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TRUTH?”

(A Reply to Robert Blatchford.)

By T. H. FERRIS.

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PREFACE.

While it does not seem difficult to deal with Mr. Blatchford's main contention, namely, that man is without freewill,—for it is only necessary to describe this as a plain misstatement of fact,—yet there can be no doubt that there is a widespread demand for a straightforward philosophical presentation of the case for Christianity, in the terms (as nearly as may be) of modern Science.

It is not easy to be both simple, lucid, and brief; nor can anything like a complete or final demonstration of the principles here laid down be attempted, within the scope of a popular pamphlet, even if it lay within the writer's powers to do so.

But the object of this essay is to help those who cannot see the wood for the trees, to form some idea of the lines along which orderly thought is possible; rather than to add to the vanities of controversy.

If any of its suggestions let a ray of pure light into the darkness of doubt or difficulty, the writer will be well content.

T. H. F.

“WHAT IS TRUTH?”

(A Reply to Robert Blatchford.)

Nineteen centuries ago, there was given to humanity a plain outline of the plan of the universe,—plain enough for the simplest to follow, and yet sweeping enough for all but the most strenuously pure to contradict, wherever its demands came into conflict with their cherished traditions and personal ideals.

The plan was given by Jesus, and was fully worked out in his own birth, life, death, and after-appearance.

Even those who accepted the plan had a difficulty in really believing the whole of it. Because to believe in it fully you have to be perfectly pure and free from prejudice, and such a state of mind is not at all easy to be reached. Only a constant struggle to be sincere at all costs will give us a real grasp of the plan.

So that humanity lost no time in watering-down the plan to suit its own convenience, and in a few centuries it even became a crime to circulate copies of the plan, in the language of the common

people. The official interpretation of the plan became a most valuable monopoly, yielding most profit when given in the interests of the ruling and wealthy classes; and in course of time the plan was so hidden under mountains of falsehood, that it ceased to be understood at all. Because men can only enter into what is somewhat familiar to them.

However, the loss of the plan, and the corruption of its interpreters, drove men to make enquiry for themselves. They insisted on printing and circulating popular editions of the plan, and gave much study to its meaning; and made fresh attempts to carry out its teaching,—but they were still a long way from its pure interpretation.

And a new difficulty arose. Owing to the destruction of all the oldest copies of the plan, by enraged Conservatives, it became doubtful whether the copies we still have were really correct. And enough disagreement in points of detail was found, in the four chief versions of the plan, to throw doubt upon the remainder.

Moreover even those who favoured the plan deemed it Utopian, and impossible to be set up in practice; so that distrust of the plan became general; and the people returned to a sort of Nature-worship,—which they reckoned would at least secure the health of the body, if not of the mind.

And now arises Robert Blatchford, an apostle of this worship of Nature (under the name of environment and heredity), and offers to destroy the last claims of the plan, to human obedience and belief. But he neither understands the plan, nor has he studied Nature closely enough to find out the plan from “her.”

For it goes without saying that either the plan of

Nature must be the same as that of Christ, or else Christ was an impostor. Because the laws of Nature must be the laws of God, if we are to have a God at all. Both Blatchford and Jesus agree to that extent.

But what are the “laws” of Nature? What do we know of them?

Law is the relation between cause and effect. According to Jesus, Love (or Spirit) is the primary Cause, and Matter the effect. According to Blatchford it would seem that Matter is both cause and effect, and the word “law” is used as a kind of courtesy title to describe the order of things.

Now nobody ever said the order of things was perfect, or divine, or even orderly. In Nature (as in Society) we see both order and disorder, health and disease. It does not follow that disorder and disease are either natural, or social. That is, unless evil and good are equally natural, and equally the result of law.

I shall call that “natural” which is orderly and healthful, and “Nature” to me means “health,” or *wholeness*. How, then, shall I account for disease? Is not disease part of the whole?

Well, *is it?* Is a cancer or a tumour part of the human body? Is a thief part of our distributive system? Is a false balance part of our system of weights and measures? Is a boiler explosion part of engineering, or war essential to trade?

Is divorce part of marriage, or cold part of heat, or darkness part of light? Let us not talk meaningless cant!

Be it noted then, that while in the Universe we see both order and disorder, we do not regard these

as equally valid, necessary, and lawful; equally permanent, real, and natural.

But if all effects are the result of law, then law must produce disease as well as health? But who said that all effects were the result of law? Law is the relation between Cause and Effect, and though there is one law there may be many causes. Because each effect may become a partially independent cause.

Blatchford says this is rot, and incomprehensible; but that is because he argues about it in abstract terms, instead of coming down to the simple natural explanation.

Blatchford contends that because man is the result of heredity and environment, therefore he is not free. But suppose our heredity is a heritage of freedom, and suppose our environment is an environment of freedom? Are they, or are they not?

Freedom in heredity is the power to choose your character. Freedom in environment is the power to choose your environment. We certainly have power to choose our character, for life is a succession of such choices; and as we choose, so will our characters change. We also have power to choose our environment, and we do perpetually choose.

"But," says Blatchford, "the choice is an illusion. Your inherited character decides beforehand what you shall choose."

If that were true, Blatchford's case would be complete. But it is not true. Man has no fixity of character which determines his choice, nor is there any force in his environment that can compel his choice, in the decision between good and evil. Let us examine the facts. And here we come to the medium.

What medium?

Well, we cannot conceive of a Cause acting in or upon *nothing*! That in which (or upon which) the Cause acts, is the medium, and the material universe is the effect. This medium is *consciousness*.

Consciousness is the fusion of intellect, will, and passion. Intellect is seeing. Will is doing. Passion is feeling.

One of the lowest forms of passion we observe is called "chemical affinity." A low form of intelligence appears in the formation of crystals, and the lowest form of will we call "momentum."

Intelligence gives form and order to things, will gives motion, and passion gives force.

That which sees, does, and feels, we call a personality, an individual, a soul. Some people call it a quantity of "matter," but they don't know what they mean by that. Funny men!

The only thing we know about matter is, that it is *divided*. About this we are certain.

But we already suspect that atoms of matter, though divided, are yet divisions of a parent substance, which we call "Ether." And the only distinction between ether and matter is, that ether is not divided.

Division, parturition, and materialisation appear to be the same thing. Matter appears to be literally "born" of Ether,—divided from it into particles,—not dead particles, but pulsating centres of consciousness.

Not until this division takes place can there be set up between particle and particle those reactions from which the sense-perceptions are developed. These sense-perceptions are built by our intelligence into our knowledge of the outside world.

But the Ether, or universal consciousness, permeates all things, and acts upon us from "within."

"Within," means merely "not through the channels of sense." An idea or purpose produced in us by the working of our own consciousness, or by the direct contact of our consciousness with that of another, would be said to come from "within;" but no exact spacial meaning can be attached to this use of the word.

Briefly, we may summarise it thus,—There is one medium or substance, which is Consciousness, known to Science as Ether. This can only appear as a concrete effect, by subdivision; as "concrete" means palpable to the senses, and there can be no sense relations until there are separate particles to be externally related to each other.

This subdivision of Ethereal Consciousness is the birth of "Matter," of separate particles, of separate momentum or inertia; in a word, of self-will.

How this process came about, Science cannot explain; because Science strives to regard the Ether as a mechanical fluid, and no mechanical theory can possibly describe the phenomenon.

But if we regard the Ether as universal Consciousness, it is not difficult to suppose that Consciousness capable of knowing that it might be subdivided into its own elements, and capable of so dividing itself; or, if you like, of inspiring its own elements to separate themselves; and thus to create concrete atoms of minute intelligence and valency.

Science tries to conceive of the Ether as a frictionless fluid, which is yet capable of exerting force upon matter. But since friction is due to the inter-

locking of particles with each other, and their cohesive attractions for each other; it follows that frictionlessness cannot be obtained by any mechanical or external transmission of force from one particle to another, but only by individually perfect obedience on the part of each atom to some guiding impulse which marks out its path in common with all the other atoms concerned.

To say, then, that Ether is frictionless, is to say that it is both intelligent and unanimous. To say that matter exhibits friction, is to say that reactions between particles have power to obstruct the guiding impulse; because the guiding impulse does not act upon the particle mechanically (*i.e.* by transmission from particle to particle), but directly,—*that is, through its intelligence*,—which may, or may not, respond.

A good example of this, would seem to be afforded by the hysteresis of iron, when subjected to a magnetising influence.

Perhaps a better example still is yielded by some peculiarities of electrolysis. Electrolysis is the separation of atoms from one another by electrical attraction; and it appears that in any solution of a salt which it is proposed to split up by this means, *some of the atoms are more willing to be separated than others*, are already partly dissociated, in fact; and therefore do not require the usual electro-motive force to effect their disunion.

But for those who are unfamiliar with these phenomena, a simpler instance can be supplied by gravitation.

We conceive of gravitation as an ethereal impulse acting upon every particle of matter, tending to make it approach every other particle. This is suspiciously like a mechanical definition of Love.

However, the point is, that this tends to result in *equilibrium*; in the production of a common level, where gravitation itself does not interfere with freedom of movement in any direction, on the surface of a sphere. Our globe is approximately such a sphere.

Given the very smallest portion of intelligence and power of choice to a particle of matter, and it is evident that these particles can easily and frequently get into positions where there exists a practical equilibrium between the total ethereal impulse and the mechanical reactions between particle and particle,—and under these circumstances whatever initiative a particle possessed would have some play, and could form the actual means of self-evolution into more complex combinations and activities.

Physical Science observes many phenomena which point to this power of initiative in atoms, just as we observe it also in plants and animals. But this initiative is not absolute and unconditioned,—it is relative.

That is to say, that while there is an undoubted power of choice, there is not an unlimited number of alternatives to choose between. In fact, there are only two ways of choosing,—namely, Right and Wrong.

To choose rightly, is to obey always the ethereal impulse, and to move always into those circumstances where it is most keenly felt. This is right, because that impulse is the impulse of a unanimous *whole*, exercised for the good of the whole, and the ultimately harmonious and frictionless movement of every part.

To choose wrongly, is to choose to follow the attraction of some particle or particles which is felt to be opposed to the ethereal impulse, and which does not make for the equilibrium, freedom, and welfare of the whole.

The ethereal impulse is the impulse of Love; and according to Jesus, God is Love, and is the Parent of all.

This impulse is ever present with us, though we may easily distract our attention from its indications, and absorb ourselves in some special relation with our immediate surroundings; “the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches.”

This power of bestowing our attention where we will (to some extent, at least) is the measure of our freedom and our responsibility. Beyond this power we cannot sin.

Jesus is very outspoken on this point. “If ye were blind, ye would have no sin; but now ye say, ‘We see,’ your sin remaineth.”

Or again, “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin; but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.”

They had not had sin, because it is not always easy to distinguish between the influence of Love, and the attraction of a considerable part of our very attractive environment.

Indeed, only the purest and most strenuous souls succeed in this; and their success becomes a kind of secondary, or derived, practical standard. It becomes what we call the science of Ethics, or Morals. But this science is at best merely a counter-check upon Love; and without Love is as useless as a chart without a compass.

It is the attractive power of our own circle in seducing us from the ethereal impulse (the Spirit of

the Whole, or Holy Spirit), that leads Jesus to say, "If any man cometh unto me, and hateth not his own father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple."

In other words, he that would embrace pure love must hate sentimentalism. But as long as a man retains any sentimentalism (and Blatchford has plenty) he will rebel at this.

But let us return to our atom. It won't mind.

We are to conceive of evolution as a gradual progress of atoms to higher and more intelligent combinations, by fidelity to the ethereal impulse. Degeneration is no more a part of evolution, than decay is a part of growth; though some writers have the effrontery to include both as part of the same process.

Evolution does not progress by the survival of the fittest. If all were equally fit, or ceased to progress towards higher fitness, they would still survive. Evolution progresses *by increasing fitness*, not to our external environment, but to the purpose of God.

We cannot "fit" ourselves (that is, adapt ourselves) properly to the good and the evil in our environment at the same time. Hence the evil often wipes out the fittest. That is what proves it evil. But when the evil has wiped out the fittest, it hates itself, and destroys itself, and so the good survives. The evil cannot agree, but the good can.

The ethereal impulse produces higher "Variation," it influences "Natural Selection," and it aids the survival of some of the fittest. Without it, variation would be chaotic; natural selection would

be base, and the conservative element alone would survive. Great is the blindness of those who seek the cause of progress in external conditions alone! They will never find it.

It will be seen that this view of evolution gives a direct answer to Blatchford's question, "Did man make himself?" Undoubtedly man had a considerable share in his own making.

Wherever man followed the ethereal impulse, God made him. Wherever he deserted it, he made himself. That is to say, he made himself as far as the materials and means at his disposal allowed. Some of these means were placed at his disposal by the evil of others, and some by God. Some of his evil choices were determined more by others than by himself. These others had a hand in making him too. For their share they must answer. For God's share, God will answer. For the man's own share, he must answer himself.

Mr. Blatchford's contention that personal initiative is merely heredity reacting with environment, is a perfectly empty statement. It is about on a par with the statement that everything is due to cause and effect. No one can dispute it, because it tells us nothing.

It does not touch the question whether God is in our environment, and whether we can disobey Him or not. It does not touch the question whether God is in our heredity, and whether we can repudiate our sonship to any extent. It is a grotesque evasion of the whole issue.

The simple fact is, that Mr. Blatchford has got his mind confused between the ideas of Law, and Order, and he thinks that because it is im-

possible for man to alter or violate Law, it is impossible for him to interfere with Order. There is no more common delusion than this.

The so-called "laws" of Science are not really laws at all. They are merely observations of natural Order.

Law is the relation of things to their own "insides,"—it is what holds them in being. Order is merely their relation to each other, and rests entirely on personal choice.

The proof that Law does not determine choice, is that we do not all choose alike.

Atoms do not choose alike, plants do not choose alike, nor do animals, nor men.

Some choose what is real, and adds to their being. Others choose what is unreal, and detracts from their being.

The Law determines what is real, but it does not determine choice—or we should all be prosperous automata.

Neither Science nor Morals is concerned directly with Law, but only with Order.

The ten commandments are exhortations to Order.

All laws are psychic laws—that is to say, they are laws of Consciousness.

All pain and pleasure come to us from reactions with other created beings like ourselves. They do not come directly from God. I do not see that they could directly come from God without violating our freewill. They would necessarily be too intense to resist.

What we get from God, is *the capacity to feel* pleasure and pain.

When we ignorantly violate the moral order, we may or may not suffer much ourselves, though we are bound to cause suffering somewhere. But suffering may be most unjustly distributed, *because we do the distributing ourselves*. This is the profoundest truth of Socialism. Bill Hicks may suffer more than he personally deserves, but not more than is necessary to prod Society into consciousness of the error of its ways. Taking Society as a whole, the suffering is just, because it is the direct consequence of the total action of Society.

But when we violate *our consciousness* of what is right—that is to say, when *we sin*, we lose even *our capacity to feel* pleasure and pain—not altogether, but to the extent that we have sinned. This happens by law, instantly, and with absolute individual justice.

Sin being a violation of the inner order, it is the inner perceptions that are forfeited thereby. Joy and sorrow disappear, and only the pleasures and pains of the senses remain. The life of the Soul withers at its root.

Just as temperance, in the body, brings the senses to their fullest perfection, and intemperance or mere asceticism degrades them—so sincerity, purity, and courage, in the Soul, bring intellect, will, and passion, to their keenest fulness of life; both in joy and sorrow. While levity, lust, and cowardice reduce a man below the level of a chattering monkey. This is just, inevitable, and by no means cruel. It is the Law of perfect Love.

These considerations have an important bearing on the teaching of Jesus about the further

stages of existence. A man who lives for the senses alone must necessarily suffer acutely, in an environment from which sensual pleasures are excluded.

I take it that the parable of Dives and Lazarus is a conscientious, but not necessarily literal, attempt to convey this truth to the popular mind. In the world of souls, where only soul counts, Dives is represented as tormented with a desire to gratify the cravings of sense,—a desire which consumes him like a flame. He is informed that this cannot be gratified. There is no physical escape. *But there may be a moral one.* Indeed, there must be.

Lazarus, whose earthly occupation was not of an anti-social, soul-destroying kind, finds himself in Abraham's bosom,—which I take to mean, in the bosom of his kindred,—and the gulf fixed between him and Dives is merely the perpetuation of the gulf of misunderstanding and contemptuous injustice, which separated Dives from Lazarus on earth. It can only be crossed by resolute aspiration and humility. It can only be removed by man's repentance, *because it was put there by man's sin.* Dives is not represented as repentant, and does not yet aspire to working his way out. He does not even know that there must be a way out. He cannot even realise that it is futile to warn his brethren against a similar fate. The pangs of hell are not to be avoided by fear, but by the exercise of truth and love.

If men heed not the prophets who testify of these, neither will they heed the warning of a departed soul.

Once more, then, Law does not determine what we shall choose, but it measures out to our inner consciousness the exact result of our choice.

Not in pleasure and pain, but in *power to feel.* Contact with our environment, through the senses, and with other intelligent beings like ourselves, brings the pleasure and pain.

All Order, we, together with the rest of the Creation, make for ourselves; whether in this life or the next. All injustice is the disorder that we (and other things) make, by rejecting the ethereal impulse that would guide us into perfect harmony. If we take the responsibility of rejecting this impulse, the responsibility remains with us as long as we go our own way; and embodies itself in painful consequences. If we follow the ethereal impulse of Love, the guidance and the responsibility are God's, and the general result is to reduce suffering and assist Order. Though we may suffer personally, we gain in being, in power to feel, in power to achieve, in power to endure, and also in power to enjoy. We have companionship with *all* noble souls,—not merely with human bodies, through the senses.

The Order of the Universe cannot be just, until all are perfect. For all sin produces disorder; and injustice and disorder are the same thing.

But Law is absolutely just, here and now, instantly. It does not enforce obedience, but it enforces the consequences of both obedience and disobedience. It takes effect upon the consciousness itself, without intermediary. The justice of the perfect Order may be a thing of the future; but the justice of Law is swifter than thought.

It follows from this, that there are two kinds of justice,—external and internal. The justice of Order is equal welfare for all, a thing hardly yet to be defined, much less realised. The justice of Law

is to give to every man *the best that he is able to receive*. We get it now.

The Socialist aims at the first kind of justice, and doesn't want (in theory, at least) to do more than his share. The Christian realises the second, and knows that, whatever he may lose or sacrifice, he is all right, and cannot go too far. He knows that only by waiving his full share of external justice can he effectively disarm evil and possess the ideal.

There really can be no possible truce between the consistent Socialist and the consistent Christian. Their methods only overlap where they happen to be inconsistent. The man who aims at external justice for its own sake, will inevitably make for a position of authority, where he can bring the coercive powers of human government to bear, in subduing men to his mechanical scheme of order. Christ himself was tempted to do this.

But such schemes are bound to fail, because they do not recognise that the true object of life is not an equality of pleasurable experience, but *the expansion of the human consciousness*. A pure consciousness can extract limitless delight from the commonest pleasures.

And the consciousness can only expand by fidelity to the ethereal impulse of Love within itself. Fetter it by any external authority, and you immediately limit its expansion, and may easily cripple it altogether. The more widely any government extends its would-be beneficence over the activities of human life, *in the form of authority* (i.e. backed by coercion), the narrower becomes the development of the human consciousness, and the greater the probability of its arrestment. For to be compelled to take part in a good, which is not the result of

one's own choice, produces servility on the one hand, and priggishness and snobbery on the other. No wealth or prosperity can compensate for this detestable result.

Now if we aim first at the expansion of the consciousness, in accordance with the declaration of Christ, "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly," we do not concern ourselves with any scheme for the general betterment, nor aim at the establishment of any economic system of equality. Hence we are not tempted to strive for positions of power and authority. But we do something far more effective. We deal ideally with our immediate neighbours and circumstances. We are perfectly truthful, perfectly loving, perfectly pure. This establishes an immediate and ideal equality between us and them, and secures the immediate expansion of our life and their life to the fullest possible extent.

If the so-called Christian Churches made any serious attempt to do this, nobody would take any further interest in Socialism. But the Churches are even now becoming socialistic institutes in their actual belief and policy,—whatever they may profess. They don't like to acknowledge it, even to themselves; but to try and sit on the fence, in these matters, is the same thing as complete surrender to the enemy.

But apart from the official policy of the Churches (which is really socialistic as far as it goes, and poor at that), there is a leaven of genuine individual Christians who are bright and shining lights of purity, devotion, and tenderness. Doubtless the Socialist movement contains many such—for membership of such a movement no more makes a consistent Socialist, than membership of a Church

makes a consistent Christian. Nothing is more obvious than the differences which prevail among Socialists—who nevertheless poke fun at the sectarian differences of the Churches!

Now although Christianity has no possible ground of agreement with any kind of Socialism that employs the coercion of government to further its interests, and although it does not make economic justice its direct aim, it is bound by every law of its being to lay down its life in the practical realisation of the Socialist's most Utopian dreams—as a mere by-product of its spiritual existence.

It can hardly be necessary to remind my socialistic readers of the essentially social spirit, which has manifested itself in lives of perfect devotion to the common good, among the real followers of Christ. And again and again, religious brotherhoods and sisterhoods have exhibited an ideal co-operation, and sense of mutual need and responsibility, that left little to be desired.

I believe some Socialists are foolish enough to blame them for not endeavouring to secure for Society as a whole, the Order which prevailed amongst themselves. But to do that, they must have exchanged the method of inspiration for that of coercion, and so done that very homage to the devil, which Jesus repudiated.

Ye cannot serve Love and Prosperity.

Ye cannot serve Labour and Capital.

To propagate Love, prosperity must often be sacrificed. To serve Labour, Capital must also be sacrificed. The sacrifice is a legitimate investment, but it does not yield its material profits to the investor. We sow that which is perishable, without

hope of return, and we reap a harvest of imperishable Love.

But directly we come in with our systems of calculating profits, and compelling their uniform distribution, the Spirit takes its flight, and leaves us with a lifeless piece of machinery.

I repeat, that there can be no truce between Christianity and Socialism, if Socialism is to mean the compulsory application of an ethical system.

Blessed in Spirit are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of Love.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

And except your righteousness shall exceed the demands of Order and Morality, ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of Love.

“Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

I take it that God leads men into temptation when they cannot otherwise be convinced that evil is evil. To pray to be delivered from this, is to unite ourselves more perfectly with the good, which then delivers us.

It remains to deal simply with the main incidents which distinguish the career of Jesus from that of any other man, and give him a unique claim upon our consideration and fidelity.

Jesus must be regarded as the fulfilment of the Law, which gives to men the best that they are able to receive.

In the progress of Evolution a stage had been reached when three great streams of human effort had reached their highest level, each by the cultivation of one side of the human consciousness, somewhat to the exclusion of the others.

The Greeks, by their cultivation of intellectual sincerity, had brought the human mind to a beautiful accuracy and balance.

The Hebrews, by their passionate devotion to an intimate God, had cultivated the heart into profoundly charitable and humane ideals.

The Romans, by the cultivation of virtue, had developed an organic energy of will that made them the custodians of Order throughout the civilised world.

The Ethics of Aristotle, the idealism of Plato and Socrates, the glorious visions of Isaiah, and the moral grandeur of Rome, had been assimilated and intermingled; and were waiting for the Man who should unite them all into one Perfect Life, and should demonstrate their unity with the Order of Nature, and with the absolutely perfect Law. The soil was prepared. The arena was expectant.

A heredity without bias! That was the first requirement. Born of the ethereal impulse, weaving together his corporeal frame, atom by atom in perfect symmetry, within his mother's womb,—behold the advent of the child Jesus!

Nursed by that impulse, in every fibre of his being; loyal to it, so that it strengthened with his

strength, and grew with his growth,—we observe him quietly coming into a perfect human relation with his environment.

Arrived at maturity, the impulse led him apart, to review his position, to widen his aims, and to be tempted of the devil.

He realises that we make for ourselves the Order of Nature, and that man, the highest intelligence within that order, has power over the rest. Why not satisfy his hunger by utilising this power?

Because that would be to deprive Love of its privilege of caring for him. "Man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of Love." Blessed loyalty!

"True," says the Tempter, "therefore cast thyself down from the pinnacle of the Temple, and men shall see that thou art the Chosen of Love."

But there would be no love in the act; and to demand of Love the sanction of an act empty of love, would be to tempt Love to stultify itself. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Would that we could remember this in our praying!

Again the Tempter: "True, there would be no love in such an act. But use your power to establish yourself as monarch of the civilised world, and think of the good you could do! The management of these things is my province, and if you will only come to terms with me, I will place my whole power at your disposal."

The reply was sufficient. "Thou shalt worship Love, and Love only shalt thou serve."

So that Jesus was tempted, first to satisfy hunger, then to satisfy ambition, and finally, to

satisfy His desire for Order,—at the expense of Love. And He did not yield.

His forerunner, John the Baptist, was a prophet of Order. Jesus was the exponent of Law. John came fasting, and crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"

That is to say, John felt that the ethereal impulse was so readily choked by over attention to the superfluities of life, that the first duty was to put away all disorderly and unnecessary things, to give the impulse a chance to make itself felt. This was to prepare the way. Beyond this, his message did not go.

But Jesus had so perfected every detail of His life in accordance with that impulse, that in Him every act was consecration, whether in eating and drinking, in toil, or in conversation. His life was a revelation of the inherent power and beauty of the common lot. His mere example was a mighty power—"the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

He kindled an enthusiasm before which all difficulties melted. His disciples did not fast while He was with them—they had no need! His presence was a constant inspiration. He wrought miracles.

What *is* a miracle? Simply the restoration of Order, by obedience to the ethereal impulse. Consider, for instance, what goes on in a human body. It has a consciousness—that we know, for we are It—so to speak. This consciousness makes demands upon the body, which the body obeys. Not only do the muscles move in response to consciousness, but *every* vital function has its corresponding nervous network, through which the consciousness organises the consciousnesses of each tiniest cell into action for the good of the whole.

When the activity of the consciousness is feeble, cells may get out of hand, and start an independent growth, of a tuberculous or other nature. Or the phagocytes, which devour hostile germs, may be produced in insufficient numbers; and then we succumb to an attack of fever. But if any means of stimulating the consciousness can be found, there is no reason why these degenerative actions cannot be checked, reversed, and the tissues restored to health. We do not know the limits of the power even of the unaided human consciousness, if such a vague expression as "unaided" be at all permissible. But we know experimentally that its range of power is very considerable.

But if we add to this the influence of the ethereal impulse, if we reflect that most atoms add their freewill to that impulse, and that even if they subtract it, it still dominates them in the main,—we shall understand how readily any kind of change may be produced in us, when our consciousness is fully united with the impulse of creative Being.

Surely if the perception of the marvellous Love of God, embodied in the life of Jesus, could stir men to repentance and the abandonment of sin, and could raise them to the highest pitch of heroism and fidelity, it is not in the least surprising that it should restore order to the physical life, as well as to the life of the Soul?

Surely power over human intelligence must include power over all intelligences less than human?

The reason why we possess so little of this power, is, mainly, that we lack sincerity. A sincerity which would enable us to carry conviction to any true mind, must also dominate atoms. But if atoms are more sincerely serving God than we are, (and this is pretty sure to be the case), how can we pos-

sibly enlist the ethereal impulse on our behalf, and sway them to our will?

On this point, the teaching of Jesus is most literal and explicit. "If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed," He says, "ye should say unto this sycamine tree, 'Be thou rooted up, and be thou planted in the sea,' and it would have obeyed you." And His own action, in calming the storm upon the water, was a most impressive verification of this claim.

To those who object that even if the Order of Creation is to some extent in our hands, the power to interfere involves a breach of the sanctity of the true Order,—I would make the obvious reply that since this power of direct interference is dependent upon perfect sincerity (*i.e.*, upon perfect reverence for the true Order)—just as completely as the power to have electric trams depends upon the sincerity of our observation of the conditions required—there is no possible breach of Order implied, in the possession of power on such terms.

But it must be conceded that there could be no miracle *if there were no disorder*. There could be no healing, if there were no disease. There could be no forgiveness if there were no sin.

Forgiveness, or *forthgiving*, is the restoration of the consciousness by the act of God. It is to the Soul what healing is to the body, or the cancellation of a debt, to the debtor.

The reality of forgiveness is the salvation of the sinner. Because otherwise he is crushed by the reaction of his own iniquity.

Forgiveness is a thing outside Order. It is the means by which Order makes drafts upon Law. "Repent," says Love, the Lawgiver, "that is, do

what you can to restore Order around you—and I will restore Order within you!" But the coming of Jesus was more than that.

It was the entrance of Love, to restore Order, in Person—the mandate of Law, incarnate. By a logical necessity, Disorder focused itself against Him; and, howling that His claims were blasphemy, crucified Him.

He had the power to resist, but He did not resist. Not thus could the ethereal impulse be enthroned. Its supremacy was never in danger. But man's belief in it, his realisation of Eternal Love, leading him into the pathway of Eternal Life, needed confirmation.

Hence the reappearance of Jesus to His disciples—whether in His own reanimated body, or as a temporary materialisation, is not to the purpose. Suffice it that He satisfied them of the reality and presence of His Soul, and of the continued fellowship of the invisible with the visible.

And the seal was set upon this truth, by the dematerialisation of His body, either before or after appearing to His disciples. The body was of no more use.

Some contend that the assurance of a better Order, in the future life, detracts from our efforts in the present. But this objection is childish, because we can only enter the true Order hereafter, by striving with all our might for its establishment here.

Nevertheless, it is not for Order that we strive. It is for that Love which is the fulfilling of the Law.

THE END.