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III

HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

§1

I intend here to consider the character of historical experience from the standpoint of the totality of experience, that is, to consider the truth or validity of history as a form of experience. And this purpose, as I have already indicated, does not include the attempt to determine the exact degree of truth which belongs to history (as compared with other forms of experience); it does not include the attempt to place history in a hierarchy—either genetic or logical—of forms of experience. On the one side, it may be the case that, in the development of a civilization, an interest in history has been more primitive than (for example) an interest in

science. But that belongs to the history of history, which is not what I wish to discuss. It is no part of my plan to indicate the place occupied by history in 'the development of human experience'. Nor, on the other side, am I able to discover the means by which the exact logical status of history as a form of experience might be determined. And consequently that also must lie outside my plan. My intention, precisely, is to consider the character of history in order to determine whether it be experience itself in its concrete totality or an arrest in experience, an abstract mode of experience; and further, to determine the general character of the relationship between history as a world of experience and other worlds of experience.

Now, it will be seen at once that what I am offering is a view of history from the outside. It is a view of history, not from the standpoint of the historian, but as it appears to one whose interest lies to one side of that of the historian. For,

while my plan is to consider the truth of history, the validity of history as a world of experience, the historian is engaged in the attempt to establish truth or coherence in the world of history itself. And it will be said that, whatever else there is in favour of such a discussion, it cannot be contended that it will give us an adequate view of history. A view of the world of history from the outside may be an exercise which affords interest for the otherwise idle, but it can result in no extension of our knowledge of the character of history. And this suggestion must be noticed because it will be encountered wherever the character of any form of experience is discussed. Religion, it is said, can be understood only by the religious man; science by the scientist, art by the artist and history by the historian. It is, nevertheless, wholly misleading. The character of any world of experience is its place in the totality of experience and depends upon its capacity to provide what is ultimately satisfactory in experience. Consequently, if

the world of historical experience be itself the world of concrete experience, the attempt to get outside it will be futile, but it will also be unnecessary; for there is no outside to the totality of experience, and experience as a whole is self-conscious and self-critical—is, in short, its own criterion. And if the world of historical experience discloses itself as a mode of experience, its character (because it is constituted by the place it holds in the totality of experience) can be determined only so long as we remain outside the postulates and presuppositions in terms of which it is constructed and maintained, world of experience, except it be the coherent world of concrete experience itself, cannot he seen as a whole and as a world from within, and until it is judged as a whole its character must elude us. We may leave religious questions to religious men, the problems of science to the scientist, history itself to the historian; it is the business of each of these to organize and make coherent his own world of experience: but to

suppose that the nature of history is an historical question, or that the character of religion is a question upon which a religious *man*, as such, is specially qualified to advise

us, would involve (to say the least) unwarranted assumptions about the character of these worlds. Our business, then, is to discuss all that the historian merely assumes, to consider what he merely postulates. And if there is anything merely postulated in history, that, at least, is a symptom of unself-consciousness, a symptom of modality.

It should be expected, then, that the view of history I have in mind may differ considerably from the historian's view of history, or (which is the same thing) history's view of its own character. The view which the historian, as such, must take of history is an historical view; and if (and in so far as) the history of a thing falls short of its definition, his view of the character of history must fail to be satisfactory in experience. If history be not the concrete totality of experience, of which all forms of experience are mere modifications, wherever the historian is found considering the character of history, the fact that he is an historian, so far from giving special

authority to his speculations, will render them suspect. It should not be assumed, then, that all views of the character of history must be confined to the historian's view of its character. And it should not be supposed that any view of the character of history which differs from history's own view of its character, must therefore be false or inadequate. Indeed, unless history be itself the concrete totality of experience, it is the historian s view of its character which will be inadequate—as inadequate as history itself. The historian's view of history cannot, it is true, be replaced by any other view; within the realm of history itself his view is certainly the only relevant view. Hut it is a view which must be set on one side when we come to consider the validity of historical experience itself.

What I have to offer, then, is neither a description of how history has been written, nor advice as to how it ought to be written. I am not concerned with the historian's 'psychology', his methods of research or his speculations about

history, but with history itself—to determine its character from the standpoint of the totality of experience. Consequently it must be my first business to establish history

within the realm of experience, to establish it as a form of experience, for what is not itself experience can scarcely be expected either to meet or to fail to meet the demands of experience. And we are already well enough acquainted with the general character of experience to know that if history is to be established as a form of experience, it must be shown to he a form of thought, a world, a world of ideas; and be shown to recognize coherence as the sole criterion of achievement. But since, on more than one occasion, each of these characteristics has been denied to history, it will be necessary for me, in order to establish my view, to consider briefly the validity of these denials.

The view that history is experience but not thought, that it consists of experiences but not of ideas, may be dismissed at once. For not only has it never, so far as I am aware, been asserted, but also, were it asserted, we have already in our possession arguments enough to refute it. History does not consist of the sensations or intuitions of the

historian; it is not a world of sensations, intuitions or immediate experiences: and if it were, it would, for that reason, be unable to maintain its independence of thought. History, if it be a form of experience, cannot avoid the character of thought.

But further, if history is to he established as a form of experience it must be shown to be a world. And on this point we are met, at once, with a denial. History, we shall be told, is not a world (of ideas or events—for the present it does not matter how we conceive it), but a series; it is not a world, but "a tissue of mere conjunctions";[1] it gives us "co—ordination" without ''subordination or system"[2]. History is not a whole or a world, but a sum; it enumerates, hut cannot integrate. And, should it he possible to establish this view, the consequences for history would be important. If history be a mere series, a tissue of mere conjunctions, then it is

[1] Bosanquet, The Principle of Individuality and Value, p. 78.
[2] Schopenhauer, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung,* B. II, Kap. 38.

something other than experience, it is something less than knowledge, and outside the world of thought. For

we have seen already that there can be no experience which is not a world. Here, then, is a precise view, an explicit denial of history as a form of experience. History is concerned, not with what is 'co-existent', with what belongs to a world, hut with what is 'successive', with what belongs to a series. Nevertheless, it will, I think, be found impossible to establish this view. I take it, first, that history is concerned only with that which appears in or is constructed from record of some kind. 'Events' may have happened (if we choose this way of speaking) of which all record or suggestion has been lost, and these are certainly no part of the so-called 'historical series'. The 'historical series', that is, is not the same as what is spoken of as the 'time series'. Moreover, history does not consist in a hare, uncritical account of whatever has survived in record. Because an event is (in some sense) recorded, it does not imply that it is historical. 'History' has, indeed, been written in defiance or ncg[1]ect of this

principle, hut it affords all the evidence we require to demonstrate the absurdities involved.[1] Much so-called 'religious' history, working with the non-historical concept of miracle', accepts without criticism and at its face value whatever is given, and for this reason falls short of the character of history. The mistake here is not mere credulity, but a failure to realize that the so-called 'authorities' (better called 'sources') of history are frequently not themselves the product of historical thought and require to be translated into the categories of history before they are used. What is a miracle' for the writer of any of the gospels cannot remain a miracle for the historian. History, like every other form of experience, must make its material as well as determine its method, for the two are inseparable. If, then, we conceive

[1] "Osiander (s498~-x 552), in his *Harmony of the Gospels,* maintained the principle that if an event is recorded more than once the Gospels, in different connexions, it happened more than once and in different connexions. The daughter of Jairus was therefore raised from the dead several times,.. there were two cleansings of the Temple, and so forth." Schweitzer, *Quest of the Historical Jesus,* p. 13.

history as a 'series', we are nevertheless obliged to admit that in this so-called historical series the terms are not merely successive, they offer criticism of one another. They do not stand isolated and self-evident, but are guaranteed by the series as a whole. What comes later in the series is part of the ground upon which the historian establishes what comes earlier, and *vice* versa. In short, it is impossible to exclude criticism from history, and where there is criticism there is judgment. Before a 'recorded' event becomes an 'historical' event, a judgment must have been interposed. But judgment involves more than a series, it involves a world. And the view that history is concerned with what is merely successive breaks down. What was taken for a mere series has turned, in our hands, into a world. For, wherever the terms of a 'series' so far lose their isolation and come to depend upon the criticism and guarantee of other, perhaps subsequent, terms, and of the 'series' as a whole, there is no longer a mere series of what is

successive, but a world of what is co-existent. Nor is it possible to maintain that, although the world of history is constructed by means of this process of mutual criticism of what has been recorded (which implies a world), nevertheless, when it is completed, its character is that of a series and not of a world. This mutual criticism is not merely a stage in the construction of history, it is a permanent character of history—like the tensions and stresses always present in a building, maintaining its stability. History, then, must choose between remaining a mere series, an undiscriminating account of whatever appears in any record in the order in which it is recorded, or becoming a world of co-existent facts and by this means establishing itself as a form of experience. And there is no doubt which will be its choice. Whatever the historian may think, history is never a mere series, is never concerned with what is merely successive. It is a world because it is unable to maintain itself as anything else. And because, and in so

far as it is a world, it is a form of experience. It is true that the notion of a series, the notion of successive events, is, as we shall see, one

of the notions which determine the character of the world of history; hut what I wish to establish here is that history itself is not a series, but a world.

And it may be remarked, also, that the view that history is not experience, is not knowledge, because it is concerned with a series, with what is merely successive, and not with what is co-existent, arises from an elementary misunderstanding. It is due to the assumption that the abstractions of the historian must be accepted without criticism or modification by any view of the character of history which expects a hearing. The world of history may appear to the unreflective historian as a series of successive events, but that affords no reason whatever for supposing that it is of this character. For the historian (as we shall see it is dangerous enough to regard history in this manner; for anyone who desires a clear view of the character of history it is disastrous. The 'historical series' is a bogy, and we must rid ourselves of its influence if

we are to achieve a coherent view of the character of history. There is, then, no ground for supposing that history is nothing more than a tissue of mere conjunctions. And if no more relevant objection than this can he raised, history will have no difficulty in establishing itself within the realm of experience.

Nevertheless history, if it is to be a form of experience, must he, not only a world, but a world of ideas. And here also we shall be met by doubt and denial. History, it will be asserted, is an 'objective' world, a world of past events to he discovered, unearthed, recaptured; it consists of what actually happened, and that (at least) is independent of what we think; it is a world, not of ideas, but of events. History, in short, is the course of events. Or again, the business of the historian, it is said, is to recall, not to think; he is a receptive, not a constructive agent; he is a memory, not a mind. This seems to have been Bacon's view of the character of history; and Hegel appears to have thought that there was at least one kind of history which

was not “reflective’. Historians such as Herodotus and Thucydides

"merely transformed what was passing in the world around them into the realm of representative thought (in das Reich der geistigen Vorstellung)". These historians "bind together the fleeting elements of story and treasure them up for immortality in the temple of Mnemosyne".[1] And other less judicious writers have believed this to be the universal character of written history. Written history, for them, is not a rebirth, not even a resurrection; it is a mere exhumation of the past course of events. But objections to this view are ready to hand. And the most comprehensive is that history cannot he 'the course of events' independent of our experience of it, because there is nothing independent of our experience—neither event nor fact, neither past nor future. What is independent of experience is certainly not fact; there are no facts which are not ideas. And equally certainly it is not event or happening. An event independent of

[1] Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte,* Lasson, I, 167.

experience, 'objective' in the sense of being untouched by thought or judgment, would be an unknowable; it would be neither fact nor true nor false, but a nonentity. And, in so far as history is a world of facts (which will scarcely be denied), it is a world of ideas, and a world which is true or false according to the degree of its coherence. The distinction between history as it happened (the course of events) and history as it is thought, the distinction between history itself and merely experienced history, must go; it is not merely false, it is meaningless. The historian's business is not to discover, to recapture, or even to interpret; it is to create and to construct. Interpretation and discovery imply something independent of experience, and there is nothing independent of experience. There is no history independent of experience; the course of events, as such, is not history because it is nothing at all. History is experience, the historian's world of experience; it is a world of ideas, the historian's world of ideas. And further,

even if the task of the historian is conceived as recalling what has happened, nevertheless it is a gross fallacy to suppose

that recalling is something less than a form of experience, to suppose that we can recall anything but ideas. To recall is not merely to lay side by side in present consciousness rigid particles of past event, it is to organize our present consciousness, it is to think, to judge, to construct. But even were it possible to find a world of merely recalled, exhumed events, it would not be a world satisfactory to the historian. For it is impossible to suppose that it would be free from internal contradictions, and if the historian were merely to recall, there would he no means by which he could overcome the disharmony of what he discovered. His world would he a chaos masquerading as a world, and its principle would be, 'Everything is true exactly as it is presented'. In short, discovery without judgment is impossible; and a course of events independent of experience, untouched by thought and judgment, is a contradiction.

And here, also, it maybe remarked that this view of history as an 'objective' world

is derived from the prejudices and assumptions of the historian as such, and comes to us hacked merely by the fact that some historians seem to have believed it. The historian sometimes sets before himself the task of constructing an unbiassed account of the course of events; *er will blos zeigen wie es eigentlich gewesen.* But often lie confuses this absence of bias with the achievement of a world of facts uninfluenced by experience. He supposes that what is independent of the particular ideas and prejudices of his own place and time must be what is altogether independent of experience. His criterion of objectivity is freedom from experience; and this, we have seen, is absurd. And moreover, this notion is, in the case of history, peculiarly vicious, because it involves us in a division of the world of history so radical as to amount to its total disintegration: I mean, of course, the separation of 'what has come to us' from our interpretation of it', the separation of 'the course of events' from the recollection

of it in the mind, of history from historiography, of *Geschichte* from *historic*. Written history appears to some historians as the attempt to build

up in the present a world of ideas to correspond with a past and buried course of events. But since, in that case, the course of events must lie for ever outside experience, and consequently he unknowable, there is little to recommend the view. And further, written or experienced history itself is involved in the fall of the course of events, because it must always be impossible to ascertain the correspondence between the historian's world of ideas and the course of events which, *ex hypothesi*, is outside his experience. This 'course of events', this 'what has come to us' separated from 'our interpretation of it' is, in fact, a contradiction. It is what is experienced sundered from the experience of it and offered an independent existence which, nevertheless, it is powerless to sustain. When the course of events has been separated from the experience of it, it will be found impossible ever to bring them together again, and apart they are void of meaning. Or again, from a fresh standpoint, for the historian there appears to stand on one side the course of

events, and on the other, the historical method, which he thinks of as specially adapted to the discovery of what actually happened. But the truth is that this course of events does not and cannot exist independently of the historical method. The method is correlative to the matter; when we consider the one we are considering the other also. There is, then, to be found among some writers on history a point of view, corresponding closely to the Naturalism of the last century, which attributes to the presuppositions of history a universal relevance and mistakes the abstractions of the historian for independent entities. It may be convenient for the historian to think of his work as the discovery and interpretation of a past course of events, to think of historical truth as the correspondence of his ideas with a past fact, but it is the first business of anyone who undertakes to consider the character of history as a form of experience to criticize these notions. They are not presup-positions which lie is obliged to accept on the authority of the historian. And it is safe to

say that he will find none of them satisfactory. History is a world arid is a world of ideas.

And consequently it is not a world of mere ideas. We have seen already that mere ideas are abstractions and nowhere found in experience. And in asserting that history is the experience of the historian, I mean neither that it consists of his experience as such, merely as *his* experience, nor that it is a world of mere ideas.

In so far, then, as history is a world and a world of ideas it is a form of experience. But beyond these there are other characteristics to be looked for in experience. The datum in all experience is, we have seen, a world of ideas, and the process in all experience is to make a given world more of a world, to make it coherent. The given world in experience is given always to be transformed; nothing in experience is satisfactory merely because it is given. And if history is to be established as a form of experience, it must he shown to begin with a homogeneous world of ideas and to end with that world made coherent. But here again we are met with the prejudices of the historian. History, he says, knows very well where to begin and it is

not with a homogeneous world of ideas. History begins with the collection of data, or, alternatively, it begins with the collection of material. "The search for and the collection of documents is a part, logically the first and most important part, of the historian's craft." After "isolated facts" have been collected, the historian proceeds to criticism and synthesis. "After the collection of facts comes the search for causes."[1] 'The data in history are fixed; they are given to he incorporated, not to be transformed. And they are isolated historical facts, and not a world of ideas. But there are many difficulties which stand in the way of our accepting this naïve theory of historical knowledge. First, there is the difficulty that, if it were taken seriously, this view would at once place history outside knowledge. No knowledge whatever, we have seen, can he supposed to begin with mere unrelated particles of data, isolated facts, for these

[1] Langlois and Seignobos, *Introduction to the Study of History* pp. 18, 211, 214.

are contradictions and lie in the region of the unknowable. The mind can entertain only that

which has a meaning, that which belongs to a world. But further, if we consider what is in the mind of the historian as he collects his material, we shall find, in place of this supposed miscellaneous assortment of 'facts', first, a homogeneous system of ideas or postulates, in terms of which he is conscious of whatever comes before him. The collection of materials is certainly not the first step in history. And the data of the historian are certainly not facts. Indeed history, like every other form of thought, ends and does not begin with facts. What is given in history, what is original from the standpoint of logic, is a system of postulates. But secondly, the mind of the historian, even where it is free from mere prejudice and preconception about the course of events (even where it is free from the most crippling of all assumptions in history, that the past is like the present), contains not only a system of postulates, but also a general view of the course of events, an hypothesis, governed by these postulates. No historian

ever began with a blank consciousness, an isolated idea or a genuinely universal doubt, for none of these is a possible state of mind. He begins always with a system of postulates (largely unexamined) which define the limits of his thought, and with a specific view of the course of events, a view consonant with his postulates. And whenever the historian imagines himself actually to *begin* with the collection of materials, he is suffering from an illusion which not only hinders him from achieving a true view of the character of history itself, but may also hinder him from the achievement of his own explicit end. The so-called 'scientific' historians of the last century placed their emphasis upon accuracy and the necessity of acquainting themselves with the 'original authorities', the necessity of 'research'; and the notion arose that the chief source from which the modification or correction of an historical writer should proceed was "the discoveries which have been

made since he wrote ".[1] And so far they were right. But their view of the character of history suffered from a radical defect. It neglected to urge the necessity of examining the hypotheses of the historian, the given world of ideas in terms of which the materials were understood, and into which new discoveries were incorporated. And it failed to recognize the necessity of transforming the hypotheses of the historian to meet new demands. But, not to have examined its initial system of hypotheses is as ruinous to history as to be without knowledge of the so-called 'authorities'. Historical research cannot take the place of historical experiment; historical experiment is barren without hypothesis; and hypothesis apart from a homogeneous world of ideas is impossible. My view is, then, that the theory of knowledge at the back of the notion that history begins with the collection of material and that

[1] Bury, Introduction to *Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

the data in history are 'isolated facts', is erroneous, ..and that the notion itself is preposterous. We know nothing of a course of historical events apart from some system of postulates; and it is the first business of anyone who is considering the character of history to discover the nature of those postulates. And further, no line can be drawn between what is presupposed and what is known. What is known is always in terms of what is presupposed. The historian begins with a homogeneous world of ideas, and his task is to transform (though not wholly to transform) what is given into what is satisfactory.

History, then, begins not with the collection of isolated particles of data, nor with a universal doubt, nor with a blank and empty consciousness, but with a homogeneous world of ideas. No other starting place is to he found, none other is possible. And the work of the historian consists in the transformation of this world as a whole, in the pursuit of coherence. The problem of historical thinking is to detect what modification

a new discovery, a new experience produces in the world of history as a whole. And the weakness of many historians is due to their inability to understand, first, that a new discovery cannot be appeased by being fitted into an old world, but only by being allowed to transform the whole of that world;

and secondly, that the character of a new discovery is not given and fixed, but is determined by its place in the world of history as a whole. The general scheme, the initial world of ideas, they imagine to have been given and to lie beyond the reach of criticism; and each new discovery is, for them, equally fixed, solid and independent. New knowledge may be used to illustrate or to extend the old world, but never to modify or transform it. Hut the fact is that this general scheme, with which the historian begins, is a world of ideas given only in order that it may be superseded. And to see the bearing of a new detail upon the world of history as a whole is at once the task and the difficulty of historical thought. For each new discovery, whatever it may appear to be, is, indeed, not the discovery of a fresh detail, but of a new world. Every experience is, by implication, a complete world of experience. And each new discovery must be seen in its place in that \4'orld, its effect must have been felt upon that world, before its meaning can be said to have been

apprehended, before it is 'discovered'. The process in historical thinking is never a process of incorporation; it is always a process by which a given world of ideas is transformed into a world that is more of a world.

I take it, then, that history is experience, and not a course of events independent of experience. There is, indeed, no course of events independent of experience. History is not the correspondence of an idea with an event, for there is no event which is not an idea. History is the historian's experience. It is 'made' by nobody save the historian; to write history is the only way of making it. It is a world, and a world of ideas. It begins with a world of ideas; nothing can come to the historian which is isolated, meaningless or merely 'material'. And the explicit end in history is to make a given world more of a world, to make it coherent. The course of events is, then, the result, not the material of history; or rather, it is at once material and result. And the course of events is not a mere

series of successive events, but a world of co-existent events—events which co-exist

in the mind of the historian. And since, as we have seen, truth belongs only to a world of ideas as a world and as a whole, truth in history belongs only to the world of historical ideas as a whole. No detail is true in isolation: to be true is to belong to a coherent world. And further, since no world of ideas is merely true, hut is always true of reality, history also, in so far as it is true is true of reality. History is nothing but experience, the course of events is nothing but thought, and it is objective not because it is free, or comparatively free from the 'interference' of thought, but because it is what the historian as such is obliged to think.

Nevertheless, there remains the prejudice that history, though it cannot throw off the character of experience, though it cannot avoid the necessity of judgment and is itself the product of inference, is not primarily reflective experience. History, it is felt, is likely to be falsified as often on account of too much thought, as on account of too little. To desert fact for inference, to interpose

judgment too readily are temptations from which the historian must turn away. History, it has been said, is “the least artificial extension of common knowledge “. And this appears to mean that it is knowledge least compromised by experience, that it is fact merely supplemented by thought, that in history there is a datum of raw material and that the historian contributes only a binding or co-ordinating element. And wherever the contribution of the mind’ is in excess of some undefined quantity, the result is either false history or not history At all. But we must not give way to this compromise, this vestige of moderation which, in philosophy, is always the sign of makeshift. No distinction whatever can be allowed between the raw material of history and history itself, save a distinction of relative coherence. There is no fact in history which is not a judgment, no event which is not an inference. There is nothing whatever outside the historian’s experience. And we must discard absolutely and altogether this notion of a

course of events which the thought of the historian may represent but which too much thinking will distort. Either

history is experience without compromise, a world of ideas without qualification, or it is not experience in any sense; and if it is not experience (T have contended) it is nothing at all. History may be a limited, deficient mode of experience (that we must consider in a moment), but it is certainly nothing but experience.

§2

My conclusions so far are meagre, nevertheless I take them to be not unimportant. History is experience and nothing but experience; and the attempt, implicit in the passing remarks of many historians and explicit in the theories of some philosophers, to place history outside experience must be considered to have failed. History, whatever else it is, is not "the doubtful story of successive events"; it is a world of ideas, a form of experience. And, because it is experience, it is the whole of reality; the whole, perhaps from a limited standpoint, but still, never a

separable and independent part of reality. Here, then, is the genus of what we are considering; we are thus far towards determining its character. And our business now is to ascertain the *differentia* of history. Historical experience, we have seen, begins with a system of postulates; and, since it is in these postulates that the *differentia* of this form of experience lies, it is to this system that we must turn in order to fill out and make precise our view of the character of history. 'The character and status of history as a form of experience is determined by the character of its postulates. Nevertheless, to attempt an exhaustive account of the system of postulates implicit in historical experience would lead me too far afield, and I must be content to consider it briefly and tinder five heads—the ideas of the past, of fact, of truth, of reality and of explanation which belong to history and are explicit in history. These ideas are, of course, closely interconnected, and it will be both impossible and undesirable to keep them

entirely separate. They belong to a world and must be seen together in and as that world.

(i) Now, whatever the historian may suppose, the historical past is not the only past. History is certainly a form of experience in which what is experienced is, in some sense, past. But the past in history is not the only past, and a clear view of the character of the past in history involves the distinction of this past from that in other forms of experience.

Certain pasts may be dismissed at once as alien to history. The past in history is not the remembered past. The remembered past may be historical, hut it is not historical because it is remembered. For memory is *always* personal; we can remember only what has come within our personal experience. And if Thucydides wrote about what he remembered, it is not on that account that he wrote history. History is the historian's experience, but it is not the historian's autobiography, and it is not his experience merely as his. And further, the past in history is not a merely fancied past; the historical past is not a past which merely might have

been. Nor is it a past which merely must have been. The historical past, whatever else it is, is categorical and not merely apodeictic. And again, the realisation that to claim for history the whole past would he to claim more than history is capable of mastering, has led some writers to make a vertical division, and others to make a horizontal division of the past, in order to stake out a moderate claim for history. Thus, the past in history is said to be the 'human' past or the 'political' past. But these, whatever their convenience, are distinctions without a principle; there is nothing in the human to distinguish it absolutely from the non-human past, nothing in politics to distinguish it finally from what is non-political, what is economic or religious. There is nothing more than a makeshift here. And, on the other side, the more recent past has been selected as the past in history, the less recent past being made over to pre-history. And it has been suggested that the historical past is confined to a certain geographical area: Hegel considered Africa to be

no part of the world of history. But these also are distinctions without reason or justification, distinctions merely of convenience.

The historical past is not to be determined merely by leaving out this kind of event or that period or locality; some more rational distinction must he found to distinguish the historical past.

Setting aside these, the past which I take to be the most important for us to distinguish from that in history is what I will call the practical past. Wherever the past is merely that which preceded the present, that from which the present has grown, wherever the significance of the past lies in the fact that it has been influential in deciding the present and future fortunes of man, wherever the present is sought in the past, and wherever the past is regarded as merely a refuge from the present—-the past involved is a practical, and not an historical past.

'This practical past will be found, in general, to serve either of two masters—politics or religion. Patriotism, it is said, is a love of the past, a respect for the generations which have preceded us. This is sometimes a fancied past (though it is not thought of as

such), and sometimes it is a remembered past. What is characteristic of it is that it is known as *our* past, and the love of it is inseparable from self-love. Hut this political past, our past as ours, ~s not, as such, the historical past. And so soon as we have relieved ourselves of the prejudice that every past is necessarily the same, and necessarily historical, we shall have no difficulty in setting aside this practical past as something alien to history. For the past is not 'there', the same for all who consider it and from whatever standpoint they choose to consider it. What it is depends entirely upon how we think of it; and the past which (in some sense) is what is experienced in history, is not the past in practical experience.

And when we turn from politics to religion this becomes even clearer. There belongs, for example, to the Christian religion a so-called 'historical' element, which has been the source of both pride and difficulty to its defenders. But when this element is considered more closely it will

be found indeed to involve the past, but not the historical past. The view that the past is important to Christianity appears to have been

inherited originally from Judaism; but it would appear also that the idea of a specifically historical past was unknown to the Hebrew race. Like most primitive peoples, the past had meaning for them only in so far as it was seen to be their past; their concern was with its life, not with its deadness; for them it was a saga, it was (in fact) a mythology, an effort to make actual and impressive their beliefs about their present world and about the character of God. The Greeks, for the most part, did not call upon the past to the added force and reality to the creations of their religious imagination; they called instead upon a present sensibility to nature and life, to things which could be touched and seen and heard. But the Hebrew language of imagination had in it always some reference to the past; the world was seen not as it appeared when they opened their eyes to the day but as a process, and in this they were not unique. They did not, of course, think of this past as a merely fancied past; its power to capture the imagination was due entirely to the fact that it

was believed to be a past which had actually happened. But this belief cannot of itself convert what is essentially a practical past into an historical past; it is merely part of the paraphernalia required to extract from the past the inspiration and the life which practical experience seeks. This Hebrew dependence upon the past was taken over by Christianity, and has now become imbedded in our religion. Our mythology is built upon it, our imagination dominated by it. When we wish to give to our beliefs the force and liveliness which belong to them, we find in the *language* of history a ready means for expressing our desires. And whatever motive lies behind the composition of the Gospels, the past which they are concerned with is a past of this character. And it is not an historical past. The language may he mistaken for that of history, hut the meaning does not lie in the world of historical ideas.[1] Whether this

[1] It must be understood that my view is not that the writers of the Gospels were unconcerned about the 'truth' of the past which they presented, but that this past was not an historical past.

dependence of

practical experience upon a past arises from some dark deficiency of the imagination or is due to some other circumstance, is not for me to say; certainly it has involved the civilization of Christendom in some momentous consequences, both practical and intellectual. What I have to suggest is that this past must be distinguished absolutely from that in history. In practical experience, the past is designed to justify, to make valid practical beliefs about the present and the future, about the world in general. It constitutes, of course, an argument the form of which disguises its real content and cogency; the language is that of history, while its thought is that of practice. But this, so far from detracting from its force, appears (in certain circumstances) to enhance its power to persuade. It magnifies the intensity of sensitive affection. Strauss conceived a disbelief in the Christian religion based partly upon practical, partly upon theological grounds; but he expressed it in the language of history and persuaded many

who would otherwise have remained untouched by his argument. In short, Christianity seems, almost from the beginning, to have provided a new incentive for studying the past, but it provided no incentive whatever for studying the historical past. It is only in recent times that new and specifically historical interest has arisen in connexion with Christianity. And how great a revolution this has involved is known to those who have followed it in detail.

The practical past, then, is a past alien to that in history. And whenever the past is regarded as a storehouse of political wisdom, as the authority for a body of religious beliefs, as a mode of expressing a philosophical system , or as the raw material of literature, wherever the past is seen in specific relation to the present, that past is not the past in history. To seek in legend and in myth, in saga and in religious biography, or in 'the birth of nationalism', the dawn of the historical consciousness, is to commit ourselves to a misconception which can only lead us farther

astray the more faithfully it is followed.

So far, I have considered only those ‘pasts’ which separate

themselves from the historical past. And the question of the positive character of the historical past may perhaps be approached most conveniently by considering the character of the past for history, the past as the historian is accustomed to conceive it. And this past may be distinguished at once distinguished from the practical past and from all other pasts) as the past for its own sake. History is the past for the sake of the past. What the historian is interested in is a dead past ; a past unlike the present. The *differentia* of the historical past lies in its very disparity from what is contemporary. The historian does not set out to discover a past where the same beliefs, the same actions, the same intentions obtain as those which occupy his own world. His business is to elucidate a past independent of the present, and he is never (as an historian) tempted to subsume past events under general rules. He is concerned with a particular past. It is true, of course, that the historian postulates a general similarity between the historical past and

the present, because he assumes the possibility of understanding what belongs to the historical past. Hut his particular business lies, not with this bare and general similarity, but with the detailed dissimilarity of past and present. He is concerned with the past as past, and with each moment of the past in so far as it is unlike any other moment. But further, the historian is accustomed to think of the past as a complete and virgin world stretching out behind the present, fixed, finished and independent, awaiting only discovery. The past is something immune from change. And this view encourages the historian; he thinks that if he slips, the past does not fall. In short, the past *for* history is 'what really happened'; and until the historian has reached back to and elucidated that, he considers himself to have performed his task incompletely. There are occasions, he knows, when 'what really happened' remains obscure in spite of his attempts to discover it. And, at these points, history is thought of as falling short of its full

character. Nevertheless, with care, with patience and with luck, the historian can often come at the past as it really was; and the

occasional failures of history to fulfil its destiny, do not invalidate this view of its general purpose—the discovery and elucidation of a fixed and finished past, for its own sake and in all its dissimilarity from the present. Here, then, is a past different from the practical past—which is a past seen only in terms of the present and for the purposes of the present— and able to sustain itself on its own account. In history there is the elucidation of a past which really happened, in terms of that past and for its own sake. Nevertheless, this view of the historical past cannot, I think, be maintained unmodified. It is what the historian is accustomed to believe, and it is difficult to see how he could go on did he not believe his task to be the resurrection of what once had been alive. This is, and must remain, what the past is *for* history. But the view suffers from a fatal defect: it implies that history is not experience. And consequently it must be set on one side as a misconceived view of the character of the past *of* or *in* history.

That this view of the historical past contradicts the character of history as experience there can he no doubt. The notion here is of a fixed and finished past, a past independent of present experience, which is to be considered for its own sake. But with such a past we are back again with 'the course of events' sundered from 'our knowledge of it', we are back again with the view of history which makes it something other than experience. For what is sundered from present experience is sundered from experience altogether. A fixed and finished past, a past divorced from and uninfluenced by the present, is a past divorced from evidence (for evidence is always present) and is consequently nothing and unknowable. If the historical past be knowable, it must belong to the present world of experience; if it be unknowable, history is worse than futile, it is impossible. The fact is, then, that the past in history varies with the present, rests upon the present, is the present. 'What really happened~ (a fixed and finished course of events,

immune from change) as the end in history must, if history is to be rescued from nonentity, be replaced by ‘what the evidence obliges us to believe’. All that history

has is 'the evidence'; outside this lies nothing at all. And this is not a mere methodological scepticism; history is not merely obliged to *postulate* nothing beyond the evidence. What is beyond the evidence is actually unknowable, a nonentity. What is known in history is not 'what was', 'what really happened', of that we can know nothing; it is only and solely with 'what the evidence obliges us to believe'. There are not two worlds—the world of past happenings and the world of our present knowledge of those past events— there is only one world, and it is a world of present experience. The facts of history are present facts. And it is misleading to suggest that present facts are merely evidence for past events: historical events are facts, ideas in the world of the historian's experience, and there are no facts at all which are not present absolutely. The historical past does not lie behind present evidence, it is the world which present evidence creates in the present. And again, suppose 'what really happened' to have some

independent existence and suppose the task of the historian be to construct a present world of ideas to correspond with it, how is he to determine the correspondence? Apart from his present world of ideas, he can know nothing of 'what really happened'; any correspondence he can establish, any comparison he can institute, must necessarily he confined within his present world. immediately we think of history as the correspondence of the historian's ideas with 'what was', historical experience becomes impossible, historical truth unattainable. Briefly then, to pursue 'what really happened', as distinct from simply 'what the evidence obliges us to believe', is to pursue a phantom. And the shortest way of disposing of history altogether is to suppose that what is known in history is a fixed, finished and independent past. A form of experience wedded to this purpose is infatuated with the impossible and joined with the contradictory.

The past in history is, then, always an inference; it is the

product of judgment and consequently belongs to the historian's present world of experience. All he has is his present

world of ideas, and the historical past is a constituent of that world or nothing at all. For, in historical inference we do not move from our present world to a past world; the movement in experience is always a movement within a present world of ideas. it is not possible in historical experience to separate any element which is merely past, for what is merely past is merely contradictory; there is nothing at all which is not present through and through. there is no 'what was' to contrast with 'what is', there are no 'facts of history' which are not present facts. The historical past is nothing other, nothing more and nothing less, than what the evidence obliges us to believe—a present world of ideas.

But with this we appear to he faced with a paradox: the historical past is not past at all. And it is a paradox which must be taken absolutely. It is not merely that the past must survive into the present in order to become the historical past; the past must *be* the present before it is historical. Nevertheless, the precise

character of this paradox may easily be misunderstood. And it will certainly be misunderstood if the view that the past in history is present leads us to conclude that the historical past is indistinguishable from the practical past, which we have seen to be the past for the sake of the present, the past as merely present. There is a view, for example, which conceives the historical past to be a reflection of the present as merely present. History, it is said, can only be written backwards. Of course, some limiting conditions are recognized; nobody supposes that any reflection of any present, however random, deficient or distorted, will put us in possession of the historical past. Nothing, indeed, is more obviously ridiculous than some of these reflections of the present into the past. Nevertheless, the dependence of the past upon the present is taken to be the principal characteristic of history. The present dominates the past; all history is contemporary history. What I take to be the value of this theory is the emphasis it places

upon the present, and its insistence that the facts of history are present facts. But, for all that, it cannot be counted a satisfactory view. Behind it

lies this notion of a complete and virgin world of past events which history would discover if it could, but which it cannot discover on account of some radical defect in human knowledge. The past and the present still stand over against one another, and their relation is conceived as a compromise. The present is the present as merely present, and it dominates the past, not because it is seen to include the past, but because it is, in the historian's mind, prior to the past. In short, this view suffers from that fatal tendency to moderation, compromise and abstraction which cannot, in the end, be distinguished from logical inconsequence, and it is not the view of the historical past which I am recommending. The historical past, as I see it, is not present in the sense of being the present as such, in the sense of being merely contemporary. It is not the historian's world of ideas merely as present and as his. All this, we have seen often enough, is abstraction. The past in history is not whatever enters the historian's head, it is what he is obliged to

believe. He can believe nothing which is not present, but it is not on account of its presentness that he is obliged to believe it. The historical past is a world of ideas, not a mere series of events, and consequently its criterion is coherence and not mere presentness. It is certainly present, because all experience whatever is present; but, equally certainly it is not merely present, because no experience whatever is merely present. The past in history is not a reflection of what is contemporary as such—that, we have seen, is the practical past and lies quite outside history. It is present, not in contrast with what is merely past, but in contrast with what cannot be in experience.

The historical past, then, because it cannot be mere past, is present; but it is not merely present. Nevertheless, the historical past, because it is past, is not present through and through. But experience, as such, is present through and through (although it is not merely present). Thus, the pastness of the world of historical experience involves

a modification of its presentness, involves a modification of

its character as experience. The pastness of the world of historical experience (although it is not mere pastness) is not merely a symptom of the abstractness of that world, it is one at least of the characteristics of that world which implies and constitutes its abstractness. History, since it is experience, implies an attempt to organize, to make and maintain coherent the whole world of experience. But the *differentia* of history is that in it an attempt is made to organize the whole world of experience in the form of the past and of the past for its own sake, The historical past does not stand over against the present world of experience, as a separate tract of experience; on the contrary, it is a special organization of that world, it is the organization of the totality of experience *sub specie praeteritorum.* The historical past is always present; and yct historical experience is always in the form of the past. And this contradiction must remain unresolved so long as we remain in the world of historical ideas. History, because it is experience, is

present, its facts are present facts, its world a present world of ideas; but because it is history, the formulation of experience as a whole *sub specie praeterttorum*, it is the continuous assertion of a past which is not past and of a present which is not present.

(ii) Fact, I have observed, is what is achieved in experience, not what it is given. Or rather, fact is given (because there is nothing given which is not made), and more complete fact is achieved by the transformation of what is given. The significance of fact lies always ahead in the completed world, never behind in the given world. To be a fact means to have found a necessary place in a world of ideas. The world as a whole is the arbiter of fact; and fact is coercive, obligatory, absolute, only when it is complete and because it is complete, and never because it is mere 'fact' (that which has been made).

Historical fact, I take it, conforms to the general character of fact. It is a conclusion, a result, an inference, a judgment. And consequently it belongs to the

world of present experience. Historical fact is present fact, because a merely past or future fact is a self-contradiction. And, because all

historical fact is judgment, there are no historical facts about which mistake is impossible: where error is impossible, truth is inconceivable. Further, historical fact is not 'what really happened'; it is 'what the evidence obliges us to believe'. And the evidence is, comprehensively, the present world of experience. Moreover, in history there are no isolated facts, because there are none such in experience. An isolated fact, without world or relation, is a fact not yet made, a fact without significance, a contradiction. Whenever in history a fact is asserted, the world in which this fact is involved is asserted also: the fact and its world are not merely inseparable, they are (in the end) identical.

Nevertheless, among historians there will be found those who hold a different view of the character of historical fact. It is said, for example, of Gibbon that "while he put things in the light demanded by his thesis, he related his facts

accurately".[1] This I take to mean that the relation (or recounting) of historical facts (which is, of course, indistinguishable from the relations between facts) is something external and inconsequent to the facts themselves. It means that the fact and its world are separate, that an isolated fact can be established while we remain ignorant of the world of facts to which it belongs, and that a fact can be true while its world is false. It means, in short, that historical facts may he adjacent but cannot he related, that they may belong to a series but cannot belong to a world. I need not, however, pause over this view; if it were taken seriously history would be impossible, and wherever it has been entertained none but defective history has been written. Each historical fact belongs to the whole world of history, and the whole world of history belongs to each fact. And, in the end, historical fact is nothing less than the world

[1] Bury, Introduction to Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

of historical ideas taken as a whole and seen to he coherent.

(iii) Fact is always judgment, and with the conception of fact is connected the conception of truth. And I must now

consider what is meant when a fact is said to be 'historically true'. 'truth, we have observed, is not outside experience, but is a condition of the world of experience. And, in general, whatever is satisfactory in historical experience must he taken to be historically true. The question for us, then, is, What condition of the world of historical ideas is satisfactory in historical experience?

Truth in the view I have taken of it, is invariably coherence in a world of ideas. Wherever it is found, it is a coherent world of ideas; and where it is found in history, it is the coherence of the world of historical ideas. And this, I think, involves us in three important consequences. First, because truth belongs always to a world of ideas, it belongs only to a world of present experience. A past or a future truth is a mere contradiction. Truth, of course, is never merely present, and that is why it can be neither past nor future; nevertheless it is always present. Secondly, because truth is solely a matter of coherence, it can neither require nor recognize any

external test or guarantee. 'that is, truth in history is never a matter of the correspondence of a present world of ideas with a past course of events, or the correspondence of present facts with what was'. And thirdly, it is impossible to establish the truth of historical facts piecemeal. The truth of each fact depends upon the truth of the world of facts to which it belongs, and the truth of the world of facts lies in the coherence of the facts which compose it. In historical experience, as in all other experience, there are no absolute data, nothing given which is immune from change; each element rests upon and supports every other element. Each separate 'fact' remains an hypothesis until the whole world of facts is established in which it is involved. And no single fact may be taken as historically true, and beyond the possibility of transformation, until the whole world of facts has achieved a condition of stable coherence. It is impossible, for example, to 'fix' a text before we begin to interpret it. To 'fix' a text involves an interpretation; the

text is the interpretation and the interpretation is the text.

What comes to the historian is, then, a world of ideas. It comes to him as a world of facts, hut in order to transform it from a merely given world into a coherent world, the given 'facts' must he considered as hypotheses to be verified. And the process of verification involves not merely the acceptance or rejection of this or that constituent of the given world, but the transformation of the given world as awhole. Nothing which comes to the historian is wholly false; and nothing, until he has established the coherence of his world, is wholly true. But, since his world is a world of facts (and therefore present), and since history is a form of experience (and therefore involves an attempt to establish coherence in the world of experience as a whole), the question for the historian is not (as he commonly supposes), Does this set of past events hang together when taken in this way? but, Does my whole world of experience gain or lose in coherence when I take these facts in this way? Truth in history, I repeat, is a matter

of the coherence of a world of facts, and there is no world of facts apart from the world of present experience taken as a single whole. An anachronism is not (as is often supposed) a contradiction in a world of past events, it is a contradiction in a world of present experience: it is something which conies to us as a fact, but which fails to establish its factual character on account of the incoherence it introduces into our world of present experience.

But, it may he objected, the truth of an historical fact depends upon 'the original authorities'. If we abandon the notion that the original authorities are the touch-stone of historical truth, we shall find ourselves committed to a conception of history in which truth is independent of evidence, the product of 'pure reason' or (in the debased sense of the phrase) a *priori* thought.

Let us consider, then, the character of what actually guarantees our beliefs, for this, I take it, is what we must suppose to be fully authoritative. First, it is not external to our experience. We

are deceiving ourselves if we attribute any of our beliefs whatever to a ground less than our world of

experience as a whole. The so-called 'authority' of an eyewitness, of a tradition, of a report, of a document or of an expert, if it he supposed to stand on its own feet and take the place of first-hand experience, is no authority at all. Whatever comes to us from these and similar sources must enter our world of present experience before it can influence our belief, and to enter this world means, in every case, to be absorbed, transformed, interpreted, made part of that experience, means (in brief) to be known at first-hand. Secondly, what actually guarantees our beliefs for us is always present. A past 'authority', as such, is no part of our world of ideas; it is beyond the region of possible experience. "A past judgment holds not because it was once made, nor merely because it is not in actual conflict with our present. it holds because, and so far as, we assume identity between our present and our past, and because, and so far as, our past judgment was made from the basis and on the principle which stands at present. An assumption of the

same kind, I may add, is all that justifies our belief in testimony, and, so far as you cannot infer in the witness a mental state essentially one with your own, his evidence for you has no logical worth."[1] Thirdly, the real ground of our beliefs is always single and indivisible. A belief is never guaranteed by a 'series of reasons' or a 'number of witnesses', for these (and the testimony they offer) must themselves be believed before they can influence our belief, must submit to our world of experience as a whole. And lastly, the real authority of a belief is not reached until something absolute and in-escapable has been found. To speak of the sanction of an authority is to commit a pleonasm: an authority is always its own sanction. It is authoritative because it is absolute; it is absolute because it is complete, because it is impossible to look beyond or outside it. With a real authority there can he no question whether or not we shall accept

[1] Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 406.

it; we have no choice in the matter, for an authority we can escape is an impostor. In short, then, what alone governs our beliefs (and

what is, consequently, their only final authority) is our present world of experience as a whole.

And when we turn to the so-called 'original authorities' of history we shall find no difficulty in recognizing them, when taken alone, as abstractions. Taken by themselves they fall outside the world of experience and consequently are unable to stand alone as the ground of belief. It is not, of course, because they are the source or origin (as distinct from the ground) of our historical beliefs that these 'authorities', taken by themselves, are not authoritative. For the distinction between the origin of a belief and its ground is not one which can be maintained in the end. There is no 'cause' of belief which may not be 'reason' for belief. These 'authorities' are not authoritative only because they are never the *whole* ground of belief, because they are abstractions. Nor should they be thought of as part of the ground of our historical beliefs, for a ground can have no parts. These 'authorities' come to us from the past,

written records, traditions, eye-witness's accounts and the like; and in so far as they retain their character as past, they remain strictly outside experience. They may be in some sense original, they are certainly necessary for history, but they are not, as they stand and by themselves, authoritative. they are abstractions which, taken by themselves, have no independent existence, and taken in their place in the world of experience must submit to criticism and suffer transformation. The ground, the authority of a belief in an historical event, is neither that it is recorded by an historian, nor that it is asserted by a contemporary, nor that it is attested by an eyewitness, but is an independent judgment we make, based upon and guaranteed by our entire world of experience, about the capacity of the event to enhance or decrease the coherence of our world of experience as a whole. The grounds of our historical belief are not two— conformity with our own experience and the testimony of others'

experience—they are our single world of experience taken as a whole. Historical truth is certainly not independent of evidence; but evidence is not something, coming to us

from the past, which has merely to be accepted. Evidence, the testimony of ethers' experience, can never take us outside our own world of experience; and the evidence of an historical fact is this present world as a whole and nothing else. If history is to maintain itself as a form of experience, we must abandon at once and altogether this notion that the so-called 'original authorities' of history are, taken by themselves, the touchstone of historical truth.

But, it will be objected, if the 'authorities' are no longer to be considered the criterion of historical truth, we shall find ourselves left with history as the construction of 'pure reason', with history as a *priori* thought, with history (in short) which is not history at all. History, it is said, is an unpredictable course of events, the connexions in which are not necessary or logical, but merely temporal and accidental. Consequently, nothing can be known of this course of events except by considering it in detail. And historical truth can be nothing save the correspondence of the

historian's ideas with this essentially 'empirical' course of events.

Now, this view raises many and important questions, some of which I must consider later, but in order to refute it, it is not necessary for me to embark upon a consideration of the meaning of *a priori* truth. The view I have suggested is that in all experience whatever we begin and end with a world of ideas, and that any view which introduces or implies a linear conception of knowledge is misleading and false. It is impossible to think in advance of experience, and no experience is merely empirical. *A priori* and *a posteriori* are alike vicious abstractions. And further, history is not a 'course of events', it is not a series of happenings, not a temporal development; it is a world of facts in which the truth of each fact is based, not upon specific attestation, but upon that world as a whole. The truth of each historical fact is a function of its place in the world of historical facts. And nothing, in the end, is true, and nothing false save that world as a whole, 'Pure reason' is,

indeed, powerless to determine the relations and the truth of historical facts, but it is

powerless also to determine any truth whatever: 'pure reason' is something unknown in experience. And historical truth is not *a priori* (in the sense of being derived from merely general considerations or in the sense of being independent of experience), because no truth whatever is of this character.

Historical fact and historical truth suffer, then, from this limitation; they are necessarily present, because all fact and all truth is necessarily present, and at the same time they are conceived of in the form of the past. Historical truth is not present truth about what happened in the past—that is a view I have dismissed as self-contradictory. It is the entire world of experience seen as a single arid coherent world of ideas *sub specie praeteritorum.* And it is the business of the historian to introduce into the world of experience whatever coherence this category of the past is capable of introducing.

(iv) History is experience, a world of ideas; and because it is this, it is not a world of mere ideas. The ultimate reference of historical judgment (like

that of all other judgment) is to reality. And the criterion of reality recognized alike in all forms of experience is the criterion of self-completeness or individuality. The absoluteness of this criterion is not, however, recognized equally in all forms of experience, and the *differentia* of a form of experience may be taken to lie in the degree of thoroughness with which the criterion is applied. And our present business is to consider the world of historical ideas in relation to its conception of reality or individuality.

It will he observed at once that historical reality involves the same contradiction as we have seen to be involved in historical fact and historical truth. Reality, because it is experience, must be present; and yet, in history, it must also be past. And there is no need for me to repeat here what I have said already in connexion with historical truth. The historical past is not a *part* of the real world, it is the whole of reality *sub specie praeteritorum*, it is the whole of reality subsumed under the category of the past.

But beyond its character as 'past', I take reality in historical

experience to be comprised of events, things (or institutions) and persons. The distinction between them is not, of course, an absolute or ultimate distinction; no such distinction could be maintained between the elements of what is real. It is a distinction of convenience. The fall of the Bastille and the Reformation are examples of what I mean by historical events; the Roman Empire and Christianity are historical institutions; and what the person or self is in history will appear in a moment. The generic reality to which these abstractions belong, I will call the historical individual. And the question for us to consider is, What is the character of the individual in historical experience?

It seems that there is a widespread belief that time and place, taken together, offer a principle of individuation appropriate to historical experience, and I will consider this view first. History, it is said, is concerned with what is absolutely particular, what exists 'here' and not 'there', what exists once and no more than once. Every historical

event is fettered by time and place. And again, history deals only with that which cannot be repeated; it recognizes only that aspect of reality which is merely successive or which never recurs in the same way. The absolute uniqueness of each moment of space-time is the fundamental postulate in historical experience. Now, I am not disposed to deny that there is some truth in this view, and what truth there is we shall see later on; but taken as a whole it appears to mc to suffer from two defects. First, history of this kind has never been written. This, of course, is not a conclusive objection; the history that has been written cannot be taken as a kind of absolute datum for a view of the character of historical experience, but it is suggestive. Secondly, such history never could be written. What is absolutely singular is absolutely unknowable, it is neither idea nor fact. Merely successive unique events, as such, belong not to a world but to a series and consequently lie outside the world of possible experience. This view reduces the degree of individuality in

historical events, things and persons to zero. It is a view which cannot

be taken absolutely; and a view which cannot be taken absolutely is no view at all. Once modification is attempted, the principle (such as it is) which is offered here disappears. For if these unique units of space-time are not absolute, how are we to determine them? Merely, I suppose, by drawing arbitrary lines across the continuous flow of experience. But since no reason is offered why we should draw them 'here' rather than 'there', we are left without guidance in determining what, in history, shall be considered a real thing.

I do not, however, intend to dismiss this view—that what is real in history is that which is absolutely singular—unconditionally. Behind it there lies the truth that the individual in history is presupposed, that it is designated and not defined. History itself does not and cannot provide us with the historical individual, for 'wherever history exists it has been constructed upon a postulated conception of individuality. The history of Natural Science, of Christianity, of Napoleon, of

Cambridge, involve and depend upon a presupposed conception of their subject; and it is never a fully criticized, but always a merely designated conception. What is required of it is that it should be stable and should be consistently adhered to, not that it should be absolutely clear and coherent. "I have described", says Gibbon, "the triumph of barbarism and of religion." But his conception of barbarism and of religion does not amount to a definition; he has made no enquiry into the ultimate character of these things. Barbarism and religion are, for him, easily distinguished from their environment, and his business is merely to make sure that the distinction he works with is consistent. And those historians who see in the Reformation the triumph of secularism over a religious view of the world, have not asked themselves for more than a superficial, almost a conventional, conception of these things. Historical individuals are, then, designated; the determination of their character involves settling no ultimate questions.

But the designation is not merely arbitrary, it is not without a principle.

Mere place and time I have rejected already as the principle of historical individuality; taken by themselves they offer no principle at all. But if this notion of place and time he enlarged and transformed by means of the double conception of continuity and discontinuity, we reach a principle which offers us an individual, neither absolutely singular, nor absolutely complete, nor merely arbitrary, but an individual in some degree separable from its environment and consequently suited to the purpose of history. The explanation of this principle belongs to a later stage in my argument, and I will offer here only an example.

First, in respect of what I have called an historical thing, it appears to me that its individuality can be established by means of this conception of continuity and discontinuity, and can be established in no other way. It is, I believe, the tacit assumption of all sound historical thinking. The Roman Empire, for example, stands out from what, for history, is

taken to be its environment, not because it can show no change at all, no variation in shape, size or content, nor because the historian has chosen the line of least resistance and has restricted the name either to the thing as it first appeared before change had made its individuality ambiguous or to some core which he supposes to have remained untouched by outward circumstances, but because its beginning is marked by an apparent break in the continuity of what went before, and because, having once been established, it could maintain a continuous existence. Into this individuality, place enters very little; Rome itself is scarcely significant at all; now \Vest, now East preserves the continuity. What establishes it for history is the fact that there appears to be some discontinuity at its beginning, and subsequently no absolute break in the Empire's existence, various as were the circumstances of its life. And when such a break is seen to occur, then and not till then, is the individuality shattered. Secondly, the principle of

continuity and discontinuity is that by which historical events are determined. An historical event is never a mere point-instant; it is something with a

meaning, and something which can maintain itself relatively intact and self-complete. Its capacity for establishing its individuality lies in the discontinuity, the relative break which seems to precede it; and its capacity for maintaining its individuality lies in the continuity, or relative absence of break, which it can show. Anyone who has considered the matter knows well enough how arbitrary the individuality of an historical event is. One historical event is distinguished from another by the flimsiest partition; there is nothing solid or absolute in their character. The historian is constantly to be found joining and separating them: the Reformation, the invasion of the Crimea, the Charge of the Light Brigade, the fall of the Bastille and the fall of Jerusalem, are alike historical events. But their determination as events is not arbitrary; it is always a question of relative continuity and discontinuity and a question of scale. And thirdly, in respect of historical persons, the same principle seems to be required, and to he

all that is required, to establish their individuality. The persons of history are constructed upon the analogy of the persons of practical experience. Birth is the discontinuity which establishes their individuality, death the discontinuity which shatters it. The self in history is centred in the body; where the body is, there is the man. And the principle of mere time and place, the principle of the bare particular, is quite foreign to the conception of the individual person postulated in historical experience.

But, although this principle of continuity and discontinuity is absolute in determining the individual in historical experience, it can be and is applied in history in varying degrees of thoroughness. History begins with a world of presupposed individuals, but in the attempt to make it coherent, to make it more of a world, there is a constant temptation to abandon the terms of the presupposition. The historical individual is relatively stable, but it is also abstract and to some extent arbitrary, and it is difficult for the historian to remain

unaware of this. Historical experience, hike all abstract experience, is always on the verge of passing beyond itself. Its movement

tends to supersede the conception of individuality upon which it is based, while at the same time it insists, as it must insist, upon retaining it. The historical individual, determined upon the principle of relative continuity, is conceived in terms rather of separateness than of self-completeness and passes almost unnoticed into its environment. V here does an historical event begin, and where end? Political and religious beliefs are sometimes sufficiently separable to appear as distinct historical individuals; but who shall separate them in ancient Greece, or in sixteenth-century England? And even the historical self shows this same tendency to coalesce with its environment. Principal and agent are often indistinguishable. Selves which are inseparable tend to be acknowledged as a single individuality. And there appears no limit to this process. But carry it too far, allow the designated individual of history to disappear altogether into its environment, and history is destroyed. And what rises from the wreckage

is not (as some writers seem to suppose) reinvigorated historical experience, but a hybrid and barren world of pseudo-historical ideas. The possibility of history depends upon the maintenance of this balance.

The individuality of the historical individual is, then, established by means of the principle of discontinuity; it is maintained by means of the principle of continuity. And this involves us at once in the difficult problem of change and identity. For nothing can be continuous which is not a changing identity. Happily, however, it is not necessary for my purpose to consider this problem in full; all that is required here is for us to understand the solution satisfactory in historical experience itself.

The historical individual is a changing identity. And this is true not less of events in history than of institutions and persons. A bare particular, a mere point-instant; the complete and concrete individual, the universe as a self-explanatory whole; an abstract individual designed to exclude,

change like the individual of scientific thought, a quantitative abstraction statistically determined - to these, it is true, neither change

nor identity may be attributed; but it is true also that they are not historical individuals. The individual in history changes and is identical; it persists through a period of time, and a mere change of place is not held to destroy it. An historical event is never a mere point-instant; an historical thing or institution never exists merely 'there' and 'then'; and an historical person is taken to maintain his identity from day to day and from place to place, so long as death does not intervene. And the principle upon which the identity of the historical individual is maintained is what has been called the principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles. This means, briefly, that "what *seems* the same *is* so far the same, and cannot be made different by any diversity, and that so long as an ideal content is identical no change of context can destroy its unity".[1] "It implies that sameness can exist together with difference, or that what is the same is still the same, however much in

[1] Bradley, *Logic, I, 288.*

other ways it differs."[1] But historical experience itself does not attempt to establish or examine this principle: for history it is a sheer, uncriticized postulate. The historical individual is established on this presupposition, on this pre-supposition it is maintained and, since somewhere there must he a limit, this presupposition supplies also its limit. The problem of identity is not solved in historical experience, it is merely perfunctorily settled. The historical individual is not constructed upon an examined foundation, but upon an uncriticized, a merely postulated foundation.

The world of historical experience is, then, a past (though not a merely past) world of historical individuals, a world governed by the ideas of change, of continuity and discontinuity. The world of history is the real world as a whole comprehended under the category of the past. And the individual, the real thing in history, is not a defined indi-

[1] Bradley, *Appearance and Reality,* p. 347.

vidual, but a merely designated individual, and consequently an abstract, unstable and incomplete individual. Whatever distortion the real world may suffer when seen *sub specie*

praeteritorum is increased by the distortion which mere designation in place of definition never fails to introduce.

(v) The last of the structural concepts of the world of history which I have undertaken to consider is that of historical explanation. In experience, we have seen, there is always meaning; experience is explanation. And history, because it is experience, is explanation: in history what is attempted is to give a rational account of the world. But, since the explanation offered in history will necessarily be in terms of the categories of historical experience, in considering the character of historical explanation we shall be considering again, and as a whole, the categories which determine the world of history.

The world of history, besides being past, is a world of changing identities. Change and identity are of the essence of the historical individual. And history, from one standpoint, may be taken to be the attempt to account rationally for historical change. For it is

only by explaining the changing character of its world that historical experience can hope to introduce coherence into it. Historical explanation is, then, an explanation of the world in terms of change, and an explanation of change in its world. But it must be observed once more that the categories of historical explanation are, for history, presuppositions. And this means that they are to be thought out (or assumed) *first,* and that they are not to be learnt from the study of history itself. The view is frequently to be met with that the categories of historical explanation are the product of some kind of inductive study of the course of events, that they are the result, not the ground of history. It is suggested that the 'historical method' is determined by the character of the world. But that this is a preposterous view can scarcely be doubted. Without historical experience there is no historical world, no course of events from which to gather the principles of historical knowledge. '[he course of events is the result, not the material of hi story, and more

cannot be got out of it than the historian has put into it.

Now, of all the methods of accounting rationally for change, that which has most frequently been attributed to history is an explanation in terms of cause and effect. The categories of cause and effect have been used by historians since history began to be written. "The description of the course of events is interesting", says Polybius, "but the indication of cause makes history fruitful." Indeed, cause and effect have become ingrained in our view of historical knowledge. History, we scarcely question, is concerned with past events and causal connexions. And for this reason it will be proper for me to consider first this conception of the character of historical explanation. And I must consider it with a view to discovering whether it affords an explanation of change relevant to the character of the historical world.

The notion of cause as a category of explanation covers, however, a variety of conceptions; and my first business must be to distinguish and set on one side those causes which, although they

are not altogether absent from the writings of historians, are nevertheless not consonant with the character of historical events and are consequently unable to provide an explanation satisfactory in historical experience. And among these must be placed those causes which offer so liberal and extensive an explanation that they end by explaining nothing at all. For, it is well known that what can be used indifferently to explain everything, will in the end explain nothing.

"Of all causes the remotest are stars", says Burton, writing of the causes of love. But since the stars are the cause of everything (or nothing, according to our view), they explain so much (or nothing at all) that the historian is obliged to leave them out of account. It may be possible to explain every event in this way, but history, unless it is to disappear altogether, must find some other way. This is an explanation which contradicts the character of the historical past, and consequently it is unable to offer anything acceptable in history. And

again, the idea of God suffers, from the standpoint of history, from the same defect. He explains

everything and consequently affords no rational explanation of any one thing. Whatever there is to he said for the view that God works directly in the world, he cannot be supposed to work directly in the world for history—the world of historical experience—-without destroying that world altogether. 'God in history' is, then, a contradiction, a meaningless phrase. Wherever else God is, he is not in history, for if he were there would no longer be any history. Where in history he is taken to be a cause, nothing has been said and nothing remains to be said. And this, among other reasons, is why we must deny to the ancient Hebrews any proper historical consciousness. 'God in history' indicates an incursion of the practical past into the historical past, an incursion which brings only chaos. Nor is it possible to bring God into history by a back door. Polybius, for example, thinks it permissible for an historian to impute an historical event directly to the gods whenever he can discover for it no other cause. But an event without a

cause (other than God) is not in any sense an historical event. It may belong to 'what really happened' (whatever that may mean), but it certainly does not belong to history. In short, what may be called purely general causes are not a category of explanation consonant with the presuppositions of historical experience.

But further, there is another kind of cause which must be rejected in historical explanation because to recognize it involves the destruction of history. A cause in scientific experience is, briefly, the minimum conditions required to account for any example of an observed result. But this, clearly, is a form of explanation foreign to historical experience; and it is possible in science only because the world of scientific experience is a world, not of events but of instances. Were he to adopt it, the historian would be obliged to eliminate all causes save one, of existing effects; and this would resolve history into an infinite regress of abstractions in search of an

absolute beginning, or limit its reference to whatever lay immediately behind the given event. And moreover, the historian would find himself

obliged to consider (by a kind of ideal experiment) what *might* have happened as well as what the evidence obliges him to believe did happen; that is, he would find himself becalmed outside the current of historical thought. History must reject not only those causes which are too comprehensive, but also those which are too limited. For example, history has no use for abstractions such as climate, geographical conditions or national character as the sole causes of events. When Lessing ascribes the eminence of Greek art to the climate and the government of Greece, he has quitted altogether the region of historical thought. Or again, to say of an event that it is due solely to 'economic causes is not bad history; it is not history at all. This is not a question of evidence, not a question to be decided by the historian as such, it is a way of thinking excluded by the presuppositions of his thought. A cause in history must belong to and be consonant with the character of the world of history.

But there is a third conception of cause which must be rejected from history if history is not to suffer extinction. There is the notion that some events are causal in the sense of being decisive. 'The 'great events', the 'turning-points' of history are regarded as causes, and the world of history is explained in those terms. For example, it is possible that had St Paul been captured and killed when his friends lowered him from the wall of Damascus, the Christian religion might never have become the centre of our civilization. And on that account the spread of Christianity might he attributed to St Paul's escape. Or again, the upbringing of the Emperor Frederick II in Sicily has been made a turning-point of this kind, a decisive, causal event which accounts for and explains the subsequent, or parts of the subsequent history of the Empire. Had he not been in Sicily when he succeeded to the Empire, all would have been different. And once more, the Reformation, or Protestantism, has been isolated as the sole cause of modern capitalistic industry,

democracy, republicanism, or religious toleration. Now, that causes of this

kind are foreign to the character of history is clear enough when it is realized that the process by which an event is made a cause is a process which deprives it of its historical character. Explanation of change in terms of these causes implies that a single historical event may be abstracted from the world of history, made free of all its relations and connexions, and then spoken of as the cause of all that followed it or of certain selected events which followed it. And when events are treated in this manner they cease at once to be historical events. The result is not merely bad or doubtful history, but the complete rejection of history. Indeed, the distinction, which this view implies, between essential and incidental events does not belong to historical thought at all; it is a monstrous incursion of science into the world of history. The so-called 'great events' of history are either those which are seen to have great practical importance (in which case they belong to a non-historical past), or events possessing a high degree of individual completeness because they

concentrate and include within a single whole a number of smaller events. The birth of Jesus of Nazareth and the battle of Salamis are examples of the first; the fall of the Roman Empire in the West and the Reformation are examples of the second. But 'great' historical events cannot be supposed to be those which are in some special sense causes and not effects, those which fall outside the process as a whole.

The principle in all this is that we desert historical experience whenever we look outside history itself for the cause of historical events or whenever we abstract a moment in the historical world and think of it as the cause of the whole or any part of what remains. Thus, every historical event is necessary, and it is impossible to distinguish between the importance of necessities. No event is merely negative, none is non-contributory.[1] It is, then, a

[1] This principle will be found, somewhat differently stated, in the writings of some historians. "There are conditions", says Lord Acton, "in which it is scarcely an hyperbole to say that slavery is a stage on the road to freedom." "The first lesson of history", says Creighton, "is

contradiction of the

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the good of evil." But the principle that nothing in the world of history is non-contributory (or, if we choose to speak the language of morality, evil) is not a "lesson of history", it is presupposition of historical thought. And this affords one more example of the confusion which exists with regard to the presuppositions of historical thinking. It is impossible to get more out o history than has been put into it; and if you learn from it the good of evil, it means that you have built your world of events on that principle.

character of history whenever we attempt to explain this world of changing identities by means of a cause which is either altogether outside the world of history itself (such as the stars, or God), or an arbitrarily selected moment in the world of history. Whatever else historical explanation must be, it must be consonant with the conception of fact and event which determine the structure of the world of history; and these causes contradict that conception.

However, it will perhaps be suggested that there is one important exception to this principle. What is true of historical events is not equally true of historical persons. In the individual human will is to be found the cause of all events; all other causes are subsidiary to this; history cannot look behind it and does not require to look beyond it for a principle of explanation. "The aggressive action of Prussia which astonished Europe in 1740 determined the subsequent history of Germany; but that action was anything but inevitable; it depended entirely upon the

personality of Frederick the Great."[1]

The grounds of this view are not, however, as clear as I should wish. The individual human will is, indeed, something which may be distinguished within the world of history, but why it should be relieved of all its connexions, placed outside that world and then made the sole cause in it, is difficult to understand. If it be placed outside, it can no longer have anything to do with history, it is become an abstraction foreign to historical thought; and if it remain inside, it must lose all appearance of being the sole cause of everything else. 'The personality of Frederick the Great' is

[1] Bury, *Selected Essays,* p. 38.

not something absolute, self-explanatory, self-contained, and it is not this even for historical experience. It is true that certain historians have written on the assumption that it is. With Thucydides personal character and motive is a first cause behind which, as a general rule, he does not press. Hut in this he is not only a peculiar, but also a defective historian. 'Personality' cannot be placed in this manner outside history without becoming irrelevant to history. And further, to speak of a single, ill-distinguished event (for no historical event is securely distinguished from its environment) as determining, in the sense of causing and explaining, the whole subsequent course of events is, again, not bad or doubtful history, but not history at all. In scientific experience, on account of its assumptions, it is possible to circumscribe and analyse both the antecedent and the consequent situations and to determine which elements of the latter were caused by which elements of the former, but in history this is impossible—not, of course,

because the evidence is insufficient, but because the presuppositions of historical thought forbid it. And, unless we are to return to the distinction between essential and incidental events, there is no more reason to attribute a whole course of events to one antecedent event rather than another. The beginning of a course of events might, I suppose, be spoken of as in some sense essential; but a mere beginning explains nothing, is logically neutral and cannot take the place of a cause. And besides, history knows nothing of beginnings; it is not m any sense a study of origins.

These, then, are some of the causes which, because they contradict the presupposed character of the historical past, cannot offer an explanation acceptable in history of the changes in that past. These causes either explain too much, or turn out to be no causes at all. And when we pass from these causes and pseudo-causes to the more general conception of cause, we shall I think be obliged to conclude that it also has

nothing to offer of which history can make use. What, I take it, is fundamental to this conception is that we

should be able to separate the cause and its effect, and endow each with a certain degree of individuality; but it is just this which is impossible while we retain the postulates of historical experience. It cannot be achieved by selecting some single event and attributing to that any subsequent event or the whole course of subsequent events. No single event in history is isolable in this manner, and if it were there would be no more reason to isolate *this* event rather than *that*. And abstractions like geographical or economic conditions cannot for one moment be considered to have the character of historical causes because these do not as such belong to history. It might, however, appear that the conception of cause could be saved for history by taking it to be the complete course of events antecedent to any single event or subsequent course of events. But here again the separation of cause and effect is arbitrary, random and meaningless; it affords no explanation; there is no more reason why it should be made at one point rather than

another. Unless the emphasis is placed upon the complete antecedent course of events, this conception of cause shows no advance upon those we have already found to be unsatisfactory; and if it is placed there, *post hoc* and *propter hoc* are indistinguishable, and all semblance of a cause and of an explanation is lost. And finally, the suggestion that all these are manufactured difficulties, that single historical events are legitimately created by a rupture in the single whole postulated in historical experience, and that there is no reason why historical causes should not be made in the same manner, puts us on no firmer ground. It is one thing to break up the single whole of history, but quite another to force one of the pieces outside the whole itself and then call it a cause. The strict conception of cause and effect appears, then, to be without relevance in historical explanation.

These remarks will not, of course, have been mistaken for a general criticism of the idea of cause. That lies beyond

what is necessary for me to consider here. All I have suggested is that the strict conception of cause, and all that it involves,

when introduced into historical experience, instead of bringing light, brings darkness; instead of order, added chaos. And there appears to me no reason whatever for supposing that, because no place can be found for it in the world of history, historical experience is (on that account) defective. That all explanation must be in terms of cause and effect is a view we need not stop to consider. But if the strict conception of cause breaks down as the explanatory principle in historical experience, because it contradicts the postulated character of the historical past, it is necessary for us to find some other category of explanation with which to replace it.

This question is not one frequently discussed by historical writers, nor is there any reason why they should discuss it, but a distinguished modern historian has advanced a view of the character of historical explanation which deserves consideration because it is proposed as an attempt to get beyond the category of

mere cause and effect.[1] In the course of his study of history, Bury appears to have conceived a dissatisfaction with explanation in terms of general causes, especially when used to account for what he calls the 'great events' of history. And the grounds of this dissatisfaction seem to lie in the fact that, if we observe events as they actually happen, many of them are not to be accounted for by means of this category of general cause. Indeed, wherever we are able to observe events closely and in detail this category of explanation breaks down. Consequently, Bury proposes a conception of 'contingency' to replace that of cause. The historian is to explain the course of events not by referring it to general causes, but by seeing it as the product of accident. Change in history is the result of accident, not specific cause.

Now, the first point to be remarked here is that, if accident is to afford an explanation of historical

[1] See Bury, *Selected Essays*.

change in some terms other than those of general cause, it must be distinguished from mere chance. For if accident meant mere chance, then it would be merely one of the most general of all causes—like God and the stars—and consequently useless to the historian.

Whatever else it is, the course of events in history cannot be a mere series of miracles. "Fortune has caused the whole world and its history to tend towards one purpose—the Empire of Rome", says Polybius; but he can scarcely be held to have explained the history of the world. Chance belongs to one of the types of causes which we have already dismissed as inappropriate in history. And Bury is certainly not guilty of a mere appeal to t??? S?te??a. An accident for Bury is, then, not a mere chance, but a 'contingent event', a 'coincidence'.

The character of Bury's view of historical explanation may be seen best in application. "The truth is that the success of the barbarians in penetrating and founding states in the western provinces cannot be explained by any general considerations. It is accounted for by the actual events and would be clearer if the story were known more fully. The gradual collapse of the Roman power in this section of the Empire was the consequence of a series of contingent events. No general

cause can be assigned that made it inevitable."[1] And Bury's general explanation of the fall of the Roman Empire in the West has been summed up as follows: "It was the conflux of coincidences which proved decisive. The first contingent cause was the invasion of the Huns from Asia, a 'historical surprise' and resulting from 'events in Central Asia strictly independent of events in Europe.' It was an 'Asian mystery' how these Huns arose and poured into Europe. And to this first contingency was added a second, for the valiant Goths fled before them and poured into the Roman Empire. In their flight they met and defeated a Roman army and slew a Roman Emperor. This great defeat was mainly due to the contingent accident that the Roman Emperor was incompetent and rash. Theodosius, who succeeded Valens, set 'the unfortunate precedent' of settling the Visigoths—a new barbarian people—as a unit inside his l)orders. The fact that he died

[1] Bury, *Later Roman Empire* (1923), I, 311.

at the age of fifty was ‘a third contingency’, for had he lived longer his great ability might

have averted the evils of his blunder. But a fourth event, dependent on causes which had nothing to do with the condition of the Empire, was the mediocrity of his two sons who divided his Empire. The Eastern Arcadius was incompetent, and the Western Honorius was 'feeble-minded'. The final or fifth event was the fact that in the West poor Honorius was controlled by a German, Stilicho. His character is a puzzle', and he admitted barbarians wholesale into the Roman Empire till he brought disaster on himself and it".[1] Bury was prepared to apply this principle of explanation to all historical events, and one more example of it may be given. "The American War of Independence may furnish another illustration. It may be said that the separation of the colonies from Great Britain must inevitably have occurred. This is a proposition on which it would he rash to dogmatize. But granting it for the sake of argument, there can yet be no

[1] Bury, *Selected Essays*, Introduction, by I-I. Temperley, pp. xxvi-xxvii.

doubt that if George II had been still reigning when the difficulties arose, or if George III had been a man of different character, the differences between the colonies and the mother country would have been amicably composed. If the independence of the colonies was inevitable, it would have come about at a later time and in another way. The American War, one of the most far-reaching events of modern history, was determined by the contingency of the personal character and political ideas of George III, which were the result of a chain of causes, unconnected with the relation between the interests of the colonies and those of England.'[1] "The course of events ", says Bury," seems, then, to be marked at every stage by contingencies, some of greater, some of smaller import."

This view, it will be seen, involves two presuppositions. First, it presupposes the whole world of history to consist of a complex of separate series of

[1] Ibid. pp. 63—4.

events, each of which (taken by itself) is a causal sequence—a sequence of events which the category of cause and effect is adequate to explain. There

is no event in history which does not fall within one of the causal sequences. And each of these causal series of events is governed (in the absence of interference by another similar series of events) by its own principle of "natural development". "The irruption of the Huns into Europe", for example, is seen as "the result of a series of political events in Central Asia which was strictly independent of the events in Europe." "The disarrangement of the Germanic world by the descent of the nomads altered at many points the natural development of events in Europe, with which it had no causal connexion." And secondly, this view implies that all historical events may be divided into those which must have happened, inevitable events, and those which need not have happened, accidents. Inevitable events are those which have place within any one of these causal sequences which is permitted to follow its own course of development unhindered; accidents or contingent events are the

product of any conflux of these independent causal sequences.

The explanation of change in history which Bury offers in this theory is, then, in terms of two different but co-operative categories: cause and effect, and accident or contingency. Cause is required to explain, and is all that is required to explain events falling within the separate series of events of which the totality of history is composed. And these events, because to each of them a specific cause can be assigned, are inevitable events. Contingency is required to explain and account for events which lie at the meeting place of any two or more of these causal sequences. And such events are accidental or coincidental.

Now, as a rational explanation of historical change this theory suffers from many and obvious defects: it is in fact both self-contradictory and contradictory of the presuppositions of historical experience, and must, I think, be rejected. I will not stay to consider all its defects, but only those which lie upon the surface. In the first place, in

the form in which Bury presents it, it purports to be not a postulate of historical thought, but a principle derived from a study

of history itself. It is a lesson of history. And since we have seen that history has no lessons of this kind to teach, it stands convicted of misconception at the outset. History, indeed, for Bury, is not a world of experience; it is 'what actually happened'. And he thinks that a rational principle of historical explanation can be deduced from the study of what actually took place. We speak of coincidences and accidents in practical life, and for that reason (he thinks) these things belong to history. "It is obvious that daily life, and therefore history, is full of such chances." Modern history he thought particularly instructive because there, owing to the fullness of our information, we can observe the extent to which history depends upon accident. But, of course, all this is beside the mark. Such a principle is not to be found in history unless we have first put it there. No course of historical events exists until it has been constructed by historical thought, and it cannot be constructed without some presupposition about the

character of the relation between events. And it does not follow that because, in practice, we speak of accidents, they remain accidents in history. Indeed, as we shall see, accident is itself a conception altogether foreign to historical experience.

Secondly, this theory of historical explanation, although it modifies the use of cause as the principle of explanation, yet retains it. And in so far as cause is retained, this theory suffers from the defects which we have seen belong to all attempts to use the category of cause and effect in historical explanation. But, thirdly, where this theory attempts to limit or modify the use of cause as the principle of explanation in history, it introduces a distinction between the characters of certain events which is, in fact, meaningless. On the one hand, there are causal sequences; on the other hand, conflux of coincidences. But in what sense, if we are willing to accept coincidences in history at all, can we retain these causal sequences? How, in short, does the advance of the

Huns, taken by itself, or the spread of Christianity before it was adopted by Constantine, or the rashness of Valens, or

the feeblemindedness of Honorius or anything else which Bury takes to he the effect of a rigid causal sequence, to be an inevitable event, differ in principle from the fall of the Empire in the \Vest? What, in fact, we arc given here is a distinction without a difference. Every one of these so-called rigidly causal sequences is, in fact, merely an unrecognized conflux of coincidences. ‘there is not one of them which may not be broken up into subsidiary events and series of events, the independence of which is no more and no less indisputable than that of the original series. And we arc left with the position that, if we admit coincidence (in Bury’s sense) into history, its first action is to swallow up cause; every historical event becomes an accident. How satisfactory an explanation of historical change this affords, we need not wait to enquire.

But the defects of this theory do not stop here. For if, on the one side, taking the conception of accident seriously leaves us with nothing but accidents, on the other side, any attempt to maintain the genuine causality of the independent sequences of events of which history is represented as being composed, leaves no place at all for accident. An accident or

coincidence is, for Bury, the meeting point of two or more causal sequences, it is a collision of two or more "strictly independent" series of events. Now, if we suppose such a collision between two independent causal sequences of events to have taken place, the point at which it occurred certainly belongs to both sequences concerned. Both have been led to this point by a rigid sequence of cause and effect. How, then, can it be maintained either that the two series are strictly independent, or that the point at which they collide is an accident? That point falls within both series concerned, they have it in common; and it is absurd to maintain that two rigidly causal sequences of events which have one or more events in common arc "strictly independent". And since the point of collision is the 'effect' not of one but of two causal sequences, its 'accidental' character appears to be to seek. Where, then, causal sequences such as Bury postulates exist, there is no room for accidents.

Two other objections to this theory may be noticed. It presupposes a complex of separate causal sequences of events each with a "natural" or "logical" development of its own, from which only a collision with another such course of events can cause it to diverge. But history knows nothing, and cares less about a natural or logical development apart from the actual development which the evidence obliges the historian to accept. The question in history is never what must, or what might have taken place, but solely what the evidence obliges us to conclude did take place. Had George II been King of England when the trouble arose with the American colonies, it is possible that the differences might never have led to war; but to conclude from this that George III was an odd chance, which at this critical point altered the "natural" sequence of events, is to have abandoned history for something less profitable if more entertaining. When Dicey says that "in the ordinary course of events" the law of England with regard to property would have been emended before the end of the eighteenth century, or soon after the beginning of the nineteenth, had not the French Revolution and the Napoleonic

wars delayed the changes, he speaks as a lawyer and a man of affairs, not as an historian. This 'ordinary course of events' is, so far as history is concerned, a pure myth, an extravagance of the imagination.[1]

And lastly, Bury's theory of contingent events implies that in history there are accidents, surprises, abnormalities. But the notion of the accidental is contradictory of the whole

[1] "As for it having been unlikely that Shakespeare should have the literary power at 21 to write the Sonnets—Shakespeare proved to have such transcendent literary power that there is no arguing as to what he might or might not be able to do when he was 21. The only question should be one of fact as to whether the evidence leads us to suppose or no that he wrote the Sonnets at that age. We cannot argue in Shakespeare's case from what other young men are commonly able to do. If this kind of argument is permitted, may we not have someone presently maintaining that Pitt cannot have been born so late as 1759 because that would make him only 24 in 1783 when he became Prime Minister?" Samuel Butler, *Correspondence.*

character of the historical world. It is a notion which the historian, when he sits down to write history, must dismiss from his mind. History knows nothing of the fortuitous or the unexpected; in history there is nothing extraordinary, because there is nothing ordinary. The hard winter of r8iz which ruined Napoleon's expedition to Russia, the storm which dispersed the Armada—these, from the standpoint of the participants, were distressing mischances; all (from that point of view) might so easily have been different. But the attitude of the historian is not that of the eyewitness or the participant. Where they see mischance and accident, he sees fact and event. And he is never called upon to consider what might have happened had circumstances been different. For himself and his friends the death of William I was an accident; for the historian it is no more accidental than if he had died in his bed. To think, as Bury does, of the death of Pericles as in some sense accidental because he died of the plague is to have abandoned history altogether. If we consider Napoleon abstractly, merely as a human being, it was an accident that he was born in Corsica. But when he is considered as the historical Napoleon who

(evidence obliges us to believe) was born in Corsica, his birthplace is no more accidental than any other event in the whole range of history. In short, chance or accident is a mask which it is the precise duty of the historian to tear away, it is a way of thinking which he cannot understand. In the historical past there are no accidental events because, in the scientific sense, there are no necessary or inevitable events. Nevertheless, if history has no place for the accidental, it does not replace it with 'providence' or a 'plan'; it replaces accident with the actual course of events which the evidence establishes.

For these reasons, then, I take it that the attempt to establish historical explanation as explanation in terms of cause and effect and of the conflux of coincidences must be held to have failed. It is both self-contradictory and contradictory of the postulated character of the historical past. Nevertheless, it cannot be considered a wholly worthless

attempt. Any view which has the effect of relieving history from the incubus of bare cause and effect must have some merit. For no attempt to explain change in history can come within sight of success unless somehow it avoids any arbitrary arrest or disjunction in the flow of events and any arbitrary distinction in the character of events. The conception of cause is unsatisfactory because it requires false and misleading interruptions in history: the conception of coincidence is unsatisfactory because it entails the separation of historical events into those which are inevitable and those which are accidental. And the chief defects of Bury's view are, first, that it retains the category of cause, and secondly that it modifies cause only by means of the contradictory concept of accident.

However, in looking elsewhere for a more satisfactory view of the character of historical explanation, we shall do well, I think, to consider a sentence which I have already quoted from Bury. The fall of the Roman Empire in the West is, he says, "accounted for by the actual events and would be clearer if the story were known more fully". For this sug-

gestion contains, I believe, at once a view of historical explanation quite different from that which Bury worked out in detail, and a view less objectionable than any other. Change in history carries with it its own explanation; the course of events is one, so far integrated, so far filled in and complete, that no external cause or reason is looked for or required in order to account for any particular event. The historian, in short, is like the novelist whose characters (for example) are presented in such detail and with such coherence that additional explanation of their actions is superfluous. This principle I will call the unity or continuity of history; and it is, I think, the only principle of explanation consonant with the other postulates of historical experience.

The unity or continuity of history is, of course, a conception not unknown to historians. But most writers of history, because they conceive it to be a lesson of history, must be taken to have misconceived it. History teaches no lessons of this sort. Freeman, for example, believed the unity of

history to be a principle derived from the study of history: as man is the same in all ages, the history of man is one in all ages". Bury thought it had been established by the Darwinian theory of evolution. And, on the other hand, Stubbs denied that it is possible to discover unity in the course of events: there are breaks and "new points of departure in human history ". But for our present purpose, the unity of history must be regarded as a presupposition of historical thought. We shall not find unity in history unless we have first constructed history on a principle of unity. And what I have to suggest is that this principle is capable of offering an explanation of historical change alternative to that supplied by the presupposition of cause, and free from the defects inseparable from the conception of cause.

The first implication of this principle I have noticed already: it is that nothing in the world of history is negative or non-contributory. All relationship between historical events is positive. And to show an event to be non-contributory is the historian's method of denying it the character of an historical event. Moreover (to extend

this implication a little) history has no place for mere error or mistake. The belief that the Donation of Constantine recorded a genuine 'donation' was erroneous; the document was a forgery. But, for the historian, the belief is a positive fact, an event which makes a positive contribution to our knowledge of the Middle Ages, and not a mere mistake. A forgery is not, of course, the same thing to the historian as a genuine work, but it is no less and no more important. History is never a balance of debit and credit; it is a positive unity. In short, the unity of history implies a world of positive events in which such negative concepts as 'evil', 'immoral', 'unsuccessful', 'illogical', etc., have, as such, no place at all. Historical explanation, consequently, involves neither condemnation nor excuse. Secondly, it is implied in this principle that in the course of events for history "everything goes by degrees and nothing by leaps ". Whatever may happen in 'daily life', nothing appears in history *de* novo. Events which, in the world

of practice, appear sudden catastrophes, strange, unexpected occurrences, in history are seen as elements in a completely integrated world. It is a presupposition of history that every event is related and that every change is but a moment in a world which contains no absolute *hiatus*. And the only explanation of change relevant or possible in history is simply a complete account of change. History accounts *for* change by means of a full account *of* change. The relation *between* events is always other events, and it is established in history by a full relation *of* the events. The conception of cause is thus replaced by the exhibition of a world of events intrinsically related to one another in which no *lacuna* is tolerated. To see all the degrees of change is to be in possession of a world of facts which calls for no further explanation. History, then, neither leaves change unexplained, nor attempts to explain it by an appeal to some external reason or universal cause: it is the narration of a course of events which, in so far as it is without serious

interruption, explains itself. In history, "pour savoir les choses, il faut savoir le detail". And the method of the historian is never to explain by means of generalization but always by means of greater and more complete detail.[1]

There are, of course, other implications of this principle of the unity of history which it is not necessary for me to consider in full. It requires, for example, that we should reject any notion of a 'plot' or 'plan' in history, in the sense

[1] To Lord Acton's advice—" Study problems in preference to periods'—we must reply first, that there is no difference; a period in the hands of the historian is as much a problem as anything else. The historian's business with a 'period' is to make it coherent, not merely to narrate the course of events; to understand it historically, not merely to recount it. And secondly, while many of the 'problems' which historians have undertaken to study are not historical problems at all and have succeeded only in leading them astray, 'periods' are beyond question historical individuals and the writer who undertakes seriously to discuss a period, may write bad history, but he certainly cannot be convicted of not writing history at all. Nevertheless, ideally, I suppose, the subject of a history is not so much a 'period' as a society or social whole.

of an outline skeleton of important events, the abstract story without the details. History and the plot of history are the same thing, to know one is to know the other. There is no 'main stream', no essential core in terms of which explanation can be offered. "Au fond, le detail c'est tout l'histoire:" history has neither husk nor kernel.[1] But it is, perhaps, important to notice that 'the unity of history' does not (as Freeman supposed) require us to "cast away all distinctions of 'ancient' and 'modern', of 'dead' and 'living'".[2] Without distinctions of some kind there can be no historical individuals, and without separate individuals there can be no change. This principle does, however, require us to recognize only historical distinctions, only the individuals of history. It excludes the recognition both of individuals which lie outside the world of history, and of individuals created by the arbitrary grouping of historical events in order to give the appearance of a cause and an effect. And finally, it is by means of this principle that accidents are dismissed from

[1] Cp. R. G. Collingwood, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society,* 1924—5, pp. 151 sq.
[2] Freeman, *Comparative Politics, p.* 197.

history and the contrast between freedom and necessity, freewill and determinism, is made meaningless. These conceptions are relevant in the world of practical experience, but in historical experience they have no meaning. Events, things and persons in history are neither free (in the sense of being ungoverned by relations), nor determined (in the sense of being governed by 'logical' or cosmic causes). They are both free from the influence of external determination, and determined by their place and relations in their own world. The 'human will' is no more uncertain or unaccountable than any other individual of historical experience.[1] in short, what the principle of mechanism is in scientific experience, this principle of unity or continuity is in historical experience, it is a structural presupposition (assumed and left uncriticized in history) which enables the historian to build a specific and homogeneous world of ideas. In history

[1] Cp. Freeman, *Methods of Historical Study, p.* 148.

there is the attempt to explain the historical past by means of the historical past and for the sake of the historical past.

§3

My purpose, I have said, is to consider historical experience from the standpoint of the totality of experience, to consider (that is) the truth of history. History is the whole of reality from a certain standpoint, and not a separable part of reality. Historical thought belongs to the attempt to find a world of experience satisfactory in itself, and history cannot be dismissed as a "tissue of mere conjunctions". The under-taking of Schopenhauer and others to thrust history outside experience must be considered to have failed. The world of historical fact is certainly true and history is certainly reality, so far as it goes. But, beyond this general character, historical experience is a specific, homogeneous world of experience, an organized whole, and die problem of the character of this world of historical ideas, taken by itself and as a self-contained whole, remains. Is the world of historical ideas, taken as a whole and by itself,

satisfactory, or must a means be discovered of superseding it in order to achieve what the character of experience implies? Is the world of history the world of concrete reality, or is it an arrest in experience? For we have seen, whatever he the character of the world of historical experience, it must be accepted or rejected as a whole. Either it is, when taken as a world and by itself, abstract, defective, unable to satisfy the ultimate demand in experience; or it is itself the concrete world of reality. Our question, then, remains: What is the status of this world of historical experience, taken as a world and by itself, in the totality of experience?

In considering the actual structure of the world of history I have not concealed my view that it is, when regarded from the standpoint of the totality of experience, abstract and defective. And in order to answer the question now before us, I have only to point out the implications of

the view of historical experience to which I am a]ready committed. What determines the world of historical experience as historical, determines it also as an arrest in experience.

The first characteristic of the world of historical experience I have had occasion to notice is that its form contradicts the nature of its content. And this alone obliges us to consider it no better than an abstract world, a defective mode of experience. The world of historical fact, truth and reality appears to lie in the past; historical reality is a past reality, and the notion of the past cannot be dismissed from history without dismissing history itself. But to suppose this world of history *actually* to lie in the past, to accept it (that is) in the form in which it is satisfactory in historical experience, involves us in a radical contradiction. It obliges us to suppose a world which is not a world of ideas, to suppose facts which are not in experience, truths which are not true, reality which is not real. For no fact, truth or reality is, or can be, past. And, at this point, what is satisfactory in historical experience fails to satisfy in experience itself. The world of history is the world *sub specie praeteritorum*; but only by

becoming present through and through can this world become an adequate organization of experience, and to become this would involve the renunciation of its own specific and distinguishing character. In historical experience the attempt is made to establish and maintain the real world, but the world which is actually established and maintained, the world which corresponds with its actual character and represents its explicit purpose, is a world vitiated by this abstraction, the past. Historical experience, because it is experience, implies the assertion of reality; but what is explicit in historical judgment is not what it asserts of reality, for what is explicit is abstract and unable to qualify reality directly. And again, the world of history appears to be an extension of our present world, a newly discovered tract in experience; and unless it actually is this, it stands convicted of defect and ambiguity. But to suppose that this is its character involves us at once in the contradictory notions of events which are not facts, facts

which are not ideas, ideas which are not experiences. In short, what is past is, as such, an abstraction, and any attempt to make a system of experience upon the basis of this abstraction can result only in an abstract world of experience. The world seen under the category of the past is the world seen imperfectly.

This world of historical events, then, taken as a whole and by itself, must be thought of as a certain abstracted aspect of the real world. Or, alternatively, it must be considered a defective organization of the world of experience taken as a whole. It adds nothing to that world, and by introducing this contradictory notion of the past, it succeeds only in rendering a satisfactory organization of the world of experience impossible. Taken by itself, the world of history is abstract and defective from end to end: and only by abandoning it altogether shall we find ourselves once more on the way to a world of experience satisfactory in itself. Pretending to organize and elucidate the real world of experience *sub specie aeternitatis*, history succeeds only in organizing it *sub specie praeteritorum.* And consequently the world of historical experience

constitutes an arrest in experience and a renunciation of the full, unmitigated character of experience.

But there is a second characteristic of the world of history which establishes its abstract character on an even firmer foundation. If, after what I have said, the notion is still entertained that history can be freed from its attachment to the past without at the same moment being freed from itself, we need only consider the character of the historical individual (what is real in history) to be convinced of the abstractness of the world of history. The historical individual, besides being past (and for that reason abstract and beyond redemption), is, I have said, the creature of designation. And designation is not a separate kind of thought, but a defective mode of thought. The end in all experience is definition; and wherever in experience satisfaction is achieved in a world of merely designated individuals, in place of a world of defined individuals, experience has fallen short of its own character.

The individual of designation is always more or less arbitrary; its limits are arbitrary, its identity insecure. Everything, we have seen, is real so long as it is not taken for less than it is. But mere designation is a mode of thought which consistently takes everything for less than it is; it is abstraction as a special process. And this is the condition of history. What in history is taken to be real falls short of the character of reality. The subject in history is not, of course, a mere name, or it is not always so. There are degrees of designation, degrees of falling short of definition; and history certainly passes beyond any form of experience satisfied with singular judgments, the subjects of which are proper names. Nevertheless, it always falls short of definition. And any world of designated individuals falls short of what is satisfactory in experience. History postulates something more than a mere name, and something less than a definitive individual.

Moreover, the historical individual is a changing

identity. And identity and change, we have seen, belong only to abstract individuals: they postulate incompleteness. Wherever identity can be asserted or denied, what we are dealing with is an abstraction, an individual which falls short of being a world and complete in itself, an individual which has failed to achieve and cannot maintain individuality. The historical individual is, then, the result of an arrest in the conception of individuality at a point short of absolute coherence. And consequently there is nothing in history which can be supposed to provide what is ultimately satisfactory in experience.

Historical experience, I conclude, is a modification of experience; it is an arrest in experience. History is a world of abstractions. It is a backwater, and, from the standpoint of experience, a mistake. It leads nowhere; and in experience, if we have been unable to avoid it, we can regain the path to what will afford satisfaction only by superseding and destroying it. In short, everything I have taken to be true of a mode of experience is true of historical experience; and everything I have taken to be true of a world of

ideas, is true of history. This, of course, does not mean that in historical experience there is nothing which affords any degree of satisfaction whatever, that historical experience is abstract absolutely—such a position is, in my opinion, untenable and I have already dismissed it. Historical experience means, in the end, nothing else than experience which in a certain specific degree is satisfactory in itself. That historical experience is in some degree satisfactory is not untrue, but (from my point of view) irrelevant. My standpoint is that of the totality of experience, and from that standpoint historical experience is a failure and consequently an absolute failure. And the limited satisfaction to be found in historical experience is unable even to contribute to the ultimate satisfaction looked for in the totality of experience. The world of history, as a formulation of experience, stands in the way of a finally coherent world of ideas.

It will, perhaps, be thought that I have reached this conclusion somewhat rapidly and without having given sufficient attention to the views with which it conflicts. And in order to remedy this defect, I

propose now to consider what I take to he the two most important forms of the view that historical experience is concrete experience and that the world of historical ideas is the world of concrete reality. Briefly, this view asserts that in order to understand things we must understand their history, and that when we have understood their history we have understood the things themselves. Experience, it is said, "is historical altogether and the fact is happily one there is no gainsaying".[1] "History", remarks Lord Acton, "rescues us from the transient": and for that reason must be supposed to provide what is satisfactory in experience. Experience itself is historical, and all abstract modes of experience are modifications of historical experience.

Before considering this view in detail, there are two general observations to be made. First, it will be seen that any view

[1] Ward, *Naturalism and Agnosticism,* II, 218.

which asserts that in order to understand 'things' we must understand their history, rests, from my point of view, upon a *petitio principii*, and is entirely worthless. It assumes the existence of 'things' independent of experience, it takes these 'things' to be the absolute and unchangeable data in experience, and then enquires what interpretation or view of them reveals their essential and intrinsic character. The world of 'things' and the world of experience are sundered, and all attempts to reunite them must remain futile. And secondly, so far from history rescuing us from the transient, it is the organization of experience under the category of transience. It rests upon the assumption that transience is real and gives us a view of experience from this standpoint. History could rescue us from the transient only if the past were separate from and independent of the present, a storehouse of past events and past experiences, and history a kind of universal memory—and this view involves us in so many difficulties that I have already been obliged to reject it.

The claim to concreteness or absolute self-completeness, in the first of the forms in which I shall consider it, is made on

behalf of history itself. By this I mean that history itself (and not any refinement upon history) is represented as concrete experience, and the world of historical events (and not something derived from that world) is represented as the world of concrete reality. And it is difficult to conjecture how this notion can ever have gained currency. On the surface it presents difficulties enough: but these are negligible when compared with the mass of contradictions which does duty as a foundation. I do not, however, propose to unearth these systematically; many of them I have discussed already, and it will be sufficient for my purpose to consider only the main arguments which are used to recommend this claim.

Historical experience, it is said, is concrete experience because the object in historical experience is what is individual and not (like scientific experience) what is merely general. In history we have knowledge of what is absolutely individual, what is real without qualification. Now, anyone

who has followed the remarks I have already made on the subject of individuality will understand the objection I must take to this view. For me individuality is a question of degree; hut for this view it is either present in or entirely absent from any world of experience. For me the end in all experience is to distinguish individuality; but for this view there are modes of experience which are wholly without a notion of individuality; the generalities of scientific thought are not a modified form of individuality, they are the mere denial of individuality. For me the only absolute individual is the universe as a whole, for this alone is self-complete, without either environment or relations; but for this view the universe is as full of absolute, self-existent individuals as it is full of historical events, things and persons. In short, this view of history is based upon a notion of experience and of reality which I have already examined in detail and rejected. And further, that the historical individual is a self-complete whole, ultimate, irreducible and absolute, is, when we compare it with the shaky and uncertain individuality which actually belongs to history, a notion so absurd that it is difficult to take it seriously. The individual in

history is both past and merely designated, and on account of either of these characteristics it stands convicted of abstraction. And if what this view of history intends to claim is, not that history is concerned with and reveals what is absolutely individual, but what is singular, it is merely another attempt to thrust history outside experience in the hope that it may, on that account, demonstrate its intimacy with reality. And, as we have seen already, the effect of this procedure is the reverse of what is intended.

Another argument (if it may be called so) used to support the world of historical events in its character of the world of absolute reality takes this form: all knowledge is historical knowledge, because all knowledge is the product of experience, and experience is necessarily historical, necessarily derived from 'what has happened'. But this argument relies upon a conception of experience which identifies it with something

standing over against reflection providing the material or data of reflection—a common conception, but one for which there is nothing at all to be said, And further, even if we were able to maintain the possibility of such experience, it would still be something different from historical experience. For history, we have seen, is not concerned with 'what has been' as such, with every and any past, but only with the historical past. Historical knowledge is not knowledge of 'what has happened', but of the past in so far as it conforms to the categories of historical experience. What, no doubt, lies behind this notion of historical knowledge as complete knowledge is the idea that in history we enjoy a kind of extension of present knowledge which must be supposed to enrich it and make it more profound, and without which it must remain partial and restricted. Hut history, we have seen, is anything hut an extension of present experience; it is, on the contrary, a mutilation of present experience, it is present experience deformed and restricted by being thrown into the mould of the historical past, by being conceived under the category of the past. The view, then, that the world of

history is the world of concrete reality, that historical truth is absolute truth, can find no adequate support for itself in the notion that history is somehow an extension of present experience, that history "rescues us from the transient ".

But further, this view appears sometimes connected with the notion that history is not a mode of experience at all, but the direct presentation of the objective life of the universe, uncompromised by experience and unmodified by interpretation. In the 'pageant of history' we perceive naked reality, unencumbered with the generalities of philosophy and the abstractions of science, passing before our eyes. We see the whole, of which the present is but a part; the detailed whole, from which science abstracts a mere aspect and of which philosophy grasps a mere outline. But in so far as a connexion with this extraordinary notion is insisted upon it cannot fail to discredit rather than advance the claim we

are considering. Unless history is experience it is nothing at all; and if it be experience it must conform to the character of experience, which knows nothing of a whole separated into parts; there are no separate tracts of experience and no separate kinds of knowledge.

So far, then, from it being impossible to gainsay the view that experience is "historical altogether", it must remain conjectural how such a notion could ever have been entertained. That experience itself is historical experience; that the only valid criticism which can be offered of any modification of experience is an historical criticism; and that when history itself is made the subject of thought, all that can be said of it, relevantly, must be comprised in a mere history of history—all this, and much else, seems to be involved in this claim. And there can be no doubt that, to appear in this exaggerated guise, history must be living beyond its means, and the last state of such extravagance can be only bankruptcy.

But the assertion that historical experience is absolute experience is to be found in a second form. The claim is not only made on behalf of history itself, but also on behalf of what is called the 'philosophy of history'. The world of

historical events, as it leaves the hand of the historian, is admitted to be incomplete and defective, but it is asserted that 'philosophy' working upon this world can somehow transform it into the world of absolute reality. And I must now consider this view. It should, however, be remarked that the claim cannot be said to be on behalf of history, or the world of historical events, unless the 'philosophy of history' itself stands for some form of historical experience. The transformation which 'philosophy' is to produce in the world of history must not be so radical as to involve the destruction of that world and the substitution of another in its place. Yet it must be a real transformation, for otherwise the result would be indistinguishable from history itself and would suffer from the defects which we have seen belong to history. And it appears to me that the 'philosophy of history',

in its attempt to serve two masters, will succeed in satisfying neither, and must reveal itself as a hybrid and homeless form of thought.

Now, the phrase 'the philosophy of history' cannot be said to have a single and unambiguous meaning for all who make use of it. It will, I think, be found to cover at least three entirely distinct conceptions. And in what I have to say I will confine myself to these In the first place, the philosophy of history' has been taken to mean the attempt to discover and establish some general laws which govern the whole course of history. The materials are supplied by the mere historian; the philosopher generalizes them. Historical facts are regarded as ephemeral instances of the unchanging truths which the philosophy of history propounds. I do not, however, propose to consider this type of philosophy of history in detail now, because it represents a form of thought which I should prefer to call the 'science of history', and I must discuss it later when I come to consider the relation of historical to scientific thought. All that need be remarked at this point is that this so-called philosophy of history involves the complete

destruction of history. The moment historical facts are regarded as instances of general laws, history is dismissed. Historical individuals are, of course, themselves generalizations, but any form of generalization which reduces them to instances of a rule must involve the complete destruction of history. An historical individual, it is true, tends always to pass beyond the conception of individuality upon which it is based, but there is a limit beyond which it ceases to be an historical individual. And I may say also that I can find no reason whatever for speaking of this attempt to generalize history as 'philosophy'. The first form of the philosophy of history appears, then, to be neither philosophy nor history; it is of too nondescript a character to he able to maintain itself either as concrete experience itself, the world of absolute reality, or as the world of history.

But secondly, 'the philosophy of history' means for some

writers a kind of general review of the course of human life, a view of finite existence from some standpoint outside the actual course of finite life. A notion of this sort is, I think, to be found in Lotze.[1] But its excessive vagueness makes it difficult to describe. Its difficulties, however, are obvious. Such a form of thought might be philosophy, but it could be nothing whatever to do with history. The transformation it effects in the world of historical events is so radical that nothing recognizable as history remains. A view of finite existence from the standpoint of the Absolute is, indeed, an intelligible conception, but it is grossly misleading to speak of it as a 'philosophy of history'.

A third conception of the 'philosophy of history' is to be found in the notion of the discovery and elucidation of the plan or plot of history. And this may be taken in two quite distinct senses. It may mean either the skeleton of history, the general plan from which the details have been omitted; or, history seen as one, all-inclusive whole in which each detail has its place. It may mean either a selective

[1] Lotze, *Mikrokosmus*, vii, Kap. ii.

simplification of history based upon some assumed notion of general significance[1]; or what is called 'universal history'. If, however, the discovery of the plot or plan of history be taken in the first sense, the result may possibly be philosophy, but has certainly nothing to do with history; it is, in *fact*, the denial of all that we have seen history to be. To omit the details involves the destruction of history. And if it be taken in the second sense, it is quite indistinguishable from history itself: for, merely to extend the region of history cannot be supposed to convert an abstract mode of experience into the concrete whole of experience. And consequently it suffers from the defects which we have seen belong to the world of history itself.

I conclude, then, that the attempt to find the world of unqualified reality in the world of historical events or in the

[1] The writings of Hegel and Schlegel on the philosophy of history appear to fall into this class

'philosophy of history', has failed. And no argument the cogency of which can be recognized has yet been proposed to persuade me to alter this opinion. Any attempt of historical experience, or any form of experience derived from history, to pass itself off as the concrete totality of experience can result only in the grossest error. And similarly, any attempt on the part of experience itself, philosophical experience, to enter the world of historical experience, except in the form of historical experience, must constitute an *ingnoratio elenchi*, and be productive only of confusion. The world of history is a world of abstractions, historical experience is abstract experience; it is a homogeneous, self-contained mode of experience which falls short of self-completeness. And those who have made it their business to press experience to its conclusion can choose only between avoiding or superseding it.

§4

From this review of the categories of historical thought and the character of the world of historical experience, I will

pass now to consider briefly the relation of this world, as a world, to other worlds of experience. In so far as these other worlds are what I have called abstract, they are (of course) in no sense whatever related to the world of history, and there can be no passage from one to the other in argument without *ignoratio elenchi;* that is a principle I have already discussed. Whenever they attempt an incursion into the world of history, the result can be only the destruction of history; and whenever history invades any other world of experience, the result is always the general disintegration of experience. Nevertheless, it is important to see *what* worlds of experience are thus excluded from history and why in detail they are excluded. And in what I have to say on this topic I shall confine my attention to two worlds of experience which have, on occasion, been confused with that of history, but which, since they are different modifications of experience from that of history, must be taken to fall outside the world of his-

torical experience—I mean the worlds of practice and of science.

(a) I have already considered in some detail the result of an incursion of history into the world of practical experience and of practical experience into the world of history; and I have contended that from neither can anything but error arise. The notion, however, is common that the aim in historical thought is the elucidation of the world of practical experience. "The understanding of the present is always the final goal of history. History is just the whole life experience of our race, in so far as we are able to remember it well and apply it closely to our present existence."[1] The goal in history is, in short, the elucidation of our world of practical ideas, the organization of our present practical life. Two connected notions appear to be involved in this view of the character of history, and both of them I take to be false. First, it is implied that "our present existence" can be isolated in such a way as to leave part of our experience outside it. It is a world of experience which

[1] Troeltsch, *Die .Bedeutung des Protestantismus,* p. 6

can be elucidated by applying' to it some other experience which lies behind it. And secondly, it is implied that history is an extension of our world of present knowledge. The appeal to history as a guide to conduct, as a school of statecraft, as a basis for present practical life is conceived to be an appeal to a wider world of experience than what belongs to the present.[1] This, for example, is how the matter seems to have appeared to Burke. But history, we have seen, can in no sense be considered to open to us a world of 'past experience' lying outside our world of present experience. And whenever history is joined to practical experience an appeal is made, not to an extension of our present, practical experience, but to experience as a whole disguised and misrepresented *sub specie praeterttorum*, to a mode of experience wholly without relevance to practical life. And whenever history finds itself joined with

[1] "Die Geschichte ist das *????? sea?t??* der Menschheit, ihr Gewissen", Droysen.

practical experience, the result can be only the destruction of both. No guidance for practical life can be expected to follow from the organization of the totality of experience *sub specie praeeritorum*. The world of history has no data to offer of which practical experience can make use; and to conceive it as offering such data is to misconceive its character.

This does not mean that in matters of practice any form of appeal to any past is always irrelevant. We have seen already that such an appeal is both possible and intelligible as an incentive to belief or action; though it never amounts to more than a *facon de paler*. What it means is that this practical appeal to a practical past is not even an abuse (much less a 'use') of history, it is merely not history at all. Unless history is released from this proposed alliance with the world of practical experience it must remain a hybrid and sterile mode of experience. History is not a bar of judgment; it passes no verdict; *die Weltgeschichte* is not *das Weltgericht*. Neither the truth nor the character of history depend, in any way, upon its having some lesson to teach us. And if ever we persuade ourselves that the past has taught us something, we may be certain that it is not

the historical past which has been our teacher. The worlds of history and of practice are different arrests in experience, different modifications of experience, and, taken as worlds and by themselves, there can be no relation or commerce between them.

(b) The relation between the world of history and that of science calls for a more detailed consideration; and in what I have to say now I shall be compelled to anticipate some of the conclusions of the next chapter, for the view which I wish to present of the relationship depends, naturally, as much upon the character of scientific experience as upon the character of historical experience.

There have been historians who believed that this so-called relation between history and science is the very condition of historical truth. History, they thought, is itself a science. Sometimes it is not clear what exactly they intended to convey by this assertion; at other times it is only too clear that

they did not intend to convey the meaning to which, I think, we must hold the words. But briefly, the view I wish to suggest is that history and science are different modifications of experience and that whenever they are brought together, associated or combined only irrelevance, a hybrid and nonsensical world of ideas is produced. I do not say that the phrase 'the science of history' has no intelligible meaning; I say that "a science of history *in the true sense of the term* is an absurd notion ".[1] The assimilation of history to science is, on account of the different characters of these worlds of ideas, impossible.

The relation between history and science has appeared to some writers to be a matter merely of words. Freeman, for example, takes this view. History is certainly knowledge; 'science~ is merely Latin for the Teutonic 'knowledge'; therefore history is a science.[2] But since on this view all knowledge whatever is also science, it cannot be considered to have greatly extended our ideas on the subject. Few will deny that history is knowledge; but the question for us is, Does history

[1] Jevons, *Principles of Science, p. 761.*

[2] Freeman, *Methods of Historical Study, pp.* 117, 152.

belong to that subspecies of knowledge called 'science'? Again, 'scientific history' sometimes means little more than 'accurate history', history unclouded by prejudice, or history based upon a critical examination of the original sources. But this also is in the nature of a metaphor and does not help us to determine the relations of history and science. No attempt is made to advance from mere designation to a definition of the terms in question. And the whole of that grotesque (and now happily obsolete) controversy as to whether history is an art or a science must be considered, from our point of view, quite beside the mark. What, however, appears to lie at the root of any serious assertion that history and science belong together is the notion that, for some reason, history must be assimilated to science before it can be considered to be a valid form of knowledge: history must be science in order to be valid. And

further, what I take to be the ground of this notion is the view that history, if it is to be a form of knowledge, cannot avoid generalization, and that the only valid form of generalization is that which belongs to science. The first of these ideas would seem to contain some hint of truth. Without some kind of generalization history would be a "tissue of mere conjunctions", would fall altogether outside experience. The second, however, is certainly false. And since I cannot here anticipate the whole argument of my next chapter, I will content myself (so far as scientific generalization is concerned) with the assertion that if the character of science and scientific generalization be what I there suggest it is, then it is different from anything which can be found in history. But with regard to the character of historical generalization a few observations may be made.

First, it will be observed that historical individuals are themselves the product of generalization, though not (of course) of scientific generalization: a scientific generalization can result only in a scientific individual. The fall of the Bastille, the Roman Empire and Napoleon are all generalizations, and they are

constructed (we have seen) by means of the principle of continuity. And since the principle of continuity implies that there is in history nothing apart from 'details', this historical generality cannot be secured by suppressing what, from another and non-historical point of view, might be regarded as mere details, accidents. But, it will also be observed that these historical generalizations are limited. Press them too far, and we shall find that we have pressed them outside the world of history; abandon (in the interests of universal generalization) the limits of historical individuality, and we shall have abandoned history itself. Historical facts, then, are limited generalizations constructed by means of the more or less arbitrary principle of historical continuity. But the important point is yet to come. Historical individuals, themselves the product of generalization, do not admit of further generalization. There is no process of generalization by means of which the events, things and persons of

history can be reduced to anything other than historical events, things and persons without at the same time being removed from the world of historical ideas. For, once an historical individual is established it is, for history, absolute. It is not, of course, absolute in the sense of being ultimately complete and self-sufficient; but, with all its limitations, it remains the irreducible unit of history. And what appear to be universal generalizations in history are, in fact, merely collective or enumerative judgments. *All the Reformation Parliaments were packed,* is an historical judgment, but it is in no sense a generalization.[1] In history there are no 'general laws' by means of which historical individuals can be reduced to instances of a principle, and least of all are there general laws of the character we find in the world of science.

But the real difficulties involved in the notion of a science of history appear when a world of ideas is considered which, in the opinion of some, unites historical and scientific thought; I mean the world of

[1] Bradley, *Logic*, I, 46, 82

ideas pursued and maintained in Anthropology.

There are not many points upon which anthropologists are unanimous, but there seems to he tolerable agreement upon the propositions that anthropology is an historical study, that it is a science, and that "it is a science in whatever way history is a science ". And we may he excused for supposing that some explanation beyond these assertions is required before an intelligible world of ideas is even in sight.

Anthropology is an historical study—this is certainly intelligible. The men it is concerned with are historical persons, the societies it studies are historical facts, the events it records are historical events; in short, the abstractions it works with are the abstractions of history. The subject of anthropology is the evolution of historically determined individuals. "Anthropology is the whole history of man as fired and pervaded by the idea of evolution. Man in evolution—that is the subject at its full reach. Anthropology studies man as

he occurs at all known times. It studies him as he occurs in all known parts of the world. It studies him body and soul together—as a bodily organism, subject to the conditions operating in time and space, which bodily organism is in intimate relation with a soul-life, also subject to those same conditions. Having an eye to such conditions from first to last, it seeks to plot out the general series of changes, bodily and mental together, undergone by man in the course of history."[1] Anthropology, in short, is the application of an historical idea of evolution to the history of man.[2] And, whatever difficulties we may find in this view, even if it must he admitted that this prepossession with the idea of evolution or development and with a merely "general" series of changes may lead to had history, it is impossible to suppose that the mode of experience involved is other than historical, and that the

[1] Marett, Anthropology, pp. 7—8.

[2] The scientific or biological conception of evolution must, of course, be distinguished from the historical (or pseudo-historical) conception. To speak of the Darwinian theory as an invasion of science by the historical method, the introduction of an 'historical biology', is certainly to misconceive its character. Evolution for biology is not an historical change. And the tendency of some biologists to express their views in pseudo-historical language is, to say the least, misleading and belongs to an ill-thought out conception of scientific experience.

world of ideas is other than the world of historical ideas.

The second proposition asserts that anthropology is a science. And this, if it means anything, means that anthropology is not concerned with historical events, that its data are not perceptual objects, and that its conceptions and abstractions are not those of history. It appears, then, that whatever else the character of anthropology is, it cannot be both history and science; and to advertise it as such is to advertise an absurdity. And it appears, further, that although it has frequently claimed the character of a science, no serious attempt has been made to create a genuine science of anthropology. No anthropologist, in fact, is to he found willing to surrender the abstract world of history for the abstract

world of science, to adopt (that is) a purely quantitative conception of man and of society, of civilization, moral development and religion, and to be content with measurements in place of historical events, statistical inference in place of historical fact, statistical generalization in place of historical enumeration.[1] And the reason for this is, perhaps, that the conclusions of such a science would be relatively unimportant. If anthropology is to be a science, it must begin with a world conceived *sub specie quantitatis*. And it is difficult to imagine the process of abstraction which would produce a scientific conception of 'society', or of 'man', sufficiently different from that of biology, psychology or economics, to distinguish this science of anthropology. Beyond this lack of distinctive scientific conceptions, the relative unimportance of the conclusions of a science of anthropology would be due to a lack of data. A science which aimed at establishing general laws with regard to 'races',

[1] The attempt to correlate 'societies' with their standard of civilization on a purely numerical basis, whatever its validity, might appear to be an exception to this. But, while societies are taken to be pure measurements, the standard of civilization is not similarly conceived, and the argument consequently fails to be genuinely scientific. Cp. Sutherland, *Origin and Growth of the Moral Instinct*, ch. xi.

'nations' or communities distinguished upon the basis of creed or culture would have comparatively few measurements and observations at its command. This, of course, would not make such a science impossible. What makes a science impossible is never merely the quantitative limitation of its data. All scientific generalization is statistical generalization and refers directly only to a series of observations as such; and wherever there is a series of observations of the right character there is material for scientific generalization. But a scantiness of data will certainly render scientific generalizations insignificant. And such is the inevitable condition of a science of anthropology.

The assertion that anthropology is a science may, however, he made in a modified form. It may mean merely that what is sought in anthropology is, not strictly scientific laws, but

general laws of some kind. "The aim of this science," says Frazer, "as of every other science, is to discover general laws to which the particular facts may be supposed to conform."[1] This, in so far as it refers to "every other science" is, of course, if not untrue, at least misleading. It is never supposed that the "particular facts" of science "conform" to general laws; it is always and only the series of observations as a series which in science is taken to conform to law. And further, whatever we may suppose the character of "the general laws which have regulated human history"[2] to he, we cannot suppose them to be scientific laws; for scientific laws can refer only to scientific observations which are of a wholly different character from those in history. They are neither past, nor percepts, nor observed under the category of historical continuity.

And even when they attempt generalization, many writers on anthropology do not, in fact, venture beyond a merely historical treatment of this subject. Such 'generalizations' as: "Among certain races and at certain times superstition has strengthened the respect

[1] Frazer, *The Scope of Social Anthropology.*
[2] *Ibid.*

for government, especially monarchical government, and has thereby contributed to the establishment and maintenance of civil order",[1] or, "No society has ever passed into full civilization without passing through patriarchy. No matriarchy has ever given rise directly to a full civilization",[2] are merely enumerative judgments; they are certainly not scientific (because they are not statistical), and they are certainly not generalizations because they rely upon the supposition that the observations on which they are based are exhaustive. They are, however, valid, and for what they are worth, historical.

But when a more extended form of generalization is attempted, it becomes (to say the least) doubtful, without becoming scientific. When, for example, a "pre-exogamic stage of human society" is spoken of, or when it is said that primitive societies recognize no purely self-regarding acts

[1] Frazer, *Psyche's Task, p. 4*

[2] *G.* Heard, *The Social Substance of Religion,* p. 39.

because they recognize no independent individuals, an attempt has been made to pass beyond judgment about the mere history of particular societies, to pass beyond enumerative judgment about all observed societies, to judgment about human society in general. Again, a similar attempt is made in such a statement as this: In England scrofula was believed to be curable by the king's touch, "and on the analogy of the Polynesian superstitions which I have cited, we may perhaps conjecture that the skin disease of scrofula was originally supposed to be caused as well as cured by the king's touch".[1] And it becomes necessary to enquire into the character of these generalizations. We should notice first that, though these judgments purport to be real generalizations, to go beyond what has actually been observed, they take, nevertheless, the form of historical judgments; they are in terms of historical concepts and they refer directly to historically determined events or occurrences, and not to a series of quantitatively conceived observations as such. And for this reason, if for no other,

[1] Frazer, *Psyche's Task, p.* 17

they are not scientific. But, we are told, the generality of anthropological judgments (whether or not it is scientific) is based upon the Comparative Method, which is described as "borrowing the links in one chain of evidence to supply the gaps in another".[1] And the method, in turn, "rests upon the well-ascertained similarity of working of the human mind in all races of men",[2] rests upon "correspondence among mankind",[3] the fact that "one set of savages is like another". And this view of the character of anthropological generalization is important because it is the only coherent suggestion yet made for a method of generalizing historical observations. We should not, however, allow ourselves to assume the validity of this form of generalization before we have considered the ground upon which it rests and the presuppositions which it involves.

First, it is clear enough that the Comparative Method is

[1] Frazer, *The Scope of Social Anthropology*
[2] *Ibid*
[3] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I, *7*

sterile unless it is dealing with instances which are demonstrably separate. If one event or custom has influenced another, either directly or indirectly through the mere knowledge of the fact that it has happened, they are no longer separate instances, and to compare them can result in no valid generalization whatever. Unless, for example, it is demonstrated that the change from mother-right to father-right in one community was uninfluenced by a corresponding change in another community, or by the knowledge of a corresponding change, we cannot begin to collect data to verify the hypothesis that changes in lineage are always from mother-right to father-right and never *vice versa*. And not only is this condition difficult to satisfy, but also, were it satisfied, anthropology would at once become something other than history (for where comparison begins, as a method of generalization, history ends), without becoming scientific.

But secondly, assuming this condition to be satisfied, the position of the Comparative Method is still precarious; it rests, indeed, upon a *petitio principii*. If the world of anthropology does not possess the characteristics of atomism

and limited variety which this method assumes it to possess, then the method ceases to he of value. And the assumption that it does possess these characteristics involves the assumption that the world of anthropology is a world of scientific concepts —--which it is not, because it is not a world of quantitatively determined observations. Science secures for itself a world of limited variety, a world of repetitions and recurrences, by assuming a world of pure measurements. But this assumption, we have seen, is impossible for anthropology, and with it goes the validity of the Comparative Method.

Anthropology, then, has in the main none but historical observations at its command, and these observations depend upon the rejection of the one condition upon which the Comparative Method depends, the rejection of a world of limited variety, a world of distinguishable cause and effect. If generalization in anthropology depends upon the Comparative Method, then anthropology is a scientific study and

not an historical study; but it cannot be scientific for the reasons I have already given. It must, then, be concluded that the generality of the 'laws' of anthropology, in so far as they pass beyond genuine historical generalizations and in so far as they are based upon the Comparative Method, is mere conjecture and without logical validity. Anthropology certainly provides no scientific generalizations, and its attempt to produce non-scientific laws has been without legitimate issue. And we must not allow ourselves to be misled by the suggestion that, because this historico-scientific form of thought has produced results, it is therefore absurd to question its validity. Any mode of thought, however hybrid or diseased, can produce results, but they are not necessarily legitimate. The Comparative Method is not a method which unites science and history; it dismisses history and never achieves the full condition of science. And since the scientific character of anthropology is an illusion, its conceptions and presuppositions being those of history, we must conclude that it is history or it is nothing. Any attempt to find in it, or to make of it, an historico-scientific world of ideas must always fail.

What reforms a full realization of the historical character of anthropology (and the consequent rejection of the view that it is a science) would produce in this study need not now be considered. But it may be remarked that one effect would be a shifting of emphasis from similarities to differences. The anthropologist, intent upon developing the pseudo-scientific character of his subject, has in the past concentrated upon the observation of similarities; but history is regulated by the pursuit of differences. Whenever the historian is presented with an apparent identity, not merely are his suspicions aroused, but he knows that he is passing beyond his own presuppositions; for it is posited from the beginning that the world of history is a world from which identity has been excluded. The question whether or not history repeats itself is not one to he decided by examining the 'course of events' itself, it is answered in the negative by the postulates which

determine the only course of events known in history. History never repeats itself because to do so would involve a contradiction of its own character. And the institution of comparisons and the elaboration of analogies are activities which the historian must avoid if he is to remain an historian.

I have embarked upon this discussion of the character of anthropology because it appeared the most comprehensive way of dealing with the question of the relation of historical and scientific experience. And I conclude from it that in fact science and scientific conceptions have never contributed to the elucidation of the world of historical ideas. Wherever science and history have been associated, nothing but recognizable error and confusion has followed, and in logic such a contribution is impossible. The conjunction of science and history can produce nothing but a monster, for these are abstract and separate worlds of ideas, different and exclusive modifications of experience, which can he joined only at the cost of an *ignoratio elenchi*.

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