

PREFACE TO MORALS

Copyright, 1929. BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY.

Set up and electrotyped. Published May, 1929.

All rights reserved, including the right of reproduction in whole or in part in any form.

Reprinted August 1929

September 1929

October 1929 November 1929 December 1929 February 1930

** **

Printed in the United States of America by J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

PART I

THE	DISSOLUTION	OF	THE	AN	CE	STI	RAL	C	R	DER
снарти I.	er The Problem of	Une	SELIEF							PAGE 3

,nnr 11	er e				FAGE
I.	THE PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF			٠	3
	1. Whirl is King				3 5
	 Whirl is King False Prophecies 				5
	3. Sorties and Retreats				10
	4. Deep Dissolution				14
II.	GOD IN THE MODERN WORLD				21
	1. Imago Dei				21
	 An Indefinite God God in More Senses Than One . 				23
	3. God in More Senses Than One.				25
	4. The Protest of the Fundamentalist	s.			30
	5. In Man's Image				35
III.	THE LOSS OF CERTAINTY				37
	1. Ways of Reading the Bible				37
	2. Modernism: Immortality as an E	xam	nle		40
	3. What Modernism Leaves Out .	•	•	•	48
IV.	THE ACIDS OF MODERNITY				51
	1. The Kingly Pattern				51
	2 I andmarks	•	•	•	56
	2. Landmarks	•	•	•	61
	4 Sophisticated Violence	•	•	·	63
	4. Sophisticated Violence 5. Rulers	:		•	65
37	The Breakdown of Authority				68
٧.			•	•	68
	1. God's Government	•	•	•	სგ
	[v]				

CHAPT	BR.			PAGE
	2. The Doctrine of the Keys			71
	3. The Logic of Toleration			74
				76
	5. The Effect of Patriotism			78
	6. The Dissolution of a Sovereignty .	•	•	82
VI.	LOST PROVINCES			84
	1. Business			84
	2. The Family			88
	3. Art			94
	a. The Disappearance of Religious	Pa	nt-	
	ing		•	94
	b. The Loss of a Heritage		•	96
	c. The Artist Formerly d. The Artist as a Prophet			98
	d. The Artist as a Prophet		•	101
	e. Art for Art's Sake			104
	f. The Burden of Originality .	•	٠	106
VII.	THE DRAMA OF DESTINY			112
	1. The Soul in the Modern World			112
	2. The Great Scenario			115
	3. Earmarks of Truth			118
	4. On Reconciling Religion and Science			121
	5. Gospels of Science			125
	6. The Deeper Conflict			131
	7. Theocracy and Humanism	•	•	133
	PART II			
	THE FOUNDATIONS OF HUMAN	ISN	1	
	Introduction			143
VIII.	GOLDEN MEMORIES			145
IX.	THE INSIGHT OF HUMANISM			152
444.	1. The Two Approaches to Life	•	-	152
	2. Freedom and Restraint	•	•	153
	vi]	•	•	1//

CHAPTI	3R		PAGE
	3. The Ascetic Principle		158
	4. Oscillation between Two Principles		164
	The Golden Mean and Its Difficulties .		166
	6. The Matrix of Humanism		171
	7. The Career of the Soul	•	175
	7. The Career of the Soul	•	183
	9. The Function of High Religion	•	191
X.	HIGH RELIGION AND THE MODERN WORLD .		194
	1. Popular Religion and the Great Teachers		194
	 The Aristocratic Principle The Peculiarity of the Modern Situation 		197
	3. The Peculiarity of the Modern Situation		200
	4. The Stone Which the Builders Rejected	•	203
	PART III		
	THE GENIUS OF MODERNITY		
XI.	THE CURE OF SOULS		213
	1. The Problem of Evil		213
	2. Superstition and Self-Consciousness		217
	3. Virtue		221
	4. From Clue to Practice		226
XII.	THE BUSINESS OF THE GREAT SOCIETY		232
	1. The Invention of Invention		232
	2. The Creative Principle in Modernity .		235
	3. Naive Capitalism		241
	4. The Credo of Old-Style Business		244
	5. Old-Style Reform and Revolution		247
	6. The Diffusion of the Acquisitive Instinct		252
	7. Ideals	•	257
XIII.	GOVERNMENT IN THE GREAT SOCIETY		260
	1. Loyalty		260
	1. Loyalty		263
	3. Pluralism		267
	3. Pluralism		269
	[vii]		

CHAPTE	R												PAGE
	5.	Gove	ernm	ent i	n th	e Peo	ple						272
	6.	Polit	ician	s and	l Stat	esme	'n.		•	•	•	•	279
XIV.	Love	IN TI	ie G	REA:	r Soc	CETY							284
	1.	The	Exte	rnal	Con	trol o	f Se	xua	l C	ondi	ıct		284
	2.	Birth	Cor	itrol									288
	3.	The	Logi	c of	Birt	h Cor	itrol						293
		The											299
	5.	The	New	He	donis	m .							301
	6.	Marr	iage	and	Αffi	nity							307
	7.	The	Scho	olin	g of	Desi	re		•	•	•		311
XV.	Тне	Mora	LIST	IN .	AN L	Jnbei	LIEVI	NG	Wo	RLE	٠.		314
	1.	The	Decl	arati	on c	f Ide	als						314
	2.	The	Choi	ice c	of a	Way							320
	3.	The	Relig	gion	of th	ne Śp	irit	•		•	•	•	326
Appen	DIX: A	Ackn	OWL	EDGM	1ENT	s ani	o No	OTE.	s.	•			331
INDEX													339

PART I

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE ANCESTRAL ORDER

"Whirl is King, having driven out Zeus."

ARISTOPHANES.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM OF UNBELIEF

1. Whirl is King

Among those who no longer believe in the religion of their fathers, some are proudly defiant, and many are indifferent. But there are also a few, perhaps an increasing number, who feel that there is a vacancy in their lives. This inquiry deals with their problem. It is not intended to disturb the serenity of those who are unshaken in the faith they hold, and it is not concerned with those who are still exhilarated by their escape from some stale orthodoxy. It is concerned with those who are perplexed by the consequences of their own irreligion. It deals with the problem of unbelief, not as believers are accustomed to deal with it, in the spirit of men confidently calling the lost sheep back into the fold, but as unbelievers themselves must, I think, face the problem if they face it candidly and without presumption.

When such men put their feelings into words they are likely to say that, having lost their faith, they have lost the certainty that their lives are significant, and that it matters what they do with their lives. If they deal with young people they are likely to say that they know of no compelling reason which certifies the moral code they adhere to, and that, therefore, their own preferences, when tested by the ruthless curiosity of their children, seem to have no

sure foundation of any kind. They are likely to point to the world about them, and to ask whether the modern man possesses any criterion by which he can measure the value of his own desires, whether there is any standard he really believes in which permits him to put a term upon that pursuit of money, of power, and of excitement which has created so much of the turmoil and the squalor and the explosiveness of modern civilization.

These are, perhaps, merely the rationalizations of the modern man's discontent. At the heart of it there are likely to be moments of blank misgiving in which he finds that the civilization of which he is a part leaves a dusty taste in his mouth. He may be very busy with many things, but he discovers one day that he is no longer sure they are worth doing. He has been much preoccupied; but he is no longer sure he knows why. He has become involved in an elaborate routine of pleasures; and they do not seem to amuse him very much. He finds it hard to believe that doing any one thing is better than doing any other thing, or, in fact, that it is better than doing nothing at all. It occurs to him that it is a great deal of trouble to live, and that even in the best of lives the thrills are few and far between. He begins more or less consciously to seek satisfactions, because he is no longer satisfied, and all the while he realizes that the pursuit of happiness was always a most unhappy quest. In the later stages of his woe he not only loses his appetite, but becomes excessively miserable trying to recover it. And then, surveying the flux of events and the giddiness of his own soul, he comes to feel that Aristophanes must have been thinking of him when he declared that "Whirl is King, having driven out Zeus."

[4]

2. False Prophecies

The modern age has been rich both in prophecies that men would at last inherit the kingdoms of this world, and in complaints at the kind of world they inherited. Thus Petrarch, who was an early victim of modernity, came to feel that he would "have preferred to be born in any other period" than his own; he tells us that he sought an escape by imagining that he lived in some other age. The Nineteenth Century, which begat us, was forever blowing the trumpets of freedom and providing asylums in which its most sensitive children could take refuge. Wordsworth fled from mankind to rejoice in nature. Chateaubriand fled from man to rejoice in savages. Byron fled to an imaginary Greece, and William Morris to the Middle Ages. A few tried an imaginary India. A few an equally imaginary China. Many fled to Bohemia, to Utopia, to the Golden West, and to the Latin Quarter, and some, like James Thomson, to hell where they were

gratified to gain
That positive eternity of pain
Instead of this insufferable inane.

They had all been disappointed by the failure of a great prophecy. The theme of this prophecy had been that man is a beautiful soul who in the course of history had somehow become enslaved by

Scepters, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,

and they believed with Shelley that when "the loathsome mask has fallen," man, exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king over himself, would then be "free from guilt or

pain." This was the orthodox liberalism to which men turned when they had lost the religion of their fathers. But the promises of liberalism have not been fulfilled. We are living in the midst of that vast dissolution of ancient habits which the emancipators believed would restore our birthright of happiness. We know now that they did not see very clearly beyond the evils against which they were rebelling. It is evident to us that their prophecies were pleasant fantasies which concealed the greater difficulties that confront men, when having won the freedom to do what they wish—that wish, as Byron said:

which ages have not yet subdued In man—to have no master save his mood,

they are full of contrary moods and do not know what they wish to do. We have come to see that Huxley was right when he said that "a man's worst difficulties begin when he is able to do as he likes."

The evidences of these greater difficulties lie all about us: in the brave and brilliant atheists who have defied the Methodist God, and have become very nervous; in the women who have emancipated themselves from the tyranny of fathers, husbands, and homes, and with the intermittent but expensive help of a psychoanalyst, are now enduring liberty as interior decorators; in the young men and women who are world-weary at twenty-two; in the multitudes who drug themselves with pleasure; in the crowds enfranchised by the blood of heroes who cannot be persuaded to take an interest in their destiny; in the millions, at last free to think without fear of priest or policeman, who have made the moving pictures and the popular newspapers what they are.

These are the prisoners who have been released. They ought to be very happy. They ought to be serene and composed. They are free to make their own lives. There are no conventions, no tabus, no gods, priests, princes, fathers, or revelations which they must accept. Yet the result is not so good as they thought it would be. The prison door is wide open. They stagger out into trackless space under a blinding sun. They find it nerve-racking. "My sensibility," said Flaubert, "is sharper than a razor's edge; the creaking of a door, the face of a bourgeois, an absurd statement set my heart to throbbing and completely upset me." They must find their own courage for battle and their own consolation in defeat. plain, like Renan after he had broken with the Church, that the enchanted circle which embraced the whole of life is broken, and that they are left with a feeling of emptiness "like that which follows an attack of fever or an unhappy love affair." Where is my home? cried Nietzsche: "For it do I ask and seek, and have sought, but have not found it. O eternal everywhere, O eternal nowhere. O eternal in vain."

To more placid temperaments the pangs of freedom are no doubt less acute. It is possible for multitudes in time of peace and security to exist agreeably—somewhat incoherently, perhaps, but without convulsions—to dream a little and not unpleasantly, to have only now and then a nightmare, and only occasionally a rude awakening. It is possible to drift along not too discontentedly, somewhat nervously, somewhat anxiously, somewhat confusedly, hoping for the best, and believing in nothing very much. It is possible to be a passable citizen. But it is not possible to be wholly at peace. For serenity of soul requires

some better organization of life than a man can attain by pursuing his casual ambitions, satisfying his hungers, and for the rest accepting destiny as an idiot's tale in which one dumb sensation succeeds another to no known end. And it is not possible for him to be wholly alive. For that depends upon his sense of being completely engaged with the world, with all his passions and all the faculties in rich harmonies with one other, and in deep rhythm with the nature of things.

These are the gifts of a vital religion which can bring the whole of a man into adjustment with the whole of his relevant experience. Our forefathers had such a religion. They quarreled a good deal about the details, but they had no doubt that there was an order in the universe which justified their lives because they were a part of it. The acids of modernity have dissolved that order for many of us, and there are some in consequence who think that the needs which religion fulfilled have also been dissolved. But however self-sufficient the eugenic and perfectly educated man of the distant future may be, our present experience is that the needs remain. In failing to meet them, it is plain that we have succeeded only in substituting trivial illusions for majestic faiths. For while the modern emancipated man may wonder how any one ever believed that in this universe of stars and atoms and multitudinous life, there is a drama in progress of which the principal event was enacted in Palestine nineteen hundred years ago, it is not really a stranger fable than many which he so readily accepts. He does not believe the words of the Gospel but he believes the best-advertised notion. The older fable may be incredible to-day, but when it

was credible it bound together the whole of experience upon a stately and dignified theme. The modern man has ceased to believe in it but he has not ceased to be credulous, and the need to believe haunts him. It is no wonder that his impulse is to turn back from his freedom, and to find some one who says he knows the truth and can tell him what to do, to find the shrine of some new god, of any cult however newfangled, where he can kneel and be comforted, put on manacles to keep his hands from trembling, ensconce himself in some citadel where it is safe and warm.

For the modern man who has ceased to believe, without ceasing to be credulous, hangs, as it were, between heaven and earth, and is at rest nowhere. There is no theory of the meaning and value of events which he is compelled to accept, but he is none the less compelled to accept the events. There is no moral authority to which he must turn now, but there is coercion in opinions, fashions and fads. There is for him no inevitable purpose in the universe, but there are elaborate necessities, physical, political, economic. He does not feel himself to be an actor in a great and dramatic destiny, but he is subject to the massive powers of our civilization, forced to adopt their pace, bound to their routine, entangled in their conflicts. can believe what he chooses about this civilization. cannot, however, escape the compulsion of modern events. They compel his body and his senses as ruthlessly as ever did king or priest. They do not compel his mind. They have all the force of natural events, but not their majesty, all the tyrannical power of ancient institutions, but none of their moral certainty. Events are there, and they over-

power him. But they do not convince him that they have that dignity which inheres in that which is necessary and in the nature of things.

In the old order the compulsions were often painful, but there was sense in the pain that was inflicted by the will of an all-knowing God. In the new order the compulsions are painful and, as it were, accidental, unnecessary, wanton, and full of mockery. The modern man does not make his peace with them. For in effect he has replaced natural piety with a grudging endurance of a series of unsanctified compulsions. When he believed that the unfolding of events was a manifestation of the will of God, he could say: Thy will be done. . . . In His will is our peace. But when he believes that events are determined by the votes of a majority, the orders of his bosses, the opinions of his neighbors, the laws of supply and demand, and the decisions of quite selfish men, he yields because he has to yield. He is conquered but unconvinced.

3. Sorties and Retreats

It might seem as if, in all this, men were merely going through once again what they have often gone through before. This is not the first age in which the orthodox religion has been in conflict with the science of the day. Plato was born into such an age. For two centuries the philosophers of Greece had been critical of Homer and of the popular gods, and when Socrates faced his accusers, his answer to the accusation of heresy must certainly have sounded unresponsive. "I do believe," he said, "that there are gods, and in a higher sense than that in which