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MYSTICISM.

HERBERT SPENCER has affirmed that the one essential principle of religion is the sense of mystery. We have about us the visible world of things. Each of these things stands in definite relations with the things about it. These relations we can understand; or at least we can put them into formulas which seem clear to the understanding. But we feel that behind these visible things and these finite relations there is a something which we cannot see, which we cannot put into formulas, and which, thus, we cannot even pretend to understand. This unknowable something is a power present in all things, manifesting itself in all things, the life of all things; but though it is always manifesting itself, it can never make itself known; though so near us, it can never be grasped. It remains ever the infinite, the unknown. The consciousness of the reality of this unknowable power is, according to Spencer, the element peculiar to all religions, the only element that may properly be called religious.

The definition of religion, as given by Herbert Spencer, tells only half the story. There is another element which is essential to religion and which is common to all religions. There is light in religion as well as darkness. If God dwells in the darkness He dwells also in the light, and the darkness and the light are alike filled with His presence. I refer, however, at this time to the position of Herbert Spencer, not to criticize it, not to attempt to supply its deficiency, but to recognize its real though partial truth. The sense of mystery is not the only element of religion, but it is an essential element of it; an element too much lost sight of in these days of brilliant, though largely superficial thought. The religious world owes a debt of gratitude to Herbert Spencer for bringing back to its consciousness so forcibly the great fact of this essential principle of mystery. We are apt to forget that much as we need to know, just so much do we need to feel the presence of the unknowable. We are apt to look upon the mountain of truth only as a ledge to be quarried. We are so busied with our machinery of one sort and another for drilling and blow-

ing, for raising and shaping and carrying, so pleased with the smoothly hammered blocks which attest our labor and our skill, that we forget to look up at the sublime vastness of the mountain, at its precipitous sides, at the clouds which veil forever its snowy and inaccessible summit. And yet the mountain in its wholeness may be more helpful to us than in its fragments. All the architecture in which these fragments may be embodied are puny in comparison with it. All the physical luxury to which they may minister is as nothing compared with the vigor which the sense of its sublimity may bring to the spirit. So, also, our square-hewn truths, however fair, however wonderful, are as nothing to the infinitude of truth. The spirit of man needs to feel its strength. It is well that among the finite things about it, it should feel strong, proud and defiant; that it should come to the world as a conqueror to his realm; but it is well also that it should feel the presence of a mightier than it. There are minds to which the sense even of the sublimities of earth would be a salvation. Nowhere does the spirit show its greatness more than in the sense of awe, in the presence of the infinitudes of life and thought, and nowhere does it gain greater strength than in such contemplation. Religion has at all times, and among all nations, recognized this element of the unknowable. "They best know Thee who confess that they do not know Thee," cried the Hindoo; "Canst thou know the Almighty to perfection?" exclaimed the Hebrew. And thus, wherever there has been a religion worthy of the name, there has been this solemn gladness, this bowed exaltation, this mighty helplessness, this blending of the deepest and loftiest of man's nature, which comes from the sense of knowing that which passes knowledge.

While religion has thus openly and triumphantly recognized the element of mystery as essential to its existence, it has, I believe, covertly, recognized the same thing in its ceremonies and creeds. I cannot understand how else many of these extravagant and sometimes even absurd forms and formulas should have taken such a hold upon the hearts of men. Take, for instance, some of the peculiarities of the Roman Catholic service. It seems sometimes absurd to see an ignorant worshipper taking part in a service conducted in a language which he cannot understand. A poor Irish

girl, for instance, worships through the Latin tongue. At least, however, she feels herself in the presence of a mystery behind which is the Divine ; and if we take even the loftiest terms that we use in our English prayers, with realistic literalness, if we regard them as simply and wholly true, perhaps our worship may be more imperfect than hers. A divinity that could be wrapt in any terms however fair and sweet would be a living divinity no longer. So also the dimness of the Mediæval church, its wondrous music with its heights of joy and abysmal depths of sorrow, its architecture with its soaring arches and its gloomy crypts, all combined to force home this sense of mystery upon the soul. The creeds of the Mediæval church bringing together opposites in the same breath, setting at defiance the most fundamental laws of thought and reason, at least brought men into the presence of the unknown, and were doubtless helpful in this respect. I have spoken thus of the Mediæval church, but all religions have had their mysteries. The mysteries of the Greek must have brought a healthful spirit of awe and reverence into the midst of much that was superficial and frivolous in the Greek culture.

It would be interesting to consider the nature and the limit of this element of mystery that underlies all religion, to examine the forms under which it confronts us, and the light that comes to us through and around them. It would be interesting to consider the mystery that waits upon the finite soul, by reason of its very finiteness, when it strives to comprehend the infinite ; or to examine that mystery which meets us under every form of thought when we strive to reconcile the freedom of man with inevitable and invariable law, or with the all-embracing providence of God ; or it would be interesting to drop our plummets farther than sight could reach, down into the dark depths of the mystery of suffering and sin.

My object in this essay is, however, to consider one form of this mystery which underlies all others, and which, so far as the solutions is possible, gives the only hint towards the solution of any of them. I mean that form of mystery which is involved in what is called mysticism.

The word mysticism is often used in a very vague manner. At first it is probable that it had no very definite signification, except as it referred to whatever was connected with mystery in general,

or with the so-called mysteries of religion in particular. But as the nature of this mystery and of these mysteries became more apparent, as the vital element of all began to manifest itself more distinctly from amid the hulls that enveloped it, the words mystic and mysticism assumed a very definite meaning; and this meaning, in spite of much vague and careless use, still belongs to them. The word mysticism, whenever properly used, refers to the fact that all lives, however distinct they may appear, however varied may be their conditions and their ends, are at heart one; that they are the manifestations of a common element; that they all open into this common element and thus into one another. Merely philosophical mysticism calls this common element by one name or another according to the nature of the system. Religious mysticism finds this common element in the life of God. Mysticism then is the recognition of the universal element in all individual forms; religious mysticism finds everywhere the presence and power of the divine life.

Mysticism is so foreign to much of our modern habit of thinking; it is so foreign to our habits of life; it is so foreign to that hard individualism which both our thinking and our living tend to nourish, that it may not be easy for all to enter into the spirit of it, or even to comprehend its meaning. Moreover the word has been associated with so much that is extravagant and absurd that it has somewhat fallen into disrepute. Those, most often, have been known as mystics in whom mysticism has run riot. But in spite of modern atomism and individualism, in spite of former extravagance and fanaticism, mysticism expresses the profoundest fact of our being. All the greatest thinkers and seers of the world have been more or less imbued with it. Modern creed makers and creed holders may disown it; but the religious founders, those on whose mighty foundations the creed makers rear their shapeless and unsubstantial fabrics, wrought from the intuition and the inspiration of the mystical view of life.

However distinct our little individual lives may seem, these mighty thinkers and seers have perceived that they had a common root and a common substance. Within and beneath all existences there is the being from which all spring and in which they all exist. We ask the leaf, Are you complete in yourself? and the leaf

answers, No, my life is in the branches. We ask the branch, and the branch answers, No, my life is in the trunk. We ask the trunk, and it answers, No, my life is in the root. We ask the root, and it answers, No, my life is in the trunk and the branches and the leaves; keep the branches stripped of leaves and I shall die. So is it with the great tree of being. Nothing is completely and merely individual. All are expressions, higher and lower, of a common life.

Illustrations of this fact may be found in the comparatively superficial relations of life in those realms which seem intermediate between the body and the mind. The relations of which I here speak are those which connect one life with another. They show a relation which is deeper than any that the senses can account for, and thus manifest a direct communication between one life and another. We see this in the great pulses of feeling which thrill through communities and assemblies. On a large scale we see it in the frenzy of a nation, a state of things which has found its most striking exemplification in the history of France; on a smaller scale we see it in the enthusiasm or excitement of any crowd. There are occasions in which the calmest and most balanced mind is drawn into the common whirl and tumult of feeling, not from anything that has been said or done, but because the depths of the spirit are stirred by the mighty movements in the life about it. Such a common movement may be found, for instance, in the enthusiasm of the camp-meeting, which becomes filled with a common terror or a common fervor; and in the rout of some great army when a strange and inexplicable panic spreads from heart to heart. Such mighty stirrings of the common life suggest to us the movements of the sea. The fury of the waves is felt in every cove and inlet, however sheltered, that has a communication open with the ocean. When a great tidal wave sweeps over the sea the whole line of coast feels its power, and all the rivers that pour into it heave and swell with its influx. So do lives thrill and stir with the convulsions of the common life about them.

We find examples of this direct relation between life and life in individuals as well as in masses. There are spiritual harmonies and discords from which result much of the happiness or unhappiness of life.

There are individuals who possess what is called magnetism. They attract or move or govern, we can hardly tell why. We can see that this is not mere association with the past history of such persons, that the effect does not arise merely because it is expected to arise, by the fact that animals are frequently affected in a similar way. They become submissive to one whose nature possesses this element; they wait upon his movements, they seem to live for him.

We see further illustrations of this inner relation between life and life in the communication that seems sometimes to flow from one life to another, in the case of friends closely bound together. Especially does this occur in the case of the death of one. Cases of this kind are so common that the German language has set apart a word to stand for this sort of communication. Sometimes the living friend appears to see the form of the one who has just died, sometimes the effect is less striking though not less real. This sort of connection between one life and another reaches its climax in what is known as animal magnetism. In this the independent will and consciousness of the one is entirely given up. The whole nature is taken possession of by another. The will, the thought, the emotions and the sensations of the one depend upon the will of the other. In the same category stand the phenomena of spiritualism. Whatever view we may take of the reality of the claims to spiritual manifestations, this at least would appear to be true, that the life of the medium is invaded by some external personality, whether this external personality be that of an embodied or disembodied spirit.

One of the strangest, we might even say the most inexplicable exhibitions of this hidden interlacing of life with its surroundings, is found in that foreshadowing which is sometimes felt of the future. This yields itself to our comprehension far less than the other phenomena to which I have referred, because it appears to regard the future as already existing, at least as fixed. Perhaps we may find an example of this in the history of our martyred president, Abraham Lincoln. In Lamon's *Life of Lincoln*, a book which with all its faults is one of almost unparalleled interest, showing as it does, in all its details, the growth of one of the noblest, purest, and strongest natures of which we have record, out of circumstances which would seem to render such

a development impossible, — in this marvellous story of a true life, we are told that for years Lincoln was haunted by an impression that he was set apart for the execution of some great work, and that he should fall in the accomplishment of it. This impression cast a shadow over his life which he could not shake off. Of course this impression may have been the result of his ambition united with his temperament. But when we consider on the one side the morbid and somewhat abnormal elements of his nature, and, on the other, the exceptional work to which he was summoned and the no less exceptional end which was to befall it, it does not seem strange that this nature should have felt some foregleams of the glory and some foreshadowings of the gloom. When I think of this strong and patient, this tender and heroic soul, pressing on its serene course, unsoiled by pollution, never misled by the sophistries of legal chicanery or political corruption, never led a step beyond the true path by its mighty ambition, never sinking beneath its burdens, never shrinking from peril, seeing ever before it vaguely in the darkness alike the glory and the terror, it seems to me one of the sublimest figures of history.

Of course I know that the whole class of facts to which I have referred are denied by some; of course, too, any individual case may be doubtful; yet I believe that this class of phenomena is accepted by the unprejudiced among thinking men, by those who do not let theory exclude fact.

The class of facts to which I have referred stand in a somewhat superficial relation to our theme, to which however they may well serve to introduce us. I have tarried among these outlying facts so long, because there are some to whom an introduction to the theme, the being brought into its sphere, so as to feel the reality and the power of it, is more difficult and important than the elaboration of it.

Deeper than that class of facts to which I have alluded, lies the sense of sympathy with the lives and actions of others, however far we may be from the ability to reproduce them. This relation Emerson has happily expressed in the opening paragraph of his essay on history. Though the words are fortunately familiar, they are so apt to our present needs that I will quote them: "There is one mind, common to all individual men. Every man is an inlet

to the same and to all of the same. He that is once admitted to the right of reason is made a freeman of the whole estate. What Plato has thought he may think; what a saint has felt, he may feel; what at any time has befallen any man, he can understand. Who hath access to this universal mind is a party to all that is or can be done, for this is the only and sovereign agent."

Somewhat similar to this is the sympathy that we feel with nature. The sense of beauty is at heart a sense of companionship. We recognize in the nature about us a life which is kindred to our own. We rejoice to be wrapped in by this infinite life of nature. The early peoples have loved to speak of the earth as their mother. From this feeling of relationship comes the sympathy which we have with the outward world. Sometimes nature reflects our mood. She is glad or sorrowful according as we are glad or sorrowful. Sometimes she takes us up into her lofty moods. Our spirits grow strong with her strength, tender with her tenderness, calm with her calmness. Whatever form the effect may take it springs from our sense of unity with the life about us.

Still deeper lies the metaphysical and religious sense of the unity of all being. This is the principle that our modern science fancies it has discovered while really it is the principle upon which science itself rests, and of which the scientific formulas in regard to the uniformity of law form only a partial expression. It is a principle that the thought of man has always taken for granted, and which finds its complete expression alike in Greece and India, countries the types and habits of whose thought are so largely antithetical to one another. Philosophy takes it for granted. The religious element is not essential to it. Schopenhauer is as thorough a mystic as Madame Guyon. Indeed, some of the fairest thoughts of Madame Guyon have been transplanted by Schopenhauer to the uncongenial soil of his system, where amid the darkness and the chill they seem scarcely less at home than beneath the warm and sunny heavens that before smiled about them. It is indeed difficult to draw the exact line where metaphysical passes into religious mysticism. Men may differ, for instance, as to the side of the line on which Spinoza stands, or even in regard to the location of much Hindoo thought,—may doubt as to whether it shall be called metaphysical or religious. It is, how-

ever, in the sphere of religion that mysticism reaches its fairest growth. The oriental religions have given themselves up most thoroughly to this principle. Indeed, it is this that characterizes the central period in the history of the Brahmins, while it is powerfully manifested both in the earlier and later periods of this history. It finds its perfect expression in this Hindoo prayer, "Thou art the sacrifice, the prayer of oblation; the sovereign of all creatures; Thou art all that is to be known or to be unknown; O universal soul, the whole world consists of thee." Among the Sufis, whose type of religion is a reaction against the hard superficialness of Mohammedanism, mysticism has found its most picturesque and poetical expression. They tell us, for instance, that a saint knocked at the door of Paradise. Who is there? asked the Lord. It is I, answered the saint. But the gate remained fast closed against him. Again he drew near and knocked, and when the Lord asked, as before, Who is there? the saint, grown wiser, answered, Lord, it is Thou; and the gates of Paradise flew open to grant him prompt admittance.

But though this principle is associated in our minds rather with the religions that I have named than with Christianity, yet in Christianity it is no less truly present. In Him we live, and move, and have our being, cried the clear-headed, active Paul, no less a mystic than the contemplative John. All through the Christian history have arisen souls as purely mystical in feeling and in thought as any to be found under warmer skies. Their type of religion was exceptional in Christianity only in its degree. The pious Fenelon could justify his mystical piety by unanswerable arguments drawn from the church fathers. Indeed, no religion that has any soul to it can avoid the touch of mysticism. It is the very life of religion. Men may talk of an external creation, may shut up each soul to a sharp and separate individuality, may set off the infinite over against the finite, forgetting that thereby they have two finites and no infinite. But then comes the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, which is that of the very indwelling of God in the soul, and all these finely drawn lines disappear, the hard distinctions become fluid; men become partakers of the divine life, and God is all and in all. Our tenderest hymns are full of a beautiful

mysticism. Thus we sing with Furness, — in what I am sometimes tempted to call the sweetest of hymns, —

“What is it? and whither, whence,
This unsleeping, secret sense,
Longing for its rest and food
In some hidden, unknown good?”

“’Tis the soul — mysterious name;
Him it seeks from whom it came:
While I muse I feel the fire
Burning on and mounting higher.

“Onward, upward to thy throne,
O thou Infinite, Unknown!
Still it presseth, till it see
Thee in all, and all in Thee.”

Mysticism is Protean in its shapes. It possesses the key to all forms and all creeds. The smallest cell opens into God's infinitude. The harshest dogmas assume a tenderness, the most varied rites a meaning for it. The mystic can take the sacred wafer on his lips finding in it the real presence of God, for is not God in all things? He can affirm the absolute divinity of Christ, for is not all life divine, the highest and fullest the most divine? He can affirm the dogma of the Trinity, for does not this furnish the formula that includes all the deep and vast relations of the universe? On the other hand, the mystic, for like reasons, may disown all forms and cast off all creeds. Out of such mysticism, pure and tender, sprang the sect of the friends. He may justify to himself at least the most extreme and solitary individualism; for am not I, the soul may ask, one of the manifestations of the eternal mind? If I have access to the eternal mind what do I need of other help and guidance?

Not only does mysticism thus hold in solution the forms of religion; it brings to the mysteries of religion a solution, so far as any solution is possible. At least it absorbs all other mysteries into itself.

Nothing has taxed the thought of men more than the relation between God's sovereignty and man's free will. If man is free how is it possible that the will of God should be absolute in the

moral no less than in the physical world. But if the life of man is born out of the life of God, if so far as man truly lives he lives in God and God lives in him, then when man comes to himself, when he lives his true life, his will is one with the will of God. The will of God does not act upon him from without, subduing him by external force. It acts from within. It is indeed his own truest life.

Sin is the blackest mystery of the universe. We cannot understand how it should have a place in the universe of God. Mysticism teaches us that there is but one life, and that is the divine life. Sin is the absence of this life. It thus is death. If we should mark the presence of this life by light, the perfect man would be wholly luminous, showing that every part is living; the worst man would be seen to have only a few intermittent sparks of brightness at the heart of his being. Sin is nothing but the absence of life, and that is the absence of everything. With all its parade of pride and pomp, sin is thus seen in its nothingness. The leaf, as we have seen, has its life only in the tree. When in the autumn it begins to loosen its hold upon the tree, it puts on the greatest appearance of glory. Its gold and its purple fill the earth with splendor. We rejoice in the beauty, but we rejoice with a sense of sadness in our hearts, for we know that what we see is the pomp and glory of death. Such is the splendor that springs from the pride and selfishness of the world. The true man may, in his humility, confront them with calm confidence. They also spring from the separation of the individual from the universal life. They also are the flaunting glories of death.

So also does mysticism help to answer the great question as to the possibility of knowing anything of God. Some thinkers, as we have seen, love to resolve the thought of God into that of an unknown force. But if this power lives in us, if it thinks in us, how shall we not have some revelation of it in ourselves? Indeed why should we not know more of it than of anything besides. If in religion, then, we find the darkest mystery, in it we find also the clearest light. We may doubt wholly in regard to the nature and even the reality of the things which we see merely from the outside; but of that life that lives in us, that is the life of our life, how can we wholly doubt.

Thus does mysticism have the central, the supreme place in the religious thought and life; but owing to this very supremacy it is beset with perils. From this source of life and strength and knowledge may spring the blackest errors, the most fantastic delusions.

The fundamental errors which have too often marred the beauty of mysticism, and which have made the very word so often a reproach are, in the first place, the belief, natural enough in theory, that if the true life be life in God, then to reach this true life in its fullness the individual life must be given up. The life must flow backward and downward to become one with its source. Thus in all nations men have sought to find God by giving up all relation with the world, by shutting up the avenues of sense, by giving up feeling and thought. Thus the Hindoo mystic sits with his eyes fixed upon a single point, with measured or suspended breath, so far as possible with no emotion in his heart and no thought in his brain, seeking thus, by entering into perfect inanity, to become one with God. Christian mystics have resorted to like measures, and marked out all the steps that lead to the state which is at once the absence and the fullness of life. They have not seen that this fullness which they seek is emptiness. The being they would share is the negation of being. By this process they do not become God, they become nothing. It is as if the bud, knowing that its life is in the life of the parent tree, should seek to become one with the tree by withering and shrinking, and letting its life ebb back into the common life. Seeing it, we should not say, Behold how this bud has become one with the tree; we should say, The bud is dead.

Errors, in the second place, somewhat different from the one I have named, grow out of a less extreme application of the same theory. Instead of giving up the life of thought and feeling, the mystic gives up the control of thought and feeling. Whatever comes to him, apparently, from the depths of his own consciousness, he takes it for granted comes from God. The exercise of reason, of thought, reference to the results of other minds, would mar the freedom of the revelation of God. The favorite motto of the mystic, which may be applied to both forms that I have named, is this: When man sleeps, God wakes.

He considers himself one of the beloved of God to whom he giveth in their sleep. But when men sleep, answers Hegel, they dream. Hence in the writings of so many mystics we have by the side of thoughts whose depth and beauty thrill us with an inspiration of fresh life, conceits the most fantastic and absurd, multiplied till the reading becomes a weariness and a disgust. Such men think that by this falling back into the heart of things they can understand all the phenomena of time and eternity; some even have believed that their life could thus become so blended with the common life that they could control the course of things by a word. Thus we have growing out of a grand and fundamental truth all the extravagances of Theosophy and Theurgy. In a more superficial and modern view we have abnormal states of the nervous system, or of the bodily life, prized more highly than the normal. The state of the mesmeric or other trance is considered by some higher than the state of consciousness. Such do not realize that this is a falling back and down, a losing of the real individual life in the indistinguishable mass of being. The individual ceases to be a person and becomes a thing acted upon by wills and forces outside of itself. I do not say that such a process may not, like that of sleep, be sometimes useful. It may bring to light facts in our nature otherwise unknowable. Like sleep, however, it is not an exaltation, but a lowering of the nature.

If the life of man is born out of the life of God, if the divine life is to flow into and fill out the human life, then the channels for its entrance are those which God himself has created; and the most normal life is the life which is most filled with his presence. Very refreshing after the distorted theories which we have been considering sounds the cry of John, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him;" and that of Paul, "The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith." This is the true mysticism. It is the true identification of the human with the divine. The bud is most full of the life of the tree when it swells and bursts into the leaf or the flower. So man is most full of the life of God when his natural powers are most fully developed. Not when he sleeps but when he is most awake can he best see God. The form of mysticism we first considered cries that God is; it does

not say what he is. It gives us the copula without the predicate. The soul gives up also its predicates and sinks back into empty abstraction to find him. The true mysticism adds the predicate. It tells what God is. God is love, and he that would live in God must not fall back but press forward: He will find Him, not in emptiness but in fullness. The life of God visits the soul as the life of nature pours itself into the tree, not to bring into it anything strange, but to fill out that which is natural to it. The fruit of the spirit is love, and joy, and peace, the simple, natural flowering and fruitage of the soul.

I and my Father are one, said Jesus; he also said: My Father worketh hitherto, and I work, making thus his union with the Father to consist, not in passivity, but in activity. Christianity, thus, while preserving the great truth of mysticism, disentangles it from the perversions which have too often corrupted it, and makes of it the incentive to the noblest and fullest life.

Thus mysticism, rightly understood, would increase our confidence in human nature rather than destroy it. It would increase our confidence in human thought. It would teach us that this is akin to the creative thought of God. He that should stop thinking in order to find the truth, would be like one who should close his eyes that he might see.

But thought alone is partial and superficial. There are depths in the nature of man which thought alone can bring to light, but which thought has only just begun to sound. There are forces in human nature which thought must accept as given. There are spiritual growths of which thought cannot lay bare the roots. Certain habits and instincts spring out of experience. The roots lie near the surface and thought can uncover them and show their place and nature. There are others that are not thus rooted in any superficial experience. As we trace them they stretch down through the drift and debris of our past lives. They are rooted only in the absolute life. They are offshoots from the life of God.

Of this nature pre-eminently is the moral sense. I will dwell at some little length upon the aspect of our theme, on account of its practical importance; and also that our theme itself may be seen to be not merely a matter of dreamy speculation, but

bound up in the most momentous issues of our times. Kant was right in making the moral sense pre-eminently the medium by which the reality of the divine being is manifested to us. He was wrong and inconsequent in denying validity to the other fundamental elements of our nature; but the moral sense, the practical reason, is so much more authoritative, so much more clear and final in its utterances than the rest, it brings us so into the presence of the awfulness and sublimity, as well as of the beauty of the divine holiness, that we can forgive him that the sense of it obscured everything beside.

Especially can we forgive him in the days in which we live, in which the grandeur and authority of morality are to such an extent lost sight of. I think we do not enough realize the terrible pressure against which morality has to contend at this time. We need not delay to speak much of external causes of this pressure, though these are very powerful. The war, in spite of its high purpose, left the legacy that all wars leave, a tendency to demoralization and brutality. Much of the most popular and plausible thought of the age tends in the same direction. I will not here discuss nor question the truth of the theory that human life is a development out of animal life. Least of all will I join in the outcry against it. It is a theory which is compatible with the highest faith; which may, indeed, introduce a new element of beauty and hopefulness into our faith. But however readily we may accept the theory, however clearly we may see the high applications of it, it is no less obvious that in the world at large the first impression of it, the superficial judgment in regard to it, would result in a lowering of the dignity of human nature. If it is accepted as truth by the scientific world its tendency will in time be seen to be no more anti-spiritual than that of the fact that we have bodies; but it will be long before the popular mind will recover from the shock of it. Its tendency will be to put a burden upon many an upward struggling soul, and to sink deeper many a depraved one. It will seem to degrade human nature, to justify its brutalization.

This crisis is one that cannot and could not be avoided; but the crisis is rendered more perilous to appearance from the fact that the same process of thought which brings man physically nearer to the brute seeks to separate him spiritually from the divine.

While opening a gulf below, it seeks to unclasp his hold upon the support above. This is especially seen in the manner in which this thought makes light of, or seeks to take away the authority of the moral sense. Bain, one of the foremost English writers on psychology and morality, refers to the old motto, *Fiat justitia ruat coelum*, Let justice be done though the heavens should fall, only to stigmatize it as the climax of sentimentalism. It is indeed a motto which utilitarianism can have little place for. It shows that to whatever extent utilitarianism may be the guide of morality, there comes at last a point where the two part company. It is a motto which can be used fanatically and foolishly; but yet it is a motto that has sustained and inspired many a noble soul. The sentiment it expresses has, in one and another form, done more to purify the moral atmosphere, to keep human life strong and healthy, and society sweet and clean, than all the treatises on morality that could be piled together. How many a man has it sustained in the performance of an act of justice which would make of his fortunes a mere wreck. The act has been done; his little heaven has fallen; his little world has collapsed. He has found indeed a heaven within. The sense of justice done has brought its own satisfaction to his soul; but if justice has no inner authority, no inner life, the inner heaven would have fallen with the outer. When John Stuart Mill exclaimed that he would go to hell rather than call that just in God which would be unjust in man, what was that but a new application of the old cry, Let justice be done though heaven should fall. Acting upon this principle the whole human race, the whole community of finite spirits, would leave heaven empty rather than countenance injustice though it might be called divine. If we dismiss the heroic motto with a sneer, we shall find that not only our sentimentalism but that the strength of our manhood, has gone with it.

Bain is not the only writer whose theorizing tends in the same direction. Herbert Spencer seeks to solve the question why men have attached special sanctity to the dictates of morality, and he gives as reasons, in effect, the selfish maxims of society and the mistaken assumptions of theology, repeated so often through countless generations as to produce a permanent effect on human nature. I do not forget that he elsewhere indicates a system of morality

which is not without inspiration. I here consider the explanation which he gives of the authority of morality itself. Now any man who should accept this explanation as all sufficient, and who should find in his own nature no moral principle that this could not account for, would, I believe, hold himself free from any responsibility to the moral principle. Schopenhauer approached the theme in the same manner that Spencer does. He states, distinctly, that he has not to ask why men should obey the moral law, but why they do obey it. Schopenhauer was an atheist and a pessimist; but at the same time he was a philosopher and a mystic, and because he was a mystic, his explanation of the moral sense is such that if you and I accepted it, even though we could find within ourselves no moral instinct which this could not account for, the principle of morality would be stronger within us than it was before; because we should see its real nature more clearly than we did before.

Darwin also attempts the explanation of the moral sense with morality left out. He explains the power of conscience by the simple fact of the prominence of the social instincts and the comparative transientness of the selfish impulses. No authority is given to morality except the greater prominence of the instincts on which it is based. But the truth is that the regal dignity of the moral law is never more strongly felt than when it confronts the selfish impulses. Even when it suffers violence at their hands, it yet receives their homage. With the king in Hamlet ambition was as permanent as the sense of justice. Indeed it was only now and then that the voice of justice made itself heard in his heart. That wonderful soliloquy of his shows us the collision between the two principles. It shows us the king yielding to his selfish ambition, but, while doing this, feeling himself ashamed in the presence of the divinity of justice. Shakspeare knew less than Darwin does about plants and animals, but he knew infinitely more about human nature; and this single passage, the single picture of this —

Limed soul, that struggling to be free
Was more engaged,

refutes by the simplicity of truth the flimsy reasoning of the naturalist.

There is a story, happily familiar, that Theodore Parker, when a boy, took up a stone to throw at a tortoise in a pond; but something within him seemed to forbid the act. He went home and asked his mother what this something was. Suppose she had given him any of the definitions to which I have just referred. Suppose she had told him, for instance, that it was the inherited effects of the maxims of a self-interested society and the assumptions of presumptuous theologians. It was a turning point in Parker's life. I think that if his mother had told him this, and he had thoroughly believed her, the next tortoise that he saw would have been in peril. What his mother really did tell him was this: That the something that bade him hold his hand was what men commonly called conscience; but she preferred to call it the voice of God within him. Parker himself tells us the power of these words. His true life seemed to date from them. The voice of conscience, instead of being silenced by sophistry, was recognized and listened to as the voice of God. His conscience thus nurtured became the conscience of the land.

I have dwelt upon this matter that we might realize the odds against which the moral principle has to contend amid the superficial teaching of the time. Such teaching is not shut up within books of science that are sealed to the common thought. Such theories spread more rapidly than the books which contain them, and their effects extend more rapidly than they.

I make here no complaint against the science of the day. It is doing its work bravely and well. I reverence the devotion of its students and rejoice in their success. But physical science has to do with only one side of facts. There is another side which is recognized by religion. Religion and science are like two oarsmen on opposite sides of one boat. Science is pulling with all its strength. It does not do for religion to drop its oar that it may wave applause to its comrade. Still less does it do for it to wring its hands and cry with terror that the strokes of science are swinging the boat's head out of its course, that it will be dashed against the rocks or swept far out into the open sea. Rather let religion do what science is doing. Let it also bend itself to the oar. While it rejoices in the strength of its comrade's stroke, let it make

its stroke as strong, and the boat will shoot along in its course with a speed that it has never reached before.

In other words, religion should emphasize the spiritual facts of life, just as science emphasizes the physical facts of life. While science shows the relation of man to the brute, religion should show his relationship with God. This is to be done, not by fulminations and anathemas, not by ecclesiasticisms and external authority; but by making men feel the power of God within them; by bringing into consciousness what I have called the mystical element of life.

Mysticism and physical science recognize the opposite poles of being. We need not wait, then, for physical science to come to its aid. Physical science has to do with points, with atoms; mysticism has to do with wholes. The results of mysticism, physical science calls unthinkable; but they are the staple of our thoughts. Physical science boasts of the clearness of her results; but these results, without the aid of mysticism, are unthinkable. Physical science can see in each man only a congeries of atoms mingled in a mazy dance. Can you think of yourself as simply a figure in the dance of atoms? Can you think of the friend you love the most as such a whirl of atoms, a whirl closer and more intricate than that of the sand-column that sweeps across the desert, the material more pliant, but the nature of the two being otherwise alike? The only element of thought from which we never can escape is personality. If physical science fails to give us this we see that it needs its complement, if only that its own results may be thinkable. The recognition of personality, of the unity in the midst of the variety of physical elements, is the beginning of mysticism; its culmination is the recognition of a like unity amid all the variety of the universe, the infinite personality, of which we are a part, but which yet is distinct from us and from which we are distinct; from which and in which is our only life; to which we must return, not by the mere absorption of being, but by the higher absorption of a joyful love.

C. C. EVERETT.