



God of the Heart

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FROM GOD TO GOD

To affirm that the religious sense is a sense of divinity and that it is impossible without some abuse of the ordinary usages of human language to speak of an atheistic religion, is not, I think, to do violence to the truth; although it is clear that everything will depend upon the concept that we form of God, a concept which in its turn depends upon the concept of divinity.

Our proper procedure, in effect, will be to begin with this sense of divinity, before prefixing to the concept of this quality the definite article and the capital letter and so converting it into “the Divinity”—that is, into God. For man has not deduced the divine from God, but rather he has reached God through the divine.

In the course of these somewhat wandering but at the same time urgent reflections upon the tragic sense of life, I have already alluded to the *timor fecit deos* of Statius with the object of limiting and correcting it. It is not my intention to trace yet once again the historical processes by which peoples have arrived at the consciousness and concept of a personal God like the God of Christianity. And I say peoples and not isolated individuals, for if there is any feeling or concept that is truly collective and social it is the feeling and concept of God, although the individual subsequently individualizes it. Philosophy may, and in fact does, possess an individual origin; theology is necessarily collective.

Schleiermacher’s theory, which attributes the origin, or rather the essence, of the religious sense to the immediate and simple feeling of dependency, appears to be the most profound and exact explanation. Primitive man, living in society, feels himself to be dependent upon the mysterious forces invisibly environing him; he feels himself to be in social communion, not only with beings like himself, his fellow-men, but with the whole of Nature, animate and inanimate, which simply means, in other words, that he personalizes everything. Not only does he possess a consciousness of the world, but he imagines that the world, like himself, possesses consciousness also. Just as a child talks to his doll or his dog as if it understood what he was saying, so the savage believes that his fetich hears him when he speaks to it, and that the angry storm-cloud is aware of him and deliberately pursues him. For the newly born mind of the primitive natural man has not yet wholly severed itself from the cords which still bind it to the womb of Nature, neither has it clearly marked out the boundary that separates dreaming from waking, imagination from reality.

The divine, therefore, was not originally something objective, but was rather the subjectivity of consciousness projected exteriorly, the personalization of the world. The concept of divinity arose out of the feeling of divinity, and the feeling of divinity is simply the dim and nascent feeling of personality vented upon the outside world. And strictly speaking it is not possible to speak of outside and inside, objective and subjective, when no such distinction was actually

felt; indeed it is precisely from this lack of distinction that the feeling and concept of divinity proceed. The clearer our consciousness of the distinction between the objective and the subjective, the more obscure is the feeling of divinity in us.

It has been said, and very justly so it would appear, that Hellenic paganism was not so much polytheistic as pantheistic. I do not know that the belief in a multitude of gods, taking the concept of God in the sense in which we understand it to-day, has ever really existed in any human mind. And if by pantheism is understood the doctrine, not that everything and each individual thing is God—a proposition which I find unthinkable—but that everything is divine, then it may be said without any great abuse of language that paganism was pantheistic. Its gods not only mixed among men but intermixed with them; they begat gods upon mortal women and upon goddesses mortal men begat demi-gods. And if demi-gods, that is, demi-men, were believed to exist, it was because the divine and the human were viewed as different aspects of the same reality. The divinization of everything was simply its humanization. To say that the sun was a god was equivalent to saying that it was a man, a human consciousness, more or less, aggrandized and sublimated. And this is true of all beliefs from fetichism to Hellenic paganism.

The real distinction between gods and men consisted in the fact that the former were immortal. A god came to be identical with an immortal man and a man was deified, reputed as a god, when it was deemed that at his death he had not really died. Of certain heroes it was believed that they were alive in the kingdom of the dead. And this is a point of great importance in estimating the value of the concept of the divine.

In those republics of gods there was always some predominating god, some real monarch. It was through the agency of this divine monarchy that primitive peoples were led from monocultism to monotheism. Hence monarchy and monotheism are twin brethren. Zeus, Jupiter, was in process of being converted into an only god, just as Jahwé originally one god among many others, came to be converted into an only god, first the god of the people of Israel, then the god of humanity, and finally the god of the whole universe.

Like monarchy, monotheism had a martial origin. “It is only on the march and in time of war,” says Robertson Smith in *The Prophets of Israel*,¹ “that a nomad people feels any urgent need of a central authority, and so it came about that in the first beginnings of national organization, centring in the sanctuary of the ark, Israel was thought of mainly as the host of Jehovah. The very name of Israel is martial, and means ‘God (*El*) fighteth,’ and Jehovah in the Old Testament is Iahwè Çebäôth—the Jehovah of the armies of Israel. It was on the battlefield that Jehovah’s presence was most clearly realized; but in primitive nations the leader in time of war is also the natural judge in time of peace.”

God, the only God, issued, therefore, from man’s sense of divinity as a warlike, monarchical and social God. He revealed himself to the people as a whole, not to the individual. He was the God of a people and he jealously exacted that worship should be rendered to him alone. The transition from this monocultism to monotheism was effected largely by the individual action, more philosophical perhaps than theological, of the prophets. It was, in fact, the individual activity of the prophets that individualized the divinity. And above all by making the divinity ethical.

Subsequently reason—that is, philosophy—took possession of this God who had arisen in the human consciousness as a consequence of the sense of divinity in man, and tended to define him and convert him into an idea. For to define a thing is to idealize it, a process which necessitates the abstraction from it of its incommensurable or irrational element, its vital essence. Thus the God of feeling, the divinity felt as a unique person and consciousness external to us, although at the same time enveloping and sustaining us, was converted into the idea of God.

The logical, rational God, the *ens summum*, the *primum movens*, the Supreme Being of theological philosophy, the God who is reached by the three famous ways of negation, eminence and causality, *viæ negationis*, *eminentiæ*, *causalitatis*, is nothing but an idea of God, a dead thing. The traditional and much debated proofs of his existence are, at bottom, merely a vain attempt to determine his essence; for as Vinet has very well observed, existence is deduced from essence; and to say that God exists, without saying what God is and how he is, is equivalent to saying nothing at all.

And this God, arrived at by the methods of eminence and negation or abstraction of finite qualities, ends by becoming an unthinkable God, a pure idea, a God of whom, by the very fact of his ideal excellence, we can say that he is nothing, as indeed he has been defined by Scotus Erigena: *Deus propter excellentiam non inmerito nihil vocatur*. Or in the words of the pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, in his fifth Epistle, "The divine darkness is the inaccessible light in which God is said to dwell." The anthropomorphic God, the God who is felt, in being purified of human, and as such finite, relative and temporal, attributes, evaporates into the God of deism or of pantheism.

The traditional so-called proofs of the existence of God all refer to this God-Idea, to this logical God, the God by abstraction, and hence they really prove nothing, or rather, they prove nothing more than the existence of this idea of God.

In my early youth, when first I began to be puzzled by these eternal problems, I read in a book, the author of which I have no wish to recall,² this sentence: "God is the great X placed over the ultimate barrier of human knowledge; in the measure in which science advances, the barrier recedes." And I wrote in the margin, "On this side of the barrier, everything is explained without Him; on the further side, nothing is explained, either with Him or without Him; God therefore is superfluous." And so far as concerns the God-Idea, the God of the proofs, I continue to be of the same opinion. Laplace is said to have stated that he had not found the hypothesis of God necessary in order to construct his scheme of the origin of the Universe, and it is very true. In no way whatever does the idea of God help us to understand better the existence, the essence and the finality of the Universe.

That there is a Supreme Being, infinite, absolute and eternal, whose existence is unknown to us, and who has created the Universe, is not more conceivable than that the material basis of the Universe itself, its matter, is eternal and infinite and absolute. We do not understand the existence of the world one whit the better by telling ourselves that God created it. It is a begging of the question, or a merely verbal solution, intended to cover up our ignorance. In strict truth, we deduce the existence of the Creator from the fact that the thing created exists, a process which does not justify rationally His existence. You cannot deduce a necessity from a fact, or else everything were necessary.

And if from the nature of the Universe we pass to what is called its order, which is supposed to necessitate an Ordainer, we may say that order is what there is, and we do not conceive of any other. This deduction of God's existence from the order of the Universe implies a transition from the ideal to the real order, an outward projection of our mind, a supposition that the rational explanation of a thing produces the thing itself. Human art, instructed by Nature, possesses a conscious creative faculty, by means of which it apprehends the process of creation, and we proceed to transfer this conscious and artistic creative faculty to the consciousness of an artist-creator, but from what nature he in his turn learnt his art we cannot tell.

The traditional analogy of the watch and the watchmaker is inapplicable to a Being absolute, infinite and eternal. It is, moreover, only another way of explaining nothing. For to say that the world is as it is and not otherwise because God made it so, while at the same time we do not know for what reason He made it so, is to say nothing. And if we knew for what reason God made it

so, then God is superfluous and the reason itself suffices. If everything were mathematics, if there were no irrational element, we should not have had recourse to this explanatory theory of a Supreme Ordainer, who is nothing but the reason of the irrational, and so merely another cloak for our ignorance. And let us not discuss here that absurd proposition that, if all the type in a printing-press were printed at random, the result could not possibly be the composition of *Don Quixote*. Something would be composed which would be as good as *Don Quixote* for those who would have to be content with it and would grow in it and would form part of it.

In effect, this traditional supposed proof of God's existence resolves itself fundamentally into hypostatizing or substantivating the explanation or reason of a phenomenon; it amounts to saying that Mechanics is the cause of movement, Biology of life, Philology of language, Chemistry of bodies, by simply adding the capital letter to the science and converting it into a force distinct from the phenomena from which we derive it and distinct from our mind which effects the derivation. But the God who is the result of this process, a God who is nothing but reason hypostatized and projected towards the infinite, cannot possibly be felt as something living and real, nor yet be conceived of save as a mere idea which will die with us.

The question arises, on the other hand, whether a thing the idea of which has been conceived but which has no real existence, does not exist because God wills that it should not exist, or whether God does not will it to exist because, in fact, it does not exist; and, with regard to the impossible, whether a thing is impossible because God wills it so, or whether God wills it so because, in itself and by the very fact of its own inherent absurdity, it is impossible. God has to submit to the logical law of contradiction, and He cannot, according to the theologians, cause two and two to make either more or less than four. Either the law of necessity is above Him or He Himself is the law of necessity. And in the moral order the question arises whether falsehood, or homicide, or adultery, are wrong because He has so decreed it, or whether He has so decreed it because they are wrong. If the former, then God is a capricious and unreasonable God, who decrees one law when He might equally well have decreed another, or, if the latter, He obeys an intrinsic nature and essence which exists in things themselves independently of Him—that is to say, independently of His sovereign will; and if this is the case, if He obeys the innate reason of things, this reason, if we could but know it, would suffice us without any further need of God, and since we do not know it, God explains nothing. This reason would be above God. Neither is it of any avail to say that this reason is God Himself, the supreme reason of things. A reason of this kind, a necessary reason, is not a personal something. It is will that gives personality. And it is because of this problem of the relations between God's reason, necessarily necessary, and His will, necessarily free, that the logical and Aristotelian God will always be a contradictory God.

The scholastic theologians never succeeded in disentangling themselves from the difficulties in which they found themselves involved when they attempted to reconcile human liberty with divine prescience and with the knowledge that God possesses of the free and contingent future; and that is strictly the reason why the rational God is wholly inapplicable to the contingent, for the notion of contingency is fundamentally the same as the notion of irrationality. The rational God is necessarily necessary in His being and in His working; in every single case He cannot do other than the best, and a number of different things cannot all equally be the best, for among infinite possibilities there is only one that is best accommodated to its end, just as among the infinite number of lines that can be drawn from one point to another, there is only one straight line. And the rational God, the God of reason, cannot but follow in each case the straight line, the line that leads most directly to the end proposed, a necessary end, just as the only straight line that leads to it is a necessary line. And thus for the divinity of God is substituted His necessity. And in the necessity of God, His free will—that is to say, His conscious personality—perishes.

The God of our heart's desire, the God who shall save our soul from nothingness, must needs be an arbitrary God.

Not because He thinks can God be God, but because He works, because He creates; He is not a contemplative but an active God. A God-Reason, a theoretical or contemplative God, such as is this God of theological rationalism, is a God that is diluted in His own contemplation. With this God corresponds, as we shall see, the beatific vision, understood as the supreme expression of human felicity. A quietist God, in short, as reason, by its very essence, is quietist.

There remains the other famous proof of God's existence, that of the supposed unanimous consent in a belief in Him among all peoples. But this proof is not strictly rational, neither is it an argument in favour of the rational God who explains the Universe, but of the God of the heart, who makes us live. We should be justified in calling it a rational proof only on the supposition that we believed that reason was identical with a more or less unanimous agreement among all peoples, that it corresponded with the verdict of a universal suffrage, only on the supposition that we held that *vox populi*, which is said to be *vox Dei*, was actually the voice of reason.

Such was, indeed, the belief of Lamennais, that tragic and ardent spirit, who affirmed that life and truth were essentially one and the same thing—would that they were!—and that reason was one, universal, everlasting and holy (*Essai sur l'indifférence*, partie iv., chap. viii.). He invoked the *aut omnibus credendum est aut nemini* of Lactantius—we must believe all or none—and the saying of Heraclitus that every individual opinion is fallible, and that of Aristotle that the strongest proof consists in the general agreement of mankind, and above all that of Pliny (*Paneg. Trajani*, lxii.), to the effect that one man cannot deceive all men or be deceived by all—*nemo omnes, neminem omnes fefellerunt*. Would that it were so! And so he concludes with the dictum of Cicero (*De natura deorum*, lib. iii., cap. ii., 5 and 6), that we must believe the tradition of our ancestors even though they fail to render us a reason—*maioribus autem nostris, etiam nulla ratione reddita credere*.

Let us suppose that this belief of the ancients in the divine interpenetration of the whole of Nature is universal and constant, and that it is, as Aristotle calls it, an ancestral dogma (*πατριος δοξα*) (*Metaphysica*, lib. vii., cap. vii.); this would prove only that there is a motive impelling peoples and individuals—that is to say, all or almost all or a majority of them—to believe in a God. But may it not be that there are illusions and fallacies rooted in human nature itself? Do not all peoples begin by believing that the sun turns round the earth? And do we not all naturally incline to believe that which satisfies our desires? Shall we say with Hermann³ that, “if there is a God, He has not left us without some indication of Himself, and if it is His will that we should find Him.”

A pious desire, no doubt, but we cannot strictly call it a reason, unless we apply to it the Augustinian sentence, but which again is not a reason, “Since thou seekest Me, it must be that thou hast found Me,” believing that God is the cause of our seeking Him.

This famous argument from the supposed unanimity of mankind's belief in God, the argument which with a sure instinct was seized upon by the ancients, is in its essence identical with the so-called moral proof which Kant employed in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, transposing its application from mankind collectively to the individual, the proof which he derives from our conscience, or rather from our feeling of divinity. It is not a proof strictly or specifically rational, but vital; it cannot be applied to the logical God, the *ens summum*, the essentially simple and abstract Being, the immobile and impassible prime mover, the God-Reason, in a word, but to the biotic God, to the Being essentially complex and concrete, to the suffering God who suffers and desires in us and with us, to the Father of Christ who is only to be approached through Man, through His Son (John xiv. 6), and whose revelation is historical, or if you like, anecdotal, but not philosophical or categorical.

The unanimous consent of mankind (let us suppose the unanimity) or, in other words, this universal longing of all human souls who have arrived at the consciousness of their humanity, which desires to be the end and meaning of the Universe, this longing, which is nothing but that very essence of the soul which consists in its effort to persist eternally and without a break in the continuity of consciousness, leads us to the human, anthropomorphic God, the projection of our consciousness to the Consciousness of the Universe; it leads us to the God who confers human meaning and finality upon the Universe and who is not the *ens summum*, the *primum movens*, nor the Creator of the Universe, nor merely the Idea-God. It leads us to the living, subjective God, for He is simply subjectivity objectified or personality universalized—He is more than a mere idea, and He is will rather than reason. God is Love—that is, Will. Reason, the Word, derives from Him, but He, the Father, is, above all, Will.

“There can be no doubt whatever,” Ritschl says (*Rechtfertigung und Versöhnung*, iii., chap. v.), “that a very imperfect view was taken of God’s spiritual personality in the older theology, when the functions of knowing and willing alone were employed to illustrate it. Religious thought plainly ascribes to God affections of feeling as well. The older theology, however, laboured under the impression that feeling and emotion were characteristic only of limited and created personality; it transformed, e.g., the religious idea of the Divine blessedness into eternal self-knowledge, and that of the Divine wrath into a fixed purpose to punish sin.” Yes, this logical God, arrived at by the *via negationis*, was a God who, strictly speaking, neither loved nor hated, because He neither enjoyed nor suffered, an inhuman God, and His justice was a rational or mathematical justice—that is, an injustice.

The attributes of the living God, of the Father of Christ, must be deduced from His historical revelation in the Gospel and in the conscience of every Christian believer, and not from metaphysical reasonings which lead only to the Nothing-God of Scotus Erigena, to the rational or pantheistic God, to the atheist God—in short, to the de-personalized Divinity.

Not by the way of reason, but only by the way of love and of suffering, do we come to the living God, the human God. Reason rather separates us from Him. We cannot first know Him in order that afterwards we may love Him; we must begin by loving Him, longing for Him, hungering after Him, before knowing Him. The knowledge of God proceeds from the love of God, and this knowledge has little or nothing of the rational in it. For God is indefinable. To seek to define Him is to seek to confine Him within the limits of our mind—that is to say, to kill Him. In so far as we attempt to define Him, there rises up before us—Nothingness.

The idea of God, formulated by a theodicy that claims to be rational, is simply an hypothesis, like the hypotheses of ether, for example.

Ether is, in effect, a merely hypothetical entity, valuable only in so far as it explains that which by means of it we endeavour to explain—light, electricity or universal gravitation—and only in so far as these facts cannot be explained in any other way. In like manner the idea of God is also an hypothesis, valuable only in so far as it enables us to explain that which by means of it we endeavour to explain—the essence and existence of the Universe—and only so long as these cannot be explained in any other way. And since in reality we explain the Universe neither better nor worse with this idea than without it, the idea of God, the supreme *petitio principii*, is valueless.

But if ether is nothing but an hypothesis explanatory of light, air, on the other hand, is a thing that is directly felt; and even though it did not enable us to explain the phenomenon of sound, we should nevertheless always be directly aware of it, and, above all, of the lack of it in moments of suffocation or air-hunger. And in the same way God Himself, not the idea of God, may become a reality that is immediately felt; and even though the idea of Him does not enable us to explain either the existence or the essence of the Universe, we have at times the direct

feeling of God, above all in moments of spiritual suffocation. And this feeling—mark it well, for all that is tragic in it and the whole tragic sense of life is founded upon this—this feeling is a feeling of hunger for God, of the lack of God. To believe in God is, in the first instance, as we shall see, to wish that there may be a God, to be unable to live without Him.

So long as I pilgrimaged through the fields of reason in search of God, I could not find Him, for I was not deluded by the idea of God, neither could I take an idea for God, and it was then, as I wandered among the wastes of rationalism, that I told myself that we ought to seek no other consolation than the truth, meaning thereby reason, and yet for all that I was not comforted. But as I sank deeper and deeper into rational scepticism on the one hand and into heart's despair on the other, the hunger for God awoke within me, and the suffocation of spirit made me feel the want of God, and with the want of Him, His reality. And I wished that there might be a God, that God might exist. And God does not exist, but rather super-exists, and He is sustaining our existence, existing us (*existiéndonos*).

God, who is Love, the Father of Love, is the son of love in us. There are men of a facile and external habit of mind, slaves of reason, that reason which externalizes us, who think it a shrewd comment to say that so far from God having made man in His image and likeness, it is rather man who has made his gods or his God in his own image and likeness,⁴ and so superficial are they that they do not pause to consider that if the second of these propositions be true, as in fact it is, it is owing to the fact that the first is not less true. God and man, in effect, mutually create one another; God creates or reveals Himself in man and man creates himself in God. God is His own maker, *Deus ipse se facit*, said Lactantius (*Divinarum Institutionum*, ii., 8), and we may say that He is making Himself continually both in man and by man. And if each of us, impelled by his love, by his hunger for divinity, creates for himself an image of God according to his own desire, and if according to His desire God creates Himself for each of us, then there is a collective, social, human God, the resultant of all the human imaginations that imagine Him. For God is and reveals Himself in collectivity. And God is the richest and most personal of human conceptions.

The Master of divinity has bidden us be perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect (Matt. v. 48), and in the sphere of thought and feeling our perfection consists in the zeal with which we endeavour to equate our imagination with the total imagination of the humanity of which in God we form a part.

The logical theory of the opposition between the extension and the comprehension of a concept, the one increasing in the ratio in which the other diminishes, is well known. The concept that is most extensive and at the same time least comprehensive is that of being or of thing, which embraces everything that exists and possesses no other distinguishing quality than that of being; while the concept that is most comprehensive and least extensive is that of the Universe, which is only applicable to itself and comprehends all existing qualities. And the logical or rational God, the God obtained by way of negation, the absolute entity, merges, like reality itself, into nothingness; for, as Hegel pointed out, pure being and pure nothingness are identical. And the God of the heart, the God who is felt, the God of living men, is the Universe itself conceived as personality, is the consciousness of the Universe. A God universal and personal, altogether different from the individual God of a rigid metaphysical monotheism.

I must advert here once again to my view of the opposition that exists between individuality and personality, notwithstanding the fact that the one demands the other. Individuality is, if I may so express it, the continent or thing which contains, personality the content or thing contained, or I might say that my personality is in a certain sense my comprehension, that which I comprehend or embrace within myself—which is in a certain way the whole Universe—and that my individuality is my extension; the one my infinite, the other my finite.

A hundred jars of hard earthenware are strongly individualized, but it is possible for them to be all equally empty or all equally full of the same homogeneous liquid, whereas two bladders of so delicate a membrane as to admit of the action of osmosis and exosmosis may be strongly differentiated and contain liquids of a very mixed composition. And thus a man, in so far as he is an individual, may be very sharply detached from others, a sort of spiritual crustacean, and yet be very poor in differentiating content. And further, it is true on the other hand that the more personality a man has and the greater his interior richness and the more he is a society within himself, the less brusquely he is divided from his fellows. In the same way the rigid God of deism, of Aristotelian monotheism, the *ens summum*, is a being in whom individuality, or rather simplicity, stifles personality. Definition kills him, for to define is to impose boundaries, it is to limit, and it is impossible to define the absolutely indefinable. This God lacks interior richness; he is not a society in himself. And this the vital revelation obviated by the belief in the Trinity, which makes God a society and even a family in himself and no longer a pure individual. The God of faith is personal; He is a person because He includes three persons, for personality is not sensible of itself in isolation. An isolated person ceases to be a person, for whom should he love? And if he does not love, he is not a person. Nor can a simple being love himself without his love expanding him into a compound being.

It was because God was felt as a Father that the belief in the Trinity arose. For a God-Father cannot be a single, that is, a solitary, God. A father is always the father of a family. And the fact that God was felt as a father acted as a continual incentive to conceive Him not merely anthropomorphically—that is to say, as a man, *ανθρωπος*—but andromorphically, as a male, *ανηρ*. In the popular Christian imagination, in effect, God the Father is conceived of as a male. And the reason is that man, *homo*, *ανθρωπος*, as we know him, is necessarily either a male, *vir*, *ανηρ*, or a female, *mulier*, *γυνη*. And to these may be added the child, who is neuter. And hence in order to satisfy imaginatively this necessity of feeling God as a perfect man—that is, as a family—arose the cult of the God-Mother, the Virgin Mary, and the cult of the Child Jesus.

The cult of the Virgin, Mariolatry, which, by the gradual elevation of the divine element in the Virgin has led almost to her deification, answers merely to the demand of the feeling that God should be a perfect man, that God should include in His nature the feminine element. The progressive exaltation of the Virgin Mary, the work of Catholic piety, having its beginning in the expression Mother of God, *θεοτοκος*, *deipara*, has culminated in attributing to her the status of co-redeemer and in the dogmatic declaration of her conception without the stain of original sin. Hence she now occupies a position between Humanity and Divinity and nearer Divinity than Humanity. And it has been surmised that in course of time she may perhaps even come to be regarded as yet another personal manifestation of the Godhead.

And yet this might not necessarily involve the conversion of the Trinity into a Quaternity. If *πνευμα*, in Greek, spirit, instead of being neuter had been feminine, who can say that the Virgin Mary might not already have become an incarnation or humanization of the Holy Spirit? That fervent piety which always knows how to mould theological speculation in accordance with its own desires would have found sufficient warranty for such a doctrine in the text of the Gospel, in Luke's narrative of the Annunciation where the angel Gabriel hails Mary with the words, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee," *πνευμα αγιον επε λευσεται επι σε* (Luke i. 35). And thus a dogmatic evolution would have been effected parallel to that of the divinization of Jesus, the Son, and his identification with the Word.

In any case the cult of the Virgin, of the eternal feminine, or rather of the divine feminine, of the divine maternity, helps to complete the personalization of God by constituting Him a family.

In one of my books (*Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, part ii., chap. lxxvii.) I have said that

“God was and is, in our mind, masculine. In His mode of judging and condemning men, He acts as a male, not as a human person above the limitation of sex; He acts as a father. And to counterbalance this, the Mother element was required, the Mother who always forgives, the Mother whose arms are always open to the child when he flies from the frowning brow or uplifted hand of the angry father; the Mother in whose bosom we seek the dim, comforting memory of that warmth and peace of our pre-natal unconsciousness, of that milky sweetness that soothed our dreams of innocence; the Mother who knows no justice but that of forgiveness, no law but that of love. Our weak and imperfect conception of God as a God with a long beard and a voice of thunder, of a God who promulgates laws and pronounces dooms, of a God who is the Master of a household, a Roman *Paterfamilias*, required counterpoise and complement, and since fundamentally we are unable to conceive of the personal and living God as exalted above human and even masculine characteristics, and still less as a neutral or hermaphrodite God, we have recourse to providing Him with a feminine God, and by the side of the God-Father we have placed the Goddess-Mother, she who always forgives, because, since she sees with love-blind eyes, she sees always the hidden cause of the fault and in that hidden cause the only justice of forgiveness ...”

And to this I must now add that not only are we unable to conceive of the full and living God as masculine simply, but we are unable to conceive of Him as individual simply, as the projection of a solitary I, an unsocial I, an I that is in reality an abstract I. My living I is an I that is really a We; my living personal I lives only in other, of other, and by other I's; I am sprung, from a multitude of ancestors, I carry them within me in extract, and at the same time I carry within me, potentially, a multitude of descendants, and God, the projection of my I to the infinite—or rather I, the projection of God to the finite—must also be multitude. Hence, in order to save the personality of God—that is to say, in order to save the living God—faith's need—the need of the feeling and the imagination—of conceiving Him and; feeling Him as possessed of a certain internal multiplicity.

This need the pagan feeling of a living divinity obviated by polytheism. It is the agglomeration of its gods, the republic of them, that really constitutes its Divinity. The real God of Hellenic paganism is not so much Father Zeus (*Jupiter*) as the whole society of gods and demi-gods. Hence the solemnity of the invocation of Demosthenes when he invoked all the gods and all the goddesses: *τοις θεοις ευχομαι και πασαις*. And when the rationalizers converted the term god, *θεος*, which is properly an adjective, a quality predicated of each one of the gods, into a substantive, and added the definite article to it, they produced *the* god, *ο θεος*, the dead and abstract god of philosophical rationalism, a substantivized quality and therefore void of personality. For the masculine concrete god (*el dios*) is nothing but the neuter abstract divine quality (*lo divino*). Now the transition from feeling the divinity in all things to substantivating it and converting the Divinity into God, cannot be achieved without feeling undergoing a certain risk. And the Aristotelian God, the God of the logical proofs, is nothing more than the Divinity, a concept and not a living person who can be felt and with whom through love man can communicate. This God is merely a substantivized adjective; He is a constitutional God who reigns but does not govern, and Knowledge is His constitutional charter.

And even in Greco-Latin paganism itself the tendency towards a living monotheism is apparent in the fact that Zeus was conceived of and felt as a father, *Zeus πατηρ*, as Homer calls him, the *Ju-piter* or *Ju-pater* of the Latins, and as a father of a whole widely extended family of gods and goddesses who together with him constituted the Divinity.

The conjunction of pagan polytheism with Judaic monotheism, which had endeavoured by other means to save the personality of God, gave birth to the feeling of the Catholic God, a God who is a society, as the pagan God of whom I have spoken was a society, and who at

the same time is one, as the God of Israel finally became one. Such is the Christian Trinity, whose deepest sense rationalistic deism has scarcely ever succeeded in understanding, that deism, which though more or less impregnated with Christianity, always remains Unitarian or Socinian.

And the truth is that we feel God less as a superhuman consciousness than as the actual consciousness of the whole human race, past, present, and future, as the collective consciousness of the whole race, and still more, as the total and infinite consciousness which embraces and sustains all consciousnesses, infra-human, human, and perhaps, super-human. The divinity that there is in everything, from the lowest—that is to say, from the least conscious—of living forms, to the highest, including our own human consciousness, this divinity we feel to be personalized, conscious of itself, in God. And this gradation of consciousnesses, this sense of the gulf between the human and the fully divine, the universal, consciousness, finds its counterpart in the belief in angels with their different hierarchies, as intermediaries between our human consciousness and that of God. And these gradations a faith consistent with itself must believe to be infinite, for only by an infinite number of degrees is it possible to pass from the finite to the infinite.

Deistic rationalism conceives God as the Reason of the Universe, but its logic compels it to conceive Him as an impersonal reason—that is to say, as an idea—while deistic vitalism feels and imagines God as Consciousness, and therefore as a person or rather as a society of persons. The consciousness of each one of us, in effect, is a society of persons; in me there are various I's and even the I's of those among whom I live, live in me.

The God of deistic rationalism, in effect, the God of the logical proofs of His existence, the *ens realissimum* and the immobile prime mover, is nothing more than a Supreme Reason, but in the same sense in which we can call the law of universal gravitation the reason of the falling of bodies, this law being merely the explanation of the phenomenon. But will anyone say that that which we call the law of universal gravitation, or any other law or mathematical principle, is a true and independent reality, that it is an angel, that it is something which possesses consciousness of itself and others, that it is a person? No, it is nothing but an idea without any reality outside of the mind of him who conceives it. And similarly this God-Reason either possesses consciousness of himself or he possesses no reality outside the mind that conceives him. And if he possesses consciousness of himself, he becomes a personal reason, and then all the value of the traditional proofs disappears, for these proofs only proved a reason, but not a supreme consciousness. Mathematics prove an order, a constancy, a reason in the series of mechanical phenomena, but they 'do not prove that this reason is conscious of itself. This reason is a logical necessity, but the logical necessity does not prove the teleological or finalist necessity. And where there is no finality there is no personality, there is no consciousness.

The rational God, therefore—that is to say, the God who is simply the Reason of the Universe and nothing more—consummates his own destruction, is destroyed in our mind in so far as he is such a God, and is only born again in us when we feel him in our heart as a living person, as Consciousness, and no longer merely as the impersonal and objective Reason of the Universe. If we wish for a rational explanation of the construction of a machine, all that we require to know is the mechanical science of its constructor; but if we would have a reason for the existence of such a machine, then, since it is the work not of Nature but of man, we must suppose a conscious, constructive being. But the second part of this reasoning is not applicable to God, even though it be said that in Him the mechanical science and the mechanic, by means of which the machine was constructed, are one and the same thing. From the rational point of view this identification is merely a begging of the question. And thus it is that reason destroys this Supreme Reason, in so far as the latter is a person.

The human reason, in effect, is a reason that is based upon the irrational, upon the total vital consciousness, upon will and feeling; our human reason is not a reason that can prove to us the existence of a Supreme Reason, which in its turn would have to be based upon the Supreme Irrational, upon the Universal Consciousness. And the revelation of this Supreme Consciousness in our feeling and imagination, by love, by faith, by the process of personalization, is that which leads us to believe in the living God.

And this God, the living God, your God, our God, is in me, is in you, lives in us, and we live and move and have our being in Him. And He is in us by virtue of the hunger, the longing, which we have for Him, He is Himself creating the longing for Himself. And He is the God of the humble, for in the words of the Apostle, God chose the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty (1 Cor. i. 27). And God is in each one of us in the measure in which each one feels Him and loves Him. "If of two men," says Kierkegaard, "one prays to the true God without sincerity of heart, and the other prays to an idol with all the passion of an infinite yearning, it is the first who really prays to an idol, while the second really prays to God." It would be better to say that the true God is He to whom man truly prays and whom man truly desires. And there may even be a truer revelation in superstition itself than in theology. The venerable Father of the long beard and white locks who appears among the clouds carrying the globe of the world in his hand is more living and more real than the *ens realissimum* of theodicy.

Reason is an analytical, that is, a dissolving force, whenever it transfers its activity from the form of intuitions, whether those of the individual instinct of preservation or those of the social instinct of perpetuation, and applies it to the essence and matter of them. Reason orders the sensible perceptions which give us the material world; but when its analysis is exercised upon the reality of the perceptions themselves, it dissolves them and plunges us into a world of appearances, a world of shadows without consistency, for outside the domain of the formal, reason is nihilist and annihilating. And it performs the same terrible office when we withdraw it from its proper domain and apply it to the scrutiny of the imaginative intuitions which give us the spiritual world. For reason annihilates and imagination completes, integrates or totalizes; reason by itself alone kills, and it is imagination that gives life. If it is true that imagination by itself alone, in giving us life without limit, leads us to lose our identity in the All and also kills us as individuals, it kills us by excess of life. Reason, the head, speaks to us the word Nothing! imagination, the heart, the word All! and between all and nothing, by the fusion of the all and the nothing within us, we live in God, who is All, and God lives in us who, without Him, are nothing. Reason reiterates, Vanity of vanities! all is vanity! And imagination answers, Plenitude of plenitudes! all is plenitude! And thus we live the vanity of plenitude or the plenitude of vanity.

And so deeply rooted in the depths of man's being is this vital need of living a world^d illogical, irrational, personal or divine, that those who do not believe in God, or believe that they do not believe in Him, believe nevertheless in some little pocket god or even devil of their own, or in an omen, or in a horseshoe picked up by chance on the roadside and carried about with them to bring them good luck and defend them from that very reason whose loyal and devoted henchmen they imagine themselves to be.

The God whom we hunger after is the God to whom we pray, the God of the *Pater Noster*, of the Lord's Prayer; the God whom we beseech, before all and above all, and whether we are aware of it or not, to instil faith into us, to make us believe in Him, to make Himself in us, the God to whom we pray that His name may be hallowed and that His will may be done—His will, not His reason—on earth as it is in heaven; but feeling that His will cannot be other than the essence of our will, the desire to persist eternally.

And such a God is the God of love—*how* He is it profits us not to ask, but rather let each consult his own heart and give his imagination leave to picture Him in the remoteness of the Universe, gazing down upon him with those myriad eyes of His that shine in the night-darkened heavens. He in whom you believe, reader, He is your God, He who has lived with you and within you, who was born with you, who was a child when you were a child, who became a man according as you became a man, who will vanish when you yourself vanish, and who is your principle of continuity in the spiritual life, for He is the principle of solidarity among all men and in each man and between men and the Universe, and He is, as you are, a person. And if you believe in God, God believes in you, and believing in you He creates you continually. For in your essence you are nothing but the idea that God possesses of you—but a living idea, because the idea of a God who is living and conscious of Himself, of a God-Consciousness, and apart from what you are in the society of God you are nothing.

How to define God? Yes, that is our longing. That was the longing of the man Jacob, when, after wrestling all the night until the breaking of the day with that divine visitant, he cried, “Tell me, I pray thee, thy name!” (Gen. xxxii. 29). Listen to the words of that great Christian preacher, Frederick William Robertson, in a sermon preached in Trinity Chapel, Brighton, on the 10th of June, 1849: “And this is our struggle—the struggle. Let any true man go down into the depths of his own being, and answer us—what is the cry that comes from the most real part of his nature? Is it the cry for daily bread? Jacob asked for that in his *first* communing with God—preservation, safety. Is it even this—to be forgiven our sins? Jacob had a sin to be forgiven, and in that most solemn moment of his existence he did not say a syllable about it. Or is it this—’Hallowed be Thy name’? No, my brethren. Out of our frail and yet sublime humanity, the demand that rises in the earthlier hours of our religion may be this—’Save my soul’; but in the most unearthly moments it is this—’Tell me thy name.’ We move through a world of mystery; and the deepest question is, What is the being that is ever near, sometimes felt, never seen; that which has haunted us from childhood with a dream of something surpassingly fair, which has never yet been realized; that which sweeps through the soul at times as a desolation, like the blast from the wings of the Angel of Death, leaving us stricken and silent in our loneliness; that which has touched us in our tenderest point, and the flesh has quivered with agony, and our mortal affections have shrivelled up with pain; that which comes to us in aspirations of nobleness and conceptions of superhuman excellence? Shall we say It or He? What is It? Who is He? Those anticipations of Immortality and God—what are they? Are they the mere throbbings of my own heart, heard and mistaken for a living something beside me? Are they the sound of my own wishes, echoing through the vast void of Nothingness? or shall I call them God, Father, Spirit, Love? A living Being within me or outside me? Tell me Thy name, thou awful mystery of Loveliness! This is the struggle of all earnest life.”⁶

Thus Robertson. To which I must add this comment, that Tell me thy name is essentially the same as Save my soul! We ask Him His name in order that He may save our soul, that He may save the human soul, that He may save the human finality of the Universe. And if they tell us that He is called He, that He is the *ens realissimum* or the Supreme Being or any other metaphysical name, we are not contented, for we know that every metaphysical name is an X, and we go on asking Him His name. And there is only one name that satisfies our longing, and that is the name Saviour, Jesus. God is the love that saves. As Browning said in his *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*,

For the loving worm within its clod,
Were diviner than a loveless God
Amid his worlds, I will dare to say.

The essence of the divine is Love, Will that personalizes and eternalizes, that feels the hunger for eternity and infinity.

It is ourselves, it is our eternity that we seek in God, it is our divinization. It was Browning again who said, in *Saul*,

‘Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead!

But this God who saves us, this personal God, the Consciousness of the Universe who envelops and sustains our consciousnesses, this God who gives human finality to the whole creation—does He exist? Have we proofs of His existence?

This question leads in the first place to an enquiry into the meaning of this notion of existence. What is it to exist and in what sense do we speak of things as not existing?

In its etymological signification to exist is to be outside of ourselves, outside of our mind: *ex-sistere*. But is there anything outside of our mind, outside of our consciousness which embraces the sum of the known? Undoubtedly there is. The matter of knowledge comes to us from without. And what is the mode of this matter? It is impossible for us to know, for to know is to clothe matter with form, and hence we cannot know the formless as formless. To do so would be tantamount to investing chaos with order.

This problem of the existence of God, a problem that is rationally insoluble, is really identical with the problem of consciousness, of the *ex-sistentia* and not of the *in-sistentia* of consciousness, it is none other than the problem of the substantial existence of the soul, the problem of the perpetuity of the human soul, the problem of the human finality of the Universe itself. To believe in a living and personal God, in an eternal and universal consciousness that knows and loves us, is to believe that the Universe exists *for* man. For man, or for a consciousness of the same order as the human consciousness, of the same nature, although sublimated, a consciousness that is capable of knowing us, in the depth of whose being our memory may live for ever. Perhaps, as I have said before, by a supreme and desperate effort of resignation we might succeed in making the sacrifice of our personality provided that we knew that at our death it would go to enrich a Supreme Personality; provided that we knew that the Universal Soul was nourished by our souls and had need of them. We might perhaps meet death with a desperate resignation or with a resigned despair, delivering up our soul to the soul of humanity, bequeathing to it our work, the work that bears the impress of our person, if it were certain that this humanity were destined to bequeath its soul in its turn to another soul, when at long last consciousness shall have become extinct upon this desire-tormented Earth. But is it certain?

And if the soul of humanity is eternal, if the human collective consciousness is eternal, if there is a Consciousness of the Universe, and if this Consciousness is eternal, why must our own individual consciousness—yours, reader, mine—be not eternal?

In the vast all of the Universe, must there be this unique anomaly—a consciousness that knows itself, loves itself and feels itself, joined to an organism which can only live within such and such degrees of heat, a merely transitory phenomenon? No, it is not mere curiosity that inspires the wish to know whether or not the stars are inhabited by living organisms, by consciousnesses akin to our own, and a profound longing enters into that dream that our souls shall pass from star to star through the vast spaces of the heavens, in an infinite series of transmigrations. The feeling of the divine makes us wish and believe that everything is animated, that consciousness, in a greater or less degree, extends through everything. We wish

not only to save ourselves, but to save the world from nothingness. And therefore God. Such is His finality as we feel it.

What would a universe be without any consciousness capable of reflecting it and knowing it? What would objectified reason be without will and feeling? For us it would be equivalent to nothing—a thousand times more dreadful than nothing.

If such a supposition is reality, our life is deprived of sense and value.

It is not, therefore, rational necessity, but vital anguish that impels us to believe in God. And to believe in God—I must reiterate it yet again—is, before all and above all, to feel a hunger for God, a hunger for divinity, to be sensible of His lack and absence, to wish that God may exist. And it is to wish to save the human finality of the Universe. For one might even come to resign oneself to being absorbed by God, if it be that our consciousness is based upon a Consciousness, if consciousness is the end of the Universe.

“The wicked man hath said in his heart, There is no God.” And this is truth. For in his head the righteous man may say to himself, God does not exist! But only the wicked can say it in his heart. Not to believe that there is a God or to believe that there is not a God, is one thing; to resign oneself to there not being a God is another thing, and it is a terrible and inhuman thing; but not to wish that there be a God exceeds every other moral monstrosity; although, as a matter of fact, those who deny God deny Him because of their despair at not finding Him.

And now reason once again confronts us with the Sphinx-like question—the Sphinx, in effect, is reason—Does God exist? This eternal and eternalizing person who gives meaning—and I will add, a human meaning, for there is none other—to the Universe, is it a substantial something, existing independently of our consciousness, independently of our desire? Here we arrive at the insoluble, and it is best that it should be so. Let it suffice for reason that it cannot prove the impossibility of His existence.

To believe in God is to long for His existence and, further, it is to act as if He existed; it is to live by this longing and to make it the inner spring of our action. This longing or hunger for divinity begets hope, hope begets faith, and faith and hope beget charity. Of this divine longing is born our sense of beauty, of finality, of goodness.

Let us see how this may be.

FAITH, HOPE, AND CHARITY

Sanctius ac reverentius visum de actis deorum credere quam scire.—TACITUS: *Germania*, 34.

The road that leads us to the living God, the God of the heart, and that leads us back to Him when we have left Him for the lifeless God of logic, is the road of faith, not of rational or mathematical conviction.

And what is faith?

This is the question propounded in the Catechism of Christian Doctrine that was taught us at school, and the answer runs: Faith is believing what we have not seen.

This, in an essay written some twelve years ago, I amended as follows: “Believing what we have not seen, no! but creating what we do not see.” And I have already told you that believing in God is, in the first instance at least, wishing that God may be, longing for the existence of God.

The theological virtue of faith, according to the Apostle Paul, whose definition serves as the basis of the traditional Christian disquisitions upon it, is “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen,” *ἐπιζομενων υποστασις, πραγματων ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων* (Heb.

xi. 1).

The substance, or rather the support and basis, of hope, the guarantee of it. That which connects, or, rather than connects, subordinates, faith to hope. And in fact we do not hope because we believe, but rather we believe because we hope. It is hope in God, it is the ardent longing that there may be a God who guarantees the eternity of consciousness, that leads us to believe in Him.

But faith, which after all is something compound, comprising a cognitive, logical, or rational element together with an affective, biotic, sentimental, and strictly irrational element, is presented to us under the form of knowledge. And hence the insuperable difficulty of separating it from some dogma or other. Pure faith, free from dogmas, about which I wrote a great deal years ago, is a phantasm. Neither is the difficulty overcome by inventing the theory of faith in faith itself. Faith needs a matter to work upon.

Believing is a form of knowing, even if it be no more than a knowing and even a formulating of our vital longing. In ordinary language the term “believing,” however, is used in a double and even a contradictory sense. It may express, on the one hand, the highest degree of the mind’s conviction of the truth of a thing, and, on the other hand, it may imply merely a weak and hesitating persuasion of its truth. For if in one sense believing expresses the firmest kind of assent we are capable of giving, the expression “I believe that it is so, although I am not sure of it,” is nevertheless common in ordinary speech.

And this agrees with what we have said above with respect to uncertainty as the basis of faith. The most robust faith, in so far as it is distinguished from all other knowledge that is not *pistic* or of faith—faithful, as we might say—is based on uncertainty. And this is because faith, the guarantee of things hoped for, is not so much rational adhesion to a theoretical principle as trust in a person who assures us of something. Faith supposes an objective, personal element. We do not so much believe something as believe someone who promises us or assures us of this or the other thing. We believe in a person and in God in so far as He is a person and a personalization of the Universe.

This personal or religious element in faith is evident. Faith, it is said, is in itself neither theoretical knowledge nor rational adhesion to a truth, nor yet is its essence sufficiently explained by defining it as trust in God. Seeberg says of faith that it is “the inward submission to the spiritual authority of God, immediate obedience. And in so far as this obedience is the means of attaining a rational principle, faith is a personal conviction.”⁷

The faith which St. Paul defined, *πιστις* in Greek, is better translated as trust, confidence. The word *pistis* is derived from the verb *πειθω*, which in its active voice means to persuade and in its middle voice to trust in someone, to esteem him as worthy of trust, to place confidence in him, to obey. And *fidare se*, to trust, is derived from the root *fid*—whence *fides*, faith, and also confidence. The Greek root *πιθ* and the Latin *fid* are twin brothers. In the root of the word “faith” itself, therefore, there is implicit the idea of confidence, of surrender to the will of another, to a person. Confidence is placed only in persons. We trust in Providence, which we conceive as something personal and conscious, not in Fate, which is something impersonal. And thus it is in the person who tells us the truth, in the person who gives us hope, that we believe, not directly and immediately in truth itself or in hope itself.

And this personal or rather personifying element in faith extends even to the lowest forms of it, for it is this that produces faith in pseudo-revelation, in inspiration, in miracle. There is a story of a Parisian doctor, who, when he found that a quack-healer was drawing away his clientèle, removed to a quarter of the city as distant as possible from his former abode, where he was totally unknown, and here he gave himself out as a quack-healer and conducted himself as such. When he was denounced as an illegal practitioner he produced his doctor’s certificate,

and explained his action more or less as follows: “I am indeed a doctor, but if I had announced myself as such I should not have had as large a clientèle as I have as a quack-healer. Now that all my clients know that I have studied medicine, however, and that I am a properly qualified medical man, they will desert me in favour of some quack who can assure them that he has never studied, but cures simply by inspiration.” And true it is that a doctor is discredited when it is proved that he has never studied medicine and possesses no qualifying certificate, and that a quack is discredited when it is proved that he has studied and is a qualified practitioner. For some believe in science and in study, while others believe in the person, in inspiration, and even in ignorance.

“There is one distinction in the world’s geography which comes immediately to our minds when we thus state the different thoughts and desires of men concerning their religion. We remember how the whole world is in general divided into two hemispheres upon this matter. One half of the world—the great dim East—is mystic. It insists upon not seeing anything too clearly. Make any one of the great ideas of life distinct and clear, and immediately it seems to the Oriental to be untrue. He has an instinct which tells him that the vastest thoughts are too vast for the human mind, and that if they are made to present themselves in forms of statement which the human mind can comprehend, their nature is violated and their strength is lost.

“On the other hand, the Occidental, the man of the West, demands clearness and is impatient with mystery. He loves a definite statement as much as his brother of the East dislikes it. He insists on knowing what the eternal and infinite forces mean to his personal life, how they will make him personally happier and better, almost how they will build the house over his head, and cook the dinner on his hearth. This is the difference between the East and the West, between man on the banks of the Ganges and man on the banks of the Mississippi. Plenty of exceptions, of course, there are—mystics in Boston and St. Louis, hard-headed men of facts in Bombay and Calcutta. The two great dispositions cannot be shut off from one another by an ocean or a range of mountains. In some nations and places—as, for instance, among the Jews and in our own New England—they notably commingle. But in general they thus divide the world between them. The East lives in the moonlight of mystery, the West in the sunlight of scientific fact. The East cries out to the Eternal for vague impulses. The West seizes the present with light hands, and will not let it go till it has furnished it with reasonable, intelligible motives. Each misunderstands, distrusts, and in large degree despises the other. But the two hemispheres together, and not either one by itself, make up the total world.” Thus, in one of his sermons, spoke the great Unitarian preacher Phillips Brooks, late Bishop of Massachusetts (*The Mystery of Iniquity and Other Sermons*, sermon xvi.).

We might rather say that throughout the whole world, in the East as well as in the West, rationalists seek definition and believe in the concept, while vitalists seek inspiration and believe in the person. The former scrutinize the Universe in order that they may wrest its secrets from it; the latter pray to the Consciousness of the Universe, strive to place themselves in immediate relationship with the Soul of the World, with God, in order that they may find the guarantee or substance of what they hope for, which is not to die, and the evidence of what they do not see.

And since a person is a will, and will always has reference to the future, he who believes, believes in what is to come—that is, in what he hopes for. We do not believe, strictly speaking, in what is or in what was, except as the guarantee, as the substance, of what will be. For the Christian, to believe in the resurrection of Christ—that is to say, in tradition and in the Gospel, which assure him that Christ has risen, both of them personal forces—is to believe that he himself will one day rise again by the grace of Christ. And even scientific faith—for such there is—refers to the future and is an act of trust. The man of science believes that at a certain future date an eclipse of the sun will take place; he believes that the laws which have governed the

world hitherto will continue to govern it.

To believe, I repeat, is to place confidence in someone, and it has reference to a person. I say that I know that there is an animal called the horse, and that it has such and such characteristics, because I have seen it; and I say that I believe in the existence of the giraffe or the ornithorhynchus, and that it possesses such and such qualities, because I believe those who assure me that they have seen it. And hence the element of uncertainty attached to faith, for it is possible that a person may be deceived or that he may deceive us.

But, on the other hand, this personal element in belief gives it an effective and loving character, and above all, in religious faith, a reference to what is hoped for. Perhaps there is nobody who would sacrifice his life for the sake of maintaining that the three angles of a triangle are together equal to two right angles, for such a truth does not demand the sacrifice of our life; but, on the other hand, there are many who have lost their lives for the sake of maintaining their religious faith. Indeed it is truer to say that martyrs make faith than that faith makes martyrs. For faith is not the mere adherence of the intellect to an abstract principle; it is not the recognition of a theoretical truth, a process in which the will merely sets in motion our faculty of comprehension; faith is an act of the will—it is a movement of the soul towards a practical truth, towards a person, towards something that makes us not merely comprehend life, but that makes us live.⁸

Faith makes us live by showing us that life, although it is dependent upon reason, has its well-spring and source of power elsewhere, in something supernatural and miraculous. Cournot the mathematician, a man of singularly well-balanced and scientifically equipped mind, has said that it is this tendency towards the supernatural and miraculous that gives life, and that when it is lacking, all the speculations of the reason lead to nothing but affliction of spirit (*Traité de l'enchaînement des idées fondamentales dans les sciences et dans l'histoire*, § 329). And in truth we wish to live.

But, although we have said that faith is a thing of the will, it would perhaps be better to say that it is will itself—the will not to die, or, rather, that it is some other psychic force distinct from intelligence, will, and feeling. We should thus have feeling, knowing, willing, and believing or creating. For neither feeling, nor intelligence, nor will creates; they operate upon a material already given, upon the material given them by faith. Faith is the creative power in man. But since it has a more intimate relation with the will than with any other of his faculties, we conceive it under the form of volition. It should be borne in mind, however, that wishing to believe—that is to say, wishing to create—is not precisely the same as believing or creating, although it is its starting-point.

Faith, therefore, if not a creative force, is the fruit of the will, and its function is to create. Faith, in a certain sense, creates its object. And faith in God consists in creating God; and since it is God who gives us faith in Himself, it is God who is continually creating Himself in us. Therefore St. Augustine said: “I will seek Thee, Lord, by calling upon Thee, and I will call upon Thee by believing in Thee. My faith calls upon Thee, Lord, the faith which Thou hast given me, with which Thou hast inspired me through the Humanity of Thy Son, through the ministry of Thy preacher” (*Confessions*, book i., chap. i.). The power of creating God in our own image and likeness, of personalizing the Universe, simply means that we carry God within us, as the substance of what we hope for, and that God is continually creating us in His own image and likeness.

And we create God—that is to say, God creates Himself in us—by compassion, by love. To believe in God is to love Him, and in our love to fear Him; and we begin by loving Him even before knowing Him, and by loving Him we come at last to see and discover Him in all things.

Those who say that they believe in God and yet neither love nor fear Him, do not in fact

believe in Him but in those who have taught them that God exists, and these in their turn often enough do not believe in Him either. Those who believe that they believe in God, but without any passion in their heart, without anguish of mind, without uncertainty, without doubt, without an element of despair even in their consolation, believe only in the God-Idea, not in God Himself. And just as belief in God is born of love, so also it may be born of fear, and even of hate, and of such kind was the belief of Vanni Fucci, the thief, whom Dante depicts insulting God with obscene gestures in Hell (*Inf.*, xxv., 1-3). For the devils also believe in God, and not a few atheists.

Is it not perhaps a mode of believing in God, this fury with which those deny and even insult Him, who, because they cannot bring themselves to believe in Him, wish that He may not exist? Like those who believe, they, too, wish that God may exist; but being men of a weak and passive or of an evil disposition, in whom reason is stronger than will, they feel themselves caught in the grip of reason and haled along in their own despite, and they fall into despair, and because of their despair they deny, and in their denial they affirm and create the thing that they deny, and God reveals Himself in them, affirming Himself by their very denial of Him.

But it will be objected to all this that to demonstrate that faith creates its own object is to demonstrate that this object is an object for faith alone, that outside faith it has no objective reality; just as, on the other hand, to maintain that faith is necessary because it affords consolation to the masses of the people, or imposes a wholesome restraint upon them, is to declare that the object of faith is illusory. What is certain is that for thinking believers to-day, faith is, before all and above all, wishing that God may exist.

Wishing that God may exist, and acting and feeling as if He did exist. And desiring God's existence and acting conformably with this desire, is the means whereby we create God—that is, whereby God creates Himself in us, manifests Himself to us, opens and reveals Himself to us. For God goes out to meet him who seeks Him with love and by love, and hides Himself from him who searches for Him with the cold and loveless reason. God wills that the heart should have rest, but not the head, reversing the order of the physical life in which the head sleeps and rests at times while the heart wakes and works unceasingly. And thus knowledge without love leads us away from God; and love, even without knowledge, and perhaps better without it, leads us to God, and through God to wisdom. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

And if you should ask me how I believe in God—that is to say, how God creates Himself in me and reveals Himself to me—my answer may, perhaps, provoke your smiles or your laughter, or it may even scandalize you.

I believe in God as I believe in my friends, because I feel the breath of His affection, feel His invisible and intangible hand, drawing me, leading me, grasping me; because I possess an inner consciousness of a particular providence and of a universal mind that marks out for me the course of my own destiny. And the concept of law—it is nothing but a concept after all!—tells me nothing and teaches me nothing.

Once and again in my life I have seen myself suspended in a trance over the abyss; once and again I have found myself at the cross-roads, confronted by a choice of ways and aware that in choosing one I should be renouncing all the others—for there is no turning back upon these roads of life; and once and again in such unique moments as these I have felt the impulse of a mighty power, conscious, sovereign, and loving. And then, before the feet of the wayfarer, opens out the way of the Lord.

It is possible for a man to feel the Universe calling to him and guiding him as one person guides and calls to another, to hear within him its voice speaking without words and saying: “Go and preach to all peoples!” How do you know that the man you see before you possesses

a consciousness like you, and that an animal also possesses such a consciousness, more or less dimly, but not a stone? Because the man acts towards you like a man, like a being made in your likeness, and because the stone does not act towards you at all, but suffers you to act upon it. And in the same way I believe that the Universe possesses a certain consciousness like myself, because its action towards me is a human action, and I feel that it is a personality that environs me.

Here is a formless mass; it appears to be a kind of animal; it is impossible to distinguish its members; I only see two eyes, eyes which gaze at me with a human gaze, the gaze of a fellow-being, a gaze which asks for pity; and I hear it breathing. I conclude that in this formless mass there is a consciousness. In just such a way and none other, the starry-eyed heavens gaze down upon the believer, with a superhuman, a divine, gaze, a gaze that asks for supreme pity and supreme love, and in the serenity of the night he hears the breathing of God, and God touches him in his heart of hearts and reveals Himself to him. It is the Universe, living, suffering, loving, and asking for love.

From loving little trifling material things, which lightly come and lightly go, having no deep root in our affections, we come to love the more lasting things, the things which our hands cannot grasp; from loving goods we come to love the Good; from loving beautiful things we come to love Beauty; from loving the true we come to love the Truth; from loving pleasures we come to love Happiness; and, last of all, we come to love Love. We emerge from ourselves in order to penetrate further into our supreme I; individual consciousness emerges from us in order to submerge itself in the total Consciousness of which we form a part, but without being dissolved in it. And God is simply the Love that springs from universal suffering and becomes consciousness.

But this, it will be said, is merely to revolve in an iron ring, for such a God is not objective. And at this point it may not be out of place to give reason its due and to examine exactly what is meant by a thing existing, being objective.

What is it, in effect, to exist? and when do we say that a thing exists? A thing exists when it is placed outside us, and in such a way that it shall have preceded our perception of it and be capable of continuing to subsist outside us after we have disappeared. But have I any certainty that anything has preceded me or that anything must survive me? Can my consciousness know that there is anything outside it? Everything that I know or can know is within my consciousness. We will not entangle ourselves, therefore, in the insoluble problem of an objectivity outside our perceptions. Things exist in so far as they act. To exist is to act.

But now it will be said that it is not God, but the idea of God, that acts in us. To which we shall reply that it is sometimes God acting by His idea, but still very often it is rather God acting in us by Himself. And the retort will be a demand for proofs of the objective truth of the existence of God, since we ask for signs. And we shall have to answer with Pilate: What is truth?

And having asked this question, Pilate turned away without waiting for an answer and proceeded to wash his hands in order that he might exculpate himself for having allowed Christ to be condemned to death. And there are many who ask this question, What is truth? but without any intention of waiting for the answer, and solely in order that they may turn away and wash their hands of the crime of having helped to kill and eject God from their own consciousness or from the consciousness of others.

What is truth? There are two kinds of truth—the logical or objective, the opposite of which is error, and the moral or subjective, the opposite of which is falsehood. And in a previous essay I have endeavoured to show that error is the fruit of falsehood.⁹

Moral truth, the road that leads to intellectual truth, which also is moral, inculcates the study

of science, which is over and above all a school of sincerity and humility. Science teaches us, in effect, to submit our reason to the truth and to know and judge of things as they are—that is to say, as they themselves choose to be and not as we would have them be. In a religiously scientific investigation, it is the data of reality themselves, it is the perceptions which we receive from the outside world, that formulate themselves in our mind as laws—it is not we ourselves who thus formulate them. It is the numbers themselves which in our mind create mathematics. Science is the most intimate school of resignation and humility, for it teaches us to bow before the seemingly most insignificant of facts. And it is the gateway of religion; but within the temple itself its function ceases.

And just as there is logical truth, opposed to error, and moral truth, opposed to falsehood, so there is also esthetic truth or verisimilitude, which is opposed to extravagance, and religious truth or hope, which is opposed to the inquietude of absolute despair. For esthetic verisimilitude, the expression of which is sensible, differs from logical truth, the demonstration of which is rational; and religious truth, the truth of faith, the substance of things hoped for, is not equivalent to moral truth, but superimposes itself upon it. He who affirms a faith built upon a basis of uncertainty does not and cannot lie.

And not only do we not believe with reason, nor yet above reason nor below reason, but we believe against reason. Religious faith, it must be repeated yet again, is not only irrational, it is contra-rational. Kierkegaard says: “Poetry is illusion before knowledge; religion illusion after knowledge. Between poetry and religion the worldly wisdom of living plays its comedy. Every individual who does not live either poetically or religiously is a fool” (*Afsluttende uvidenskabelig Efterskrift*, chap. iv., sect. 2a, § 2). The same writer tells us that Christianity is a desperate sortie (*salida*). Even so, but it is only by the very desperateness of this sortie that we can win through to hope, to that hope whose vitalizing illusion is of more force than all rational knowledge, and which assures us that there is always something that cannot be reduced to reason. And of reason the same may be said as was said of Christ: that he who is not with it is against it. That which is not rational is contra-rational; and such is hope.

By this circuitous route we always arrive at hope in the end.

To the mystery of love, which is the mystery of suffering, belongs a mysterious form, and this form is time. We join yesterday to to-morrow with links of longing, and the now is, strictly, nothing but the endeavour of the before to make itself the after; the present is simply the determination of the past to become the future. The now is a point which, if not sharply articulated, vanishes; and, nevertheless, in this point is all eternity, the substance of time.

Everything that has been can be only as it was, and everything that is can be only as it is; the possible is always relegated to the future, the sole domain of liberty, wherein imagination, the creative and liberating energy, the incarnation of faith, has space to roam at large.

Love ever looks and tends to the future, for its work is the work of our perpetuation; the property of love is to hope, and only upon hopes does it nourish itself. And thus when love sees the fruition of its desire it becomes sad, for it then discovers that what it desired was not its true end, and that God gave it this desire merely as a lure to spur it to action; it discovers that its end is further on, and it sets out again upon its toilsome pilgrimage through life, revolving through a constant cycle of illusions and disillusion. And continually it transforms its frustrated hopes into memories, and from these memories it draws fresh hopes. From the subterranean ore of memory we extract the jewelled visions of our future; imagination shapes our remembrances into hopes. And humanity is like a young girl full of longings, hungering for life and thirsting for love, who weaves her days with dreams, and hopes, hopes ever, hopes without ceasing, for the eternal and predestined lover, for him who, because he was destined for her from the beginning, from before the dawn of her remotest memory, from before her cradle-days, shall

live with her and for her into the illimitable future, beyond the stretch of her furthest hopes, beyond the grave itself. And for this poor lovelorn humanity, as for the girl ever awaiting her lover, there is no kinder wish than that when the winter of life shall come it may find the sweet dreams of its spring changed into memories sweeter still, and memories that shall burgeon into new hopes. In the days when our summer is over, what a flow of calm felicity, of resignation to destiny, must come from remembering hopes which have never been realized and which, because they have never been realized, preserve their pristine purity.

Love hopes, hopes ever and never wearies of hoping; and love of God, our faith in God, is, above all, hope in Him. For God dies not, and he who hopes in God shall live for ever. And our fundamental hope, the root and stem of all our hopes, is the hope of eternal life.

And if faith is the substance of hope, hope in its turn is the form of faith. Until it gives us hope, our faith is a formless faith, vague, chaotic, potential; it is but the possibility of believing, the longing to believe. But we must needs believe in something, and we believe in what we hope for, we believe in hope. We remember the past, we know the present, we only believe in the future. To believe what we have not seen is to believe what we shall see. Faith, then, I repeat once again, is faith in hope; we believe what we hope for.

Love makes us believe in God, in whom we hope and from whom we hope to receive life to come; love makes us believe in that which the dream of hope creates for us.

Faith is our longing for the eternal, for God; and hope is God's longing, the longing of the eternal, of the divine in us, which advances to meet our faith and uplifts us. Man aspires to God by faith and cries to Him: "I believe—give me, Lord, wherein to believe!" And God, the divinity in man, sends him hope in another life in order that he may believe in it. Hope is the reward of faith. Only he who believes truly hopes; and only he who truly hopes believes. We only believe what we hope, and we only hope what we believe.

It was hope that called God by the name of Father; and this name, so comforting yet so mysterious, is still bestowed upon Him by hope. The father gave us life and gives bread wherewith to sustain it, and we ask the father to preserve our life for us. And if Christ was he who, with the fullest heart and purest mouth, named with the name of Father his Father and ours, if the noblest feeling of Christianity is the feeling of the Fatherhood of God, it is because in Christ the human race sublimated its hunger for eternity.

It may perhaps be said that this longing of faith, that this hope, is more than anything else an esthetic feeling. Possibly the esthetic feeling enters into it, but without completely satisfying it.

We seek in art an image of eternalization. If for a brief moment our spirit finds peace and rest and assuagement in the contemplation of the beautiful, even though it finds therein no real cure for its distress, it is because the beautiful is the revelation of the eternal, of the divine in things, and beauty but the perpetuation of momentaneity. Just as truth is the goal of rational knowledge, so beauty is the goal of hope, which is perhaps in its essence irrational.

Nothing is lost, nothing wholly passes away, for in some way or another everything is perpetuated; and everything, after passing through time, returns to eternity. The temporal world has its roots in eternity, and in eternity yesterday is united with to-day and to-morrow. The scenes of life pass before us as in a cinematograph show, but on the further side of time the film is one and indivisible.

Physicists affirm that not a single particle of matter nor a single tremor of energy is lost, but that each is transformed and transmitted and persists. And can it be that any form, however fugitive it may be, is lost? We must needs believe—believe and hope!—that it is not, but that somewhere it remains archived and perpetuated, and that there is some mirror of eternity in which, without losing themselves in one another, all the images that pass through time are received. Every impression that reaches me remains stored up in my brain even though it may

be so deep or so weak that it is buried in the depths of my subconsciousness; but from these depths it animates my life; and if the whole of my spirit, the total content of my soul, were to awake to full consciousness, all these dimly perceived and forgotten fugitive impressions would come to life again, including even those which I had never been aware of. I carry within me everything that has passed before me, and I perpetuate it with myself, and it may be that it all goes into my germs, and that all my ancestors live undiminished in me and will continue so to live, united with me, in my descendants. And perhaps I, the whole I, with all this universe of mine, enter into each one of my actions, or, at all events, that which is essential in me enters into them—that which makes me myself, my individual essence.

And how is this individual essence in each several thing—that which makes it itself and not another—revealed to us save as beauty? What is the beauty of anything but its eternal essence, that which unites its past with its future, that element of it that rests and abides in the womb of eternity? or, rather, what is it but the revelation of its divinity?

And this beauty, which is the root of eternity, is revealed to us by love; it is the supreme revelation of the love of God and the token of our ultimate victory over time. It is love that reveals to us the eternal in us and in our neighbours.

Is it the beautiful, the eternal, in things, that awakens and kindles our love for them, or is it our love for things that reveals to us the beautiful, the eternal, in them? Is not beauty perhaps a creation of love, in the same way and in the same sense that the sensible world is a creation of the instinct of preservation and the supersensible world of that of perpetuation? Is not beauty, and together with beauty eternity, a creation of love? “Though our outward man perish,” says the Apostle, “yet the inward man is renewed day by day” (2 Cor. iv. 16). The man of passing appearances perishes and passes away with them; the man of reality remains and grows. “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory” (ver. 17). Our suffering causes us anguish, and this anguish, bursting because of its own fullness, seems to us consolation. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (ver. 18).

This suffering gives hope, which is the beautiful in life, the supreme beauty, or the supreme consolation. And since love is full of suffering, since love is compassion and pity, beauty springs from compassion and is simply the temporal consolation that compassion seeks. A tragic consolation! And the supreme beauty is that of tragedy. The consciousness that everything passes away, that we ourselves pass away, and that everything that is ours and everything that environs us passes away, fills us with anguish, and this anguish itself reveals to us the consolation of that which does not pass away, of the eternal, of the beautiful.

And this beauty thus revealed, this perpetuation of momentaneity, only realizes itself practically, only lives through the work of charity. Hope in action is charity, and beauty in action is goodness.

Charity, which eternalizes everything it loves, and in giving us the goodness of it brings to light its hidden beauty, has its root in the love of God, or, if you like, in charity towards God, in pity for God. Love, pity, personalizes everything, we have said; in discovering the suffering in everything and in personalizing everything, it personalizes the Universe itself as well—for the Universe also suffers—and it discovers God to us. For God is revealed to us because He suffers and because we suffer; because He suffers He demands our love, and because we suffer He gives us His love, and He covers our anguish with the eternal and infinite anguish.

This was the scandal of Christianity among Jews and Greeks, among Pharisees and Stoics, and this, which was its scandal of old, the scandal of the Cross, is still its scandal to-day, and

will continue to be so, even among Christians themselves—the scandal of a God who becomes man in order that He may suffer and die and rise again, because He has suffered and died, the scandal of a God subject to suffering and death. And this truth that God suffers—a truth that appals the mind of man—is the revelation of the very heart of the Universe and of its mystery, the revelation that God revealed to us when He sent His Son in order that he might redeem us by suffering and dying. It was the revelation of the divine in suffering, for only that which suffers is divine.

And men made a god of this Christ who suffered, and through him they discovered the eternal essence of a living, human God—that is, of a God who suffers—it is only the dead, the inhuman, that does not suffer—a God who loves and thirsts for love, for pity, a God who is a person. Whosoever knows not the Son will never know the Father, and the Father is only known through the Son; whosoever knows not the Son of Man—he who suffers bloody anguish and the pangs of a breaking heart, whose soul is heavy within him even unto death, who suffers the pain that kills and brings to life again—will never know the Father, and can know nothing of the suffering God.

He who does not suffer, and who does not suffer because he does not live, is that logical and frozen *ens realissimum*, the *primum movens*, that impassive entity, which because of its impassivity is nothing but a pure idea. The category does not suffer, but neither does it live or exist as a person. And how is the world to derive its origin and life from an impassive idea? Such a world would be but the idea of the world. But the world suffers, and suffering is the sense of the flesh of reality; it is the spirit's sense of its mass and substance; it is the self's sense of its own tangibility; it is immediate reality.

Suffering is the substance of life and the root of personality, for it is only suffering that makes us persons. And suffering is universal, suffering is that which unites all us living beings together; it is the universal or divine blood that flows through us all. That which we call will, what is it but suffering?

And suffering has its degrees, according to the depth of its penetration, from the suffering that floats upon the sea of appearances to the eternal anguish, the source of the tragic sense of life, which seeks a habitation in the depths of the eternal and there awakens consolation; from the physical suffering that contorts our bodies to the religious anguish that flings us upon the bosom of God, there to be watered by the divine tears.

Anguish is something far deeper, more intimate, and more spiritual than suffering. We are wont to feel the touch of anguish even in the midst of that which we call happiness, and even because of this happiness itself, to which we cannot resign ourselves and before which we tremble. The happy who resign themselves to their apparent happiness, to a transitory happiness, seem to be as men without substance, or, at any rate, men who have not discovered this substance in themselves, who have not touched it. Such men are usually incapable of loving or of being loved, and they go through life without really knowing either pain or bliss.

There is no true love save in suffering, and in this world we have to choose either love, which is suffering, or happiness. And love leads us to no other happiness than that of love itself and its tragic consolation of uncertain hope. The moment love becomes happy and satisfied, it no longer desires and it is no longer love. The satisfied, the happy, do not love; they fall asleep in habit, near neighbour to annihilation. To fall into a habit is to begin to cease to be. Man is the more man—that is, the more divine—the greater his capacity for suffering, or, rather, for anguish.

At our coming into the world it is given to us to choose between love and happiness, and we wish—poor fools!—for both: the happiness of loving and the love of happiness. But we ought to ask for the gift of love and not of happiness, and to be preserved from dozing away into

habit, lest we should fall into a fast sleep, a sleep without waking, and so lose our consciousness beyond power of recovery. We ought to ask God to make us conscious of ourselves in ourselves, in our suffering.

What is Fate, what is Fatality, but the brotherhood of love and suffering? What is it but that terrible mystery in virtue of which love dies as soon as it touches the happiness towards which it reaches out, and true happiness dies with it? Love and suffering mutually engender one another, and love is charity and compassion, and the love that is not charitable and compassionate is not love. Love, in a word, is resigned despair.

That which the mathematicians call the problem of maxima and minima, which is also called the law of economy, is the formula for all existential—that is, passional—activity. In material mechanics and in social mechanics, in industry and in political economy, every problem resolves itself into an attempt to obtain the greatest possible resulting utility with the least possible effort, the greatest income with the least expenditure, the most pleasure with the least pain. And the terrible and tragic formula of the inner, spiritual life is either to obtain the most happiness with the least love, or the most love with the least happiness. And it is necessary to choose between the one and the other, and to know that he who approaches the infinite of love, the love that is infinite, approaches the zero of happiness, the supreme anguish. And in reaching this zero he is beyond the reach of the misery that kills. “Be not, and thou shalt be mightier than aught that is,” said Brother Juan de los Angeles in one of his *Diálogos de la conquista del reino de Dios* (Dial. iii. 8).

And there is something still more anguishing than suffering. A man about to receive a much-dreaded blow expects to have to suffer so severely that he may even succumb to the suffering, and when the blow falls he feels scarcely any pain; but afterwards, when he has come to himself and is conscious of his insensibility, he is seized with terror, a tragic terror, the most terrible of all, and choking with anguish he cries out: “Can it be that I no longer exist?” Which would you find most appalling—to feel such a pain as would deprive you of your senses on being pierced through with a white-hot iron, or to see yourself thus pierced through without feeling any pain? Have you never felt the horrible terror of feeling yourself incapable of suffering and of tears? Suffering tells us that we exist; suffering tells us that those whom we love exist; suffering tells us that the world in which we live exists; and suffering tells us that God exists and suffers; but it is the suffering of anguish, the anguish of surviving and being eternal. Anguish discovers God to us and makes us love Him.

To believe in God is to love Him, and to love Him is to feel Him suffering, to pity Him.

It may perhaps appear blasphemous to say that God suffers, for suffering implies limitation. Nevertheless, God, the Consciousness of the Universe, is limited by the brute matter in which He lives, by the unconscious, from which He seeks to liberate Himself and to liberate us. And we, in our turn, must seek to liberate Him. God suffers in each and all of us, in each and all of the consciousnesses imprisoned in transitory matter, and we all suffer in Him. Religious anguish is but the divine suffering, the feeling that God suffers in me and that I suffer in Him.

The universal suffering is the anguish of all in seeking to be all else but without power to achieve it, the anguish of each in being he that he is, being at the same time all that he is not, and being so for ever. The essence of a being is not only its endeavour to persist for ever, as Spinoza taught us, but also its endeavour to universalize itself; it is the hunger and thirst for eternity and infinity. Every created being tends not only to preserve itself in itself, but to perpetuate itself, and, moreover, to invade all other beings, to be others without ceasing to be itself, to extend its limits to the infinite, but without breaking them. It does not wish to throw down its walls and leave everything laid flat, common and undefended, confounding and losing its own individuality, but it wishes to carry its walls to the extreme limits of creation and to

embrace everything within them. It seeks the maximum of individuality with the maximum also of personality; it aspires to the identification of the Universe with itself; it aspires to God.

And this vast I, within which each individual I seeks to put the Universe—what is it but God? And because I aspire to God, I love Him; and this aspiration of mine towards God is my love for Him, and just as I suffer in being He, He also suffers in being I, and in being each one of us.

I am well aware that in spite of my warning that I am attempting here to give a logical form to a system of a-logical feelings, I shall be scandalizing not a few of my readers in speaking of a God who suffers, and in applying to God Himself, as God, the passion of Christ. The God of so-called rational theology excludes in effect all suffering. And the reader will no doubt think that this idea of suffering can have only a metaphorical value when applied to God, similar to that which is supposed to attach to those passages in the Old Testament which describe the human passions of the God of Israel. For anger, wrath, and vengeance are impossible without suffering. And as for saying that God suffers through being bound by matter, I shall be told that, in the words of Plotinus (*Second Ennead*, ix., 7), the Universal Soul cannot be bound by the very thing—namely, bodies or matter—which is bound by It.

Herein is involved the whole problem of the origin of evil, the evil of sin no less than the evil of pain, for if God does not suffer, He causes suffering; and if His life, since God lives, is not a process of realizing in Himself a total consciousness which is continually becoming fuller—that is to say, which is continually becoming more and more God—it is a process of drawing all things towards Himself, of imparting Himself to all, of constraining the consciousness of each part to enter into the consciousness of the All, which is He Himself, until at last He comes to be all in all—*παντα εν πασι*, according to the expression of St. Paul, the first Christian mystic. We will discuss this more fully, however, in the next chapter on the apocatastasis or beatific union.

For the present let it suffice to say that there is a vast current of suffering urging living beings towards one another, constraining them to love one another and to seek one another, and to endeavour to complete one another, and to be each himself and others at the same time. In God everything lives, and in His suffering everything suffers, and in loving God we love His creatures in Him, just as in loving and pitying His creatures we love and pity God in them. No single soul can be free so long as there is anything enslaved in God's world, neither can God Himself, who lives in the soul of each one of us, be free so long as our soul is not free.

My most immediate sensation is the sense and love of my own misery, my anguish, the compassion I feel for myself, the love I bear for myself. And when this compassion is vital and superabundant, it overflows from me upon others, and from the excess of my own compassion I come to have compassion for my neighbours. My own misery is so great that the compassion for myself which it awakens within me soon overflows and reveals to me the universal misery.

And what is charity but the overflow of pity? What is it but reflected pity that overflows and pours itself out in a flood of pity for the woes of others and in the exercise of charity?

When the overplus of our pity leads us to the consciousness of God within us, it fills us with so great anguish for the misery shed abroad in all things, that we have to pour our pity abroad, and this we do in the form of charity. And in this pouring abroad of our pity we experience relief and the painful sweetness of goodness. This is what Teresa de Jesús, the mystical doctor, called “sweet-tasting suffering” (*dolor sabroso*), and she knew also the lore of suffering loves. It is as when one looks upon some thing of beauty and feels the necessity of making others sharers in it. For the creative impulse, in which charity consists, is the work of suffering love.

We feel, in effect, a satisfaction in doing good when good superabounds within us, when we are swollen with pity; and we are swollen with pity when God, filling our soul, gives us the suffering sensation of universal life, of the universal longing for eternal divinization. For we

are not merely placed side by side with others in the world, having no common root with them, neither is their lot indifferent to us, but their pain hurts us, their anguish fills us with anguish, and we feel our community of origin and of suffering even without knowing it. Suffering, and pity which is born of suffering, are what reveal to us the brotherhood of every existing thing that possesses life and more or less of consciousness. “Brother Wolf” St. Francis of Assisi called the poor wolf that feels a painful hunger for the sheep, and feels, too, perhaps, the pain of having to devour them; and this brotherhood reveals to us the Fatherhood of God, reveals to us that God is a Father and that He exists. And as a Father He shelters our common misery.

Charity, then, is the impulse to liberate myself and all my fellows from suffering, and to liberate God, who embraces us all.

Suffering is a spiritual thing. It is the most immediate revelation of consciousness, and it may be that our body was given us simply in order that suffering might be enabled to manifest itself. A man who had never known suffering, either in greater or less degree, would scarcely possess consciousness of himself. The child first cries at birth when the air, entering into his lungs and limiting him, seems to say to him: You have to breathe me in order that you may live!

We must needs believe with faith, whatever counsels reason may give us, that the material or sensible world which the senses create for us exists solely in order to embody and sustain that other spiritual or imaginable world which the imagination creates for us. Consciousness tends to be ever more and more consciousness, to intensify its consciousness, to acquire full consciousness of its complete self, of the whole of its content. We must needs believe with faith, whatever counsels reason may give us, that in the depths of our own bodies, in animals, in plants, in rocks, in everything that lives, in all the Universe, there is a spirit that strives to know itself, to acquire consciousness of itself, to be itself—for to be oneself is to know oneself—to be pure spirit; and since it can only achieve this by means of the body, by means of matter, it creates and makes use of matter at the same time that it remains the prisoner of it. The face can only see itself when portrayed in the mirror, but in order to see itself it must remain the prisoner of the mirror in which it sees itself, and the image which it sees therein is as the mirror distorts it; and if the mirror breaks, the image is broken; and if the mirror is blurred, the image is blurred.

Spirit finds itself limited by the matter in which it has to live and acquire consciousness of itself, just as thought is limited by the word in which as a social medium it is incarnated. Without matter there is no spirit, but matter makes spirit suffer by limiting it. And suffering is simply the obstacle which matter opposes to spirit; it is the clash of the conscious with the unconscious.

Suffering is, in effect, the barrier which unconsciousness, matter, sets up against consciousness, spirit; it is the resistance to will, the limit which the visible universe imposes upon God; it is the wall that consciousness runs up against when it seeks to extend itself at the expense of unconsciousness; it is the resistance which unconsciousness opposes to its penetration by consciousness.

Although in deference to authority we may believe, we do not in fact know, that we possess heart, stomach, or lungs so long as they do not cause us discomfort, suffering, or anguish. Physical suffering, or even discomfort, is what reveals to us our own internal core. And the same is true of spiritual suffering and anguish, for we do not take account of the fact that we possess a soul until it hurts us.

Anguish is that which makes consciousness return upon itself. He who knows no anguish knows what he does and what he thinks, but he does not truly know that he does it and that he thinks it. He thinks, but he does not think that he thinks, and his thoughts are as if they were not his. Neither does he properly belong to himself. For it is only anguish, it is only the passionate

longing never to die, that makes a human spirit master of itself.

Pain, which is a kind of dissolution, makes us discover our internal core; and in the supreme dissolution, which is death, we shall, at last, through the pain of annihilation, arrive at the core of our temporal core—at God, whom in our spiritual anguish we breathe and learn to love.

Even so must we believe with faith, whatever counsels reason may give us.

The origin of evil, as many discovered of old, is nothing other than what is called by another name the inertia of matter, and, as applied to the things of the spirit, sloth. And not without truth has it been said that sloth is the mother of all vices, not forgetting that the supreme sloth is that of not longing madly for immortality.

Consciousness, the craving for more, more, always more, hunger of eternity and thirst of infinity, appetite for God—these are never satisfied. Each consciousness seeks to be itself and to be all other consciousnesses without ceasing to be itself: it seeks to be God. And matter, unconsciousness, tends to be less and less, tends to be nothing, its thirst being a thirst for repose. Spirit says: I wish to be! and matter answers: I wish not to be!

And in the order of human life, the individual would tend, under the sole instigation of the instinct of preservation, the creator of the material world, to destruction, to annihilation, if it were not for society, which, in implanting in him the instinct of perpetuation, the creator of the spiritual world, lifts and impels him towards the All, towards immortalization. And everything that man does as a mere individual, opposed to society, for the sake of his own preservation, and at the expense of society, if need be, is bad; and everything that he does as a social person, for the sake of the society in which he himself is included, for the sake of its perpetuation and of the perpetuation of himself in it, is good. And many of those who seem to be the greatest egoists, trampling everything under their feet in their zeal to bring their work to a successful issue, are in reality men whose souls are aflame and overflowing with charity, for they subject and subordinate their petty personal I to the social I that has a mission to accomplish.

He who would tie the working of love, of spiritualization, of liberation, to transitory and individual forms, crucifies God in matter; he crucifies God who makes the ideal subservient to his own temporal interests or worldly glory. And such a one is a deicide.

The work of charity, of the love of God, is to endeavour to liberate God from brute matter, to endeavour to give consciousness to everything, to spiritualize or universalize everything; it is to dream that the very rocks may find a voice and work in accordance with the spirit of this dream; it is to dream that everything that exists may become conscious, that the Word may become life.

We have but to look at the eucharistic symbol to see an instance of it. The Word has been imprisoned in a piece of material bread, and it has been imprisoned therein to the end that we may eat it, and in eating it make it our own, part and parcel of our body in which the spirit dwells, and that it may beat in our heart and think in our brain and be consciousness. It has been imprisoned in this bread in order that, after being buried in our body, it may come to life again in our spirit.

And we must spiritualize everything. And this we shall accomplish by giving our spirit, which grows the more the more it is distributed, to all men and to all things. And we give our spirit when we invade other spirits and make ourselves the master of them.

All this is to be believed with faith, whatever counsels reason may give us.

And now we are about to see what practical consequences all these more or less fantastical doctrines may have in regard to logic, to esthetics, and, above all, to ethics—their religious concretion, in a word. And perhaps then they will gain more justification in the eyes of the reader who, in spite of my warnings, has hitherto been looking for the scientific or even philosophic development of an irrational system.

I think it may not be superfluous to recall to the reader once again what I said at the conclusion of the sixth chapter, that entitled “In the Depths of the Abyss”; but we now approach the practical or pragmatism part of this treatise. First, however, we must see how the religious sense may become concrete in the hopeful vision of another life.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Lecture I., p. 36. London, 1895, Black.

² *No quiero acordarme*, a phrase that is always associated in Spanish literature with the opening sentence of *Don Quijote: En un lugar de la Mancha de cuyo nombre no quiero acordarme*.—J.E.C.F.

³ W. Hermann, *Christlich systematische Dogmatik*, in the volume entitled *Systematische christliche Religion. Die Kultur der Gegenwart* series, published by P. Hinneberg.

⁴ *Dieu a fait l’homme à son image, mais l’homme le lui a bien rendu*, Voltaire.—J.E.C.F.

⁵ *Vivir un mundo*.

⁶ *Sermons*, by the Rev. Frederick W. Robertson. First series, sermon iii., “Jacob’s Wrestling.” Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co., London, 1898.

⁷ Reinold Seeberg, *Christliche-protestantische Ethik* in *Systematische christliche Religion*, in *Die Kultur der Gegenwart* series.

⁸ Cf. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, secunda secundæ, quæstio iv., art. 2.

⁹ “*Qué es Verdad?*” (“What is truth?”), published in *La España Moderna*, March, 1906, vol. 207 (reprinted in the edition of collected *Ensayos*, vol. vi., Madrid, 1918).

Miguel de Unamuno. *The Tragic Sense of Life*. Chapters 8 and 9. Trans. J.E. Crawford Fritch. London: Macmillan, 1921.

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