

A Modern Mystic's Way

**The way of the mystics is an open secret
for us all, but in each man it is
'My Secret to Myself.'**



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Uniform with this Volume



THE ROADMENDER

By Michael Fairless



THE GREY BRETHREN

By Michael Fairless



HORAE SOLITARIAE

By Edward Thomas

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TO
MICHAEL FAIRLESS,
WHO SHOWED ME THE WAY

26 Aug 53 9. Foundation: Turner

PREFACE

SINCE I wrote this little book I have read Professor William James's Gifford Lectures on 'The Varieties of Religious Experience,' which he delivered at the University of Edinburgh. I have found there a definite statement concerning a link between the scientific knowledge of the human mind and the mystic's 'inner way'; and I venture to quote the following passages to show what that link is.

"The further limits of our being plunge, it seems to me, into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely 'understandable' world. Name it the mystical region, or the supernatural region, whichever you choose. So far as our ideal impulses originate in this region (and most of them do originate in it, for

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we find them possessing us in a way for which we cannot articulately account), we belong to it in a more intimate sense than that in which we belong to the visible world, for we belong in the most intimate sense wherever our ideals belong. Yet the unseen region in question is not merely ideal, for it produces effects in this world. . . . The whole drift of my education goes to persuade me that the world of our present consciousness is only one out of many worlds of consciousness that exist, and that those other worlds must contain experiences which have a meaning for our life also ; and that although in the main their experiences and those of this world keep discrete, yet the two become continuous at certain points, and higher energies filter in. . . . If, then, there be a wider world of being than that of our every-day consciousness, if in it there be forces whose effects on us are intermittent, if one facilitating condition of the effects be the openness of the

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‘subliminal’ door, we have the elements of a theory to which the phenomena of religious life lend plausibility. I am so impressed by the importance of these phenomena that I adopt the hypothesis which they so naturally suggest. At these places at least, I say, it would seem as though transmundane energies, God, if you will, produced immediate effects within the natural world to which the rest of our experience belongs.”

In an earlier chapter Professor James shows the starting-point of the train of investigation from which these opinions are derived. “I cannot but think,” he says, “that the most important step forward that has occurred in psychology since I have been a student of that science is the discovery, first made in 1886, that, in certain subjects at least, there is not only the consciousness of the ordinary field, with its usual centre and margin, but an addition thereto in the shape of a set of memories, thoughts, and feelings which are extra-marginal and outside of the

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primary consciousness altogether, but yet must be classed as conscious facts of some sort, able to reveal their presence by unmistakable signs. I call this the most important step forward because, unlike the other advances which psychology has made, this discovery has revealed to us an entirely unsuspected peculiarity in the constitution of human nature. No other step forward which psychology has made can proffer any such claim as this."

It seems to me that this great discovery, with its extending results, should help others among us to believe that the mystic's experience may be one outcome among many of a profoundly significant fact in the constitution of every man, concerning which we were ignorant, in the scientific sense, before the year 1886. Is not the "'subliminal' door" of the psychologist suggestive of the "deep door" of Behmen ; and does it not demand a place in our consideration for the mystical 'way' by which, as Professor James is

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willing to allow, and the mystics always assert, love and light and power pass in and out from being to being, or from world to world? I cannot help thinking that this recent extension of scientific recognition should, in fact, lend to the records of inner religious and mystical experience a presumptive favour, and, *primâ facie*, a value which they have not hitherto possessed in common estimation. I believe that the influence the new discovery has had upon the work and opinions of Professor James and many other eminent men of science indicates that which it will have in the near future upon the world at large where it is at present either unheeded or unknown. I am myself an example of the spread of this influence. The psychological discovery of 1886 reached me, by good fortune, at or very near the time it was made; and it effected the first breach in the fortress of my Huxleyan agnosticism. My training and professional work and study had made that fortress strong, and I well

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remember my feeling of bewilderment and instability when for the first time I saw the evidence for the new-found fact, and began to see that it must open for me problems I had thought closed for ever by an ignorance that only the habit of caution kept me from calling invincible. Thenceforward I faced those problems, with amazing results to myself and my scheme of things; and the fragmentary account which I have given in this little book is the result of my revolutionised attitude and opinions. Its chief value in my eyes is that of a straw showing the set of a new current and the turning of a tide.

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I

I INTEND to set down here, plainly if I can but at least as faithfully as may be, the story of my heart and mind since it came to seem in my view worth telling. I propose to give myself the shelter of namelessness for truth's sake and my own.

The scheme, the desire, and the occasion are all new. I had nothing of the kind in prospect until I met a new friend a year ago ; but the desire and the scheme have been growing as the friend's message has grown within myself.

This new friend was only a bird, a "little brown brother" ; but I know him now for the angel, the message-bearer, that he surely was.

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Just a year ago to-day I was in my garden listening to a burst of song with which the birds proclaimed the passing of the rain. The rain had annoyed me ; it had spoilt my plans, and I was out of mood for singing ; but the birds found one of my weak spots, and with a vile consciousness of virtue I began to listen to the sermon that they preached. It is the beginner's way, as I came to think a little later. Before a man has taken the first plain step in the way of life as a brother it is of his best if he treat all these little ones with the kindness of a good master, as he treats the men who serve him more. He may go down to the grave content with nothing better than a comfortable sense of duty done, the cardinal virtues not plainly flouted, the heavenly graces neither perceived nor missed. In a long life-time he may learn no more than this ; but round about every man are angels ready to teach us children in this primary-school world ; and if one of these angels

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reach him with the message of a new beginning and the call to a brother's life there is an end to duty and contentment with the end of his ignorance.

How can he be content with duty when his eyes have caught a glimpse of the beauty and the power of love? Our trouble is—but it keeps us back from profanation—that no man knows his own blindness towards love until vision comes with an opening of a new sense. That is what such vision really is for a man—a new sense. There are marvels of perception hidden from my senses now, “permanent possibilities of sensation” not for sight, or touch, or hearing, but for some sense or senses now inconceivable—unknown vibrations, undetected wonders; and without them I go content. So, too, it is with love, the divine love that gives itself, and with the light beyond our light, until they find a way.

But between the coming of the vision of

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love and the state of dutiful mastership there is another manner of life ; and in this manner I walked in my garden on that memorable day, learning from the birds.

In this manner, with agreeable humility, a stooping of the over-lord very pleasant to self-love seeking its profit in virtue, I saw the world charged by God's peculiar providence with good things for me. The other creatures were to serve me or preach to me as I should ask of them ; they were for me and they were ready for either work ; they lived in the main that I might learn and live.

It is a poor enough beginning ; but it is a beginning, and there is truth with the over-lord's delusion. The servants by their service spell out some part of the man-master's meaning ; but they have also their own life, and meaning not their master's, meaning and life in which man must stand as servant not as lord. All this is hidden from the master until he learns to turn servant and becomes

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aware of a message to deliver, a sermon he must preach, a gift he must present, and the existence of a vital hidden link between his brothers and himself. When he has learnt this the vision of love is revealed to him; and with more just humility he stoops again to lift his share of the common burden in the common life and purpose. He becomes freedman of a greater country where, like the Master-freedman of Assisi, he preaches to fishes and birds his sermon of the redemption of a world.

Such liberation must come to each man by an appropriate unfolding. It came to me only one year ago by means of the little brown brother, my new friend. I found him on his back, struggling in that desperate and alien attitude, his wings battering the ground, his little feet clutching at the air. It must have been a subversal of all things for him as bewildering and terrifying as the quiver of solid earth under a land-creature's tread. I took him up, not

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knowing him for angel or myself for servant ; and I held him as I had never held a bird before, with a new adaptability, a new sense of his needs, and a new recognition of the life both his and mine—a life I seemed to know but had forgotten. A way was opened between him and me ; I touched him not only without but within, and I felt him touching me. More—I knew that he felt me. He gave himself to my sheltering power, as birds in my experience had never done before, without reluctance, in full and willing trust, or so it seemed. At once the flutter of his heart died down and his breathing calmed ; he rested and I felt that he had no longer any fear. Into me there entered a new joy and the revelation of an inner way of meeting in our common life.

I kept him for an hour or two in a basket which he accepted as the man fallen among thieves accepts the shelter of the inn ; then he ate the sacramental bread of brotherhood,

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and I gave him leave to join his other friends. He has gone, I suppose, for ever; but I know that he is mine in the life that never dies. I know him too for an angel—an angel who opened for me the Paradise of men whom even wild creatures learn to understand. In those blessed and effectual moments I attained to preaching in some common language to a bird: my scale was microscopic in proportion to my microscopic self, but the difference between me and Francis was a difference only of degree.

Do you see—you who read these words—the change for me from knowing about Francis and the birds to doing as Francis did, perhaps feeling in a low measure as Francis surely must have felt? Then and there I acquired a new sense, a sense of the unveiling and uniting love which he had for all creatures. “*Il ne les regardait pas avec le plaisir égoïste du dilettante.*” At last I saw that before my bird told me the secret of the saints I had looked on creatures dilettante-

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wise, and "*le plaisir égoïste*" in me, however subtle and refined, had been enough to hide from me the truth of my garden and the truth of man's Paradise. In Paradise life not only is but shows itself as one. This I know who am still, despite my vision, for the most part outside the gates; and the knowledge has made me lament my isolation as a broken fragment of the great life. Community and dominion make new demands on me, show me new perils, point out new ends. I stand afraid yet not only afraid, as one called to some height of blessedness that may be profaned. All creatures show themselves mine in a new and living way; and in that way, it seems, each least step counts. The bird is my angel and my brother, truly of me, truly of God; and this thing that he and I have wrought is wrought in meaning, purpose, shaped life—mine, his, God's, that must endure. Within the Great I Am all we little ones are set, and He is Love within us and without;

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therefore the way of peace and unity between His creatures is a way of love.

Since the coming of my little brown brother I have held in my hand another bird which a man had rescued from a cat. It was struggling in a kindly grasp ; but when I took hold it made me feel a Son of Consolation, a Barnabas in whom it had found that which it sought. There are happy people who have always possessed this sense of real kinship between themselves and every living thing, and always known how to reveal themselves ; but I am not among them, and I thank God and His little angel that I found the secret not too late.

It is a secret hidden not only from many of the wise and prudent, but from some among the babes.

“Just when we're safest
There's a sunset touch, a fancy from
A flower bell, some one's death,
A chorus ending from Euripides——”

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Blougram is of the prudent who see and fear to see more ; and with all his recognition of the grip of God he knows nothing of the message of my bird. Nor does the seeing babe of 'Christmas Eve' :—

“ Have I been sure, this Christmas Eve,
God's own hand did the rainbow weave,
Whereby the truth from heaven slid
Into my soul ? I cannot bid
The world admit He stooped to heal
My soul, as if in a thunder-peal
Where one heard noise, and one saw flame,
I only knew He named my name.”

“ *He named my name.*” Surely He did ; but there was something more for me while I held my bird ; He named to me His little one. He showed me the great life-kingdom “where no sparrow falls to the ground without the insight of One who knows, and where the vine and the branches eternally flourish in a sacred unity.” In that kingdom the least have names, and they are embraced in love ; the bird and I are two, yet one.

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Before us men, if this be true and if the way be possible for many or for all, stands a long atonement for our sins and ignorance as masters and servants in the earthly life. We are estranged from our fellow-workers ; the strife of tongues and interests divides us ; our ears are stopped to the common language of a common life ; and we have made foes and slaves where foes need not have been and slaves might perhaps have grown to be friends. For this we must atone if the lower world is to be redeemed ; we cannot merely begin afresh at the point whence we might have started the work of love had contempt and folly and self-seeking never been. The birds are wild, the beasts flee ; we know little of the tender lover's ways with them ; it is all to begin, and all to be atoned.

Duty, at last and at least, is calling everywhere ; but the sense of duty needs to be displaced by love ; duty, everywhere, is but

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for the hardness of our hearts, and is love's forerunner to lessen as love grows. In the bonds of a common flesh, a common life and origin and descent, and the including purpose of God, we are one with all the living creatures and even with the inanimate things of earth. We know it now, but fifty years ago we had forgotten it; and so duty gains new hearing from us and the world of the lower creatures begins to grow vivid; but duty can only annex that world, it is for winning by love. To the conquest of love in love no man must dare to set a limit: perhaps there is no limit, and we shall be winning for ever in that endless field. My dog points out one way, my bird another; I think that the greater, the more winning secret lies in the way of the bird, the way by which there is no gain for man poorer than his gain of love.

I see a great destiny opening out along this way of the bird, a great mission of man to a lower world crying to be redeemed, to

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be set free. It is a dream, far away from our living as it is now ; but all life is far away from that which it shall be even here on earth, and we are stirring in our sleep, moved, not a few of us perhaps, by just such dreams.

II

“FLOWER in the crannied wall”—my bird brought me the message of the flower as well as the naming of its own name; it set out afresh before me problems that have been problems ever since a man could hold in his hand a flower for wondering. These things are called science, a bad name; philosophy, a good one; religion—*binding*—best of all. There is no binding save by love, and love’s way is the way to Paradise, where birds and flowers are understood and God walks openly with men.

We need not be far from Paradise; the Kingdom of Heaven itself is not separate from any one of us, and if Heaven is at the inner door of self so too is Paradise; so too are the myriad worlds, the innumerable mansions or prison-houses of

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the Lord, through which I may have to pass.

Once, not many years ago, I watched a sleeper dreaming, or seeing some such world. There is nothing speculatively improbable about the tale she told me after she awoke ; the world of which she spoke may well be one of Lotze's "plurality of ordered worlds," one more "system of appearances" as real as this "system of appearances" which we take sometimes for the only real ; and she may have touched it in the hidden depths. Doubtless our earthly island in the great ocean of life is a fit world for me as I am now and my ship does well to anchor to its shores ; but the fleshly cable which holds me there will soon be slipped, and who shall say that no Avalon awaits me even now just over my horizon line of flesh. Avalon, or desert of loneliness, either may await me, either may be mine already, my 'own place' must be mine then and now ; and if I set forth hence

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at all, if my voyage is not at an end when my cable is slipped from earth, I shall still remain myself as I have ever been, and still be in my 'own place.'

Well—I watched a sleeper, one in whom the deep inner door always seemed half open. I loved her, and she was leaving me. Before she slept I had been wishing she would die quickly to escape from pain. Then suddenly for the first and last time in that fatal illness she fell like a child into a quiet, painless sleep. I felt as though my heart stood while I watched her, I hardly dared to breathe; because this which I watched seemed to me such life as might well set death out of both sight and longing. On her face was a new glow of health cheating me into unreasonable hope. I watched her for a whole hour or more, and during that time something—was it no better than a dream?—took away her pain and gave her fresh beauty that faded only many hours after she awoke, and new

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strength making her strong for a coming day of wonder.

She told me of "going into '*The Blue.*'" It is a place, she said, as real as earth, but it seems to be made of some different and finer stuff. There are trees and flowers and grass and men and women, all like the people and things of earth yet seeming of earthly life transfigured. Every living thing in that world radiates its proper light, making around it, as it were, a bright shadow from its own intensity of light. The grass is shining green; the daisies spread their candid loveliness as our daisies cast darkening shadow; but the light is all about them, pouring forth from them; and the whole world is brilliant beyond all brilliance on earth. The sky yields the dominant note, a deep and "solid-looking" blue.

She saw a river, a liquid jewel with depths beyond depths of many colours. There were forests of radiant trees; the forest-ways showed their direction and their

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distance, but not by appearing to change in size as they would for earthly sight in the perspective change that we have here ; there is no perspective in that landscape. And there is no sound there, but in the universal silence she found gain not loss. Sound as we know it is not needed, she said (sound, I suppose, travelling by material waves), it would break the harmony, for all things there reveal themselves or are revealed by mind nearing mind; thought meeting thought—a general telepathy of concordant life. So the silence seems a great unfolding, the opening of a new window of the soul to sight of utterance, or touch of truth—a music beyond the music of material spheres.

The human beings in this Paradise are not mere disembodied flames of soul ; they are full human beings transfigured, and radiance from them shines in a body—their own body and recognisable, but not of earthly stuff—powerful, beautiful, and seem-

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ing very flexible to will. They are clothed, and their clothing belongs to them as clothing here does not; it is an "opal-glimmering dress" eloquent in fitness. My sleeper saw friends who had died some years before; they came towards her, "not walking, but just *coming*," she said. They showed her their joy and peace and their possession of knowledge that made them regard her as one might regard a dear child impatient for want of it.

At times she saw people who appeared to be looking over an obstacle at something beyond, but she found that they were looking through the thin grey veil which she herself saw and passed through in leaving that world. Is this the veil of our material stuff and body, I wonder; and shall we too see its thinness from that other side? Is the place a real Eden of "melodious colours and radiant notes," one of the gardens of the Lord, or is it a dream-symbol conceived in the mind of the seer? When Claude de Saint-

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Martin said that he "saw flowers that sounded and heard notes that shone," was he speaking in parable, or telling of some such garden? I do not know; but I have heard since of other men and women who are as sure as my seer was that their cable has sometimes stretched to let them catch glimpses of an Avalon over the horizon of the earthly life. In all cases where this "blue" land has been entered, or dreamt, however different in details the accounts may be, joy, peace, beauty, intelligible harmony, brilliance, self-luminosity and the unregretted absence of perspective and sound have been recorded.

I have heard too of desert places where colour is dull and changeless, and where sad, lonely-looking people have been seen. Over one of these there was a cloak of ochreous fog which suggested an unseen external light struggling to penetrate its darkness. My sleeper saw this once long ago; but she did not enter. Is this also parable? How

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can I tell? I know only that here and now I make for myself an unique world out of the many worlds God proffers me; and as for that voyage which I must take I cannot but believe it will be no catastrophe, no cataclysm, but a passing on.

We who select, we who are architects of ourselves and our own worlds, may pass through world on world produced in the creative fancy of the love of God, sifting them on our way as we sift this to make some body and larger self and world-capacity according to the likeness of our disposition; until at some far last we come to the fulfilment of desire, low or high, and to the meaning that in the procession of the temporal things is being made ours within the meaning that is God's.

This world of earth most certainly does not suffice to express the meaning of any one of us, much less the meaning of the whole, the great divine Idea. I cannot but believe that this is not the only world

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for us, the only field of our attention, our selection, and our making, building, framing and fulfilling — our unfinished work as creators within creation's art.

Those other visible islands of our sea, our sun and its planets, and other suns with their satellites made and in making, also point me towards Avalon.

In the star-field of the Hunting Dogs there is to be seen the Great Spiral Nebula in the long act of giving birth, like other nebulæ but more obviously than most, to systems of suns, systems of worlds. Its distance from us is not measured and we can only guess roughly at its size ; but there is no rashness in saying that on my photograph of it—two inches and a half across—our whole magnificent solar system, Sun, Earth, Jupiter, Neptune, drawn to scale, would find room within the dot of a pencil-point. The sky is full of these pregnant clouds baffling imagination in a tale of science that stuns like a blow.

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Out of one of these clouds, now fulfilled and gone, we men came ; or rather, I put it to myself, the stuff which I use for an earthly body came thence. The significance of those almost intolerable marvels, their only significance to me, is life. There I see life enormous, majestic, matching Him whom it reflects, a part of the great image that embraces us ; but it is life in our earthly rank, ranged with our life here on Tellus, this little satellite of a sun not large, to which my ship of life is anchored. Not there, in any earthy, starry, world, nor here, is the Avalon of our souls ; but through the hidden opening into some wider sea beyond this radiant veil of clouds and worlds of clouds.

The stuff I hold in my body here, I say to myself, came from the cloud ; life's temple here is built of stones to which the telluric drop gave origin. In this tale of physics the ancestry of my body-stuff is given, but not the ancestry of that far greater thing

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in which it dwells: and even the story of the stuff passes beyond the mother-cloud. We are hearing now in the physical manner something pointing to the fashion of "the abysm-birth of elements," and perhaps also to their death into the ethereal grave and womb which embeds them always. We are told of decomposition from element into element, and of the liberation of almost incredible powers from within their atom-systems, systems as complex as those of suns and worlds and charged with the energy that brings forth worlds.

Science is learning and teaching as it has always learnt and taught—new things. It is "the systematic classification of experience," said Lewes. "The classification of facts, the recognition of their sequence and relative significance" is its function, says Karl Pearson. Its field is the universe—as we men perceive a universe, within ourselves. With an ideal goal which is no

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less than an interpretation of this universe, it issues practically in cartography ; and the scientific man makes diagrammatic pictures of his living field as the geographical cartographer makes dry, correct, and useful maps of the wanderings of real men about a wonderful real earth. Every now and then a new country of experience is discovered ; and old maps must be locked away with those of Anaximander, whose world was a disk, and Democritus of Abdera, who stretched it to an oblong because he had travelled into Persia. The new physical discoveries are overpassing our lately newest maps ; and some of them are telling me what I knew before, that even my dust has an ancestry of glory, glory beyond the dust.

I am not ungrateful ; but I am impatient for the time when men shall know in common knowledge that the great possessions of science stand to the truth of life as the geographer's map stands to the truth of a living earth full of colour, of subtle

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quality, of drama, meaning, purpose, that must be set aside in the making of good maps.

“Grau, theurer Freund, ist alle Theorie,
Und grün des Lebens goldner Baum.”

III

I AM one with the stuff of earth; and I penetrate and include the multitude of the stars, in unifying life and by the mystery of consciousness. The linkage of my earth and mind is the realm of perpetual miracle, my own miracle-working of every day, my significant and determining activity in a body whereby I meet an earthly world.

‘Faith’—divine power in man to move mountains; or by another name, ‘self-suggestion’ of idea to be embodied by self’s latent strength; or by yet a third, ‘psycho-physical parallelism,’ irreconcilable and unconnected body-work and mind-work side by side; these three ways of putting things attack the same problem, so it seems, of our activity: does it matter what we say and how we name that which really

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works? To me the more fit question is "Lord, when saw we Thee?" and I, for myself, thus write down my belief concerning our life of light and strength uncomprehended here. Lord, when saw we Thee in ourselves, in all our powers and works? When saw we Thy miracles everywhere, Thy life our life in marvel and mystery?

Does it matter whether or not I see and say "Lord, Lord," when I move either mountains or my finger? Does it matter for the work, that I think and speak of it in one way or another? Truth matters; but where shall I find truth? Through 'self-suggestion,' 'neurosis and psychosis,' or through the word 'faith'? I hold, for myself, that if the problem could stand alone, as no problem can stand unless as mere problem kept by force apart from its context, we might well send 'faith' out of our speech and thought—mountains and human limbs would still be moved. But the

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problem is bound up with all the lives of men facing the greater life that encloses every manner of living. Wherefore we must not lose the word of wholeness lest we also lose the truth and our right place. There is peril in abstraction even when it is to help the grip of our childish minds to lay hold of great things. When for convenience of reasoning and speech I set by itself my power over the mountains that are within me or without, and then forget that I have stolen away the small thing that is myself, or the far smaller thing that is my body or my earth, from the whole which owns and explains it, I come near to megalomania of the soul, or else to its paralysis. I would keep such words as faith, I would use them in common days ; because they point to my state and place, and they are guardians of my sanity as well as of my strength. I for myself cannot but cherish these words ; they have haunted common days since I began to see for myself

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the angels in the little things of God, and dust as the outgoing radiance of His throne.

There is no power but is His ; I and the stuff of my earth and body meet in His Oneness — when I do not forget to see. The world, for me, is full of miracle and mystery, when I do not forget. If miracles should seem to me rare, as once they seemed, I should again believe in none ; but I have learnt to know myself compact of miracle and not hiding mystery, from the crooking of my finger to my love of God. The bodily road from my finger to my brain is charted ; and I am taught by science to believe that things are happening there which can be weighed and measured, things I do not know and never shall know as I work the miracle. Concerning the inner efficiency of myself in this crooking, science has no word to say ; so I turn for light to the neighbouring miracle of my finger's food — the nearest external mountain set ready for my moving.

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This finger which I move so easily is bread transformed in me—the very stuff of bread. Were I to move the loaf as I move my finger most men would cry miracle, unless I moved it every day. I move bread-stuff made finger-stuff at will ; and I cry miracle although I do it all the days of my life. Bread, the loaf, is foreign to me, it is a thing apart and I must move it by intervention of itself made into finger. Bread, my body, is of my very self, feeling, acting, thinking in me, all mine and mine alone ; and without this bread, some would say, I myself cease to exist. Here is miracle indeed and mystery ; and to my thinking now there is no miracle anywhere that does not line itself with this.

The mystery draws my thought beyond the miracle, for mystery is nearer to the heart of life, the heart which is of God and Man. “ *This, this, is My Body* ” ; and it is the body of us all ; this, this, is My Heart, the heart of all ; given for us, broken

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for us, the Body and Heart of God in Man. Here lies the mystery of earthly bread, which is in very truth, if we will the will of God, the Bread of Heaven, the conjoining love on which angels feed.

It is well for our remembrance that Bread and Wine stand as the visible connection of the divine-human world—food and drink, the body's necessity, the instrument of life, linking together the great fellowship of earth; and, by the coming of God to feed with us, linking our earthly fellowship with heaven. It is well that by Bread and Wine, common things of common life, we are held to the Life and Truth of God and kept in Him who is our Way. We are not allowed to forget the mystery of food, at least for long; although there are dark days when mystery seems blotted out and miracle a word for fools. The Bread and the Wine remain through all dark days; and mystery and miracle return when light dawns once more and we see again that there is no gulf in

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the universe of life within which Bread and Wine, like ourselves, have their own place. Only our poor sight or our forgetfulness makes food growing to be us seem to pass from deadness into life ; life holds it through every change. Out there in the loaf I do not feel this bread ; but in the miracle of feeding it comes near, comes into me, and then because I feel it I say it lives—that which once was bread and is now me, but well may become bread again. It is part of the meaning of God, who always feels it ; and in Him it lives, sometimes bread, sometimes body.

It has been said that to see life everywhere and ourselves bound to all other beings in universal links, is to bring religion and science towards peace. Divisions make occasion of their recurrent war. Divide body from mind, dead matter from living, soul or spirit from all, and God from Man ; and how shall scientific inference keep peace with the experience of our heart ? Where, then, is

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truth ? And above all, where can be love ? Truth is lost in antinomy and contradiction, and love hidden by dividing ; so we remain at war, religion here and science there, because we have made artificial cleavage in the great whole of life. Within the divine unity, I verily believe, there is nothing dead as we count death ; there is only diversity and change in life. There are no dead things even here on earth, there are only living things too remote for us to feel or move—as we are now.

The art and manner of our bringing all things near is as the art and manner of our bodily feeding. There is a feeding of the body, another of the mind, a feeding of the heart and soul ; and all bring life within life, all conjoin to make unity itself alive and felt in the consciousness of him who feeds. The babe upon the mother's breast stands a type and an example of our life's work in body and in soul ; and our food must always be of a certain nearness of kinship with us like the

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babe's, or it is for us no food, of body or of soul.

My body cannot feed upon the rocks, although the rocks are of my kin and are made of the stuff that is my food. Things nearer to me than rocks, nearer to rocks than I, must mediate for me. So the rocks are broken up by frost and rain ; the little servants of the plants seize upon their fragments and make ready ; and the plant-lords in their turn prepare for me and for the birds and beasts, that we may feed through brotherhood upon the gifts of our far-off kin, the rocks, the air, the rain. My body is of the stuff of earth ; but earth reaches me by the long-drawn living way between, wherein there is no break, nothing to show me separate from the rocks, remote although they are from my understanding and from holding by my heart. They feed me, but from afar off ; the food they send is not my food until it has been changed and passed on to me through other lives ; but the whole chain

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of uniting service is one, and I cannot see where to set my hand and say "here is the end of life ; here, not there close by." Whence too (I say again) is the stuff of our earth ? Material coming forth from immaterial, and perhaps now and always returning thither ? 'Atoms,' 'electrons,' 'ether,' 'thought of God,' 'will,' 'power of God,' His under any name, in order and disorder ; His always in the one life we share, for in Him there is no death and no dead thing. I am a babe ; and I feed on life, the divine life brought to me as I am capable of absorbing it. My body-life is nourished by the bread of earth, and my soul-life is nourished by bread the angels share. I dare to say that I absorb the very life of God for the feeding of my life in body and soul. He must nourish me with Himself, or in soul and body I go down into the pit and I shrink to my starved nothingness. There comes too with all these thoughts one of great joy —my soul can feed on Him unmediated

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save by Himself made Man in me, because He is so near, nearer than all my kin, near as my own self, and of greater love for me.

How shall I dare forget that He in me and I by His grace are together movers of the mountain and of the least particle I move in common days of common life? How shall I dare forget that if His power is not my power neither can His love be mine—if my power and my love do not find place in Him neither can I, and I must go lonely in a universe of love?

IV

It seems that the little brown brother opened not only the gate of an earthly Paradise, but a clearer vision of the living way to God. Indeed how shall I divide one from the other; is not He my 'own place,' and are not the two ways ways of the one love? I knew it all, before the little brother spoke, or rather I knew about it. Had I not read the mystics, the philosophers, the psychologists? Had I not watched day by day one who travelled in that road? Had I not tried to pray, sometimes succeeded? Had I not loved, and—better almost—even striven to love? All this—but still there was a want; the wood collected, the fire laid, the hands held out for warmth, but no fire. "Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" I had loved, but loved

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great things, men and women and children whom I could not help but love, those who loved me or those who drew me by strong cords of pitifulness ; and still I knew not what I did, I was not able to notice the working of the love itself, to see its Face. But this little thing, this little live creature, filled so small a space that its work was the more manifest ; the fire sprang alight, and I could not miss the striking of the little flint and steel, nor could I fail to note new warmth of heart and open my eyes to gaze upon Love Himself revealed. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how shall he love God" ? How indeed, if he truly see his brother ? And if he truly see him how shall he not love God when love comes with beauty and display of truth ? But what of my wide-stretching blindness to my brother ? What of my ignorance ? It seems to me quite true in a sense that all sin is ignorance—more, it is folly, a hopeless, witless, experiment of man—but it does not

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seem true in any sense that all ignorance is sin, nor that because sin is ignorance it ceases therefore to be sin.

I heard to-day that among Lancashire cotton-workers the death-rate from consumption has fallen fast of late years ; and that the change, which one may estimate in terms of joy and profit of life if one likes, is due in no small degree to the invention of flannelette. It seems that before this happened it was quite impossible to keep fluff out of factory air and factory lungs ; now glass cases with flannelette for final cause are giving joy and profit of life by the way. Is this sin or ignorance, or ignorance which is sin ? I cannot portion out responsibility or blame ; but both will assuredly, to my mind, be portioned out some day. At bottom, it seems to me a question of the scope of interest and attention, this whole matter of sin and ignorance, responsibility and blame, so far as concerns a man's own part in his life and meaning. All men, even

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the saints, are interested only in their own affairs ; so the right and the wrong come to be matters of the scope of self, the reach of self, the depth and breadth and height of self's affairs. "Which now was neighbour to him that fell among thieves?" I have grown to be neighbour and to have the neighbourly heart towards him only over whom I have learnt to stretch my shield of ownership and to make real and living for me with the warmth of interest I feel in that which I call *mine* ; to other men I am cold—they are theirs and somebody's, they are not *mine*. I choose from the vast multitude of unacknowledged brothers born into the same image and the same family of God this one or that to be counted of my life ; so does the cotton-spinner, and there may be some poor souls who choose none and are poor indeed ; but "*les aveugles volontaires*" are the only men among us whose ignorance of the multitude beyond is sin. A "viciously-acquired naïveté" is the

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foundation of that ignorance ; the man has shut out from sight and knowledge some claim which he might hear and see demanding to be recognised ; he has narrowed his attention and passed by on the other side, leaving victims he might have succoured, deeds of love he might have done, unsuccoured and undone, affairs made by him to be not his.

Here I seem to touch the inner spring of self ; my freedom, my right of consenting choice, my very being as a man, all hang on this power of mine to ignore or to attend to some call, some message, from God, His angels, my brother-men, or my brothers less than men. Herein is the mechanism of self-possessed and self-possessing life, the central secret of freedom—that I can attend or not attend to this or that. Herein is set a root of love ; for although not all attention brings love in its train, yet there is no love without it ; and the infinite and eternal love of God means an infinite and eternal

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present attention in which no sparrow falls to the ground unmarked and the very hairs of my head are numbered. But herein too is the mechanism of our ruin, and perhaps of the ruin of the Paradise of earth.

Attention, desire, interest—all these words stand, I think, for the state of man in which the face of the soul is set and the hand of the soul is held out towards some other beyond, that it may be drawn into the life of the man as his own. This is the quickness of all prayer of hunger and thirst after righteousness, and of the search for God and the brethren; but it is also the quickness of greed and self-will and lust, and of power of intelligence.

In the marvellous rhythm of life with life, desire and the potency of attention determine the flow of gifts from the greater to the included less, whether by an inner or an outer way. So God meets us in the many phases of our shadowed minds, in our learned ignorance and even in our folly,

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and gives Himself or what is His, as we will receive ; that some day within His eternity and our time and His, we may find Him as He is.

Prayer, I am sure, is being put forth wherever man, blind and seeing, stretches out a hand. Let me remember that I myself may pray without knowing it, pray with an evil desire as with a good, and that I may win God's perilous gifts without winning Himself. Let me remember that in the depth of my own self is He, and that the Omnipotent waits to bestow Himself in love, while He sends His rain upon the just and the unjust and His sun of power to shine on all.

His kingdom is to come, it is not yet ; the world is full of His gifts, the world is His, but not yet ; and the prince of the world is a prince of disorder in the world, where there are both evil prayers and good.

Why do I not distinguish more carefully between the purpose of man for himself and

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the purpose of God for him ; and between prayers in the mind of God in man and those other prayers in the self-isolated self of the *aveugle volontaire*? "God is the Place of the Soul," and God, Love, seeks His place within each soul. In my own soul is He, desiring with infinite desire to communicate Himself to me ; and He is unable—the Omnipotent is unable—to force my own good upon me. Therefore I must pray, and my prayer to God for God is always answered. "Everyone that asketh receiveth, everyone that seeketh findeth, and to everyone that knocketh it shall be opened." He who asks, he who seeks, he who knocks, himself opens out a way for God, opens his own hands that God may fill them full. Within myself stands the barrier which keeps God back, the barrier I must throw down to admit the Omnipotent.

He is the All-Giver who refuses not ; therefore the world is full of wonders, magic of the new Egyptians ; and men are drunk

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with power. I may win power without winning wisdom and love, and it is power of God wrenched out from God, won by strong seeking, pressing attentiveness, heat of interest, force of will—unholy but effectual prayers. A man may call the unfailing answer his own deed, or a self-acting return ; but it remains, as I see it, a manifest and conforming response of the universal life in God to the movement of particular life in man. A man may think he is only calling upon his own strength, as he is in a sense ; but his strength is of the strength which is in God, and it comes from out of God, whether it carry him to Paradise or to hell.

The problems of prayer and brotherhood begin to clear up as I look, and I must range all those masterful operations of self in self, 'suggestion,' resolution, self-reliance, side by side with every faithful appeal for help and every effort of love made by the humblest and most clear-sighted servant of God.

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I touch here again the mechanism of life meeting with life ; hereby I win my neighbour and my bird, and they win me ; hereby I win God and God wins me ; hereby my little self grows into Him, and He enters upon His heart-possession of me. But also hereby I may win hell and lose all else, even to my shrunken lonely soul.

Do I work in the love of God and towards a greater living world growing more and more warmly *mine*, or in self-will for the love of self apart ? This tells whether I go towards the darkness or towards the light—by the same means, always a prayer, divine or devilish, always concentration on an idea, a purpose unfulfilled, a desired fulfilment.

How then shall I seek Paradise, how shall I seek God Himself, how attend to Him, how feel Him ? Where then is He ? I have sought Him with many prayers of the word-kind, and sometimes I have found Him thus, most often when words might well have been unsaid, because there the whole man spoke

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in me and would have spoken without the tongue. At other times the words come back to me empty as they went forth, for lack of energy of the heart to grasp and hold an answer. These are no prayers ; and they cannot reach Him who is most real. But He is everywhere, I say ; and then I forget, and pray as if He were only standing over against me, a great and shadowy Figure towering over all lesser figures, One among the many, only above and beyond, not truly everywhere, in and with all.

This shadowy lonely Figure is God only as an idol may be God ; it is projected forth from me, and praying thus I pray to an idol. When and where have I truly found my true and living God, where have I touched Him in whom all things are, and found Him gracious as the Lord and Giver of all life, the Love and Lover of all ? I found Him in my bird when I sought my bird for its own sake, when I loved it as God loves. There, in my bird, the angel

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with His message, I found God Himself pouring forth grace in me. And always in every moment of such love I have touched His heart in the heart of His creatures, and in my own. He is an-hungred, He is sick and in prison ; but although I may visit Him and give all my goods to feed Him I do not find Him, I do not touch Him, unless within my heart His love arises and is made mine to be poured forth.

Then I am filled with His energy, His concentration, His strength to cherish and to hold. Then the other becomes mine as I am God's, and God becomes mine while I touch and hold my neighbour and my brother. "Lord, when saw we Thee an-hungred?" I may not know that He whom my heart embraces is the Lord—and my brother—but when the veil is parted I shall know ; and even here, behind the veil, I know sometimes when in His light I see light.

How rare are those times of blessedness !

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How rarely I die to live! God calls me with the voice of His love that I may love, and I pray empty prayers lest I should know that I am praying none.

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not.”

This is a world of shadows; the light pouring upon us has not yet become our own. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not”; but His necessity of love never fails, and His Spirit works with men. God is still being made man in us who would fall to nothingness alone: ‘*Christus venit semper*’—Christ is being fulfilled even in them who know Him not. Only the discord of the will and the duplicity of the heart delay the coming of His kingdom.

V

"CHRISTUS venit semper": I say in this that the eternal God comes always into time and change, raising our manhood into Himself. I wonder, then, about these words "eternal," "time"—what do they mean for me? Once again the psychologist and the philosopher help me as they have so often helped me before. This is what I have learnt from them.

My "time-span," my "duration-block," or grasp of a chain of things as happening 'now,' 'at once,' for me, is like the grasp of my hand, a definite, measurable affair. The reach of our human time-span is most likely different from that of any other set of living creatures in all the many worlds; and a change in it would bring wholly new fields of experience, new worlds in fact,

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within our grasp. I find pregnant with meaning a mental operation of mine by which I cut out from the future and the past my present moment—some half-dozen seconds long—an arbitrary thing that might easily, one might say, be longer or shorter than it is. This arbitrary time-span furnishes me with a hint, more, with an image, of the eternity that includes all time and every changing world. Eternity is the inclusive present moment of God, the time-span of one who embraces unending time within a 'now' containing all succession, as my 'now,' my present moment of some five seconds long, contains the successive happenings that occur within its length. This contrast in a likeness serves my purpose; I can relate eternity and time for thinking in an intelligible way. I see, too, that all my change may be kept real in God, noted and held enduringly in Him: but how barren all this would be if I could not translate it into the language of wisdom and love,

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and think of regarded sparrows, numbered hairs, ravens and lilies of the field ; and the Christ who ever comes !

God is the Great I Am ; and within His eternal 'Now' each of my passing moments has its place and an enduring meaning which is both His and mine. The least event of my life is held in His—one of the sparrows whose fall He knows ; and it is held in mine ; but in Him alone it has the fulness of its meaning. My history, my process, is the mutual act by which the divine life and the human are being made at one, and made my own ; but in God's knowledge they always are at one, and I am always that which in my completeness I must be. This process of conjoining is long-drawn out for me—my time-span is so short—and I know but little of its stages ; but I can see that they are being wrought within me in a growing active life that would not be as it is and will be if any stage were missed, or if those stages to come could be other than

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they are—to come. God loves me, not as I am at any arbitrarily selected stage within this process, not as I am in my own sight at any 'now' I choose to mark as present: He loves me in my wholeness as the Son whom He, the Eternal, alone can know. He loves me as the Son of righteousness whom in the supreme completed truth of me I am; beyond this fragmentary present self of a fragmentary world. Thus I, the impure, am embraced within the high and holy God who inhabiteth eternity. My unending symphony of life is heard by Him alone and He calls it very good.

I am a work of art,—and an artist—not a piece of mechanism being gradually improved to a static perfection. I progress towards a goal that is temporally never reached, my symphony never ends; and what I was and am remains always of me, even in time, as the opening chords of the symphony are present through and with every phrase, even with the last, only in me

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there is no last. "A life seeking its goal," says Royce¹ "is indeed essentially temporal,—but it is so just as music is temporal,—except indeed that music is not only temporal, but temporally finite. For every work of art involves significant temporal series, wherein there is progression, and passage from chord to chord, from phrase to phrase, and from movement to movement."

I know myself—in part—in each successive movement; but God eternally knows me in all movements that were and are and shall be for me, knows me better than I shall ever know myself in all the æons of my change to come.

There are still many people who make trouble for themselves out of this eternally all-embracing knowledge of God, which they

¹ I am most gladly in debt to Professor Royce for his Gifford Lectures on 'The World and the Individual,' from the second series of which this passage and the musical simile for life, besides many other things, are taken. Already it is hard for me to distinguish the track of his leaven in my lump.

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call *fore*-knowledge, as though it stood in temporal relations : they ask how any act of man can be a free consent or refusal if God knows precisely what it will be *before* it is done.

“The Ball no question makes of Ayes and Noes,
But Here or There as strikes the Player goes ;
And He that toss'd you down into the Field,
He knows about it all—*HE* knows—*HE* knows !”

I find there no trouble for myself ; I see the marvel of eternal knowledge as knowledge of our free acts *when and as* we do them, not as they *will be* for a temporally conditioned sight. The inexorable things we face are incarnate and incarnating Love and our own selves, not any puppet-making fore-knowing First Cause among lesser causes, a power itself in the sequence of our temporal events. The God of the free, the Eternal Father, is no Player with the Ball, nor Great Mechanic Potentate. He is for me, since I must name Him in terms of man, the Supreme indwelling Artist, calling out

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through and by us, in and under His eternal complete Idea, an expression of it in time, a divine - human representative image of responding life, in which we, who are free workers together with Him, may find Him under human conditions as the Christ who always comes. Not under these conditions is there even for Him eternal knowledge, knowledge of an all-including 'now'; such knowledge lies in the abyss of God wherein our time is overpassed. Even the eternal Son, issuing from eternity and become the Son in time, even He, the universal Man, when as a man He walked among us men, knew not "that day and that hour" which was future for Him yet present eternally in the Father. Eternal knowledge *cannot* both remain eternal and enter into process in time and change. God incarnate, God indwelling and working among men, lays aside the glory of the eternal 'now.'

My freedom and its consequences and the

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operation of compensating love are all included in the original Idea of God. "The eternal point of view," says Royce, "includes in its single glance the whole of time, and therefore includes a knowledge and estimate of all the changes that finite agents, acting in time, really work *in their own world*, namely, in the temporal world that is future to their own deeds, and subject to their own will."

Here in the temporal sphere there is real and significant succession of change in free beings who really consent or refuse to conform to the Will and the Idea that are their own best will and the fulfilment of all ideas. God surveys and includes our time, but within it we are incalculably free; and our process is a real process, not an empty show.

There is no least thing of which I dare to say "it does not matter." There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, because all things are significant. Nothing can be

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obliterated by a fiat ; if it is evil it must be atoned ; and even for their "idle" words men must account, because there are no idle words. All that 'ought not' to be must be wrought against ; the active and positive must overpass and fill up negation, so that the meaning of evil shall be taken into the master-meaning of good, its notes of discord harmonised, its darkness overpowered in the increase of the light needed to overcome. Then its whole history plays a real part as an episode in the history of good ; its enduring meaning lies embedded in the operation of that power which has been made greater to match its needs, the power by which it is overwhelmed. The divine purpose is fulfilled in good, even by the evil things ; the significance of the sin of man issues in divine righteousness made to be his own. Therefore the angels can both see and sing ; and God rests in eternal bliss, the consummation of His striving creatures, the source and power of their atonement for themselves in

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Him. How could divine Love have rest in eternity if He did not become our love and our atoning and redeeming power?

Only love can atone for lack of love; and my eyes must open to the light if darkness is to be destroyed in me. Darkness weakens me, and for lack of love I have forgotten how to love; yet this, if I will, is but the opportunity of the Lord who atones for all. That solidarity of man by which my sins make sorrow for the world is the instrument of the Lord in man. We are one and our oneness is in Him; His power to atone may be poured out within me if I will; and if I will it is poured out. So righteousness comes by the power of God incarnate to beautify for the angels' eyes every sinner who consents to receive the holy indweller of the life of man.

O felix culpa, embalmed at last in love, and sharing its sweetness! "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety

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and nine just persons who need no repentance." The sin of the sinner, my sin, is presented before heaven in terms of the angels' joy, in terms of the triumph of atoning love.

VI

“God said, the heaven and the earth, and all that is between them, think ye that We created them in jest, and that ye shall not return to Us?”

Whither shall I flee from Your presence, and why should I flee, since Your glory, O God and the Sons of God, is my own glory and my beginning and my end? Why should I condemn the world? Why should I turn from its evil, its sorrow and pain, now that my eyes begin to see glory manifest in the flesh? I deny my birthright if I fear that I shall not know myself a Son of God in this great mansion of His house, and so make to myself some windowless hut wherein to crouch and think of Him, and seek speech with Him whose utterance is everywhere, and whose own are all the wasted beauties of the world.

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I am beginning to see the world and the world's affairs in a fuller context, and to face its problems with new courage and new hope. Indeed the problem of earth-life presses; and looked at out of its great context it claims a terrible solution. Let earth as it is stand alone for my thought, or exist for my belief in presence of a God who looks on and helps or hinders at His pleasure us who are the puppets of His might; what only can my verdict be? What is the verdict of thinking men who see no illimitable context to this earth, and no divine Lover sharing its pain? What verdict is given by men who believe God to be the remote and arbitrary answerer or refuser of their prayers, when some prayer offered with agony seems lost in darkness; and nature or disease, or evil men, triumph over the innocent and those who have no help but His who will not hear?

Thousands of the souls of God swept away by volcanic fires; a child, the little brother

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of Christ, killed by a falling chimney-pot ;
I and many like me, sinners all and sons,
in healthy houses and beautiful gardens ;
millions as dear to God and His angels
herded together and breeding poison to
body and mind : this problem of life and
death, of the meaning of man and God, of
the ways between those two who are one,
is everywhere. My daughter is smitten by
the angel of warning who heralds death ;
and I fly to my prayers that the angel may
take his warning away. The angel goes, or
stays. Is my prayer directing him this way
or that ? Would thousands of prayers have
put out those destroying subterranean fires in
Martinique ? Do I excel in merit the people
of the slum-abyss as my house excels theirs ?
What, in very truth, is God about in this
present life of ours ? This one thing I
know in the fuller context,—*He* is not
ruling it, for which cause we pray “Thy
kingdom come !” This other thing I know
—He overrules it and He would fain

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inwardly rule it in and by us as He rules in His heaven ; but His rule and His will to rule are to be discerned only by the eye which looks beyond and within, and by the heart which possesses Him. All things work *together* for good in them who love God ; but to the eyes of the looker-on they may seem to be working, and for a time indeed they may really work, either good or ill. There is no knowing truly from the outside and in a narrow view ; there is no knowing truly by any outside or narrow test applied even by God's lovers themselves. Our view, out of place in the great whole, is always in some measure false. Only when we have begun to correct it, only when we begin to see heaven and hell here, earth away beyond earth, death transfigured to an angel of mercy ; pain, sorrow, and suffering borne by God in us ; the world disordered, mankind bound together in its sins and their consequence, and the divine All-Lover loving the least and

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lowest beyond our power to love the nearest, can we begin to see aright; but he who can see thus may share the wide-eyed optimism of saints, the optimism that lets angels sing, the optimism that makes hell powerless to touch the bliss of God—and he may wait in peace.

The light in which the great mystics see, as other men do not, transfigures all their world; and for them earth holds no problem of the justice of the Lord; but they, to whom heaven and earth's garden seem to lie in open sight, are indeed "a chain of stars" in the firmament of man. "My secret to myself," each one of them declares, not because he will not give, but because it cannot be given. Originality is the law of mystical attainment because it is the law of all immediate experience. For me the way of these great ones and the brightness of the light they see lie remote. The covering of my world and self conceals both from my sight; but the covering has at last begun to

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grow translucent, and the divine light is breaking through. My world of earth, disordered, darkened, is becoming a messenger of God, a great messenger world full of His angels and Himself; and soon perhaps, I shall learn to understand, now that I have learnt how sorely I have misunderstood. The lesser angels have reached my heart, and it is awakened from its sleep.

There is a mystic's way even for me to the King's presence and the light in which light shines.

"I give you the end of a golden string :
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's Gate
Built in Jerusalem's wall."

My way is a gradual way, a way of learning step by step. Such as I must take time and go in patience, acquiring little by little as we go the manner of the divine realm. The angels of the outer court beyond Jerusalem's wall are my teachers here, that some day in fulness of His light I may

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see Him manifest within the dwelling-place
of His love. Nothing is too small for me,
child of His earth that I am.

“I begin through the grass once again to be
bound to the Lord ;
I can see, through a face that has faded, the
face full of rest
Of the Earth, of the Mother, my heart with
her heart in accord,
As I lie 'mid the cool green tresses that
mantle her breast
I begin with the grass once again to be bound
to the Lord.”

God through the grass, God through the
bird, God visible in His human children on
earth. Following the divine progression
through the things which are being made,
the progression crowned and gathered up
as the King takes man to His everlasting
throne, I may tread the divine-human
road and find myself at home within His
heart. “He that loveth not his brother
whom he hath seen, how can he love God
whom he hath not seen?” There is no

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escape from that question, set to last while time goes on by the man who felt God's heart beat as he leaned upon a breast of man : and I, to whom the vision of love has so long been strange, thank God who is in man and in less than men, that His love begins in me among the little things He holds in love.

“Jesus saith, ye ask who are those that draw us to the kingdom, if the kingdom is in Heaven? . . . the fowls of the air, and all beasts that are under the earth or upon the earth, and the fishes of the sea, these are they which draw you, and the kingdom of Heaven is within you ; and whoever shall know himself shall find it. Strive therefore to know yourselves, and ye shall be aware that ye are the sons of the Almighty Father ; and ye shall know that ye are in the city of God, and ye are the city.”

How shall I learn to know myself, who cannot be known save in the knowledge of God ? There is no knowing of person by

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person without the fire and the light of love to strip bare and illuminate the living truth. Drawn by the little things of God I may draw near to Him and to myself within my heart. "The fowls of the air and all beasts" beckon me to the city which lieth foursquare, whose gate stands open day and night.

But how shall I, the beginner, know that in very truth by this way I am learning to love God whom I cannot see? What indeed is it for me—to *love God*? For my help and joy I am assured that within the circle of His love, the centre of which is everywhere, He shows Himself as beauty, truth, righteousness, and love being made manifest, pressing to be known more and more. He is in all my brothers of the common life, poor in their need, bestowing with their good gifts; and therefore they are more than mere messengers sent out from Him. Do I discern these manners of His display, and seek them with the strength of my desire?

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In so far I learn to love God. Do I shut them from my sight? Then I call upon a nominal God in vain, with my "Lord, Lord!" All men may discern God in His messengers, therefore all men may learn to love Him. "Lord, when saw we Thee?" Yet, "Come, thou blessed," He replies to those who have never known that they were knowing Him.

Here is the answer to my doubts. By one thing only I can hide Him from myself—by the darkening of His light in my self-will, the narrowing of my eyelids to shut out that which does not serve some dominant and excluding interest of my narrow self. I can see no other manner of the ignorance that is sin than the manner of him who will not look when God's light shines upon his way. It is not without evil effort that I can ignore this light; it lightens all the world, and the divine Spirit fills the whole round earth. All men are touched, flesh to flesh, heart to heart, by God; and the divine light shines most

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clearly, I think, in the faces of men women and children whom I meet every day. Many a blinded soul is smitten from thence as by a lightning flash which clears a way for God. So in the common way of life God within meets God without, and barriers are broken down. Of many another man, as of the 'Roadmender's' organ-grinder, Gawdine, the epitaph might stand—"He saw the face of a little child, and looked on God."

Thus God comes to our love, His love pouring from us and towards us, streams meeting to form the deep whirlpool of the opening self, streams of the roadside of Paradise ; and all the while we may think that we have never known Him, nor travelled in any way save the natural way of earth and earth's people. Paradise will unveil the truth, and we shall hear the voice of the Beloved whom we have loved in His love for us, while we were perhaps looking for Him elsewhere, sad because we could not

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find Him, or because to our mistaking vision He was not.

“Jesus saith, let not him who seeks . . . cease until he finds, and when he finds he shall be astonished, astonished he shall reach the kingdom and having reached the kingdom he shall rest.”

Men complain that “Our God is a God who *hideth* Himself”; they should rejoice. He will not come save by the way of love, which is always—we know it well—a secret way. What if He came some other way? In outward Majesty upon the clouds? What then? Men cannot be made holy by force; they cannot be constrained to love by terror, or by the awe of Majesty. They could not see God who were blinded by His glory. Only in His love can they be one with Him, and learn to know Him as He is. He must hide Himself for our sakes. No least manifestation of Him through things that are being made can be perceived save where the heart embraces with the mind; nor can the

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greatest. He meets us in the open way towards which angels call us; but a man may know from other men the words of many an angel, he may be aware of every truth concerning God that the world of men possesses, he may be a master in the divine teaching; and God Himself may still be hidden from him, unperceived, unfelt, unknown, unloved.

What, in truth, do I mean when I say that God *is* Love? I have love and I feel it, but I am not Love, essential Love.

There is in us men condescending love, pitying love, benign love, love in unnumbered ways of love, all of God; but the love God is—it will not do to say the love that is God — the love God is transcends and includes all these. It is love coming with power upon all to conjoin all, by passionate communication of Himself. This forms the Kingdom of Heaven, the City of our God; wherein He shows that to lose life is to find it, even for Him in

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whom life is His own glory, the express image of His Person ; and its loser is Himself. His city is the city of the free, for power cannot compel if it is power of love. Yet the power of love is among us free beings that which comes nearest to compulsion, and the problem of the free return to God is the problem of the discerning of God,—attention to Him. Again and yet again I come in my reflection over these problems to that central mechanism of myself, my power of attention ; I can attend or not attend to the angels who call me, to the voice of God in their voice, to the light in their light, the love which is Himself that they display ; if I attend I learn to see, and to see love is to learn love and to have love.

I dare to say that the love with which I loved my bird while he rested in my hand is God's as well as mine—Christ in me, the hope of glory ; and as I loved my bird I saw and loved God. This little act is, in very truth, a manifest hope of glory, glory that

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shall be revealed in the heavenly city where God Himself is the one and only Light and shines in all His citizens.

“*Mens hominis lucerna Domini*”; God is Light as well as Love. He comes by the hidden way, with power; and “the candle of the Lord” in every man of good will shows to him in his own measure the beauty of truth, the beauty of holiness, and of the Face of God. I have the honour of knowing an old unlearned and untaught country builder in whom the candle of the Lord burns bright. He is said to be too honest to grow rich, but this is much less than the truth; it is love, not honesty, that keeps him from being rich. I upbraided him one day for having lost seventy pounds by trusting a stranger. “Well, well,” he said, “it’s almost the only time I’ve lost. I didn’t always trust men like that; but then, ever since I have,—you see what I’ve *gained*! Why, I used to take the children to Bardon Hill, because everybody went, you know;

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and do you think I *saw* anything there? Not I! But now, when I go there I can hardly speak—for the beauty of it. And last week I'd had a hard day at a gentleman's house, and I went out on the heath and lay down a bit; and there under my eyes was a patch of moss, just *full* of wonders. Should I have seen that, before I took to trusting men?" Then he added wistfully: "I wish they'd teach the children in church about those things." And I thought it was probably not too late for this old man's children to learn to see by the candle of the Lord in his eyes, even if they had never learnt in church. He cannot help showing it; one day this autumn I saw him coming across my lawn on business—some work he was doing for me—and he stopped by a great horse-chestnut which had strewn its new-fallen leaves in a thick carpet around. As he turned away again he found my daughter close to him. I asked her afterwards what he had said. "Only—

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'I'm *glad* to have seen that.'” There has been many a solemn ‘Te Deum,’ I think, with less thanksgiving, less prayer, than there was in that one word “*glad*”; and to this great lover his ‘Te Deum’ was nothing more than a natural expression of joy, with a vague background of recognition of a gift, perhaps from the chestnut-tree and the sunlight on the leaves. He would be much astonished, and even shocked, if you told him that God, who is both Love and Beauty, is making of him a pleasure-house wherein to dwell because there He finds His welcome. But seventy pounds and success are little enough to pay for that, even if one does not know it.

Through the little things this man is finding God; but he did not even begin until he had begun to love. “God said, the heaven and the earth, . . . think ye that we created them in jest. . . .?”

VII

I HAVE gone back to the mystics to learn in new light; it is one way of following the star of my soul. "Get up," says William Law, "and follow it as gladly as the *wise men of the east* followed the *star* from heaven that appeared to them; it will lead thee to the birth of Jesus, not in a stable at Bethlehem in Judea, but to the birth of Jesus in the *dark centre* of thine own fallen soul." Jacob Behmen showed Law the star, and he arose and followed—he speaks that which he knows. There is a great gulf between his 'Serious Call' and 'The Spirit of Love.' Behmen marked out that gulf, and set William Law for ever on the other side. He showed him the divine love within himself; showed him too the passionate heart of God pressing to com-

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munion even in the deeps of hell ; and the man was transformed. "For divine Love," he says, "is a new life and new nature, and introduces you into a new world ; it puts an end to all your former opinions, notions, and tempers ; it opens new senses in you, and makes you see high to be low, and low to be high, wisdom to be foolishness, and foolishness wisdom." He speaks that which he knows. In the 'Serious Call' he speaks that which he thinks he ought to know, and speaks it well ; but it is only galvanized into likeness to life ; it does not live, like 'The Spirit of Prayer' and 'The Spirit of Love.' But for one man who has read these two later books how many are there who think Law's message ended with the other ? For this cause, I suppose, his later message is sounding again in our ears through other voices ; but for me his own voice is best. It is like a breath of God direct, fresh, strong, immediate, of the open Spirit ; not of the closer ways of men.

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"The *oracle* is at home that *always* and *only* speaks the truth to you," he says, "because nothing is *your truth* but that good and that evil which is yours within you." He speaks with authority, — this man—not as the Scribes who think this or that of possible or probable or taught, he speaks that which he *knows*. We do well to go to him instead of to the Scribes; Christ really lives in him. Here is his trumpet-call of the message many voices are giving us to-day; it rings as theirs do not.

"Awake, then, thou that sleepest, and *Christ*, who from all eternity hath been espoused to thy soul, shall give thee Light. Begin to search and dig in thine own field for this *Pearl of Eternity*, that lieth hidden in it; it cannot cost thee too much, nor canst thou buy it too dear, for it is *all*, and when thou hast found it, thou wilt know that all which thou hast sold or given away for it is a mere nothing, a bubble upon the water."

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“But if thou turnest from this heavenly Pearl, or tramplest it under thy feet for the sake of being rich or great, either in Church or State, if death finds thee in *this success*, thou canst not then say that though the *Pearl* is lost, yet *something* has been gained instead of it. For in that parting moment the *things* and the *sounds* of this world will be exactly alike; to have had an *estate*, or only to have *heard* of it, to have lived at Lambeth twenty years, or only to have twenty times *passed by* the palace, will be the same *good* or the same *nothing* to thee.”

“There is but one salvation for all mankind, and that is the *Life of God* in the soul. . . . This is God's will to all *Christians, Jews, and Heathens*. They are all *equally* the desire of His heart; His Light continually *waits* for an entrance into *all* of them; His wisdom crieth, she putteth forth her voice, not here, or there, but everywhere, in all the streets of all the parts of the world.”

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“Now, there is but *one possible* way for man to attain this salvation, or Life of God in the soul. There is not one for the *Jew*, another for a *Christian*, and a third for the *Heathen*. No ; God is One, human nature is one, salvation is one, and the *Way* to it is one ; and that is, *the desire of the soul turned to God*. When this *desire* is alive, and breaks forth in any creature under heaven, then the *lost sheep* is found, and the *Shepherd* hath it upon His shoulders. Through *this desire* the poor *prodigal son* leaveth his *husks* and *swine*, and hasteth to his Father ; it is because of *this desire* that the Father seeth the son while yet *afar off*, that He runs out to meet Him, falleth on his neck, and kisseth him. See here how plainly we are taught that no sooner is this desire *arisen* and in *motion* towards God, but the *operation* of God's spirit answers to it, cherishes and welcomes its *first beginnings*, signified by the Father's seeing and having compassion on His son,

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whilst yet *afar off*,—that is, in the first beginning of his desire. Thus does *this desire* do all : it brings the soul to God, and God into the soul ; it unites with God, it co-operates with God, and is one life with God. Suppose this *desire* not to be alive, not in motion either in a Jew or a Christian, and then all the sacrifices, the service, the worship, either of the Law or the Gospel, are but *dead* works that bring *no life* into the soul, nor beget any *union* between God and it. Suppose this desire to be awakened, and fixed upon God, though in souls that never heard either of the Law or Gospel, and then the divine Life, or operation of God, enters into them, and the *new birth in Christ* is formed in those that never heard of His name. And these are they ‘that shall come from the east, and from the west, and sit down with Abraham and Isaac in the Kingdom of God.’ ”

It stirs the blood, this voice of authority, the voice of the man who knows that which

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he proclaims—knows the love and light of God in its individuality, and divines it surely in its universality, in the wonder of its all-inclusiveness. It stirs the blood as tentative reasoning never can, nor even the best conceptions of the Scribes; and William Law may yet become our angel with the star, although the star may be held, as seems likely enough, in other hands than his.

It is the power of transfiguration that we must seek, the vision for which nothing of earth can seem common or unclean, nothing of God can be other than Light and Love, nothing can be of life in man that is not of God become his own; nothing of true death and hell that is not all his own. A man may find a way through many perplexities if even he merely believe these things without as yet seeing them. *Credo ut intelligam*; I hold that I may see, not by any force from without, by no trick of inspiration falsely so called—transpiration would be a better word for that puppet-process—but by

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the divine light become my own light, my candle of the Lord made to burn bright yet verily and indeed my own. "He is not a mere presence in me, overruling, controlling, displacing. What He in me does, I do. What He in me wills, I will. What He in me loves, I love. Nay, never is my will so really free ; never is my power so worthy of being called power ; never is my rational wisdom so rational or so wise ; never is my love so really love ; never moreover is any one of these things so royally my own ; never am I, as I, so capable, so personal, so real ; never am I, in a word, as really what the real ' I ' always tried to mean ; as when by the true indwelling of the Spirit of God, I enter into the realisation of myself ; a true, willing, personal response to the very Being of God."

This is another voice of authority, also a voice from the dead, the sorely-missed dead, who are more alive than we and may be doing more for us than they could before

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we missed them. If anyone should read these words and not know of their author it would be an opportunity lost did I not name Moberly for his 'Atonement and Personality,' with Law, both men who speak in the authority upon which all other must be based, the authority of him who knows and feels and does in his own measure that of which he tells. "*Credo ut intelligam*," we may reply to these men—it is our venture of faith into the inner world of the soul where God presses to become man in us.

Only in His light can we see that inner world of our own life, or any world, transfigured, but in His light all worlds are transfigured. Did the Master change, or the servants, in the mount of great transfiguring? Both, surely, for no man even seeth unto himself, nor is any, even the greatest, seen without power go forth from him; but the power issued always in the Master and the servants knew it not; and they could not see until they laid hold upon

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His light in them—"The Sun cannot be seen by the Eye, unless the Eye receive the likeness of the Sun."

It seems to me that the Gospel of the Transfiguration should be more widely proclaimed among us. The poets sing of it, the mystics show it, even the scientific men have some foreshadowings; but in the common ways of men it is unheard. "God is Joy itself." Where is the man who shall preach with power to the multitude of the transfiguring of pleasure into joy, as well as of the like transfiguring of pain? "Joy, then," says Myers, "I will boldly affirm, is the aim of the Universe; that Joy which is the very bloom of Love and Wisdom; and men's souls need attuning to that inconceivable delight."

Where is the man who shall speak to us of this with authority, and show us the divine alchemy at work transmuting all our dross of life? We await him; and it may

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be that our awaiting is that for which God in him has waited.

Savonarola's burning words stripped from the people their gold and jewels. Will any man tell the women of to-day how to wear jewels as the High Priest wore them, and as San Carlo Borromeo played chess,—to the glory of God, which is also the salvation of men? And if it may not be in this time of our humiliation, will he teach them to transform their jewels into something else that *can* be worn to the glory of God? Will he show us how to cleanse the gold of the cities of the plain so that it will be a true image of the pure gold, like unto clear glass, of the city standing eternal in the heavens?

When he has taught us these two things we shall have learnt the secret of turning both pain and pleasure into joy; and all the rest will come. But how shall any man teach unless hearing go forth to meet him? Power has a battle to fight in our depths

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before it can go forth through the hearing ear and the seeing eye. Divine love must first encounter and overcome the deadly cupidity which is perverted love, and which forms in us a corrupting touch that spreads poison through all the world. Nothing but this battle can set free divine power within us to become our own, and bring light to transfigure desire and all objects of desire. Nothing less can so change our body of humiliation as to uplift its passions to the God-man in whom all passions are divine as well as human. "To be carnally-minded is death."

We modern men are bold, bolder than our fathers, and asceticism is a word of reproach, the thing itself is of an age gone by. We do well, perhaps, but certainly we do ill unless we have raised asceticism to its higher power before discarding it. "Touch not the unclean thing" is a divine word which we must obey. Only when by divine transfiguring all things have become clean in us

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does the commandment pass. It is the law to lead us to freedom from the law. There is a touch by which defilement enters, there is another by which healing goes forth; the first is forbidden to us, the second is our calling; it is love—Christ in us, whereby we give ourselves to him who needs, always in love, though sometimes love must wound. The publican, the harlot, the Pharisees and Scribes, Mary the great sinner, the lepers and the men possessed of devils, are all unclean or not unclean, as one touch or the other shall be ours.

The higher power of asceticism is reached when pleasure is lifted into joy by love and wisdom at work in us, and when nothing is, in all our world, that is unclean to our touch of purity. The consummation of love and light is not yet, Paradise is not yet, the City of God is not descended, and the unclean thing is always forbidden; but the divine word and the divine manner of life are here among us and within us with trans-

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muting force. The law leads us unto Christ, the Bright and Morning Star, and in Him is fulness of joy. Only to the pure in heart all things are pure, because they discern all with divine eyes which are filled with love for all.

“Teach us, O Lord,” prays Christina Rossetti, “to fear Thee without terror, and to trust Thee without misgiving : to fear Thee in love, until it please Thee that we shall love Thee without fear.”

When stolen pleasures, won by robbery and inflicted pain, are no pleasures ; and when we cannot enjoy anything alone, not even joy ; then will dawn our unending day of joy, even here amid the shadows and recurrent nights. When gold and jewels are given freely and received to be freely given again, we shall wear them to the glory of God ; when pain is freely borne in love it will set a crown upon our joy as it sets a crown of thorns upon the joy of God until sorrow shall everywhere be done away.

VIII

LOVE, says St Augustine, and do what you like. Love all earth, from its grass—"the emerald which has its place with the rest in the City of God"—upwards and downwards, for the beauty, truth, good, of grass and the meaning that is its own as well as yours; love and worship body and soul with soul and body, and you may do what you like and love body as passionately as soul. "The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky" will not have lost its hold on earth in passing into heaven. "The love of God has its first root in the most secret of the human affections," and God does not tear up the least of His many roots.

It is not the joy of life that we should throw away; it is not liberty; it is caprice,

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and "*le plaisir égoïste*": but because caprice and "*le plaisir égoïste*" are here *in viâ* fetters of our liberty, corroding joy ; because in us there should go with trust in God a deep distrust of ourselves ; here *in viâ* I must be careful of my likes and of my will, let love be what it may. There are always serpents gliding through the grass among the shadows ; and I have need of fear as well as love. "Perfect love casteth out fear" ; yes, but only the fear which is torment ; and besides, who among us dares lay claim to perfect love ? It is the claim that made *in viâ* has brought the temple of love in ruins upon the worshipper. The greatest peril of the mystic of goodwill is that he should mistake his rapture in the love of God for the love with which God securely loves, and in which securely and of necessity of nature He does what He likes. Perfect love in man means perfect man. There is perfect man ; but He is not complete, for lack of men ; and until we

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complete Him not one of us will be a perfect man. No man can be enslaved without touching my liberty; and while God as Man, the Divine Image, includes men who are slaves, men who will not return to Him and find the fulness of their liberty, every man falls short. It is of our 'solidarity'; and there are great lovers who tell how their love grows cold when the poison of the world of men, which runs in their veins as in the veins of every man, reaches the heart. It is then that the serpent of the darkening shadows may enter their Paradise, and bring in caprice to drive out freedom, and "*le plaisir égoïste*" to extinguish joy. So during our pilgrimage love must still join hands with fear, but it is a fear that has no torment and is the prudence of the saints.

Wedwell among the shadows: the moments are rare indeed when even the greatest lover attains that loss of self which is its truest finding, the "Dark" wherein he joins openly the Light. These jewels of the soul, so

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precious, are white pearls set in a many-coloured shell behind which is the rugged, broken outer life as it is here and now ; and even these rare white pearls have flaws.

My language of every day is a foreign language to the birds, I preach in the unknown tongue ; or rather I forget the burden of my human leading and never preach at all, but dictate to them and lord it over the little things who are named and watched. The prudence of the saints must come to join my love and keep it for me. So since I cannot speak the common tongue, and lord so often drives out brother, let me have strength sometimes to keep violently silent when my brother makes no call upon me. This belongs to the prudence of the saints, who know how like the body are both the mind and heart of man.

If I cannot love my shadowed grass without seeking a selfish good and discovering the serpent who would guide me to the desert, let me beg for flaming swords to

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set in my garden's gate, and keep me out. It is the defence of fallen man and fallen love. And if "*le plaisir égoïste*" has taken root within my soul and overgrown my garden with its weeds, I may have to work a deeper violence. Say that not my garden but my very self is fettered, I may need to pluck out an eye or cut off a hand ; and thus go maimed to joy and liberty.

In viâ there is no safety for us pilgrims without the help of this prudence of the saints ; but we need not use the imprudent violence by which some have tried to storm the tabernacle, and have perhaps (since intention counts), succeeded.

If I am sick or slothful, medicine or surgery may cure my disease, or I may be trained into strength to run my race of life—that is the therapeusis or the gymnastic of the soul. But there is a hypochondriac life miscalled religious, lived by the man who knows of no prudence ; his fear undoubtedly has torment. He fears the grass of God, he

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fears himself made in the image of God, and he fears God with the fear which casts out love ; therefore the serpent hides in his shadowed mind and heart, and poisons his life, God-given for a simple, natural use and holding within itself a *vis medicatrix* of the soul. He is obsessed by fear, and he rejects the bread of earth and heaven for some mess of pottage that will rob him of joy God is longing to bestow.

With all my self-made dangers, and the other dangers of a common life, I dare not turn my face from joy ; I must seek it as I seek God Himself ; but sacrifice is the very means and manner of our approach to joy, our transmuting virtue, when we yield up the self-seeking that profanes this world and obstructs the sacramental channels of delight which no man can lay open for himself alone, or lose without loss for all.

The prudence of the saints sometimes means pain, but so does love ; and such pain and such love have always been conditions

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of joy, and have proved their heavenly quality in bringing joy. Deep, very deep in the mystery of pain is the sacred custom of those great lovers among the saints who have not refrained from seeking pain only for love of Love. This is a great mystery, the lover's own; but many a lover who has followed the winding of his golden string only a little way holds in his hand this lover's clue. "For in this I saw," says Julian of Norwich, "a Substance of Nature's Love, continued by Grace, that creatures have to Him For ever the higher, the mightier, the sweeter that the love be, the more sorrow it is to the lover to see that body in pain that is love. . . . And thus they that were His friends suffered pain for love."

If I love, however small may be my range of love, I may do what I like, but only as I keep humbly in the friendship of God who is Friend of friends. If I love my bird as friend and brother should, love him in the

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way that makes him mine, I let him go away from me, never, most likely, to come into my hand again. If I cage him—this wild bird—I am no friend and I lose him for ever, and in that loss I depart from the friendship of God.

If I love the brother-man whom I see as I would love God whom the pure shall see, what must I strive to do in the bonds of such a love? The question seeks me, presses itself, as brother after brother calls; and the dark mass of suffering, ignorant, sinful brother-life shuts out my sun. I cannot say, "They are in the hands of God," and fold my own; my hands have done and still may do what is impossible for Him without my hands; and for the deeds of my hands done and undone I stand responsible. I have played my part in the making and the keeping of that dark mass; and I play it still. This is in the hands of God only as it is in mine; although He keeps us all and strives with men. And if I dread the beasts

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and the birds whom I have not loved how much more must I dread the men? It is a terrible question: God is keeper of us all, and keeper of each; but Cain must not seek there for his excuse.

I can understand how men become inspired with a fury of love when they hear the call of men; but I can understand better, alas, how the call of any man may go unheard, even when he is one to whom I should be neighbour from of old. The nearest and the dearest call in vain sometimes. So I think prudence would have me set myself to learn some catechism of love, that when calls come and I hear them I may not have to sit down and keep my brother waiting while I study the method of response.

The brother who is not mine stands between me and God, shutting out His light. The brother who is no brother is set in God as I am, and in the ultimate and most intimate life he and I are embraced. Unless I hold him close he overshadows me and

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I overshadow him ; we two stand, a blot and injury upon life.

There is no escape for him and me from God ; all that we do, of good or ill, we do in Him and by the power He gives. I smite God in my brother, and I smite with strength which I have from Him, given that I may use it to embrace every little one of His. Nothing has brought to me so keen a sense of the meaning for my practical life of the brotherhood we name so easily, as the sight of it grounded, in all its woeful parts, within the unity of God. There, through that all-embracing medium, a medium that *feels* with the intensity of the life of God, I see the disturbance of every heart, the pain, the ignorance and folly, the sin, of every man, passing as a universal thrill and stirring God Himself. I cannot move my finger without affecting the storm-clouds of the sun, the light of Sirius, the whirling of the cloud that is the womb of worlds ; and I cannot repel the least of these my brethren

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without hurting Him. I never felt the horror of sin as since I saw it thus. I hear the discord and the clash of hell within the holy unity of love: and I might be in hell, even now and here, yet still in Him. Our profanation of the temple of the Holy Ghost here, in this little life, sends shudders through all the life in God.

One thing only saves me from pessimism: it is that I can say "*Christus venit semper*"; that I know God takes me and every man into His heart of Man, and is Brother of every brother of mine. Each of us is to Him unique, a precious Self whom He will guard for ever. My whole world, like myself, is affirmed for me, and every part of it is made safe and significant; the whole creation sings to me in the heart-call of God in man: harmony is entering, discord will be resolved, and the very earth is neither dead nor dumb.

The mystic's symbol, pregnant though it be, is always "My secret to myself"; the

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bird, the neighbour-brother, and the world I make my own, are unique in me. Each man among us, like the nautilus, builds from within, his own many-chambered shell of growing world and self; and even the chambers which he abandons are always his own, and as they are to him are secret save to him. No other man can stand in my life's centre; no other man can look through my glass of sense and thought. Heart speaks to heart, hand clasps hand; but the speech is always from a heart, and the touch is with a hand, which in outgoing or in receiving is one man's own. Between me and every other creature is set the limit of a personal life which is mine and is not his as it is mine. But God, in His perfect unity—I trust myself to hold—penetrates and includes the central knot and all outgoing and receiving of every self, and keeps it His. And so God as Man speaks by every heart and mind as each heart and mind gives its consent to Him. He is the

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destroyer of all loneliness if we will have it so ; and in His life and love we are with lovers everywhere.

Christus venit semper. It is the mystery enclosing mysteries, and the crown of divine simplicity. The Master of the thunder speaks in the still small voice ; the King stoops from His throne to be laid a little child among the beasts : it is the Sustainer of the stars who has given me my bird, and has made of it an angel to lead me to Himself in whom both it and I are being assumed.

IX

GOD, says Behmen, is the Place of the Soul ; therefore, let the body be where it may the soul must be in His garden or His desert, His love or His wrath ; making for itself its *own* place, taking to itself that only of God which it will receive. Death should but lift the heavy veil which has hidden the soul's own place here on earth ; death should lift the grey veil of the flesh, the stuff of earth that has held us fast in our earthly place ; and the affectiveness of the soul will reveal to every man, at least more nearly, himself and his own place.

Thus much seems plain ; but I do not think that I shall find in the world which death opens to me either the fulness of the truth of myself or the fulness of the truth and love that are divine ; both these I shall

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be unfit to bear. Nor do I think that my soul will be unclothed, naked of all body, means, link with the outward things ; rather I think that my body is to grow there and through worlds beyond, more and more truly my own, more and more truly revealing and expressive of my truth, rising as I rise, falling if I fall. Therefore I look towards world within world, body within body, truth growing to more truth, God—my own Place—becoming more and more mine. “*I believe in the resurrection of the body and the life of the world to come.*” “It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body”; and the raising must march step by step with the raising of the spirit which the body grows to match, and with the gradation of worlds through which that spirit shall pass, always in its own place, opening more and more of the meaning of itself.

Death holds within his hand the progress of even the earthly worlds, growth even

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there involves decay: our earth's timepiece runs down, the fires of the sun cool like the rest. Systems come forth and are destroyed, to come forth again but always at a loss. The material scheme changes towards material death; our conviction of its temporary place is but confirmed since we have been told that the ultimate elements of our matter-world are radiating away into some other state. It is the law of growth, and there shall be new heavens and a new earth; but meanwhile it is a law of death for all material things.

My body wastes and dies daily as its new material enters into my life and becomes a part of me; and I think there is here something that tells of the meaning of all the worlds dying around us. Are they entering into life, these dying things, as the stuff of my body enters into life in me when it records itself and its enduring meaning in my undying life?

I do not know, but I hold it as a thought

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because I see that the death of matter-things points me towards their meaning, not their substance, as that which must endure. It is meaning that must count the most even for them, not stuff; it is meaning that is upheld and carried on in life by the self-life that does not die. As with my body of stuff, so I think with the innumerable worlds; not stuff but meaning lasts, yet stuff lasts in its meaning. All the worlds have their sure place in the purpose of God, the place which has endurance and whereto death brings them as it brings all else. This, as to my sight, must be true, the great truth underlying other truth; and so the worlds are made at one for me and with me, in my thought.

To see Hell and Heaven here and Earth in the worlds to come brings me light. I do not yet know how many of my troubles and misdoings have come of the want of it; but already I have found so much straightening of the balance of my affairs in this more

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clear sight that I think the real ills which might not have been had the light come to me sooner must be almost all I dare not lay to the charge of wilfulness. But where does my wilfulness end? Surely I might if I would have come to that enlightening long ago; the way to it seems so plain that I can hardly think anything short of my own perversity has kept me aside. Yet, after all, there is nothing new or rare in this; all true things are natural, simple, obvious, when they are no longer hidden. God is, must be, the one flawless Home of the Soul, where the only surprise is the wanderer's desire to be elsewhere. He is supremely natural for us. So it is natural that Hell and Heaven should be here, and Earth in the worlds to come; because we are changing, and where we are all these must be, our states and places matching us within and without, and each growing more and more clear to us as we grow more and more clear to ourselves. For each man and

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woman among us it is either Hell or Heaven that grows ; and either darkness or light increases in Earth. I allow myself to believe then, that in the life to come each one of us finds plainer to be seen either Hell and a dark Earth, or Heaven and the Paradise of light. The kingdom of Heaven is within us, so is the kingdom of Hell ; and Earth with its glow and its shadow is without, to be made ours in meaning, and so pass on with us. I have my choice in consenting to determine in one fashion rather than in another the world to which I go and the body which shall rise with me, and I make choice by the turning of my heart this side or that. The way to Hell is a heart-way ; and the heart of a man dies on that weary and destroying road ; the way lies within himself, as does the way to Paradise. "The Scholar asked his Master, 'Whither goeth the Soul when the Body dieth?' His Master answered him : 'There is no necessity for it to go any whither.'"

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Earth changes for us as our Hell or Heaven does not, in the change of death ; for at death the man discards something, worn out, broken, spoilt for his use, something of earth ; and in leaving it he leaves behind also all that belongs to it in earth, all he cannot take away, all which passes of itself away. Not his own body, I am sure, not his own world ; but some material mode of the mind of God, lent to him for his profit and its own. All through the earthly phase of life he has been discarding bit by bit, and mending bit by bit, the borrowed stuff of earth ; nothing of this temporary loan has ever been his for long, save in its meaning ; but it has done its service in his life, and doubtless he takes away with him all that it really is for him. I cannot but believe the change only a plainer revealing of his Heaven or Hell, his Prison or his Paradise, and of himself ; a coming up to judgment which no man can escape, judgment within himself, judgment also without,

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judgment self-acting, inevitable as life itself, and yet administered.

I see also that I can earn punishment for myself without making hell ; I can earn it by turning my heart too often towards that which perforce I leave behind when the inward gate opens and I pass through. If I leave with the garment of the clay the objects of my greater interest, the manner of life most real, most dear to me ; if I have been wrapped in that garment by my everyday affections and habitual will ; then in my loss of earthly stuff I shall be poor indeed, for I shall have lost the manner of life I love, the means of life I best know how to use ; and to other means and manners I shall be strange. I see before me then the possibility of a poverty with which no outward poverty can compare. Wherefore it is but prudent that I make haste to store up treasure where no corruption comes ; treasure of my own interest, treasure of my own activity, treasure of my own mind and heart,

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which death, stripping the outer garment, cannot take away. It is not enough to escape hell ; "the punishments of God are what we should call self-acting," and there is loss which I may bring upon myself, and feel even when my soul is turning towards the joys of Paradise. If some great part of my treasure is buried in the grave shall I not miss it even in Paradise? But if the new crystalline earth and my crystalline body are to me most welcome, most natural and befitting to the uses for which I have sought and striven, tools which my soul's hand finds shaped to my soul's mind, then I shall come into my own in my Father's house, and all shall indeed be well with me. Doubtless I shall know myself the prodigal, doubtless I shall weep as I enter upon the inheritance of love ; but I shall have only gain not loss—nothing of my heart will turn towards the empty husks I have for ever left behind.

X

How young is this world, and how childish we are ! We play with our toys ; and we are no less childish because our play is grim or sad, or terrible. It has been said that most of us walk through earth in our sleep, a long sleep from birth to death, in which our interest is set on dreams. We are childish, we are asleep, and we begin to know in part what we have been when our dreaming passes in part. Set in its right place among the many worlds, this world shrinks ; its affairs change in aspect when they are looked at for their meaning in the light that shines in Paradise as well as on this shadowed earth. In the least glimmer of that light how does a city of this world show ? It is revealed at best as a city of dreaming, a city of men at unchild-like childish play ; worse,

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it is revealed a city wherein the appetites of men are choked with husks, and they have no hunger—a City of the Plain. “Jesus saith, I stood in the midst of the world and in the flesh I was seen of them, and I found all men drunken, and none found I athirst among them, and my soul grieveth over the sons of men, because they are blind in their heart and see not.”

Not hungering, not athirst, satiated with husks and water of Dead Seas, blind in our hearts, neither seeing nor desiring to see—it is good to be able to say that we are children and asleep, for this is the language of hope ; the other would be of despair, but for the piercing love and the overwhelming mercies of God.

“He hath filled the hungry with good things ; and the rich he hath sent empty away.” The rich go empty of His good things because they are filled full with the food of swine. Hunger opens the storehouse of God, hunger alone. The soul-life

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is one with body-life, and like body-life it may have appetite destroyed. The food of swine weighs us men down into mire under the feet of the swine. Lower things become for us evil things to choke and poison us, and to quench the longing and the taste for food which is of Paradise, the food of those whose eyes, if they be lifted up, may look into the eyes of God.

The world always proffers these lower things that we can make to be evil and our riches. I need to use violence with myself when they draw me, lest I cease to long for the tables of Paradise. I have within me a deadly magic that can turn earth's beauty to a feast of rottenness wherein I lose desire for fruit of the garden of God. The feast of rottenness is thronged here upon earth; hunger and love both perish, and my brothers feed content among the swine.

There are good men now who indulge their will to believe that upon earth all's

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well ; "God's in His heaven." True—God is in His heaven ; but He cannot force heaven into men who will not have heaven ; He cannot feed those who do not hunger ; therefore we must not say all's well. There is an optimism that will not look at the sinful face of life, at our transmuting power over the gold of earth, at the dark shadows mingled with its light. There is a Paradise of Fools, there is a Garden of the Idle Mind, there are Pleasure-Grounds of Self—from which truth is banished when truth may bring in pain. But no man attains the optimism of the saints or the grace of the pure in heart, by making gardens in which there is no place for rosemary and rue. The optimism of the saints comes only to those who follow truth, let truth lead where it may and bring in that which it must bring in while earth still needs to be redeemed ; the pure in heart see truth, but in the light divine.

Wise saints walk and labour in our

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garden of many shadows, beholding God in secret places, and recognising His ways with men ; but they see also the serpent in the shadow, and men turning away wilfully from His light. They see them playing with their foolish toys and feeding upon the food of beasts ; they see the tables of God spread in vain in the very presence of these poor rich. They see pain and sin and wrath and hell ; but they know that in God there is no darkness, and no wrath, nor any shadow over love ; for which cause, and for no false peace, they dare to walk open-eyed in joy and call none unclean to their touch of love.

In clearness of vision these men both suffer and rejoice as they feel within themselves the divine love surging in forgiveness of the sins of men. *O felix culpa*, the lover says ; for here too I have found my love anew.

“This is a sovereign friendship of our courteous Lord,” says Julian, “that He keepeth us so tenderly while we be in sin ;

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and furthermore He toucheth us full privily and showeth us our sin by the sweet light of mercy and grace. But when we see our self so foul, then ween we that God were wroth with us for our sin, and then are we stirred of the Holy Ghost by contrition unto prayer and desire for the amending of our life with all our mights, to slacken the wrath of God, unto the time we find a rest in soul and a softness in conscience. Then hope we that God hath forgiven us our sins: and it is truth. And then showeth our courteous Lord Himself to the soul—well merrily and with glad cheer—with friendly welcoming as if it had been in pain and in prison, saying sweetly thus: *My darling I am glad thou art come to me: in all thy woe I have ever been with thee; and now seest thou my loving and we be oned in bliss.*"

"But in God," adds Julian the beloved, "there may be no wrath, as to my sight. For wrath is not else but a forwardness

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and contrariness to peace and love; and either it cometh of failing of might, or of failing of wisdom, or of failing of goodness: which failing is not in God, but is on our part."

The wise mystics are a chain of stars, each star with its secret to itself; but the light they give is one. I may see a door of heaven shut against me, but they know that heaven has no doors; and I, even I, when I knock at that door, find it standing wide. It is I myself who make and close the door, not He who is within and without, ever waiting, ready for the first look from His son. Seven times in a day I may turn righteousness from my heart, and seven times in a day, as my heart says "I repent," He gives His righteousness to be mine. There may be many times in a day when I am not forgiven; there are none when I am not loved. God is ever going out to meet His wandering sons with the open arms of love. *O felix culpa!* It

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is only the man who has in his garden rosemary and rue, who knows Him thus.

All this — and yet the whole earth of many cities of the plain groans and travails in the wrath of God. Hell, wrath, sin, grow of the constancy of God, and of the rejection of Him and His by man. They come of discord and loss; but there could be no hell and wrath, and indeed no sin, but for the abiding holiness and the unquenchable love of God. These horrors are rooted in the union between Him and us, as are all blessing and forgiveness; but they are brought into uprising in defiance of His longing to communicate Himself to us; in Him they are not. We children make of our Eden a land of wrath while our Father is urgent within us to forgive and sanctify. For some of us, it seems to our sight here, He must wait in vain; for some of us He has no beauty here, that we should desire Him; but His word to keep us in the free image of free eternal

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life has been pledged, and love and penitence cannot be compelled.

“And as to this,” says Julian of the open eyes, “I had no other answer in showing of our Lord God but this: *That which is impossible to thee is not impossible to me: I shall save my word in all things and I shall make all things well.* Thus I was taught, by the grace of God, that I should steadfastly hold me in the Faith as I had aforehand understood, [and] therewith that I should firmly believe that all things shall be well, as our Lord showed in the same time.”

“For this is the Great Deed that our Lord shall do, in which Deed He shall save His word, and He shall make all well that is not well.”

“But that Great Deed aforesaid shall neither be known in Heaven nor earth till it is done.”

This wise Julian is one of my angels; with her I see divine love in a world of strife, of darkening shadow, of self-made

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wrath, and sin ; and so I follow her in her vision of the Lord, and of His Great Deed which is to be known only when it is done.

It is well that we do not know it now, although it is being done. In the economy of the kingdom of God, light and grace are always sufficient, but are never in excess with force to shatter. This is the way of the Spirit of Wisdom, who breathes "mightily and sweetly ordering all things" and destroying none. It is the way of the Spirit of Life who neither compels nor is compelled—life in the growing image of God, unfolding His likeness from within. A truth to which I have not grown is a truth I cannot bear ; if it could be forced upon me it would enslave me. And a great truth, a truth of the whole man, would be profaned to his damnation, if it could be seen and yet not taken up into the whole man in righteousness and love. It is of the ineffable tenderness of God that no man can find Him by the way in which recog-

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nition is compelled. God whom a man were forced to see, would be God rejected and despised as even God is not. So it is, I think, with the Great Deed of love which love will do ; we should profane it if we could know how it is being done, while any of us know so little of the finding of our God in liberty as to abuse His devotion to our good. When His purpose is willingly embraced within the whole Body Mystical which will show His likeness face to face, we shall know, I suppose, this fulness of His communication of Himself and this marvel of His most hidden way with men.

The body grows ; it is being built among us, organised by the indwelling Spirit of incarnate God ; but it is still incomplete and still imperfect, still unable to make full expression of its indwelling mind, the mind of the Spirit. Doubtless every child born into the world has his meaning to bring as member of this body, and should give discovery of the divine mind. I see progress

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towards the unfolding of truth ; but since full unfolding cannot be until it shall be glory rather than guidance I will not make to myself any golden image of beauty that is to come. Truth sufficient shall be my guide ; it brings strength ample for my needs ; and I will wait patiently and justly for more beauty, for I have not yet learnt to use the beauty that is here.

The rhythm of our opening life goes on growing in volume and in power along the stream of time ; there are saints, doctors, and prophets still unborn, with gifts ungiven ; the "flower in the crannied wall" has more of its tale of God and man to tell ; and the peoples and the nations are coming and to come from north and south and east and west, for the building of Jerusalem. "Wisdom crieth in the streets" even of the cities of the plain ; and she has many things to say which we are not yet able to bear.

XI

WE have not learnt peace ; we are not fit to use the greater power, therefore we are being schooled within the less. Only a disordered earth fits our poor state. This I see. We are not ready for an earthly Paradise ; a world made to bend unchecked to our perverted will, a world of no thwarting for our wilfulness, would be no place of our return into the order of God.

I and my earth are bound up together, and in this binding there is great mystery ; but I see that my earth is spoilt as I am spoilt, so I must die to an unreal life before I can be fully born into the real life. I need to be emancipated from desire for the flesh-pots of Egypt, the lusts of the unreal life, an unreal happiness, a false and base ideal. When I complain of the defects of

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my natural world I do it, for the most part, because I am desiring more of the lower things rather than the high things of God through which they and I may be restored. The Promised Land seems very far away and Egypt very near ; but I suppose the worst that could happen to me would be to find in Egypt my right and happy home.

I know, moreover, that when the pain of the world leads any of us to revolt against God, or hides Him from us, we are setting Him in our imagination over against us either as Friend, or as Lord and Judge, instead of finding Him within ourselves, working, bearing, suffering, striving, as we work, bear, suffer, and strive. How hard it is for Him to make us understand ! He writes His word over the face of earth in letters of a labouring, suffering, dying life which is His own and man's ; He writes of the meaning of Omnipotence, using the Cross for graving tool, writes thus of the meaning of the Omnipotence of Love. He gives Himself

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that He may draw all men, all things to Himself, and He gives Himself in all our woe and with our woes. He, the Omnipotent, cannot forswear Himself, and He has pledged Himself in our life ; He cannot force us to love good, nor force us out of self-hood into good not loved. So His unconquerable Love encompasses us with legions of suffering angels who proclaim the secret of our life ; and He comes and looks into our eyes from under His crown of thorns.

Earth rings with the miserable truth of life wandering and with the triumphant truth of life being succoured, life His and ours and every creature's, all in one whole of striving, hindered love. Yet when suffering overtakes me His child the darkening cloud comes and hides His fellowship of suffering. I think of His life as cut off from my own, a thing apart ; and I call upon a far-away God, or a Father in Heaven outside myself, to remove the pain from me, not knowing

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that it is His pain as well as mine. He bears, not sends, our griefs ; He carries, not inflicts, our sorrows ; and in all our affliction He too is afflicted. It would make of us men indeed, open-eyed sons of God, if we could realise this marvel of incarnation and feel ourselves one with Him in the pain of the world, and in the toil of its redeeming. Instead we cry out : "He can and will not ; He is no Father, nor are we His children ; the face of the world is dark, and over it hangs the wrath-cloud of a Judge." "He can and will not." It would be better to cry rather, "If thou be the Son of God come down from the Cross" ; but we see even less than they saw on Calvary. We do not see God in man and with man, always upon the Cross because perfect love cannot come down while man is suffering and being redeemed. The suffering of incarnate God will not end until there is an end to the suffering of all creatures.

It is our great mistake, I think, to set

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divine suffering in a bare fact of history come and gone, an episode of once and no more, and to preach our sharing of it as only an emotional transaction and an effort of the good will. It is this, but more, far more. I share all my pain with God, and He bears our griefs whether we see Him or are blind. Not over against me holding back a hand which might help, but side by side, nay, "closer than breathing," within the inmost hiding-place of my suffering self He suffers too and bears all pain with me. Therefore, if I will, His strength may be my strength, His love may succour me ; new life and light may arise within me to be and to remain my own, and to turn even suffering into joy.

My little brown angel submitted to be helped by love, not being perverse of will like men, who pay the penalty, and inflict upon themselves and God the pain, of their own greatness. But if a man submit with open eyes to the succouring love of God,

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and touch within himself the source of life and strength ; if a man can truly say, "I live, yet not I, but God in Man liveth in me," then he can do and bear all things and is delivered, let Hell be opened round about him ; for the Prince of this world will find nothing in him.

In that life and strength the conjoining of men into the God-Man and the ordering of our disordered world are to come to pass by the way of love. God Himself bears me on, bent on setting me free to do my part in His work. Once love's fire burns in me as my own fire I may even burn down the enmity set between my brother and myself ; I have but to open out a way. This in me is God's love for those who defy and reject Him and all that is precious in His sight. It is the love wherewith He first loved us ; the love that breaks down enmity, the love given without return until it brings return. I myself as I am now fail to love even my dearest thus ; but because I am in

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God and He is in me I may love my enemy as He loves His, if I will. If I desire it with desire possessed of hands to grasp, I shall find my fulfilment. Let me only believe with the belief alive in faith, love, actuality, and all things shall be mine. Now, in languor I discuss my possibilities, and my discussion is barren for want of the venture of faith ; therefore I continue to deal carefully with my enemy, only keeping guard over my unloving impulses lest conscience should deal hardly with me ; and he remains my enemy, a brother lost to me, a power of anguish to which I shall awake. God's love for him presses within me ; but there is no responsive desire of my heart, and I am paralysed. The kingdom of Heaven is within me, and by my own unwillingness I am dispossessed of treasure which I tell myself I am longing to obtain. While I disinherit myself of love and power and light I may bribe conscience by turning my cheek to the smiter, and I may give all my

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goods to feed the poor ; but I shall never subdue my enemy and win the brother he should be. All the secret of that conquest stands open before me since I won my bird ; all the secret of order in a disordered world.

"It is not I but thou thyself claiming admittance" ; this is the magic word of brotherhood. Only since that revealing moment when I saw how I had gained the heart of my bird have I learnt what it means to imitate the manner of the pleading of God with me ; and I stand almost afraid before the efficacy of that plea, for I know that I possess a power before which, if I will but use it, barriers of which I have made to myself defences will fall away. *"I am not thine, I am a part of thee,"* is the next word, and it follows quickly on the first.

The barrier I myself erect against God and my brother may crumble here or there, but it will often be raised, I know, again. It is the weakness of human liberty, and until virtue becomes nature I shall be

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weak. Only as the divine life becomes my own life and I cease to imitate because I am that which I fain would follow, shall I find myself in the strength of the constancy of God.

The new desire to give my very self to that other is the revelation of growing love, for only so does man act with God who is Love — the ever self-communicating Act. Nothing short of self-communication is true love: to give to my brother all my goods is futile for the aim of love if I do not proffer myself with my gifts. If I open wide my hands and shut my heart I make for myself a desert in which I shall dwell until the breaking of my heart. My heart alone conjoins my brother with myself and drives away disorder from us men.

The lesson stands written over all my life. That mainspring of my conscious life, attention, is in truth always a giving of myself. I cannot learn one fact, I cannot

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take to myself from out the blur of the world which is not my own but only surrounds my own—in the vague fringe of mind—unless I give myself to that particular fact, give my mind to it, that it may be received into my mind as a fact in me, held, known, ordered with the rest, because in it is something of myself. The lesson is not learnt, or rather it is more difficult to put to use in the high realms of brotherhood between man and man, and in the yet higher realm, the inmost kingdom where God meets me heart to heart. His gifts I take, sometimes with gratitude ; but Himself I dare reject. Yet He gives His gifts only that I may take Himself ; and His gifts do not bind me to Him ; this, only the conjoining of my heart with His can do. I pray Him for His gifts ; in my eyes their value goes beyond His value ; and I pray my condemnation.

“ Seek thou *first* the Kingdom of Heaven,”
He says ; and I answer “ Lord, where is the

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Kingdom ? These things I see and I desire." I ask for bread and He gives me bread ; but the bread of heaven I will not even see. Yet when God calls me to see first the kingdom my answer to Him should be "*Ecce ancilla Domini*," for I am called to be the bearer of an unique incarnation, God in my own flesh. This lesson also is written over my life even in its least things ; for whensoever and wheresoever I turn my heart to lay hold of the least one among the many gifts He proffers me in the great vague world not yet my own, whensoever and wheresoever I seize upon a fact with living attention and make it mine, I make an unique element in my unique world, the world of my unique self. Again too, the lesson passes into a realm too high for me ; and I do not see or rather I forget—it is so high—that the making of God in me waits only on my heart, and is the crown for me of all His miracles of love, a crown no other man may share or take

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away. God desires to express Himself by me as by no other man, and I ask Him for anything but that.

Not I, but He living in me is the secret of love, of the love that conjoins all in one, the love that destroys self-seeking and brings forth the Self for which no life is alien. When "I" and "He" are indistinguishable for me within myself Love is incarnate in His creature, my own self; and I stand in my own place in Him bringing forth His Holy Thing that redeems.

XII

MY story is coming to an end ; I have learnt much, very much, by writing it, much that cannot be written down. And I think there must be some wider good in telling it, because, after all, I am not only my unique self, I am of the common product of the time. The time-spirit speaks in me ; and some of the good of utterance which I have found may reach others who read in the same spirit.

We are all born to be freedmen of life—God compels us only to be and to be free—but we are bound up in an interacting web of free give and take. Each one of us must lean upon God and His fellows of all grades for gifts ; we are dependent, we are children upon the breast of life ; although the dependence of each one of us is a thing

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unique, a dependence unlike that of any other in all the worlds.

I myself, issuing as do we all from the Eternal Infinite into finitude and time, have for you as I have for God, a value, a meaning, that is all my own ; and it should be given to you. Everything I have is borrowed ; but it is stamped with my own image and some of it is here proffered for new use. We are all encompassed with angels and each one of us may be angel unawares, each one of us may give his poor gift in confidence that it is not too small to find a place. I owe to my little brown brother more than I can bestow upon his whole race in the life left to me here. If a sparrow can give, so can I.

Some day soon a greater angel will stand before me in the way, whom I shall know without doubt, and meet, I hope, without fear ; despite the sword with which his liberating word must pierce my flesh. I shall not die ; I shall pass on with opening

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eyes to find close at hand more of my meaning and more life in some crystalline world. God is most surely Reason, and He puts no man's to confusion. I am a son whom He loves, a son learning to love Him, learning to love His truth, His beauty, His holiness, and Himself, love's self; I am enfolded in His purpose, I, whom He has compelled to be; I am rooted in His eternity; and I shall most surely find myself and all my meaning fulfilled at last within the kingdom of His heart. There waits the goal of my heart-way, there is Jerusalem; death does but open wide my way. "Where the body dies there is heaven and hell. There also is Paradise, and the soul needeth only to enter through the deep door in the centre."

This deep door is for the greater mystic a place of opening and opened sight; for other men it hides, for the most part, the truth of their own self which lies beyond; but we must all pass through it once—in death we

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are not divided—and I am learning now to be ready to give a welcome when the summons sounds upon my door. Death is to Francis, the lover of all life, a dear and tender sister; to others of like mind, the mother of life, or a strong brother, angel of pity; and for St Paul, to whom to live was Christ, to die was gain of Christ. Now, even I in my low measure begin to see my deep door as a gateway of fulfilment; and I must turn my eyes away to my place in God on this side of the door lest even I desire death too much.

I have no tormenting fear; my door is mine alone and beyond is my own place again. I know I have to dread no gloom which is not already mine; but while I am still on earth I would learn more of the life of Paradise foreshadowed here, that in the greater light I may see the beauty which is of Avalon. Therefore, for all this cause, although I share the optimism of the saints I dare not long for death as they have

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longed ; in me nature groans and travails still. I will only look towards it as a step in life which I hope that I shall gladly take when it comes before my waiting feet. I will call it a transfiguration towards my truth, and I will dread it only as I dread a truer vision of my truth.

“It is but a point of time interjected between two extremes : a parenthesis, which interposed breaks no sense, when the words meet again.” I shall not have to lament the loss of any sense and words, beauty, or truth, or love, any good world of mine ; for none of these will be lost or broken ; all I have I shall either bear away or in a moment meet again ; the good which I must leave I cannot have made my own ; the bad I have grace even now not to desire to take. God holds my truth of self, my purpose, and all things significant for life in me, that in Him I may always partake of them. I shall lose nothing that in new light I shall wish to keep, as I pass from one place of my own

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to another ; I shall be stripped of accidents of circumstance, which have only seemed realities ; and of evils chosen, which I desire that I may truly desire to reject. So I shall go, truly my growing self, with my true growing world, into my truer world, to follow there the same heart-way. "There shall be new Heavens, new Earth ; the world shall be made better, not nothing," says Henry Montagu. "Death," he says, "brings me where I would be, into my owne *Countrey*, into *Paradise*, where I shall meet . . . the *Patriarchs* my fathers, the *Saints* my brothers, the *Angels* my friends ; my wife, children, and kinsfolkes that are gone before me, and doe attend me, looking and longing for my arriving there."

I have no fear lest my Saints should be far from me in their upper heaven ; God's hierarchy is the hierarchy of conjoining love, and His great ones have their place in power to draw near even to the very least.

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The heights of heaven must be close to every lower place, as close as heart and heart may be.

My place is here, my place is there : but God is always my place and He is love ; therefore the way to His garden is the heart-way, the way of my heart and of His. Like the child who asked, " Father, do the children who go to heaven sleep in a cradle or in Your arms ? " I have asked where we children shall find ourselves when we pass through the deep door opening at the call of death ; I have asked where we are now ; and the answer has come to me as it came to the child : In My Arms.

" *Mens hominis lucerna Domini* " ; the candle of the Lord shows us our way to Him ; and it is the heart-way, the way of love, wherein He travels too with us.

After many wanderings not recorded here I am come to this plain road, and in it I find myself, with all my poverty and rags, a

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happy traveller at last. Love is the simplifier, love the bond, love the redeemer ; and I see myself set here on earth to follow His wonder-working way.

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