

ON CHERISHED FALLACIES OF TENDER MINDS.

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THERE is something amazingly inspiring about a person who boldly, bravely, unalterably and even nonchalantly does good for the sake of good and persists at the task in a determined and unswerving manner. Compared to this person the weak individual who must needs postulate gods and demons and punishments eternal and rewards everlasting—casting into objective form his purely subjective fancies because the process pleases him—is a poor piece of clay indeed.

William James has divided people into the tough and the tender minded. Let those bold persons above be then tough minded; let that other class, composed of those timorous souls of instinctive mental processes who absorb fallacy as the bread of life, and who regard their toughened fellows with a mixture of awe, hatred and contempt—let them be for us the tender minded. And it is quite true that to do good for the sake of doing good is no more rational or logical than to do evil for the sake of doing evil; but those hardy souls who stand like sentinels of virtue in a wicked world, without hope of reward and without fear of punishment; who persist in a course of action altogether *sui compos*, who manage to “suspend belief in the presence of an emotionally exciting idea.”¹ who are impervious to vituperation and immune to fallacy—these people are irritating beyond all peradventure to say the very least!

A man long since sicklied o'er with the pale cast of effeminacy and weakness lent by insipid religious dogma was of that type—the man Jesus. For he said in effect: “For the sake of ideals I shall live a life of pure idealism. You may say that it is impractical; you may insist that it is irrational; you may prove that it is useless. You may persecute me, revile me, condemn me, spit upon me, scourge me—yea, you may crucify me. Yet shall I defy you. For I

¹ William James, *Principles of Psychology*.

shall live pure idealism and shall show that this can be done for no other reward than the triumph of having done so." In a measure he reflected the aloofness from materialistic misfortune Epictetus had taught. Here were two souls toughened against the soporific fallacies which do numb the minds and stimulate the hearts of those of us who falter and stammer along, continually under the influence of some psychic alkaloid.

These psychic alkaloids, these cherished fallacies of tender minds, are the aspects objective reality is made to wear under the impress of our subjective beliefs. For we do have an overwhelming tendency to believe what it pleases us to believe. So much so that A. Clutton-Brock correctly quotes Nietzsche as saying that "all our beliefs are but efforts to make ourselves comfortable in a universe that is indifferent to us."² The universe is indifferent to us; its laws work out unalterably regardless of the wishes of puny man. But man rises superior to the universe by possessing the magic faculty of convincing himself that things are as he wishes them to be! There is no evil that has not somehow been demonstrated to be good; there is no torture that has not by someone been looked upon as a pleasure; there is nothing in the gamut from unpleasantness to catastrophe which cannot be regarded as a blessing in disguise if such fallacy makes us more comfortable. .

"To die is gain!" cried Paul in ecstasy, and to die for Christ's sake has ever been an approved pleasure, however superficial and however certainly vicarious that approval be on the part of the nodding limousine congregation napping at some fashionable first church. Mackenzie³ has explained how we at first find pleasure only in sensuous excitement, to evolve on through the stage of the more reflective Epicureans to attain, in some cases, the point where physical agony and mental distress are looked upon as the keenest pleasures. The frantic flagellants of an earlier age knew this art to perfection and enjoyed it hugely. The poet who sang "grow old along with me, the best is yet to be" was well versed in the process of convincing himself that things were really as he wished them to be. The mourner at the bier of one much beloved who asserts that 'twas better so after all finds solace in the same method, so great is our power to believe what we please in spite of adverse circumstances.

Dr. Johnson says somewhere that "Every man, however hopeless his pretensions may appear to all but himself, has some project

² Arthur Clutton-Brock, *Studies in Christianity*.

³ J. S. Mackenzie, *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*.

by which he hopes to rise in reputation; some art by which he imagines that the notice of the world will be attracted; some quality good or bad which discriminates him from the common herd of mortals, and by which others might be persuaded to love or compelled to fear him." That would have been said at this point in other words had it not been discovered said more effectively by the Doctor. It fitly illustrates another aspect of the tendency under discussion.

There is indeed ample reason to think that the wish is largely father to the thought—at least that a desire to believe what we are pleased to believe, rather than conviction of a more logical character holds true—in the case of such matters as the belief in God, in immortality, in cosmic progress and in the ultimate triumph of the good. We do not deny any of these things; they may every one of them be true in an absolute sense; but we should face the fact that nothing produces such conviction as a simple, but intense, desire to believe which we more euphonistically christen "intuition" or something still more profound.

For instance, nothing produces so tremendous a belief in personal immortality as does the death of one near and dear to us. Even notorious skeptics of the coldest mentality have weakened in the face of such a tragedy, while poets and prose writers under stress of grief produce lines bearing the stamp of deep conviction. As we hear it said over and over again—without the persistence of personal consciousness all is lunacy and unreason. It seems harsh and irrational that we should live here but a little while, growing, developing, forming friendships and attaining certain ends, only to be snuffed out suddenly like a light that is no longer wanted, and without the remotest possibility of ever meeting our kind again.

And it does seem harsh and cruel; but the fact of its seeming so would make it none the less true, if true it was. Perhaps it seems impossible to believe this largely because we are conscious of the ruthless disregard the theory shows for vaunting human pride; yet consciousness itself is but a refinement of an instinct which we share with the lower animals, and the animal sees no injustice in annihilation merely because he has escaped this psychic development.

In spite of our comforting beliefs Schopenhauer may perfectly well be right. We may be "like lambs in a field, disporting ourselves under the eye of the butcher, who choses out first one and then another for his prey." And it may very well be possible that even "though things have gone with us tolerably well, the longer we live the more clearly we feel that, on the whole, life is a disappointment, nay, a cheat." Not that we claim life is necessarily an "unprofitable

episode disturbing the blessed calm of non-existence," but that it may quite as well be so for all that intuitive conviction founded upon desire alone is worth.⁴ Certain it is that if death be followed by a single day or hour of total unconsciousness, it had quite as well be followed by an eternity thereof for all we should ever know about it; for in unconsciousness a day is no longer than an hour and a thousand years are but a day.

It is quite certain also that we have no standard of absolute value by which to measure the progress of the world. Who shall weigh the mechanics of to-day against the philosophy of Greece; who shall weigh the science of to-day against the religion of the Hebrews; who shall weigh the stupendous material achievements of the modern against the matchless art of the ancient? True enough we can see progress if we incline ourselves to see it. Schopenhauer remarked in a letter to Goethe that truth is so seldom found because we are much more intent upon finding some preconceived opinion of our own. We can well enough observe cosmic evolution if it pleases us to do so just as the confirmed optimist can always find good in evil, given his own peculiar values. Nietzsche founded an iconoclastic philosophy by merely reversing popular values.

We can see the triumph of good over evil in any particular instance if we sufficiently desire to do so. We can sanctimoniously carry on a horrible inquisition or we can complacently murder Aztecs and Incas wholesale, immediately after administering a sacrament, and do all to the glory of God and for the triumph of the good. We can brace ourselves through a war more terrible than any the world has ever seen with the pious thought that we fight for right; and then we can make a predatory peace which contravenes every noble ideal we espoused and every upward aspiration of the human soul, and yet persuade ourselves that good has triumphed.

And so we go incorrigibly along. We find ourselves somewhat lonely at times in this vast and rather antagonistic universe; hence we are apt to postulate some Great Companion who guides our steps, whose guardian angels preside over our lives, whose cosmos graciously withholds its drastic laws for our protection and whose compassion ultimately refines us into perfect beings composed of equal parts of George Washington and an Idealized Allied soldier, thus to live out monotonous eons of undiluted bliss. Out of the loneliness of the human heart cometh God, and the modern god-makers recently analyzed in the *Unpartisan*⁵—Reeman, Wells and G. A.

⁴ Schopenhauer, *On the Sufferings of the World*.

⁵ *Unpartizan Review*, Jan.-Feb., 1920, "The War and the God-Makers."

Studdert Kennedy—to whom may be added William James and John Stuart Mill and, perhaps, Frederic Harrison et al, merely continue the process more intellectually and more fastidiously and postulate some unique kind of finite or limited liability deity who suits their particular purpose.

The war brought out two interesting aspects of the ability of mankind to believe what pleases them. Previous to the war the custom of looking charitably upon one's enemy was growing with sufficient rapidity to alarm the ubiquitous militarists who thrived in all nations. Certain it is that the German was universally regarded as rather learned, rather stupid, rather innocuous and absolutely harmless; scientifically he was worshiped, personally he was amusing. Furthermore the belief in immortality was distinctly on the wane, and the escapades of the Society for Psychical Research were viewed with tolerant amusement, scarcely with hatred or contempt, for they were not of sufficient importance to menace our soul's comfort; and an opinion must threaten something about which we are not indifferent before we are moved to declare it dangerous license instead of justifiable liberty.

At this point came the war. Almost immediately we ourselves became the vicars of right on earth, paragons of truth incarnate, guiltless of wrong before God and man and the heavenly appointed crusaders of Deity for justice and other high sounding virtues. Our enemy—and of course this held true whether "we" were Teutons or of the Allied nations—became fiends diabolical, incapable of anything right or true or good or noble and deserving only to be exterminated from the earth like the pests which plagued Egypt of old. The eyes of the Anglo-Saxon professors who had grasped at coveted and much prized decorations bestowed by William Hohenzollern in his palmy days were opened and they cast these filthy baubles from them in fine disdain. So also were the eyes of the professors of Germany opened and they penned a rousing creed of spleen which rivaled in childish bitterness the super-ludicrous Hymn of Hate and the Allied newspaper editorials. And why all this? Was it not because it pleased us humans, with our boasted reason, to so believe? A Daniel come to judgment said, "Give an intellectual any ideal and any evil passion and he will always succeed in harmonizing the twain."⁶

We who had been taught ethics in the light of the Ten Commandments must bolster our robbing, our lying, our killing and our reversal of the morality of civil life by assuming our enemy possessed

⁶ Romain Rolland, *Above the Battle*.

of all the most degraded passions of our own subconscious minds. For in such cases we are essentially projecting our own subconscious evil outwardly and objectively.⁷ In popular parlance the Kaiser was made an outward symbol upon which were fixed all the unconscious capacities for evil of many thousands; "in their mental picture he is surrounded by a glamour of fear and hatred, such as properly belongs to no human being but only to some fantasy of the unconscious."

Secondly there came with the war, born of lonely vigils beside the chair forever vacant, a recrudescence of barbarism and superstition. For not only was the more legitimate intuitive faith in immortality universally strengthened, but thousands of minds turned toward the most crude spiritism for proofs of what they frantically desired to believe. Facts well known to abnormal psychology and scientifically classified under dissociated consciousness and secondary personalities, were reinterpreted in the light of preconceived desires, and fiction more elaborate than that of inspired genius was produced by the disordered fancy of former scientists. We reverted to the days of primitive credulity, of belief in "mana," of association purely by contiguity, and it was the heyday of those perspicacious minds which hold that "pink pills" more effectually cure "pale people" than do white pills of precisely the same chemical composition.

Not, be it understood, that there do not exist facts which cannot as yet be fully explained by science, facts which may point to personal immortality. The point is that hosts of people to whom immortality was a mere thoughtless affirmation, or who, if they thought at all, were inclined to postpone to most remote future the eternal bliss reserved for them, now suddenly became passionate in their conviction, grasped at any straw to support that conviction and did all of this because, in the presence of tragedy it pleased and comforted them to do so. The facts were well known; they had existed and been ridiculed by these same people for years; but with "the will to believe" what a change in them!

It was said that immortality had become a mere pious affirmation. It is another of our vagaries to cling tenaciously to institution and forms of belief long after they have ceased to be animated by the spirit of life, and then to smile at the Englishman for his slavery to precedence! Go to the movies, if your digestive apparatus is abnormally strong, and observe the moron rabble as it loudly acclaim the triumph of conventional virtue—however absurd and inherently unlikely that triumph—at the end of a series of episodes

⁷ M. K. Bradby, *Psycho-Analysis, and Its Place in Life*, Chaps. 13, 14.

shaving as near to the prohibitive as the censorship permits. Just so long as everything finally conforms to the publicly accepted standard of morality, all is well; otherwise all is something that rhymes well with well. True enough the private morality of these very people is a different matter. Pope described immorality as a monster so hideous that to see it is to hate it. Francis Thompson adds that the implication is plain—as long as it is kept unseen, well and good!⁸ That this rude crowd blandly shatters the conventional code when expedient; that it is even aware of the fact that the code is an empty form, makes no difference whatever. The film or the play or the book must outwardly and superficially conform to the accepted mandate of conventional morality and traditional theology or what Francis Hackett aptly calls “the invisible censor”⁹ steps in to repress and to banish.

And why again? Because it pleases us to think, as did those self-satisfied Pharisees that Christ so superbly tongue-lashed, that the whited sepulchre is an admirable piece of architecture, and that so long as outward forms are punctiliously observed, other things will automatically take care of themselves. Because it pleases us to ignore our own eternal sense of values and to abide by an external set which cannot mean to any one of us what it meant to the few who originally made the mistake of codifying it. A Clutton-Brock has well said that “since few of us act upon the religious dogmas of Christ, we may conjecture that they fail to mean to us what they meant to him, that for us they are often as untrue as the enemies of Christianity assert them to be.”¹⁰

Or, to express the same idea a little differently, this vagary is due to the restrictions upon our mental activities which are imposed at the very beginning of our respective careers by our instruction. The ideas and the information given to us in our early years, the creeds inculcated and the antipathies aroused, a “selection which under any other circumstances whatever would have been different,”¹¹—these things mould us and in great measure make us please to believe certain other things which can be congruously knit to them. Thus we pass through the world believing what pleases us, espousing the causes which support our preconceived notions, ignoring the facts which have an unpleasant habit of perverseness and obstinacy and, finally, emptying the vials of wrath upon the heads of those luckless

⁸ Francis Thompson, *A Renegade Poet*.

⁹ Francis Hackett, “The Invisible Censor,” *New Republic*, Dec., 3, 1919.

¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, 2.

¹¹ Frederick J. Teggart, *The Processes of History*.

individuals who presume to think differently about matters regarding which the absolute truth is unknown.¹² When the truth does become known, if it ever does in the sense of our attaining an absolutely terminal experience the word truth would be a misnomer, for these experiences would then be real, "they would simply *be*."¹³

Yet how good it makes things if they appear in an accustomed guise and in a manner to conform to our pet notions. There rests in memory a picture of King Rami of Siam wending his way to the Royal Wat and standing at the shrine in meditation while his awed subjects watch him breathlessly and a slave chases madly by to irritate His Highness with a large umbrella. There he stands, but how out of place in these Eastern surroundings! For 'tis khaki of the latest cut he wears and he resembles more than anything else some corpulent American swivel-chair colonel; certainly his appearance is ages away from that of an oriental potentate. Yet, doubtless, to our fallacy laden minds he becomes, in looking thus, very civilized, very refined, very advanced. For he looks quite as we do, so uniformed, and that goes a long way with us.

Furthermore in those we like, we pretend to find our own sense of values just as we surely discover abominations in those we do not like. Yet, "if we could look into the minds of those furthest away from us, of the Chinese, or even of the wildest savages, we should find that they shared our conceit as well as our values, and that to them we seemed cold and inhuman."¹⁴ These cherished values of ours are after all rather universal; nor are those we love so good, or those we hate so bad as we choose to make them. Yet how we resent it when our pet convictions are menaced and how bitterly we snarl at those hardy souls who, to our great discomfort, persist in the pursuit of truth for truth's sake!

Or perhaps it had better be stated that we can only become properly horrified and angry when the matter is one of essential importance. It has been truly and pithily said that "The dividing line between liberty and license is now, as it always has been, the line between those things about which we are comparatively indifferent and those which we regard as of supreme importance."¹⁵ And the "monster of iniquity" who dares advocate any opinion on these matter which is adverse to our own conclusions merits a punishment which can scarcely be too severe.

¹² Emerson, *Intellect*.

¹³ William James, "The Essence of Humanism" in *The Meaning of Truth*.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, 2.

¹⁵ M. Jay Flannery, "Liberty and License, *Open Court*, Dec., 1919.

These days of moribund Christianity (regarding it as an instituted religion) we can view with considerable complacency, not to say apathy, quite dubious theological opinion. Not long ago the President of the American Unitarian Association, the President of the American Association of Rabbis and the president of an orthodox, though liberal, theological seminary spoke from the pulpit of a Methodist church at one and the same meeting. But, they tell us, this means broadmindedness and freedom of thought. Can we be certain that it does not mean sectarianism gone to seed and growing indifference? Ask these same people to listen to some lukewarm political liberal who finds slight glimmerings of truth in the soviet idea and you may discover how broadminded they are—provided you are not fatally injured in the rush to tar and feather him. But, they say, Bolshevism is—oh well it is described correctly by any adjective that can be applied to what we do not like—anarchistic, infidel, irrational, a menace to democracy, etc., etc. True. Nor does one have to be very old to remember the time when liberal theology, the mild liberalism of Emerson for instance, was all of these terrible things. But of course sectarianism was then a matter of high importance. To-day nationalism has largely taken its place.

And anything that menaces the status of things as they are in so far as it is important to us to have them as they are, is hated, reviled, persecuted and suppressed; the effort is made to gas it out of existence with talk if mere reasoning is ineffective. In France, Barbusse and Rolland and Thomas and Anatole France are annihilated by a caricature in *Fantasio*; in Australia, straight Australian doctrine and the tendency away from the empire is wiped out by refusing Dr. Mannix a hall in which to speak; in America—but why speak of America when we can much more pleasantly condemn other people? And of course history shows that error persists forever if upheld by the powers that be, and that truth may readily be persecuted out of existence as was Christianity. Not to say that Bolshevism, for instance, is true; but, if it is, measures of repression are powerless.

There was once a man who held that the gods worshiped by the people he lived among were rather childish beings and that this crude religion of theirs might well be refined and evolve into something nobler and better. He taught them that there were mightier truths than silly myths and that it would be a good idea to attend to them. He perverted the young men of his city by teaching them to believe in ideals which have come down to us through the ages as the purest and the best. But in doing this he told some people what

they did not want to know and what they did not find it pleasant to believe; therefore they hated him and eventually found legal provocation to give him hemlock to drink—for law can always be made to subserve passion. And thus it was that Socrates joined the true immortals.

There was a man born into an insignificant satrapy of the great Roman Empire. He found his people enslaved by a formalistic religion, bound by creed and dogma and meticulous rule of conduct and thereby missing life's higher values. He protested boldly against these things and continually told his countrymen that the things which they liked to believe were not necessarily true just because it pleased them to believe. So their frenzy finally reached the proper pitch and they did him to death like a common criminal. And, having crucified Jesus, they joyfully went their way assured that error was banished from the earth and that what they liked to call truth was vindicated. And to-day Jesus of Nazareth is still the inspiration of those who can sufficiently dissociate him from the accretions of nauseating dogma to appreciate him, while the brilliantly endowed mob which cheerfully cried "Away with him! Crucify him!" is but a hazy and repugnant memory.

There was Copernicus who set the sun in the midst of the solar system and relegated the earth to a subordinate position, and how the discerning masses rebuked him for his error. There was Galileo who continued this preposterous mistake and even enlarged upon it; yet how effectually did the priests dash his conclusions to atoms by refusing to look through his telescope. There was Colenso who derogated from man's dignity by insisting that God did not create all animals out of hand for the pleasure of man; and how quickly and unerringly the masses perceived his ignorance!

There was Darwin who insisted upon the kinship of man and the lower animals, a view which shocked the vanity of human kind and which made the celebrated Englishman an abomination. To-day we have Freud who does psychically what Darwin did physically, and declares that the very finest brain has within it the inherited instincts of the most degraded beast, and how intensely and whole heartedly he is hated by people whose mentality is severely taxed by a problem play.

Each and every one of these men was met with vituperation and passion; their ideas were misstated, their conclusions were ridiculed and their systems made objects of derision. Men of science otherwise rational laughed at their absurd conjectures and brushed them aside as unworthy of notice, refusing to examine them

calmy and reasonably. Even so mild an adventurer into radicalism as William James met this barrenness of logic on the part of critics who hastened to misinform themselves and then to demolish ludicrous men of straw which they had carefully labelled "Pragmatism."¹⁶ To-day men of the cast of Bertrand Russell, Romain Rolland and Victor Berger—everyone of them apostles of peace and opponents of violence—are misjudged, are slurred and insulted and worse, and are studiously and deliberately misunderstood with the studied insolence that Samuel Butler finds so offensive, being the conviction that another could understand if he chose but he does not choose.¹⁷

Nous ne croyons par les choses parce qu'elles sont vraies, mais nous les croyons vraies parce que nous les aimons, said Pascal; and we very deliberately and maliciously libel those who ask us to believe the true. Even if it only seems true to them we could credit them with intellectual sincerity. This immense nation of a hundred and ten millions which has declared it could "lick the earth," trembles in terror and ships away from its shores a few hundred aliens unconvicted of any crime, lest these purveyors of falsehood should disrupt our nation which is founded upon what we choose to call the eternal rock of truth! If our nation is so founded ten thousand apostles of falsehood shall not triumph over her; if she be brought to the dust by the determined efforts of a few hundred radicals then is her foundation insecure. Truth is its own justification and error will always eventually commit suicide unless protected by law.

However, for our peace of mind, these naughty agitators—of whatever breed—simply must not prattle too loudly against things essential to our happiness. Of course if by some strange mischance they manage to prattle along, as did the prohibitionists, and to make unnoticed inroads before we are aware of the damage they are doing, till they have us bound hand and foot and "personal liberty" is dead—then—why then, we can very gracefully and very skillfully retreat, without any appearance of giving ground, to the equivocal point where we suddenly discover that an apparent evil is a positive good. Yesterday prohibition was to the press a dangerous infringement of personal liberty; to-day it is found to be what was wanted all along! To-day these newspapers realize unanimously that prohibition is an excellent and a virtuous thing; and, since the average newspaper editorial would test at about eleven years on a scale for the feeble-minded, and since this near moron grade represents the

¹⁶ See *The Meaning of Truth* especially.

¹⁷ Samuel Butler, *The Fair Haven*.

average mentality of those charming people who once hated Socrates and Jesus and Spinoza and Darwin, and who now collectively hate any one with advanced opinions, this means that prohibition is an unmitigated good and that is all there is to it!

Yet, in spite of all our cocksureness, life may be any number of things that seem distasteful. It may be a more or less conscious struggle toward an ideal never to be attained and under the tutelage of a finite God who is also struggling and getting nowhere. We may be but the most recent effort of that being among whose early mistakes were the leviathan and the prehistoric mammals of mountainous aspect. Life may be an examination paper set us "by God and Matthew Arnold." And when the prisoner declared that he stole bread because he must live, the judge may have been right in replying "I don't see the necessity!"

We may be able to see some cosmic meaning in this struggle between love and strife as does Mackenzie,¹⁸ or we may approach the brink with our ideal unattained and still wondering and half bewildered as Adler thinks probable.¹⁹ We may be but self-directive organisms menaced on all sides by inexorable nature and calling that good which helps and that evil which hinders us, as Roy Wood Sellars presumes.²⁰ Humanity may be God as hold the positivists. Nature may be God as held Spinoza, there may not be a God as held Huxley. Or as James tells us we may live in the universe as do dogs and cats in our libraries, having no inkling of the meaning of it all.²¹ To which Mackenzie might well reply that though a cheese mite had a human consciousness and had thereby but small knowledge of the place of cheese in the totality of things, yet this circumscribed life cannot be called an illusion, but is an "aspect of reality imperfectly apprehended." Life may even be as futile as Ameil sometimes and Schopenhauer all the time imagines it or as Calderon sings it—*una ficción, una sombra, une ilusion*. We may be mildly hopeful and say with Maeterlinck that "it seems fairly certain that we spend in this world the only narrow, grudging, obscure and sorrowful moment of our destiny,"²² or we may become more exuberant and echo Maurice Barres when he says: "*Je suis un instant d'une chose immortelle!*"

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, 3.

¹⁹ Felix Adler, *The World Crisis and Its Meaning*.

²⁰ Roy Wood Sellars, *The Next Step in Religion*.

²¹ William James, *A Pluralistic Universe*.

²² Maeterlinck, *Death*.

Any of these things may be true totally or in part. The point to be stressed is that truth remains truth whether we like it or not and that our hatred of truth seekers neither defeats their purposes nor extenuates our error. James tells us that if a novel experience contradicts too emphatically our preexistent systems of belief, we will in most cases treat it as false.²³ We see the giraffe and simply say "There is no such animal" because we have no category in which to classify it and do not care to frame a new one. And yet the ideas which lead to strife are not those verified as a result of scientific inquiry, but are opinions about matters which we do not yet fully understand. "Men begin the search for truth with fancy, after which they argue, and at length they try to find it."²⁴

Just here lies the difference. It is absolutely necessary to distinguish between personal opinions and objective facts. Hydrochloric acid reacts with marble to form calcium chloride. Here is a fact of absolute reality to which everyone must agree once it is sufficiently explained to them. Facts of such character, where the search for truth has resulted in a terminal experience of reality, are to be propagated and insisted upon. Jesus Christ died to save sinners. Here is an opinion which became intuitive fact for certain people who crystallized it into dogma and, by trying to objectify intuition, gained nothing and lost much; to-day this unverifiable assertion is believed by every man in his own peculiar and individualistic manner, and it must always be so regarded. To insist upon propagating such things as fact and to expect others to objectify it as we may happen to, is a pure waste of time. The facts of intuition may be the most potent and the most precious things in our lives, but they must be regarded in a light altogether different from that in which we regard the accredited facts of the objective world.

At the end of his *Biographical History of Philosophy* Lewes seems struck with the futility of all this speculation, and he espouses the scientific method as the rational way out. The desire for the knowledge of "things in themselves" is dismissed as unpardonable moonshine: what we can have and what we must attain to is phenomenal knowledge about things. Perhaps this view is too materialistic. It seems, for instance, that the philosophy of a Haeckel errs by ignoring the spiritual side of man quite as much as does that of a Clutton-Brock by making intuitive faith into something bordering on naive credulity.

There are facts of nature which must be believed because they

²³ *Op. cit.*, 13.

²⁴ *Op. cit.*, 11.

are demonstrably true: there are also undeniably facts of subjective experience which carry intuitive conviction and which are certainly true for the individual at very least. Some of these remain simple solipsism; others are in a sense universal. But it is characteristic of such beliefs that as soon as they are formulated they lose their value. For they are seen after all not to be true for all in precisely the same manner as they are true to any one. The statement—Acids turn blue litmus red—means precisely one thing for any one to whom it is made and who has sufficient intelligence and education to apprehend it properly. The statement—God is a spirit—means something a little different to every single person who hears it, and we can scarcely postulate a time when things will be otherwise.

We need science and we need faith; we need knowledge of externals and internal convictions; we need objective demonstration and subjective illumination. But we need to regard the two as separate aspects of that “mysterious Goddess whom we shall never see except in outline”—Truth.²⁵ Facts of the first type may be inculcated in so far as we are able to overcome inherent distaste for the unusual. Facts of the second type are in no case to be thrust upon another, especially when that other is a helpless child whose future life will be moulded thereby; these things are the individual possession of the reflective mind at maturity and are of little value to another. They must be formulated by each within the sacred precincts of his own soul.

Our task is to see that the intensity of our personal over-beliefs never causes us either to discount the assured convictions of scientific research or to look with intolerance upon the sincere professions of another believer wherein his opinions differ from our own. If this task be neglected we may readily attain a certain complacency and comfort in beliefs which are largely fallacies and thus go our myopic way to the paradise reserved for the exponents of cow-like virtue and the idolators of convention. If that task be done we may go forward assured that we have realized the highest law of our being and discerning that

“Life is but half a dream, wherein we see
 The shadows of those things we may not know;
 Yet do we trust the forms that come and go
 Hold forth a promise of the world to be—
 And, till the creeping darkness covers all,
 We lie and watch the shadows on the wall.”

—Allan Sanderson, *Chamber's Journal*.

²⁵ Matthew Arnold, Preface to *Essays in Criticism*, 1st series.