# RELIGION
## AND THE
# NEW PSYCHOLOGY

N. BISHOP HARMAN

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## And other Addresses

BY

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# PREFACE

To some, religion is beyond reason and not susceptible of proof. To believe is to accept the "faith which was once for all delivered to the saints." To others, religion must be reasonable and in accord with the known facts of life, if it is to be sustained and to be a sustainer. It is noteworthy that two of the founders of Christianity, the Apostles Paul and Peter, urged the necessity for reason and proof: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," and "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you." In these papers I have attempted, from a medical standpoint, to state some modern views of life and to show how these compare with religious intuitions and experience.

N. B. H.

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SEARCH while thou wilt, and let they Reason go,
To ransome Truth, even to th' Abyss below;
Rally the scattered Causes; and that line,
Which Nature twists, be able to untwine.
It is thy Maker's will, for unto none
But unto Reason can He e'er be known.

. . . . .

Teach my indeavours so Thy works to read,
That learning them in Thee, I may proceed.
Give Thou my reason that instructive flight,
Whose weary wings may on Thy hands still light.
Teach me to soar aloft, yet ever so
When near the Sun, to stoop again below.
Thus shall my humble Feathers safely hover,
And, though near Earth, more than the Heavens discover.
And then at last, when homeword I shall drive,
Rich with the Spoils of Nature, to my Hive,
There will I sit like that industrious Flie,
Buzzing Thy praises, which shall never die,
Till Death abrupts them, and succeeding Glory
Bid me go on in a more lasting story.

*Religio Medici.*

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Given at Manchester, before the National Conference of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, 1923.
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WHAT is the new psychology? What are its fundamentals? What does it teach concerning human activities? And in particular, what bearing has it upon religion? The older psychology was a branch of philosophy. It dealt much in abstractions. It was based upon no certain foundation, and its conclusions were ambiguous. The newer psychology deals much with matters of fact. It is a branch of biology in the wider sense. It is based upon the sure foundations of verifiable observation, and so far as it has reached conclusions these are clear.

To understand the fundamentals of the new psychology it is necessary to have a working knowledge of biology, and a knowledge such as will enable the student to

visualize a connected series of observations. To see with the mind's eye the progression of biological gradations just as clearly as one may observe the steps that rise up from the level to the height of the topmost platform upon which is erected some great temple. That is a symbol we may well keep in mind as we consider this subject: a vast series of platforms rising step upon step and crowned with a temple of unique design. We may ascend the serried steps and examine their features and characters, and even enter the temple precincts.

The first platform, the lowliest and yet the widest, is the cell. A unicellular organism, such as the amœba, is a minute speck of protoplasm with a minimum of differentiation. It has no nerves, for it is all nerve; that is to say, the sensibility of the organism is equal in all its parts. Yet it has attributes. It reacts to stimuli, it moves, feeds, and reproduces its kind. Its reactions are few, nevertheless they illustrate certain primary characters or instincts. To the genial stimulation of warmth it responds by movements this way or that; coming into contact with other objects, it flows over

them, enclosing them if they be small enough; if the particles are soluble within the protoplasm they are absorbed, if not they move with the movement of the organism until haphazard they lag behind in the flow of the protoplasm, reach its surface, and may be left behind. If the stimulus be adverse it promptly contracts into a ball, and thereby dissociates itself from its surroundings. When well fed it divides, making a complete cell division, or if perchance one other similar cell meets it there is conjugation, and after a resting period a new and more vigorous organism resumes movement. In other unicellular organisms, such as the vorticella, free movement is varied by attachment to some fixed object by a long, slender stalk. On adverse stimulation this stalk contracts sharply into a close spiral, so that the cell is withdrawn from and closed against danger.

All these reactions, self-protection by immobilization or flight, feeding, and reproduction, are complete; just as much as can be done is done. There is no selection, no critical power of gradation in any variation of circumstance. That is what we mean by

instinct. These primitive unicellular organisms show instinct in pure unadulterated fashion.

A higher platform shows multicellular organisms, like the beautiful volvox. Each cell is much alike, but it is possible to determine that all are united into a common whole by fine threads of protoplasm, so that although each unit cell appears a complete whole, yet it is evident that each is in living union with all, so that the whole sphere of cells acts as one cell. Here is association or gregariousness, a physical basis for the group mind.

On a still higher platform the differentiation of function of the several cells entering into the group organism is found. There are cells which are endowed with greater sensibility than the others, they are found in positions which indicate the appearance of a distinct head, or rather mouth, of the organism, and with that formation there is some indication of a selective action in ingestion; all may be taken into the body cavity with the water currents, but some will be rejected as useless. Something like a distinctive sensory function as distin-

guished from a general sensitiveness is established, the earliest hint of a critical faculty or control.

In ascending steps we find organisms of growing complexity with arrangements to secure orderly progression. The body is arranged tubular fashion, with a mouth and anal ends, such as in the earth worm. The tube is made up of a series of segments, each of which is complete in itself for most of the bodily functions. Each is furnished with cells that exhibit an orderly range of movement, producing a contractile power that propels the whole through the earth. As the earth is passed through the whole length of the tube such of it as can be absorbed is absorbed, the rest passes out in the familiar form of worm casts. Each segment has cells set apart to control the motive cells, these cells are massed in clumps, called ganglia; they form the primitive brains of the segments, a pair for each segment, all are linked together, the pair of each segment and the pairs of all the segments, and at the mouth end the ganglia are greater than elsewhere and encircle the mouth. There is again a hint of selection

with a growing organization of the body to affect this.

Still higher we find more selective action, and with it a greater growth of the ganglia at the mouth end, so large do these become in some organisms that they narrow the tube so straitly that only fluid nutriment can be taken, as in the scorpions and blood-suckers. With the development of the head ganglia there is associated the growth of special organs of tactile and prehensile character, whilst the body becomes shaped by the appearance of limbs which are the extensions of the segmental muscles and ganglia.

We are now nearing the upper stages of our series. A body such as we have described needs co-ordination of its parts in order to maintain itself. There must be some central control or else the whole will suffer. From the head ganglia there develop new outgrowths particularly related to the special senses of taste and smell and later of sight and hearing. From this new paired brain there radiate to all parts of the body new nerve fibres which link up all with the head so that from the seat of the special

senses there may be direction of movement. As the organism develops along certain lines so this new brain grows. Its growth is greater in the hunting animals than in the hunted; and so it is greatest in man, with his brain of nine thousand millions of nerve cells, for he is "a mighty hunter before the Lord."

Yet in man there is still the foundation of all these lower platforms persisting. Each cell of his body retains its sensibility in its degree, its reactions to stimuli, its power of absorption; the segmental ganglia still persist and exert an ever present influence, the great mouth ganglia are there highly developed as the basal ganglia of the mid-brain; and upon the integrity of this series of segmental ganglia from the mid-brain downwards depends the life of the man and the continuance of those regulated functions which mean health.

We must now, for a time, discard our simile of the temple piled up high upon its many platforms. Instead we may imagine this latest development in man as a coach-and-four, the driver with his team. The driver is the great brain, his team the

ganglia. Let us examine their relations in some detail. Alongside the spinal column are a series of paired ganglia connected with the spinal cord at each segment and with each other from above downwards. The ganglia are small grey masses, and the nerves connected with them slender grey strands naked of any thick protective sheathing which is such a characteristic feature of the greater motor and sensory nerves which promote and co-ordinate the movement of the body. The slender grey nerves and ganglia, the sympathetic system, radiate with extraordinary complexity through the viscera of the body, the blood vessels, the glands, and the smooth muscle fibres which are found throughout these organs. They enter into the most intimate relations with these organs, so that in some of them it is difficult to determine which is the primary feature of the combination, nerves or glands. Despite this complexity, it is clear that the system is definitely segmental, so that it is found in disorders of an organ associated with one segment, or a series of segments, reflexes or radiations are set up which affect all or some of the other

portions of that segment or segments, and since these segmental sympathetic nerves are connected with the corresponding segments of the spinal cord pain from disease of an organ is referred to skin spots or areas corresponding to the affected segment. Each segment reacts as a complete body, even though it is but one segment of a larger and co-ordinated whole. Again these nerves control the working of the glands of the body, and particularly the ductless glands and those portions of ducted glands which have the additional function of producing internal secretions, *i.e.*, secretions which are carried off in the blood stream. The influence of these internal secretions upon the whole organism is profound ; if they are disordered or withdrawn, the whole character of the organism is altered. A minute gland buried within the skull, a remnant of the foregut, controls ordered symmetrical growth; disorder of the gland will produce giantism. A gland in the front of the neck maintains the texture of the tissues; disorder by excess secretion will produce the startling disturbance of exophthalmic goitre, or by insufficiency myxœdema with coarse, harsh skin

and dull, sluggish wits. And so through a whole series of these glands to the sex glands which, through their internal secretions, coming into action at puberty make a man a man and a woman a woman. It is the influence of this internal secretion of the sex glands which changes the slim, soft-voiced boy into a man, rugged of face, harsh-voiced, brawny, and hairy. It is this influence which changes the tomboy of a schoolgirl into a shy maiden with swelling bosom and softly moulded limbs. Deprive either of these youths of the glands which make these changes, and you get no man and no woman, but a creature that shows the muddled features of both and a mind that is repellent to both man and woman alike.

The influence of the glands of internal secretion on body and mind cannot be over-emphasized. The effect upon the body of the loss of function of one or other of them and its restoration is dramatic in the extreme. The effect of these same functions upon the mind is no less striking; unless there is a full and orderly development of all these glands the mind fails to develop, the being is an "ament"; whilst there is a growing

tendency on the part of alienists to regard the failure of these functions in the adult as the cause of the onset of dementia.

These are some of the correlations of the team; but they are not all. Respiration and the heart-beat, the cessation of which means death, are controlled by the big basal ganglia within the skull cap; body balance and co-ordination of movement directed by the great brain are largely under the control of the basal ganglia. The work of these basal ganglia and sympathetic ganglia is never done; they function continuously from before birth until death releases them. For the most part they are not subject to the higher control of the great brain, and yet they are. The action of the great brain can vary the working of these automatic services. Emotion will make the heart beat faster, the breathing laboured, the glands secrete in excess, and produce such strange sensations within the body that it is no wonder the ancients thought that the seat of the soul was in the great liver with its intimate connection with the solar plexus. Sometimes stresses of unusual severity, set up within the great brain, will react so

seriously upon the automatic services as to derange them even to producing death by shock, or in lesser degrees initiate disease such as exophthalmic goitre, diabetes, and the like; which in their turn affect the integrity of the great brain. In contrast to the work of the ganglionic system, which never ceases day or night, waking or sleeping, the great brain is a part-time worker. The infant is born with a great brain complete in all its parts, but it does not function; again in sleep the great brain is quiescent. In these periods the ganglionic system is in full and almost sole control.

The human infant is the most helpless of animals, despite the magnificence of its heritage. In its helplessness it shows all the primitive reflexes uncontrolled. It is on a very low platform of our temple series. To pain it reacts with its whole body by explosive and continuous cries, such movements as it is capable of, and finally, in severe cases, by passing into general convulsions. It has no power of selection; when hungry it will seize indifferently the nipple of the mother's breast, a finger, or any other object, and suck with a surprising

power at each or any. The control of the sphincters of the body orifices is purely subject to local reflex arcs. If the milk be sour the infant will vomit with an ease and thoroughness that is alarming to the uninitiated, and the waste products of the body are voided immediately on the sensory reflex starting from the mucous membranes. Although it is endowed with hind limbs and balance mechanism suitable for walking, it crawls; and in its progress every and any object in its path is conveyed to the mouth. It is not until many months have passed that the great brain comes into conscious control of the several functions. No wonder Eve named her second babe Abel! It is only by dint of long continued and oft-repeated stimuli from within and without that the superior control is established. We may suppose, on the evidence of the reverse process of loss of control, that this consciousness is attained by a gradual linking up of the nerve fibrillæ and the establishment of potential connections. The control varies within a wide range, from the feeblest attempt at co-ordination of natural functions seen in the mentally de-

fective to the highest control of the trained mind; from a lower range in which even the reflex bed-wetting is incurable to the higher range in which even the reflex set up by tickling the soles of the feet may be inhibited. Not only is there this inequality of attainment, there is a corresponding liability to recall or loss of control. One careful alienist concluded that of the so-called shell-shock cases caused by the war from fifty to seventy per cent. were mental defectives—"For he that hath, to him shall be given, and he that hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath."

Conscious control is not a fixed condition. It may vary or be wholly lost. Its variation may be brought about by dissociation. This is one of the primary, perhaps the primary instinct, and one which we each retain as a possibility inherent within our nervous organization. It would appear to be definitely related to the instinct of self-preservation, such as is found in unicellular organisms which react by flight or immobilization. It is set up by some adverse stimulus. Dissociation may be explained by reference to a simple physical experiment. If the kitchen

poker be held in the axis of the earth's magnetism, north and south and with the appropriate dip, and one end of the poker be smitten a smart blow, that inert rod of iron will be found to have become magnetic with north and south poles. The blow shook up the molecules of the iron, so that during the momentary flux the ever-present terrestrial magnetism asserted its power. The softer the iron, the more easily does the terrestrial influence regain the power it had when the iron was still in the ore; the harder and finer the steel, the more it is capable of resisting. That is an analogy of those serious cases of shock wherein the higher levels of consciousness are replaced or diminished by the reassertion of the lower automatic levels. Dissociation may be seen in purely physical reactions unconnected with consciousness. In squint the doubled images would endanger the life of the child, so the image of the one eye is suppressed, or if both be retained there is alternation of vision and suppression, so that first one eye sees and the other is quiescent, and *vice versa*. In adults a similar dissociation is found when diverse images are presented

to the eyes. If under appropriate conditions there be shown simultaneously a cross of St. George to one eye and a cross of St. Andrew to the other the brain refuses to fuse them into a common image of binocular vision, but first one and then the other is perceived in steady alternation. I doubt if even a Scot could retain the vision of his cross of St. Andrew to the exclusion of that of St. George. The recall of primitive conditions extends to simpler orders than the cerebral. Occasionally children are born with a drooped lid over one eye, due to the failure of full development of the elevator muscle. In some of these cases it is observed that in feeding, with the movement of the lower jaw there is a rhythmic movement of the drooped lid—it lifts and falls, opening and closing the eye. The phenomenon tends to diminish or be lost with increase of age. It is a revival of a primitive function. The whole of the facial musculature is stolen property, transferred, by that great adaptor nature, from the first gill opening where it serves for respiration in fishes to a new and wider purpose. In these cases of the children there is a recall

of the underlying habit common to fishes.

These examples illustrate from different angles what occurs in mental dissociation in an attempt of the organism to save itself from some unpleasant occurrence. That process of forgetting or repressing, the storing away out of the range of the conscious mind, is what is known as the unconscious mind. It is not merely the storing by the memory of incidents experienced which may be recalled at any time when some other associated incident or sensation stimulates memory into activity. It is the definite repression, a storing away of data in some ungetatable record office, the passage to which is lost to ordinary volition. Yet stored there it exerts a sway over future actions almost equal to that exerted by the automatic ganglia. These are the origins of phobias and other eccentricities which mark out some persons as falling short of the possession of fully controlled intelligence. The defence is apparently a temporary one, but, like many makeshifts, it is more costly than a good job. It is as though on entry into an old country-house there was found a dangerous cesspool, and this, instead of

being cleared out, was merely boarded off. It is banished from sight, and perhaps memory, yet it is ever present and potent to produce long-continued ill-health by the gases that percolate from it into the dwelling. Sometimes these repressions are serious and endanger mental balance; at other times they are merely annoying and not without a humorous side.

I have a lively recollection of one occurrence of the latter order Many years ago, when staying in a strange house where there was no safe storage, I hid a packet of money where it would seem to be safe from casual fingers. My brain played me the trick of putting me into the same category as those from whom the money was hidden, by suppressing the memory of the hiding-place. For some days it had been given up as lost. One morning I awoke suddenly with the thought, it is there; and there it was. In the state of sleep, in dreamland, the memory of the hiding-place was delivered from the unconscious mind. That is the basis of psycho-analysis, the recovery of the repressed by the critical analysis of dream remembrances or of responses to set questions.

Dreams that are supposed to suggest or foretell the unknown are not in this category. The unconscious mind does not store up or discover the unknown. Dreams alleged to have these clairvoyant characters are mere chaos, the results of the disordered working of the half-awake brain which under the stimulus of internal and external impressions runs riot; and they are commonly edited by the fully awakened conscious mind into something that has a semblance of rationality. Recently I was much troubled by an irritating and untraceable noise in my motor car; the most methodical search failed to locate it. I awoke one morning with a most distinct and impressive recollection of a dream examination of the car in which the noise was located to a broken brake rod. The waking examination of the car showed that these rods were quite sound. The dream had no revealing character, it was merely the recollection of the breakage of one of these brake rods a year previously recalled to memory by the new trouble.

Dissociation extends to much wider territory than such incidents. It is a normal characteristic of many persons. Seeing

what relations man has and how strongly this characteristic is displayed by some of them, it would be strange if this were not so. How can we conceive of an orderly life for an amphibian, such as a newt, which spends long periods on land and at other times in the water, unless there were such a faculty. Our ability to live our lives in almost water-tight compartments is possibly explained by this. The man of war, keen on the advancement of his profession, a martinet in his regiment, may be a sincere Christian evangelist. The scientist diligent in the discovery and application of natural laws, may be a devoted son of a Church which prides itself in the rejection of those laws. The man with a lifelong reputation for a saintly life, may be subsequently exposed as an habitual evil liver, or as a swindling thief. How could such incompatibles exist in one mentality unless there were such a power of dissociation? Extended still further it will cover those strange cases of dual personality in which one manifestation not merely ignores but is actually unconscious of the other.

The unconscious mind is susceptible to

more influences than those arising from the instinct of self-preservation. Closely allied thereto is the instinct of sex. There has been a howl of derision, long and loud, at the teachings of the Vienna school on the influence of the sexual instinct. Certainly those implications have been unduly stressed and stretched to cover occurrences which have far simpler origins ; but that sex has a vast and fundamental influence there can be no manner of doubt. Parenthood, the outcome of sex, has an immense effect upon the individual and the community. There is no social relation which has at one and the same time a greater moderating and a greater stimulating influence. The sense of responsibility to the community as expressed in the care of the child is a stimulus of incalculable value, it is too well recognized to need stressing. But the moderating influence of parenthood is perhaps less well or widely recognized. It was most clearly brought home to my own mind during the suffragette controversy. At a time when it appeared as though any feminine vote would be limited to the spinsters, I maintained in a discussion in a mixed assembly that

logically the vote should be limited to parents, and turning to one of the disputants, who was both a university graduate and a mother, I asked: "Has motherhood made no difference to you?" The reply came without hesitation: "Yes. It has made me more kindly disposed towards men." Further, the sexual act itself, and apart from its consequences in parenthood, has an immense significance. It is appetite truly, perhaps in many cases quite unrelated to the thought of parenthood. It is arguable that but for the greatness of that appetite parenthood would not have been maintained. But it is fundamentally more than that, for in primitive organisms the penile organ is a weapon of offence, so that in all probability there is residual within the act some more subtile influence than that of gratification, something akin to the self-assertion and self-expression seen in other forms of conscious creative effort. Those who deride as ridiculous in the extreme the teaching of the Vienna school forget that those implications of sexual congress are not new. The veneration of the generative principle is perhaps the earliest religious

observance of which we have knowledge. The cult of the phallus was probably in its inception entirely innocent, but the very materialism of the association involved it in a degradation. The invective of the Hebrew prophets against the worship of Baal was the revulsion of a finer perception against practices which destroyed the ideal behind the symbol.

> "Thou hast also taken thy fair jewels of my gold and silver, which I have given thee, and madest to thyself images of a male, and didst commit whoredom with them . . . and thou hast set mine oil and mine incense before them."

These are indications of how the facts of sex impressed themselves upon the mentality and religion of whole peoples. But nearer to our minds is the teaching of Christianity. Can we forget that one of the greatest lessons in morals and religion was given in this very connection by Paul, who was not content to pass over an immorality that had the sanction of national custom, but declared that these deeds were in themselves of the most serious import involving little less than a perpetual relationship albeit forged

in a momentary action—"he that is joined to an harlot is one body."

There is not the least doubt in my own mind that sex plays an immense part in making us what we are. The internal secretions of the sex glands determine our physical characters and with these much of our mental bias. The act of sexual congress has no relation to this internal secretion of the sex glands, which is altogether independent of any conscious or unconscious action of the individual. But the sexual act has its own influences, and the belittling of these is a peril as great as their overemphasis. Finally, it may be said that parenthood is the seal of manhood and womanhood, and that in this relationship there is greater good, greater sanity, greater sanctity, and more godlikeness than in the most exalted dream of the celibate.

These, then, are the fundamentals of the new psychology, springing from a recognition that man's mind is part of a great biological development which carries with it all its ancestry and the possibilities that arise therefrom. By the test of pragmatic sanction it is a great advance. It has put

into the hands of the competent a means of diagnosis and of treatment of mental disorders which up till now were neglected. But like all new discoveries in the realm of medicine, it is being exploited by many ignorant of its bearings as a "cure-all," which is rank quackery. Long experience and careful observation are necessary to discover the range of its utility and its limitations. But this we may say for certain. The new psychology does not pander to self-indulgence. It does not say, "resist not evil." It urges the need for a full development of control by facing evils as they come, by overcoming them and not shrinking from the struggle. It re-echoes the old saying, "Resist the devil and he shall flee from you." It recognizes that perpetual struggle which Paul so tellingly described in the words:—

"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

"I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

"For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

"But I see another law in my members,

warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

It is a confirmation of the doctrine of original sin, or rather bias, but it denies the inhuman implications of that doctrine. It says in effect to the sufferer:—

"Come now, and let us reason together, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."

In all these things it confirms religious conceptions of great antiquity, and in this it is amazing testimony to the truth of the intuition of generations of seekers after truth.

We may now ask what is the motive power behind all mentality. Does the new psychology throw any light upon the conception of the Soul and the Over-Soul as the mainspring of all? So far as I can see it brings no evidence to bear, certainly no direct evidence. It is the psychology of behaviour rather than of first principles. It has no more direct reference to the essence

of religion than has the evolutionary theory of natural selection. Neither of these theories is inimical to religion, though many fear that both are. Not many years ago some theologians shouted themselves hoarse over the "hell-begotten" theory of evolution, not seeing that it made creation infinitely more wonderful than anything they had dreamed of. It is true it shattered many a hoary dogmatic edifice, like a flimsy house of cards but these are not religion. The conception of the soul is still left to the contention of the metaphysician; the animist, the mechanist, the solipsist, and the dualist. But the new psychology has certain indirect implications.

It is a unifying system, and so to my thinking sweeps dualism into the dust-bin of discarded theories. It condemns the solipsist and writes down his illusions as delusions, for it establishes the relations of matter to many mental processes. But between the animist and the mechanist it does not attempt to decide. The battle between these is still as undecided by direct evidence as ever. The mechanist asserts that all thought is the secretion of the

brain cells. Let this be conceded for the sake of argument to be a true statement, but even so that does not show why or how these cells should secrete such astounding products. If it be asserted that these products are the outcome of the metabolism of living cells and is the evidence of their life, we are carried no further forwards, for we do not even know what life is. That scrap of unicellular organism is alive, but why? It tells us naught to say life is the inherent property of protoplasm. This much we do know. We cannot analyse life by any physical or chemical means at our disposal. Touch with our coarse tests the protoplasm and there is no more protoplasm but only dead protein. And as it is with the least of these organisms, so it is with the greatest. The position of animist versus mechanist is well illustrated by the oscillation of theories of physiology. Fifty years ago vitalism was supposed to account for every unsolved problem. A score of years ago the advances made by means of the applications of newer physical and chemical methods to physiology were so great that enthusiasts in research felt that all was within reach, and

so a mechanist theory held the field. Still later experience has shown that neither physics nor chemistry will account for some phenomena. Osmosis and filtration will not account for all the powers of such simple glands as those that secrete the saliva. The working physiologist, and every other research worker, must postulate that there are explanations, ascertainable causes, to account for all effects, else he will cease to explore; but the further he goes the further he finds there is to go, yet he finds nothing disheartening in that prospect, he does not expect to find finality. Very much the same swaying of opinion is found for the soul conception.

To myself I put matters in some such fashion as this. Life is one. The motive power behind it must be one and one with life. But the manifestations of its action extend through many degrees, and in the highest degrees there is an overwhelming development of individuality. The amœba lives and has its instincts, and these same instincts are found in higher organisms. But on that basis there is achieved something immeasurably greater. How inferior

in its formlessness is the amœba to the shapely gibbon, and how far removed the gibbon with its one facial expression of a snarl to man with his speaking countenance! Anatomically man and gibbon are no distant relations; but in the powers wrought through these anatomies they are poles apart. Man's body is one with other organisms, his mind is built up on the same fundamentals as theirs; but his is stamped with a mark, with an individuality, which makes his body seem other than theirs. The temple is built of the same stone and is part of the same design with the many platforms upon which it is reared, yet how different the temple from the platforms.

When death comes to man, his body is resolved into its constituent elements, which return to the great store of the world's matter; nothing is lost. Can it be conceived, therefore, that the motive power, which is in and through all his life and thought, which has stamped those material elements and made them seem something other than common clay, is lost just because it cannot be found? Such a conception would be a contradiction of natural order of

the strangest kind, for everywhere we find nature takes the most care to preserve her highest achievements. There must be some solution to the riddle.

It may be that the elements that we know and which make up the more material part of man's organism are not the only elements, but that there are wide extensions of elements or their equivalents beyond the known and recognized elements, and that within these extensions are the materials from which is made up that part of man which cannot be discovered by our physical and chemical analysis; and that these rarified ethereal elements are as indestructible as any of the more material elements whose combinations we can weigh and measure. The suggestion is not so fantastic as it may appear at first sight. The solar spectrum is a familiar picture to you all, but how many know that it extends both ways far beyond any comprehension of our sight. What a contrast there is between the limitations of the visible spectrum and the wide range of the spectrum as registered by actinic power. Perchance that immeasurable something which actuates all, that is in all and through all, that is life,

or the soul, bears some such relation to the known and measurable matter of the body as does the invisible spectrum to the visible.

But it may be urged this is cold comfort. There is in this no life after death, no real animism, nothing that would secure for the soul of man a larger future than that of the essence of any other organism, even the unicellular amœba. Here the fundamentals of the new psychology may have an indirect bearing, if only by way of analogy. Our body is a congeries of a myriad cells, each retaining its own sensibility and reactions in its degree, though all combine to make the sensibility of the whole. If this be so in the known world, why may we not infer a like condition in those limitless extensions of it which we can neither see nor handle, but which we may conceive are there. So that in these illimitable realms individuality may be maintained distinct even though it be one with the greater whole.

But these are speculations, attempts to provide a rational explanation of a conception which has always been and must always remain a matter of faith. The soul conception cannot be proved; it cannot be

disproved. Belief in it has been and is now the mark of some of the most virile peoples of the earth; the fundamental belief of peoples who have sought to guide their steps by the light of intelligence. These same peoples have, by a similar process of intuition, arrived at secondary religious principles which are now shown by the new psychology to be biologically correct. Is there not therefore reasonable ground for concluding that the summation of those principles—the intuition of the Soul and of the Over-Soul as the Essence of all things, and of the indestructibility, the immortality of the soul—is equally true.

" It must be so,—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality ?
Or whence this secret dread and inward horror
Of falling into naught ? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction ?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man,
Eternity ! thou pleasing, dreadful thought ! "

# HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

Given at Maidstone, August, 1923.

*"The Lord delighteth not in the strength of a horse; he taketh no pleasure in the legs of a man."*

## HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

I HAVE a very lively remembrance of the time when this passage of scripture was first brought to my notice. In the days when the bicycle was a rarity, and the riding of it a sport, some forty years ago, myself and other youths of an equal age, contrived to possess ourselves of these new and delightful machines. They were poor things as one would judge a cycle to-day. Heavy and cumbrous, their narrow solid tyres made them veritable bone-shakers; there were no free wheels which rendered "coasting" a delight, but we did "coast" even at the risk of our necks, for such brakes as these old machines possessed were often more dangerous than useful. The roads also, in the first Jubilee year of Queen Victoria, were not as they are now. We made a long expedition into the fen country of Cambridgeshire, and, in the heat and dryness of that summer, the great main road was more like the shingly

can use his hind legs for climbing, leaping and grasping; but away from his trees his arms and legs are poor things for progression. He cannot walk, and his life is restricted to arboreal districts. The hind limbs of a horse are fine things for speed and strength, but they can only work with two other limbs; by themselves they are helpless. They have been developed and adapted to one purpose, that of flight, and flight across good ground; away from the prairie, or the fairways of man's handiwork, the horse is a vain thing for safety. The paw of the dog gives that animal a greater range of life than the specialized horse, but good as his hind limb may be, it is but part of a quartet, the completeness of which is a necessity to its life. The bird has indeed secured independence for its hind limbs, so that it is in truth a biped, but it finds wings better, and even when its legs are developed to the power of that of the ostrich it still hankers after the usage of its diminished wings.

The limbs of a man will lift him upright, so that he can look up as well as down. With them he can run and not be weary, he

can walk and not faint. Be the road rough or smooth, hard or sandy, he can overpass it. He can climb, swim, walk, run, or leap, all with an equal facility. He can march, day in and day out, with a dogged persistence, weighted with heavy burdens, in the face of climatic conditions that kill out animal life other than his. And with all this his limbs have a perfection that is without parallel amongst all these other structures which possess the same ground plan as his.

There is more than this. The perfection of the lower limbs of a man lies in the fact that they are so completely the means of support and progression for his body that the fore limbs, the arms, are entirely freed from this primitive purpose, and have become the special servants of the brain. Man's skill as a cunning workman depends upon the close and complete association of hand, eye, and brain, and this could not have been secured without the release of the arms from the labour of progression.

There is some interest in speculating as to why and how this saying found utteran e

in the hundred and forty-seventh Psalm. There is no real necessity for the verse; it might as well be removed so far as the general sequence of the ideas is concerned. I rather think that the passage must be accounted for by some such incident as the following. If it were recorded in Bible language, it would read somewhat like this:

Now it was upon the first day of the week that I, Eleazer the scribe, arose early in the morning to meditate upon the law of the Lord. And as I thought upon the words of the sweet singer of Israel, there came from beyond the city walls a great noise, which did break the thread of my meditations. And I arose and looked out from the lattice of the window, for my dwelling was upon the wall of the city. And I beheld Jehu the son of Nimshi riding upon the stallion of his father. The horse was a great beast, fierce and strong, and the lad was but a stripling and smooth of face. Yet did he bring the great beast to his desires, causing it to halt in its great speed, and to turn this way and that at his pleasure.

> And I marvelled greatly upon the scene, on the strength of the horse, and the beauty of the limbs of the youth. Then heard I the voice of Elah that liveth with me, lifted up in prayer, and my heart smote me sore that I had let my thoughts stray from the richness of the pasture of the law of the Lord before the vain show of horse and rider, which are as naught in the sight of the Lord.

So perhaps in some such fashion as this the passage arose. But whether that be so or not, there can be no doubt that the passage is a direct challenge to what we recognize as high achievement. The limbs of a man are, in a sense, a symbol of all that man stands for. So that the writer of this verse says, in effect, that God takes no pleasure in the achievement of man, he is as indifferent to it as he is to the strength of the horse. The psalmist is not alone in such a challenging statement. Many others, in many lands, and in many ages, have maintained this as the truth. But is it true? Is this Hebraic idea true, or is the contrary Greek idea true? We can have

no doubt that the ancient Greek did delight in the limbs of a man; his delight is witnessed to this day in the carved marble which has fixed for ever in an almost living guise the subtleties of the grace of the human form; and in what the Greek delighted, he conceived his Gods to delight in. Which men of these is right, and whence come these different estimates of human achievement ?

The Bible, and Christianity, have developed under many influences, and not least of these is the fatalism of the far east. It is a fatalism which seems to be the fruit of the overpowering forces of climate—the heat of the sun, the terror of the drought, the fierceness of the tempest, and the inevitable failure of unprotected man to overcome these forces. A reflex of the inevitable submission to the vehemence of nature is to be found in the common attitude to the despotism exhibited in the governmental habits of the east What was inevitable in nature was assumed also to be inevitable in human control. Submission became the rule of life. Habitual submission on the one part, and arrogant domin-

ance on the other, tend, in the long run to accentuation of these characters; unless indeed the arrogance become so insupportable that even the worm turns. With submission there grows fear, and with fear, craftiness and dissimulation. In that process there is the explanation of this tendency in all eastern writings and habits of speech to belittle possessions, and make little of achievement. The savage mother, who fears the malign influences of the devils that surround her, curses the child she hugs to her breast, and loudly declaims upon the vileness of its features, while she cherishes its little life with her own. By such simple artifices do the lovable instincts of human nature triumph over the terrors with which a mind not balanced by understanding peoples the universe. In the early Hebrew Scriptures we find the same contradictions. The goodly eldest son of Jesse is rejected for the Kingship of the little tribe of Israel, " for the Lord seeth not as man seeth "; and so the full-grown first-born is rejected in favour of the youngest, a mere insignificant stripling of so little account that he is not brought into the family circle at the first

summons of the household. But even here the warmth of human nature comes into the narrative, for little David is commended to our regard, in that "he was ruddy, and withal of a beauitful countenance, and goodly to look to." Samuel, the rugged old seer, is obsessed with an indwelling fear of a jealous tribal God, and will not dare to set up against his theocracy the full grown man, but chooses the undeveloped stripling; yet even his rough heart is softened to the beauty of youth, and the goodliness of the human form.

And so in the New Testament. Paul teaches us in one place to despise our bodies, and to mortify our members; and in another tells us that they are the temple of the Holy Spirit, and therefore to be treated with all reverence. Jesus loved human nature, and did not fail to perceive the beauty of God's handiwork in human form. The little children drew him to them, and as he looked upon the rich young ruler, he loved him; even the hair of the human head, that transient glory, was remarked by him. I cannot but think that Jesus saw in a fair form the promise of a good spirit, and often

found that promise realized ; and that he would have approved the words of Sir Thomas Browne, who, in his "Religio Medici," wrote: "Upon sight of beautiful persons, to bless God in His creatures, to pray for the beauty of their souls, and to enrich them with inward grace, to be answerable unto the outward; upon sight of deformed persons to send them inward graces, and enrich their souls and give them the beauty of the Resurrection."

The habit of belittling achievement has followed us right into these days. The rich, in medieval times, hid their treasures in the shell of frowning unattractive dwellings. Isaac of York gave no sign of wealth either in his person, or in the exterior of his house. He feared too much the rapacity of the reigning tyrant. Only in the security of his humble looking home did he rejoice in the treasures of art and comfort which his skill procured for him. The polite Chinaman to this day decries his home, his wife, his children, and himself, to his visitor; and this, I have no doubt, is a politeness bred of a fear, in days even now present, lest

covetous eyes should be inflamed by a hint of treasure in home or family. Only amongst the Greeks and our rude forefathers in the northern climes do we find a free, unfettered, undissimulating assertion of the beauty of human life and human achievement. The Greeks saw it, and made it live in the statues of Phidias and in the songs of Homer. Our forefathers made it live in the ruder sagas of the north, in the poems of Chaucer, and in the incomparable insight of Shakespeare. The old northern folklore is full of the strength of the heroes. There is no lack of appreciation of their manliness; maybe, even, there is something more—a relish of brute force in their robustness, yet there is, withal a sufficiency of humanity to salt the strength of their imagery. Chaucer's story of the pilgrimage abounds in facile human touches. He gives picture after picture of the human form in merchant, priest, doctor, and dame; and throughout it is plain that he loves the human form and all that it means. Our later poets make no mystery of their love of man. Think for a moment of Milton's imagery of our first parents. What can be more fine and

delicate than his brief word painting of Adam and Eve? Shakespeare's men and women are real and living, and full of the dignity of humanity. There is no sense of baseness about their form, and no hint of the grovelling of a false humility.

This character, a recognition of the dignity of humanity, is significant of our literature. It points, I think, to a realization that man achieves. He surmounts the dangers of inclemency, fights against storms, rebels against cold, survives in times of dearth, provides against their repetition, and in all things shows that he believes in himself, and carries his belief into actual life both in his own thoughts and in his actions in regard to those about him.

In these days there is no lack of appreciation of the dignity and fineness of the human form. Some would say that it is carried to excess in the worship of athletics and of those who excel therein. But better a little excess in the recognition of what is fine than a denigration of that which was meant to be good, and which is good. But withal we are not even now free from the taint of

a false humility, a mock modesty which decries that which is manifestly good. To-day the air is full of criticism, and much of it bitter. There are few spheres of life which are not subject to some form of condemnation. Indeed the whole of our Western civilization is condemned by some who deem themselves thinkers, and who would pose as the prophets of a new and better age. In the face of all these indications of unrest one may fairly ask: are these the signs of disappointed hopes, of hopes that were extravagant and bound to be disappointed, or are they genuine signs of abounding evils which from their volume and magnitude must condemn our Western civilization ?

Amid the publication of these wholesale condemnations there has passed almost unnoticed what is to my mind a most striking commentary upon them. I refer to the census return of a couple of years ago. We learnt from this that there were in these small islands no less than forty-seven millions of people, and in this Greater London of ours so vast a multitude as seven millions. These islands, in the good old

days, which are regarded by some, and by no less an authority than the Dean of Saint Paul's, as the halcyon days of England—contained at most five million inhabitants; they now carry nine times the number, and sustain them in a fashion that would have amazed our forefathers. I dare venture to affirm there has never been so great a volume of individual and collective comfort and well being, and such a high level of life as is now enjoyed by the peoples of these lands of ours. The cottage of to-day would put to shame the Tudor castle by its sweetness and cleanliness, and the clothing of the girls of the humblest class is of finer texture than that which graced the persons of princesses in olden days; while as to personal cleanliness, those treasured relics in our museums, the bejewelled backscratchers, furnish a commentary on a conception of cleanliness and comfort which is wide as the poles from that which we hold now.

When we look upon the picture of London in those good old times, remember the huddled darkness of its houses and streets, the appalling death rate of its infant life, the endemic and epidemic

diseases which made a man of fifty years a patriarch, the plagues that at intervals decimated its long suffering citizens, and the brutal habits and cruel laws, we are not amazed that John Bunyan conceived the idea of the City of Destruction from which he who would live must flee; and I dare venture to think that if that immortal writer could revisit these scenes he would believe that he had indeed arrived at a Celestial City, so great are its proportions, so multitudinous its citizens, so vigorous its activities, and so kindly its manners. London of to-day is a triumph of good citizenship. Every man, woman and child who forms part of this aggregation plays a part in welding its units into a social unity—thinking, acting and striving as a great living force. The very fact that seven millions of intelligent human beings can and do live and move and have their being in so vast a social unity, with so large a measure of health, happiness, and contentment, is a most challenging reply to those who see nothing of good and everything of evil in our modern civilization. It is convincing proof that with all its imperfections our race

can and does achieve success, and it is conclusive that the removal of imperfections and anomalies, of which there will always be plenty, is not to be sought and found in violent disruptions aimed at the destruction of the existing order so that it may be replaced by we know not what.

There is a phrase in the catechism of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, for which I have a great affection. To the question: "What meanest thou by this word Sacrament?" The answer comes: "I mean an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." The limitations of the answer to forms of religious ceremony, and to some aspects of these which bear no distant relation to magical rites, need not detract from the fineness of the phrase. Apply it more widely, and we get right at the significance of human achievement. Why are the limbs of a man so good to look upon? Wherein lies their excellence? They are an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace. There has gone to the makings of these limbs, generations of evolution, the spirit of God has been

breathing upon the face of nature so constantly and so unremittingly that there has been a perpetual uprising of the forces of nature to the making of these living structures. And so also to every department of man's activity. That man now stands erect, facing the odds of superhuman difficulty, seeking out blemishes in his scheme of things, striving to make good that which is poor, to make better that which is merely good, and to bring into effect even better conditions of life, habit and conduct than the world has ever known—all these things are the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace which is ever inspiring man to the height of an ambition which is untold and unimaginable.

The thoughts of man are not less than his material achievements: indeed they are greater, for without them there would never have been the need of these material advances. The inner urge drives him both onward and upward. He needs must reach out to the infinite; he feels that without some contact with that which is beyond and above all, his own achievements are poor gains. The varying thoughts of God, of the

meaning of life, of the quality of his own soul, that have come to man, are all outward and visible signs of this inward and spiritual grace. They are the divine breath that blows through all, kindling the dull flame, sweetening the sultry air of lethargy, and making life something which is glad and hopeful, and far removed from the cry of the world-weary philosopher: "vanity of vanities, all is vanity."

Religion, even in its most debased and superstitious form, contains some germ of this divine essence, and carries with it some comfort to the groping soul of man. In the full light of the gospel of Jesus of Nazareth there is attained a calmness and security for which, in their plane, the security and excellence of man's bodily structure are a fitting symbol. By each of them can he stand erect, a whole man; erect in stature, a son of the gods; erect in mind and spirit, true son of God.

The view we take of these things will depend upon our insight, physical and spiritual. Have we eyes to see? We shall see wonders. Are we dull of sight and

sluggish of wit ? There will be little wonder about us. An unknown lover, of years gone by, wrote of his lady:—

"Though others may Her brow adore,
Yet more must I, that therein see far more
Than any other's eyes have power to see:
She is to me
More than to any others she can be:
I can discern more secret notes
That in the margin of her cheeks Love quotes,
Than any else besides have art to read:
No looks proceed
From those fair eyes but to me wonder breed."

To Paul, the Christian pioneer, there was given such an insight into the things of the spirit, that he was filled with wonder and ecstasy, so that he cried:—

"Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory throughout the ages. Amen."

# DOES NATURE FORGIVE?

Given at Manchester College, Oxford, Easter Sunday, 1923.

*"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."*

## DOES NATURE FORGIVE?

On a recent occasion when meeting an officer of a Liberal Christian Church for the purpose of arranging the details of a Sunday morning Service, I proposed to use one of the orders of that unmatched prayer book compiled by the late John Hunter, of Glasgow, wherein was a version of the General Confession:—

> "Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from Thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and desires of our own hearts. We have offended against Thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done, and we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But Thou, O Lord, have mercy upon us. Spare thou them, O God, who confess their faults. Restore thou them that are penitent, according

to Thy promises declared unto mankind, in Christ Jesus our Lord; and grant, O most merciful Father, that we may hereafter, live a godly, righteous and sober life, to the glory of thy holy name. Amen."

My companion suggested that this prayer was scarcely fitting in such a church, and had better be left out. Nevertheless, the prayer was used, and I did not discern that it seemed in anywise incongruous with the spirit of the worshippers in that church.

The incident shows that we may, with advantage, consider whether or no we believe in the forgiveness of sins, and whether we may and should preach that there is forgiveness of sins with God.

The Bible is full of the forgiveness of sins, prayers for forgiveness, promises of forgiveness, joy in forgiveness, injunctions to repent that sins may be forgiven, moving narratives of forgiveness. To the candid reader of the literature of the Bible there can be no doubt that in the minds of all its writers, from first to last, there was a sincere and unconquerable belief in the forgiveness of sins. The way in which this has been

expressed has varied with the age in which it has been written. Forms and ceremonies have been prescribed, through which this forgiveness could be obtained; strange ideas of sacrificial ransom are there, remnants of the childhood of mankind; great schemes of redemption from an overshadowing terror conceived through meditation on the mystery of evil. But notwithstanding these prescriptions, there was no doubt of forgiveness. And beside all, there are the words of a free forgiveness, untrammelled with priestly ordinances, or thought of a sacrificial compensation: just the free gracious pardon of God to the repented confessor, an act of fidelity and justice on the part of the Almighty.

The word " forgive " is a very simple one. It occurs in much the same form in the many tongues of northern Europe. It conveys its own definition—an indication of an attempt to give things their former character —to give them that appearance and feeling which they had before the offence was committed. To forgive is to *give back* that which *was before.* The idea is expressed in many prophetic utterances of the Old Testament:

> "And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, . . . my great army which I sent among you."

Such thoughts are as beautiful as they are deliberate. God will give back things as they were before sin had marred his work.

Forgiveness carries with it the belief, nay, even the knowledge that there is sin. And the universality of the cry for forgiveness, as we find it in the Bible, implies the belief that all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God. In the words of the writer of the text: "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Nay more, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and his word is not in us." By the very thought of the denial of sinfulness we sin against God. The Christian ethic claims an integrity of mind which does not allow that deeds of commission or of omission are alone evidence of sin. The most passing and evanescent thoughts that flit through the mind of man, brought into being by the momentary vision of the eye, or the hearing of the ear, are counted as sin. "I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after

her, hath already committed adultery with her in his heart." If this be true, what man is there among us who has escaped condemnation?

There has been much ebb and flow in man's feeling of his own worth. At some times his thought of the greatness and holiness of the divine nature has led him to affirm the worthlessness and even vileness of his own nature. At other times there has been an uplifting of his spirit; his belief in the indwelling of God has banished fear until he has realized himself as but little lower than God. Our minds are so constructed that the filling of our thought with some great idea almost always tends to drive us to an extreme which may be fraught with peril for the very integrity of that idea. To-day sin bulks but little in the eyes of many thinkers. Man is a fair plant, full of blossom, and bearing much fruit, and if there be blemishes upon him, is it more than the soil from which the gracious flower sprang? Sin is less a shortcoming than an incident that is unavoidable. Indeed to some, there is no sin. To think that there is sin is a failure of faith and a falling away

from the high ideal of life. Who then is right? These later thinkers, or the writer of the Epistle of John, and the many that bear witness to the truth of his words?

Our experience of human nature brings with it the realization that temperaments vary as much as physical conformation. The old belief in a "humoural" pathology finds its reflex in our appreciation of the attitudes of our neighbours. Some are good humoured, and others are ill-humoured: some sanguine and some melancholy. These characters have their parallel in the terms of our subject. There are some happy souls who are so "healthy minded" as to be unable to feel that they or their deeds fail in anything that should be expected of them. They live always in the joy of the present, and reck little of the road they have passed over, the steeps which they have climbed, or the perils which are to come. There are others who are for ever checking their progress with the investigation of what has been, what might have been, and what may be; and their minds are depressed with the consciousness of a failure to attain, and fear

of a false step in the ascent of the Hill Difficulty. These differences are temperamental. They are inherent in human nature, and I doubt if they will ever be smoothed out. They may be traced to the very beginnings of human thought and experience. Innocence as a basis of happiness is of doubtful stability. The time of man's innocence was the time of his unconsciousness. So soon as he became conscious of himself, that is so soon as he began to think, be became conscious of the manifold forms of life surrounding and pressing upon him. The realization filled him with terror, a terror akin to the fear of the child for the darkness which wraps him round, touches him at all points, and cannot be fended off by deed or thought. To the primeval man, the stab of a nettle revealed an invisible hostile power, the stone that overthrew his faltering steps was the instrument of a malignant agency, the thunder of the air was a terror beyond all endurance, and the eyes of the midnight sky exposed his nakedness to the universe.

Primitive man was no noble creature. The "noble savage" is the figment of imagina-

tion out of touch with reality. The savage was and still is ignoble. Yet there was in him the germ of nobility which has grown under the severest stresses and born much fruit through the centuries. In primitive man, fear dominated mind and controlled actions in a slavery more complete than that of the most inhuman of masters for the body of his thrall. If you have any doubts on this point, I would bid you read a little book—" On the Edge of the Primeval Forest," recently written by Professor Albert Schweitzer, who, leaving the Art which had been his first love, qualified himself as a physician, and has lived in the heart of Central Africa tending the sickness, mental and bodily, of the dark skinned tribes of that region. It is a book of thrilling interest, and it will show you the horror and the bondage of fear, and how man is being redeemed from his bondage by that perfect love which casteth out fear.

Whatever be our natural temperament and the corresponding reaction which it brings to our outlook upon life, whether we be the happiest of the " healthy-minded " or the sorriest of the " sick souls " whose

experiences have been analysed with such shrewdness by William James, it is certain that within each of us there is some vestige of the opposite habit of mind. And this vestige may spring up into activity and possibly dominate thought in untoward conditions. There is a very true analogy between mental conditions and physical conditions. A man is a man and a woman is a woman. But in the study of embryology we find that there is a time in the history of every bodily beginning when there is no differentiation, and that with the differentiation there remain for ever with each body the vestiges of the organs and tissues which, in their full development make the other sex. Man carries within him the undeveloped insignia of the woman, and the woman those of the man, so that in pathological conditions there may be found a disturbance of the natural balance and a development of physical characters which are foreign to the particular individual. Even so in the temperament of the individual, there is in the most healthy minded of us some response and some liability to the reactions which are those of the sick soul. Trouble, sorrow or sickness

may bring about these manifestations. Even the discomforts of a common cold may make the most healthy minded feel that he is in truth a miserable sinner, in whom there is no health. There is therefore, for every one of us, a need of that assurance of forgiveness without which such times as these may, perchance, prove the dissolution of the integrity of the mind and of its fine balance.

To the healthy minded the essays of Emerson are superb in their virile dignity. To the sick soul they are superficial and repellant. To the sick in soul and body there comes a craving for the solace of the words of the penitential psalm. In such thoughts it finds no meanness of spirit, but the source of a renewal through which alone health can be attained. There is a time for man to stand upon his feet erect in the dignity of manhood, and there is a time when it is no shame to humble ourselves to the earth, and to embrace the call to repentance through which there is forgiveness.

The possibility of forgiveness has been denied by some. They have asserted that

there is no forgiveness in nature; what is done, is done, and there is no remission. That is a hard saying, and if it be true in fact, on such knowledge as we possess of nature's doings, then the outlook is black for a belief in forgiveness of sins. But is the statement true? For myself, I am convinced that it is not true. There may be many appearances which on a first and limited view appear to support it; but there are other facts amply supported by experience, which lead us to an entirely different view. A few examples may be given of nature's forgiveness—the effort of nature to put things back as they were before the offence was committed.

If there be an injury to the tissues of the body, a cutting wound or the like, there is an immediate effort of the bodily structure for the repair of that injury. The fluids of the body exude in an attempt to close the wound; then the wandering cells of the body collect in and about the wound, bringing with them those chemical processes which are so effective in promoting reactions against an alien invasion; and the fixed tissue cells are stimulated to an activity

which results in the speedy formation of a scaffolding, the precursor of a process of repair which, ultimately secures a clean white seam in place of the bleeding gaping wound. In that process there is more wonder and precision than is to be witnessed in the gigantic outworks of the great buildings which we see being reared in many parts of our modern cities.

Delicacy and complexity of tissue is no necessary bar to processes of repair. A lesion of the brain is followed by a process of recovery, so that it is found that neighbouring or related cell-groups endeavour to take over the functions lost by the injury received. The nerve fibres themselves, which stretch out to the periphery of the limbs, show most amazing powers of repair. Immediately on the severance of a connection, there is an outgrowth from the central end of the fibre which seeks to grow down to the lost connection; and it is now a common practice for the skilful surgeon to provide means whereby a lost section may be bridged by a new growth of nerve fibres, so that a lost function is restored and "the withered hand made whole."

Or again, the body is invaded by a deadly parasite, the bacillus of tuberculosis. It fastens itself upon the delicate tissues of the lungs and threatens the very spring of vitality. Even there the body seeks to rid itself of the invader, the reaction which is set up promotes the formation around it of an enclosing barrier of tissue, which, after its kind, slowly shrinks in upon its centre, and like the fabled torture chambers of medieval times gradually crushes the life out of the encircled parasite.

Or yet again, in that most dreadful of all diseases, which is conveyed from person to person by deeds of evil living, and alas too often communicated to the innocent, an infection which penetrates the body to its inmost recesses, bringing corruption and death, which reaches even to the germ cells of the body so that the progeny of the affected ones are born to disease and death, even there is an effort to restore the former state. I have collected numerous family histories in which there is seen the record first of the destruction of the products of conception, then the appearance of unviable children, followed by those who live but are affected

by the disease, until at last the virus is overcome and healthy viable children are born to the parents. Nature has forgiven and restored the former things.

Lest it be thought I confine my illustrations too much to the realm of pathology, let me ask you to look upon yonder pine tree. By the slight crook in its upright shaft there is told a story. Some careless youth broke off the leading shoot of the sapling, and for a time its upgrowth was checked; but another shoot took on the lead and today the tree is tall and straight and scarce bears the marks of the injury. Even the cold earth forgives the injuries done to its face. The scars of war, the ugly trenches which have seamed our countryside, will be gone in a few decades; even now the props are rotting, the barbarous wire is rusting into dust; wind and rain, frost and sunshine are crumbling away their sides, the blown leaves are filling in the depth of the recesses, and the spring flowers, the heralds of a new resurrection, show their tender shoots among them. Even here, nature shows forgiveness; and the laws of nature are the laws of God.

Is it less so with man, who also is part of nature? Do we not in the swift movement of our city life blunder and stumble against each other in the press of the traffic, do we not beg pardon and receive it with an almost automatic swiftness? And does not the churl who rejects a pardon with gross words, render himself an offence? Forgiveness is almost a part of our life. Husband forgives wife and wife husband, parents children, and children parents, and friend forgives friend; for we all continually fall short of what we should be, and as we are forgiven, so also we forgive. Even nations forgive, or will forgive in time. And we men are a part of nature, and our doings are part of the outcome of the laws of nature, and the laws of nature are the laws of God.

But it may be that the critic will assert that the forgiveness is not proven. That the measure of the mark of the injury remains in the scar of the wound, in the lesions of the lungs, in the family history of disease and death, in the crook of the tree, in the marks on the downs of earthworks of unknown history, in the wounds and bruises

of mental encounters even as of physical, and that the reparation is but partial and the forgiveness incomplete if at all. That objection will have much or little weight according to the light in which it is examined. To the purblind eye, the scar on the hand, the mark of the wound, may limit and therefore possess the view to the exclusion of the body as a whole; but this is a limitation of sight which is in itself pathological and unnatural. The scar on the hand that marks the site of some old injury is less the mark of the injury than the mark of and the sign of repair, of restoration, of reparation, of forgiveness, even as the bow in the heavens is the sign of sunshine in the midst of the storm. If there had been no repair, the wound would have gaped without closing, strange infections would have entered into it, the hand and the limb would have been rendered useless, and the death of the whole organism would have been assured at no distant time. The larger view, a view which takes into its range not the scar alone, but also the existence of the whole body, assures us that the scar is the sign of healing, that is of forgiveness of the

injury and a restoration of the former state of efficiency and freedom from danger. And so also the thesis might be developed in regard to those other examples that have been cited, and to as many more as might be considered. Even of the old time marks on the distant downs, the same may be said. Those shallow dells, those flattened ramparts which mark the place of some prehistoric encampment, are now covered with turf as close and fine as that found in any part of the downs that has never felt the wound of celt, or of stake. The rough places have been made plain, so that now there is scarce depth enough to hide the children who gather in the place of old traditions to play games of joy and happiness. There has been restoration and forgiveness even there.

Would we have more ? We would have forgiveness, but would we also have forgetfulness ? To forgive the injury and to receive forgiveness are good, but can we, with safety or profit forget the forgiveness ? These old scars are in truth reminders of the forgiveness, and in that sense they are of priceless value, and not one of them can be lost.

Let us endeavour to achieve that freshness of memory which shall be able to call to mind each day, the triumph of nature over the injuries that have been inflicted upon her handiwork. There can be no manner of doubt that there is forgiveness in nature, and as we believe in the God whose living influence pervades all things and all nature, so we may believe also in the forgiveness of God.

To those who are engaged in the services of the churches of the Liberal Faith these things are matters of moment. It may be that for the most part these assemblies are made up of the "ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance." But even so, there may be the one, the stranger who ventures in to hear if, in this place, there may be any promise that there is forgiveness with God. His intelligence may scorn the priestly absolution of a church; his recognition of the mystery of God may make repugnant to him a scheme of remission which offers the pain of the innocent for mercy on the guilty. Yet he may yearn for some assurance that there is forgiveness for himself, and he may hope to find some

reasonable hint of the goodness of God in the gospel of the freeborn. Let it not be said that any such has failed to find what he sought in our Churches, and not only failed but found only a hard ethic which taught the perfection of the perfect. And who can tell what is behind the mask of the ninety and nine just persons who may be thought to need no repentance ? What sense of failure may be there. What heartache. Can you ever be sure that there is no need of the ministry of comfort even amongst the elect ? Speaking as a member of the medical profession, I say that there is more than meets the eye in every one of us. The healthiest in aspect may be, and often is, in deep need of physical ministration. And so it is with the things of the spirit. That is no statement of pessimism, it is a plain statement of fact, and we shut our eyes to it at our peril, the peril of the failure of our evangel.

Let us profess our faith with all assurance, and teach it with no uncertain sound:—

If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

## DOES NATURE FORGIVE?

"God wove a web of loveliness,
Of clouds and stars and birds,
But made not anything at all,
So beautiful as words."

Amongst all the words of our tongue there is none more beautiful than the word "Forgive." Unless it be that other word, "Love," and love is in its essence forgiving; for love putteth back the hands of the clock and causes all age to pass into nothingness; it repairs the ravages of time and stress and makes youth, beauty, and truth to be the possession of each who shares in it. It is the true giver back of all that was before, even to the renewal of the ideals and inspirations of youth which are the ideals of a golden age.

I BELIEVE IN GOD . THE FATHER OF ALL MEN . AND MY FATHER . REVEALED IN THE LOVE OF LITTLE CHILDREN . THE LIVES OF ALL GOOD MEN . AND MOST TO US CHRISTIANS IN JESUS . OUR MASTER . IN WHOSE LIFE WE HAVE ASSURANCE OF HOPE . I BELIEVE IN THE EVER-PRESENT SPIRIT OF GOD WORKING IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS . LEADING US TO HIMSELF . TO A GREATER GLORY OF LIFE . AND TO A HOPE FULL OF IMMORTALITY . . . . . I BELIEVE IN THE COMMUNION OF SAINTS . THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS . GOD THE MOST MERCIFUL . AMEN . . .