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THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT

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THIS LIFE AND THE NEXT

THE EFFECT ON THIS LIFE OF
FAITH IN ANOTHER

By

P. T. FORSYTH, M.A., D.D.

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PREFACE

NOVEMBER 11th, 1946, is the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of my father, P. T. Forsyth; he died on the fourth Armistice Day. And the recognition of this anniversary happened to coincide with my realisation of the growing demand for his books, all of which were out of print. During this year I have received from all parts of the English-speaking world suggestions as to which of the twenty-five books should be reprinted, in letters which expressed deep and almost passionate appreciation of his work. Based largely on these letters, a selection of five books¹ has been made. *This Life and the Next* was the last book he wrote. And so it has been chosen as the first to reappear, in commemoration of his own passing into the Next Life, "love's native land"—that passing of which he had written, seeing that which is invisible. "I do not just sink into the Unseen, I move deeper into God and the Kingdom of God. I see His face. I am rapt into the energies of the Eternal."

JESSIE FORSYTH ANDREWS.

**The Person and Place of Jesus Christ, The Work of Christ, The Church and the Sacraments, and The Charter of the Church, are to follow as soon as possible.*

CHAPTER I

IS LIFE'S BREVIDITY ITS VALUE?

George Eliot's "Jubal." The effect of life's brevity on its value. Death good for life only as it promises life beyond. The moral action of immortality on life due to the enhanced value of personality.

I AM not proposing to speak about the grounds in this life of a belief in another, but about the reaction of that belief upon this life. It is not a question about the basis of a belief in immortality, but about its moral rebound. We often hear from pulpits of the effect of this life on the next; but this is not a pulpit, and what we are now to dwell on is rather the reaction of the next life on this. Sometimes we are bidden to turn from considering what we do for posterity to realise what posterity does for us—which is much. Mr. Benjamin Kidd lectured in 1906 at the Royal Institution on this subject. "The significance of the Future in the theory of organic evolution." Well, it is great. But the future has a greater significance still for our *spiritual* evolution. Posterity does much for our souls. We are to think, then, of the reflex action on us of the idea of immortality, or, in a more Christian way, the power over us of an endless life in Christ, where the gain in dying is but more of our career in Christ. If to live is Christ, to die is more Christ.

May I be personal and reminiscent? The formative part of my life was spent in a world ruled by the giants of the Victorian days, of whom one of the most potent was George Eliot. And I can well remember when her poem, "The Legend of Jubal," came out in *Macmillan's Magazine*. I was a student in an ancient university in a far northern city. A few of us seized the magazine as soon as it could be bought, and took it out for consumption one morning by the banks of the Highland river that there ends in the North

Sea its passionate yet pensive life. George Eliot was not at her best as a poet, and I do not think that "Jubal" is as much read now as her lyric with the same motive, which probably will live in the anthologies.

O may I join the Choir Invisible,
Of those immortal dead who live again
In souls made better by their presence, etc.

But "Jubal" was more dramatic, more picturesque, and at the same time more philosophic, which appealed to us as we then were. It had a story, and it had reflection. And one passage that impressed myself deeply that morning was the lines describing the tender value given to life by the new sense of its mortality. According to this legend, death had never entered the world till an accident brought it. As the finality of the sleep came home to the race, its effect was revolutionary. And the nature of the effect was more feverish energy, and an affection tender because brief.

And a new spirit from that time came o'er
The race of Cain; soft idlesse was no more,
But even the sunshine had a heart of care,
Smiling with hidden dread—a mother fair
Who, folding to her heart a dying child,
Beams with feigned joy that but makes sadness mild.
Death now was lord of life, and at his word
Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,
With measured wing now audibly arose,
Thrilling through all things to some unknown close.
Now glad content by clutching haste was torn,
And work grew eager, and device was born.
It seemed the light was never loved before,
Now each man said, "I will go and come no more."
No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
From the one thought that life must have an end.
And the last parting now began to send
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.

Thus to Cain's race death was tear-watered seed
Of various life, and action-shaping need.

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Now, who does not feel the touching truth in this? Who has not clung with new tenderness to the dear one whose days are numbered? How many have recognised their angels only as they were leaving them? Even in health who has not stayed the impatient word, at the remembrance that the time together is at most so short, and might be shortened to an hour? Who has not felt a new fascination in the world's beauty as our lease of it runs out, even if we have had many fits of disillusion about it?

But what if this became our general attitude to the world! If the ruling feeling of society were that of brief life, sure sorrow, and eternal loss! If this feeling became a social principle! If we all lived in the conviction that death ended all, and was no new departure! What would the effect of that be? Would it not be like that of alcohol—first bustle, then blight, excitement and then stupidity? If we only looked forward to Jubal's goal, to immersion in the All—

Quitting mortality, a quenched sun wave,
The all creating presence was his grave.

would there be much creative vigour left in life under that doom?

A far greater poem on immortality came from the Victorians than George Eliot's. There was "In Memoriam." And we can call it great, whatever critical reserves we may have about certain aspects of that spiritual achievement to-day. It is a poem that ought to be read and studied to-day more than ever before. Our preachers of comfort and hope should make much of it, and, even if they quote little, draw much from it, while they add something. It is better and holier than ghosts for the comfort and making of the soul. Well, there is a line in it which is very true to the psychology of sorrow. Unless we can be sure of love's immortality, Tennyson says, a blight would come on love, it would be

Half dead to know that it could die.

So it would be. It would take the energy out of us, and the zest, if we came, habitually and collectively, to believe that

death ended all, and that we only survived in our life's resultant among men, and not in its personality with God.

We might grant that death teaches us much as to the value of life, and that life without death would become a very hard and coarse thing. With the abolition of death would vanish the uncertainty which educates faith, the mystery, the tragedy, which makes life so great, the sense of another world which gives such dignity and meaning to this, the range of sympathy that flows from believing that our affections are not for this world alone. Erase death, and Tithonus tells us life sinks at last into drab weariness. Its noblest, dearest interest ebbs and fades. Its tragedy and its chivalry both go. We should end by having no concern but feeding, drowsing, prancing and feeding again. Love, valour, pity, sacrifice; charm, music and all the nameless spell of nature and of personality; courtesy and reverence, all the sweet fine things of life that are tributes to soul, and that death seems to cut short most painfully—those are the things which would really die out if we succeeded in indefinitely averting death.

But, of course, it is not death that preserves these after all. It is the conviction that death is a crisis which opens a new phase of life. It is the conviction, latent or patent, of immortality and spiritual growth in it. How much more true is St. Paul: "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, immovable, ever abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." The work is the Lord's. It is there not simply to meet man's need, but God's purpose. That purpose is a greater action-shaping power than our need is. It is not true to suggest, as this poem does, that death, understood as final, could have set afoot the new future of energy or desire, the eagerness of work, the strength of society, or the tenderness of affection. For men were already living in a city, "The City of Cain," before the accident took place or the

stimulus of death came in. The enterprise of civilisation had started well on its way. Did it need an accidental death to stir in the children of the first murderer the terrors that made life tragic, intense, and pathetic? It is not the poverty and brevity of life that draws out its resources; it is its sense of fulness and power. It is strength that is the root of action, not need. "Action-shaping need," yes, but not action-creating. Action *shaping*! Yes, but what *inspires* action—moral *action* as distinct from mere energy, mere movement? What makes the good will which attends at all to the needs of others and does not just feed our own? A stream is not effective which just spreads out and flows into each hole it finds. It dies of diversion. That phrase was a piece of egg-shell which clung to George Eliot from the hatching of her mind by George Henry Lewes, as anyone may see who reads his now forgotten books. Need may shape action, but it does not create action; which is the child of wealth not poverty, of the soul's fulness and not of its death. We were created by God not out of his poverty and his need of company, but out of his overflowing wealth of love and his passion to multiply joy.

The passage is fine poetry; it is true to certain phases of experience, but it is a pathetic fallacy all the same. It partakes of that very sentimentalism in religion which the author's school unduly despised,—and succumbed to. Sentiment has its dear place, but it is demoralising to construe life by the sentiment of its phases instead of the revelation in its conscience. Love is not fondness. Sentiment is not life. Sentimentalism is not cherishing sentiment but living by it, at the cost of moral realities. Like art, it is life's friend, but not its guide. And it is the peculiar peril of a religion of love which is not understood as holy love.

Of course it would be unfair to say that with the decay of a belief in immortality morality would straightway cease. At least that would be putting it too bluntly. All morality would not cease. The nobler souls would still for a time find

goodness good. And the rest would find incumbent on them a utilitarian ethic in the interest of the society of which they were a part. For a long time at least this would be so. But all the time there would be question whether a utilitarian ethic is really moral, whether you find your moral soul in it or not.

This finding of the soul raises an issue more direct and just. Would moral vigour, courage, enterprise, civilisation continue to rise and progress under the condition supposed? Would the disbelief in immortality lead in the end to the finding of the soul or the losing of it? Would it lead to the gain of public morale or its loss? For I mean the phrase less in the theological sense than the sociological. Even if the disbelief in our soul's future did not arrest morality, would it not lead to a lowered sense of that which is behind morality and is the condition of it—the value of personality? And would that not in the end produce the same effect as the relaxation of moral sanctions—especially on society? Public morality would sink to class egoism or national patriotism, and finally it would be abjured. The moral value of the individual would sink—as it has done in Germany, for instance, where there is no general belief in immortality, and where the individual withers and the State is more and more. And this means the corruption of the State itself, which ceases to be a moral entity, and becomes the prey of the militarist gamblers in power. The people would be brutalised. The citizen would really cease to be a citizen. The free elector would disappear and become *Kanonen-futter* fed up to the guns. Under such a creed the vital natural man would cease to concern himself with posterity; therefore he would slacken in public concern. His interests would be but egoist, and his activity but for the order of the day. He would say of everything, "it will last my time." His policy would be from hand to mouth, with a growing tendency to the mouth and its egoism. The shortening of the soul's career would lead to the impoverishment of its interests. It would be emptied and not merely curtailed.

Pantheism or Positivism, of course, does not think so. It says that each moment left would receive an increase of value, like the Sibylline books. If you reduce the supply you increase the price of life. Well, that looks plausible if you treat moral realities and moral issues commercially, if you regulate the soul by economics, or politics by mere prudence. But that course has been a failure. We are now on the other tack. We try to regulate economics by the soul, wages by the standard of living, profits with a prime regard to wage. The soul does not work by the law of supply and demand. You do not increase the value of mankind by decimation. To reduce population is not the way to a vigorous and lasting community. Nor is it so if we reduce the content of each life by stopping it at a point. On the contrary each person would then drop to pursue the line of least resistance. If I am to die in six months I won't get new clothes. If I must get them, shoddy will do. A jerry-built house will serve me; and the children can move to a new one when this begins to crack. Burdens would be thrown on the after-comers. Those upon whom the end of the world should come would be crushed under the silt of the obligations left to them before it arrived. Neglect would not be felt to be criminal. Whereas the sense that each moment is of value for an eternal life is like the soul's sense that it is not its own but is the subject and property of Christ—it raises the soul's sense of its dignity, and therefore raises also its inner wealth and energy. The things it does are worth while. And it *will* matter to us a hundred years hence what we do to-day or omit. If there were no other consideration, there would be this. If I am to be extinguished at seventy I need not be too much concerned about my soul's perfection, to say nothing of becoming perfect as God is. And that is the end of moral effort in due course. The pursuit of perfection is a greater moral influence than the passion for power.

The finality of death in the *vital* sense leads to all the low temperatures in life which I have been describing. Its finality

in the *moral* sense leads to all the enormities which we associate with the doctrine of a double predestination.

Clearly in this life some are better off than others, and some are morally better. That means, if there be a ruling power in human affairs, a doctrine of election in one sense or another. Now, to a doctrine of election we do not need to object. *Aimer c'est choisir*. Love is preferential. But two things we must insist on. First, it is not an election to prerogative, privilege, and exemption, but to God's own responsibility, service, and sacrifice. The Captain of the elect came to serve. For it is an election of love. On that the Gospel is clear. And second, it is the action of a moral process that goes on after death. The fate of the soul is not finally determined then. Those lives and those generations which were elect here were chosen for the service and good of those whose turn was not to come in this life. Education, or experience, which begins in this life does not fructify in certain cases till another. An election to a certain place in this life does not mean that we are condemned to that place for ever. Death does not fix the moral position of the soul irretrievably. Other methods of moral discipline lie beyond. We cannot be occupied there with the sordid trivialities which engage so much of our time here. That is to say, we are not predestined for ever to the place or state in which we die. Does that not take the sting out of a doctrine of predestination? We are all predestined in love to life sooner or later, *if we will*. An election is to certain stages and methods of endless growth. It is selection for cycles and crises of moral evolution. It is not that some are chosen for eternal life and some are doomed to eternal death. That was a nightmare which grew from the association of the truth of election with the falsehood of death's finality. And its tendency is to reduce the value of the soul, like the notion that death is final in the sense of extinction. It is a doctrine which for the popular mind has blighted the great name of Calvin, and prevented us from realising him as one of the very greatest makers of history, and the creator through

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Puritanism of modern democracy. Calvin only applied consistently that idea of death's finality which all Protestants held. Take his doctrine of election, relieve it of the notion of death's absolute arrest, and you have a great panorama of development which makes this life organic, with all the possibilities of an endless growth beyond. It is the abuse of Calvinism, as it is the abuse of purgatory, that has done the mischief. So we discard the extreme of orthodoxy as we do the extreme of negation about the finality of death. And we realise the immense effect exerted on this life and its uses by the faith of another life, which is the continued action of the Kingdom of God and the discipline of the moral soul. But why did predestination, as a matter of fact, not lower personality? Why was it the religion of the strongest men of the day and for long after—the makers of history? Why did it not act like Fatalism in Islam? Because it was the action not of a Fate but of a living God and a free God of Grace, however distorted the conception of His mode of action. The greatness of God's free and holy sovereignty overbore the weakness of the rest of the creed. He *was* a living God and a free, and not a force, a process, or a fate. And the history of Calvinism shows that a supreme concern for God's freedom is the best motive and guarantee for man's.

CHAPTER II

THE EGOISM OF IMMORTALITY

The egoism of Christ. The fear of punishment and the hope of heaven. Demoralisation possible. But my neighbour's immortality. The worth of our mortality to God. The egoism of the anti-egoists. Immoral immortality.

THE belief in immortality has been charged with egoism. But there is egoism and egoism. And in Christ Himself there is a unique combination of self-sacrifice and self-assertion.

In what sense can we say there was an egoism in Jesus? "Eternal life is to believe in Me," "Because I live ye shall live also," "I shall judge the world," "Inasmuch as ye did it to these ye did it to me." These, with many similar claims, indicate what, in a mere man, would be egoism carried even to imperial megalomania. Yet it does not offend us. It offends us no more than the egoism of God—who is a sole and jealous God—or love's egoism with its monogamy (the social counterpart of monotheism) and its exclusive right. As a matter of fact, the egoism of Christ is in the same category as the absoluteness of God; and such egoism in God is the blessing of the world. It is its moral stability. It is its holiness. To worship it is not to be infected with egoism, but to lose it. To glorify God is to find our soul, which is lost in its own pursuit. It is not egoism to court an immortality which is the communion and obedience of His absolute life.

It might, of course, be said that we should not speak of an egoism in God, and that we had better betake ourselves to a less familiar but more fitting word, and speak of His Egoity. But that hardly meets the case if by the new term we think to avoid the idea that God seeks His own. He does

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seek His own, since He can seek no higher. Like us, He must seek the highest. Could He devote Himself only to an inferior? His grace to us is a debt to Himself. And our faith is a faith that nothing is well with us until we are at His service in that quest, that seeking of His own. For He is a holy God, with a life self-determined and turned in on Himself with an infinite self-sufficiency, just as surely as He is a God of love with a life outgoing. He is at once self-contained and communicative. Without a centripetal force the heavens cannot stand. It were a slack piety, and one drawn from our sentiment more than from His revelation, to treat Him as one whose whole concern is to give, with nothing in His energy of that self-regard which makes a character worth much to receive. An effusive God cannot be a holy God, and such love is not divine. It is not self-seeking, therefore, to cherish an immortality of divine service. Man's true self is the worship of God's. But to this point I shall return.

I do not mean to say much on the common theme (however valuable) of the effect on this life of a doctrine of retribution, of rewards and punishments, in another. For this is not the only action of a belief in immortality. And some might say it was not the chief. They might say its chief effect was on the soul's belief in itself and its dignity. They would question the worth of goodness done for a reward. Many would ask how reward consists with grace, a wage with a free gift—deep points these that I do not stop to discuss here. As to punishment, they might also go on to say that the fear of it has been more debasing than the hope of reward; because people as they grow worse tend to think more about punishment, while as they grow better they think less of reward. The reward is not a motive with the people who deserve best, but the punishment is a motive with the people who deserve least. And in a religion of moral redemption a doctrine cannot be of chief value if it weigh more with the bad than with the good.

Also, I will do little more than mention the effect of the waning belief in eternal torment, both upon life and upon some public matters like capital punishment, or war. If the hangman fixes a soul in a certain state for ever, I do not see how any crime could justify any State in the capital sentence; nor do I see how it could morally go to war. But there does follow on the decay of this belief a certain levity about death, judgment, and the soul. The soul is taken more lightly if its sin is no more than this life or a brief purgatory can deal with. The whole meaning of life is lowered. And with life's reduced value there comes a reduced sense of life's sanctity and public order. This levity of doctrine has gone beyond a protest against the *eternity* of punishment, and has led to dropping the idea of any hell or judgment at all, as if we could cheat judgment by dying. And so it leads to the loss of such life-wisdom as begins in fear, and rises to reverence and awe. It is all part of the loss of moral tone in religion through the general abeyance of the sense of the holy and of sin.

In the matter of reward, it is charged by some that an immortal life, as it involves the infinite expansion of the self, magnifies our egoism, makes us take ourselves too seriously, and thereby tends to develop an anti-social frame of mind which cannot bear to be out of anything and always wants the front. The criticism itself reflects the old anti-social individualism. But there is no doubt that some forms of the belief do have the effect named. It is so in Islam, which is mostly a religion of conquest rather than of civilisation. It was so even with the Moors in Spain. But it is so also nearer home. Germany means civilisation, but by racial dominion. If the doctrine of immortality is held only on subjective grounds, it is quite likely to end in religious egoism. It is a fundamental principle of all I say on the subject that a sure belief in immortality does not rest where philosophy puts it, but where religion puts it. It is not founded on the nature of the psychic organism, but on its relation to Another. I

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mean that if it is based on the indestructible nature of the soul substance, or upon an untamed passion for adventure, or upon endless curiosity, or upon our instinct and thirst for personal perfection, or upon our native moral greatness, or upon any such stoic forms of self-esteem, or even self-respect, it is quite likely (if you go on far enough to give scope for its gravitation) to end downward in a supreme care for *my* immortality, whatever becomes of yours. And that ends in people elbowing each other out of the way to get at the elixir of life, or to dip in this Bethesda pool for eternity. But these are philosophic considerations, or æsthetic or egoistic concerns, which are not really religions. They detach man from God, the Lord and Giver of Life. At least they do not found on man's union with God. They set him, with his claims and presumptions, over against God, as the deadly way of Pharisaism was. Man may come thus to behave like a spoilt beauty, unschooled in duty, and craving for attentions without end. The Creator may even be reminded that He has made the soul immortal, that He cannot recall the initial gift of life, and that the soul bears stamped on it a signed concession of eternal rights. All that is egoist enough, or can become so. And I do not remember where we have Christian warrant for believing that man was created immortal.

But the case is quite altered if I am not thinking chiefly about *my* living for ever. I may be thinking of some dearer to me than life, for whose salvation beyond the grave I would risk my own. Or I may be thinking of the immortality of the race; which is a more potent influence on the present than a multitude of individual immortalities, because the efficiency of an organic group is greater than the sum total of the efficiencies of its units. A nation is great, a crowd is not. But still more is the case altered if I am thinking about our glorifying God for ever whether as a soul or as a race. All is different if I am thinking of what my soul means for others. Most of all when I am thinking of

what it means for God and not of what it means for me, if I am not making Him to serve my egoism, if I am not thinking of the paradise of Heaven but of the purpose of God and His righteousness. If my immortality is due to God's gift, it is due to His *incessant* gift and creation, and not to an infinite lease of life which He signed at the beginning. That is to say, it can go on only by communion with Him. But that is not the communion of love between equals, but of grace between unequals. And whatever we owe to God's grace glorifies Him far more than it glorifies us. What man tends to say, whether he do it naïvely or philosophically, is, "Because I live I shall live." But what Christ says, and what faith hears is, "Because I live ye shall live also." He alone has life in Himself, and we have it by His gift and by union with Him either here or hereafter. It makes a vast difference between the philosophic and the religious treatment of immortality when we remember this—that in the Bible the supreme interest and the final ground of immortality was not the continuity of an organism, physical or psychical, but of a relation. The ground of the belief was not that such an organism must go on, but that a life in God, and especially in the risen Christ, could not die. The philosophic way is egoist, however large and fine; it does justice to that excellent creature man. It is anthropocentric. The other way (of faith) is concerned with God, His stake in us, His purpose with us, and our service of His Kingdom and honour. It is theocentric.

If this were a mere matter of debate and we wanted to make a point, we might, of course, remind an objector that if there is egoism in some of the hopes of immortality, there is egoism in many of the results of its denial. If death be dissolution, self knows that it has but a short time, and must make the most of it. And there is no power to forbid or limit. So it piles gain on gain, power on power, pleasure on pleasure, with an energy that nothing abates or deflects, and with a deep sense of the resources of money to neutralise

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consequences, still pain, and avert death. So duty easily comes to be a negligible quantity. And the man is ruled by the will to live with all his might the little span on which he may count. But the events round us would show, if nothing else did, that such brief egoism in due course reduces the value and power of each ego even to enjoy. It reduces the value of moral personality, and society sinks to worse than death.

But it is not here a mere matter of debate and of making points. Let it be owned that in cases it has happened, and does happen, that the passion for poring on a future life has starved the passion due to this life, and bleached it of reality. (Though, to tell the truth, I wish more people pored on these things now.) It has taken the monk out of his helping place in the world into a hiding place; and it has put him into a cellular self, regardless of either the goods or the duties of this life. By his celibacy it robbed the world of the propagation of the best lives to an extent only equal to that in which by this war we have lost them. But the hope that produces such a result does not get its substance from positive faith, which is occupied with Christ and not with our future, and with a Christ who had much sense of life's joy and zest. The dream of a life to come can be used only to pamper the self; and that means to empty of reality the life that now is. It is a non-moral faith; for if social duty be unreal, all is unreal. Our real and great hope is not that one day we shall die to the world, but that this day we live to others and to God.

To such misled people as I have named the future was a hope that starved the present. But there are those to whom it is a fear, which also crushes it. The dread of hell is an obsession that has distorted many lives. But that again has been because their future was more to them than Christ was, and they were more tied in self than freed in a Saviour. With a keen conscience and a vivid imagination, a future that is merely life prolonged and not reborn may well become filled with fears and loaded with care. But in Christ the future is

given us filled with a regenerate power and glory, where fear is sanctified into penitence and vigilance, sorrow glorifies God and becomes service, and love is realised in ready obedience. Our total ignorance of a future which faith does not fill with Christ can be a more debasing source of fear than a hell which we know serves the purposes of God. Without Christ and the love of Him, the past and the future may equally loom upon us, and beetle over our present.

And not upon us only. We are unsure and anxious not only about ourselves, but about the loved and lost. If our personal outlook be a blank we can perhaps be Stoics, but what of them? Is it any comfort to our love, does it not add a sting to death and put a slur on love, that they may have ceased to be? It is one thing to commit them to Christ, who fills (and is) our future and theirs; but it is another thing to trust to Christ neither ourselves nor them. And yet to-day there are thousands who have far more passion to see their dead than to know Christ; one word from a *revenant* were worth all that Christ has said or could say; a frame of mind which not only disappoints moral hope, but leaves them too easy victims to the occult and all its train. It is neither religion nor ethic, but magic. It does not produce religious belief. "If they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they believe to Christian purpose if one rose from the dead." One does not like to seem untender to the bereaved, but surely it is a poor ending to high-minded people when they find in West End mediums a certainty about their dear ones which they had renounced in Christ, and more comfort in the ghosts' banalities than in the power or silence of Him. It is always an unstable frame of mind and a low form of faith to be, even in the name of love, more anxious about immortality than about being in Christ or in God's Kingdom. And it is dangerous, because it exposes affection to the advances of magic, the variation of temperament, and the spell of the occult—as if the chief secret of life were in the preternatural or the subliminal and not in a moral revelation. But, on the other hand, we can so view the other life in

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Christ, and so care for the righteousness of His endless Kingdom that we give up the dearest souls to its historic service with tears of such noble sorrow as the mother weeps in sad joy when she sends off her daughter as a bride.

CHAPTER III

THE EGOISM OF GOD

The immortals not an élite. The egoism of God is the blessing of the world. The moral paradox and miracle of holy love.

I KEEP saying that our immortality is not so much a matter of our psychical structure, but of our relation to God. And not to God only, but also to our fellows. Let us think of the future not only religiously, as God's gift to us, but ethically, as the destiny of others rather than of ourselves, or as the destiny of our whole kind. Its issues go to the horizon of the whole race. If the future do not belong to them all as it does to us we become an élite. The immortals become a caste. They exist, not in grades of glory (which we may well think), but in a monopoly of prerogative. Without are dogs. If we are more concerned about our own future than about that of our kind we destroy the Kingdom of God. We turn moral considerations out of the large action of history, and we cut the tap root of the unity of mankind, which at the last lies in the conscience and its salvation. The Christian believes in the unity of man only because he believes in the righteousness of the universal Kingdom and the new Humanity in Christ. Also, if we are more concerned about a future compensation for the ills and losses of life to ourselves than to others, we soon come to treat them as our tools. If there be no compensation, such as only another world can give, to these millions of sufferers, all silent but for a Pleader in heaven, and unknown except to the mercy that forgets nothing—if there be no compensation to these dim and common populations of age after age, that fact reduces their whole value, and therewith the value of the soul everywhere. And with that goes the concern at last for human life or suffering. Men come to seem not worth

compensating. God has not cast His mantle over their mangled corpses. But we cannot so leave them. If they do not ask, we must ask for them. We must press God to take order for them. Otherwise we lose respect, to say nothing of love, for them. We belong then to a caste and not to mankind. And if the caste so formed be a coarsely egoist, if it be a militarist, caste, with a dynastic caste within it; and if, moreover, the belief in the soul and its destiny die out in that land, then the lives of the millions are but food for the guns, and even the caste itself becomes the vassal of the dynasty. And the whole of Humanity becomes but the manure in which this monopoly grows.

But a bold spirit may go further and say that the God of the everlasting Kingdom is but an Egoist. He is a dynast. The very unity of the race may be but the footstool of His throne. If his object in our eternal life is His own eternal glory, that transfers the egoism to Him. It makes Him the Arch-Egoist, the Cæsar of heaven. And how can an Egoist worship the Arch-Egoist, however much he might envy Him? There is a kind of thinking, more or less popular, which takes to that somewhat crude criticism as the liberal way. That is its form of protest against the domineering sovereignty of God in the old orthodoxy, for which it has nothing but protest—no interpretation. The Church in preaching a holy God, a jealous God, a sole God, is charged with preaching an egoist God; and the Christian course, it is said, must be to discard Him for a God whose holiness is only purity, and whose being as pure love is wholly spent in bestowing Himself on His creation without a thought of His own self or dignity. He keeps us immortal for our good, and He is not thinking of His own sanctity or glory at all.

But this is as one-sided as orthodoxy could ever be, and for moral man much more fatal. It makes God but the servant of man, the father of a spoilt child. Man picks up all the egoism such a God discards. The Christian revelation is a God of *holy* love and not of hearty love only; but this

tendency drops the holy and keeps only to the love. It offers us a God of dear motherhood and not holy fatherhood. It has taken this swing in the rebound from an orthodoxy that made everything of God's justice and nothing of His love. But if we cannot hold both sides of a paradox we are not fit for the kingdom of heaven. The God of holy love is a paradox. He is not only a mystery; we might even welcome that in an æsthetic way. But He is an aggressive mystery; and that irritates us. He combines two things which, as thoughts, we can adjust in no theology; but we can grasp them by a faith of their reconciliation in a person with whom we have to do—a moral reconciliation, and not one worked out by the process of an idea.

Consider. A God of holy love, a God whose love we do not only enjoy but worship, must be a God that orbs into a perfect sun as well as sheds His goodly rays. He must be a God concentrated as much as a God communicative; else what can He communicate? He does owe something to that closed self which blesses all to their fill. Except as a real self He cannot bless. He would have nothing to give. His self-revelation would only be effusion. But His transcendence in the Old Testament does not cease in His condescendence in the New. It even rises to the place the *Holy Spirit* takes there as a constituent of Godhead. His love is homeward bound as well as outward bound. If it go forth always, it also returns incessantly on Himself. Systole is as endless as diastole. And the synthesis of these two movements can only be realised in the energy of His living person; it cannot be set out in any rational harmony. It involves the miracle of personality and will. That the holy should ever touch the sinful is the great miracle of moral reality. A holy God is more than altruist. His holiness is not egoism. His absolute founds every relative, and does not destroy it.

In the Bible, things, or places, or people are holy which are set apart for God; God is holy as He is set apart for Himself. Things are holy as they are for God; He is holy as He is for Himself. We are holy as belonging to Him; He is holy

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as belonging to Himself, as absolute possessor of Himself, by gift of none. He is possessor of Himself, and of all in Him that houses and blesses us. In the Father's heart are many mansions. For the creature to be holy is *to be for God*; for God Himself to be holy is *to be God*. His holiness is the complete accord of His will and His nature. It is not an attribute of God; it is His name, and being, and infinite value. But if the holiness do not go out to cover, imbue, conquer, and sanctify all things, if it do not give itself in love, it is the less holy. It is but partial and not absolute. As holy He must subdue all and bless all. God's holiness is the fundamental principle not of our worship only, but of His whole saving revelation and economy of love. It is the moral principle of both love and grace. It is love's content, it is what love brings or grace gives. And it is the warrant of love's eternity. For only the holy can love for ever and for ever subdue the loveless; only the holy can thoroughly forgive so as to make His holiness dear. In God's holiness are perfectly balanced the two things which correspond to Egoism and Altruism with us. They are warp and woof of Him. That heaven moves in the harmony of its centrifugal and its centripetal powers. If we fasten on either at the cost of the other we fly from our orbit and come to grief. Luther (but half de-catholicised) seized on the love, and we have modern Germany, with its deadly docility, its soft piety, and its hard practice. Calvin (with the moral thoroughness of Redemption) seized by pre-eminence on the holy, with a seeming hardness which has brought the freedom and security of the world. The two had coexisted in Catholicism in a naïve and dormant way; and they had to dispart in these two reformers on the way to a synthesis which we have not yet reached in practice, but which the great Catholicism of the future must see.

The egoism of the absolute God is not egoism. It makes the relativity of all. It is not selfishness but selfhood. It is the security of blessing for all. The egoism of God is the blessing of the world. It is His possession of His own holy soul.

If He did not possess His soul how should He give His spirit to us? It is not the egoism of an individual that we have to do with, but the universal self-containedness, self-constancy, self-identity. It is the eternal totality (if we speak Latin) or the holiness (if we speak Saxon) of all things in righteous love. It is love's power, in every contact with creation, to remain itself, assert itself, establish itself, and always come home to itself, bringing its sheaves in our souls. It is the absoluteness and eternity of the moral and spiritual world, the security and certainty of the conquest, government, and uplifting of the Universe. The worship of the absolute selfhood of the holy Lover by those who live in Him is the source in us of permanent power to quell our egoism in the sacrifices of love. Naturally we love love because it is lovely. Yet it might be helpless. We do not love spiritually till we are perfectly sure of its infinite power. And that lies in its holiness. Because it is holy it is almighty, and we trust it for eternal victory. The idea of a Fate behind Him that might destroy Him and that keeps Him on a long chain would also destroy religion; we could not worship a God who was but our stoutest comrade under a Fate which bound us both. He would not be a holy God. And we can worship no less.

God's holy love is the egoism not of the fragmentary individual but of the absolute fulness and perfect personality which gives every person or soul its place, wealth, and joy. It is the egoism of the sacrificial God of the Cross, lifted up to draw all men unto Him. And an immortality which shares such egoism as that is our last destiny as the image of God.

CHAPTER IV

DE MORTUIS

The egoism of the will to live is qualified by the suicides and the martyrs. Demoralising sacrifice. False consolations and true. Prayer for the dead.

WE have seen that when we speak of another life we mostly mean a second cycle of this life better oiled. The immortality of the soul means for us mostly a continuance, under better and smoother conditions, of that self-asseveration, conscious or unconscious, which makes life here. It expresses that revolt from extinction which gives zest and verve to our natural world, and which may be, after all, but a part of our egoism. But we have also seen that a belief so great as Immortality has come to be in Christianity cannot rest at last upon the instinct of a mere egoism distended. Such a basis would reduce its moral value, i.e. its ultimate value for life. We should lose life in our anxiety to prolong it. The Christian ground for immortality is that the Lord hath need of him.

But when our life-hunger has been discussed it is not all. Is there no such thing as the passion for death? If we long for Immortality, we also have, in cases, both the wish and the power of suicide. If we could only be sure of extinction by it! Sleep! Ay, but what dreams may come! In like manner the racial instinct is an adumbration of the instinct for immortality, and emerges in us when religion does; but there is also celibacy, whether as a preference, or a power, or a duty. These are two sets of extremes, life with its refusal in death, or love with its refusal in celibacy. And each extreme seems to cross the other's drift—life at war with death, love with celibacy. But there is one point in which the two agree. They agree in asserting the soul's power over nature. The one, life, asserts that the soul has

power to transcend nature and live down circumstances; the other, suicide, that it has power to slip out of circumstances, to foil nature, and to stop when nature says go on. The one, love, can rejoice over untoward fate; the other, celibacy, can wear down instincts the most primal and powerful. And if the soul is so in control of nature, then it need not end with nature. It is not wholly dependent on it. Thought does not depend on brain. Still, let us not overpress certain points in the argument. I only note that, when we urge the passion for life as an argument for its duration, the disgust or indifference for life must also be taken into account. The attenuation of life, by loss of interest in it, is closely associated with its brevity.

There is a farther qualification that we have already marked on the passion to live. The desire for immortality may not be a desire for *my* immortality, but for that of another life more dear to me than my own. That would greatly affect the note of my daily life. Indeed such a love might point towards my own suicide were I certain that it would ensure the continuance of the other's life beyond. I am ready to die; he is not. If my death could be thought to give him chances in a future life which he has thrown away in this I would welcome it. I might even cause my own death for his sake, and trust the motive to win me mercy. If my ceasing to live entirely could ensure him a life of goodness and happiness, I should gladly go out that he might have a fuller life. "Blot me out of the Book of Life." "I could wish myself accursed of God for my brethren's sake." I would part with my immortality for his if I had the power. Indeed, in some cases, so far as people have the power, it is done. Some lives are thus given for others, not by an act of pistol or poison, but by long days of sacrifice; and sometimes, alas! these very days crush the soul itself and grind it down. You will meet with a long life sacrifice in which the soul seems to sink in the moral scale with every year, and the service itself becomes sordid. This is one of the most pathetic of moral mysteries. The cross that was taken up

was more than the moral power could carry. It shows that sacrifice is not *in itself* a moral or an elevating thing. The habit is not sustained by any sense of a compensating future or an unfailing God. There is often, indeed, no regard for a future life at all. That is a common type of parenthood among unspiritual people. All warmth or beauty in the relation dies in the habit or duty of it. But take it at its best. Would it alter, would it vanish, if immortality came to be generally disbelieved?

Again, at a time like the present, the interest of countless bereaved hearts is not in immortality for themselves, but for those who have been caught away either unfulfilled, or unprepared, or worse than unprepared, by the wickedness of war. What do our ideas of the unseen warrant us to say to the bleeding hearts and fearful minds of those left upon earth?

At the outset, I venture to think that it is a surrender of Christianity to find from ghosts a comfort and hope about the unseen which we do not draw from Christ. It is amoral. It is another religion and a debased. It is the renunciation of the moral element in religion for quite an inferior mysticism (magic). It is a non-moral mysticism which gets from some Bond Street medium a faith which the soul fails to receive from Christ or His apostles and saints. But that by the way.

May we say in consolation to the bereaved that every martyr patriot goes straight from the field of death to the side of the Saviour? May we say that in the way of comfort; as if a death for a great cause, to whose side the man sprang at a patriotic call, wiped out the vices of a lifetime, or the betrayal of innocent hearts? We could say no such thing. We may not forget our moral gospel so far as to speak like that. If these souls go straight to the presence of the Saviour, it is to the Judgment seat of Christ, where we must all stand. Yes, but it is where nothing is neglected or forgotten, nothing glozed, and nothing set down in malice, but good and bad are in scales perfectly and kindly just. It is quite as

false, on the other hand, to quote the bad old phrase about the tree lying as it has fallen. It does not. It crumbles. Or it is moved away. It is turned to some good account. We may be quite sure that, if a cup of cold water to a disciple do not lose its reward, so an act of sacrifice for a righteous cause cannot go without its moral value for God, and a corresponding effect on the soul. And the finest thing that that soul ever did, though it will not atone for a lifetime of things foul, yet must have its full value for the personality in a sphere where such things tell more than they do here. There shall never be one lost good. The closing sacrifice does all that is in it to do. It is not wasted. But it does not do what it is beyond heroism itself to do for the soul. It does not save. Yet it may be the moment of his conversion. It may open his moral eyes. It may begin his godly sorrow. It may be the first step in a new life, the beginning of repentance in a new life which advances faster there than here. We threw away too much when we threw Purgatory clean out of doors. We threw out the baby with the dirty water of its bath. There are more conversions on the other side than on this, if the crisis of death opens the eyes as I have said. And, while it may be true that some mephistophelian spirits are born dead into that world as some are into this, is it not true also that for others we can only say that the manner of their leaving life became them better than anything they did in it, and it is the first step to a *new* life, and not only *another* life? If a man do not at once receive the prodigal's robe, at least he has the entrée of the father's domain.

How natural in this connexion to turn to prayer for the dead. Prayer for the dead is healthier than tampering with them. Prayer is our supreme link with the unseen—with which otherwise we have no practical relations. We should resume prayer for the dead, were it only to realise the unity of the Church and our fellowship with its invisible part. In Christ we cannot be cut off from our dead nor they from us wherever they be. And the contact is in prayer.

No converse with the dead is so much of a Christian

activity as prayer for them. There is no part of the practical Christian life which is so intimate and effectual as prayer. It colours and shapes us more than the obvious forms of action do. It is the work which chiefly influences the growth of faith and the quality of character. Life is affected from its foundation by whether we pray or not, and by how we pray. It is the main practical interest between this life and the life unseen. And we shall pray or not pray, we shall pray one way or another way, according as we believe in a future life, and hope for ourselves, or for those dearer than ourselves. Which is the better, to put them in God's hands and pray for them, or to bring strange devices to pass to conjure them up? If we believe in a continued life through spirits and not through Christ, if a medium mean more than a Mediator for our contact with the unseen, the manner of our prayer will be accordingly. If we discard Christ's moral revelation, and say we get more if one seem to rise magically from the dead, we pass into another religion, and prayer sinks accordingly. If Christ's voice do not come to us from beyond the grave, if all we hear is but the dull sound and hard effort of a miner's pick trying to meet ours in a tunnel between the two worlds, the note of our prayer and of our life is going to be deeply affected. It will lose the infinite moral value of union with the intercession of Christ, crowning His moral and final victory of a *holy* Cross. Or if we go on to say that death ends all, it ends all prayer. It not only stops the soul that prays, but the thought of it paralyses the soul and its prayer in life.

On the other hand, if death fix and settle all, if the tree lies for ever as it falls, prayer is much affected, and so life. One form of prayer is then excluded—prayer for the dead (though they need our prayer more if they are suffering yonder). Yet it would be easier to maintain a belief in immortality if we were encouraged so to pray. It would give us a practical relation with the other side, and to other immortality than our own. As it is, we have little direct and practical contact with immortality so far as the day's life

goes. No act of that life brings us into direct and practical connection with the world of the dead. It is a dream; it is a world not realised. It does not belong to the strong and active side of our life. There is always about a life that works outward on another a certain note of distinction which is not made up for by any enthusiasm of Humanity. I knew an agnostic of a very fine kind who shortened his life by his devoted service to the very poor in a low part of London. There was to me a certain halo about him. And yet it is a different kind of spell that invests a life lived in the power of an endless life, a life that dwells with immortality daily.

I venture to say, then, that the instinct and custom of praying for our dearest dead, or our noblest (like many of the soldiers by whose pain and death we live), should be encouraged and sanctified as a new bond for practical life between the seen and the unseen, where we have bonds all too few. Nothing in our Christian belief is against it, and there is a good deal for it. It would never have been lost but for the abuses of purgatory, masses, and the commerce which the Church made of a magical influence on another world. But we threw away too much when we made a clean sweep. We are bidden to pray for everything that is not trivial, "*In everything* making your requests known," and to cast every real care on God. There is nothing serious that we may not bring to the Father. A widow praying who does not know where her next shilling is to come from means more to the Father than a full choral service, and more engages His heart. And it is serious enough that half our heart, and all its treasure, should be snatched into the unseen. With that unseen our only sure link is the God to whom we pray. But He is as much the God of our dead as of us; and He is a God from whom they cannot be severed as they are from us. May our prayer to our common Father not put into petition what is always in our thoughts, and put into words what is always in our heart? If we name them before God, what are we doing in our way but what He does in His, and calling things that are not as though they were?

There are those who can quietly say, as their faith follows their love into the unseen, "I know that land. Some of my people live there. Some have gone abroad there on secret foreign service, which does not admit of communications. But I meet from time to time the Commanding Officer. And when I mention them to Him He assures me all is well."

There is another world. It is not a mere unseen, unknown. It is not blank being, but full of feature, character, power, reality. We do not fall into it over the edge of a bottomless abyss. It is not clean cut off from this life. All kinds of processes run out into it, and they carry current both ways. For Christian people the supreme link, the Grand Commissure (if I might so speak) of both worlds is Christ. The absolute unity of Christ's soul in its victory over death and dread, in its exorcism of the occult powers, gives us the spiritual unity of seen and unseen. His great delivery for a pagan world was not from death, but from inferior and accusing spirits haunting, distracting, and debasing life. His living person is as real yonder as here, as real here as there. It is the last effective in both worlds. He *is* a living person. He is not inert substance, a mere continuity of essence, a mere prolongation of some great kind of being, or vitality, or principle, or tendency. He *is* the House of many mansions. He is more. He is King and Lord. His unity is one of action and reaction. In Him the other world acts on this, and this world on the other. But our chief action from this world on the other is prayer. And our other world is God. Prayer is action in the God in whom our dead live. Were they in hell, it is still God's hell. How can prayer help, either in nature or in grace, being prayer for our dead? Can we think of them there and not pray? Can we think of them there not praying, and for us, as even Dives prayed for his family at a very early stage of his new moral growth? They, too, in proportion as they feel the atmosphere of the other world,—are they not caught up, and carried on, in the stream of the great intercession? Believers at least are all in Christ, and

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surely not outside that intercession in His name and power. In the early Church, says Dr. Swete, it was a well-spread opinion, and apparently unrebuked, that the dead in Christ pray for the living. "No belief which was not actually an article of faith was more general, or more deeply cherished in Christendom." Paul has no protest against Baptism for the dead. There is nothing apostolic or evangelical that forbids prayer for them in a communion of Saints which death does not rend. It is an impulse of nature which is strengthened by all we know of the movement of grace. The arguments against it are apt to be more theologically pedantic than spiritually proficient. And they do not seem to have much heart.

CHAPTER V

THE PRACTICE OF ETERNITY AND THE EXPERIENCE OF LIFE

The moral psychology of the saints. The change wrought by age on the soul's direction. But also in the soul's interests. The effect on life of the antepast of Eternity.

THERE is much to be yet written about the psychology of spiritual change, and especially of conversion and of the new birth which gives us our true eternity. For eternal life means more than immortality. We may hope for better light on the process when there are more cases, and more thorough, and more intelligent cases of the new birth among people with the modern mind and the psychological insight. The psychology of sainthood has not yet had the attention which has been given to the psychology of the natural man. The reason is partly because spiritual people are somewhat shy of revealing themselves, partly because they are shy of analysing the hour of their best spiritual experience. For to dissect may be to kill it; it shrivels at the critical touch; and we can examine but its memory. But we have some analogies—and large analogies, not small. The soul's immortality beyond death may be shown to have a relation to the new birth, similar to that which the new birth has to the origin of the natural egoist man.

It is not so hard to speak of conversion if we mean by it no more than a change of direction, a turning round and moving the other way. But more than that is meant when it is described as regeneration, as a new birth. It is a change in quality, and not in mere movement or behaviour. It means a greater crisis in the growth of the moral personality than the mere reversal of the machinery; a new type of motor is put into the mill.

It has been pointed out that we can mark in the long course of the moral life a slow change, which we may well call a slow conversion, because it is a change in the direction of our interest. In youth, says Paulsen, speaking of the course of the natural life, our interest is turned mainly upon the future; in maturity it is turned upon the present; and in age it reverts more and more to the past. Such a change is gradually wrought by experience upon the direction of the soul. And it is brought about by our approach to another life. For what are youth, maturity, and age? Are they not all relative terms and stages, which we measure by their distance from a fixed point—namely, death. They draw their meaning from some close to which they move. Their particular meaning comes from their various distance from death. But that means from eternity. For death is the point where all men enter a relation with eternity which gathers past, present, and future all into one infinite simultaneity.

Youth, maturity, and age, I say, gradually undergo in us the great conversion of interest that I have described when they are spread out and successive; but they must undergo a greater change still when we enter at death an eternity in which they all coexist in a timeless way, and act simultaneously and collectively on us. And the frequent contemplation here of such contact with eternity must greatly affect life. If the conduct of our life is much affected by the gradual passage to age as I have put it, without our being very conscious of the change; if the history of our soul must be still more affected when we pass death, and find all the stages of life in a timeless simultaneous action on us, must not life be vastly affected in those who also accustom themselves spiritually to confer with eternity during the whole of life's passage, who make frequent excursions into the unseen, and who deliberately expose their soul at intervals during their whole life to the spiritual influence which condenses all successive stages in a timeless spiritual experience. To dwell devoutly on such an eternity must much modify

the natural development. It must hasten it by anticipation, and ripen us faster than any experience of life can which is merely ethical and reflective. It moralises in a transcendent way the time process, the successive stages of life. And especially so as we look back on life; it sublimates the retrospect.

Let me linger on this. Paulsen finely says (speaking of the spiritual and reflective life) that when we come to age and look back on our moral growth, we are much less interested in recalling the good times we had than we were when we anticipated them in youth; and we are more arrested by the memories of our faults than of our pleasures. As to these, we prefer to dwell on the pleasures we have given, or the help we have brought—on the amount of service we have put into life. And we are more concerned than we once were about the loss we have caused, the lives we have stunted, the wrongs we have done; or about the wrongs and losses which our success has cost, even when we meant no ill, just by the course of things. That is to say, our outlook on life is more moral and less selfish in its retrospect than in its prospect. We become alive to the preoccupation of our old egoism and the cruelty of our youth—or at least its crassness and insensibility. And does this not show what the larger effect of eternity must be? Is that not the inverted value we shall see in looking back on life when we are converted by entering Eternity? And is it not the value we should see if we entered Eternity in spirit here? If during life we let the influences of eternity, of life in its simultaneity, play on us deliberately and in advance; if we court, by the culture of our spiritual life in Christ, the revelation of eternity in God, with whom is no after nor before; if we let it all act on our soul from there; should we not be doing much to anticipate the verdict of age, and to avert many of the regrets of eternity? The last judgment would then be always at work on us. We should live in it and its power and glory. We should in a short time fulfil a long time. By the Eternal Spirit, we should so number our days that we turn our

hearts to moral wisdom faster than we are changed by the mere lapse of the years. For the knowledge that we court with pains has a value that does not belong to what is forced on us, or what just sinks in subconsciously.

But this means for Christians placing ourselves in ever closer rapport with Christ's holy love, and especially with the holiness in it and the conquest that means. The real power of immortality is the eternity of the holy. It is philosophically put, the invincibility of the moral absolute. Holiness, with its eternal moral conquest, is the eternal thing in love itself, it is the only guarantee of love's final victory. As we take home eternity from Christ, it is the holy we take home in love. It is the holy as what might be called the ingrain, the tissue, the physiognomy of eternal love, the content and quality of it, the gift and power it brings, the warp to its woof. It is to this supreme moral power that we expose ourselves for our cleansing, our shaping, nay, our new creation—which is something beyond love's power except as holy. And it is as moral persons that we do so, for the holy is a moral idea, it is a moral power. Therefore it is not the mere duration of the soul that concerns us, not the continuance of a *process* more or less natural by which we are swept in, but the immortality of the moral personality which is reared by our *action*, our personal action of response. And the influence of holiness, of God, on that active personality is supreme, because the true eternity is His standing act, it is Himself in that pure holy action which is the native energy of His being. He is not a static being into whose kind love we sink, but He is the eternal Energy we join, which constitutes all being, and binds in holy action the coherent universe—the love which, as holy, moves the earth and all the stars. He is the most influential environment of the moral soul. For His holiness does not merely act on man as an object, as it does on the natural world; but it so acts on him that he returns the act as a subject; it is a case of reciprocal action in a rising scale. It is communion. And we know, not as science knows, but because we are first

THE PRACTICE OF ETERNITY

known by what we know, because His knowing us is the cause of our knowing Him. The object of our knowledge is the eternal Subject that knows. An eternity which begins by knowing us must have a very different effect on our life from an eternity which we but know, and to which we but look forward.

CHAPTER VI

IMMORTALITY AS PRESENT JUDGMENT

It is a vocation rather than a problem. Life is another thing if we confuse these. Immortality is a destiny rather than a riddle. Live immortally. Choose; do not argue. To live for Eternity is much, but to live Eternity is more.

LIKE every other Christian doctrine, that of the soul's immortality needs to be moralised and brought home to our daily life without losing its mystic spell. And in this interest we might regard the following considerations.

The trouble about the doctrine of immortality has been increased by the fact that so many have turned it from an imperative task to a leisurely theme. It has passed from a practical task to be but a theoretical problem, from a Gospel to our will to be a riddle to our wits. From a "concern" it has become an enigma. From a vocation it has turned a question. From a matter of conscience and duty it has become a matter of poetry and speculation. It has been made to rest not on the free grace of God but on the dim presumptions of man. The faith of it has turned from a gift of God to a result of ours.

And this greatly affects its influence on life. We should begin with the fact, if we are Christians at all (for it just means our part and lot in the Christ Who vanquished death), and we should act accordingly. I do not see how a true believer in Christ can doubt the immortality of those who are Christ's (and He claims all), or require occult assurance of it, which means finding Him unsatisfactory. But if you do not so begin and so act; if, instead of beginning with the belief, you expect only to end with it, how long do you think you will take to arrive at a conclusion? It may take a long time, for some all their lives, for others more. Meantime

how are you to be living? If so great a thing is true about life, it must have, and must be meant to have, an effect equally great on life's practice. Our belief about such a fact of personality when it finds us must greatly colour life. Is it an immortal soul that is living life out? If so, and if you begin, and for long go on, speculating pro and con, then all that makes the power of immortality and its action on your soul is lost out of your first stage. Your soul must lose irreparably in the end if that *plastic* stage is not living the immortality out as a power or principle, but is only working towards it in a hope rather than a faith. It must make a great difference to life if it is not spent under the power of an eternal life but only under its possibility, not in living out the immortality but only in weighing it, considering whether there is any such thing to live out. If you do not believe in it you cannot live it. And if you are not living an immortal life you are living something different and inferior; and the effect of this for life's tone and value must correspond. It is not something that begins when we die, but something that begins with us and lives forth in our life. Death is not the solution of the riddle, but a crisis of the power. And it may be the coming home of judgment on you for treating as a riddle what is a power.

Immortality is really a destiny pressing on us by Christ in us; it is not a riddle that just interests us. It is not chess, it is war. It is a duty bearing on us, it is not a theme that attracts us. When duties turn to mere problems and destinies become but intellectual toys, it is an evil time. It is not well when we stop doing in order to discuss. We cannot safely turn the will's duty over to thought. Duty is a thing we must do. For effect on life we must own it practically, not debate its existence. The gifts of God are not there to be looked in the mouth but to be lived in the heart. There is no Christian question about our duty to obey the immortal call; the only possible question is as to the form of obedience; or it is the question whether we are obeying it or not. Our immortality lies on us with that kindling weight, that weight of glory,

that weight of wings. Weight but not pressure. The wings that add to our weight yet lift us from the ground. "My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken Thou me according to Thy winged word." Such a word, gift, and destiny is our immortality. Our Christian business is to crystallise it. It is an obligation; it is not a mere stirring in us. It is a duty on our person and action; it is not a mere process of our natural organism, to whose stream we have just to yield ourselves. Life is not just a stream which we have reason to think flows on beyond a certain point, or continues when it disappears round a certain bend. It is not an inevitable movement towards the future. It is rather a doom from the past, a work in the present, or a destiny from above. We cannot tarry to argue if there is an immortality awaiting us; we must obey the immortality urging and lifting us. We do not move to a possible mirage of a city of God; the citizenship is within us. Ask, am I living as immortal—not as one who will be immortal? Do not waste time asking if there is a coming eternity; ask, what must I do to give effect to my present eternity; how shall I be loyal to the eternal responsibility in me and on me? Is my faith a life? It must make a great difference to life whether we treat our eternity as a present or a future, as a power or as a possibility, as a duty or as an ideal—whether our Christ is a Bystander or an Occupant of us. Our immortality is really our judgment and its joy of righteousness; it is not a mere condition of judgment, nor the region of it. It does not become a mere venue, a mere stage for judgment, a set scene. Nor does it provide a mere asbestos either for future flames, or for the happier incandescence. It has no existence apart from a content of weal or woe. And that content depends on us (under grace). Our immortality is not just the glory (or gloom) of going on and still to be. It is not mere duration. There is no such thing, no such abstraction. Our eternity is something that remains when all its events have passed. It is the state of a soul, the content and quality of its life, when events in a sequence cease, when they have come and gone with the

soul's verdict on them, and the reaction of such verdict on the soul. It is good or evil according to choice. It is a departing to one of two great seas. It does not call chiefly for contemplation but decision. What Paul did in speaking to Felix was not to persuade him of immortality; it was to turn immortality from a curious interest to a crushing crisis, from a curious interest hovering about life, and discussible at the tables of roués, to a searching judgment on life's interior. It was preaching that Felix did not like with wine and walnuts. The salons shun it, and the reviews ignore it. Nor was it in the nature of popular preaching. It did not carry the accent either of culture, or of sentiment, or of mere urbane consideration. It did not humour the instincts of the heart, nor hallow the graces of the home. It did not agitate the questions that occupy the periodicals on the one hand, nor those that captivate the young on the other. But it was the kind of preaching which brings the other life into this, which shapes our behaviour in time by the nature of an immanent eternity (whether we speak of public conduct or private), which transmutes time into eternity and does not simply prolong it. It translates a present, it does not discuss a future. It does more than educate, it converts. It does more than enlarge our moral horizon, or manipulate the themes of moral culture. It makes the new heaven and the new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness.

That is a sample of the way we must rescue the spiritual for the ethical, moralise our theology, and make creed practice. However much religion may be life, theology is deeper life. It rises deeper in God's life, it goes deeper into ours. It moralises all by its origin in the holy. A theme like Immortality, at least—we do it wrong, being so majestic, to explore it but as a cavern with our torches, instead of honouring it as our light and sun and showing it forth accordingly. It is much to live for Eternity, to live Eternity is more.

CHAPTER VII

ETERNITY WITHIN TIME, TIME WITHIN ETERNITY

The other life then is the other life now. The timeless in Time. Time's Sacrament. We are Eternal each moment. Eternity and progress.

“THIS *is* eternal life,” says Jesus, “to know God, to know Me.” It is a thing indwelling with us, it is not a thing outside that awaits us. It is ourselves in a phase, in a new relation. Myself am hell; myself am my own heaven. It is not a realm we enter, nor an influx that enters us. Moral though it be, it is a mystic thing now rather than a future then, an inner presence not an outer goal, a power rather than an expectation. It is to know God as holy love. But it is not to know Him as an object, not to know Him as science knows, not to know Him in a cognition, which sees a thing at the other end of our observation or of our thought. It is to know Him by an inner appropriation. It is by an interpenetration. We know what begins by knowing us. We know because we are known. It is the kind of knowledge which does not *give* power but *is* power, where our self is not just enhanced but lost, and only in that way found in its fulness. The Christ, who knew God best, had power over all; but it was power to give as to Him it was given, and to give to His own eternal life. Eternal life is much more than contact; it is living communion with spiritual and eternal reality. And on that reality's initiative. Real love is not that we loved God but He us.

Eternal life is not so inward that it ignores the world as phantasmal. Especially it does not ignore history. Unhistoric spirituality is often a danger to faith. Some say it is one of the greatest to-day. The true spirituality is rooted in history. It springs from an incarnation of action. It is not a

matter of illumination. It does not arise from a mere emanation of light. It is knowing God in Christ the Redeemer. The resurrection to immortality crowns the redemption from guilt. It is not the lone soul with the Alone, ignoring two millenniums of revelation and its saints. It is not intuition, mystic and gnostic. It is in a historic Mediator. Is that a piece of theology? Is a Mediator between the eternal spirit and the finite an unreality, an intrusion? The mystic soul may impatiently think so, but the moral soul finds such mediation the way to reality; and the mystic experience is not quite trustworthy about reality. The pagan gods had not mediators, because they were not real or good gods; but the living God has a living Revealer. To know the living God is to know Christ, to know Christ is to know the living God. We do not know God *by* Christ but *in* Him. We find God when we find Christ; and in Christ alone we know and share His final purpose. Our last knowledge is not the contact of our person with a thing or a thought; it is intercourse of person and person. We meet God in His coming in Christ, meet Him there on His own tryst, and find there that we know only because we were first known. We do not infer from Christ to God. And in Christ we *have* Eternal *life*, we do not simply qualify for it, we do not just take the needful steps.

The true spiritual intuition looks through the historic Christ. Otherwise it is apt to be individual and not social. It may haunt a cell and retire from a church. It is more devout than sacramental. It is not historic and it is not moral in its nature. It is more prone to visions than revelations; it is more mystic than positive. It develops subjective frames rather than objective powers. It often craves fusion with God rather than communion. From the abeyance of the moral note it tends to think of process more than action, of imagination more than conscience, of elation more than sympathy, of an evolution instead of a redemption. It is more interested in sanctity than in righteousness. It lives on an inner light rather than a redeeming power, a charity

rather than a righteousness, a group of saints rather than a Kingdom of God. Its immortality is a beatific vision rather than the reciprocal energy of eternal life. Christian intuition turns on our insight into Christ, which to an extent varies with temperament; but Christian faith turns on Christ's action on us and for us, which is removed from our variations, and can be met and answered well by some whose spiritual penetration is not yet subtle, vivid, or vocal.

Another life—what is the other life *then* but that which is the other life *now*? What is it but the eternal life which is our true life here, only viewed as going on, viewed in amount rather than in kind, in extent rather than quality, as prolonged rather than intense, as expressed in terms of time, duration or quantity, instead of worth? We ask, how long, instead of how rich, how full, we live. Some will remember the Spinozist description of the two disparate aspects of the great reality. Spinoza spoke of these aspects as thought and extension. And there was only an empirical connexion between them. Well, the two aspects of eternal life correspond. We may view it quantitatively, extensively, as everlasting, or qualitatively *sub specie eternitatis*, as moral. Now are these, like extension and thought, irrelevant to each other and disparate? Are we quite ignorant of what *has* these features, of that whose physiognomy they are? The life that goes on—is it not the life of moral personality? That is soul, that is reality. When we speak of another life we think of our life as enduring; but it is the continuance of the same eternal life which is our good as souls here—intense at each immeasurable moment, infinite in each particle, as it were, and royal in its quality, whatever its extent may be. It does not matter for the moment whether we think of its imperative as that of conscience or that of love. It is the great shaping and guiding power, whose influence is real out of all proportion to our sense of its range.

Even when by the other life we mean the eternal life in its aspect of duration, we still prize it only for its quality.

We want it, not because there is a lot of it, but because it is good. Without that quality it would be a Tithonus burden, and we might well shrink from it. The same thing makes it precious both there and here. It is its intrinsic excellence and influence. It is its excellence and influence over what we call nature. It is its quality, not simply as enhancing us (which is after all but an extension or aggrandisement of our Ego), but as regenerating us, as giving us another centre, which is the source of another value, and so makes a new creation. It is as holy that the soul is permanent, it is in virtue of its quality. It is as holy that God Himself is eternal, in incessant moral victory. Thus, as we shall see later, we connect immortality very closely with the new birth, which is the foundation of Christian ethic.

As to natural ethic it might plausibly be said that it could go on in our posterity for its own sake even were immortality denied. Truth (it is even held) would be a good thing were there none to believe it, and kindness were all hearts dust.

It comforteth my soul to know
That though I perish truth is so.

That is in some ways absurd. (Yet read Isa. li. 6.) It is a very individualist view. As was long ago said, pagans have an ethic but paganism has not. Even if a case could be made out from the good pagans—that virtue was good in its own right, their failure was to get people in general to believe and act on it, whose brief life would be a merry one at all costs. But for Christian ethic the view that goodness was indifferent to immortality could not be made even plausible. To abolish a future life would be to abolish the eternal life of the present (i.e. the Eternal Spirit, or the Eternal Christ), which takes the place of the natural man, and makes the Christian soul and its conduct. If you destroy the permanency, you do not leave the quality unaffected. The new power is of God's Spirit. It is absolute, timeless. If at a point it could cease, it would be struck at the heart; its

absoluteness, its divinity would cease—"Half dead to know that it could die."

When we speak of eternal life we are apt to think of it as a second order of things, which might be developed out of time or inserted into it, but which is less obvious, less real, more ghostly and metaphorical. But, if we come to consider closely, all the deepest life is timeless; and the more life there is the more timeless it feels. The more intensely we live the less we take note of passing time. Life is full of the present the more vital it is. But what does that mean? The present? Suppose we look into that. Should I be metaphysical (and therefore an enemy of the human race) or should I be but psychological (and a favourite of the hour) if I took this line? What is the present? Has it any real existence? Is any fixed point of time conceivable? Can you arrest any moment? Have we not to do with something that is not so much a point in time as timelessly interior to time, and to all its movement through what we call points? Each moment of time is outwardly but a spark at the contact of past and future, a point that is gone before you can say it is. What is the present, outwardly seen, but the briefest flash in the perpetual becoming of things. And we master it only by pressing into its inwardness, by union with that perfect *being* which has a *becoming* only in us and our history. The moment is a "shoot of everlastingness." There is no present, because there is no time. An abounding life which is all present, even if not all conscious, is timeless. But not as a dreamy entity or velleity might be. It is eternal as a moral act or personality is. It expresses itself chiefly in action; and an act, in its nature, as the act of a spiritual personality, is a timeless thing. As an act of the spirit it partakes of the energy eternal. The great acts of the great personalities at a point of history are superior to time, interior to it, and beyond it. So also their bodies mock space, and five feet of corporeality may mould the soul of man for ever. The greater we grow the less are we the victims of time or space, and the more we are immortal. And the more we live in our

true and active immortality the more greatly we live—most of all as we live in Christ, whose whole person went into one eternal and redeeming act.

Eternity is thus beyond time only in the sense of being deep within it. "He hath set eternity in their hearts." It is within our interior, and beyond it—above it in that way. It is more interior. It inhabits our inner castle. "Religion is not the perception of the infinite; it is having the infinite within us." That makes the moral value of Immortality for life. We are living now the life beyond. Time and space are rather distilling our eternity than preparing for it. Think of the automatic reaction on our soul of our resolves and deeds, so that what we have been makes us what we are. Think then, more deeply still, of the power, the eternity, moulding these wills and deeds. Our eternal life is not at the end of our days but at the heart of them, the source of them, the control of them. Time is there to reveal or to deposit Eternity, not to qualify for it. Eternity does not lie at the other end of time, it pervades it. We can invert our way of putting it. Time is, as it were, the precipitate of eternity—should I say the secretion of it? Time is the living garment of the God in us. And it can be not only transparent but permeable. It has the sacramental, the miraculous power to pass us into eternity at each moment, and not only when we die. Time is divine in the sacramental, and not in the essential, sense. That is, the divine thing is achieved in the souls time makes, whether time be a form of the eternal consciousness or not. Time is divine in function if not in being. "For religion," says Schleiermacher, "immortality means being one with the Infinite in the midst of finitude. It means to be eternal at every moment." We have begun eternity. We began it at birth. The sacramental value of time I will discuss further in the next chapter.

But does that not farther mean this, that life and history are there to let God get out rather than to let man get on? We go forward really only as we can take God with us and realise His Kingdom. The grand interest of man is not

progress but eternity, not length but wealth of days, and wealth moral and spiritual. Above progress is the Kingdom of God—a conception that is replaced in the fourth gospel by the idea of Eternal Life. It is eternity, it is the Kingdom of God, that is the standard to decide what is progress and what is not.

This is the point where religious liberalism comes to grief, especially in its popular forms. It becomes secularised as the march of mind. But a life which realises that its great interest is not progress but eternity must be concerned about much else than the advance of culture. It must be a life very different from one to which progress is everything. It can rest. It is not always on the move. It can be guided and steered. It has a worship. It has at least a pole star and a compass. It must be much higher than a life of mere progress, and so much the more real. As we draw nearer death by age, and immortal things become more real to us, it is a commonplace to say that we tend to grow more conservative. But why is it the case? It is not that we grow lazy and reactionary, but rather because eternity is set deeper in our heart. We become more alert in a certain direction. We become more sensitive to what is deep than to what is lively, to a searchlight than to the flares, to what is the sure, permanent, and timeless thing in all movement. We realise more the goal eternal, which rules within every point of progress as its true ground, which has a quality and a command of its own to stamp upon all movement, a norm (and not only a law) to set on all change, and which, therefore, is the only test we have whether a movement is progress or not. The great interest is not progress; it is the eternity which all along the line looks forth from what we call progress (or looks in on it), and passes a judgment on it. The eternal element in us measures the events which teach, impress, and even shape the soul. The soul remains when these are gone. It passes judgment on them when they are dead. The eternal soul reacts on its impressions. It selects some as making for its true progress, and rejects others which make the other

way. Its ever-abiding eternity is the measure of its never-abiding times and phases. Eternity saturates and shapes time, time but clothes and serves eternity. And the soul, as eternal, by an epigenetic¹ power on its environment, selects some directions of change for its own, and discards others. It is thus the real creative power in things. It exercises over them all a creative criticism, appreciative, selective, and expansive. This idea of a creative criticism from above is more positive and Christian than that of creative evolution. It does more justice to personality, and pays it more respect. To be judged or chosen is a nobler thing than to be hurried on by a stream. Though evolution itself is a great step to the assertion of that moral eternity within time which the mere thinker is apt to ignore. For it gives room for that election, that choice, which must always be associated with the notion of a personal God in relation to His world. The conviction of that eternity which is the true immortality, of that timeless simultaneity and compatibility of things, is what really sets up the idea of progress; since, as I say, only an eternal and final standard which is at once ground and goal, and which unites in itself both causation and finality, enables us to describe any movement in time as progress or the reverse. And it is therefore of first moment for the form and colour of life, personal or social.

¹ The theory of development known as epigenesis is different from that called preformation in having a selective action on its environment. All is not in the germ in miniature, which is a simple body without structural sign of its discriminating power.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE A SACRAMENT

Time sacramental of Eternity. How part and lot in the Eternal raises the common tasks and tragedies of life beyond the sordid.

IT is quite true that time is a gift to us as immortality is. But time is given us that we may become free of it, and may reach the undying spirit and quintessence of time. Our business in time is to resist it even while we appropriate it. We take the honey from the flower we have to struggle to enter and are soon to leave with a struggle. The soul, shaped as it is by the events of time, has yet in the end more power to determine them. A soul like Christ's, immersed in a year's events, can yet be creative for history. Our growth in time (if we may change the image) is to resist its petrification, to resent our burial in time, and the sealing of the grave. And this we can only do immortally—by rising always into the timeless heaven, and in Christ continually ascending by the experience of a constant new creation. The second death is to miss the second creation. We grow in soul if we feel spiritually younger to-day than yesterday, and to-morrow than to-day. We are less loaded with years because we are more lifted in the eternal. We taste the rejuvenescence of immortality, where ends meet and things come full circle. We live where the Father for ever meets the Son, the first the last, the beginning the end, age youth, and all things return for their completion to the perfection in which they began. Time is sacramental of Eternity.

As we follow up this line of reflection, I say, there is borne in on us something more than the religious significance of life. There comes home to us not only its solemn but its sacramental value. Life means more than even the

poets tell. It has more than an imaginative worth. It has more than a supernatural. It has more than an everlasting. It has a holy and eternal worth. I mean that not only is it involved in the process or tragedy of the Universe, but it is partner in the solution of that tragedy in God. History is not only reconciled, it is charged with the message and power of reconciliation. Even art can embalm life in amber. It can cast on it the æsthetic spell, and for a time transport us to another world. It can make our noisy lives seem moments in the energy of the eternal silence. But a greater than art is here. There is a greater secret than even art commands in the relation of the soul and the Holy. The action in time of the Holy and Eternal Spirit of our Redemption is greater than that of genius. We are told indeed by many a seer that "the momentary life of to-day is a factor in the procession of all time and being." Philosophy can teach us that, whether it get it home or not, whether there be much help in it or not. But we have to do with more than a procession of being, or a dance of ideas; and we have to do with getting that something more home to people. We have to do with an eternal providence, with a heart of love eternal, and with a will absolute over the hearts and in the wills of men; and we have to do with a public faith in it. I mean something more than dogmatics—certainly more than dogmatics as a sort of Palladium we carry about in an ark. I have in mind the riddle of the painful earth, for which theology must be some kind of solution. We have to connect up earth's tragedy with God's.

The tragedy of the plodding peasant, dragging a rheumatic existence from the soil, and dying alone and broken-hearted with his daughter's shame or his son's crime—we have to integrate that with an eternal tragedy, an immortal solution of it, and a final joy. We have to link it with God's disappointment in His son man, His grief and His joy and His victory in His Son Christ. Is there any experience possible to the soul, is there any power at work on it, any revelation, any redemption, whereby the very horrors of

world-war and wickedness can be made sacramental of the fulness of joy? Can they be underagents for the last righteousness and angels of the last judgment which secure the last peace? Is it a delusion, or is it Time's sacramental secret, that a person, like Christ, of two thousand years ago, is as near us all now as He was to men then? Have we with us a power of life by which these two millenniums do not divide us from Christ, like a world of mists and seas, but unite us—as commerce and invention make the ocean a bond and not a gulf? Is it a dream that the issue in His Cross is greater, and more creative, than all the issues of history? Why do the heathen rage but for the Kingdom of God's Son? And have we a power by which ephemeral lives are not only absorbed in a stream universal but become revelations and energies from a person of absolute love? Can they become channels of the Holy Ghost, in the power of One Who was more than a channel, and more than a revelation—Who was the incarnation of God the Redeemer? That is what the Cross of Christ as the source of His Spirit proposes to do with them. The victory of an immortal Redeemer becomes the effective point and principle of life's most sacramental significance. It is the source of any worth life can have not only *to* God but among us *for* God, as the vehicle of the Eternal Spirit, as a human priest to human kind. The power which makes life most deeply sacramental is its new creation by Christ. The eternal life that Christ's Cross won for us in the Eternal Spirit acts on us so timelessly that it can give the meanest life the eloquence of the spiritual world. It makes it that it can be not only an object but a channel of supernatural blessing, and not only a channel but a medium. That miraculous power which turns the historic Christ from a memory to be the most real presence, and even constituent, of our life to-day, that power which makes Him Who is so far off the most near, and changes the temporal to the eternal—that is what makes the true sacramental power in life, and transfigures it with the glow of something that lifts it and lights it for ever. Nothing makes the poor man's toil so

full of worth and price as the work of Christ the Spirit. Nothing so lifts into eternal significance the loves, sorrows, drudgeries, tragedies of the poor men of the dull fields. It has done it in cases innumerable. Nothing so makes them know themselves, and seem to others, to be worlds more than mere atoms bubbling in a seething cauldron, or drifting in a desert dust, whirled in a universe of meaningless sound and fury. Such certainty as Christ can give, and does give, of a life beyond life by our partnership of it in Him fills the humblest soul with such power and price that the men of genius can neither fathom it (though they feel it) nor can they give, far less guarantee, that which they may divine of its wealth. The commonest life means worlds both Godward and manward. That is the sacramentality of life. The most Christian poets are those who, like Wordsworth, Burns, or Barnes, breathe that note from huts where poor men lie. And the warrant for it is its Creator, its new Creator—the power of the Eternal spirit by which that poor man Christ Himself won the endless victory over time, death, and the world. The simple have known that as they could know nothing else. And it made life for them, and for all who could read them aright, because they shared the same faith, full of staying power, mystic eloquence, and conclusive bliss.

“Grave in the sight of God is the death of His loyal and loving ones.”

CHAPTER IX

IMMORTALITY AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD

Absence from able publicists of either idea. But the only perfection is in a common realm and a common King.

WE have admitted that the belief in another life has been cherished on lines so individual that its effect on this life has really been to increase the natural egoism instead of concealing it. That has happened because it has been dismoralised—first, because the notion of eternal life has dropped to that of endless life, and second, because it has been narrowed down from the idea of the Kingdom of God. It is on this latter that I would now dwell.

The Kingdom is more than a social idea, but as a social idea it dominates the synoptics. In the Epistles it retains its social note as the ideal Church. In the fourth Gospel it appears more mystically, and therefore more individually, as eternal life. To put it technically, the eschatology becomes a transcendency, and the last things are not simply the end things but the ground things, the dominants. As the Church went on to grow more external and egoist this idea shared in the fall. Both the Kingdom and its eternal life became debased by contact with the paganism they overcame. But now we are returning to the larger and holier note. The Kingdom of God is the emergence into the life of history, both by growth and crisis, of that saving sovereignty which is the moral power and order of the spiritual world. The coming of the Kingdom is the growth or the inroad of God's Will on earth to be what it always is in peace and glory in Heaven. I am thinking of what we have in the very opening of the Lord's Prayer, where the phrase "as in heaven so on earth" belongs to each of the three first petitions, and not only to its next neighbour. "Hallowed be Thy Name" as in Heaven so on Earth; "Thy Kingdom

come" as in Heaven so on Earth. As if it should say, "There is a realm at the heart of things where all is already won and well, all is Yea and Amen. And access to it is not barred to faith on earth. And it is the real workshop of history." Our commerce with that country alters much, the whole complexion of our social discussion changes, when we seek to measure and adjust all things by their obedience to this power and their movement to this goal. All changes its note and method when we seek first that Kingdom. That is the new creation in which dwells immortality.

Now it is quite true that to-day there is better thinking and writing in social or national subjects than there ever was in the world before. It is writing also much ruled by the ethical note. But even the best of it is for the most part, less than historic in its range, and it moves only in the middle register of thought. Its eye is not on the history of the whole soul. And it represents spiritually neither revolt nor faith, but indifference (probably more apparent than real). It is not for God's enemies, but neither is it for God as it is for man. To read it you would not guess that we were in a Christian country with a long Christian tradition shaping its society. You would receive the impression that its religion had no more to do with affairs than a harem, that it is kept behind the purdah. In all the able and interesting speculation of the publicists about either the causes or the consequences of the present convulsion, it is one of the most significant things that hardly any reference is made to the eternal Kingdom of God, ranging from earth to heaven; and no express guidance is taken from distinctive principles of the Kingdom's ethic. Insistence on a world-righteousness, and on judgment accordingly, is treated as an outburst, more or less amusing, of obsolete Puritanism. If such be the mark of civilisation, and if the Kingdom of God yet be the fundamental nusus in and under all the civilisations, it must be that offence comes and war. Our social science is written as our novels are—as if there were no such thing among the powers of life as the Kingdom of God and its religion, as if

religion were not the ruling passion of the race (to say nothing of its contents being the key of history), as if a supreme regard to an eternal life made no vital difference to the conduct of life. All is written as if the power which has done the most to make history was an illusion now outgrown, as if the Kingdom of God were a superstition of pietists in holes and corners, or a figment of theologians who mistook for effective realities certain fantasies of the first century. Any thinker would be more or less discredited with the leading writers on social or political questions, however profound a historian, if he announced that he was to measure everything in the light of the principle of Christ's established Kingdom of God emerging into human affairs. Even with the far flung monitions and deep old judgments of the war booming in our ears that is so. Reconstruction in its wake is approached with a mind which seems to have no sense of any but economic or philanthropic quantities. The treatment of the war as a function of judgment by that Kingdom on a whole civilisation which ignores it would be regarded as a piece of pulpit fustian which the preacher has sunk to be expected to say. And that means that religion, the deepest religion, and especially the religion of the long future, is regarded (if at all) but as a private affair, that there is no idea of eternity as the greatest of public interests and public powers, but that we can best prepare citizens for life by teaching civics. There is no sense of a Church as the trustee of man's last social weal, nor of the reign of a holy God as active and decisive in our common life. When you begin discussing the Church with such people they discuss Churchmen; just as when I criticise democracy I am often tripped up with the fatuous remark what capital fellows the trades' union leaders are. But no judgment can be really recognised as such, it cannot be recognised as a movement of the Kingdom of God, and a solemn effect of its righteousness, except by a conscience taught by God. Calamity on a worldly soul but hardens it. And the fool brayed in a mortar is a shrewd fool still.

Now, since that is so, the chief public work of the Church as the trustee of eternal life, and the way to its recovery of public influence in this life, must be so to acquire the deep historic conscience of the holy as to evangelise with its righteousness the corporate nation and not only the souls in it; to create public repentance and new purpose; to Christianise political conduct; to press the reality of the Kingdom of God in history and affairs; to make it the dominant it was for the Person who has most moulded history; and to do this in such a way that it shall not only become credible but luminous for public life—at least with those for whom the moral interest of society is supreme. Much of the current talk about the Church's duty after the war where it is not pietism is journalism, mostly empiric, the work of people who have no special preparation, no serious discipline in ethic, history, philosophy, or theology for such matters, but as taken from some other job for this. People who have no real part or lot in the Church are very eager to exploit it as an asset for some vague ideal. They know much in a way, but not in a way to teach them that the Church has made modern history. And they vindicate their claim to be realists "without any nonsense" by calling on the Church to change front with every new formation of social phases and public events, just as they would urge the House of Commons. The Church may only change front in so far as it can do so without changing its ground. And when it comes to selecting the time and type of change, the Church has really no more fools in it than literature or business. But more and more the Church must feel that its ground is the Kingdom of God set up by the moral and creative crisis for history of the Cross of Christ. The real ground of a Christian belief in the soul's future and the future of humanity is the reality of God's Kingdom there put in action as, in a new creation, planting heaven, founding earth, and leading history (Isa. li. 16), there put into subtle control of human affairs, and made the goal of human history as the new destiny of each soul. It is true all the same that if the Church realised as it should

its own ground, its first concern might be the less bustling but more biting task of its own reconstruction. One is amazed at the naïve facility with which it devises machinery for the new situation without a misgiving that that situation is largely due to a defect, not to say a falsity, in its own grasp of the Gospel, which calls for something like a conversion in itself as the preacher.

Our preoccupation with the interests of another life (I have said) may be of a degree or kind to damage the soul it would save, and the Kingdom it should serve. It may encourage the same egoism which is the ruling power in civilisation, which is bound to quarrel with the movement of the Kingdom, and which it is the work of a real revelation to convert or destroy. I mean by egoism profiteering in religious things to the loss of public soul; and by a real revelation I mean a revelation which redeems even more than it reveals, plants us on a new centre, and changes our conscience much more than our conceptions. In an ethical religion which is also social the immortality of a personal being is valuable as an increase of life for others, and especially for God and His Kingdom. If we are more they are more. The very Fathers are not perfect till we Sons of the later day come in (a fact which should end the tyranny of patristics). By a perverted religion we can overdo the care of our soul, which we have to master and not to fuss, and which is in better hands than ours; but we cannot be too much occupied with the Kingdom of God and our lot there. This is a more vital doctrine for Christianity than the immortality of the soul, because it includes it. The historic righteousness, the holiness of God, which makes His Kingdom, is an infinitely greater matter than the realisation of the superior self. Indeed, is there any hope of our coming to our own, our ownest own, in life except as God does Who is our life, and Whose own we are? We cannot truly or finally realise ourselves except in the service and spread of the Kingdom of God. (Only let us not be too self-conscious in this matter of service. The man who is always

fussing about his duty needs our vigilance.) It is this Kingdom which is the standard of all progress, and the test by which we tell it from degeneration. It is only to this service that all else is added, and especially moral growth. That is to say only in the active love and service, not simply of God, but of the Kingdom of God and His Christ, are the full powers of the soul released and its resources plumbed. The Kingdom of God is only another phrase for the energetic fulness of man's eternal life—here or hereafter. It involves a millennium, the moral organisation of society in considerate sympathy, but it is much more. It is the greatest object in the world; and life's chief end is not even the highest stage or phase of itself, but to glorify and to enjoy for ever in His realm a God of holy love. Without such a goal and its service there is nothing to keep alive in us always a living sensibility of feeling or imagination—as there is nothing without it to bind the nations together by their conscience. That is the Kingship of God, which is more than His Kingdom.

It has been said, in a slashing way which impresses some, that amid our present circumstances the only choice open to Society is between Utopia and Hell. But what is Utopia, and how reach it? How pass from the mere anomalies of Society to the paradox of moral power and peace? Hell is easy; and our Utopias are not hard; they kindle us easily. But this is hard. For these cannot bring themselves to pass. We slide down, but we have to struggle up. And where are we to find the power to climb, or the guidance? We must be carried, for we cannot go. We faint and fail till we wait on the Lord. The soul in due course subsides on itself, and its prospects starve and shrivel; but, forgetting itself in God's Kingdom after a godly sort, the soul rises to the righteousness of it and all its rich entail. Here in our present life we are not what it is in us to be because of the limitations which beset us within and without. Each stunted soul is a drag upon every other. We cannot love each other as we should, nor even as we long to do, because of something

that lies on us like frost, and ties us with invisible threads. We cannot move as we would. Or if we do, at the first step to our neighbour's heart our foot is frozen by reserve, or it stumbles on his invisible fence. And this may be so even with those who are nearest us. But in a life of eternal reconciliation, which is not sympathetic only but constructive, which is not a kinder family only but a godlier Kingdom, it will be otherwise. We shall not lose our individuality, but the barriers will fall down in a spiritual telepathy and tact. We shall talk across our fences. For the features of our idiosyncrasy, the physiognomy of our soul, limits though they be, are not limitations. They are frontiers and not barriers. They make contour and character, not insulation. The individual, as he becomes a living person, has powers infinitely expansible and reciprocal. As the soul grows thus perfect it grows at once more capacious and more communicative. For it is such persons only, and not mere individuals, that can interpenetrate. Each has wealth to give, and room to receive the rest. We grow by such mutual interpenetration. Hearts swell into each other. We assimilate each other. We know as we are known. We live ourselves into each other. We rise to each other, or we stoop to raise. None without the rest can be made perfect. And the common perfection is guaranteed by the Kingship of an indwelling God. Our powers increase there by much more than addition. And that more is what makes a meeting a Church—it is the Holy Ghost. The new creation is a new combination of the old powers, with an eternal life as the secret of the blend.

But the longer we dwell on this new life, and dispose ourselves to it, so much the more we inhabit another world. And the change, the reaction on our life, is great as we live such another world into this. We acquire both the devout life and the brotherly. The immortality of the soul can only be realised as our part and lot in an immortal fellowship deeply active every day. This is what saves it from being an egoist burden or a bore. But it is first a fellowship of Christ.

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To preach the Kingdom without preaching the knowledge of Christ may be still to serve Him; but to preach it with an ostentatious silence about Him is of Antichrist. The one is the twilight of the morning, the other of the evening.

CHAPTER X

IMMORTALITY AND REDEMPTION

The theology of it and the psychology. The ethic of it.
The holy the guarantee of the eternal. The difference
of faith and experience.

ALL this goes to hint that it is not quite satisfactory to speak so much of the soul's immortality when we speak of its future. For, as I say, if that mean an immortality native and intrinsic to it, it may be but an expanded egoism. Or else we are leaving out those souls in whom the passion to bless others becomes ready to be shut out from the presence of God and a share in His eternity. Is it not better, then, to have less to say about the soul's immortality and more about God's new creation—less about a life in heaven or hell and more about life in Christ or without Him? We can be more sure about the new creation than about the natural immortality of the soul. I do not wish to prejudge the question about conditional immortality. But I venture to suggest that for religious purposes it is better to approach the matter theologically than psychologically, in terms of the first creation and the second, of nature and grace. These theological terms are better, surer, more objective than the terms which do not go beyond aspirations, premonitions, tendencies, probabilities, which have no real leverage on life, or at least do not give it footing, and are apt to become but pursuits, or even hobbies, of leisure. Our immortality is the new work of God on us rather than the continuation of a psychical process, the uncoiling of an infinite spring, or the fruition of a spiritual tendency. Immortality is a gift, a creation. We do not simply arrive; we were invited and we are fetched. As the second creation it is more of a creation than the first. For it is creation not out of a chaos but a wreck. It is the recreation of a decreation. Our perfection

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(though it is anything but an annexe) is more created from us, than developed out of us. We are born again into an uncreated world, as the first birth placed us in a world created. And the moral thereof for life is that we grow more perfect when we dwell upon what we may receive rather than on what we may become, and when we conquer our recalcitrance and not merely our inertia.

When I speak of our immortality as a work of God I do not necessarily mean a sharply and obviously miraculous act. And I certainly do not speak of a wing added on to us, a *donum superadditum*. That is not how a personality is regenerated. It is not even how it grows. But I would go deeper than any thaumaturgy, and think of the way the new creation is related to the old. We do not pass from the one to the other by a jolt, radical and revolutionary as the change is. The old life and the new are not parted by a bottomless pit. It is a constitutional revolution. I mean God did not create the first world of nature without reference to the second of grace. His grace is not but a new strategy to save an unforeseen reverse. He did not give us a natural freedom without knowing that He had in reserve freer resources still, which were more than able to recover any abuse of it. He had the new creation in view when He issued the first. The second was provided for in the first, and we are to live the first in the interest of the second. Though nature cannot of itself culminate in grace, at least it was not put there without regard to grace. Grace is Nature's destiny. We are born to be saved. The soul that in its freedom threw away with its freedom its immortality and its God yet was not thrown out of the compass of redemption and regeneration. Any immortality worth having is always of God's grace; it is not a matter of going on and still to be. It is not a mere realisation of a created self but a rescue of it. The soul's true destiny is not achieved under God's benevolence; it is bestowed by His grace. If it go on and on it is not because of the ever new creative action of Him Who is the source of

fresh value more than of continued being, and Who makes life not only long but precious. If we think only of the soul's immortality we shall be bandied to and fro by diverse presumptions. But if we think of an incessant new creation as the source of the new life by a new birth, then our whole soul's habit will settle from the oscillations of self on the fidelity of God, or the constancy of the divine Energy, or the faithfulness of the new Creator. The one is the way of reflection and its presumptions, the other of faith and its certainty. And it makes all the difference to life which of these is our ruling note. Only one of them makes a thing really and finally religious out of the life we would prolong. The fidelity of God will mean more for our destiny than the simplicity of the soul, its indissoluble simplicity, and certainly more than its constancy. His Holiness, and the constancy which in Him is fidelity, is the warrant of our personality. Nothing can separate us from the holy love of God in Christ. And nothing but the faith of that love enables us to say that.

We do not believe the greatest things on the ground of experience, but only in the medium of experience, by way of an experience, by a miracle of the Spirit which takes place only in experience, and gives us our Authority. It is in that plane, though not on that ground. The matter of our immortality is one of the cases where faith must outrun experience. We cannot experience our own Eternity as we can Christ's. Our faith is in One for whom there is no after nor before, to whom, therefore, the far future is already an experience, and our destiny already an achievement. I cannot experience the far future (Paul would have said) by any faith; but for me to live is Christ. My career is Christ, the risen and immortal. He has subdued everywhere everything fatal to my soul. Apart from Him there are perils to it I cannot conceive. I do not know, in my most religious moments, what may happen to my future in the long, long course of things. How can I be sure of an *Eternal* God, One

from whose hands nothing can pluck me ever? All the religious are not. How can I tell that between now and then there may not be some fatal incursion upon heaven which even the vast love of God may be powerless to withstand—just as all the love my dearest spend on me can not avert my death and parting? I may be plucked from His hand, as lives here are snatched away from our love unspeakable. Is God's unspeakable love also invincible? That is the question. Is He able to keep what I trust to Him? I have no means of being sure about this, nor can I live as if I were, unless I know and experience Christ; unless I know Him not simply as the Lover of my soul but as the Victor for it for ever, nay, the very constituent of it; unless His love is the Holy One's love, love absolute. The Christian revelation is not just God is love, but God's love is omnipotent. If I know Him as the final Redeemer, who has beaten down Satan, or all that Satan means, for ever, I trust the saving power of His personality as I can never trust the indestructibility of my own. To faith it is more certain that He cannot be broken than that I cannot. He cannot be broken short as time might suddenly cease. The holy nature and quality of His work for me, and for man's whole destiny, is a mightier matter than mere duration. It is only His salvation, His redemption, that gives duration any moral value, any value for eternity. But if this is so, then the belief that it is so gives a distinct complexion to both religion and life. The habit of my soul will be different, first, if I believe in its future, and second, and still more, if I believe in it for these reasons—reasons moral rather than psychological, more ethical than philosophical, more theological than ethical, and therefore more religious in a religion of moral redemption—reasons of faith more even than of hope. The foundation of the moral is the supermoral.

CHAPTER XI

ETERNITY AND NEW BIRTH

Does the great change re-furbish or regenerate? Do we need more a fuller life or a changed? Immortality is the continuance less of the soul than of its change. Meaning of the new creation. Not an annexe, nor a surrogate, but a reconciliation of the soul. The idea of Resurrection as the nexus of that life and this.

THE subject I have in hand is practically the relation of immortality and ethic, of Christian ethic and natural, of Christ and conscience. Is our immortality just a new discovery, or is it a new birth? Is the Christian conscience but the natural refined, or is it the natural reborn? Christ's relation to the conscience—is it to develop its culture or to reconstitute its power? Is it to subtilise its acumen, or is it to give it a new quality and a new principle corresponding to the new centre on which it is set and the new life which Christ now lives in us—a life new in proportion as He is of God more than of man? Is conscience the voice of God, or (more humbly) the ear which may hear it? The work of Christ—is it refurbishing or regeneration? Is our key changed, or only the clef? Is conversion but a fresh stimulus, or is it a real revolution in the quality of the moral life, the source of its power, and the direction of its movement? Is the new birth but a somewhat exaggerated metaphor for a new departure, for turning over a new leaf? Is the passage from the natural to the eternal life but an ascent of the spiritual nature, or is it a leap and a venture of faith? These are questions which are of first moment for the effect on life of that new birth into our true immortality.

We hear of many who are eating their heart out because circumstances do not allow them a fuller life. But it is not more life and fuller that we want. We need a different life, a

life not simply with a new light on it but a new power in it and a new footing under it. We need a new centre, not a transformation but a transposition. We need the completion not of the soul but of its radical change. The growing spiritual life, and not the natural, goes on beyond the greatest of its crises, in death, and goes on reversing its past all the time. That goes on into which we are being changed as personality grows by a constant revolution in our egoism. (I refer to the allusion to Paulsen in Chapter V.) If life goes on for ever, it goes on coming round full circle, and reflecting an absolute change, an inversion of values which are presaged in the moral estimates of age compared with youth. If it is an absolute change, that means life going on for ever in an ascending spiral where looking back is looking down. For the eternal, in the qualitative sense of rich life and full, could not continue such if it did not include the quantitative also of long life, and time to work itself out. Grace would then simply be irrelevant to nature, and not related at all. Nothing can ensure to us indestructible being except a power which delivers us, by a higher way than mere persistence, from the mutations of time or space—which delivers us from their demoralisation. Only what is eternal in the moral sense could ensure eternity in the temporal sense, for “morality is the nature of things.” Eternity is time not simply prolonged, nor only sublimated, but hallowed, morally regenerated for the holy. That which protects us from time to that which delivers us from evil. So the kingdom of an endless heaven is the Kingdom of a *holy* God. And it is the fruit not of *Christus Consummator* but of *Christus Redemptor*.

I dwell on this to point out that any discussion of Christian ethic which does not start with moral regeneration is by so much the less Christian. In the Christian faith “we die but once, but we are born twice.” Immortality is precious as the continuance of that which has set life in quite another than the natural key, moved it into a new rhythm, and made its verdicts more than those of the natural judgment

rarefied, or the rational just spiritualised. It is behaviour in a new dimension. Have I not said that that is no true, and it is certainly no Christian, belief in immortality which hankers for a life after death just to give the old egoism supernatural opportunities, and to furnish the old desires with superior facilities for getting their head and their bread? Did not even the Pharisees likewise? They believed in a resurrection, but not in immortality as Christ understood it. For him newness of life meant more than a return to life, for however long; it meant a new order of life and love. But for them it only meant a better chance for the old passion; it meant just making good the damage in earth's disappointments; it did not necessarily mean a higher stage of aspiration, or a change of quality in the desire. They need not be born again, as even their best, like Nicodemus or Hillel, must from Christ's point of view. Their divine future meant but the happier perpetuating of such national and social ambitions as filled the horizon of many a zealot in his public career. Christ thought of a new heaven and earth; they thought of a smooth running repristination, the restoring of dominion to Israel. He thought of immortality as a worship; they thought of it as a reward, the return to them, repaired, of what death had taken away. For Christ the true resurrection and the true immortality meant a new ethic born of the spirit; for them it was worldliness re-established and endowed, with security of tenure.

In these remarks I have had partly in view the admirable book of Dr. Rashdall, *Christ and the Conscience*. No book on Christian ethic so good has appeared among us. But I cannot agree with its religious foundation. The prolegomena seems to me to be vitiated by the absence of the idea of regeneration in connexion with Christian ethic. I am not going to argue here whether we are to think of regeneration in the baptismal, and subliminal, not to say magical, way, or in the evangelical and ethical way. It is enough for my present purpose to recognise that in both cases it represents

a change as real and miraculous as grace and the Spirit's life must always be. It is not to be identified with sanctification. Nor is it to be reduced to a development of sympathetic power, nor to a culture of the moral judgment. Christian ethic is not simply the top story of all natural ethic. It is supreme in another sense than merely superlative. There is a new "creative synthesis" (Wundt). There is an element of crisis, and a new life given. We are born into a new world. We are lifted to a new plane. We ascend there in a new atmosphere. When we die it is into an immortality which is only a new departure in the old rebirth and its new life. It is but a new grasp of the grace in which we had died to nature, and yet in losing it found it.

There is a crude way of criticising the idea of a new creation and reducing it to a mere metaphor by asking whether the old soul is destroyed and a new identity put down on its site. We all know that that could not be. It is not even a new wing built on. Of course the new man must find his points of attachment in the old, but he cannot have his foundation there. The truth is the newness of the new creature is less in himself than in his tenant. Christ lives in him. And the newness in the man corresponds to the new and original thing in Christ. If in Christ there was nothing essentially new, if He was but man at his spiritual best, we could not so speak. But all that makes Him the Son of God goes to differentiate the new creature He inhabits. It is a real novelty, it is not a fresh stimulus that we have. And if that be so, it means much for the tone and style of our life. It gives us a creative revelation; and a fresh experience is not a revelation. The new creation is not in me so much as in Him Whose unique soul and life inhabits me as souls do souls. My knowledge is reborn beyond all science because I am known by Him whom I know; my life is reborn beyond all nature because it is now not lived by me but lived into me. The new master makes the new man. The relation of son to God, which is intrinsic to Christ by His nature, becomes ours by His gift; we are sons in Him. He is

Son in Himself. He is our immortality. We do not in the new creation get a new identity, but a new kind and quality of moral power, a new unity of soul by His Reconciliation. The new man is the destruction of the old man as forgiveness destroys—forgiveness, and not sheer oblivion, forgiveness, which is but the negative action of eternal life in a Reconciliation drawing on all the unity of God, rising, that is, from His holiness. The new thing in Christ's revelation of God was not a new attribute, but the unity in holy love of all His attributes, conflicting before. It was the revelation and action of God as holy in His love, with all that that entails. And so the new thing in us is not a new quality or faculty, but the unity of our warring selves and our divided heart in Christ's name and power. It is the Reconciliation with God and ourselves. It is the $\Theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\nu\ \tau\iota$ in the life of an organism which marks even a mollusc from a mosaic, which no analysis can discern, no invention reproduce, and no mere continuation create. It is like the unity in a work of art, which the best copyist cannot give. It was thus that Shakespeare used Plutarch. Art makes a chord instead of a clang.

I knew not if, save in this, such gift be allowed to man
That out of three sounds he frame not a fourth sound but a star.

The new and qualitative element in immortality is what connects it with the new birth, and gives it the greatest of all influences upon our conduct of life, were it only that it fortifies the will to live, to say nothing of living to divine effect. Our present life is deepened by such an immortality; whereas a mere indestructibility would become a thin ghostliness, with an air of Sheol and a Tithonus burden. Love receives thus a solemnity which guards it from levity, and which fixes its colours in fixing its destiny. We live and love to glorify an immortal God in Christ. We labour to be accepted of Him. He harmonises the passion for life and the longing for death. The faith of a Christian immortality blesses our present life also by taking its concern off itself

and its interests. We are not too preoccupied with our own personal prospects. We are lost in the desire of God's Kingdom and its fulness. And so our very personal growth is more free and full. For the self-preoccupied do not grow; they do not advance; they only rotate, and wear their axis out. But that is a complaint which every form of immortality will not cure. An immortality that we project from ourselves, as the grand presumption from our being what we are, does not rid us of that egoism. An immortality which does not proceed from God's gift in Christ is but an imaginative one, which seems now sure now dim. But, losing our souls in Him, we find in His eternity a life we never found while we called our souls our own. In union with Him we live in His grace, be it here or there. We shall have a very different interpretation of His world and His ways in it, a very different theology, according as we are thinking of the release of our powers or the glory of His grace.

This gives room for the idea of Resurrection, whatever we may think of its form or body. The other life reacts on this because it is still, through all crisis or miracle, organic with it. And what integrates the other life into this life's history is the idea of resurrection. The New Testament connects the idea of immortality with that of resurrection. Its nature is given in Christ's. It is not the resurrection of the flesh but of a body—not of matter but of form. Its idea of resurrection means something very much more than the repriming of the old life under happier circumstances. That, I have said, is but Jewish, and Pharisaist, and Moslem. It thought the old desires were to be refurbished, the old ambitions facilitated, the old life well warmed and oiled for an elect. But that was sheer egoist eudæmonism, the cult of selfish happiness and individual well being. It only gave the old hunger better cooking. The idea of immortality had to be moralised. And that was done first, by the notion of sanctification and perfection, but, second, by the close

association of these with the new life of past duty and relation. The other life was that life going on to perfection and coming to itself in a crisis. It was in an organic moral connection with this. Christ came back to give effect to what He had done. He came back, His body (not His flesh), His person came back to be the Holy Spirit of all He had done. That is the real value of the doctrine of resurrection. It gives the next life a realism drawn from its moral reality common and continuous with this. Our life beyond is in a moral relation of causality with this. Moral causation is broken as a bondage but not as a power. We take with us the character we made. All discussion of what body we come in is beside the point; and we have no data. What happens to this physical body is indifferent to faith, and it is left to reverence. We are reverent to the corpse, and not prudent. It will not be wanted again. We do not mummify our dead; we even burn them. But still the idea of Resurrection is the integrating factor between the next life and this. Even the new nature does not come *per saltum*. We return to an old haunt. We put on an old fashion if not the old garment. We grow in the old soil. So the next life has much effect on this by making the new present of infinite worth and moment. Our character here starts our destiny there. This is one of the things that make it such an abuse to rely on another life to make good our neglect here. The deliberate postponement of repentance here in the hope of doing it there only deepens its unlikelihood. We fix the impenitent temper. We return yonder to the habit of putting off which we acquired here.

It may be added that, as we pass into no lone immortality, the social bearings of the next life on the present are great. We so worship here as worshipping with the greater part of the One Church there—the Unseen. The dead are the majority; and we are in communion with them in Christ. Even for society outside the Church the authority of history means much. For the dead, I say, are the majority; and if they are not extinct they are still in some organic connexion

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with history and with the present. The future is in some sense their resurrection. They revisit us if only in the resultants of their deeds. And we still meet in the undying Lord. In Christ the past with its souls means much for us and our future. We are debtors both to ancestry and posterity, both unseen. We live as those who are come to a general assembly and Church of the first born (for the youngest dead are senior born to us in the unseen). We are come to a city of the living God, and a heavenly Jerusalem, and an innumerable company of heavenly ones. And we cannot live our public life as if we were cut off from either life or society on the other side. We are all in the one historic purpose of God. We are in the lower parts of the same Kingdom of God, and in the advance battles of the soldiery of faith. The dead still have a vote where votes are not counted but weighed. Let us not ignore their weight, their tradition, in public things. They still belong to the constituency of the Christ Whom we have to put in command of affairs. Ignoble peace always renounces the sacrifices of the noble dead, and still crucifies them afresh.

CHAPTER XII

THE FRUCTIFICATION OF FAILURE

The future is the fruition of failure here. Eternity holds the key of history, the meaning of progress, the interest of tears. All opens out in that light. The pathos of the past.

THERE are those who are not geniuses, with a ruling passion to realise themselves and get themselves out, but they have more affinity with the meek saints, who have striven for souls without any effect apparent. To such it may come with some cheer to remember that, if death is not a blight but a blessing, the seed they sowed here will be reaped yonder. As the Old Testament lives and works in the New so our discipline, long latent here, bears fruit yonder. Death is like the leaf between the Old Testament and New Testament. Or as the old Bible lives on, and lives larger, in the growing Church, so the instruction that came to little here may yonder bud and seed. Christ died like a corn of wheat sinking into the ground to rot, but His harvest grows all over the world. So our fruitless efforts for souls will germinate yonder, as the mummy wheat is said to sprout in soil to-day. Historic Christianity is working its greatest results in the unseen world, and far more mightily, perhaps, there than here, as the spiritual climate is so much more congenial. When we are disappointed with the historic results of the Gospel, and ask with even despair

And is the thing we see Salvation?

the answer is that it is not, except in process. Indeed the thing we see most obviously to-day is the result of neglecting God's salvation and kingdom. But there is a realm far within all that goes on here where these things are not neglected, but are ruling, judging, and creative powers. The effects of Christianity are greater, its salvation is greater, where we do

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not see than where we do. Which helps us patiently to believe how great they will be in the future and unseen stretch of earth's history. There is a region where the triumph of the cross is assured and realised as it is not yet here. And our contributions to it here do not come to their fruition till they take effect in a land that is their own. It seems far off, but the same faith that works for it sees it. If we paint for eternity it is eternity painting through us. For after all eternity is doing far more for time than time is doing for eternity. "Time is the mercy of Eternity." Think of that phrase of Blake. Time is there by the initiative of Eternity, by the Grace of God, to make Eternity accessible. He forestalls us with every good. We love Him because He first loved us, and became incarnate in creation for us. Time is not the mistake of Eternity. The Eternal did not darkly blunder on man's suffering soul. The old Providence does not desert us when we go out of life's door. The souls that go into eternity know themselves as they never did before. The spirit is more to them than ever before. Their spiritual acquirement while they were here opens out upon their sight. Think of the grand leisure of Eternity, the leisured receptivity of soul, its feeding in a wise passiveness. How things will break open on us, and be reconciled. And not only its poverty but also its wealth will be enriched. Lessons, facts, thoughts, sacrifices, verses, hymns, that were here overwhelmed with the life mean and coarse, stand out, open out, fructify, take command there. Memories become powers. Old faces become fresh blessings. The once dear becomes the ever solemn. Even if the once despised become terrible it is as the terrible things in righteousness answer us from the God of our Salvation. And all through Death. All things are in a new light.

Thou takest not away, O Death,
Thou strikest; absence perisheth,
Indifference is no more.
The future brightens on our sight,
For on the past has fallen a light
That tempts us to adore.

Yes, the old companion body, so mangled once, and even so abused, and made the servant of sin, is clothed with a new tenderness through a new repentance, and the soul shall still feel a respect and affection for its old home. In a theatre once I saw a packed audience brought to a dewy silence like the half hour in heaven, while a young girl on the stage caressed a child to sleep with words they had all known long, and memories they had known longer still, sung to a grave sweet melody.

O, the auld hoose, the auld hoose,
 What though the rooms were sma',
 How many cherished memories
 Do they like flowers reca'!
 The auld hoose, the auld hoose,
 Deserted though ye be,
 There ne'er can be a new hoose
 Will seem sae fair to me.

So, I thought, the spirit might look back from its immortal repentance upon the mangled body left on Flanders fields, wherein had grown up a young soul's pathetic tragedy. And the very repentance, not being hopeless, would not be fierce but tender, and the poor shielding of flesh would receive from across the misty seas of death a reverence we knew not while we lived therein.

And if you complain that this is sentiment and fancy I will say it is that and more. It is at least a parable of what I said was in the heart of the doctrine of resurrection, of the new meaning, effect, and dearness of all that took place in time, all that came closest to life, all that was the medium of experience. It is a parable of all the blessings we mis-
 prized, all the monitions we ignored, all the teaching we resented, all the discipline that chafed us, and all the sacrifices we coolly took as our due. The loving faces we too little loved will not rise up to accuse us, though their very blessings will reproach us. They will not reproach, though reproach will be ours. For it is love's native land this, its song is of mercy and justice, its very judgments are full of

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grace, and its severities make for praise. And their past, through which we who are left here are now toiling, and struggling, and crying, appears already to certain eyes, for whom we once worked and wept, to be

Ennobled by a vast regret,
And by contrition sealed thrice sure.

CHAPTER XIII

L'ENVOI

To live is Christ, to die is more Christ. We pass into a genial native land.

YOU cannot dwell too much on the death and resurrection of Christ as the revelation of God's immortal love, so long as you do not hide the fact that they are powers and not mere lessons, and that they make together one crucial, final act of divine majesty and mercy. They make up the act which is the central and unflagging energy of the world's last reality as moral reality. They are one act of decisive, and final power at the moral centre of the Universe; and that is real omnipotence. Unless we can say that, the centre of our religion does not coincide with the centre of the moral cosmos; our faith and our ethic lead a double life; and in a religion of universal and moral redemption that cannot be. Therefore Christ went out in the one grand moral activity of all being, and not in a mere submission, passivity, or martyrdom. He certainly did not simply subside into an allcreating presence, as one vortex swirls away to make room for another in a vast sea which boils with them. His death and resurrection made the greatest thing His great historic and cosmic person did. Nay, it was the greatest thing that God ever did. When God raised Christ from the dead it was the greatest of all His works. It was the new creation of the world. It certainly was the greatest thing ever done for the soul.

Christ's death meant power and victory over sin's spiritual guilt and moral bondage; His resurrection meant victory over sorrow, nature, and the bondage of the world. Together they make a glory greater and surer than nature's joy. More than the morning stars sang together at this new creation—the Father was well pleased. Nothing created could express the Holy Father's joy as He found Himself in

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the victory of His equally holy Son. A new value was given to the natural life from its spiritual Lord. It became more active, more precious, and dear. We learned to paint for Eternity. Clutching haste died, and crude feverishness. "I pass but do not cease. I go to those who have gone. I go to Him in whom is no after nor before, and in whom all work is Yea and Amen. To die is Christ. It is gain—gain in reality. I go nearer to the great reality, the eternal holy love. I do not just sink into the Unseen, I move deeper into God and the Kingdom of God. I see His face. I am rapt into the energies of the Eternal. Here I am not where I should be, because others are not. But I go where all souls are filled with Christ; where the public opinion is the Holy Ghost; where all moves in righteousness, service and worship." What an accession to our best life here to believe that. What a gain to the value of these things here, when, even if we do lead a buried life, it is among the roots of the fruit eternal where the river of life flows by. The same Christ Who is the reality and power of that life beyond is the reality and value of this. To live here is to live the Christ that rules eternity. To die is more of that Kingdom.

Doubt and distraction about our destiny do not stimulate work nor ennobling feeling, though a morbid tenderness they may breed. They kill work. They reduce it to mere restlessness. Mere activity is not work. We do not then run a race set before us; we dawdle, or we scamper; we flutter before pursuing doom like a fowl before a train. And these uncertainties about our future, these blank misgivings, debase feeling rather than elevate it. But how the revelation of Christ's eternity as ours has ennobled love. It has given love a new value for the modern world, and yet made the parting full of hope. The more free we are made from life and the world the more we find in both. But Jubal was not freed, only swallowed up. He was reabsorbed; he was not redeemed. But Christian death is the only close which is more of a beginning than an end.

The foundation of our true immortality is in a redemption. Eternal Life is a new *gift* to us by a new act, a new creation. It is a second birth. It is not a case of evolution but of revolution. It is not the development of a power or an ideal immanent to the world or Humanity. It is a gift of God, through an act of God. And thus it is the only means of passing to our moral perfection. To evade that act of God is to turn religion to a piece of æsthetic. In an ethical religion we are redeemed. We do not glide into heaven; we are taken, not to say plucked, into it. There is no straight line or smooth ascent to our high places—that is shown by the calls to severe self-denial of earthly good.¹ And these calls join with the certainty of judgment to make life grave, or even tragic, as Eternal Life makes it great and glorious. For our race the Kingdom of God can only come by the Cross, by crisis, by a breach with the natural life, though not a disruption of it. It is this new relation to a holy Creator and His eternity that gives the final value to life's chief assets and its best dreams. Eternal Life is the enhancement and warrant of human joy and weal. It is the fixing of its finest colours. It is the last Amen. Do not flee the world; overcome it by good. "There is no time so miserable but a man may be true." The force you have to use on yourself is really a function of the power of new life which carries you, an energy of the righteous kingdom. If you break with the world it is in the power of the life which serves and saves it. If Christ live in you all humane affection, all love of man or woman, will be in the service and worship of God. A new power of service comes from that faith. In the vast certainty that Christ has charged Himself with our immortality our minds and hands are set free to serve others. We escape from ourselves, our introspection, our culture of

¹ There is another life, hard, rough, and thorny, trodden with bleeding feet and aching brow; the life of which the cross is the symbol, a battle which no peace follows this side the grave; which the grave gapes to finish before the victory is won; and—strange that it should be so—this is the highest life of man. Look back along the great names of history; there is none whose life has been other than this.—J. A. Froude, *England's Forgotten Worthies*.

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immortality. We escape our anxious self-concern. So little is Christian immortality a piece of egoism. We do not see the prospect as a field for imaginative enjoyment, nor as a food for our mere comfort. If Christ is our life our future is not our own. Our ruling passion is not greed of life. We do not do just what we must do to keep death at bay. We begin living the eternal life here, with its endless selfless energy, vaster than we feel, and surer than we know. That life is not a mere spirituality but a sanctity; for we are not mystic beings in our destiny, but moral and holy. So to live is the life of faith—which is not another piece of work, but the new life which is the source of all work, and which has for its ventures all the capital of Christ's life behind it.

The other life is not the negation and arrest of this. Nor is it mere restitution—as if we might then pursue all the old egoist dreams and appetites only with better machinery than here. That were pagan, Moslem. It were at best but happiness. And the Christian idea is not happiness and it is not power, but it is perfection—which is the growth of God's image and glory as our destiny.