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THE RELIGIOUS
SENTIMENT

Daniel Brinton

The Religious Sentiment

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The Religious Sentiment / Its Source and Aim: A Contribution to the Science and / Philosophy of Religion

PREFACE

Mythology, since it began to receive a scientific handling at all, has been treated as a subordinate branch of history or of ethnology. The “science of religion,” as we know it in the works of Burnouf, Müller, and others, is a comparison of systems of worship in their historic development. The deeper inquiry as to what in the mind of man gave birth to religion in any of its forms, what spirit breathed and is ever breathing life into these dry bones, this, the final and highest question of all, has had but passing or prejudiced attention. To its investigation this book is devoted.

The analysis of the religious sentiment I offer is an inductive one, whose outlines were furnished by a preliminary study of the religions of the native race of America, a field selected as most favorable by reason of the simplicity of many of its cults, and the absence of theories respecting them. This study was embodied in “The Myths of the New World; a Treatise on the Symbolism and Mythology of the Red Race of America” (second edition, N. Y. 1876).

The results thus obtained I have in the present work expanded by including in the survey the historic religions of the Old World, and submitted the whole for solution to the Laws of Mind, regarded as physiological elements of growth, and to the Laws of Thought, these, as formal only, being held as nowise a development of those. This latter position, which is not conceded by the reigning school of psychology, I have taken pains to explain and defend as far as consistent with the plan of this treatise; but I am well aware that to say all that can be said in proof of it, would take much more space than here allowed.

The main questions I have had before me in writing this volume have an interest beyond those which mere science propounds. What led men to imagine gods at all? What still prompts enlightened nations to worship? Is prayer of any avail, or of none? Is faith the last ground of adoration, or is reason? Is religion a transient phase of development, or is it the chief end of man? What is its warrant of continuance? If it overlive this day of crumbling theologies, whence will come its reprieve?

To such inquiries as these, answers satisfactory to thinking men of this time can, I believe, be given only by an inductive study of religions, supported by a sound psychology, and conducted in a spirit which acknowledges as possibly rightful, the reverence which every system claims. Those I propose, inadequate though they may be, can at any rate pretend to be the result of honest labor.

Philadelphia, *January*, 1876.

THE BEARING OF THE LAWS OF MIND ON RELIGION

SUMMARY

The distinction between the Science and the Philosophy of religion. It is assumed (1) that religions are products of thought, (2) that they have a unity of kind and purpose. They can be studied by the methods of natural science applied to Mind.

Mind is co-extensive with organism. Sensation and Emotion are prominent marks of it. These are either pleasurable or painful; the latter *diminish* vital motions, the former *increase* them. This is a product of natural selection. A mis-reading of these facts is the fallacy of Buddhism and other pessimistic systems. Pleasure comes from continuous action. This is illustrated by the esthetic emotions, volition and consciousness.

The climax of mind is Intellect. Physical changes accompany thought but cannot measure it. Relations of thought and feeling. *Truth* is its only measure. Truth, like pleasure, is desired for its preservative powers. It is reached through the laws of thought.

These laws are: (1) the natural order of the association of ideas, (2) the methods of applied logic, (3) the forms of correct reasoning. The last allow of mathematical expression. They are three in number, called those of Determination, Limitation and Excluded Middle.

The last is the key-stone of religious philosophy. Its diverse interpretations. Its mathematical expression shows that it does not relate to contradictories. But certain concrete analytic propositions, relating to contraries, do have this form. The contrary as distinguished from the privative. The Conditioned and Unconditioned, the Knowable and Unknowable are not true contradictions. The synthesis of contraries is theoretic only.

Errors as to the limits of possible explanation corrected by these distinctions. The formal law is the last and complete explanation. The relations of thought, belief and being.

CHAPTER I

THE BEARING OF THE LAWS OF MIND ON RELIGION

The Science of Religion is one of the branches of general historical science. It embraces, as the domain of its investigation, all recorded facts relating to the displays of the Religious Sentiment. Its limits are defined by those facts, and the legitimate inferences from them. Its aim is to ascertain the constitutive laws of the origin and spread of religions, and to depict the influence they have exerted on the general life of mankind.

The question whether a given religion is true or false cannot present itself in this form as a proper subject of scientific inquiry. The most that can be asked is, whether some one system is best suited to a specified condition of the individual or the community.

The higher inquiry is the object of the Philosophy of Religion. This branch of study aims to pass beyond recorded facts and local adjustments in order to weigh the theoretical claims of religions, and measure their greater or less conformity with abstract truth. The formal or regulative laws of religious thought occupy it.

Theology, dogmatic or polemic, is an explanatory defence of some particular faith. Together with mythology and symbolism, it furnishes the material from which the Science and Philosophy of Religion seek to educe the laws and frame the generalizations which will explain the source and aim of religion in general.

The common source of all devotional displays is the Religious Sentiment, a complex feeling, a thorough understanding of which is an essential preliminary to the study of religious systems.

Such a study proceeds on the assumption that all religions are products of thought, commenced and continued in accordance with the laws of the human mind, and, therefore, comprehensible to the extent to which these laws are known. No one disputes this, except in reference to his own religion. This, he is apt to assert, had something “supernatural” about its origin. If this word be correctly used, it may stand without cavil. The “natural” is that of which we know in whole or in part the laws; the “supernatural” means that of which we do not at present know in any degree the laws. The domain of the supernatural diminishes in the ratio of the increase of knowledge; and the inference that it also is absolutely under the control of law, is not only allowable but obligatory.

A second assumption must be that there is a unity of kind and purpose in all religions. Without this, no common law can exist for them. Such a law must hold good in all ages, in every condition of society, and in each instance. Hence those who explain religious systems as forms of government, or as systems of ethics, or as misconceived history, or as theories of natural philosophy, must be prepared to make their view good when it is universally applied, or else renounce the possibility of a Science of Religion; while those who would except their own system from what they grant is the law of all others, violate the principles of investigation and thereby the canons of truth.

The methods of science are everywhere alike. Has the naturalist to explain an organism, he begins with its elements or proximate principles as obtained by analysis; he thence passes to the tissues and fluids which compose its members; these he considers first in a state of repose, their structure and their connections; then he examines their functions, the laws of their growth and action; and finally he has recourse to the doctrine of relations, *la théorie des milieux*, to define the conditions of its existence. Were such a method applied to a religion, it would lead us first to study its psychological elements, then the various expressions in word and act to which these give occasion, next the record of its growth and decay, and finally from these to gather the circumstantialia of human life and culture which led to its historic existence.

Some have urged that such a method should not be summoned to questions in mental philosophy. To do so, say they, is to confound things distinct, requiring distinct plans of study. Such

a criticism might have had weight in the days when the mind was supposed to inhabit the body as a tenant a house, and have no relation to it other than that of a casual occupant. But that opinion is antiquated. More than three-fourths of a century ago the far-seeing thinker, Wilhelm von Humboldt, laid down the maxim that the phenomena of mind and matter obey laws identical in kind;¹ and a recent historian of science sums up the result of the latest research in these words:

“The old dualism of mind and body, which for centuries struggled in vain for reconciliation, finds it now, not indeed in the unity of substance, but in the unity of laws.”²

It is, therefore, as a question in mental philosophy to be treated by the methods of natural science, that I shall approach the discussion of the religious sentiment. As it is a part, or at least a manifestation of mind, I must preface its more particular consideration with some words on the mind in general, words which I shall make as few and as clear as possible.

At the beginning of this century, the naturalist Oken hazarded the assertion: “The human mind is a memberment of infusorial sensation,”³ a phrase which has been the guiding principle of scientific psychology ever since. That in the course of this memberment or growth wholly new faculties are acquired, is conceded. As the union of two inorganic substances may yield a third different in every respect from either; or, as in the transition of inorganic to organic matter, the power of reproduction is attained; so, positively new powers may attend the development of mind. From sensations it progresses to emotions, from emotions to reason. The one is the psychical climax of the other. “We have still to do with the one mind, whose action develops itself with perception, through discrimination, till it arrives at notions, wherein its most general scheme, ‘truth and error,’ serves as the principle.”⁴

Extravagant as Oken’s expression seemed to many when it was published, it now falls short of the legitimate demands of science, and I may add, of religion. *Mind is co-extensive with organism*; in the language of logic, one “connotes” the other; this statement, and nothing short of it, satisfies the conditions of the problem. Wherever we see Form preserved amid the change of substance, *there* is mind; it alone can work that miracle; only it gives Life. Matter suffers no increase; therefore the new is but a redistribution of the old; it is new in *form* only; and the maintenance of form under changes of substance is the one distinguishing mark of organism. To it is added the yet more wonderful power of transmitting form by reproduction. Wherever these are, are also the rudiments of mind. The distinction between the animal and the vegetable worlds, between the reasoning and unreasoning animals, is one of degree only. Whether, in a somewhat different sense, we should not go yet further, and say that mind is co-extensive with motion, and hence with phenomena, is a speculative inquiry which may have to be answered in the affirmative, but it does not concern us here.

The first and most general mark of Mind is sensation or common feeling. In technical language a sensation is defined to be the result of an impression on an organism, producing some molecular change in its nerve or life centres. It is the consequence of a contact with another existence. Measured by its effects upon the individual the common law of sensation is: Every impression, however slight, either adds to or takes from the sum of the life-force of the system; in the former case it produces a pleasurable, in the latter a painful sensation. The exceptions to this rule, though many, are such in appearance only.⁵

¹ In his essay entitled, *Ueber den Geschlechtsunterschied und dessen Einfluss auf die organische Natur*, first published in 1795.

² “Der alte Dualismus von Geist und Körper, der Jahrhunderte hindurch nach Versöhnung gerungen, findet diese heute nicht zwar in der Einheit der Substanz, wohl aber in der Einheit des Gesetzes.” Dr. Heinrich Boehmer, *Geschichte der Entwicklung der Naturwissenschaftlichen Weltanschauung in Deutschland*, s. 201 (Gotha, 1872).

³ *Elements of Physio-Philosophy*, § 3589. Eng. trans., London, 1847.

⁴ Von Feuchtersleben, *The Principles of Medical Psychology*, p. 130 (Eng. trans., London, 1847).

⁵ “The fundamental property of organic structure is to seek what is beneficial, and to shun what is hurtful to it.” Dr. Henry Maudsley, *Body and Mind*, p. 22. “The most essential nature of a sentient being is to move *to* pleasure and *from* pain.” A. Bain, *On the Study of Character*, p. 292 (London, 1861). “States of Pleasure are connected with an increase, states of Pain with an abatement of some or all of the vital functions.” A. Bain, *Mind and Body*, p. 59. “Affectus est confusa idea, quâ Mens majorem, vel minorem sui corporis, vel alicujus ejus partis, existendi vim affirmat.” Spinoza, *Ethics*, Lib. III. *ad finem*.

In the human race the impression can often be made quite as forcibly by a thought as by an act. "I am confident," says John Hunter, the anatomist, "that I can fix my attention to any part, until I have a sensation in that part." This is what is called the influence of the mind upon the body. Its extent is much greater than used to be imagined, and it has been a fertile source of religious delusions. Such sensations are called subjective; those produced by external force, objective.

The immediate consequent of a sensation is *reflex action*, the object of which is either to avoid pain or increase pleasure, in other words, either to preserve or augment the individual life.

The molecular changes incident to a sensation leave permanent traces, which are the physical bases of memory. One or several such remembered sensations, evoked by a present sensation, combine with it to form an Emotion. Characteristic of their origin is it that the emotions fall naturally into a dual classification, in which the one involves pleasurable or elevating, the other painful or depressing conditions. Thus we have the pairs joy and grief, hope and fear, love and hate, etc.

The question of pleasure and pain is thus seen to be the primary one of mental science. We must look to it to explain the meaning of sensation as a common quality of organism. What is the significance of pleasure and pain?

The question involves that of Life. Not to stray into foreign topics, it may broadly be said that as all change resolves itself into motion, and, as Helmholtz remarks, all science merges itself into mechanics, we should commence by asking what vital motions these sensations stand for or correspond to.

Every organism, and each of its parts, is the resultant of innumerable motions, a composition of forces. As such, each obeys the first law of motion, to wit, indefinite continuance of action until interfered with. This is a modification of Newton's "law of continuance," which, with the other primary laws of motion, must be taken as the foundation of biology as well as of astronomy.⁶

The diminution or dispersion of organic motion is expressed in physiological terms as *waste*; we are admonished of waste by *pain*; and thus admonished we supply the waste or avoid the injury as far as we can. But this connection of pain with waste is not a necessary one, nor is it the work of a *Providentia particularis*, as the schoolmen said. It is a simple result of natural selection. Many organisms have been born, no doubt, in which waste did not cause pain; caused, perhaps, pleasure. Consequently, they indulged their preferences and soon perished. Only those lived to propagate their kind in whom a different sensation was associated with waste, and they transmitted this sensitiveness increased by ancestral impression to their offspring. The curses of the human race to-day are alcohol, opium and tobacco, and they are so because they cause waste, but do not immediately produce painful but rather pleasurable feelings.

Pain, as the sensation of waste, is the precursor of death, of the part or system. By parity of evolution, pleasure came to be the sensation of continuance, of uninterrupted action, of increasing vigor and life. Every action, however, is accompanied by waste, and hence every pleasure develops pain. But it is all important to note that the latter is the mental correlative not of the action but of its cessation, not of the life of the part but of its ceasing to live. Pain, it is true, in certain limits excites to action; but it is by awakening the self-preservative tendencies, which are the real actors. This physiological distinction, capable of illustration from sensitive vegetable as well as the lowest animal organisms, has had an intimate connection with religious theories. The problems of suffering and death are precisely the ones which all religions set forth to solve in theory and in practice. Their creeds and myths are based on what they make of pain. The theory of Buddhism, which now has more followers than any other faith, is founded on four axioms, which are called "the four excellent

⁶ The extension of the mechanical laws of motion to organic motion was, I believe, first carried out by Comte. His biological form of the first law is as follows: "Tout état, statique ou dynamique, tend à persister spontanément, sans aucune altération, en résistant aux perturbations extérieures." *Système de Politique Positive*, Tome iv. p. 178. The metaphysical ground of this law has, I think, been very well shown by Schopenhauer to be in the Kantian principle that time is not a force, nor a quality of matter, but a condition of perception, and hence it can exert no physical influence. See Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena*, Bd. II, s. 37.

truths.” The first and fundamental one is: “Pain is inseparable from existence.” This is the principle of all pessimism, ancient and modern. Schopenhauer, an out-and-out pessimist, lays down the allied maxim, “All pleasure is negative, that is, it consists in getting rid of a want or pain,”⁷ a principle expressed before his time in the saying “the highest pleasure is the relief from pain.”

Consistently with this, Buddhism holds out as the ultimate of hope the state of Nirvana, in which existence is not, where the soul is “blown out” like the flame of a candle.

But physiology demolishes the corner-stone of this edifice when it shows that pain, so far from being inseparable from existence, has merely become, through transmitted experience, nearly inseparable from the progressive cessation of existence. While action and reaction are equal in inorganic nature, the principle of life modifies the operation of this universal law of force by bringing in *nutrition*, which, were it complete, would antagonize reaction. In such a case, pleasure would be continuous, pain null; action constant, reaction hypothetical. As, however, nutrition in fact never wholly and at once replaces the elements altered by vital action, both physicians and metaphysicians have observed that pleasure is the fore-runner of pain, and has the latter as its certain sequel.⁸

Physiologically and practically, the definition of pleasure is, *maximum action with minimum waste*.

This latter generalization is the explanation of the esthetic emotions. The modern theory of art rests not on a psychological but a physiological, and this in turn on a physical basis. Helmholtz’s theory of musical harmony depends on the experimental fact that a continued impression gives a pleasant, a discontinuous an unpleasant sensation. The mechanics of muscular structure prove that what are called graceful motions are those which are the mechanical resultant of the force of the muscle, – those which it can perform at least waste. The pleasure we take in curves, especially “the line of beauty,” is because our eyes can follow them with a minimum action of its muscles of attachment. The popular figure called the Grecian figure or the walls of Troy, is pleasant because each straight line is shorter, and at right angles to the preceding one, thus giving the greatest possible change of action to the muscles of the eye.

Such a mechanical view of physiology presents other suggestions. The laws of vibratory motion lead to the inference that action in accordance with those laws gives maximum intensity and minimum waste. Hence the pleasure the mind takes in harmonies of sound, of color and of odors.

The correct physiological conception of the most perfect physical life is that which will continue the longest in use, not that which can display the greatest muscular force. The ideal is one of extension, not of intension.

Religious art indicates the gradual recognition of these principles. True to their ideal of inaction, the Oriental nations represent their gods as mighty in stature, with prominent muscles, but sitting or reclining, often with closed eyes or folded hands, wrapped in robes, and lost in meditation. The Greeks, on the other hand, portrayed their deities of ordinary stature, naked, awake and erect, but the limbs smooth and round, the muscular lines and the veins hardly visible, so that in every attitude an indefinite sense of repose pervades the whole figure. Movement without effort, action without waste, is the immortality these incomparable works set forth. They are meant to teach that the ideal life is one, not of painless ease, but of joyous action.

The law of continuity to which I have alluded is not confined to simple motions. It is a general mathematical law, that the longer anything lasts the longer it is likely to last. If a die turns ace a dozen times handrunning, the chances are large that it will turn ace again. The Theory of Probabilities is

⁷ “Aller Genuss, seiner Natur nach, ist negativ, d. h., in Befreiung von einer Noth oder Pein besteht.” *Parerga und Paralipomena*. Bd. II, s. 482.

⁸ “No impression whatever is pleasant beyond the instant of its realization; since, at that very instant, commences the change of susceptibility, which suggests the desire for a change of impression or for a renewal of that impression which is fading away.” Dr. J. P. Catlow, *The Principles of Aesthetic Medicine*, p. 155 (London, 1867). “Dum re, quem appetamus fruimur, corpus ex ea fruitione novam acquirat constitutionem, á quâ aliter determinatur, et aliæ rerum imagines in eo excitantur,” etc. Spinoza, *Ethics*, Pars III, Prop. lix.

founded upon this, and the value of statistics is based on an allied principle. Every condition opposes change through inertia. By this law, as the motion caused by a pleasurable sensation excites by the physical laws of associated motions the reminiscences of former pleasures and pains, a tendency to permanence is acquired, which gives the physical basis for Volition. Experience and memory are, therefore, necessary to volition, and practically self restraint is secured by calling numerous past sensations to mind, deterrent ones, “the pains which are indirect pleasures,” or else pleasurable ones. The Will is an exhibition under complex relations of the tendency to continuance which is expressed in the first law of motion. Its normal action is the maintenance of the individual life, the prolongation of the pleasurable sensations, the support of the forces which combat death.

Whatever the action, whether conscious or reflex, its real though often indirect and unaccomplished object is the preservation or the augmentation of the individual life. Such is the dictum of natural science, and it coincides singularly with the famous maxim of Spinoza: *Unaquaeque res, quantum in se est, in suo esse perseverare conatur*.

The consciousness which accompanies volitional action is derived from the common feeling which an organism has, as the result of all its parts deriving their nutrition from the same centre. Rising into the sphere of emotions, this at first muscular sensation becomes “self-feeling.” The Individual is another name for the boundaries of reflex action.

Through memory and consciousness we reach that function of the mind called the intellect or reason, the product of which is *thought*. Its physical accompaniments are chemical action, and an increase of temperature in the brain. But the sum of the physical forces thus evolved is not the measure of the results of intellectual action. These differ from other forms of force in being incommensurate with extension. They cannot be appraised in units of quantity, but in quality only. The chemico-vital forces by which a thought rises into consciousness bear not the slightest relation to the value of the thought itself. It is here as in those ancient myths where an earthly maiden brings forth a god. The power of the thought is dependent on another test than physical force, to wit, its *truth*. This is measured by its conformity to the laws of right reasoning, laws clearly ascertained, which are the common basis of all science, and to which it is the special province of the science of logic to give formal expression.

Physical force itself, in whatever form it appears, is only known to us as feeling or as thought; these alone we know to be real; all else is at least less real.⁹ Not only is this true of the external world, but also of that assumed something, the reason, the soul, the ego, or the intellect. For the sake of convenience these words may be used; but it is well to know that this introduction of something that thinks, back of thought itself, is a mere figure of speech. We say, “*I think*,” as if the “*I*” was something else than the thinking. At most, it is but the relation of the thoughts. Pushed further, it becomes the limitation of thought by sensation, the higher by the lower. The Cartesian maxim, *cogito ergo sum*, has perpetuated this error, and the modern philosophy of the *ego* and *non-ego* has prevented its detection. A false reading of self-consciousness led to this assumption of “a thinking mind.” Our personality is but the perception of the solidarity of our thoughts and feelings; it is itself a thought.

These three manifestations of mind – sensations, emotions and thoughts – are mutually exclusive in their tendencies. The patient forgets the fear of the result in the pain of the operation; in intense thought the pulse falls, the senses do not respond, emotions and action are absent. We may say that ideally the unimpeded exercise of the intellect forbids either sensation or emotion.

Contrasting sensation and emotion, on the one side, with intellect on the other, feeling with thought, they are seen to be polar or antithetical manifestations of mind. Each requires the other for its existence, yet in such wise that the one is developed at the expense of the other. The one waxes as the other wanes. This is seen to advantage when their most similar elements are compared.

⁹ “Feeling and thought are much more real than anything else; they are the only things which we directly know to be real.” – John Stuart Mill. — *Theism*, p. 202. How very remote external objects are from what we take them to be, is constantly shown in physiological studies. As Helmholtz remarks: “No kind and no degree of similarity exists between the quality of a sensation, and the quality of the agent inducing it and portrayed by it.” — *Lectures on Scientific Subjects*, p. 390.

Thus consciousness in sensation is keenest when impressions are strongest; but this consciousness is a bar to intellectual self-consciousness, as was pointed out by Professor Ferrier in his general Law of consciousness.¹⁰ When emotion and sensation are at their minimum, one is most conscious of the solidarity of one's thoughts; and just in proportion to the vividness of self-consciousness is thought lucid and strong. In an ideal intelligence, self-consciousness would be infinite, sensation infinitesimal.

Yet there is a parallelism between feeling and thought, as well as a contrast. As pain and pleasure indicate opposite tendencies in the forces which guide sensation and emotion, so do the true and the untrue direct thought, and bear the same relation to it. For as pain is the warning of death, so the untrue is the detrimental, the destructive. The man who reasons falsely, will act unwisely and run into danger thereby. To know the truth is to be ready for the worst. Who reasons correctly will live the longest. To love pleasure is not more in the grain of man than to desire truth. "I have known many," says St. Augustine, "who like to deceive; to be deceived, none." Pleasure, joy, truth, are the respective measures of life in sensation, emotion, intellect; one or the other of these every organism seeks with all its might, its choice depending on which of these divisions of mind is prominently its own. As the last mentioned is the climax, truth presents itself as in some way the perfect expression of life.

We have seen what pleasure is, but what is truth? The question of Pilate remains, not indeed unanswered, but answered vaguely and discrepantly.¹¹ We may pass it by as one of speculative interest merely, and turn our attention to its practical paraphrase, what is true?

The rules of evidence as regards events are well known, and also the principles of reaching the laws of phenomena by inductive methods. Many say that the mind can go no further than this, that the truth thus reached, if not the highest, is at least the highest for man. It is at best relative, but it is real. The correctness of this statement may be tested by analyzing the processes by which we acquire knowledge.

Knowledge reaches the mind in two forms, for which there are in most languages, though not in modern English, two distinct expressions, *connaitre* and *savoir*, *kennen* and *wissen*. The former relates to knowledge through sensation, the latter through intellection; the former cannot be rendered in words, the latter can be; the former is reached through immediate perception, the latter through logical processes. For example: an odor is something we may certainly know and can identify, but we cannot possibly describe it in words; justice on the other hand may be clearly defined to our mind, but it is equally impossible to translate it into sensation. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that the one of these processes is, so far as it goes, as conclusive as the other, and that they proceed on essentially the same principles.¹² Religious philosophy has to do only with the second form of knowledge, that reached through notions or thoughts.

The enchainment or sequence of thoughts in the mind is at first an accidental one. They arise through the two general relations of nearness in time or similarity in sensation. Their succession is prescribed by these conditions, and without conscious effort cannot be changed. They are notions about phenomena only, and hence are infinitely more likely to be wrong than right. Of the innumerable associations of thought possible, only one can yield the truth. The beneficial effects of this one were felt, and thus by experience man slowly came to distinguish the true as what is good for him, the untrue as what is injurious.

After he had done this for a while, he attempted to find out some plan in accordance with which he could so arrange his thoughts that they should always produce this desirable result. He was thus

¹⁰ *The Philosophy of Consciousness*, p. 72.

¹¹ The Gospel of John (ch. xviii.) leaves the impression that Pilate either did not wait for an answer but asked the question in contempt, as Bacon understood, or else that waiting he received no answer. The Gospel of Nicodemus, however, written according to Tischendorf in the second century, probably from tradition, gives the rest of the conversation as follows: "Pilate says to him: What is truth? Jesus says: Truth is from heaven. Pilate says: Is not there truth upon earth? Jesus says to Pilate: See how one who speaks truth is judged by those who have power upon earth!" [ch. iii.]

¹² The most acute recent discussion of this subject is by Helmholtz, in his essay entitled, "*Recent Progress in the Theory of Vision*."

led to establish the rules for right reasoning, which are now familiarly known as Logic. This science was long looked upon as a completed one, and at the commencement of this century we find such a thinker as Coleridge expressing an opinion that further development in it was not to be expected. Since then it has, however, taken a fresh start, and by its growth has laid the foundation for a system of metaphysics which will be free from the vagaries and unrealities which have thrown general discredit on the name of philosophy.

In one direction, as applied logic and the logic of induction, the natural associations of ideas have been thoroughly studied, and the methods by which they can be controlled and reduced have been taught with eminent success. In this branch, Bentham, Mill, Bain, and others have been prominent workers.

Dealing mainly with the subjects and materials of reasoning, with thoughts rather than with thinking, these writers, with the tendency of specialists, have not appreciated the labors of another school of logicians, who have made the investigation of the process of thinking itself their especial province. This is abstract logic, or pure logic, sometimes called, inasmuch as it deals with forms only, “formal logic,” or because it deals with names and not things, “the logic of names.” It dates its rise as an independent science from the discovery of what is known as “the quantification of the predicate,” claimed by Sir William Hamilton. Of writers upon it may be mentioned Professor De Morgan, W. Stanley Jevons, and especially Professor George Boole of Belfast. The latter, one of the subtlest thinkers of this age, and eminent as a mathematician, succeeded in making an ultimate analysis of the laws of thinking, and in giving them a symbolic notation, by which not only the truth of a simple proposition but the relative degree of truth in complex propositions may be accurately estimated.¹³

This he did by showing that the laws of correct thinking can be expressed in algebraic notation, and, thus expressed, will be subject to all the mathematical laws of an algebra whose symbols bear the uniform value of unity or nought (1 or 0) – a limitation required by the fact that pure logic deals in notions of quality only, not of quantity.

This mathematical form of logic was foreseen by Kant when he declared that all mathematical reasoning derives its validity from the logical laws; but no one before Professor Boole had succeeded in reaching the notation which subordinated these two divisions of abstract thought to the same formal types. His labors have not yet borne fruit in proportion to their value, and they are, I believe, comparatively little known. But in the future they will be regarded as epochal in the science of mind. They make us to see the same law governing mind and matter, thought and extension.

Not the least important result thus achieved was in emphasizing the contrast between the natural laws of mental association, and the laws of thinking which are the foundation of the syllogism.

By attending to this distinction we are enabled to keep the form and the matter of thought well apart – a neglect to do which, or rather a studied attempt to ignore which, is the radical error of the logic devised by Hegel, as I shall show more fully a little later.

All applied logic, inductive as well as deductive, is based on formal logic, and this in turn on the “laws of thought,” or rather of thinking. These are strictly regulative or abstract, and differ altogether from the natural laws of thought, such as those of similarity, contiguity and harmony, as well as from the rules of applied logic, such as those of agreement and difference. The fundamental laws of thinking are three in number, and their bearing on all the higher questions of religious philosophy is

¹³ George Boole, Professor of Mathematics in Queen’s College, Cork, was born Nov. 2, 1815, died Dec. 8, 1864. He was the author of several contributions to the higher mathematics, but his principal production is entitled: *An Investigation into the Laws of Thought, on which are founded the mathematical Theories of Logic and Probabilities* [London, 1854.] Though the reputation he gained was so limited that one may seek his name in vain in the *New American Cyclopaedia* [1875], or the *Dictionnaire des Contemporains* [1859], the few who can appreciate his treatise place the very highest estimate upon it. Professor Todhunter, in the preface to his *History of the Theory of Probabilities*, calls it “a marvellous work,” and in similar language Professor W. Stanley Jevons speaks of it as “one of the most marvellous and admirable pieces of reasoning ever put together” (*Pure Logic*, p. 75). Professor Bain, who gives a synopsis of it in his *Deductive Logic*, wholly misapprehends the author’s purpose, and is unable to appraise justly his conclusions.

so immediate that their consideration becomes of the last moment in such a study as this. They are called the laws of Determination, Limitation and Excluded Middle.

The first affirms that every object thought about must be conceived as itself, and not as some other thing. “A is A,” or “ $x = x$,” is its formal expression. This teaches us that whatever we think of, must be thought as one or a unity. It is important, however, to note that this does not mean a mathematical unit, but a logical one, that is, identity and not contrast. So true is this that in mathematical logic the only value which can satisfy the formula is a concept which does not admit of increase, to wit, a Universal.

From this necessity of conceiving a thought under unity has arisen the interesting tendency, so frequently observable even in early times, to speak of the universe as one whole, the $\tau\omicron\ \pi\alpha\nu$ of the Greek philosophers; and also the monotheistic leaning of all thinkers, no matter what their creed, who have attained very general conceptions. Furthermore, the strong liability of confounding this speculative or logical unity with the concrete notion of individuality, or mathematical unity, has been, as I shall show hereafter, a fruitful source of error in both religious and metaphysical theories. Pure logic deals with quality only, not with quantity.

The second law is that of Limitation. As the first is sometimes called that of Affirmation, so this is called that of Negation. It prescribes that a thing is not that which it is not. Its formula is, “A is not not-A.” If this seems trivial, it is because it is so familiar.

These two laws are two aspects of the same law. The old maxim is, *omnis determinatio est negatio*; a quality can rise into cognition only by being limited by that which it is not. It is not a comparison of two thoughts, however, nor does it limit the quality itself. For the negative is not a thought, and the quality is not *in suo genere finita*, to use an expression of the old logicians; it is limited not by itself but by that which it is not. These are not idle distinctions, as will soon appear.

The third law comes into play when two thoughts are associated and compared. There is qualitative identity, or there is not. A is either B or not B. An animal is either a man or not a man. There is no middle class between the two to which it can be assigned. Superficial truism as this appears, we have now come upon the very battle ground of the philosophies. This is the famous “Law of the contradictories and excluded middle,” on the construction of which the whole fabric of religious dogma, and I may add of the higher metaphysics, must depend. “One of the principal retarding causes of philosophy,” remarks Professor Ferrier, “has been the want of a clear and developed doctrine of the contradictory.”¹⁴ The want is as old as the days of Heraclitus of Ephesus, and lent to his subtle paradoxes that obscurity which has not yet been wholly removed.

Founding his arguments on one construction of this law, expressed in the maxim, “The conceivable lies between two contradictory extremes,” Sir William Hamilton defended with his wide learning those theories of the Conditioned and the Unconditioned, the Knowable and Unknowable, which banish religion from the realm of reason and knowledge to that of faith, and cleave an impassable chasm between the human and the divine intelligence. From this unfavorable ground his orthodox followers, Mansel and Mozley, defended with ability but poor success their Christianity against Herbert Spencer and his disciples, who also accepted the same theories, but followed them out to their legitimate conclusion – a substantially atheistic one.

Hamilton in this was himself but a follower of Kant, who brought this law to support his celebrated “antinomies of the human understanding,” warnings set up to all metaphysical explorers to keep off of holy ground.

On another construction of it, one which sought to escape the dilemma of the contradictories by confining them to matters of the understanding, Hegel and Schelling believed they had gained the open field. They taught that in the highest domain of thought, there where it deals with questions of pure reason, the unity and limits which must be observed in matters of the understanding and which

¹⁴ *The Institutes of Metaphysic*, p. 459, (2nd edition.)

give validity to this third law, do not obtain. This view has been closely criticized, and, I think, with justice. Pretending to deal with matters of pure reason, it constantly though surreptitiously proceeds on the methods of applied logic; its conclusions are as fallacious logically as they are experimentally. The laws of thought are formal, and are as binding in transcendental subjects as in those which concern phenomena.

The real bearing of this law can, it appears to me, best be derived from a study of its mathematical expression. This is, according to the notation of Professor Boole, $x^2=x$. As such, it presents a fundamental equation of thought, and it is because it is of the second degree that we classify in pairs or opposites. This equation can only be satisfied by assigning to x the value of 1 or 0. The “universal type of form” is therefore $x(1-x)=0$.

This algebraic notation shows that there is, not two, but only one thought in the antithesis; that it is made up of a thought and its expressed limit; and, therefore, that the so-called “law of contradictories” does not concern contradictories at all, in pure logic. This result was seen, though not clearly, by Dr. Thompson, who indicated the proper relation of the members of the formula as a positive and a privative. He, however, retained Hamilton’s doctrine that “privative conceptions enter into and assist the higher processes of the reason in all that it can know of the absolute and infinite;” that we must, “from the seen realize an unseen world, not by extending to the latter the properties of the former, but by assigning to it attributes entirely opposite.”¹⁵

The error that vitiates all such reasoning is the assumption that the privative is an independent thought, that a thought and its limitation are two thoughts; whereas they are but the two aspects of the one thought, like two sides to the one disc, and the absurdity of speaking of them as separate thoughts is as great as to speak of a curve seen from its concavity as a different thing from the same curve regarded from its convexity. The privative can help us nowhere and to nothing; the positive only can assist our reasoning.

This elevation of the privative into a contrary, or a contradictory, has been the bane of metaphysical reasoning. From it has arisen the doctrine of the synthesis of an affirmative and a negative into a higher conception, reconciling them both. This is the maxim of the Hegelian logic, which starts from the synthesis of Being and Not-being into the Becoming, a very ancient doctrine, long since offered as an explanation of certain phenomena, which I shall now touch upon.

A thought and its privative alone – that is, a quality and its negative – cannot lead to a more comprehensive thought. It is devoid of relation and barren. In pure logic this is always the case, and must be so. In concrete thought it may be otherwise. There are certain propositions in which the negative is a reciprocal quality, quite as positive as that which it is set over against. The members of such a proposition are what are called “true contraries.” To whatever they apply as qualities, they leave no middle ground. If a thing is not one of them, it is the other. There is no third possibility. An object is either red or not red; if not red, it may be one of many colors. But if we say that all laws are either concrete or abstract, then we know that a law not concrete has all the properties of one which is abstract. We must examine, then, this third law of thought in its applied forms in order to understand its correct use.

It will be observed that there is an assumption of space or time in many propositions having the form of the excluded middle. They are only true under given conditions. “All gold is fusible or not,” means that some is fusible at the time. If all gold be already fused, it does not hold good. This distinction was noted by Kant in his discrimination between *synthetic* judgments, which assume other conditions; and *analytic* judgments, which look only at the members of the proposition.

Only the latter satisfy the formal law, for the proposition must not look outside of itself for its completion. Most analytic propositions cannot extend our knowledge beyond their immediate statement. If A is either B or not B, and it is shown not to be B, it is left uncertain what A may be. The

¹⁵ *An Outline of the Necessary Laws of Thought*, p. 113 (New York, 1860).

class of propositions referred to do more than this, inasmuch as they present alternative conceptions, mutually exhaustive, each the privative of the other. Of these two contraries, the one always evokes the other; neither can be thought except in relation to the other. They do not arise from the dichotomic process of classification, but from the polar relations of things. Their relation is not in the mind but in themselves, a real externality. The distinction between such as spring from the former and the latter is the most important question in philosophy.

To illustrate by examples, we familiarly speak of heat and cold, and to say a body is not hot is as much as to say it is cold. But every physicist knows that cold is merely a diminution of heat, not a distinct form of force. The absolute zero may be reached by the abstraction of all heat, and then the cold cannot increase. So, life and death are not true contraries, for the latter is not anything real but a mere privative, a quantitative diminution of the former, growing less to an absolute zero where it is wholly lost.

Thus it is easy to see that the Unconditioned exists only as a part of the idea of the Conditioned, the Unknowable as the foil of the Knowable; and the erecting of these mere privatives, these negatives, these shadows, into substances and realities, and then setting them up as impassable barriers to human thought, is one of the worst pieces of work that metaphysics has been guilty of.

The like does not hold in true contrasts. Each of them has an existence as a positive, and is never lost in a zero of the other. The one is always thought in relation to the other. Examples of these are subject and object, absolute and relative, mind and matter, person and consciousness, time and space. When any one of these is thought, the other is assumed. It is vain to attempt their separation. Thus those philosophers who assert that all knowledge is relative, are forced to maintain this assertion, to wit, All knowledge is relative, is nevertheless absolute, and thus they falsify their own position. So also, those others who say all mind is a property of matter, assume in this sentence the reality of an idea apart from matter. Some have argued that space and time can be conceived independently of each other; but their experiments to show it do not bear repetition.

All true contraries are universals. A universal concept is one of “maximum extension,” as logicians say, that is, it is without limit. The logical limitation of such a universal is not its negation, but its contrary, which is itself also a universal. The synthesis of the two can be in theory only, yet yields a real product. To illustrate this by a geometrical example, a straight line produced indefinitely is, logically considered, a universal. Its antithesis or true contrary is not a crooked line, as might be supposed, but the straight line which runs at right angles to it. Their synthesis is not the line which bisects their angle but that formed by these contraries continually uniting, that is, the arc of a circle, the genesis of which is theoretically the union of two such lines. Again, time can only be measured by space, space by time; they are true universals and contraries; their synthesis is *motion*, a conception which requires them both and is completed by them. Or again, the philosophical extremes of downright materialism and idealism are each wholly true, yet but half the truth. The insoluble enigmas that either meets in standing alone are kindred to those which puzzled the old philosophers in the sophisms relating to motion, as, for instance, that as a body cannot move where it is and still less where it is not, therefore it cannot move at all. Motion must recognise both time and space to be comprehensible. As a true contrary constantly implies the existence of its opposite, we cannot take a step in right reasoning without a full recognition of both.

This relation of contraries to the higher conception which logically must include them is one of the well-worn problems of the higher metaphysics.

The proper explanation would seem to be, as suggested above, that the synthesis of contraries is capable of formal expression only, but not of interpretation. In pursuing the search for their union we pass into a realm of thought not unlike that of the mathematician when he deals with hypothetical quantities, those which can only be expressed in symbols – $\sqrt{1}$ for example, – but uses them to good purpose in reaching real results. The law does not fail, but its operations can no longer be expressed

under material images. They are symbolic and for speculative thought alone, though pregnant with practical applications.

As I have hinted, in all real contraries it is theoretically possible to accept either the one or the other. As in mathematics, all motion can be expressed either under formulas of initial motion (mechanics), or of continuous motion (kinematics), or as all force can be expressed as either static or as dynamic force; in either case the other form assuming a merely hypothetical or negative position; so the logic of quality is competent to represent all existence as ideal or as material, all truth as absolute or all as relative, or even to express the universe in formulæ of being or of not-being. This perhaps was what Heraclitus meant when he propounded his dark saying: “All things are *and* are not.” He added that “All is not,” is truer than “All is.” Previous to his day, Buddha Sakyamuni had said: “He who has risen to the perception of the not-Being, to the Unconditioned, the Universal, his path is difficult to understand, like the flight of birds in the air.”¹⁶ Perhaps even he learned his lore from some older song of the Veda, one of which ends, “Thus have the sages, meditating in their souls, explained away the fetters of being by the not-being.”¹⁷ The not-being, as alone free from space and time, impressed these sages as the more real of the two, the only absolute.

The error of assigning to the one universal a preponderance over the other arose from the easy confusion of pure with applied thought. The synthesis of contraries exists in the formal law alone, and this is difficult to keep before the mind. In concrete displays they are forever incommensurate. One seems to exclude the other. To see them correctly we must there treat them as alternates. We may be competent, for instance, to explain all phenomena of mind by organic processes; and equally competent to explain all organism as effects of mind; but we must never suppose an immediate identity of the two; this is only to be found in the formal law common to both; still less should we deny the reality of either. Each exhausts the universe; but at every step each presupposes the other; their synthesis is life, a concept hopelessly puzzling unless regarded in all its possible displays as made up of both.

This indicates also the limits of explanation. By no means every man’s reason knows when it has had enough. The less it is developed, the further is it from such knowledge. This is plainly seen in children, who often do not rest satisfied with a really satisfactory explanation. It is of first importance to be able to recognize what is a good reason.

I may first say what it is *not*. It is not a *cause*. This is nothing more than a prior arrangement of the effect; the reason for an occurrence is never assigned by showing its cause. Nor is it a *caprice*, that is, motiveless volition, or will as a motor. In this sense, the “will of God” is no good reason for an occurrence. Nor is it *fate*, or physical necessity. This is denying there is any explanation to give.

The reason can only be satisfied with an aliment consubstantial with itself. Nothing material like cause, nor anything incomprehensible like caprice, meets its demands. Reason is allied to order, system and purpose above all things. That which most completely answers to these will alone satisfy its requirements. They are for an ideal of order. Their complete satisfaction is obtained in universal types and measures, pure abstractions, which are not and cannot be real. The *formal law* is the limit of explanation of phenomena, beyond which a sound intellect will ask nothing. It fulfils all the requirements of reason, and leaves nothing to be desired.

Those philosophers, such as Herbert Spencer, who teach that there is some incogitable “nature” of something which is the immanent “cause” of phenomena, delude themselves with words. The history and the laws of a phenomenon *are* its nature, and there is no chimerical something beyond them. They are exhaustive. They fully answer the question *why*, as well as the question *how*.¹⁸

¹⁶ *The Dhamapada*, verse 93.

¹⁷ Koppen, *Der Buddhismus*, s. 30.

¹⁸ Spencer in assuming an “unknowable universal causal agent and source of things,” as “the nature of the power manifested in phenomena,” and in calling this the idea common to both religion and “ideal science,” fell far behind Comte, who expressed the immovable position, not only of positive science but of all intelligence, in these words: “Le véritable esprit positif consiste surtout à

For it is important to note that the word “law” is not here used in the sense which Blackstone gives to it, a “rule of conduct;” nor yet in that which science assigns to it, a “physical necessity.” Law in its highest sense is the type or form, perceived by reason as that toward which phenomena tend, but which they always fail to reach. It was shown by Kant that all physical laws depend for their validity on logical laws. These are not authoritative, like the former, but purposive only. But their purpose is clear, to wit, the attainment of proportion, consistency or truth. As this purpose is reached only in the abstract form, this alone gives us the absolutely true in which reason can rest.

In the concrete, matter shows the law in its efforts toward form, mind in its struggle for the true. The former is guided by physical force, and the extinction of the aberrant. The latter, in its highest exhibition in a conscious intelligence, can alone guide itself by the representation of law, by the sense of Duty. Such an intelligence has both the faculty to see and the power to choose and appropriate to its own behoof, and thus to build itself up out of those truths which are “from everlasting unto everlasting.”

A purely formal truth of this kind as something wholly apart from phenomena, not in any way connected with the knowledge derived through the senses, does not admit of doubt and can never be changed by future conquests of the reasoning powers. We may rest upon it as something more permanent than matter, greater than Nature.

Such was the vision that inspired the noble lines of Wordsworth: —

“What are things eternal? – Powers depart,
Possessions vanish, and opinions change,
And passions hold a fluctuating seat;
But, by the storms of circumstance unshaken,
And subject neither to eclipse nor wane,
Duty exists; immutably survive
For our support, the measures and the forms
Which an abstract intelligence supplies;
Whose kingdom is where time and space are not.”

There is no danger that we shall not know what is thus true when we see it. The sane reason cannot reject it. “The true,” says Novalis, “is that which we cannot help believing.” It is the *perceptio per solam essentiam* of Spinoza. It asks not faith nor yet testimony; it stands in need of neither.

Mathematical truth is of this nature. We cannot, if we try, believe that twice two is five. Hence the unceasing effort of all science is to give its results mathematical expression. Such truth so informs itself with will that once received, it is never thereafter alienated; obedience to it does not impair freedom. Necessity and servitude do not arise from correct reasoning, but through the limitation of fallacies. They have nothing to do with

“Those transcendent truths
Of the pure intellect, that stand as laws
Even to Thy Being’s infinite majesty.”

It is not derogatory, but on the contrary essential to the conception of the Supreme Reason, the Divine Logos, to contemplate its will as in accord and one with the forms of abstract truth. “The ‘will of God’” says Spinoza, “is the refuge of ignorance; the true Will is the spirit of right reasoning.”

substituer toujours l'étude des *lois* invariables des phénomènes à celles de leurs *causes* proprement dites, premières ou finales, en un mot la détermination du *comment* à celle du *pourquoi*.” —*Système de Politique Positive*, i. p. 47. Compare Spencer's Essay entitled, “Reasons for dissenting from Comte.” The purposive law is the only final cause which reason allows. Comte's error lay in ignoring this class of laws.

This identification of the forms of thought with the Absolute is almost as old as philosophy itself. The objections to it have been that no independent existence attaches to these forms; that they prescribe the conditions of thought but are not thought itself, still less being; that they hold good to thought as known to man's reason, but perchance not to thought in other intelligences; and, therefore, that even if through the dialectical development of thought a consistent idea of the universe were framed, that is, one wherein every fact was referred to its appropriate law, still would remain the inquiry, Is this the last and absolute truth?

The principal points in these objections are that abstract thought does not postulate being; and that possibly all intelligence is not one in kind. To the former objection the most satisfactory reply has been offered by Professor J. F. Ferrier. He has shown that the conception of object, even ideal object, implies the conception of self in the subject; and upon this proposition which has been fully recognized even by those who differ from him widely, he grounds the existence of Supreme Thought as a logical unity. Those who would pursue this branch of the subject further, I would refer to his singularly able work.¹⁹

The latter consideration will come up in a later chapter. If it be shown that all possible intelligence proceeds on the same laws as that of man, and that the essence of this is activity, permanence, or truth – synonymous terms – then the limitation of time ceases, and existence not in time but without regard to time, is a necessary consequence. Knowledge through intellection can alone reach a truth independent of time; that through sensation is always relative, true for the time only. The former cannot be expressed without the implication of the conceptions of the universal and the eternal as “dominant among the subjects of thought with which Logic is concerned;”²⁰ and hence the relation which the intellect bears to the absolute is a real and positive one.

THE EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

SUMMARY

The Religious Sentiment is made up of emotions and thoughts. The emotions are historically first and most prominent. Of all concerned, Fear is the most obvious. Hope is its correlate. Both suppose Experience, and a desire to repeat or avoid it. Hence a Wish is the source of both emotions, and the proximate element of religion. The significance of desire as the postulate of development. The influence of fear and hope. The conditions which encourage them.

The success of desire fails to gratify the religious sentiment. The alternative left is eternal repose, or else action, unending yet which aims at nothing beyond. The latter is reached through Love. The result of love is *continuance*. Illustrations of this. Sexual love and the venereal sense in religions. The hermaphrodite gods. The virgin mother. Mohammed was the first to proclaim a deity above sex. The conversion of sexual and religious emotion exemplified from insane delusions. The element of fascination. The love of God. Other emotional elements in religions.

The religious wish defined to be one *whose fruition depends upon unknown power*. To be religious, one must desire and be ignorant. The unknown power is of religious interest only in so far as it is believed to be in relation to men's desires. In what sense ignorance is the mother of devotion.

¹⁹ *The Institutes of Metaphysic*, 2d Ed. See also Bain, *The Emotions and the Will*, the closing note.

²⁰ Boole, *Laws of Thought*, p. 401.

CHAPTER II

THE EMOTIONAL ELEMENTS OF THE RELIGIOUS SENTIMENT

The discussion in the last chapter illustrated how closely pain and pleasure, truth and error, and thought and its laws have been related to the forms of religions, and their dogmatic expressions. The character of the relatively and absolutely true was touched upon, and the latter, it was indicated, if attainable at all by human intelligence, must be found in the formal laws of that intelligence, those which constitute its nature and essence, and in the conclusions which such a premise forces upon the reason. The necessity of this preliminary inquiry arose from the fact that every historical religion claims the monopoly of the absolutely true, and such claims can be tested only when we have decided as to whether there is such truth, and if there is, where it is to be sought. Moreover, as religions arise from some mental demand, the different manifestations of mind, – sensation, emotion and intellect – must be recognized and understood.

Passing now to a particular description of the Religious Sentiment, it may roughly be defined to be the feeling which prompts to thoughts or acts of worship. It is, as I have said, a complex product, made up of emotions and ideas, developing with the growth of mind, wide-reaching in its maturity, but meagre enough at the start. We need not expect to find in its simplest phases that insight and tender feeling which we attribute to the developed religious character. “The scent of the blossom is not in the bulb.” Its early and ruder forms, however, will best teach the mental elements which are at its root.

The problem is, to find out why the primitive man figured to himself any gods at all; what necessity of his nature or his condition led him so universally to assume their existence, and seek their aid or their mercy? The conditions of the solution are, that it hold good everywhere and at all times; that it enable us to trace in every creed and cult the same sentiments which first impelled man to seek a god and adore him. Why is it that now and in remotest history, here and in the uttermost regions, there is and always has been this that we call *religion*? There must be some common reason, some universal peculiarity in man’s mental formation which prompts, which forces him, him alone of animals, and him without exception, to this discourse and observance of religion. What this is, it is my present purpose to try to find out.

In speaking of the development of mind through organism, it was seen that the emotions precede the reason in point of time. This is daily confirmed by observation. The child is vastly more emotional than the man, the savage than his civilized neighbor. Castren, the Russian traveller, describes the Tartars and Lapps as a most nervous folk. When one shocks them with a sudden noise, they almost fall into convulsions. Among the North American Indians, falsely called a phlegmatic race, nervous diseases are epidemic to an almost unparalleled extent. Intense thought, on the other hand, as I have before said, tends to lessen and annul the emotions. Intellectual self-consciousness is adverse to them.

But religion, we are everywhere told, is largely a matter of the emotions. The pulpit constantly resounds with appeals to the feelings, and not unfrequently with warnings against the intellect. “I acknowledge myself,” says the pious non-juror, William Law, “a declared enemy to the use of reason in religion;” and he often repeats his condemnation of “the labor-learned professors of far-fetched book-riches.”²¹ As the eye is the organ of sight, says one whose thoughts on such matters equal in depth those of Pascal, so the heart is the organ of religion.²² In popular physiology, the heart is the seat of the emotions as the brain is that of intellect. It is appropriate, therefore, that we commence our analysis of the religious sentiment with the emotions which form such a prominent part of it.

²¹ *Address to the Clergy*, pp. 42, 43, 67, 106, etc.

²² E. von Hardenberg [Novalis], *Werke*, s. 364.

Now, whether we take the experience of an individual or the history of a tribe, whether we have recourse to the opinions of religious teachers or irreligious philosophers, we find them nigh unanimous that the emotion which is the prime motor of religious thought is *fear*. I need not depend upon the well-known line of Petronius Arbiter

Primus in orbe deos fecit timor;

, for there is plenty of less heterodox authority. The worthy Bishop Hall says, “Seldom doth God seize upon the heart without a vehement concussion going before. There must be some blustering and flashes of the law. We cannot be too awful in our fear.”²³ Bunyan, in his beautiful allegory of the religious life, lets Christian exclaim: “Had even Obstinate himself felt what I have felt of the terrors of the yet unseen, he would not thus lightly have given us the *back*.” The very word for God in the Semitic tongues means “fear;”²⁴ Jacob swore to Laban, “by Him whom Isaac feared;” and Moses warned his people that “God is come, that his fear may be before your faces.” To *venerate* is from a Sanscrit root (*sêv*), to be afraid of.

But it is needless to amass more evidence on this point. Few will question that fear is the most prominent emotion at the awakening of the religious sentiments. Let us rather proceed to inquire more minutely what fear is.

I remarked in the previous chapter that “the emotions fall naturally into a dual classification, in which the one involves pleasurable or elevating, the other painful or depressing conditions.” Fear comes of course under the latter category, as it is essentially a painful and depressing state of mind. But it corresponds with and implies the presence of Hope, for he who has nothing to hope has nothing to fear.²⁵ “There is no hope without fear, as there is no fear without hope,” says Spinoza. “For he who is in fear has some doubt whether what he fears will take place, and consequently hopes that it will not.”

We can go a step further, and say that in the mental process the hope must necessarily precede the fear. In the immediate moment of losing a pleasurable sensation we hope and seek for its repetition. The mind, untutored by experience, confidently looks for its return. The hope only becomes dashed by fear when experience has been associated with disappointment. Hence we must first look to enjoy a good before we can be troubled by a fear that we shall not enjoy it; we must first lay a plan before we can fear its failure. In modern Christianity hope, hope of immortal happiness, is more conspicuous than fear; but that hope is also based on the picture of a pleasant life made up from experience.

Both hope and fear, therefore, have been correctly called secondary or derived emotions, as they presuppose experience and belief, experience of a pleasure akin to that which we hope, belief that we can attain such a pleasure. “We do not hope first and enjoy afterwards, but we enjoy first and hope afterwards.”²⁶ Having enjoyed, we seek to do so again. A desire, in other words, must precede either Hope or Fear. They are twin sisters, born of a Wish.

Thus my analysis traces the real source of the religious sentiment, so far as the emotions are concerned, to a Wish; and having arrived there, I find myself anticipated by the words of one of the most reflective minds of this century: “All religion rests on a mental want; we hope, we fear, because we wish.”²⁷ And long before this conclusion was reached by philosophers, it had been expressed in

²³ *Treatises Devotional and Practical*, p. 188. London, 1836.

²⁴ In Aramaic *dachla* means either a god or fear. The Arabic Allah and the Hebrew Eloah are by some traced to a common root, signifying to tremble, to show fear, though the more usual derivation is from one meaning to be strong.

²⁵ “Wen die Hoffnung, den hat auch die Furcht verlassen.” Arthur Schopenhauer, *Parerga und Paralipomena*. Bd. ii. s. 474.

²⁶ Alexander Bain, *On the Study of Character*, p. 128. See also his remarks in his work, *The Emotions and the Will*, p. 84, and in his notes to James Mill’s *Analysis of the Mind*, vol. i., pp. 124-125.

²⁷ Wilhelm von Humboldt’s *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. vii., s. 62.

unconscious religious thought in myths, in the Valkyria, the Wish-maidens, for instance, who carried the decrees of Odin to earth.

This is no mean origin, for a wish, a desire, conscious or unconscious, in sensation only or in emotion as well, is the fundamental postulate of every sort of development, of improvement, of any possible future, of life of any kind, mental or physical. In its broadest meaning, science and history endorse the exclamation of the unhappy Obermann: “*La perte vraiment irréparable est celle des désirs.*”²⁸

The sense of unrest, the ceaseless longing for something else, which is the general source of all desires and wishes, is also the source of all endeavor and of all progress. Physiologically, it is the effort of our organization to adapt itself to the ever varying conditions which surround it; intellectually, it is the struggle to arrive at truth; in both, it is the effort to attain a fuller life.

As stimuli to action, therefore, the commonest and strongest of all emotions are Fear and Hope. They are the emotional correlates of pleasure and pain, which rule the life of sensation. Their closer consideration may well detain us awhile.

In the early stages of religious life, whether in an individual or a nation, the latter is half concealed. Fear is more demonstrative, and as it is essentially destructive, its effects are more sudden and visible. In its acuter forms, as Fright and Terror, it may blanch the hair in a night, blight the mind and destroy the life of the individual. As Panic, it is eminently epidemic, carrying crowds and armies before it; while in the aggravated form of Despair it swallows up all other emotions and prompts to self destruction. Its physiological effect is a direct impairment of vitality.

Hope is less intense and more lasting than fear. It stimulates the system, elates with the confidence of control, strengthens with the courage derived from a conviction of success, and bestows in advance the imagined joy of possession. As Feuchtersleben happily expresses it: “Hope preserves the principle of duration when other parts are threatened with destruction, and is a manifestation of the innermost psychical energy of Life.”²⁹

Both emotions powerfully prompt to action, and to that extent are opposed to thought. Based on belief, they banish uncertainty, and antagonize doubt and with it investigation. The religion in which they enter as the principal factors will be one intolerant of opposition, energetic in deed, and generally hostile to an unbiased pursuit of the truth.

Naturally those temperaments and those physical conditions which chiefly foster these emotions will tend to religious systems in which they are prominent. Let us see what some of these conditions are.

It has always been noticed that impaired vitality predisposes to fear. The sick and feeble are more timorous than the strong and well. Further predisposing causes of the same nature are insufficient nourishment, cold, gloom, malaria, advancing age and mental worry. For this reason nearly invariably after a general financial collapse we witness a religious “revival.” Age, full of care and fear, is thus prompted to piety, willing, as La Rochefoucauld remarks, to do good by precept when it can no longer do evil by example. The inhabitants of swampy, fever-ridden districts are usually devout. The female sex, always the weaker and often the worsted one in the struggle for existence, is when free more religious than the male; but with them hope is more commonly the incentive than fear.

Although thus prominent and powerful, desire, so far as its fruition is pleasure, has expressed but the lowest emotions of the religious sentiment. Something more than this has always been asked by sensitively religious minds. Success fails to bring the gratification it promises. The wish granted, the mind turns from it in satiety. Not this, after all, was what we sought.

The acutest thinkers have felt this. Pascal in his *Pensées* has such expressions as these: “The present is never our aim. The future alone is our object.” “Forever getting ready to be happy, it is

²⁸ De Senancourt, *Obermann*, Lettre xli.

²⁹ *Elements of Medical Psychology*, p. 331.

certain we never can be.” “’Tis the combat pleases us and not the victory. As soon as that is achieved, we have had enough of the spectacle. So it is in play, so it is in the search for truth. We never pursue objects, but we pursue the pursuit of objects.” But no one has stated it more boldly than Lessing when he wrote: “If God held in his right hand all truth, and in his left the one unceasingly active desire for truth, although bound up with the law that I should forever err, I should choose with humility the left and say: ‘Give me this, Father. The pure truth is for thee alone.’”³⁰ The pleasure seems to lie not in the booty but in the battle, not in gaining the stakes but in playing the game, not in the winning but in the wooing, not in the discovery of truth but in the search for it.

What is left for the wise, but to turn, as does the preacher, from this delusion of living, where laughter is mad and pleasure is vain, and praise the dead which are dead more than the living which are yet alive, or to esteem as better than both he that hath never been?

Such is the conclusion of many faiths. Wasted with combat, the mortal longs for the rest prepared for the weary. Buddha taught the extinguishment in Nirvana; the Brahman portrays the highest bliss as *shanti*, complete and eternal repose; and that the same longing was familiar to ancient Judaism, and has always been common to Christianity, numerous evidences testify.³¹ Few epitaphs are more common than those which speak of the mortal resting *in pace*, *in quiete*.

The supposition at the root of these longings is that action must bring fatigue and pain, and though it bring pleasure too, it is bought too dearly. True in fact, I have shown that this conflicts with the theory of perfect life, even organic life. The highest form of life is the most unceasing living; its functions ask for their completest well being constant action, not satisfaction. That general feeling of health and strength, that *sens de bien être*, which goes with the most perfect physical life, is experienced only when all the organs are in complete working order and doing full duty. They impart to the whole frame a desire of motion. Hence the activity of the young and healthy as contrasted with the inertness of the exhausted and aged.

How is it possible to reconcile this ideal of life, still more the hope of everlasting life, with the acknowledged vanity of desire? It is accomplished through the medium of an emotion which more than any I have touched upon reveals the character of the religious sentiment – Love. This mighty but protean feeling I shall attempt to define on broader principles than has hitherto been done. The vague and partial meanings assigned it have led to sad confusion in the studies of religions. In the language of feeling, love is a passion; but it does not spring from feeling alone. It is far more fervid when it rises through intellect than through sense. “Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love,” says the fair Rosalind; and though her saying is not very true as to the love of sense, it is far less true as to the love of intellect. The martyrs to science and religion, to principles and faith, multiply a hundred-fold those to the garden god. The spell of the idea is what

“Turns ruin into laughter and death into dreaming.”

Such love destroys the baser passion of sense, or transfigures it so that we know it no longer. The idea-driven is callous to the blandishments of beauty, for his is a love stronger than the love to woman. The vestal, the virgin, the eunuch for the kingdom of heaven’s sake are the exemplars of the love to God.

What common trait so marks these warring products of mind, that we call them by one name? In what is all love the same? The question is pertinent, for the love of woman, the love of neighbor, the love of country, the love of God, have made the positive side of most religions, the burden of their teachings. The priests of Cotytto and Venus, Astarte and Melitta, spoke but a more sensuous

³⁰ Lessing’s *Gesammelte Werke*. B. ii. s. 443 (Leipzig, 1855).

³¹ See Exodus, xxiii. 12; Psalms, lv. 6; Isaiah, xxx. 15; Jeremiah, vi. 16; Hebrews, v. 9. So St. Augustine: “et nos post opera nostra sabbato vitæ eternæ requiescamus in te.” *Confessionum Lib.* xiii. cap. 36.

version of the sermon of the aged apostle to the Ephesians, – shortest and best of all sermons – “Little children, love one another.”³²

The earliest and most constant sign of reason is “working for a remote object.”³³ Nearly everything we do is as a step to something beyond. Forethought, conscious provision, is the measure of intelligence. But there must be something which is the object, the aim, the end-in-view of rational action, which is sought for itself alone, not as instrumental to something else. Such an object, when recognized, inspires the sentiment of love. It springs from the satisfaction of reason.

This conclusion as to the nature of love has long been recognized by thinkers. Richard Baxter defined it as “the volition of the end,” “the motion of the soul that tendeth to the end,” and more minutely, “the will’s volition of good apprehended by the understanding.”³⁴ In similar language Bishop Butler explains it as “the resting in an object as an end.”³⁵ Perhaps I can better these explanations by the phrase, *Love is the mental impression of rational action whose end is in itself*.

Now this satisfaction is found only in one class of efforts, namely, those whose result is continuity, persistence, in fine, *preservation*. This may be toward the individual, self-love, whose object is the continuance of personal existence; toward the other sex, where the hidden aim is the perpetuation of the race; toward one’s fellows, where the giving of pleasure and the prevention of pain mean the maintenance of life; toward one’s country, as patriotism; and finally toward the eternally true, which as alone the absolutely permanent and preservative, inspires a love adequate and exhaustive of its conception, casting out both hope and fear, the pangs of desire as well as the satiety of fruition.

In one or other of these forms love has at all times been the burden of religion: the glad tidings it has always borne have been “love on earth.” The Phoenix in Egyptian myth appeared yearly as newly risen, but was ever the same bird, and bore the egg from which its *parent* was to have birth. So religions have assumed the guise in turn of self-love, sex-love, love of country and love of humanity, cherishing in each the germ of that highest love which alone is the parent of its last and only perfect embodiment.

Favorite of these forms was sex-love. “We find,” observes a recent writer, “that all religions have engaged and concerned themselves with the sexual passion. From the times of phallic worship through Romish celibacy down to Mormonism, theology has linked itself with man’s reproductive instincts.”³⁶ The remark is just, and is most conspicuously correct in strongly emotional temperaments. “The devotional feelings,” writes the Rev. Frederick Robertson in one of his essays, “are often singularly allied to the animal nature; they conduct the unconscious victim of feelings that appear divine into a state of life at which the world stands aghast.” Fanaticism is always united with either excessive lewdness or desperate asceticism. The physiological performance of the generative function is sure to be attacked by religious bigotry.

So prominent is this feature that attempts have been made to explain nearly all symbolism and mythology as types of the generative procedure and the reproductive faculty of organism. Not only the pyramids and sacred mountains, the obelisks of the Nile and the myths of light have received this interpretation, but even such general symbols as the spires of churches, the cross of Christendom and the crescent of Islam.³⁷

³² “Filioli, diligite alterutrum.” This is the “testamentum Johannis,” as recorded from tradition by St. Jerome in his notes to the Epistle to the Galatians.

³³ Alexander Bain, *The Senses and the Intellect*, Chap. I.

³⁴ *A Christian Directory*. Part I. Chap. III.

³⁵ “The very nature of affection, the idea itself, necessarily implies resting in its object as an end.” *Fifteen Sermons by Joseph Butler, late Lord Bishop of Durham*, Preface, and p. 147 (London, 1841).

³⁶ Dr. J. Milner Fothergill, *Journal of Mental Science*, Oct. 1874, p. 198.

³⁷ The most recent work on the topic is that of Messrs. Westropp and Wake, *The Influence of the Phallic Idea on the Religions of Antiquity*, London, 1874.

Without falling into the error of supposing that any one meaning or origin can be assigned such frequent symbols, we may acknowledge that love, in its philosophical sense, is closely akin to the mystery of every religion. That, on occasions, love of sex gained the mastery over all other forms, is not to be doubted; but that at all times this was so, is a narrow, erroneous view, not consistent with a knowledge of the history of psychical development.

Sex-love, as a sentiment, is a cultivated growth. All it is at first is a rude satisfaction of the erethism. The wild tribes of California had their pairing seasons when the sexes were in heat, “as regularly as the deer, the elk and the antelope.”³⁸ In most tongues of the savages of North America there are no tender words, as “dear,” “darling,” and the like.³⁹ No desire of offspring led to their unions. The women had few children, and their fathers paid them little attention. The family instinct appears in conditions of higher culture, in Judea, Greece, Rome and ancient Germany. Procreation instead of lust was there the aim of marriage. To-day, mere sentiment is so much in the ascendant that both these elements are often absent. There is warm affection without even instinctive knowledge of the design of the bond assumed.⁴⁰

Those who would confine the promptings of the passion of reproduction as it appears in man to its objects as shown in lower animals, know little how this wondrous emotion has acted as man’s mentor as well as paraclete in his long and toilsome conflict with the physical forces.

The venereal sense is unlike the other special senses in that it is general, as well as referable to special organs and nerves. In its psychological action it “especially contributes to the development of sympathies which connect man not only with his coevals, but with his fellows of all preceding and succeeding generations as well. Upon it is erected this vast superstructure of intellect, of social and moral sentiment, of voluntary effort and endeavor.”⁴¹ Of all the properties of organized matter, that of transmitting form and life is the most wonderful; and if we examine critically the physical basis of the labors and hopes of mankind, if we ask what prompts its noblest and holiest longings, we shall find them, in the vast majority of instances, directly traceable to this power. No wonder then that religion, which we have seen springs from man’s wants and wishes, very often bears the distinct trace of their origin in his reproductive functions. The liens of the family are justly deemed sacred, and are naturally associated with whatever the mind considers holy.

The duty of a citizen to become a father was a prominent feature in many ancient religions. How much honor the sire of many sons had in Rome and Palestine is familiar to all readers. No warrior, according to German faith, could gain entrance to Valhalla unless he had begotten a son. Thus the preservation of the species was placed under the immediate guardianship of religion.

Such considerations explain the close connection of sexual thoughts with the most sacred mysteries of faith. In polytheisms, the divinities are universally represented as male or female, virile and fecund. The processes of nature were often held to be maintained through such celestial nuptials.

Yet stranger myths followed those of the loves of the gods. Religion, as the sentiment of continuance, finding its highest expression in the phenomenon of generation, had to reconcile this with the growing concept of a divine unity. Each separate god was magnified in praises as self-sufficient. Earth, or nature, or the season is one, yet brings forth all. How embody this in concrete form?

The startling refuge was had in the image of a deity at once of both sexes. Such avowedly were Mithras, Janus, Melitta, Cybele, Aphrodite, Agdistis; indeed nearly all the Syrian, Egyptian, and Italic gods, as well as Brahma, and, in the esoteric doctrine of the Cabala, even Jehovah, whose

³⁸ Schoolcraft’s *History and Statistics of the Indian Tribes*, Vol. iv. p. 224.

³⁹ Richardson, *Arctic Expedition*, p. 412.

⁴⁰ Most physicians have occasion to notice the almost entire loss in modern life of the instinctive knowledge of the sex relation. Sir James Paget has lately treated of the subject in one of his *Clinical Lectures* (London, 1875).

⁴¹ Dr. J. P. Catlow, *Principles of Aesthetic Medicine*, p. 112. This thoughtful though obscure writer has received little recognition even in the circle of professional readers.

female aspect is represented by the “Shekinah.” To this abnormal condition the learned have applied the adjectives epicene, androgynous, hermaphrodite, arrenothele. In art it is represented by a blending of the traits of both sexes. In the cult it was dramatically set forth by the votaries assuming the attire of the other sex, and dallying with both.⁴² The phallic symbol superseded all others; and in Cyprus, Babylonia and Phrygia, once in her life, at least, must every woman submit to the embrace of a stranger.

Such rites were not mere sensualities. The priests of these divinities often voluntarily suffered emasculation. None but a eunuch could become high priest of Cybele. Among the sixteen million worshippers of Siva, whose symbol is the Lingam, impurity is far less prevalent than among the sister sects of Hindoo religions.⁴³ To the Lingayets, the member typifies abstractly the idea of life. Therefore they carve it on sepulchres, or, like the ancient nations of Asia Minor, they lay clay images of it on graves to intimate the hope of existence beyond the tomb.

This notion of a hermaphrodite deity is not “monstrous,” as it has been called. There lies a deep meaning in it. The gods are spirits, beings of another order, which the cultivated esthetic sense protests against classing as of one or the other gender. Never can the ideal of beauty, either physical or moral, be reached until the characteristics of sex are lost in the concept of the purely human. In the noblest men of history there has often been noted something feminine, a gentleness which is not akin to weakness; and the women whose names are ornaments to nations have displayed a calm greatness, not unwomanly but something more than belongs to woman. Art acknowledges this. In the Vatican Apollo we see masculine strength united with maidenly softness; and in the traditional face and figure of Christ a still more striking example how the devout mind conjoins the traits of both sexes to express the highest possibility of the species. “Soaring above the struggle in which the real is involved with its limitations, and free from the characteristics of gender, the ideal of beauty as well as the ideal of humanity, alike maintain a perfect sexual equilibrium.”⁴⁴

Another and more familiar expression of the religious emotion, akin to the belief in double-sexed deities, – nay, in its physiological aspect identical with it, as assuming sexual self-sufficiency, is the myth of the Virgin-Mother.

When Columbus first planted the cross on the shores of San Domingo, the lay brother Roman Pane, whom he sent forth to convert the natives of that island, found among them a story of a virgin Mamóna, whose son Yocaúna, a hero and a god, was chief among divinities, and had in the old times taught this simple people the arts of peace and guided them through the islands.⁴⁵ When the missionaries penetrated to the Iroquois, the Aztecs, the Mayas, and many other tribes, this same story was told them with such startling likeness to one they came to tell, that they felt certain either St. Thomas or Satan had got the start of them in America.

But had these pious men known as well as we do the gentile religions of the Old World, they would have seasoned their admiration. Long before Christianity was thought of, the myth of the Virgin-Mother of God was in the faith of millions, as we have had abundantly shown us of late years by certain expounders of Christian dogmas.

How is this strange, impossible belief to be explained? Of what secret, unconscious, psychological working was it the expression? Look at its result. It is that wherever this doctrine is developed the *status matrimonialis* is held to be less pure, less truly religious, than the *status virginitatis*. Such is the teaching to-day in Lhassa, in Rome; so it was in Yucatan, where, too, there were nunneries

⁴² This is probably what was condemned in Deuteronomy xxii. 5, and Romans, i. 26.

⁴³ “The worship of Siva is too severe, too stern for the softer emotions of love, and all his temples are quite free from any allusions to it.” – Ferguson, *Tree and Serpent Worship*, p. 71.

⁴⁴ W. von Humboldt, in his admirable essay *Ueber die Männliche und Weibliche Form* (*Werke*, Bd. I.). Elsewhere he adds: “In der Natur des Göttlichen strebt alles der Reinheit und Vollkommenheit des Gattungsbegriff entgegen.”

⁴⁵ I have collected the Haitian myths, chiefly from the manuscript *Historia Apologetica de las Indias Occidentales* of Las Casas, in an essay published in 1871, *The Arawack Language of Guiana in its Linguistic and Ethnological Relations*.

filled with spouses of God. I connect it with the general doctrine that chastity in either sex is more agreeable to God than marriage, and this belief, I think, very commonly arises at a certain stage of development of the religious sentiment, when it unconsciously recognises the indisputable fact that sex-love, whether in its form of love of woman, family, or nation, is not what that sentiment craves. This is first shown by rejecting the idea of sex-love in the birth of the god; then his priests and priestesses refuse its allurements, and deny all its claims, those of kindred, of country, of race, until the act of generation itself is held unholy and the thought of sex a sin. By such forcible though rude displays do they set forth their unconscious acknowledgment of that eternal truth: “He that loveth son or daughter more than Me, is not worthy of Me.”

The significance of these words is not that there is an antagonism in the forms of love. It is not that man should hate himself, as Pascal, following the teachings of the Church, so ably argued; nor that the one sex should be set over against the other in sterile abhorrence; nor yet that love of country and of kindred is incompatible with that toward the Supreme of thought; but it is that each of these lower, shallower, evanescent forms of emotion is and must be lost in, subordinated to, that highest form to which these words have reference. Reconciliation, not abnegation, is what they mean.

Even those religions which teach in its strictness the oneness of God have rarely separated from his personality the attribute of sex. He is the father, *pater et genitor*, of all beings. The monotheism which we find in Greece and India generally took this form. The ancient Hebrews emphasized the former, not the latter sense of the word, and thus depriving it of its more distinctive characteristics of sex, prepared the way for the teachings of Christianity, in which the Supreme Being always appears with the attributes of the male, but disconnected from the idea of generation.

Singularly enough, the efforts to which this latent incongruity prompts, even in persons speaking English, in which tongue the articles and adjectives have no genders, point back to the errors of an earlier age. A recent prayer by an eminent spiritualist commences: – “Oh Eternal Spirit, our Father and our Mother!” The expression illustrates how naturally arises the belief in a hermaphrodite god, when once sex is associated with deity.

Of all founders of religions, Mohammed first proclaimed a divinity without relation to sex. One of his earliest suras reads:

“He is God alone,
God the eternal.
He begetteth not, and is not begotten;
And there is none like unto him.”

And elsewhere: —

“He hath no spouse, neither hath he any offspring.”⁴⁶

While he expressly acknowledged the divine conception of Jesus, he denied the coarse and literal version of that doctrine in vogue among the ignorant Christians around him. Enlightened christendom, to-day, does not, I believe, differ from him on this point.

Such sexual religions do not arise, as the theory has hitherto been, from study and observation of the generative agencies in nature, but from the identity of object between love in sense and love in intellect, profane and sacred passion. The essence of each is *continuance*, preservation; the origin of each is subjective, personal; but the former has its root in sensation, the latter in reason.

The sex-difference in organisms, the “abhorrence of self-fertilization” which Mr. Darwin speaks of as so conspicuous and inexplicable a phenomenon, is but one example of the sway of a

⁴⁶ *The Koran*, Suras, cxii., lxii., and especially xix.

law which as action and reaction, thesis and antithesis, is common to both elementary motion and thought. The fertile and profound fancy of Greece delighted to prefigure this truth in significant symbols and myths. Love, Eros, is shown carrying the globe, or wielding the club of Hercules; he is the unknown spouse of Psyche, the soul; and from the primitive chaos he brings forth the ordered world, the Kosmos.

The intimate and strange relation between sensuality and religion, so often commented upon and denied, again proven, and always misinterpreted, thus receives a satisfactory explanation. Some singular manifestations of it, of significance in religious history, are presented by the records of insane delusions. They confirm what I have above urged, that the association is not one derived from observation through intellectual processes, but is a consequence of physiological connections, of identity of aim in the distinct realms of thought and emotion.

That eminent writer on mental diseases, Schroeder van der Kolk, when speaking of the forms of melancholy which arise from physical conditions, remarks: "The patient who is melancholy from disorders of the generative organs considers himself sinful. His depressed tone of mind passes over into religious melancholy; 'he is forsaken by God; he is lost.' All his afflictions have a religious color." In a similar strain, Feuchtersleben says: "In the female sex especially, the erotic delusion, unknown to the patient herself, often assumes the color of the religious."⁴⁷

⁴⁷ *Elements of Medical Psychology*, p. 281.

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