CHAPTER - II.

Marie Corelli's views on God and the human soul.

"Beware of trifling with the real God, - the absolute Ego sum of the Universe".

--The Soul of Lilith. pp.45.

"One spark of God's own essence remains alit within us."

A Romance of Two Worlds. pp.XVI.

Mystics and men of religion have always thought of a Supreme Power as comprehending the working of the universe. The empirical plurality is studied in relation to this Absolute Being. Starting from the world of experience, we go up to the ultimate principle of God, and from the conception of the whole so gained we descend into details and review the parts. If God is denied and everything is looked at from the physical and theoretical point of view then the world appears as a "mere flux of becoming, ever aspiring to be something else than what it is."

Indian philosophy is no mere theoretical argumentation devoid of imagination and mysticism. The problem of the universe should be studied on the basis of both the subjective and objective facts of experience. Otherwise we cannot have a complete

account of the nature of the universe. The physical sciences should not be allowed to suppress the science of the spirit. In reply to the profane talk of a scientist, Sri Aurobindo once said: "The existence of God is not and cannot be and never was a scientific hypothesis or problem at all, it is and always has been a spiritual or a metaphysical problem."

There is an intermixture of the Christian and non-Christian conception of God in Corelli's description of Deity. She deals with the main outlines of the Eastern and Western thought on Godhood and does not consider subtle and intricate problems. In combining the Christian and non-Christian attributes of God she sometimes fails to give a consistent picture. She even substitutes rhetoric and stylistic flourishes for consistency and clarity.

The Christian conception of God is also monotheistic. God reveals Himself gradually but intermittently in the course of time of the human world. Jesus Christ has accepted the God of the Old Testament. God is "personal, spiritual, transcendent, unique in holiness, goodness, and the loftiest moral attributes." He is a self-communicating God but not a metaphysical abstraction, or a solitary remote Deity. He is omnipotent. He has a lofty ethical character.

3. --Ibid--
Corelli's God is transcendental as well as immanent. He is infinite and indefinable. Man's intellect fails to grasp Him. Man, without hesitancy, should accept God as the ultimate reality. Azul, the guiding angel, says to the liberated soul of the heroine in A Romance of Two Worlds: "Dare not thou question His shape, His look, His mien! Know that He is the Supreme spirit in which all Beauty, all perfection, all Love find consummation." He is the cause of all creation. He is not bound by time, space and reason. He is eternal, there is neither beginning nor end to Him. The universe may vanish but He lives. He contains everything:

"Though earth and man were gone,
And suns and universes ceased to be,
And thou wert left alone,
Every existence would exist in Thee."

Corelli, through some of her characters, tries to give an idea of the infinity of God in her novels. But men can at the most vaguely describe God's transcendence in exaggerated and negative terms. The soul of Lilith tells the sceptic El-Rami: "I know that God is beyond man's knowledge: "To the seven declared tones of music, add seventy million more, — and let them ring their sweetest cadence, they shall make but a feeble echo of the music of God's voice! To all the shades of radiant

1. A Romance of Two Worlds, p.194.
2. From 'Last Lines' - by Emily Bronte.
colour, to all the lines of noblest from, add the splendour of
eternal youth, eternal goodness, eternal joy, eternal power,
and yet we shall not render into speech or song the beauty of
our God! From His glance flows Light - from His presence
rushes Harmony, - as He moves through Space great worlds are
born; and at His bidding planets grow within the air like flow-
er3. God is immanent. He pervades all things in the universe.
verse. "In everything and around everything from the sun to a
grain of sand, He hath a portion, small or great, of His own
most perfect Existence."2 God is a Spiritual Being. The nature
of His work is invisible. But He is the first cause and ultimate
truth. The angel, Edris, explains the nature of God to
her earthly lover Theos in Ardath: God is the "Truth Celestial,
Truth Unchangeable, - Truth that permeates and underlies all
the mystic inward workings of the Universe,... Vast as Eternity
is this Truth, - ungraspable in all its manifestations by the
merely mortal intelligence."3 The concepticon of God according
to the heroine of The Life Everlasting is pantheistic. Nature
seems to her the material expression of God. "The world of gla-
rious Nature showed me an aspect of brilliancy and beauty...
it was a mirror in which I saw reflected the perfect Mind of
the Divine."4 She feels entirely in unison with everything.

Some occult sympathy makes them closely related. Lucio, Satan incognito, in The Sorrows of Satan, was conscious of the spark of God in everything. While revealing his Satanic character to the disillusioned Tempest, he says: "You, God's work endowed as every conscious atom of His creation is endowed, with the infinite germ of immortality."¹

The philosophers of the Upanishads differentiate between God and the Creator as Brahman and Brahma. Plato also distinguishes the God or God from the Demiurge of the Creator. God is the absolutely self-identical One without a second. But the Creator is the first creation of God. "Brahma comes from the Brahman."² Plato's Demiurge "fashions the world after the pattern of the ideal world; guided by the idea of the Good."³ Corelli does not separate God from the Creator. In her conception, they are the same. He is a 'shape of Electric Radiance'. He is pure Love. His love implied the necessity of loving. Hence He created the universe.⁴

Corelli refers to a peculiar phenomenon of the Creator's intellectual power in A Romance of Two Worlds. There is an "Electric Ring encompassing God's World."⁵ It is "the result of the Creator's ever-working Intelligence; from it all the universe hath sprung. It is exhaustless and perpetually creative... The

1. The Sorrows of Satan. pg.461.
4. A Romance of Two Worlds. pg.229.
5. Ibid— pp.xxvi
smallest spark of that fiery essence in a mortal frame is sufficient to form a soul or spirit. It is this 'Ring' which does the work of creation and absorption, but it seems to have been guided by the Creator. This conception of the 'Electric Ring' is a unique thing in Corelli's cosmos. It is neither Eastern nor Western Plato's Demiurge and the Indian Brahma do not form 'rings'; they themselves create and absorb. Corelli herself does not mention this 'Electric Ring' in her later philosophical novel *The Life Everlasting*. She here refers to the Governing Intelligence, the Mind and the Spirit. These words are used as synonyms for the Creator. There cannot be any creative and absorbing 'Ring' separate from the Creator. He is everything.

Corelli says that the Creator the Governing Intelligence is androgynous. It must, "like the brain of man, be dual, combining the male and female attributes, since we see that it expresses itself throughout all creation in dual form and type." The Creator is the omnipotent Being. Whether He is androgynous or not or is beyond sex, man cannot decide. Corelli many times refers to God by the masculine pronoun 'He'. Only in describing His Governing Intelligence she uses the neuter pronoun 'It.' It is because she thought of it as distinct from the Creator.

In Heliobas's 'Electric Creed' of Christianity some of the attributes of God are described. It is said that God pities man because He finds a portion of Himself in man. God is "capable of all the highest emotions known to man, in a far larger and grander degree, besides possessing other sentiments and desires unimaginable to the human mind... all the attributes that accompany perfect goodness He enjoys; therefore He can feel compassion, tenderness, forgiveness, patience— all or any of the emotions that produce pure, unselfish pleasure." Heliobas pictures God here almost as a super-man, a man of lofty ethical character. His physical law of uniformity which governs all the component parts of the universe. There is His law of compensation which governs the moral world of the universe. They are rigorous and impartial laws. God is the spectator of the whole drama of the universe. He is delighted to see the workings of His Creation because it is said that God is Bliss. It is ignorance to restrict Him to the finite human knowledge.

God and His Creation are closely related; He pervades all the things of the universe. Man is not an isolated being. Man often remembers God in his spiritual fall and agony. "God is never so near to us as in a great sorrow." The soul in man always craves for God. It is "unsundered from the Absolute".

concept of the human soul as described by theosophists. The soul is "moving force."¹ Thales ascribed such a soul to magnets, and declared that the whole world was full of souls.² For Plato "soul was above all the source of motion. It was the only thing which could move itself and other things without being itself moved by anything else."³ This conception of Plato refers to the highest soul, God, who is the self-mover and the cause of motion in the universe. In Indian philosophy soul is called Atman. In the Rigveda it means breath or the vital essence.⁴ The human soul is an emanation of God.

In Corelli’s generation seances had rendered the term soul hackneyed. Corelli called it by various other names. She gives a lengthy explanation for the use of those names in the preface, and Introduction, to A Romance of Two Worlds and in the prologue to The Life Everlasting. "The right term is not to be found in the dictionary... the term which would cover atm once the principles of life, light, heat, force and motion, which, combined with an Intelligent Principle, are the component parts of the living Germ within us which we call the soul... to explain one’s self clearly to the majority, one

³. Ibid.
⁴. Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol. XI—Soul [Greek]
must avoid the use of involved and learned terms which confuse the mind without enlightening it.\textsuperscript{1} The following names which Corelli uses to explain the nature of the soul, show how Corelli was unable to express precisely the meaning of the 'soul' as she had understood it. Her terminology is almost theosophical: "electricity, electric force, the spiritual germ, the volatile essence, the living sentient creature, the vital spark of heavenly flame, the vital principle of each man's moral and mental well-being, the soul-germ, the pure GODhead, the immortal spirit, the spark of God's own essence, the germ of Divinity, the imperishable inner self, the actual self, the spirit of Divinity, the vital principle of human existence, the infinite power, the eternal radioactivity, the ever living spirit, the germ of embryo of the vital radioactive force, the pure radium, the vital germ, the radiant active creature, the pure radio activity, the radia, the psychic form, the emanation of God, the eternal active conscious individual Force, or Being or Form and the God-like image."

For Corelli the soul is not a hypothesis but a living spirit in the body. Being spiritual, it escapes the common man's visual perception. Although all men are born with a small portion of Divinity, no two persons are alike in this world. The soul at the birth of a child smoulders at the centre of the

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{A Romance of Two Worlds}. pp.X.
flesh. It is placed there either to be cultivated or neglected. It is indestructible. The human brain cannot act without the influence of the soul. The monk Heliobas tries to convince the sceptic Theos in Ardath about the existence of the soul in man, with scientific illustrations: "If the hands on the telegraph-dial will not respond to the electric battery, the telegram cannot be deciphered. But it would be foolish to deny the existence of the electric battery because the dial is unsatisfactory! In like manner, when by physical incapacity, or inherited disease, the brain can no longer receive the impressions or electric messages of the Spirit, it is practically useless. Yet the Spirit is there all the same, dumbly waiting for release and another chance of expansion." The soul is the guiding power of man's body; it is a living sentient creature; it is "the vital principle of each man's moral and mental well-being."

Intuitively man feels the presence of the soul in himself. Like God the soul is indefinable. "The knowledge of one's own inner self-Existence is a Knowledge surpassing all the marvels of art and science." Man through yogic experience feels the infinitude of his soul. "The world is no more than a grain of dust, measured by the standard of your own soul."

Bodily charm does not last long. But the soul lasts forever. It is eternal. El-Rami was fascinated by the outward beauty of Lilith. He considered it real and permanent.

But his idea was materialistic. Hence the soul of Lilith says to him: "To love the Seeming and not the Real is the curse of all sad Humanity. It is the glamour of the air, - the barrier between Earth and Heaven. The Body is the Shadow - the soul is the Substance." The soul never approves of evil; it burns the wrong doer inwardly. "In everyman there is the dumb dreadful immortal spirit who is real, - who cannot act, - who is, - and who steadily maintains an infinite though speechless protest against the body's life!" Corelli's conception of the human soul is somewhat non-Christian. The Church believes in the survival of the essential personality of man after his death. And this essential personality is said to include the body also. "The body is conceived as an integral part of the personality." The divine spark in man is pure spirit according to Corelli. There is no single particle of matter in it.

Corelli does not say where exactly the soul is placed in man's body. Blavatsky gives the views of some great philosophers about the actual position of the soul. Plato visualised

1. The Soul of Lilith, pp. 314.
2. The Sorrows of Satan, p. 105.
two kinds of soul in man - an immortal principle of soul and a separate mortal kind of soul; the former is in the head and the latter is in the trunk. Plutarch also mentions two kinds of soul in man. According to him the animal soul is in the body but the purer soul remains outside the body. "It swims above and touches (over shadows) the extremest part of the man's head; it is like a cord to hold up and direct the subsiding part of the soul, as long as it proves obedient and is not overcome by the appetites of the flesh." In a passage of the Upanishads it is said that the inner immortal self is situated at the back of the mind, as it were.

In the pursuit of divine wisdom man should be receptive and trustful like a child. As long as he interposes the darkness of his vanity and scepticism between himself and divinity, no progress can be made in the spiritual world. The soul has no escape from its immortal remembrance. It always longs for its Original home. "The soul placed within us by the Creator is meant to be fostered by man's unfettered Will." The soul is "progressive, ... it begins as a germ - it goes on increasing in power and beauty for ever, till it is great and pure enough to enter the last of all worlds, God's world."

References:
6. Faith...
is the spiritual apprehension of the divine truths which are beyond the reach of sensible experience. It is a unique faculty in the soul of man. It is the result of supernatural illumination.\(^1\) Mere logical argumentation does not lead man to the ultimate truth. The sceptic Theos spent the early part of his life in restlessness. But he was convinced of the existence of God in his later life. "I know", he says, "... how the noblest ideals of the soul can be swept down and dispersed into blank ruin by the specious arguments of cold-blooded casuists."\(^2\) God is love. Love is endowed with perfect faith. It does not therefore deny Him. The psychic vision reminds man of the existence of the Supreme Soul. The mysterious man, Melchior, tries to explain the nature of God in Barabbas. Man does not know how the light reaches the dry seed in the depths of earth and causes it to fructify. Nor does man know how light imprisons itself in drops of water and grains of dust to form diamonds\(^3\). Man does not question their growth. But he doubts God. A Scientist may give an explanation of Melchoir's problems about natural phenomena. But all that matter is, as the mystic Feraez says to his materialistic brother El-Rami, that man should not neglect the divine spark in him. It is his

\(^{1}\) The Oxford English Dictionary. Vol.IV.
\(^{2}\) Ardath. pf.553.
\(^{3}\) Barabbas. pf.305.
bounden duty to enlighten his soul. "There is more than dust in your composition. There is divinity! And the divinity belongs to God, and to God you must render it up, pure and perfect. He claims it from you, and you are bound to give it." Sooner or later every one bends his stubborn knees to invoke God for his deliverance.

Man is an instrument of God, working for his own salvation and the evolution of the Universe. "Every talent you have, every breath you draw, every drop of blood flowing in your veins, is lent to you only; you must pay it all back." Men should believe in the Almighty and in his own instrumentality. It is not at all necessary to think of the fruit of the action. His pure devotion to God is bound to fructify in the long run.

"The only wisdom we can hope to acquire
Is the wisdom of humility: humility is endless." The devotee's humility ends in his union with the Divine. God safeguards the happiness of the souls that love and believe in Him. The Creator says in an inaudible voice:

"They reckon ill who leave me out;
When me they fly, I am the wings."  

Courage and strength belong to the adept in his pursuit of the Divine. "If we proceed with the faith in the work, in our instrumentality for the work, in the power that moves us, then in the very act of trial, of facing and surmounting difficulties and failures, the strength will come and we shall find our capacity to contain as much as we need of the All-strength of which we grow more and more perfect vessels."

The nourishment of the soul is an inner process. Nobility of thought and action awaken the soul. Moral purity and loftiness brighten its nature. "It is the...pure Godhead in us, and its very nature is to shrink from the very contact of evil...it springs to life and grows with every effort towards betterness, - till working upon the body itself, it even makes that fairer, and better able to withstand the ravages of time and sorrow." When fostered and educated, the soul becomes conscious of its divinity. It becomes an active spiritual force of absolute beauty. Its awakening and growth widen man's vision. Gradually it invigorates the whole body of man and brings to him the supramental consciousness of the Infinite. In other words man himself becomes the Infinite. "The whole life and so-called 'death' of Christ was and is a great symbolic lesson to mankind of the infinite power of That within us which we call Soul."  

1. Letters of Sri Aurobindo-Fourth Series.p.394
2. A Romance of Two Worlds.pp.XXII.  
If man neglects the spark of God in himself and leads the life of a quadruped - of mere eating, drinking and breeding, the soul escapes the body at the time of his death to seek fruition somewhere else in some other body. Corelli seems to have recognised two souls in man - the animal soul and the rational soul or spirit. She vaguely describes them in explaining the soul's progression and retrogression. The heroine in A Romance of Two Worlds reads in the 'Electric Creed' of Helios that after the departure of the rational soul, the human body "Supported only by physical sustenance drawn from the Earth on which it dwells, becomes a mere lump of clay animated by mere animal life solely, full of inward ignorance and corruption, and outward incapacity." It is the animal soul which breathes in it. The man who possesses only such a soul is no better than any other animal. Marie Corelli thinks that there is no place of eternal damnation like the Christian idea of Hell. But she envisages the possibility of eternal retrogression for the soul. A man who actively pursues evil can retrograde his soul to such an extent that it lacks the power to escape from the body at the time of his death to some other human for its development. It sinks into the lives of "quadrupeds, birds, and other creatures dominated by purely physical

But even such a degraded soul cannot forget its past life or former births. In the picking of its conscience is constituted Hell.

The goal of the soul therefore consists in its attainment of God-hood. As its progress is of the inner, spiritual world, the outward material objects on earth appear to it as secondary and transitory. "It is the Soul that gives individuality to Body." Man's greatness even on earth is judged by his lofty morality and universality. The body is a temporary frame for the soul. The world and its resources seem to it to be a mere passing pageant. For the man who has understood the nature of ultimate Reality, is convinced that each soul has "to pass through many phases of every broader, deeper and more satisfying life, each phase leading to the highest of all, the state of uttermost perfection." The pleasure and pain on earth do not disturb the inner poise of the soul. Fortune and poverty do not upset it. Temporal prosperity does not quench its thirst for Eternal Glory. "In the countings of the soul's progress, this world's 'successes' are mere flying grains of dust on the road and are not the road itself."

3. A Romance of Two Worlds. pp. XIII.
4. --Ibid-- pp. XIII.
Spiritual training is more an inner travail. An adept has to overcome ordeals. He has to deny himself and submit his soul and body to God.

"To have yes, choose No;
Gird, and thou shalt unbind;
Seek out, and thou shalt find;
To eat,
Deny thy meat."¹

Man’s patience and devotion lead him to Divinity. Every one has to seek his salvation by his own efforts. "Each human soul is a germ of separate and individual spiritual existence... no two souls resemble each other, but are wholly different, endowed with different gifts and different capacities."² Free will is given to man. God does not interfere with its free exercise. No human or divine power compels man to remain in ignorance. Everyman has a "master-talisman and key to all locked doors."³

Man himself must learn the way of right and wrong. His choice between them works either for his delight or doom. In his spiritual training and attainment man should not think of the time factor. Man alone considers everything in relation to time and place. But his soul is eternal. It is not restricted by time or space. Man becomes desperate sometimes in his spiritual quest. This shows his hidden fear, called forth by some of his

¹ From ‘Any Saint’ by Francis Thompson.
² The Life Everlasting, p. 21.
³ The Life Everlasting, p. 10.
own selfish motives. The soul which is completely surrendered, has no self. It is filled with God. "If you would find the path which is made fair and brilliant by the radiance of the soul's imperishable summer, you must not grudge time." The awareness of one's own central consciousness and the action of natural forces is a definite step towards self mastery. Equanimity and peace under all circumstances are the mark of a Yogi. "In the path of sadhana - one must persist however long it takes, so only one can achieve." Through pain and suffering the soul arms itself against hardships on its way to perfection. When the soul once becomes conscious of its destiny, there can be no deception in distinguishing between appearance and reality.

Corelli might have lacked the true yogic experience. But she tried to understand the spiritual path. The words of an Angelic Voice to the heroine in *The Life Everlasting* seem to echo the symbolic terminology of Yoga: "Pass from vision into waking! - from night to day! - from seeming death to life! - from loneliness to love!" The enlightened soul tries to escape from the social whirl and its evil influences. But it always works in harmony with Nature. Corelli in a passage seems to explain to the beginner the environment suitable for the development of the soul: "Fear, suspicion, distrust, anger, envy and callousness..."

1. The Life Everlasting. p. 28.
paralyse its being and destroy its action, - love, courage, sweetness, generosity and sympathy are actual life-forces to it and to the body it inhabits. All the influences of the social world work against it - all the influences of the natural world work with it.¹

Corelli mentions some of God's laws working in the universe, - Divine Law, the Law of God, the Law of Nature, and the Law of Compensation. But she is not clear in her explanation of these laws. Sometimes it is even difficult to say whether Corelli thinks that there is one law, or more than one, working in the universe. However, when she describes the law of compensation, she attributes it mainly to the action of man and other animals. When she describes the law of nature she says that Nature is "the reflection of the working-mind of the Creator- and any opposition to that working-mind on the part of any living organism it has created cannot but result in disaster."² Hence the law of Nature seems to be altogether a different law from the law of compensation. In the Upanishads these two laws of God's power are clearly discussed. The objective world [Nature] works according to the physical law of uniformity. "The law of Karma is the counterpart in the moral world of the physical law of uniformity.

¹The Life Everlasting. pp.375.
It is the law of the conservation of moral energy. Both the laws are complementary. Both work to set order and harmony in the universe. Both are interdependent and one is influenced by the other. Nothing is uncertain or capricious in the moral as well as in the physical world. These two laws are the working powers of God. But they are not God.

The goal of the universe is to evolve itself towards perfection and to become one with God. Man is a component part of the universe. A great responsibility is placed on man, as he seems to be the only conscious being in creation. No other creature except man is aware of the final goal. "The difference between human consciousness and all else is that while all seek the infinite, man alone has an idea of the end." If man does not become conscious of his duty, if he continues to live like a luxurious animal, then, the life of humanity becomes at its best vague and meaningless. The whole creation appears to be "something of a cruel force, for which peoples and civilizations come into being merely to be destroyed and leave no trace. All the work futile, all the education useless, all the hope vain." Character is destiny. There is no such thing as accident, fate, chance or luck. The religious-minded artist, Angela, says in The Master Christian: "I

2. Indian Philosophy. p. 207.
do not believe in coincidences, I do not believe in 'chance' or 'luck'...I think everything is planned by the law from the beginning; even to the particular direction in which a grain of dust floats through space. It is all mathematical and exact.1 As the heroine in A Romance of Two Worlds thinks: 2 Fate is not another name for God. It is rather the law of compensation working on man in the cycle of his births. While addressing his brethren, Aselion in The Life Everlasting says that from the past, stretching back into infinity, man himself has made the present, and from the present he forms his future. Every little action has its effect on his future. "Forgiveness of sins there is none since every trespass against law carries its own punishment. 3 Man's past sins turn up again and retribution follows. 4 Time and death cannot blur or erase the record of Karma of any one's life. As it is said in the Upanishads, "we cannot arrest the process of moral evolution any more than we can stay the sweep of the tides or the course of the stars. The attempt to overlap the law of Karma is as futile as the attempt to leap over one's shadow. It is the psychological principle that our life carries within it a record that time cannot blur or death erase. 5 The law of compensation or Karma is not fatalistic. It gives man scope for his

3. The Life Everlasting, pp.432.  
4. The Master Christian, pp.121  
5. Indian Philosophy, Vol.1, pp.245 by S.Radhakrishnan.
redemption. Gloucester's exclamation in King Lear is fatalistic.

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods;
They kill us for their sport." 1

But it is contrary to the law of compensation. We are not as flies to wanton boys to the gods. They do not kill us for their sport. The law rules the lower impulses of man. It has nothing to do with the spirit in him. The essence of spirit is freedom. Man, by the help of his spirit can transcend his lower nature. He can, therefore, transcend the law of compensation, too. The purification of his soul is the only means for his salvation. Virtue brings reward, and vice punishment. If man cannot change his present life, as it seems to be entirely the result of his past life, he can change the course of his future life through conscientious efforts in his present life.

The Karma of one birth may even cling to man in some of his future births till, he is completely purified. The soul transmigrates from one body to another after death, to expiate the sin clinging to it. As Hiriyanna says: "The present conduct of a person and the good or evil that follows from it are due to his own actions done in one state of existence, if not in another. Destiny thus becomes only another name for deeds in

previous births. Lucio, in *The Sorrows of Satan*, shows to
Tempest the former incarnation of his dead, sinful wife, Sibyl, at Luxor in Egypt. It was the elaborately adorned mummy of a sensual dancer at the court of Queen Amenartee. The mummy was some thousand years old. It almost looked like the body of Sibyl. Death is a transition of the soul from one body to another or to spirithood. It is "the loss of earth-consciousness; but the gain of another consciousness, whether of another earth or another Heaven, none can say. But there is no real death - as much as even a grain of dust in the air will generate life." Man cannot definitely compute the period of time needed for the end of the soul's migration.

Corelli vaguely says: "As it progresses onward through endless aeons of constantly renewed vitality, (the soul) grows more and more powerful, changing its shape often, but never its everlasting composition and quality." The monk Aselaion also says that death is unreal: "Death is an impossibility in the scheme of Life - what is called by that name is merely a shifting and re-investing of imperishable atoms." Man should become conscious of his duty. He should redeem his soul or else he can

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1. The Essentials of Indian philosophy by H. Hiriyanas. pp. 47.
never escape from the cycle of births. For his evil actions
man is compelled to pay more compensation. Corelli remarks
about false notions regarding human life in the prologue to
*The Life Everlasting*. "You complain of the high taxes imposed
upon you by your merely material and ephemeral Governments,-
but you forget that the Everlasting Government of all Worlds
demands an even higher rate of compensation for such wrong or
injurious uses as you make of this world, which was and is an
intended to serve as a place of training for the development and
perfection of the whole human race, but which, owing to personal
and selfishness, is too often turned into a mere
ground for the interment of faulty civilizations."¹ Men and
women should know that their lives are not infinitesimal but
infinite and that each of them possesses within himself or herself
an eternal, active, conscious individual Force. They
should develop it for the attainment of God. The rewards and
punishments to the transmigrating soul are not ends in themselves.
They are the means to promote its spiritual growth.

Reverend Abbe says in *The Master Christian*: "Spirit flies forward—
Body pulls back. But Spirit is one day bound to win!"²

The implication of retribution is the means to educate man towards goodness. The law of compensation, as Hiriyanna says,
"commits man to the obligations of a truly moral life. It points

to the truth that there is an ideal of life which it is the
first duty of man, as a thinking and self-conscious being, to
sedulously pursue. The karmas doctrine presupposes the possibility
ability of moral growth. The soul has no satisfaction till
it reaches God. "In my beginning is my end."  

Nature is the subject and servant of the spirit in
man. The natural resources are given to man not only for his
material development but also for his spiritual evolution.
Man's life is not restricted to this earth. There is some
greater and more glorious immortal life in other regions. "We
have been, and still are in a state of Evolution, - out of the
Beast, God has made Man, - but now He expects us, with all the
wisdom, learning and experience. He has given us, to evolve
for ourselves from Man, the Angel, - the supreme height of His
divine intention."  

This world is intended to serve as a place
for spiritual training. But man, often in his ignorance, turns
it into a mere grave for fallen civilizations. Instead of thinking
seriously about the ultimate problems, he often talks
profanely. But the physical law working in Nature does not allow
man's decadence for a long time. Nature always pursues its God-
appointed course. When man obstinately obstructs its progress,
it sweeps its puny opponents aside and inexorably carries out
its will to the end. If man does not fulfil his God-ordained

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1. The Essentials of Indian Philosophy-by Hiriyanna.pp.49-50.
2. From 'Four Quarters' by T.S.Eliot. pp.15.
duty he may be replaced by some nobler being.\(^1\) "All the corrupt
up\(^2\) government, wars, slaveries, plagues, diseases and despairs
that afflict humanity are humanity's own sins taking vengeance
upon the sinners, 'even unto the third and fourth generation.'
And this not out of Divine cruelty, but because of Divine Law
which from the first ordained that Evil shall slay itself,
leaving room only for Good."\(^2\)

Corelli's conception of the spiritual evolution of man
seems to have been borrowed from theosophists. Blavatsky\(^3\)
discusses both the material and spiritual conceptions of evolution
in her *Isis Unveiled*. In one of her passages she says: "The
Hermetic philosophers yet maintained that, according to the
cyclic law, the living human race must inevitably and collectively
return one day to that point of departure, where man was
first clothed with 'coats of skin'; or, to express it more clearly,
\(\text{by}^4\) the "human race must, in accordance with the law of evolution,
\textit{mutation}, be finally physically spiritualised."\(^5\) Corelli seems
to echo this very idea. This conception of the inevitability
of the spiritual transformation of human beings is also emphasized
\textit{mutatis mutandis} by Sri Aurobindo in his *The Human Cycle*. "To transfer
from the vital being, the instrument reality in us, to the spirit,
\(\text{by}^6\) the central reality, to elevate to that height our will to
\(\text{by}^7\)

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1. *A Romance of Two Worlds*, pp. 337.
be and our power of living is the secret which our nature is seeking to discover."¹ Sri Aurobindo's spirituality was dynamic, like that of theosophists.

It is said that every action of man has a cosmic as well as a psychological aspect. It produces its natural effect in the world and at the same time it leaves an impression on the mind of man. Hence it has its effects on both the physical and moral world. Man cannot escape from these effects in the universe. But as Upanishads say, man can control his mental tendencies and can strengthen his good impulses. This psychological change in him gives him a better birth in his future life.² This progress also helps him towards his final spiritual transformation.

The soul has a memory. It carries the experiences of the past and present into the future. Santoris and the heroine in The Life Everlasting were twin lovers. They pass through many births before their perfect union. Delighted with their happy union, Santoris says to her: "I am glad to have met you at last. I have known you by name - and in the spirit - a long time."³ The materialised soul is dulled in its memory. But when it is highly spiritualised, it can remember the past and foresee the future. The monk Heliobas foresees the failure of

¹. The Human Cycle by Sri Aurobindo. pp.300.
of El-Rami's experiment on the nature of the soul in The Soul of Lilith. When the soul reaches the utmost height of spiritual capacity, and is strong enough to know and see and understand, then it will remember all from the beginning.\(^1\) The soul is said to become fully conscious of its divine knowledge when it is liberated from the body. As Blavatsky says: "The soul is the camera in which facts and events, future, past and present, are alike fixed."\(^2\)

Faith in God brings man the power of contemplation, which in its process leads the adept to the highest attainment of yoga. Spirits and the spiritual world are invisible to the common man but yogies can see them. For them there is no veil between matter and spirit. Through yogic training man can have visions of other worlds; he can perform miracles. It is the "one connecting ray of communication between us and Heaven, which the descending and ascending angels may become familiar objects to our earthly eyes.\(^3\) The monk Heliobas could heal by mere touch or glance. He could exercise his power both for good and for evil. He liberated the soul of the heroine from her body, in A Romance of Two Worlds so that she could move in the other spheres of the universe. With the same power again he tried to strangle prince Ivan when the prince attacked him.

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3. A Romance of Two Worlds. pp.XXII.
Mesmerism also is a part of spiritual power. The spiritually trained heroine in The Life Everlasting stops a bird's flight: "On a sudden impulse I stretched out my hand, determined to stay the bird's flight.... The effort succeeded". Corelli seems to have meant that the power of the will and the power of the soul are the same. The soul intuitively guides the will of man. The will is rather the expressed consciousness of the soul. Corelli sometimes becomes inconsistent while describing will-power.

"When you have educated your will to a certain height of electric command, you can at your pleasure see at any time, and see plainly, the spirits who inhabit the air, ... you can converse with them, and they with you. You will also be able ... to see the parted spirits of dead persons." But Corelli contradicts this statement in her later novel. "Dr. Oliver Lodge ... conceives it even possible to communicate with departed spirits, while I, who have no such weight of worldly authority and learning behind me, tell you that such a thing is out of all natural law and therefore can never be." Corelli's mystical knowledge was mainly acquired from books. This explains her wavering statement and beliefs.

The power of the soul is "infinite as God, - and its surroundings are made by itself. It is its own Heaven, - and

once established within that everlasting centre, it radiates from the Inward to the Outward, thus making its own environment not only now but for ever. When the soul becomes conscious of its divinity, it is not usually influenced by any outward events. It forgets itself in its devotion to God. The unusual works of a saint appear as miracles to the laymen. But no other supernatural power works in his actions except his own soul. The miracles are the works of the divinity in man. The soul is not restricted by time and space. It is infinite. It ever breathes in freedom. Nature serves its demands. There is a magnetic influence on others where ever a seer walks. Nothing in the universe can resist the influence of the soul.

Blavatsky mentions some of the powers of the soul. The soul can shrink to a minute state. It can also enlarge itself to gigantic proportions. It can dominate all things, animate and inanimate. It can change the course of Nature. It is capable of fulfilling every desire. Blavatsky names the different powers of the soul. They are Anima, Mahima, Laghima, Carima, Prapti, Prakamyaa, Vashita and Ishita. Prapti is the power of predicting future events, understanding unknown languages, curing diseases, divining unexpressed thoughts and understanding the language of the heart. Some of Corelli's characters like the

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1. The Life Everlasting. p.11.
monk Heliobast, the monk Aselzion, Santoris and El-Rami possessed these powers in varying degrees. Prākṛta is the power of converting old age into youth. This phenomenon is seen in The Young Diana in which the middle aged spinster, Diana, by drinking a mysterious liquor, becomes a maiden in the bloom of youth. Vashita is the power of mesmerizing human beings and beasts, and making them obedient. It is the power of restraining the passions and emotions. The monk Heliobast in A Romance of Two Worlds mesmerizes a dog. The artist Cellini, the heroine and Zara are under his magic spell. These eight powers of the soul are discussed in the yogic philosophy of India and they are known as the "Siddhis of Siva".

The beginning and the end of the human soul are the same. It stays in man's body to do its God-ordained duty, - that of evolving towards perfection. When it frees itself completely from matter, it again returns to its original place - God.

"What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make a beginning.
The end is where we start from."  

God and the soul are interrelated when they are separate and,

1. A Romance of Two Worlds, Ardath and the Soul of Lilith.
2. The Life Everlasting.
3. The Soul of Lilith.
6. From 'Four Quarters' by T.S. Eliot, p. 42.
when they unite, they live in a state of lasting communion.
The human body is a temporary place for the soul's habitation.
The world is a passing pageant. The burning desire of the soul is for God. It longs for "that wondrous goal of the Divine from whence all life doth come, and to which all life must, in due time return."¹

It was the disparity between the Eastern and Christian conceptions of the soul that Corelli faced while dealing with the eternity of the soul. The Church believes in the survival of the 'essential personality of man' after his death. "Even in the future perfect communion, Christianity does not offer the abolition of the body."² The Church does not believe therefore in the doctrine of the immortality of the (immaterial) soul like the seers of the Upanishada, Plato and theosophists.²

According to the Church, on the Day of Judgement, some persons will be redeemed and others will be condemned to Hell. "The conscious existence of the lost is expressed or implied in so many NT passages that only a drastic and quite uncritical purging of the text can get rid of it."³ And "Christ believed and taught that their (the lost) doom will be eternal."⁴ Corelli believed in every soul's immortality and in its ultimate goal of Godhood. Her combination of Christian and non-Christian

１. The Soul of Lilith. pg.211.
⁴. —Ibid— Vol.XI. —Ibid—
doctrines resulted in confusion. Corelli gives full importance to Jesus Christ in the matter of man's salvation. He becomes the indispensable mediator between God and man. Her dogmatic Christianity becomes obvious when she says: "To ensure progression the will must be guided by faith in Christ, and Christ only." A man who understands and follows the teachings of Christ gets miraculous powers. The monk Heliobas also says that Jesus Christ was the only absolute emanation of God.

Although Corelli does not call Christ God, she sometimes seems to have identified Christ with God. The old woman Zaroba says to Feras when the soul of Lilith passes away from her body forever: "The Christ claims all! ... He must have all, the soul, the body, the life, the love, the very ashes of the dead, - He must have all," Feras agrees with her in this. Corelli clung to Christianity in spite of all her beliefs in non-Christian doctrines. But as she had accepted the immortality of every soul, she never emphasises, like the Church, the Day of Judgement and the redemption or damnation of men and women.

According to Indian Philosophy the soul is the spark of God, it is God. It is immortal, pure spirit. No matter clings to it. The soul's release, Moksha, is not to a glorified earth. There

1. A Romance of Two Worlds. pp. X.
2. Ibid. pp. 238.
is no separate Kingdom or Heaven of God. God is infinite. He includes all worlds and Heavens. There is nothing beyond or beside God. But the Christian conception of Heaven is different. The Christian Heaven resembles the Vedic conception of Indraloka or Swarga loka.

Corelli weaves together the Christian and Eastern conceptions of God and the soul in *A Romance of Two Worlds*. Her God is pure Spirit. He is ungraspable. But the Heaven in which He lives with other pure souls seems to be a higher world, like Indraloka.

Corelli believed in the soul's release. "Those who enter the Perfect Glory return no more to an imperfect light." There is again a little confusion in Corelli's conception of the Creator's working power - the Electric Circle, and God's World. The Electric Circle absorbs and creates. It encircles God's Globe. "As worlds are absorbed into the Electric Circle and again thrown out in new and more glorious forms, so are we absorbed and changed into shapes of perfect beauty, having eyes that are strong and pure enough to look God in the face." The verb 'absorb' means swallow up, incorporate. There cannot be separate existence for the soul after its absorption in God. Afterwards there cannot be any birth or change for it. Corelli's

'Electric Circle' seems then to be a distinct power of God standing at the border of God's world. It absorbs and changes all souls before their entrance into God's world. This mechanism seems to be a unique thing in Corelli's cosmos. But from other contexts in Corelli's works it seems that the ultimate goal of the soul is communion with God and not absorption in Him. The monk Heliobas believed in the communion of the soul: "Christ's death was not sacrifice; it was simply a means of confidence and communion with the Creator." The Angel-Edris was the lover of Theos on earth. She says to him that his spirit was formerly equal to hers and of all angels. In his pride, he fell to mankind from his former Godhood. She gives him advice to have faith in Christ. Through faith he could again go to Heaven. "There will I wait for thee", says Edris "and there thou shalt make me thine own forever." This kind of living in fellowship with God is again repeated in The Soul of Lilith. El-Rami was disillusioned in his life after the departure of the soul of Lilith. His brother, Feraa, tries to console him: "All angels love and have their being in that Greater Light. ... And there too is Lilith - beautiful, - deathless, - faithful."

1. A Romance of Two Worlds, pp. 235.
2. Ardath, pp. 446.
The Christian conception of communion and the Upanishadic conception of Moksa or Release are quite distinct. According to the Catholic Church, man's ultimate purpose is moral likeness of God. Man's communion is not absorption in God. "This communion is a moral life, and it aims at perfection through moral activity. It is, ideally viewed, a real ethical personal communion, in which all endowments and characteristics are morally potentiated to their highest degree. It is a personal life of righteousness saturated in the atmosphere of a Personal Holy Presence." Corelli followed this conception of communion. Here God lives with 'pure soul's in His world. Jesus Christ is there. Everyone maintains there his or her individuality and sex. All live there happily "having eyes ... to look God in the face." But this Christian conception of communion and the theosophical or the Upanishadic conception of Moksa or Release of the soul differ in some respects from each other. According to Blavatsky, the Nirvana of Buddha and the Moksa of the Upanishads are the same. "To reach the Nirvana means absorption into the great universal soul." According to Radhakrishnan, Moksa "is a state of rapture and ecstasy, a condition of Ananda, where the creature as creature is abolished, but becomes one with the Creator, or more accurately realises his oneness with Him. We

2. Isis Unveiled. Vol.II. p.116..
cannot describe this perfection adequately. We use symbols. The nature of eternal life is a condition of ananda or freedom, a state of joyous expansion of the soul, where heaven and earth are felt to flow together. But there is no reference here to the 'personality' and 'sex' of the soul. All the scattered sparks of God in the universe unite with the parental Fire at the time of breaks and live with Him or in Him. As T.S. Eliot says,

"...All shall be well and,
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned Knot of fire."  

Whether the final state of beatitude, as imagined by Corelli, be one of absorption or communion, it is clear that Corelli did not accept the Christian idea of Hell. Her conception of Heaven also differed somewhat from the Christian conception. Lastly, her view of the soul was radically different from that of Christianity, for she accepted the law of reincarnation and of the gradual evolution of the soul towards perfection cycle of births. Her idea of the powers of the soul also bears a strong resemblance to the theosophic view.

2. From 'Four Quartets' by T.S. Eliot, p. 44.