

# BELIEFS AND REALITIES<sup>1</sup>

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## 1.

**B**eliefs look both ways: they are the original Mr. Facing-both-ways. They form and judge—either justify or condemn—the agents who entertain them and insist upon them. They are of things whose immediate meaning they supply. To believe is to ascribe value, impute meaning, assign import. The collection and interaction of these appraisals and assessments is the world of the common man—that is, of man as an individual and not as a professional being or class specimen. Thus things are always characters, not just entities; they behave and respond and provoke. In the behavior which exemplifies and tests their character, they are things which help and hinder; disturb and pacify; resist and comply; are dismal and mirthful, orderly and deformed, queer and commonplace; they agree and disagree; are better and worse.

Thus the human world, whether or no it have core and axis, has both presence and transfiguration. It means here and now, not in some transcendent sphere. It moves, of itself, to varied incremental meaning, not to some far off event, whether divine or diabolic. For such immediate meanings are the bases, the “predicaments” of human conduct. Conduct is the real, and thus the logical, working out of the commitments of belief. That believed better is held to, asserted, affirmed, that is, acted upon. The moments of its experience are the natural “transcendentals”; the decisive, the critical, standards of further estimation, selection, and rejection. That believed worse is fled, resisted, transformed into an instrument for the better. Characters, in being condensations of belief, are thus at once the reminders and the prognostications of weal and woe; they concrete and they regulate the terms of contact with objects.

For beliefs, made in reality, reciprocate by making reality still farther, by developing it. Beliefs are not made *by* reality in a mechanical or logical or psychological sense. Reality naturally—that is, metaphysically—instigates belief. It appraises itself and through this self-appraisal manages its affairs. As things are surcharged valuations, so “consciousness” is ways and ends of believing and disbelieving. It is interpretation; not merely reality aware of itself as fact, but reality judging itself, approving and disapproving.

This double outlook and connection of belief, its implication, on one side, of beings who suffer and endeavor, and, on the other, its complication with the meanings and worths of things, is its glory or its unpardonable sin. We cannot keep connection on one side and throw it away upon the other. We cannot preserve significance and decline the personal attitude in which it is inscribed and

operative, any more than we can get anything but vanity by making things "states" of a consciousness whose reality is to be an interpretation of things.

Beliefs are personal affairs, and personal affairs are adventures, and adventures are, if you please, shady. But equally discredited, then, is the universe of meanings. For the world has meaning as somebody's, somebody's at a juncture, taken for better or worse, and you shall not have completed your metaphysics till you have told whose world it is and how and what for—in what bias and to what effect. Here is a cake which is had only by eating it, just as there is digestion only for production.

So far the standpoint of the common man. But the professional man, the philosopher,<sup>2</sup> has been largely occupied of late in a systematic effort to discredit the standpoint of the common man, that is, to disable belief as a metaphysical principle. Philosophy is shocked at the frank, almost brutal, evocation of beliefs by and in reality, like witches out of a desert heath—at a mode of production which is neither logical, nor physical, nor psychological, but just metaphysical. For modern philosophy is, as every college senior recites, epistemology; and epistemology, as perhaps our books and lectures sometimes forget to tell the senior, has absorbed the Stoic dogma. Passionless imperturbability, absolute detachment, complete subjection to a ready-made and finished reality—physical it may be, mental it may be, logical it may be—is its professed ideal. Foreswearing the reality of affections, and the gallantry of adventure, of the incomplete, the tentative, it has taken the oath of allegiance to a reality, objective, universal, complete; made perhaps of atoms, perhaps of sensations, perhaps of logical ideas or meanings. This ready-made reality, already including all, must then swallow and absorb belief, must produce it psychologically, mechanically or logically, according to its own nature; must in any case, instead of acquiring aid and support from belief, resolve it into one of its own preordained creatures, making a desert and calling it harmony, unity, totality.<sup>3</sup>

Philosophy has dreamed the dream of a knowledge which is radically other than the propitious outgrowth of beliefs, developing aforesaid their ulterior implications in order to recast them, rectifying their errors, cultivating their waste places, healing their diseases, fortifying their feeblenesses—of a knowledge which has to do with objects having no nature save to be known.

Not that their philosophers have admitted the concrete realizability of their scheme. On the contrary, the assertion of the absolute reality of what is unrealizable is a part of the scheme; the ideal of a universe of pure, cognitional objects, fixed elements in fixed relations. Sensationalist and idealist, positivist and transcendentalist, materialist and spiritualist, defining this universe in as many differing ways as they have differing conceptions of the ideal and method of knowledge, have been at one in their devotion to an identification of reality with something which connects monopolistically with passionless knowledge, belief purged of all personal reference, origin, and outlook, into pure cognitional objectivity—mechanical, sensational, conceptual, as the case may be.<sup>4</sup>

What is to be said of this attempt to sever the cord which naturally binds together personal attitudes and the meaning of things? This much at least: the effort to extract meanings, values, from the beliefs which ascribe them, and to give the former absolute metaphysical validity while the latter are sent to wander as scapegoats in the wilderness of mere phenomena, is an attempt which, as long as "our interest's on the dangerous edge of things," will attract an admiring, even if suspicious, audience. Moreover, we may admit that the attempt to catch the universe of immediate experience, of action and passion, coming and going, to damn it in its present body expressly in order to glorify its spirit to all eternity, to validate the meaning of beliefs by discrediting their natural existence, to attribute absolute worth to the intent of human convictions just because one is so sure of the absolute worthlessness of their content—that the performance of this feat of virtuosity has developed philosophy to its present wondrous, if formidable, technique.

But can we claim more than a *succès d'estime*?<sup>5</sup> Consider again the nature of the effort. The world of immediate meanings, the world sustained in beliefs, is to be sorted out into two portions, metaphysically discontinuous, one of which shall alone be good and true reality, the fit material of passionless, beliefless knowledge; while the other part, that which is excluded, shall be referred exclusively to belief and treated as mere appearance, purely subjective, impressions or effects in consciousness, or as that ludicrously abject modern discovery—an epiphenomenon. And this division into the real and the unreal is accomplished by the very individual whom his own absolute results reduce to phenomenality, and in terms of the very immediate experience which is infected with worthlessness, and on the basis of preference, of selection, which are declared to be unreal! Can the thing be done?

Anyway, the snubbed and excluded factor may always reassert itself. The very pushing it out of reality may but add to its potential energy, and invoke the more violent recoil. When affections and aversions, with the beliefs in which they record themselves, and the efforts they exact, are reduced to epiphenomena, dancing an idle attendance upon a reality complete without them, to which they vainly strive to accommodate themselves in mirroring, then may the emotions flagrantly burst forth with the claim that, as a friend of mine puts it, reason is only a fig leaf for *their* nakedness. When one man says that need, uncertainty, choice, novelty, and strife have no place in metaphysical reality which is made up wholly of established things, behaving by foregone rules, then may another man be provoked to reply that all such fixities, whether named atoms or God, whether they be fixtures of a sensational, a positivistic or an idealistic system, have existence and import only in the problems, needs, struggles and instrumentalities of conscious agents and patients. For home rule may be found in the unwritten efficacious constitution of experience.

That contemporaneously we are in the presence of such a reaction is apparent. Let us in pursuit of our topic inquire how it came about and why it takes the form which it takes. This consideration may not only occupy the hour, but

may help to diagram some future parallelogram of forces. The account calls for some sketching (1) of the historical tendencies which have shaped the situation in which a Stoic theory of knowledge claims metaphysical monopoly, and (2) of the tendencies which have furnished the despised principle of belief opportunity and means of reassertion.

## 2.

Imagination readily travels to a period when a gospel of intense, and, one may say, deliberate passionate disturbance appeared to be conquering the Stoic ideal of passionless reason; when the demand for individual assertion by faith against the established, embodied objective order was seemingly subduing the idea of the total subordination of the individual to the universal. By what course of events came about the dramatic reversal, in which an ethically conquered Stoicism became the conqueror, epistemologically, of Christianity?

How are our imaginations haunted by the idea of what might have happened if Christianity had found ready to its hand intellectual formulations corresponding to its practical proclamations!

That the absolute principle is affectional and volitional; that God is love; that access to the supremely real is by faith, a personal attitude; that belief, surpassing logical basis and warrant, works out through its own operation its own fulfilling evidence: such was the metaphysic of Christianity. But it needed to become a theory, a theology, a formulation; and in this need, it found no recourse save to philosophies which had identified reality with the proper object of logical reason. For, in Greek thought, after the valuable meanings, the meanings of industry and art that appealed to sustained and serious choice, had given birth and status to reflective reason, reason denied its ancestry of organized endeavor, and proclaimed itself as self-conscious logical thought to be the author and warrant of reality. Yet how nearly Christianity had found prepared for it the needed means of its own intellectual statement! We recall Aristotle's account of moral knowing, and his definition of man. Man as man, he tells us, is a principle which may be termed either desiring thought or thinking desire. Not as pure intelligence does man know, but as an organization of desires affected through reflection upon their own conditions and consequences. What if Aristotle had only assimilated his idea of theoretical to his notion of practical knowledge! But just because practical thinking was so human, Aristotle rejected it in favor of pure, passionless cognition, something superhuman. Thinking desire is experimental, is tentative, not absolute. It looks to the future, and to the past for help in the future. It is contingent, not necessary. It doubly relates to the individual: to the individual thing to be experienced by an individual agent; not to the universal. Hence desire is a sure sign of defect, of privation, of non-being, and seeks surcease in something which knows it not. Hence desiring reason culminating in beliefs relating to imperfect realities, stands forever in contrast with passionless reason functioning in pure knowledge, logically effected, of perfect being.

I need not remind you how through Neo-Platonism, St. Augustine, and the Scholastic renaissance, these conceptions became imbedded in Christian philosophy; and what a reversal occurred of the original practical principle of Christianity. Belief is henceforth important because it is the mere antecedent, in a finite and fallen world, a temporal and phenomenal world infected with non-being, of true knowledge in a world of completed Being. Desire is but the self-consciousness of defect striving to its own termination in perfect possession, through perfect knowledge of perfect being. I need not remind you that the *prima facie* subordination of reason to authority, of knowledge to faith, in the mediaeval code, is, after all, but the logical result of the doctrine that man as man, since only reasoning desire, is merely phenomenal, having his reality in God as God, as the complete union of rational insight and being—a Being the term of man's desire, and the fulfillment of his feeble attempts at knowing. Authority, "faith" as it was then conceived, meant just that this Being came externally to the aid of man, otherwise hopelessly doomed to misery in long drawn out error and non-being, and disciplined him till in the next world, under more favoring auspices, he might have his desires stilled in good, and his faith yield to knowledge—for we forget that the doctrine of immortality was not then an appendage, but an integral part of the theory of knowledge and of its relation to man and to God—perfect content of perfect thought.

For my part, I can but think that mediaeval absolutism, in its provision for authoritative supernatural assistance in this world and assertion of supernatural realization in the next, was more logical, as well as more humane, than the modern absolutism, which with the same logical premises, bids man find adequate consolation and support in the fact, that, after all, his strivings are already eternally fulfilled, his errors already eternally transcended, his partial beliefs already eternally comprehended.

The modern age marked a refusal to be satisfied with the postponement of the exercise and function of reason to another and supernatural sphere, and a resolve to practice itself upon its present object, nature, with all the joys thereunto appertaining. The pure intelligence of Aristotle, thought thinking itself, expressed itself as free inquiry directed upon the present conditions of its own most effective exercise. The principle of the inherent relation of thought to being was preserved intact, but its practical locus was moved down from the next world to this. Spinoza's "God" or "Nature" is the logical outcome; as is also his strict correlation of the attribute of matter with the attribute of thought; while the combination of thorough distrust of passion and faith with complete faith in reason and all-absorbing passion for knowledge is so classic an embodiment of the whole modern contradiction that it may awaken admiration where less thorough-paced formulations call out irritation.

In the practical devotion of present intelligence to its present object, nature, not only was science born, but its philosophical counterpart, the theory of knowledge. Epistemology only generalized in its loose, although narrow and

technical way, the question practically urgent in Europe: How is science possible? How can intelligence actively and directly get at its object?

Meantime, through Protestantism, the values, the meanings formerly characterizing the next life (as the opportunity for full perception of perfect being) were carried over into present-day emotions and responses.

The dualism between faith authoritatively supported as the principle of this life, and knowledge supernaturally realized as the principle of the next, was transmuted into the dualism between intelligence now and here occupied with natural things, and the affections and accompanying beliefs, now and here realizing spiritual worths. For a time this dualism functioned as a convenient division of labor. Intelligence, freed from responsibility for and preoccupation with supernaturally realizable truths, could occupy itself the more fully and efficiently with the world that now is; while the affections, surcharged with the values evoked in the mediaeval discipline, entered into the present enjoyment of the delectations reserved for the saints. Directness took the place of systematic intermediation; the present of the future; the individual's emotional consciousness of the supernatural institution. Between science and faith, thus conceived, a bargain was struck. Hands off; each to his own, was the compact; the natural world to intelligence, the moral, the spiritual world to belief. This (natural) world for knowledge; that (supernatural) world for belief. Thus the antithesis, unexpressed, ignored, *within experience*, between belief and knowledge, between the purely objective values of thought and the personal values of passion and volition, was more fundamental, more determining, than the opposition, explicit and harassing, *within knowledge*, between subject and object, mind and matter.

This latent antagonism worked out into the open. In scientific detail, knowledge encroached upon the historic traditions and opinions with which the moral and religious life had identified itself. It made history as natural, as much its spoil, as physical nature. It turned itself in upon man, and proceeded remorselessly to account for his emotions, his volitions, his opinions. Knowledge, in its general theory, as philosophy, went the same way. It was pre-committed to the old notion: the absolutely real is the object of *knowledge*, and hence is something universal and impersonal. So, whether by the road of sensationalism or rationalism, by the path of mechanicalism or objective idealism, it came about that concrete selves, specific feeling and willing beings, were relegated with the beliefs in which they declare themselves to the phenomenal.

### 3.

So much for the situation against which some contemporary tendencies are a deliberate protest.

What of the positive conditions which may give us not mere protest, like the unreasoning revolt of heart against head found at all epochs, but something articulate and constructive? The field is only too large, and I shall arbitrarily limit myself to the evolution of the knowledge standpoint itself. I shall suggest,

first, how the progress of intelligence directed upon natural materials has evolved a procedure of knowledge in its own aims, conditions, and tests which renders untenable the inherited conception of knowledge; and, secondly, how the result is reinforced by the specific results of some of the special sciences.

(1) First, then, the very use of the knowledge standpoint, the very expression of the knowledge preoccupation, has produced methods of procedure which, when generically formulated, intimate a radically different conception of knowledge, and of its relation to both reality and belief, than the orthodox one.

The one thing that stands out is that thinking is inquiry, and that knowledge as science is the outcome of systematically directed inquiry. For a time it was natural enough that inquiry should be interpreted in the old sense, as just change of subjective attitudes and opinions to make them square up with a reality that is already there in ready-made, fixed, and finished form. The rationalist had one notion of the reality, i.e., that it was of the nature of laws, genera, or an ordered system, and so thought of concepts, axioms, etc., as the indicated modes of representation. The empiricist, holding reality to be a lot of little discrete particular lumps, thought of disjointed sensations as their appropriate counterparts. But both alike were thorough conformists. If reality is already given and completely given, and if knowledge is just submissive acceptance, then, of course, inquiry is only a subjective change in the "mind" or in "consciousness"—these being subjective and unreal over against the objectively real.

But the very development of the sciences served to reveal a peculiar and intolerable paradox. Epistemology, having condemned inquiry once for all to the region of subjectivity in a sense metaphysically invidious, finds itself in flat opposition in principle and in detail to the assumption and to the results of the sciences. Epistemology is bound in detail to deny to the results of the special sciences any ulterior objectivity just because they always *are* in a process of inquiry—always *in* solution. While a man may not be halted at being told that his mental activities as his are not metaphysically real, many men will draw violently back at being told that all the discoveries, conclusions, explanations and theories of the sciences share the same fate, since they are products of a discredited mind. And, in general, epistemology, in relegating human thinking as inquiry to a merely phenomenal region, makes concrete approximation and conformity to objectivity hopeless. Even if it did square itself up to and by reality it would never be aware of it. The ancient myth of Tantalus and his effort to drink the water before him seems to be ingeniously prophetic of modern epistemology. The thirstier, the needier of truth is the human mind, and the intenser [*sic*] the efforts it puts forth to slake itself in the ocean of being just beyond the edge of consciousness, the more surely the living waters of truth recede!

When such self-confessed sterility is joined with consistent derogation of all the special results of the special sciences, some one is sure to raise the cry of "dog in the manger," and of "sour grapes." A revision of the theory of thinking, of inquiry, would seem to be inevitable; a revision which should cease trying to construe knowledge as an attempted approximation to a reproduction of reality

under conditions which condemn it in advance to failure; a revision which should start frankly from the fact of thinking as inquiring, and purely external realities as terms in inquiries, and which should construe validity, objectivity, truth, and the test and system of truths, on the basis of what they actually mean and do within the inquiry activity.

Such a standpoint promises ample revenge for the long damnation and longer neglect to which the principle of belief has been subjected. The whole procedure of thinking as developed in those extensive and intensive inquiries which constitute the sciences, is but rendering into a systematic technique, into an art deliberately and delightfully pursued, the rougher and cruder means by which practical human beings have in all ages worked out the implications of their beliefs, tested them and endeavored in the interests of economy, efficiency, and freedom, to render them coherent with one another. Belief, sheer, direct, unmitigated personal belief, reappears as the working hypothesis; action which at once develops and tests belief reappears as experimentation, deduction, demonstration; while the machinery of universals, axioms, a priori truths, etc., is the systematization of the way in which men have always worked out, in anticipation of overt action, the implications of their beliefs with a view to revising them in the interests of obviating the unfavorable, and of securing the welcome consequences; observation, with its machinery of sensations, measurements, etc., is the resurrection of the way in which agents have always faced and tried to define the problems that face them; truth is the union of abstract postulated meanings and of concrete brute facts in a way which circumvents the latter by utilization as means, while it fulfills the other by use as methods, in the same personally active experience. It all comes to immediate experience, personally initiated, personally conducted, and personally consummated.

Let consciousness of these facts dawn a little more brightly over the horizon of epistemological prejudices, and it will be seen that all that prevents the giving of genuine metaphysical reality both to thinking activities and to their characteristic results, is the notion that belief itself is not a genuine ingredient of reality metaphysically taken—a notion which itself is only a belief, but a belief, which unlike the convictions of the common man, and the hypotheses of science, finds its proud proof in the fact that it does not so unworthily demean itself as to work.

Once believe that beliefs themselves are as metaphysically real as anything else can ever be, and we have a universe in which uncertainty, doubtfulness, really inhere; and in which personal attitudes and responses are real both in their own distinctive existence, and as the only ways in which the as yet undetermined factor of reality takes on shape, meaning, value, truth. If “to willful men the injuries that they themselves procure, must be their schoolmasters”—and all beliefs are willful—then by the same token the propitious evolutions of meaning, which willful men secure to an expectant universe, are at once their compensation and their justification. In a doubtful and needy universe elements must be beggarly, and the development of personal beliefs into experimentally exe-



cuted systems of actions, is the organized bureau of philanthropy which confers upon a travailing universe the meaning for which it cries out. The apostrophe of the poet is above all to man the thinker, the inquirer, the knower:

O Dreamer! O Desirer, goer down  
 Unto untravelled seas in untried ships,  
 O crusher of the unimagined grape,  
 On unconceived lips.

(2) Biology, psychology, and the social sciences proffer an imposing body of concrete facts which also point to the rehabilitation of belief—to the interpretation of knowledge as a human and practical outgrowth of belief, not of belief as the state to which knowledge is condemned in a merely finite and phenomenal world. I need not, as I cannot, here summarize the psychological revision which the notions of sensation, perception, conception, cognition in general have undergone, all to one intent. “Motor” is writ large on their face. The testimony of biology is unambiguous to the effect that the organic instruments of the whole intellectual life, the sense-organs and brain and their connections, have been developed on a definitely practical basis and for practical aims, for the purpose of such control over conditions as will sustain and vary the meanings of life. The historic sciences are equally explicit in their evidence that knowledge as a system of informations and instructions is a cooperative social achievement, at all times socially toned, sustained, and directed; that logical thinking is a reweaving through individual activity of this social fabric at such points as are indicated by prevailing social needs and aims.

This bulky and coherent body of testimony is not, of course, of itself metaphysics. But it supplies, at all events, facts which have scientific backing, and as such are as worthy of regard as the facts pertinent to any science. At the present time they would seem to have some peculiar claim just because they offer facts largely ignored in prior philosophic formulations, while those belonging to mathematics and physics have so largely wrought their sweet will in systems. Again, it would seem as if, in philosophies built deliberately upon the knowledge principle, any body of known facts should not have to clamor for sympathetic attention.

Such being the case, the reasons for ruling psychology and sociology and allied sciences out of competency to give philosophic testimony have more significance than the bare denial of jurisdiction. They are evidences of the deep-rooted preconception that whatever concerns a particular conscious agent, a wanting, struggling, satisfied and dissatisfied being, must of course be only phenomenal in import.

This aversion is the more suggestive when the professed idealist appears as the special champion of the virginity of pure knowledge. The idealist, so content with the notion that consciousness determines reality, provided it be done once for all, at a jump and in lump, is so uneasy in presence of the idea that empirical

conscious beings metaphysically determine reality now and here! One is reminded of the story told, I think, by Spencer. Some committee had organized and contended, through a long series of parliaments, for the passage of a measure. At last one of their meetings was interrupted with news of success. Consternation was the result. What was to become of the occupation of the committee? So, one asks, what is to become of idealism at large, of the wholesale unspecifiable determination of reality by or in consciousness, if specific conscious beings, John Smiths and Susan Smiths (to say nothing of their animal relations), beings with bowels and brains, are found to exercise influence upon the character and existence of metaphysical reals?

One would be almost justified in construing idealism as a Pickwickian scheme, so willing is it to idealize the principle of consciousness at the expense of its facts, were it not seen that this reluctance is the necessary outcome of the Stoic basis and tenor of current idealism as a knowledge theory—its preoccupation with logical contents and relations in abstraction from their *situs* and function in conscious lives.

#### 4.

I have suggested to you the naïve conception of the relation of beliefs to realities: that beliefs are themselves real without discount, manifesting their reality in the usual proper way, namely, by modifying and shaping the reality of other real things; that in their reality they connect the bias, the preferences and affections, the needs and endeavors of personal lives with the values, the characters ascribed to things, whereby the latter are made worthy of human acquaintance and responsive to human intercourse. This was followed by a sketch of the history of thought, indicating how beliefs and all that they insinuate were subjected to preconceived notions of knowledge and of reality as its monopolistic possession. Then I traced some of the motifs which make for reconsideration of the supposed uniquely exclusive relation of logical knowledge and reality—motifs which make for a less invidiously superior attitude towards the convictions of the common man.

In concluding, I want to say a word or two to mitigate—for escape is impossible—some misunderstandings. And, to begin with, while possible doubts inevitably troop with actual beliefs, the doctrine in question is not particularly sceptical. The radical empiricist, the humanist, the pragmatist, label him as you will, believes not in fewer but in more realities than the orthodox philosophies warrant. He is not concerned, for example, in discrediting objective realities, or logical or universal thinking; but in such a reinterpretation of the sort of reality which these things possess as via authorize the accrediting, without depreciation, of concrete empirical conscious centers of action and passion.

My second remark is to the opposite effect. The intent is not specially credulous, although it starts from and ends with the radical credulity of all consciousness. To suppose because all the sciences are ultimately instrumental to

human beliefs, that we are therefore to be careless of the most exact possible use of the most extensive and systematic scientific methods for testing the meaning and worths of beliefs, is like supposing that because a watch is made to tell present time, and not to be an exemplar of transcendent, absolute time, watches might as well be made of cheap stuffs, casually wrought and clumsily put together. It is the task of telling present time, with all its urgent implications, that brings home, steadies and enlarges the responsibility for the best possible use of intelligence, the instrument.

For one, I have no interest in the old, old scheme of derogating from the worth of knowledge in order to give an uncontrolled field for some *special* beliefs to run riot in—be these beliefs even faith in immortality, in some special sort of a Deity, or in some particular brand of freedom. Any one of our beliefs is subject to criticism, revision and even ultimate elimination through the development of its own implications into intelligently directed action. Because reason is a scheme of working out the meanings of beliefs in terms of one another and of the consequences they import in further experience, convictions are rendered the more, not the less amenable and responsible to the full exercise of reason.<sup>6</sup>

Thus we are put on the road to that most desirable thing—the union of fullest acknowledgment of moral powers and demands with thoroughgoing naturalism. No one really wants to lame man's practical nature; it is the supposed exigencies of natural science that force the hand. No one really bears a grudge against naturalism for the sake of sheer obscurantism. It is the need of some sacred reservation for spiritual interests that coerces. We all want to be as naturalistic as we can be. But the "can be" is the rub. If we set out with a fixed dualism of belief and knowledge, then there haunts us the uneasy fear that the natural sciences are going to encroach and destroy spiritual values. So we build them a citadel and fortify it; that is, we isolate, professionalize, and weaken beliefs. But if beliefs are the most natural, the most metaphysical of all things, if knowledge is an organized technique for working out their implications and interrelations, for directing their formation and employ, how unnecessary, how petty the fear and the caution. Because the freedom of belief is ours free thought may exercise itself; and the freer it is the more sure the emancipation of belief. Hug some special belief and one fears knowledge; believe in belief and one loves and cleaves to knowledge.

We have here, too, the possibility of a common understanding, in thought, in language, in outlook, of the philosopher and the common man. What would not the philosopher give, if he did not have to part with some of his common humanity in order to join a class? Does he not always when challenged justify himself with the contention that all men naturally philosophize, and that he but does in a more conscious and more orderly way what leads to harm when done in an indiscriminate and irregular way? If philosophy be at once a truly natural history and a logic—an art—of beliefs, then is its technical justification at last one with its humane justification. The natural attitude of man, said Emerson, is believing; "the philosopher, after some struggle, having only reasons for believ-

ing." Let the struggle then enlighten and enlarge beliefs; let the reasons enkindle burnt out forms of belief and engender new.

Finally, it is not a solution, but a problem which is presented. As philosophers, our disagreements as to conclusions are trivial compared with our disagreement as to problems. To see the problem another sees, in the same perspective and at the same angle—that amounts to something. Agreement in solutions is in comparison perfunctory. To feel the same problem another feels—that is perhaps the only agreement possible on strictly intellectual matters. In a world where distinctions are as invidious as comparisons are odious, and where intellect works only by comparison and distinction, pray what is one to do?

But beliefs are personal matters, and the person, we may still believe, is social. To be a man is thinking desire; and the agreement of desires is not in oneness of intellectual conclusion, but in the sympathies of passion and the concords of action.

### Notes

1. Presidential Address delivered 28 December 1905 before the fifth annual meeting of the American Philosophical Association, at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

2. I have found much instruction in Dr. [Alfred] Lloyd's article "The Personal and the Factional in the Life of Society," *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology, and Scientific Methods* 2, no. 13 (Jun. 22, 1905): 337–345, at 337.

3. Since writing the above I have read the following words of a candidly unsympathetic friend of philosophy:

Neither philosophy nor science can institute man's relation to the universe, because such reciprocity must have existed before any kind of science or philosophy can begin; since each investigates phenomena by means of the intellect, and independent of the position and feelings of the investigator; whereas the relation of man to the universe is defined, not by the intellect alone, but by his sensitive perception aided by all his spiritual powers. However much one may assure and instruct a man that all real existence is an idea, that matter is made up of atoms, that the essence of life is corporality or will, that heat, light, movement, electricity, are different manifestations of one and the same energy, one cannot thereby explain to a being with pains, pleasures, hopes, and fears his position in the universe. (Tolstoi, Religion and Morality, in *Essays, Letters, and Miscellanies* [(New York, Crowell 1899).])

4. Of course I except Hegel from this statement. The habit of interpreting Hegel as a Neo-Kantian, a Kantian enlarged and purified, is a purely Anglo-American habit. This is no place to enter into the intricacies of Hegelian exegesis, but the subordination of both logical meaning and of mechanical existence to *Geist*, to life in its own developing movement, would seem to stand out in any unbiased view of Hegel. At all events, I wish to state the debt to Hegel of the view set forth in this paper.

5. [something that wins critical respect but not popular success]

6. There will of course come in time with the development of this point of view an organon of beliefs. The signs of a genuine as against a simulated belief will be studied; belief as a vital personal reaction will be discriminated from habitual, incorporate, unquestioned (because unconsciously exercised) traditions of social classes and professions.

In [William James's] *Will to Believe[: And Other Essays in Popular Philosophy]* (New York: Longmans Green, 1896)], Professor James has already laid down two traits of genuine belief (viz., "forced option," and acceptance of responsibility for results) which are almost always ignored in criticisms (really caricatures) of his position. In the light of such an organon, one might come to doubt whether *belief* in, say, immortality (as distinct from hope on one side and a sort of intellectual balance of probability of opinion on the other) can really exist at all.