

# Immanence

(Latin *in manere*, to remain in)

Immanence is the quality of any action which begins and ends within the agent. Thus, vital action, as well in the physiological as in the intellectual and moral order, is called immanent, because it proceeds from that spontaneity which is essential to the living subject and has for its term the unfolding of the subject's constituent energies. It is initiated and is consummated in the interior of the same being, which may be considered as a closed system. But is this system so shut in as to be self-sufficient and incapable of receiving anything from without? -- or can it enrich itself by taking up elements which its environment offers and which are at times even necessary, as nourishment is to the immanent activity of the body? This is the problem which the philosophies of immanence propose and attempt to solve, not only in respect to man considered as a particular being, but also in respect to the universe considered as a whole. It is, indeed, with reference to this latter aspect that the controversy arose in ancient times.

## HISTORICAL SKETCH

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The doctrine of immanence came into existence simultaneously with philosophical speculation. This was inevitable, since man first conceived all things after his own likeness. He regarded the universe, then, as a living thing, endowed with immanent activity, and working for the full unfolding of its being. Under the veil of poetic fictions, we find this view among the Hindus, and again among the sages of Greece. The latter hold a somewhat confused Hylozoism: as they see it, the cosmos results from the evolution of a single principle (water, air, fire, unity), which develops like an animal organism. But Socrates, coming back to the study "of things human", refuses to look upon himself as merely part and parcel of the Great All. He asserts his independence and declares himself distinct from the universe; and thus he shifts the pivotal problem of philosophy. What he professes is, indeed, the immanence of the subject, but that immanence he does not conceive as absolute, for he recognizes the fact that man is subject to external influences. Thenceforward, these two conceptions of immanence are to alternate in ascendancy and decline. After Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, absolute immanence regains its sway through Zeno of Cittium, who gives it its clearest expression. In turn it falls back before the preaching of Christianity, which sets forth clearly the personality of man and the distinction between God and the world. The Alexandrians, in the wake of Philo, impart a new lustre to the doctrine of absolute immanence; but St. Augustine, borrowing from Plotinus the Stoic notion of "seminal principles", contends for relative immanence which in the Middle Ages triumphs with St. Thomas. With the Renaissance comes a renewal of life for the theory of absolute immanence. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, on the contrary, Descartes and Kant maintain the transcendency of God, though recognizing the relative immanence of man. But their disciples exaggerate this latter fact and thus fall into subjective monism: the ego is shut up in its absolute immanence; it posits the non-ego. After Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel, the same path is taken by Cousin, Vacherot, Bergson, and many others. The principle of absolute immanence becomes a dogma which they seek to impose upon contemporary philosophy. It confronts revealed religion, and appears as one of the sources of modernism, which it thus brings into close proximity with liberal Protestantism. The notion of immanence is at the present day one of the centres around which the battle is being fought between the Catholic religion and monism.

Before passing on to larger development, we note that;

- (1) under its various aspects, the conception of immanence is the interpretation and extension of a fact observed in the living subject;
- (2) in every age it takes on two parallel and opposite forms, which the Encyclical "Pascendi gregis" defines in an eminently philosophical way, as follows: "Etenim hoc quærimus; an ejusmodi 'immanentia' Deum ab homine distinguat necne? Si distinguit, quid tum a catholica doctrina differt aut doctrinam de revelatione cur rejicit? Si non distinguit, pantheismum habemus. Atqui immanentia hæc modernistarum vult atque admittit omne conscientiæ phenomenon ab homine, ut homo est, proficisci" (For, we ask, does this "immanence" make God and man distinct or not? If it does, then in what does it differ from the Catholic doctrine? or why does it reject what is taught in regard to revelation? If it does not make God and man distinct, it is Pantheism. But this immanence of the Modernists would claim that every phenomenon of consciousness proceeds from man as man).

## **DIVISION**

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From this general consideration of the subject the following division arises.

- A. The doctrine of immanence,
  - o (1) absolute,
  - o (2) relative.

And, as this doctrine has of late years given birth to a new method in apologetics, we shall next consider:

- B. The employment of the method of immanence,
  - o (1) absolute,
  - o (2) relative.

### **A. The Doctrine of Immanence**

#### **(1) Absolute Immanence**

##### **(a) Its Historical Evolution**

At its outset the doctrine of immanence, properly so called, was concerned with solving the problem of the world's origin and organization: the universe was the resultant of an absolutely necessary, immanent evolution of one only principle. The Stoics, who gave it its first exact formula, virtually revived the pre-Socratic cosmogonies. But they shut up in matter first the "Demiurgic Word", in which Plato saw the efficient cause of the cosmos; and, then, the transcendently lovable and desirable "Supreme Intelligence", postulated by Aristotle as the final cause of universal activity. There existed, then, but one principle under a seeming duality; it was corporeal, though it expressed itself sometimes in terms of passivity, when it was called *matter*, and sometimes in terms of activity, when it was called *force*, or *cause*. It was the technic fire presiding over the genesis of the world; it was the Divine seminal principle from which all things were born (*pyr technikon, Logos spermatikos*). This principle, which is the first to move, is also the first to be moved, since nothing is outside of it; all beings find in it their origin and their end, they are but successive moments in its evolution, they are born and they die through its perpetual becoming. The fiery spirit seems to move the chaotic mass as the soul moves the body, and this is why it is called the "soul of the world". Human souls are but sparks from it, or rather its phenomena, which vanish at death and are re-absorbed into the bosom of nature. This is Hylozoism carried to its ultimate expression.

The Greek and Roman Stoics changed nothing in this conception. Philo alone, before Christianity, attempted to transform it. Pursuing the syncretic method which he brought into repute in the School of Alexandria, he undertook to harmonize Moses, Plato, and Zeno. Thus he was led into a sort of inverted Stoicism, setting up at the origin of all things no longer a corporeal seminal principle, but a spiritual God, perfect, anterior to matter, from whom everything is derived by a process of outflow and downflow continued without limit. Proclus, Porphyry, Jamblicus, and Plotinus adopted this emanationist Pantheism, which formed the basis of their neo-Platonism. From Egypt the Alexandrian ideas spread over the West through two channels. First, in the fourth century, they entered Spain with a certain Mark, who had lived at Memphis; in Spain they developed by amalgamating with Manichæism under the influence of Priscillian, and after the German conquest of Spain they passed into Gaul. In the latter country, moreover, they were propagated by the Latin translations of Boethius. Later on, we find traces of them in Scotus Eriugena (ninth century), then in Abelard (twelfth century), Amaury of Bène, and David of Dinant (twelfth and thirteenth centuries), and especially in the celebrated Meister Eckhart (fourteenth century). Soon after this the Renaissance restores the ancient doctrines to honourable consideration, and the philosophy of immanence reappears in the commentaries of Pomponatius on Aristotle and those of Marsilio Ficino on Plotinus. Giordano Bruno saw in God the monad of monads, who by an inward necessity produces a material creation which is inseparable from Himself. Vanini made God immanent in the forces of nature, while, according to Jacob Böhme, God acquires reality only through the evolution of the world. By an unbroken tradition, then, the doctrine of immanence comes down to modern times. The Cartesian revolution seems even to favour its development. Exaggerating the distinction between soul and body, the former of which moves the latter by means of the pineal gland, the mechanical theories prepared the way for Malebranche's occasionalism: God alone acts; "there is but one

true cause, because there is but one true God." Spinoza, too, admits only one cause. A disciple of Descartes in the geometrical rigour of his deductive processes, but still more a disciple of the rabbis and of Giordano Bruno in the spirit of his system, he sets up his *natura naturans* unfolding its attributes by an immanent progression. This is all but the revival of Alexandrian thought.

True Cartesianism, however, was not favourable to theories of this sort, for it is based on personal evidence, and it distinguishes sharply between the world and its transcendent cause. With its vivid realization of the importance and independence of the individual, it follows, rather, the Socratic tradition. That insight, defined and purified by Christianity, had all along served as a barrier against the encroachment of the doctrine of absolute immanence. It could not but derive fresh strength from the philosophy of *Cogito, ergo sum*, and it was indeed strengthened even to excess. Jealous of its own immanence, which it had learned to know better than ever, the human mind overshot its first intention and turned the doctrine of absolute immanence to its own profit. At first it sought only to solve the problem of knowledge, while keeping entirely clear of empiricism. In the Kantian epoch it still claimed for itself only a relative immanence, for it believed in the existence of a transcendent Creator and admitted the existence of noumena, unknowable, to be sure, but with which we maintain relations. Soon the temptation becomes stronger; having hitherto pretended to impose its own laws on knowable reality, thought now credits itself with the power of creating that reality. For Fichte, in fact, the ego not only posits knowledge, it also posits the non-ego. It is the pre-eminent form of the Absolute (Schelling). No longer is it the Substance that, as *natura naturans*, produces the world by a process of derivation and degradation without limit; it is an obscure germ, which in its ceaseless becoming, rises to the point of becoming man, and at that point becomes conscious of itself. The absolute becomes Hegel's "idea", Schopenhauer's "will", Hartmann's "unconscious", Renan's "time joined to the onward tendency" (*le Temps joint à la tendance au progrès*), Taine's "eternal axiom", Nietzsche's "superman", Bergson's "conscience". Under all the forms of evolutionistic monism, lies the doctrine of absolute immanence.

Considering the religious tendencies of our age, it was inevitable that this doctrine should have its corresponding effect in theology. The monism which it preaches, setting aside the idea of separateness between God and the world, also removes entirely the distinction between the natural order and the supernatural. It denies anything transcendent in the supernatural, which, according to this theory, is only a conception springing from an irresistible need of the soul, or "the ceaseless palpitation of the soul panting for the infinite" (Buisson). The supernatural is but the product of our interior evolution; it is of immanent origin, for "it is in the heart of mankind that the Divine resides". "I am a man, and nothing Divine is foreign to me" (Buisson). Such is the origin of religion in this view. And herein we recognize the thesis of liberal Protestantism as well as that of the Modernists.

## **(b) The actual content of the doctrine of Absolute Immanence**

As it is nowadays presented, the doctrine of absolute immanence is the resultant of the two great currents of contemporary thought. Kant, reducing everything to the individual consciousness, and declaring all metaphysical investigation to be illusory, locks the human soul in its own immanence and condemns it thenceforth to agnosticism in regard to transcendent realities. The Positivist movement reaches the same terminus. Through mistrust of that reason which Kant had exalted to such a degree, Comte rejects as worthless every conclusion that goes beyond the range of experience. Thus the two systems, setting out from opposite exaggerations, arrive at one and the same theory of the unknowable: nothing is left us now but to fall back upon ourselves and contemplate the phenomena which emerge from the depths of our own ego. We have no other means of information, and it is from this inner source that all knowledge, all faith, and all rules of conduct flow out by the immanent evolution of our life, or rather of the Divine which thus manifests itself through us. This initial position determines the solutions which the doctrine of immanence furnishes for the problems concerning God and Man.

### **(i) God**

The problems of the Divine life and action are among the foremost to interest the partisans of absolute immanence. They talk incessantly of Trinity, Incarnation, and Redemption, but only, as they claim, to do away with the mysteries and to see in these theological terms merely the symbols that express the evolution of the first principle. Philo's Trinity, like that of neo-Platonism, was an attempt to describe this evolution, and the moderns have only resuscitated the Alexandrian allegory. The great being, the great fetish, and the great

medium (Comte), the evolving idea, the evolved idea, and their relation (Hegel), unity, variety and their relation (Cousin) -- all these, in the thought of their originators, are but so many revivals of the Oriental myths. But conscience now demands the abolition of all such symbols. "The religious soul is in fact forever interpreting and transforming the traditional dogmas" (Sabatier), because the progress of the absolute reveals to us new meanings as it makes us more fully conscious of the Divinity that is immanent in us. Through this progress the incarnation of God in humanity goes on without ceasing, and the Christian mystery (they make the blasphemous assertion) has no other meaning. There can be no further question of a redemption; nor could there have been an original fall, since in this view, disobedient Adam would have been God Himself. At most the pessimists admit that the Supreme will, or the unconscious, which blundered into the production of the world, will recognize its blunder as it rises to consciousness in individuals, and will repair that blunder by annihilating the universe. In that hour of cosmic suicide, according to Hartmann, the Great Crucified will have come down from his cross. Thus is Christian terminology incessantly subjected to new interpretations. "We still speak of the Trinity . . ., of the Divinity of Christ, but with a meaning more or less different from that of our forefathers". Buisson, in his "La Religion, la Morale et la Science", thus explains the influence of the doctrine of immanence upon the interpretation of dogmas in liberal Protestantism.

## **(ii) The World, Life, and the Soul**

To explain the origin of the world, the evolution of the Divine principle is put forward. This hypothesis would also account for the organization of the cosmos. Hence the universal order is considered as the outcome of the action of blind energies, and no longer as the realization of a plan conceived and executed by a providence. From the physico-chemical forces life issues; the absolute slumbers in the plant, begins to dream in the animal, and at last awakens to full consciousness in man. Between the stages of this progress there is no breach of continuity; it is one and the same principle which clothes itself in more and more perfect forms, yet never withdraws from any of them. Evolutionism and transformism, therefore, are but parts of that vast system of absolute immanence in which all beings enfold one another, and none is distinct from the universal substance. Consequently, there is no longer any abyss between matter and the human soul; the alleged spirituality of the soul is a fable, its personality an illusion, its individual immortality an error.

## **(iii) Dogma and Moral**

When the Absolute reaches its highest form in the human soul, it acquires self-consciousness. This means that the soul discovers the action of the Divine principle, which is immanent in it as constituting its essential nature. But the perception of this relation with the Divine -- or, rather, of this "withinness" of the Divine -- is what we are to call Revelation itself (Loisy). At first confused, perceptible only as a vague religious feeling, it develops by means of religious experience (James), it becomes clearer through reflexion, and asserts itself in the conceptions of the religious consciousness. These conceptions formulate dogmas -- "admirable creations of human thought" (Buisson) -- or rather of the Divine principle immanent in human thought. But the expression of dogmas is always inadequate, for it marks but one moment in the religious development; it is a vesture which the progress of Christian faith and especially of Christian life will soon cast off. In a word all religion wells up from the depths of the sub-conscious (Myers, Prince) by vital immanence; hence the "religious immanence" and the more or less agnostic "symbolism" with which the Encyclical "Pascendi gregis" reproaches the Modernists.

The human soul, creator of dogmas, is also the creator of moral precepts, and that by an absolutely autonomous act. Its will is the living and sovereign law, for in it is definitively expressed the will of the God immanent in us. The Divine flame, which warms the atmosphere of our life, will inevitably cause those hidden germs of morality to develop which the absolute has implanted. Hence, there can be no longer any question of effort, of virtue, or of responsibility; these words have lost their meaning, since there is neither original sin nor actual and freely willed transgression. There is no longer any blameworthy concupiscence; all our instincts are impregnated with Divinity, all our desires are just, good, and holy. To follow the impulse of passion, to rehabilitate the flesh (Saint-Simon, Leroux, Fourier), which is one form under which the Divinity manifests itself (Heine), this is duty. In this way, indeed, we cooperate in the redemption which is being accomplished day by day, and which will be consummated when the absolute shall have completed its incarnation in humanity. The part which moral science has to play consists in discovering the laws which govern this evolution, so that man in his conduct may conform to them (Berthelot) and thus ensure the collective happiness of humanity; social utility is to be hence-forward the principle of all morality; solidarity

(Bourgeois), which procures it, is the most scientific form of immanent morality, and of this man is, in the universe, the beginning and the end.

## (2) Relative Immanence

### (a) Its Historical Evolution

Since the day when Socrates, abandoning the useless cosmogonic hypotheses of his predecessors, brought philosophy back to the study of the human soul, whose limits and whose independence he defined -- since that time the doctrine of relative immanence has held its ground in conflict with the doctrine of absolute immanence. Relative immanence recognizes the existence of a transcendent God, but it also recognizes, and with remarkable precision, the immanence of Psychological life. It is upon the evidence of this fact, indeed, that the admirable pedagogical method, known as *maieutic*, is founded. Socrates thoroughly understood that knowledge does not enter our minds ready made from without; that it is a vital function, and therefore immanent. He understood that a cognition is not really ours until we have accepted it, lived it, and in some sort made it over for ourselves. This certainly attributes to the life of thought a real immanence, not, however, an absolute immanence; for the soul of the disciple remains open to the master's influence.

Again we find this conception of relative immanence in Plato. He transports it, in a rather confused manner, into the cosmological order. He thinks, in fact, that, if there are things great and good and beautiful, they are such through a certain participation in the ideas of greatness, goodness, and beauty. But this participation does not result from an emanation, an outflowing from the Divinity into finite beings; it is only a reflection of the ideas, a resemblance, which the reasonable being is in duty bound to perfect, as far as possible, by his own energy. With Aristotle this notion of an immanent energy in individuals acquires a new definiteness. The very exaggeration with which he refuses to admit in God any efficient causality, as something unworthy of His beatitude, leads him to place at the heart of finite being the principle of the action which it puts forth with a view to that which is supremely lovable and desirable. Now, according to him, these principles are individualized; their development is limited; their orientation determined to a definite aim; and they act upon one another. It is, therefore, a doctrine of relative immanence which he maintains. After him the Stoics, reviving the physics of Heraclitus, came back to a system of absolute immanence with their theory of germinal capacities. The Alexandrian Fathers borrowed this term from them, taking out of it, however, its pantheistic sense, when they set themselves to search in the writings of the pagans for "the sparks of the light of the Word" (St. Justin), and, in human souls, for the innate capacities which render the knowledge of God so easy and so natural. St. Augustine, in his turn defines these capacities as "the active and passive potentialities from which flow all the natural effects of beings", and this theory he employs to demonstrate the real, but relative, immanence of our intellectual and moral life. Our natural desire to know and our spontaneous sympathies do not germinate in us unless their seeds are in our soul. These are the first principles of reason, the universal precepts of the moral consciousness. St. Thomas calls them "*habitus principiorum*", "*seminalia virtutum*" "*dispositiones naturales*", "*inchoationes naturales*". He sees in them the beginnings of all our physiological, intellectual, and moral progress, and, following the course of their development, he carries to the highest degree of precision the concept of relative immanence. The Thomist tradition -- continuing after him the struggle against empiricism and positivism on the one side and, on the other, against rationalism carried to the extreme of monism -- has always defended the same position. It recognizes the fact of immanence, but rejects every exaggeration on either side.

### (b) Actual Content of the Doctrine of Relative Immanence

This doctrine rests upon that innermost experience which reveals to man his individuality, that is to say his inward unity, his distinctness from his environment, and which makes him conscious of his personality, that is to say, of his essential independence with respect to the beings with which he is in relation. It, moreover, avoids all imputation of monism, and the manner in which it conceives of immanence harmonizes excellently with Catholic teaching. "An ejusmodi *immanentia* Deum ab homine distinguat, necne? Si distinguit, quid tum a catholica doctrina differt?" (Encycl. "Pascendi").

### (i) God

God, then, transcends the world which He has created, and in which He manifests His power. We know His works; through them we can demonstrate His existence and find out many of His attributes. But the mysteries of His inner life escape us; Trinity, Incarnation, Redemption are known to us only by revelation, to which revelation the immanence of our rational and moral life presents no obstacle whatever.

## (ii) The World, Life, and the Soul

The organization of the world is governed by Divine Providence, whose ordering action can be conceived in diverse ways, whether we suppose successive interventions for the formation of various beings, or whether, following St. Augustine, we prefer to maintain that God created all things at the same time -- "Deus simul omnia creavit" (De Genesi ad lit.). In the latter case we should invoke the hypothesis of germinal capacities, according to which hypothesis God must have deposited in nature energies of a determinate sort -- "Mundus gravidus est causis nascentium" (ibid.) -- the evolution of which at favourable junctures of time would organize the universe. This organization would be due to an immanent development, indeed, but one proceeding under external influences. Thus did plants, animals, and men appear in succession, though there could be no question of attributing to them a common nature; on the contrary, the doctrine of relative immanence draws a sharp line of demarcation between the various substances, and particularly between matter and soul; it is extremely careful to maintain the independence of the human person. Not only does this doctrine, joining issue with sensualism, demonstrate that the mind is a living energy, which, far from letting itself be absorbed by influences from without, forms its necessary and universal principles by its own action under the pressure of experience -- not only this, but it also safeguards the autonomy of human reason against that encroachment of the Divine which the ontologists maintained.

## (iii) Dogma and Moral

The human soul, then, enjoys an immanence and an autonomy which are relative indeed but real, and which Divine Revelation itself respects. Supernatural truth is, in fact, offered to an intelligence in full possession of its resources, and the reasonable assent which we give to revealed dogmas is by no means "a bondage" or "a limitation of the rights of thought". To oppose Revelation with "a preliminary and comprehensive demurrer" ("une fin de non-recevoir préliminaire et globale" -- Le Roy) in the name of the principle of immanence, is to misinterpret that principle, which, rightly understood, involves no such exigencies (see below, "The Method of Immanence"). Nor does the fact of relative immanence stand in the way of progress in the understanding of dogmas "in eodem sensu eademque sententia" (Conc. Vatic., sess. III). The human soul, then, receives the Divine verities as the disciple receives his master's teaching; it does not create those verities. Neither does it create principles of moral conduct. The natural law is certainly not foreign to it, being graven upon the very foundation of man's constitution. It lives in the heart of man. This law is immanent to the human person, which consequently enjoys a certain autonomy. No doubt it recognizes its relation to a transcendent legislator, but none the less true is it that no prescription coming from another authority would be accepted by the conscience if it was in opposition to the primordial law, the requirements of which are only extended and clearly defined by positive laws. In this sense the human will preserves its autonomy when, in obeying a Divine law, it acts with a fundamentally inviolable liberty. This liberty, however, may be aided by natural and supernatural helps. Conscious of its weakness, it seeks and obtains the assistance of grace, but grace does not absorb nature; it only adds to nature, and in no way infringes upon our essential immanence.

## B. Employment of the Method of Immanence

The notion of immanence occupies so large a place in contemporary philosophy that many make an axiom of it. It is held to be a directing principle of thought and Le Roy makes bold to write that "to have acquired a clear consciousness of the principle of immanence is the essential result of modern philosophy" (Dogme et Critique, 9). Now it is in the name of this principle that "a preliminary and comprehensive demurrer" (ibid.) is presented in bar of all Revelation, for in the light of it "a dogma has the appearance of a subjection to bondage, a limitation of the rights of thought, a menace of intellectual tyranny" (ibid.). And this creates a religious situation with which apologetics is deeply concerned, and with good reason. All the efforts of this science will be vain, all its arguments inconclusive, if it cannot, first of all, compel minds imbued with the prejudice of absolute immanence to take under consideration the problem of the transcendent. Without this precaution, antinomy is inevitable: on the one hand, it is claimed, the mind cannot receive a heterogeneous truth; on the other, revealed religion proposes to us truths which go beyond the range of any finite

intelligence. To solve this difficulty we have recourse to the method of immanence. But this method has been understood in two different ways which lead to diametrically opposite results.

## (1) Method Based on the Idea of Absolute Immanence

This is the positivist and subjectivist method. It consists in accepting off-hand the postulate of an absolute immanence of the rational and moral life. It is therefore obliged to lower revealed truth to the level of scientific truths which the mind attains solely by its own energy. Thus, some, like Lechartier, have proposed to modify dogmatic formulæ and "dissolve the symbols" of them in order to harmonize both with the aspirations of the soul which thinks them. By this means "the higher realities, which religious myths have for so many centuries striven to express, will be found identical with those which positive science has just established". Revealed truth will then appear as coming from us; it will present itself as the reflexion of our soul, which changes its formulæ according as it can or cannot find itself in them. In this way there will no longer be any antinomy, since human reason will be the principle of dogmas. Others following Loisy, hope to find in themselves, through a psychological analysis, the expression of revelation. This would be the outcome of an immanent progress, "the consciousness which man has acquired of his relations with God". Revelation is realized in man, but it is "the work of God in him, with him, and by him". Thus the difficulty arising out of the opposition between the natural order and the supernatural would disappear -- but at the price of a return to the doctrine of absolute immanence. It seems, too, that Laberthonnière, though in spite of his principles, ends by accepting this very same doctrine which he had undertaken to combat, when he writes that "since our action is at once ours and God's, we must find in it the supernatural element which enters into its constitution". According to this view, psychological analysis will discover the Divine element immanent in our action, the inward God "more present to us than we ourselves". Now this "living God of conscience" can be discerned only through an intuition which we get by a sort of moral and dynamic ontologism. But how will this presence of the Divine manifest itself in us? By the true and imperative demand of our nature which calls for the supernatural. -- Such is the abuse of the method of immanence which the Encyclical "Pascendi gregis" points out and deplors: "And here again we have reason for grievous complaint, because among Catholics there are to be found men who, while repudiating the doctrine of immanence as a doctrine, make use of it nevertheless for apologetic purposes, and do this so recklessly that they seem to admit in human nature a genuine exigency properly so called in regard to the supernatural order." With still less reserve, those whom the Encyclical calls *integralistæ* boast of showing the unbeliever the supernatural germ which has been transmitted to humanity from the consciousness of Christ, and hidden in the heart of every man. This is the thought of Sabatier and of Buisson, theologians of the liberal Protestant school -- "I am a man, and nothing Divine is foreign to me" (Buisson).

## (2) Method Based on the Idea of Relative Immanence

There is another application of the method of immanence much more reserved than the one just described since it keeps within the natural order and confines itself to stating a philosophic problem, viz.: Is man sufficient for himself? or is he aware of his insufficiency in such a way as to realize his need of some help from without? Here we are not at all concerned -- as the Encyclical "Pascendi gregis" reproaches the Modernists -- "with inducing the unbeliever to make trial of the Catholic religion"; we are concerned only with;

- (1) compelling a man who analyzes his own being to break through the circle within which, supposedly, the doctrine of immanence confines him, and which makes him reject a priori, as out of the question, the whole argument of objective apologetics; and then
- (2) with bringing him to recognize in his soul "a capacity and fitness for the supernatural order which Catholic apologists, using the proper reservations, have demonstrated" (Encycl. "Pascendi gregis").

In other words, this method has in itself nothing that calls for condemnation. It consists, says Maurice Blondel, its inventor, "in equating within our own consciousness, what we seem to think, to wish, and to do with what we really do, wish and think, in such a way that in the fictitious negations, or the ends artificially desired, those profound affirmations and irrepressible needs which they imply shall still be found" (Lettre sur les exigences). This method endeavours to prove that man cannot shut himself up in himself, as in a little world which suffices unto itself. To prove this, it takes an inventory of our immanent resources; it brings to light, on the one hand, our irresistible aspirations towards the infinitely True, Good, and Beautiful, and, on

the other hand, the insufficiency of our means to attain these ends. This comparison shows that our nature, left to itself, is not in a state of equilibrium; that, to achieve its destiny, it needs a help which is essentially beyond it -- a transcendent help. Thus, "a method of immanence developed in its integrity becomes exclusive of a doctrine of immanence". In fact, the internal analysis which it prescribes brings the human soul to recognize itself as relative to a transcendent being, thereby setting before us the problem of God. Nothing more is needed to make it evident that the "preliminary and comprehensive demurrer", which it sought to set up against Revelation in the name of the principle of immanence, is an unwarranted and arrogant exaggeration. The psychologic examination of conscience which is just now being made, far from ruling out the traditional apologetic, rather appeals to it, opens the way for it, and demonstrates its necessity.

To this preliminary clearing of the ground the method adds a subjective preparation which shall dispose the individual for the act of faith by exciting in him the desire to enter into relations with the transcendent God. And the result of this preparation will be not only intellectual and theoretical, but also moral and practical. Arousing in him a more vivid consciousness of his weakness and his need of help, the method will impel a man to acts of humility which inspire prayer and attract grace.

Such is the twofold service which the method based on the idea of relative immanence can render. Within these limits, it is rigorous. But could it not go farther, and open to us a view of the nature of this transcendent being whose existence it compels us to recognize? Might it not, for example, bring the unbeliever to hear and heed "the appeal of preventive or sanctifying grace" which would then express itself in psychologic facts discernible by observation and philosophical analysis (Cardinal Dechamps)? Would it not enable us to experience God, or at least "to find in our action the supernatural element which is said to enter into His Constitution" (Père Laberthonnière)? Would it not, finally, justify us in affirming with certainty that the object of our "irrepressible aspirations" is a "supernatural Unnamed" (Blondel), an object which is "beyond and above the natural order" (Ligard)?

At this point the method of immanence stirs the delicate problem of the relation between nature and the supernatural; but it is doubtful whether the method can solve this problem by its immanent analysis. All the attempts referred to above when they lead to anything, seem to do so only at the price of confounding the notion of the transcendent with that of the preternatural, or even of the supernatural -- or, again, at the price of confounding the Divine co-operation and Divine grace. In a word, if the psychologic analysis of the tendencies of human nature ends in "showing, without recourse to what Revelation gives us, that man desires infinitely more than the natural order can give him" (Ligard), it does not follow that we can say with any certainty that this "desired increase" is a supernatural Unnamed. As a matter of fact,

- (1) the natural order far exceeds in vastness the object of my analysis;
- (2) between my nature and the supernatural there is the preternatural;
- (3) the aids to which my nature aspires, and which God gives me, are not necessarily of the supernatural order.

Besides, even if a supernatural action does in fact manifest itself under these religious aspirations, immanent analysis, apprehending only psychological phenomena, cannot detect it. But the question is still under consideration; it is not for us to solve the mystery of the transcendent in a definitive manner and from the point of view of the method of immanence.

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