

CHAPTER VI

MODERN INSTANCES AND SPECULATIONS

WE have nearly worked our way through to the point where we may claim to have established a case for using the miracles of Jesus Christ to interrogate the universe ; for asking what light they have to throw upon the courses of nature and history, the character and purpose of God, the place and power of prayer and the ultimate destiny of man.

But it may be said that the argument has been vitiated by one great omission. It implies that the power of Christ over Nature and, in particular, over the destroying and mortal powers of Nature inhere in His perfect humanity through which the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, can work deeds of creative life and blessing in the lives of men. But if it be so, we should surely expect to find in His followers some trace at least of that supernatural power, however faintly and imperfectly it may manifest itself. Now it is said, it is matter of plain fact that these lives manifest nothing of the kind. They do show, in general, some signs of inward regenerating power, and, sometimes, changes of character so radical that the best language for describing them is that of new birth. But there is nothing at all of the same kind

in the outward life, nothing physical corresponding to the spiritual deliverances of which religious biography is full. Do we, indeed, expect to return to the age of miracles? This is, indeed, the practical crux of the whole argument.

First of all in reply to the last question, I would say that it depends entirely on what is meant by "miracles." As the word is usually employed, it would mean, Do we expect that the time is at hand when men will do the things that Jesus did? I would say, "Assuredly, no." The whole argument implies that these extraordinary achievements of prayer were due to His extraordinary spiritual personality which was so entirely at one with the will of the Father that the Father was able to do extraordinary deeds of blessing, through Him. The difference between His achievements and the greatest of other men's achievements is a measure of the spiritual difference between Him and them. It is like the difference between Shakespeare and some modern playwright.

But if by "miracle" we mean something inexplicable in terms of physical Nature, I would say, "Assuredly, yes." In this sense every free human action, as Lord Kelvin once said, is a miracle, for it cannot be accounted for in terms of its merely physical antecedents. As we have seen, the power of the sciences to explain all individuality and the physical actions that result from individuality is far less than men used to believe. In this sense, too, every answered prayer is a miracle. I believe that such miracles are happening every day of our lives, and that no earnest life that lives by prayer

is so poor as to be without them. I do not see any reason whatever to discredit the many instances that can be given to prove that God hears and answers prayer for outward as well as inward blessings and enhancements of life, recovery from sickness, delivery from danger and famine. I do not believe that our Lord put the prayer for daily bread in His prayer without meaning something by it.

In this sense, then, I certainly believe that we are one and all meant to work miracles, and that they are occurring all around us only they are not recognised as such.

But, further, it has to be said that to a great extent modern men and women have ceased to ask for and expect them, largely owing to sophistications and perplexities in the region of thought. In current experience they are most commonly to be found on the mission field remote from the influence of the Time Spirit, in the lives of devout men and women who live apart from the great intellectual currents, or in communities like the Friends who are nurtured in a tradition of "signs and wonders" in the life of the Spirit.

I do not believe that this limitation of faith in prayer is likely to be anything but a passing phase in the life of true Christendom. It is due in part to that intellectual sophistication of which I have spoken, and in part to that weakening of the idea of God which is the radical spiritual malady of our time and is the real cause of that peculiar flatness and deadness of the life of the Church, of which so many with greater or less justice complain.

It is surely too much that an age like ours should take its own life and achievement as the normal standard, and rule out of the New Testament as myth, legend and overbelief, all for which it can find no strict analogy in the life of to-day. The underlying assumption is that our own spiritual climate is that which is normal for the human race, an odd self-complacency for an age the natural working out of whose ideals and methods has produced so enormous a conflagration as the world war. Nearly all the deepest judges of our age tell us that it has been an age in which the higher forces of the Spirit are running low.

Can we pass beyond that general answer that we who believe in God know that prayer is answered?

Is there anything in the progress of human knowledge that brings the signs of Jesus more within the range of what is believable by modern men? Or are we in that respect just in the same position as were the men and women of fifty years ago? I have already pointed out that there has been a very great though only half-realised or acknowledged change here in the general position of the modernist school which indicates quite plainly that new facts of that kind have come to light. In the days of Strauss and Renan nearly all the miracles of Jesus were regarded as either mythical or legendary. To-day one great exception is almost invariably made. The healing miracles are in substance admitted to be probably true history. That is a very remarkable fact. There cannot be the least doubt as to the cause of this change. It is due to

nothing less than the growing conviction that there is clear and convincing evidence that there is undeniable reality in some at least of the innumerable stories of cures of bodily disease by spiritual means which have been recorded from a great variety of sources within the last eighty years.

At first these stories came purely from religious sources. The Roman Church was early¹ in the field with the "miracles" of Lourdes, but as the nineteenth century went on Protestantism began to develop several distinct schools of spiritual healing, that of Pastor Blumhardt at Badboll, which exerted a marked influence on German opinion, certain more obscure movements in England, and finally the immense outgrowth of Christian Science in the United States.

But the deepest and widest impression on the educated mind was made when science took the matter up and the growing interest in and understanding of the phenomena of hypnotism led to the rise of psycho-therapeutics. The steady accumulation of facts in this domain at last forced the recognition that the mind was more concerned both in the production and in the healing of disease than the older medical science had been prepared to recognise, and than the old hard and fast philosophical dualism of conscious mind and unconscious body could admit. Frederick Myers's volumes on *Human Personality* first brought the idea of the subliminal region within the ken of

¹ Of course the Roman Church has never abandoned the claim that miracles were wrought by the saints and at certain holy places. But Lourdes is her most conspicuous modern instance.

the English-speaking public, and gave the ordinary man a new pigeon-hole in which he could now receive and store the strange and hitherto "occult" facts which were too well attested for him to deny. Next came the schools of Freud and Jung, and then came the war and its tragic multitudes of nerve-shattered men with maladies with which the older types of medical science, however magnificently successful they were in their own regions, proved utterly unable to cope, while the newer methods of psycho-therapeutics often proved completely successful.

I once, after the close of the war, asked one of the most distinguished authorities on these methods what difference it had made to him and his fellow practitioners. "Just this," he said, "that at the beginning of the war we found it impossible to get a chance in the field, and that now we cannot get demobilised."

To-day it is generally, I think, conceded by most open-minded people that many diseases even of the body can be successfully attacked from within through the mind, as well as from without through the body.

How far that attack may be successfully made there is no general agreement, even among experts in psycho-therapeutic treatment. One of these told the writer that there were certain forms of physical disease that he had no hope that with his methods he could ever cure, while another,² equally distinguished, was positive that ideally

² Both of these men were fully qualified medical practitioners, and distinguished men of science.

every form of disease could be successfully treated by such methods, "though," he added, "it will take a good while to do it. I do not expect that in twenty-five years from now we shall be treating cancer by suggestion, but by a new serum." Orthodox medical science, while admitting that there is no tissue of the human body that may not be influenced by spirit, draws the line between functional and organic disease. Bolder spirits in the other camp argue that this distinction in kind is arbitrary and depends simply and solely on the fact that our microscopes are as yet not of sufficient power to reveal organic deterioration in all functionally disordered tissues, and so to make the distinction simply one of degree.

All genuinely religious faith in spiritual healing, of course, while it admits the distinction, denies its relevance. "With God all things are possible." Meantime facts accumulate. Each one interested must examine the evidence for himself as he may meet with it in his own experience or study it in the voluminous but somewhat loosely attested reports in the periodical publications of Christian Science, or the more carefully drawn up volumes and bulletins which originate at Lourdes. I confess that unless one possesses a comfortable *a priori* theory which enables one satisfactorily to decide as to what is or is not true beforehand, it is extremely difficult to escape from the conclusion that diseases usually called organic sometimes yield to these methods as certainly as many that are called functional. I would recommend to any one who doubts this a careful study of one or more of the Lourdes volumes

to which I have referred above, which always give the previous medical diagnosis and which certify the results. It is easy to check these by reading the hostile literature, which is also voluminous. As a matter of fact, so far as mere scientific evidence goes some of these "miracles" are better attested than some in the Gospels themselves.

Few people who have not examined the evidence which is now available on the whole matter have any idea of the change in the whole outlook on the possibilities of the powers of the mind over the body which the last twenty-five years have effected.

I shall content myself however with two quotations on the matter from Professor Macdougall's well-known volume on *Body and Mind*.

"It has been shown that under certain conditions (especially in the hypnotic and post-hypnotic states) the mind may exert an influence over the organic processes of the body far greater than any that had been generally recognised by physiologists. Especially noteworthy are the production of blisters, erythemata and ecchymoses of the skin (the so-called stigmata³) in positions and of definite shapes determined by verbal suggestions, and the rapid healing of wounds or burns with almost complete suppression of inflammation; and with these may be put the complete suppression or prevention of pain, even pain of such severity as normally accompanies a major surgical operation."⁴

Professor Macdougall brings his massive survey of the entire field of the relations between mind and body to a conclusion in a chapter from which the

³ *Sc.* of St Francis and others.

⁴ P. 351.

following carefully guarded sentence is taken. It seems to me to represent the real state of the question on the particular point under immediate discussion. "Successful therapeutic suggestions and others that effect definite tissue changes are especially significant in the present connexion; for in all such cases we have definite evidence of control of bodily processes which, though unconsciously effected, must be regarded as psychical. Of the limits of this power of mental control over the organic processes of the body we are altogether ignorant, and new evidence, much of it ill reported, and therefore valueless, but much of it above suspicion, repeatedly warns us against setting up any arbitrary limit to what may be effected in this way."⁸

It is impossible to study all this immensely varied mass of evidence coming from all the different schools of spiritual and mental healing and psychotherapeutics without being impressed by its superficial diversity and its fundamental agreement as to method. There is the sharpest antagonism between the schools of practitioners. To the devout Roman Catholic the whole claim of Protestant faith-healers and Christian Scientists is anathema, and there is chronic warfare also between him and the physicians of the Salpêtrière and the school of Nancy. To the true Christian Scientist there is only one scientific method of healing, and that is his own; hypnotism in particular is of the pit. To the psycho-therapist, Christian Scientists and faith-healers are blundering fanatics or charlatans. Yet there is one

⁸ Pp. 374-5.

fundamental thing that they all alike call for and that one thing is Faith. They one and all ask for a belief in the healer or the suggestion or the ultimate nature of things so full that it shall generate in the imagination the confident expectation that the thing sought for will be given, or, better still, that it has already been given, and that all that is needed is to realise it. In other words, they ask for a kind of faith and hope. That this is so any one can verify for himself by studying the copious literature of all these movements and schools. This agreement seems to me of extraordinary significance, and taken in connection with what was said at the beginning of this chapter about those answers to prayers "of which many can testify," it disposes completely of the objection that there is nothing in human nature and experience as we know them to-day which would warrant us in believing that if we were liker Christ we might in some measure share His powers over the mortal forces of Nature. Something has happened in the world of the last fifty years, the discovery of latent potentialities in human nature, which throws new light on this ancient controversy, something which was not fully before the mind of either the earlier Traditionalist or Modernist when they framed their views of the miracles of Jesus.

Many good people to-day think that it lowers the greatness of the miracles of Jesus to seek to bring them into any kind of comparison with Lourdes and Christian Science and Spiritual Healing and Psychotherapeutics. They are thus at the opposite pole from those referred to above, whose main difficulty

with the miracles of Jesus is that there is nothing in human experience that is in the least analogous with them, nothing that helps us to believe that even a Personality unique in greatness and goodness can have any greater influence for good on the world of Nature than the most commonplace personality and the meanest character. I confess that I do not share the difficulty of the former class. There is a profound difference between the deeds of Jesus taken as a whole and the miracles of Lourdes and Nancy, but so far as physical results go it is a difference of degree rather than of kind.

I would plead for a more sympathetic outlook on all these strange phenomena of spiritual and mental healing. If they can be finally established as true facts, the result would be greatly to enrich human life and widen and deepen our whole view of the world. They show that even in this world spiritual and mental forces can control for good the lower forces, and that a bold and generous faith in the ultimate nature of things works for physical, as we know that it does for mental and spiritual, soundness and health. If these facts can be established and set beyond all doubt, I cannot but think it would be a good day for the human race. The world would be proved to be a richer and finer place for humanity to dwell in, more sympathetic and responsive to human need. That these phenomena have been often exploited by fanatics and charlatans is nothing to the point. There is no field of human science that in its earlier stages has not been so exploited. Did not astronomy grow out of astrology, and chemistry from the quest

for the philosopher's stone? The facts and their attestation or disproof are what we have to fix our thoughts upon, and if, as seems now indisputable, disease can be dispelled or even alleviated from the spiritual side by means of ordinary human beings to-day, that has a very momentous and definite bearing upon the historical character of the healing miracles of the Gospels, which it is mere obscurantism to ignore.

It may be granted by others that while all this may be true of what is known as spiritual healing, it is not true of the cures wrought by suggestion under hypnosis or of psycho-therapeutics; that these have nothing whatever in common with the miracles of healing recorded in the Gospels, and that therefore they cannot be brought into the question at all. It is quite true that these have often nothing distinctively religious about them, and often seem almost as mechanical as cures wrought by the action of a drug. Waiving, for the moment, the point to which I have already referred, that the patient must have some measure of faith in the healer and his method and in the suggestion given him, I would point out that every one of the miracles of the Gospels must have had a psychological side. Assuming the truth of the New Testament view that all our Lord's deeds of healing were wrought by the Spirit of God, there must have been some point at which that Heavenly Life made contact with and influenced the human organism, and set in operation the psychophysical processes of renewal. Psycho-therapeutics has explored this region and shown

that it is still open to the control of the mind.*

As has been said, the impression made upon modern thought by the phenomena of which I have spoken has been sufficiently great to make most if not all modern writers on the life of Jesus admit in general terms the historical credibility of His healing miracles. This change is of itself sufficient to dispose of the difficulty stated at the beginning of this chapter. But here the line is usually drawn. The nature miracles, as they are called, the narratives of the stilling of the storm and the feeding of the multitudes, are still regarded as incredible and, therefore, legendary. The reason is obvious. Modern experience has given us something analogous to the healing miracles. But to these there is believed to be no parallel. They are "signs" wrought, not upon responsive human bodies, but directly on the great frame of Nature herself, and one of them at least seems to be a miracle not of influence and direction of natural forces, but of actual creation. The distinction is held to be so great as to make such miracles unbelievable by modern men and women. Many even of those who fully accept the uniqueness of Christ and the reality of His healing miracles are willing to give up these nature miracles as inconsistent with the scientific outlook and also as

* I leave meantime undiscussed the question of what it is that in the last resort heals in psycho-therapeutic treatment, whether, as is commonly said, it is the suggestion that heals, or whether it simply puts the mind and the psycho-physical mechanisms in such a relation to the cosmos that healing influences can enter.

contributing little or nothing to the Christian interpretation of life. But is it indeed so? With reference to the former point there does not appear to me to be any difference in principle between these nature miracles and the healing miracles. Neither group can really be brought within the "closed system" of physical Nature. While, like the others, the nature miracles elude physical science, they may well belong to history, for once more we have to remember the unique personality of Jesus.

It is quite true that a sign wrought upon the vast frame of Nature, as it were directly, seems much greater, more out of the common, than one wrought upon the human body. The human body seems something intermediate between nature and spirit. It seems to be a piece of nature half spiritualised already, and therefore more readily open to spiritual influences. But we must think clearly and consecutively. The consistent scientific naturalism with which we have mainly to do cannot admit that the body is open to spiritual influences. Body and spirit are parallel processes, lines that never meet, and therefore the body is just as sealed to spiritual influences as are the winds and the waters. The whole of physical Nature is one closed system under the complete sway of material causation throughout, or no part of it is. But if we depart, as we have seen reason to depart, from this view, if we have made up our minds that it is an incomplete view of Nature, then it no longer stands in the way of even the "nature miracles" of Jesus.

Nothing can be more futile when great issues are before us which demand coherent thought, than to grant the possibility of small miracles and to hold to the impossibility of great. Consistent religious thought finds it difficult to treat such reasoning seriously. It is like pleading in defence of a murder that the person murdered was only a child. The reply of the law is that it was murder all the same.

But when we have thus cleared the ground of the strictly scientific and relevant difficulty, and when the argument is with those who no longer stand by the "closed system" conception of nature, as anything but a convenient method and calculus of thought, with those who have a freer and more spiritual view of the universe, Theistic in its bases, with men who admit that the body is the meeting-ground of Nature and Spirit and that from the spiritual side influences directing, moulding and renewing do pass over into the physical, we may readily admit that there is some difference between the healing and the nature miracles. There is a greater difficulty for the imagination in believing that Christ said to the storm and the waves, "Peace be still!" and that they obeyed Him, than that He said, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk!" and that the paralytic "arose and followed Him." We think of the miracles of healing as wrought directly by Jesus on men's bodies through their minds, but we see no such mental bridge between Christ and the storm. The difficulty suggests a deepening of all our thought about healing and nature miracles alike. Are they not all alike wrought through the

Divine mind by prayer? For anyone who believes in the living God in whom nature has its origin and who controls its course is there really any fundamental difficulty that is not present in the other case? I do not think so. In the one case as in the other it is really God who heals the body and controls the storm, and it is in His name that Jesus utters His commands.

But it may be said, are the nature miracles of any real spiritual importance? On the view which I have been endeavouring to set forth in this volume, as that of the Gospels themselves, they certainly are. When all is said, physical disease is only one of the multitude of natural ills to which man is at present subject—plague, hunger, and the wild forces of Nature, symbolised in the sea and the storm. The nature miracles are indications that subjection to none of these things is part of God's unconditional will for man. They have no place in the Kingdom of God. Man's present subjection to them and the havoc and sorrow that they cause in human life is due to his imperfection, ignorance, and sin. They are therefore part of his discipline in character and in knowledge, in faith and in prayer. But we have no reason to believe that permanent subjection to them is part of the unchangeable, unconditional will of God for men. It is not impious for men to fight against famine, or foolish for men to pray for deliverance from the storm. It is indeed their duty to do both, just as it is their duty to strive and pray against the inroads of disease.

Has real piety of the Biblical type ever thought

• anything else, or shrunk from the appeal to God to control even the winds and the waters and deliver those "in peril on the sea"? These prayers are certainly for something more than that those in such peril may be kept calm and strong and morally intact amid their dangers. They should include that, but they are for real objective deliverance, and that, as we have seen, necessarily implies something over and above the "closed system" of nature, something in principle, therefore, "miraculous" in the broader meaning of the term, in other words a nature miracle.

In truth the real difficulty which many feel about the nature miracles of Jesus has precisely the same root as that difficulty which many feel about petitionary prayer for anything save inward spiritual help and guidance. We have here the old obsession about the "closed system" of physical nature showing itself once more. That "closed system" is assumed to be the whole of Nature, and is then identified with the immovable decree of God. From the point of view of the argument of this book the nature miracles of Jesus are needed to complete the idea embodied in the healing miracles. They are meant to embody the ideal will of God and the ideal destiny of man in the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Lord's resurrection is the crowning manifestation of that victory over all the mortal and tragic powers of the world. It unites the two groups of His signs of which I have spoken. On the one hand it may be classed with the healing group, for all disease is a kind of dying. On the other, a human body from which

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life has departed seems simply part of the inorganic world,

Rolled round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks and stones and trees.

It is as much part of the dead material world as the winds and waters of the Galilean lake. It is difficult to see, if we reject the nature miracles on principle, how we can continue to maintain a reasonable faith in the complete reality of the resurrection. Yet a Christianity without a true resurrection is bereft, as I have tried to show, of something that lies near the very springs of its genius. Modernist attempts to show that the first Christians did not believe in anything but a spiritual resurrection of Jesus, an escape to God from the trammels of the body, come dangerously near to special pleading. It can be quite conclusively shown, for instance, that the idea of the body as the prison of the soul is not Hebrew at all but Greek. It can be shown also, quite conclusively, that the whole structure of Hebrew and Jewish thought compelled men to hold that Christ's premature death upon the Cross demanded a full and complete resurrection, and an empty tomb, if His disciples were to recover their faith in Him as the victorious Messiah and the "prince of life" they believed Him to be. Such considerations compel us to take St Paul's words⁷ in their natural way and at their full value. "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received: that Christ died for our sins according

⁷ 1 Cor. xv. 3 and 4.

to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he hath been raised on the third day according to the Scriptures."

It has been argued that St Paul here is thinking only of a spiritual resurrection of Jesus and that it is significant that he makes no mention of the empty tomb. I have already in another connection⁶ dealt with this argument, but something falls to be added. Dr Denney's reply to this ingenuity is, I think, final. "The mention of the burial is important in this connection as defining what is meant by the rising—we see from it that it would have conveyed no meaning to Paul or any member of the original Christian circle to say that it was the spirit of Christ which rose to new life, or that He rose again in the faith of His devoted followers, who could not bear the thought that for Him death should end all. The rising is relative to the grave and the burial, and if we cannot speak of a bodily resurrection we should not speak of a resurrection at all."⁷

It is, as has already been pointed out, difficult to see how anyone who has really studied St Paul's whole thought on the relation between sin and death, on the body and the spirit, and finally on the ultimate transformation of the body, can persuade himself that St Paul could possibly have believed in any theory of the Lord's resurrection which could dispense with the empty tomb. We are not at the moment concerned with the truth or error of these Pauline ideas, but simply with the kind of resurrection in which he believed. It is

⁶ Pp. 44-45.

⁷ *Jesus and the Gospels*, p. 113.

quite clear from the whole context of his thought, as well as from his own words, that at the centre of his faith lay the full Easter message, and that in this he was at one with the whole New Testament community. This full resurrection faith is the very root of the New Testament optimism. There is no more characteristic expression of it than the opening of the first Epistle of Peter, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

There was something more here than even that which was the central and supreme thing in the New Testament consciousness—the sense that the power of sin was broken. There was the sense that the power of sorrow and tragedy was broken too, that in the resurrection the Kingdom of Heaven had been manifested to men. In a word the resurrection was the same kind of thing in a supreme and perfect way that the earlier signs of the Lord had been, the visualising of the eternal life, the first-fruits of the Spirit, the beginning of the new heaven and the new earth in which sin and sorrow would pass away and death be no more. The first Christians believed that they were living in the dawn of a new creation. The sun had risen behind them and was transfiguring earth and sky and sea with a light which would one day irradiate the whole universe. That sun was God in Christ, the risen Christ "who had abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel."

Can we translate that idea of the resurrection

into terms of modern thought, so that we shall not miss its essence, as I cannot but think that even the well-intended mediating theories do?

It is clear that St Paul held neither these nor the simple reanimation view. He obviously believed that a transfiguring change had passed over the body of the Lord. We have here something that goes quite beyond all our experience. We admit this of all the signs of Jesus, and it is truest of all of His final victory over death. But while we freely admit this, it is permissible to approach the mystery along the lines of analogy with what we do know. If we follow the lines of organic evolution up to man, and from the most primitive men of whom we have traces up to the highest men we know, we see the bodily elements growing more and more capable of becoming instruments of Spirit, the wonderful tool of the body becoming more and more adequate for the uses of the intelligence, the imagination, and the soul. What is the difference between the monkey's paw and the artist's hand? Is there not more here than the anatomist and the physiologist can tell us, something that only comes into view when we ask as to the end? Is not the artist's hand a better expression and instrument of the spirit? Are we to suppose that the long process of the subordination of matter to spirit ends with the human body as we know it, or must there not be something more perfect still in the way of bodily organisation, a more spiritual and lasting type of body in touch with a finer and larger environment?

Such an idea sixty years ago would have been treated as simply a forlorn and "devout imagination" by the dominant science and philosophy. But to-day there come new voices from science. As regards higher forms of living organism which may transcend mortality, let us hear Bergson as he contemplates the giant stream of life pouring from the unknown past to the unknown future: "As the smallest grain of dust is bound up with our entire solar system, drawn along with it in that undivided movement of descent which is materiality itself, so all organised beings from the humblest to the highest, from the first origin of life to the time in which we are, and in all places as in all times, do but evidence a single impulsion, the inverse of the movement of matter, and in itself indivisible. All the living hold together, and all yield to the same tremendous push. The animal takes its stand upon the plant, man bestrides animality, and the whole of humanity, in space and in time, is one immense army, galloping beside and before and behind each of us in an overwhelming charge, able to beat down every resistance and clear the most formidable obstacles, perhaps even death."¹⁰

Let us hear another living philosophic thinker on the possibilities of the human spirit: "We need not fear that this mechanism (*i.e.* of the material world) will be found too rigid and mechanical, that in the ripeness of time it will put an absolute limit upon spiritual evolution. The time may come when Matter will no longer offer any obstacle to our wishes, and when, in sober truth, Man will

¹⁰ *Creative Evolution*, Eng. tr., pp. 285, 286.

precipitate a mountain into the sea. Or can it be that a completer harmony of the human with the Divine Will can anticipate the course of social evolution, and give to saints and sages a power over Matter which transcends that of ordinary men, and even now enables their faith to move mountains? May not their power over Matter already rise to the level to be attained in far-distant ages, just as their intellectual and moral development towers above that of the societies in which they dwell? It is enough for a philosopher to assert that there is nothing inherently absurd in the supposition, and that a will completely synonymous with the Divine Will would needs have a complete control of the Material."¹¹

And as regards the transformation of something much greater than the body, the physical universe, into what may be the environment of that transformed body, let us hear Professor Whitehead: "The universe shows us two aspects: on one side it is physically wasting, on the other it is spiritually ascending. It is thus passing with a slowness, inconceivable in our measure of time, to new creative conditions, amid which the physical world, as we at present know it, will be represented by a ripple, barely to be distinguished from non-entity."¹²

However we may speculate, the power of the resurrection faith in the first Christian age lay in this, that it was a complete victory over death and

¹¹ *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 2nd Edition, pp. 304-5, by F. C. S. Schiller.

¹² *Religion in the Making*, p. 160.

therefore contained in itself the promise and the potency of a like victory for all mankind. "When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

The last word then of the Gospel is not one of final submission to nature's last word, death, but of rebellion against it and of victory over it by the power of the Spirit.