

A. S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Immortality* (Oxford, 1922), pp. 190-208

The defect of the Stoic theory, whether in its ancient or its modern form, is ultimately to be found, as I argued in the preceding lecture, in the subordination of persons to impersonal values. But Truth, Beauty, Goodness have no reality as self-existent abstractions; they have no meaning apart from conscious experience. They carry us therefore to a primal Mind in whose experience they are eternally realized. God himself is at once the supreme, Reality and, as Dante calls him, the supreme Value – *il primo, il summo Valore*.¹ And the highest conception we can form of perfect personality is Love, not in any shallow sentimental sense, but the self-giving Love which expends itself for others, and lives in all their joys and sorrows. Such love, then, the principle of our argument bids us take as the ultimate value of which the universe is the manifestation. It bids us conceive the inmost being of God not solely as the realization of eternal Truth and the enjoyment of perfect Beauty, but pre-eminently as the exercise and fruition of his nature as Love. And if so, value of the finite world to the Spirit of the universe must lie, above all else, if one may so speak with modesty and reverence, in the spirits to whom he has given the capacity to make themselves in his own image. The spirits themselves must be the values to God, not simply the degrees of intelligence and virtue, abstractly considered, which they respectively realize. They are not made, then – we seem justified in concluding – to be broken up and cast aside and to be replaced by relays of others in a continual succession.

Here again, as throughout, we are applying the idea of the divine perfection, appealing for the interpretation of the more and the less perfect to our own experience. I remember many years ago reading a little book by one of our minor poets, in which he expounded with some complacency what he called ‘The Religion of a Literary Man’. Among other serious topics which he handled was that of the Hereafter, in its bearing on friendship and the death of friends. ‘We love our friends’, he argued, ‘not, as we often say, “for themselves”, but for their possession of certain qualities, for their good nature, their wit, their beauty, or whatever their qualities may be; and these qualities are to be met with over and over again, possibly in still more satisfying harmonies. Thus we have not to wait to meet our old friends again in heaven, we meet them again already on earth-in the new ones.’ The rest of the book I have quite forgotten, but this sentiment has remained in my memory as a signal instance of poverty of

feeling and shallowness of nature. The application of the reminiscence is obvious. Are we to attribute to the divine Friend and Lover of men a levity of attitude which we find offensively untrue of our ordinary human fidelities? Are we to liken Him to a military commander, who is content if fresh drafts are forthcoming to fill his depleted battalions? To the military system, men are only so much human material, so many numerable units; but a chance encounter with one of the men in the flesh, one touch of human-heartedness, is sufficient to dissolve the abstraction which so regards them.

Many voices bid us distrust a hope which, they tell us, is but the phantom offspring of our own desire. What is it, they say, but the old dream of a golden age, whether figured in the past or returning still more glorious in the future?

Fools! that so often here
Happiness mock’d our prayer,
I think, might make us fear
A like event elsewhere! Make us, not fly to dreams,
but moderate desire.²

There is ground for the warning. But everything depends on the nature of the desire. Those who think of heaven Primarily as a place where all hardship shall cease, where no exertion shall be needed, but every harmless longing frustrated in the present life shall receive its fullest gratification, may well be preparing for themselves a disappointment. There are no signs that the universe is conducted on hedonistic principles, and just for that reason it appears to the hedonist ‘a sorry scheme’.³ Desire in itself is irresponsible; seeing only its own object, it is blind to all the larger ends which are incompatible with its demands. So long, therefore, as it remains the desire of private satisfaction, no such desire can be regarded as secure of fulfilment. The existence of the very general, if not universal, desire of immortality is sometimes adduced as itself a powerful argument for the belief that the desire will be satisfied. But so long as it remains simply a desire for personal continuance-an instinctive shrinking from death – we cannot build upon it in the way suggested. Desire, at such a level, has no lien upon the universe; unless it be purged of its original selfishness, it can be no guide to us in such a question. The familiar message of religion everywhere is renunciation, death to self, as the gateway to freedom and to the wider life which is life indeed. The desires of the religious man are, therefore, for ‘the brethren’ rather than for himself-for himself only as one with them, a member of what Royce called⁴ ‘the blessed community’; and in a large sense the object of their corporate desire may be said to be an increasing knowledge of God and of his will.

At such a standpoint, the belief in immortality is not based by the religious man on any personal claim for himself or even for others; it seems rather, as our argument has suggested, to be an inference from the character of God.

In an old novel of George Macdonald's there is quoted an epitaph in doggerel verse –

Here lie I, Martin Elginbrod:
Hae mercy o' my soul, Lord God;
As I wad dae, were I Lord God,
And ye were Martin Elginbrod.

The sentiment of the lines is unimpeachable, but the standard of conduct is pitched too low. The principle is stated with a diviner breadth in the 'how much more' of the Gospels. 'If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask him.'⁵ 'Too good to be true' is a saying often on our lips; and the mood it expresses is on the whole a prudent one, when it is a case of worldly goods and prospects. But, as some one has said,⁶ 'too good *not* to be true' is the more fitting expression, where it is a question of the ultimate ideals and hopes which have been the nursing-fathers and nursing-mothers of mankind. For serious philosophical reflection nothing can be more foolish than the common talk which tries to set these down as the baseless dreams of subjective fancy – as if man were self-created, and as if he developed his ideals in the internal vacancy of his individual mind. Man can no more rise spiritually above himself in his own strength than he can raise himself from the ground by tugging at his own shoulder-straps. We did not make ourselves, and we do not weave our ideals out of nothing. They are all derived; they point to their source in a real Perfection, in which is united all that, and more than, it hath entered into the heart of man to conceive. The essential meaning of the old ontological argument, I have argued elsewhere,⁷ is that the best we think, or can think, must be.

'A strange mystery it is', says Mr. Bertrand Russell,⁸ 'that Nature, omnipotent but blind, in the revolutions of her secular hurrying through the abysses of space, has brought forth at last a child, subject still to her power, but gifted with sight, with knowledge of good and evil, with the capacity of judging all the works of his unthinking Mother.' And he proceeds to explain how God is the 'creation of our own conscience', 'created by our own love of the good', and to tell us that it is for man to 'worship at the shrine that his own hands have built', although well aware that the Deity within has no being in the actual world. A strange mystery indeed! The mystery rather, is that Mr. Russell should apparently never have

brought his philosophical reflection to bear upon the sheer credibility of the supposition – the idea of a complete absence of relation between the world of fact and world of values, the world of fact or reality consisting solely of 'the blind empire of matter', and the world of values being a world of phantoms produced by autosuggestion in the brain of one of the casual products of this 'omnipotent matter' as it 'rolls on in its relentless way'. If we refuse to entertain so extravagant a hypothesis, we shall not be reduced to building our soul's habitation, as Mr. Russell advises us, 'on the firm foundation of unyielding despair'. We shall believe that here, as elsewhere, nothing comes from nothing – that whatever elements of goodness exist in us must have their source in the Power that brought us into being, and that the ideals of unattained perfection to which we reach forward are due to the same inspiration. On this, which seems the only reasonable view, the permanent ideals which have lighted mankind on its way must be taken as our best clue to the inmost nature of the real, and even the so-called instinct of immortality will not lose its legitimate significance. For we may say without exaggeration that it is man's meditation upon death that has made him, and makes him, the human creature he is. His philosophy, his religion, his greatest poetry, all have their roots in the fact of death and in his refusal to accept it as final. The central and beneficent function of death in human experience has been finely expressed by Hawthorne: 'What a blessing to mortals,' he wrote,⁹ 'what a kindness of Providence, that life is made so uncertain, that Death is thrown in among the possibilities of our being. For without it, how would it be possible to be heroic, how we should plod along in commonplace for ever! . . . God gave the whole world to man, and if he is left alone with it, it will make a clod of him at last; but to remedy that, God gave man a grave, and it redeems all, and makes an immortal spirit of him in the end.'

It does not follow, however, that we are to think of personal immortality as an inherent possession of every human soul, or a talismanic gift conferred indiscriminately on every being born in human shape. We talk very loosely of 'souls' and 'persons', as if these were static entities, magically called into being, and complete from the outset. But it is manifestly a question of degree: *how much* personality, *how much* of a coherent soul has the experience of life developed within the animal creature? For personality or selfhood is not anything that can be conferred by another, it is emphatically something that must be won before there can be any question of its conservation. What is given is simply the opportunity. A true self comes into being as the result of continuous effort, and the same effort is needed to hold it together and

ensure its maintenance; for the danger of disintegration is always present.

Nur der verdient die Freiheit wie das Leben
Der täglich sie erobern muss.¹⁰

If a man is no more than a loosely associated group of appetites and habits, the self as a moral unity has either flickered out or has never yet come into existence. To, the constitution of such a real self there must go some persistent purpose, or rather some coherent system of aims and ideals, and some glimpse at least, it would seem, of the eternal values. Eternal life, as a present experience, lent no support; we saw, to the view that such experience is limited to the present life, nor to the view that it tends, in any way to bring about its own cessation by dissolving the finite personality. It does, however, certainly suggest that the further life is to be regarded as the sequel and the harvest of what began here. Plato speaks, in the Republic¹¹, of souls that pass through life in a kind of stupor: 'Dreaming and drowsing this present life through, before ever awaking here, they are gone to Hades to the final sleep.'

How should such earth-bound souls
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn ?
No, no! The energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagged not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing – only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.¹²

Dante is confronted by the problem of the characterless soul at the outset of his journey—the multitude of those who in their life-time 'were never alive', who lived 'without praise or blame', 'taking part neither for God nor for his enemies'. Chased forth from Heaven and rejected by Hell, these spirits hover in Dante's imagination on the hither side of Acheron. 'The world suffers no rumour of them to survive; mercy disdains them, and justice too. Let us not talk of them, but look and pass.' Dante was obliged to find a place for them because of the Catholic dogma of the natural immortality of every soul. But why should the universe be permanently burdened by the continued existence of those who made no use of life while they had it? People talk as if the being of a soul were something which almost defied annihilation, which at any rate could be brought to an end only by a special fiat of the Deity. But surely it is quite the other way. It is but a relaxing of central control, and a process of dissociation at once begins. Nothing seems more fatally easy than the dissolution in this fashion of the coherent unity which we call a mind, if the process is allowed to continue and to spread. We can observe the phenomenon frequently in cases of

disease, when it affects the practical activities of life; but the mere relaxation of moral effort may initiate the same process in the spiritual sphere. And without the unity implied in some continuous purpose, what prospect can there be of eternal life, or what meaning can it have ?

It is not as if intellectual distinction, or distinguished achievement of any kind, were demanded as a passport to the heavenly kingdom. In one of his symbolic utterances in the second part of Faust, Goethe says

Wer keinen Namen sich erwarb, noch Edles will,
Gehört den Elementen an.¹³

'He who won himself no name and wills no noble end, returns to the elements as their lawful prey.' But, as if conscious that the criterion, so expressed, savours too much of the aristocracy of genius, he adds at once:

Nicht nur Verdienst, auch Treue wahrt uns die
Person.

'Not only merit or desert, fidelity also – the faithful heart preserves for us our personality.' Some little unremembered act of kindness ('Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee ? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?'), some dim perception of the sacred beauty of unselfish affection, the uncomplaining acceptance of hardship with no envy of those more fortunately placed, some sense, 'perhaps, of nature's environing beauty and peace

the unassuming things that hold

A silent station in this beauteous world –
of such simplicities is the Kingdom of Heaven. What further credentials are needed for the eternal citizenship ? And who will presume to declare them absent even in
Souls that appear to have no depth at all
To careless eyes?

Intelligence, on the contrary, merely as such, if employed simply for finite and selfish ends, though it be what we call human as distinguished from animal intelligence, carries with it no promise of a further life. Man, if we look at him as entirely absorbed in his finite activities, is no fit subject for immortality; there is no more call to raise the question in his case than in the case of other animals. This is the key to Hume's negative treatment of the subject in his unpublished essay on the Immortality of the Soul. Professor Ward has remarked that Hume's suppression of this essay is not to be wondered at, seeing that its arguments rest on a cynical and ignoble estimate of humanity that has seldom been surpassed'.¹⁴

The reason is, as I have suggested, that Hume deliberately confined his survey to man's biological activities as a member of an animal species. Looking at him thus, he concludes that, 'if any purpose of nature be clear, we may affirm that the whole scope and intention of

man's creation, so far as we can judge by natural reason, is limited to the present life... If the reason of man gives him a great superiority over other animals, his necessities are proportionally multiplied upon him. His whole time, his whole capacity, activity, courage, passion, find sufficient employment in fencing against the miseries of his present condition, and frequently, nay almost always, are too slender for the business assigned them . . . The powers of men are no more superior to their wants, considered merely in this life, than those of foxes and hares are, compared to their wants and to their period of existence. The inference from parity of reasoning is therefore obvious.'

Certainly, if reason were no more than this – a more effective weapon in the struggle for existence – Hume's argument would hold: man's life would be altogether on the same scale as that of foxes and hares, his outlook and activities limited, like theirs, to the present scene. There is nothing here to differentiate reason from instinct; one or two instincts thrown in might have served the purpose more effectively. But Hume deliberately ignores the fact that it is just by the operation of reason that the finite completeness of the merely animal life is broken up. 'A spark disturbs our clod' and 'projects the soul on its lone way',

A man, for aye removed

From the developed brute; a god though in the germ.¹⁵

To identify reason with the computative understanding, and to limit the field of its operation to the economic struggle, is gratuitously and unwarrantably to impoverish the meaning of the word. Art and science, morality and religion, all have their roots in reason, and these are to us the charter of our common humanity. The perception of beauty – the whole range of aesthetic emotion and artistic practice, from the cave man onwards – is quite useless for the preservation of the individual or of the species. Scientific truth may certainly be applied as serviceable knowledge; but the pursuit of truth for truth's sake, which is the inspiration of science, is unaffected by such material inducements. Bacon's philosophy predisposed him to emphasize the practical function of knowledge, the inventions to which it gives rise for the development of the 'regnum hominis' and 'the relief of man's estate'; yet he tells us that 'without doubt the contemplation of things as they are, without superstition or imposture, without error or confusion, is in itself a nobler thing than the whole harvest of inventions'.¹⁶ 'God hath framed the mind of man as a mirror or glass, capable of the image of the universal world, and joyful to receive the impression: thereof, as the eye joyeth to receive light.'¹⁷ Truth,

Beauty, and Goodness: in view of man's admission to worlds like these it becomes the 'merest travesty of the facts – I would say a mere affectation – to ignore, as naturalism does, the difference in scale between such a life and that of any of his animal compeers. For the difference is not quantitative-not merely one of degree, that is to say but qualitative and decisive. And it is just the discrepancy between human capacities and ideals and the limited opportunities of man's earthly existence that has throughout the history of the race so insistently suggested that the life we see must be only part of a larger plan.

And although immortality, as our argument has led us to think, is not something that comes to us automatically, but essentially something to be won and held, it would ill become us, in the phrase and the spirit of a bygone theology, to seek to limit the number of the elect, by making the destiny of any soul dependent on our finite and necessarily imperfect judgement of its character and possibilities. Better to bear in mind the words of Locke, when challenged by theological critics regarding the fate of 'changelings' in the other world: 'They are in the hands of a faithful Creator and a bountiful Father, who disposes not of his creatures according to our narrow thoughts and opinions, nor distinguishes them according to names and species of our contrivance. And we that know so little of this present world we are in, may I think content ourselves without being peremptory in defining the different states which creatures shall come into when they go off this stage.'¹⁸ Our most peremptory judgements may often be the most fallacious. Are we not sometimes irritated by the unreasoning devotion of a woman – a wife or a mother – to a brute (as we say) whom every one else has given up as hopeless and would think the world well rid of? And yet that dumb fidelity and ever-repeated forgiveness of injuries depends on a faith in some spark of goodness in the wretch who appears to others so wholly vile. The faith and the love shame our impatience by the glimpse they seem to give us of the infinite long-suffering of a divine Compassion. It is rash to imagine that Patience exhausted in the short space of our earthly life. We know not what succession of experiences may be needed, before the vision of love and goodness awakens a degraded soul to the hideousness of its own condition. And it may be that, in the end, no single soul shall be 'cast as rubbish to the void, when God has made the pile complete'. There is hardly a more ignoble figure in literature than Peer Gynt, in the fifth Act of the play, hurrying from crossroad to crossroad to escape from the Button-moulder, who threaten to melt him up as old metal, because he has never been *himself* at all – his whole life having been a make-

believe and a piece of selfish indulgence. The way in which he haggles to save his pitiful individuality only whets the reader's desire to see the just doom accomplished. And yet the poet saves him at the end. In a flash, in the light of Solveig's love, he sees things at last as they really are, and himself as he really is.¹⁹

The idea of a final restoration – the belief 'that somehow good will be the final goal of ill' – seems to many minds the belief most consonant with our idea of the divine perfection and the ultimately constraining power of the good. To think otherwise is, for Browning, to confess a failure of the divine plan for the soul in question; 'which must not be'.²⁰ It is the solution which commends itself to us as appropriate wherever a real self has come into being, were it only through rebellion and active sin. Spiritual energy may be shown in the pursuit of evil as well as of good. But what of the 'frustrate ghosts'²¹ who have taken no sides, who seem never to have achieved selfhood by an act of personal choice at all? If we insist that every such soul must go on for ever, are we not allowing ourselves to be swayed by the conception of a soul-thing created once for all by God? But there is no soul (in any sense relevant to our present question) except the unified personality built up by our own acts. In the absence of such a personality how can the question of an immortal destiny be properly said to arise? 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find.' It is contrary to every principle of the spiritual life to conceive of immortality as a gift thrust upon a man without his active co-operation. Those who have not known 'Immortal longings' are not wronged if that is not granted which they have never sought.

The ideal of universal restoration, if it is allowed to harden into a dogma, involves a danger and may easily lay itself open to the same criticism as the vaunted law of automatic Progress in which the nineteenth century so profoundly believed. The operation of this natural law was to carry the race to ever higher heights, quite irrespective of the conscious co-operation of individuals, of their sluggish inertia or their open resistance. To proclaim universal restoration in similar fashion as a necessary law of the universe is to ignore the fact that, in the nature of the case, the destiny of a self-conscious spirit is committed to itself and depends upon a personal choice. To assure people that, whatever they do, all will come right in the end is not an effective method of awakening them to the gravity of decisions here and now, which bind upon the soul the fetters of habit and make it ever more difficult to find the way back. But in fairness it must be admitted that, where the belief in ultimate restoration produces in the careless and impenitent the soporific effect appre-

hended, this result is really due to the idea of salvation not as a deliverance from sin, but as an escape from certain extrinsic penalties of sinning. When the appeal of the evangelist is made in the name of goodness itself, the idea of postponement to the future and of ultimately 'jinking' the consequences,²² is one which will no longer arise.

In view of human freedom, it has sometimes been impressively contended that, although the good is freely offered to every soul, yet the possibility must always remain that some souls, however long their probation, may, to the end, harden their hearts against the divine appeal, and so by their own act exclude themselves from grace. But on full reflection, we must, I think, conclude that such absolute freedom is an abstraction of the intellect, and that final determination to evil is inconsistent with what we believe of the omnipotence of love or the all constraining power of goodness. 'That pure malignity can exist', Emerson has said,²³ 'is the extreme proposition of unbelief. It is not to be entertained by a rational agent; it is atheism, it is the last profanation.' Unless, therefore, *per impossibile*, a being were created wholly evil and impenetrable by good, he could not finally resist its influence. So long as any good at all remains in a nature, it is accessible to the spirit of God, and the little leaven must work till it leavens the whole lump.

But if we immerse ourselves thus in eschatological speculations as to what may happen after death to different people, we are in danger of forgetting that religious truth is in its essence practical, and addresses itself to the individual soul. The truths of religion are to be taken neither as statements of future fact nor as a geography, so to speak, of the celestial regions. They are eternal truths of the spiritual life, which directly concern our spiritual bearing in the life that now is. This is as true of the belief in immortality as it is of any other religious truth. The idea of immortality has no religious significance, and it loses all credibility, if we separate it from the idea of eternal life as a realized possession. Apart from such a context, it becomes a sheer incongruity.²⁴ There are people', it has been said, 'who cannot dispose of a day; an hour hangs heavy on their hands, and you offer them rolling ages without end.' Hence in theories of ultimate restoration, it will be noted, the successive leases of life are not put forward as valuable in themselves, but only for the further opportunities they afford of laying hold on the life eternal. With that consummation the idea of the mere prolongation of existence in time seems to drop from us as no longer called for, as no longer adequate to the experience in question.

Not that we can discard the time-form altogether. Duration is an essential element in any notion we can

form of reality; and we must clothe the thought of immortality in the language of time, if the meaning is not to evaporate 'altogether. If we try to avoid this necessity by speaking of an 'eternal now', a 'timeless present', we must convey into that 'now' the feeling of 'that which was and is and ever shall be': otherwise it shrinks to the abstraction of a mathematical point. The attempt to discard the durational form becomes in the end an affectation, which betrays us into a negative position actually falser (I have contended) than the popular crudities against which it is a protest. Nevertheless, as I have suggested, we do well to remember that the 'hope of immortality' is not to be regarded like the scientific prediction of an eclipse, or any other event in the temporal series. It is the supreme assertion of spiritual values, above all an assertion of the infinite value of the human spirit that has realized its vocation and entered into its heritage. And just for that reason the life beyond remains something which we cannot translate into concrete detail. In this region,

Alles Vergängliche ist nur ein Gleichniss.

'Beloved, now are we sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'

In the light of what has been said, we may ask, in conclusion, what ought our attitude to be towards death and an after-life. Two contrasted attitudes are obviously conceivable. Each has been widely exemplified in the history of mankind, and each can appeal to the authority of a great philosopher. Plato, in the *Phaedo*, as we saw, defined philosophy as a meditation of death, 'one long study of death and dying', seeing (he says) that 'only after we are dead can we gain the knowledge we desire'.²⁵ The true philosopher 'is in every respect at enmity with the body and longs to be released from the company of his enemy'. Till God releases him, his struggle is to 'live pure from the body, to have no communion or intercourse with it, beyond what is absolutely necessary'.²⁶ This mystic and ascetic strain, I pointed out, is very far from representing the whole of Plato's thought. Still the ascetic, other-worldly side is dominant in the *Phaedo*, and this was the aspect of his teaching which most impressed and attracted the Christian Fathers. The spirit of these sayings is the same spirit which, exaggerated in natures less sane and balanced, sent men to the desert as anchorites and pillar-saints, or drove them into monasteries that, by penance and asceticism becoming dead to this world, they might prepare for themselves an entrance into a heaven beyond. This is the temper of mind which has been labelled 'other-worldliness', and we deem it peculiarly characteristic of mediaeval Christian piety to regard the present life in this way as merely an antechamber to the

never-ending life beyond. But the same contempt of the world, a still more complete subordination of the present to the future, is exhibited by any Indian fakir. It is refreshing to recall, by way of contrast, the old Persian consecration of the wholesome activities of life. 'He who sows corn sows holiness.' 'To do so is more meritorious than a hundred acts of adoration, a thousand oblations, ten thousand sacrifices.'²⁷ In such extreme forms as I have mentioned, this exclusive preoccupation with future salvation would be generally condemned by modern sentiment. But even when it does not run into such excesses — even when it flowers in natures of a delicate and tender beauty — the negative attitude adopted to the present life and its concerns is indefensible: the dualism between the present and the future is wrong in principle.

Let us hear the other philosopher. '*Homo liber de nulla re minus quam de morte cogitat*', says Spinoza;²⁸ 'there is nothing on which the free man lets his thoughts dwell less than on death.' '*Et ejus sapientia*,' he adds, with an obvious allusion to Plato, '*non mortis sed vitae meditatio est*'; 'the free man's wisdom is not a meditation of death but of life.' In the same spirit Goethe would have us substitute for the old maxim, '*memento mori*', the truer motto, *Gedenke zu leben, memento vivere*, remember to live. And in our own generation there is Lewis Nettleship's often quoted saying, in one of his last letters, 'Don't bother about death; it doesn't count.' It was the spirit of his own life as expressed in the beautiful inscription on the memorial tablet in Balliol Chapel: 'He loved great things and thought little of himself: desiring neither fame nor influence, he won the devotion of men and was a power in their lives: and seeking no disciples, he taught to many the greatness of the world and of man's mind.'

The meaning of Nettleship's advice is that physical death cannot touch the life of the spirit. If we are occupied with 'thoughts immortal and divine', or with some great cause which means for us the kingdom of God upon earth, or, for the matter of that, in doing anything that we feel is worth doing, we have neither time nor inclination to brood over our personal future. Our life is full of these objective interests. So death should find us; and to a mind so attuned physical death ought to appear no more than an incident in life, an event to be accepted as naturally as sleep. It should bring with it no depressing suggestion of finality, nor do we find that it really does so in those who thus live. 'Unbelief in death', it has been said, 'seems to be the necessary characteristic or concomitant of true spiritual life!'²⁹ And spiritual life in this connexion is not to be limited to religious experience in any narrow or traditional sense of the word. It means the super-individual life in any form. Such is the life we ought to live to

our life's end. Other preparation for death there can in any case be none. The very idea of specific preparation for death and a future life (as if the new life were to be entirely different in kind from the old, with no continuity between the two) can have no meaning for those who have sought and found eternal life here –

in the very world, which is the world
Of all of us, – the place where in the end
We find our happiness, or not at all.³⁰

¹.So Nicholas of Cusa describes God as *valor valorum*. Cf. Dean Inge's *Philosophy of Plotinus*, ii. 127.

².Matthew Arnold, *Empedocles on Etna*

³.Omar Khayyám.

⁴.In *The Problem of Christianity*.

⁵.Matt vii. 11.

⁶.Sir Henry ones, in his volume on Browning, quotes the saying as Emerson's, but I have been unable to verify the reference.

⁷. *Idea of God*, p. 241.

⁸. In his essay, 'The Free Man's Worship' (*Philosophical Essays*, p. 61 *et seq.*).

⁹.In an unfinished novel. The passage is quoted in Edward Caird's *Lay Sermons*, p. 272.

¹⁰.Goethe, *Faust*, Part II. Faust's words immediately before his death.

¹¹.Bk. VII. 534.

¹². Matthew Arnold's Sonnet, 'Immortality'.

¹³. The words are those of the leader of the chorus in *Helena*, dismissing, the spirits.

¹⁴. *Realm of Ends* p. 386n.

¹⁵. Browning, 'Rabbi ben Ezra'.

¹⁶. *Novum Organum* Bk. 1, Aphorism 129.

¹⁷.Advancement of Learning, Bk. 1. i. 3.

¹⁸. 1 *Essay*, Bk. IV 4. 14. Changelings, in Locke's sense of the term, were creatures supposed to be half-man, half-beast.

¹⁹. Cf. Browning's treatment of Guido in *The Ring and the Book*.

²⁰. The words of the aged Pope contemplating Guido's fate:

So may the truth be flashed out by one blow,

And Guido see., one instant, and be saved.
Else I avert my face, nor follow him
Into that sad, obscure, sequestered state
Where God unmakes, but to remake, the soul
He else made first in vain; which must not be.

The same view is emphatically supported ; by Sir Henry Jones in the volume of Gifford Lectures, *A Faith that Enquires*, published since his death. He thus summarizes his argument at the close of the lecture on Immortality: 'God is. God is perfect. His loving-kindness and power are unlimited; and his greatest gift to man is the gift of the power, tendency, and opportunity to learn goodness. God's goodness being unlimited the opportunity not made use of by man in the present life is renewed for him in another life, and in still another ; till, at last, his spirit finds rest in the service of the God of Love.' Any other hypothesis, he maintains, is inconsistent with the belief that ' the world-process is the expression of the sovereign will of a perfect Being' (p. 347). ' One genuine failure of the good in any one single life' would mean a failure of the divine purpose,' and that would mean the entry of contingency and ' sheer unreason ' into the universe, undermining even the postulate of order on which our ordinary scientific knowledge rests. 'This religious view of the world process is that in the light of which alone the universe is left a cosmos and not a chaos ' (p. 41). 'Denial of the immortality of the soul implies absolute Scepticism' (p. 347)

²¹. Browning's own phrase in 'The Statue and the Bust'.

²². As suggested in Burns's 'Address to the Deil'.

²³.In his essay on Swedenborg in *Representative Men*.

²⁴. Emerson.

²⁵. *Phaedo*, 62.

²⁶. 66-8.

²⁷.Cf. Stevenson's 'Our Lady of the Snows'.

²⁸. *Ethics*, IV. 67.

²⁹. Edward Caird, *Evolution of Religion*, ii. 242 (3rd edition).

³⁰. Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Bk. XL The passage in which the lines occur was published separately at an earlier date.