



Apocalypse



D. H. LAWRENCE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD ALDINGTON

\$1.95 / A Viking Compass Book

Apocalypse

Apocalypse

D. H. Lawrence



With an Introduction by
Richard Aldington

The Viking Press
New York

Copyright 1931 by The Estate of David Herbert Lawrence
Introduction by Richard Aldington Copyright 1932,
Renewed © 1960 by The Viking Press, Inc.
All rights reserved

VIKING COMPASS EDITION

Issued in 1966 by The Viking Press, Inc.
625 Madison Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022

SBN 670-12951-8 (hardbound)

670-00191-0 (paperbound)

Library of Congress catalog card number: 32-5886

Sixth printing November 1974

**Distributed in Canada by
The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited**

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

INTRODUCTION

To Frieda Lawrence

Dear Frieda,

I've undertaken to say something about Apocalypse and about Lawrence, and I've decided that the best way to do it is by a letter to you. There are two clear advantages. If I say anything which you know to be false or malicious, you are thus invited to come out and say so publicly. And by making this Introduction an informal letter, I can at least try to avoid that quasi-professorial solemnity of the intellectuals which annoyed Lawrence and which is so unsuitable when writing about a free spirit who loved life.

Such a lot of nonsense has been written about Lawrence, as well as stuff which is either stupidly uncomprehending or downright malevolent. I don't want to add to any of it. Yesterday I was reading a new life of Edgar Poe, where the man shows that most of the discreditable stories about Poe are either unproved or demonstrably untrue; and that the worst fabricator was his own literary executor! This made me think of the ridiculously false and cruel things which have been written or said about Lawrence. People have been terribly eager to point out his faults

Apocalypse

before ever they allowed themselves to recognise his qualities and achievements; and they've tried to explain him away long before they understood him. Like every creative man, Lawrence suffered from the hundreds of people who would like to create, and can't. The unconscious envy of this type disguises itself as "critical standards," and its attack is always against the essentially creative and original artist.

I don't mean that Lawrence wasn't appreciated as a writer. From the Garnetts and Hueffer at the beginning, on to Aldous Huxley at the end, there were always distinguished men who admired him, as well as a growing number of silent people who bought his books. But how much there was against him! The Home Office with its policemen and beastly War-time spies; many of the reviewers; the huge stupid puritanical middle class; and all the nasty busybodies who are always so busy watching and warding other people's morals. It was a lot for a poor miner's son to fight, even though he was a great writer. I do think it is up to us to see that his courage and energy are not misrepresented and betrayed.

I often think that the biggest blow Lawrence ever received was the prosecution of *The Rainbow*. They can say all they like about "obscenity," but you and I know in our bones that the real reason for the attack was that he denounced War. And you were German, so of course Lawrence was plotting to bring the Prussian Guards into Cornwall in submarines. Probably only you know how much he suffered in those War

Introduction

years, though other people can guess if they will read the "Nightmare" chapters in Kangaroo. I think it was the utter stupid misjudging of him, and the complete betrayal by nearly everyone who ought to have stood by him, which hurt him, far more than the bitter poverty which the prosecution brought. As if he did not care far more for England than the "patriotic" fools and knaves who ruined it for us! For the War was a triumph of that evil hatred of life which he always struggled against.

His acceptance of the poverty was one of the sweet things in him. You remember the time after you were both turned out of Cornwall as dangerous conspirators, and afterwards went to live at that little cottage of Margaret Radford's at Hermitage. He described it all in Kangaroo—how poor you were, and how you often hadn't enough to eat, and how he went out in the evening to gather the woodcutters' chips so that you could have a fire. The trees were being cut down to further the ends of the destructionists, so it was only right that the man who believed in life and creativeness should have only the chips. He writes about all that with a simple-hearted acceptance which is deeply touching, because it is so unconscious. The resentment in him was not about his own suffering or even yours, but at the triumph of the world's yahoos over the human beings.

The way people misunderstand all this is rather exasperating. In the summer of 1930 I received a letter (one of those hoity-toity superior letters which

Apocalypse

people think they have a right to send because they've spent a few shillings on a book) from a man, a school-master I think he was, about my little book on Lawrence. This man said I was quite wrong to protest—he knew Lawrence was popular, because two of his friends were Lawrence enthusiasts, and he knew he had plenty of money because Lawrence first editions fetched as much as three pounds! Doesn't it make you cross? That little book was published in America in 1927 (nobody would issue it in England until after Lawrence was dead, and therefore famous) and, as you know, he was never without money anxiety until 1928, and then it was too late. I remember at the Mirinda in 1926, you were both so pleased because he had got £80 for a short story from the Saturday Evening Post—very pleasant, except that I knew they then paid anything from £100 to £500 to other far less gifted writers.

You know how simply he lived, how completely without any sort of extravagance, how unmercenary his writing was, how he even gave away manuscripts, and how cross he was with me at Port-Cros for trying to make him more "business-like." So you will hardly believe it when I tell you that somebody recently informed me that "Lawrence loved money." We shall hear next that he loved power and had political ambitions. Naturally, a hungry man is pleased when he gets some food; and it does not surprise me that a man should be pleased to have a little money after being poor for forty years. I don't

Introduction

call that "loving money." To hear people talk you might suppose he had yachts and had Hispano-Suizas and large villas at Cannes. I remember once at Port-Cros we were all making out the list of provisions. Lawrence wanted a whole ham, and you said it would be too expensive; and he said, very proudly and extravagantly, "Never mind, we've got £700—let's have what we want." So we got the "money-lover" his ham!

The absurd popular Lawrence-legend reaches me in forms which do not come to you. All sorts of little episodes, which showed the utterly false ideas circulating about him, come into my memory. There was the well-meaning but sadly stupid literary gentleman, who gravely informed me that Lawrence was "one of the most sinister figures of our time." Only last year I heard a wealthy middle-class woman say at a party, "Lawrence? He's the man who hates women, isn't he?" Perhaps one should pay no attention to such idiocies, but they annoy me. I hope the books that you and his sister are bringing out will destroy some of these ill-natured calumnies; but, though truth is great, it seems to take a long while to prevail. I think Ada Lawrence is quite right when she says that nowadays our rulers underhandedly try to discredit and ruin a man whose ideas do not please them, instead of adopting the more direct methods of their ancestors, such as burning and imprisonment.

In the last twenty years other writers have been banned or persecuted, but Lawrence was peculiarly

Apocalypse

unlucky, or shall we say, selected. There is something very irritating in the back-stairs methods now so much favoured in England. A writer may be secretly denounced by his rivals, and is judged and condemned by his inferiors. I know that in France during the War I received a communication from some English Vice Society, asking for a subscription to carry on their good work and boasting that their latest achievement was—what do you think?—the suppression of Rainbow. I lost the document, but I remember that it was signed (among others) by a Bishop and a “literary critic” now dead. Another and more startling example of animosity towards Lawrence came my way once when I was on leave, and staying in the same house with you both. When everybody else was out I discovered a man poking about the house, and he informed me that he was a detective sent to investigate Lawrence’s activities in London. (It sounds a bit mad, but it’s true.) I tried to point out that Lawrence had neither the will nor the means to do any material harm to the Allied and Associated Powers, and that his attitude towards the War was determined by moral and human considerations. This, however, went rather over his head. Reassured by my uniform, he became quite confidential, and finally informed me that he had read some of Lawrence’s books and “didn’t fink much of ’em.”

From this distance, it seems comic, particularly when you know that our treasonable activities the night before had been limited to playing charades

Introduction

under Lawrence's direction. (How he bossed us about, as if we were children, and insisted on having the most important part himself!) But at that time it was more serious and tragic than we realised. All this opposition and persecution and calumny (which in his case was certainly greater than the normal hostility every original writer must expect) made him feel very lonely. The "intellectuals" let him down as badly as anybody. From 1916 to about 1921 Lawrence felt, and indeed almost was, a pariah. And the result was not only the desperate feeling so startlingly expressed in *Kangaroo*, but a sharpness and intolerance very unlike his own genuine sweetness and charm. In this very *Apocalypse*, to which I am leading up, you will find him snapping at sun-bathers for lying on the beach "like pigs."

His ordinary rages and crossnesses had nothing to do with this later sharpness which I was surprised to find in him after you came back from Mexico. (I did not see him between 1919 and 1926, and so noticed such things.) In working-class homes people let off steam much more freely than in bourgeois homes, where a sort of rancour often lurks under the superficial good manners. Very likely Lawrence was only doing what he had seen his father do a thousand times—work off his annoyance by shouting and apparently unnecessary violence. But with these people, once the scene is over, there is no ill-will at all. Everybody has worked off his or her annoyance, and is quite prepared to be affectionate again. People like ourselves

Apocalypse

are brought up to conceal our feelings; he always expressed his. Once I had worked that out for myself, I didn't at all mind his occasional crossnesses; but I did mind that sharp girding at so many people and things. Yet I believe it was not inherent in his nature. It was created in him by the spirit of persecution and hostility which met nearly everything he wrote. A little genuine effort to understand what he was trying to say, a slight gleam of intelligence in wooden-headed officials, would have spared him much humiliation and suffering. It was the humiliation he could not forgive. But I am indeed glad that he never wasted time in replying to literary "attacks," that he made the only reply an artist need make—writing another fine book.

What annoyed, and still annoys me, is that Lawrence was attacked on "moral" grounds by people who ought to have shut up when the word "morality" was mentioned. For instance, there was one "critic"—now deceased—whose hobby was the collection of filthy verses and writing indecent letters. And there is another whom I will not specify in any way. The beastly hypocrisy of it! These people hated Lawrence because he was a clean man, because he had such reverence and delight in the beauty and glory of sex and sex-love, that he would not endure anything which degraded or sneered at them. Do you remember how our Italian friend, G., used to say laughingly, "How moral they are, those Lawrences, how moral!" But it was true. I think Lawrence had the sweetest imagi-

Introduction

nation and feeling about sex of any man I have known; just as, in its essential meaning, he was a truly "religious" man.

It isn't necessary for me to insist any further on this, since you and his sister are writing about him. I hope you'll give the quietus to all the highbrow and lowbrow calumnies—particularly the highbrow ones. But I must add one little story to show how sensitive Lawrence was to anything which he thought at all vulgar or indelicate in these matters. One day we were spelling out Etruscan inscriptions—you know, they go from right to left. I transcribed a, r, s, e. Lawrence scratched his head and said, "I wonder what that means, Richard?" I said, "Well, I don't know what it means in Etruscan, but I know what it means in English." How cross he was with me! Afterwards he said to someone else, "You know, I used to think Richard was sound, but now I'm afraid he's just like other Englishmen!"

I mustn't prolong these reminiscences, because this, after all, is meant to be an introduction to Apocalypse, yet I can't help giving one more glimpse of this wicked man. It was at the Mirenda. You had gone into Florence to do some shopping, and Lawrence and I sat in deck-chairs under the chestnut trees at the back of the villa. The October afternoon was very warm and golden, and we talked about this and that, and occasionally a ripe chestnut slipped out of its bulging spiky burr and plopped in the grass. Our real interest was not in talking, but in the children of the contadini.

Apocalypse

Every now and then, a shy little barefoot child would come stealing through the bushes with a bunch of grapes. Lawrence would say, "Look! There's another. Pretend not to see." The child would come very stealthily forward over the grass, like a little animal, and then stop and gaze at him. Finally, Lawrence would look up, and say with a pretence of surprise, "Che vuoi?" "Niente, Signor Lorenzo." "Viene qui." Then the child would come up very shyly, and present the grapes. "Ma, cosa hai li?" "Uva, Signor Lorenzo." "Per me?" "Sissignore." "Come ti chiami?" And then was a grand scene, trying to make out the child's name. We were terribly puzzled by "stasio," until we decided it must be "Anastasio." But every time, Lawrence, ill as he was, went into the house to get the child a piece of chocolate, or some sugar when all the chocolate was gone. And each time he apologised to me for his generosity (for at Vendemmia, as you know, grapes are worth nothing, and chocolate and sugar are always expensive luxuries) by telling me how poor the peasants were, and how the children ought to have sugar for the sake of their health.

And in England they called him "a sewer." Per Bacco!

It is sometimes suggested that Lawrence made himself unpopular by "putting people in his books," and there is Norman Douglas's pamphlet about Lawrence and Maurice Magnus in support of this view. Now, I'm not one of those clever people who know

Introduction

what went on in Shakespeare's mind when he wrote Hamlet and in Keats's when he wrote the Nightingale. So I shan't pretend that I can tell you what went on in Lawrence's mind when he wrote his novels and poems and essays. If you think about his books, you will see that they form a whole; and that it is a vast imaginative spiritual autobiography. Lawrence believed that you cannot write about anything but yourself, by which I suppose he meant that a writer must keep within the limits of his experience. He also said that the writing of a book is an adventure of the mind. Lawrence made use of traits of character, situations, relationships among the people he knew. But he used these imaginatively, and very often merely to project his own inner experience.

This Norman Douglas denounces as "the novelist's touch," asserting that such writing at its best is a travesty of life, at its worst dishonest. And he proceeds to show that the Magnus he knew was not at all the person described by Lawrence. But a poet is not bound to the literal accuracy of a biologist. Oddly enough, this Magnus book contains some of Lawrence's most beautiful descriptive prose. It seems plain to me that what Lawrence wrote was a short imaginative novel about a possible (not necessarily the real) Magnus, and that his grave error was to publish this as a biography. As I knew nothing of Magnus, I can easily read the thing as a short novel, and as such I find it extremely interesting. Thus, while I believe Douglas was right to condemn what he

Apocalypse

thought was a travesty of his friend, I think he was wrong to extend his condemnation to Lawrence's avowed fiction. Otherwise the contemporary novel becomes impossible, and every doctor's wife in Normandy will be taking action against the author of a future *Madame Bovary*. In any case, I do not think that the resentment of persons who imagined that he had written about them unflatteringly in his novels was responsible for the fantastic legendary Lawrence and the hostility to his books; though, doubtless, such people would not always strive too officiously to defend him.

I have tried to give with frankness my own impression of the man whom you knew far more intimately than anybody else. Before I go on to talk about *Apocalypse* I must try to tell you what is my explanation of the anger and hostility at his books, a hostility which spread from them to himself, and made of him in common imaginations such a monster that there is scarcely any relation between the Lawrence we knew and the Lawrence of the Press and common talk. I shall take only a few simple and fairly obvious points, for I am not such a fool as to imagine that I can explain all Lawrence in a preface.

There was nothing particularly surprising or remarkable in his shocking the circulating library public. It is the most omnivorous public in existence, interested in everything except literature and life, from which it is conscientiously defended on all fronts. The prussic-aciders are always with us. The official

Introduction

prosecution arose out of *War* panic (supported by a little virtue) and was prolonged by mere departmental stupidity—which did not make it any more endurable or any less reprehensible on the part of those responsible. You will see at once what I mean when I say that offence was given all round, not by any sort of scandalous behaviour or horridness of character in him, but by his whole attitude towards human life and human beings. I believe Lawrence had a great deal of love in him, and the sharpness I have regretted only came after his love had been grotesquely misunderstood and flung back at him as hatred. I intend to write this without dragging in Jesus, so I will put it in this way: suppose a Nietzsche who effected a transvaluation not of intellectual values, but of fundamental human values. Such was Lawrence. And he paid the price.

Before Lawrence, the primacy of the intellect had been doubted by Bergson, the psychology of the unconscious had been formulated by Freud, and the whole system of values of European civilisation had been rejected in their different ways by Tolstoy and Nietzsche, and even Dostoievsky. Lawrence differs from them, partly because he was English, but chiefly because he was essentially a poet—a poet who for various reasons found his more effective medium was prose. But, being an Englishman of his class and time, he could scarcely avoid being a preacher as well as a poet. It was the preacher who brought the house down on his own head. From the point of view of the

Apocalypse

intellectuals (and this is the reason why they treated him either with coldness or hostility) Lawrence's fundamental heresy was simply that he placed quality of feelings, intensity of sensations and passion before intellect. In this he is the very antithesis of Bernard Shaw, a fanatic of the intellect, who was at the height of his powers and influence when Lawrence began writing. See the complete contrast between the optimistic belief of the Fabians that anything and everything could be achieved by the human intellect, and Lawrence's conviction that intellect is a dangerous, even pernicious thing which leads only to death.

Perhaps I put this a little too strongly, and in any case I must insist that he felt and wrote about these things as a poet, and not as a philosopher with a system to expound. I think you will agree that what Lawrence had to give and wanted to give was a new or different way of feeling, living, and loving, and not a new way of thinking. You cannot put him into formulas. Of course, he had to think too—how else could he be a writer? But his problem as a writer was to put into words these feelings and perceptions which he believed to be independent of the conscious intellect. This was difficult enough for Lawrence, who was dealing with his own experience; it is almost impossible for anyone else, who may entirely misinterpret what he wrote. For example, what exactly were the experiences expressed (or rather, symbolised) in those beautiful but curious poems in *The Plumed Serpent*? What did he mean when he spoke of the Indian sing-

Introduction

ing as "mindless"? What exactly are the "physical life" and the "tenderness" he used to talk to us about? I can feel, you can feel what he meant, but they are not things which can be pinned down with neat defining sentences. These things cannot be expressed except through images and symbols and the evocative descriptions at which Lawrence excelled.

This rejection of the sovereignty of the intellect is the cause of much of the misunderstanding and hostility Lawrence endured. It made him look like a crank, and thereby estranged the intellectuals. At the same time, his rejection of organised religion naturally offended the enormous number of people who are still enthralled by it. The so-called "spiritual" values had no interest for him at all; and numerous idiots went about saying that Lawrence wished us to become "animal" or even "amœbic." Finally, he was serious about sexual love. There are all sorts of accepted attitudes towards sex, which you can get away with because au fond they all imply contempt and disgust, the Pauline conviction that sexual desire is base, impure, and sinful. You may be sentimental-pure or sentimental-prurient, mocking or solemn, materialist or idealist, sociological or medical; but you may not say (and believe and experience) that sexual desire is a glorious and beautiful thing. Any other god may be worshipped, but not *Æneidum genetrix, hominum divumque voluptas*. (That "voluptas" is the crime—why, a skilful journalist very nearly shook the English superstition about Shakespeare by suggesting

Apocalypse

that the Bard was "a voluptuary.") Thus while Lawrence informed mankind that they were scarcely living at all, they retorted by calling him a cretin, a sewer, and a pornographer. A sad imbroglio.

Towards the end of his life Lawrence wrote three books which are very important towards an understanding of him. They are *The Man Who Died*, the essays on *Etruscan Towns*, and—most important of all—*Apocalypse*. The *Etruscan* book had been in his mind for a long time, and he died without finishing it. I thought the manuscript (it has not yet been published) extremely interesting, less perhaps for what it told me about the *Etruscans* (though that is stimulating enough) than for what it told me about Lawrence. To put it roughly in a sentence, Lawrence believed that the *Etruscans* of about 700–300 B.C. had lived largely in the way he wished to live and thought that we should all live. The *Etruscans* were a great convenience, for, since nobody knows much about them, nobody could contradict what he said. Lawrence ranged pretty far both in space and time in search of other modes of living which could be used either as symbols for expressing his faith or as sticks to beat the moderns. He found bits of what he wanted in German and Italian peasants, in Mexicans and Indians. (You remember how he liked the fishermen at Lavandou, going out in boats with their sons, playing boules, and eating bouillabaisse with their wives? Alas, they are lost already among cocktail-drinking tourists and ladies in trousers.)

Introduction

These traces of elemental life were not enough for him. In Europe they are being obliterated every day, and probably even more rapidly in America. Moreover, I think he grew dissatisfied with his savages, if only because (as he says somewhere) their consciousness is so different from ours that there is scarcely any possibility of communication. The white man can do nothing with the savage except to destroy or enslave, since it is too much to expect the elementary justice of leaving him alone. Lawrence's return to Tuscany was fortunate. I think he always liked it, and was as happy at the Mirinda as anywhere, except perhaps the Ranch and Sicily. Boccaccio, who is the very essence of country Tuscany, was one of the few authors he always loved, a man filled with that warm instinctive life Lawrence wanted so much to see around him. And for a long time he had had a hankering to investigate the Etruscans for himself, and to write a book about them.

The Etruscans were quite a godsend. Here was a lost European civilisation which had never been guilty of a Homer or a Plato, had indeed no extant literature at all. There is no history of the Etruscans, for the book about them by the Emperor Claudius has disappeared, and the dislike of the Romans for a conquered and perhaps more civilised people, added to Christian horror of "pagans," has left us little but archæology and conjecture. To increase their attractiveness, you will find that the Etruscans are not favourites with the learned, who accuse them of immorality and of borrow-

Apocalypse

ing what culture they had from other races. They were a very religious people, greatly interested in the divine significance of the flight of birds and of the entrails of sacrifices. They must have believed in some sort of life after death, since they constructed cities of elaborate tombs (planned in imitation of their towns), burying their dead in full armour or festival robes in painted chambers filled with precious objects and offerings to the dead. Sometimes the dead were burned, and placed in carved marble or alabaster coffers.

Lawrence believed that Etruscan art had a quality of its own, quite different from Greek or Roman art; and what he found there and liked so much was that intense "physical" life he thought the world has very nearly lost. The Etruscans did not possess much "æsthetic" feeling, the Greek love of perfection, harmony, grace. They were wonderful craftsmen in gold, for the best modern goldsmiths cannot quite equal the delicacy of their filigree work. The best of their bronzes have great spirit and energy—for example, the chariot and shields in the Vatican, and the elongated statuettes in Florence. The Apollo of Veii at the Villa di Papa Giulio and the tomb in the British Museum show what they could achieve in terracotta. Almost more important are the wall-paintings and the carved stone caskets of the dead. On or near every Etruscan tomb was a conventionalised phallus—a symbol of the triumph of life over death. Some of the later wall-paintings have horrid devils of death in them, but most of the earlier ones are rather gay. They depict the life of the living,

Introduction

and there are real warmth and tenderness in the love-scenes. Moreover, those carved figures of obese magistrates and often ugly men and women have extraordinary vitality. They fascinate an attentive observer, in Rome and Florence, in Volterra, Perugia, Orvieto—even in the smallest collection.

All this you know as well as I; but the point I want to stress is the depth to which Lawrence was stirred by these vestiges of a lost civilisation. For my present purpose, it is quite irrelevant to ask whether Lawrence had or had not any “scientific” basis for Etruscan enthusiasm. What matters is that he found in the Etruscans (or lent them, it doesn't matter) a conception of life such as he believed in himself. Perhaps it is only a poet's dream, a transference to the remote past of an ideal he despaired of finding in the present. This conception comes up again in Apocalypse, and indeed runs through much of his work. In Apocalypse the Etruscans have fallen into the background, as rather belated specimens of the “great Ægean civilisation” which existed before 1000 B.C., of which the Etruscans are quite possibly an off-shoot. Whether imagined or not, here at least were civilisations which Lawrence felt he could love, nations of men and women living an intense “physical” life without too much restless intellect and hatred. And in Etruria at any rate the women enjoyed great liberty and consideration, while the idea of sex and sexual desire as shameful things had never been thought of—that was an importation of the puritan Romans.

Apocalypse

I shall only say a little about The Man Who Died. It is intensely personal, and the saddest thing Lawrence ever wrote. It is the only thing in his work which looks like a confession of defeat, and this he promptly countered by writing Apocalypse. The opening part when he describes the mingled agony and gradual happiness in creeping back from death to life is full of pathos; one can't help thinking of his own sufferings as he recovered from one or other of his serious crises. Like much of Lawrence's writing, it has more than one meaning. You can take it as an expression of his latest feelings about Jesus—a rejection of Jesus as a teacher, an acceptance of Jesus as the lover. The mistake of Jesus was not in loving, but in trying to influence men by a doctrine of love. Even when he was struggling with the problem of love and hatred, Lawrence was always a great lover; his deepest and most passionate belief was in love. It was because he loved so much that he also hated so intensely all the enemies of love. But that forlorn, lonely suffering creature just shivering back to life in the sun outside the peasant's hut is also a symbol of Lawrence himself. In this mood of agonised convalescence he doubted his own life. He did not doubt love, for the triumph of love is still his theme, but he doubted both the love he had given to mankind in general and all his own efforts as a writer. It would have been better, he seems to imply, just to live out a life of love, and not to try to give love to all. Isn't it true that he was misunderstood and sneered at by those he was trying to illuminate with his love, and even that

Introduction

he was betrayed? If I read this story correctly, then it expresses the bitterest moments of Lawrence's life. How glad I am that he lived to write *Apocalypse*!

In several of Lawrence's novels we see the conflict between this mysterious "dark consciousness," this "sense-awareness," and the "intellectual" consciousness of the modern world, which he felt was utterly hostile and destructive to the other and (for him) deeper and more vital way of living. There, he used human characters as symbols. In *Apocalypse* he uses strange primitive symbols, such as you find in pre-Christian art and, oddly enough, in the *Book of Revelation*. *Apocalypse* is a kind of last testament, a last effort to make himself understood by the very many who had either not listened to him or had failed to understand him. The despair of *The Man Who Died* has disappeared, and it is significant that he could not help trying just once more to do something for the humanity he so obviously loved if only because he scolded it so much. *Apocalypse* is essentially a book of hope and life, although it condemns so completely all our contemporary ways of living.

I've tried to show how this study of the Etruscans had stimulated his interest in early civilisations; and this study must have revived an interest in symbols which so far as I know he always had. And, I repeat, *The Man Who Died* is a rejection of Jesus the teacher, though not of Jesus the lover. But in *Apocalypse* Lawrence not only comes out as an interpreter of strange old symbols, but as a teacher and a lover—he

Apocalypse

could not put off his nature so easily. If he had really ceased to care about men and women, he would have ceased to write; or, at any rate, he would not have written a book like *Apocalypse*, which attempts to give ordinary people the clue to the kind of life he felt he had discovered. I doubt if he was entirely happy with his red and green dragons and beasts with starry wings and coloured horses. You know he admitted to you that he was a little bored by them, which was very endearing of him, for they are a trifle boring in the end.

From the point of view of scholars Lawrence's book may be quite worthless as an interpretation of the *Book of Revelation*. That is neither here nor there, at least so far as I am concerned. *Apocalypse* interests me not as the revelation of John of Patmos, but as the revelation of Lawrence. The things he says by the way are more valuable than the interpretation, whatever it may be worth. In *Apocalypse* he goes further (I think) than in any of his other books, except perhaps in *Mornings in Mexico*. Here we are quite definitely told that this different "consciousness" he was always talking about, this different "sense-awareness," this life of man "breast to breast with the cosmos," can only exist in its plenitude outside what he calls our "cycle," the cycle of Platonic "spiritual" philosophy, of Christianity and of science. This "cosmos" he talks of is a "living thing" with which man may commune and which will commune with him:

"We and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts. The sun

Introduction

is a great heart whose tremors run through our smallest veins. The moon is a great gleaming nerve-centre from which we quiver forever."

But:

"We have lost the cosmos. The sun strengthens us no more, neither does the moon."

And that was because "the old vital religions" were rejected by "intellectuals" like Aristotle and all who derive from him and by the Christians:

"The cosmos became anathema to the Christians, though the early Catholic Church restored it somewhat after the crash of the Dark Ages. Then again the cosmos became anathema to the Protestants after the Reformation. They substituted the non-vital universe of forces and mechanistic order, everything else became abstraction, and the long slow death of the human being set in. This slow death produced science and machinery, but both are death products."

I like the distinction between science and machinery, because to many persons science is the machine; when they talk of the "marvels of modern science" they mean airplanes and wireless and electric light. But machinery is only a by-product of true science, which is the search for an abstract something called the Truth. But since "the Truth" does not exist, Lawrence, like Remy de Gourmont before him, is quite justified in calling it a death-product. This cult for "Truth," the most abstract of kakodaimons, withers the vital

Apocalypse

impulses, so that mankind is reduced to the pitiable belief that we live by bread alone—taking bread as symbolical of commodities. To this lie, which is indeed a lie in the soul, Lawrence cried, "Better lack bread than lack life."

Thus I believe that Apocalypse perfectly rounds off the long series of Lawrence's writings, is a splendid valediction. It protests against the dehumanising of men and women by Christianity, which promises them an imaginary heaven after they are dead, "if they are good." And it protests against their dehumanising by "science," which has taken the gods out of heaven and the heart out of men. And by implication it protests against the puerile conceptions of men like Bernard Shaw, with their ridiculous tyrannical "organisations" and equal incomes. As if life were a matter of income! It may be said (though you will not say it) that the experience behind Apocalypse—or rather the conception of life and consciousness expressed in the book—is a purely mystic one. Well, we can all argue that the experiences we have not had are invalid or non-existent. But Rousseau experienced this same physical ecstasy, this same sensation of living "breast to breast with the cosmos" when he was living in the Ile de Saint-Pierre. All his life afterwards was a regret for this lost "consciousness" (for he lost it when he had to leave the island) and an attempt to regain it.

If people try to read Apocalypse either as a work of scholarship or of scientific analysis, they make a mistake, for it is nothing of the kind. Lawrence makes

Introduction

use of the book to illustrate a double theme. He shows that it embodies the "Christianity" of the uneducated under-dog dissenting sort of Christian because it is the expression of frustrated power-lust. Parallel with this he ventures on the bolder assertion that much of the symbolism is taken from very ancient and pre-Christian cosmogonies, conceptions of man and the universe which the Christians meant to destroy and did destroy but whose symbolism they used because human consciousness was still saturated by it, and because they could not invent another themselves, or at best only in part.

The two themes are interwoven with all Lawrence's astonishing literary skill. For him, it is a comparatively cool book with little of that passionate eloquence which came to him so naturally when he was deeply moved; but, obviously, he was keeping himself under strict control. The remarkable thing is that a book by a dying man should contain so much energy, physical energy. The glow and warmth of himself, as of his very blood and flesh, which Lawrence gave in his books, are wonderful and a lovable thing. There was no literary posing, no dry crackle of witticism, no arid friendless mind-spinning in his work. It was himself. He could have echoed Whitman truly, for who touches Lawrence's books touches a man. Yet Apocalypse is the book of a dying man, and you might think it would have to be excused as such. Not a bit. The rich passion, the lovely poetic sensual imagination are a little muted, because this differs from nearly

Apocalypse

all Lawrence's other books. It is a work of exposition rather than of creation, though it is created; it is an attempt to explain his beliefs, rather than to embody them in a work of art. But it is a living book. And it is not about death, but about life.

How easy it all looks to an outsider, and what exquisite writing-power is behind these easy almost colloquial sentences! From the very beginning you feel, you must feel, the old fascinating Lawrence spell. He starts so quietly, just making you realise his own boyhood, and how his child consciousness was saturated with the Bible words until his mind rejected them with loathing. He moves outward from himself, and takes us into the cold ugly miners' chapels with the flaring gas-jets and the voice roaring out the denunciations of John of Patmos against the rich and the splendid and the lovely and the powerful—all the magnificent things of life they hadn't got and wanted so much and envied, but especially the power. And then the writing sweeps out in wider and wider circles, like a swift hawk soaring round and round and higher, just as he would talk when he was in the right mood. He shows how this envy of power, this desire for the utter destruction of Babylon the Great, the symbol of all the splendid power and magnificence of the world, so that in the end the weak under-dogs are left as the only rulers—how this gospel of hate has slipped into the gospel of love, was bound to do so, since it is always the religion of the have-nots.

The religion of Jesus (not the religion of John of Patmos), he says, is a religion for individuals. It is

Introduction

not (he maintains) a religion for the collective side of man's nature, which needs more than love. Men need to identify themselves with a splendid hierarchy, to feel themselves fulfilled in "their" Emperor or King and "their" nobles. (This curious piece of English snobbery might be a justification of the Church of Rome—a consequence of his argument which Lawrence does not appear to have noticed.) And so through the long analysis of the "old symbolists" and their cosmogonies, which I have already mentioned, Lawrence leads up to a sort of credo which is well worth meditating, even by those who are hostile to Lawrence. His six points are elaborated, but briefly they are:

- (1) No man can be a pure individual.
- (2) The State, or what we call society as a collective whole, cannot have the psychology of an individual.
- (3) The State cannot be Christian.
- (4) Every citizen is a unit of worldly power.
- (5) As a citizen, as a collective being, man has his fulfilment in the gratification of his power-sense.
- (6) To have an ideal for the individual which regards only his individual self and ignores his collective self is in the long run fatal.

Thus baldly summarised, these sound as if Apocalypse petered out into a political tract of Six Points for the Continuance of War. But I am not concerned to argue that now. For me the interesting part of Apocalypse is its "poetic" side, and I do not mind whether poets hold sound theories of political world-

Apocalypse

organisation, or not. At any rate, Lawrence's dream is of a human world, and the aim and spirit of the book is the attainment of abounding life. And he concludes with a magnificent passage, such as only he could write, which I throw as a refutation and a challenge to his enemies:

“What man most passionately wants is his living wholeness and his living unison, not his own isolate salvation of his ‘soul.’ Man wants his physical fulfilment first and foremost, since now, once and once only, he is in the flesh and potent. For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation.”

And so, dear Frieda, au revoir, with all good wishes to you, and all my reverence for the great English writer who was your husband.

RICHARD ALDINGTON.

Apocalypse



O N E

APOCALYPSE means simply Revelation, though there is nothing simple about this one, since men have puzzled their brains for nearly two thousand years to find out what, exactly, is revealed in all its orgy of mystification, and of all the books in the Bible, they find Revelation perhaps the least attractive.

That is my own first feeling about it. From earliest years right into manhood, like any other nonconformist child I had the Bible poured every day into my helpless consciousness, till there came almost a saturation point. Long before one could think or even vaguely understand, this Bible language, these "portions" of the Bible were *douched* over the mind and consciousness, till they became soaked in, they became an influence which affected all the processes of emotion and thought. So that today, although I have "forgotten" my Bible, I need only begin to read a chapter to realise

Apocalypse

that I "know" it with an almost nauseating fixity. And I must confess, my first reaction is one of dislike, repulsion, and even resentment. My very instincts *resent* the Bible.

The reason is now fairly plain to me. Not only was the Bible, in portions, poured into the childish consciousness day in, day out, year in, year out, willy-nilly, whether the consciousness could assimilate it or not, but also it was day in, day out, year in, year out expounded, dogmatically, and always morally expounded, whether it was in day-school or Sunday-school, at home or in Band of Hope or Christian Endeavour. The interpretation was always the same, whether it was a Doctor of Divinity in the pulpit, or the big blacksmith who was my Sunday-school teacher. Not only was the Bible verbally trodden into the consciousness, like innumerable foot-prints treading a surface hard, but the foot-prints were always mechanically alike, the interpretation was fixed, so that all real interest was lost.

The process defeats its own ends. While the Jewish poetry penetrates the emotions and the imagination, and the Jewish morality penetrates

Apocalypse

the instincts, the mind becomes stubborn, resistant, and at last repudiates the whole Bible authority, and turns with a kind of repugnance away from the Bible altogether. And this is the condition of many men of my generation.

Now a book lives as long as it is unfathomed. Once it is fathomed, it dies at once. It is an amazing thing, how utterly different a book will be, if I read it again after five years. Some books gain immensely, they are a new thing. They are so astonishingly different, they make a man question his own identity. Again, other books lose immensely. I read *War and Peace* once more, and was amazed to find how little it moved me, I was almost aghast to think of the raptures I had once felt, and now felt no more.

So it is. Once a book is fathomed, once it is *known*, and its meaning is fixed or established, it is dead. A book only lives while it has power to move us, and move us *differently*; so long as we find it *different* every time we read it. Owing to the flood of shallow books which really are exhausted in one reading, the modern mind tends to think every book is the same, finished in one

Apocalypse

reading. But it is not so. And gradually the modern mind will realise it again. The real joy of a book lies in reading it over and over again, and always finding it different, coming upon another meaning, another level of meaning. It is, as usual, a question of values: we are so overwhelmed with *quantities* of books, that we hardly realise any more that a book can be valuable, valuable like a jewel, or a lovely picture, into which you can look deeper and deeper and get a more profound experience every time. It is far, far better to read one book six times, at intervals, than to read six several books. Because if a certain book can call you to read it six times, it will be a deeper and deeper experience each time, and will enrich the whole soul, emotional and mental. Whereas six books read once only are merely an accumulation of superficial interest, the burdensome accumulation of modern days, quantity without real value.

We shall now see the reading public dividing again into two groups: the vast mass, who read for amusement and for momentary interest, and the small minority, who only want the books which

Apocalypse

have value to themselves, books which yield experience, and still deeper experience.

The Bible is a book that has been temporarily killed for us, or for some of us, by having its meaning arbitrarily fixed. We know it so thoroughly, in its superficial or popular meaning, that it is dead, it gives us nothing any more. Worse still, by old habit amounting almost to instinct, it imposes on us a whole state of feeling which is now repugnant to us. We detest the "chapel" and the Sunday-school feeling which the Bible must necessarily impose on us. We want to get rid of all that *vulgarity* — for vulgarity it is.

Perhaps the most detestable of all these books of the Bible, taken superficially, is Revelation. By the time I was ten, I am sure I had heard, and read, that book ten times over, even without knowing or taking real heed. And without ever knowing or thinking about it, I am sure it always roused in me a real dislike. Without realising it, I must, from earliest childhood, have detested the pie-pie mouthing, solemn, portentous, loud way in which everybody read the Bible, whether it was parsons

Apocalypse

or teachers or ordinary persons. I dislike the "parson" voice through and through my bones. And this voice, I remember, was always at its worst when mouthing out some portion of Revelation. Even the phrases that still fascinate me I cannot recall without shuddering, because I can still hear the portentous declamation of a non-conformist clergyman: "And I saw heaven open, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon it was called —" there my memory suddenly stops, deliberately blotting out the next words: "Faithful and True." I hated, even as a child, allegory: people having the names of mere qualities, like this somebody on a white horse, called "Faithful and True." In the same way I could never read *Pilgrim's Progress*. When as a small boy I learnt from Euclid that: "The whole is greater than the part," I immediately knew that that solved the problem of allegory for me. A man is more than mere Faithfulness and Truth, and when people are merely personifications of qualities they cease to be people for me. Though as a young man I almost loved Spenser and his *Faerie Queene*, I had to gulp at his allegory.

Apocalypse

But the Apocalypse is, and always was from earliest childhood, to me antipathetic. In the first place its splendiferous imagery is distasteful because of its complete unnaturalness. "And before the throne there was a sea of glass like unto crystal: and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, were four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

"And the first beast was like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast was like a flying eagle.

"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come."

A passage like that irritated and annoyed my boyish mind because of its pompous unnaturalness. If it is imagery, it is imagery which cannot be imagined: for how can four beasts be "full of eyes before and behind," and how can they be "in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne"? They can't be somewhere and

Apocalypse

somewhere else at the same time. But that is how the Apocalypse is.

Again, much of the imagery is utterly unpoetic and arbitrary, some of it really ugly, like all the wadings in blood, and the rider's shirt dipped in blood, and people washen in the blood of the Lamb. Also such phrases as "the wrath of the Lamb" are on the face of them ridiculous. But this is the grand phraseology and imagery of the nonconformist chapels, all the Bethels of England and America, and all the Salvation armies. And vital religion is said to be found, in all ages, down among the uneducated people.

Down among the uneducated people you will still find Revelation rampant. I think it has had, and perhaps still has more influence, actually, than the Gospels or the great Epistles. The huge denunciation of Kings and Rulers, and of the whore that sitteth upon the waters is entirely sympathetic to a Tuesday evening congregation of colliers and colliers' wives, on a black winter night, in the great barn-like Pentecost Chapel. And the capital letters of the name: MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND

Apocalypse

ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH thrill the old colliers today as they thrilled the Scotch Puritan peasants and the more ferocious of the early Christians. To the underground early Christians, Babylon the great meant Rome, the great city and the great empire which persecuted them. And great was the satisfaction of denouncing her and bringing her to utter, utter woe and destruction, with all her kings, her wealth and her lordliness. After the Reformation, Babylon was once more identified with Rome, but this time it meant the Pope, and in Protestant and nonconformist England and Scotland out rolled the denunciations of John the Divine, with the grand cry: "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." Nowadays the words are still mouthed out, and sometimes still they are hurled at the Pope and the Roman Catholics, who seem to be lifting their heads up again. But more often, today, Babylon means the rich and wicked people who live in luxury and harlotry somewhere in the vague distance, London, New York, or Paris worst of

Apocalypse

all, and who never once set foot in "chapel," all their lives.

It is very nice, if you are poor and *not* humble — and the poor may be obsequious, but they are almost *never* truly humble in the Christian sense — to bring your grand enemies down to utter destruction and discomfiture, while you yourself rise up to grandeur. And nowhere does this happen so splendiferously as in Revelation. The great enemy in the eyes of Jesus was the Pharisee, harping on the letter of the law. But the Pharisee is too remote and subtle for the collier and the factory-worker. The Salvation Army at the street corner rarely raves about Pharisees. It raves about the Blood of the Lamb, and Babylon, Sion, and Sinners, the great harlot, and angels that cry Woe, Woe, Woe! and Vials that pour out horrible plagues. And above all, about being Saved, and sitting on the Throne with the Lamb, and reigning in Glory, and having Everlasting Life, and living in a grand city made of jasper, with gates of pearl: a city that "had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it." If you listen to the Salvation Army you will

Apocalypse

hear that they are going to be very grand. Very grand indeed, since they get to heaven. *Then* they'll show you what's what. *Then* you'll be put in your place, you superior person, you Babylon: down in hell and in brimstone.

This is entirely the tone of Revelation. What we realise when we have read the precious book a few times is that John the Divine had on the face of it a grandiose scheme for wiping out and annihilating everybody who wasn't of the elect, the chosen people, in short, and of climbing up himself right on to the throne of God. With non-conformity, the chapel people took over to themselves the Jewish idea of the chosen people. They were "it," the elect, or the "saved." And they took over the Jewish idea of ultimate triumph and reign of the chosen people. From being bottom dogs they were going to be top dogs: in Heaven. If not sitting actually on the throne, they were going to sit in the lap of the enthroned Lamb. It is doctrine you can hear any night from the Salvation Army or in any Bethel or Pentecost Chapel. If it is not Jesus, it is John. If it is not Gospel, it is Revelation. It is popular religion, as distinct from thoughtful religion.

T W O

OR at least, it was popular religion when I was a boy. And I remember, as a child, I used to wonder over the curious sense of self-glory which one felt in the uneducated leaders, the men especially of the Primitive Methodist Chapels. They were not on the whole pious or mealy-mouthed or objectionable, these colliers who spoke heavy dialect and ran the "Pentecost." They certainly were not humble or apologetic. No, they came in from the pit and sat down to their dinners with a bang, and their wives and daughters ran to wait on them quite cheerfully, and their sons obeyed them without overmuch resentment. The home was rough yet not unpleasant, and there was an odd sense of wild mystery or power about, as if the chapel men really had some dispensation of rude power from above. Not love, but a rough and rather wild, somewhat "special" sense of power. They were so *sure*, and as a rule

Apocalypse

their wives were quite humble to them. They ran a chapel, so they could run their household. I used to wonder over it, and rather enjoy it. But even I thought it rather "common." My mother, who was Congregationalist, never set foot in a Primitive Methodist Chapel in her life, I suppose. And she was certainly not prepared to be humble to her husband. If he'd been a real cheeky chapel man, she would no doubt have been much meeker with him. Cheek, that was the outstanding quality of chapel men. But a special kind of cheek, authorised from above, as it were. And I know now, a good deal of this special kind of religious cheek was backed up by the Apocalypse.

It was not till many years had gone by, and I had read something of comparative religion and the history of religion, that I realised what a strange book it was that had inspired the colliers on the black Tuesday nights in Pentecost or Beauvale Chapel to such a queer sense of special authority and of religious cheek. Strange marvellous black nights of the north Midlands, with the gas-light hissing in the chapel, and the roaring

Apocalypse

of the strong-voiced colliers. Popular religion: a religion of self-glorification and power, forever! and of darkness. No wailing "Lead, kindly Light!" about it.

The longer one lives, the more one realises that there are two kinds of Christianity, the one focussed on Jesus and the Command: Love one another! — and the other focussed, not on Paul or Peter or John the Beloved, but on the Apocalypse. There is the Christianity of tenderness. But as far as I can see, it is utterly pushed aside by the Christianity of self-glorification: the self-glorification of the humble.

There's no getting away from it, mankind falls forever into the two divisions of aristocrats and democrats. The purest aristocrats during the Christian era have taught democracy. And the purest democrats try to turn themselves into the most absolute aristocracy. Jesus was an aristocrat, so was John the Apostle, and Paul. It takes a great aristocrat to be capable of great tenderness and gentleness and unselfishness: the tenderness and gentleness of *strength*. From the democrat you may often get the tenderness and gentleness of

Apocalypse

weakness: that's another thing. But you usually get a sense of toughness.

We are speaking now not of political parties, but of the two sorts of human nature: those that feel themselves strong in their souls, and those that feel themselves weak. Jesus and Paul and the greater John felt themselves strong. John of Patmos felt himself weak, in his very soul.

In Jesus's day, the inwardly strong men everywhere had lost their desire to rule on earth. They wished to withdraw their strength from earthly rule and earthly power, and to apply it to another form of life. Then the weak began to rouse up and to feel *inordinately* conceited, they began to express their rampant hate of the "obvious" strong ones, the men in worldly power.

So that religion, the Christian religion especially, became dual. The religion of the strong taught renunciation and love. And the religion of the weak taught *Down with the strong and the powerful, and let the poor be glorified*. Since there are always more weak people, than strong, in the world, the second sort of Christianity has triumphed and will triumph. If the weak are not

Apocalypse

ruled, they will rule, and there's the end of it. And the rule of the weak is *Down with the strong!*

The grand biblical authority for this cry is the Apocalypse. The weak and pseudo-humble are going to wipe all worldly power, glory, and riches off the face of the earth, and then they, the truly weak, are going to reign. It will be a millennium of pseudo-humble saints, and gruesome to contemplate. But it is what religion stands for today: down with all strong, free life, let the weak triumph, let the pseudo-humble reign. The religion of the self-glorification of the weak, the reign of the pseudo-humble. This is the spirit of society today, religious and political.

T H R E E

AND this was pretty well the religion of John of Patmos. They say he was an old man already when he finished the Apocalypse in the year 96 A.D.: which is the date fixed by modern scholars, from "internal evidence."

Now there were three Johns in early Christian history: John the Baptist, who baptised Jesus, and who apparently founded a religion, or at least a sect of his own, with strange doctrines that continued for many years after Jesus's death; then there was the Apostle John, who was supposed to have written the Fourth Gospel and some Epistles; then there was this John of Patmos who lived in Ephesus and was sent to prison on Patmos for some religious offence against the Roman State. He was, however, released from his island after a term of years, returned to Ephesus, and lived, according to legend, to a great old age.

For a long time it was thought that the Apostle

Apocalypse

John, to whom we ascribe the Fourth Gospel, had written the Apocalypse also. But it cannot be that the same man wrote the two works, they are so alien to one another. The author of the Fourth Gospel was surely a cultured "Greek" Jew, and one of the great inspirers of mystic, "loving" Christianity. John of Patmos must have had a very different nature. He certainly has inspired very different feelings.

When we come to read it critically and seriously, we realise that the Apocalypse reveals a profoundly important Christian doctrine which has in it none of the real Christ, none of the real Gospel, none of the creative breath of Christianity, and is nevertheless perhaps the most effectual doctrine in the Bible. That is, it has had a greater effect on second-rate people throughout the Christian ages, than any other book in the Bible. The Apocalypse of John is, as it stands, the work of a second-rate mind. It appeals intensely to second-rate minds in every country and every century. Strangely enough, unintelligible as it is, it has no doubt been the greatest source of inspiration of the vast mass of Christian minds — the

Apocalypse

vast mass being always second rate — since the first century, and we realise, to our horror, that this is what we are up against today; not Jesus nor Paul, but John of Patmos.

The Christian doctrine of love even at its best was an evasion. Even Jesus was going to reign “hereafter,” when his “love” would be turned into confirmed power. This business of reigning in glory hereafter went to the root of Christianity, and is, of course, only an expression of frustrated desire to reign here and now. The Jews would not be put off: they were determined to reign on earth, so after the Temple of Jerusalem was smashed for the second time, about 200 B.C., they started in to imagine the coming of a Messiah militant and triumphant, who would conquer the world. The Christians took this up as the Second Advent of Christ, when Jesus was coming to give the gentile world its final whipping, and establish a rule of saints. John of Patmos extended this previously modest rule of saints (about forty years) to the grand round number of a thousand years, and so the Millennium took hold of the imagination of men.

Apocalypse

And so there crept into the New Testament the grand Christian enemy, the power-spirit. At the very last moment, when the devil had been so beautifully shut out, in he slipped, dressed in apocalyptic disguise, and enthroned himself at the end of the book as Revelation.

For Revelation, be it said once and for all, is the revelation of the undying will-to-power in man, and its sanctification, its final triumph. If you have to suffer martyrdom, and if all the universe has to be destroyed in the process, still, still, still, O Christian, you shall reign as a king and set your foot on the necks of the old bosses!

This is the message of Revelation.

And just as inevitably as Jesus had to have a Judas Iscariot among his disciples, so did there have to be a Revelation in the New Testament.

Why? Because the nature of man demands it, and will always demand it.

The Christianity of Jesus applies to a part of our nature only. There is a big part to which it does not apply. And to this part, as the Salvation Army will show you, Revelation does apply.

Apocalypse

The religions of renunciation, meditation, and self-knowledge are for individuals alone. But man is individual only in part of his nature. In another great part of him, he is collective.

The religions of renunciation, meditation, self-knowledge, pure morality are for individuals, and even then, not for complete individuals. But they express the individual side of man's nature. They isolate this side of his nature. And they cut off the other side of his nature, the collective side. The lowest stratum of society is always non-individual, so look there for the other manifestation of religion.

The religions of renunciation, like Buddhism or Christianity or Plato's philosophy, are for aristocrats, aristocrats of the spirit. The aristocrats of the spirit are to find their fulfilment in self-realisation and in service. Serve the poor. Well and good. But whom are the poor going to serve? It is a grand question. And John of Patmos answers it. The poor are going to serve themselves, and attend to their own self-glorification. And by the poor we don't mean the indigent merely; we mean the merely collective souls,

Apocalypse

terribly "middling," who have no aristocratic singleness and aloneness.

The vast mass are these middling souls. They *have* no aristocratic individuality, such as is demanded by Christ or Buddha or Plato. So they skulk in a mass and secretly are bent on their own ultimate self-glorification. The Patmoosers.

Only when he is alone, can man be a Christian, a Buddhist, or a Platonist. The Christ statues and Buddha statues witness to this. When he is with other men, instantly distinctions occur, and levels are formed. As soon as he is with other men, Jesus is an aristocrat, a master. Buddha is always the Lord Buddha. Francis of Assisi, trying to be so humble, as a matter of fact finds a subtle means to absolute power over his followers. Shelley could not *bear* to be the aristocrat of his company. Lenin was a Tyrannus in shabby clothes.

So it is! Power is there, and always will be. As soon as two or three men come together, especially to *do* something, then power comes into being, and one man is a leader, a master. It is inevitable.

Accept it, recognise the natural power in the man, as men did in the past, and give it homage,

Apocalypse

then there is a great joy, an uplifting, and a potency passes from the powerful to the less powerful. There is a stream of power. And in this, men have their best collective being, now and forever, and a corresponding flame springs up in yourself. Give homage and allegiance to a hero, and you become yourself heroic. It is the law of men. Perhaps the law of women is different.

But act on the reverse, and what happens! Deny power, and power wanes. Deny power in a greater man, and you have no power yourself. But society, now and forever, must be ruled and governed. So that the mass must grant *authority* where they deny power. Authority now takes the place of power, and we have "ministers" and public officials and policemen. Then comes the grand scramble of ambition, competition, and the mass treading one another in the face, so afraid they are of power.

A man like Lenin is a great evil saint who believes in the utter destruction of power. It leaves men unutterably bare, stripped, mean, miserable, and humiliated. Abraham Lincoln is a half-evil saint who *almost* believes in the utter destruction

Apocalypse

of power. President Wilson is a quite evil saint who quite believes in the destruction of power — but who runs himself to megalomania and neurasthenic tyranny. Every saint becomes evil — and Lenin, Lincoln, Wilson are true saints so long as they remain purely individual; — every saint becomes evil the moment he touches the collective self of men. Then he is a perverter: Plato the same. The great saints are for the *individual* only, and that means, for one side of our nature only, for in the deep layers of ourselves we are collective, we can't help it. And the collective self either lives and moves and has its being in a full relationship of power: or it is reserved, and lives a frictional misery of trying to destroy power, and destroy itself.

But nowadays, the will to destroy power is paramount. Great kings like the late Tzar — we mean great in position — are rendered almost imbecile by the vast anti-will of the masses, the will to negate power. Modern kings are negated till they become almost idiots. And the same of any man in power, unless he be a power-destroyer and a white-feathered evil bird: then the mass will back

Apocalypse

him up. How can the anti-power masses, above all the great middling masses, ever have a king who is more than a thing of ridicule or pathos?

The Apocalypse has been running for nearly two thousand years: the hidden side of Christianity: and its work is nearly done. For the Apocalypse does not worship power. It wants to murder the powerful, to seize the power itself, the weakling.

Judas had to betray Jesus to the powers that be, because of the denial and subterfuge inherent in Jesus's teaching. Jesus took up the position of the pure individual, even with his disciples. He did not *really* mix with them, or even really work or act with them. *He was alone all the time.* He puzzled them utterly, and in some part of them, he let them down. He refused to be their physical power-lord: The power-homage in a man like Judas felt itself betrayed! So it betrayed back again: with a kiss. And in the same way, Revelation had to be included in the New Testament, to give the death kiss to the Gospels.

FOUR

IT is a curious thing, but the collective will of a community really reveals the *basis* of the individual will. The early Christian Churches, or communities, revealed quite early a strange will to a strange kind of power. They had a will to destroy all power, and so usurp themselves the final, the ultimate power. This was not quite the teaching of Jesus, but it was the inevitable implication of Jesus's teaching, in the minds of the vast mass of the weak, the inferior. Jesus taught the escape and liberation into unselfish, brotherly love: a feeling that only the strong can know. And this, sure enough, at once brought the community of the weak into triumphant being; and the will of the community of Christians was anti-social, almost anti-human, revealing from the start a frenzied desire for the end of the world, the destruction of humanity altogether; and then, when this did not come, a grim determination to destroy

Apocalypse

all mastery, all lordship, and all human splendour out of the world, leaving only the community of saints as the final negation of power, and the final power.

After the crash of the Dark Ages, the Catholic Church emerged again a *human* thing, a complete, not a half-thing, adjusted to seed-time and harvest and the solstice of Christmas and of midsummer, and having a good balance, in early days, between brotherly love and natural lordship and splendour. Every man was given his little kingdom in marriage, and every woman her own little inviolate realm. This Christian marriage guided by the Church was a great institution for true freedom, true possibility of fulfilment. Freedom was no more, and can be no more than the possibility of living fully and satisfactorily. In marriage, in the great natural cycle of church ritual and festival, the early Catholic Church tried to give this to men. But alas, the Church soon fell out of balance, into worldly greed.

Then came the Reformation, and the thing started over again: the old will of the Christian community to destroy human worldly power, and

Apocalypse

to substitute the *negative* power of the mass. The battle rages today, in all its horror. In Russia, the triumph over worldly power was accomplished, and the reign of saints set in, with Lenin for the chief saint.

And Lenin was a saint. He had every quality of a saint. He is worshipped today, quite rightly, as a saint. But saints who try to kill all brave power in mankind are fiends, like the Puritans who wanted to pull all the bright feathers out of the chaffinch. Fiends!

Lenin's rule of saints turned out quite horrible. It has more thou-shalt-nots than any rule of "Beasts," or emperors. And this is bound to be so. Any rule of saints must be horrible. Why? Because the nature of man is not saintly. The *primal* need, the old-Adamic need in a man's soul is to be, in his own sphere and as far as he can attain it, master, lord, and splendid one. Every cock can crow on his own muck-heap, and ruffle gleaming feathers; every peasant could be a glorious little Tzar in his own hut, and when he got a bit drunk. And every peasant was consummated in the old dash and gorgeousness of the nobles,

Apocalypse

and in the supreme splendour of the Tzar. The supreme master and lord and splendid one: their own, their own splendid one: they might see him with their own eyes, the Tzar! And this fulfilled one of the deepest, greatest, and most powerful needs of the human heart. The human heart needs, needs, needs, splendour, gorgeousness, pride, assumption, glory, and lordship. Perhaps it needs these even more than it needs love: at least, even more than bread. And every great king makes every man a little lord in his own tiny sphere, fills the imagination with lordship and splendour, satisfies the soul. The most dangerous thing in the world is to show man his own paltriness as hedged-in male. It depresses him, and *makes* him paltry. We become, alas, what we think we are. Men have been depressed now for many years in their male and splendid selves, depressed into dejection and almost into abjection. Is not that evil? Then let men themselves do something about it.

And a great saint like Lenin — or Shelley or St. Francis — can only cry *anathema! anathema!* to the natural proud self of power, and try deliberately to destroy all might and all lordship,

Apocalypse

and leave the people poor, oh, so poor! Poor, poor, poor, as the people are in all our modern democracies, though nowhere so absolutely impoverished in life as in the most absolute democracy, no matter how they be in money.

The community is inhuman, and less than human. It becomes at last the most dangerous because *bloodless* and insentient tyrant. For a long time, even a democracy like the American or the Swiss will answer to the call of a hero, who is somewhat of a true aristocrat: like Lincoln: so strong is the aristocratic instinct in man. But the willingness to give the response to the heroic, the true aristocratic call, gets weaker and weaker in every democracy, as time goes on. All history proves it. Then men turn against the heroic appeal, with a sort of venom. They will only listen to the call of mediocrity wielding the insentient bullying power of mediocrity: which is evil. Hence the success of painfully inferior and even base politicians.

Brave people add up to an aristocracy. The democracy of thou-shalt-not is bound to be a collection of weak men. And then the sacred "will

Apocalypse

of the people " becomes blinder, baser, and more dangerous than the will of any tyrant. When the will of the people becomes the sum of the weakness of a multitude of weak men, it is time to make a break.

So today. Society consists of a mass of weak individuals trying to protect themselves, out of fear, from every possible imaginary evil, and, of course, *by their very fear*, bringing the evil into being.

This is the Christian community today, in its perpetual mean thou-shalt-not. This is how Christian doctrine has worked out in practice.

FIVE

AND Revelation was a foreshadowing of all this. It is above all what some psychologists would call the revelation of a thwarted "superiority" goal, and a consequent inferiority complex. Of the positive side of Christianity, the peace of meditation and the joy of unselfish service, the rest from ambition and the pleasure of knowledge, we find nothing in the Apocalypse. Because the Apocalypse is for the non-individual side of a man's nature, written from the thwarted collective self, whereas meditation and unselfish service are for pure individuals, isolate. Pure Christianity anyhow *cannot* fit a nation, or society at large. The great war made it obvious. It can only fit individuals. The collective whole must have some other inspiration.

And the Apocalypse, repellent though its chief spirit be, does also contain another inspiration. It is repellent because it resounds with the dan-

Apocalypse

gerous snarl of the *frustrated, suppressed* collective self, the frustrated power-spirit in man, vengeful. But it contains also some revelation of the true and positive power-spirit. The very beginning surprises us: "John to the seven churches in Asia: grace be to you and peace from HE WHO IS AND WAS AND IS COMING, and from the seven Spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the prince over the kings of the earth; to him who loves us and loosed us from our sins by shedding his blood — he has made us a realm of priests for his God and Father, — to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen. Lo, he is coming on the clouds, to be seen by every eye, even by those who impaled him, and all the tribes of earth will wail because of him: even so, Amen." — I have used Moffatt's translation, as the meaning is a little more explicit than in the authorised version.

But here we have a curious Jesus, very different from the one in Galilee, wandering by the lake. And the book goes on: "On the Lord's day I found myself rapt in the Spirit, and I heard a loud

Apocalypse

voice behind me like a trumpet calling, 'Write your vision in a book.' — So I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me; and on turning round I saw seven golden lampstands and in the middle of the lampstands One who resembled a human being, with a long robe, and a belt of gold round his breast; his head and hair were white as wool, white as snow; his eyes flashed like fire, his feet glowed like burnished bronze, his voice sounded like many waves, in his right hand he held seven stars, a sharp sword with a double edge issued from his mouth, and his face shone like the sun in full strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet like a dead man; but he laid his hand on me, saying: 'Do not be afraid; I am the First and Last, I was dead and here I am alive for evermore, holding the keys that unlock death and Hades. Write down your vision of what is and what is to be hereafter. As for the secret symbol of the seven stars which you have seen in my right hand, and of the seven golden lampstands: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches. To the angel of the church at

Apocalypse

Ephesus write thus:—“These are the words of him who holds the seven stars in his right hand, who moves among the seven golden lamp-stands——”””

Now this being with the sword of the Logos issuing from his mouth and the seven stars in his hand is the Son of God, therefore, the Messiah, therefore Jesus. It is very far from the Jesus who said in Gethsemane: “My heart is sad, sad even unto death; stay here and watch.”—But it is the Jesus that the early Church, especially in Asia, prominently believed in.

And what is this Jesus? It is the great Splendid One, almost identical with the Almighty in the visions of Ezekiel and Daniel. It is a vast cosmic lord, standing among the seven eternal lamps of the archaic planets, sun and moon and five great stars around his feet. In the sky his gleaming head is in the north, the sacred region of the Pole, and he holds in his right hand the seven stars of the Bear, that we call the Plough, and he wheels them round the Pole star, as even now we see them wheel, causing universal revolution of the heavens, the roundwise moving of the

Apocalypse

cosmos. This is the lord of all motion, who swings the cosmos into its course. Again, from his mouth issues the two-edged sword of the Word, the mighty weapon of the Logos which will smite the world (and in the end destroy it). This is the sword indeed that Jesus brought among men. And lastly, his face shines like the sun in full strength, the source of life itself, the dazzler, before whom we fall as if dead.

And this is Jesus: not only the Jesus of the early churches, but the Jesus of popular religion today. There is nothing humble nor suffering here. It is our "superiority goal," indeed. And it is a true account of man's *other* conception of God; perhaps the greater and more fundamental conception: the magnificent Mover of the Cosmos! To John of Patmos, the Lord is *Kosmokrator*, and even *Kosmodynamos*; the great Ruler of the Cosmos, and the Power of the Cosmos. But alas, according to the Apocalypse man has no share in the ruling of the cosmos until after death. When a Christian has been put to death by martyrdom, then he will be resurrected at the Second Advent and become himself a little *Kosmokrator*, ruling

Apocalypse

for a thousand years. It is the apotheosis of the weak man.

But the Son of God, the Jesus of John's vision, is more even than this. He holds the keys that unlock death and Hades. He is Lord of the Underworld. He is Hermes, the guide of souls through the death-world, over the hellish stream. He is master of the mysteries of the dead, he knows the meaning of the holocaust, and has final power over the powers below. The dead and the lords of death, who are always hovering in the background of religion away down among the people, these chthonioi of the primitive Greeks, these too must acknowledge Jesus as a supreme lord.

And the lord of the dead is master of the future, and the god of the present. He gives the vision of what was, and is, and shall be.

Here is a Jesus for you! What is modern Christianity going to make of it? For it is the Jesus of the very first communities, and it is the Jesus of the early Catholic Church, as it emerged from the Dark Ages and adjusted itself once more to life and death and the cosmos, the whole great

Apocalypse

adventure of the human soul, as contrasted with the little petty personal adventure of modern Protestantism and Catholicism alike, cut off from the cosmos, cut off from Hades, cut off from the magnificence of the Star-mover. Petty little personal salvation, petty morality instead of cosmic splendour, we have lost the sun and the planets, and the Lord with the seven stars of the Bear in his right hand. Poor, paltry, creeping little world we live in, even the keys of death and Hades are lost. How shut in we are! All we can do, with our brotherly love, is to shut one another in. We are so afraid somebody else might be lordly and splendid, when we can't. Petty little bolshevists, every one of us today, we are determined that *no* man shall shine like the sun in full strength, for he would certainly outshine us.

Now again we realise a dual feeling in ourselves with regard to the Apocalypse. Suddenly we see some of the old pagan splendour, that delighted in the might and the magnificence of the cosmos, and man who was as a star in the cosmos. Suddenly we feel again the nostalgia for the old pagan world, long before John's day, we

Apocalypse

feel an immense yearning to be freed from this petty personal entanglement of weak life, to be back in the far-off world before men became "afraid." We want to be freed from our tight little automatic "universe," to go back to the great living cosmos of the "unenlightened" pagans.

Perhaps the greatest difference between us and the pagans lies in our different relation to the cosmos. With us, all is personal. Landscape and the sky, these are to us the delicious background of our personal life, and no more. Even the universe of the scientist is little more than an extension of our personality, to us. To the pagan, landscape and personal background were on the whole indifferent. But the cosmos was a very real thing. A man *lived* with the cosmos, and knew it greater than himself.

Don't let us imagine we see the sun as the old civilisations saw it. All we see is a scientific little luminary, dwindled to a ball of blazing gas. In the centuries before Ezekiel and John, the sun was still a magnificent reality, men drew forth from him strength and splendour, and gave him

Apocalypse

back homage and lustre and thanks. But in us, the connection is broken, the responsive centres are dead. Our sun is a quite different thing from the cosmic sun of the ancients, so much more trivial. We may see what we call the sun, but we have lost Helios forever, and the great orb of the Chaldeans still more. We have lost the cosmos, by coming out of responsive connection with it, and this is our chief tragedy. What is our petty little love of nature — Nature!! — compared to the ancient magnificent living with the cosmos, and being honoured by the cosmos!

And some of the great images of the Apocalypse move us to strange depths, and to a strange wild fluttering of freedom: of true freedom, really, an escape to somewhere, not an escape to nowhere. An escape from the tight little cage of our universe; tight, in spite of all the astronomist's vast and unthinkable stretches of space; tight, because it is only a continuous extension, a dreary on and on, without any meaning: an escape from this into the vital cosmos, to a sun who has a great wild life, and who looks back at us for strength or withering, marvellous, as he goes his way. Who

Apocalypse

says the sun cannot speak to me! The sun has a great blazing consciousness, and I have a little blazing consciousness. When I can strip myself of the trash of personal feelings and ideas, and get down to my naked sun-self, then the sun and I can commune by the hour, the blazing interchange, and he gives me life, sun-life, and I send him a little new brightness from the world of the bright blood. The great sun, like an angry dragon, hater of the nervous and personal consciousness in us. As all these modern sunbathers must realise, for they become disintegrated by the very sun that bronzes them. But the sun, like a lion, loves the bright red blood of life, and can give it an infinite enrichment if we know how to receive it. But we don't. We have lost the sun. And he only falls on us and destroys us, decomposing something in us: the dragon of destruction instead of the life-bringer.

And we have lost the moon, the cool, bright, ever-varying moon. It is she who would caress our nerves, smooth them with the silky hand of her glowing, soothe them into serenity again with her cool presence. For the moon is the mistress and

Apocalypse

mother of our watery bodies, the pale body of our nervous consciousness and our moist flesh. Oh, the moon could soothe us and heal us like a cool great Artemis between her arms. But we have lost her, in our stupidity we ignore her, and angry she stares down on us and whips us with nervous whips. Oh, beware of the angry Artemis of the night heavens, beware of the spite of Cybele, beware of the vindictiveness of horned Astarte.

For the lovers who shoot themselves in the night, in the horrible suicide of love, they are driven mad by the poisoned arrows of Artemis: the moon is against them: the moon is fiercely against them. And oh, if the moon is against you, oh, beware of the bitter night, especially the night of intoxication.

Now this may sound nonsense, but that is merely because we are fools. There is an eternal vital correspondence between our blood and the sun: there is an eternal vital correspondence between our nerves and the moon. If we get out of contact and harmony with the sun and moon, then both turn into great dragons of destruction

Apocalypse

against us. The sun is a great source of blood-vitality, it streams strength to us. But once we resist the sun, and say: It is a mere ball of gas! — then the very streaming vitality of sunshine turns into subtle disintegrative force in us, and undoes us. The same with the moon, the planets, the great stars. They are either our makers or our unmakers. There is no escape.

We and the cosmos are one. The cosmos is a vast living body, of which we are still parts. The sun is a great heart whose tremors run through our smallest veins. The moon is a great gleaming nerve-centre from which we quiver forever. Who knows the power that Saturn has over us, or Venus? But it is a vital power, rippling exquisitely through us *all the time*. And if we deny Aldebaran, Aldebaran will pierce us with infinite dagger-thrusts. He who is not with me is against me! — that is a cosmic law.

Now all this is *literally* true, as men knew in the great past, and as they will know again.

By the time of John of Patmos, men, especially educated men, had already almost lost the cosmos. The sun, the moon, the planets, instead of being

Apocalypse

the communers, the comminglers, the life-givers, the splendid ones, the awful ones, had already fallen into a sort of deadness; they were the arbitrary, almost mechanical engineers of fate and destiny. By the time of Jesus, men had turned the heavens into a mechanism of fate and destiny, a prison. The Christians escaped this prison by denying the body altogether. But alas, these little escapes! especially the escapes by denial! — they are the most fatal of evasions. Christianity and our ideal civilisation have been one long evasion. It has caused endless lying and misery, misery such as people know today, not of physical want but of far more deadly vital want. Better lack bread than lack life. The long evasion, whose only fruit is the machine!

We have lost the cosmos. The sun strengthens us no more, neither does the moon. In mystic language, the moon is black to us, and the sun is as sackcloth.

Now we have to get back the cosmos, and it can't be done by a trick. The great range of responses that have fallen dead in us have to come to life again. It has taken two thousand years to

Apocalypse

kill them. Who knows how long it will take to bring them to life?

When I hear modern people complain of being lonely then I know what has happened. They have lost the cosmos. — It is nothing human and personal that we are short of. What we lack is cosmic life, the sun in us and the moon in us. We can't get the sun in us by lying naked like pigs on a beach. The very sun that is bronzing us is inwardly disintegrating us — as we know later. Process of katabolism. We can only get the sun by a sort of worship: and the same with the moon. By *going forth* to worship the sun, worship that is felt in the blood. Tricks and postures only make matters worse.



S I X

AND now we must admit that we are also grateful to St. John's Revelation for giving us hints of the magnificent cosmos and putting us into momentary contact. The contacts, it is true, are only for moments, then they are broken by this other spirit of hope-despair. But even for the moments we are grateful.

There are flashes throughout the first part of the Apocalypse of true cosmic worship. The cosmos became anathema to the Christians, though the early Catholic Church restored it somewhat after the crash of the Dark Ages. Then again the cosmos became anathema to the Protestants after the Reformation. They substituted the non-vital universe of forces and mechanistic order, everything else became abstraction, and the long, slow death of the human being set in. This slow death produced science and machinery, but both are death products.

Apocalypse

No doubt the death was necessary. It is the long, slow death of society which parallels the quick death of Jesus and the other dying gods. It is death none the less, and will end in the annihilation of the human race — as John of Patmos so fervently hoped — unless there is a change, a resurrection, and a return to the cosmos.

But these flashes of the cosmos in Revelation can hardly be attributed to John of Patmos. As an apocalypticist he uses other people's flashes to light up his way of woe and hope. The grand hope of the Christians is a measure of their utter despair.

It began, however, before the Christians. Apocalypse is a curious form of literature, Jewish and Jewish-Christian. This new form arose somewhere about 200 B. C., when the prophets had finished. An early Apocalypse is the Book of Daniel, the latter part at least: another is the Apocalypse of Enoch, the oldest parts of which are attributed to the second century B. C.

The Jews, the Chosen People, had always had an idea of themselves as a grand imperial people. They had their try, and failed disastrously. Then they gave it up. After the destruction they

Apocalypse

ceased to imagine a great natural Jewish Empire. The prophets became silent forever. The Jews became a people of *postponed destiny*. And then the seers began to write Apocalypses.

The seers had to tackle this business of postponed destiny. It was no longer a matter of prophecy: it was a matter of vision. God would no longer *tell* his servant what would happen, for what would happen was almost untellable. He would show him a vision.

Every profound new movement makes a great swing also backwards to some older, half-forgotten way of consciousness. So the apocalyp-tists swung back to the old cosmic vision. After the second destruction of the Temple the Jews despaired, consciously or unconsciously, of the *earthly* triumph of the Chosen People. Therefore, doggedly, they prepared for an unearthly triumph. That was what the apocalyp-tists set out to do: to vision forth the unearthly triumph of the Chosen.

To do this, they needed an all-round view: they needed to know the end as well as the beginning. Never before had men wanted to know the end

Apocalypse

of creation: sufficient that it was created, and would go on for ever and ever. But now, the apocalyptists had to have a vision of the end.

They became then cosmic. Enoch's visions of the cosmos are very interesting, and not very Jewish. But they are curiously geographical.

When we come to John's Apocalypse, and come to know it, several things strike us. First, the obvious scheme, the division of the book into two halves, with two rather discordant intentions. The first half, before the birth of the baby Messiah, seems to have the intention of salvation and renewal, leaving the world to go on renewed. But the second half, when the Beasts rouse up, develops a weird and mystic hate of the world, of worldly power, and of everything and everybody who does not submit to the Messiah out and out. The second half of the Apocalypse is flamboyant hate and simple lust, lust is the only word, for the end of the world. The apocalyptist *must* see the universe, or the known cosmos, wiped out utterly, and merely a heavenly city and a hellish lake of brimstone left.

The discrepancy of the two intentions is the

Apocalypse

first thing that strikes us. The first part, briefer, more condensed or abbreviated, is much more difficult and complicated than the second part, and the feeling in it is much more dramatic, yet more universal and significant. We feel in the first part, we know not why, the space and pageantry of the pagan world. In the second part is the individual frenzy of those early Christians, rather like the frenzies of chapel people and revivalists today.

Then again, we feel that in the first part we are in touch with great old symbols, that take us far back into time, into the pagan vistas. In the second part, the imagery is Jewish allegorical, rather modern, and has a fairly easy local and temporal explanation. When there is a touch of true symbolism, it is not of the nature of a ruin or a remains embedded in the present structure, it is rather an archaic reminiscence.

A third thing that strikes us is the persistent use of the great pagan, as well as Jewish power-titles, both for God and for the Son of Man. *King of Kings and Lord of Lords* is typical throughout, and *Kosmokrator*, and *Kosmodynamos*. Always the titles of power, and never the

Apocalypse

titles of love. Always Christ the omnipotent conqueror flashing his great sword and destroying, destroying vast masses of men, till blood mounts up to the horses' bridles. Never Christ the Saviour: never. The Son of Man of the Apocalypse comes to bring a new and terrible *power* on to the earth, greater than that of any Pompey or Alexander or Cyrus. Power, terrific, smiting power. And when praise is uttered, or the hymn to the Son of Man, it is to ascribe to him power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing — all the attributes given to the great kings and Pharaohs of the earth, but hardly suited to a crucified Jesus.

So that we are left puzzled. If John of Patmos finished this Apocalypse in 96 A. D., he knew strangely little of the Jesus legend, and had just none of the spirit of the Gospels, all of which preceded his book. A curious being, this old John of Patmos, whoever he was. But anyhow he focussed the emotions of certain types of men for centuries to come.

What we feel about the Apocalypse is that it is not one book but several, perhaps many. But it is

Apocalypse

not made up of pieces of several books strung together, like Enoch. It is one book, in several layers: like layers of civilisation as you dig deeper and deeper to excavate an old city. Down at the bottom is a pagan substratum, probably one of the ancient books of the Aegean civilisation: some sort of book of a pagan Mystery. This has been written over by Jewish apocalyptists, then extended, and then finally written over by the Jewish-Christian apocalyptist John: and then, after his day, expurgated and corrected and pruned down and added to by Christian editors who wanted to make of it a Christian work.

But John of Patmos must have been a strange Jew: violent, full of the Hebrew books of the Old Testament, but also full of all kinds of pagan knowledge, anything that would contribute to his passion, his unbearable passion, for the Second Advent, the utter smiting of the Romans with the great sword of Christ, the trampling of mankind in the winepress of God's anger till blood mounted to the bridles of the horses, the triumph of the rider on a white horse, greater than any Persian

Apocalypse

king: then the rule of martyrs for one thousand years: and then, oh then the destruction of the entire universe, and the last Judgment. "Come, Lord Jesus, Come!"

And John firmly believed he was coming, and coming *immediately*. Therein lay the trembling of the terrific and terrifying hope of the early Christians: that made them, naturally, in pagan eyes, the enemies of mankind altogether.

But He did not come, so we are not very much interested. What does interest us is the strange pagan recoil of the book, and the pagan vestiges. And we realise how the Jew, when he *does* look into the outside world, has to look with pagan or gentile eyes. The Jews of the post-David period had no eyes of their own to see with. They peered inward at their Jehovah till they were blind: then they looked at the world with the eyes of their neighbours. When the prophets had to see visions, they had to see Assyrian or Chaldean visions. They borrowed other gods to see their own invisible God by.

Ezekiel's great vision, which is so largely repeated in the Apocalypse, what is it but pagan,

Apocalypse

disfigured probably by jealous Jewish scribes? a great pagan concept of the Time Spirit and the Kosmokrator and the Kosmodynamos! Add to this that the Kosmokrator stands among the wheels of the heavens, known as the wheels of Anaximander, and we see where we are. We are in the great world of the pagan cosmos. •

But the text of Ezekiel is hopelessly corrupt — no doubt deliberately corrupted by fanatical scribes who wanted to smear over the pagan vision. It is an old story.

It is none the less amazing to find Anaximander's wheels in Ezekiel. These wheels are an ancient attempt to explain the orderly yet complex movement of the heavens. They are based on the first "scientific" duality which the pagans found in the universe, namely, the moist and the dry, the cold and the hot, air (or cloud) and fire. Strange and fascinating are the great revolving wheels of the sky, made of dense air or night-cloud and filled with the blazing cosmic fire, which fire peeps through or blazes through at certain holes in the felloes of the wheels, and forms the blazing sun or the pointed stars. All the orbs are little holes

Apocalypse

in the black wheel which is full of fire: and there is wheel within wheel, revolving differently.

Anaximander, almost the very first of the ancient Greek thinkers, is supposed to have invented this "wheel" theory of the heavens in Ionia in the sixth century B. C. Anyhow Ezekiel learnt it in Babylonia: and who knows whether the whole idea is not Chaldean. Surely it has behind it centuries of Chaldean sky-knowledge.

It is a great relief to find Anaximander's wheels in Ezekiel. The Bible at once becomes a book of the human race, instead of a corked-up bottle of "inspiration." And so it is a relief to find the four Creatures of the four quarters of the heavens, winged and starry. Immediately we are out in the great Chaldean star-spaces, instead of being pinched up in a Jewish tabernacle. That the Jews managed, by pernicious anthropomorphising, to turn the four great Creatures into Archangels, even with names like Michael and Gabriel, only shows the limit of the Jewish imagination, which can know nothing except in terms of the human ego. It is none the less a relief to know that these policemen of God, the great Archangels,

Apocalypse

were once the winged and starry creatures of the four quarters of the heavens, quivering their wings across space, in Chaldean lore.

In John of Patmos, the "wheels" are missing. They had been superseded long ago by the spheres of the heavens. But the Almighty is even more distinctly a cosmic wonder, amber-coloured like sky-fire, the great Maker and the great Ruler of the starry heavens, Demiurge and Kosmokrator, the one who wheels the cosmos. He is a great *actual* figure, the great dynamic god, neither spiritual nor moral, but cosmic and vital.

Naturally or unnaturally, the orthodox critics deny this. Archdeacon Charles admits that the seven stars in the right hand of the "Son of Man" are the stars of the Bear, wheeling round the Pole, and that this is Babylonian: then he goes on to say "but our author can have had nothing of this in mind."

Of course, excellent clergymen of today know exactly what "our author" had in mind. John of Patmos is a Christian saint, so he *couldn't* have had any heathenism in mind. This is what orthodox criticism amounts to. Whereas as a matter of

Apocalypse

fact we are amazed at the almost brutal paganism of "our author," John of Patmos. Whatever else he was, he was not afraid of a pagan symbol, nor even, apparently, of a whole pagan cult. The old religions were cults of vitality, potency, and power: we must never forget it. Only the Hebrews were moral: and they only in patches. Among the old pagans, morals were just social manners, decent behaviour. But by the time of Christ all religion and all thought seemed to turn from the old worship and study of vitality, potency, power, to the study of death and death-rewards, death-penalties, and morals. All religion, instead of being religion of *life*, here and now, became religion of postponed destiny, death, and reward *afterwards*, "if you are good."

John of Patmos accepted the postponement of destiny with a vengeance, but he cared little about "being good." What he wanted was the *ultimate* power. He was a shameless, power-worshipping pagan Jew, gnashing his teeth over the postponement of his grand destiny.

It seems to me he knew a good deal about the pagan value of symbols, as contrasted even with

Apocalypse

the Jewish or Christian value. And he used the pagan value just when it suited him, for he was no timid soul. To suggest that the figure of the Kosmodynamos wheeling the heavens, the great figure of cosmic Fire with the seven stars of the Bear in his right hand, could be unknown to John of Patmos is beyond even an archdeacon. The world of the first century was full of star-cults, the figure of the Mover of the Heavens must have been familiar to every boy in the east. Orthodox critics in one breath relate that "our author" had no starry heathenism in mind, and in the next they expatiate on how thankful men must have been to escape, through Christianity, from the senseless and mechanical domination of the heavens, the changeless rule of the planets, the fixed astronomical and astrological fate. "Good heavens!" we still exclaim: and if we pause to consider, we shall see how powerful was the idea of moving, fate-fixing heavens, half cosmic, half mechanical, but still not anthropomorphic.

I am sure not only John of Patmos, but St. Paul and St. Peter and St. John the Apostle knew a great deal about the stars, and about the pagan

Apocalypse

cults. They chose, perhaps wisely, to suppress it all. John of Patmos did not. So his Christian critics and editors, from the second century down to Archdeacon Charles, have tried to suppress it for him. Without success: because the kind of mind that worships the divine *power* always tends to think in symbols. Direct thinking in symbols, like a game of chess, with its king and queen and pawns, is characteristic of those men who see power as the great desideratum — and they are the majority. The lowest substratum of the people still worships power, still thinks crudely in symbols, still sticks to the Apocalypse and is entirely callous to the Sermon on the Mount. But so, apparently, does the highest superstratum of church and state still worship in terms of power: naturally, really.

But the orthodox critics like Archdeacon Charles want to have their cake and eat it. They *want* the old pagan power-sense in the Apocalypse, and they spend half their time denying it is there. If they *have* to admit a pagan element, they gather up the skirts of their clerical gowns and hurry past. And at the same time, the Apocalypse

Apocalypse

is a veritable heathen feast for them. Only they must swallow it with pious appearances.

Of course the dishonesty, we can call it no less, of the Christian critic is based on fear. Once start admitting that *anything* in the Bible is pagan, of pagan origin and meaning, and you are lost, you won't know where to stop. God escapes out of the bottle once and for all, to put it irreverently. The Bible is so splendidly full of paganisms and therein lies its greater interest. But once admit it, and Christianity must come out of her shell.

Once more then we look at the Apocalypse, and try to sense its structure vertically, as well as horizontally. For the more we read it, the more we feel that it is a section through time, as well as a Messianic mystery. It is the work of no one man, and even of no one century, of that we feel sure.

The oldest part, surely, was a pagan work, probably the description of the "secret" ritual of initiation into one of the pagan Mysteries, Artemis, Cybele, even Orphic: but most probably belonging there to the east Mediterranean, probably actually to Ephesus: as would seem natural.

Apocalypse

If such a book existed, say two or perhaps three centuries before Christ, then it was known to all students of religion: and perhaps it would be safe to say that every intelligent man in that day, especially in the east, was a student of religion. Men were religious-mad: not religious-sane. The Jews were just the same as the gentiles. The Jews of the dispersion certainly read and discussed everything they could lay their hands on. We must put away forever the Sunday-school idea of a bottled-up Jewry with nothing but its own god to think about. It was very different. The Jews of the last centuries B. C. were as curious, as widely read, and as cosmopolitan as the Jews of today: saving, of course, a few fanatical sets and sects.

So that the old pagan book must quite early have been taken and written over by a Jewish apocalypticist, with a view to substituting the Jewish idea of a Messiah and a Jewish salvation (or destruction) *of the whole world*, for the purely individual experience of pagan initiation. This Jewish Apocalypse, written over perhaps more than once, was surely known to all religious seekers of Jesus's day, including the writers of the

Apocalypse

Gospel. And probably, even before John of Patmos tackled it, a Jewish-Christian apocalypticist had rewritten the work once more, probably had already extended it in the prophetic manner of Daniel, to foretell the utter downfall of Rome: for the Jews loved nothing in the world so much as prophesying the utter downfall of the gentile kingdoms. Then John of Patmos occupied his prison-years on the island in writing the whole book over once more, in his own peculiar style. We feel that he invented little, and had few ideas: but that he did indeed have a fierce and burning passion against the Romans who had condemned him. For all that, he shows no hatred of the pagan Greek culture of the east. In fact, he accepts it almost as naturally as his own Hebrew culture, and far more naturally than the new Christian spirit, which is alien to him. He rewrites the older Apocalypse, probably cuts the pagan passages still shorter, simply because they have no Messianic anti-Rome purport, not for any objection to their paganism; and then he lets himself go in the second half of the book, where he can lash the Beast called Rome (or Babylon), the Beast called

Apocalypse

Nero, or Nero redivivus, and the Beast called Antichrist, or the Roman priesthood of the Imperial cult. How he left the final chapters about the New Jerusalem we don't know, but they are now in a state of confusion.

We feel that John was a violent but not very profound person. If he invented the letters to the seven churches, they are a rather dull and weak contribution. And yet it is his curious fervid intensity which gives to Revelation its lurid power. And we cannot help liking him for leaving the great symbols on the whole intact.

But after John had done with it, the real Christians started in. And that we really resent. The Christian fear of the pagan outlook has damaged the whole consciousness of man. The one fixed attitude of Christianity towards the pagan religious vision has been an attitude of stupid denial, denial that there was anything in the pagans at all, except bestiality. And all pagan evidence in the books of the Bible had to be expurgated, or twisted into meaninglessness, or smeared over into Christian or Jewish semblances.

This is what happened to the Apocalypse after

Apocalypse

John left it. How many bits the little Christian scribes have snipped out, how many bits they have stuck in, how many times they have forged "our author's" style, we shall never know: but there are certainly many evidences of their pettifogging work. And all to cover up the pagan traces, and make this plainly unchristian work passably Christian.

We cannot help hating the Christian *fear*, whose method, from the very beginning, has been to deny everything that didn't fit: or better still, suppress it. The system of suppression of all pagan evidence has been instinctive, a fear-instinct, and has been thorough, and has been really criminal, in the Christian world, from the first century until today. When a man thinks of the vast stores of priceless pagan documents that the Christians have wilfully destroyed, from the time of Nero to the obscure parish priests of today, who still burn any book found in their parish that is unintelligible, and therefore possibly heretical, the mind stands still! — and we reflect with irony on the hullabaloo over Rheims Cathedral. How many of the books we would give

Apocalypse

our fingers to possess, and can't, are lost because the Christians burnt them on purpose! They left Plato and Aristotle, feeling these two kin. But the others — !

The instinctive policy of Christianity towards all true pagan evidence has been and is still — suppress it, destroy it, deny it. This dishonesty has vitiated Christian thought from the start. It has, even more curiously, vitiated ethnological scientific thought the same. Curiously enough, we do not look on the Greeks and the Romans, after about 600 B. C., as *real* pagans: not like Hindus or Persians, Babylonians or Egyptians, or even Cretans, for example. We accept the Greeks and Romans as the initiators of our intellectual and political civilisation, the Jews as the fathers of our moral-religious civilisation. So these are “our sort.” All the rest are mere nothing, almost idiots. All that can be attributed to the “barbarian” beyond the Greek pale: that is, to Minoans, Etruscans, Egyptians, Chaldeans, Persians, and Hindus, is, in the famous phrase of a famous German professor: *Urdummheit*. *Urdummheit*, or primal stupidity, is the state of all mankind

Apocalypse

before precious Homer, and of all races, all, except Greek, Jew, Roman, and — ourselves!

The strange thing is that even true scholars, who write scholarly and impartial books about the early Greeks, as soon as they mention the autochthonous races of the Mediterranean, or the Egyptians, or the Chaldeans, insist on the childishness of these peoples, their perfectly trivial achievement, their necessary *Urdummheit*. These great civilised peoples knew nothing: all *true* knowledge started with Thales and Anaximander and Pythagoras, with the Greeks. The Chaldeans knew no true astronomy, the Egyptians knew no mathematics or science, and the poor Hindus, who for centuries were supposed to have invented that highly important reality, the arithmetical zero, or nought, are now not allowed even this merit. The Arabs, who are almost “us,” invented it.

It is most strange. We can understand the *Christian* fear of the pagan way of knowledge. But why the scientific fear? Why should science betray its fear in a phrase like *Urdummheit*? We look at the wonderful remains of Egypt, Babylon,

Apocalypse

Assyria, Persia, and old India, and we repeat to ourselves: *Urdummheit!* *Urdummheit?* We look at the Etruscan tombs and ask ourselves again, *Urdummheit?* primal stupidity! Why, in the oldest of peoples, in the Egyptian friezes and the Assyrian, in the Etruscan paintings and the Hindu carvings we see a splendour, a beauty, and very often a joyous, sensitive intelligence which is certainly lost in our world of *Neufrechheit*. If it is a question of primal stupidity or new impudence, then give me primal stupidity.

The Archdeacon Charles is a true scholar and authority in Apocalypse, a far-reaching student of his subject. He tries, without success, to be fair in the matter of pagan origins. His predisposition, his terrific prejudice, is too strong for him. And once, he gives himself away, so we understand the whole process. He is writing in time of war — at the end of the late war — so we must allow for the fever. But he makes a bad break, none the less. On page 86 of the second volume of his commentary on Revelation, he writes of the Antichrist in the Apocalypse that it is “a marvellous portrait of the great god-opposing power

Apocalypse

that should hereafter arise, who was to exalt might above right, and attempt, successfully or unsuccessfully for the time, to seize the sovereignty of the world, backed by hosts of intellectual workers, who would uphold all his pretensions, justify all his actions, and enforce his political aims by an economic warfare, which menaced with destruction all that did not bow down to his arrogant and godless claims. And though the justness of this forecast is clear to the student who approaches the subject with some insight, and to all students who approach it with the experience of the present world war, we find that as late as 1908, Bousset in his article on the 'Antichrist' in Hastings's *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, writes as follows: 'The interest in the (Antichrist) legend . . . is now to be found only among the lower classes of the Christian community, among sects, eccentric individuals, and fanatics.'

"No great prophecy receives its full and final fulfilment in any single event, or single series of events. In fact, it may not be fulfilled at all in regard to the object against which it was prima-

Apocalypse

riely delivered by the prophet or seer. But, if it is the expression of a great moral and spiritual truth, it will of a surety be fulfilled at sundry times and in divers manners and in varying degrees of completeness. The present attitude of the Central Powers of Europe on this question of might against right, of Caesarism against religion, of the state against God, is the greatest fulfilment that the Johannine prophecy in XIII has as yet received. Even the very indefiniteness regarding the chief Antichrist in XIII is reproduced in the present upheaval of evil powers. In XIII the Antichrist is conceived as a single individual, i. e., the demonic Nero; but even so, behind him stands the Roman Empire, which is one with him in character and purpose, and in itself the Fourth Kingdom or the Kingdom of the Antichrist — in fact, the Antichrist itself. So in regard to the present war, it is difficult to determine whether the Kaiser or his people can advance the best claims to the title of a modern Antichrist. If he is a present-day representative of the Antichrist, so just as surely is the empire behind him, for it is one in spirit and purpose with its leader

Apocalypse

— whether regarded from its military side, its intellectual, or its industrial. They are in a degree far transcending that of ancient Rome ‘ those who are destroying the earth.’ ”

So there we have Antichrist talking German to Archdeacon Charles, who, at the same moment, is using the books of German scholars for his work on the Apocalypse. It is as if Christianity and ethnological science alike could not exist unless they had an opposite, an Antichrist or an Urdummheit, for an offset. The Antichrist and the Urdummheit are just the fellow who is different from me. Today Antichrist speaks Russian, a hundred years ago he spoke French, tomorrow he may speak cockney or the Glasgow brogue. As for Urdummheit, he speaks any language that isn't Oxford or Harvard or an obsequious imitation of one of these.

S E V E N

IT is childish. What we have now to admit is that the beginning of the new era (our own) coincided with the dying of the old era of the true pagans or, in the Greek sense, barbarians. As our present civilisation was showing the first sparks of life, say in 1000 B. C., the great and ancient civilisation of the older was waning: the great river civilisation of the Euphrates, the Nile, and the Indus, with the lesser sea-civilisation of the Aegean. It is puerile to deny the age and the greatness of the three river civilisations, with their intermediary cultures in Persia or Iran, and in the Aegean, Crete or Mycenae. That any of these civilisations could do a sum in long division we do not pretend. They may not even have invented the wheel-barrow. A modern child of ten could lick them hollow in arithmetic, geometry, or even, maybe, astronomy. And what of it?

What of it? Because they lacked our modern

Apocalypse

mental and mechanical attainments, were they any less "civilised" or "cultured," the Egyptians and the Chaldeans, the Cretans and the Persians and the Hindus of the Indus, than we are? Let us look at a great seated statue of Rameses, or at Etruscan tombs; let us read of Assiburnipal or Darius, and then say: How do our modern factory-workers show beside the delicate Egyptian friezes of the common people of Egypt? or our khaki soldiers, beside the Assyrian friezes? or our Trafalgar Square lions beside these of Mycenae? Civilisation? it is revealed rather in sensitive life than in inventions: and have we anything as good as the Egyptians of two or three thousand years before Christ as a people? Culture and civilisation are tested by vital consciousness. Are we more vitally conscious than an Egyptian 3000 years B. C. was? Are we? Probably we are less. Our conscious range is wide, but shallow as a sheet of paper. We have no depth to our consciousness.

A rising thing is a passing thing, says Buddha. A rising civilisation is a passing civilisation. Greece rose upon the passing of the Aegean:

Apocalypse

and the Aegean was the link between Egypt and Babylon. Greece rose as the passing of the Aegean civilisation, and Rome rose as the same, for the Etruscan civilisation was a last strong wave from the Aegean, and Rome rose, truly, from the Etruscans. Persia arose from between the cultures of the Euphrates and the Indus, and no doubt, in the passing of these.

Perhaps every rising civilisation must fiercely repudiate the passing civilisation. It is a fight within the self. The Greeks fiercely repudiated the barbarians. But we know now, the barbarians of the east Mediterranean were as much Greeks as most of the Greeks themselves. They were only Greeks, or autochthonous Hellenes who adhered to the old way of culture instead of taking on the new. The Aegean must always have been, in the primitive sense, Hellenic. But the old Aegean culture is different from what we call Greek, especially in its religious basis. Every old civilisation, we may be certain of it, had a definitely religious basis. The nation was, in a very old sense, a church, or a vast cult-unit. From cult to culture is only a step, but it took a lot of making. Cult-lore

Apocalypse

was the wisdom of the old races. We now have culture.

It is fairly difficult for one culture to understand another. But for culture to understand culture is extremely difficult, and, for rather stupid people, impossible. Because culture is chiefly an activity of the mind, and culture is an activity of the senses. The pre-Greek ancient world had not the faintest inkling of the lengths to which mental activity could be carried. Even Pythagoras, whoever he was, had no inkling: nor Herakleitos nor even Empedokles or Anaxagoras. Socrates and Aristotle were the first to *perceive* the dawn.

But on the other hand, we have not the faintest conception of the vast range that was covered by the ancient sense-consciousness. We have lost almost entirely the great and intricately developed sensual awareness, or sense-awareness, and sense-knowledge, of the ancients. It was a great depth of knowledge arrived at direct, by instinct and intuition, as we say, not by reason. It was a knowledge based not on words but on images. The abstraction was not into generalisations or into qualities, but into symbols. And the connection

Apocalypse

was not logical but emotional. The word "therefore" did not exist. Images or symbols succeeded one another in a procession of instinctive and arbitrary physical connection — some of the Psalms give us examples — and they "get nowhere" because there was nowhere to get to, the desire was to achieve a consummation of a certain state of consciousness, to fulfil a certain state of feeling-awareness. Perhaps all that remains to us today of the ancient way of "thought-process" are games like chess and cards. Chess-men and card-figures are symbols: their "values" are fixed in each case: their "movements" are non-logical, arbitrary, and based on the power-instinct.

Not until we can grasp a little of the working of the ancient mind can we appreciate the "magic" of the world they lived in. Take even the sphinx conundrum: *What is it that goes first on four legs, then on two, and then on three?* — The answer is: Man. — To us it is rather silly, the great question of the sphinx. But in the uncritical ancient who *felt* his images, there would spring up a great complex of emotions and fears. The thing that goes on four legs is the animal, in all

Apocalypse

its animal difference and potency, its hinterland consciousness which circles round the isolated consciousness of man. And when, in the answer, it is shown that the baby goes on four legs, instantly there springs up another emotional complex, half fear, half amusement, as man realises himself as an animal, especially in the infantile state, going on all fours with face to the ground and belly or navel polarised to the earth's centre, like a true animal, instead of navel polarised to the sun, as in the true man, according to primitive conception. The second clause, of the two-legged creature, would bring up complex images of men, monkeys, birds, and frogs, and the weird falling into relationship of these four would be an instant imaginative act, such as is very hard for us to achieve, but which children still make. The last clause, of the three-legged creature, would bring wonder, faint terror, and a searching of the great hinterlands beyond the deserts and the sea for some still-unrevealed beast.

So we see that the emotional reaction to such a conundrum was enormous. And even kings and heroes like Hector or Menelaus would make the

Apocalypse

same reaction, as a child now does, but a thousandfold stronger and wider. Men were not fools for so doing. Men are far more fools today, for stripping themselves of their emotional and imaginative reactions, and feeling nothing. The price we pay is boredom and deadness. Our bald processes of thought no longer are life to us. For the sphinx-riddle of man is as terrifying today as it was before Oedipus, and more so. For now it is the riddle of the dead-alive man, which it never was before.

EIGHT

MAN thought and still thinks in images. But now our images have hardly any emotional value. We always want a "conclusion," an end, we always want to come, in our mental processes, to a decision, a finality, a full stop. This gives us a sense of satisfaction. All our mental consciousness is a movement onwards, a movement in stages, like our sentences, and every full-stop is a mile-stone that marks our "progress" and our arrival somewhere. On and on we go, for the mental consciousness. Whereas of course there is no goal. Consciousness is an end in itself. We torture ourselves getting somewhere, and when we get there it is nowhere, for there is nowhere to get to.

While men still thought of the heart or the liver as the seat of consciousness, they had no idea of this on-and-on process of thought. To them a thought was a completed state of feeling-aware-

Apocalypse

ness, a cumulative thing, a deepening thing, in which feeling deepened into feeling in consciousness till there was a sense of fulness. A completed thought was the plumbing of a depth like a whirlpool, of emotional awareness, and at the depth of this whirlpool of emotion the resolve formed. But it was no stage in a journey. There was no logical chain to be dragged further.

This should help us to appreciate that the oracles were not supposed to say something that fitted plainly in the whole chain of circumstance. They were supposed to deliver a set of images or symbols of the real dynamic value, which should set the emotional consciousness of the enquirer, as he pondered them, revolving more and more rapidly, till out of a state of intense emotional absorption the resolve at last formed; or, as we say, the decision was arrived at. As a matter of fact, we do very much the same in a crisis. When anything very important is to be decided we withdraw and ponder and ponder until the deep emotions are set working and revolving together, revolving, revolving, till a centre is formed and

Apocalypse

we “know what to do.” And the fact that no politician today has the courage to follow this intensive method of “thought” is the reason of the absolute paucity of the political mind today.

N I N E

WELL then, let us return to the Apocalypse with this in mind: that the Apocalypse is still, in its movement, one of the works of the old pagan civilisation, and in it we have, not the modern process of progressive thought, but the old pagan process of rotary image-thought. Every image fulfils its own little circle of action and meaning, then is superseded by another image. This is specially so in the first part, before the birth of the Child. Every image is a picturegraph, and the connection between the images will be made more or less differently by every reader. Nay, every image will be understood differently by every reader, according to his emotion-reaction. And yet there is a certain precise plan or scheme.

We must remember that the old human conscious process has to *see something happen*, every time. Everything is concrete, there are no abstractions. And everything *does* something.

Apocalypse

To the ancient consciousness, Matter, Materia, or Substantial things are God. A pool of water is god. And why not? The longer we live the more we return to the oldest of all visions. A great rock is god. I can touch it. It is undeniable. It is god.

Then those things that move are doubly god. That is, we are doubly aware of their godhead: that which is, and that which moves is twice godly. Everything is a "thing": and every "thing" acts and has effect: the universe is a great complex activity of things existing and moving and having effect. And all this is god.

Today, it is almost impossible for us to realise what the old Greeks meant by god, or *theos*. Everything was *theos*; but even so, not at the same moment. At the moment, whatever *struck* you was god. If it was a pool of water, the very watery pool might strike you: then that was god; or a faint vapour at evening rising might catch the imagination: then that was *theos*; or thirst might overcome you at the sight of the water: then the thirst itself was god; or you drank, and the delicious and indescribable slaking of thirst was the god; or you felt the sudden chill of the

Apocalypse

water as you touched it: and then another god came into being, "the cold": and this was not a *quality*, it was an existing entity, almost a creature, certainly a *theos*: the cold; or again, on the dry lips something suddenly alighted: it was "the moist," and again a god. Even to the early scientists or philosophers, "the cold," "the moist," "the hot," "the dry" were things in themselves, realities, gods, *theoi*. And they *did things*.

With the coming of Socrates and "the spirit," the cosmos died. For two thousand years man has been living in a dead or dying cosmos, hoping for a heaven hereafter. And all the religions have been religions of the dead body and the postponed reward: eschatological, to use a pet word of the philosophers.

It is very difficult for us to understand the pagan mind. When we are given translations of stories from the ancient Egyptian, the stories are almost entirely unintelligible. It may be the translations' fault: who can pretend really to *read* hieroglyph script! But when we are given translations from Bushman folk-lore, we find ourselves in almost the same puzzled state. The words may

Apocalypse

be intelligible, but the connection between them is impossible to follow. Even when we read translations of Hesiod, or even of Plato, we feel that a meaning has been arbitrarily *given* to the movement that is wrong, the inner connection. Flatter ourselves as we may, the gulf between Professor Jowett's mentality and Plato's mentality is almost impassable; and Professor Jowett's Plato is, in the end, just Professor Jowett with hardly a breath of the living Plato. Plato divorced from his great pagan background is really only another Victorian statue in a toga — or a chlamys.

To get at the Apocalypse we have to appreciate the mental working of the pagan thinker or poet — pagan thinkers were necessarily poets — who starts with an image, sets the image in motion, allows it to achieve a certain course or circuit of its own, and then takes up another image. The old Greeks were very fine image-thinkers, as the myths prove. Their images were wonderfully natural and harmonious. They followed the logic of action rather than of reason, and they had no moral axe to grind. But still they are nearer to us than the orientals, whose image-thinking often fol-

Apocalypse

lowed no plan whatsoever, not even the sequence of action. We can see it in some of the Psalms, the flitting from image to image with no essential connection at all, but just the curious image-association. The oriental loved that.

To appreciate the pagan manner of thought we have to drop our own manner of on-and-on-and-on, from a start to a finish, and allow the mind to move in cycles, or to flit here and there over a cluster of images. Our idea of time as a continuity in an eternal straight line has crippled our consciousness cruelly. The pagan conception of time as moving in cycles is much freer, it allows movement upwards and downwards, and allows for a complete change of the state of mind, at any moment. One cycle finished, we can drop or rise to another level, and be in a new world at once. But by our time-continuum method, we have to trail wearily on over another ridge.

The old method of the Apocalypse is to set forth the image, make a world, and then suddenly depart from this world in a cycle of time and movement and event, an *epos*; and then return again to a world not quite like the original one,

Apocalypse

but on another level. The "world" is established on twelve: the number twelve is basic for an established cosmos. And the cycles move in sevens.

This old plan still remains, but very much broken up. The Jews always spoil the beauty of a plan by forcing some ethical or tribal meaning in. The Jews have a moral instinct against design. Design, lovely plan, is pagan and immoral. So that we are not surprised, after the experience of Ezekiel and Daniel, to find the *mise en scène* of the vision muddled up, Jewish temple furniture shoved in, and twenty-four elders or presbyters who no longer quite know what they are, but are trying to be as Jewish as possible, and so on. The sea as of glass has come in from the Babylonian cosmos, the bright waters of heaven, as contrasted with the bitter or dead waters of the earthly sea: but of course it has to be put in a dish, a temple laver. Everything Jewish is *interior*. Even the stars of heaven and the waters of the fresh firmament have to be put inside the curtains of that stuffy tabernacle or temple.

But whether John of Patmos actually left the

Apocalypse

opening vision of the throne and the four starry creatures and the twenty-four elders or witnesses in the muddle we find them in, or whether later editors deliberately, in true Christian spirit, broke up the design, we don't know. John of Patmos was a Jew, so he didn't much mind whether his vision was imaginable or not. But even then, we feel the Christian scribes smashed up the pattern, to "make it safe." Christians have always been "making things safe."

The book had difficulty in getting into the Bible at all: the eastern Fathers objected to it so strongly. So if, in Cromwellian fashion, the heathen figures had their noses and heads knocked off, to "make them safe," we can't wonder. All we can do is to remember that there is probably a pagan kernel to the book: that this was written over, perhaps more than once, by Jewish apocalypticists, before the time of Christ: that John of Patmos probably wrote over the whole book once more, to make it Christian: and after that, Christian scribes and editors tinkered with it to make it safe. They could go on tinkering for more than a hundred years.

Apocalypse

Once we allow for pagan symbols more or less distorted by the Jewish mind and the Christian iconoclast, and for Jewish temple and ritual symbols arbitrarily introduced to make the heavens fit inside that precious Israelitish tabernacle, we can get a fairly good idea of the *mise en scène*, the vision of the throne with the cosmic beasts giving praise, and the rainbow-shrouded Kosmokrator about whose presence the prismatic glory glows like a rainbow and a cloud: "Iris too is a cloud." This Kosmokrator gleams with the colour of jasper and the sardine stone: the commentators say greenish yellow, whereas in Ezekiel it was amber yellow, as the effulgence of the cosmic fire. Jasper equates with the sign *Pisces*, which is the astrological sign of our era. Only now are we passing over the border of *Pisces*, into a new sign and a new era. And Jesus was called The Fish, for the same reason, during the first centuries. Such a powerful hold had star-lore, originally Chaldean, over the mind of man!

From the throne proceed thunders and lightnings and voices. Thunder indeed was the first grand cosmic utterance. It was a being in itself:

Apocalypse

another aspect of the Almighty or the Demiurge: and its voice was the first great cosmic noise, betokening creation. The grand Logos of the beginning was a thunderclap laughing throughout chaos, and causing the cosmos. But the thunder, which is also the Almighty, and the lightning, which is the Fiery Almighty, putting forth the first jet of life-flame—the fiery Logos—have both also their angry or sundering aspect. Thunder claps creative through space, lightning darts in fecund fire: or the reverse, destructive.

Then before the throne are the seven lamps, which are explained as the seven Spirits of God. Explanations are fishy, in a work like this. But the seven lamps are the seven planets (including sun and moon) who are the seven Rulers from the heavens over the earth and over us. The great sun that makes day and makes all life on earth, the moon that sways the tides and sways our physical being, unknown, sways the menstrual period in women and the sexual rhythm in a man, then the five big wandering stars, Mars, Venus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury, these, which are also

Apocalypse

our days of the week, are as much our Rulers now as ever they were: and as little. We know we live by the sun: how much we live by the others, we don't know. We reduce it all to simple gravitation-pull. Even at that, strange fine threads hold us to the moon and stars. That these threads have a psychic pull on us, we know from the moon. But what of the stars? How can we say? We have lost that sort of awareness.

However, we have the *mise en scène* of the drama of the Apocalypse — call it heaven, if you like. It really means the complete cosmos as we now have it: the “unregenerate” cosmos.

The Almighty had a book in his hand. The book is no doubt a Jewish symbol. They were a bookish people: and always great keepers of accounts: reckoning up sins throughout the ages. But the Jewish symbol of a book will do fairly well, with its seven seals, to represent a cycle of seven: though how the book is to be *opened* piece by piece, after the breaking of each seal, I myself cannot see: since the book is a rolled up scroll, and therefore could not *actually* be opened till all seven seals were broken. However, it is a detail:

Apocalypse

to the apocalypticist and to me. Perhaps there is no intention of opening it, till the end.

The lion of Judah is supposed to open the book. But lo! when the kingly beast comes on to the stage, it turns out to be a Lamb with seven horns (of power, the seven powers or potencies) and seven eyes (the same old planets). We are always hearing a terrific roaring as of lions, and we are always seeing a Lamb exhibiting this wrath. John of Patmos' Lamb is, we suspect, the good old lion in sheep's clothing. It behaves like the most terrific lion. Only John insists that it is a Lamb.

He has to insist on the Lamb, in spite of his predilection for lions, because Leo must now give way to Aries; for, throughout the whole world, the God who, like a lion, was given blood sacrifice must be shoved into the background, and the sacrificed god must occupy the foreground. The pagan mysteries of the sacrifice of the god for the sake of a greater resurrection are older than Christianity, and on one of these mysteries the Apocalypse is based. A Lamb it has to be: or with Mithras, a bull: and the blood drenches over the

Apocalypse

initiate from the cut throat of the bull (they lifted his head up as they cut his throat) and makes him a new man.

“ Wash me in the blood of the Lamb
And I shall be whiter than snow — ”

shrieks the Salvation Army in the market place. How surprised they would be if you told them it might just as well have been a bull. But perhaps they wouldn't. They might twig at once. In the lowest stratum of society religion remains pretty much the same, throughout the ages.

(But when it was for a hecatomb, they held the head of the bull downwards, to earth, and cut his throat over a pit. We feel that John's Lamb was for a hecatomb.)

God became the animal that was slain, instead of the animal that does the slaying. With the Jews, then, it had to be a Lamb, partly because of their ancient paschal sacrifice. The Lion of Judah put on a fleece: but by their bite ye shall know them. John insists on a Lamb “ as it were slain ”: but we never see it slain, we only see it slaying mankind by the million. Even when it comes on in

Apocalypse

a victorious bloody shirt at the end, the blood is not its *own* blood: it is the blood of inimical kings.

“ Wash me in the blood of my enemies
And I shall be that I am — ”

says John of Patmos in effect.

There follows a paean. What it is, is a real pagan paean of praise to the god who is about to demonstrate — the elders, those twice twelve of the established cosmos, who are really the twelve signs of the zodiac on their “ seats,” keep getting up and bowing to the throne, like the sheaves to Joseph. Vials of sweet odour are labelled: Prayers of the saints; probably an aftertouch of some little Christian later on. Flocks of Jewish angels flock in. And then the drama begins.

T E N

WITH the famous four horsemen, the real drama begins. These four horsemen are obviously pagan. They are not even Jewish. In they ride, one after the other — though why they should come from the opening of the seals of a *book*, we don't know. In they ride, short and sharp, and it is over. They have been cut down to a minimum.

But there they are: obviously astrological, zodiacal, prancing in to a purpose. To what purpose? This time, really individual and human, rather than cosmic. The famous book of seven seals in this place is the body of man: of a man: of Adam: of any man: and the seven seals are the seven centres or gates of his dynamic consciousness. We are witnessing the opening and conquest of the great psychic centres of the human body. The old Adam is going to be conquered, die, and be reborn as the new Adam: but in stages: in

Apocalypse

sevenfold stages: or in six stages, and then a climax, seven. For man has seven levels of awareness, deeper and higher: or seven spheres of consciousness. And one by one these must be conquered, transformed, transfigured.

And what are these seven spheres of consciousness in a man? Answer as you please, any man can give his own answer. But taking common "popular" view they are, shall we say, the four dynamic natures of man and the three "higher" natures. Symbols mean something: yet they mean something different to every man. Fix the meaning of a symbol, and you have fallen into the commonplace of allegory.

Horses, always horses! How the horse dominated the mind of the early races, especially of the Mediterranean! You were a lord if you had a horse. Far back, far back in our dark soul the horse prances. He is a dominant symbol: he gives us lordship: he links us, the first palpable and throbbing link with the ruddy-glowing Almighty of potence: he is the beginning even of our godhead in the flesh. And as a symbol he roams the dark underworld meadows of the soul. He stamps

Apocalypse

and threshes in the dark fields of your soul and of mine. The sons of God who came down and knew the daughters of men and begot the great Titans, they had "the members of horses," says Enoch.

Within the last fifty years man has lost the horse. Now man is lost. Man is lost to life and power — an underling and a wastrel. While horses thrashed the streets of London, London lived.

The horse, the horse! the symbol of surging potency and power of movement, of action, in man. The horse, that heroes strode. Even Jesus rode an ass, a mount of humble power. But the horse for true heroes. And different horses for the different powers, for the different heroic flames and impulses.

The rider on the white horse! Who is he then? The man who needs an explanation will never know. Yet explanations are our doom.

Take the old four natures of man: the sanguine, the choleric, the melancholic, the phlegmatic! There you have the four colours of the horses, white, red, black, and *pale*, or yellowish. But how should sanguine be white? — Ah, be-

Apocalypse

cause the blood was the life itself, the very life: and the very power of life itself was white, dazzling. In our old days, *the blood was the life*, and visioned as power it was like white light. The scarlet and the purple were only the clothing of the blood. Ah, the vivid blood clothed in bright red! itself it was like pure light.

The red horse is choler: not mere anger, but natural fieriness, what we call passion.

The black horse was the black bile, refractory.

And the phlegm, or lymph of the body was the pale horse: in excess it causes death, and is followed by Hades.

Or take the four planetary natures of man: jovial, martial, saturnine, and mercurial. This will do for another correspondence, if we go a little behind the *Latin* meaning, to the older Greek. Then Great Jove is the sun, and the living blood: the white horse: and angry Mars rides the red horse: Saturn is black, stubborn, refractory and gloomy: and Mercury is really Hermes, Hermes of the Underworld, the guide of souls, the watcher over two ways, the opener of two doors, he who seeks through hell, or Hades.

Apocalypse

There are two sets of correspondence, both physical. We leave the cosmic meanings, for the intention here is more physical than cosmic.

You will meet the white horse over and over again, as a symbol. Does not even Napoleon have a white horse? The old meanings control our actions, even when our minds have gone inert.

But the rider on the white horse is crowned. He is the royal me, he is my very self and his horse is the whole *mana* of a man. He is my very me, my sacred ego, called into a new cycle of action by the Lamb and riding forth to conquest, the conquest of the old self for the birth of a new self. It is he, truly, who shall conquer all the other "powers" of the self. And he rides forth, like the sun, with arrows, to conquest, but not with the sword, for the sword implies also judgment, and this is my dynamic or potent self. And his bow is the bended bow of the body, like the crescent moon.

The true action of the myth, or ritual-imagery, has been all cut away. The rider on the white horse appears, then vanishes. But we know why he has appeared. And we know why he is paralleled at

Apocalypse

the end of the Apocalypse by the last rider on the white horse, who is the heavenly Son of Man riding forth after the last and final conquest over the "kings." The son of man, even you or I, rides forth to the small conquest: but the Great Son of Man mounts his white horse after the last universal conquest, and leads on his hosts. His shirt is red with the blood of monarchs, and on his thigh is his title: King of Kings and Lord of Lords. (Why on his thigh? Answer for yourself. Did not Pythagoras show his golden thigh in the temple? Don't you know the old and powerful Mediterranean symbol of the thigh?) But out of the mouth of the final rider on the white horse comes that fatal sword of the logos of judgment. Let us go back to the bow and arrows of him to whom judgment is not given.

The myth has been cut down to the bare symbols. The first rider only rides forth. After the second rider, peace is lost, strife and war enter the world — really the inner world of the self. After the rider on the black horse, who carries the balances of measure, that weigh out the measures or true proportions of the "elements" in

Apocalypse

the body, bread becomes scarce, though wine and oil are not hurt. Bread, barley is here the body or flesh which is symbolically sacrificed — as in the barley scattered over the victim in a Greek sacrifice: “Take this bread of my body with thee.” The body of flesh is now at famine stage, wasted down. Finally, with the rider on the pale horse, the last, the physical or dynamic self is dead in the “little death” of the initiate, and we enter the Hades or underworld of our being.

We enter the Hades or underworld of our being, for our body is now “dead.” But the powers or demons of this underworld can only hurt a fourth part of the earth: that is, a fourth part of the body of flesh: which means, the death is only mystical, and that which is hurt is only the body that belongs to already-established creation. Hunger and physical woes befall the physical body in this little death, but there is as yet no greater hurt. There are no plagues: these are divine wrath, and here we have no anger of the Almighty.

There is a crude and superficial explanation of the four horsemen: but probably it hints at the

Apocalypse

true meaning. The orthodox commentators who talk about famines in the time of Titus or Vespasian may be reading the bit about barley and wheat correctly, according to a late apocalypticist. The *original* meaning, which was pagan, is smeared over intentionally with a meaning that can fit this "Church of Christ versus the wicked Gentile Powers" business. But none of that touches the horsemen themselves. And perhaps here better than anywhere else in the book can we see the peculiar way in which the old meaning has been cut away and confused and changed, deliberately, while the bones of the structure have been left.

But there are three more seals. What happens when these are opened?

After the fourth seal and the rider on the pale horse, the initiate, in pagan ritual, is bodily dead. There remains, however, the journey through the underworld, where the living "I" must divest itself of soul and spirit, before it can at last emerge naked from the far gate of hell into the new day. For the soul, the spirit, and the living "I" are the three divine natures of man. The four bodily

Apocalypse

natures are put off on earth. The *two* divine natures can only be divested in Hades. And the last is a stark flame which, on the new day is clothed anew and successively by the spiritual body, the soul-body, and then the "garment" of flesh, with its fourfold terrestrial natures.

Now no doubt the pagan script recorded this passage through Hades, this divesting of the soul, then of the spirit, till the mystic death is fulfilled sixfold, and the seventh seal is at once the last thunder of death and the first thunderous paean of new birth and tremendous joy.

But the Jewish mind hates the mortal and terrestrial divinity of man: the Christian mind the same. Man is only postponedly divine: when he is dead and gone to glory. He *must not* achieve divinity in the flesh. So the Jewish and Christian apocalyptists abolish the mystery of the individual adventure into Hades and substitute a lot of martyred souls crying under the altar for vengeance — vengeance was a sacred duty with the Jews. These souls are told to wait awhile — always the postponed destiny — until more martyrs are killed; and they are given white robes: which is

Apocalypse

premature, for the white robes are the new resurrected bodies, and how could these crying souls put them on in Hades: in the grave? However — such is the muddle that Jewish and Christian apocalyptists have made of the fifth seal.

The sixth seal, the divesting of the spirit from the last living quick of the “I,” this has been turned by the apocalyptist into a muddled cosmic calamity. The sun goes black as sackcloth of hair: which means that he is a great black orb streaming forth visible darkness; the moon turns to blood, which is one of the horror-reversals of the pagan mind, for the moon is mother of the watery body of men, the blood belongs to the sun, and the moon, like a harlot or demon woman, can only be drunk with red blood in her utterly maleficent aspect of meretrix, blood-drinker, she who should give the cool water of the body’s fountain of flesh; the stars fall from the sky, and the heavens depart like a scroll rolled together, and “every mountain and island were moved out of their places.” It means the return of chaos, and the end of our cosmic order, or creation. Yet it is not *annihilation*: for the kings of the earth and all the rest of

Apocalypse

men keep on hiding in the shifted mountains, from the ever-recurrent wrath of the Lamb.

This cosmic calamity no doubt corresponds to the original final death of the initiate, when his very spirit is stripped off him and he knows death indeed, yet still keeps the final flame-point of life, down in Hades. But it is a pity the apocalyptists were so interfering: the Apocalypse is a string of cosmic calamities, monotonous. We would give the New Jerusalem cheerfully, to have back the pagan record of initiation; and this perpetual "wrath of the Lamb" business exasperates one like endless threats of toothless old men.

However, the six stages of mystic death are over. The seventh stage is a death and birth at once. Then the final flame-point of the eternal self of a man emerges from hell, and at the very instant of extinction becomes a new whole cloven flame of a new-bodied man with golden thighs and a face of glory. But first there is a pause: a natural pause. The action is suspended, and transferred to another world, to the outer cosmos. There is a lesser cycle of ritual to fulfil, before the seventh seal, the crash and the glory.

E L E V E N

CREATION, we know, is four-square, and the number of creation, or of the created universe, is four. From the four corners of the world four winds can blow, three bad winds, one good one. When all the winds are loosed, it means chaos in the air, and destruction on earth.

So the four angels of the winds are told to hold back their winds and hurt neither earth nor sea nor trees: that is, the actual world.

But there is a mystic wind from the east which lifts the sun and the moon like full-sailed ships, and bears them across the sky, like vessels slowly scudding. — This was one of the beliefs, in the second century B. C. — Out of this east rises the angel crying for a pause in the blowing of the winds of destruction, while he shall seal the servants of God in their foreheads. Then the twelve tribes of Jews are tediously enumerated and sealed: a tedious Jewish performance.

Apocalypse

The vision changes, and we see a great multitude, clothed in white robes and with palms in their hands, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, and crying with a loud voice: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb." Thereupon angels and elders and the four winged beasts fall on their faces and worship God saying: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen."

This suggests that the seventh seal is opened. The angel cries to the four winds to be still, while the blessed, or the new-born appear. And then those who "went through the great tribulation," or initiation into death and rebirth, appear in glory, clothed in the white dazzling robes of their new bodies, carrying branches of the tree of life in their hands, and appearing in a grand blaze of light before the Almighty. They hymn their praise, and the angels take it up.

Here we can see, in spite of the apocalyptist, the pagan initiate, perhaps in a temple of Cybele, suddenly brought forth from the underdark of

Apocalypse

the temple into the grand blaze of light in front of the pillars. Dazzled, reborn, he wears white robes and carries the palm-branch, and the flutes sound out their rapture round him, and dancing women lift their garlands over him. The lights flash, the incense rolls up, the brilliant priests and priestesses throw up their arms and sing the hymn to the new glory of the reborn, as they form around him and exalt him in a kind of ecstasy. The crowd beyond is breathless.

This vivid scene in front of the temple, of the glorification of a new initiate and his identification or assimilation to the god, amid grand brilliance and wonder, and the sound of flutes and the swaying of garlands, in front of the awed crowd of onlookers was, we know, the end of the ritual of the Mysteries of Isis. Such a scene has been turned by the apocalyptists into a Christian vision. But it really takes place *after* the opening of the seventh seal. The cycle of individual initiation is fulfilled. The great conflict and conquest is over. The initiate is dead, and alive again in a new body. He is sealed in the forehead, like a Hindu monk, as a sign that he has died the death, and

Apocalypse

that his seventh self is fulfilled, he is twice-born, his mystic eye or "third eye" is now open. He sees in two worlds. Or, like the Pharaohs with the serpent Uraeus rearing between their brows, he has charge of the last proud power of the sun.

But all this is pagan and impious. No Christian is allowed to rise up new and in a divine body, here on earth and in the midst of life. So we are given a crowd of martyrs in heaven, instead.

The seal in the forehead may be ashes: the seal of the death of the body: or it may be scarlet or glory, the new light or vision. It is, really, in itself the seventh seal.

Now it is finished, and there is silence in heaven for the space of about half an hour.

T W E L V E

AND here, perhaps, the oldest pagan manuscript ended. At any rate the first cycle of the drama is over. With various hesitations, some old apocalyptist starts the second cycle, this time the cycle of the death and regeneration of earth or world, instead of the individual. And this part, too, we feel is much older than John of Patmos. Nevertheless, it is very Jewish, the curious distortion of paganism through the Jewish moral and cataclysmic vision: the monomaniacal insistence on punishment and woes, which goes right through the Apocalypse. We are now in a real Jewish atmosphere.

But still there are old pagan ideas. Incense rises up to the nostrils of the Almighty in great clouds of smoke. But these clouds of incense-smoke are allegorised, and made to carry up the prayers of the saints. Then the divine fire is cast down to earth, to start the little death and final regenera-

Apocalypse

tion of the world, the earth and the multitude. Seven angels, the seven angels of the seven dynamic natures of God, are given seven trumpets to make seven annunciations.

And then the now-Jewish Apocalypse starts to unroll its second cycle of the Seven Trumps.

There is again a division into four and three. We are witnessing the death (the little death) of the cosmos at divine command, and therefore each time there is a trumpet blast, a third part, not a fourth, of the world is destroyed. The divine number is three: the number of the world, four-square, is four.

At the first Trump, a third part of vegetable life is destroyed.

At the second Trump, a third part of all marine life, even ships.

At the third Trump, a third part of the fresh waters of earth are embittered and become poison.

At the fourth Trump, a third part of the heavens, sun, moon, and stars, are destroyed.

This corresponds to the four horsemen of the first cycle, in a clumsy Jewish-apocalyptic parallel.

Apocalypse

The *material* cosmos has now suffered the little death.

What follows are the "three woes," which affect the spirit and soul of the world (symbolised now as men), instead of the material part. A star falls to earth: Jewish figure for an angel descending. He has the key of the abyss: Jewish counterpart of Hades. And the action now moves to the underworld of the cosmos instead of the underworld of the self, as in the first cycle.

It is now all Jewish and allegorical, not symbolical any more. The sun and the moon are darkened because we are in the underworld.

The abyss, like the underworld, is full of malefic powers, injurious to man.

For the abyss, like the underworld, represents the superseded powers of creation.

The old nature of man must yield and give way to a new nature. In yielding, it passes away down into Hades, and there lives on, undying and malefic, superseded, yet malevolent-potent in the underworld.

This very profound truth was embodied in all old religions, and lies at the root of the worship

Apocalypse

of the underworld powers. The worship of the underworld powers, the chthonioi, was perhaps the very basis of the most ancient Greek religion. When man has neither the strength to subdue his underworld powers — which are really the ancient powers of his old, superseded self; nor the wit to placate them with sacrifice and the burnt holocaust; then they come back at him, and destroy him again. Hence every new conquest of life means a “harrowing of Hell.”

In the same way, after every great cosmic change, the power of the *old* cosmos, superseded, becomes demonic and harmful to the new creation. It is a great truth which lies behind the Gea-Ouranos-Kronos-Zeus series of myths.

Therefore the whole cosmos has its malefic aspect. The sun, the great sun, in so far as he is the *old* sun of a superseded cosmic day, is hateful and malevolent to the new-born, tender thing I am. He does me harm, in my struggling self, for he still has power over my old self and he is hostile.

Likewise the waters of the cosmos, in their *oldness* and their superseded or abysmal nature, are malevolent to life, especially to the life of

Apocalypse

man. The great Moon and mother of my inner water-streams, in so far as she is the old, dead moon, is hostile, hurtful, and hateful to my flesh, for she still has a power over my old flesh.

This is the meaning away back of the "two woes" : a very deep meaning, too deep for John of Patmos. The famous locusts of the first woe, which emerge from the abyss at the fifth Trump, are complex but not unintelligible symbols. They do not hurt vegetable earth, only the men who have not the new seal on their foreheads. These men they torture, but cannot kill: for it is the little death. And they can torture only for five months, which is a season, the sun's season, and more or less a third part of the year.

Now these locusts are like horses prepared unto battle, which means, horses, horses, that they are hostile potencies or *powers*.

They have hair as the hair of women: the streaming crest of the sun-powers, or sun-rays.

They have the teeth of the lion: the red lion of the sun in his malefic aspect.

They have faces like men: since they are directed only against the *inward* life of men.

Apocalypse

They have crowns like gold: they are royal, of the royal orb of the sun.

They have stings in their tails: which means, they are in the reversed or hellish aspect, creatures which once were good, but being superseded, of a past order, are now reversed and hellish, stinging, as it were, backwards.

And their king is Apollyon: which is Apollo, great Lord of the (pagan and therefore hellish) sun.

Having made his weird, muddled composite symbol at last intelligible, the Jewish apocalypticist declares the first woe is past, and that there are two more still to come.

THIRTEEN

THE sixth Trump sounds. The voice from the golden altar says: Loose the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates. —

These are evidently four angels of four corners, like those of the four winds. So Euphrates, the evil river of Babylon, will no doubt stand for the waters under the earth, or the abysmal under-ocean, in its hellish aspect.

And the angels are loosed, whereupon, apparently the great army of demon-horsemen, two hundred million, all told, issue from the abyss.

The horses of the two hundred million horsemen have heads as the heads of lions, and out of their mouths issue fire and brimstone. And these kill a third part of men, by the fire, smoke, and brimstone which come out of their mouths. Then unexpectedly we are told that their power is in their mouths and in their tails; for their tails are

Apocalypse

like serpents, and have heads, and with them they do hurt.

These weird creatures are apocalyptic images, surely: not symbols but personal images of some old apocalypstist long before John of Patmos. The horses are powers, and divine instruments of woe: for they kill a third part of men, and later we are told they are plagues. Plagues are the whips of God.

Now they ought to be the reversed or malevolent powers of the abysmal or underworld waters. Instead of which they are sulphurous, evidently volcanic beasts of the abysmal or underworld fires, which are the hellish fires of the hellish sun.

Then suddenly they are given serpent tails, and they have evil power in their tails. Here we are back at the right thing — the horse-bodied serpent-monster of the salty deeps of hell: the powers of the underworld waters seen in their reversed aspect, malevolent, striking a third of men, probably with some watery and deadly disease; as the locusts of the fifth Trump smote men with some hot and agonising, yet not

Apocalypse

deadly disease, which ran for a certain number of months.

So that here probably two apocalypticists have been at work. The later one did not understand the scheme. He put in his brimstone horses with their riders having breastplates of fire and jacinth and brimstone (red, dark blue, and yellow), following his own gay fancy, and perhaps influenced by some volcanic disturbance and some sight of splendid red, blue, and yellow cavalry of the east. That is a true Jewish method.

But then he had to come back to the old manuscript, with serpent-tailed watery monsters. So he tacked on the serpent tails to his own horses, and let them gallop.

This apocalypticist of the brimstone horses is probably responsible for the "lake of fire burning with brimstone" into which the souls of fallen angels and wicked men are cast to burn for ever and ever more. This pleasant place is the prototype of the Christian hell, specially invented by the Apocalypse. The old Jewish hells of Sheol and Gehenna were fairly mild, uncomfortable abysmal places like Hades, and when a New Jerusalem

Apocalypse

was created from heaven, they disappeared. They were part of the old cosmos, and did not outlast the old cosmos. They were not eternal.

This was not good enough for the brimstone apocalyptist and John of Patmos. They must have a marvellous, terrific lake of sulphurous fire that could burn for ever and ever, so that the souls of the enemy could be kept writhing. When, after the last Judgment, earth and sky and all creation were swept away, and only glorious heaven remained, still, away down, there remained this burning lake of fire in which the souls were suffering. Brilliant glorious eternal heaven above: and brilliant sulphurous torture-lake away below. This is the vision of eternity of all Patmosers. They could not be happy in heaven unless they *knew* their enemies were unhappy in hell.

And this vision was specially brought into the world with the Apocalypse. It did not exist before.

Before, the waters of the hellish underworld were bitter like the sea. They were the evil aspect of the water under the earth, which were conceived as some wondrous lake of sweet, lovely

Apocalypse

water, source of all the springs and streams of earth, lying away down below the rocks.

The waters of the abyss were salt like the sea. Salt had a great hold on the old imagination. It was supposed to be the product of "elemental" injustice. Fire and water, the two great living elements and opposites, gave rise to all substance in their slippery unstable "marriage." But when one triumphed over the other, there was "injustice." So, when the sun-fire got too strong for the sweet waters, it *burnt* them, and when water was burnt by fire, it produced salt, child of injustice. This child of injustice corrupted the waters and made them bitter. So the sea came into being. And thence the dragon of the sea, leviathan.

And so the bitter waters of hell were the place where souls were drowned: the bitter anti-life ocean of the end.

There was for ages a resentment against the sea: the bitter, corrupt sea, as Plato calls it. But this seems to have died down in Roman times: so our apocalypticist substitutes a brimstone-burning lake, as being more horrific, and able to make the souls suffer more.

Apocalypse

A third of men are killed by these brimstone horsemen. But the remaining two-thirds do not refrain from worshipping idols which can “neither see nor hear nor walk.”

That sounds as if the Apocalypse here was still quite Jewish and pre-Christian. There is no Lamb about.

Later, this second woe winds up with the usual earthquakes. But since the shiver of the earth must immediately give rise to a new movement, it is postponed awhile.

FOURTEEN

SIX Trumps are blown, so now there is a pause: just as there was a pause after the Six Seals were opened, to let the angels of the four winds arrange themselves, and the action transfer itself to heaven.

Now, however, come various interruptions. First there comes down a mighty angel, a cosmic lord, something like the Son of Man in the first vision. But the Son of Man, indeed all Messianic reference, seems missing in this part of the Apocalypse. This mighty angel sets one burning foot upon the sea and one on earth, and roars like a lion throughout space. Whereupon the seven creative thunders roll out their creative utterances. These seven thunders, we know, are the seven tonal natures of the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: and now they are giving voice to seven vast new commands, for a new cosmic day, a new phase in creation. The seer is in a

Apocalypse

hurry to write down these seven new words, but he is commanded not to do so. He is not allowed to divulge the nature of the commands which will bring the new cosmos into being. We must wait for the actuality. Then this great "angel" or cosmic lord raises his hand and swears, by heaven and earth and water under the earth, which is the great Greek oath of the gods, that the old Time is over, the mystery of God is about to be fulfilled.

Then the seer is given the little book to eat. It is the lesser general or universal message of the destruction of the old world and creation of the new: a lesser message than that of the destruction of the old Adam and the creation of new man, which the seven-sealed book told. And it is sweet in the mouth — as revenge is sweet — but bitter in experience.

Then another interruption: the measuring of the temple, a pure Jewish interruption; the measuring or counting of the "chosen of God," before the end of the old world; and the exclusion of the unchosen.

Then comes the most curious interruption of the two witnesses. Orthodox commentators iden-

Apocalypse

tify these two witnesses with Moses and Elijah who were with Jesus in the transfiguration on the mount. They are something much older too. These two witnesses are prophets clothed in sackcloth: that is, they are in their woeful aspect, hostile or reversed. They are the two candlesticks and the two olive trees which stand before "Adonai," the god of the earth. They have power over the waters of the sky (rain), power to turn water into blood, and to smite the earth with all the plagues. They make their testimony, then the beast out of the Abyss rises and slays them. Their dead bodies lie out in the street of the great city, and the people of the earth rejoice because these two who tormented them are dead. But after three and a half days, the spirit of life from God enters the dead two, they rise to their feet, and a great voice says from heaven, "Come up hither." So they rise to heaven on a cloud, and their enemies in fear behold them.

It looks as if we had here a layer of very old myth referring to the mysterious twins, "the little ones," who had such power over the nature of men. But both the Jewish and Christian apocalyptists

Apocalypse

have balked this bit of Revelation: they have not given it any plain meaning of any sort.

The twins belong to a very old cult which apparently was common to all ancient European peoples; but it seems they were heavenly twins, belonging to the sky. Yet when they were identified by the Greeks with the Tyndarids, Kastor and Polydeukes, already in the *Odyssey*, they lived alternately in Heaven and in Hades, witnessing to both places. And as such, they may be the candlesticks, or stars of heaven, on the one hand, and the olive trees of the underworld, on the other.

But the older a myth, the deeper it goes in the human consciousness, the more varied will be the forms it takes in the upper consciousness. We have to remember that some symbols, and this of the twins is one of them, can carry even our modern consciousness back for a thousand years, for two thousand years, for three thousand years, for four thousand years, and even beyond that. The power of suggestion is most mysterious. It may not work at all: or it may carry the unconscious mind back in great cyclic swoops through eras of time: or it may go only part way.

Apocalypse

If we think of the heroic Dioskouroi, the Greek Twins, the Tyndarids, we go back only halfway. The Greek heroic age did a strange thing, it made every cosmic conception anthropomorphic, yet kept a great deal of the cosmic wonder. So that the Dioskouroi are and are not the ancient twins.

But the Greeks themselves were always reverting to the pre-heroic, pre-Olympian gods and potencies. The Olympic-heroic vision was always felt to be too shallow, the old Greek soul would drop continually to deeper, older, darker levels of religious consciousness, all through the centuries. So that the mysterious Tritopatores at Athens, who were also called the Twins, and Dioskouroi, were the lords of the winds, and mysterious watchers at the procreation of children. So here again we are back in the old levels.

When the Samothracian cult spread in Hellas, in the third and second centuries B. C., then the twins became the *Kabeiroi*, or the Kabiri, and then again they had an enormous suggestive influence over the minds of men. The Kabiri were a swing back to the old idea of the dark or mysterious twins, connected with the movement of the

Apocalypse

cloudy skies and the air, and with the movement of fertility, and the perpetual and mysterious balance between these two. The apocalypticist sees them in their woeful aspect, masters of sky-water and the waters of earth, which they can turn into blood, and masters of plagues from Hades: the heavenly and hellish aspect of the twins, malevolent.

But the Kabiri were connected with many things: and it is said their cult is still alive in Mohammedan countries. They were the two secret little ones, the homunculi, and the "rivals." They were also connected with thunder, and with two round black thunder-stones. So they were called the "sons of thunder," and had power over rain: also power to curdle milk, and malefic power to turn water into blood. As thunderers they were sunderers, sundering cloud, air, and water. And always they have this aspect of rivals, dividers, separators, for good as well as for ill: balancers.

By another symbolic leap, they were also the ancient gods of gateposts, and then they were the guardians of the gate, and then the twin beasts that guard the altar, or the tree, or the urn, in so

Apocalypse

many Babylonian, Aegean, and Etruscan paintings and sculpture. They were often panthers, leopards, gryphons, earth and night creatures, jealous ones.

It is they who hold things asunder to make a space, a gateway. In this way, they are rainmakers: they open the gates in the sky: perhaps as thunder-stones. In the same way they are the secret lords of sex, for it was early recognised that sex is a holding of two things asunder, that birth may come through between them. In the sexual sense, they can change water into blood: for the phallos itself was the homunculus, and, in one aspect, it was itself the twins of earth, the small one who made water and the small one who was filled with blood: the rivals within a man's own very nature and earthly self symbolised again in the twin stones of the testes. They are thus the roots of the twin olive trees, producing the olives, and the oil of the procreative sperm. They are also the two candlesticks which stand before the lord of earth, Adonai. For they give the two alternate forms of elemental consciousness, our day-consciousness and our night-consciousness, that

Apocalypse

which we are in the depths of night, and that other very different being which we are in bright day. A creature of dual and jealous consciousness is man, and the twins witness jealously to the duality. Physiologically, in the same meaning, it is they who hold apart the two streams of the water and of the blood in our bodies. If the water and blood ever mingled in our bodies, we should be dead. The two streams are kept apart by the little ones, the rivals. And on the two streams depends the dual consciousness.

Now these little ones, these rivals, they are "witnesses" to life, for it is between their opposition that the Tree of Life itself grows, from the earthly root. They testify before the god of earth or fecundity all the time. And all the time, they put a limit on man. They say to him, in every earthly or physical activity: Thus far and no farther. — They limit every action, every "earth" action, to its own scope, and counterbalance it with an opposite action. They are gods of gates, but they are also gods of limits: each forever jealous of the other, keeping the other in bounds.

Apocalypse

They make life possible; but they make life limited. As the testes, they hold the phallic balance forever, they are the two phallic witnesses. They are the enemies of intoxication, of ecstasy, and of licence, of licentious freedom. Always they testify to Adonai. Hence the men in the cities of licence rejoice when the beast from the abyss, which is the hellish dragon or demon of the earth's destruction, or man's bodily destruction, at last kills these two "guardians," regarded as a sort of policemen in "Sodom" and "Egypt." The bodies of the slain two lie unburied for three and a half days: that is half a week, or half a period of time, when all decency and restraint has departed from among men.

The language of the text, "rejoice and make merry and send gifts to one another" suggests a pagan Saturnalia, like the Hermaia of Crete or the Sakaia at Babylon, the feast of unreason. If this is what the apocalyptist meant, it shows how intimately he follows pagan practice, for the ancient saturnalian feasts all represented the breaking, or at least the interruption of an old order of rule and law: and this time it is the "natural

Apocalypse

rule " of the two witnesses which is broken. Men escape from the laws even of their own nature for a spell: for three days and a half, which is half the sacred week, be a " little " period of time. Then, as heralding the new earth and the new body of man, the two witnesses stand up again: men are struck with terror: the voice from heaven calls the two witnesses, and they go up in a cloud.

" Two, two for the lily-white boys, clothed all in green-O! — "

Thus the earth, and the body, cannot die its death till these two sacred twins, the rivals, have been killed.

An earthquake comes, the seventh angel blows his trumpet and makes the great announcement: The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever. — So there is again worship and thanksgiving in heaven, that God takes the reign again. And the temple of God is opened in heaven, the holy of holies is revealed, and the ark of the testament. Then there are the lightnings, voices, thunderings, earthquakes, and

Apocalypse

hail which end a period and herald another. The third woe is ended.

And here ends the first part of the Apocalypse: the old half. The little myth that follows stands quite alone in the book, dramatically, and is really out of keeping with the rest. One of the apocalyp-tists put it in as part of a theoretic scheme: the birth of the Messiah after the little death of earth and man. And the other apocalyp-tists left it there.

F I F T E E N

WHAT follows is the myth of the birth of a new sun-god from a great sun-goddess, and her pursuit by the great red dragon. This myth is left as the centre-piece of the Apocalypse, and figures as the birth of the Messiah. Even orthodox commentators admit that it is entirely unchristian, and almost entirely unjewish. We are down pretty well to a pagan bed-rock, and we can see at once how many Jewish and Jewish-Christian overlays there are in the other parts.

But this pagan birth-myth is very brief — as was the other bit of pure myth, that of the four horsemen.

“And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: and she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

“And there appeared another wonder in

Apocalypse

heaven; and behold a great red dragon having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. And his tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born.

“ And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne. And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and threescore days.

“ And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.”

This fragment is really the pivot of the Apocalypse. It looks like late pagan myth suggested

Apocalypse

from various Greek, Egyptian, and Babylonian myths. Probably the first apocalypticist added it to the original pagan manuscript, many years before the birth of Christ, to give his vision of a Messiah's birth, born of the sun. But connecting with the four horsemen, and with the two witnesses, the goddess clothed in the sun and standing upon the moon's crescent is difficult to reconcile with a Jewish vision. The Jews hated pagan gods, but they more than hated the great pagan goddesses: they would not even speak of them if possible. And this wonder-woman clothed in the sun and standing upon the crescent of the moon was too splendidly suggestive of the great goddess of the east, the great mother, the Magna Mater as she became to the Romans. This great woman goddess with a child stands looming far, far back in history in the eastern Mediterranean, in the days when matriarchy was still the natural order of the obscure nations. How then does she come to tower as the central figure in a Jewish Apocalypse? We shall never know: unless we accept the old law that when you drive the devil out of the front door he comes in at the back. This great

Apocalypse

goddess has suggested many pictures of the Virgin Mary. She has brought into the Bible what it lacked before: the great cosmic Mother robed and splendid, but persecuted. And she is, of course, essential to the scheme of power and splendour, which must have a queen: unlike the religions of renunciation, which are womanless. The religions of power must have a great queen and queen mother. So here she stands in the Apocalypse, the book of thwarted power-worship.

After the flight of the great Mother from the dragon, the whole Apocalypse changes tone. Suddenly Michael the archangel is introduced: which is a great jump from the four starry beasts of the presence, who have been the Cherubim till now. The dragon is identified with Lucifer and Satan, and even then has to give his power to the beast from the sea: alias Nero.

There is a great change. We leave the old cosmic and elemental world, and come to the late Jewish world of angels like policemen and postmen. It is a world essentially uninteresting, save for the great vision of the scarlet woman, which has been borrowed from the pagans, and is, of

Apocalypse

course, the reversal of the great woman clothed in the sun. The late apocalyptists are much more at their ease cursing her and calling her a harlot and other vile names, than in seeing her clothed in the sun and giving her due reverence.

Altogether the latter half of the Apocalypse is a come-down. We see it in the chapter of the seven vials. The seven vials of the wrath of the Lamb are a clumsy imitation of the seven seals and the seven trumps. The apocalyptist no longer knows what he is about. There is no division into four and three, no rebirth or glory after the seventh vial — just a clumsy succession of plagues. And then the whole thing falls to earth in the prophesying and cursing business which we have met already in the old prophets and in Daniel. The visions are amorphous and have fairly obvious allegorical meanings: treading the wine-press of the wrath of the Lord, and so on. It is stolen poetry, stolen from the old prophets. And for the rest, the destruction of Rome is the blatant and rather boring theme. Rome was anyhow more than Jerusalem.

Only the great whore of Babylon rises rather

Apocalypse

splendid, sitting in her purple and scarlet upon her scarlet beast. She is the Magna Mater in malefic aspect, clothed in the colours of the angry sun, and throned upon the great red dragon of the angry cosmic power. Splendid she sits, and splendid is her Babylon. How the late apocalyp-tists love mouthing out all about the gold and silver and cinnamon of evil Babylon! How they *want* them all! How they *envy* Babylon her splendour, envy, envy! How they love destroying it all! The harlot sits magnificent with her golden cup of the wine of sensual pleasure in her hand. How the apocalyp-tists would have loved to drink out of her cup! And since they couldn't: how they loved smashing it!

Gone is the grand pagan calm which can see the woman of the cosmos wrapped in her warm gleam like the sun, and having her feet upon the moon, the moon who gives us our white flesh. Gone is the great Mother of the cosmos, crowned with a diadem of the twelve great stars of the zodiac. She is driven to the desert and the dragon of the watery chaos spues floods upon her. But kind earth swallows the floods, and the great woman,

Apocalypse

winged for flight like an eagle, must remain lost in the desert for a time, and times, and half a time. Which is like the three and a half days, or years, of other parts of the Apocalypse, and means half of a time-period.

That is the last we have seen of her. She has been in the desert ever since, the great cosmic Mother crowned with all the signs of the zodiac. Since she fled, we have had nothing but virgins and harlots, half-women: the half-women of the Christian era. For the great woman of the pagan cosmos was driven into the wilderness at the end of the old epoch, and she has never been called back. That Diana of Ephesus, John of Patmos's Ephesus, was already a travesty of the great woman crowned with the stars.

Yet perhaps it was a book of her "mystery" and initiation ritual which gave rise to the existing Apocalypse. But if so, it has been written over and over, till only a last glimpse is left of her: and one other corresponding glimpse, of the great woman of the cosmos "seen red." Oh, how weary we get, in the Apocalypse, of all these woes and plagues and deaths! how infinitely weary we are

Apocalypse

of the mere thought of that jeweller's paradise of a New Jerusalem at the end! All this maniacal anti-life! They can't bear even to let the sun and the moon exist, these horrible salvationists. But it is envy.

SIXTEEN

THE woman is one of the "wonders." And the other wonder is the Dragon. The dragon is one of the oldest symbols of the human consciousness. The dragon and serpent symbol goes so deep in every human consciousness, that a rustle in the grass can startle the toughest "modern" to depths he has no control over.

First and foremost, the dragon is the symbol of the fluid, rapid, startling movement of life within us. That startled life which runs through us like a serpent, or coils within us potent and waiting, like a serpent, this is the dragon. And the same with the cosmos.

From earliest times, man has been aware of a "power" or potency within him — and also outside him — which he has no ultimate control over. It is a fluid, rippling potency which can lie quite dormant, sleeping, and yet be ready to leap out unexpectedly. Such are the sudden angers that

Apocalypse

spring upon us from within ourselves, passionate and terrible in passionate people: and the sudden accesses of violent desire, wild sexual desire, or violent hunger, or a great desire of any sort, even for sleep. The hunger which made Esau sell his birthright would have been called his dragon: later, the Greeks would even have called it a "god" in him. It is something beyond him, yet within him. It is swift and surprising as a serpent, and overmastering as a dragon. It leaps up from somewhere inside him, and has the better of him.

Primitive man, or shall we say early man, was in a certain sense afraid of his own nature, it was so violent and unexpected inside him, always "doing things to him." He early recognised the half-divine, half-demonish nature of this "unexpected" potency inside him.

Sometimes it came upon him like a glory, as when Samson slew the lion with his hands, or David slew Goliath with a pebble. The Greeks before Homer would have called both these two acts "the god," in recognition of the superhuman nature of the deed, *and of the doer of the deed,*

Apocalypse

who was *within* the man. This "doer of the deed," the fluid, rapid, invincible, even clairvoyant potency that can surge through the whole body and spirit of a man, this is the dragon, the grand divine dragon of his superhuman potency, or the great demonish dragon of his inward destruction. It is this which surges in us to make us move, to make us act, to make us bring forth something: to make us spring up and live. Modern philosophers may call it Libido or *Elan Vital*, but the words are thin, they carry none of the wild suggestion of the dragon.

And man "worshipped" the dragon. A hero was a hero, in the great past, when he had conquered the hostile dragon, when he had the power of the dragon *with him* in his limbs and breast. When Moses set up the brazen serpent in the wilderness, an act which dominated the imagination of the Jews for many centuries, he was substituting the potency of the good dragon for the sting of the bad dragon, or serpents. That is, man can have the serpent with him or against him. When his serpent is with him, he is almost divine. When his serpent is against him, he is stung and

Apocalypse

envenomed and defeated from within. The great problem, in the past, was the conquest of the *inimical* serpent and the liberation within the self of the gleaming bright serpent of gold, golden fluid life within the body, the rousing of the splendid divine dragon within a man, or within a woman.

What ails men today is that thousands of little serpents sting and envenom them all the time, and the great divine dragon is inert. We cannot wake him to life, in modern days. He wakes on the lower planes of life: for a while in an airman like Lindbergh or in a boxer like Dempsey. It is the little serpent of gold that lifts these two men for a brief time into a certain level of heroism. But on the higher planes, there is no glimpse or gleam of the great dragon.

The usual vision of the dragon is, however, not personal but cosmic. It is in the vast cosmos of the stars that the dragon writhes and lashes. We see him in his maleficent aspect, red. But don't let us forget that when he stirs green and flashing on a pure dark night of stars it is he who makes the wonder of the night, it is the full rich coiling

Apocalypse

of his folds which makes the heavens sumptuously serene, as he glides around and guards the immunity, the precious strength of the planets, and gives lustre and new strength to the fixed stars, and still more serene beauty to the moon. His coils within the sun make the sun glad, till the sun dances in radiance. For in his good aspect, the dragon is the great vivifier, the great enhancer of the whole universe.

So he persists still to the Chinese. The long green dragon with which we are so familiar on Chinese things is the dragon in his good aspect of life-bringer, life-giver, life-maker, vivifier. There he coils, on the breasts of the mandarins' coats, looking very horrific, coiling round the centre of the breast and lashing behind with his tail. But as a matter of fact, proud and strong and grand is the mandarin who is within the folds of the green dragon, lord of the dragon. — It is the same dragon which, according to the Hindus, coils quiescent at the base of the spine of a man, and unfolds sometimes lashing along the spinal way: and the yogi is only trying to set this dragon in controlled motion. Dragon-cult is still active and

Apocalypse

still potent all over the world, particularly in the east.

But alas, the great green dragon of the stars at their brightest is coiled up tight and silent today, in a long winter sleep. Only the red dragon sometimes shows his head, and the millions of little vipers. The millions of little vipers sting us as they stung the murmuring Israelites, and we want some Moses to set the brazen serpent aloft: the serpent which was "lifted up" even as Jesus later was "lifted up" for the redemption of men.

The red dragon is the kakodaimon, the dragon in his evil or inimical aspect. In the old lore, red is the colour of *man's* splendour, but the colour of evil in the cosmic creatures or the gods. The red lion is the sun in his evil or destructive aspect. The red dragon is the great "potency" of the cosmos in its hostile and destructive activity.

The agathodaimon becomes at last the kakodaimon. The green dragon becomes with time the red dragon. What was our joy and our salvation becomes with time, at the end of the time-era, our bane and our damnation. What was a creative god, Ouranos, Kronos, becomes at the end of

Apocalypse

the time-period a destroyer and a devourer. The god of the beginning of an era is the evil principle at the end of that era. For time still moves in cycles. What was the green dragon, the good potency, at the beginning of the cycle has by the end gradually changed into the red dragon, the evil potency. The good potency of the beginning of the Christian era is now the evil potency of the end.

This is a piece of very old wisdom, and it will always be true. Time still moves in cycles, not in a straight line. And we are at the end of the Christian cycle. And the Logos, the good dragon of the beginning of the cycle, is now the evil dragon of today. It will give its potency to no new thing, only to old and deadly things. It is the red dragon, and it must once more be slain by the heroes, since we can expect no more from the angels.

And, according to old myth, it is woman who falls most absolutely into the power of the dragon, and has no power of escape till man frees her. The new dragon is green or golden, green with the vivid ancient meaning of green which Mohammed took up again, green with that greenish dawn-light

Apocalypse

which is the quintessence of all new and life-giving light. The dawn of all creation took place in greenish pellucid gleam that was the shine of the very presence of the Creator. John of Patmos harks back to this when he makes the iris or rainbow which screens the face of the Almighty green like smaragd or emerald. And this lovely jewel-green gleam is the very dragon itself, as it moves out wreathing and writhing into the cosmos. It is the power of the Kosmodynamos coiling throughout space, coiling along the spine of a man, leaning forth between his brows like the Uraeus between the brows of a Pharaoh. It makes a man splendid, a king, a hero, a brave man gleaming with the gleam of the dragon, which is golden when it wreathes round a man.

So the Logos came, at the beginning of our era, to give men another sort of splendour. And that same Logos today is the evil snake of the Laocoön which is the death of all of us. The Logos which was like the great green breath of spring-time is now the grey stinging of myriads of deadening little serpents. Now we have to *conquer* the Logos, that the new dragon gleaming green may

Apocalypse

lean down from among the stars and vivify us and make us great.

And no one is coiled more bitterly in the folds of the old Logos than woman. It is always so. What was a breath of inspiration becomes in the end a fixed and evil *form*, which coils in round like mummy clothes. And then woman is more tightly coiled even than man. Today, the best part of womanhood is wrapped tight and tense in the folds of the Logos, she is bodiless, abstract, and driven by a self-determination terrible to behold. A strange "spiritual" creature is woman today, driven on and on by the evil demon of the old Logos, never for a moment allowed to escape and be herself. The evil Logos says she must be "significant," she must "make something worth while" of her life. So on and on she goes, making something worth while, piling up the evil forms of our civilisation higher and higher, and never for a second escaping to be wrapped in the brilliant fluid folds of the new green dragon. *All* our present life-forms are evil. But with a persistence that would be angelic if it were not devilish woman insists on the *best* in life, by which she means the

Apocalypse

best of our evil life-forms, unable to realise that the best of evil life-forms are the most evil.

So, tragic and tortured by all the grey little snakes of modern shame and pain, she struggles on, fighting for "the best," which is, alas, the evil best. All women today have a large streak of the policewoman in them. Andromeda was chained naked to a rock, and the dragon of the old form fumed at her. But poor modern Andromeda, she is forced to patrol the streets more or less in policewoman's uniform, with some sort of banner and some sort of bludgeon — or is it called a baton! — up her sleeve, and who is going to rescue her from this? Let her dress up fluffy as she likes, or white and virginal, still underneath it all you can see the stiff folds of the modern policewoman, doing her best, her level best.

Ah God, Andromeda at least had her nakedness, and it was beautiful, and Perseus wanted to fight for her. But our modern policewomen have no nakedness, they have their uniforms. And who could want to fight the dragon of the cold form, the poisonous old Logos, for the sake of a policewoman's uniform?

Apocalypse

Ah woman, you have known many bitter experiences. But never, never before have you been condemned by the old dragon to be a policewoman.

O lovely green dragon of the new day, the undawned day, come, come in touch, and release us from the horrid grip of the evil-smelling old Logos! Come in silence, and say nothing. Come in touch, in soft new touch like a spring-time, and say nothing. Come in touch, in soft new touch like a spring-time breeze, and shed these horrible policewoman sheaths from off our women, let the buds of life come nakedly!

In the days of the Apocalypse the old dragon was red. Today he is grey. He was red, because he represented the old way, the old form of power, kingship, riches, ostentation, and lust. By the days of Nero, this old form of ostentation and sensational lust had truly enough become evil, the foul dragon. And the foul dragon, the red one, had to give way to the white dragon of the Logos — Europe with the glorification of white: the white dragon. It ends with the same sanitary worship of white, but the white dragon is now a

Apocalypse

great white worm, dirty and greyish. Our colour is dirty-white, or grey.

But just as our Logos colour began dazzling white — John of Patmos insists on it, in the white robes of the saints — and ends in a soiled colourlessness, so the old red dragon started marvelously red. The oldest of old dragons was a marvellous red, glowing golden and blood-red. He was bright, bright, bright red, like the most dazzling vermilion. This, this vivid gold-red was the first colour of the first dragon, far, far back under the very dawn of history. The farthest off men looked at the sky and saw in terms of gold and red, not in terms of green and dazzling white. In terms of gold and red, and the reflection of the dragon in a man's face, in the far-off, far-off past, showed glowing brilliant vermilion. Ah then the heroes and the hero-kings glowed in the face red as poppies that the sun shines through. It was the colour of glory: it was the colour of the wild bright blood, which was life itself. The red, racing bright blood, that was the supreme mystery: the slow, purplish, oozing dark blood, the royal mystery.

Apocalypse

The ancient kings of Rome, of the ancient Rome, which was really a thousand years behind the civilisation of the eastern Mediterranean, they painted their faces vermilion, to be divinely royal. And the Red Indians of North America do the same. They are not red save by virtue of this very vermilion paint, which they call "medicine." But the Red Indians belong almost to the Neolithic stage of culture, and of religion. Ah, the dark vistas of time in the pueblos of New Mexico, when the men come out with faces glistening scarlet! Gods! they look like gods! It is the red dragon, the beautiful red dragon.

But he became old, and his life-forms became fixed. Even in the pueblos of New Mexico, where the cold life-forms are the life-forms of the great red dragon, the greatest dragon, even there the life-forms are really evil, and the men have a passion for the colour blue, the blue of the turquoise, to escape the red. Turquoise and Silver, these are the colours they yearn for. For gold is of the red dragon. Far-off down the ages gold was the very stuff of the dragon, its soft, gleaming body, prized for the glory of the dragon, and men wore soft

Apocalypse

gold for glory, like the Aegean and Etruscan warriors in their tombs. And it was not till the red dragon became the kakodaimon, and men began to yearn for the green dragon, and the silver arm-bands, that gold fell from glory and became money. What makes gold into money? the Americans ask you. And there you have it. The death of the great gold dragon, the coming of the green and silver dragon — how the Persians and Babylonians loved turquoise blue, the Chaldeans loved lapis lazuli; so far back they had turned from the red dragon! The dragon of Nebuchadnezzar is blue, and is a blue-scaled unicorn stepping proudly. He is very highly developed. The dragon of the Apocalypse is a much more ancient beast: but then, he is kakodaimon.

But the royal colour still was red: the vermilion and the purple, which is not violet but crimson, the true colour of living blood, these were kept for kings and emperors. They became the very colours of the evil dragon. They are the colours in which the apocalypticist clothes the great harlot woman whom he calls Babylon. The colour of life itself becomes the colour of abomination.

Apocalypse

And today, in the day of the dirty-white dragon of the Logos and the Steel Age, the socialists have taken up the oldest of life-colours, and the whole world trembles at a suggestion of vermilion. For the majority today, red is the colour of destruction. "Red for danger," as the children say. So the cycle goes round: the red and gold dragons of the Gold Age and the Silver Age, the green dragon of the Bronze Age, the white dragon of the Iron Age, the dirty-white dragon, or grey dragon of the Steel Age: and then a return once more to the first brilliant red dragon.

But every heroic epoch turns instinctively to the red dragon, or the gold: every non-heroic epoch instinctively turns away. Like the Apocalypse, where the red and the purple are anathema.

The great red dragon of the Apocalypse had seven heads, each of them crowned: which means his power is royal or supreme in its own manifestation. The seven heads mean he has seven lives, as many lives as a man has natures, or as there are "potencies" to the cosmos. All his seven heads have to be smitten off, that is, man has

Apocalypse

another great series of seven conquests to make, this time over the dragon. The fight goes on.

The dragon, being cosmic, destroys a third part of the cosmos before he is cast down out of heaven into earth: he draws down a third part of the stars with his tail. Then the woman brings forth the child who is "to shepherd mankind with an iron flail." Alas, if that is a prophecy of the reign of the Messiah, or Jesus, how true it is! For all men today are ruled with a flail of iron. This child is caught up to God: we almost wish the dragon had got him. And the woman fled into the wilderness. That is, the great cosmic mother has no place in the cosmos of men any more. She must hide in the desert since she cannot die. — And there she hides, still during the weary three and a half mystic years which are still going on, apparently.

Now begins the second half of the Apocalypse. We enter the rather boring process of Danielesque prophecy, concerning the Church of Christ and the fall of the various kingdoms of the earth. We cannot be very much interested in the prophesied collapse of Rome and the Roman Empire.

S E V E N T E E N

BUT before we look at this second half, let us glance at the dominant symbols, especially at the symbols of number. The whole scheme is so entirely based on the numbers of seven, four and three, that we may as well try to find out what these numbers meant to the ancient mind.

Three was the sacred number: it is still, for it is the number of the Trinity: it is the number of the nature of God. It is perhaps from the scientists, or the very early philosophers, that we get the most revealing suggestions of the ancient beliefs. The early scientists took the extant religious symbol-ideas and transmuted them into true "ideas." We know that the ancients saw number concrete — in dots or in rows of pebbles. And the number three was held by the Pythagoreans to be the perfect number, in their primitive arithmetic, because you could not divide it and leave a gap in the middle. This is obviously true of three

Apocalypse

pebbles. You cannot destroy the integrity of the three. If you remove one pebble on each side, it still leaves the central stone poised and in perfect balance between the two, like the body of a bird between the two wings. And even as late as the third century, this was felt as the perfect or divine condition of being.

Again, we know that Anaximander, in the fifth century, conceived of the Boundless, the infinite substance, as having its two "elements," the hot and the cold, the dry and the moist, or fire and the dark, the great "pair," on either side of it, in the first primordial creation. These three were the beginning of all things. This idea lies at the back of the very ancient division of the *living* cosmos into three, before the idea of God was separated out.

In parenthesis let us remark that the very ancient world was entirely religious and godless. While men still lived in close physical unison, like flocks of birds on the wing, in a close physical oneness, an ancient tribal unison in which the individual was hardly separated out, then the tribe lived breast to breast, as it were, with the cosmos,

Apocalypse

in naked contact with the cosmos, the whole cosmos was alive and in contact with the flesh of man, there was no room for the intrusion of the god idea. It was not till the individual began to feel separated off, not till he fell into awareness of himself, and hence into apartness; not, mythologically, till he ate of the Tree of Knowledge instead of the Tree of Life, and knew himself *apart* and separate, that the conception of a God arose, to intervene between man and the cosmos. The very oldest ideas of man are *purely* religious, and there is no notion of any sort of god or gods. God and gods enter when man has "fallen" into a sense of separateness and loneliness. The oldest philosophers, Anaximander with his divine Boundless and the divine two elements, and Anaximenes with his divine "air," are going back to the great conception of the naked cosmos, before there was God. At the same time, they know all about the gods of the sixth century: but they are not strictly interested in them. Even the first Pythagoreans, who were religious in the conventional way, were more profoundly religious in their conceptions of the two primary forms, Fire

Apocalypse

and the Night, or Fire and Dark, dark being conceived of as a kind of thick air or vapour. These two were the Limit and the Unlimited, Night, the Unlimited, finding its Limit in Fire. These two primary forms, being in a tension of opposition, prove their oneness by their very *opposedness*. Herakleitos says that all things are an exchange for fire: and that the sun is new every day. "The limit of dawn and evening is the Bear: and opposite the Bear is the boundary of bright Zeus." Bright Zeus is here supposed to be the bright blue sky, so his boundary is the horizon, and Herakleitos means probably that opposite the Bear, that is down, down in the antipodes, it is always night, and Night lives the death of Day, as Day lives the death of Night.

This is the state of mind of great men in the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ, strange and fascinating and a revelation of the old symbolic mind. Religion was already turning moralistic or ecstatic, with the Orphics the tedious idea of "escaping the wheel of birth" had begun to abstract men from life. But early science is a source of the purest and oldest religion. The mind

Apocalypse

of man recoiled, there in Ionia, to the oldest religious conception of the cosmos, from which to start thinking out the scientific cosmos. And the thing the oldest philosophers disliked was the new sort of religious conception, with its ecstasies and its escape and its purely *personal* nature: its loss of the cosmos.

So the first philosophers took up the sacred three-part cosmos of the ancients. It is paralleled in Genesis, where we have a god creation, in the division into heaven, and earth, and water: the first three *created* elements, presupposing a God who creates. The ancient threefold division of the living heavens, the Chaldean, is made when the heavens themselves are divine, and not merely God-inhabited. Before men felt any need of God or gods, while the vast heavens lived of themselves and lived breast to breast with man, the Chaldeans gazed up in religious rapture. And then by some strange intuition, they divided the heavens into three sections. And then they really *knew* the stars as the stars have never been known since.

Later, when a God or Maker or Ruler of the

Apocalypse

skies was invented or discovered, then the heavens were divided into the four quarters, the old four quarters that lasted so long. And then, gradually with the invention of a God or a Demiurge, the old star-knowledge and true worship declined with the Babylonians into magic and astrology, the whole system was "worked." But still the old Chaldean cosmic knowledge persisted, and this the Ionians must have picked up again.

Even during the four-quarter centuries, the heavens still had three primary rulers, sun, moon, and morning-star. But the Bible says, sun, moon, and stars.

The morning-star was always a god, from the time when gods began. But when the cult of dying and reborn gods started all over the old world, about 600 B. C., he became symbolic of the new god, because he rules in the twilight, between day and night, and for the same reason he is supposed to be lord of both, and to stand gleaming with one foot on the flood of night and one foot on the world of day, one foot on sea and one on shore. We know that night was a form of vapour or flood.

E I G H T E E N

THREE is the number of things divine, and four is the number of creation. The world is four-square, divided into four quarters which are ruled by four great creatures, the four winged creatures that surround the throne of the Almighty. These four great creatures make up the sum of mighty space, both dark and light, and their wings are the quivering of this space, that trembles all the time with thunderous praise of the Creator: for these are Creation praising their Maker, as Creation shall praise its Maker forever. That their wings (strictly) are full of eyes before and behind, only means that they are the stars of the trembling heavens forever changing and travelling and pulsing. In Ezekiel, muddled and mutilated as the text is, we see the four great creatures amid the wheels of the revolving heavens — a conception which belongs to the seventh, sixth, and fifth centuries — and supporting on

Apocalypse

their wing-tips the crystal vault of the final heaven of the throne.

In their origin, the Creatures are probably older than God himself. They were a very grand conception, and some suggestion of them is at the back of most of the great winged Creatures of the east. They belong to the last age of the living cosmos, the cosmos that was not created, that had yet no god in it because it was in itself utterly divine and primal. Away behind all the creation myths lies the grand idea that the cosmos *always was*, that it could not have had any beginning, because it always was there and always would be there. It could not have a god to start it, because it was itself all god and all divine, the origin of everything.

This living cosmos man first divided into three parts: and then, at some point of great change, we cannot know when, he divided it instead into four quarters, and the four quarters demanded a whole, a conception of the whole, and then a maker, a Creator. So the four great elemental creatures became subordinate, they surrounded the supreme central unit, and their wings cover all

Apocalypse

space. Later still, they are turned from vast and living elements into beasts or Creatures or Cherubim — it is a process of degradation — and given the four elemental or cosmic natures of man, lion, bull, and eagle. In Ezekiel, each of the creatures is all four at once, with a different face looking in each direction. But in the Apocalypse each beast has its own face. And as the cosmic idea dwindled, we get the four cosmic natures of the four Creatures applied first to the great Cherubim then to the personified Archangels, Michael, Gabriel, etc., and finally they are applied to the four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. “Four for the Gospel Natures.” It is all a process of degradation or personification of a great old concept.

Parallel to the division of the cosmos into four quarters, four parts, and four dynamic “natures” comes the other division, into four elements. At first, it seems as if there had been only three elements: heaven, earth, and sea, or water: heaven being primarily light or fire. The recognition of air came later. But with the elements of fire, earth, and water the cosmos was complete, air being

Apocalypse

conceived of as a form of vapour, darkness the same.

And the earliest scientists (philosophers) seemed to want to make one element, or at most two, responsible for the cosmos. Anaximenes said all was water. Xenophanes said all was earth and water. Water gave off moist exhalations, and in these moist exhalations were latent sparks; these exhalations blew aloft as clouds, they blew far, aloft, and condensed *upon their sparks* instead of into water, and thus they produced stars: thus they even produced the sun. The sun was a great "cloud" of assembled sparks from the moist exhalations of the watery earth. This is how science began: far more fantastic than myth, but using processes of reason.

Then came Herakleitos with his: All is Fire, or rather: All is an exchange for Fire, and his insistence on Strife, which holds things asunder and so holds them integral and makes their existence even possible, as the creative *principle*: Fire being an element.

After which the Four Elements become almost inevitable. With Empedokles in the fifth century

Apocalypse

the Four Elements of Fire, Earth, Air, and Water established themselves in the imagination of men forever, the four *living* or cosmic elements, the radical elements: the Four Roots Empedokles called them, the four cosmic roots of all existence. And they were controlled by two principles, Love and Strife. — “ Fire and Water and Earth and the mighty height of Air; dread Strife, too, apart from these, of equal weight to each, and Love in their midst, equal in length and breadth.” And again Empedokles calls the Four: “ shining Zeus, life-bringing Hera, Aidoneus, and Vestis.” So we see the Four also as gods: the Big Four of the ages. When we consider the four elements, we shall see that they are, now and forever, the four elements of our experience. All that science has taught about fire does not make fire any different. The processes of combustion are not fire, they are thought-forms. H₂O is not water, it is a thought-form derived from experiments with water. Thought-forms are thought-forms, they do not make our life. Our life is made still of elemental fire and water, earth and air: by these we move and live and have our being.

Apocalypse

From the four elements we come to the four natures of man himself, based on the conception of blood, bile, lymph, and phlegm, and their properties. Man is still a creature that thinks with his blood: "the heart, dwelling in the sea of blood that runs in opposite directions, where chiefly is what men call thought; for the blood round the heart is the thought of men." — And maybe this is true. Maybe all basic thought takes place in the blood around the heart, and is only transferred to the brain. Then there are the Four Ages, based on the four metals: gold, silver, bronze, and iron. In the sixth century already the Iron Age had set in, and already man laments it. The age before the eating of the Fruit of Knowledge is left far behind.

The first scientists, then, are very near to the old symbolists. And so we see in the Apocalypse, that when St. John is referring to the old primal or divine cosmos, he speaks of a third part of this, that, or another: as when the dragon, who belongs to the old divine cosmos, draws down a third part of the stars with his tail: or where the divine trumps destroy a third part of things: or the

Apocalypse

horsemen from the abyss, which are divine demons, destroy a third part of man. But when the destruction is by non-divine agency, it is usually a fourth part that is destroyed. — Anyhow there is far too much destroying in the Apocalypse. It ceases to be fun.

N I N E T E E N

THE numbers four and three together make up the sacred number seven: the cosmos with its god. The Pythagoreans called it "the number of the right time." Man and the cosmos alike have four created natures, and three divine natures. Man has his four earthly natures, then soul, spirit, and the eternal I. The universe has the four quarters and the four elements, then also the three divine quarters of Heaven, Hades, and the Whole, and the three divine motions of Love, Strife, and Wholeness. — The oldest cosmos had not Heaven nor Hades. But then it is probable that seven is not a sacred number in the oldest consciousness of man.

It is always, from the beginning, however, a semi-sacred number because it is the number of the seven ancient planets, which began with the sun and moon, and included the five great "wandering" stars, Jupiter, Venus, Mercury, Mars,

Apocalypse

and Saturn. The wandering planets were always a great mystery to man, especially in the days when he lived breast to breast with the cosmos, and watched the moving heavens with a profundity of passionate attention quite different from any form of attention today.

The Chaldeans always preserved some of the elemental immediacy of the cosmos, even to the end of Babylonian days. They had, later, their whole mythology of Marduk and the rest, and the whole bag of tricks of their astrologers and magi, but it never seems to have ousted, entirely, the direct star-lore, nor to have broken altogether the breast to breast contact of the star-gazer and the skies of night. The magi continued, apparently, through the ages concerned only in the mysteries of the heavens, without any god or gods dragged in. That the heaven-lore degenerated into tedious forms of divination and magic later on is only part of human history: everything human degenerates, from religion downwards, and must be renewed and revived.

It was this preserving of star-lore naked and without gods that prepared the way for astronomy

Apocalypse

later, just as in the eastern Mediterranean a great deal of old cosmic lore about water and fire must have lingered and prepared the way for the Ionian philosophers and modern science.

The great control of the life of earth from the living and intertwining heavens was an idea which had far greater hold of the minds of men before the Christian era than we realise. In spite of all the gods and goddesses, the Jehovah and the dying and redeeming Saviours of many nations, underneath the old cosmic vision remained, and men believed, perhaps, more radically in the rule of the stars than in any of the gods. Man's consciousness has many layers, and the lowest layers continue to be crudely active, especially down among the common people, for centuries after the cultured consciousness of the nation has passed to higher planes. And the consciousness of man always tends to revert to the original levels; though there are two modes of reversion: by degeneration and decadence; and by deliberate return in order to get back to the roots again, for a new start.

In Roman times there was a great slipping back

Apocalypse

of the human consciousness to the oldest levels, though it was a form of decadence and a return to superstition. But in the first two centuries after Christ the rule of the heavens returned on man as never before, with a power of superstition stronger than any religious cult. Horoscopy was the rage. Fate, fortune, destiny, character, everything depended on the stars, which meant, on the seven planets. The seven planets were the seven Rulers of the heavens, and they fixed the fate of man irrevocably, inevitably. Their rule became at last a form of insanity, and both the Christians and the Neo-Platonists set their faces against it.

Now this element of superstition bordering on magic and occultism is very strong in the Apocalypse. The Revelation of John is, we must admit it, a book to conjure with. It is full of suggestions for occult use, and it has been used, throughout the ages, for occult purposes, for the purpose of divination and prophecy especially. It lends itself to this. Nay, the book is written, especially the second half, in a spirit of lurid prophecy very like the magical utterances of the occultists of the time.

Apocalypse

It reflects the spirit of the time: as *The Golden Ass* reflects that of less than a hundred years later, not very different.

So that the number seven ceases almost to be the "divine" number, and becomes the magical number of the Apocalypse. As the book proceeds, the ancient divine element fades out and the "modern," first century taint of magic, prognostication, and occult practice takes its place. Seven is the number now of divination and conjuring rather than of real vision.

So the famous "time, times and a half," which means three and a half years. It comes from Daniel, who already starts the semi-occult business of prophesying the fall of empires. It is supposed to represent the half of a sacred week — all that is ever allowed to the princes of evil, who are never given the full run of the sacred week of seven "days." But with John of Patmos it is a magic number.

In the old days, when the moon was a great power in heaven, ruling men's bodies and swaying the flux of the flesh, then seven was one of the moon's quarters. The moon still sways the flux

Apocalypse

of the flesh, and still we have a seven-day week. The Greeks of the sea had a nine-day week. That is gone.

But the number seven is no longer divine. Perhaps it is still to some extent magical.

T W E N T Y

THE number ten is the natural number of a series. "It is by nature that the Hellenes count up to ten and then start over again." It is of course the number of the fingers of the two hands. This repetition of five observed throughout nature was one of the things that led the Pythagoreans to assert that "all things are number." In the Apocalypse, ten is the "natural" or complete number of a series. The Pythagoreans, experimenting with pebbles, found that ten pebbles could be laid out in a triangle of $4+3+2+1$: and this sent their minds off in imagination. — But the ten heads or crowned horns of John's two evil beasts probably represent merely a complete series of emperors or kings, horn being a stock symbol for empires or their rulers. The old symbol of horns, of course, is the symbol of power, originally the divine power that came to man from the vivid cosmos, from the starry green dragon of

Apocalypse

life, but especially from the vivid dragon within the body, that lies coiled at the base of the spine, and flings himself sometimes along the spinal way till he flushes the brow with magnificence, the gold horns of power that bud on Moses' forehead, or the gold serpent, Uraeus, which came down between the brows of the royal Pharaohs of Egypt, and is the dragon of the individual. But for the commonalty, the horn of power was the ithyphallos, the phallos, the cornucopia.

T W E N T Y - O N E

THE final number, twelve, is the number of the established or unchanging cosmos, as contrasted with the seven of the wandering planets, which are the physical (in the old Greek sense) cosmos, always in motion apart from the rest of motion. Twelve is the number of the signs of the zodiac, and of the months of the year. It is three times four, or four times three: the complete correspondence. It is the whole round of the heavens, and the whole round of man. For man had seven natures in the old scheme: that is, $6 + 1$, the last being the nature of his wholeness. But now he has another quite new nature, as well as the old one: for we admit he still is made up of the old Adam *plus* the new. So now his number is twelve, $6 + 6$ for his natures, and one for his wholeness. But his wholeness is now in Christ: no longer symbolised between his brows. And now that his number is twelve, man is perfectly rounded and

Apocalypse

established, established and unchanging, for he is now perfect and there is no need for him to change, his wholeness, which is his thirteenth number (unlucky in superstition), being with Christ in heaven. Such was the opinion of the "saved," concerning themselves. Such is still the orthodox opinion: those that are saved in Christ are perfect and unchanging, no need for them to change. They are perfectly individualised.

T W E N T Y - T W O

WHEN we come to the second half of Revelation, after the new-born child is snatched to heaven and the woman has fled into the wilderness, there is a sudden change, and we feel we are reading purely Jewish and Jewish-Christian Apocalypse, with none of the old background.

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon.” They cast down the dragon out of heaven into the earth, and he becomes Satan, and ceases entirely to be interesting. When the great figures of mythology are turned into rationalised or merely moral forces, then they lose interest. We are acutely bored by moral angels and moral devils. We are acutely bored by a “rationalised” Aphrodite. Soon after 1000 B. C. the world went a little insane about morals and “sin.” The Jews had always been tainted.

Apocalypse

What we have been looking for in the Apocalypse is something older, grander than the ethical business. The old, flaming love of life and the strange shudder of the presence of the invisible dead made the rhythm of really ancient religion. Moral religion is comparatively modern, even with the Jews.

But the second half of the Apocalypse is all moral: that is to say, it is all sin and salvation. For a moment there is a hint of the old cosmic wonder, when the dragon turns again upon the woman and she is given wings of an eagle and flies off into the wilderness: but the dragon pursues her and spues out a flood upon her, to overwhelm her: "And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed up the flood. . . . And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war on the remnant of her seed, *which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.*"

The last words are, of course, the moral ending tacked on by some Jew-Christian scribe to the fragment of myth. The dragon is here the watery dragon, or the dragon of chaos, and in

Apocalypse

his evil aspect still. He is resisting with all his might the birth of a new thing, or new era. He turns against the Christians, since they are the only "good" thing left on earth.

The poor dragon henceforth cuts a sorry figure. He gives his power, and his seat, and great authority to the beast that rises out of the sea, the beast with "seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as the feet of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion."

We know this beast already: he comes out of Daniel and is *explained* by Daniel. The beast is the last grand world-empire, the ten horns are ten kingdoms confederated in the empire—which is of course Rome. As for the leopard, bear, and lion qualities, these are also explained in Daniel as the three empires that preceded Rome, the Macedonian, swift as a leopard, the Persian, stubborn as a bear, the Babylonians, rapacious as the lion.

We are back again at the level of allegory, and for me, the real interest is gone. Allegory can always be explained: and explained away. The true

Apocalypse

symbol defies all explanation, so does the true myth. You can give meanings to either — you will never explain them away. Because symbol and myth do not affect us only mentally, they move the deep emotional centres every time. The great quality of the mind is finality. The mind “understands,” and there’s an end of it.

But the emotional consciousness of man has a life and movement quite different from the mental consciousness. The mind knows in part, in part and parcel, with full stop after every sentence. But the emotional soul knows in full, like a river or a flood. For example, the symbol of the dragon — look at it, on a Chinese tea-cup or in an old wood-cut, read it in a fairy-tale — and what is the result? If you are alive in the old emotional self, the more you look at the dragon, and think of it, the farther and farther flushes out your emotional awareness, on and on into dim regions of the soul aeons and aeons back. But if you are dead in the old feeling-knowing way, as so many moderns are, then the dragon just “stands for” this, that, and the other — all the things it stands for in Frazer’s *Golden Bough*: it is just a kind of

Apocalypse

glyph or label, like the gilt pestle and mortar outside a chemist's shop. Or take better still the Egyptian symbol called the *ankh*, the symbol of life, etc., which the goddesses hold in their hands. Any child "knows what it means." But a man who is *really* alive feels his soul begin to throb and expand at the mere sight of the symbol. Modern men, however, are nearly all half dead, modern women too. So they just look at the *ankh* and know all about it, and that's that. They are proud of their own emotional impotence.

Naturally, then, the Apocalypse has appealed to men through the ages as an "allegorical" work. Everything just "meant something" and something moral at that. You can put down the meaning flat—plain as two and two make four.

The beast from the sea means Roman Empire—and later Nero, number 666. The beast from the earth means the pagan sacerdotal power, the priestly power which made the emperors divine and made Christians even "worship" them. For the beast from the earth has two horns, like a lamb, a false Lamb indeed, an Antichrist, and it

Apocalypse

teaches its wicked followers to perform marvels and even miracles — of witchcraft, like Simon Magus and the rest.

So we have the Church of Christ — or of the Messiah — being martyred by the beast, till pretty well all good Christians are martyred. Then at last, after not so very long a time — say forty years — the Messiah descends from heaven and makes war on the beast, the Roman Empire, and on the kings who are with him. There is a grand fall of Rome, called Babylon, and a grand triumph over her downfall — though the best poetry is all the time lifted from Jeremiah or Ezekiel or Isaiah, it is not original. The sainted Christians gloat over fallen Rome: and then the Victorious Rider appears, his shirt bloody with the blood of dead kings. After this, a New Jerusalem descends to be his Bride, and these precious martyrs all get their thrones, and for a thousand years (John was not going to be put off with Enoch's meagre forty), for a thousand years, the grand Millennium, the Lamb reigns over the earth, assisted by all the risen martyrs. And if the martyrs in the Millennium are going to be as bloodthirsty and

Apocalypse

ferocious as John the Divine in the Apocalypse — Revenge! Timotheus cries — then somebody's going to get it hot during the thousand years of the rule of Saints.

But this is not enough. After the thousand years the whole universe must be wiped out, earth, sun, moon, stars, and sea. These early Christians fairly lusted after the end of the world. They wanted their own grand turn first — Revenge! Timotheus cries. — But after that, they insisted that the whole universe must be wiped out, sun, stars, and all — and a *new* New Jerusalem should appear, with the same old saints and martyrs in glory, and everything else should have disappeared except the lake of burning brimstone in which devils, demons, beasts, and bad men should frizzle and suffer for ever and ever and ever, Amen!

So ends this glorious work: surely a rather repulsive work. Revenge was indeed a sacred duty to the Jerusalem Jews: and it is not the revenge one minds so much as the perpetual self-glorification of these saints and martyrs, and their profound impudence. How one loathes them, in their “new white garments.” How disgusting their

Apocalypse

priggish rule must be! How vile is their spirit, really, insisting, simply insisting on wiping out the whole universe, bird and blossom, star and river, and above all, everybody except *themselves* and their precious "saved" brothers. How beastly their New Jerusalem, where the flowers never fade, but stand in everlasting sameness! How terribly bourgeois to have unfading flowers!

No wonder the pagans were horrified at the "impious" Christian desire to destroy the universe. How horrified even the old Jews of the Old Testament would have been! For even to them, earth and sun and stars were eternal, created in the grand creation by Almighty God. But no, these impudent martyrs must see it all go up in smoke.

Oh, it is the Christianity of the middling masses, this Christianity of the Apocalypse. And we must confess, it is hideous. Self-righteousness, self-conceit, self-importance and secret *envy* underlie it all.

By the time of Jesus, all the lowest classes and mediocre people had realised that *never* would they get a chance to be kings, *never* would they go in chariots, *never* would they drink wine from gold

Apocalypse

vessels. Very well then — they would have their revenge by *destroying* it all. “ Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils.” And then all the gold and silver and pearls and precious stones and fine linen and purple, and silk, and scarlet — and cinnamon and frankincense, wheat, beasts, sheep, horses, chariots, slaves, souls of men — all these that are destroyed, destroyed, destroyed in Babylon the great — how one hears the envy, the endless envy screeching through this song of triumph!

No, we can understand that the Fathers of the Church in the east wanted Apocalypse left out of the New Testament. And like Judas among the disciples, it was inevitable that it should be included. The Apocalypse is the feet of clay to the grand Christian image. And down crashes the image, on the weakness of these very feet.

There is Jesus—but there is also John the Divine. There is Christian love—and there is Christian envy. The former would “save” the world—the latter will never be satisfied till it has destroyed the world. They are two sides of the same medal.

T W E N T Y - T H R E E

BECAUSE, as a matter of fact, when you start to teach individual self-realisation to the great masses of people, who when all is said and done are only *fragmentary* beings, *incapable* of whole individuality, you end by making them all envious, grudging, spiteful creatures. Anyone who is kind to man knows the fragmentariness of most men, and wants to arrange a society of power in which men fall naturally into a collective wholeness, since they *cannot* have an individual wholeness. In this collective wholeness they will be fulfilled. But if they make efforts at individual fulfilment, they *must fail* for they are by nature fragmentary. Then, failures, having no wholeness anywhere, they fall into envy and spite. Jesus knew all about it when he said: To them that have shall be given, etc. But he had forgotten to reckon with the mass of the mediocre, whose motto is: We have nothing and therefore nobody shall have anything.

Apocalypse

But Jesus gave the ideal for the Christian individual, and deliberately avoided giving an ideal for the State or the nation. When he said, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's," he left to Caesar the rule of men's bodies, willy-nilly: and this threatened terrible danger to a man's mind and soul. Already by the year 60 A. D. the Christians were an accursed sect; and they were compelled, like all men, to sacrifice, that is to give worship to the living Caesar. In giving Caesar the power over men's bodies, Jesus gave him the power to compel men to make the act of worship to Caesar. Now I doubt if Jesus himself could have performed this act of worship, to a Nero or a Domitian. No doubt he would have preferred death. As did so many early Christian martyrs. So there, at the very beginning was a monstrous dilemma. To be a Christian meant death at the hands of the Roman State; for refusal to submit to the cult of the Emperor and worship the divine man, Caesar, was impossible to a Christian. No wonder, then, that John of Patmos saw the day not far off when *every* Christian would be martyred. The day would have come, if the imperial

Apocalypse

cult had been absolutely enforced on the people. And then when *every* Christian was martyred, what could a Christian expect but a Second Advent, resurrection, and an absolute revenge! There was a condition for the Christian community to be in, sixty years after the death of the Saviour.

Jesus made it inevitable, when he said that the money belonged to Caesar. It was a mistake. Money means bread, and the bread of men belongs to no men. Money means also power, and it is monstrous to give power to the virtual enemy. Caesar was *bound*, sooner or later, to violate the soul of the Christians. But Jesus saw the individual only, and considered only the individual. He left it to John of Patmos, who was up against the Roman State, to formulate the Christian vision of the Christian State. John did it in the Apocalypse. It entails the destruction of the whole world, and the reign of saints in ultimate bodiless glory. Or it entails the destruction of all earthly power, and the rule of an oligarchy of martyrs (the Millennium).

This destruction of all earthly power we are now moving towards. The oligarchy of martyrs

Apocalypse

begin with Lenin, and apparently others also are martyrs. Strange, strange people they are, the martyrs, with weird, cold morality. When every country has its martyr-ruler, either like Lenin or like those, what a strange, unthinkable world it will be! But it is coming: the Apocalypse is still a book to conjure with.

A few vastly important points have been missed by Christian doctrine and Christian thought. Christian fantasy alone has grasped them.

1. No man is or can be a pure individual. The mass of men have only the tiniest touch of individuality: if any. The mass of men live and move, think and feel collectively, and have practically no individual emotions, feelings or thoughts at all. They are fragments of the collective or social consciousness. It has always been so. And will always be so.

2. The State, or what we call Society as a collective whole *cannot* have the psychology of an individual. Also it is a mistake to say that the State is made up of individuals. It is not. It is made up of a collection of fragmentary beings. And *no* collective act, even so private an act as voting, is

Apocalypse

made from the individual self. It is made from the collective self, and has another psychological background, non-individual.

3. The State *cannot* be Christian. Every State is a Power. It cannot be otherwise. Every State must guard its own boundaries and guard its own prosperity. If it fails to do so, it betrays all its individual citizens.

4. Every *citizen* is a unit of worldly power. A *man* may wish to be a pure Christian and a pure individual. But since he *must* be a member of some political State, or nation, he is forced to be a unit of worldly power.

5. As a citizen, as a collective being, man has his fulfilment in the gratification of his power-sense. If he belongs to one of the so-called "ruling nations," his soul is fulfilled in the sense of his country's power or strength. If his country mounts up aristocratically to a zenith of splendour and power, in a hierarchy, he will be all the more fulfilled, having his place in the hierarchy. But if his country is powerful and democratic, then he will be obsessed with a perpetual will to assert his power in interfering and *preventing* other people

Apocalypse

from doing as they wish, since no man must do more than another man. This is the condition of modern democracies, a condition of perpetual bullying.

In democracy, bullying inevitably takes the place of power. Bullying is the negative form of power. The modern Christian State is a soul-destroying force, for it is made up of fragments which have no organic whole, only a collective whole. In a hierarchy each part is organic and vital, as my finger is an organic and vital part of me. But a democracy is bound in the end to be obscene, for it is composed of myriad disunited fragments, each fragment assuming to itself a false wholeness, a false individuality. Modern democracy is made up of millions of frictional parts all asserting their own wholeness.

6. To have an ideal for the individual which regards only his individual self and ignores his collective self is in the long run fatal. To have a creed of individuality which denies the reality of the hierarchy makes at last for more anarchy. Democratic man lives by cohesion and resistance, the cohesive force of "love" and the resistant

Apocalypse

force of the individual "freedom." To yield entirely to love would be to be absorbed, which is the death of the individual: for the individual must hold his own, or he ceases to be "free" and individual. So that we see, what our age has proved to its astonishment and dismay, that the individual *cannot* love. The individual cannot love: let that be an axiom. And the modern man or woman *cannot* conceive of himself, herself, save as an individual. And the individual in man or woman is *bound* to kill, at last, the lover in himself or herself. It is not that each man kills the thing he loves, but that each man, by insisting on his own individuality, kills the lover in himself, as the woman kills the lover in herself. The Christian *dare not love*: for love kills that which is Christian, democratic, and modern, the individual. The individual *cannot* love. When the individual loves, he ceases to be purely individual. And so he *must* recover himself, and cease to love. It is one of the most amazing lessons of our day: that the individual, the Christian, the democrat *cannot love*. Or, when he loves, when she loves, he *must* take it back, she *must* take it back.

Apocalypse

So much for private or personal love. Then what about that other love, "caritas," loving your neighbour as yourself?

It works out the same. You love your neighbour. Immediately you run the risk of being absorbed by him: you must draw back, you must hold your own. The love becomes resistance. In the end, it is all resistance and no love: which is the history of democracy.

If you are taking the path of individual self-realisation, you had better, like Buddha, go off and be by yourself, and give a thought to nobody. Then you may achieve your Nirvana. Christ's way of loving your neighbour leads to the hideous anomaly of having to live by sheer resistance to your neighbour, in the end.

The Apocalypse, strange book, makes this clear. It shows us the Christian in his relation to the State; which the gospels and epistles avoid doing. It shows us the Christian in relation to the State, to the world, and to the cosmos. It shows him in mad hostility to all of them, having, in the end, to will the destruction of them all.

It is the dark side of Christianity, of individual-

Apocalypse

ism, and of democracy, the side the world at large now shows us. And it is, simply, suicide. Suicide individual and *en masse*. If man could will it, it would be cosmic suicide. But the cosmos is not at man's mercy, and the sun will not perish to please us.

We do not want to perish, either. We have to give up a false position. Let us give up our false position as Christians, as individuals, as democrats. Let us find some conception of ourselves that will allow us to be peaceful and happy, instead of tormented and unhappy.

The Apocalypse shows us what we are resisting, unnaturally. We are unnaturally resisting our connection with the cosmos, with the world, with mankind, with the nation, with the family. All these connections are, in the Apocalypse, anathema, and they are anathema to us. We *cannot bear connection*. That is our malady. We *must* break away, and be isolate. We call that being free, being individual. Beyond a certain point, which we have reached, it is suicide. Perhaps we have chosen suicide. Well and good. The Apocalypse too chose suicide, with subsequent self-glorification.

Apocalypse

But the Apocalypse shows, by its very resistance, the things that the human heart secretly yearns after. By the very frenzy with which the Apocalypse destroys the sun and the stars, the world, and all kings and all rulers, all scarlet and purple and cinnamon, all harlots, finally all men altogether who are not "sealed," we can see how deeply the apocalyptists are yearning for the sun and the stars and the earth and the waters of the earth, for nobility and lordship and might, and scarlet and gold splendour, for passionate love, and a proper unison with men, apart from this sealing business. What man most passionately wants is his living wholeness and his living unison, not his own isolate salvation of his "soul." Man wants his physical fulfilment first and foremost, since now, once and once only, he is in the flesh and potent. For man, the vast marvel is to be alive. For man, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive in the flesh. The dead may look after the afterwards. But the magnificent here

Apocalypse

and now of life in the flesh is ours, and ours alone, and ours only for a time. We ought to dance with rapture that we should be alive and in the flesh, and part of the living, incarnate cosmos. I am part of the sun as my eye is part of me. That I am part of the earth my feet know perfectly, and my blood is part of the sea. My soul knows that I am part of the human race, my soul is an organic part of the great human soul, as my spirit is part of my nation. In my own very self, I am part of my family. There is nothing of me that is alone and absolute except my mind, and we shall find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters.

So that my individualism is really an illusion. I am a part of the great whole, and I can never escape. But I *can* deny my connections, break them, and become a fragment. Then I am wretched.

What we want is to destroy our false, inorganic connections, especially those related to money, and re-establish the living organic connections, with the cosmos, the sun and earth, with mankind and nation and family. Start with the sun, and the rest will slowly, slowly happen.

