

THEOLOGY AS A SCIENCE.

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE PART THAT THE WILL PLAYS
IN RELIGION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE
PRESENT SITUATION CAUSED THROUGH
THE INCREASING INFLUENCE OF
SCIENCE UPON FAITH.

RELIGION and Science are as disparate and as diametrically opposed to one another as are sentiment and knowledge, or poetry with its indeterminable flights of fancy, and mathematical argument; and this fact seems sufficient to draw a line of demarcation between the two, which would keep our religious and scientific notions quite distinct and not permit either one to interfere with the other. Religion is of the heart; it is the warm devotion to the noblest cause imaginable; it is a zeal and enthusiasm for, and a faith in, an ideal that lies in spheres transcendent, while science is the ruthless unblinking investigation of facts, consisting of mental functions that may well be compared to the operations of a calculating machine, with which sentiment must not interfere, and of which the results are the more reliable the less the personal equation of subjective preferences enters into them.

This contrast between Religion and Science is not exaggerated, and so it seems to justify the old dualism that some statement may be true in religion or theology which is utterly untrue in science. Indeed artistic imagination has rules of its own and the causation of poetic dreams is different from the causation of scientific facts. The former in the domain of the latter would be lies; the latter in the domain of the former, prosaic and meaningless trivialities.

We recognise this contrast and believe fully in the right of both Religion and Science to exist in their own name with institutions that are relatively independent and not subject to one another, but correlated in harmonious alliance. Yet we do not believe in a duality of truth or a separation of the spheres of life as if there were two worlds, a realm of religion which lies in a Beyond and a domain of science which is the reality of matter in motion that surrounds us here. We believe that the fields of both are the same and that in spite of their disparity the two are inseparably linked together as husband and wife ought to be in well-ordained wedlock. When we encourage the science of religion (an investigation of the facts of religion), and come, on the other hand, to the conclusion that there is religion in science which may be formulated as a religion of science, we are perfectly aware of the difficulty of the undertaking. We do not slur over the contrast that actually and obviously exists, but on the contrary, we appreciate its significance and point out a *modus vivendi* as to how the contrast may be preserved without injury to either party, for a contrast is not a contradiction and involves conflicts only when it is wrongly interpreted and its nature misunderstood.

RELIGION.

Religion has been defined differently as belief in a deity, as devotion to the supernatural, as worship, or also as obedience to the behests of God, etc., but it is obvious that the definitions of the catechisms are one-sided; they suit the case for home use well enough but keep only in view one feature of religion. Religion is broader than its usual definitions: it affects the whole man, his heart, his head, his conduct, and there are religions which imply definite beliefs, especially the belief in God, while others do not. Buddhism, e. g., so far as its original tenets are concerned, can be taught and practiced without even the mention of the word God or a belief in him, and yet it is as decidedly, not a mere philosophy, but a religion, as is Christianity, or the Mosaic faith, or Islam, or Brahmanism, or Mazdaism. That which characterises religion is the predominance of sentiment. There is no religion without senti-

ment, but as there is no sentiment in itself; so religious sentiment has always a definite content and is characterised by a principle of conduct imparting a definite direction to the minds of its devotees. The former (the contents) is the notion upon which it is built up, the latter the moral ideal in which it finds expression. In other words: while sentiment is the core and center of religion, the sentiment feeds upon the materials furnished by the intellect and manifests itself in practical life as will.

Religion is everywhere the sentiment of adapting oneself to the ruling power of one's surroundings, and thus it presupposes a definite world-conception and implies that this world-conception serves as a guide in life. Hence there are three elements in religion: its root is of the head, consisting of the notions concerning the significance of life; in its essential nature it is sentiment; *Gefühl ist alles*; and in the average man, who is untrained in self-analysis, the religious sentiment is a mysterious mass of yearnings, hopes, fears, visions of bliss and ecstatic upliftings which defy the explanation of scientific enquiry; but its most significant feature is, after all, the impulse it gives to action. Religion is always practical; it has a moral application, and the immoral customs of savage or barbarous, and semi-civilised religions only prove that religion and morality are inseparable. An immoral religion leads to immoral practices, and a pure religion will unfailingly tend to elevate and purify conduct.

There are three distinct elements in religion: (1) doctrine, (2) piety, and (3) conduct. All three are indispensable, but now the one, now the other is emphasised. The doctrine may be blind faith, or a philosophically purified belief, or a clear scientific comprehension. A doctrine that on account of its nature strongly affects our sentiment and then becomes a principle of conduct is called a conviction; and all those convictions which affect our notion of the purpose of life in general constitute our religion.

An essential feature of a religious conviction is the recognition of its rule or principle or maxim as obligatory, for that which is acknowledged to be right or good or commendable, should, on penalty of punishment or of evil results, be carried into effect. In

other words, a religious conviction implies a duty to be performed, or a command to be obeyed.

The authority upon which the duty depends (i. e., that which renders it obligatory) need not be a personal being; it may simply be the universality of law which, when recognised, teaches us that all causes have their effects, and that evil deeds beget evil consequences. But whatever the nature of the authority, its conception as something superior exercises an educational influence; it holds up an ideal to be attained, and thus stimulates man to reach beyond and to grow above his present stature. Since the average man, even of to-day, is little trained in philosophical thought, it is but natural that he will personify the authority of conduct and think of the divine (the supreme norm of existence) in terms human, shaping God in man's own image. But whatever the authority of conduct may be, we call it God and would say that a belief in God (viz., the recognition of an authority of conduct) is an essential feature of religion.

Having broadened the conception of God so as to include all possible views, we may now, without fear of being misunderstood, fall back upon the definition of religion in terms of Christian theology and say: "Religion is the faith in, the love of, and the obedience to, God." But whatever point of view we may take, religion is always triple in its aspect: It is: (1) idea, (2) devotion, (3) deed. The idea is the product of our intellect, the devotion is sentiment, and the deed is the expression of our will.

MAN ALONE RELIGIOUS.

According to the antiquated notions of prescientific psychology, intellect, sentiment and will were three distinct powers or faculties of man, but modern psychology, having discarded the assumption of faculties, looks upon them as phases and features only in man's psychic dispositions.

The change may be best explained in the instance of memory.

We no longer believe in memory as an organ of the mind but regard it now as a general disposition of mental functions. Every sense-impression that is perceived is a psychic act; it is conscious

for a moment and then disappears from the field of consciousness. But it is not entirely obliterated; it only sinks below the limit of that mental state which is clearly felt. It ceases to be conscious and becomes subconscious. Being present in the mind, in an unconscious condition but as a definite trace, it can by a proper stimulus be revived; and we generalise this feature of mental proceedings as "memory." To conceive of *memory*, which is a general function, as if it were a definite faculty having its own center in a special bump of the brain, is an antiquated conception; and similarly all the faculties as distinct provinces of the mind have been done away with.

There is no definite place in the brain where sentiment has its seat nor another where the intellect operates, nor a third where the will reigns; but all, sentiment, intellect, and will, are three phases in one and the same process; they have their seats (if we may use the word) all over the organ of the mental functions and are abstract terms that designate the several significant features of the whole process.

There may be regions in the brain where either the sensation or the motor impulse is the significant feature of cerebral activity, as we have reason to assume of the several sensory and motor centers; but these centers are stations only on a longer road, and the nature of their activity is determined by their co-operation with other brain-structures. At any rate they are not isolated organs of sentiment, of thought, and of will, but interacting parts of one indivisible process; and in all actions of man these three aspects of his soul-life are indispensable, and every one of them plays an important part.

Religion is a product of experience, and thus it is decidedly a child of the intellect. Objects of inorganic nature, celestial bodies as well as the atoms of chemical reagents, are endowed with energy, but if we call their motions (by an indulgence in poetic language) actions of a will, it is a blind will only; they act, and their actions agree with the natural laws, yet they have no religion. Further, the brute creation is possessed of sensation, and we know that many animals are capable of most tender feelings, yet they

have no religion. Man alone possesses religion, because his intellect has attained the height of rationality. Man's conceptions beget religion, and man's religion can be modified by a modification of his conceptions.

Suppose a primitive man witnessing a thunderstorm is suddenly surprised by a tremendous flash of lightning which breaks down a tall tree in his immediate vicinity and is accompanied by the awful roar of a thunderclap. Think of the animistic notions he has concerning the powers of nature, his helplessness in facing them, his fear of being slain, his gratitude for having escaped, etc., etc.! What a storm of passionate feelings excites his soul! His notions concerning the power of the being that causes the thunderstorm is intensified, and he is willing to submit to its behests whatever the command may be. Or again, think of the same man seeing in a dream his deceased father, his slain enemy, a murdered friend, or some other dead person: he believes in the reality of the vision and wakes up with the idea that he has conversed with the ghost of the departed. How will he be stirred! And how quickly will he obey the commands of the spirits! The intensity of the sentiment gives power to the will, and the sentiment in its turn is the reaction of man's soul upon a definite kind of experience.

THE SUBJECTIVITY OF SENTIMENT.

Sentiment seems to us a purely subjective factor, and so will appear arbitrary. The whims of both are quite enigmatic and frequently defy a rational explanation by pure self-introspection, even on honest self-observation. The prominent part which they play in psychology and ethics has been recognised since time immemorial, and all moralists, all public orators, all educators, are agreed on this: that to gain success a reformer must work through the sentiment on the will. Our sentiments are, properly understood, we ourselves, and those sentiments that preside over and dominate our impulse ideas which in their totality are comprised under the name of "will," are the dynamic power of our mental life. The will is king.

We can easily understand how the will, being personified in the prescientific period of psychology, becomes "the thing-in-itself," and in Schopenhauer's system it is conceived as the mysterious metaphysical entity which comes to the rescue when science ceases and the dreams of metaphysics begin. The superiority of the will, as the motor power in man, being recognised, Nietzsche goes so far as to banish reason, and logic, and the entire intellect, including objectivity of truth, declaring the will in its full arbitrariness to be the autocrat of everything. The intellect is the handmaid of the will and ought to be nothing better; for truth is truth only (so Nietzsche says) if it pleases the will to be so. And these doctrines are echoed in America by a man of most conservative tendencies, Professor William James of Harvard, who has worked out a special theory of "the will to believe," cherishing the opinion that the will is justified in forming its belief according to its "organic needs," and not in compliance with arguments or scientific investigations.¹

It is not our intention here to criticise either Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, or James; we adduce their views only to prove the importance and the necessity of a ventilation of the significance of the will. We take exception to their views. The will is not a metaphysical entity, it is not an isolated faculty, or a monarch in the commonwealth of the soul: the will is an abstract term denoting the condition of a conscious image, or notion, or idea, or plan, in the mind of man, pressing him to action.

Will implies three factors: (1) the idea, or plan, or conception; (2) consciousness or feeling, viz., a state of awareness which may be intense or weak, passionate and fitful or quiet and steady, joyous and jubilant, or painful; full of excitement or indifferent; and (3) the realisation, or at least inchoate realisation, in deeds.

¹ I may be mistaken in my conception of James, for he must not always be taken literally. He is more of a prophet than a philosopher and may in his desire to emphasise a statement easily go to extremes. Though there are many statements of his which I cannot endorse, I find him always interesting and in addition personally sympathetic. He is decidedly a noteworthy personality, and I refer to him on account of the significance which I attach to him. Should I misrepresent him, he is cordially invited to correct my statements.

The latter is that which characterises the state as Will in contrast to feeling, and has led to the definition of will as "a state passing into act."

Accordingly there is no will which would be will pure and simple. Every will is possessed of a contents of some kind, and the contents of the will is an idea, which is a product of the intellect.

THE PERSONAL EQUATION.

Now, we grant that in all practical questions in life there is a subjective element that belongs and must belong to what may be called the personal equation. The facts that lie before us in a given case are not sufficient to form an opinion or to determine the course that a special person should take. The attitude of the person toward the facts is an important part of the whole combination, and this "personal equation" cannot be the same for all people. It will be and must be different with different personalities.

The truth is that no two persons facing the same situation, even when understanding the situation to be the same, will assume the same attitude. Thus, a recognition of the nature of the soul as a compound produces a different impression upon different idiosyncrasies. Buddha expresses it in his doctrine of the three characteristics of life, that all compounds are transitory, that their existence implies misery, and that there is no thing-in-itself, no stable ego-entity (*atman*); and he derives from it his moral teaching of unselfishness, or non-assertion, of a surrender of all clinging to worldly pleasures and a universal loving-kindness toward all beings. How different is the attitude of Omar Khayyam! Life is fleeting, there is no permanency, and our personality too is a cluster of effects without any stable entity behind it. But his conclusion is not that therefore man must renounce the impermanent and seek that which is permanent, by surrendering his egotism which is based upon the illusion of self, but on the contrary, he advises clinging to the fleeting moment, sipping the cup of joy to the dregs, and leaving all other thoughts to dreamers. To him, life has no sense except enjoyment. I note here the contrast only which con-

sists in the attitude, but must not be sought in the facts in the face of which the attitude is taken. I ought to add that there is a serious moral background in the position of the poet of wine and love, which is worked out by Goethe in such poems as "*Vanitas Vanitatum Vanitas*."¹ In fact, Goethe's attitude is one that in a certain sense combines the opposites of Buddha and Omar Khayyam.

In brief, we grant that there is a personal equation in the moral principle of every man, and the objective statement of facts is not the sole thing in the determination of man's attitude toward his surroundings. This personal equation is due to the character of man. But we must insist, first, that the attitude toward facts is not (as James would have it) "a belief." In a scientifically trained man the will determines the attitude towards facts but not his belief in their existence or non-existence. The will may further determine the mode of expression, but not the substance of the statements themselves. And, secondly, it is obvious that the will itself is a product of experience; it has developed from blind impulses and has been modified, trained, and educated in the school of life. Its character, accordingly, its worth, its place in the scale of evolution, depend upon the growth of intelligence, i. e., the part that reason and rational considerations play in its decisions.

THE WILL.

Far from being a metaphysical entity, which is such as it is by an act of royal arbitrariness, a *sic volo sic jubeo* (as Schopenhauer teaches) the will is a phenomenon of nature, a product of definite conditions and explicable in its origin and growth. Schopenhauer commonly characterises the will as blind, meaning thereby that it lacks rationality and spurns the acute vision of intellectual comprehension. And it is quite true that the will appears to be arbitrary in its nature. The several personalities, and generally speaking all living beings, know what they will, but, as a rule, they do not know why they will it. In other words, they are conscious of

¹ For further details and a collection of Goethe's poems in this line of thought see the author's *Buddhism and Its Christian Critics*, pp. 118-121 and 98-115.

what they are, what they desire, what they want: but they are not conscious of the conditions that have moulded their nature. They are especially ignorant of their prenatal history, which built up their physiological system, the frame of the skeleton, the muscles, the intestines, the several organs of sensation, and also the inherited traits of character. Only the present is illumined by consciousness, not the past.

The lion lives on a flesh diet because he has become carnivorous in the history of his race. He does not know why; he only feels his appetite for flesh; he hunts animals as he saw his parents do; he catches his prey and devours it. For him (if he could reason about it) there is no "why?" save his royal pleasure. He likes flesh diet, it agrees with him, he feels contented when he gets it,—in short he wills it. It is his "organic need" (to use the phrase of Professor James). Logic, or ratiocination, or scientific evidence, has nothing to do with it. To the lion the slimmest pretext of an argument would be sufficient to justify his belief in flesh diet. On the other hand, no amount of the most skilful explanation of its absolute necessity will be sufficient to induce a sheep not to condemn the lion's mode of living as an utterly immoral principle.

The example of the lion's belief in flesh diet exhibits in an exaggerated way the enormous significance of the part which the personal equation plays in the formation of convictions; and on that very account it is more instructive than an instance taken from the field of arithmetic or formal logic. No one questions the statement of a mathematician that $2 \times 2 = 4$, or that $(a + b)^2 = a^2 + 2ab + b^2$, or if all A 's are B , that every single A is B . But purely formal statements, so long as they are considered abstractly, are purely theoretical. As soon as they are applied to practical life, the quarrel of dissenting opinions begins. On the very threshold of experience, the question arises whether $2 \times 2 = 4$ is true at all. There is a large contingent of able-minded, headstrong, stout-willed knights of thought who would declare that purely formal statements are not true: they are merely correct; that is to say, they are legitimate inferences only from assumed propositions.

The statement proves true in thousands of instances in the domain of our experience, but it may not hold good on Mars, where (for all we know) 2×2 may = 5. And geometrical theorems, far from being true, are positively false, for geometrical lines and points and surfaces are purely imaginary and positively unreal.

Such is the theory of John Stuart Mill as presented in his *Logic*, and if he is right, science loses its solid bottom and ceases to be reliable; but the loss of science (viz., exactness of argument and objectivity of statement) is the gain of the erratic escapades of subjectivity, of superstition and of all flights of fancy in the domain of unfounded belief.

If science (viz., objective knowledge) ceases, subjective opinion as fashioned by an arbitrary will exercises undisputed control. Thus the door is opened to either agnosticism or obscurantism.

Those who seek religion in the domain of the impenetrable night of nescience, who define religion as belief in the unknowable or incomprehensible, or even the impossible and incredible, whose motto is *credo quia absurdum*, would say here, "the loss of science is the gain of religion."

The attentive reader will notice that we speak of "superstition," not of "religion" here; for it is the point we intend to make that this conception of religion (as being based upon unfounded belief, as being a mere matter of subjective idiosyncrasy and comparable to the lion's belief in flesh diet) is as false as is the method of laying its foundation upon scepticism.

The denial of the objectivity of truth which seems to be a disease that naturally develops in the period of transition from childhood to manhood, a kind of mental measles, leads in science to agnosticism, in religion to obscurantism. The agnostic argues there is no truth, and thus everyone's religious conviction becomes a matter of purely subjective attitude. The infidel scorns religion, saying, since truth is not forthcoming, let us acquiesce in nescience; and the pious rejoices at the idea that nothing can be either proved or disproved, for now he is free to believe anything he pleases. In both cases indolence triumphs. There is no need of troubling oneself with doubts, or investigating the problems of life. Since sci-

ence is not reliable, the personal equation of our own organic needs will solve for us all the problems of life. The will is king, intelligence is his hired servant. The will to believe alone can fabricate for us a religion that will suit us. Never mind what science has to say. Will is trump!

It is not our intention to moralise, but to explain. Says Schopenhauer: "To preach morals is easy, but to explain morality is difficult." Our intention is to elucidate the problem of the will. We do not renounce influencing others, but by affecting the comprehension we expect indirectly to affect the morals more effectually than by preaching.

The question of the will in both spheres, science and religion, has a far-reaching moral application. If our organic needs are the court of last appeal, we have only to know what we want and make a religion to suit us. We need not trouble, and we may let others do the thinking for us. It is a convenient and easy way of dealing with a grave problem, but the world will move on and may leave us behind. Our intellectual life will be arrested, for the correction of the will through better insight, through growth and higher development, is thus made irrelevant.

INTELLECT FORMING THE WILL.

Neither a truly religious nor a truly scientific man can find satisfaction in the assumption of an arbitrary will that uses the intellect as a handmaid only to do the bidding of the will. On the contrary: the will is (not directly but indirectly) the product of the intellect. And if the will were not amenable to intellectual guidance, whence should we take the courage to labor for progress, whence the hope that our life's work is not in vain? If the will were truly the ultimate *raison d'être* of our religious convictions and the authority of last appeal, there would be no sense in letting the light of science shine upon religion. Religion would be relegated to the dark region of the inscrutable, and there all superstitions, whether high or low, whether absurd or relatively true, whether inspiring by their moral significance or debasing by bigotry and error, would rank on the same level and be entitled to equal claims,

—for the criterion of judging them would have been removed and purely subjective, arbitrary needs would be deemed sufficient for their justification.

The will can be affected by instruction, it can be guided by education, it can be modified by experience. And though the influence of an improved insight is slow, it is unfailing.

Let us but consider the origin of the will, and we shall appreciate the paramount influence which intelligence exercises upon its formation.

Schopenhauer claims (and within certain limits he is right) that the will is unchangeable. Educators can improve the intellect of a man but cannot affect his character. A cat will have a hankering after birds, even though constant fear of punishment may restrain her from attacking the canary in his cage. *Mutatis mutandis*, a thief will remain a thief, a liar a liar, a rascal a rascal, even though fear of punishment may force him to reform: the character will remain as before, for no living being can change its nature, it can only adapt itself to circumstances and acquire the habit of suppressing certain impulses in consideration of their inevitable evil results. This is true enough, but we must not forget that the acquisition of new habits is actually a change of character. We grant that the growth of new habits is a slow process, and that the old habits are more inveterate than later accretions. Nevertheless, no one can doubt that education and experience in developing certain desirable habits modify the character.

There is no need of entering here into a discussion of Weismannism concerning the heredity of acquired characters, for we are concerned only with the facts of life and are not concerned with the theories invented to explain them. The fact is that men change their habits in life according to their surroundings and previous experience, and the domestication of animals proves that cats and dogs and cattle and pigeons can develop new species which all but absolutely lose qualities that were typical of their ancestors in a wild state, and they acquire others which become inbred and need very little training. The difference between Weismann and his adversaries is not a question of fact (for as to facts there is no

disagreement), but of theories as to the mode of operation. Most naturalists believe that acquired habits are transmitted as dispositions, and disposition grows into hereditary traits; which implies that nature selects those individuals for propagation which adapt themselves to conditions. Weismann believes that only such individuals acquire new habits as (according to their germinal predispositions) possess the faculty of adaptation to the special line required and thus selection is made of germs. The facts in both cases remain the same: there is evolution,—viz., a growth by epigenesis, a development of new additional faculties which did not exist before.

The fact remains that new types of beings are being moulded under our very eyes. Human races (like the negroes in the United States, the Japanese under the influence of Western civilisation, European immigrants to America) are modified. The process is slow, very slow, but not slow enough to be questioned. And it is experience under definitely given conditions that produces the change. Experience means intelligence, and it implies the objectivity of facts to which the subjectivity of sentiment becomes adapted. The product which is a change of character appears upon introspection as arbitrary as before; it is will, and the new type of creature acts according to its new habits because it wills to be such as it now is, and not because it argues on lines of logical deductions.

It is the logic of the influence of objective facts, not the subjective logic of pondering over problems, that moulds sentient beings. Hence the statement concerning great leaders on the path of progress that they builded better than they knew. Evolution in the animal kingdom and progress in the history of mankind is due to the influence of the reason or logic of the objectivity of facts upon the subjectivity of the will, of character, of sentiment. Thus sentiment, and with it character and will, are slowly but surely modified by reason.

Sentiment, character, and will are for the present purpose identical, for character is a name of the general tenor of will-impulses, and will is merely the dynamic aspect of sentiment.

EVOLUTION OF SUBJECTIVITY.

The evolution of all life must have started with simple impulses of sentient substance, and these blind impulses are the result of an internal state of irritable matter; they are due to the physical need of hunger. A need is felt as a want, and the want is an incipient will. The want incites irritable substance to activity, and a blind search for food is made. The want is sooner or later satisfied, leaving a trace of the pleasant experience, which is a predisposition for a repetition of the same process. Innumerable actions of the same kind shape the life-substance in adaptation to its surroundings. The constant touch with a surrounding medium produces a follicle or enveloping membrane with an aptitude to contract upon touch; the constantly repeated impact of ether-waves is responded to in places most exposed to them, viz., in front, and the traces of this constantly repeated response develop specks sensitive to light, called ocelli, or primitive eyes. Thus the environment shapes the several creatures, and their will is nothing but the response to given conditions. The subjectivity of every being is due to its place of growth in the objective world.

And what a bewildering multitude of forms exists in animate creation! There are innumerable bacilli, bacteria, and spores fungi and microbes. We have protists which cannot as yet be classified either as animals or plants. There are innumerable varieties of lower life, but the number of forms rather decreases with their ascent; fishes, birds, amphibia present stately groups of families, fully known only to specialists. The mammalia are sufficiently limited in number to be generally pretty well known. But when we come to the highest type, the rational animal, we have one genus only, which is man. There are about half a dozen human races, but the black and the white, the yellow and the red races differ from each other less (as regards race characteristics) than the St. Bernard from the dingo. The races of man are not *genera*, but *species*.

It is true that within the unity of the human genus there is a

great variety of individual differences, almost as great as, or perhaps even greater than, the variety of genera on the lowest scale. Still it is one genus only. This contrast between the higher and lower stages of evolution is characteristic, because it points out the power of the oneness of the aim, or goal, or ideal. This ideal of animal life is not imposed upon it as an external purpose in the old sense of the doctrine of design, but inheres in nature as an intrinsic teleology, a direction which evolution takes because it is determined by law, i. e., the immanent world-order of uniformities which naturally lead all creatures to develop toward rationality. We do not deny that on other planets other kinds of rational beings may exist; they may be winged, their organs of locomotion may be different, and they may have additional sense-organs, but they will have the same reason, and (leaving out the decimal system as accidental) the same arithmetic, the same mathematics, the same logic. There is one law only in the world which in its purely formal relations is the condition of all uniformities in the world, and corresponding to this one law there is one reason only and there can be only one ideal of rationality for rational beings. This ideal, being founded upon the objective fact of uniformity in the world-order, is an objective factor; it is the factor that moulds the intellect of living creatures, and, by moulding the intellect, fashions the will.

Will (properly speaking) is never blind, as Schopenhauer says; will develops from blind impulses, but it becomes will only by the light of intelligence which is nothing but subjectivity regulated by a recognition of the objective world-order, viz., the eternal law of being in which existence is moulded.

The idiosyncrasy of the will is unquestionably the most powerful factor in belief, religious as well as ethical. All creatures that can speak are apt to fashion their rules of conduct according to their character, the preservation of which is to them an organic need. And yet, however stable a character may be, it is not absolutely stable. There is back of it the influence of experience which is little recognised and much misinterpreted, working constantly in one and the same direction toward a recognition of the factors that shape us. The result is first a rational being with the eggshell of

superstition still clinging to him and then the completion of the rational ideal in the man of scientific insight.

SCIENTIFIC INSIGHT.

We say purposely "man of scientific insight," not "scientist"; for science is the method only, the instrument by which we realise the aims of mankind, the ideal of existence toward which evolution tends. The scientist is the hod-carrier who furnishes the materials for a scientific conception of existence. It is not probable in the advance of civilisation that all men will become scientists, but it is quite within the scope of probability that in a future condition of society all people will be possessed of scientific insight, and as soon as that stage is attained, we shall understand that above the organic need of a will to believe, there is an objective norm which shapes and moulds in the furnace of evolution the organic needs of beings, and those creatures whose organic needs are not amenable to the quiet promptings of the lessons of life will be sifted out and discarded.

Organic needs remain the court of last appeal to the rational but prescientific man. The prescientific man finds rest and peace in the thought that a certain belief is satisfactory to him, because it suits his idiosyncrasy. The man of scientific insight goes farther; he seeks his foundation in the eternal conditions that have shaped his will and thus he is enabled to grow beyond his present size. All creatures have this chance, and it is a positive fact that all creatures do grow by experience in the school of life. For it is this growth which makes evolution possible. But the man of scientific insight ceases to cling to what he is at a given moment, and thus he acquires the power of conscious growth.

In the prescientific man there is a resistance to growth and this resistance to growth is beneficial as a conservative principle: otherwise growth would not be steady, but erratic. When the stage of scientific insight has been attained, there is no further danger of haphazard advances, for then changes being based upon a clear comprehension of facts imply fewer risks and thus there is less fear

of going astray, which implies a calm confidence and a well-directed courage.

THEOLOGY.

But what has an exposition of the evolution of will to do with theology?

Very much indeed ! If religion is in its most significant period of growth a condition of belief, and if in this period belief depends upon our organic need, i. e., upon the will to believe, the gradual disappearance of the subjective factor and its replacement by a recognition of the objective norm in which our will is moulded must finally transform the old theology, the pseudo-science of subjective beliefs, into a new theology, viz., theology as a genuine science. The latter is the natural outcome of the aspirations of the former as much as astronomy issues from astrology and chemistry from alchemy. We might call the new theology by a new name to distinguish it from the old theology of bygone ages, but if the transition be a peaceful change there will be no need of a new name.

We might call the new theology "theosophy," had that beautiful name not been monopolised by the theosophists whose most prominent representatives seem to be bent on continuing the errors and vagaries of the old theology without actually attaining the higher ground of the truly scientific spirit; they introduce new-fangled extravagances and return at the same time to errors that have been discarded.

We might call the new theology "theonomy" (in analogy to astronomy) were it not for the fact that the ending "logy" in the sense of "science" is literally quite correct, and even "astrology" would according to its etymology be the correct term for the science of the stars. But if the term were accepted it would serve its purpose.

The new theology (or if you please "theonomy") is a new science the roots of which lie partly in philosophy, partly in a scientific treatment of history, partly in ethics, partly in an application of art, and partly also in poetry and belles-lettres, the religious literature being to a great extent hymns and recitals. The basis of

theonomy is an appreciation of the factors that shape our ends, viz., God.

The name God remains quite as appropriate for the new conception of the eternal norm of being as it was for the old. The notion of a divine personality which the term conveys is as little objectionable as is the occasional personification of nature which now and then occurs even in strictly scientific books. For there is a good reason for anthropomorphism, and if it is only understood as such, there is no need of taking offence at it. Moreover, the eternal norm of being is actually a harmonious totality of laws of nature, a system of truths, a spiritual organism, or a body of immaterial influences which condition all the details of becoming, and these creative factors of life are omnipresent as they are non-material; they are eternal as they are indelible; they are immutable as they are perfect, and beyond the possibility of being improved, forming the unchangeable bedrock and ultimate *raison d'être* of existence.

But theonomy, the new theology, is not merely philosophy: it is complicated by a consideration of the positive forms of religion as it has historically developed on earth. It is history when tracing the evolution of religion from Egypt and Babylon to Palestine, from Palestine to Rome, from Rome to Germany, England, and America. It is in need of philology and literary criticism when it restores the old sense of the literature of the several religions. It partakes also of the nature of the descriptive natural sciences. It enters into psychological investigations when inquiring into the source of religious phenomena, e. g., the practice of sacrifice, of slaughtering animals, and in savage times even human beings, on the altars of the gods. It trespasses upon the territory of folklore and anthropology when tracing the development of purer views from superstitions, of moral convictions from barbarous customs, of scientifically tenable notions from a belief in magic and other errors. It partakes of the methods of the educator when applied to the practical needs of present morality. It is a grand and noble science, and the scope of its development is of infinite potentialities.

THE FUTURE OF RELIGION.

Those who speak of the irreligion or non-religion of the future have seen one side only of the religious life of the present age, viz., the decay of certain dogmatic features of the old theology and the palpable untenableness of the old position of dogmatism with its *credo quia absurdum*; they are limited in their field of vision to one aspect only and have not seen the actual growth that is taking place in the minds of theologians holding chairs of theology at the several universities of both hemispheres, and also in the hearts of religious congregations, especially of the Protestant Churches of the United States. The future of mankind will not be less religious than the past; it will be more religious; that is to say: its religion will be as much purer than the decaying credos of to-day as monotheism was better than the polytheism which it succeeded.

The present age is a time in which frequent demands are being made for a revision of creeds, and the Presbyterian Church has gone so far as to make a few important changes, and it is remarkable that the delegates were practically unanimous.

Obviously modifications in the formulation of our religious tenets have become desirable, because our comprehension has expanded and our field of vision has been enlarged as well as deepened. This change, however, is not a symptom of decay and death, but of growth and life. We find it necessary to discard the old dogmatism. Yet while dogmatism should go, dogmas (or rather doctrines) should stay, and they will stay. That is to say: our attitude toward the traditional confessions of faith, our interpretation of them, our views concerning their letter and the relation of the letter to the spirit, has changed, and the change actually consists in a better knowledge of their spirit.

Thus the future will not be less religious but more religious, and our religion will be purer and nobler and truer.

We shall understand the way in which the intellect modifies the will, and we shall see the justice of interpreting the traditional dogmas in the light of science. We need not drop the symbol as

a myth, when we begin to understand its significance, nor need we abandon the name and conception of God when we learn that God is not an individual being, but a superpersonal omnipresence.

Religion, far from being abolished, is at present in a stage of growth. Its horizon is expanding, but instead of losing anything, we are gaining. Theology changes into theonomy, which is not a surrender of the old orthodoxy, but its fulfilment and completion.¹

THE REVISION OF CREEDS.

Now it may seem strange that supposing I myself had been a delegate to the Presbyterian assemblage or committee, I should (in spite of my radical position and advanced views) have voted against a revision of the creed. And why? Because I would propose another course which seems to me more recommendable.

To revise creeds seems to imply that their formulation in a past age was a mistake, and I think it was not. A creed is a formulation of faith as understood at the time of its formulation and under definite historical conditions. We can understand the spirit of a creed only after a close study of the history of the time which gave birth to it, and to adapt a creed of the past to the needs of the present must forever remain patchwork. And it would be wrong to tamper with creeds, for they are historical documents and should be as little altered as we would change the text of ancient monuments.

The revision of a creed, too, is an historical act, and so the changes adopted indicate a change in the religious attitude of a Church, but it would have been preferable to leave the old confession alone.

In place of a revision I should have proposed a new statement made of the spirit in which the present generation views the con-

¹ The change pointed out here does not lead to agnosticism or negativism of any kind, but toward the establishment of a positive science of religion, including the nature of God. While we grow broader, we become more tolerant and sympathetic with other conceptions, but also more definite in comprehending the truth, viz., the orthodox solution of religious problems. For details see the writer's article "The New Orthodoxy" in *The Monist*, Vol. VI., No. 1, and in *The Dawn of a New Era*, p. 21 ff.

fessions of faith in the past, and my proposition, which I trust would be acceptable to the most orthodox wing of the Church, would read about as follows:

WHEREAS, divine revelation is the unfoldment of truth ;

WHEREAS, God speaks to mankind at sundry times and in divers manners ;

WHEREAS, Jesus Christ spoke to us in parables, and the Christian confessions of faith are, as their name implies, symbolical books ;

WHEREAS, religion is a living power and life means growth ;

WHEREAS, that is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world ; and finally

WHEREAS, centuries of unparalleled growth have added much to our better comprehension of religious truth :

THEREFORE, be it resolved that we, the duly elected representatives of the Presbyterian Church, declare

That we regard the Westminster Confession of Faith and other formulations of belief in ages past contained in the symbolical books, as venerable historical documents which were, from time to time, on certain occasions, and for specific purposes, composed by the legitimate and legally appointed representatives of our Church ;

That we justify the spirit in which they were written, but deny that they were ever intended to bar out from us the light that the higher development of science and the general advance of civilisation would bring ;

That we bear in mind that the symbolical books are symbols, and that we have learned that a freer scope for their interpretation in the light of the maturest science of our age will do no harm to the essential doctrines of our faith.

This declaration would bestow the necessary liberty of conscience on Presbyterian ministers without involving the change of a single letter in the Westminster Confession and without causing a break in the historical tradition of the Church.

While I am radical in my principles and do not hesitate to apply my radicalism to practical life, the very recognition of evolution as an essential truth in the interpretation of the development of man teaches me to be conservative. Such a radicalism as would tear down religion on account of some antiquated expressions is shallow and will not prove wholesome. It is a spurious radicalism. We must learn to comprehend the old formulations of faith from the standpoint of the old times. We must recognise the sincerity of our fathers and appreciate the work they did. Let there-

fore their work stand *as theirs*. On the other hand, we must not allow the dead to govern the living, and the past to cripple the life of the present.

It is true that the authors of the Westminster Confession fondly imagined that their statement would prove acceptable to all the generations to come; they did not consider the needs of the twentieth century. But that narrowness which characterised them is a trait of their age and we cannot appreciate the moral worth of their zeal unless we bear in mind their limitations.

The Huguenots endured most dreadful persecutions, they were exiled from France, they lost all their worldly possessions in their old homes; but they carried with them confidence in liberty, boldness of enterprise, good schooling and knowledge, sound methods of education, thrifty habits, energy and endurance. It is no accident that they became prosperous wherever they went. History is their justification. We make ourselves worthy of the heirloom of their deeds, not by clinging to their limitations, but by imitating their boldness of spirit and their love of truth—of the truth as they saw it—which made them rise in rebellion against the tyranny of the letter of the established Church institutions.

When we lay our hands on the plow, there is no need of looking back. We should learn to understand the past, but we should live within the living present; and we of the present have the same right to think, to learn, and to grow as our ancestors had. We have the same right to reform the Church as they had, and also to formulate our views of religious truth in terms that will suit the needs of the present time. We are their descendants; our faith is the outcome, and in part the product, of their religious development, and if it is not the same in letter, it is the same in spirit. Our faith is their faith; but it is their faith matured by the increased experience of several centuries. There is no need of tampering with their statements and of changing their confessions of faith. If we only recognise our own right to read the old doctrines in the new light, we shall be more just to them and give them a better interpretation which at the same time will be better adapted to the conditions under which we live.

Religious truths were formulated for the sake of rendering clear the situation in which they were written, but they were never meant to arrest mental development. The men who wrote the Westminster Confession would not express themselves to-day in the same terms as they did then. In their days they reformed the Church, because they insisted upon their right to think, to learn, and to grow; they would not to-day be prevented from acting on the same principles, and under changed conditions they would express their faith in other terms. Let us follow their example and so prove ourselves to be their faithful successors, their legitimate heirs and true children, not in the letter, but in the spirit.

What is true of the Presbyterians holds good for all Churches. There is no need of revising dogmatic formulas or tampering with any confession of faith. Let all creeds stand as they read and treat them as historical documents; but when you feel that you have outgrown the letter of your religious traditions, remember that creeds are symbols of your faith, not absolute truth, and insist on your right of interpretation.

We need elasticity in our religious life as well as stability. The right of interpretation gives both: It frees us from the bondage of the letter that killeth, yet preserves the spirit. It allows a great scope to liberty on conservative principles and favors growth without producing a break, thus rendering evolution possible where otherwise a revolution would be necessary.

EDITOR.