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THE OPEN WAY

A Study in Acceptance

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A BOOK OF VERSE

A HANDBOOK OF PROBATION (*Edited*)

THE OPEN WAY

A Study in Acceptance

by

E. GRAHAM HOWE

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and

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*'Take of this grain which in my garden grows,
And-grows for you;
Make bread of it: and that repose
And peace, which ev'ry where
With so much earnestnesse you do pursue
Is onely there.'*

'PEACE.'
GEORGE HERBERT.
(about 1637)

*'There is no proof, there is only experience.
There is no teaching, there is only learning.'*

'BIRD UNDER GLASS.'
RONALD FRASER.
(1937)

AUTHORS' NOTE

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The God Whom we Ignore, by John Kennedy, B.D., Ph.D. Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton.

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Letters to a Niece, by Baron von Hügel. Messrs. J. M. Dent & Sons.

What dare I Think? by Julian Huxley. Messrs. Chatto and Windus

Ends and Means, by Aldous Huxley. Messrs. Chatto and Windus.

E. GRAHAM HOWE

L. LE MESURIER

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PREFACE

by

E. GRAHAM HOWE

'THE OPEN WAY' is not a book that I could or would have written by myself. I wanted to see it written, but felt that it needed a collaborator to bring to it a different point of view and another way of statement from my own. I thought there might be a certain freshness, also, generated out of the impact of two minds. I found my collaborator in Mrs. Le Mesurier. The book is our joint production, and I am glad to take my full share of responsibility for it. I supplied the essential ideas, but Mrs. Le Mesurier has brought the book into the world. As is always the case, the father's role has been the easier one, and Mrs. Le Mesurier has had all the work to do.

That experience is for our acceptance is perhaps as old a lesson as any that mankind can learn. I claim no originality for the teaching which this book contains, but truth sometimes requires re-statement, and must often be re-learned. It has to be freshly interpreted by many minds, according to the needs of their life and times. It is the responsibility and privilege of the teacher to attempt the re-setting in such a way that the beauty of the ancient jewel is not lost.

Because it sets forth a 'teaching,' there seems to be a quality about this book that can best be called 'religious.' If religion is a way of life, we have not exceeded our aim, for life must have its way, but I hope the effect will not appear didactic or dogmatic. Though there is nothing new here, only ancient wisdom that belongs to all time, yet it appears new, and even produces a sense of shock when it is re-discovered and shown in a fresh and unfamiliar light

The importance of this teaching for us to-day seems to be that it stresses certain truths we have been in danger of forgetting. We have been under the dictatorship of a Morality of Action, as if life consisted solely in an answer to the question: 'What shall we do about it?' Our duty to ourselves and to our neighbours has been made so much a matter of action that the 'feeling' side, or quality of tenderness, has been almost lost. Our major purpose in this book is to stress the importance of the Morality of Sensitiveness. The question we shall face will no longer be simply 'What shall I do?' but 'What do I feel?' And that will bring us back to the deeper question: 'Who am I?' Our attention must turn back to ourselves for a while, to find enlightenment.

The first step in any analysis of life is to set ourselves apart, and feel the barriers and the relationships which are implied by 'I am' and 'I am not.' The Experiencer is set apart from, but by that very fact related to, the many fields of his experience. He is set on the way of all experience by realizing that something is happening to him. He is not Dictator, but Experiencer, which is the humbler part to play.

To be the Experiencer is also to be the pupil, where life itself is the teacher. The way of learning is by enlightenment. There is no room for Dictatorships, for no one can be sure he knows the way for any other one, whose place in life is different. But there is plenty of room for teachers who will show the way of tenderness, by which all problems of relationship within the complexity of community can be solved. Without them, so-called freedom is at the mercy of moral tyrants who assume their own convenient authority, as Dictators of the nursery, the home, the pulpit, the Press and politics.

Sometimes psychologists seem liable to underrate the value of the teacher. 'Don't interfere,' they say. 'The child is always right until he is taught otherwise. No man can teach another how to live.' But this doctrine of freedom as the condition required for growth is not true enough, for it is

only partially, not wholly true. It served its turn as corrective to the dogmatic habits of coercive authority. But because some teachers are bad, it does not follow that all teachers must necessarily be so. True, teachers have taught wrongly, untimely and out of place (as all dictators do), and they needed to be put in their place a little. They have been inclined to dogmatize, administering labels, fixing values, hoarding knowledge, in the misguided notion that they could thus equip their charges with 'the facts of life.' They forgot that good teaching is always learning; not handing out desiccated accumulations, but growing together. Teaching is as difficult as any other art, but is not therefore to be rejected. Nor is the one who is willing to learn to be despised for that. Teachers and leaders have a part to play: it is a question of whether we are to fall into the hands of good ones or of enthusiastic faddists with an axe to grind. There is a Way of Life, and the good teacher is the one who makes us see this and helps us to find it, without insisting too stridently that his way is the only way. Many are confused, and do not find the way of life plain.

✓ Life is a difficult business, and seems to have become increasingly so, until we are now faced with a major crisis: 'Learn or die!' Our dogmas have lost their power to make men believe in them: our prejudices have been shown to be what they really are: religion does not revive in its old forms, but is striving to express itself in new and unfamiliar ways: political creeds are found to be lacking in valid answers to the question, 'How to live?' We need guidance that will show us how to be wise in our dilemma. Teacher or Dictator? Someone must be at the helm, if we are to find our way out of chaos into a more ordered way of life.

But who is to give the orders? The Dictator says, 'I will' (and does). Some teachers make themselves into dictators, for it seems to them the easier way; but others, who are wiser to the way of life, say: 'Only Life is the teacher: let's see.' And so they are our watchers, our observers: they see,

they 'keep their eye on the ball,' reporting, translating, pre-digesting difficult data. They are guiding us, with tenderness, and yet with toughness too, upon the way of Life. They have no prejudice, and no purpose other than the Truth which is more abundant life. They have no axe to grind, but know that their wits must be kept sharp indeed to follow in this moving, living way.

There are many ways to the Kingdom, but none of them are straight. There are many teachers of the way, but none of them can assume with justice that they know the whole of Truth. It is not private property, yet we may all possess some little share of it. Truth, like Life itself, is a spirit shared amongst us all, for our intimate guidance amidst the tangled problems of experience. The best teacher is the one who can best show the way to those who from the darkness of their ignorance can still see, and are willing to see, what he has to show.

The power of the teacher is the power of the spirit. It is the capacity to inspire with life, to radiate light, to show the way when courage fails, so that we may 'walk on.' He is the guardian of 'faith,' who can show the meaning and value of experience, even if that be tragedy. The one who understands can interpret us to ourselves, and stands for Life itself—our greatest teacher. We do not have to seek what lessons we should learn: experience is for the Experimenter. It is always with us, if we are but willing to accept what is set before us. Life is the meal upon our plate, for eating and digesting, in good time.

The teaching of this book is that we should be willing to let Life be our teacher, and let it teach us exactly as it does and what it wills. All other teachers are only fit to serve if they can teach us the way of willing and active obedience to the Law, which is the Truth of our experience, Now. To the all-important question: 'What is the Way of Life?' the answer is: 'Walk on!'

But finally, lest anyone should feel that the teaching of

the way of acceptance seems too easy, let us emphasize the meaning of the ready answer, 'Yes, I WILL !' For here is the crisis of our opportunity. The measure of our acceptance is in our willingness to live. This is our 'will to live,' without which there cannot be a 'more abundant life.' The will with which we live is the spirit of our lives, and it requires this positive quality of the ringing answer: 'Yes, I WILL.'

It is therefore the reader's responsibility to read (as it has been ours to write), and thereafter to live, with great will. The power of the Spirit 'expressed in this word WILL is the source of all 'becoming' upon the way of Life.

E. G. H.

146 HARLEY ST.,
LONDON, W.1.
January, 1939

PREFACE

by

LILIAN LE MESURIER

DR. HOWE HAS WRITTEN the only preface to this book which really matters. Mine is more in the nature of a personal note to explain my share in it. Those who are already familiar with his work in his lectures and his other books, will not need to be told that the ideas put forward here are his, not mine, planted only by him, and often expressed in his own words and phrases. But seed-ideas grow differently in the soil of different minds, so I do not say they may not have got altered in the process. I hope they are 'true to strain.'

I went to Dr. Howe as a patient, stayed on as a pupil, and then as a collaborator. I was deeply honoured when he asked me to write this book with him. His ideas interested me enormously: they seemed to have healing in them, and to hold the secret of reconciliation with life and death. People who are really well may not feel any need for that: 'they that are whole need not a physician': but so few of us are really well. To have the chance of helping to pass on these new-old ideas, which had so helped me, to thousands who were, I believed, hungry for them, was an amazing opportunity, but also a frightening responsibility. The instrument being so faulty, it was certain the transmission would be faulty too, and the message might easily be spoilt. So I was afraid, but yet I hoped. At any rate what I have written has been written sincerely.

Several people, interested in this collaboration, have asked me whether the Open Way is a religious way, or a philosophic way, or a psychological way. I can only say I think

it is all three. I have never been able to draw hard and fast lines between religion and philosophy, they seem so to overlap and intermingle. And surely psychology links both, and is inextricably part of both, as it must be of all our thoughts and visions and ways of life ?

While working on this book, I read for the first time Berdyaev's *Freedom and the Spirit*, which impressed me greatly, and from which I have quoted freely. Although written in quite another language (I do not mean Russian !) and too difficult for me to understand all of it, it seemed to fit in curiously with the ideas I had learnt from Dr. Howe and which were moving in my mind. Most strangely the same thing happened again and again. Everywhere I turned I found them, in places where I certainly did not expect them, as well as in quarters where they might have been expected ; in the daily Press, in the pulpit and in the street. *The Times*, Dean Inge and Dean Matthews, essays, plays, novels—even casual comments at cocktail parties—all seemed to echo what I was thinking about and suggest new questions. It was as if these thoughts were in the air, and there was a sort of clamouring of many voices, calling for further expression of them.

It is said that in a preface one should state clearly and accurately what a book is about, so that those who are not interested, and who wish to avoid the trouble of reading it, can do so without wasting their time. Very well ! The dominating ideas of this book are, first, that we cannot be well unless we accept the whole of life : second that we shall be ill and unbalanced if we try to live on one floor only of our psychic house, even if it is the highest floor : third, that it is only by the acceptance of love that any evil can ever, in actual fact, be changed. The key-notes of the book are balance and wholeness.

The expression 'technique of the Cup' may be criticized, and perhaps needs a word of explanation. Nothing exists without developing a technique of its own, whether it is 'art' in the conventional sense, or the art, say, of playing

acceptably with small children. But the word has both a wide and a narrow meaning. A noted composer once said that the art of music consists in the combination of science, gift, experience and love. Love alone is not enough. Science and gift, without experience and love, are not enough, though they may give 'technique' in the limited and rather contemptuous sense of mechanical skill. But that is a very inadequate conception of technique.

We use the word here in its wider sense, which comes nearer to that definition of the art of music, and which applies equally to the art of living. The technique of the Cup cannot be successfully practised by any mere acquired prowess, or intellectual agility. It is an activity—no, rather a positive passivity—which belongs to every floor of the psychic house. It is only possible in the attitude of prayer, and permeated with accepting love. Experience comes in too, no doubt.

We have stressed in this book that the way is for *all* men, whatever their religious or philosophical ideas may be; that it is an open way, and a way that keeps us open. Some may think that we have dealt more with the difficulties of Christians than with those of people who think differently. If this is true—I am not sure that it is true—it must be remembered that the book is addressed chiefly to a nation that is, nominally at least, Christian. It is certainly true that there are many more quotations from the Christian and Jewish Scriptures than from those of other religions, but that is because I know them better. When Christians ask how this Way agrees with Christianity, the answer is that the Churches have sometimes lost touch with it, but it is all in the teaching of Christ. Those who have found the Way of Life through Him, and are nearest to understanding Him, know that they are walking in the Way of Acceptance.

But we cannot ignore the fact that there are many to-day who cannot find the Way through organized Christianity, as it has been commonly taught and understood. Perhaps

they cannot find it now in any form of institutional religion, however wisely it may be taught. This may be due to the special conditions of the period of history we are passing through, or to individual or other causes. In any case it is a fact that must be reckoned with. These people need the Way as much as any others need it, and the Way is equally for all. All are thirsty for living water, and they *must have it* in one form or another. The shape of the vessel does not matter much, so long as a man can quench his thirst. Those who drink thankfully from the sacred vessels of old tradition, will not grudge the water to others, to whom those vessels are unacceptable. What matters is when men perish for lack of water, and give money and labour for that which is not bread, and does not satisfy.

There are many burning questions that might well have been dealt with here at much greater length, such as education, pacifism and the official Christian attitude towards it, democracy, etc. But we were anxious not to over-load the book, and all these subjects need—and have—whole tomes, not chapters devoted to them. Enough has been said here to show the mental and emotional and spiritual attitude in which we believe these and all problems must be examined and dealt with, if a wise solution is to be arrived at. It is certain that refusal to face facts, even in the interests of the highest ideals, will help no one.

Many people may feel that this book suffers from a surfeit of quotations. But they were not brought in merely to gild and illuminate the page with borrowed beauty, but because they bore so exactly on the points I wanted to make. I hope therefore that they may be forgiven me.

The frequent repetition of the same idea in various forms, must, I fear, be tedious to those already familiar with these subjects. But the book is addressed also to those who have no such background of knowledge. In their interests I felt that I must risk boredom and sacrifice brevity to the need for making meanings as clear as I could.

In modern novels it is a point of honour—indeed of etiquette—to say that in writing them one has thought of no living person. Here it is different, and without fear of offence or the law of libel, I can say that I have thought constantly of many who are dear to me, and of their special problems. I hope the book may help some people. It has helped me so much to write it, that I think perhaps it will. But that does not mean that I think everyone will find it comfortable reading. For I remember Ronald Fraser's wise saying in *Bird under Glass*: 'Truth is not altogether comforting to those who need comfort, for it needs resolution and patience and courage in superhuman quality to face the journey which is before the soul.' But we can have that quality. I believe also: 'Knock and it shall be opened unto you: seek and ye shall find.'

L. LE M.

COLEHERNE COURT,
LONDON, S.W.5.
January, 1939

SUMMARIES OF THE TEN CHAPTERS

CHAPTER FIRST THE BODIES OF MAN

The World—its contradictions—the lost Pattern—life a problem in relations—separation from the original source of life—inherent tragedy of relationship—detachment—philosophies of life—monism, dualism, trinitarianism—problems of community linked with personal problems—the Hermetic postulate—man the possessor of his own bodies—various classifications—Body, Soul and Spirit—the four-fold psychological division—physical, emotional, mental and spiritual bodies—their correspondences and functions—symbol of the lighted Candle-time, 'no-time', clock-time—experiences and personality—sensations, feelings, thoughts, intuitions—Man the Experiencer—Jacob's ladder—mother-fixation—higher and lower rungs—seekers of heaven and hiders from earth—enclosed religious orders—motives of retreat—the bodies compared with garments—attitude of the Self to the bodies—the Mystic and the Soldier in the Soul—conflict—comparison of life with a hand of cards—acceptance of reality even when it is a bad deal—different bodies need different food and language—refusal to admit doubt means the murder of thought or of vision—Higher Mind and Lower Mind (Body-Mind)—rights of the lower mind—old wounds and maladies—reason for their persistence unhealed—imperfection of human relationships—remedy by acceptance—need of a metaphysic—symbols of the Sword and the Cup—the Real Self—right use of metaphors and symbols—forms and their surrender—sign-posts.

CHAPTER SECOND THE WAY OF ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is positive, not negative—power and love—activity in passivity—external problems solved internally—necessity for undefended acceptance of experience—tragedy of unanswerable questions—attitude of acceptance to disappointment, to Death, to Life, to old age, to the Opposites—its relation to the universe, to other individuals, to groups, to ourselves—its effect on health—how it is known in all our bodies by results—the link between the Opposites—the Law of Life—the Law, broken by rejection is mended by acceptance—insecurity—the Divine Will—alternating rhythm of life—the secret of balance—no picking and choosing—universal acceptance—force breeds hate—'let's see'—light and heat—verbal violence—protests against amoral or immoral doctrine—misunderstandings—getting together—'loving' evil—the 'beloved enemy'—teaching of Christ—inner meaning—love of power and power of love—practical objections to acceptance—alleged gains by violence—counter-balancing losses—qualities and their defects—the right and the wrong militancy—eagerness and earnestness—Puritans, Quakers and pacifists—the plus and the minus of power—the Kingdom of God—the Tao—the Open Way of Acceptance—timeliness.

THE OPEN WAY

CHAPTER THIRD

ACCEPTANCE OF OURSELVES

The Cup's digestive process—no short-cuts to wholeness—acceptance of ourselves more difficult than acceptance of our neighbours—what it implies—first reactions against the doctrine of acceptance—various causes for refusal, better and worse—motives of loyalty—unnecessary fears—identical goals but different methods—acceptance is not acquiescence—failure of efforts to conquer sin by extermination—the parable of the tares—patience and charity towards ourselves—we must BE before we can be different—fallacy of arguments from isolated texts—Christ's attitude—Brother Lawrence—the efficiency of mystics—desire of the soul to change—its power to change, in time—pace and rhythm of spiritual growth—'dry times'—difference between loving and liking—love of a child—married love—love of God to man—love is unconditional, but that does not mean approval—remorse—repentance—mental acceptance and acceptance of the heart—the Pharisee's attitude—the Sacrament of Life—the inevitability of the choice between acceptance and refusal.

CHAPTER FOURTH

ACCEPTANCE IN POLITICS

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CHAPTER FIFTH

A DAY OF ACCEPTANCE.

Life a problem without solution—not to be solved but experienced—acceptance as a way of daily life—two attitudes towards life, choosing and ordering it about, or accepting it *all* willingly—Western and Eastern habits of behaviour—theory and practice—the vicious circle of disappointment—control of the Self or of the stranger—the open door—the way of happiness—the 'falling' ways of healing—parallel living in the different bodies—acceptance necessary in every

step of life—eating—walking—talking—fatigue—sleep—sleeplessness—the ‘whole man’—‘Letting go’ and keeping open—waking feelings—our choice of attitude—at the breakfast table—in the office—in the kitchen—in the nursery—four great healers—good ‘interference’—change of thought—objections and the answer—‘problem children’—mistaken methods—nursery discipline, positive and negative—causes for being negative—acceptance in social contacts—the untimely visitor—the dinner-party—charm—the shock-absorber—our failures in acceptance—how not to treat them—pressure—healing—not effort but ‘letting go’—not exclusion but inclusion.

CHAPTER SIXTH HEALTH AND DISEASE

No health without acceptance—Eastern and Western attitudes—the ‘I’ and the ‘it’—absorption—phagocytosis—parallelism of hygiene on all planes—circulation—gymnastic exercises—washing—inner cleanliness—spiritual catharsis—food—digestion—rejection a sign of lack of balance—symptoms are danger-signals—something wrong—what?—three alternatives—diagnosis—dangers of unsuitable diet, mental or physical—remedial measures—illness not identical with symptoms—the point of impact with experience—emotional indigestion—deflection of the impact by refusal—deflection may be upwards or downwards—physical or mental or spiritual consequences—acceptance of painful experience brings release—refusal brings conflict—the nature of disease—two life forces, creation and destruction—the balance—the one and the many—the symbolism of the Snake—forms—maggots, germs, etc.—bacteriology—health at the centre—the Cup and the stomach—katabolism and anabolism—taking our trouble as our food—pushing the plate away—life is friendly—the place of the healer—the need of empty spaces—faith and health—the difference between faith and beliefs—good words in bad odour—‘Will’ and ‘Willingness’—co-operation—freedom to refuse—changing ‘no’ to ‘yes’—positiveness of the healthy life—focus of the will in healing—distinction between will and desire—atmosphere of healing in a sick room—sincerity—minor ailments—humour and good humour—radiant health—the Source—the rich young ruler and the way of life—the need for self-emptying on all levels—seed-thoughts.

CHAPTER SEVENTH ‘BE YOURSELF’

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hardship for those we love—examples of refusal—growth and pain—being and becoming—public affairs—peace-conferences—war—dictatorships—maxims of Lao T'su—persecutions—exclusiveness and its Nemesis—the Jews and Hitler—our opportunity—acceptance as a platitude or an iniquity—criminal law—deterrent effect of punishment—the argument for war—respect for personality—education—'first' and 'second,' two meanings—fulfilment and service—freedom to grow—continuous re-birth.

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CHAPTER NINTH

WHOLENESS

The meaning of wholeness—it implies balance—the proof of having balance—the keys to wholeness are inclusiveness and paradox—human craving for happiness is unfulfilled—tragedy, frustration, disappointment—defeatism of regret, or victory by acceptance—fruitful or barren experience—the Christ in man—willingness to learn from unpleasant people—spiritual journeys and adventures—they are necessary—seeking and finding—new lamps—childish religious conceptions—lack of wholeness is the cause of unhappiness—wholeness is not goodness but includes it—need of courage—we cannot bargain with God or with life—defeat accepted can be victory—the dangers of over-concentration on evil—evil and temptation are not removed, but man can be delivered from attachment to them—our problem is how to keep the Cup open—our attitude to Space and the Unseen is wrong—we fear movement and change—we fight the rhythm of life and struggle against the downward curve—we calculate personal advantage—disinterestedness is necessary to wholeness—the ideal of universal sharing—hoarding of love as a 'possession—willingness to lose possessions, even visions—the unconsciousness of the 'good life'—self-consciousness is a stage on the way to it—acceptance of Death as one of the Healers—we need Life AND Death.

CHAPTER TENTH

THE CUP

The symbol—its meaning and technique—difficulty of explaining a mystery—dimness of religion—Christian and Jewish practice—the Cup or the Golden

Flower—the indwelling fire—the solar plexus—our duty to sustain the Cup and keep it open—all experience, personal and universal, pours into it—our Karma—the Cup as an Altar for 'sacrifice'—surrender of all our valuables and all sins and sorrows—our power of choice, not of what flows into the Cup but of our attitude towards it—by acceptance or refusal the content of the Cup is changed—man's fateful freedom—the pattern of the soul—faith, what it is and is not—trust and courage—the long journey of the soul—'walk on'—effect of metaphysical ideas on daily life—materialism and pessimism—pressure of time—limit and anxiety—gnosis and agnosticism—patience and faith—direct knowledge—charge against faith of 'other-worldliness' and disregard of 'this-world' service—fallacious argument—need of eternity for fulfilment and wisdom—reincarnation—the 'Eternal Now'—conceptions of Time—the harvest of suffering—conceptions of immortality—indestructibility of the higher values—Christ's silence on many questions—different aspects of God—different methods of approach—the language of personality in prayer—the wordless prayer which is an attitude of the soul—the sending of the Cup as a healing vessel—the technique of the Lighthouse—mysticism and secret wisdom—parables and symbols—their dangers—the crucifixion of Christ's religion—unity of life—universal responsibility—willingness to drink the Cup—avoidance of over-anxiety—members of the orchestra are not the conductor—re-birth—dying into life—the centre and the circumference—Space-Time-Now—returning to the centre—light and the lantern—fuel for our engine—depression and exaltation—false identifications—the emptiness we need is created by the healers—the open way keeps us open.

THE MAP OF THE BOOK

The Goal of Man is Wholeness (Holiness).

The Way is the Way of Acceptance.

The Words are Life, Light and Love.

The Gesture is the open, up-turned Hand.

The Secret is Balance, which brings Wisdom.

The Process is Digestion of Experience (Absorption—
Assimilation).

The Condition is Inclusiveness.

The Rhythm is the flowing Movement of an upward
and downward Curve.

The Key is Paradox.

The Discipline is the Negative which the Law of
Reality opposes to our Desire.

The Need of the Soul is empty Spaces.

The Attitude is Prayer—the Prayer of Acceptance.

The Symbols are the Sword and the Cup.

The Technique is the Technique of the Cup.

Chapter First

THE BODIES OF MAN

THIS IS A RICH WORLD, but we are very poor; a world where men have won marvellous skill in dealing with disease, and yet are mostly sick; a world where we desire peace and find ourselves at war; a world where our ideal is freedom, and still we live in prison. What is it that we lack? Where have we gone astray?

We have somehow lost sight of the Pattern, and have come to look on existence as a whirling mass of atoms with no rhyme or reason. We see millions of disconnected stitches, or isolated notes of music, or dissociated blobs of colour scattered upon a canvas. But the design of the fabric, the symphony, the picture have escaped from our range of vision, and left us in a meaningless universe. We shuffle along with eyes fixed on the immediate steps which we must take, but with no sense of direction and no confidence. We are built like a city that is without unity in itself, without planning or purpose. Some of us have still a pocketful of dreams, and we are the best off, the least unhappy, but they are not a substitute for chart and compass.

We have not understood the truth that life is relationship, and a problem in relations. Our freedom can only be realized by accepting the bonds of that relationship. We can be rich only if we will share: we can only be well and at peace with ourselves and with the world, when we know and accept ourselves, and, through that knowledge, know and accept others also.

Life, common to all, is given to each one in varied measure. The form of our earth-life implies a needed separation from the wholeness of the original source of life. (This is our

measure of what the theologians call 'original sin,' which makes us not only different, but also wilfully and necessarily different.) Since we are thus separated, the problem of life becomes one of relationship, and other things follow. The Greeks saw that life is tragic in its very nature and essence, just because it is relationship. It is this conception of the inherent tragedy of life that moderns have rejected, finding it intolerable. But we do not escape it by rejection: we can only transform it by acceptance.

The first stage in all relationship must be one of detachment, that is, the recognition of the 'I' and the 'Not-I,' of the separation and 'twoness' of the loved and the loving. We may accept philosophic monism as the ultimate reality, and believe in a unity which underlies all things and all processes, vital or psychic or chemical. But in this world of Time and Space, *Now*, dualism is the great fact for us to realize, for on it all life, all relationship depends. We are not one but two. Separateness and difference are painful to us, for they mean conflict between the different aspects of ourselves, and between us and those we love, but they are facts. What is the solution? Are we to force the two back to the unity of one? But that would mean either illusion or else exclusion of one in favour of the other who is to dominate. The true solution is that we should move on to the trinity which is the pattern of life.¹ This is not a matter of simple arithmetic, no mechanical sum in addition or subtraction. It is reached by the united pair preserving their separate identity, yet changed to something new by their union, producing the higher third. It is a dynamic process, and it is essentially miraculous.

It is urgently important to realize the link, the vital connection between all problems and all difficulties, even when they seem most different. Life being relationship, all its infinite variety is closely interrelated. The most difficult problems of our modern times are the problems of how to live

¹ See Epilogue.

harmoniously as members of a great community. The community is so vast and complicated: the members are so sharply divided. But community problems are not separate from our own personal problems. It must not be thought that time is wastefully spent, or selfishly spent in the bad meaning of 'selfish,' when it is spent in trying to solve these individual problems. Though they may seem petty and small, they have a cosmic significance. To solve the problems of the related parts of the mysterious self, may be to solve the problems of community. At the least it will throw light upon them. 'As is the Inner, so is the Outer; as is the Great, so is the Small; as it is Above so it is Below: there is but one Life and Law.'¹

If, then, we are to understand others and our relationship with them, we must have some knowledge of ourselves. The first question is: 'Who and what am I?' And in trying to answer it, in learning to know ourselves, the first thing to become aware of is that man is the possessor of his own body, but not identified with it. He has, in fact, not one but several bodies, which are the vehicles through which he functions. This truth has been perceived throughout the ages, by some men dimly and by others clearly, and it is vital to our well-being. It explains the mental and physical conflicts which so often rend and destroy us, and, when we understand it, shows us how we may be healed. It puts us in the way of finding our lost pattern again.

The bodies of man, the means of his earthly experience, have been differently named and divided by various cults and systems of thought. There is the familiar threefold division into body, soul and spirit, and the theosophical theory of the seven bodies of man. The detail of these subdivisions is not important for our present purpose, though it may have significance in other connections. It is enough that we should recognize that the individual clothes himself in multiple

¹This is the hermetic postulate. The word hermetic derives from the name of Hermes Trismegitus, who was traditionally associated with the ancient Egyptian mysteries, and in whose reputed writings the source of much of the esoteric philosophy may be traced.

garments to meet the multiple aspects of life—including death—in relation to *all* of which it is his destiny to function. For practical living, the fourfold psychological division is sufficient:¹ the recognition that man has assuredly four bodies: the physical, the emotional, the mental and the spiritual.

The physical body corresponds with the element earth, and functions through the senses, by seeing, by hearing, by smelling, by tasting, by touching—in a word by sensation.

The emotional body corresponds with the element water, and functions through feeling.

The mental body corresponds with the element air, and functions through thought.

The spiritual body corresponds with the element fire, and functions through intuition.

These are not merely poetic metaphors, vague and capable of being transposed at will without affecting their meaning: they are symbols on the plane of true correspondences,² and are worthy of close attention. The symbol of the candle illustrates them, and will help us to translate them for our practical use, for the lighted candle is the perfect symbol of the chemistry of life. First the solid wax, corresponding with earth and the plane of sensation; then the melting liquid, corresponding with emotion; then the rarefied, gaseous form, corresponding with thought, and finally the end and aim of it all—combustion; the fire, the burning flame of spiritual intuition. Each of these planes has its own speed-time. In the highest, where expansion is greatest, density least, and wavelengths shortest, the speed-time is relatively instantaneous: it is 'No-time,' that is to say, Eternity. The speed-time of thought is much less rapid, but still tremendous, like the speed of light. The pace of emotion slows down, in harmony with nervous vibrations, and

¹ See C. G. Jung, *Psychological Types*. We are here using Professor Jung's classification, but making a very free use of it on somewhat different lines.

² See Chapter Seventh, 'Be Yourself,' p. 111.

gradually decreases as it nears the solid earth-level, where there is greatest density, longest wavelengths, and contraction instead of expansion. This is where time is clock-time, 'our time,' time as men reckon it. There is every gradation of time from the instantaneous, comprehensive movement in all directions simultaneously of the Eternal Now, down to our dragging clock-time, where a moment in spiritual reckoning may be a thousand years. On the fire level, the gesture of expansion is always to open and accept, but on the earth level, the gesture of contraction is to clench a fist and refuse.

Many people have now reached the stage of realizing that their physical bodies are not themselves. Their personality is not the same thing as their strongest sensation, nor yet the equivalent of the sum of all their sensations. They can say with sincere conviction: 'I have cut my hand; it festers—the pain spreads; it affects more of me with sensations of illness, but still it is not I. It is an experience. *I* am the Experiencer.' It may and does seem strange to people who are accustomed to think of matter as the only reality, that a mere difference of speech and thought should make any real alteration to a practical sensation like pain, which seems so concrete and material. But those who have put it to the trial bear witness that this difference in our way of speaking and thinking does have an almost miraculous effect, not only in enabling a man to bear his pain better, but actually in reducing the degree of his pain. To many this good news is already a commonplace of everyday experience.

Fewer people as yet realize that it is equally true of all their bodies. But, as knowledge and understanding grow, we come to perceive that just as we are not identified with our pains or with our satisfactions in the physical body, so we are not identified with our experiences in the emotional body. 'I feel this sorrow, this joy, this hope or this fear, but they are not I.' And in the mental body it is the same story: 'I have these ideas, this knowledge; I hold these opinions, but they are not I.' Even in the spiritual body, which most

systems and religions have identified with the 'Real Self,' the best and highest self, we must remember that it is still only a body. 'I have these intuitions, these ecstasies, this mystic sense of union with God, and His creation, but they are not I.'

All our experiences are conditional, relative that is to say to their various planes and conditions. They are all necessary, and, within their own conditions, 'real.' Not one of them is to be deemed better and one worse, one preferred and one rejected, one despised and another exalted. The Real Self is part of the Divine, Creative Spirit, which is unconditional and unconditioned. He is the Experiencer, who must accept all and contain all.

Contemplation and meditation, as generally taught and practised, are often based on the mistaken notion that men should try to escape from or hasten through the so-called 'lower,' in order to reach quickly and remain in the so-called 'higher.' In Jacob's dream he saw on the ladder angels both descending and ascending—a rhythmic, cyclical, 'timely' movement. The desire for union with God is universal, though it is often not conscious. This common aim is sought by a myriad different paths, but some seekers strive to reach it out of due time, or to fix it by force or strategy as a permanent state, *now*. It is as if the descending angels would not face the descent into matter and darkness, and refused the earth-experience, turning round and trying to force their way back to the conscious presence of God. In so doing they have turned God into Satan, that is into their Tempter or Temptation. They have not understood the teaching of fruits in due season, with its deep implied stress on timeliness. In the jargon of modern psychology they are suffering from what is known as 'mother-fixation.' Their goal is not before but behind them, in a state of amorphous unweaned unity with the source from which they have come. The true pattern (of unity through trinity and trinity in unity) is reached differently, and always by walking on.

More of us need the bottom than the top rungs of the ladder. We are not ready yet for the high places, though anxious parents and conscientious educators urge us to scale the dizzy heights without wasting precious time on the low levels. We are, indeed, easily imbued with the belief that our proper place is on top. This is partly from vanity and self-love, but partly because we see that 'it is better up there,' and are afraid of what lies below. And we are in too much of a hurry. The primal, essential need for us all is to be *what we are and where we are, now*. We have to live *in and through* our experiences with our whole vitality, before we can advantageously try to be different and to pass on to other experience. We must thoroughly explore the lower floors of the house first. Then we shall be better fitted to mount to the upper stories.

We are not on earth to withdraw from or escape any part of our earth-experience, but to suffer it and learn from it in its entirety. And—constantly, continually—we have to bring heaven down to earth. We have to dwell amongst our fellow-men. Seekers of the 'good'—of 'Heaven'—are often hidiers from the earth-experience. To say this is not to condemn the enclosed religious orders as such, and approve only open fraternities which maintain their earthly contacts through teaching and nursing, or visiting the poor. It all depends on *why* the order is enclosed, and, for the individual, upon his or her motive in entering it. If it is so as to identify themselves with the suffering people outside, helping them through the right kind of prayer and meditation, it may be one of the best and most beautiful ways of 'bringing it down.' But if it is used as a retreat from life, an escape from perils and temptations, then it is wrong. To evade the heavy burdens of the earth-life in order to enjoy spiritual ecstasies may be to defeat the end for which we were born into the world. It is always the *next* step we have to take, not to skip a step here and there in the vain hope of reaching the top of the ladder sooner.

The four bodies have often been compared to garments, inner and outer, worn by the real self, and it is a helpful analogy. One may be of fine silk, and another of cotton or wool, delicate or coarse, but all alike are only clothes which the real self will eventually discard. Meantime it must use them, but not identify itself with any of them. Some of us feel we ought to be 'nudists,' and divest ourselves of our material bodies for the sake of the freedom of the spirit, which we strive to accomplish by spiritualism or some occult technique. It is an illusion and a dangerous one. The freedom of the spirit works quite otherwise, and its need is to *invest* itself within the limitation imposed by the garments of its material conditions. For the spirit's job is to function in these hampering, earthly conditions, not 'naked upon the air of heaven to ride.' The virtue of the bodies is that they make possible all contacts and relationships. They act as bridges. It is true that sometimes they act also as barriers, yet even as barriers they have their virtues, for they force us to realize the reality of difference. As bridges they are the 'plus' and positive element of life: as barriers they are the 'minus' and the negative. Both are needed: both are good: both are true.

We differ greatly in the importance we attach to our various bodies, and, naturally, it depends to a considerable extent on the degree of development we have attained individually in each. It follows that we necessarily talk in different idioms, and often fail to understand each other. The man who is speaking in terms of rough homespun, finds it hard to follow the more diaphanous texture of another's thought. But it is particularly dangerous to identify the 'I' with the spiritual body, for this leads easily to self-righteousness and egoism. Snobbery and priggishness spring from it in quick mushroom growth. And an error on the spiritual plane is more serious than one on the physical plane, because the latter is more crude and obvious, and therefore more easily corrected. The cardinal mistake, whether revealed on

the physical plane by the sensual man revelling in his sense of release and elation in the public-house, or by the saint revelling in his ecstatic, mystical sense of union with God, is essentially the same. Both in their different ways lack the balanced wholeness which is the goal of man.

The attitude of the Self towards its experiences in all its bodies is of vital importance to health and balance, and it is due to mistakes in this attitude that conflicts and disorders often arise. They may be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual. It sometimes happens, for example, that a man experiencing in his mental body adopts a favourable attitude to what may be called the Soldier side of the Soul.¹ He approves its ethical activities and social service, its compelling impulse towards all good works and the building of Jerusalem. But he is averse from and unfavourable to the Mystic side of the Soul. This may arise from a far from unworthy motive. There is the honourable dread of superstition, the aversion to buying hope and comfort at the price of integrity. This mental attitude, losing balance, may grow at last to a fixed position which insists that *all* beliefs of a metaphysical or religious nature are merely wish-fulfilment, and that intellectual honesty demands a stoic refusal to believe in *anything* which cannot be proved and known with measurable certainty.

But it is as dishonest to trample down and stifle at birth the dawning of spiritual knowledge of which we are sometimes dimly conscious, as it would be to shut out the mental questionings and doubts which arise from time to time to join issue with them. Both must be freely accepted, and admitted to the battle-ground of feeling and thought and intuition. Both must have a fair field and no favour. For both are *real*, and reality can never safely be denied or ignored. It must not be thrust down into the darkness, forbidden access to the light of consciousness. Neither of any pair of opposites can end the conflict with triumph for itself

¹ See Chapter Seventh, 'Be Yourself.'

and total defeat and discomfiture for the other, because both are part of the whole. Conflict there must be, if we are to have living, moving relationship, and not stagnation. But if it is continued too long it ravages human happiness, and it should be resolved in an honourable peace. Often this does not happen: the conflict continues in many lives, paralysing all their powers. It is because of failure to accept the conditions of the earth-experience, failure to recognize that the self is not identical with any of its bodies or any of its experiences. Always it is more than they: always, for good and evil, the Experiencer.

In terms of bodies, we are variously placed. Some have more of this, others of that. A hand of cards is unlike any other: each deal is unique. Still more is this the case with every individual self, and there are many parallels between the playing of a hand at cards and the living of life. In that strange phenomenon of symbolic literature, the Tarot pack (which is still used for purposes of fortune-telling in southern Eūrope), ancient wisdom was concealed. The story is told that it was thus hidden lest it should be misused as power through knowledge, and yet that it should be preserved for future times when its use might be less dangerous, and those who studied it safe from persecution. It contained ideas which are only now being rediscovered, and much literature has been devoted to its interpretation. The black suits symbolized the active qualities, such as energy, initiative, etc. The red suits expressed the passive, receptive qualities of the self.

Playing with this idea, we can find a symbolism which is suggestive. As we might say: Let diamonds be intuition and hearts correspond with feeling, then clubs will stand for thought (which is often aggressive and bludgeoning!), while spades bring us right down to earth, and represent sensation. And let us (arbitrarily) decide to rank the scoring value of the suits as diamonds, clubs, hearts and spades. If diamonds (intuitions) are best of all, surely we

ought to lead with them? Yet if we do, regardless of the hand dealt us, do we get satisfactory results? And what happens when with a hand full of hearts (emotions) and short of clubs (thoughts); 'we go 'five clubs'? We might not be so stupid at cards, but we do it in life time and again. With feelings hurt and angry, we *think* what we can do, and imagine that will win us the trick, instead of recognizing and absorbing our own ill feelings. What happens then? Trick after trick is thrown away. 'No trumps' is better than making any one suit trumps, whether at card-playing or living, for all-round development and balance are better than specialization. But because we see this, and should prefer to make it 'no trumps,' that does not enable us to force events or order the deal.

The point is that in playing a rubber we recognize reality, although the facts are against us. But in life, too often we seem to think that heroic refusal of the facts will enable us to overcome or disregard them. Sometimes our deal is too poor for hope of victory, yet careful play may save disastrous defeat, and in any case the game is the thing. We have to learn to accept the hands we hold, and play the game according to the rules, making best use of all the cards we have.

Let us return to the analogy between the different bodies of man. We shall follow it out with prosaic detail in another chapter,¹ but here we must just notice that they all need *different* food as well as *sufficient* food, if they are not to be starved or subjected to the deforming diseases of malnutrition. And also they need different languages in which to express themselves. This would be readily admitted when it is a question of the spirit and the physical body, but it is just as unreasonable to expect to be able to describe the things of the spirit in terms of the mental body. They have words and ideas in common, no doubt, but also they need and have others, specially adapted to their special conditions.

¹ Chapter Sixth, 'Health and Disease.'

Sometimes the same words are used with different shades of meaning. They must be thought of as imperfect translations, darkly shadowing forth the light behind.

The religious believer who refuses to admit and face the doubts which knock at the door of his mind is deliberately starving, murdering the thinker in himself. He imagines perhaps that he has acted from loyalty to his faith, refusing to allow himself even to contemplate the possibility of doubt. But in truth he has shown his lack of faith. In his dread of facing truth and reality—which may not be as he imagined them and would have them be—he has taken refuge in flight. He may seem to himself to have succeeded in buying peace at the cost of freedom, but ever at his spiritual banquet the ghost of his slain thought arises to mock at peace.

The intellectual who deifies his thought, and identifies himself with it to the exclusion of all that cannot be mathematically proved or scientifically demonstrated, is in no better case. He has bartered his birthright for a mess of pottage, even though it is disguised in high-sounding words, 'intellectual courage' and the like. He, too, is afraid—afraid of something faintly stirring in the depths of his being. He breathes a rare, pure air, it may be, upon his mountains, but he has murdered something of infinite value, the vision in his own soul. The ghost of the dead vision arises in the night to say in Rossetti's words: 'I am thyself. What hast thou done to me?'. He thought he had sacrificed hope to win a certainty, albeit a bleak one. But doubt—the other side of his belief—still lives and gnaws like a rat, just below the level of his full consciousness.

A distinction should be drawn between two kinds of thought. There is the larger thought which observes and accepts *all* reality, seeking not to reject or alter it but only to comprehend it. This is the perfected intelligence of the 'higher mind.' Such thought is closely associated with the spiritual body as well as with the mental body, and understands the possibility of enlightenment through heightened

consciousness and intuitive knowledge. The job of the higher mind is to love all, accept all, see all, bridge all, so that it is the mediator and the means of adding it all up. The lower, narrower thought is closely bound up with matter and desire, and is really a part of body-mind. It does not seek knowledge of the whole truth, but only of such parts of the truth as are in accordance with its own wishes. It wants just so much truth as will not contradict its prejudices, and may help it to prove its case. In this it is false to its own avowed ideal of the scientific method and of intellectual honesty. The scientific method is all-embracing, excluding neither ignorance nor unwelcome knowledge. It refuses nothing on the plea that 'it ought not to be,' or because 'I cannot understand it,' so it is the fitting instrument of the intelligence which is 'higher mind.' The 'lower mind' just measures data, without concern with their relationship. It compares, measures, classifies, enumerates, and there it stops. It can make an analysis, but not a synthesis. It can destroy life, and label it, but not create it. But the higher intelligence relates, loves and absorbs the wholeness of all.¹

Our civilization has too much of the selective, exclusive kind of thinking, and has made an idol of it. We treat it as if it were the founder and ruler of the universe, lord of our life and our salvation, instead of the false god, the Juggernaut it has so often shown itself to its worshippers. Indeed, much modern thought has lost all touch with earth and human life, and with our urgent spiritual needs. What the world wants to-day is far more sensitive feeling and intuition, and willingness to receive their guiding. Then it will have that inner certainty which it desires, though not the 'sign from heaven' which an earlier generation demanded, nor the 'proof' which is the substituted claim of their modern descendants.

Yet though the lower mind is unimportant compared

¹ See Chapter Seventh, 'Be Yourself,' and the Epilogue.

with the larger understanding, it has a right to be satisfied in its own sphere. It has claims which cannot be denied, and in its own kingdom must be paid its just dues. The spiritual body must not claim that it *only* has importance, though it has *supreme* importance. To say to the intellect: 'This is incredible, therefore you must believe it,' is not only rude and untimely but unconvincing. The 'sacrifice of the intellect,' thought of by St. Ignatius Loyala as the highest form of obedience, and specially pleasing to God, needs qualifying, or it is liable to cause misunderstanding. If the reference were to the 'higher understanding' of which we have spoken, it would be untrue, for that is a sacrifice that cannot be made, and it is not conceivable that it could be required by God. But if the Saint meant that the sacrifice of the lower mind of logic and reason may be necessary, what he said contains an inescapable truth. 'There is a point, and there is a time, when this absolute surrender must be made. The intellect must be set on one side, so to speak, but not destroyed or thrown away, for later on it will be required again for service.'¹ The logical mind must realize its own limitations, and not refuse to admit any truth which cannot be weighed and measured by its instruments. It must yield up all arrogance, and be content to be made a fool of in the kingdom of the spirit, where values cannot be weighed or measured. And to many who love the things of the mind, as to the young man with great possessions, this will seem a hard saying, and they will go away sorrowful. Yet, as we accept the sadness of this departure—for facts must be accepted, and freedom implies full liberty to come and to go—we can remember for our comfort that: 'Jesus beholding him, loved him,' and that the way of acceptance is always open.

There is need for the self to hold a wise and balanced attitude not only as between its spiritual and mental experiences, but also to those in the emotional and physical bodies. Both have claims, not despicable and not to be suppressed

¹ From an address by R. Carpenter, the Very Rev. the Dean of Exeter.

without grave peril, as the lives of many ascetics demonstrate clearly enough. But they cannot be allowed to assume dictatorship. The evil of becoming a slave to the physical body has been recognized by all religions. In many phases of religious thought, poor Brother Ass has been deemed worthy only of blows and semi-starvation. It was left for Robert Browning to write of a time when 'all good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul.' To flee from the physical and try to eliminate its influence as far as possible, is to refuse to live fully in the endeavour to live well. It is flight from danger instead of facing it. But the *whole* of life is our destiny, to be met with courage and confidence. Any experience which we have not eaten and digested has been for us in vain. We have not learnt the lessons we were meant to learn from it, and we are no nearer to our goal of wholeness. And we shall suffer the pains and penalties of our refusal and failure to digest, for indigestion means illness. To treat our fleshly body as at best a beast of burden, and at worst a beast of prey, is a mistake to say the least of it. It is wiser and more reverent to accept it as a temple of the Holy Ghost, worthy of honour. The just man made perfect accepts the whole of his earth-experience, *but he is not bound by it*. He has attained detachment through enlightenment.

In the emotional body we sometimes find old wounds festering, wounds to vanity and self-respect, or—hardest of all to bear—wounds to love. We thought the fevered inflammation had died down in them, that we had fought and conquered our hate and anger and sore resentment. But suddenly we are aware that they are still alive in us, clamorous and insistent. We avert our eyes and ears uneasily: we move restlessly to other thoughts and things; but still, like the high, nerve-shattering note of the attacking mosquito in an Indian night, they pervade our consciousness and will not leave us in peace. It is because we have ignored and disowned them, never come to terms with them.

We have pretended to ourselves that feelings we so strongly disapproved were not really there. But they are there, and they are ours, and will not be denied. They must be acknowledged and accepted as our own children, beloved though disapproved, placed in the Cup with long-suffering and understanding. Then, and then only, can they be changed.¹

The recognition of our various bodies makes it easier to comprehend the failure of many human relationships to bring all that we hoped from them. We understand easily enough that a friendship or marriage founded only on physical attraction will not long be found satisfying. But if there is mental or spiritual, or strong emotional attraction, the case is not so clear to us. It is not only our personal sense of loss that fills us with a grieved sense of hurt when such a marriage proves imperfect, but a bewildered feeling that 'these things ought not so to be.' But they *are*, and facts are to be faced, not argued about, above all not with eagerness to apportion blame, whether with the wish to place it on other shoulders or to take it on our own. If there is a lack of sympathy in any one of the bodies, the result will always be some degree of frustration and disappointment. There may be a cleavage in physical intimacy or in the emotional expression of love. Or, on the mental plane, husband or wife may have reached different levels of interest and experience. The same is true in the spiritual sphere. We cannot be spared this bitter experience because the relationship is close and deeply rooted in all the other bodies. But we can keep our balance about it. It does not mean that the relationship is not real and beautiful, but life must be lived and love loved under the earth conditions, for perfection belongs to the kingdom of heaven. Acceptance of the earthly imperfections, not denial that they are imperfections or that they exist, brings healing and reconciliation.

¹ Throughout the book references to the Cup and the technique of the Cup will be found. Explanations are given in Chapter Tenth. Here it must suffice to say that the Cup stands for a symbol of the Self, which, if it is in the Way of Acceptance, will be open to *all* experience.

In this life we cannot avoid worries, but we can help worrying. We cannot prevent trouble, but we need not be troubled about it. We are often bound to know deep depression, for it is part of life's rhythm, but we shall not *mind* depression or be depressed by it, if we are in the way of acceptance. The way of refusal is to say 'No,' with passionate vehemence to all the 'bad' and 'ugly' happenings in the world, whether personal wounds, or wars and cruelties and oppressions. It would have us ride forth in armour and slay them; but violence and hatred do not change the fact that they are facts. Only the great teachers Life and Love can change them, and they are patient teachers and use slow processes. We are worn out with the strain of constant rejection of the mixed fare which life offers us, and for all our agonies we achieve nothing. But acceptance holds the secret of reconciliation. It sees that evil things exist and are evil and must be changed in time. But it does not tear itself to pieces and waste its power by refusing to admit what is. It is calm and can wait and work in peace. For it is saved by faith.

It has been noted many times that it is impossible for man to live without a basis, conscious or unconscious, of metaphysical ideas. Even the savage or the simpleton does not exist without making some guess at the meaning of life, however crude and unsupported by facts his guess may be. And it will necessarily affect his whole attitude. The choice, as Aldous Huxley has said, is never between a metaphysic and none, but between a good metaphysic—that is one which corresponds with reality as we test it—by thought and by practical experiment—and a bad metaphysic which fails to stand that test.¹

The idea which runs through this book like a connecting chain is the doctrine of acceptance, which it is better to think of as a Way than as a doctrine. The goal is wholeness. The images used are the symbols of the Cup and the

¹ *Ends and Means*, by Aldous Huxley. Chatto and Windus.

Sword (the passive and the active, the female and the male, the love and the power). But we must be very careful here. It is necessary to guard against the mistake of thinking and writing about these symbols as if they were only a single pair of opposites—one Cup *versus* one Sword. This mistake can easily be made, and if we fall into it we shall be led into misapprehensions about life and the way of acceptance and the nature of Wholeness. There is a lower Cup which stands for quietism and pacifism, both good things but only partial things. It would achieve unity by exclusion; by excluding the Sword. And the Sword, standing for power, would achieve unity by exclusion of the Cup. Both are equally mistaken. Partial ideas cannot lead to wholeness, but provoke partisanship. A woman may be standing, as she thinks, for the Cup of peace and love, and yet by excluding power, which is also real and necessary, she may be in a sense responsible for forcing the man to the side of the Sword. He feels that she is somehow wrong, though it all sounds so right. She is excluding something that is vital and essential to virility, making life lifeless, and flowing water stagnant. He reacts violently against the one-sided truth which she presents to him. He may take to drink, or beat her, or murder her, but she is in some measure the cause of it as well as he. For the murderer is always guilty, but the murdered is not always guiltless.

There is a higher Cup which is not lifeless, but alive with living water, all-round life. It is not *versus* anything, not exclusive but inclusive. It unites the Cup of healing with the Sword of power, because the Sword runs through it and is part of it. The Sword pierces the very heart of the Cup, as it pierced the heart of the sacred mother of a Divine Child, for without birth-pangs there is no life.

The symbols of the Cup and the Sword are not for the adherents of any one religion only. Christians and the followers of the other great world religions, those who have seemed to see their gods die and lost their religion, those

also who have never found a religion to satisfy them or who think they need none, can all alike accept this doctrine and this symbolism, with, it may be, a few translations from one language to another. For the idea and the symbols run through all life and meet the needs of all men, just as health (which is another way of describing holiness or wholeness), is a universal ideal and needed by all.

In all that has been said about the different bodies of man, the essential or 'Real Self' is conceived of as Spirit, 'born of God' to use St. John's phrase. Words are baffling when we attempt to define indefinable meanings, yet the attempt has to be made. The Real Self is imagined here as a ray of the eternal uncreated Light that men call God, which is the creative. We may picture this as incarnating, taking form in two parts, (1) the mental body (which includes higher and lower mind, or intuition and thought) and (2) the physical body (which includes the emotional body and the sensational body). These can be thought of as the parents of whom the child is life: they are its creators (procreators). Through their relationship, united by the link of love, they create the child, life, which is the soul: abstract as it seems, this is the real self in action, being and becoming. The soul is the self which is in process of being created; it is therefore the growing point which mirrors in itself the creative Light.

But all such expressions are only metaphors, fluid and not fixed. They are the language of poetry, and must not be thought of literally. They deal in correspondences, not in identities, and are not accurate statements, like mathematical formulas and chemical prescriptions. Some people say that all symbols cloud the air for them, and obscure clear thinking. But we cannot force the language of the mental body to the use of the spiritual body. Symbols *we must have*. No religion or philosophy can be expressed without myth and symbol. It is wise to remember that it is possible to be too clear-cut and definite, too brightly lit-up in a small, limited area, with a proportionately greater surrounding darkness.

And sometimes well-worn words and threadbare phrases, religious or scientific, serve to conceal that there is nothing there! It is the Hans Andersen tale of the Emperor's Clothes over again.

-We cannot get rid of forms in our earth-experience, whether we would or no. But we must be willing to surrender any particular forms, however much we love them, when their surrender is called for. To clutch a vision and try to hold it fast, is to find it perished like fairy gold in the morning. It is like bartering freedom for goodness, only to find the exchange was impossible, and that without freedom goodness is dead. Even our free visions are finite affairs, limited by our slow growth in intelligence. It is only by being willing to lose one that we can gain a larger one. We must make room, prepare a place for the new vision. Even then it will only give us a glimpse of infinity and eternity as it flashes past. We must not try to fix it with idolatrous hands. For idolatry,¹ whether of words or of a church, or of a personal vision, can only serve to hide the radiance of the living, moving light, and so shut us out from the wholeness of life.

¹ The word 'idolatry' is used here in rather a special sense, which has been fully explained in *I and Me*. The following extracts make the meaning clear:

'If we take any words and bow down to worship them as if they meant something in themselves, then we are in danger of idolatry, for words, forms, ideas and idioms, are only very rarely to be used with safety in that simple way. Rather are they to be moved lightly . . . played with . . . burned, destroyed, and finally distributed to the common stock again when they have served our end. . . . The moment we hold on to anything, whether it be a word or an image of a god, we have lost the value and the meaning. . . . Then we are only idolators. . . .'

I and Me, by E. Graham Howe. Pp. 37-38. Faber and Faber.

' . . . Idolatry . . . is the religion of the superstitious, who take form for meaning, idol for ideal, and power for wisdom. . . . Most of us who are products of this twentieth century civilization are idolatrous children of an idolatrous age.'

I and Me, p. 51.

'Idolatry of specialism is one of Medicine's most fashionable fallacies, but it is an idolatry which must always miss the wholeness, whether of science or of sanity.'

I and Me, p. 199.

Symbolism, allegory and analogy are indispensable vehicles for the truth, but they must be used in the spirit of their meaning, not forced into unnatural dependence upon the letter. We must always be ready to find new ones when the old have ceased to reflect the light for us. 'Let go,' and 'Walk on,' are written on the signposts leading to the way of acceptance.

Chapter Second

THE WAY OF ACCEPTANCE

THE FIRST THING TO NOTICE about acceptance is that it is a very positive thing. Yet it is always seen by negative minds as negative, and as a sign of weakness. The active enemy of the way of life (acceptance) is inertia. There is a great problem here for the will to face and overcome. It must tackle the job through complete acceptance. Our inner self must sustain the concentrated and inclusive will to 'walk on,' through time, absorbing all our experience in all our bodies, as we go. There is no destructiveness about acceptance, but neither is there any apathy or indifference. It is a constructive force, but it constructs through stillness and passivity as well as through activity. It finds room and scope for the Sword of power as well as for the Cup of love. The way of acceptance is not by dominating and striving to alter facts to suit our principles or pride or prejudice. It is not a way of power, but it is a way *for* power: a way through which power manifests itself, not only or chiefly for those who walk in the way, but for all mankind.

There is great need to emphasize this from the outset, to save misconceptions later. Obviously power is not an evil thing in itself: all religions recognize it as one of the attributes of Godhead. Christians pray to the 'God of all power and might,' and say, as they were taught by Christ: 'For Thine is the power.' But it is, of all things, the most liable to be misused for egotistic (partial) purposes. The pacifist sees this danger very clearly, and his tendency has been to escape from the problem of power by refusing to have anything to do with it. He has preferred instead to accept the Cup only, and, turning to that as a refuge, has

left out the Sword. The result of this negative attitude is to externalize power, which has been driven outside, delivered over to aggressiveness, and left destructive, uncontrolled.

The negative attitude to any error is never enough. It is like damming up a river without constructing sluices and channels to regulate its over-flow. Sooner or later it sweeps away the dam, spreading greater destruction than if it had been left unrestrained to take its own, however undesirable, course. If the error is the dictatorship of power, it is not enough to deny its worth. We have done that in our relationships with some foreign countries, and in the end it almost certainly leads to a delayed and inefficient resort to the practice of the same power whose worth we have denied. In a later chapter¹ the various courses which can be pursued, and their consequences, are discussed. Assuredly there must be something constructive, not mere negation. On the lower level the alternative to power is its natural opposite, weakness. But on the higher level its true alternative, though not its opposite, is love. Love is quite as positive as power, and requires just as continuous purpose, clearer vision, and its own kind of concentration to attain it.

The problem of power, like the problem of happiness, can only be solved internally. This is true of all problems in the last analysis, even of those which seem most concrete and external. There is nothing in this book which offers to anyone a ready-made solution for any of life's problems. What it does is to show a Way: a way of proving the power of love by means of the direct, immediate, and defenceless experience of the whole of life. It must be undefended, because it must accept *all* that comes to it. Avoidance of contact, or the erection of a barrier of defence against anything, is a way of refusing it. Even the hard fact that to many of life's problems we can find no answer, must be accepted. It is part of the tragedy to which we are committed when we

¹ Chapter Fourth, 'Acceptance in Politics.'

embark upon the adventure of living, that we are born to ask questions but not always to receive an answer.

Acceptance shows its positive character by the way it faces disappointment, a word which covers a whole world of emotional experience, from petty trivialities to heart-break. 'Making the best of it,' and 'not crying over spilt milk' are maxims we all approve of, but often fail to practise. They are homely, nursery proverbs, which, like much nursery lore, are full of eternal wisdom—the wisdom of acceptance.

The supreme test of acceptance is the death of the beloved. Acceptance feels the agony of grief and loss with full sensitiveness, but without refusal or rebellion. Nor does it attempt to escape from anguish by forcing it out of memory and consciousness. It accepts Death. And in the second part of its manifestation it shows not only sensitiveness but endurance, accepting and enduring what seems unendurable, the continuance of life without the presence of the beloved. It accepts Life.

Another test of acceptance is its attitude towards old age. It faces facts. It does not deny or belittle the losses and pains and indignities of age, but knows that these are part and not the whole, and not a very important part. It does not regard old age as a grisly spectre, dreaded and resented, to be dodged and kept at bay as long as possible, but as the complementary other side of the circle of experience, the honoured opposite of youth in the figure dance of life. If age would accept its own side of the circle, contentedly, instead of trying to linger belatedly on the other, it might be more honoured than it sometimes is. There is an orchard of age, no less than a garden of youth. The tragedy of age lies not in itself but in how we take it and what we make of it, for it can be defeat or victory. It takes away, but also it gives, if only we do not clutch at what we cannot keep. We must 'let go,' and have open, empty hands, if we would receive the fruits of fulfilment.

The essential thing to understand is that all life is

rhythmic; up and down, ebb and flow, light and dark. No quality exists without its opposite, and to eliminate, if that were possible, one of the pair would be to destroy the other. Infinity can only be conceived in contrast to the finite: goodness can only be good if it is recognized as good, made known by contrast with the existence of evil. It can only be goodness if it is free, and freedom implies the existence of an alternative. And the alternatives are not always or only two direct opposites, black and white, but an infinite gradation of shades. Life is best pictured in terms of curves, not of straight lines. It is always moving, one phase melting into another, and will not be put in irons by any words or codes or dogmas. All these serve their purpose, striving to understand and interpret life, and in so serving they are consumed. If we try to hoard and preserve them, they rot and poison us, like manna kept beyond the appointed day. They must be burnt and pass away, but Life—the Spirit—continues, 'birthless and deathless and changeless.'¹

In order to understand acceptance in its various aspects, all of which affect us intimately, it is well, for the sake of clearness, to make a classification. We must see what acceptance means in regard to our relationship with and our attitude towards:

- I. The Universe. (The ALL and the wholeness of it.)
- II. Other people. (Individual relationships.)
- III. Ourselves. (The inner life—the soul.)
- IV. Other groups. (National and international relationships—politics.)

Acceptance is an act, an experience, not in one body only but in all the bodies of which we spoke in the first chapter, and vitally affects our health in every one of them. It manifests itself in unmistakable fashion, leading in each body to the highest development of which that body is capable. It is known, like the spirit, by its fruits.

¹ 'The Song Celestial,' *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Sir Edwin Arnold.

In the physical body, if we accept completely and without reserve, we shall be conscious of relaxation, expressing itself in the power to rest and recuperate of every separate cell, and leading to intense vitality.

In the emotional body we shall know it by the relief of our unloading, no longer worn out by the endless exhaustion of refusal, and by our fuller experience of loving.

In the mental body it shows itself by our adoption of the scientific method of unbiased matter-of-factness, in the true sense of the words. That is, we give our unprejudiced attention to *everything* which is indeed a matter of fact, and we remember that facts are not immutable things, but must always be considered with special regard to their context and conditions. The accepting attitude is the path to the highest intelligence which the mind can reach, the capacity to discover relationships and realize them—make them real in actual experience.

In the spiritual body we shall know that we have indeed 'accepted,' by our increased awareness of universal meanings. Our power of intuition will be strengthened, and it will lead us to compassion and understanding.

The way of acceptance provides the link which brings together every pair of opposites, so that their union may bear fruit. It allows for conflict in order to resolve it. Conflict there must be in life, for without it there is stagnancy, but it is not a virtue in itself. It can easily degenerate into sterile strife and end in deadlock, creating nothing of value. The virtue and value of conflict are found when the living link of love is brought in, which accepts the difference but does not love any the less. Love, uniting the opposites, is the parent here, and life—which is never stagnant like a pond, but flowing, swiftly or slowly, like a river—is the child.

In this chapter we will consider only the first two divisions of our fourfold classification: (1) Universal acceptance, and (2) Acceptance of other individuals. What do these conceptions mean?

(1) Acceptance with regard to the universe means that we accept the *Whole* of reality, and not only such parts of it as please our taste or satisfy our desire or conform to our moral judgment. We accept *both* of what are called in the sacred scriptures of the East, 'The Opposites,' or 'The Pairs,' or 'The Qualities.' That is to say we accept evil as well as good, sickness as well as health, doubt as well as faith, sorrow and joy, death and life. For all these are part of the living Law of the universe, the law of reality. But here a distinction is necessary to avoid confusion. *All* facts are not part of the living Law. Some things are as they are because mankind has made them so: they are not the Law but the result of broken Law. The Law was broken by our gesture of rejection, which is sin. It is mended by our gesture of acceptance, which is contrition and forgiveness. Some of the facts of reality are as puzzling and as painful to our limited understanding, as facts which we guess are due to sin. Both must be accepted, but the acceptance is different. For sin and the fruit of sin we place in the Cup with the prayer that they may be changed in time, but the facts of the Law we put there only with the prayer that we may learn to understand and accept them. And this acceptance does not mean that we bow before them in grieved submission and sad resignation, for that implies not acceptance but mute reproach. It means that we do not quarrel with the facts or rebel against them, and above all that we do not abuse them as things which 'ought not to be.' They *ARE*, and they are part of the law of life, and that is enough for us. We must accept them and learn what they are meant to teach us, as we must do with *all* facts, but these facts of the Law we shall also reverence.

The hardest thing for most of us—perhaps the last lesson we learn to accept—is the insecurity which is woven into the very texture of our existence. We long for finality and certainty; to arrive somewhere where we can feel safe and fixed, assured by high authority that there are no more new

and frightening adventures for us to meet. But life is not like that. The fabric of it is shot with multitudinous colours and variations of the pattern so long as we have experience of it. We never know what to-morrow will bring forth, or what we shall have to do or to bear. The religious man may reply that whatever else we are unsure about, we are always sure of God, and that is eternally true. The Divine Will is wisdom, and must prevail. Those who have that knowledge should find it easier to accept the whole of experience. But we do not know what the Divine Will for us or for the world may be at any given time. We are not given any detailed guidance as to our conduct and actions in situations of perplexity, such as a ready reckoner or a 'Code Napoléon' might provide. Therefore religious faith does not offer us a way of escape from uncertainty and insecurity. It is not meant to do so, but to enable us to accept them with confidence. For they are the terms on which we have our tenure of life. We are not fixed but moving. We have no certainty that our decisions are right and our choices wise, unless we choose to accept *all*. We cannot play for safety, but by the very nature of our dual being must live dangerously, with a perilous-seeming footing between two worlds. Yet our position is not too perilous, once we have accepted it, for we can learn the secret of balance.

This alternating rhythm of life seems to us either a-moral or immoral when we are first brought up against it. It contradicts our preconceived ideas of a continuous progress, ascending to and remaining on the heights. We revolt against it until we are weaned from attachment to our own partial conceptions. In our desperate moments we feel that we would gladly

'conspire
To grasp this sorry scheme of things entire,
. . . and shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the heart's desire.'¹

¹ Omar Khayyám.

But in calmer hours we are less arrogant. We doubt our capacity as master-builders of the world, still less as architects of the universe. We watch more humbly and are glad that the government is not upon our shoulder. Here is a marvellous Web of intricate Being spread out before our eyes, and if we do not shut them, preferring blindness, we should be moved to wonder and worship. There must be no picking and choosing:¹ no 'I will have this but not that; I will accept what seems to me good, but refuse what seems to me bad.' The way to our wholeness is the way of universal acceptance.

(Here a ripple of remonstrance makes itself subtly felt among the listeners, a vague atmosphere of surprise and disapproval. But patience or curiosity prevails, and silence waits.)

(2) Acceptance with regard to other people means that we accept them as they are, although we might prefer to have them different. That is, we abstain from forceful interference in their lives, and make no attempt to compel them, or to put them right according to our own lights; lights which, of course, always appear to us as manifestly the right lights. No, not even if they really are the better lights, and admitted to be so by unbiased, third-party opinion. For however good they may be in themselves, they will still do no good if they are pressed upon others, against their will, by force. Force so quickly breeds hate, both in those who use it and those who must submit to it. There must be no intervention except that which works with the power of love, and not with the love of power; none that cannot be prefaced with the conciliatory words: 'Let's see,' coupled with a friendly *looking together* for more light. For illumination, not heat, is what is needed, and it is needed by both parties to any dispute, even though both sides believe, with sincere and touching naïveté, that they already have light enough! But we are all in darkness, and light must be sought without pre-assumptions of moral superiority.

¹ See *I and Me and War Dance*. E. Graham Howe. Faber and Faber.

Enlightenment is found only by those who seek it humbly.

(Here the murmurs become audible and articulate. 'What! does this mean that we must approve or condone what our conscience tells us is wrong? Or must we pretend to do so? Or are we to suppress our own conviction that it is wrong?' They wait for an answer.)

No. That is a common and perhaps natural mistake, but it is a serious one. Acceptance is not the same word or the same thing as acquiescence. We need to be not less but more sensitive to wrong and iniquity. But we must realize—and it is a discipline that comes hard to our ready wrath and impatience—that we can never alter evil by using its own evil weapon of violence against it. It does not matter whether the violence called in to punish violence is physical or 'only' verbal. Words can wound as much as bombs, and poison as well as any gas. They can shatter just as effectively the hope of peace and good will and understanding.

(An irate ejaculation is thrown in here: 'Can we do nothing, then?')

Yes, much, but not by direct, compulsive action. We can *get together* with the people we thoroughly disapprove of, and be 'amongst them' instead of 'against them.' This is not the same thing as being one with them, or of one mind with them, for they are still the enemy though the beloved enemy.¹ *Tout comprendre* is not possible for us. We cannot hope for that full knowledge which makes forgiveness easy, but we can *try* to understand, rather than turn our faces away in condemnation. We can wait and suffer long, and

¹ The following passages explain the expression 'beloved enemy,' which occurs frequently in *War Dance*:

'Can we develop a mental habit of relaxation about life, accepting what we dislike with the same spirit as that which we adopt towards what we like? Thus enemies are loved as friends are loved, although the enemy is disliked and the friend liked. (The fact that we love him does not mean that he is any less the enemy for that.)'

War Dance, by E. Graham Howe, p. 72. Faber and Faber.

'Only unconditional acceptance of the beloved enemy will absorb him in time into the larger circle of our friends.'

War Dance, p. 134.

we can pray. Not the imperious prayer which tries to storm the heights and take the citadel of the Kingdom of Heaven by violence, constraining God, as it were, to stand and deliver the goods so urgently needed by the world, and which we feel the poor world surely 'ought to have.' That is an impious prayer, in which we make ourselves not equal to God but superior to Him, and seek to teach His wisdom what should be done for us and ours. It is true that He works through us and not by super-natural agencies, and that His will can only be done on earth by the will of man. But it is in the stillness that man hears His voice and knows what he must do, and prayer must be the quiet, accepting prayer of faith. Evil exists as a fact, an undeniable part of Reality, and therefore it must be accepted, there is no choice about that. The choice is in what spirit we shall accept it, in the spirit of love or in the spirit of hate.

(And now the protests swell to cries of outraged, indignant morality. 'Love evil? No, indeed. Evil is evil and foul is foul. I will never meet it with love but with hate, and will fight it to the bitter end.')

But there will be no end that way, only a bitter continuing. Hate cannot conquer evil and transform it into good, nor turn foul to fair. Only love can do that. Is not the command to love and to forgive?

('Yes,' comes the quick answer, 'I will love the sinner. I grant you that is right, though it is sometimes difficult. But I will always hate the sin. It is right that I should hate it. More than that, it is my bounden duty: I ought to hate it.')

But peace and righteousness are never born of hate. It is not enough to love the sinner and hate the sin. The sin itself must be accepted and 'loved,' according to the true meaning of love, of which we shall say more later.¹ This is necessary, so that the alchemy of the power of love may change the sin and dissolve it. If hatred is an evil thing, a bad emotion that we should wish to grow out of, it does not become good because it is directed against itself. Here is the old dilemma:

¹ See Chapter Third, 'Acceptance of Ourselves.'

How shall Satan cast out Satan? It is strange that masters in Christendom should not know these things. It is written that we should love our enemies, and our worst enemies are the sins that so easily beset us, rather than the flesh and blood enemies who injure us.

(And this time the protest is almost a moan of pain: 'Yes, yes, but it does not mean that. This is sophistry, false doctrine, a temptation of the devil.')

But all great religious teaching contains an inner meaning, as well as the obvious, surface meaning. Otherwise there would seem to have been little need for and small point in Christ's repeated warning to His disciples that He needs must teach in parables, and that only those 'who had ears to hear' could hear and understand His teaching. The direct meaning of His words was plain enough, and the simplest people could understand it. Is it sufficient then, and is nothing more required for the guidance of our life? Yet Christ gave that warning. We must remember that Christianity may be a simple thing for simple souls, or a very complex thing for complex souls.

'Christ came for the whole of the universe and for all men at every period. Christianity exists not merely for simple souls, but also for the more complex ones.'¹

It is our business not to 'resist the Spirit' and close our ears against the inner meaning because it is strange, but to seek until we find it. New interpretations of old truths are apt to be thought shocking or even blasphemous. When one learns something 'it feels at first as if one had lost something,' as a great modern playwright has remarked.² Our instinct is to close ourselves and pull up our draw-bridges as if for a siege, instead of opening our gates: we hold on instead of passing on. The result is tenseness, lack of balance, lack of wholeness. Julian Huxley uttered a fine truth finely when he said that 'Truth lies in the future as well as in the past.

¹ *Freedom and the Spirit*. Nicolas Berdyaev. Geoffrey Bles. Centenary Press.

² *Major Barbara*. G. Bernard Shaw. Constable, Ltd.

. . . A religion based on science and human nature must be a religion of life, and therefore must not be afraid of the greatest and most precious property of life—the property of development and progressive change.¹

And this growth of understanding applies not only to our philosophic ideas, our theories of life and the universe, but also to our practical methods of dealing with the daily problems of living. We see this in our attitude to wrongs and abuses. There are two ways of working to a desired end. One, as we said before, acts in the power of love, and the other with the love of power. The power of love can be compared to natural growth, and pictured in the form of a convolvulus flower, its cup open to receive whatever pours into it, light, warmth or rain. It grows without violence, yet with resistless strength, a steady, continuous growth. The love of power on the other hand is like a shell or bomb, a projectile hurled with destructive intent against its objective. Or it works its way like a gimlet or screw, boring in until it reaches the mark. It is a *closed* method, rude, self-assertive, aggressive—the method of the closed fist. But the power of love is an *open* method, and its typical gesture is the open hand, friendly and welcoming. The victor who triumphs over his defeated enemies has many foes, and provokes many counter-attacks. But 'he that is down needs fear no fall,' and he that is *willing* to be down, accepting his low estate and working humbly from the lowest place, need fear no foe, for no man hates or fears him.

(The chorus of objections attains great volume at this point and rises to a crescendo. 'What! Take things lying down? What a poor, contemptible spirit! Besides, it is not practical politics: at this rate nothing would ever get done. It is the fanatics that get things done. The most desirable aims can often only be accomplished by aggressiveness and violence in the face of obstinate, ignorant opposition. Where should we be if militant, passionate souls like Wilberforce and Shaftesbury, John Howard, Elizabeth Fry and Florence

¹ *What Dares I Think?* Julian Huxley. Chatto and Windus.

Nightingale had not fought strenuously for their ideals? Doubtless some of them were often aggressive and ruthless. They used force and violence in one form or another, and made enemies. They spared others no more than they spared themselves. But without these methods could they have realized the vision they had seen, and destroyed the abuses against which their souls revolted? Such people are the salt of the earth, and without them we should still have the slave-trade with us, and the horrors of child-labour in the mines and factories, and all the squalid abominations of prisons and hospitals and asylums.')

This is a genuine difficulty, and one worthy of respectful examination. On the face of it, it certainly seems that the objectors have a case. But if we look more closely we shall see that these great things were accomplished by those heroic pioneers not *because of* but *in spite of* elements of strain and violence, which, to whatever degree they may have crept in, marred the perfect beauty of their enterprise. No one doubts that force can and does accomplish something. But it is at a great cost, always to those who practise it and become exhausted and sometimes destroyed by it, often to many others who suffer from it, and sometimes to those who are influenced by the apparently successful example and use it for less worthy ends. Even with regard to the good things gained, there is an unseen counter-balancing loss somewhere, when the wrong method has been used. Opposition and hatred are aroused by self-willed domination. The good object might have been better gained, perhaps sooner gained, and certainly more completely gained if these reactions had been avoided.

Let us be honest and admit fairly that the wonderful work of Wilberforce and Florence Nightingale and the rest of them was the result of their great qualities of mind and soul, their long, patient preparation for the work, and their self-dedication to its service. There is no evidence and no reason to support the suggestion that it was due to the human faults which, to whatever extent, greater or less, they may have entered in, to that extent hampered and delayed the full realization of their vision. We are not the less grateful to

them for all they accomplished at so much cost to themselves by their love and perseverance. Imperfection is a necessary part of the earth-experience for every one of us, and must be accepted for saints and heroes as much as for ourselves. But our admiration must not blind us to the fact that the fruits were won by their noble qualities, not by the defects of the qualities. It is a point worth noting, for indeed it is a common thing to worship a hero and make his faults an excuse for our own, without always imitating the better part of his example.

When we say that evil must be 'accepted' as what it is, a living part of reality, the necessary opposite and complement of good, that does not mean that its character is thereby altered, and that it is no longer to be considered evil. That would cut at the root of our growing process on earth. When we say that evil must be 'loved' in the sense which we hope to explain,¹ that does not mean that it is to be approved or liked. Nor does it mean that we are excused from seeking to change it into good. There is a militancy, if you choose to call it so, of love and acceptance; they are not all quietism and pacifism. The Puritans and Quakers had—some of them at least—a clear perception of this. Though they rightly laid the stress on the unpopular, quietist, pacifist side of truth which was so neglected, they were not negative. They saw the positive vision of Eager-Heart. *Pilgrim's Progress* is full of this militancy of love, which is without bitterness or greed, and does not wish for barren triumph and domination over others. The song of the Shepherd-Boy, and the Pilgrim's hymn breathe that spirit. It is true that Bunyan had plenty of the other militancy also! He thought in terms of battle with his own sins, and of overthrowing them by fierce, direct action (a method which he seems sometimes to have found disconcertingly unsuccessful). Many Puritans and many pacifists do the same and find the same. Bunyan's imagery of letting the burden slip off his back, as it did when

¹ See Chapter Third, 'Acceptance of Ourselves.'

he found himself in the right way, comes nearer the truth than the metaphors of war. But though he was passive rather than active, in the sense that he depended on 'grace' and not on 'works,' once he had made his choice and started on the way, yet he was always positive in attitude, never negative. He was eager, not indifferent or inert, and that vibrating, vital note is never absent from his work. Eagerness is a sign of the spirit's positive life and movement. It is the poetry of the soul, whereas earnestness is often the formal, uninspired prose of a dead code: 'works without faith.' The 'earnest person' is, we all know, a stumbling-block to many, especially to those who have a sense of humour. He is apt to make them blaspheme. But eagerness never repels, even when it may seem to need re-direction, because it is abundantly alive. Love, seen from the side of power, must seem weak, because it appears as the opposite of power. But this is a false antithesis—an illusion. Weakness is the opposite of power, its 'minus,' but love adds to power, raising it to the n th power. It is the 'plus' of power. The true opposite of love is not power but escape, which either cannot face its problems or does not care. Love cares, and it is strong and positive. Love and acceptance are different words, but both have the same spirit.

The difference between us and the objectors whose difficulties we have tried to voice here, is not a difference of aim, for our common aim is the same, in whatever language it may be revealed or obscured. In the Christian metaphor it is the coming of the Kingdom of God, bringing it down to earth, that His Will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, and that men may have Life more abundantly. In the Eastern phraseology it is the attainment of the Tao, the Way. Here we call it the Open Way of Acceptance, leading to wholeness. The difference is not in the end, but in the method by which we hope to attain it. We must learn to recognize the importance of the fact of Time, and the significance of our timeliness.

Chapter Third

ACCEPTANCE OF OURSELVES

EVERYTHING THAT COMES to us is, in the language of this symbolism, to be 'placed in the Cup,'¹ and, most of all, ourselves. Within the Cup we need to accept the transitional distresses of our own feelings, before we can even try to attain the full serenity of acceptance. It is very important to stress this. There is a tendency to regard the Cup as itself an objective which will give us what we want, but we find that what we get is something very different, and it seems all wrong and disappointing. Actually what we get is what we need, and what we must accept, so that we learn to love our hatred, and sustain anxiety, and tolerate intolerance. This is the working truth of the Cup's digestive process. But it seems baffling at first, and it is difficult to understand. We have a mental habit of assuming that we can reach our objective—that is our wholeness—by visualizing and desiring it, while eliminating the way to it. It is a mistake, for though it is true that there is no need for constant, fussy activities, and all we have to do is to keep our Cup open—put a match to the fire, as it were, and leave it to burn—yet we do not travel on a wishing carpet to our goal, annihilating distance. There are no short cuts to wholeness, and acceptance is necessary at every separate step and in every relationship which makes up our life.

To accept ourselves may sound an easier proposition than to accept our neighbours—self-love suggests this—but it is really more difficult. It means that we must be willing to look steadily both at the good and evil within us, not denying either, and not excusing or justifying the evil. Neither may

¹ See Footnote, p. 16.

we hide it away, and suppress it from consciousness, and forget it. Least of all must we hate it. We must face it as a fact, like any other fact, without magnifying or minimizing it, for both those attitudes arise from vanity, and show a lack of balance and of sense of reality. We must put it in the Cup, and learn from it, and change it in time by love and prayer. Such prayer is only possible in real humility. We reach it, not in a flash of exaltation, but only through surrender and in isolation and deep desolation of the spirit.

In the last chapter we saw that the first reaction in many people's minds to the way of acceptance is shocked and startled negation. Not only do they feel that they cannot understand it, but they do not like it or wish to receive it. The refusal is compounded of many elements: misunderstanding, passion, prejudice, the normal conservatism which dislikes reconsidering established positions buttressed by authority, and long since established, without much thought, as part of the familiar furniture of the mind. Sometimes an element of mental sloth comes in, cloaked by pseudo-humility. It is said that religious, or philosophical or metaphysical questions are too difficult for us, and it is better to leave them alone. But, as Aldous Huxley has remarked,¹ much of our ignorance is vincible ignorance. We do not know, not because we cannot know, but because we do not want to know. Perhaps we are afraid, or indifferent, or unwilling to take the trouble which all knowing requires. But the chief trouble lies in the strong tendency of the mind—the lower mind—to identify itself with one of the pairs of opposites, and take up a partisan attitude. Being itself one of a pair, it feels impelled to choose one of a pair, as a moral compulsion. The result is that it tries to exclude the other, and revert to a monism based on exclusion, instead of moving forward from dualism to the created third. But the pattern of the trinity is the truer pattern of a life: not one nor two but three.²

¹ *Ends and Means* by Aldous Huxley. Chatto and Windus. ² See Epilogue.

There are other motives. There is aversion to asking fundamental questions, born not of laziness or indifference, but of love and reverence for dogmas which have come to seem axiomatic. Tender devotion is felt to shrines where we first saw light in our darkness, and passionate gratitude to any altar or lantern or personality that have mirrored the living light to us. There is genuine scruple, too, in the sensitive conscience, afraid of new ways and where they may lead, and inclined to think it 'ought' to cling unquestioningly to the old ways, even if these have come, in course of time, to seem like a labyrinth without a guiding clue.

It is a vain fear. Prophets blunder with half truths, altars and lanterns serve their turn and perish, but the light never dies. Whatever may be true of physical journeyings, it is certain that in spiritual adventures the rule of the road is not 'safety first' but 'live dangerously.' 'Trust God, see all, nor be afraid.' But, when love and loyalty are the motives that are keeping people back from accepting acceptance, no effort can be too great to try and help them to resolve their difficulties. Mostly they are due to the ease with which the words that are our trusted tools betray us. For words are double-edged and have many meanings.

Confronted by the problem of acceptance of ourselves, the tender conscience is bewildered. It asks: '*How can I treat the evil in myself, of which I am so painfully aware, except by cutting it down drastically, tearing it up by the roots, suppressing every fresh shoot of it? What can I do but try to exterminate it?*'

Let us agree at once about the goal at which extermination aims. Our aim is identical—complete wholeness. The disagreement concerns the method by which it is assumed that evil can be changed by simply trying to get rid of it; because that method does not and cannot work. Evil means can only lead to evil ends, however high or good our hopes and intentions may be. Extermination is itself evil, and re-creates its own problem. It seems a simple, straightforward method, easily understood by everyone, and congenial to the fighting

instincts of the great mass of mankind. But a method can only be judged by its success or failure. If it succeeds, and if the object is good, we may be satisfied, unless indeed it should appear that more evil is wrought by the method than is removed by winning the object. Let us look at the results of this exterminating, root-and-branch method. For many generations it has been practised by saintly souls seeking to overcome sin. Yet evil is not exterminated nor completely suppressed in them, as they record with grief in their own confessions. Evil thoughts and passions rear their heads again, and those that were the most violently attacked and strangled seem the most obstinate. They refuse to die, and revenge themselves in strange disorders of soul and mind and body. The 'saints' attribute their failure to their own grievous fault in not applying the remedy with single-minded thoroughness. But perhaps the remedy cannot be so applied without destroying life itself, since our experience on earth shows us good and evil as necessary opposites and inextricably intertwined. One of Christ's parables has a bearing on this problem. The servants of the householder asked should they not go and gather up the tares in the field which were destroying the good seed. 'But he said, Nay, lest ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest.'

We seem back again at the old difficulty, and the despairing cry goes up: '*Then are we to do nothing? Surely it cannot be right to acquiesce complacently in our own evil? How, then, can we ever get better?*'

No, it is not part of this teaching that we should acquiesce in our own or anybody else's evil, and be content to do nothing. But it is often the path of wisdom to do nothing in a hurry, lest we do the wrong thing, and so make matters worse. As has been said before, it is a great error to confuse acceptance with acquiescence, or, as we shall see a little later, to identify love with liking and approval. Let us repeat again that the difference between this and the usually

accepted religious view with regard to sin, is not one of aim but of method. Patience and charity towards ourselves are as much a duty as towards our neighbour. By accepting the evil in ourselves in the spirit of tolerant understanding, we set up the conditions in which it can be changed. We accept what we are and do not like, in order that we may become what we may. If, on the other hand, we refuse to tolerate our evil, loathing it and ourselves for harbouring it, insisting that we ought and must and can get rid of it forthwith, we are in fact creating an atmosphere in which it does not change or fade away. To our surprise and distress, it grows stronger, engrossing all our energies, until we have none left for positive living and loving. Beauty and goodness are around us, but we are too absorbed by our negative combat to enjoy them. By refusing to accept what we *are*, we fix ourselves in an endless struggle that prevents us from becoming *different*, through the power of love. People are sometimes taught to have a double standard of ethical judgment, severe for themselves and lenient for others. But this is not good sense, and it works out badly in practice. Nor is it so ethically satisfactory as it sounds, for a self-righteous assumption of moral superiority inevitably creeps in.

But some of the objectors say, in deep distress, that there are sayings of Christ both in sermon and parable that seem to justify the use of force against external evil, and a policy of extermination against our own. If we are taking our stand upon the letter, that is true. Isolated texts, torn from their context and from the circumstances and conditions under which they were spoken, are an unconvincing argument, and may imply blasphemy against the spirit of Christ's religion. When the whole trend and purpose of His Gospel are considered, it is hard to argue that either by teaching or example He sanctioned the use of violence and the aggressive method. Perhaps we are anxious to seize upon and twist anything He said which can excuse our instinctive inclination for the use of compelling force in a cause we think good.

True, He said that 'the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' Doubtless it can be so taken, but there is nothing to imply that the method was commended or that it was best for those who adopted it. There is a sense, as we have tried to show already, in which the path of acceptance has its own militancy, that cannot be turned aside or over-persuaded, and which is very characteristic of it. In that sense it is undoubtedly a way of power, although it claims none, and its power is not that which the world uses. It is true that Christ said in dramatic language: 'If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out . . . it is better for thee to enter the Kingdom blind or halt or maimed than to be cast out into the hell-fire,' and who would deny the truth conveyed in the flaming phrase? But if it were to be taken as a precept of general and literal application, it would justify murder of an offending member by the community for the good of the state, and suicide by the individual, if his motive were to destroy his body which was leading him into temptation, for the sake of his immortal soul. This would amount to exalting rebellious refusal of the earth-experience, instead of humbly working *through* it, by suffering, to the fulfilment of destiny. There is nothing to suggest that Christ thought mutilation a better preparation for the Kingdom than wholeness, and how often in His miracles of healing He spoke of 'making whole' ! The misunderstandings caused by faulty reporting and mistranslation and inserted 'glosses' must be remembered, and the still greater errors due to the psychological impossibility of His ignorant and prejudiced hearers fully understanding or rightly transmitting His doctrines. Then the difficulties raised by trying to reconcile the letter of a few, isolated, sayings of Christ with His general teaching, dissolve and cease to be difficulties, except for those who, for one reason or another, want to keep them there.

Some of the Christian saints and mystics have understood very well that a ceaseless, active campaign against sin, and

acute distress of mind because of it, either in ourselves or others, are not the best methods of attaining freedom from the bonds of attachment to it. It is modern psychology which has revealed the forces of the unconscious or sub-conscious minds, and wise men of earlier ages might have been surprised to hear that their 'will-power' could automatically raise a 'won't power' to defeat their object. But 'through grace,' to use their own language, they had reached the conception and attained the practice of calm untroubled passivity, and patient 'waiting for the Lord.' They accepted sin as inevitable for all in this life, yet recognized that they could be free from slavery to it. That is the vital point: a recognition that sin cannot be killed and exterminated in us, but that we *can* cease to be fettered by attachment to it.

Brother Lawrence, most lovable and sincere of souls, showed in his *Practice of the Presence of God*, how near a Catholic monk of the seventeenth century had come to the idea of wholeness and the way of acceptance.

'When he had failed in his duty, he only confessed his fault, saying to God: "I shall never do otherwise if You leave me to myself; 'tis only You must hinder my falling and mend what is amiss." After this he gave himself no further uneasiness about it.

'As for the miseries and sins he heard of daily in the world, he was so far from wondering at them, that on the contrary, he was surprised there were not more, considering the malice that sinners were capable of; for his part he prayed for them, but, knowing that God could remedy the mischiefs they did when He pleased, he gave himself no further trouble.

'He expected, after the pleasant days God had given him, he should have his turn of pain and suffering, but he was not uneasy about it, knowing very well that as he could do nothing of himself, God would not fail to give him the strength to bear them.

'He was very sensible of his faults, but was not discouraged by them; he confessed them to God, and did not plead

against Him to excuse them. When he had so done, he peaceably resumed his usual practice of love and adoration.

'The worst that could happen to him was to lose that sense of God which he had enjoyed so long, but the goodness of God assured him that He would not forsake him utterly, but would give him strength to bear whatever evil He permitted to happen to him; and therefore he feared nothing.'

Allowing for the different habit of mind and phraseology of the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, it is clear that Brother Lawrence had attained that peace and health of mind which are the aims of all psychotherapy. He was no unweaned babe, crying to be spared this or that, but a whole man. Undisturbed by his own sense of sin or by world problems, he had reached that balance which is always to be found in full acceptance of reality, and in conscious, willing dependence on the underlying, creative spirit.

It may be said in comment on this: That is all very well for saints, 'but we are very ordinary men.'¹ Brother Lawrence was dedicated, and could give himself to the practice of the presence of God, but:

'There's lots of things a man has got to think of,
His work, his home, his pleasure and his wife.'¹

Attitudes that were possible for him are not possible for us.

No, we are not saints. But (contrary to popular belief) mystics at their best are more efficient than materialists, perhaps because they have the secret of the pure in heart—that is, single-mindedness. This Saint was a wise man, and, to put it no higher, he had found what was necessary for efficiency. His wisdom must become our common sense. He used it for his sainthood, but it is equally true and applicable for all the problems of everyday life. And, in point of fact, Brother Lawrence used it not only for his sainthood,

¹ *Christ in Flanders*. Lucy Whitmell.

in direct spiritual approach to God, but in all worldly matters and daily drudgery, and expressly tells us so. And whether it was in the kitchen, or in the purchase of wine for his community (business for which he had no turn, and sometimes a great aversion), always it 'proved very well,' and he found it had been 'very well performed.'

In all that we have said the idea is implicit that the soul of man *can* change, and does desire to change. Also that it is meant to change, though not at a fixed, uniform pace. Each soul should be allowed to move at its natural pace, according to its own, inherent pattern, without the use of external whip and spur. It is not always dynamic: sometimes, for a time at least, it seems static and irresponsive, as it passes into an involutory phase. It does not even desire progress then, but appears to stand still passively, or even to go backwards. This is often a cause of deep distress to people of real saintliness, who feel estranged from good. Yet the greatest saints have recognized the existence of rhythm and periodicity in the spiritual life, the ebb and flow of the tide, and the inevitability of 'dry times.' They have taught that these should be accepted as part of the soul's discipline, without surprise or fear, with faith and patience. The recurrent cycle of the seasons, with the seeming death and sterility of winter, teaches the same lesson. When the 'dry times' are accepted in the right spirit, they are not in fact barren times, but, like the field that lies fallow, the soul acquires unconsciously qualities which make for greater harvest in the future. When they are refused with impatient self-blame and anger, this process seems to be delayed, and the duration of the painful 'dry times' is prolonged.

We have spoken of the importance of the distinction between acceptance and acquiescence, and alluded to the no less important one between loving and liking. People are apt to brush this last aside, assuming that the difference is self-evident, and no warning is needed. Yet often their

love is only an intensified form of liking. If the beloved changes, or proves unworthy, or becomes displeasing to them, their feeling promptly fades, and even changes to hate. But the hallmark of love, distinguishing it from all degrees of liking or attraction, is that it is unconditional. Does this seem difficult or incredible? too high a standard for human nature to contemplate? Shakespeare did not think so.

‘Love is not love

Which alters when it alteration finds

Or bends with the remover to remove.

Oh, no ! It is an ever fixed mark

That looks on tempests and is never shaken :

It is the star to every wandering bark. . . .

Love’s not Time’s fool. . . .

Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks

But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.’

Perhaps we can understand it more easily if we think of our feeling for a child. We love him or her, yes, beyond words; but often we do not approve them in the least, nor ‘like’ them in the ordinary sense of the word. If we are capable of clear-sightedness about anyone near and dear to us, we recognize frankly that they are not—temporarily we hope—likable at all. Indeed they are unlovable, in the conventional sense, meaning that they are not admirable and possessed of the qualities which command and are worthy of love. Yet we know that we do not love them the less though we suffer through them the more. The children themselves find it difficult to believe that our love is not affected by our displeasure, or dependent on their earning it by good behaviour.

Married love may start on a basis of mutual liking and attraction of some kind, but if it ripens, going on from duality

to unity in trinity, it becomes independent of these or any conditions. It is a part of reality—simply something that is and cannot be argued about—quite unconditional.

When we repeat the words, 'God so loved the world,' we do not mean that the goodness and charm of mankind attracted His love. But He knew what was in man, and what man might become. And it is part of the magic of love, when it is real, given unconditionally, with no thought of bargaining for personal advantage, that it has power to change those who receive it into the best that we can desire for them. Not instantaneously but gradually, within the limits of their stage of development at the time. So when we speak of loving sinners, or of loving the sin in them or in ourselves, it is essential to understand that such love has nothing necessarily to do with liking, or in common with approval. But it has much to do with tolerance, loving-kindness and long-suffering, with all that deep charity of heart and mind which St. Paul, in his famous analysis of love, has assured us never fails.

It does not fail. Try it and see. Surround your 'difficult' child with encompassing love, and many of the most baffling problems of adolescence can be solved. But it must be in all four bodies, not ignoring or suppressing any one of them, or there will be disaster. Unwearying forbearance and encouragement will be needed on all four stories of the house of life. It does not mean that there will not be discipline: there must be, if education, which is the mediator of life, is faithful to its Law. The answer to the child may be militant and yet be love. There is no need to be ashamed of power, if it is the right sort of power: it belongs within and must not be left outside, whether in ourself or in the child. But we must not use it violently, *against* the child, or against our own short-comings. We shall get better results by this more temperate method than by all denunciations and self-flagellations.

If it seems that we are letting off ourselves or other sinners

too easily, the answer is that it is not an easy treatment, or a 'letting off' at all. It is more difficult than to lash ourselves into a frenzy of indignation and remorse, because it needs a clearer vision and more balanced judgment. And it is more honest. It does not allow us to assume that our violent grief for our wrongdoings has in some quasi-magical fashion wiped them out, and changed us into what we should like to believe ourselves but are not yet. Remorse can sometimes act as a smoke-screen, hiding our emptiness, or camouflaging the real nature of things we do not wish to acknowledge in ourselves. We cannot 'repent' our sin until it is truly accepted and acknowledged. And repentance is one of the great words of all religion: without repentance there can be no salvation.

What, then, is true repentance? What must be done? Repentance means confession of our sin and contrition for it. There is no pride of the mind or of the spirit in repentance. A broken and contrite spirit, a broken and contrite mind, as well as a broken and contrite heart must be offered up, placed in the Cup, surrendered. There they will attract to themselves knowledge of how to make amends, and how to win atonement. The first step is acceptance.

Placed in the Cup with contrition, but not with hatred or anger or disgust, for in these emotions there is no acceptance and no love. Not with exaggerated shame either, for that would be inverted vanity again. And not with morbid intensity of remorse, for the danger of such remorse is that it makes for cruel callousness. It makes us feel that no pain we inflict on others or which they return to us, can compare with the torture which by remorse we inflict on ourselves. So we lose sensitiveness and sympathy.

In some moods acceptance seems to us a gracious word, but it is a difficult thing to practise in its full meaning. It is hard to accept without hatred an injury done to our beloved, to tolerate what we most disapprove in others, to bear without bitterness the blows that life may deal us. And

it is no easier to accept the real truth about ourselves. We may acquiesce in unpleasant thrusts about our own lives and characters; that is a mental act, an experience in our mental bodies, and the admitted sin may repeat itself in the very moment of admission. Conceit and vanity can plume themselves on the clear-sightedness that detects the failings, and the honesty that does not deny them. Hatred can hate those who point out some ugly thing in us, even while we say and know that they are right. And so we sin again. For what is sin? It is a gesture of exclusiveness. Always we shall find that it is rejection of *something* that was meant for our eating and digestion. It may be rejection of pain, or of grief, or of adverse criticism, or of the fact of our own imperfection. What we need to learn is the obedience of the heart, and mere verbal acquiescence does not bring us much nearer to it.

Very different is real acceptance, which is a spiritual and emotional experience, as well as a mental one. Sin must be realized as a barrier that does indeed cut us off from progress towards our reunion with God, not arbitrarily as punishment, but inevitably by its very nature. Then there will be real grief and humiliation. That too must be accepted, eaten and absorbed. To repudiate it is only another gesture of proud self-righteousness, which will not endure for more than a brief moment to look upon so wounding a picture. This mood insists that the portrait in the mirror must be altered or effaced immediately, the 'degrading' facts eliminated or thrust out of memory, so that the image may conform more nearly to our high idea of ourselves. The Pharisee's attitude has crept in unawares. Others, even as this publican, may fall in the mire, but we are different. We know better, or ought to know better: we are, or ought to be, in a superior position, morally or spiritually: in the top class, or perhaps in a class by ourselves!

The Pharisee, in short, may, and probably does, admit that he is a sinner, but he cannot bear to leave it at that, in

humility. It is not enough for him to ask the mercy and pardon of his God, and to receive it to his great and endless comfort: he must deserve it. He desires not so much deliverance from the burden of his sin, as to be able to pat himself on the back, in the comfortable assurance that he has done well, gained ground and can feel self-approval. Until he can achieve this, no forgiveness and no atonement contents him: If he is a Christian, he believes, indeed he knows, that God loves him. But the fact is that in this mood he is not satisfied to have the love of God. He wants God also to *like* and *approve* him, so that he need not sacrifice his secret self-satisfaction.

This is not acceptance. The ugly image must be recognized as no mere accidental thing to be hastily brushed aside, but as a deep, essential part of our own true nature *as it is at present*. Only when we admit that we are really ill, without stipulating that we must be made well at once, can we begin to be healed. Only when the 'intolerable' evil in ourselves has been tolerated and really accepted, can we make a true act of repentance, confessing the sin and offering it with contrition in the Cup, that there by love it may be changed.

So there is no hatred of our sin in acceptance, only repentance and love. And if this still seems strange and difficult to those who have been brought up to use a different language, let them remember that the command is that we love our neighbour *as ourself*. It is not possible to obey the spirit of that command unless we first love ourselves, sinful and imperfect as we are. And it is difficult, if not impossible, to love ourselves, if we are hating our sinfulness and ourselves for sinning. We must 'truly and earnestly repent,' indeed, but in the simple, sincere way of faith without morbidity. Else our repentance will make for a deadly division within us, and not for that healing and wholeness which are the fruit of true repentance—the condition of that 'new life' which we hope and intend to lead, as we grow and become that which we are not yet, in time. If we can reach

to knowing and feeling that hate is hateful: if we can desire in very truth to be free from the curse of it, and yet not hate ourselves or our neighbours for hating (as, alas! we know that we still do), then we shall have gone a long way to overcoming hate. It can only be overcome by absorption, never by extermination. When we know this and can practise it, we shall be not far from wholeness and the Kingdom of God.

It comes to this, that we must be 'in love and charity' with ourselves, as well as with our neighbours and with the whole universe. Without this it is not that we *may* not but that we *can* not, draw near and partake fully of that great sacrament which God has provided for us from the foundations of the world: that 'outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace' which we call Life. But when we have that fullness of love and charity which is acceptance, we see that the body of the Lord is in truth the world of form in which He reveals Himself to our senses through beauty and ugliness, through pain and through delight: and that His blood is the spirit which lives and moves in our inner self, and makes us part of the divine reality.

In using these words, so sacred to millions of people in their associations, no shadow of irreverence is intended to the ordered sacraments administered by the Churches with beautiful ritual and deep mystical significance. But to the Sacrament of Life *all* may come, not only those who worship at the Table of their Lord in the Christian tradition, or those who seek God in some other fellowship, but those also who never enter a temple made with hands. For all are bidden to this Supper, and indeed compelled to come in. And if they will accept the feast of life in its wholeness, sweet and bitter alike, they will find that they do indeed feed upon the Lord of all Life 'in their hearts, by faith with thanksgiving.'

We cannot avoid the choice or leave it on one side, for the Way of Acceptance is woven into the whole pattern of our existence. Nothing can happen to us in our daily lives,

whether ordinary or extraordinary, that is not fundamentally affected by whether we walk in this Way, or choose the other Way of Refusal. In sickness and in health—in joy and in sorrow—in understanding and in ignorance—in light and in darkness—in living and dying—if we walk in the Way of Acceptance we are healed and reconciled to life. We are fulfilled in at-one-ment with God.

So then, acceptance must be thought of in terms of its relationship to the universe, and to all men, and to ourselves. But the last is the hardest, because it is always easier to love and forgive your enemies who are outside, rather than those that are within.

Chapter Fourth

ACCEPTANCE IN POLITICS

LET US LOOK NOW at the way of acceptance as it affects politics—in other words, our relationship towards other *groups*. They may be the minor groups within the circle of our own nation, thus coming under the heading of home affairs, or those greater groups which are other nations. It is our relationships with these last that are the stuff of which international affairs are made.

All these public matters are secular matters, and we have tried to show that acceptance is fundamentally a religious or philosophical idea. Politicians may, on that account, be inclined to warn us off the course, and tell us to mind our own business. But acceptance has a direct bearing on public affairs, and perhaps specially on international affairs. It is not a theory up in the air, cut away from contact with the practical realities of life. On the contrary, it is so practical that it may make all the difference between peace and war in our time, between the life and death of our children and ourselves. Like most, though not all religious and philosophical ideas, it has a profound effect on psychological states, and through them on historical facts. If acceptance as a practical working theory of life did not exist, it would have—like God in Voltaire's phrase—to be invented. Its adoption as a method of manners and behaviour in current international politics is imperative if disaster is to be avoided.

Acceptance involves the conception that there is an inner meaning as well as an outer form in everything, and that the inner meaning has the higher value. This idea or 'ideal,' was once almost universally regarded as a self-evident truth, but,

as knowledge of the variety and complexity of the outer form grew, it was largely lost sight of. It is a loss by which life has been devalued and belittled, robbed of half its meaning and beauty. A loss, moreover, which has had very important consequences, not only in the formation of individual and national character, but in politics and public affairs.

When the form alone is regarded as a fact and worthy of study, acceptance becomes difficult if not impossible. It is, like Christ to the Greeks, 'foolishness.' For if a form displeases, and there is nothing more to it than that, why should it be accepted and 'eaten?' It would seem more sensible to reject it if we can, and in point of fact the Way of Rejection is the path which the greater part of modern, Western, civilization has chosen. Of course, if we have made a mistake, and there really was an inner meaning behind the offending form which roused our dislike, then, by refusing to eat and digest it, we have been depriving ourselves of something which possibly contained essential vitamins, and we may find that in consequence we suffer from malnutrition.

Then again, if material form is all there is, it seems only common sense to snatch at everything whose form delights us, and strive to possess it and keep it for ourselves. The sign-token of the materialist has always been his aching urge to acquire and accumulate possessions. He loves to heap them one upon another, storing them into barns or safes, adding field to field, power to power. The indulgence of the craving has not had satisfactory results: the 'Haves' as well as the 'Have nots' have suffered, for they have 'travelled from Dan to Beersheba and found all barren.' It has multiplied social evils and led to many wars. The spiritually minded man, on the contrary, knows that life does not consist in the multitude of things possessed. He accepts the paradox that losing is the way to gaining; he sees behind every form, giving it meaning and value, the eternal, living

Flame. It follows that he can reject nothing, but must accept all with humility and suffer it gladly.

This sounds as if the divergence arose between the spiritual and material points of view, and perhaps ultimately it is so, but the immediate issue is not quite that. It is rather the difference between the saving grace of a recognized, accepted duality, and the attitude which rejects this difference as wrong and intolerable. The latter tries to force the separated two back into a false unity that spells death. But difference and dualism are real facts. The solution is not by a backward movement from two to one, but forward from two to three. No international issue is a simple one. It is always complicated by cross-currents and conflicting rights and wrongs. Good and evil are inextricably mixed, sheep and goats refuse to keep their proper places, and bewildered people find themselves in the opposite camp to what they had supposed and intended.

The fact is that politics have become moralized to a large extent, with unexpected and surprising consequences to many well-meaning persons. They identify morality with what is 'good,' and, moreover, with the idea that they, being moved by moral considerations, are safely on the side of the 'good' and against the 'bad.' To them the moralization of politics seems a splendid thing, by which politics have been drawn up to a higher plane, fixing attention on things as they *ought* to be, rather than on things as they *are*. But this is a very dangerous attitude if we are to keep the peace. Because, however regrettable, it is a fact that different groups have totally different views as to what 'ought to be,' and are equally insistent that their ideas are right and must be made to prevail over the wrong or foolish ideas of other groups. As a matter of actual history, the moralization of politics has led to a great deal of aggressiveness and counter defensive-aggressiveness. The determination of one group not to tolerate but to eliminate, forcibly if necessary, and if they are able to use force, ideas and practices which they condemn

morally, generates violent and bitter opposition from the group who think differently. War may follow, but as Napoleon said, it decides nothing. Even if force appears to win its point, the end is not there, for passions are driven underground with sinister consequences, and emerge later as irresistible volcanoes. When a national law is in conflict with general public opinion, or even much above the level of majority feeling, it tends to be broken with an easy conscience. This has the disastrous result that not only that particular law but *all law* is weakened and brought into contempt. So it is with attempts to force international policies which do not yet command general consent.

Real statesmanship takes the view of balance and reconciliation between opposing interests, and so is in sharp contrast with the partisan views of average politics. It does not wish the elimination of opposition, but the definition and understanding of it. This is the basis of our English system of government. It recognizes not only the Government, but the Opposition, and invites free and equal discussion on all points. This has the result that most proposed laws and policies are looked at from every angle, and greatly modified before they are finally adopted. It may be argued, and not without truth, that this method necessarily causes delay in carrying out much-needed reforms, and leads also to their being sometimes so watered down that their original sponsors feel inclined to disown them. But these drawbacks are outweighed by the enormous advantage of carrying substantially the whole country in agreement with the slower advance. A reversal of policy by the next government in power is not provoked, and the tortoise is justified against the hare. The same conception underlies all Round-Table Conferences. By sitting down together we often find the way to harmonious adjustment of divergent claims. To put it in a nutshell, bad politics refuse and eliminate: good politics accept and include.

Before we can hope really to understand the idea of

acceptance in politics, we must realize the alternatives which have to be distinguished. There is, first, (A) partial purpose, which is identified with patriotism. And second (B) universal purpose, which is identified with the brotherhood of all mankind. We have to ask ourselves whether (A) is still necessary, or have we outgrown it? The Cup technique, of which we shall speak later, only applies to (B). But we must not forget that (B) must accept (A) so long as (A) is a real fact. We most of us quote with admiration Edith Cavell's great saying that 'patriotism is not enough,' and then are apt to pass on without understanding, which certainly is not enough. We must ask ourselves *why* patriotism is not enough. The answer is that patriotism, taken alone, contravenes the ideas of wholeness and balance. It would be unreal and insincere to deny that there are *any* advantages attaching to a partial will directed to a partial purpose. It does 'get things done' in 'no time.' But it is at a big price, for it upsets the balance of life, and though it creates something, it destroys more than it can create. When we point proudly to what force has accomplished, striving to justify it as a means of achieving righteousness—even if only a partial and partisan righteousness—we point only to what it has created: we turn a blind eye, or at least omit to notice what it has destroyed. But detachment and fairness require that we should be able to observe from an impartial standpoint; one that is neither patriotic nor personal, but that takes heed of *all* the facts and needs and desires, without bias or prejudice. This is the way of the scientific method, and indeed of all enlightenment. Acceptance is essentially a way of light as well as a way of life.

With regard to (A) and (B) the way that (B) should take to (A) is the way of the wise parent.

As the wise parent treats the child, so must we learn to treat our enemies. And that expression may remind us of Bernard Shaw's noble phrase: 'I have no enemy under the age of seven!' He said it referring to the 'Save the Children Fund,'

when many people who professed and called themselves Christians argued that we ought not to feed the enemy. But it has something to teach us in a wider sense, that will embrace more than the starving children of those who have been at war with us. Modern psychology has familiarized us with the idea of mental age, and the fact that it is by no means always in accordance with a person's age in years. There are nations, as there are individuals, who are still in the infant stage, and some in the aggressive, adolescent period, while a few are struggling towards maturity. No nation can claim that it is completely grown-up, and has left childish things and green sickness behind it. There are plenty of schoolboy mentalities and cases of arrested development amongst us, all the world over. It is useless with nations, as with children, to expect them to leap the gap between three years old and thirty at one fell swoop, however great the advantage of more adult standards. The wise parent knows that growth is a slow process. The gardener learns from experience that he must practise patience and let the plant alone if it is to attain the fullness of its potential stature in time. Careful gardening will help, but it cannot force blossom and fruit out of season without doing damage. The same is true of the growth of political wisdom. The impatient people who want to cut down the fig tree, rather than dig it about and dung it, create more problems than they solve. International problems cannot be solved by eliminating or exterminating or liquidating anybody.

Let us test the truth or falsehood of what we have said about the moralization of politics, not in general terms but with application to events in our modern life to-day. Public opinion and conscience are much exercised over the question of the sanctity of treaties, and the recognition of *de facto* situations which have undoubtedly been accomplished by violence in defiance of pledges. They also appear to us (and probably quite rightly,) to be founded on inequity or iniquity, whichever spelling we prefer. Our disapproval is

partly on moral grounds, but also on grounds of practical expediency. For, evidently, lies debase the verbal currency, and broken promises destroy social confidence. And so with international agreements. If they are to be torn up at the convenience of either party without consulting the other, it is as if debts were to be paid not in legal tender with a recognized and more or less stable value, but in doubtful cheques which might or might not be honoured. Under such circumstances credit would vanish, and with it trade and prosperity. All this is true, and the ideal of 'swearing unto your neighbour and disappointing him not, though it were to your own hindrance,' is a high and honourable one. Yet, as always, there is another side to the truth. If we probe deeper, the underlying substance is not always as it looks on the surface, and it may happen that we find 'our honour rooted in dishonour stands.' We must look squarely at that other side of truth which is less gratifying to our self-esteem, if we want the *whole* truth.

There are treaties which are extorted under duress, as, for instance, that of Versailles in 1919.¹ They may have been the best obtainable under the psychological conditions of the time, when men were still blinded by fear and passion, but they surely have no more *moral* validity than concessions or confessions made under torture, whether at Moscow or elsewhere. There are, besides, many others which are obtained under pressure of some sort, moral or immoral. Such agreements are not really agreed, and cannot for long remain agreeable. They are generally devised without scruple in the interests of things as they have been established by force. The weaker nations are induced to declare their acquiescence in the *status quo*, though this may be against

¹ This, of course, is not only true of Versailles and Trianon, which have been so much in the public mind, but also of Brest Litovsk, etc.; of all 'unequal treaties,' in fact, when whole nations have been penalized for the crimes and blunders of their leaders or for the misfortune of defeat. Such treaties slay the future with the past, and till they are rectified make peace an impossible dream.

their obvious wishes and interests. They are not compelled by violence, but they are not free agents. They agree as part of a bargain which their weakness necessitates, but with inward resentment and hatred that only wait the chance for a *revanche*. Such a policy towards them may be reasonably if cynically defended on the plea of necessity, or on the principle of 'woe to the vanquished,' but hardly on high moral grounds. Neither surprise nor moral indignation should be felt when promises so obtained are broken, though these virtuous emotions are often loudly declared. The people who make such protests are not always guilty of conscious hypocrisy; far from it. Rationalization comes to their help and shows in most convincing fashion the excellent results which will coincide with their advantage. And sometimes it is true, but not nearly so often as personal bias makes us anxious to believe. When the voice of conscience identifies the highest good of the world with our own interests, it should always be heard with the gravest suspicion and closely cross-examined. This is not popular counsel, but if peace is desired it is not to be disregarded.¹

Another point to note is that where in a personal concern high-minded people are scrupulous not to take unfair advantage, such scruples operate more rarely when the interests of whole groups and classes are affected, as, for instance, in

¹ This was the justification of the policy of appeasement from the ethical standpoint, whatever may be argued against it on grounds of political strategy. It took the view of universal not of partial purpose. It accepted existing facts, no matter how unpalatable or who was to blame for them. It was ready to recognize whatever justice might underlie claims, however alien to our ideas and interests, or intransigently put forward. It acknowledged old mistakes and had the avowed intention of healing sores and redressing grievances even at great sacrifice. The tragedy of Munich was that the sacrifice had to include the innocent victims of previous folly, because one of the relentless facts was the impossibility of saving them. If the policy of appeasement lamentably fails, it will be because the other disputants reject conciliation and prefer the ancient way of violence. If that comes to pass, force will have the same time-dishonoured results it has always had: those that choose the sword will perish by the sword, and, alas! millions of others who have not so chosen, though perhaps their fathers made the fatal choice before them. Then, will the victors in the next war remember the lesson when they make the next peace? Or will they sow more dragons' teeth?

labour disputes. They are hardly ever given full weight in international affairs, because there the interests of 'my country' become a sacred matter, and are identified with the cause of God and of Good. 'What scoundrels we should be if we did for ourselves what we are doing for Italy,' remains true of all nations. When war breaks out it is inevitable that for the time all higher considerations of justice and generosity are swept away by the instinct of self-defence rising to a flood tide. It is all the more essential to think of these things while peace is still with us, and there may yet be time to save the world. Civilization is indeed in imminent danger of wreckage because of its lack of acceptance. It has forgotten timeliness and forced the pace.

It is no use taking our stand on the ground that promises are always sacred, and that to break them is always criminal. Compare public and private life, and see how far more advanced we are privately, as individuals, in this respect, than politically as nations. It is now generally recognized that the extraction of promises from children by parents is not only useless but *wrong*. Promises not to drink, not to smoke, not to gamble, to go to church, to pray morning and evening, to read the Scriptures daily, etc., cannot be defended, however desirable some of these things may be in themselves. Their extortion cannot be justified morally because it is an infringement of the freedom of one human being by another—an 'interference,' in the worst sense of the word, with personality—an abuse of power and an outrage upon love. If the promises exacted are not even in the supposed interests of the children themselves, but of the parents, e.g. 'Promise me that you will never leave me,' obviously the iniquity is grosser, because love has been used to cloak an ulterior motive. Such promises are *not* sacred. The person who exacts them is more guilty than the person who breaks them.

Ultrior motives are a great danger in international politics, and Czecho-Slovakia provides a signal instance of

this. Behind the many apparent factors which influenced the drawing of the frontiers of that ill-fated State (gratitude to allies, recognition of existing facts, old Bohemian claims, geographical features, the wish to support a free democratic State, etc.) few will deny the existence of another, dominating motive. France felt the compelling need to safeguard herself and Europe (as she supposed) by encircling Germany, and placing a strong military power on her eastern flank. We and the other Powers supported France. There is no need to discuss the rights and wrongs, the wisdom or folly of that policy here. It was a very understandable one. But evidently there was this ulterior motive, and, as usual, it acted as a boomerang. When Germany was strong enough to act freely in accordance with her own wishes, the destruction of Czecho-Slovakia as created at Versailles was a certainty. The violent re-drawing of the map, in accordance with most partial purpose, can have no different result: it will bring not peace, but poison. Acceptance of *all* the facts disarms the danger of ulterior motive.

The great need between nations to-day is not for more promises and assurances, but for better manners, and a more sincere desire to understand each others' necessities and difficulties. The old motto, 'Manners maketh man,' is appropriate. A real obstacle to the better understanding and feeling which all desire, is our deplorable British habit of reading moral lectures to our erring neighbours. Even if they are always wrong and we are always right—which humility suggests is hardly probable—rudeness and self-righteousness are more likely to stiffen and antagonize than to lead to a change of heart. They *cannot* help the cause of peace. It is no answer to this indictment to plead that other nations have no better manners than our own, and would compel, or did actually compel, even more cruel and unrighteous treaties, if and when they had the power. This, however true, is no more than the schoolboy retort of *tu quoque*. 'You're another' is not a convincing argument to the adult mind.

If there were better manners in our foreign relations, they might lead to better behaviour. Then an atmosphere would be possible in which agreements could be freely entered into and voluntarily adhered to, because both parties felt them to be of mutual advantage. Till then we are better off with as few new ones as possible, for they command little confidence and give fresh occasion for acerbity and exasperated argument.

It is sometimes urged that there are greater evils than war, and that some causes are so sacred and so essential to the good life, that even war must be risked, and if need be endured in their service. But surely this is to mix up a great truth with a great falsehood. It is true that in the scale of values there are some which are higher even than peace, and such values are justice, freedom and generosity. But it is false to suggest that they can ever be served by war: on the contrary, war can only do them the greatest disservice. It may indeed be waged in their name and with sincere desire to serve them, as the gospel of peace and goodwill has, alas, sometimes been carried to ignorant and savage tribes at the point of the sword. But neither in nor after war is it found that justice and generosity and freedom have enlarged their borders; rather they have shrunk to lesser proportions and power. Satan has not cast out Satan, though implored to do so with naïve simplicity and imposing ritual. The cause is worth even world war? Yes, perhaps it is, if it could be served by war, but experience does not bear out the hope. Many wars have been started from mixed motives, good and bad, with self-interest generally predominating. And some wars have begun on a wave of generous emotion, based on compassion or high idealism. But all wars end with moral aspirations jaded and stale, with visions faded and tarnished. The hard, sad fact is always relentlessly the same, that in spite of all the fine qualities and heroic sacrifices of individuals, the souls of the mass of men have not been cleansed and ennobled by war, but coarsened and degraded. Men may fight, and men *will* fight if they are pressed too

far, but the higher values will be swallowed up, whether by defeat or victory.

It is worth quoting here from an interesting book¹ recently published, the scene of which is laid in modern Spain. The following illuminating scrap of dialogue occurs:

“It is a pity it [goodwill] is not to be found between the parties in this unhappy war.”

“I am not sure. How should one have goodwill towards the enemies of civilization?”

Dom Philip laughed. “Who is the enemy of civilization? It is he that makes wars, and shall he be overcome by obeying him?”

The Governor shrugged his shoulders. “I am afraid we cannot live in an atmosphere of such thoughts outside your monastery.”

“That is a pity for you,” the Prior replied. “It is you who will suffer. Let me ask you to remember some day that I have told you that hatred of evil strengthens evil, and opposition reinforces what is opposed. This is a law of an exactitude equal with the laws of mathematics.”

We can endorse this without taking up the extreme pacifist position, and saying that re-armament is always wrong. It is true that war can never be right, and that re-armament cannot give us peace and security. But we may have got ourselves into such a wrong position by our wrong behaviour, that re-armament is inevitable. There are times in a re-arming world when we are forced to have recourse to it, much as we dislike and distrust it, in order to avoid the worse evil of a sudden precipitation into war. But it cannot avert war permanently, for it is a negative remedy, and the real remedy is positive and constructive—that mental and spiritual disarmament which leads to physical disarmament as a logical consequence. The great danger of re-armament, necessary as it may sometimes be, is that

¹ Ronald Fraser, *Bird under Glass*. Jonathan Cape.

we are terribly liable to be satisfied with the negative remedy, and stop short there. But its only real value is that it can give a breathing space in which to pass on to the constructive remedy. If the interval is not used for that purpose, it has failed to achieve anything lasting; it has postponed but not solved its problem. It may even prove an added danger if it has blinded us with an illusory sense of security and false prosperity.

One may get a helpful analogy, by comparison with the case of a patient in high fever. The fever and the dangerously quick pulse are not the disease, they are only its symptoms. The wise physician knows this, and knows, when he has made his diagnosis, what the disease really is, and that the cure of it is bound to be long and slow. But in the meantime the temperature must be quickly brought down, or the patient will die. So the doctor uses his negative remedies, his anti-febrile drugs and sedatives, in order to give time for nature to re-assert herself and exercise her own healing powers. By so doing he tides his patient over the immediate crisis, but he is under no delusion that he has cured him. Unless the root cause of the trouble can be absorbed—a process which needs the co-operation of the patient—he knows very well that there must soon be another attack, which may well prove fatal. So it is with wars and the world.

The same testimony as that of the English Prior in the Spanish monastery comes from the Russian mystic, Nicolas Berdyaev, of whom the Archbishop of York has said that he is one of the most important writers of the time. In his great book, *Freedom and the Spirit*,¹ he writes:

‘Hatred can never lead to love, neither can division lead to union, murder to life, nor violence to liberty. No good objective can be achieved by evil means, for it is always the evil that triumphs.’

He cites Karl Marx as an example of a man striving for an end which he regarded as good, but who sanctioned the use

¹ Publishers of English translation: Geoffrey Bles. Centenary Press.

of evil to attain it, claiming by teaching hatred and animosity, covetousness and revenge, to bring men to peace and brotherhood. But these evil passions are akin to murder and death, destructive and negative, not positive and life-giving.

‘Too often feelings of hatred against evil-doers are merely a form of self-affirmation. . . . What man believes to be a struggle against evil becomes itself a good. The State is appealed to in order to restrict the manifestation of evil, but the methods it uses easily become evil themselves. . . . When men become haunted by such ideas as that of a world-wide conspiracy of Jews or Freemasons, they are simply committing spiritual suicide, and by shutting their eyes to the light become a mass of hate, suspicion and revenge. . . . Our first need is to discover the bad in ourselves and not in others. . . . Evil cannot be fought by exterminating it; it must be overcome and conquered.’

That is the important thing to understand—the great word of illumination—that conquest is by absorption and not by extermination. It is foreign to all our Western ideas of conquest, for we are trained to the methods of direct assault and battery against all our foes. But it is true, both in regard to political enemies and moral evil and disease.

People often say: ‘You must stand up for your principles: you must make a stand somewhere.’ But principles are not enough, however high and good they may be. Perhaps it is their very virtues which make them deceive us as they do. For they always seem right and good, and often proven true, and yet they may be frauds whose fruits are evil although their seeds were good. It is because every principle, like every other thing, is made up of two parts, the inner essence and the outer form, the spirit and the letter. One gives freedom, but the other is a tyrant, a totalitarian dictator who cannot—because of principles!—admit difference or allow opposition. We have made an idol of the form,

of the rigid rule of our principles. 'It stands to reason' is the voice of pride, arrogant on a point of principle, in that dangerous, partial sense of the word. 'We must stand up for our principles' sounds better than 'We must stand up for our rights,' and it is better, if we are sure we are not making our principles and our rights synonymous. But equally it is the war-cry of all aggressiveness that inflames a man against his brother and nation against nation, with the clash of Cause destroying Life. There is no salvation in terms of outward forms, however good. They are our enemies if they stand between us and our lives as they must be lived. They make enemies for us where we might have and be better friends. They create conflict which they cannot solve.

A principle is in its essence a movement of the spirit, a free invisible force not to be measured, and of no account to science and reason, just because it is not measurable. It belongs to the spiritual not the material order of experience. As soon as it is allowed to become externalized and fixed, it has crossed to the other side of the gulf of paradox, and turned round to strike at some enemy. Then it is no better than any other material power, directed to achieve some partial purpose. Our forms must be, and so they will be, broken down. Our 'principles' must fail, as it is obvious to the blindest they are failing. We must be dishonoured, broken, ashamed. The spirit does not 'stand to reason' or 'stand by principle' or 'make a stand,' simply because it does not and cannot 'stand' at all. 'Standing' belongs to the material order of experience, and implies something fixed, rigid, unyielding. On the opposite side of the paradox of life—the paradox which is our dilemma—is the spirit which suffers humiliation by the power of the proud aggressor. It stoops to conquer and is crucified. It is fluid, all-embracing, universal. It works as life within a seed, creating, evolving, expanding; never externally, aggressively against someone or something; always from within. It

accepts with the most exact acceptance the conditions over which it has no direct or immediate power, but within which it must grow.

Thinking then of principles in their dual aspect, as an inner movement of the spirit on the one side, and a fixed externalization on the other, let us look again at the moralization of politics, and see to which aspect of principle it has leaned. Has it been productive of good or bad results? We seem to come in practice to this position: either morality exists as a fact in international affairs, or it does not: either my neighbour is good, as I understand goodness, or he is not. If he is good, there is no need for strenuous fuss and effort, for then what *is* will be as the moralist sees that it *ought* to be. But if he is bad, then what is to be done about it? Certainly we can protest and put forward the view we think right, and try to get it accepted. That, provided it is done in a good spirit and with good manners, is not only permissible but necessary for our integrity. But if my neighbour will not be persuaded, what then? We can take up a condemnatory attitude, and hurl verbal missiles, which may yield us some private satisfaction but will not redress the wrongs we protest against. The expression of public opinion can, indeed, be of immense value, but only when it is shared to some extent by those whom it is sought to influence, and it is a plant of slow growth. It is unlikely that my neighbour will be converted by an alien public opinion which condemns him, unless it is backed by force. But the use of force can never, as we have argued, be more than temporarily successful, since violence breeds violence and defeats its own ends. And it is always an immoral means of defending morality. The things that are Cæsar's may be secured for a brief moment by an unrighteous instrument, without inconsistency, but the things that are God's are betrayed when it is used.

At this point the conscientious objector to peace, of whom there are many, boils over. He must, in common fairness, be allowed to state his case himself.

'This,' he says, 'is all very fine, but in practice it is contemptible. It means acquiescing in the oppression of the weak, in the persecution of minorities, and in mass murders of the most atrocious kind. We cannot wait for nations to outgrow these barbarities, because meantime it means the slaughter of the innocents. If, fifty years ago, when the police were less highly organized, you had happened in some foul slum of Bethnal Green to see a drunken bully thrashing a four-year-old child within an inch of its life, would you not have felt it your duty to interfere? Even though you knew the bully was the bigger, stronger man, and the odds enormous that you would be knocked out and badly man-handled, no decent man could stand by and not try to prevent the brutality. Even if you feared you could not really save the child, because local public opinion in those days might not have rallied to your support, and after finishing with you the bully might treat the child worse than ever in his anger at your interference, still you could not help yourself. YOU MUST TRY. Is not the case parallel with interference in the affairs of other nations when they outrage common humanity? You may excuse non-intervention on grounds of weakness and expediency, or of selfishness and cowardice, but you cannot justify it on ethical or spiritual grounds. Least of all can you do so if you are taking your stand upon Christianity. For that above all religions insists that we are our brother's keeper and responsible for him. It teaches that we must bear one another's burdens, and the parable of the Good Samaritan lends no support to the attitude of detached observation and passing by on the other side.'

This is the case for the opposition, and it is finely felt and ably argued within the limits of the lines which it has drawn. We can grant with both hands the need for effective sympathy with the suffering child; grant with a heart and a half that nothing can justify or excuse persecution. Still, there are fundamental flaws in the argument when examined closely.

First, it starts off with a false equation, slick and derogatory. Taking the highest moral and religious ground, it bases the indignation which we share, on a premise that has been assumed, not proved or even examined. The enemy is

equated with a drunken bully torturing a child, but we may be sure such an accusation would be repudiated—genuinely—by the accused, as an unworthy insult. The enemy in mind may be Germany, Italy or Russia, or rather, perhaps, Naziism, Fascism or Communism. No matter to whom they are applied, all such labels, ‘mad dogs,’ ‘plague-spots of Europe,’ and the like, are terribly dangerous to peace and goodwill. They poison hope of mutual understanding, for they start by evoking passions which see red and make clear judgment impossible. They forget the millions of people who would be included among the enemy, but who do not share in the crimes which it is wished to prevent or avenge. And they forget also the deep resentment we should ourselves feel, and do feel, when other nations, instead of minding their own business, pass moral strictures and pour contempt on the way in which we manage ours. These labels are not compatible with the scientific method, nor with good manners.

Neither are they compatible with the Christianity to which appeal has been made, for that requires us to ‘judge not.’ Yet the appeal was sincere. The mistake made here seems to be exclusiveness. It limits the conception of ‘our neighbour’ to the man or nation with whom we feel in sympathy, but Christ set no such limitation. Everyman is our neighbour according to Christ’s teaching, and the test of neighbourliness is showing mercy where it is needed. It is easy to feel sympathy with the beaten child, and enfold him in compassion, but there is still greater need to give it to the drunken bully, for his need is even sorer. The bomber is always more in need of love and compassion than the bombed. The Good Samaritan would have had compassion on the Priest and the Levite who passed by on the other side, no less than on the man who fell among thieves, or on the thieves themselves.

One who is neighbour in Christ’s meaning must be prepared to be attacked, for the mediator is always attacked. Both sides as a rule unite in attacking him, and unless he is

completely unarmed his position is most dangerous. He must not be aggressive to aggressors; he must not even defend himself by excluding them from the range of his sympathy and understanding. He must include all; the bomber as well as the bombed. This is not devil's advocacy to excuse indifference to persecution, physical or moral. There is not less to do than the supporters of forcible intervention urge, but much more. But it is best to begin at home, and to avoid projections.

Let us remember that we do not attack others bitterly except for faults which we share with them. If we feel their conduct to be intolerable, it is because it is closely related to some intolerable conduct of our own, to which we are blind, or will not bear to look upon. We say that Hitler has persecuted thousands of innocent Jews, and it is true. But have we ourselves no persecuted classes? Have we defended no conditions of life which are indefensible, because they served our own advantage? Is it not true that we persecuted Germany with the heavy hand of the conqueror, and then Hitler by our exclusion and ostracism of him? Yes, there were many complications and difficulties, many provocations and excuses, and one wrong, indeed, does not justify another. But it is not irrelevant to quote: 'Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.' Christ could and did denounce hypocrisy; He stated the plain fact of the woe which is the inevitable portion of hypocrites, but He threw no stone. He that is without sin does not throw stones, for it is impossible to conceive of the throwing of stones without malice and revenge. We, who speak and act out of a welter of mixed motives, surely deceive ourselves when we claim a right that the pure in heart do not claim and never exercise. There are other forms of war, besides those that deal in blood and guns. Sanctions and verbal fisticuffs are weapons of warfare that may seem mild and harmless compared with gas and incendiary bombs, but they work to the same end—destruction—and they get there as effectively though

more quietly. Every gesture of rejection is an act of warfare. There is no difference in the spirit, although the act of war has been lifted from the physical to the moral or mental level: the motives that inspire it are the same.

An objection may be raised here which deserves a careful answer. Someone asks: *'Is it suggested that we never attach blame except when we are secretly conscious of deserving the same blame? Surely this is not borne out by our experience! We all know people of true saintliness, tolerant and compassionate, who do not hesitate to condemn the evils of cruelty and intolerance in unmeasured terms. Are we to suppose that in the depths of their hearts they are Sadists and Inquisitors?'*

No. This misunderstanding is due to a confusion in the use of the word 'blame,' which has not one but three meanings. First, blame can mean an impartial judgment which is objective and illuminative of facts. This is cognitive, not conative, and is concerned not to punish but to see clearly. Secondly, blame may also mean righteous indignation, wrath which is the spirit's inflammatory answer to its own degradation: 'Be ye angry and sin not.' But where is this impersonal anger to be found in the world to-day? It seems to be a lost art. We find many things around us that might well arouse it, and we re-act in hot anger, only to find that we are *not* impersonal and *not* without sin. The third meaning of blame—the current meaning attached to it to-day—is equated with desire to punish. This blame feels passionate need of a scapegoat. It is not impersonal but vindictive, and it is always violently directed against the sins and faults which we share. We call names and declare whole groups moral outcasts and pariahs, and in so doing we judge ourselves and pronounce our own condemnation.

Ouspenski in *Tertium Organum*¹ has noticed that though hate is a murderous emotion, yet it is possible to feel hate without sin if the hatred is entirely impersonal.

¹ Publishers of English translation: Kegan Paul.

'There can be impersonal hatred—of injustice, of brute force; anger against stupidity, dullness; aversion to nastiness, to hypocrisy. These feelings undoubtedly elevate and purify the soul of man, and help him to *see* things which he would not otherwise see.'

Such hatred is identical with blame in our second meaning of the word, and compatible with the first meaning. But it has nothing in common with the third kind of blame. It is a curious fact, indicative of something wrong with our civilization, that this art of impersonal, righteous anger, and disinterested hate of wrong, should seem to have died out in public life. Where, during this century, could we give an undeniable instance in the history of any nation of totally disinterested wrath taking effect politically? Looking further back, Gladstone's passionate campaign for the Armenian victims of atrocities comes to mind as a possible example, and Lord Shaftesbury's lifelong struggle to redress the injuries done to women and children by the Industrial Revolution. But to-day our feelings appear blunted and more indifferent, *unless* a personal interest is affected. Is it because the ideal of the 'detached man' has been forgotten? More and more our civilization has identified itself with material powers and possessions. It has followed a diversity of interests on the circumference of life, instead of returning to the centre. It has concentrated on the outer forms instead of on the inner flame, and it is sick. The loss of the power to be angry and sin not, may be one of the consequences. Till we have won it again we shall do well to rule out hatred from our list of 'righteous' emotions. We will blame it, whether in ourselves or in others, in the first meaning of blame but not in the third. Saints do not blame sins or sinners in that third sense. They love them, and by this means include them within the whole community, as they once learnt to love and include and absorb their own faults within themselves. This is the meaning of compassion, which encompasses all quarters of the globe, all differences and all sins.

The present international situation is the child of the past. If it is a hideous fruit of sin, we must bear it in some better way than with hatred, for that will only procreate a worse future. What we need is more light: all-round enlightenment to-day will bring all-round light to-morrow. It cannot be arrived at without real understanding, and that means getting down below the surface for what we seek. It requires a depth of sensitiveness and sympathy which must include the lowest and the highest, the worst and the best. Insensitiveness seems to be the chief fault of the British character. It is inclined to overbearingness instead of understanding, and to 'goodness' rather than acceptance of truth. Insensitiveness, with its resultant partial purpose and one-track mind, is a product of the public schools, and has been largely responsible for the creation of the British Empire. Not that other, finer elements have been lacking; the spirit of adventure, high courage, dogged perseverance, indifference to hardship and the like. They are great qualities, and the public schools have played their part in training them, but they are not likely to be forgotten, so there is no need to stress them. We do not, however, like to think of ourselves as 'insensitive,' and our instinctive shrinking and resentment at the suggestion are the measure of its truth.

A study of history will convince any impartial student. It is improbable indeed that any Empire could be built up by conquest and maintained largely by force, if the majority of the governing classes had not been carefully trained to insensitiveness. But to gain the consent and co-operation of the governed other qualities are necessary, sensitiveness, enlightenment and understanding. The Indian Civil Service at its best gives a fine example of what good administration of other races and religions may be. Many instances could be cited from all the Indian and Colonial Services, of absolutely open-minded, sensitive devotion not to any partial, patriotic purpose, but to the interests of those whose country they administer not merely as a professional duty

but as a sacred trust. It is more of such a universal spirit that is needed in the home public and in the Houses of Parliament, if imperial and international problems are to be solved and not aggravated.

The crux of the situation is a true understanding of the meaning of balance. Without balance there cannot be permanent prosperity or security, yet this is frequently lost sight of. Economists see clearly that the wealth and well-being of one country cannot long be maintained unaffected by the poverty and misery of other nations. But politicians, and still more some journalists, are apt to pursue the *ignis fatuus* of more wealth, a higher standard of life, greater colonial possessions and wider empire for their own people alone. The erection grows higher and higher, more and more precarious, less and less proportionate to its foundations. What will happen as a result of such lop-sided conceptions and efforts? The building, however grandly designed, can but topple over, like the house built upon the sands, and great will be the fall of it.

What is the remedy? Our ideal must never be the literal meaning of the words *Sinn Fein*, 'Ourself Alone.' It is not merely the greatness and glory of the British Empire, or the French Republic, or the German National-Socialist State, or the Italian Empire, that their citizens must have before them, but the good of all, which is inevitably the good of each. There cannot be wholeness without secure balance, for the constant strain of trying to keep one's balance produces an uneven development which is incompatible with wholeness.

If it seems a hopeless task for the world ever to reach such balance and therefore the goal of wholeness, let us keep firm hold of the truth that the world is made up of individuals, and as the microcosm so the macrocosm. The only way of changing the world is to change individuals. In international affairs as in every-day private life, there are two methods of striving for what we desire, the balanced and the biased, the

dictatorial and the persuasive, the rude and the courteous. And time, the growth factor, must never be forgotten. A wise passivity that bides its time is more effective in its mode of change than an indignant activity that insists on a scape-goat. It is true that violence may gain its immediate point and seem to triumph, but it provokes inevitable reactions in the future. They produce not peace, not better behaviour, not more security nor greater prosperity, but always more violence. It is the method that is wrong—not the goal.

The other way is the Way of Acceptance. To repeat, even at the risk of tedium: acceptance does not mean approval or acquiescence in wrong-doing, any more than loving your neighbour means liking him or thinking well of him. Neither does it mean that we do not believe our own point of view or our own conduct in any given case to be the better. If we did not, we should not prefer and adopt it. It does not mean that 'whatever is is right,' and need not be changed. But it believes that change, if it is to make things better and not worse, can only come about gradually, by conviction, not by force, and that it is never helped by bad manners. The virtues needed are patience, tolerance and humility. We must be ready to see the beam which is in our own eye, as well as and before we deal with the mote (or, if you will, the beam also) which is in our neighbour's eye. These beams are real things. They must be accepted as part of the difficult reality we have to live with, and which we cannot hope to change in a hurry. We can only accept them, with a quiet mind and a constant purpose to change them, in time, if and when they can be changed.¹

Some people's idea of 'dealing with a situation' or 'tackling'

¹ It should be noted to prevent misunderstandings that the way of acceptance does not clash with civic duty, for it would include acceptance of such duty, and willingness to undertake any form of national service required, even though it might be with profound disapproval of the policy that required it. Civic duty might, of course, conflict (as we know it does in many cases) with a man's conception of his higher duty in general, or of his duty as a Christian in particular. But acceptance as such exacts no pledges either political or religious. It leaves a man free to take up arms or to abstain, according as his Self—

it, is to aggravate it. They say they believe in firmness, and taking the bull by the horns ! But expert matadors will tell you that this is a very dangerous proceeding, only to be undertaken by the most highly skilled. Even then it is not an end in itself, for no one can contemplate continuing for long to hold a bull by the horns, but only as one step in the long process of controlling the bull, which must be 'tackled' differently. In any case it is wiser not to wave a red flag in front of the animal, unless a fight is desired. Many situations if let alone instead of being 'dealt with' so conscientiously and aggressively, cease to be formidable, and sometimes cease to exist. As Lao Tsu remarked, they 'come right of themselves.'

Among those fables that we were taught in our childhood, and which contained much spiritual and worldly wisdom, there was one which gave sound practical advice bearing on our present problems—the Fable of the Sun and the Wind and the Traveller. It may or may not be remembered that the Sun and the Wind disputed together which of them was the stronger, and seeing a poor Traveller tramping the world below, wrapped in a warm cloak, they had a wager which of them would succeed the sooner in getting his cloak off him. And the Wind strove forcefully, with biting north-east blasts, and hurricanes, and icy hail-storms, and every trick he knew. (Very like a man was the Wind !) Yet he had no success, for the Traveller only hugged his cloak the more closely round him, and at last the Wind gave it up. Then the Sun came out and poured bright beams upon the Traveller's head. (Very like a god was the Sun !) And in a few minutes the Traveller was so overcome with this beneficent radiance that first he opened his cloak, and then he threw it off. So the Sun won the wager.

determined by all his experiences in his different bodies—decides. Only, if he feels that he must fight, the way of acceptance will make him fight in a different spirit both towards his own side and towards 'the beloved enemy' than the common one. Let no one say cynically that so long as he fights his attitude makes no odds ! It makes all the difference both to war and to the peace that follows. Fighting in the spirit of acceptance would be an experience, tragic in the true sense, with no comfort drawn from self-approval or self-righteousness. Tragedy is seed-time, but the Experiencer knows that it is not the end.

Chapter Fifth

A DAY OF ACCEPTANCE

IF LIFE IS REGARDED as a problem, it is a problem for which there is no solution, for a solved problem is something finally settled and done with. But life moves forward endlessly with new meanings and unanswerable questions. It cannot be 'solved,' but must be inwardly 'experienced.' If we seek the secret of how to live contentedly, it may be found in making no demands on life. If we ask how we may go through the world safely, it is by being undefended against any part of our experience, and accepting humbly the truth of our conditions..

Acceptance is a way of life: it is for all, as life is for all. It is a way of living 'livingly,' which is the same as living 'lovingly.' To know the meaning of life is to know the meaning of love. The price of life is love: it is an all-giving and all-receiving, an open-hearted, open-minded process that must not and does not count the cost. Yet if we do count the cost, we see that it is paid in suffering, by enduring disappointment, accepting loss and growing on. The price has got to be paid, but it can be paid gladly or sadly: the choice is up to us.

What life gives us from the world outside we cannot control. We cannot plan the future with any assurance of success, because life has a way of turning on the smallest things, not on the great 'causes' about which we make so great a fuss. But there are these two attitudes to life, which need clear statement and accurate contrast. The one tries to order life about: the other takes what comes. The one concerns itself with outward opportunity, picking and choosing only what is best. The other makes a job of the Self's attitude, so that it can be one of willing acceptance.

The one holds the door shut against the enemy or the stranger, opening it only when all seems safe or when advantage is sure. The other stands as a door-keeper, with 'welcome' on the mat, and sees a single task of keeping open house for all, with a warm light burning on the hearth. The one is typically Western; civilized and moralized to get the best out of life. The other is Eastern; spiritual and concerned with 'minding its own business,' *where its business is its mind*.

Theory and practice should go hand in hand, for they need each other. Theory is of no use if it remains up in the air; it must be brought down to earth. Rule of thumb lacks confidence and gropes uncertainly until it understands the principles beneath it. There is no quarrel between pure science which labours to unveil a truth, and applied science which brings it to the service of the world. The same is true of the theory and practice of acceptance. But our interest in it is practical. Which of the two attitudes to life we have just described, works the best? Can the one that seems less practical, more mystical, prove in practice to be possessed of a finer touch, a clearer insight and a more effective manner of dealing with the everyday problems with which our lives are filled?

The striving effort after partial ends is doubly disappointing if it does not gain its point, because then it is disappointed about its own disappointment also. Rejecting all it does not like, it must reject this disappointment too. Hence a vicious circle, in regard to which we must feel viciously

But by this other way of all-absorbing, all-accepting, disappointment too is accepted. There is no crying over spilt milk, nor is there crying over the tears that we must shed. In fact we do not try to do the things that can't be done, nor deny the things that cannot be gainsaid. 'The milk is spilt,' we say, or 'I am sad': the rest is up to me.

Which can we hope most wholly to control: the Self's behaviour or that which happens out beyond the self? The habits of the stranger who is outside our gates, or the door

by which we stand, to welcome or reject him? The answer is the door, of course: if we learn something of the automatic habits of the door.

The answer is very important, because the open door means happiness and peace. It is like a flower whose petals are open to the sun; or a light from which shines forth a ceaseless radiance; or a river which never runs dry. There is no happiness for *anyone, ever*, without this state or condition of enduring and expanding openness. It *is* happiness; and there is a way of learning how to embrace it while we let it go.

It is a way of paradox. That can't be helped. Life, like love, is a falling, losing, loosening, opening and expanding way. All the ways of healing are 'falling' ways. We fall asleep: we fall in love: we have faith only as we have fallen from the fixed attachments of belief. The Kingdom of Heaven is below, not above: inside, not outside: without possessions, not with them: we have to fall into it, letting ourselves go. This is the open secret, and the essential art and heart of happiness.

Consider the details of a normal day, the eating, walking, talking, fatigue and sleep which fill so much of the canvas on which our life-picture is painted. We shall see that acceptance affects the tones and 'values' of every inch of it.

Eating comes first, because without it life would quickly end. The way in which the physical body functions suggests at once the image of the growing flower or of the Cup. It applies very closely in detail, because every separate cell is a cup with open mouth eager for food, accepting it, absorbing it into our blood-stream and our breathing, using it up for energy and warmth. This parallelism is developed in another chapter,¹ so we only touch on it here, and pass on.

Walking is a very significant and symbolic action. Two of the best known symbols of life are the river flowing in its channel down to the sea, and the man walking along the road. The action of walking depends on two things,

¹ Chapter Sixth, 'Health and Disease.'

relationship and balance. It is produced by the harmonious co-operation of two limbs, each accepting the pace of the other. They are equals, leading and following in turn, and this partnership produces an easy motion, which covers the ground without undue exertion. The legs are aware if the going is difficult, but do not concern themselves overmuch with the surface of the road, nor whether it leads uphill or down. It is the road before them, that is enough. They do not refuse it because the hot pavements of cities make them footsore, or rough country tracks may cause them to stumble. Their rhythmic, double motion produces the third thing which is walking, and they bear the body in perfect balance along the road.

When people complain of excessive fatigue and abnormal mental or emotional exhaustion, it is a sure sign of lack of balance somewhere. One part of us is forcing the pace, and the rest limps uneasily behind, as if one leg disregarded the other, which went lame under the stress. We need to examine ourselves to find out what we are doing wrong. Perhaps we are trying to press on to something or snatch something out of due time. Or it may be that we are refusing and holding back from something that life offers for our health (wholeness).

Good walking is a symbol of life lived in wholeness. Chinese sages have taught about the *Tao*, which is the Meaning, or the Way of the Universe. When an Eastern Master was asked by one of his pupils: 'What is the *Tao*?' he answered simply: 'Walk on.' Ouspenski has noticed how significant is the walking of different men, according to the work they are engaged on, their errand, or their inner lives and motives. The ordinary calculations of science are unaware of these differences, but: 'The musician, the painter, the sculptor well understand that it is possible to walk differently, and even that it is impossible not to walk differently. A workman and a spy cannot walk alike.'¹

¹ *Tertium Organum*, Ouspenski. Kegan Paul.

If good walking is a symbol of life as it should be lived, bad walking is a symbol of life in a state of disease. Nothing is more indicative of a disordered body or mind, or emotional lack of balance, than a hurried, uneven, graceless walk. It shows the agitation of the walker as plainly as words. Now suppressing a symptom or trying to conceal it, will not cure the disease which is the cause of it: but to remind ourselves that this high-pressure pace, this strained way of walking is not the measure which we would choose for our life, is sometimes helpful. We can deliberately adopt a different pace and less tense rigidity of pose. The rapid movements of the brain tend to follow the rhythm of limbs and muscles, and as these are relaxed and slowed down, the whole body grows calmer and the mind more controlled. Then it is easier for distracted thought to keep in the way of acceptance and be healed.

Walking cannot be dismissed as a trivial matter. The adjective 'pedestrian' need not be a term of abuse. The poet and prophet Isaiah couples walking with flying in a description of the supreme good attained by those who wait upon the Lord and renew their strength: 'They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint.'

The importance of talking is witnessed by the fact that the Word—the Logos—has been taken through long ages as the symbol of God incarnate in the world of form. No one can measure the power of the spoken word vibrating through space and time: no one can calculate the effects of its action and re-action on speaker and listener. For, evidently, speech implies listening: we have to accept the talking of others as they must accept ours, and words can heal but they can also wound. The idea of suffering must be accepted, not only in the sense of pain given or received, but in the original meaning of tolerating, long-suffering. Even a wounding word has something to teach us if we will consent to learn from it. If it holds no truth it will not hurt

us much, but if it has even a little truth we do not want to bar our doors against it. It is better to separate the salt of salutary truth from the venom of malice which may have hurled it against us, for so the wound can be cleansed and disinfected and the value remain. It all depends on accepting and not refusing, even when what is offered is pain. Pain refused, rankles and festers, but pain accepted is by some strange alchemy transmuted into gold, and we can pass the treasure on to others if we will, through the accepting speech, and through the Cup.

Our ordinary talk reveals quickly whether we are choosing to accept the whole of life or only selected parts of it, for it is a choice which cannot be hidden. What decides it as a rule? Refusal may come from our discontent with the cards dealt us in the great game—sickness, poverty, frustration. 'Not a fair deal,' we complain. Or it may be our moral attitude which prefers to sit in the seat of judgment, expressing self-righteous condemnation of things as they are. But whatever the cause the result is the same: we are separating ourselves from the strong current of the river. We are retreating to some backwater, and in so doing are paralysing whatever power we have. We are pitting ourselves *against*, instead of uniting *with*, the strength of the tide of reality.

What is our reaction to fatigue and to sleep? It is worth noticing, for it is symptomatic of our whole attitude to life, which again means, of course, to the every-dayness of every day. Many people oppose their fatigue almost fiercely, denying it as a fact or condemning it as a weakness. They treat it as an enemy to be overcome, and are filled with shame or self-pity when they succumb to it, as if they admitted unworthy defeat. They take up a somewhat similar position with regard to sleep, seeing it as an inevitable but regrettable loss of time. It is not unusual to hear a keen worker lament that out of a lifetime of perhaps seventy years, he has spent over twenty asleep in bed. He really does think of it as sheer waste of that time which is the stuff of his life,

and which, but for the limitations of the flesh, might have been better spent. There is no acceptance of it in his mind or soul. Others, who are afflicted with sleeplessness for a while, cannot accept that either. They treat their insomnia with such anger and impatience, or such fear and anxiety, that sleep is effectually driven further away.

The attitude of the 'whole man' is different. This is the owner of the balanced mind, the man who in the Eastern phrase has understood the *Tao*, or in Western language has made his will one with the Divine Will. He accepts the ordained rhythm of life, not grudgingly and with reluctance, but in the spirit of joy. He is convinced, and sees with his inner 'I' that it is good. He does not fight his fatigue, nor condemn himself for his depression, nor does he postpone sleep as long as possible in order to continue his work the longer. He recognizes the downward curve of the ellipse, from the tip of the petal of the flower back to the centre of his life. He knows that there his spirit is refreshed and taught and strengthened for a new ascent. For in sleep his Cup does not close: it opens. During the incessant activities of the day, when the Sword-thrust of action is predominant, it is harder to keep the Cup open. But at night and in sleep it opens naturally and without hindrance, except in so far as our inhibiting thoughts make a hindrance. We have only to choose that it shall perform its function and be wide open. We have only to be willing to accept all that seeks to flow into it. Sleeplessness, if we accept it and do not fight or worry about it, cannot keep this healing from us. We get the healer rest, if not the healer sleep. And the rhythm does not end with life in our mortal bodies. Day and night, active and passive, sleeping and waking, are symbols of a larger curve and a greater rhythm. Acceptance as a way of living includes acceptance as a way of dying, and so rounds off the whole circle.

The heart of happiness lies in letting go. Happiness begins at home: it is in spite, and not because of our conditions.

It is an *open* way, and a way of opening that would shut like an oyster if lower nature (instinctive, possessive and defensive egotism) had its way. We must learn to reverse, to convert, that clam-like attitude, willingly, knowingly, deliberately. We must ask ourselves questions. When does my light go out? When do my petals close? When does my door shut with a bang? What are the outward forces that arrange it so, as if I willed it so? In fact I do not will it, it is only automatic, like a will-less spring. Let's find out: let's see, by going through the day, bit by bit.

When we first wake, our feelings are coloured by what lies behind us for good or ill, by our own fault or not. We cannot help this. If we have slept well it is not difficult to face the morning cheerfully, but if anxieties or a sick child have kept sleep at bay, it is harder. In any case we quickly recall many cares, and some unpleasant things that have to be dealt with. Are we to meet them by saying 'Yes' or 'No'? Certainly we do not and cannot like them.

If we decide that they are intolerable and must be refused, we take the first attitude towards life, of which we have spoken. We try to order life about, and re-arrange the pattern of it to our liking. (Perhaps the pattern we prefer is a very nice pattern!) It is a wearing job. It spoils our appetite for breakfast, or our enjoyment of a fine morning. We sit at table with a furrowed brow: as we read our paper we find in it only news to confirm our gloomiest fears. The others sharing the meal are quick to feel our contagious ill-temper, and react to it in ways that provoke us to still more irritability. Maids are snapped at, children scolded. Our efforts to correct all that so clearly needs correction, may make us late in starting for the station, and our consequent hurry and flurry do not aid digestion. If we miss our train, the misfortune bulks as large in our worried mind as the war or the cataclysm which distressed us in our newspaper.

In the office, our late arrival complicates a programme which was already overcrowded. Some omission and

rearrangement are necessary, but we reject this too, for the day must conform to our planned pattern. We try instead by hustle and pressure to recapture the lost hour—a thing which cannot be done. More time is wasted in recriminations at the telephone, and in sharp reprimands over trivial lapses. Things are not going well. This refusing way does not work for us, and so we have to do the work ourselves, and very exhausting we find it.

If we had adopted the other attitude of acceptance, taking things as they came and letting them in through our open door, all the vitality which was used up by resenting and fighting them, would have been released, made free for other purpose. Intolerance generates a vicious circle, and one thing wrong, refused, soon produces a state when everything is wrong or seems so. The open way is the one that works, and it means less work for us to do. We do not struggle, but let go, and let ourselves go, and let the Héalers absorb and change in time what is amiss. They do not suck our vital forces as the vampires of refusal do, but renew them.

We see this at home, in the inevitable domestic crises, for nursery and kitchen are peculiarly sensitive to atmosphere. Agitation is highly infectious, and a tense, apprehensive state of mind precipitates the very incidents it expects and dreads. The cook is going to give notice, or make it impossible not to give notice to her? And though a most difficult woman, she *can* cook, and in these days! . . . But tolerant acceptance of things as they are and cook as she is, coupled with readiness to make the best of them all within the limits of fairness, may result in both sides 'not giving notice in the best possible way!'

In the nursery trouble is evident. A little child is screaming angrily, the others are growing fractious, and 'Nannie' looks upset. The way of refusal is to express first incredulity, and then pained surprise. (This is not only ineffective but hypocritical, as no sensible person is really shocked at a small child's necessary naughtiness.) Then follow anger,

scoldings, reproaches, arguments, which at the moment are waste of breath. They only constitute a verbal interference which will do nothing to mend the situation. The child has something rankling within him which he cannot express. His door is shut too ! and what he wants is to be opened up and helped through with it. In all probability Nannie needs the same thing. But with a child screaming itself and others into fits there is no time for words. Besides—what is stronger than words ?

Let us pause to consider four great healers : Sleep, Change, Light and Love. The art of mediation (or 'interference' in its original sense of 'carrying over')¹ is to know which of these four healers should be called in to help, and when. This child has been in bed all night, so it is not likely he needs rest. To put him to bed in a punitive spirit cannot heal his naughtiness but only intensify his estrangement. At the moment it is the second of the healers that is needed : change of scene and of thought, movement of mind and body. The accepting mother therefore says to the culprit in a matter-of-fact way : 'Come along. Let's go and see the ducks.' And without more ado she whisks him from the scene of conflict to the ducks or the dogs, the kitten in the kitchen or the flowers in the drawing-room—whatever the available distraction may be.

Often the change will produce immediate results ; the furious crying ceases and the child quickly recovers himself. Despite his recent example of the reverse attitude, to watch him for a few minutes in the garden is a useful lesson to adults on the art of acceptance. For, in general, the child accepts life with amazing adaptability. The uncomfortable situation in which he has landed himself by his behaviour—Nannie's displeasure—his mother's interference (in the good, 'carrying-over' sense)—the joy of the ducks in the pond—these are all *facts* which he accepts in turn, without feeling the need of explanation or argument. He goes out to wander

¹ *Time and the Child*. E. Graham Howe. Faber and Faber.

and to wonder and to play, and finds himself in tune with the world. The change of scene may be the preface to a change of heart, and then will come the moment for a little (not too much !) enlightenment: a looking together in the 'let's see' attitude, without admonitory note. Needless to say the fourth healer must be present all the time, to inspire the wise use of the others. Without love, the most skilled and highly trained guardian cannot give children true healing. With it even serious mistakes will not be fatal, for the child will not fail to sense the love and respond to it.

It is sometimes argued that this is all wrong and subversive of discipline. It is said that there *must* be scolding and a sense of disgrace, to teach a child to know right from wrong. The moral *must* be pointed, the fact of misbehaviour rubbed in, the displeasure of authority enlarged upon, so that he may learn for another time. The answer is: test theory by practice; compare results. The naughty child, treated on these familiar lines, becomes as a rule naughtier, and more and more punishment is needed to compel submission. Or else he is cowed and grows listless and unhappy. In either case the consequences to his future character may be far-reaching and unfavourable, which is certainly not what parents or teachers or nurses desired. Changing his thought is better.

Of course, it is not always promptly successful, nor peace so easily restored. The child may for some obscure reason be in a mood to ask for trouble, may actually *want* trouble. Perhaps he needs to compensate himself for some real or imaginary grievance, by engrossing all his mother's or Nannie's attention, and to achieve this object continued naughtiness may be a useful gambit. So he may refuse with violence to go and see the ducks, and resume his screaming. What then is to be done? Certainly his gambit must not be crowned with success.

When a problem is for the moment insoluble, the most important thing to accept is its insolubility. Yet how few people practise this wisdom, in nurseries or elsewhere!

Instead, they continue arguing, battering against barred and bolted doors, with useless and painful expenditure of energy. The child has to learn, like the rest of us, that he is one of a community, a social being who must conform to the general good. On grounds then, not of his sinfulness, nor of a need to moralize or to punish his misdemeanours, but simply for social convenience, it may be necessary to put him by himself in another room for a while. This will bring in change, too, though not so happily. But there must be no locked doors or darkened windows, or anything to suggest punitive measures beyond the necessary separation. It should all seem what it is, part of the reality of the situation, and he will not resent it if he has had any training at all in acceptance of facts. His naughtiness is accepted, and so is Nannie's natural annoyance, and the other children's need of an undisturbed nursery. He also must accept the consequences of his own behaviour. When he is 'good' again, that is accepted too, as a natural and pleasing event, but one not to be made too much fuss about either. Improving the occasion, as we so love to do, scarcely ever improves it.

Nursery problems are not always such simple ones, concerned with the healthy naughtiness of a child finding its way in a difficult world, learning to adapt itself to its conditions. There is also the case of the real 'problem child,' who by some twist of personal disposition, some unhappy heredity or faulty environment, is chronically perverse or unstable. Such a child needs the third healer, light, but the healing of enlightenment comes slowly, with long patience. Meantime the child needs to be accepted *as he is*, with unconditional love, and an immense amount of encouragement. This is not the recognized method in most nurseries, where the notion still prevails that what the 'naughty' child needs is much repression. He should have the conceit and rebelliousness knocked out of him; be sat upon, put in his place and kept there. The 'good' child is the one for whom

it is thought that praise and encouragement should be reserved. But the truth is *all* children need encouragement, and more especially the 'bad' ones. For these, in an atmosphere of blame, are apt to develop a most unwholesome inferiority feeling, which may have disastrous results later on. If the mother and nurse can give the 'difficult' child confidence, if they can reconcile it to itself, they will have gone a long way in preparing it to meet life as it unfolds with a good grace. But they must first accept the child with real acceptance, and love it *as it is*, before they can help it to *become what it may*. They must treat it positively, since they want it to be positive, not negative, in its own attitude towards living.

This last is very important, and its importance is overlooked in some nurseries, where the use of negative words is so prevalent that positive words and suggestions are almost absent. 'Don't,' and 'No,' are the simplest examples. Some children are beset with them from birth. They are perpetually warned of dangers, admonished as to short-comings, exhorted to good behaviour, even when they are not scolded, nagged and punished. It is a wonder that more of them are not harassed into chronic bad temper or ill health or nervous fears, but in fact these results do ensue too often. There are so many negative epithets, e.g. 'Don't be so shy: you are a silly little girl.' In this sentence even the word *girl* is somehow made a term of reproach, in keeping with the abusive condemnation implied by the other words. 'You are crazy: you must be mad!' These are not only rudenesses which should not be hurled at anyone, least of all at so helpless a being as a child—they are also violent, negative shocks, active injurious forces, which, though the child accepts them in silence, not knowing how to counter them, may have incalculable effects on the development of its character. 'Don't make such a noise,' is a harmless and reasonable request, but it may be winged with destructive injury by the manner in which it is said. It must not be

forgotten that the voice is a powerful force, and that words may be either seeds or bombs. Negativeness cannot cast out negativeness, but it can and does breed it, as may be seen by a child's retort: 'Don't talk at me: you make me feel sick.'

Why are we so negative? Not of deliberate purpose or malice, but usually from anxiety or fatigue, perhaps more frequently the latter. Negative mothers are tired mothers. All nervousness, and 'living on our nerves' implies a loss of balance, where the open breaths of feeling and intuition have been lost in the closed ones of thought and sensation (usually worried thought and distressing sensation). This warns us to be very careful against over-using our active, contracting functions (the 'spenders,') and gives us another reason for finding and practising our expanding functions (the 'healers' of passivity). We may find it necessary to go apart awhile and make an empty space in our own souls, before we can hope to lead the child to quietness and serenity. We shall talk later at more length about these 'spenders' and 'healers.'¹ We need to know them well in the business of accepting.

So much for acceptance in business and home affairs, but it is needed also in social contacts. Sometimes an unexpected and unwanted visitor, calling at an inconvenient hour, makes a heavy draft on the bank of acceptance. To meet it our balance has to be in a healthy state! It is hard not to let the faintest trace of annoyance creep into our greeting of the untimely one, and the spirit of refusal can never achieve this courtesy. But acceptance is always well-mannered: the door is open, and the gesture is the open, friendly hand. Acceptance cannot behave itself unseemly. A sense of humour and compassion comes to the rescue. The poor visitor has no notion how unwelcome and untimely she is, and that is good, for one would be sorry, certainly, to hurt her feelings. From this negative stage it is easy to go on to

¹ See Chapter Seventh, 'Be Yourself.'

the positive phase of being glad to give her pleasure. By the time she rises to go, one has reached quite cordial feelings about her ! Acceptance has done the trick again.

In the evening the pilgrim of acceptance is giving a dinner-party. This, as hostesses are aware, is always a gambling investment. The dividend may be pleasure, or a sense of duty performed, or sheer punishment. The usual tiresome things happen. She may not be surprised, having learnt from experience, but she is disappointed. Her new frock has not come, and every woman knows how much clothes and courage have to do with each other. The late arrival of the ice has unhinged the staff, who have to be calmed and braced. One of her guests telephones at the eleventh hour that he is prevented, and his absence spoils the arrangement of her table. Another is late, and that threatens to spoil the dinner ! If she can accept all this, and her own feelings, and welcome the late-comer as cordially as if he had not committed a social sin, she will have gone far on the way of acceptance. The party will be a success. Making no demands, she will find that pleasant things come to her unasked. She can let herself go and be at ease, because her spirit is unharassed by conflict with the outward events she cannot control. So she will enjoy herself. And her husband and her guests will enjoy *her*, which is much more than merely enjoying the party ! There is, in fact, no higher tribute which can be paid to 'the charm of the perfect hostess.'

But what is charm ? It is hard to define so elusive a thing : perhaps it is indefinable. Beauty or wit may have it or lack it : goodness and kindness are no sure passport to its possession, however much moralists may deplore the fact. The only thing that seems certain is that un-self-consciousness and sincerity are among its essential elements, and that personal happiness seldom fails to charm. Perhaps then we can say that charm is an inseparable characteristic of Wholeness.

The accepting person has to be a shock-absorber—a sort of lightning conductor. He must absorb his own shocks as well as the shocks of other people, and conduct them harmlessly to the ground where they will do no damage. He can do it for others because he can do it for himself. He has found that the open way is the way that works.

But there is one very important thing to add: something to look out for in this accepting business. When you discover to your sorrow, as you often do, that your door has slammed, your light gone out, and your petals closed, what are you to do then? Force them open? Not at all. You must just accept your shutness, openly: your darkness, lightly: your fixedness, growingly. Be open and not shut, in your most secret conversation with yourself, and have no pretences. 'I see that I do not understand.' 'I accept my own intolerant hatred.' 'I openly confess the anguish in my heart.' 'I take my heaviness lightly.' Otherwise the vicious circle gets us again. We have stepped back from the open way of acceptance into the closed ring of refusal. Only the healers will heal, and they are only needed when they are not there. So, put them there! Nothing is gained by denying or trying to coerce our wrong feelings, nor by treating them with too much solemnity and concern. Better acknowledge them with regret, but with a sense of humour too, and 'walk on.'

Let us go back again to the question of fatigue, for it is an excellent example of the practical working of the open way. Fatigue is a blocking of the channels of our vitality: it comes through the accumulations of the waste products of energy. The drains are blocked, the doors are jammed, and 'pressure' is the word for it that describes our feelings. Watch our attitude towards fatigue, and note its effect. 'Oh! dear me! This is terrible! I must take care! I really must relax!' The exclamation marks denote the pressure of tense effort, and it does *not* heal fatigue.

What does heal it? The magic words are: 'Let go' and 'Let yourself go.' Sleep or rest, but not only these: any

change that turns contraction into expansion, the shut into the open, will do it. Congenial company, with or without alcohol (but that does it, too): a round of golf: music: driving a powerful car: fresh air, warmth, sunshine: dancing: play of any kind, in fact. All these are healers because they open up the flower, and switch on the light again where effort had put it out.

It is not a matter of 'take care.' Nearly opposite to this is 'let yourself go.' Thus the tired business man feels 'dead' at 6 o'clock: at 6.30 he has a drink at his club (or pub) with a friend on the way home: at 7.0 he kisses his wife: at 7.15 he is expanding in the heat of his bath: at 7.45 food, wine and good company are all adding their restorative effects. At 8.30 he is enjoying a play: at 11.30 he begins to dance and goes on until 3 a.m., feeling much less tired than he did at 6.0, and would have done at 10 p.m. if he had allowed himself to sink dully into gloom.

A disappointed voice complains that if this is all that Acceptance means, there is nothing new about it. We have always known that kindness and good temper and good sense solved most difficulties. Even the most old-fashioned Nannies knew enough to distract a fractious baby instead of scolding it.

The answer is that the way of acceptance is *not* new—it would be very suspicious if it were—but as old as life itself. And we have always known it, only we so often forget. No one who walks in the right way, even by rule of thumb, without understanding of what he does or why he does it, will fail to get healing. The wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein. But with light he will travel lighter, and go further. When the leper was bidden to wash in the waters of Jordan and be clean, he resented the simplicity of the prescription. But when he carried it into practice he was cleansed.

The trick is to keep your life-light bright: really bright, not just imitative, pseudo-cheerful, brassy, glittering brightness,

for that is never really gay. On the contrary, it is very tiring, and not least for the beholder. It means that effort which defeats itself. The real light is within the seed, where life is, and where it can always be renewed. It requires no effort to find it, but only the reverse of effort, the 'letting go.' This spirit is the fuel for our engine. We find it by falling, lose it by fixing, gain it by losing, win it by failing. And—yet another paradox—we experience it by forgetting it. Let no one think he can have this spirit by forcing his emotional memory to hold fast one experience of it in safe keeping. It must be fallen into afresh at every need. It is free for all, but all must first be free before they find it. Falling into it—letting go and letting themselves go—they will find that there is no forced note in their peace. It is satisfied and satisfying. No one will be excluded and nothing will be refused, when life is lived on terms of full acceptance of living.

Chapter Sixth

HEALTH AND DISEASE

HOW DOES ACCEPTANCE affect health, in the ordinary sense of the word? It may almost be said that it *is* health—at all events a necessary condition of health—and that without it there can be no real healing. It is not just a way of life: it is *the* Way of Life. The Western habit of mind is always concerned primarily with the necessity of change in the outward and objective world of 'it.' The Eastern habit of mind interprets the wise counsel, 'Mind your own business,' differently. It sees that the real necessity is to focus the attention inwards, not outwards, and upon the 'I' rather than the 'it.'

This is very important in the healing of disease, because, while there are many things which we cannot do, or at least cannot do immediately, what we *can* do is to concern ourselves with our own attitude towards the aggressor, upon whatever level the aggressor is operating. The normal attitude is that 'it' ought to change, if it is wrong. But the healing way of acceptance is that *my* job is to *absorb* it, and to concentrate the focus of my attention not upon 'it' but upon the faculty of absorption. This is the normal process by which the physical body does, in fact, deal with disease and heal it by absorbing it, which is known technically as the process of 'phagocytosis.' Metchnikoff discovered many years ago that the white corpuscles in the blood, called phagocytes, eat up the disease germs, and that the art of medicine consists largely in helping the phagocytes to devour and absorb the invading armies of disease; but the conception has not even yet been widely understood in all its implications.

It is helpful to remember that the hygiene of all four

bodies is the same as that which is required for the physical body. The habit of circulation is an instance of this, contrasting, as it does, with the other habit of fixing and hoarding, which is disease on any plane. The free circulation of the blood is matched by the circulation of love, which may begin at home, but must not stop there, shut into even the loveliest garden with a south wall. The circulation of thought must be liberated from the swaddling clothes of inhibiting prejudice, and given the freedom of the universe. And in the spiritual life nothing is static: there is constant movement, tide, rhythm: eternal circulation of prayer and work: ceaseless in-breathing and out-breathing. The vital spiritual oxygen is imparted, and transformed by combustion into radiant health.

Another instance is the idea of gaining and maintaining fitness by gymnastic exercises to promote elasticity and reliability. No one is so foolish as to suppose that on the physical plane it is possible to achieve fitness by a sudden spasmodic effort. It needs much patience and self-discipline. When attained, it is not a concrete possession that can be kept in a cupboard and taken out only when specially required or lodged in a bank for safe custody. It is a wasting asset that deteriorates and is quickly lost unless kept in daily repair. In all these respects the analogy with health on the other levels is close and complete. Preachers and teachers of religion have been quick to note it and emphasize it in regard to spiritual matters.

Another very simple example of the same correspondence is the idea of washing. In our generation most of us are very particular about our personal ablutions. Baths of all sorts—hot and cold, showers, open-air baths—are regarded as necessities and prized as luxuries. Modern plumbing is one of the really satisfactory results of applied science. The sale of soaps is prodigious, and most of them are good, and all this is very much *to the good*. But perhaps we are more fastidious in this respect on the ground floor of the psychic

house than higher up ! Some advertisements, no doubt, call our attention to the greater need for *inner* cleanliness, and whatever value may attach to the particular specifics advertised, the general principle is beyond question excellent. But still it only refers to the physical level. We are not made clean only by washing of hands or by physical purgatives. There is a spiritual catharsis, a mental cleansing, an emotional purification that are needed for the hygiene of the whole self. We need them both in private relations and in public life, and, very noticeably, in the Press. Hygiene on every level of experience is one of the most valuable instruments of preventive medicine, both for the individual and for the whole body politic.

But most important of all these parallel processes is that of absorption and digestion. It repeats itself on every plane, and shows the operation of the Cup on the different levels. We have already referred to this more than once, and shall do so again. 'The way of the body in health is the way of acceptance—that is, it tries to accept what is presented to it, and, normally, it succeeds. If food is refused, it is a sign of ill-health ; the balance is somehow wrong, and we lack wholeness.' In all disease the way of acceptance breaks down. Something is presented which the body fails to absorb : some effort is demanded, some condition of living is imposed with which the body feels unable to comply. If the enemy is an inimical germ trying to effect an entrance ; and the defence organisms of the body fail to devour and digest the invader—to overcome it, in fact, by assimilation—it tries to get rid of it by elimination. Then we get 'symptoms'—rapid pulse, nausea, high fever and so on. We are ill.

An obvious instance, in the experience of everyone, is the violent rejection of unsuitable food by vomiting or diarrhœa. Both may be valuable symptoms, danger-signals indicating that something is wrong. But wrong with what ? Something wrong with what has been offered to the body ? Or something wrong with the method of its presentment ? Or

perhaps a third alternative—which is indeed the one that comes first to mind with the majority and is most readily accepted—something wrong with the state of the body itself? It may from previous errors have acquired an undisciplined habit of rejection, in which it refuses almost automatically, without making any effort to assimilate. Or it may have grown a craving for unhealthy substances which do not afford real nourishment, but made it turn away from wholesome food with distaste.

The same analogy holds good with the mind. The ideas presented to it are meant to be eaten and digested, so becoming a part of the person who absorbs them, and changing him in one direction or another. Normally, they are so absorbed, and growth continues as it should, but sometimes the food offered is too unsuitable and it is violently rejected. This may be a serious matter, because rejection easily becomes habitual and automatic. The danger of giving adult diet to an infant is well recognized, but another side of the truth is more often neglected. It is possible to turn a normally healthy adult into a dyspeptic invalid by keeping him too long on milk for babes. This may have the result that his stomach remains incapable of dealing with solid food, and when it is presented to him in the ordinary course of things, sickness and distress are produced. A child must outgrow the breast, and an invalid pass on from junkets and jellies to normal diet. In fact, he must learn to chew what is tough and get accustomed to roughage. It is just the same with thoughts and ideas. They cannot with advantage be forced on a man prematurely, any more than meat should be forced on the baby or the convalescent. But gradually he should be persuaded to taste and try them, until he is fully weaned and can digest what comes.

The task of diagnosis is to discover which of various faults is the true cause of the trouble, and then the physician comes to his harder task of prescribing the right remedial treatment. Remedial treatment is a truer expression than

'remedy,' which suggests some quick, quack cure-all out of a bottle. Real remedies are not so quick and easy as a rule. They imply the mending of something which is broken, the straightening of something crooked and twisted, the strengthening of a force which has grown feeble. It is a redeeming process, and the work of redemption is generally slow.

Of course, if it is merely a question of unsuitable diet or unhygienic behaviour having been forced on the patient, it may be a short and simple matter to put right. When the offending thing is no longer pressed upon it, the body, freed from an intolerable persuasion or coercion, quickly recovers its balance. But if the something wrong is not the thing itself, but its presentation, the case is harder. It may involve the re-education, not of the patient, but of those ministering to him, who are responsible for the administration of poison. Not poison in itself, perhaps, for it may be valuable food which the patient would be the better for, but poisonous in its results because it has been given in wrong doses or at the wrong time. If it is something wrong with the patient's own body, then it is likely that a still slower and more difficult process will be necessary to correct it.

The same thing may happen in the mental or emotional bodies, and the struggle on these levels will show itself in disease of another kind. Here, too, it is of the first importance to remember that the illness is not identical with the symptoms. There may be hysteria, melancholia, phobias, neuroses of one sort or another. But the root cause of the trouble is the failure to absorb the irritant, and the consequent unsuccessful effort to get rid of it by rejection. The self's point of impact with experience is on the emotional level, and it is upon this level that absorption is required. This is what we mean by acceptance, which is a process of emotional digestion. Emotional indigestion causes a deflection of the impact of experience either upwards mentally or downwards physically. In either case the attitude to the

experience will be one of refusal, and the symptoms will be compulsive, aggressive and destructive.

This matter of the 'deflection' must be explained more fully, for it is important. The point is that when the emotional body at the emotional point of impact rejects an experience, the symptom which occurs in consequence of that gesture of rejection may be thrown up or down, and manifest itself in the physical or mental or spiritual bodies accordingly. If it is thrown downwards into the physical body, it may set up the symptom of organic disease, for instance, physical indigestion. 'I can't bear it,' says the patient's physical body. And, in truth, a nagging wife can 'cause' gastric ulcers, where the husband can swallow neither the irritant nor his own irritability. Or we may find heart trouble: the unsolved troubles of love (generally symbolized as matters of the heart) can actually affect this organ with disease. The 'decline' from which some Victorian virgins suffered, was often due to a rejection of life conscious or unconscious, on a deeper level. This attitude of rejection combined with other things to lay the lungs open to the ravages of tuberculosis. Shock, if sufficiently severe, is liable to put out the lamp of life altogether, while in a lesser degree it may cause the simple faint. All these are instances of an emotional impact which could not be endured. It was rejected and thrust downwards on to the physical level of sensation.

Rejections upwards affect the process on the thought level. They set up the compulsive meanderings of mind called 'worry,' and the endless roundabouts of mental activity, when thought, turning round on itself like a squirrel in a cage, destroys itself and gets nowhere. There are many easily recognized symptoms of this rejection thrown upwards; amongst them restlessness, the compulsive urge forcing to unnecessary work, and insomnia. They are like a grit of cinder between the eye and the eyelid, or like the pea under the princess's piled mattresses, making her turn and toss on

her luxurious bed in a night of misery. If some distressing experience is forced upon us by the action of someone else—especially if the other person is someone we love, which makes it more painful—we feel as if a bucket of dirty water were being thrown at us. Our instinct is to duck our heads, dodge the douche and close our gratings. If we cannot stop the unwelcome flood, at least we will try to deflect it to some other channel. But no, that is not the way of acceptance. The experience has come to *us*, and is meant for *us*: we must open ourselves and give it free passage, and then—*flush our drains* ! Only when the painful experience has been ‘accepted’ can release come. Then there is peace and reconciliation, for there is nothing that we feel we ‘cannot bear.’ We are like prisoners set free to live, and can ‘get on with it’ again.

As regards the nature of disease, the essential thing to understand is this: The two forces in life—creation and destruction—are both necessary to the moving, circulating order of our being. In health they are balanced in such a way that the *creative is always more than the destructive*. The creative is central and expansive, the destructive is on the surface and is associated with the manipulation and activities of the created forms. It is the creative force that is responsible for *all forms*, but the destructive force then uses—or misuses—them. The forms having been created join with the destructive force, and become a dead weight of inertia against the creative process, which must always move on and create new forms. The important thing is the right balance. So long as that balance is preserved and the creative remains the predominating force, health is maintained. But if the central power is weakened, health is lost in the same degree. The increased power, and importance of the hordes of destroyers—the penalty of progress—is perhaps the special problem of our age. The discoveries of biology and other sciences; the infinite number of the forms, their microscopic size and sub-divisions, and astonishing

activities, have tended to fix interest and attention on them too exclusively. The central, creative force is *one*, and in the process of its expansion it develops into diverse forms of manifestation which are *many*, but the one is more than the many, and must always draw them back into itself, to maintain the recurrent, balanced order.

In symbolism, the one is the snake. The many are the little worms, maggots, germs, etc., associated with putrefaction in disease. They are not evil in themselves, but only when they are in the wrong place and the wrong balance. This symbolism is not new, though it is disturbing and surprising to people who have only thought of the serpent in a different connection. Through countless generations, the symbol of the healer has been the snake. It will be remembered that Moses lifted up the image of the serpent in the wilderness for the healing of his people, and this was recalled later when the time came for a greater lifting up for a greater healing. The wand of Æsculapius shows the snake coiled round a branch: he appears thus in the badges of the Royal Army Medical Corps, and he is the same snake we are talking about. In the Garden of Eden story we find him, too, but there he has got into the wrong place, and has come out to talk temptation, instead of staying at the root of the tree, which is the place where the coiled spring of life belongs. He has thus acquired a sinister significance, and we tend to look at him askance, making him a symbol of evil instead of healing and creative power. We cannot attempt to trace out the meanings of this dual symbolism here. It would lead us too far into labyrinthine paths of legend and theology, and symbols and emblems can never wisely be pressed to extremes and forced to yield logical conclusions. But that does not make them of little worth: they can be seed-thoughts and bring forth fruit. When we think with fear and abhorrence of the snake as a symbol of evil, we might consider that often it is not the snake that has been rude and aggressive in coming out to interfere with us: it is we who

have been rude in our way of uprooting him. He is not there for nothing or for harm (though he can be misused for harm), but for essential purpose. Here we are taking him simply as the symbol of the healer, and the way of healing is always for the snake to absorb the lesser forms of the life-force back into the central, creative unity. When the snake is lacking, its vital force dissipated, then the germs abound and get control. Bacteriology—the study of the germs—is very important no doubt, but it is of secondary importance compared to the consideration of our health's vitality and capacity to resist disease. That is the chief thing, and it depends upon the elasticity and absorbing power of the centrally coiled snake.

We have compared the idea of the Cup with the habit of the stomach, and linked them together, but there is a difference. The stomach, being instinctive, behaves and is allowed to behave more 'choosily': the self upon the higher level of acceptance is not allowed to choose at all, but has to train its stomach to endure all the experiences which life pours into it. This brings the symbol of the Cup down to earth. It reminds us that the stomach is not only a fact, but is symbolic of the deeper fact which is life. Life is a process of breaking down and building up, called 'katabolism' and 'anabolism.' Only by falling in with this process, to some extent at least, on all the planes in which we function, can we continue to live at all. Only by accepting it fully can we hope for growth. We are apt to refuse. Like ill-trained children, we push the plate away, or try to push the offending food off it, because we do not like it! But refusal can only result in stunted development and semi-starvation. It is better to swallow something that is troubling us and get it down into the stomach, where it can be dealt with, broken up and assimilated, than to keep it as an undigested load of dead weight on our mind or on our heart. In the one way, we make our trouble into food, to nourish us, building up the way of life. In the other way, we make it our illness and a

cause of corruption—a barrier separating us from sanity and health. Salvation lies in realizing that *nothing* that is offered to us by life can be in itself inimical. It is only we who, by our gesture of refusal, can make it so. The Cup may have been poisoned, but still we must drink it, down to its deepest dregs, and we shall find medicine in it. So much of our distress comes from our habit of regarding life as an enemy, and feeling it our duty to fight and defeat it, instead of seeing it as a friend, loving it and agreeing with it.

Healing on any level is a process of lifting up from below, not of dragging up from above. The healer cannot stand aloft and aloof on a superior plane. He must go down to the depths with his patient if he is to understand. His place is always the lowest one, and so fulfills the Christian law of service and humility. The word 'understanding' considered literally, is very illuminative. If one may coin a phrase, and speak of 'the lightness of understanding,' it suggests that the place of light is to stand underneath at the centre of darkness, and at the lowest point of the heaviness.

And healing needs space. It cannot do its work without open spaces—empty spaces. We fill our lives too full with the forms, the many, the maggots ! We are swept into a whirling mass of undirected movement in all directions. When we get away from the necessarily crowded field of the circumference of our earth-experience, back to the centre, we reach stillness and recuperation, and we find ourselves surrounded with vast, silent space. It is cleansing, and washes us free from our petty egoisms. The soul cannot breathe deeply without going often to wash in the waters of the empty, open spaces. But no soul need be without them, for they are always there around and within us, and we can enter them if we will.

Faith, too, comes into any consideration of health and any treatment of disease. It is the normal attitude to life, and possesses a quality of unity and positiveness and acceptance towards both aspects of duality, whatever form they may take. The great difference between faith and 'beliefs' is that faith

is without form: it is an attitude and an atmosphere: it belongs to the world of the spirit. In regard to physical illness this attitude of faith is very important, because it can be operated through the higher intelligence and within the mentality of the will. Our broken legs, or common colds, or any other unwelcome symptoms of disease, offer us excellent opportunities (which we can use or neglect) for practising the Cup technique. As we shall see later, it can also be used for the healing of others, with the will but not with the aggressiveness of desire.

Some good words have got into bad odour, owing to misuse. They have had wrong meanings attached to them, or more weight has been loaded on to them than they are able to carry. 'Will' is one of these words. To call on the will seems sometimes like spurring an over-ridden horse, who is already sinking beneath his burden. The mere exhortation to 'use our will-power,' causes an overwhelming feeling of fatigue and hopeless despondancy to fall on us. It is a quite natural reaction, provoked by melancholy experience of the failures of this unwilling 'will-power.' He seems no Derby winner, but generally pants and sweats in the rear of the field. We not only think drearily of our own failures, but—with distaste—of all those strong-willed people who exercise their lust for power by trying to make us conform to their ideas of what is desirable.

All this has brought discredit on the will, which has been made to appear an external tyrant coercing our real wishes—a very 'contracting' business.¹ But all the same there is a true and most important sense in which will is necessary to healing, and is itself a creative healer. If we think of it as 'goodwill,' or better still as the French *bonne volonté*,² which

¹ See Chapter Seventh, 'Be Yourself.'

² 'Goodwill' in English has come to be chiefly associated with our attitude to others, as in the angel song: 'Goodwill towards men.' In French, *bonne volonté* is used more to indicate our attitude to ourselves, or to some action in which co-operation is needed—'willingness.' A good instance is where the great French Doctor, Charcot, said to a patient: '*Allons ! Un peu de bonne volonté et tout ira bien : vous serez guéri.*'

expresses the right shade of meaning more accurately than our English term, we shall be able to dissociate it from the conception of strain and tense effort with which we have wrongly comé to connect it. Then we shall see it in its true, healing aspect, as 'willingness,' which is co-operation. Good-will, willingness to accept, is an expanding attitude. It relaxes the whole being, instead of stringing it up to a tense and hard rigidity, and is indeed needed for our healing. It is no part of our freedom that we should be healed willy-nilly. The will *must* come in. 'Wilt thou be made whole?' is a necessary preliminary question, and sometimes, most strangely, it seems as if the answer were 'No.' It is perhaps the dread of change, the wish to remain fixed, even in a bad fix, rather than adventure forth, which leads to this refusal. When 'No' is changed to 'Yes,' the answer is always: 'I will, Be thou clean.' The will in this true sense means in general taking an attitude towards life of positive self-encouragement. This is also reflected in positive encouragement to others, bidding them to 'go on' and 'come on' with courage and confidence. There is nothing negative about the healthy life. It is always creative and positive purpose that makes for wholeness.

Besides this general attitude, the will can have a particular focus in the task of healing. It has to be carefully distinguished from desire, for desire is an act of identification with object or objective. The will must have learnt fully the lesson of detachment (non-attachment). It operates from a higher level through the construction of a mental image, which is then directed or vibrated towards the point where it is required to heal. This point may be anywhere, either in the self or in some other body, and the distance makes no difference to its power of love. This concentration of the healing focus is very effective, whether it is employed consciously in prayer, or in the often confused quackery of so-called faith-healing and absent treatment. It is present in the doctor who prescribes his medicine and does his surgery

on more orthodox lines; and in the heart of the nurse, or the one who is caring for the beloved.

It is impossible to stress too much the great need for creating an atmosphere of healing in the sick-room. This is quite different to the tense atmosphere of fearful anxiety which relatives are liable to create. Their concern and distress, most genuine, and supposed to be 'so sympathetic,' have often the reverse effect to healing. If we are not healers in the accurate sense described above, we are very liable to be destroyers, and to have an inimical effect upon the flow of life, just when that flow is most endangered and most needs the help which we can give. A bright pretence that things are better than they are, a false cheerfulness which assumes that the patient is recovering, when in fact he is not yet, are of no avail. Insincerity gives artificial smiles, instead of healing ones: its voice is like the brazen sound of a tinkling cymbal. There must be reality and respect for reality. To deny an illness or the gravity of an illness is poor comfort to the sufferer, whether it is done with the motive of reassuring his fears, or in deference to a creed which regards all illness as an illusion, due to evitable human error. To show confidence that he can be made whole is the very opposite of this method, and the reverse too of a defeatist attitude, for it helps the will of the sick person as well as the will of the healer. It helps him to accept his illness, not to deny it. The healing will is created by an attitude of acceptance, consciously directed to the point where it is needed.

In minor ailments—which can still be most distressing and should not be belittled—it is helpful to combine a sense of humour as well as good humour with our willing acceptance. Often our complaints are not so serious as our complaints about them suggest. Bad nights, for instance, are a real trouble, but if they are taken lightly they affect us much less. The real *nuit blanche* is a rare event, and it is probable that we sleep more than we imagine. Nine times out of ten our feelings of illness and exhaustion are caused less by

actual loss of sleep, than by our nervous agitation about it. If the insomnia is accepted cheerfully as a tiresome fact, but not too important a fact, which must evidently be accepted so long as it is a fact, not struggled against and refused, it will yield much more quickly to healing treatment.

Battling against disease of any kind, denying it, or stringently suppressing its symptoms, never answers. The right way of dealing with it is always by acceptance—absorption—and assimilation; always by concentrating upon the all-round health of the inner 'I,' and not upon the form of the 'it' which is the external disease.

When we describe a person as being in 'radiant health,' it is not a loose figure of speech but an *accurate* comparison. We are only talking common sense, for the quality of that condition of health is one of radiancy. It depends (according to the analogy we are using) upon the flame within the lantern burning brightly—upon the petals of the Golden Flower, or the Cup (or all the cups) being fully open to the Light which is Life. And radiancy is radiation, which accounts for the fact that radiant health is contagious and pours forth healing rays to all who come in contact with it. It does this, like radium, without any perceptible diminution of its own store. But the comparison with radium is not *quite* accurate, because radium does, in fact, gradually though imperceptibly diminish. But the source of wholeness and love is inexhaustible. The more that is given out, the more is poured into the Cup of the giver.

We spoke of the need of the soul that wills to be healed, for empty, open spaces. And not only outside, surrounding it like lake-water lapping with sounds of peace, but empty space *within itself*. When we seek to understand the laws of health and disease in all our bodies, we are in fact asking the eternal question: 'What is the way of life?' Two thousand years ago the rich young ruler asked it: 'What shall I do to inherit eternal life?' And the answer given him was that, after all the rules of good conduct to man and right attitude to God

had been faithfully observed, as he had observed them, there was one thing more needed, to 'sell all' and give to those that lacked. It is the same answer now. We cannot reach wholeness while we are weighed down with our accumulations, whether of goods or evils, in any one of our bodies. The Cup must be emptied upon every floor, self-stripped of all its fixed possessions and attachments—space made. So, it will be able to receive newly, every day and every hour. This is the way of life and the way of death. It is the great paradox of fullness by way of emptiness, and gain by way of loss. It is the way also of the healers. In sleep and in change, in love and in enlightenment and in faith, there is always this same process of emptying. When we have the readiness to be emptied—to yield all that we possess if we may find the Way of Life—we shall find that we have it springing up within us like a well of living water.

These are seed-thoughts. They are not harvest garnered or bread ready-baked for the eating. Seed-thoughts are for sowing in one's own garden. Each man must plant and tend the corn and reap the grain. He must grind the flour and make the bread himself, according to his own need and capacity, though not without the tenderness of help. If he has willingness, he will find that he does not lack bread.

Chapter Seventh

'BE YOURSELF'

THE ANCIENTS SAID, 'Know thyself,' and the moderns say, 'Be yourself.' It is not the same thing, but the recommendations do not conflict, and may even be necessary to each other's fulfilment. We are familiar with the advice to go ahead and be ourselves at all costs, and do what we genuinely want to do. That sounds good. But then, as a modern writer¹ has pointed out, it is not always so easy to know what we do like, or like to do. That must depend on knowing what we really are, which again means taking trouble, and a period at any rate of uncertainty. That is never a comfortable period ! It seems easier and safer to follow the crowd. So we choose the things that other people apparently find worth having, and try to persuade ourselves that we have chosen them freely. But then perhaps we discover that they are not '*our* things' at all, and they bring us little satisfaction. Unless we first know ourselves, it seems improbable that we can carry out the rest of the programme. We may agree that we are not likely to make a success of trying to be something other than our true self. But what is this 'self,' and how are we to know it ?

Confusion arises because 'self' is a single word, but there are many selves to be known, and there are many kinds of knowing. To begin with the last: there is the knowledge of experience in consciousness, which is and must be limited within itself, bound to its own framework. And there is knowledge in the Greek and Mediæval sense, which is also a condition of experience, but not necessarily of experience

¹ *A Life of One's Own*. Joanna Field. Chatto and Windus. The Golden Library. 5s.

in consciousness. Nor is it necessarily or only an experience in thought, or intellectual effort of any sort. It is possible, for example, to 'know' a woman in the Church or Elizabethan sense of the word, i.e. by having 'carnal knowledge of her.' This is phenomenal knowledge, and evidently implies an experience in full consciousness. But it is possible to 'know' her in quite another sense which is noumenal, (*Nous*—Greek for knowledge). Such knowledge might be conscious or unconscious; it might be an experience in the emotional or mental or spiritual bodies, or in all three; it would be knowledge of her inner self, her real personality; largely a matter of intuitive awareness. But the same words, 'knowledge,' 'knowing,' would be used to describe these quite different experiences.

Other examples come readily to mind. 'Do you understand French?' We answer, 'Yes,' meaning that we understand the words and the grammar, yet we may be without understanding of the French genius, or even of the subtleties of the French language which we have claimed to know. We can attain a certain 'knowledge of God' by study and mental endeavour, but knowing God by awareness of Him in our own and all other being is a very different thing. We can 'accept' criticism or reproof, in the sense of not repudiating it rebelliously, and yet be far from accepting it in the only sense that matters, e.g. by inwardly digesting it. And it is almost terrifying to realize how much we can know about wholeness and yet remain unhealed.

Later in this chapter we shall have much to say in reference to the expansion and contraction which operate and co-operate in all the functions both of physical and psychic life. The same terms apply to knowledge, for there is expanding knowledge as well as contracting knowledge—the knowledge of openness and of shutness, with the open hand and the clenched fist as their respective symbol and token; God's knowledge and Cæsar's.

All this by way of warning lest we get lost. We *can* know

something about this mysterious self of ours, which we are so much urged by ancients and moderns alike to make intimate acquaintance with. But the first thing to remember is that we are over-inclined to regard our self as a single entity, thereby confusing its many aspects. The text, 'In my Father's house are many mansions,' is pregnant with mystical meaning, and should not be forgotten in this connection. Let it not be imagined for one moment that we can state definitely, comfortably, finally, that we have *two* selves (e.g. conscious and unconscious, or good and evil), or *three* selves, or *four* or more. These are not concrete, material, measurable facts, but aspects of the self: ways of seeing the self through a chosen framework. We can choose the framework of two, (the familiar, dualistic conception of spirit and matter), or of three (the trinitarian), or the framework of four (which we have already used in Chapter First, 'The Bodies of Man'): later we shall be using the framework of five. We might choose yet another, if it served our purpose: the framework is unimportant in itself, but vitally important as a scaffolding on which we may build understanding. Holding fast to that idea, we shall not be so easily misled by the trickiness of words.

For our purpose at the moment, we are going to use the framework of three. There is the greater SELF which is Spirit. That is the innermost core of our being, of which we are often dimly and sometimes vividly aware. It is the great 'I AM'—the centre.

There is the small self that lives on the circumference, engrossed in pursuit of the forms which it desires and with which it identifies itself. This is the 'Me,' the body-mind. It is the self within which we are easily, continually conscious.

And there is the middle Self—the Soul—which is the mediator between the two, the bridge across which one can pass to the other. Thus, through the Soul, the Spirit is brought down to earth, and the earthly self is embraced and included by the Spirit.

There is another way of thinking of our three selves, or rather another form of words in which we can speak of them, which is illuminating:

'Like the ocean is your god-self;
It remains for ever undefiled.
Even like the sun is your god-self.
But your god-self dwells not alone in your being.

'Much in you is still man, and much in you is not yet man,
But a shapeless pigmy that walks asleep in the mist, searching
for its own awakening. . . .

'Man is standing in twilight between the night of his pigmy-self and the day of his god-self.'¹

All rude epithets hurled at the self arise from confusion between these three selves. They are directed against the little self which is so greedy and exclusive, and have neither meaning nor power against the greater Self. Words like 'selfish,' 'self-seeking,' 'self-contained,' 'self-satisfied' are familiar in daily use, and they are always used abusively, as terms of reproach. That is all right if we bear in mind the narrow, limited way in which we are thinking of the self, and do not allow it to mislead us. If we remember that the SELF is God immanent in us, we shall understand that in a real sense selfishness can be the highest wisdom. Joy—rarest of all the fruits of the spirit in our troubled world to-day—comes in truth from that self-content which is born of awareness of God in our very being. Human personality is the result of all our experiences in all our bodies (not only in our present existence), plus all the reactions of the self to all these experiences. Self-content has nothing to do with satisfactions in any of our bodies, but with realization of the divine, the god-self within us. The man who loses his life to gain it, and has staked all gladly for that greater gain, is still 'selfish,' but he is not identifying self with the clamorous

¹ *The Prophet*. Kahlil Gibran. Heinemann.

appetites and ambitions of his bodily experiences. If he is uncertain, and would be sure whether his self-content is the right or wrong kind, there is an easy test. The wrong sort is full of spiritual vanity, and desires to preserve the separate superiority over other men, which it seems to have achieved. The right sort desires that all men should share with it the pearl of great price, and there is in it no pride of place and no conceit at all. It is content because it is aware of God within. That awareness brings a deep peace, and patience both with ourselves and with the world, and we understand that Self-centredness is God-centredness.

Perhaps we may seem, ourselves, to be perversely making unnecessary confusion here. For, it may be objected, 'Why speak of being Self-centred, if what you really mean is God-centred? What is gained by using the word "self" in this unaccustomed way, instead of in the common sense to which we are all well used?'

Now, certainly, it is unwise to alter the commonly accepted meanings of words, even when these are incorrect, unless something of importance is involved. But it is important—more, vital—to learn to think of 'self' in its whole instead of only in its partial meaning. If we do not, we sink into that form of dualism which places the transcendent God on one hand, outside man, and robs the human spirit of its great hope. That is the hope of attaining complete reunion with God, while maintaining its entity and independent freedom.

For we can only desire union with what we love, and we can only love that which corresponds to something in ourselves, something to which we have a real affinity.¹ If we are to will union and attain it, there must be a living link, a communion of essential being. 'You are in fact all you seek. This is quite true, and no mere sounding sentence.'² 'Who

¹ It must be noted that we are using the word 'love' here in the ordinary sense, implying a personal bond, an individual attraction and attachment: *not* in the wider sense of encompassing, unconditional love, independent of liking or approval, which has been so much stressed in previous chapters.

² *Bird under Glass*. Ronald Fraser. Jonathan Cape.

can call upon Thee, not knowing Thee?' asked Saint Augustine. If God were not indeed in us and we in Him, we could never know Him and experience Him; there would be no faculty in us that could apprehend Him and respond to Him. So it is of the first importance to realize the divinity of our inner Self, by which we have that faculty. But note how vanity comes in! It is dangerous, and must be guarded against by realization and full acceptance of our body-mind-self also. The intuitive is specially subject to vanity. 'I am God' is true in a real sense, when we are speaking of the SELF in capital letters. But for the self in small letters to claim so much responsibility is obviously the greatest error of which vanity is capable, and may lay so heavy a burden on the space-time self that it may even be driven mad. 'I am not 'Me'; and yet there is a sense in which the opposite, 'I am Me,' seems also true. Is this a mere contradiction, sterile and meaningless, or is it a fruitful paradox? Certainly 'Me' is not 'I.' The part is not the whole, the drop is not the ocean. But the whole is in each part, though it is so much more. The ocean is all the drops, though by their union they are transformed out of recognition. We must weigh our words here with a sensitive imagination. Perhaps the truest formula would be: 'I am *in* Me: I am *through* Me: but I am *not* Me.' The form and the flame are not identical, although for us the Light is incarnate in a lantern.

Let us try, by studying the aspects of the Self in various images and from many angles, to understand them better. The 'I,' who is the Experiencer in the psychic house, is the *whole* Self. He experiences *through* Time, but is not himself *in* Time. That is to say he is not bound by the concept of time, which limits thought always and necessarily to terms of 'before' and 'now' and 'after.'

The 'Me' is the partial Self, who experiences through the medium of the respective bodies, and is *in* Time. He is bound to Time, limited by it and by the laws of form.

'I' is conditioned in his experiences through 'Me,' but his

Self is unconditioned and not identified with any experience. 'Me' is identified with the bodies and with Time. It may therefore be said in a sense that there are four 'Me's', but only one 'I' (which brings us to a framework of five). 'I' is the central whole: 'Me' is only a point on the circumference, moving around that centre. The concerns of 'Me' always seem to be with adaptation to *external* reality—efficiency, economic necessity and so on. 'I' concerns himself with adaptation to *internal* reality—spiritual life, the growth of the soul, the vision of the spirit.

In terms of male and female, 'I' is the undifferentiated, dark, female aspect of the psyche, the passive, the tranquil. 'Me' is the active hunter. They are the mystic and the soldier, the sleeping and the waking respectively. The opposite sides of the psyche can be expressed in countless comparisons—waiting and working, seeing and saying—and it is a valuable exercise to find one's own analogies. But they must not be mere fanciful 'as if's' and arbitrary metaphors. If they are to help us to clearer understanding they must be on the plane of true correspondences.

If, for instance, we compare the growth of the soul of man to the growth of a butterfly, emerging from the grub, passing through the chrysalis stage into the winged insect, it is a fanciful comparison, partial and arbitrary, and holding only a superficial resemblance. The butterfly's short, aimless existence during a few hours of summer sunshine, does not correspond with the idea of the karmic quality and long discipline of the soul. But if we compare it to the phoenix, consumed in the fire, yet ever rising from the ashes of its burning, reborn eternally into life, then we are on the plane of true correspondences.

The way to 'I' is by a state of expansion and relaxation: it is a way of falling into the darkness of an empty space. We have the word 'awareness' available for this undifferentiated knowing, as long as we do not confuse it loosely with 'consciousness.' This mistake we are very apt to make. We use

the two words indiscriminately, as if they were synonymous, and in so doing we suffer a serious loss. We need the two terms to express different meanings, and the value of both is lessened if they are confused. Consciousness can be defined as the opposite to awareness, being a function of 'Me.'

The way to 'Me' is by concentrating attention on a focus-point, by means of a state of effort or tension, in sharply defined consciousness. The scope of the two ways is quite different. The field of experience in awareness is *unlimited* and *general*. Animals and children can have awareness, which often becomes lost or blurred in the high light of adult consciousness, when pre-occupation with the concerns of 'Me' on the circumference usurps supremacy. The all-round man—the whole man—wins back to awareness without losing consciousness, when he becomes a Seer.

Further thinking about the four bodies and their functions may help to make this clearer. Two of the bodies, or conditions of the psyche, function *expansively*, by intuition and feeling. They are like living, expanding targets, or like the rhythmical movement of waves moving outwards on a pool, after the impact of a stone. And two of the bodies function by means of the focus of attention, through thought and sensation. They are *contracting* bodies. These last are like the pointed arrow or the bruising stone; they cause feeling and intuition too. But intuition is capable, also, of functioning in the general, unlimited field of awareness, without the impact of any apparent cause.

We know that life is breathing, and it is possible to see a significant analogy between the expanding and contracting phases of the four bodies, and the expanding and contracting phases through which our lungs breathe air. If we can make this plain, if we can see the Self breathing spirit as the lungs breathe air; then we shall have drawn near to that spiritual understanding of the spirit which knew it as a breath. We have described intuition as an expanding function (extension), and thought as a contracting function,

with a partial focus (attention). Feeling also expands, while sensation, again, requires a focus of attention. Here then is the living breath with the eternal rhythm of life. It forms the complete cycle, out—in, empty—full, dark—light, female—male, idea—form, spirit—matter. We can see the Self thus breathing the spirit through the four phases, bringing life to each of these conditions of experience.

Now when we come to relate this breathing Self with the breathing lungs, we discover at once that we are faced with a paradox. For the *expanding* phase of breathing in the lungs corresponds with the *contracting* phase of breathing in the Self. So the analogy is not perfect in all respects, but it does not fail in the essentials. Intuition refers to the breathing out of self-emptying, and when we are suddenly freed from strain or anxiety our lungs act in the same way: we let out our breath in a deep sigh of relief. We know from experience that shock will cause as sharp an intake of the physical breath, as it will cause a worrying thought on the mental plane, or an anxious attempt to alter the source of offence on the plane of our behaviour. In each case the instinct of self-defence tries to protect the part against the whole, by means of rigid contraction.

Now, it is necessary to proceed very tentatively. It does seem as if the very fact of maintaining a state of difference (i.e. individuality) implies effort, tension, contraction, and that these are inevitable in the functioning of life as we experience it individually. 'Me' must always be in a state of tension when it is standing for the individual difference (separation). In sleep, when we relax, or in mystical awareness of our essential unity, we have entered into the expanding phase in which the tense boundaries of our limited self are lost. The point we want to make is this: to be different is to be tense and to be active. Resistance and conflict are, therefore, necessary qualities in our individual experience as differentiated selves. The two functions which are specially related to this our sense of difference are the contracting

functions of Thought and Sensation: 'This is not that.' The two functions which are primarily concerned with the loss of self's separate identity, are Intuition and Feeling—the expanding functions which show us the other side of the truth—that: 'This is that.' In love, the self's sense of separation and separateness is utterly lost.

We are inevitably identified with consciousness, because we are incarnate in form. This is our field of attention: it is a condition of our earth experience. The full development of consciousness is in order that it may be more accurate in regard to particular differences. It is a Sword of sharpest edge and most finely tempered hardness—invaluable for its own purpose. Obviously, being identified so much and so necessarily with consciousness, we tend to prefer thought and sensation to intuition and feeling. 'Me' is more concerned with filling than with emptying. It seems more important, but it is not, and it cannot be had without the emptying. In expanding we let go, and are empty and ready for receiving. In contracting we hold hard to what we have. It is a policy that commends itself to the natural man's business sense, but it is not always successful. Many people try to meet pain with a tight, stiff, 'holding-themselves-in and not-yielding-an-inch' attitude, thinking this will help them to bear it better. But the tense contraction always makes the pain greater: complete relaxation and undefendedness against it always lessens it. The instinct of a novice at public speaking is to make the same mistake: he squares his shoulders, throws out his chest, draws in his breath, and generally pulls himself together. He is very conscious of himself, and makes great efforts. But he is taught in any good school of elocution to relax the muscles of the throat and jaw (i.e. those which are directly concerned with speech and voice-production), and to let himself go and be easy. Then he finds that without forcing himself or his voice, he gets his message across far better.

As we have seen, the contracting functions are concerned

with 'Me,' and its doings and havings in regard to the external world. They are 'spenders.' The expanding functions, where self-consciousness is lost, gain peace from within the empty spaces of the 'I.' They are 'healers.' ALL are required for wholeness, but especially, in view of our tendency to neglect them, intuition and feeling. We use them in music and in dancing, in enjoyment, in warmth and in love, as well as in rest and sleep. In all of them the small self is lost, and the great SELF renewed. This is true also of death, which is the last and greatest of the healers.

The breath, being symbolical of life, is a constant, but its direction changes through the four phases. We have spoken of the breathing out of intuition and breathing in of thought, the emptying of feeling and filling of sensation, and we have noticed the difficulty and that the analogy falls short of perfection, because intuition is also, and rightly, intertwined with the idea of receptivity. It is an analogy which must not be pressed too rigidly, yet, in spite of difficulty, it belongs to the plane of true correspondences, and has something of value to show us, for which it is worth preserving. The breath is a sign of life, which is spirit—the 'I'—the Seer. It is a *constant* current, but it passes through and functions in all our bodies in *alternating* rhythm.

Descartes was wrong in making 'I think,' by itself alone, the proof that 'I am.' Conscious thought is not enough to tell us about our real being, our true Selves. As we saw, it operates only through detachment: 'I am not that,' and by focusing a spot of high light upon a part of 'that.' So how can it possibly tell us the truth about 'that,'—much less the truth about 'I'? The contracting function of consciousness can tell us *nothing* of any experience derived from an expanding function, except that it does not or ought not to exist. It cannot explain the spiritual life, because it has no awareness: it simply does not know it and cannot know it. No doubt, Descartes was not trying to analyse the 'I,' only to prove its existence. But the proof is inadequate and one-sided.

By stressing the supreme value of thought as against all other values, it has been misleading and done much harm. It shows no sense of balance, or of the nature of a whole man. If we completed Descartes, and said: 'I think, and therefore I know that I am not what I think I am,' we should be nearer to the truth. Introspection, although partially valuable, cannot possibly tell us the whole truth of any SELF, or any self either. At most it tells us half.

The other half of truth is the other half of our living breath—the way of expansion. The method called 'contemplation,' approached by feeling and intuition, leads to the discovery of this other half of truth. Some who are near to the primitive can obtain what is known as 'participation mystique,'¹ e.g. an unconscious union with Nature, without having first understood the separation between Nature and themselves. This is not the higher life. The stage of conscious thought and seeking must be gone through, before the sense of difference and the sense of unity, both maintained and equally balanced, can be joined in an act of union. When that state is reached, man has attained what Buddhists call 'Samadhi.' He is aware that the self is lost in the SELF, the one in the other, and the part in the whole. But to consciousness, which functions through logical thought and sensation alone, this can mean only nothing or else a falsehood. Understanding cannot be reached out of due time, but only by steps and stages.

The Time Factor is a consequence of the varying conditions of our experience. Conscious time is concerned with clock time, because that is the time it knows. But feelings can and do vary our sense of the duration of time. Ecstasy (experience at the centre) has no sense of time, and knows eternity. Depression (the most external experience, needing return to the centre for its healing) finds time drag endlessly. In happiness (the experience which comes between the centre and circumference, and partakes of both) time flies.

¹ See on this subject, barely touched on here, *The Legacy of Asia and Western Man*, by Alan Watts. John Murray.

This does not sound strange to those who are familiar with the truth of Time's various gaits: that with some it trots, with some it gallops, and with some it seems to stand still, according to their circumstances. As Shakespeare said: 'Time travels at diverse paces with diverse persons'; but for centuries these lines do not seem to have suggested that there was anything amiss with our complacent assumptions about time. It is only recently that some have seen that it is not to be measured so easily, as if it were a fixed, concrete fact, with uniform direction and velocity.

Thought is omnipotent within its sphere, and can make or break anything, according to the way of its thinking. 'I think I can,' and so I can! This omnipotence can then be limited to the plane of thought (in which case it is phantasy), or it can become active in behaviour. Then, coming suddenly to earth, it is apt to act as Lucifer—a falling and incendiary star—and someone burns his fingers. The havoc wrought in history, and in private lives too, by conscience, is an example of this, and shows what dangers may be run by untimely forcing the standards of one plane on to the realities of another. The subject of conscience will be dealt with more fully later.¹

Thought and sensation are our fields of freedom, and we enjoy them. But intuition and feeling, where the truth is poured into our passive, open spaces, are more sensitive, and cause us to suffer for our free thoughts and sensations. This is another and natural reason for preferring thought and sensation, for suffering does not attract us. We prefer instinctively to identify ourselves with the pointed arrow and the bruising stone, rather than with the expanding targets which receive the wounding impact. But we are *both*, and only by identifying ourselves with both can we be whole. The will is vitality poured from outside through *all* our bodies. If it is identified with any one of them, it becomes the desire which is that body's appetite. One of our chief

¹ Chapter Eighth, 'Yardsticks.'

troubles is that 'will'—will power—has become so largely identified with thought. It needs to be detached from each body, yet functioning through all. If we think of it as 'willingness,'¹ it helps us to understand. Where all has been accepted (loved) by the willing body and mind and heart and soul, the whole adds up, and we find we *must* behave in the inclusive way, because it is the *only* way.

Now that we have tried to see the problem of the 'self' which we have to know, in general terms, we come back to the particular problem of knowing our own individual selves, as they in fact—fortunately or regrettably—are. There can be no health or happiness until we accept the truth about ourselves whatever it may be. To assume good qualities which we do not yet actually possess, is fatal to growth. There is healing virtue in the humility of sincere acceptance, in its clear outlook on things as they are. If we were guessing at a venture, we should suppose that such truthful vision and unflattering acceptance of ourselves would dishearten and rob us of all confidence. In practise, we find, strangely, that the reverse is true. It gives us the confidence which we lacked when we did not face and know ourselves. How is this?

Take a trivial instance first. Is not the fear of being natural and showing what we are really like, at the root of much social embarrassment? We find ourselves, perhaps, in unfamiliar surroundings, and experience a sense of discomfort. In most cases it is not that people are rude to us. They do not mind our shades of difference, it is we who mind them and wish to conceal them. The French call such shyness *mauvaise honte*, which is illuminating. One of the least pleasing forms of vulgarity—the snobbish variety—is always associated with pretentiousness; pretence at being or having or knowing what we do not know or possess, or are not. Of course, there is also a pretentiousness of parading our lack, whatever it may be, which is just as far from good

¹ See Chapter Sixth, 'Health and Disease.'

manners as false pretences, and even more embarrassing to others.

The common phrase, 'He gave himself away,' with its suggestion of censure, or cynical amusement, is symptomatic of our shrinking from knowing ourselves or being known. It reflects, too, the possessive and exclusive ideas of life which belong to the shut-in attitude—shutting in and keeping for oneself what is advantageous, or what might be disadvantageous to oneself if known; shutting out others from any real communion with ourselves. To give oneself away, readily, generously, means that we have abandoned our false façade, and is perhaps the best, if not the only real gift we can make to anyone.

Turning from small vanities to failures and deficiencies which loom larger, there is the fear of life, the alarm we often feel at the ordeals we see ahead of us. We are afraid that we shall prove inadequate, but think it cowardly to confess the feeling frankly. We refuse to entertain it, and buoy ourselves up with false reassurances. In fact we will not know ourselves: we think we shall be safer and braver if we do not. Brother Lawrence was wiser.¹ Failure and confession of failure are healthy, and a necessary part of discipline. They should not mortify, but bring us the deep restfulness of humility, which is not the same thing as humiliation. Brother Lawrence realized his own insufficiency, but also the inexhaustible abundance of the supply available for him. It is the secret of all religious peace.

Thinking on these lines we shall no longer find it strange that refusal of the facts should weaken us, while acceptance strengthens us. Because, when we refuse, we are thinking of our small self, and what it can be and do and bear. We are depending on the broken reed of its weakness. But when we accept the whole of reality, we have turned inward to the centre and depend on our greater SELF, and the endless source of power and plenty behind it. When we are busy

¹ See Chapter Third, 'Acceptance of Ourselves.'

refusing the painful truth about ourself, struggling to believe we possess the virtues we admire, although they are not really ours, we cannot grow. We are as if imprisoned in a strait-jacket of our own making. Our health suffers from the strain, and as our nerves go to pieces our happiness collapses too. But when we touch bottom, when we know and accept unresentfully the worst about ourselves, then our vital energy is released from the burden of pretences. Then we are free to rise again. We find not only the truth about our lower self, but we expand, breathe out, and make a space in which we find knowledge of our higher SELF. And our Soul, the mediating Self, is able to lead the pigmy across the bridge to the god. It could not do that, so long as we deceived ourselves and assumed that we were at the right side of the bridge already.

The doctrine of acceptance does not deny evil, or say that it is but a stage in the development of good. It claims that evil, although it is irrational, and cannot rationally be explained in a world where the only source of life is God, is nevertheless necessary to freedom.¹ It is therefore necessary to any goodness which is not automatic, determined, and meaningless. It is most real, and not to be denied or belittled or confused with good, but accepted and conquered, *not by extermination but by absorption.*

We certainly cannot 'know ourselves' if we refuse to recognize the evil that is in us, and the same thing is true about those we love. It is even more difficult to accept their ignorances and faults than it is to accept our own. There seems a kind of disloyalty in any, even silent, criticism. But there is confusion here. The greatest love loves in spite of, and not because of, the qualities of the beloved. Why should they be perfect when we are so imperfect? Has the motive of personal advantage crept unawares into what seemed all unselfish desire for them? Certainly life would

¹ For full and illuminating discussion of this most difficult subject, see *Freedom and the Spirit*, by Nicolas Berdyaev. Geoffrey Bles. The Centenary Press.

be easier for us if we could always admire and approve them, feeling confidence in their rightness. It would reassure us if they responded to our ideals of them and for them. But only unresolved conflict or the dangers of phantasy come from unreality. To assume that what we wish is ours already, or can be swiftly brought about by an effort of our will, or by an appeal to the Divine Will, is a refusal of reality.

There are two troubles here. First the irrational feeling that whatever degree of enlightenment we may have gained ourselves ought simultaneously to have been gained by our families and friends. Why cannot our experiences be pooled and passed on? But they are individual experiences, not mass productions; neither simultaneous nor identical, but separated by years, or perhaps by lives. This is painful but must be accepted. If we all knew and understood and accepted at the same time, that would be heaven. This is earth.

The other difficulty is that though we may be willing to accept hardness for ourselves as the necessary price of our inheritance, we cannot bear to accept it for those beloved who tear our heart-strings. We are too soft-hearted, or faint-hearted, or perhaps too lacking in faith. Even after the pilgrim has lost his burden and won by the grace of God to the end of his pilgrimage, he still has his family anxieties! He has to learn that 'we can do a wrong to our children by standing between them and danger,'¹ trying to protect them from the painful finding of their own salvation. Christian has passed over, with all the trumpets sounding, maybe, but still 'he is always trying to have a carriage sent back from the Celestial City for Christiana and the children.'¹ It cannot be done. Every generation has its own perils, privileges and possibilities. We can only stand aside and 'let be.' Then they can 'walk on.'

Are we exaggerating? See how it works in concrete instances. 'This child whom I so love is going wrong. I cannot

¹ *The Soul of a Bishop*, by H. G. Wells. Cassell & Co.

bear it. She must be saved from herself, made good.' 'My friend is dying of cancer. I cannot bear his suffering. His pain must be removed.' 'I am terribly unhappy. I cannot bear my life. Something must be done to make me happy.'

But in truth nothing can be done about any of these things until we have first accepted them, not in words but in reality. This will not mean that we grow indifferent to them: they must cause us extensive suffering. But it will mean that we are *willing* to suffer, and to learn what they may have to teach. Not only willingness for ourselves, but for those we love, whom we are so anxious to help by our favourite technique of refusal, exercised on their behalf.

We meet a nightmare panic, instinctively, with soothing words, as to a little child. 'Hush, my darling,' says the lover or the mother. 'It is all right. You are safe, with me, in my arms. You shall never be frightened or alone.' But, alas! we all must be alone often, and frightened sometimes, though some of us struggle to escape from that knowledge as if it were a trap. To refuse it is to refuse life; it is to choose cowardice instead of courage. We cannot win security by clinging to 'things as they were,' any more than to the mirage of 'things as we would have them be.' For life—relationship—is always changing, and the finest loyalty accepts the fact with unchanging love. 'Out of this nettle, danger,' we can, if we accept, 'pluck the flower, safety.'

The child must learn from her own experience, helped by our love but not made good by us; not 'saved from herself,' but helped to know and be herself. There is no short cut to wholeness for her any more than for us, though we seek it bitterly and with tears.

Our friend is learning, too, and we can help him if we accept his pain for him and with him. Anything we can do to alleviate his pain will be done, and we shall accept gratefully all the means to that end which the knowledge and skill of men have brought us. 'Our aim is to reduce pain as far as possible. . . but only in order that it may

be more possible to bear the pain which remains to be borne. . . . Because there must be so much pain, let it be eased wherever possible.'¹ But we cannot, and perhaps should not if we could, deprive him of the experience which has come to him, though it means so much pain: we do not know enough to take that responsibility.

We must endure our own unhappiness until we can learn to learn from it. The distressing truth, the tedious illness, the disturbing external events that trouble us, must be accepted simply as facts, before our power to accept also the painful processes that may be necessary to change them, in so far as they can be changed, can operate. Then acceptance has the curious power of not letting them throw us off our balance or move us to panic. It will bring undreamed-of ease of heart and mind, and show us things we could not know till we had been unhappy. We shall see that the child's growth in wisdom and goodness includes all its wrong turnings; and the friend's wholeness includes the pain through which he won healing; and our own happiness includes the hard path through which we found it. The essential thing for all is that they should grow naturally to their own full stature, out of inner freedom, not by any outside compulsion of ours. Growth cannot be compelled. It depends upon the health of the inner, coiled spring of life. They must *BE* and *BECOME* themselves.

The need for accepting the truth about ourselves is of importance in public affairs. Take the problem of pacifism and peace conferences. We see that the world seems to have gone mad, rushing headlong to self-destruction. Since it will not be persuaded, we feel that it must be compelled by force to submit to the rule of goodness. What we do not see (or perhaps quite believe) is that then goodness becomes impossible, because there is no free choice, and so the freedom of the spirit is denied.² In the midst of such pressing

¹ *I and Me*, by E. Graham Howe. Faber and Faber. (The chapter on 'Medicine.')

² See footnote, p. 126.

and great dangers we feel that we cannot afford to stop and consider questions of that kind. But we cannot afford *not* to stop and consider them.

We are satisfied, as people easily are, of the purity of our own good intentions. We say that we stand for world peace and the brotherhood of man, and what can be better? But do we really feel so peaceful and fraternal as all that to those who cause such misery by their intolerance? If not, it is wiser to know it. Nothing is gained by assuming that we have the peace spirit, simply because we see how desirable it is, if, in fact, we have not got it. It might be better not to hold peace conferences until we have more of it, for till then they will surely be sterile, or only lead to war. There is no hope of remedy until we see and acknowledge that we are ill—*WE*—not only other people. Till then we shall deserve the gibe: 'Physician, heal thyself.' It is healing that we all need, with its stress on life and growth, rather than surgery with its fixed idea of extirpation. It is true that surgery only *aims* at cutting away dead matter or malignant growths, but in the mental and spiritual worlds it is hard to do this without injuring the adjacent, healthy tissue.

Let there be no mistake. Intolerance and cruelty are the worst of all evils, whether practised by individuals or by the State. Assuredly everything that *can* be done to check and restrain them, at home under national law or throughout the world by international influence, must be done, so long as it is not going to make things worse instead of better. If either history or abstract thought lent us the slightest hope that they could be exterminated once and for all by the use of ruthless force and the most drastic surgery, it would be worth while, even at terrific immediate cost. For life is supremely important in all its forms, but especially as expressed within the individual, and respect for personality is one of the lessons most needed to-day. All over the world a complete lack of respect for individual life is manifest. We see it in the wholesale massacres of war, in the persecution of

minorities, and in the organization of society under dictators. The subject's life and liberties are sacrificed without scruple to the supposed interests of the State—which is the aggregate and quintessence of the lives of all its citizens. The claim is, of course, that this ruthlessness is for the greatest good of the greatest number, and that 'minorities must suffer.' But in effect *all* suffer. Each individual is degraded from his stature as a free man, a person who is an end in himself and not a mere means to other ends. He is not encouraged to *know* himself, for that might lead to his trying to *be* himself. Under an autocracy this is not convenient to the Government, nor is it safe for the governed.

And with all these evils and agonies, is there nothing to be done that is not useless or that will not make bad worse? Lao Tzu's maxims may have a lesson for us if we can receive it, but they sound strange in our Western ears. We have a passion for active interference; a strong conviction that the world cannot be saved unless *we* do something, and that quickly: we are not quite clear *what*, but almost anything to vindicate our outraged sense of what is right. Lao Tzu's recommendations were: 'Practise inaction. . . . Keep the mouth shut. . . . Be sparing of speech and things will come right. . . . Who is there that can make muddy water clear? But if allowed to remain still, it will gradually become clear of itself.' We might do worse than to meditate on this unaccustomed point of view, the very other side of paradox from our own, and to remember that both sides of paradox are necessary if we are to see the whole truth.

One of the most tragic failures of the human spirit has been the persecution of the Jews throughout the ages, and renewed in our 'civilized' generation. It is a plant that has sprung from the roots of refusal and exclusiveness. Judaism was itself always the religion of exclusiveness, with its glorification of the 'chosen race,' its exhortations to its people to keep themselves separate, its insistence on *kosher* and special food observances. Christianity is the religion of

inclusiveness, with its all-embracing attitude to men, its teaching of the universal fatherhood of God: 'neither Jew nor Greek, neither bond nor free, neither male nor female, but all one in Christ Jesus.' The interpenetration of Christianity in this respect by Judaism has been a great religious tragedy. The New Testament has been infected with the exclusiveness and revenges of the Old Testament. To-day the Jew finds himself being excluded with every circumstance of cruelty and horror. He is perishing by the dividing, excluding 'Sword,' that he has lived by, instead of by the including 'Cup.' Now we are at a great moment. We are in the position of being able to heal the wound of time by including the exclusives; that is to say by our inclusion of both Jews and Hitler. Shall we take it? Or shall we prefer the old barren way of punishing one exclusion by another? It is by no means clear that we have learnt the lesson yet. Many voices clamour that the Nazis must be rigorously excluded from the comity of nations. They in their turn demand the exclusion of Communists and Bolshevists. So we go on, and so it goes on: eternal recurrence of all that we would most desire to break away from.

There can be no healing of the nations till we know ourselves and know that we are all one.

'Even as the holy and the righteous cannot rise beyond the highest which is in each one of you,

So the wicked and the weak cannot fall lower than the lowest which is in you also . . . the wrong-doer cannot do wrong without the hidden will of you all.

You cannot separate the just from the unjust and the good from the wicked; . . .

And if any of you would punish in the name of righteousness and lay the axe unto the evil tree, let him see to its roots;

And verily he will find the roots of the good and the bad . . . all entwined together in the silent heart of the earth.'¹

¹ *The Prophet*, by Kahlil Gibran. Heinemann.

The difficulty in getting acceptance accepted, is that people are apt to dismiss it as either a platitude or an iniquity, according to the instance they select as illustration. First the platitude. Bad weather ruins some long-planned scheme: very well, you accept it. What else can you do? Philosophy has long taught us that to accept the inevitable with cheerfulness will minimize its evil. It is true that philosophy has taught the wisdom of acceptance, but not true that most of us have learnt it, even with regard to the weather! Still less is it true when the disappointment is due to our own fault or folly. On the contrary, we are disposed to argue then that we 'ought not' to accept our own imperfections, as we should accept those of the plants in our garden, without anger, but weeding, pruning, manuring and waiting on the seasons with patience. We feel that towards ourselves impatience is praiseworthy. In short we are up against the other objection that acceptance is an iniquity. Again we will not know ourselves, in our eager haste to escape that knowledge and be something different. But *we must be what we are*: we couldn't possibly be other, *in the circumstances*, now. The circumstances may, indeed, be due, in part at least, to our own mistaken choices in the past, but that does not alter the facts that we have to deal with in the present. If we are intelligent, and not just mentally wilful, we *must* accept what we are, before we can *become other than we are*. (This, of course, does not mean that there is no need of repentance for wrong-doing which has helped to make us what we are. Acceptance and repentance are not, as so often curiously supposed, contradictory, but complementary attitudes of the soul. There cannot be true repentance without full acceptance,¹ which is worlds away from complacent acquiescence.)

If it is the wickedness of other men or nations that ruins hope, we are still less willing to accept facts. We say that this is not inevitable like the weather; patience will but encourage

¹ See Chapter Third, 'Acceptance of Ourselves.'

it, and assuredly acceptance would be iniquitous. We should rather fight it to the death, and if the punishment is only severe enough the effect will be deterrent. So runs the argument, which has been pursued with high hope through long centuries. How has it answered?

In the case of the small-scale criminal, penal restraint under national law and in accordance with national conscience is practicable, but experience has proved that the deterrent effect is doubtful and disappointing. Certainly it is not in proportion to the severity of the punishment, but rather to its certainty. When the offender is not a private thief or burglar, but a nation or a government, the difficulties are obviously far greater. For then 'punishment' can only mean war, if powers are more or less equally matched. And war is not in accordance with the public conscience, and it is not certain, but of all things the most uncertain. It cannot be discriminating, or tempered with mercy: it is not constructive or reformative. It injures innocent and guilty alike, regardless of which side wields the double-edged weapon victoriously. It helps no man to be or know himself in wholeness. It helps no nation to wisdom and judgment.

We said in a previous chapter that if men and nations are pressed too far, they will fight, but that war will not preserve the values they are fighting for. War may be inevitable in our present stage of development, just as re-armament may be a necessary consequence of previous wrong-thinking and wrong-doing of our own or our neighbour. But at best it can only give us respite, not security. With regard to preventing persecution we find the same thing: compulsion proves useless in obtaining a permanent good. If some gallant soul cries out passionately that it is better to go down with the ship, fighting fruitlessly for an ideal, than to tolerate iniquity, the question must needs arise: 'Better for whom?' Better for our own comfort perhaps, assuaging our misery of impotent wrath, but not better for the persecuted minorities

whom we want to help, and not better for our ideals, which are not vindicated.

The hard fact is that respect for personality cannot be taught by force and violence, because they contradict and contravene the very principles that it is sought to instil. A child strikes and bullies a child younger and weaker than itself, and you are horrified. Will you teach it better ways by beating and bullying it yourself? The true remedy lies in education, but so many sins have been committed in that name that we must be sure what sort of education we want. That opens up too large a subject to be more than touched on here, but at least we can state our aims. The aim of education should be to have, first, fulfilment of the individual (wholeness), and, second, service to the community. But this statement will at once cause eyebrows to be raised in critical question. Do we put ourselves first, then? And service to our fellows afterwards? Surely the ideals of Communism, and of the dictator-ruled Corporative States, blind and unfree as they are, are still nobler than this, which sounds so mean and selfish?

This is a confusion caused by the trickiness of words again. 'First' and 'second' may refer to serial time or to comparative values. Fulfilment of the individual comes first in order of sequence, for we must be fulfilled and harmonious before we can serve helpfully. We must **BE** before we can have anything of value to **GIVE**. But service comes first in order of importance, as the goal of wholeness is greater than our efforts to achieve it. No aim is possible unless a goal is pre-supposed, but we start far off and have to travel a long road. Education by enlightenment is a stage of the pilgrimage which cannot be missed out. We may go through its discipline early and easily, or later with more difficulty, but we must go through it.

In education of this kind, freedom and respect for personality are essential. Without them there can be no growth of mind or change of heart, but only regimented thought

and behaviour, which kill the spirit of man and turn him into a robot, if not into a Frankenstein. It is intuitive perception of this truth, not mere wilfulness, which makes many children and adolescents suspicious of inhibiting control, and rebellious against well-meaning authority. They feel their need for freedom to grow according to the law of their own being, not someone else's, if they are to save their souls alive. It is their inalienable right. Education should throw open doors and windows, not close them. It must offer, but not compel. It cannot force individuals to be what they are not, but it can help them to be themselves more abundantly, and so to become what they may.

We want to grow undeformed : to dare to know ourself and be ourself. We want to identify ourself more and more with the great inner 'I' at the centre, and less and less with the small outer 'Me,' who is whirling round on the rim of the wheel of time. Our need is to be re-born, not once nor twice but constantly, continually, that we may digest the whole of our earth experience and so be ready to inherit eternal life. To move from blindness to sight, from shutness to openness, from bondage to freedom—that is our journey and our destiny.

Chapter Eighth

YARDSTICKS

IT HAS BEEN SAID gibingly, but not without a disturbing flavour of truth, that the English conception of the Deity is a perfect English gentleman. The more malicious add that in this the English feel they are not only paying a deserved compliment to the English, but also to God ! The chief advantage of satire, and perhaps its only justification, is that it can sometimes get a core of truth accepted and teach a useful lesson, where a serious argument would be rejected with indignation. Christians might be surprised and grieved to think that they were unduly given to criticism and blame of their neighbours, but the bitter irony of 'see how these Christians love one another' got home to many complacent and conventional professors of Christianity. It certainly does seem that our conception of our duty as Christians includes righteous judgment of our neighbours. We are ready, indeed, to admit with humility and contrition that we often tamper with our weights and measures, and so cheat ourselves and others, but we are satisfied that the principle is right. If we could only get rid of our selfishness and prejudice, we feel that we should be justified in judging ; more, that in so doing we should fulfil the moral law. But surely this directly contradicts the teaching of Christ. He did not command us to judge our fellow man more kindly or more fairly, but not to judge him at all.

In assuming the right of judgment, we seldom avoid the more doubtful and greater assumption that our personal measure is the 'standard yard.' Now the right of judgment in one sense may go unchallenged, that is to say we must esteem one course better than another, and if we are consistent we shall try to act accordingly. But there is much

doubt concerning the reliability of the yardstick of any one of us as the true measure of another's life. Most probably we are identified with it, making it one with our very self. Then, even if it were a good yardstick, our judgment would still be unjust, because it would lack the essential quality of justice, which is objectivity.

Let us however, suppose for a moment that our yardstick is the very best, and that it is our own, and also that we are *not* identified with it. How then may we rightly use it? Not as a weapon with which to belabour and push on those who are deficient according to its measure. Yardsticks are not meant to be used as aggressive weapons either against ourselves or anyone else. They are, strange as it may seem, things to see with, but not always to act upon drastically or immediately. They are only safe when used as aids to vision, not coercions to conduct. They impose a condition of relation or comparison upon vision. The standard may be a conventional one, or a convenient one, or a 'good' one, but it cannot justify assault and battery upon a seeming error which it has proved to be wrong. Change, if it is to be a living growth, can only 'become' in course of time. Therefore, though standards can show a way to see, and point a course to steer and a goal to aim at, the motive for the movement must be found elsewhere. Only time and will together can do the deed.

The danger of all standards of judgment or 'frames of reference' is that they may be used by imperative desire, moralized with an 'ought,' timelessly, immediately. It follows, then, that they are being used destructively, because life needs time. They are the weapons in the hands of good intentions, which produce so much tragedy in living history. Why should our standards be assumed to be right? And even if they are right, how can perception of what is right in itself but not yet realized, be useful for our guidance *now*, unless we also have careful understanding and acceptance of the truth that actually *is*? We need both: the star to

steer by, but also the chart which shows the rocks and the tides and the currents which we must reckon with. The bright light of the star is best? Yes: it is the ideal; though, human nature being infinitely various, your ideal may not be mine. But the rocks are real. It is no use steering blindly by the radiant star without considering them. The truth that *is* NOW, must always be the decisive factor in the action which we can usefully take, or 'ought' to take. This is the justification and praise of wise compromise. It is not, as is sometimes supposed, in need of apology, an unworthy refusal to follow the highest we have seen. It is humble acceptance of all the facts we have to deal with, both highest and lowest.

Our judgment of others, if it is to play the game fairly, must be safeguarded by the maxim: 'The standard by which we judge must always be the standard of the judged.' This maxim has important bearings on any day of acceptance, affecting not only those we judge and our judgment of them, but also our own feelings about it and about them. It is certainly a paradoxical maxim, for judgment is always assumed to be based on the standards and codes of the judge, not of the prisoner at the bar. Indeed it is a paradox which strikes and startles us at the first impact, because we are so accustomed to act on precisely the reverse principle. We form our own judgments, and sometimes—perhaps often—they are high ones, based on the best models. We are well satisfied with them, and rather proud of them. That may be all right or all wrong, according to the depth or shallowness of our knowledge, the breadth or narrowness of our understanding. We then proceed to apply our standards as a reference measure to other men, trying to stretch or curtail their limbs and stature to fit our beautiful bed of Procrustes. If they cannot or will not conform, and lie on the bed as we have made it, we condemn them. We are resentful of and up in arms against any criticism of the bed. This is certainly all wrong.

People are inclined to use the words judgment and justice as identical. And justice they separate sharply from mercy, holding that these are opposites, which, though they may walk together, and exchange views in friendly converse, must not be confused or allowed to unite. They see justice, therefore, as a means of dealing out measure for measure, accurately, ruthlessly, mechanically; not as a delicate, fallible instrument needing great comprehension and experience in those who handle it. They say it may be 'rough justice,' but it is just, since it gives to each one impartially his deserts. But this is begging the question, for who settles the deserts? And, if all got their deserts, 'who should 'scape whipping?' Justice so conceived can, of course, only operate on lines of a fixed code and an arbitrary scale of values. It must pre-suppose that its code and its values are the only right ones, and, as it does not and cannot see all round the circle, it is always at least half blind. To do Courts of Justice justice, they have not failed to recognize their inevitable limitations. The figure chosen, with true and moving symbolism, to depict Justice in the Law Courts, is sculptured with the eyes bandaged. When we act as self-appointed judges in the private courts of our own minds, we should do well to remember that symbolic figure, and be less confident about our fallible standards.

In any case, justice is *not* the same thing as judgment; for justice must be just, or it becomes injustice, but judgment may be just or unjust, yet it remains judgment. To judge justly implies balance: an impartial weighing of *all* the factors on either side of the scale, and a careful appraisalment of the values. These are not fixed and final, but fluid and fluctuating. To judge unjustly is to judge partially instead of wholly. And of whom can we be sure that he is whole?

If our paradox is looked at with attention it is seen to be only common sense and common fairness. How can you judge anyone justly by a standard which he does not know, or does not accept? We are told not to judge another man's

servant, for 'to his own master he standeth or falleth.' The same truth is in our paradox. By his own standards a man stands or falls, is innocent or guilty, justified or self-condemned, and when we are apportioning responsibility, it is by that standard he should be judged. The same deed may be a lapse worthy of blame in one man, or a step forward worthy of praise in another, because of their different standards.

This thought brings comfort to many who are far from wishing to blame others, or, indeed, to judge them at all, but who feel there is some sort of moral obligation laid upon them. They have been taught that it is their duty to bear witness to the truth and righteousness of their own standards, by judging those who fall short of them, and that if they do not, they are somehow betraying or dishonouring their ideals. When the sinner is also the beloved, this supposed duty is a very painful one. But if we remember that judgment must be by the standard of the judged, and realize that it is quite impossible for one person to know with any certainty what another person's standards are, still less *why* they are what they are, or how he came by them, then we are excused from serving on the jury. We need not discharge that 'duty' any more. We see that it was a self-imposed duty, more honoured in the breach than in the observance, and not really our duty at all. Divine judgment draws no hard and fast lines between justice and mercy, for omniscience knows that each is—necessarily—included in the other.

However, apart from the burden of such wrongly arrogated duty as 'moral judgment' of others, we are faced with the fact that we cannot avoid judgment of some sort, for it is implied in our daily and hourly choices, and in our reaction to every event of life. So yardsticks must needs come in. The question of our negativeness or positiveness depends on the 'frame of reference' or 'yardstick' by which we measure. If I receive £100 and have only counted on getting £50, I feel plus about it, but if I expected £200, I feel minus. To

some, life always adds up minus: they are perpetually disappointed (and a little angry !) because they expect life to be better or fairer for them than it is. They pitch their hopes too high, and would be more blessed if they expected less. The cynic interposes here, sardonically, that this is, indeed, true: 'Blessed are they that expect nothing, for they shall never be disappointed !' But this wit misses the point. Blessing comes when there is acceptance, which in this matter would include an attitude of humility. The accepting man would accept not only the probability that he would get little, but also the probability that he would be getting as much as he was worth. He would be satisfied with his 'penny a day.' He might also realize that 'getting,' whether more or less, was not of crucial importance compared with 'being.' If so, he would certainly have gained a blessing. In fact he would be using another yardstick ! But the cynic accepts nothing—save only with his lips—neither his own small deserts, nor the small recompense offered for them. He feels hurt and injured, and bitterly resents his treatment, though he affects superior indifference, and contempt for those who fail to value him at his own valuation. In such emotions, though we feel them so often and so naturally, there is no healing and no blessing.

Much of our trouble seems reducible to the fact that we treat 'to live' as if it were 'to have,' instead of 'to be' or 'to become.' It is this 'having' business that starts the yardstick racket. 'I used to have . . .' or 'He has and I haven't . . .' and so I must have now, because it ought to be mine, i.e. it is 'owed' to me. 'Having' is an 'ought' word, but 'being' is not. We used to have so much, once upon a time: a mother's love, a good mark at school, the digestion of an ostrich, a marvellous memory, an athletic figure, beauty ! And so the yardstick harries us in unending pursuit and self-pity. 'This losing is too sad. I had it once, I ought to have it now.' The way of 'having' lives chiefly in the past, for (most depressingly) having is not holding. We wish it

were, for our miserly, hoarding instinct would always prefer to consolidate possessions rather than venture on to fresh experience. But we cannot win security in having. We find that the things we had and still clutch at, striving to retain them, have slipped through our fingers. 'To be,' on the other hand, is in the present, where every 'now' is judged in its own right, re-born anew, without the ties of prejudice. 'To become' is our freedom for the future, in consequence of the way we are 'being' now.

Having and being are examples of the necessary opposites—the breathing in and breathing out—the expanding and the contracting, spoken of in the last chapter. There is an inevitable hostility between them: in a sense they are enemies: yet both are necessary, for both belong to full living. One must not simplify by just leaving out, or striving to cut out, 'having.' That is the old exterminating technique which dies so hard. It is the error of a false asceticism, which produces automatically a one-sided, partial development, and is far from the goal of wholeness.

The way of acceptance gets over the difficulty of false frames of reference and misleading or mis-applied yardsticks, by claiming the possibility of 'direct' experience. All the four floors of the psychic house have different values in their own right. A true gauge measures and values everything from direct experience of it, without allowing second-hand notions to create prejudice or favour. In regard to feeling, most of us do not know what a simple feeling is. Nearly always we have a feeling about a feeling: that is to say, we have a secondary feeling which is a derivative of a yardstick introduced from outside the actual experience. It alters in some direction our real, primary feeling. We feel hurt about pain (we think pain unfair): we cannot bear our broken hearts (a broken heart is a bad thing, like a broken chair): we feel afraid of fear (we ought not to be afraid): we feel disappointed about a pleasure (because it does not come up to our anticipations). Rain is rain, and it has many

merits, but we never can enjoy it, if we want only fine weather, and blame it for not being something other than it is. In the end, perhaps, we interfere so greatly with our experience of reality that we hardly feel at all (because feeling is so moving and disturbing that we think it is unsafe). However, there is such a thing as a real, primary feeling, objectively registered without reference to desire, and subjectively suffered in complete acceptance. It is like the movement of a galvanometer needle, and the movement depends on two things: the force of current, and the degree of resistance. This last depends again on the heaviness or lightness of the spring on which the needle is balanced. The light spring gives less resistance, and corresponds with the sensitive temperament.

It seems that many people go through life with a picture in their minds. It is a picture either of what they ought to be themselves or of what life and other people ought to be to them, and they are continually conscious of it. Obviously this picture must always be a *good* picture, but it is very unlikely that it is a *true* one. Because the self, like life, or like any other person, is an unknown quantity and must always be upon a mysterious adventure.

The Picture on the Wall is used as a yardstick with which to measure everything. Either 'I ought to be like that,' or 'It ought to be like that,' or 'He ought not to be like that.' Thus nothing is ever allowed to be what it is, because being itself is not being at all like the picture.

Conscience is too often of this rude pictorial kind, and is all the more destructive to life because of the virtuous quality that the picture must always portray. Using the picture as a yardstick, not as an aid to vision but as something with which to censure and chastise, life, thus chastised and censured, can only be regarded negatively. The yardstick has been made a destroyer of the being and becoming life, instead of a way to clearer sight, which is what conscience should be to us.

But because our soul is sick, and we have made conscience into a poison for it, it does not follow that we can gain anything by simply cutting out conscience. That would be the method of extermination again, and would not help us towards balance and wholeness, even if we could do it, which we cannot. But we can learn to use conscience rightly for seeing better, and not as a hidden scourge with which to lash ourselves or our neighbours. While we are acutely aware of it, it is because we still need it, for we are blind. We have not yet seen what we could see. When we have absorbed what it has to show us, eaten and digested it, then the soul will be healed, and will no longer want to use it as an instrument of punishment.

Conscience, as we are apt to mis-use it, is always urging us to be firm: firmness is the favourite morality of weak people. But what exactly do we mean by firmness? That we should be firm in wielding our yardstick? Firmness is a mysterious word. Children's nurses and nurses of the sick have been told continually during years of training, that they have only to be 'firm' with the child or with the patient and all will be well. Thus their footsteps become firm, their faces firm, their habits firmly fixed, but an infirmity dwells within their souls.

Of course, it is quite true that firmness works, so long as it is firm enough, but that has disadvantages too. It is like all other dictatorships, in that if it is to succeed it can only do so by becoming increasingly isolated and extreme. It is an expensive method: the price is that it must eliminate everything other than itself. The principle of Nazification is essentially aimed at such exclusion by methods which can only be described as firm!¹

There is a firmness, however, of the spirit, which does not need to pay this price of unyielding rigidity, so wounding to those who have to come in contact with it. To understand how it may be attained we would refer to what was

¹ See Chapter Sixth, 'Health and Disease.' (Will-power.)

said earlier about principle¹ and about Will.² It is most unwise to behave firmly unless you are firm, and if you really are firm, (poised, firmly balanced) you do not have to bother about appearing firm and behaving firmly. This quality of the spirit is not born in isolation, and must surely be based on prior experience of endurance. It can only come about, paradoxically, through having been not hard but soft in the attitude of acceptance, not standing rigidly but falling lovingly.

Our behaviour is determined by our sensitiveness towards experience. Our job is to be more sensitive, to feel 'nicely' in the old sense of the word (that is, discriminatingly, with delicate perception): not to feel 'nice,' for that introduces a yardstick which will spoil the true æsthetic quality of feeling. No one would choose and desire to have to face tragedy, but we need not ignore that it may open other aspects of life for us to our ultimate advantage. The Greeks knew of this salutary effect, although we, in these perhaps less virile days of easy anæsthetics, seem to have forgotten it. It could not be eliminated without loss. Enjoyment of a comedy of life will cause the flower to open; but there can be enjoyment of tragedy (as tragedy) that may have a still more wholesome effect.

The difference between feeling 'nicely' and feeling 'nice' is very important, because it explains why our feelings are often so obtuse and insensitive. We are doped or anæsthetized by using yardsticks wrongly. We try to induce feelings we wish for, or think we ought to wish for, instead of sensitively registering what we actually do feel. One thing is certain, that we can never *know* what we *feel*, because thought and feeling are opposites, and on different levels. No one floor can have its experiences so simply translated into the terms of any other.

Of the four psychic functions, the one with which we are

¹ Chapter Fourth, 'Acceptance in Politics,' p. 53.

² Chapter Sixth, 'Health and Disease.'

most closely identified, if we are men, is conscious thought. If we are women, (*qua* women—which may be rare to find, as so many are only anxious to develop their male side and compete with men) the closer identification is with feeling. The man therefore measures feeling with the yardstick of thought, and decides that women are unreasonable. The woman measures a man's reason with the yardstick of emotion, and decides that he is unfeeling. But it is only one stage further to condemn a man for being a bad woman, or *vice versa*; or to be rude to oranges because they are not apple-y enough!

The rudest yardstick of all is that of intuition. That seems very surprising. We might naturally suppose that the faculty through which the spiritual body most closely functions would be sensitive, considerate, inclusive to the highest degree. But intuition is total and timeless, and deals in values that are total and timeless: it can be rude and rough to the partial, limited values of space-time. This is the pit-fall and real error of conscience. For conscience measures Cæsar (earth, space-time, all the earthly things which are Cæsar's things) by God's standard (which is the heavenly, no-time, eternal standard of the things that are God's). That is why it can be so negative and destructive. It is only a true measure for its own level, and should be kept there: yet it must be brought into close relation with the experience that is honestly, accurately registered on other levels. We must know and analyse our conditions and levels before we can keep their yardsticks in proper place. We have to experience each level as something *different* from the others, possessed of its own quality and its own right.

The four floors are the conditions of experience which the Tenant of the psychic house can enter and traverse. He should go through them all, and know them all intimately, if he is to do justice to his tenancy, and enjoy the full possibilities of the house that has been leased to him, whether it is a poor house or a palace. One may think of the four

stories as linked together by a stairway, up and down which he is constantly moving upon his business or pleasure. The tenant may stand on the ground floor (sensation), and move up to the first floor (feeling), and then to the second floor (thought), until he reaches the top floor (intuition). He may think of the ground floor as the earthiest earth, and the top floor as very heaven, but he cannot spend all his time on the top floor while he is living through his earth-experience. He must descend again and be humble, not despising the lowest floor with its kitchens and cellars, for they too are necessary to his wholeness. Certainly he must not linger there contentedly among the fleshpots, refusing to take the trouble of climbing to the upper stories, where the view is so glorious that it is worth much climbing. But neither must he use the yardstick which was made for measuring the heavenly spaces of the temple, as the gauge for appraising basement dimensions, for they are incompatible measurements. The whole house is the business of the tenant, and while he is in occupation none of it must be neglected. We have seen so often that life is eternal movement and relationship between different values and different planes and different personalities: we have seen that it is eternally rhythmic, cyclic, breathing. So it is here also: thus is the tenant within his psychic house.

So far so good. But how does the tenant function in regard to all these experiences? Is it as Cup or as Sword? As female or male, or alternating? If it is as Cup in Cup phase and as Sword in Sword phase, then he is identified with the particular function through which he is experiencing, and, in fact, with the experience. That is not enough, because it means that the Experiencer is still in the power of his experience. Then what is he to do? Is he to be Cup in the Sword phase and Sword in the Cup phase, so as to establish his separateness and supremacy? But that will not do either, for then he is not 'accepting,' but is crossing the yardsticks, and forcibly applying the measure of one

experience to another where it does not fit. What then? He should just be Cup in all phases, but detached at the same time, not identified with all the things he must encircle in the Cup's inclusive embrace. He can play Sword later, when he has learnt his lessons and earned his freedom to use power impersonally on all planes, but not before.

This is not easy, either to understand or to practise. The point of all these diverse images and allegories is to bring home the variety of experience through which the tenant must go, and with which he must be in close relationship, accepting all, yet detached from all. He has to preserve awareness of his separate, unique, individual 'I'-ness. He is conditioned and fed by all these experiences, which he must measure with the right yardsticks on the different levels, and then eat and absorb. He is always greater than the greatest experience, because he is a ray of the eternal light, and came forth from God.

The word 'introspection' has been used as a function of consciousness, and a synonym of conscious thought. But introspection means *looking* inwards, not *thinking* about ourselves. Thinking and seeing are not the same, though we shall think about what we see. We seem to be short of a word here for accurate expression of our meaning. The thinking is the experience upon the plane of thought, viz. in the mental body. The Seer is the Experiencer. We can detach the seer to watch the thinking; we can set him to watch experiences on all four planes, or four floors, or in the four bodies—however we may phrase it. When he does this he is the tenant of the whole house, accepting (seeing) his whole experience.

So then it comes to this. The Tenant is the Seer: the 'I' is the eye: and Life is Light fundamentally and essentially—which has often been said before. But to confuse the Seer with consciousness or, indeed, with what we call 'introspection,' is to confuse the Experiencer with the experience, the eye with the sight, the 'I' with the 'Me,' the thinker with the

thought, Yardsticks only apply to the experience, to the sight, the 'Me,' the thought. Being all different, the same yardsticks cannot possibly apply all round, and to try and use them indifferently can only cause immeasurable confusion. But to apply them to the Seer is to try and limit what is part of the limitless. It cannot be done. There is no yardstick whatsoever that can measure the Seer. He 'is' within the framework of his conditions, and in the circumstances with which he is surrounded. The conditions are the yardsticks, to be used respectively in their own planes of origin: the circumstances will introduce others, all to be recognized within the limitations wherein they belong. But, for the Seer—judge him not that ye be not judged.

There is an ancient wisdom which tells us: 'When the pupil is ready, the teacher arrives.' By only changing the position of the one word 'when,' we can get a new light and learn a new truth which is not less true. We write the wording thus: 'The pupil is ready when the teacher arrives.' This changes the whole emphasis and shifts the onus of responsibility. It points the fact that it is not for the pupil to decide whether he is or is not ready. That is a matter for the teacher, who knows. He would not come if the pupil were unready and therefore unable to learn and profit by the teaching. It is of no use for us to turn away and say it is too soon—that we must be excused, or that we will receive him later!

For who is this teacher? He is experience of any kind. He is not a person, a guru who knocks for us to open and welcome him in kindly fashion or beg him to call at some more convenient season. He is WHAT IS, and what is there already for good and ill, always knocking at the door of life for our acceptance. No experience comes to us which we are incapable of receiving and learning from, if we choose to accept it. We can say 'Yes' or 'No'; that is our freedom. But the will is only really free, in the sense of being released from conflict, if we can choose to say, 'Yes, I will.'

Is this fatalism? Yes and No. It is a different fatalism from the bland inertia which says: 'I don't care. Kismet: what must be will be.' For that fatalism paralyses us, by the dead weight and relentless pressure of events, into apathetic impotence. But this fatalism—if you call it so—recognizes the part that we can play with fate through our acceptance, whether more or less. This is our share of life, our contribution to it. It is this which determines what experience shall mean *to us*, and not the movement of the stars in their courses, nor the patterns of repeated history. Fate is for our learning: it is our teacher. The teacher arrives because we need him, only and exactly as he comes to us. When we have learnt the lesson which he has to teach us, then we need no more of him, and another teacher comes instead. Surely there is always more to learn. There are many teachers waiting for us when we are ready for them, and they will not knock until we are.

'Our Fate is fixed?' Well, facts are fate, and our fate is in the facts which condition us, but still we may retain our freedom. For our destiny is not the same thing as our fate. Destiny is what we choose to make of fate, and it is free.

Chapter Ninth

WHOLENESS

THROUGHOUT THIS BOOK we have kept steadily before us the 'Map' at the beginning, and remembered that our goal is Wholeness. Wholeness is the ideal of all life, whether the life of the universe, or of the community, or of each unique personality. The very word satisfies some deep hunger in us: to attain it is the aim of all good education. So we had better ask ourselves with careful curiosity what we really mean by it. We all know *something* of its meaning, we all feel *something* of its quality, but let us analyse a little and try to understand it more profoundly and more precisely. We want to know as exactly as we can what it is and what it is not, and more especially as it affects ourselves—the individual men and women that we are.

We see easily enough that there is a wholeness of the body, a wholeness of mind, and wholeness of spirit, as well as that emotional wholeness which is often disregarded and starved by our educational system. We need them *all*, and cannot be well while any part of us remains undeveloped or becomes atrophied, for then we are divided and discordant, inharmonious and unhealed. Completeness is the central idea of wholeness: the all-round growth and development (unfolding from within as a flower does, not compelled from without) of all our infinite possibilities.

And balance is at the very heart of it. If we are in a condition of wholeness there is no disproportionate expansion, no one-sided growth of any part of us at the expense of another. We cannot lean in partial preference to one aspect of truth while neglecting other aspects, without sacrificing our wholeness. We find this fact showing itself most matter-of-factly

and disturbingly every day of our lives, in our thought and emotion and conduct. Partial feeling and biased thinking lead to unbalanced doing: the resultant lack of wholeness (health) is manifest in the world and in ourselves.

We know when we have balance. The proof of it is in the confidence and security it gives. Not confidence in a fixed, static condition, with neither fear nor hope of further change, for that would be the security of a prisoner in a fortress, the safety of a corpse in a tomb. But the confidence of free, living beings; confidence that we can keep our balance though we are always moving, and sometimes over depths and voids that make us giddy; confidence that we can be unafraid of our own fears, though very conscious of them.

There are two key-words which unlock much of the meaning of wholeness for us: they are 'inclusiveness' and 'paradox.' When we think of the wholeness of the world or of the community, it seems that inclusiveness is the key which will open most doors for us. Paradox, we guess, will be the most useful when we are trying to understand ourselves, and not to stand in the way of the wholeness of our own natures. But in truth the two ideas are interlinked and inseparable. We cannot include others until we have included ourselves: we have to realize that there is nothing in the world outside, good or evil, which is not also within us. Once we accept and digest and absorb all that is in ourselves, we shall no longer feel impelled, either from virtue or from hate, to exclude and exterminate these same elements from others, by use of the scalpel or the stomach-pump. Instead, we shall want to help, by leaving the way clear for the normal processes of assimilation and elimination in the souls of others as in our own. We shall respect the building-up and breaking-down with which we are familiar in the physical body—that metabolism which is symbolic of the way of growth in all our bodies.

And we shall find that we cannot 'include ourselves' in any

real sense, until we understand the truth of paradox. We have to accept the fact and the necessity of the pairs of opposites on all floors of the house. Many people, and especially educationists, are ready to do lip-service to the ideal of wholeness, but in practice their attitude is exactly the reverse. They exalt knowledge and learning, and despise ignorance. They want everything lit up, and condemn the fruitful darkness. They seek to identify themselves and their scholars with the best that may be, while they disown the good and the bad which actually are. If they studied paradox they would know that a wholesome truth is equally true when its meaning is completely reversed (e.g. 'I am that—I am not that'). Proverbs go in opposites and contradict each other flatly, and both are always right. Paradox insists on our observing that the other side of truth is also true. We do this reluctantly, for humanity tends to be one-idea-ed and one-visioned, and likes it better so, but we find we cannot get away from paradox. Christ taught in paradoxes—that those who were not for Him were against Him, but equally that those who were not against Him were for Him;¹ that those who were out to save their lives lost them, but those who were willing to lose them, saved them. Wholeness is not a fixed point but a moving cycle, and paradox shows every step of it, and every side of the circle, each true in its own time and conditions. To understand wholeness is to understand paradox, and to understand paradox is to understand wholeness. When Pilate asked—jestingly or most tragically?—'What is Truth?' if he had waited for an answer, it might have been: 'That which is equally true when turned about upon its axis.'

Perhaps we may agree that wholeness implies completeness and balance, and that inclusiveness and paradox unlock the doors of our understanding, so that we can perceive its nature. But still we do not feel satisfied. The truth is that if anyone is asked to say in a single word what is the desire of

¹ St. Mark ix. 40. St. Luke xi. 23. St. Matthew xii. 30.

his inmost heart, in a million cases to one he will not answer 'wholeness' or 'holiness,' but 'happiness.' Ideas of happiness may vary as the poles. For one it means detachment from bondage to the world and union with God; for another it is the well-being of those he loves; and for yet another the satisfaction of his own urgent hunger for love and understanding. But always the word that springs instinctively to the lips of all of us is happiness, and there is no gainsaying it. It is the natural desire of every normal human being.

Yet we are faced by the undeniable fact that this universal craving is not fulfilled. Most of us are often, if not most of the time, very unhappy. That is apparent and understandable in cases of tragedy where the house of life to all outward seeming looks to be shattered past repair. We feel then even if we do not say it in open bitterness, that some agonies can never be forgotten—that there can be no forgiveness, no reconciliation between ourselves and 'whatever gods there be.' We are wrong, or rather mistaken, but no matter. We suffer none the less.

But it is not only in such desperate griefs that we are confronted with the fact of unhappiness. Even in ordinary, average lives, that are spared extreme suffering and have a fair measure of joy, there is still, if we are to be honest, a very general sense of sadness, of frustration. We have not been starved of love or of significance, as Freud or Adler might say—or at least not that we are aware of. We hardly know what we expected, but we know that deep down we are disappointed.

Austin Dobson, with his keen perception and delicate touch, has summed up the feeling in his little poem 'Finis.'

'When finis comes, the book we close,
 And, somewhat sadly, fancy goes
 With backward step from page to page
 Of that remembered pilgrimage.
 (The thorn lies thicker than the rose !)

'There is so much that no one knows,
 So much unguessed that none suppose.
 Such faults—such flaws—on every page
 When finis comes.'

The note of pathos and defeatism is very apparent, and self-pity is not absent, but it is *dead true*. And yet there is another and opposite point of view which is *living true*, expressed by Browning when he makes Andrea del Sarto say:

'I am grown peaceful as old age to-night.
 I regret little, I would change still less.'

The faultless painter had griefs enough to bear; the lack of recognition for his work, the shallow inadequacy and unfaithfulness of the beautiful wife whom he adored—most of all perhaps his own weakness which let down the art he worshipped; yet he had learnt the great lesson of acceptance.

No experience should be 'regretted' in one sense, though it must be 'repented' if it has injured someone else or our own spirit. Whether we have ourselves chosen, rightly or wrongly, to undergo it, or it has been imposed upon us by some outside power against our will, the one important question for us to ask is: 'What have we learnt from it?' Has it been fruitful or barren? If it has made no difference to us, left us unmoved, unchanged, placidly content within the framework of our fixed and limited ideas, then perhaps we may regret it as a useless waste, for it has been, indeed, in vain for us. But what we must regret is not the pain of it, but its defeat; not the experience but its sterility. The way to attain wholeness is the way of acceptance; which often means the willingness to be wrong, and to learn as much from that as from our rightness. And we can learn little from any revelation, however divine, until we absorb it into ourselves and let it have its way with us.

‘Though Christ a thousand times
In Bethlehem be born,
If He’s not born in thee
Thy soul is still forlorn.
The Cross on Golgotha
Will never save thy soul:
The cross in thine own heart
Alone can make thee whole.’¹

At this point a feeling comes in which cannot be ignored. Many are willing, in theory at all events, to accept and learn from an authority which they recognize as divine, and which they feel therefore is sure to be right and to give them a comfortable guarantee of results profitable to them. The way of acceptance means more than that. We must be ready to learn from very unattractive people and from very mixed sources if we are to reach wholeness. There must be willingness to sift grains of truth from sacks of error, and not despise or distrust the value of the wheat because of the chaff which will eventually be winnowed away. We must include in encompassing love all who, whether they will or no, are on the same difficult pilgrimage with us through the earth experience, even though sometimes their faces seem to our disapproving eyes to be turned away from the light, and they appear to be walking backwards. Nicolas Berdyaev says very beautifully: ‘The divine will must be carried out to the very end, yet has not God willed that man also should be a free creator? And does He not also love Nietzsche who fights against Him?’²

Sometimes it is harder to love fellow-travellers who are going, not in the opposite direction, but facing the same way as ourselves, moving at a quicker or slower pace, if their manners or methods offend our taste. Edward Thompson has brought this truth out with remarkable clearness in his

¹ Angelus Silesius.

² *Freedom and the Spirit*, by Nicolas Berdyaev. Geoffrey Bles. Centenary Press.

Indian play, *Atonement*,¹ where he puts it into the mouth of the missionary, Gregory:

'Oh, *why* has one got to go into such squalid company if one takes the right side? I know now why decent people wouldn't join the early Christians. Haven't I seen our own conscientious objectors? Don't I know our own Christian Indians out here? No wonder decent Hindus don't want to be mixed up with them! . . . How was the decent Roman or Greek or Jew to get past the swarm of hysterical, defiant, cringing slaves, with their silly "inferiority complexes," and see a St. Paul? Or how is one to get past your venomous, cowardly, lying journalists and your double-faced pleaders, and your babyish and treacherous students, and see a Gandhi? . . . Yet the slaves were right, and the decent, self-controlled, Roman philosopher was wrong.'

Mental fastidiousness, as much as social fastidiousness, may sometimes lead us wrong, and shut us out from part of the truth. It is for our wholeness to accept and learn from everyone who has anything to teach us—and everyone has! Yes, and not only the negative lessons of 'how not to do it,' and 'what to avoid,' but, along with these, treasures of positive worth, which we can receive if we will, even from those who deeply irritate us. Humility must be humble with the humble as well as with the high, but it takes some greatness of heart and soul to accept this lowliness. When we attain so high and penetrate so deep, we find that there is a treasure of the humble that we could not afford to lose. 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.' When we have that treasure, it is a sure sign that our Cup is open.

But, as we keep our eyes fixed on our goal of wholeness, we must not be content to take a passive attitude, accepting gratefully what others have to give us. That is good, but more arduous labours of the spirit are also required. Whittier has expressed the debt which followers of one

¹ Published by Benn Bros.

religion owe to those of other, and to all souls that are feeling after God and finding Him :

‘In Vedic verse, in dull Koran
Are messages from God to man ;

.
The prophets of the elder day,
The slant-eyed sages of Cathay,
Read not the lesson all amiss
Of higher life evolved from this.’

And he goes on to point out that, having searched the world over for truth and goodness and beauty, then,

‘Weary seekers of the best
We come back laden from our quest,
To find that all the sages said
Was in the book our mothers read.’

Yes, but we had to seek it before we could find it. That was our contribution. We went away and found it, for whither could we go and not find it, since it is everywhere for those who have eyes to see ? We came back and found it where we started, eternal and changeless, for truth does not change, though its forms change ceaselessly. It has always been around us, yet we have not always seen it. We cannot rest lazily on the spiritual adventures of braver people. All in the book we learnt at our mother’s knee ? Yes, but it was not truth for us till we had made it ours. It was only a vain repetition until, by sweat and sacrifice, we had learnt something of its mystery. We came back, but some of us had to travel far to find the meaning which could make the dead bones live for us again. When we imagine that we can reach enlightenment by depending on the spiritual experience of others and refusing our own, we are guilty of mental sloth, or cowardice, or stupidity. We may not be worthy to tie the shoe-strings of those others who taught us the old simple forms, but unless we make our own experiments we shall never

live in the heart of the inner meaning which they had found, but die in the body of the outer form. In our explorings we may make mistakes, and come back humbly to those who, we find, were wiser than we guessed. But the pilgrimage was necessary and worth while.

Sometimes the old lamps prove still the best, and hold the sacred flame as translucently as ever, and sometimes they do not. Then we must accept the need of new bottles for our new wine, and not be afraid of unfamiliar vessels.

'A man would think shame of himself if in other fields of knowledge he did not advance beyond the conceptions of his childhood. Yet some men in their religious apprehensions are still playing with their childish toys. What was given to them before they were in their teens, is still being hugged through life like a Teddy bear. They are still in the religious nursery, with infant pictures on the walls. . . . With the majority of us God is taken for granted. We have given Him a name, and we think we know Him. . . . I would say: "Stop thinking of Him as God. You have probably thought of Him under that name long enough, and the word has become petrified. Think of Him as the Life of the Universe . . . as Being . . . as Purpose . . . as Reality. We are not all seers and mystics, but we can read what the seers and mystics have to say." Not in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem, but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth.'¹

Now we seem to be up on the heights again ! It is rather like Alice through the Looking-Glass, when she found herself trying to walk in one direction and always ending up in quite another. We want to bring this down to earth, where we were discussing the human problem of the happiness we desired and the unhappiness we so often had to bear. But there is a connection. Why are we so unhappy ? It is because we are not whole. Happiness is the consequence of being in a state of wholeness. This must not be confused

¹ *The God Whom We Ignore*, by John Kennedy. Hodder and Stoughton.

with 'goodness.' To say that a person would be well if he were good, or happy because he was good, would be manifestly untrue in our experience. Moralists may wish it were true, or think it ought to be true, but it is not true. We all know people who are 'good' on any computation, who are yet suffering from painful disease and great unhappiness. A man may be supremely unselfish, but he will not on that account be free from acute indigestion if he is following a mistaken régime as to diet or otherwise. He may be devoting his life to the highest aims, but he will not be happy if there is unresolved conflict and disharmony in his thoughts or his emotions. If he is trying to live exclusively on one floor of his house, because he thinks it is the 'best' one, he will find that he is not whole (healthy), but ill and unbalanced.

It is important therefore to be quite clear on this point, that 'wholeness' and 'goodness' are not the same thing. Wholeness is the greater, and it includes goodness which is the less. For it includes *everything*—not only victory over sin, and humility of heart, but also heroism and creative energy; not only service through philanthropy, but positive achievement in art and literature and music, in science and invention, and in philosophy. The 'whole man' is the all-round man. He is developed on his religious and spiritual side, but also on all sides to which his freedom and special gifts call him. It is his divine inheritance. Wholeness may be simple for the simple, or complex for the complex. But always it means that there is no denial of the freedom of the spirit of man. That spirit has a need and a right to its full growth, though it may and must be disciplined.

And always it needs courage, not only for ourselves, which is comparatively easy, but for those we love, where, as we have noticed already, it is so much harder to be brave and to take risks. Some danger seems to threaten them, we think, and we are right. They are threatened not by one, but by many dangers, and we seem powerless to help them. That

is, perhaps, the greatest pain of all, yet it must be accepted until it is swallowed up in victory. But halt a moment here, for there must be no risk of misunderstanding, and the bargaining spirit creeps in so easily. We cannot drive a bargain with life or with our destiny, or with God. We cannot count on the triumph of ultimately getting our own way, if meantime we will only 'accept' and 'behave beautifully.' It would seem a fair price to pay, if we could be sure of security and ease of heart and mind in the end, and we would buy in that market gladly, but there are no sellers.

What do we mean, then, by talking of our pain being swallowed up in victory? There are many sorts of victory, and sometimes the only one that is possible for us is the victory that comes of defeat accepted. That is not a mean victory, and it is not an easy one. Meanwhile, such security as may be attainable for the beloved, as for ourselves, is not won by refusal to take risks. Without risks there can be no free life and no growth. Let us face them, then, with courage and with a sense of humour that is not morbid and does not exaggerate them. External disasters and internal conflicts are real: nothing is gained by denying them, or by a pretence at insensitiveness which would be as unnatural as undesirable. We cannot and should not help suffering under them, but there is no point in looking at them through the magnifying lens of cowardice.

Remembering that balance is an essential part of wholeness, we can understand that too much fear of evil, too much concentration on the thought of it, even with the ardent desire to overcome it, will militate against wholeness, for they are signs of want of balance, as well as of want of faith. This is brought out emphatically by Nicolas Berdyaev in *Freedom and the Spirit*,¹ from which we have quoted repeatedly in this book. He says:

'The exaggeration of the power of temptation can hardly be a positive means of overcoming it. . . . As long as in our

¹ Geoffrey Bles. Centenary Press.

struggle against evil we regard it as strong and enticing, and at the same time both awe-inspiring and forbidden, we are not going to achieve any radical or final victory over it . . . it will remain invincible so long as it is so regarded. . . . The attraction of evil is a lie and an illusion. . . . Only the knowledge of its absolute emptiness and tedium can give us the victory over it. . . . Our attitude towards evil must be free from hatred, and has itself need to be enlightened in character. . . . Satan rejoices when he succeeds in inspiring us with diabolical feelings to himself. It is he who wins when his own methods are turned against himself. . . . A continual denunciation of evil and its agents merely encourages its growth in the world—a truth sufficiently revealed in the Gospels, but to which we remain persistently blind.'

In short, it is not the extermination of evil and temptation which the 'whole' man hopes for and aims at, but detachment from its power and glamour. We shall know when we are healed, 'made perfectly whole,' for we shall be thus detached, and however great the multitude of our griefs, or piercing our pains, we shall be happy. Happiness is that state of being which is the result of the condition of wholeness. And wholeness depends upon the inward state of the 'Golden Flower,' or 'Cup,' which symbolizes our inner Self or Spirit.

How to keep the Cup open, the Golden Flower in perfect beauty—that is our problem, and it is the key to the Kingdom of Heaven for us. This then is the supreme matter for our understanding and for our daily, hourly practice. Where is it that we go wrong in our tending of the Golden Flower? If the Golden Cup is not open, why is it shut, and against what?

It is our attitude towards Space that is wrong. We desire our Cup to be open to those things which we perceive to be good, and from which therefore we can believe that we shall receive something that will be to our highest advantage. We will be open to the sun and fresh air and summer rain;

but if a harsh wind is blowing and icy sleet falling, our instinct is to close the petals of the flower. We will open wide to receive joy and pleasure and the gay vigour of youth, but we close our Cup in a pitiful effort to ward off and keep at bay grief and pain, sickness and old age. We will be open to Heaven, but not to Hell. We hold out embracing arms to take beauty to wife, but refuse a marriage bed to the other side of the earth experience, which has no beauty that we may desire it. We will acclaim perfection, but chide and reject imperfection. We will welcome knowledge, but not suffer ignorance. We will say 'Yes' to ecstasy, but 'No' to depression. Above all—and this is the crucial point—we will be open only to those things which we can apprehend with full consciousness, so that we may know exactly what guests we are asked to entertain. For we remember, shrewdly, that 'knowledge is power,' and we have more love of power than power of love.

Our attitude to Space has been too negative. Here are darkness—emptiness—the unseen—the intangible. We do not like any of this. We are frightened and suspicious of it. Receive it, make friends with it, learn from it? No, we do not think of doing that. If we can we will draw our curtains close and pretend it is not there. If that is impossible we will fly from it, or in the last resort, fight it tooth and nail. But in any case we will refuse it, not only with our shrinking bodies, but with all our heart and mind and soul.

But this dark, empty Space which we refuse, is as much a part of reality, as much intended for our acceptance, as the visible, tangible, possessible which is so brightly lit up, and to which we turn so much more readily. It is our attitude of suspicion and resistance to this dark Space, our constant dread of it and struggle to avoid being drawn into its current, which is the cause of much of our illness and unhappiness. We forget the rhythm, the ascending and descending curves of life, which never stands still and never

moves on straight lines. We will not yield and 'in the destructive element immerse.'¹ When the downward curve comes we do not let ourselves sink down with it easily and trustfully, but struggle frantically to remain on the crest of the wave. If we find, as we do, that the tide is resistless, and that we are carried away from our safe-seeming moorings, at least we close our Cup, to keep out as much of this strange, terrifying experience as may be.

But then the Cup is starved of its fullness, the Golden Flower is bruised and crushed. Then we cannot have healing and happiness. We are only half alive, and tragically divided against ourselves. We are cheated of our wholeness.

We seem instinctively afraid of movement and of change, and to judge that they are bad for us. If things and thoughts would only keep still and stationary, so that we could study them at our ease and label and pigeon-hole them, we should feel much safer and happier. Even to the things veiled in mystery we could be more polite if they would stand to attention at our policeman's challenge, and step out into the light of our electric torch, to be stripped and searched. But that they will not do, because they cannot. Darkness and unconsciousness and ignorance must be accepted unconditionally as they are. They cannot be defined and confined within the narrow comfortable limits we seem to crave for ourselves, and would so gladly assign to them.

If we would be whole we must keep our little private preferences and personal bias out of it. We are too anxious to appraise and calculate carefully what will be likely to pay us best. But wholeness, of its very nature, implies inclusive disinterestedness. It demands that we must accept AND SHARE all that is offered for the sustenance of our eternal life. We must not select what re-assures our timidity and reject what alarms us; and, above all, we must not try to keep for our own, exclusive, separate use that which we see is good.

A great truth is reached when we realize and live the ideal

¹ Joseph Conrad.

of sharing. It is not an ideal which appeals to our natural instincts. We do not much like sharing. But life is relationship, not isolation; and to some extent at least, we *must* share, because in fact we *do* share. We have a common source—we breathe a common air—we are all brothers. We do not like our brother whom we have seen; and neither do we like or understand God whom we have not seen but have created too much in our own image, when we first catch a glimpse of Him in His Wholeness and Reality.

We have made love too exclusively a personal, private possession, a part and not a whole, hoarded and not shared. We have a sense of property in our thoughts, our opinions, our ideas. We are jealous even of our visions, fearing that the light of common day, the breath of common language discussing them, will make them wither and fade the sooner. It is a needless fear. The general is greater than the particular, and bread shared is bread of life. It is the motive of personal advantage, on the other hand, which corrodes and is destructive of life. Beauty perishes at its touch, and safety becomes a prison cell. Truth cannot be its house-mate and still breathe, and goodness dies when we would make it a personal attribute and possess it. As we grow in wholeness, the inclusive, unconditional love of God will embrace and transform the exclusive, bargaining love of man, until all are ready to share with one another, and all realize that they are one in Him and content in Him.

There are times when after being on the mountain and seeing a vision, we are aware of a vast depression settling blackly upon us. Was it a vision of life after all, or only a mirage? And have we lost it? (But Christ said that whosoever would save his life must be willing to lose it, and that may be true of visions too.) Perhaps it is because the finite, mortal part of self is overwhelmed at the glimpse of infinity and immortality. We are afraid. The depression is part of that great dark Space which draws us in spite of our dread, that rhythm which sweeps us from conscious activity and

dominating competence down to passivity and submission, back to the source and centre. We fight it and cling to the tip of the petal of the flower, where we would choose to remain in the sunlight. But if we have courage to let go, and let the darkness and desolation close over our heads, we shall find that we are not swallowed up and destroyed by the 'destructive element,' but borne up and renewed.

When the Christ is born in us, when we have attained the *Tao*, we shall realize the unconsciousness of the 'good life.' We shall be in it and of it, able to let go and walk on in natural serenity. But self-consciousness is a necessary stage that must come before. We must want and know that we have not, before we can attain. When the physical body is in perfect health we are largely unconscious of it. We only think of our blood pressure, and our temperature, and of the functioning of all our organs, when there is something wrong with them. Then, aware that we are ill, we desire to be healed, and, if we are wise, to find out where we had gone astray, so that we may learn from our mistakes how to keep to the ways of health. So it is with the good life. When we reach it and are in it and of it, we shall only be conscious of it as we are of the air which we breathe and enjoy.

Man is a free spirit, but if his freedom is used to refuse instead of to accept, it has given him only death instead of life. Yet life is what we seek so urgently. But the truth is that we are meant to have both life *and* death. Death is a part of that dark Space, that spacious Darkness which is part of our wholeness. Unless we accept it with full acceptance we cannot be complete and content.

And it is not so terrifying after all. We remember the Healers, Sleep, Change, Light and Love. They are all with us in the hour of death, and we need fear no evil. As the crying child went out into the garden to wander and to wonder and to play, and found himself reconciled and in tune with life, so it may be with us when we pass through the Gate and on to a new experience.

If we have grown familiar with the conception of our real Selves functioning through our different bodies, the idea of death will come easily to us, and we shall see it as natural and necessary and unalarming. We shall feel :

‘Nay, but as when one layeth
 His worn-out robes away,
 And taking new ones, sayeth
 These will I wear to-day.
 So putteth by the spirit
 Lightly its garb of flesh,
 And passeth to inherit
 A residence afresh.’¹

And to those to whom the language of Eastern mysticism makes no appeal, and who learn more confidently from the poets and seers of the West, we commend that noble sonnet of Blanco White’s, which breathes the very spirit of supreme faith and confident acceptance :

‘Mysterious Night, when our first parent knew
 Thee from report Divine, and heard thy name,
 Did he not tremble for this lovely frame
 This glorious canopy of light and blue ?
 Yet, ’neath a curtain of translucent dew,
 Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,
 Hesperus with the host of Heaven came,
 And lo ! creation widened in man’s view.

‘Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed
 Within thy beams, oh, Sun ? or who could find
 Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed
 That to such countless orbs thou madst us blind ?
 Why do we then shun death with anxious strife ?
 If Light can thus deceive, wherefore not Life ?’²

Whether a man be a Christian, Jew, Buddhist or agnostic makes no difference in this respect. He must—he only can—

¹ ‘The Song Celestial,’ *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Sir Edwin Arnold.

² ‘To Night,’ sonnet by J. Blanco White. Included in *The Pageant of English Poetry*, and some other anthologies.

build within his own framework, use his own language and his own experience. Whatever that framework, he will find that the spirit of acceptance is the fulfilment of the Law. Walking in the Way of Acceptance, which is the open way of faith and encompassing love, he will find healing and balance, for he will have become whole. He will not be afraid of life or of death.

And he will be happy.

Chapter Tenth

THE CUP

WHILE WE HAVE BEEN trying to point the way to the Open Way—the Way of Acceptance leading to the Goal of Wholeness—constant allusions have been made to one recurrent image: the Cup. Now the time has come to explain, if we can, what we understand by this symbol, and what we mean by talking of the ‘technique of the Cup.’

It may seem that a reverse order would have been preferable, starting the book with definitions. But the use of a symbol or the practice of a ritual must often precede the possibility of its full understanding. This is true with adults as with children, for in spiritual matters the wisest and most learned are still children. The awe and love that grow up in the presence of a mystery that is dimly apprehended and felt to be holy, come long before a logical explanation of its meaning is needed or can be attempted. When it does come it is still only possible to a limited extent. One of the most distinguished and spiritually minded of modern theologians, Baron von Hügel, has reminded us of this :

‘Religion is dim; in the religious temper there should be a great simplicity and a certain contentment in dimness. . . . Never try to get things too clear. . . . If I could understand religion as I can understand that two and two make four, it would not be worth understanding. Religion can’t be clear if it is worth having. . . . If I can see things through and through I get uneasy—I feel it’s a fake; I know I have left out something. I’ve made some mistake.’¹

The practice of a large part of the Christian Church with regard to the presence of young children at the celebration

¹ *Letters to a Niece*, by Baron von Hügel. J. M. Dent.

of the Mass or the Communion of the Holy Sacrament, indicates the value they attach to participation in mystical truth and symbolism, before there can be much comprehension, and psychologists would agree that in this they are right. Another example may be quoted from the immemorial custom of the Jewish community. When, long ago, the service of the Feast of the Passover was ordained to the children of Israel, in memory of a great deliverance, they were bidden to explain its significance to the generations that came after. And to this day, when they celebrate it, the youngest at the Feast rises up and asks the old question, 'What mean ye by this service?' and the eldest replies to him in the moving words of the old explanation. But all join first in the celebration.

Another (practical) consideration is that in dealing with any subject one must needs begin *somewhere*, and whatever starting place is chosen it is unavoidable to use terms which cannot all be defined at the same time. This is true in history, in economics and in science. Similarly, when dealing with spiritual conceptions, whether you begin with God, or the Universe, or Man, you will hardly get far in discussing the nature and being of any of the three without finding it necessary to pre-suppose and refer to the others. And so it is with the Cup, the image which has kept coming into the picture because it is an integral part of it, but which has yet had to wait its turn for attempt at explanation. It is probable that many readers will have gathered some inkling of its meaning. Some may be already familiar with it. The mystics will find it easy to understand, but to others it may, at first, seem more difficult.

The purpose of this technique is to define the law which is life, and then to co-operate wholly with it. The Cup or the Golden Flower signifies the indwelling fire or source of life. In the nervous system it is the 'solar plexus.' But, in order to co-operate with life's law or nature, we must use symbolism. With this intent therefore we create the image of the

Cup, which corresponds with the 'facts of life.' In the depths of our innermost being we create it: it is a Grail, a holy symbol. We shape it like a flower with face upturned. We create it out of the Eternal Light of which we are a part: the Light which came forth from the One Life, incarnate in the Logos, and made each one of us a living soul. We hold it up to God. Our supreme duty is to sustain the Cup, to see that it is never closed but open wide, so that it may be filled and emptied and filled again. This is the offering of a continuous sacrifice in the true sense of the word sacrifice. That does not mean renouncing or depriving ourselves of something precious, but the holding up of something to be made holy. The technique of the Cup is not an occasional spiritual exercise, but a twenty-four-hour-a-day technique. Specially is it for use at night before we sleep.

Into our open Cup, formed of the Light, come pouring all our experiences in all our bodies, past and present. (It may be from the future, too, but that is beyond three-dimensional understanding.) Not only experiences gained or suffered in this life, but from all our lives. Not only the good and the true and the beautiful, but also the evil, the false and the ugly—our whole Karma. And not only our own *personal, conscious* experiences, but experiences of the universal life in its myriad incarnations. From this conception come the ideas of universal sharing, and universal responsibility. (We spoke of the first in the last chapter, and must speak of the second in the present one.) The Cup must be open to all things and all thoughts, good and bad, sweet and bitter. We look for God in the Cup, and we shall find Him there, but there is often a deep draught of bitterness to be drunk first. Nothing must be shut out, however unacceptable; for only so, by acceptance and free admission to all-inclusive love, can anything be changed. We must not sentimentalize the Cup either. There is room in it for *everything*, and that includes laughter and a sense of humour.

But that is only part of this symbolism. There is more.

The Cup may be thought of, too, as an Altar. Within its empty space we place all the valuables which we must surrender when we would empty ourselves: our knowledge and efficiency, our gifts and talents. Only when we are truly emptied can the Cup be filled. And not valuables only must be placed in the Cup, but also all our sins and failures, even our meanest qualities. Every secret vice and hidden fault must go, confessed, upon that Altar; our pride and vanity and conceit (so closely linked yet so distinct!); our hatreds and resentments; our lack of love and love of power; our regrets and our remorse. And not only sins, but sorrows too; our physical pains and sicknesses, our mental agonies, our anxieties for ourselves and for our beloved. All should be placed in the Cup 'with intention' as Catholics say of a special Mass, and left there. And then the Self should remain passive, waiting, expectant; doing nothing actively or consciously in any of the bodies, but in full acceptance.

The 'I am' is not identified with any of the experiences in the Cup, neither with the personal nor with the universal. 'I' am always the Experiencer, and all that comes to me I must accept. I cannot change external events, for they are the result of a long series of determining causes. I cannot directly change myself either, for I, too, am the slow growth from a seed sown long ago, and well or ill-tended in the gardens of my past. But I *can* choose my attitude, both to the external universal and to my inner Self: the choice of trustful acceptance or of fearful refusal. And this choice can and does change the *content* of the Cup, as the colour or the flavour of the water in a vessel may be changed by a drop of dye or a lump of salt or sugar dissolved in it. This is man's great and inalienable freedom—perhaps the only freedom he has—the freedom of his spirit to accept and be at one with life, or to revolt and be in separation. It is a fateful freedom, a tragic freedom if you will, but it is what gives dignity and purpose to the life of man. It is the power

to co-operate with God in the work of creation and redemption—which cannot indeed be completed without man's co-operation.

In the technique of the Cup, in the practice and habit of acceptance, the pattern of the soul is decided and destiny is shaped. It is this karmic quality of soul which is individual, unique and continuous through the cycle of lives and deaths. That we have *some* freedom of choice, however limited by the facts which are our fate, we know in our spiritual consciousness. We are aware of it with passionate conviction. Else all religion and philosophy would be dead and meaningless, and the soul—the phoenix—is less even than a poor bird in a cage. It is only a robot after all. The logic and argument which rule out the spiritual and the unseen, reckoning only with the seen, material side of our present life, may seem to make the determinist position impossible to refute. It is a grim consistency, but it is consistent. But the position is impossible to maintain if we admit the existence of the spiritual. There must be freedom of the spirit, and the exercise of that freedom needs eternity. The spirit wears new garments and fulfils itself in new functions, but, like the phoenix, it is immortal, and we know it by faith, though we cannot demonstrate or prove it.

What then is faith? It is an inner, unalterable attitude of the soul towards the unseen, easily recognizable but which eludes definition. It is unquenchable, possessed of an intuitive knowledge that is independent of external argument or proof. It is easy to say what it is *not*: it is not belief in any dogma or set of dogmas received on authority. The creeds we have built up, the beliefs we cling to in our various bodies, may often have to be surrendered, together with many hopes, but faith is a thing essential to our wholeness. Not only is it never to be surrendered, but we *cannot* surrender it and live. 'We live by faith' is not a mere phrase, but a fact. Perhaps the only other thing that can be said with confidence about

faith is that it has two qualities always—trust and courage—trust in the wholeness of which only part is seen, and the courage of endurance.

Faith has courage to make all the adventures to which the freedom of the spirit may call us, even if they seem crazy adventures. For love and faith are both crazy according to ordinary rational calculations, and must be prepared to do the crazy thing at every turn. The pilgrimage of the soul is like a journey on an uncharted water-way, or along an unknown path (unknown to us, but not untrodden; it has been trodden by countless numbers, even of 'reasonable' people!). To go on this journey happily, we need an understanding of paradox, for we must know that light can only be found in and through darkness, and is perceived and understood by reason of darkness. We must look downwards and inwards for it, not only up and out, which we are so apt to think of as the only right directions for looking. As the soul travels along this path it must have courage, through faith, to open and pass through doors which must be shut again behind it. The doors lead to the unknown, and open on to darkness. It seems to common sense and caution that unless we retreat we can only plunge down into the empty void. As each door opens we are faced by a temptation which may probably present itself as a virtue: 'I ought to go back.' But it is really the voice of cowardice that fears danger and craves ease and security. It comes from lack of faith, and has neither trust nor courage. The command is always to 'walk on.' All pilgrims are at one in their experience of darkness on their progress. But they learn also that the void can become solid if one walks on. St. Peter found that he could walk upon the water until his faith failed him. 'He who has attained the *Tao*' (the Way, the Meaning), 'can walk upon reality as if it were a void, and travel on a void as if it were reality.'¹ Those in whom the Christ is born

¹ *The Travels of Mingliatré*, by Ts'u Lung. Quoted in *The Art of Living*, by Lin Yutang.

need fear nothing, for they know that underneath are the Everlasting Arms.

All this is difficult for those who are accustomed to think and speak only in terms of the material. We may consider for the convenience of our understanding that there are two planes; the plane of the life of the spirit, and the plane of manifestation. We usually pass judgment on the things of the spirit from the opposite side, which is the plane of manifestation—that plane on which mind and body function with such brightly lit-up consciousness. Body-mind, looking across the gulf to the world of spirit, sees it as nothingness, emptiness, chaos. It looks all dark, and the very negation of life and being as body-mind conceives them. But when we cross the gulf and judge spirit from the side of spirit, our eyes grow used to the darkness and we have new vision. Then we perceive that the void and chaos are in reality the teeming womb of all things living; not empty but cradling all fullness. The darkness is radiant with the essential Light that transcends our judgment of good and evil. All positive being is in that seeming negation, and all forms are ready for use when the moment comes to pass over to the plane of manifestation. Baron von Hügel was right about the necessary dimness of religion. Ignorance and darkness are a part of the soul's equipment on its eternal pilgrimage *through* and *with* and *to* the Light which is the source of its being and the goal of its wholeness.

The idea of the Cup and our practice of the Cup technique, depend upon our attitude towards the spiritual and the unseen. In our chapter on Acceptance in Politics, we saw how inevitably metaphysical ideas affected national and international life, as well as the inner life of man. If we believe that the form is all there is—no flame behind it—then when the form dies all dies. It is a difficult belief to hold consistently and with real inward conviction, yet if a man does so believe (with grief, perhaps, but with complete sincerity), he 'can no other.' But the unfortunate practical

consequences are easily seen. From such a metaphysical idea there follows naturally a feeling of rush and hurry, a desperate anxiety to clutch at time and knowledge. Any mistake is fatal, any loss final. 'A hair, perhaps, divides the false and true! . . . Oh, make haste!'¹ Even when the motive is the most generous of all, the desire to serve, the result is still one of anxious pessimism. 'If there is anything I can do, let me do it now, for I shall not pass this way again.' In such a mood wholeness is not attained, and the best work is not done. But if we have the indefinable quality of faith, we can have patience as well as trust and courage. (Perhaps patience is the third element?) Then our thoughts are different, and include, in peace, our ignorance as well as our knowledge. They run something like this: 'I do not know whether I have passed this way many times before, or whether I shall pass it ever or a thousand times again, clothed in similar bodies upon this same earth, or in different bodies and in other worlds. But through whatever experiences I pass, whenever or wherever, I shall not be lost in God but live in God. I am persuaded that nothing can separate me from the love of God which is in Christ.'

'What's time ?

Leave time for dogs and apes.

Man has for ever.'²

Any true religion must hold a great deal of agnosticism, as well as firm belief in a certain gnosis—that is in the possibility of personal knowledge and apprehension of God. Such gnosis is inherent in the symbolism of the Cup. The awareness of God can be experienced by many people directly, at first hand, and by innumerable others 'through grace,' and by faith enabling them to receive the revelation indirectly. That testimony bears witness to what is unknowable, invisible, intangible in consciousness.

¹ *Rubd'iydt of Omar Khayyám.*

² 'A Grammarian's Funeral,' by Robert Browning.

‘O world invisible, we view thee.
 O world intangible, we touch thee.
 O world unknowable, we know thee.’¹

It is sometimes objected that though the practical result of such faith may be good in respect of giving personal courage and confidence, yet it leads to an ‘other-worldliness’ which is responsible for much callous indifference to the wrongs and cruelties of the world. But this is a non-sequitur, and the weight of argument and practical experience leans to the other side. The duration of one brief life is so manifestly insignificant for determining the destiny of the individual soul or for mending the ills of the world, that if we believe that is our fixed limit the idea paralyses effort. It makes progress seem neither possible nor much worth while. We may try to support ourselves with the ideal of unselfish work for those who will come after, when we are swept into nothingness. But that too looks vain and futile, if they are also doomed to the limitations of a single life, too short for learning much or growing much. The conception of eternity in which to bring God’s kingdom down to earth and to reach our own wholeness, gives hope and encourages effort.² For

¹ ‘The Kingdom of God,’ by Francis Thompson.

² We quite realize that the idea of reincarnation has been discarded as a heresy by the orthodox teaching of Christianity. It is our belief, however, that the word holds a meaning of great value that is not to be lost without disaster. Dean Inge has recently said in a contribution to the *Evening Standard* that not only is the belief in reincarnation firmly held by most Eastern peoples, but also by far more Europeans than is generally realized. To those whose understanding of the word causes them to be unfriendly to it, we would appeal and ask them to judge all references to it afresh, for it has a content with which they have much in common. For instance, they would approve the idea of incarnation itself: they would agree about the need for re-birth or being born again in the Christian sense; and they would appreciate the symbol of the phoenix rising from the embers of destructive fire. They would probably agree, too, that many heresies of yesterday have become the liberal re-statements or re-interpretations of to-day, and may become the orthodoxy of to-morrow. The point which we want to emphasize is that Life itself is of the order of rhythmic recurrence: it is in fact re-born in us as we awake to each new day: indeed, every instant must die before the next can follow. It is an essential part of this teaching that all life must be ‘died into.’ This is another meaning of acceptance.

the teaching of the Cup is that the lessons of the school *must be learnt*: the Kingdom *must* come on earth as it is in heaven: the task *must* be continued until it is completed. The Cup *must* be open and receive all, and the contents of the Cup *must* be drunk—in good time. There is no way of escape from our destiny.

A lazy, selfish 'other-worldliness' gets no encouragement from this way of thinking. Such an attitude, uninterested in social betterment, might indeed spring from a belief that this life, so soon over, would be followed by an eternity of bliss or torment, already predestined and determined. Our school-time is not so short or so easy or so irrational as that! We are tied to the wheel of life and death until the Divine Will is accomplished in us, until our earth-experience is lived through in completeness and fulfilled. This belief teaches patience, but adds to urgency of effort. Because we desire that the cage of time may open the sooner to release us, and that, made free by love, we may dwell like singing birds in the branches of the tree of life that fills eternity. 'Now' has not lost value in some dim and distant 'Then' which is largely independent of us and our poor efforts; because it is 'the Eternal Now,' in which all things actual and potential co-exist. It is helpful to have a sense of the *depths* of the Cup, as we try to visualize the image, with no flatness or shallowness in it. Then it is easier to think of the spiral line of our life travelling onwards from one time level to another in the great Cup of the universal life.

Time is so difficult to understand. It was treated for so long as a self-evident, axiomatic fact, as to which there was no

If we believe that our earth-time is necessarily limited to the brief span of one short life, the danger of anxiety urging us on with excessive, and sometimes with aggressive speed is evident, and has been referred to in the text: also the advantage to our behaviour that is derived from faith that we are children of eternity. We would only add our belief that the new metaphysic of time will make this difficult matter more clear. Obviously, it is not possible to understand reincarnation without understanding Time. For that we must wait awhile, but meanwhile the reader is asked to hold his prejudices about reincarnation as lightly as possible.

doubt and no dispute, unthought of and not needing thought. To-day it is one of the most absorbing preoccupations of thinkers, and phrases concerning the spatiality of time and the fourth dimension find their way into current fiction as well as into philosophical studies. One thing at least we can understand and do well to remember: that is that Time as we measure it is an arbitrary conception. There are many times besides our time, and a year or a thousand years of our time may be as yesterday in the time of some other sphere, or as an instant in the time of God. But the vital moment for us is always 'now.' It is the one time with which we can ever be immediately concerned, and responsible for its spending. Our task is to live fully and wisely 'now,' within the limits of our circumstances and of those relationships which are at once our joy and our sorrow, our opportunity and our restriction. If we accept them with full surrender and unconditional love, we need not worry about the past, for the content of the Cup, wherein past, present and future are mingled, will have been changed. We need take no anxious thought for the future, whether on this Time Track or another, for it will take care of itself, or be taken care of, whichever phrase we prefer. Both contain the truth. The thing which it is vitally important for us to understand is the part which we play in determining—by digestion (acceptance) or indigestion (rejection)—what effect our experiences shall have upon our destiny. The harvest of suffering cannot be reaped until it has been eaten, burnt, digested. If the suffering is accepted and lived *through*, not fought against and refused, then it is completed and becomes transmuted. It is absorbed, and having accomplished its work, it ceases to exist as suffering, and becomes part of our growing self.

It is the conception of God as comprehending all things in Himself, while preserving every valuable element of personality and separate individual freedom undestroyed, which makes not only possible but inevitable the conception of immortality. It is true that 'this immortality' cannot

prevent the grief and sense of loss that comes to love through 'this mortality.' It answers no questions of where and when and how after death. (Men think they have the answers to these questions—or some of them do—but they are guesses or symbols.) No teaching can dogmatize on what happens to the soul after death, for so many things that we can speculate about may happen, as well, perhaps, as others of which we have not even an inkling. And wisdom speaks of spiritual awareness and of love and life, rather than of human consciousness and recognition, so that it is hard at first for the sense-bound, stricken heart to receive full consolation. But beauty and goodness and truth are real things. They are positive and creative, and therefore their reality is indestructible and eternal. We accept the idea of indestructibility easily enough on the lower plane of material values, since the physicists have familiarized us with the notion of indestructible energy. Why should we doubt it of the higher values? Only because the unseen and spiritual seem to us, imprisoned as we are in matter, to be less real than the visible and tangible. They are not less real, and the physicist's truth is true on all planes. In William Cory's exquisite lines, the friend of Heraclitus mourns his death with almost unbearable emotion, but consoles himself by remembering:

'Still are thy pleasant voices, thy nightingales awake,
For Death he taketh all away, but these he cannot take.'¹

It is not only true of immortal verse. Every generous impulse and courageous deed, every beautiful kindness or life-giving word of love, and every noble personality have in them indestructible elements, values which will not perish. The flame is not destroyed, only the temporary vessel that contains it. The karmic quality of the soul cannot die.

It seems then that in reality Death, of whom Cory said with such tragic pathos that 'he taketh all away,' takes very

¹ 'Heraclitus,' in *Ionica*, by William Cory. George Allen and Unwin, Ltd.

little after all, and love is comforted. The aching intolerable sense of waste, that so haunts the heart and mind, preventing reconciliation with Life and with God, is dispelled. Nothing is in vain or useless, nothing 'cast as rubbish to the void'; but lower forms are purged and pass into higher ones. In some form life always continues, always perpetuates itself, and the forms worthy of survival are the forms that survive. Often we judge wrongly, in pride or ignorance or anguish, which are the forms worthy of survival. Christ's great saying, of infinite reassurance, consoles us: 'In my Father's house are many mansions.' And yet another of His sayings rebukes our easy moral assumptions: 'The publicans and harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.'

It is true that Christ made no pronouncement on the subject of reincarnation or any other aspect of the life after the death of the physical body, except that it was a fact. Neither did He do so on many other matters, e.g. democracy, or the industrial structure of society. If it be said that He came to reveal spiritual and ethical truth, not political or economic truth, one may answer that the slave trade, and war, and the treatment of animals are not without high spiritual and ethical significance, yet He made no direct pronouncement upon them either. We do not know why. Perhaps the world was not ready. They were not questions of burning practical interest in His day on earth. But to-day they are, and men are striving to answer them in His spirit, without being unduly fettered to the letter of His reported words. Not least among the subjects which awaken the passionate interest of our generation, is every question which may lead to a deeper understanding of the pattern of continuous life.

There are many aspects in which we glimpse God, many ways in which we think of Him. He has a thousand names, one of which is 'The Nameless One' ! Every side of the circle and every paradox are mirrored and find their meaning in Him. Yet there are two aspects into which all the others seem

to divide or to merge, and each is a dual aspect. They are the Personal and the Impersonal, the Immanent and the Transcendent. This is a supreme instance of the urgency of remembering that 'either-or' is a false antithesis, and that we need the uniting conjunction 'and.'¹ For both these visions of God are true, and neither can the soul abandon. It is very certain that the idea of God can only get across *at all* to a large section of humanity in the form of personality, and therein lies at least one of the meanings and one of the necessities for Divine Incarnation. Probably the personal aspect of God is essential to *all* humanity in relation to our own personalities, created by Him for Himself as well as for us. 'A very present help in trouble' must be in some sense a personal help. And our sense limitations force us to think in terms of 'I' and 'Not I,' of 'God' and 'Man' separate from each other, and of Man going to God for help. Yet it is not the truest picture to think of ourselves as taking our troubles to God. Rather we should try to realize that God is there all the time, without any need of coming or going, eternally near and encompassing, within us and without, both Immanent and Transcendent. 'Closer than breathing, nearer than hands or feet.' If the Cup is kept open and empty, it will be filled.

In the other aspect of God, also, there is deep satisfaction and rest, healing and help. To forget the fitful fever of personal life and 'the opposites' in a revelation of the impersonality of God the everlasting Law of Reality, is a divine experience for the growing soul. Those who, as in the East, have been trained and accustomed to consider chiefly the vast, abstract, impersonal aspect of God, do well to turn their eyes and dwell on His intimate relationship to His Created, which is His Personal aspect. Those who, as in the West, have concentrated almost exclusively on His Personality and relationship to the human part of creation, do well to try and conceive and worship the Impersonality of the immortal,

¹ *I and Me*, by E. Graham Howe. Faber and Faber.

invisible, nameless, formless, God only One and only wise.

As there are different aspects of God who is our life, so there are different approaches by which we can come in contact with Him. Prayer, meditation, contemplation, service, the Sacraments, the technique of the Cup are some of them. Prayer is only one among others, though perhaps it is the one that comes most readily to mind when God is thought of. There are many forms and varieties of prayer, too familiar to all those who have been brought up in a religious atmosphere to need enumerating here, and meaningless to others. They all have one thing in common, namely that in general they use the language of personality. Yet that language is not essential to the idea of prayer.

There is also another form of prayer, the wordless, formless prayer of waiting and surrender. It knows nothing and knows that it knows nothing. It requests nothing, but is open, empty, ready and expectant. It is an attitude of the soul. This is the prayer of acceptance, which does not even ask what the soul is to do with all that it must accept, but is content to wait and let the Accepted do something to the soul.

Not one of these approaches to God, or forms of prayer, is good and another bad; one higher and one lower; one a true and one a false technique. All are right if they are real and sincere, and all are necessary for one soul or another. We use those forms that we can use, and for which we are ready. Speech or silence: neither speech nor language, yet their voices heard. All language is the same to God, whether it is the language of the heart or of the mind or of the soul. We live by faith, and the prayer of faith is answered.

Part of the technique of the Cup, on which we have not yet touched, is what may be called the sending of the Cup as a healing vessel. We have spoken of that greatest grief and greatest fear which life can hold for us—the vicarious suffering and fear for a beloved person. Here is no matter of anger

or resentment which could be cured if we would but alter our feelings about it, and surrender our wrong emotions. It is no case of 'You are hateful, and I hate you,' but 'Oh, my dearest, you are ill, or unhappy; you are wrong, or in danger; and therefore I am miserable.' We know that we must accept and not refuse, for them as well as for ourselves. But how are we to help them to accept? This is the crux. Often our beloved do not wish for help, or think they need it, and words may be worse than useless. For words provoke argument, and may confirm and harden in opposition a wrong or mistaken point of view. Yet we are not so helpless as perhaps we think. We can reach the inner self of another without using any sensory contacts, without looking or touching or speaking.

First of all we must absorb and digest any feeling of moral condemnation, remembering the great truth that judgment must always be by the standards of the judged. We see a truth, and feel that the action of someone else which ignores that truth is wrong, or foolish, or dangerous. But perhaps it is the result of long travail of the spirit under difficulties we do not know, and represents a step forward that we cannot measure towards a different truth that we do not see. Even if we are right, and the other is wilfully and consciously wrong, we must still stand aside, because there is nothing else we *can* do that will be of any use. We must empty ourselves of all personal self-interest and self-pity (which is not so easy as it sometimes looks). Then we must form a vision in our spirit of whatever good is desired for those we love, and a vision, too, of their own perfect, potential wholeness, according to the law of their own being, *not of ours*. And then, from the eternal light within us, of which the Cup is formed, we must send forth to them a ray of encompassing love. We must keep the attitude, not of impatient desire or feverish longing, but of the waiting, accepting prayer of faith. This, to use another metaphor, is the technique of the Lighthouse. We send the ray like the beam of a candle held

up and directed to some dark spot. It can reach and penetrate, even when there is no wish to co-operate in the person to whom it is sent, or even if there is a barrier of conscious or unconscious opposition. It can reach from one Time Track to another, and not only in this Space-Time Now, but across the gulfs and through the veils of death. The Cup can be sent to any part of our own body or mind that is sick, and to anyone—or everyone—in the universe. This is a mystery, and must be translated by those who would understand it into their own language, whether of religion or psychology, but the truth of it can be tested by those who practise it.

The Cup cannot be sent on its healing errand while we are excluding anything or anyone. Exclusion is of the devil and carries no healing. Inclusiveness is the divine attribute which seems to lead to miraculous multiplication of our own loaves and fishes. Then we are no longer like those virgins who feared—surely mistakenly—to share with their careless companions who had neglected to provide oil for their lamps, 'lest there be not enough for you and for us.' Then we have enough spiritual food and to spare, for ourselves, and for all who come hungry for it, and for those who are afar off and do not come yet.

The Cup sounds mystic, and there are many people who shy at that word. But there is a 'hidden meaning,' a 'secret wisdom' in all great spiritual teaching, which is handed down through the ages by the enlightened few. It was not hidden and kept secret because the founders of religions wished to conceal it, nor because priests deliberately withheld it, but of necessity. Because in any age only so much of wisdom can be taught as can be learnt. It must be adapted and put into symbols and parables for the people, if it is to convey even some measure of the truth to the generations who are alive when it is first preached and taught. Later come difficulties. The symbol is, itself, worshipped as a reality; the shrine is preserved with loving care, and the lamp upon the altar is adored. But in truth it may have come, through the passage

of time and the accumulating rust of misunderstanding, to darken and even to extinguish the flame within. Christ taught all of truth that men had ears to hear, and they not only crucified Him, but crucified His religion also. They made it a sharp sword upon which many have got impaled, and a stumbling-block to some, instead of a Way of Life for all. It is one of the tragedies of Christianity that the Churches have too often transformed Christ—author and authorizer of spiritual life—into the authority which would confine it within narrow bounds. When they have done so, they have turned the positive into the negative, and made the word of God of no effect through their tradition. They have turned the 'good news' into a warning to sinners, and narrowed the love of God which was Christ's supreme message, and which He preached and lived.

When we realize something of the symbolism of the Cup and of sharing and of the unity of life, we are led through perception of our common substance (each in all and all in each) to a doctrine that seems strange and startling at first. It is the doctrine of universal responsibility. Christ's prayer was that we all might be one, as He and God were one. St. Paul declared that we were indeed all one in Him; many members but one body. 'Thou art that' says the Eastern wisdom, perceiving and pointing to the underlying unity of substance beneath the separateness of form. Individual exclusiveness resents the suggestion. We are—perhaps—ready to accept some small share of responsibility for the narrow circle of people and events that are closely linked with our daily lives. We see, vaguely and uneasily, that in truth we are to some extent a contributory cause of all we most dislike in them. But universal responsibility? No, we repudiate that. Surely it is a misuse of words, a perversion of their meaning, to suggest so fantastic an idea as that we can have any share, or any part or lot, in responsibility for things of whose very existence we are often ignorant, and in deciding which we have no power to interfere? And, if it

were indeed possible, would it not be unbearable, too overwhelming a thought to be endured? Would it not rule out all joy and peace of mind? Are not our own sins and sorrows enough, without this being laid upon our shoulders that we are our brother's keeper, and responsible, even unto this last?

These are natural questions, but they are not unanswerable. If one is sensitive and vain, it is a very painful experience when the bonds of the relationship which is life suddenly involve us in the flooding of our private, respectable premises with very dirty water. Yet it happens, and it is no use denying any experience which comes to us. We cannot escape from our underlying unity with everyone else. We say glibly, 'There but for the grace of God go I,' when the criminal passes to the scaffold, but we hardly realize what it means, or really believe it. But to realize unity and responsibility does *not* destroy joy or peace of mind, if we realize also the full power which acceptance gives us. And there is a true sense in which indeed each one of us is responsible for everyone else, and does indeed contribute to what they do and are. It is implicit in the teaching of the Cup, in our power to change the content of the Cup by our choice of accepting or refusing, of loving or hating. Remembering this, we perceive that every thought and deed of ours must have influenced for good or evil everyone else, for all the Cups are open to each other even when there have been no conscious contacts. The contents of each Cup, emptying and filling, affect the universal tide that pours into all. In that way we can understand that there is a true responsibility for all the world upon each individual. It may seem a small or remote one, but no one can judge of that. No one can weigh or measure the power of a thought or a spoken word, any more than one can number or limit the endless-seeming succession of widening circles caused by a stone thrown into the water, or a sound breathed into the air. Universal responsibility is the natural consequence of the great teaching that we are all

sons of God, and all members one of another. By accepting our responsibility, and putting the sin and shame and sorrow of the whole world into our Cup, we do our part in the work of redemption and the bringing to earth of the Kingdom of God.

This seems to be the true meaning of the mystic phrase 'bringing Christ to the birth in ourselves.' His Birth, Baptism, Transfiguration, Passion, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, must be re-enacted in our own lives. Our union with God must be a reality as His was. 'Crucified with Christ' must be, not a meaningless or sanctimonious sentence but, a living experience. By acceptance in this full sense, by *willingness* to drink the Cup, however bitter, not only for our own sins or for our beloved, but for the sins of all men, we realize His injunction to serve as he served and to lay down our life for the brethren. By changing the content of our Cup, we change, in fact, not only our own past and present and future, but we help to change the life of the universe. Universal responsibility may seem a shattering conception, too hard a saying. We feel that we are, perhaps, ready to lay down our lives in expiation of our own sins, or to serve those we love, but we do *not* 'so love the world.' Yet we may come at last to see, however slowly and reluctantly, that perhaps the only expiation one could ever make for one's own sin—for any sin—would be the willingness to suffer for anyone else, without any personal motive or object to gain. Only when every man is ready to be crucified for all, can the Death of Christ have won its full fruit and the world be saved.

But we must carefully avoid the blunders of interference or over-anxiety. We are responsible for our share of *causation*, but not for *consequences*. We are members of a great orchestra, and our contribution has a quite definite and important effect on the harmony or disharmony of the whole. But we are not the conductor! When we try to assume that role we sink under the vast burden we have taken upon our

shoulders, for which they are not wide or strong enough. We must be willing to be conducted, and leave the conductor free to work out the results of his own, whole plan. When we feel too fatigued and exhausted, mentally and spiritually, we may be sure we are making the mistake of trying to do the conducting. We must 'let go': accept our share of responsibility and play our part with patience and good temper, but not try and keep the baton in our inadequate guiding hands.

To fulfil our life in this great way we must be constantly re-born, going back to the centre and the source of things. The soul is our actual, living, moving, being and becoming Self. It seems to our limited consciousness to be continuous, but in fact it dies daily and hourly, and is as often freshly born. Our physical bodies are not the same we had at birth, and neither are our emotional or mental or spiritual bodies the same: they change and are renewed continually.

It is only pure Spirit—the creative Light that is God—which is continuous and unbroken, 'birthless and deathless and changeless.'¹ That which is material, and therefore spatial and temporal, is bound to the laws of form, perpetually integrating and disintegrating: it is always, necessarily, discontinuous. We are too much concerned with and distressed about the event which we call death at the circumference. We tend to think of it as if it were some dissociated, abnormal happening, something undesirable, to be avoided, and—if we knew enough—avoidable. It should not disconcert us, and we shall not think of it thus, if by faith we see the eternal pattern. In truth death does not break the thread of destiny: it maintains it. We die into life, and without this death we could not have life at all, much less be born again. Death is part of a continuous process, co-existent with continuous life, an eternal alternating current. We pass Cross-ways and Cross-wise, from life to death and from death to life.

¹ 'The Song Celestial,' *Bhagavad-Gita*. Sir Edwin Arnold.

The centre seems so small, and sometimes so distant, and the circumference is so vast and so immediate and pressing in its claims, that it is hard—a great temptation to people of eager mind and intellectual curiosity—not to be led away into absorbed exploration of the surface of things, and pursuit of the fascinating experiences which await mental adventurers. It is a legitimate eagerness and curiosity. The mind has a right—a duty—to explore, to discriminate, to ask questions. Only it must remember, as a constant discipline, that to some questions there is no answer, or none comprehensible to us in Space-Time-Now. Every question answered gives rise to at least two more. For to the growth of the Tree of Knowledge there is no end, but the rhythm of the Tree of Life is up AND down. Its law is that it shall thrust upwards from its roots in darkness, put forth branches and leaves and bear fruit, which in due season must fall to the earth and die. The sap descends in the tree, to renew itself at the source, and to rise again in the spring.

So it is to be re-born, and not only in the hour of physical death when passing to new forms and experiences. Continually we must *remember*, remind ourselves of the law of rhythm, which will assert itself whether we will or no. We must deliberately recall our consciousness from the bewildering maze of things, from the mental and physical and emotional weariness of endless search, back to the rest and stillness of the centre. We ascend into new knowledge and see new light. We descend into new ignorance and are again in darkness. Both are for our health. In spite of our weariness and Christina Rossetti's lovely lines concerning it, we would rather that the road 'led uphill all the way,' and that when we had attained the heights we could remain there for ever. But it is not the law of reality. The rhythmic swing will not be denied. It must be repeated that life is an alternating current.

Re-birth into new life. We need it, and must have it if we are to live abundantly. We must return to the centre,

instead of always busying ourselves with the things of body-mind. This is not a conflict between faith and intellect, or between faith and works. There is nothing to be said against discriminating thought. It is the very tip of the petal of the flower, the growing point of the mind. There is nothing to be said in disparagement of wise work. It is our reasonable service. But re-birth gives us the spirit which is the power of our engine. The thoughts are truer and the works better if they are thought and done with full remembrance that they are small and finite and inseparably mixed with error. But the central source is perfect, infinite, immortal. With every new breath we draw we can be re-born into new life. The LIGHT manifests itself in matter through the lantern of each unique personality. It is God in us. And the heart of it, sensitive and vibrating through infinity and eternity, is love.

When we are conscious of many anxious feelings, however various they may seem to be they are yet all traceable to one and the same cause—the identification of the Self with the anxious events on the circumference of our life. And the remedy is always the same—to place them in the Cup and deliberately recall our consciousness from the circumference to the centre. The vital fact to remember is that 'I' am the Experiencer, who must suffer from these painful experiences and live with them, but that they are no part of the real, the inner 'I.' I am *not* my experiences, nor their bond-slave. . . . I can choose what their effect upon me shall be, whether for harassed misery and illness by struggle and refusal, or for growth towards wisdom and health and balance by a true acceptance. Always when we can stand aside from our preoccupations and anxieties, and descend willingly with the ebbing tide, returning to the source, we are healed. When we have emptied ourselves, the Cup is filled. We may not at once cease to be depressed, but we do cease to be overwhelmed by our depression, and are able to learn from it.

The same is true of our exaltations, which may be as

dangerous to spiritual health as depressions, if they are wrongly used. For then again we are feverishly attaching ourselves to, and identifying ourselves with, events which we are experiencing on the circumference. To feel joy in happy experiences, pleasure in pleasurable events, is natural and right. It is the glamour with which we surround them, the passionate attachment and identification of ourselves with them which do the harm. We do not want to be aloof or alien from any human experience, unless it is enjoyed at the expense of others: on the contrary, we should be open and sensitive to all experiences. Sensitiveness is good, and necessary for sympathy. It is suggestibility which is bad, because it implies that we identify ourselves with the things suggested, which is a false identification. Non-attachment is a difficult art to practise, but it is the most positive of all the achievements of the soul. The Healers—Sleep, Change, Light and Love—all create in us the emptiness which we need, (being so over-fed and over-full of undigested food, both good and bad, as we usually are). They are all faith in action—they make us let go. They throw us at the feet of the Saviour (it does not matter by what name we call Him, or by what means we know Him), and our small selves go into the bottom of the Cup, which is our greater Self. Then we are detached: we are indeed saved. 'In sorrow not dejected, in joy not over-joyed.'¹ We are whole.

Whether it is ourselves or others that trouble us, our or their afflictions in mind, body or estate, or the bewildering problems and disappointments of a difficult world, makes no difference. Placing them in the Cup with love will change them more than all our anxious activities. Love is the one thing that does not need to strain and struggle and compel, for it can change the world and ourselves without violence. If, in impatience, it becomes violent and dictatorial, it has ceased to be love. Love never fails, but does its perfect work—in time.

¹ *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

There are no short cuts to wholeness or heaven, but 'Man has forever,' so we can be patient. If the wrong choice of refusal has been made to-day, let us remember that the free choice of the Open Way of Acceptance can be made to-morrow. (Or after a million to-morrows !) It is the way leading to wholeness, wherein if we walk we shall be healed. And this open way is *always* open, and keeps us open. The door is never shut.

THE END

January, 1939.

EPILOGUE

IN ALL THAT has been written here, the metaphysical foundations which underlie the whole structure must have been fairly apparent, though in a book of this kind it was neither possible nor desirable to go into them deeply. Yet, in deference to expressed wishes, an attempt is now made to uncover the bones a little, or at least to indicate them rather more fully, but not with the precision which would be appropriate in a philosophic treatise. Here we have been thinking of the way of acceptance as a practical way of healing, and trying to explain it in language understandable by all. Those who dislike all metaphysics beyond the indispensable minimum which is implied in any way of life, and who have no wish for any such explanations, are warned hereby to omit this Epilogue, which is not for them.

WHOLENESS

To some people wholeness is a conception of which they seem to find it extremely difficult to form any clear idea. They say it sounds beautiful and poetic, but too vague to help them. To enable them to practise the attainment of it, they want it separated into its component parts, and shown categorically in its different relationships. We must try and answer this need.

Wholeness in Feeling

Wholeness is a simple enough conception taken in regard to feeling. In that field it is not only possible theoretically, but capable of complete realization, and can be seen daily. This is because feeling (as distinguished from partial and partisan emotion), is a total thing, whether expressed in poetry or in the prose of common life. Love, acceptance,

enlightenment, are not partial, they are positive and whole. We can love all men, friends and enemies, accept all things, good and bad, and be enlightened on every section of the circle—the wheel of life—even when we are on the shadow side and plunged in complete darkness. We may fail in practise, but there is no confusion or contradiction in the idea.

Wholeness in Action

In action, on the other hand, wholeness is *not* capable of complete realization, because action is, and necessarily must be, partial. We cannot walk to the north and to the south simultaneously. We cannot fight and remain at peace at the same time. And yet, strive as we may to abstain from too much speaking and too much doing; knowing that such abstinence is for health and wisdom; we are still perpetually compelled by our earth-conditions—especially in modern times—to speech and action, rather than to silence and waiting. In this dilemma our safety is to know the truth about ourselves, and to allow for the inevitable defects of the speech and even more the action which we have to use. We must remember that they are partial and biased and can hardly be otherwise; never, therefore, to be whole-heartedly trusted or idolized. They cannot be ‘ideal,’ even when they must be ‘real.’ Even the best of them are never absolutely right. They require the closest, fairest examination to limit their potential powers of destruction.

Wholeness in Thinking

To achieve wholeness in thinking is very difficult, but it is not impossible. It needs extreme subtlety and sensitiveness of fibre, and immense intelligence. It requires in fact the evolution of the higher mind, or ‘Higher Manas’ as Hindu writers call it. The lower mind, or ‘Lower Manas,’ works only within the limits of the human plane of consciousness, and in terms of logical dialectic. It is essentially partial and

incapable of wholeness. Facts are always conditioned by the constitution of the instrument we use for observing them, and our human consciousness is a very partial instrument of observation. To our passionate questions as to Facts and Reality, it will always give the same *partial* answer, and it will always be *totally* wrong. It is very important to recognize the limits of our consciousness, though—or because—it is the instrument we have to use now.

THE PROBLEM

The practical problem is how to evolve this subtle, sensitive instrument of the higher mind, the whole intelligence. It is greater than reason alone, for it includes the intelligence of the spirit, and of the heart as well as of the mind. Our task is to create this higher reason—which is essentially a capacity to see and understand all relationships—and to train it as a gymnast. An educative practice in this process is the cruciform analysis of a truth, and the realization of the five-fold metaphysic. These require explanation, and we will return to them shortly. But first there are certain conceptions which it is necessary for those who would develop this higher mind to have a real understanding of. They are the following:

(a) Symbolism. This, in one sense, includes ALL, for nothing exists which is not symbolic of some other, greater meaning, and no religion or philosophy can be expressed except through myth and symbols.

(b) Dynamic Balance. This is above any static absolutes or any apparent causes. It sets them in motion and controls their movement.

(c) Paradox. This is the Law of Life. It is rejected by the lower mind of logic, which argues: 'These things are contradictory; both cannot be true.' But it is vital to living, for life must include the opposites, and knows that both *are* true.

(d) Relationships. We need to understand that the inclusive 'and' is not a matter of simple mathematics, which

work the other way. Division or multiplication will not help here: still less subtraction, which is always eliminating something. But it is not a matter of simple addition either, because the union of two things which we are thinking of here is not merely an aggregate of separate entities, nor even a synthesis by which they merge into one another. It is a union of the two which transforms both, changing them into something other than they were before, though maintaining them as two. This is the union which gives birth to the third—the fruit.

(e) Space. It is a necessary condition of relationship. We have to see that space is the opposite of that which fills it (matter), and of that which comes between (the linking bridge). And yet we have also to see that space includes all within itself. This is the great paradox: 'Nothing is All.' 'Rubbish,' says the materialist. 'Nothing is no thing. It is nonsense, i.e. no sense.' Yet we know that we can be and often are 'afraid of nothing,' so that nothing can mean something that affects our lives. And 'nonsense' may be 'not *our* sense' within the limits of ordinary consciousness, and yet be 'some sense' that is vitally important to us in our deeper consciousness.

(f) Time: which is the problem of all time. It is a function of relationship which varies under different conditions, but remains always an essential part of truth. We do not understand Time yet. We have only just begun to understand that there is anything mysterious about it which calls for understanding. But the growing point of philosophic thought in modern minds is the new questioning about the meaning of Time.

THE CRUCIFORM ANALYSIS OF A TRUTH

The object of this practice is the analysis and resolution of any truth into its two pairs of related opposites. A single pair is not enough, and leads to error through attempting over-simplification. Take as an example the conception of

courage. One of the pair shows the Sword of activity, with the Cup of endurance as its related opposite. The other pair shows bravado balanced by cowardice. Or take another instance, the idea of political wisdom, state-craft. The Right (conservative) is balanced by the Left (socialist). The other pair are liberalism, uniting both in a double acceptance, and sentimentalism, sitting on the fence in a double rejection. (All these terms, liberal, conservative, socialist, are, of course, used with no reference to existing political parties bearing those labels, but to the ideas and values for which they originally stood.) Or take man, with his complex make-up, and study his co-related pairs of opposites. Intuition on the one hand, balanced by feeling on the other. Thought on the one hand, balanced by sensation on the other. Spirit and soul, body and mind, all needing to be accepted and their variety joined in the unity of balanced wholeness. This practice of 'crucifying' a truth, yields many meanings which we may not have suspected before

THE FIVE METAPHYSICS

Behind all phenomena there is *something*. What? Five metaphysics give answers, and all the answers are different, yet all—the paradox again—contain the truth, and all the Seers have seen the truth. There are:

- (1) Monism, of which the symbol is the circle, and the content is unity.
- (2) Dualism, of which the symbol is two parallel lines that do not meet. The content of it is duality, conflict of the opposites, irreconcilability.
- (3) Trinitarianism, which is the great Christian conception, and of which the triangle is the symbol. Its content is reconcilability, the idea of the two bridged by the third, which is Love—the Christ—the God-Man.
- (4) Science, of which the symbol is the right-angled equilateral—the square. It is a more complete conception than dualism, for it includes a double dualism. But its

content is again the irreconcilability which it has re-created.

(5) Intelligence (the higher intelligence). Of this—the symbol is the five-pointed star, or the five fingers of the hand, or the Cross within the Circle with the Spirit brooding over the head of the Cross. Its content is the double reconciliation of the double opposites through the fifth—the healer—that makes whole.

Space, or spirit, is the one potential, creative force. It is that void, that chaos, which to the materialist mean nothing, nonsense. Matter and order are the forms in which the spirit expresses itself. They are reality upon the plane of manifestation. These four together may be described as God un-manifest and manifesting. Life is the child of the conjunction, and the fine flower of it is the soul. This is the five-fold metaphysic. It is the vision which was seen by the higher Buddhism, and is the inner meaning of the spirit of Christianity.

A homely symbol of full intelligence and full acceptance is a grandfather clock. The pendulum below swings to and fro, noting the timely facts, the truth which is time. It swings from one partial opposite to the other, without hurry or irregularity, giving to each its due measure. Up above is the hub, which controls the movement and without which there could be no movement, yet itself remains still. The weights move slowly down; the clock ticks on. The 'lower mind,' swinging rhythmically according to law between the opposites, is controlled by the 'higher mind' symbolized by the hub at the top of the clock. All—weights, the pendulum and the uniting hub—are included and contained within the case of the one individual clock. We have to learn to be the *whole* clock, with the pendulum swinging inside us, but not identifying ourself with the pendulum alone.

The 'Opposites' seem to the Eastern mind a natural, inevitable conception. They see that it is inseparable from our earth-experience, borne witness to by the facts of every

day, inherent in the universe as far as we know it. Therefore they accept the idea readily, and it makes life and death, good and evil, easier for them. But to the Western mind, always more anxious and active and impatient, it is a conception strange and difficult to understand. It seems hard to reconcile it with our ideal of what ought to be, with our quenchless hope for the building of Jerusalem, the coming of the Kingdom, *in our time*. We have an ingrained tendency to see things always as black or white, not as the infinite series of shades which they actually show us, and to decide that black is bad and should be got rid of. Western theology has wearied itself in vain, trying to explain the mystery of evil. It cannot rationally be explained on any *logical* theory of all-good and omnipotent deity, Father of All, and containing all things within Itself. This is the riddle of the Sphinx, to which logic can find no answer. But it can be seen to be necessary, although inexplicable. As Berdyaev has said, 'the problem of evil is the problem of liberty.' It is inherent in the conception of the freedom of the spirit. And therefore, though it cannot be fully understood while we still see through the dark glass of our ignorance, yet it can be received with the love and full acceptance that brings our healing. By this means it can be consummated, not in our times but in the times of God, and, having accomplished its work, it can be changed. The part will be absorbed, ultimately, into the Whole.

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