the "god-like reason" to standardized stupidity, cultivated discrimination to a colossal crudity, bestiality, and violence, to be content to be no more than a pawn in the play of impersonal forces, to subdue the shudderings of the spirit, the repulsion of the mind, the revulsion of the heart, to quit the warm and familiar habitations of custom and decency, to give oneself in full consciousness to this roaring tide of death and destruction, is to accept a death of self, of individual pride and will, of individuality itself in blind faith in some rebirth of righteousness, personality, and spirit beyond that death for which the intelligence can give no warrant. It is to know in fact, it is to go forth to meet that horror which Kierkegaard has called "dread and trembling" in a form made concrete by catastrophe.

The metaphorical and the actual seem to meet. For the catastrophe which has come upon us so reduces the phenomena of that world of spiritual reality of which Barth and Kierkegaard prophesied to the level of concrete reality that such enunciations of spiritual law as that of Barth's "leap in the dark" or Kierkegaard's "first death, then life", assume an immediate and almost physical meaning in relation to the conditions with which catastrophe confronts us. Thus at the climax of our materialism the veil between spiritual and material reality seems to grow more

and more transparent and our twentieth century modernity, from which the high gods seem for ever to have gone, to become an apocalyptic arena for the strife of powers more mighty than mankind.

For those who thus envisage Christianity and our conditions, the " leap in the dark ", the " sacrifice ", the " death " which such a faith demand are not far to seek. Such a view would seem also to have a further implication. Since the essential conflict is believed to be beyond the measure of man's mind, those of this persuasion will seek neither to judge the immediate and ostensible issues nor to predict nor seek to control that co-ordination which, they will devoutly believe, will emerge from the conflict in God's time. For to such a vision, it is no less a blasphemous folly and impiety to seek to create some humanist co-ordination of those contraries, philosophical, dogmatic, political or ethical, from past experience or present " taking of thought " as to suppose that such a birth will be of man's begetting. They will rather, in humility of mind and awe, await as a divine event that re-co-ordination of our conflicting contraries of which faith will be assured, and prepare the way for an advent which they will know that man cannot himself beget.

Such an attitude may seem to imply a mere abnegation of effort or some desperate denial of thought. It is not so ; for though such an " existential " Christianity will know that creation is of God and from God alone, it will know also that it is not in passive but in active human brains, wills, and bodies that celestial vigour will find vent, that, though man

is not the architect of fate, he may and should be a "journeyman-builder" of the Kingdom of God, that it is through man's thought, imagination, and effort at their utmost intensity that God thinks, acts, and creates. It is for him rather so to dedicate himself, so to surrender his spirit that the power of God may work in and through his being without impediment.

The creed of a Christianity thus re-cast in catastrophe seems to fall into some such aphoristic form as this. The climate of Christian reality, as of Christ, is a climate of catastrophe. Our own lives are themselves termed with the catastrophes of birth and death. Mortal being is an antiphony of strophe and anti-strophe; catastrophe, the rhythm of eternity, strikes athwart that mortal with an immortal music. In catastrophe Christ is close and eternity contains time. Then welcome catastrophe!

The Cross, like our life, is a dualism, a clash of contraries; unlike our life it is also a co-ordination of those contraries. Therefore, when consciousness is crucified upon circumstance, give praise!

Simplicity and spontaneity lie both behind and before our complex consciousness. To sigh for the naïve simplicities and harmony of Eden or Athens is an infantilism of the spirit; to foresee through storm the co-ordination of our contraries in Christ, that dawn beyond death, is the essential Christian faith.

Save as the breaking and broken womb of a "new life" human nature is damnable and futile. Only in travail and agony is life delivered; only in conflict, in the clash of contraries, is the "new man" born. The simplicity and spontaneity of Christ flowered

from a tension and travail more terrible than any which we can either conceive or endure. Then welcome tension and travail, and when the pains of that " new birth " come upon you, rejoice !

When we are void we can be filled, when we are abased exalted, when we are confounded and stultified made wise, when we are most alive become an " acceptable " and a " living sacrifice ", when we are sacrificed sanctified. Christ was so sacrificed ; Christ lives. Then welcome sacrifice !

Only when we dare to be utterly alone can we know the One beyond all being and, having known, never be alone again. Then cherish loneliness !

God loves the lost. Is it then so great a woe to be lost in life ?

Misery is near to mystery ; in mystery God conceals Himself. Only he who can conceive God can know despair. Then entertain misery and despair for these are His angels !

In the inexorable sequence of spiritual reality only after suffering comes salvation, only after disintegration reintegration, only after conflict co-ordination, only after death life. Then welcome suffering, disintegration, conflict, and death !

Of some such kind, of such a courage, such a challenge seems to be that " existential " and " catastrophic " Christianity which this book has explored and with which it confronts the catastrophe with which we are confronted to-day. It offers no " smooth " prophecy, no easy optimism or comfortable compromise with catastrophe, no escape from but rather an absolute acceptance of suffering, destruction,

and death. This is no easy armour for the spirit to endue; it is a "sword of the spirit" which will pierce "our own hearts also". For such a Christianity, as Kierkegaard has said, "to be a Christian means to be sacrificed" indeed.

Nor does such a view envisage any swift, cheap or easy peace, any co-ordination likely to be struck from conflict till the heat of it grows more fierce than we can yet conceive, any real λύσις till the conflict which has only now commenced has run its full and unimaginable course.

It has been said that, in this strange scene now unrolling before our eyes, allegory and actuality seem curiously interchangeable. To such a contemplation of the tragic catastrophe to which we are come the immortal epic of the second Aenead, in its absolute acceptance of tragedy, in its realization of so similar, so apparently no less futile and ruthless a calamity, in its horror, agony, and sacrificial suffering, and in its last soaring guess at that which dawns for faithful spirits "beyond the tragic climax", seems a peculiarly significant and illuminating allegory of the agony of our age and of the catharsis of such a Christianity.

"Venit summa dies et ineluctabile tempus."

The ultimate day and the inexorable hour has come. Ilium (that high citadel of the beauty and majesty of our civilization?) seems once again about to fall betrayed by foolish lies, self-led into our shrines, our royalty—

"tot quondam populis terrisque superbus"

—once proudly lord of so many folks and lands, to

be laid low on its own high places and in the blood of its own sons, and the glory of our world to pass in ruin and fire. Even the lovely life of simple loves and affections grows ghostly and unreal, no more than a lamentable phantasm and shadow of that warm life and love which was once so real.

" Infelix simulacrum atque ipsius umbra Creusae "

Before that loss of the dear life of home and love the reason shakes and the spirit groans in vain—

" nequiquam ingeminans iterumque iterumque vocavi."

Yet, if the searching significance of this immortal allegory of all high tragedy is to be exhausted, its finale seems to convey an even more poignant meaning for our distress with its faint and far hint of a peace " not of this world " and a co-ordination to come. For, the uttermost toll of tragedy paid to the full, then, and only then, a dim and unearthly star-light trembles through the gloom. A Day-Star has arisen ; a new dawn is at hand :—

" iamque iugis summae surgebat Lucifer Idae
ducebatque diem . . ."

Aeneas (the spirit of man ?) bearing with him the relics of his lost life and of that " *pietas* ", that faith which survives all tragedy for the faithful, leading an infant future (" *non passibus aequis* "), moves towards the heights on his " adventure strange and new ", guided by a star.

The allegory has been deliberately elaborated, for in that vision of dawn beyond death, of λύσις " beyond the tragic climax ", of co-ordination beyond

the clash of contraries, so exquisitely wrought by so strangely Christian a spirit ("*anima naturaliter Christiana*"), the deeper wisdom of many centuries, cultures, and creeds, as of the type of Christianity considered here, seems to meet in a profound and single apprehension of that which lies "beyond the tragic climax" of life for those who "endure to the end".

Virgil's day-star dawning over the ruins of Troy, Karl Barth's "horizon light" of resurrection, that "bright and morning star" promised by "the Spirit" in the Book of Revelations to him "that overcometh", that "fire" through which Joan goes "to His bosom", the "terrible crystal" of Ezekiel, "stretched forth over their heads above," seem to be essentially of the same celestial order. It is to be observed that all these conceptions alike are that which an extreme tribulation and tragedy poignantly and utterly experienced have deposited in the imagination of the seer.

Such a "terrible crystal" is the hidden and lambent core of Christianity. Like crystal it is hidden deep and only to be found by those who will dig deep; like crystal it is formed by cataclysm and central fires; like crystal it gathers into an icy unity and a gem-like transparence all the colour and fire of life; like crystal it concentrates and irradiates light; like crystal it endures. In that only those who have looked upon tragedy can dare to behold it, it is "terrible" to uninitiated eyes. In that "white stone" those upon whom tragedy and catastrophe are come may find their cure and their redemption.

For it has been forged in tragedy and calcined in catastrophe.

Here then, in this " terrible crystal " of a central and catastrophic Christianity, is the ultimate and redeeming wisdom offered to those upon whom " all the ends of the world are come ".

" He that hath eyes to see, let him see."

December, 1939.

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