

RELIGION: ITS MODERN NEEDS
AND PROBLEMS . . . No. 4

**THE REVELATION
OF GOD IN NATURE
AND HUMANITY**

BY
BASIL VINEY

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

**THE LINDSEY PRESS
ESSEX HALL, 5 ESSEX STREET, STRAND, W.C.2**

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN NATURE AND HUMANITY

BY
BASIL VINEY

EDITOR'S NOTE

Each writer is responsible for the views expressed in his contribution to the series. No attempt has been made to limit freedom in the effort to impose an artificial uniformity. Yet a certain unity of outlook does make itself evident, and this is all the more valuable because unforced.

RAYMOND V. HOLT

THE LINDSEY PRESS
5, ESSEX STREET, STRAND, LONDON, W.C.2

First published in 1931

Printed in Great Britain
BY RICHARD CLAY AND SONS, LIMITED
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

SYNOPSIS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. FAITH AND FREEDOM	9
<p>The dogmatist is doubtful of reason and the sceptic of faith, whereas the Unitarian affirms the validity of both, and their mutual relationship. Jesus appealed from ancient authorities to his own conviction. In this we may take him for our guide; but we may also draw from sources of enlightenment unknown to him.</p>	
II. GOD IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD	12
<p>Science deepens our sense of wonder, and should therefore strengthen our faith. But it is often supposed that the discovery of natural law prevents belief in any underlying spiritual reality. This supposition depends on the confusion of the divine with the miraculous. Even mathematical order suggests a primal mathematician, and an orderly universe an indwelling intelligence. Science also reveals a hitherto unsuspected physical history—the apparently purposive development of the sun-and-world system from the primal nebula; whilst the emergence of qualitative difference from quantitative (exemplified in colour, tone and chemical affinity) is inexplicable on any mechanistic theory.</p>	
III. GOD IN THE VITAL WORLD	20
<p>Religion has nothing to fear from the spontaneous generation of living matter; but the process of organic evolution, which is proved beyond question by the facts of embryology, will affect religion adversely or favourably according to the explanation of the process which is</p>	

adopted. Darwin's theory, which emphasises struggle and explains beauty away, is atheistic in tendency; Lamarck's, which stresses the desire in the animal, is neutral; whilst Mivart suspects an upward trend, spasmodic in appearance, but definite and purposive. All three schools of thought have their representatives to-day. There is evidence that competition and effort are necessary factors; but the geological gaps favour Mivart, and the modern "mutationists." The problem of the law of prey is magnified unduly when we study animals from the human point of view. Mutual help is an equally important factor on the sub-human plane. Nor can we resolve all beauty into utilitarian terms. The increasing manifestation of beauty and of goodness is apparent. Thus the general tendency of organic evolution suggests an indwelling and guiding spirit, and the degenerate is exceptional. But creation may imply effort and sacrifice.

IV. GOD IN HISTORY 34

Man is subject to impulses from animal and super-human levels; but he is not the sport of his impulses, and may decide between them. Nevertheless, conscience differs from land to land and from age to age; therefore how can it be of God? The history of ethical standards reveals no mere change, but an ever closer approximation to a moral ideal; whilst from the various traditional creeds a universal faith is arising. But two sincere men are often found on opposite sides? That is because they differ in breadth of outlook. Conscience alone is inadequate, and must be liberated from traditional and local prejudices by reason. There is abundance of goodwill in the world to-day; but it must be supplemented by thought, that the social harmony may arise. History relates the collapse of several old-time civilisations; but with wisdom and courage we may tide over the crisis where others perished. God is revealed fitfully in history because the necessary human co-operation is fitful. Yet each generation enters on a richer cultural inheritance than the preceding.

V. GOD IN THE SOUL 46

God may be traced alike in the development of the world and the growth of the soul. By a process of ethical conversion the unregenerate and self-centred "natural man" becomes dutiful, and by a process of spiritual conversion gracious. But the most God-revealing are those who have the gift of sympathetic insight. To develop this quality it is necessary to realise how real and providential are some of the differences between us; yet how the difference is rather of emphasis than of essential content, so that understanding is always possible. Then the discord resolves itself into harmony. When this sympathetic insight is deep enough it includes even the animals. Some of the most sympathetic are atheistic in creed, but are none the less essentially Godlike and God-revealing.

VI. ARTISTIC INSIGHT 52

Nature is essentially a manifestation of the divine beauty. The artist or poet reads her meaning, whilst the mere naturalist only explains the grammar. In communion with Nature we sometimes experience an exaltation which transcends argument, and which may bring with it a sense of immortality and of the divine presence. The atheist who shares this experience has felt the touch of the God whom he rejects in intellectual mood. There are two chief modes of manifestation of the eternal beauty—Nature, essentially static and spatial; and Music, essentially dynamic and temporal, and incidentally symbolic of the eternal life.

VII. IMMORTALITY 58

World development and world beauty are both inexplicable without God, but there still remains the problem of the imperfection and injustice of the present world-order, which can only find its resolution in the assumption of a future life. In our highest æsthetic or affectional moods we feel annihilation to be impossible; but in intellectual mood it is difficult to imagine our immortality. Yet evidence of survival is accumulating;

whilst memories would appear to be essentially immaterial, and therefore possibly indestructible. There is no reason in science why we should doubt a future life, at once continuous with the present, yet inconceivably richer.

VIII. THE PRESENT DUTY 63

The true test of worship is conduct. Creation and revelation are still realities in our midst; the forces of progress are still in conflict with outworn customs and institutions, and should find their chief inspiration in the free faith.

THE REVELATION OF GOD IN NATURE AND HUMANITY

CHAPTER I

FAITH AND FREEDOM

THESE chapters are written for those to whom the traditional dogma of Christendom and the vague disbelief of to-day are alike unsatisfactory. Many still imagine that religion is inseparably bound up with dogma. To them the Bible is the ultimate source of all faith. Final truth is comprised in a series of creeds based on the apostolic epistles, and the conscience and reason of to-day must submit to the authority of two thousand years ago. On the other hand, an increasing number of thoughtful people suspect that faith is unreasonable, and God and immortality mere figments of human fear or desire.

Now some of us agree with the dogmatists that there is an Eternal truth; but we do not agree that it has found complete or undiluted expression in ancient books or mediæval creeds. Again, we agree with the agnostics that human faculties must operate unhampered by Papal or Biblical authority; but we do not admit that these faculties are useless in the great research; that God is essentially unknown or unknowable.

We claim that just as our bodily senses reveal the external world to us, so certain intuitions (the sense of right and the sense of beauty) bring us into direct contact with the spiritual. Much as reason interprets the discoveries of the senses,

discriminating between fact and fallacy, so she may interpret our spiritual experiences, and discriminate between religion and superstition. Thus in the light of reason ancient fears are dispelled, and the divine goodness is seen with increasing clearness through the vanishing mists. The faith that rests on dogma is often timid, afraid of the growing daylight. The free faith is confident and adventurous, eager to welcome light from whatever source it may come, sure that the findings of reason will but strengthen and purify the faith born in intuition. The religion of dogma is apt to be cloistered and aloof. The free faith is intimately related to science, to art, and to everyday life.

We shall not devote any of our time to the destruction of the old dogmas. Most thoughtful people find it difficult nowadays to believe in the creation of the world in six days, or in everlasting punishment; in the tri-unity of God, or in salvation through the blood of Christ. But too many of them assume that it is therefore impossible any longer to believe in the God whom Jesus worshipped, or in a future life. I hope to show that this desolating doubt of the essentials is groundless; that modern thought has but separated the wheat from the chaff.

It is important to notice that Jesus himself, who was misunderstood and elevated to superhuman rank by his followers, did not claim infallibility, or even moral perfection. He spoke, indeed, with authority, and not as the scribes, because he had met God face to face, and there were certain essential truths he never doubted. He did not hesitate to contradict the orthodoxy of his day. "It hath been said . . . but I say unto you . . ." Yet others could win the same knowledge for themselves, and so gain the same power. "Greater things than I do shall ye do."

So we in our day, guided by those who have gone before, though in no way hampered by their errors and limitations, may, in the atmosphere of free thought, win for ourselves a

faith more splendid than dogmatist ever knew. We may recapture the vision of Jesus, enriched by further light from sources of which even he suspected nothing. A deeper insight into the intimate nature of God we can scarcely imagine, but a clearer understanding of the process of creation, new explorations in the realm of the Eternal beauty and fresh adventures in the service of mankind are ours for the seeking.

For science as we know it is entirely the growth of the last three centuries; the poetic interpretation of nature is a comparatively new achievement; and the idea of the human commonwealth, the germ of which is found in the gospel of Jesus, has since been fully matured. These are the most significant tendencies in modern life and thought, and each of them has an important bearing on faith, and therefore a place in our inquiry.

Let us commence with a study of the relation between religion and science, directing our attention at the outset to the physical world.

CHAPTER II

GOD IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD

THERE is a close connection between awe and reverence, between joy and gratitude; so that any discovery which increases our delight and wonder in the world is bound to deepen our religious sentiments.

Now there is scarcely any purely scientific discovery which has not materially increased our appreciation of the world in which we live. The universe which the schoolboy looks out on to-day is far more wonderful than the realm of the ancient psalmist. He rejoiced with trembling in the wide expanse of earth and sky; but for him the stars were only little lamps suspended from the floor of heaven, and the volcanoes the chimneys of Hades. Science has shattered that ancient dolls' house. It has granted man the freedom of the universe; it has made him a denizen of infinite space and time. We can now explore the arid craters of our moon; watch the myriad moons wax and wane in the sky of Jupiter; or thread our way through the crowded multiple stars of the galaxy to some distant nebula dimly lighting the outer spaces. Or we can re-create in imagination an era when club mosses grew erect and tall as trees; when that weird forest was swathed in perpetual cloud, through which the sunbeams lazily penetrated; when gigantic saurians wandered through the glooms, and vividly iridescent pterodactyls flapped on immense bat-like wings in and out the groves. Shall not these vistas of hitherto unsuspected realms increase our wonder and delight?

Yet the idea is still prevalent in many circles that science is antagonistic to religion, or at best indifferent; that in her dry light imagination is stifled, and spiritual realities are dispelled as mere fallacy. It is feared that she has explained everything, that she has removed all possibility of miracle, and crowded God out of his own universe.

Erroneous conceptions alike of science and religion are responsible for this idea. It is supposed, on the one hand, that God is peculiarly revealed in the miracle; and, on the other, that natural law in itself offers a sufficient explanation of all phenomena. Both suppositions are erroneous.

There is one philosophical assumption which is essential to religion. It is that spirit produces (or at least controls and moulds) matter: that some sort of conscious agency is the ultimate source of all physical events. In this assumption the crudest polytheism and the sublimest monotheism are at one; and it is this assumption which scientific investigation is supposed to have undermined.

This has come to pass chiefly because of the emphasis which theology has from old time laid on any event which impresses by virtue of its rarity or immensity—the eclipse of the sun in the noonday heavens, or the appearance of the rainbow arch in the sky. The sunrise is more beautiful and beneficent than either, but because it happens every day it needs no explanation. And when science expresses all physical events in terms of mathematical formulæ; when the eclipse can be predicted with clockwork regularity, and the rainbow reproduced by a little child playing in a dark room with a hole in the shutter and a prism of glass, it is supposed that mathematics have replaced God.

But let us see what has actually happened. It is true we can no longer credit stories about the sun standing still in the heavens that the chosen people may complete the rout of the enemy. Nor do the storms and calms of nature any longer envisage the capricious moods of a superhuman tyrant. But

is that the whole truth of the matter? Does a capricious nature necessitate a God (or Gods) and a harmonious universe explain itself? Does a geometrical proposition testify to the existence of a Euclid, and a solar system bear witness to nothing beyond its own order, of which it is unaware? Is even the savage, with his innumerable array of malicious and benevolent spirits, guilty of quite as childish an error as the materialist, whose atoms all unconsciously weave patterns so intricate that only a genius can unravel them?

It is not in the least true that natural law explains everything. It reveals a mechanical order and reliability hitherto unsuspected. Now if in the human realm we discover an elaborate machine, we know for certain that it owes its existence to an inventor, that it had its origin in mind. Have we the slightest reason for rejecting a similar conclusion regarding the mechanism of the physical world? Natural law, so far from explaining things, leaves the more to be explained. Once grasp the laws of motion and gravity, and you may predict the movements of the planets; but these same laws surely reveal the method of a deity as far above the Jehovah of the early Hebrews as the mind of Newton is above that of the barbarian?

“ Who motion, foreign to the smallest grain,
Shot through vast masses of enormous weight?
. . . Has matter innate motion? . . . Has it thought,
Judgment or genius? Is it deeply learned
In mathematics? Has it framed such laws
Which but to guess a Newton made immortal?
If art to form, and counsel to conduct
. . . Reside not in each block, a Godhead reigns.”*

Nor need we conceive God as distant; residing outside His creation like the human inventor; leaving it to go by itself:

* Young, *Night Thoughts*

“ But how should matter occupy a charge,
Dull as it is, and satisfy a law
So vast in its demands, unless impelled
To ceaseless service by a ceaseless force,
And under pressure of some conscious cause?
The Lord of all, Himself through all diffused,
Sustains, and is, the life of all that lives.
Nature is but a name for an effect
Whose cause is God.”*

Science also shows that the physical world has a history. At one time it was possible to argue that the world was eternal. We now know that it had a beginning in time. It is difficult to imagine an orderly universe without an indwelling mind; it is perhaps even more difficult to imagine a definite development without a directing intelligence. Now a definite development is clearly indicated.

Imagine space filled with a fluid ether (which may or may not have existed from eternity). At a definite time there appear in this fluid tiny particles endowed with motion. They clash, disperse, and concentrate. Light and heat waves are generated in the ether by their movements. They form into definite little groups, revolving round each other. They gather into large gaseous clouds, stupendous nebulae. Here and there a nebula condenses into suns, and occasionally one sun, rushing past another, drags a planet out of it. At first the planet is itself luminous and gaseous; but slowly it develops a viscid crust, swathed in a uniform ocean. Then another wanderer passes by, and drags a moon out of the planet, leaving mighty depressions into which the water rushes. So the dry land arises, and as the globe cools, the crust shrinks and puckers, mountains and valleys appearing. All the time it is moving round and round, bathing itself now in sunshine, now in darkness; moving also round the sun with axis inclined, passing from summer to winter, and back to summer again.

* Cowper, *The Task*

Thus from a huge fluid, monotonously homogeneous and quite structureless, are moulded a radiant sun and an expectant planet, diversified with all the variety of night and day, earth and sea, mountain, valley and plain. Thus in the course of ages a world is sculptured, hewn out of old chaos to be a fitting home of life. Furthermore, when its work is done, and the races to which it has given shelter have matured and passed on, it will gradually vanish. The ultimate particles of which it is composed will dissociate themselves from one another and disappear. Once more there will be but an immense expanse of homogeneous, structureless fluid. Possibly even that will lapse, and only space be left.

Does this look like the sort of process that could happen by itself? Granted you must assume some entity to have existed from eternity, shall that entity be material or mental in nature? If merely material, whence the power which first impelled the ultimate particles to circle round each other, to group themselves into systems of ever-increasing complexity? We know that the process had a beginning. We can even arrive at a rough idea of the date. Surely the most reasonable explanation is that the spirit of God moved on the primal chaos? Is not this chapter of physical history an epic of creative activity more marvellous than ancient seer ever dreamed?

Yet another revelation which we owe to physical science should intensify our wonder and delight. It is in the realm of the physical that we find the entirely inexplicable transition from *difference of quantity* to *distinction of quality*. This sounds abstruse; but a few examples will make it quite simple. The hydrogen atom consists of a central particle (or proton) with a smaller particle (or electron) revolving round it. Other atoms contain a multiplicity of protons and electrons. Thus the atoms differ solely in the number and arrangement of the parts of which they are composed. The result, you would say, must be merely a difference in *size*. Number and distance

are *measurable quantities*, in neither of them is there any implication of *qualitative distinction*. But you would be wrong. One group gives you an atom of chlorine; a greenish-yellow, evil-smelling gas. Another gives you an atom of sodium; a soft, silvery metal. This is amazing enough. But now bring these two atoms together under conditions conducive to their union, and you are suddenly confronted with a third substance (a compound) as dissimilar to either of the elements as they are to each other. It is a white, powdery substance with a taste peculiar to itself—common salt. Or consider the elements of oxygen and hydrogen, each with its own peculiar qualities, each one gaseous at normal temperatures. Surely if you combine them the result will be a substance somewhere in between (much as a cup of tea is a mixture of tea, water, milk and sugar). But the compound is not in the least a mixture. Again you have an entirely new substance with distinctive qualities of its own—this time the well-known liquid, water.

Thus from a few elements are built up all the numerous substances that fill the world; one of them, protoplasm, so complex and subtle that it becomes the vehicle of life itself. In the final analysis all these substances, innumerable and extraordinarily diverse, are resolved into so many groupings of particles of one homogeneous substance. Some theorists naïvely imagine that in resolving the many to the one you have explained it away. But as a matter of fact, you have, in the most prosaic and mathematical branch of science, strayed into magical realms. You add together x and x , and the result is not $2x$, but x ! You combine a and b , and the product is not ab , but n ! It is not capricious magic, for you know that if ab should produce n once it will do so again. But it is true magic, none the less. You have merely to apply the simplest of mathematical processes to your undifferentiated units, and immediately you witness something that transcends all attempts at mathematical (or mechanical) explanation—

the birth of an unexpected and hitherto unpredictable substance.

This illustration is purely physical. Others involve the relation of physical and vital, or psychic. Light waves, for example, are far too rapid for us to detect separately. We compress a myriad of Nature's moments into one of ours, and a myriad meaningless throbs in ether become an illuminating flash of light. This is mysterious enough. Now these light waves vary in length (a purely quantitative and measurable variation), but the colours we perceive under their influence differ in quality. Where we should expect a variation of tint merely (so many degrees of a neutral grey) we have all the amazing and immeasurable variety of red and yellow, green and blue.

Here again is something magical. A minor poet once regretted the scientific analysis of the rainbow and the shattering of the old Hebrew legend. Well, science has certainly analysed the rainbow; but she has not in the least explained it. She has told us how, by observing the necessary conditions, we can reproduce it at leisure; but the essence of colour remains as insoluble as the essence of life. To discover a series of wave-lengths underlying the colour sequence affects the wonder of colour as little as the charm of it. Imagine a world in which all light waves were $1/1340$ mm. in length—an all-red world. Not in the wildest flight of imagination could an inhabitant of that world guess that by the continual reduction of the wave-length an altogether unsuspected series of qualities would appear. Hitherto he would have taken red for granted (without being in the least aware of red as such). Imagine his increasing astonishment as his world turned yellow, blue, green and violet in succession.

Somewhat similar to the miracle of colour is that of tone. When air or sound waves become too rapid for the ear to detect separately they blend into a continuous hum. That is pretty much what we should expect. But on any further

increase in the number of vibrations the note changes in quality—hence the musical scale!

It is of no significance whether tone and colour arise in the physical world, the sense organs or the mind. The essential point is that the human consciousness detects both these qualities in the outer world.

Surely in this emergence of *distinction of quality* from *difference of quantity* we are in the presence of a mystery as unfathomable as the origin of consciousness itself. Materialism cannot even account for the material universe; which, alike in its order, its history, and its various qualities, reveals an indwelling and informing power.

CHAPTER III

GOD IN THE VITAL WORLD

PASSING now to the biological sciences, we find that these have given rise to even greater apprehension among religious believers than the physical. The various plants and animals were once supposed to represent as many definite and clear-cut creative acts. We now know that they are intimately related to each other, and have descended from a single undifferentiated ancestor, which may itself have been spontaneously generated from lifeless matter. This reduction of innumerable creative acts to a single one at most is very disturbing to those for whom God is peculiarly revealed in the miraculous.

We have, then, to consider the religious significance of the emergence of living from lifeless matter, and of the evolution of the higher forms of life from the lower.

With regard to the origin of life little need be said. It is quite possible that protoplasm (or living matter) is, in its material aspect, only an extremely complex chemical compound. It is even possible that it may some day be artificially produced in the laboratory. But does that in any way reduce the integrating power of life itself to a material level? It only means that, granted the necessary preliminaries, life spontaneously manifests itself, and informs the subsequent development.

The problem of that subsequent development needs more detailed consideration. There is great diversity of opinion about the bearing of evolution on religious belief. Some

hold that it disposes of creation; others that it is the method of creation. Much depends on the interpretation of evolution.

It was Darwin's triumph that he not only suggested, but proved, the ascent of the higher forms of life from the lower. How are we to explain the vestiges of ear-moving muscles in our own bodies unless we are descended from some distant mammal that moved its ears? Whence come the gill slits in every unborn mammal if mammals are not remotely related to fishes? We see a condensed version of evolution under our eyes every time an ugly, aquatic, worm-like grub crawls up an iris leaf into the air, bursts his leathery skin, and emerges a splendid dragon-fly, presently to flash to and fro above the water he had crept beneath! We see the theory proved every time a wriggling tadpole (a veritable fish) doffs his tail, grows his little fore-paws and his strong hind legs, and so becomes a sprightly earth-dwelling frog! There is something most fascinating in this view of life—all creatures related and ascendant!

But Darwin tried to explain how it happened; and, by stressing certain factors unduly, he gave a materialistic twist to his theory. All animals vary slightly from their parents, and more are born than ever grow up. They vary (thought Darwin) in all ways equally, and Nature selects those whose variations are on the whole favourable—the giraffe with the longest neck, the hawk with the keenest eyes, the cat with the sharpest claws, the hare with the swiftest feet, and so on.

These creatures favoured by fortune will not only be the most likely to survive and mate, but their offspring will probably inherit the same advantageous variations, in some instances to an even more marked degree. Thus each generation witnesses an almost infinitesimal advance on the preceding.

Now if adequate, this theory explains, not indeed the origin of consciousness, but the whole process of organic differentiation and development, from the initial protoplasmic

mass to the oak, the bee and the human, by means of gradual improvements due to natural selection from minute random variations. No directing or inspiring intelligence is needed.

Beauty, of course, must be explained away. Generally, we are told, it serves a useful purpose. Thus harmony in tint or pattern between an animal and its surroundings is protective. The beauty is merely incidental.

Darwin himself hovered between agnosticism and theism; and seems never to have realised how atheistic in effect his theory was bound to be; with its emphasis on struggle, its implicit denial of any directive life force, and its virtual negation of beauty.

To the man in the street evolution still means Darwinism; and therefore, if he is at all conversant with his theme, something uncommonly like materialism. He is usually surprised to learn that there are other theories of evolution, some of which it will be well to consider before inquiring into the plausibility of the Darwinian theory.

One of these theories owes its inception to the French zoologist, Lamarck, whose work was completed before Darwin's had begun. He thought that the desire of the animal, and the deliberate effort in which it expressed itself, were the chief factors in development. Thus the ancestor of the giraffe preferred foliage to grass. It soon acquired the habit of constantly stretching its neck to reach the branches; and sometimes it would rear itself up on its hind legs, presently dropping on to all fours with a sudden shock to the body. Hence a slight but unmistakable increase in the length of neck and fore-limbs.

Now its offspring (assumed Lamarck) would tend to inherit both the bodily peculiarities and the desires that had given rise to them, and would therefore advance further along the same line of mental and physical specialisation. Thus the various animals at present existing are the outcome of as many

diverging ways of life, which in turn correspond to preferences and partialities.

Lamarck's theory is not in the least materialistic in tendency, like Darwin's. Struggle, necessity and mechanical selection play but a small part in his scheme of things. Bodily peculiarities do not determine the cast of mind, but are themselves the expression of mental bias. Structure follows inclination. The desire of the animal is the chief motive power.

Now there has been an advance in almost all instances. For every animal that has lapsed into a decadent condition there are at least a hundred that have aspired and achieved. This would almost suggest that the desire of the animal is a particular expression of a general upward urge.

Another interesting and at first sight rather curious theory is Mivart's. Mivart was the most acute of Darwin's critics. His suggestion is that the tiny chance variations of Darwin are not the chief material of evolution, but that certain unexpected variations (neither random nor minute) are of much greater significance. A species, he maintains, might long vary in the ordinary manner, and then suddenly, under pressure of outward change or inward impulse, give rise to a new species (much as water, under pressure of increasing heat, suddenly becomes steam).

Thus evolution may be neither gradual nor mechanical, but spasmodic and purposive. Not that there is any necessary connection between the spasmodic and the purposive, or between the gradual and the mechanical; but it so happens that any mechanical method must needs be gradual, and that rapid and pronounced advances do suggest an indwelling purpose.

Now Darwin, Lamarck and Mivart have all their followers among contemporary evolutionists. The neo-Darwinists represent a declining orthodoxy, which is being challenged with increasing success by the heterodox schools. Perhaps that explains a certain vein of dogmatic assertion alien to the

spirit of science. It is only fair to add that Darwin himself was altogether free from any such dogmatism.

Let us now weigh these theories against each other, and, setting aside their possible significance for religious belief, consider them solely in relation to fact.

There is probably an element of truth in all three. Lamarck is often rejected because acquired characters are transmitted (if at all) to an almost infinitesimal degree. But there is undeniable evidence that lack of effort leads to decadence. There are certain curious little animals called cicilians. They are scarcely to be distinguished from earthworms, either in bodily appearance or mental qualities. Yet dissection reveals a backbone and a tiny brain! They have descended from the newts. Almost as remarkable is the lapse of the whale from the level of the four-footed land-dwelling mammals to its present fish-like form. If sheer laziness or misdirection produces such marked depravity it is surely reasonable to assume that effort is rewarded by corresponding improvement, though it is probable that the advance is not as gradual and continuous as Lamarck supposed. We may look in vain for the appearance of the acquired character in the offspring, and yet it is among the most vigorous species that variations and mutations abound. (Darwin himself sometimes suspected this.) Thus effort may be an essential condition of progress; and it is quite possible that the nature of the desire may determine the direction of the mutation. (Of course this argument applies only to the higher animals. It is quite beside the mark where plants are concerned.)

Struggle is also an unmistakable factor. In thinly populated and isolated areas, where competition is slack, progress has been very slow. In Australia the highest indigenous mammal is the kangaroo, which might be likened in certain mental and bodily qualities to a large and rather dull-witted rat, and cannot be compared with the monkeys or even the lemurs of the larger continents.

Yet competition is probably effective solely as a stimulus to effort. And natural selection is, after all, only a means of elimination, and in no way an originative force. Nor would the minute variations of Darwin appear to be the factors between which the selective process discriminates. The most significant problem is, after all, that concerning the relative importance of these minute random variations and the mutations or "sports." The latter undoubtedly occur. Certain long-horned cattle, long-haired guinea pigs and tufted turkeys (to give a few well-known examples) have appeared suddenly, in a single generation. Darwin himself knew of these sports. But he thought that as they appeared only on odd occasions they would "breed out." The sport, mating with a normal animal, would produce semi-normal offspring, and in a few generations the new quality would entirely disappear. We now know that in many instances it does not vanish in this manner. A definite proportion of the offspring born to the sport and the normal will not only be sports themselves, but will again breed true when mated with the normal. Thus a character originating by mutation may gradually establish itself.

Then the geological record is difficult to reconcile with Darwinism. For there are great gaps in the fossil series, and to plead the imperfection of the record (as Darwin did) is hopelessly inadequate. It is surely significant that innumerable fossils have been found, but that scarcely any of them occur midway between the well-marked groups. Consider, for example, the stupendous gulf between the reptiles and the birds. If Darwin (or Lamarck) is right, this gulf must have been bridged by an enormous multitude of intermediate forms. Yet we have not found a single one; for the nearest approach, the archiopteryx, is a true bird, though its reptilian tail suggests the line of descent clearly enough. Almost it would seem as though in certain formative phases new species must have originated far more rapidly than is usually the case.

There are several other considerations which seem to fit more easily into the mutation theory than the Darwinian: the well-marked lines of demarcation between most species, the frequent disinclination of nearly allied species to interbreed, and the not infrequent sterility of hybrids, for instance. Perhaps also the strange phenomenon of instinct—the unwitting performance of purposive actions apart from instruction or experience.

The Darwinist would account for this by natural selection from random mental traits, which not only seems far-fetched, but is also difficult to reconcile with the gaps. The Lamarckian regards instinct as “lapsed intelligence” or “inherited habit.” This would imply that the creatures in whom the instincts are most highly developed (the insects) were once the most intelligent—a scarcely credible conclusion. Probably instinct is quite distinct from intelligence, and closely akin to the unconscious purpose shown in the essential vital processes, like digestion. It is surely not improbable that the instincts, the vital processes and the evolution of new species are various manifestations of the same directive force of life? Thus of the rival theories the Mivartian would appear to have the lion’s share of the truth; and the mutation is surely indicative of an indwelling and informing purpose rather deeper than the desire of the animal.

It now remains to consider both the law of prey and the manifold beauty of living things in relation to this purpose.

It is the Darwinian theory which has brought the law of prey so much into the limelight. The earlier naturalists were quite aware of it; but it did not seem to trouble them in the slightest. They would even trace as unmistakable an evidence of providential design in the teeth and claws of the flesh-eater as in the prehensile tail of the spider monkey or the padded hoofs of the camel. J. G. Wood (who believed in the immortality of the animals) thought that in a state of nature the victim was invariably stunned by the first blow,

and that the feigning of death in dangerous circumstances was purely instinctive and probably unconscious. Are we more observant and humane than our forefathers in this matter, or are we only more squeamish? Is it true, after all, that the sufferings of the wild animals exist for the most part only in the imagination of sensitive men and women?

We have no right to take it for granted that an animal feels much as we should do in similar circumstances. A little unbiased observation would often relieve our fears. The hunted hare or sheep, the moment after a narrow escape, peacefully nibbles the grass as though nothing of any consequence has happened. Even though the ears may be alert and the whole nervous system sensitive to the least renewal of the alarm, there is no trace of the mental strain which we should suffer in like circumstances, nor any suggestion of the sick horror or ecstatic relief to which we should finally succumb. E. Kay Robinson remarks that if the average grass-eater were to possess a mental constitution in the least like ours it would probably die of nervous exhaustion soon after it was born. As it is, gifted with an extremely nervous physique, but with no suggestion of the painful mentality we inevitably associate with nervousness, it lives a life in which the balance between pleasure and displeasure is well weighted on the right side. It is entirely spared the agony of recollection and anticipation. The present crisis almost invariably means a thrilling escape or an instantaneous destruction. There is, of course, no self-consciousness, and therefore no idea of death. Surely it is needless to add that there is no deliberate cruelty on the part of the pursuing carnivore? It is significant that when the domestic cat plays with the mouse she often does not so much as scratch it till she suddenly kills it. Though this, of course, is a perverse instinct. The wild cat is concerned with bigger game; rather too big to play with in that fashion. Nor would I suggest that the mouse enjoys the fun. But you

have only to liberate her to see how little she has really suffered. Suddenly she goes about her business as though nothing whatever is wrong.

It is interesting to note that the carnivore is almost always of a more developed mentality than its natural prey. Compare the dog with the rabbit, or the starling with the worm. The lower is sacrificed to the higher.

In all probability the law of prey involves far less suffering than the careless methods of slaughter till recently everywhere adopted; or than the barbarous sport of hunting, which involves infinitely more strain and exhaustion than the natural course of events.

Now have these considerations given an altogether satisfying answer to our problem? Frankly, I am not sure that they have; though I really do believe that they have taken the sting out of it. But there is an æsthetic question left, even when the humane problem has been solved. Even if there is no suffering involved, some of us would rather a world in which all the animals fed directly on leaves and fruits. A butterfly probably feels being torn in half no more than we feel a blunt pin-prick. But we do not like to see even so lowly a thing as that become a mere morsel for a bird. And we cannot but wonder how far the future is with the carnivores, after all. For they are employed in destroying their own food supplies, whereas the creatures that feed on honey, fruit and nuts are unwitting gardeners; actually engaged in the further distribution of their own favourite herbs and trees. Then whilst the carnivores are certainly more evolved than the grass-eaters, they in turn yield to these flower- and fruit-loving races. The most highly developed of the insects are the bees. The most intelligent of the birds are the parrots the finches and the thrushes, the former groups entirely frugivorous, the latter largely so. The monkeys and the lemurs are a long way ahead of the other mammals, and they are nut-eaters.

Yet would we, after all, preserve only these tribes; sacrificing the gulls and the ducks for the sake of the fish, or the dogs and the cats for the sake of the rodents? This is certainly mere squeamishness. Though it is good, all the same, to know that the highest members of the three chief classes owe their exalted rank not to the capture and destruction of other animals, but to co-operation with the most beautiful of the flowers and trees. It means that co-operation is a more potent factor in evolution, even on the vital plane, than competition.

Now just as Darwin exaggerated the element of struggle, so he minimised that of beauty. But in the attempt to explain it away he was involved in endless difficulties and complications. Even when the theory of protective colouring is stretched to the uttermost, there is much left unexplained: the excessive beauty of flowers, for instance, or the brilliant plumage of many birds. Darwin thought that the beauty of the flowers was a device to attract the insects to them, and so to secure the advantages of cross-fertilisation. Now the relationship between the flowers and the insects is a very interesting and significant one, and Darwin has earned our lasting gratitude by his researches into the subject. But in the interest of his utilitarian theory he made one rash assumption: he assumed that the insect saw the flower very much as we do. That the insect visits the flower for the honey, and that many flowers have elaborate contrivances for dusting the little creature with pollen, so that it may adhere to the stigma of the next flower she visits—all this is incontestable. It seems also reasonable to suppose that the flower must stand out conspicuously from the foliage, that she may see it clearly. But that all the refinement of beauty is a further element in this advertisement, that the delicate pencillings on the petals of certain flowers have been evolved as "guiding lines" to the honey—that is going a little too far. Amazingly sensitive to every slightest variation of light and

shade, the honey-sucking insect has but the haziest notion of form, colour or texture. Apparently it cannot distinguish between the genuine flower and the artificial, or even a daub of paint or a gas-jet!

Turning to the birds, Darwin noticed that often the male was by far the more brilliant; and he sought an explanation of this in the discrimination of the female. Through countless generations the hens must have chosen the most brilliant of their suitors for their mates. Now, that birds have a crude artistic sense is shown by the bower-bird, which decorates its nest with stones and feathers. But it is grotesque to credit any bird with sufficient discrimination to choose between two almost equally beautiful rivals. To say that the creature in unconsciously influenced by the superior beauty of one of them would seem quite as far-fetched. If greater beauty usually implied more vigour there might be a way out of the difficulty; but there seems to be no relation between these qualities.

If we give up this attempt to explain away the beautiful, and assume, with E. Kay Robinson, that there is a spontaneous emergence of the beautiful throughout the vital realm, things begin to fit in much more easily. Thus, to return to the birds, it is noteworthy that the males and females of those species that nest in holes (like the kingfishers and woodpeckers) or build domed nests (like some of the tits) are equally brilliant. Suppose, then, that we *assume* beauty, our task is no longer to explain the presence of it, but the deficiency of it. In this instance we have to account for the dowdy plumage of the hen bird on the open nest. We need not look far. Clearly in those circumstances a conspicuous coat would be too risky.

Beauty cannot be explained away. It is a spontaneous expression of the creative spirit on the vital plane. Sometimes necessity reduces it to a minimum. But usually we have merely to improve the environment to find an immediate

response in an increase of beauty. See how the flowers respond to the care of the gardener.

Now just as there is an incipient beauty throughout the world of life, which becomes outwardly manifest whenever the habit of life and the environment permit, or whenever human care steps in and lifts the creature above the struggle for existence, so there is in the higher regions of the animal world an incipient goodness, no less significant. We find in the higher animals a prophecy of the human. They cannot reason, but they associate ideas and profit by experience. Sometimes they mate for life, and often take great care of their young. In their play they probably come even nearer to the human level than in their various attachments. They respond to domestication much as plants to cultivation. Lift them above the struggle, and a suggestion of human-like devotion appears, whilst sometimes there would even seem to be a dawning sense of duty. The law of prey itself may be transcended, and natural enemies taught to live peacefully together.

Almost it would appear that the final stages in the evolution of both animals and plants waits for the human touch; and this surely suggests that the directive power at work throughout the entire process is human-like?

The attempt to explain evolution in materialistic and utilitarian terms has failed. Probably it would never have attained even temporary popularity save in a sordid and competitive age. The fact of evolution remains.

Let us go back in imagination to the barren world we left at the end of the last chapter. We now see it tenanted by ascending waves of plant and animal life. Huge mosses give way to tree ferns. Fir trees climb the mountain slopes; forest trees and meadow flowers adorn the valleys and the plains.

A tiny blob of jelly moves this way and that. It has no eyes, no head, no feet, no mouth; but vague powers of

digestion and motion everywhere. After some generations a few of its descendants always move in the same direction. A definite front thus evolves into a head, with ear-spot, eye-spot, mouth and brain. So through the worms the life impulse proceeds; on to the fishes and the tadpoles; to the newts and the lizards or the frogs and toads; till at last we find birds flitting among the trees and squirrels and monkeys playing in the branches.

If the evolution of the physical world reveals the divine power, the same ceaseless urge is seen throughout the ascent of the plants and the animals.

It is true there are still problems. We cannot explain the degenerate, the parasite, the germ, that prey on higher forms of life. Unless, indeed, animal effort (which we have seen to be one of the factors of evolution) implies the possibility of animal inertia and decadence, much as human freewill implies the possibility of sin.

Yet the problem of evil in nature is considerably diminished. These degenerates and parasites and germs were absolutely baffling to the special creationist. He must needs take it for granted that they were made deliberately, in their present form, in the beginning. He had no answer; unless he assumed the existence of some malicious demon, with power to travesty and mar the divine work.

We at least need no longer suppose anything like that. There is no more formidable devil at work than the inertia of certain forms of life. And we can quite definitely say that the degenerate is an exception. The back-currents do not really signify. The outstanding fact is the urge of energetic, eager life; ever diverging, and ever ascending to higher manifestations of beauty and enjoyment.

It has been suggested by some recent writers that God himself may be subject to growth. They argue that if he is experimenting and learning we can more easily account for the imperfections in nature. Some limiting condition

in the nature of things (of the kind already suggested) there may be—but a God who is growing is no God at all, and quite inadequate as an explanation of the upward movement. This is really but a grotesque variety of materialism, in which unaided matter gives rise not merely to man, but to God.

The Being who is revealed in the process is surely not Himself subject to change or growth? Only an Eternal changeless Creator could inspire a creation ascending through time to an ideal goal. But we may freely admit that creation by evolution is not creation by fiat. No longer can we imagine that by a flash of his will God realises his ideal. Creation is a slow process. Then surely in the nature of things it must be. Ages go to the moulding of a fern, a thrush, a human. There appears to have been a divine creative sacrifice. God gives of himself that he may share his life with his creatures. Need we regret this new outlook? It brings God much nearer. Need we fear? Divine Good would scarcely initiate a process Divine Power could not achieve. The sacrifice is impelled by love, and the issue is triumphant joy.

CHAPTER IV

GOD IN HISTORY

To learn all we can about the nature of the cause we must study all the effects, and it is the more recent of these that tell us most. Thus the artist's picture reveals a good deal more of his mind than his palette. The seed is only imperfectly unfolded in root and twig. Even the leaves do not tell all the story. For that we must wait till flower and fruit appear. Now we might liken the physical world to root and stem, the vital to the leaves, and the human to flower and fruit.

It is man alone who consciously responds to his Maker, and reveals the Divine love in his personal and social life. Yet it is on the human plane that evil first assumes monstrous proportions. This looks somewhat perplexing, though in the nature of things it could not have been otherwise. We have only to assume that God's purpose is the initiation of men and women into the good life. Now we cannot realise the essential nature of the higher unless we are fully aware of the lower. The value of light is enhanced for you ever afterwards once you have groped in the darkness. Even so, you do not really know the good till you have grappled with the bad. For the Eternal, the knowledge of good and evil co-exists from the beginning with the will to good; but for derivative beings, struggling upward from twilight to noon-day, there is a phase in which evil impulses are attractive, a phase in which the self is constantly solicited, alike from below and above. This also implies, in practice, that often the lower way is chosen, and since men and women are inter-

related in manifold subtle ways, much of the consequent suffering falls on the unselfish and innocent.

All this opens out several problems; but let it again be insisted that in the nature of things humans could not have been brought into being in any other manner. It is literal nonsense to ask why God did not make men good in the first instance. Goodness consists in the free choice of the higher in the presence of the lower, and therefore God Himself could not make good men, but only effective automatons. Plenty of these are to be found among the lower animals. All God can do is to grant man the power to make or mar himself.

Now just as in our study of the vital world we had to consider problems relating both to the nature and to the development of life, so we must now consider both the essential constitution of man and the growth of society.

Man has been evolved from the lower animals. Perhaps he could have been created in no other way. He is so close akin to them that all manner of lower impulses are bred in his body; yet his animal endowment includes some very desirable qualities. He is also sensible and intelligent enough to respond to suggestions from his Creator. This dual nature ensures a very real moral struggle, and the possibility of a genuine triumph.

But just as the materialist derives life itself from lifeless substances and forces, and resolves all beauty into utility, so he derives all that is most distinctively human from the animal level, denies the very existence of free-will, and resolves all goodness into gregarious instinct.

The sense of duty (we are told) has its origin in the fear of the pack, which sometimes prevents even the greedy baboon from appropriating more than his share. This is ingenious, but since this same sense of duty often bids us fly straight in the face of convention and defy the prejudices of the crowd, it seems somewhat inadequate.

Or again, we are told that we seek the good of our fellows

only because we know that in the long run their welfare is our own. It may be (in a providential universe it must be), but it is still true that if our goodness is genuine we crucify our desires without any thought of gain. We have already seen that the essence of goodness is the free choice of the higher regardless of reward. An appeal to the witness of consciousness itself is sufficient to dispose of all attempts to resolve goodness into lower terms.

The problem of free-will is a more elusive one, the argument against it more subtle.

We are told that a moral crisis consists solely of a conflict of impulses, lower and higher, the stronger of which inevitably prevails. The sense of will is a mere illusion. If at the end of the crisis you are doing the right thing, it is merely because the higher aspect of your nature was also the stronger, or the nobler way the more attractive. If you have yielded to temptation, it is because your animal nature was too much for you.

The argument looks irrefutable; but does it not really beg the question? In either case the determinist is speaking after the event. Was the nobler aspect stronger or more attractive during the crisis, before the act or decision had magnified it? Or was it weaker before submission had enfeebled it?

But in this problem (as in that of the nature of goodness) it is the appeal to consciousness that is really decisive. Every sane human is, after all, aware of a measure of free-will, of a sense of responsibility, and of significant emotions of pride and shame. This awareness implies a degree of certitude that no mere logic can shake. The witness of consciousness is against the determinist argument, which proves (if anything at all) not the fallacy of will, but the inadequacy of logic. Incidentally, it taxes ingenuity to see how even a fallacious idea of freedom could arise in an altogether determined world.

It is sometimes said that to admit free-will is to allow an

element of caprice in the universal order. It is not, however, caprice, but progress, that it initiates.

The psychology of the determinist is questionable, and there is no determinist who does not deny his theory over and over again in his judgments. He hears of some noble or ignoble deed, and expresses his praise or blame in no uncertain manner. In his own heart, too, he surely knows that responsibility is no mere fallacy. In time of moral crisis he is not merely the passive witness of that struggle between the rival desires, the stronger of which must prevail—or, at least, he need not be. That may happen in the life of the animal; but his is the human prerogative to decide the issue. The way to his own desire points in one direction, the way of duty (the well-being of his fellows) in another. Well, he is free to choose: neither by outward circumstances nor by inward pressure is he compelled. He may, if he will, rise into kinship with God Himself; he may, if he drift, sink below the level of the brute; he may, if he abuse his power, become a demonic travesty of the human.

We must, of course, admit that we have not all the same measure of freedom. Unfavourable environment and unfortunate inheritance sometimes fix severe limits. But the normal human, at least in earlier years, before good or evil intentions have crystallised into habits, is in large measure master of his fate.

Now though philosophers may dispute endlessly about the reality of goodness and freedom, the average man is not disturbed by these problems. With healthy disdain, he takes for granted all the matters in dispute. (So does the philosopher, every time he leaves his study and enters the human world.) The problem concerning the validity of conscience, however, is far more practical, and of vital interest to everybody.

Conscience, we are told, can scarcely be the voice of God, because it varies from age to age, from race to race, and even from sect to sect.

Thus rival faiths claim infallibility, one in the name of Jesus, another in that of Mahomet or of Buddha. Or virtues change their relative value. A practice which one generation highly commends another may pronounce vicious. Or even in a single generation there may be a conflict of loyalties.

Now a little consideration will show that in all these instances save the last we are not concerned with a capricious change, but with a steady development.

We may freely admit that some virtues vary in estimation according to locality. Sheer physical pluck is naturally a much more useful and dutiful quality in a primitive than in a highly civilised community. Thrift is a necessary family virtue in a competitive world like ours; in a more communistic state it would be far less important.

There are, however, other virtues which do not change in value. It is always nobler to be generous and loyal to the welfare of others than selfish. It is always better to be sympathetic than callous.

The apparently direct reversals of judgment which we find as we pass from age to age or from race to race are more significant. Thus in one tribe polygamy receives religious sanction; whilst in another any deviation from monogamy is severely punished. Now a limited polygamy is sometimes an improvement on certain still cruder customs, between which and monogamy it forms a kind of halfway house. Here we discover the gradual elevation of sexual attraction, which first appears as a momentary passion, and at last becomes a permanent and equal companionship. (At other times polygamy is due to decadence.)

Somewhat akin to the varying moral codes are the diverse theological creeds, generally, but rather inaptly, described as the "world religions." Here again our first impression is that of hopeless confusion and contradiction. There are so many sacred books and priestly casts, often differing profoundly in teaching, but all of them claiming infallibility and breathing

anathema on their rivals. Inquire a little more closely, and you will see in each of these religions a hazy and distorted view of the Eternal truth. That sun of truth is obscured by mists of superstition and dogma inseparable from the dawn, and the mists take on varying forms according to the locality; but the rising sun is the same throughout the world.

Even now there are in every land those who have discarded the superstitions and concentrated on the truth. Born in the very heart of every one of the so-called world faiths there is a new movement of protest and affirmation, which in each instance proclaims the freedom of the individual reason and conscience, and declares itself a herald of the true world faith. Romanists and Fundamentalists, Mohammedans and Brahmins still maintain the infallibility of the Church Councils or the Bible, the Koran or the Hindu scriptures, and still proclaim the inevitable loss of the liberated conscience in a dreary wilderness of individualism. There are as many beliefs as men, they say, outside the one true fold. Yet in actual fact it is just these very folk, bound to their respective authorities, who are severed by impassable gulfs; whilst those who have shaken themselves free from ancient traditions, and trusted to the guidance of the individual reason and conscience, are coming closer and closer together. While Fundamentalists and Mohammedans argue as to the rival merits of Moses and the Koran; while Trinitarians proclaim the necessity of the redeeming blood, and Brahmins the inevitability of a retributive reincarnation—the Unitarians and Quakers in Christendom, the Brahmo Somaj in India and the Bahai in Persia, have put away all these things as mere childishness; finding in the Fatherhood and the Brotherhood an amply sufficient faith. Thus out of the twilight of the creeds arises the universal religion.

Not that it is peculiar to our day. Jesus had it in rich measure. So had some of his immediate precursors, the unknown author of *The Epistle of the Twelve Patriarchs*, for

instance. Plato had a full share of it; Cicero more than a glimmering. Poets like Pope, Young and Cowper, nursed in traditional Christianity, have in moments of inspiration completely ignored their sectarian prejudices, and become prophets of this same universal faith. In germ we all possess it. Even savage reason and conscience have a glimmering of it. In later ages, still but half grown, and mixed with superstition, it hardens into dogma, and becomes its own worst enemy. Reason, reacting to the superstitious element, denies it. Yet it is bound in time to emerge, and to include all mankind in its embrace. Just as natural science is slowly but surely built up out of observation and experiment, at first unwittingly, later on deliberately, and with ever-increasing eagerness and interest; so is the universal faith wrought out of experience and reflection, at first haltingly, in fear and doubt, then in growing confidence and joy.

Let us now turn to our next problem: the conflict of loyalties in a single generation, in considering which we shall find an answer to another vaster question—the tardy and uncertain development of human society up to date.

It often happens that two thoroughly good men face each other on opposite sides, each uncompromising, each convinced that his own cause is the nobler one, though sometimes he may be painfully aware that his opponent is as earnest and true a man as himself.

In all probability this state of affairs has come about because both men are partially blinded by prejudice—or it may be that one is wholly guided by conscience and prejudice, the other by conscience and reason. If both were guided by conscience and reason, the situation would never arise.

On the call to arms, two brothers, equally kindly and courageous, may differ entirely in their conduct. One freely risks his life to defend his country. The other would rather be shot than kill a fellow man with whom he has no quarrel. The difference is one of outlook. The soldier accepts current

ideas about nationality. He thinks (quite rightly) that in his country's hour of need he has no rights of his own. The war-resister realises that culture is international, and imagines that but for vested interests war would long since have ceased. He thinks that the real issue is no longer between nation and nation, but between the militarists everywhere and the ordinary sensible folk everywhere. He therefore believes that the time is ripe for men and women everywhere to transcend their nationality; to give their services, their lives if need be, for the international ideal. He suspects that as long as people are content to be good-hearted, knaves will be able to persuade them to do the devil's work in God's name. Let them do a little clear thinking, and the vicious circle would soon be broken. Furthermore, should mass resistance ever again be necessary, he suspects that the passive variety is not only nobler and braver than the violent, but more potent and persuasive.

The point of all this is that conscience does not always indicate the highest road; but rather bids us seek it. If we take the conventional opinion of our generation we may do better than our distant forefathers, yet still do badly. "An eye for an eye" is an advance on "a life for an eye"; but falls far behind "do good to them that despitefully use you." Like the ideal truth, the ideal goodness is unchanging and eternal; but again our vision is at first very hazy. That it may grow clear it is necessary not only to keep the heart pure, but also the sight keen. Now most people have long been good-hearted. It is because they have not shown reason that human progress has been so slow and fitful.

To take another illustration—consider the grossly unfair distribution of material wealth. On the one hand you have extremely rich people who owe their privileged position solely to inheritance or luck; on the other hand are innumerable men and women whose souls are stifled by a cruel and entirely needless anxiety about their daily bread. The whole

thing is so incredibly stupid. Yet it does not mean that rich people are hard-hearted. It simply means that none of us has taken sufficient thought about the social order. We have simply let things drift, and the result is chaos. There is no harm in the private ownership of land or factory in a thinly populated country, where the industrious labourer has a chance of becoming a small-holder, or the intelligent artisan a master. But a large population in the same country, where those who possess the means of wealth are now a mere handful, is obviously at a disadvantage—unless the owners happen also to be the saints!

Thus improved machinery, instead of increasing leisure all round, adds to the profits of the few, and also adds to the number of the unemployed. Thus as the population crowds into the towns, competition increases, and a handful of manufacturers and tradesmen gradually get the better of their competitors, sometimes through sheer luck. So wealth and influence concentrate more and more into the hands of a decreasing number, who are neither better nor worse than the average. Despite the small shareholder, the gulf widens between the possessors and the dispossessed, and there is often not the slightest ratio between merit and reward. These things ought not to be. Yet it would be unfair to cast the responsibility for their occurrence on the successful individuals. They simply happen. They are chiefly due to sheer lack of thought. (When the favoured individuals oppose all reforms that might in any way curtail their privileges it is quite another matter.)

History is the record of so many bygone civilisations that have developed for a while (owing to the division of labour and the growth of cities) and then stagnated (like Egypt) or collapsed (like Rome), because of this same concentration of wealth and power in the hands of a mediocre few. So regular a phenomenon is this that Spengler believes that civilisations fall as inevitably as individuals die, and that the decline of our

own is certain. Henry George, who insists that we might become masters of our own fate, is surely a wiser teacher? A little organisation of the production and distribution of wealth is all we need.

Enough has now been said to show that the economic chaos, with the poverty, anxiety and disease to which it gives birth, is not due to any inescapable "economic law." There is nothing to prevent man moulding his own environment.

In the light of the above considerations, it is not difficult to trace the hand of God in history. It is true that once the human plane is reached, progress is no longer steady and inevitable. It is true that there is often an ebb tide. But that is because progress no longer depends on God. The divine urge is still there, but human co-operation is now essential; for God works solely through human sympathy and courage. We have the power to obey. We have also the terrible power to rebel, and by deliberate selfishness, callous thoughtlessness or conventional cowardice to put the break on the car of progress, and bring misery to our fellow-men.

But the responsibility does not yet rest on the majority of mankind. Through lack of ability or opportunity they have not thought matters out. They go whither they are led, and can scarcely be expected to add the social virtues to the domestic. It rests with the enlightened few, who clearly see the ideal, but who in their selfishness or cowardice bend the knee to Mammon, safe in their little oases, when they should lead the way through the wilderness to the land of promise.

Yet, in spite of hindrances, God has revealed more and more of the divine truth and beauty to mankind. Consider the progressive revelation of himself which we find in the Bible—in Moses, all-powerful and crudely righteous; in Amos, impartial and merciful; in Jesus, intimate and tender.

Or compare, in the light of Spengler's researches, the Græco-Roman civilisation with the modern. Despite Spengler, the

soul of the bygone culture lives again in ours; for we share the delight of the earlier people in the noonday landscape, in the strength and beauty of the human body, in the thrill of the present moment. But see what we have added—an appreciation of the subtler beauty of twilight and distance, a biographical interest in the growth of character, a historical sympathy that makes the art and life of bygone time live again in our minds as vividly as our own, and a strange new art that moves in sweet melodies and profound harmonies.

Yet all these advances are due to the power of individual genius. The fourth chapter of the creation story has, after all, yet to be written. Physical evolution achieved its goal as earth was sculptured into hill and dale. Vital evolution said its last word on the appearance of the human body—erect, strong and beautiful. Even mental evolution has reached fulfilment. We can imagine no one keener in intellect than Plato, no one more kindly or spiritual than Jesus. But social evolution is still in its infancy. The social chaos is yet to be moulded into cosmos. The masses are still impoverished, still indifferent to culture, still under the sway of ancient prejudices. We have yet to evolve a system in which the fruits of artistic and spiritual genius may be shared by all. How splendid were this last chapter written by our own generation! It is only a matter of sympathy and courage.

The spacious commons and wooded hills surrounding Megaton were fair to see. They would have been fairer yet had they been broken here and there by pasture and cornfield. But the folk never ventured beyond the huge wall that severed them from the country. They grew their food in crowded little allotments, and there was scarcely enough for them to eat. They lived in tenements so dizzily built one on top of another that from the level of the narrow street you could scarcely see the sky. A few of them were wealthier, with handsome houses and large gardens; but even they were depressed by the prevailing anxiety.

From time to time someone would discover a tunnel in the wall, and, wandering through it, would suddenly emerge into the open countryside, there to see the sun setting behind a birch wood, or the swallows skimming over a dimpling river. Then he would return to the city, full of amazed delight and discontent.

But his kindred would not even trouble to go back with him through the tunnel to see for themselves. They would say that he was only an idle dreamer, and that they were practical men, living in contact with hard realities, doing the necessary work of the world. In truth the wealthy among them would be afraid to venture, lest in the new land they might lose something of the luxury they had built around them. And the poor would brag about the size of the city and the height of the surrounding wall.

Sometimes the people would imprison the visionary, but of late they have usually been content to shrug their shoulders, or have even smiled good-humouredly at him. It is rumoured that some day they may appoint him their leader and follow him.

CHAPTER V

GOD IN THE SOUL

WE have now traced, with the aid of science and history, the gradual development of the universe from the primal chaos to the coming commonwealth, and in all phases of that development, physical, vital and human, have found evidence of a great indwelling and directing power. In the physical world the control is direct, immediate and all-embracing. (It is true that the elements sometimes claim a victim, but this suggests rather the frailty of life than the imperfection of the physical world.) In the vital world the main stream is still ascendant, but there are occasional backwaters. It is as though already an element of the contingent must be allowed; as though even from the animal some sort of co-operation is necessary. On the human plane that element of contingency is tremendously increased. Responsibility now rests entirely with the creature, who may thwart every divine impulse within him, or may yield himself without reserve thereto.

Yet is the ultimate issue assured, since every road to evil is a cul-de-sac; nor is any ultimate rest to be found save in obedience to the highest.

Thus along purely rational lines we have traced the hand of God in all three spheres of being.

But God may be found, both in Nature and humanity, in a surer and more intimate way. We meet Him in our own souls in every aspiration after nobler life. We meet Him also (in poetic mood) in the manifold beauty of nature and of art. Our present purpose is to trace the gradual emergence of God

in the individual life—to follow the process of conversion and regeneration according to the universal spiritual psychology which is in part expressed and in part travestied in the traditional creeds.

Now the natural man is usually self-centred. Even love may be entirely spurious, and seek only its own gratification.

Then through a process of conversion (which may or may not imply a religious reawakening) the habit of life improves, even though there is little emotional change. Good deeds are done, though with difficulty, and merely in a spirit of duty. Sometimes the ethical (and theological) conversion may be pretty thorough, and yet the spiritual (or emotional) regeneration scarcely begun.

We must all, in some degree, work our way through this phase before we can enter the higher, in which duty and desire are one, and good deeds no longer dutiful, but gracious; in which God no longer dictates to the conscience, but inspires the heart. (Not that the most graceless of men are entire strangers to the higher mood, nor yet that the best men never lapse into the lower.)

That we may habitually live in this higher mood two qualities are essential. One of them is generosity. This quality often comes naturally. Parenthood usually awakens it. But the generous heart may still lack something. The mother may yield her whole life to her children, and yet her love be jealous and exclusive—even stifling and domineering. Her unselfishness is boundless, her outlook and her insight are sometimes woefully small. Another virtue, rarer than generosity, is also essential—sympathetic imagination. This is the quality possessed by the really great novelist, who makes us feel kindly towards even his most unlikeable characters.

Of course it does not follow that one who possesses even this quality is necessarily better than another without it. It may well be that in God's sight many a man who never emerges from the realm of moral strife stands higher than many another

rich with every spiritual grace. The shabby virtues of the former may represent so much heroic wrestling with a vicious inheritance: the latter may have been blessed with a rich endowment, and never so much as put forth a single strenuous effort to use it faithfully and well. So, too, a man of woefully narrow outlook, incapable of granting sincerity to any of his political opponents, may stand higher than another of universal sympathies but luxurious habits, whose very insight into the joys or sorrows of others is but a source of useless bemoaning. "Many that are first shall be last, and the last first." Nevertheless, this same quality of sympathetic insight is the most Godlike of all. Its rarity is the chief cause of every petty misunderstanding that embitters daily life. Its presence would mean the end of every tragic antagonism between the nations, every injustice between the classes.

Now before we can make it our own we must first become aware of the difference between others and ourselves. It is surprising how little we realise this. Of course we know that other people are different; but we too often attribute their peculiarities to stupidity, ignorance or whim.

Perhaps we first feel the difference in intercourse with an intimate companion. It comes with a flash of surprise that he prefers the park to the country, that he is little given to retrospection, that he has not the slightest desire for marriage, or that, though he has little sentiment, his nature is a passionate one. Sometimes a onesided attachment is illuminating. Suddenly you realise why your sentiment is not returned. You see into the soul of your companion, and it is other than you thought, and strangely unlike yours. Henceforth the intimacy will scarcely be as close as hitherto; but ever afterward you will the better understand a type unlike your own.

It is also necessary to realise that there is a kinship underlying all differences, not only between those who are so much akin that their idiosyncrasies add sweetness to their inter-

course, but also between those who are poles apart. For we differ not so much in our actual qualities as in the proportions in which they are developed.

This is a most happy arrangement. There is no doubt that the more we develop the more we differ. You will find much more variety among the cultured than the crude. But since we differ in the relative development of so many similar qualities, we should still find it possible to meet one another in every variety of interest and emotion. We must specialise in our work, but there is nothing to prevent our receptive appreciation from becoming as wide as humanity. So our very differences serve but to deepen the harmony between us. We are wise to cultivate our own special hobbies; but we should not let any aspect of our personality atrophy. In the most artistic of temperaments there is a germ of scientific curiosity which ought not to be altogether starved. The most thoroughgoing scientist has somewhere in him a poetic strain the development of which would make him all the better a scientist. The most masculine man (or woman) is the more human for a touch of really feminine gentleness; the most feminine woman (or man) for a dash of masculine independence of thought and conduct.

Now by introspection you will discover unsuspected qualities; and by retrospection you may unearth forgotten moods. Do you wish to understand children? Ponder the incidents of your earliest years till the very emotions return that possessed you when your head was only table high, and your feet dangled freely as you sat in the chair! Do you wish to understand the criminal? In yourself are certain necessary impulses and desires, harmless enough when kept under control, which might have ripened into lusts and greeds had your temptations been stronger, or your environment more unkind. In yourself, too, are unsuspected virtues, and there is no reason why you should not nurture them till God is as potent a force in your life as in Christ's.

Realising at once your kinship with your fellows and your own peculiarities, the secret of rich and harmonious intercourse is yours. Your insight will grow till you live again in the joys and griefs of others. The passing years will never warp you; you will but grow mellow with age. Holding yourself responsible for your own conduct, your judgment of others will be tempered with mercy, since you will always allow for a poor inheritance or an unfriendly environment. You will also understand the wisdom of the new psychology of Jesus—that in the natural man any emotion usually generates the like emotion, trust calling an answering trust to the surface, and love appealing to love; suspicion breeding suspicion, and hatred enmity. There is a risk; but you will gladly take it. You will spontaneously appeal to the best in your acquaintance, and so strengthen it. The worst you will ignore, and it will wither in your presence. If ever you must hurt others, or restrain them, it will be done reluctantly, and without the least suggestion of hatred, revenge or satisfaction. Something of God's own sympathy will be born in you, and will find expression in your daily life.

Herein, surely, is the secret of the ultimate society which is even now developing in our midst. A web in which every thread has some degree of significance in the general pattern; a harmony in which every instrument lends its colour to the tonal scheme; a family whose members are attached by every variety of intimacy, from the closest to the subtlest, but in which total indifference is unknown.

Nor will the animals be forgotten. Almost shall we glide through the moonlit trees with the owl, and frisk in the autumn woods with the squirrel. The thought of the hunted otter will move us to indignant protest; and it will give a rare thrill of joy to overcome the timidity of the young lamb, or win the confidence of the little birds. This intelligent response to the joys and cares of wild animal life (as distinct

from a morbid exaggeration of their sufferings) is often the last refinement of sympathetic imagination.

“Self-love but serves the virtuous mind to wake,
As the small pebble stirs the peaceful lake!
The centre moved, a circle straight succeeds,
Another still and still another spreads;
Friend, parent, neighbour first it will embrace;
His country next; and next all human race;
Wide and more wide, the o'erflowings of the mind
Take every creature in, of every kind;
Earth smiles around, with boundless bounty blest,
And Heaven beholds its image in his breast.”*

It must be added that some people in whom this sympathy is fully developed do not know God. In their tenderness they feel acutely the grief of their fellows, and they are driven to doubt. We may wonder why God withholds the secret of his presence from them. But perhaps it matters little. They are nearer to him, though they may not know him, than many others loud in their orthodoxy and sordid in their conduct. They are shedding abroad the divine radiance, though they know it not. Their love and service are as sure an evidence of the divine reality as daylight of the sun.

Some day these people will be troubled by a sweet suspicion that, after all, God is there. Not always to be traced in the outward world, because his work is still incomplete. But present in the soul surely enough—the source of all kindly sympathy and all moral indignation.

So faith trembles into being. The clouds of doubt disperse. The sun shines on every little flower just as though there were only one flower in the world. God loves every one of his children as though he were an only child. Communion with him becomes more intimate than any human intercourse.

“Closer is He than breathing,
Nearer than hands and feet.” †

* Pope, *Essay on Man*

† Tennyson, *Higher Pantheism*

CHAPTER VI

ARTISTIC INSIGHT

IDLy wandering in a wood one day, a young boy discovered a splendid palace. It seemed to be empty, and he ventured inside. Columns of marble upheld a huge dome of quartz, through which the sunlight streamed, tinted with all the colours of the rainbow. In the midst was a fountain, the waters of which gushed up almost dome high, and then fell in gentle spray. As the boy gazed spellbound, an old man approached him. "You look pleased," he said. "Oh, it's the most wonderful place I've ever seen," replied the boy. "Then just wait a bit, and I'll show you a better," said the old man. He passed his hand over the boy's forehead so that for a while he forgot all the things he had ever known. Then he led him out into the wood again. And marble columns and quartz domes and miraculous fountains seemed almost trivial by comparison with green trees, white clouds and a bubbling little torrent.

The Hebrews and the early Christians thought of heaven in terms of marble and precious stone; but we know that this everyday world is far more beautiful than any apocalyptic dream—that in a very real sense nature is the living garment of God. You will realise that we are not now referring to the realm of the naturalist. For the appeal of nature to the naturalist is essentially an appeal to interest and curiosity; her appeal to the artist or poet is something much deeper, an appeal to emotion or intuition.

This contrast was well brought out in one of my lakeland experiences. I was climbing a mountain with two friends from

the south, neither of whom had ever seen the highlands before. One was a keen field naturalist. The other had no particular hobby. We will let him represent the average man. On the ascent, the one was quite naïvely interested in the fauna and flora. Every time he found the least little difference between the wayside plants and insects of the Cumbrian moorlands and his own Sussex downs his eyes sparkled with child-like eagerness. The other was quite indifferent to these things, completely unaware of them; but keenly responsive to the mountain atmosphere, to every little glimpse through a fold in the hillside of distant lake or fir ridge.

Arrived at the summit, the contrast between them was extreme. My naturalist friend discovered a small tarn there, and shouted with excitement on finding large quantities of frog-spawn at so great a height. My other companion cared not a jot for the spawn. Breathless, he gazed on the prospect—on the large lake shimmering peacefully between green slopes and fir-clad crags—on the narrow valley piercing into the heart of the barren mountains, on the little town far below, nestling in the lap of the hills. Then he said, "Well, if I wanted to upset an atheist I wouldn't argue with him at all: I'd just bring him up here!"

The remark surprised me, for until then I had never suspected that there was anything of either the artist or the religious devotee in him. He never went to church. He had no taste in pictures. He was just the ordinary man. Yet he caught the very message of that scene, to which the mere naturalist was quite unresponsive.

I tell this story because it is very relevant to our present purpose. Several of us are quite devoid of any scientific interest in nature (though we should all be the better for a touch of it—my friend's appreciation of that frog-spawn was really delightful). But the rapture of the artist or the poet (after all, a far more important thing) exists in almost all of us to-day, however devoid of expressive power we may be. It

exists (I verily believe) in all save those in whom the scientific aspect is over-developed. Even the most sordid or trivial have their moments of vision. A sudden glimpse of a waterfall rushing by the pine-trees on a mountain crag; a thrush singing in a birch wood at evening; a fir-clad hill set against a snowy Alpine background; the seagulls flitting along the brown sands between the surging white wave-crests and the jagged cliffs, yellow with gorse; the stars sparkling through the leafless trees on a windy night—these things lift the soul out of the temporal order, and translate it to a higher realm.

In this communion with the Eternal beauty the imperfections and backwashes which trouble us in intellectual mood cease to annoy. They signify no more than grammatical slips in a sublime poem. We realise that Nature is other than a mere addition of individual hills and streams, plants and animals. These are the strands with which the eternal art is woven; it is in their subtle relation that the supreme beauty consists. The mere naturalist can no more interpret it in scientific terms than the mere grammarian can interpret a sonnet.

In this mood we also feel a curious expansion and exaltation of self. Almost the trees and clouds are a part of us, more nearly related to us than the eyes with which we see them, and of which at the time we are unaware.

“ My soul went forth, and, mingling with the trees
Danced in the leaves; or, floating in the cloud,
Saw its white double in the stream below. . . .
I was the wind that dappled the lush grass,
The tide that crept with coolness to its roots,
The thin winged swallow skating on the air:
The life that gladdened everything was mine.”*

The Eternal beauty has so taken possession of us that we feel ourselves eternal. We cannot credit that the lightning stroke would destroy us, or the earthquake overwhelm. These things would but liberate us from our bodies, and set the seal

* Lowell, *Under the Willows*

of immortality on our rapture. What matter if the senses are destroyed, if the windows are broken, when the house collapses with them, and the prisoner escapes?

In this mood, too, there comes the suspicion that the Eternal beauty is the messenger of the Eternal love—that in nature we are meeting and mingling with a great human-like soul at the very heart of things, that dwelling in the innermost is one so kindly and so tender that fatherhood and motherhood are utterly inadequate symbols of his relationship to us.

“ I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts . . .
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man. . . .”*

This is the consummation of all things. God has sacrificed himself that the ideal might be realised in the material plane, and that matter, impregnated by his Spirit, might give birth to creatures able to appreciate the divine beauty and share the divine life.

It is true that some who are intensely alive to the beauty of the world, who respond with all the quick perception and appreciation of the artist to every subtle harmony between tree and cloud, meadow and woodland, heath and birchwood, who find escape to an unearthly realm in the very beauty of the earth, are quite unaware of anything spiritual in their rapture. Like some of those who respond most freely to the call of human brotherhood, they deny the very existence of God. Often this is because the ideas of God with which they have become familiar are unworthy or inadequate. They generally spell nature with a capital N—Nature becomes a better name for the Divine Being than any more hallowed word, which old associations have rather spoiled than sanctified.

* Wordsworth, *Tintern Abbey*

True, that capital N is sometimes only a pretty or pathetic make-belief. But at any time it may flash upon these folk that, after all, it is nothing of the sort. The truth is certainly no smaller than the dream. It may be immeasurably greater. Nature really is a Mother. That sublime art-work is not merely a fancy imposed on an impersonal and emotionless cosmos by their fertile minds. That beauty is not merely subjective. They are but interpreting the thought of the infinite artist, expressed in nature for their own inspiration. Nature is but the medium of communion between the little human children on this side and the great Human Original on the other. So she will become dearer than ever, because she now speaks not merely of herself, but of the Friend beyond.

There are other manifestations of the Eternal beauty. The realm of orchestral tone is as rich and varied, as intricate and subtle, as the realm of nature. It is quite incidental that the one is the direct handiwork of God and the other revealed through the medium of human genius. In the sheer beauty of Mozart or the brilliance of Rossini, in the heroic triumph of Beethoven, the lyric rapture of Schubert or the romance of Schumann, in the poignant aspiration of Tchaikovsky or the joyous fantasy of Dvorak we find expressions of the Eternal beauty as distinctive as in the grandeur of the mountains or the tranquillity of the sunset sky.

But it is quite a different mode of the Eternal that music expresses, even when (as often in Raff, Smetana or MacCunn) the themes are suggestive of the rustle of the leaves, the flow of the river or the rage of the storm, and thus of natural scenes. For nature is essentially spatial, and though she owes an added charm to the movements of the clouds or the oncoming of twilight, these changes are unobtrusive, and her chief message is one of tranquillity and peace. The moment endures. To music, on the other hand, time is essential, and space of no significance whatever. She is always fluctuating. Activity is her very life, even in her most tranquil moments.

Yet she transcends time. The theme that passes is not lost. Presently it recurs, altered, elaborated, yet essentially the same. There is change, but there is also endurance. There is spontaneity, yet the successive moments are related, deriving their significance from each other, and the movement is an entity. In all these respects music is symbolic of the life eternal; life in which there is nothing meaningless or evil left, yet in which there is still development; life at once changing and enduring; life in which any discord is transient, at once justified and purified in the ensuing harmony.

Even earth-life is strangely sublimated by music.

Religious emotions, inadequately set forth in words, find free expression in the heroic or pensive strains of a Carissimi, the rich deep polyphony of a Bach or the powerful devotional numbers of a Cherubini; and human joy is wonderfully intensified and pathos strangely enlightened in the moving recitative of a Monteverdi, the sincere melody of a Bellini or the massive orchestration of a Wagner.

CHAPTER VII

IMMORTALITY

WE have now traced the hand of God in nature and mankind as revealed by scientist and artist, by historian and humanitarian.

In the study of the moulding of the earth and the evolution of the animals, in the beauty of the world and in the wonder of human fellowship, we have found so many ways to the divine presence; and there is surely no one to whom one or other is not open wide. But nothing has yet been said of immortality. Space will only permit us to touch upon it very lightly, but a few words must be added. For though without God we cannot explain such order and beauty as already appear, as long as we consider only the visible world the problem of existence must remain half-unsolved. For the order is not yet perfect, and the beauty is unknown to many. Several of our fellows are debarred, through no fault of their own, from entering the sanctuary. Life offers one thing to us, another very different thing to those who by mere accident of birth have been deprived of every advantage. Were death to come even prematurely to some of us, and were it to mean the end of all things, we could scarcely in justice complain. Experience has been very rich and full, far beyond our poor deserts. Nature and fortune have been bountiful—or God gracious—put it how you will. But for others the story may have been a very different one. An almost ceaseless warfare with economic anxiety, or with a poor or vicious physique, has sapped their vitality. They may make no protest themselves, they may even thank God

for such small gleams of sunshine as have come their way. But should we not emphatically protest on their behalf?

Others, again, may have had abundance of vitality; but they were born in troublous times, when the masses were oppressed, or when it needed rare moral courage to speak the truth. They lived as rebels; maybe they passed their time behind prison bars; or maybe the end of life was a cross, a gallows or a stake. These people, be sure, will make no complaint. They were content to die that truth might live. But shall we not complain bitterly on their behalf?

Furthermore, if it is grossly unfair that they should die who have never truly lived, it is surely as ludicrously wasteful that those who grow in wisdom and kindness through the years should be destroyed by a falling rock, a disease germ or a worn-out body!

We must also confess that though we have no right to demand immortality, many of us find the thought of annihilation the most awful to contemplate. This horror is generally the more intense not with the careless and trivial, but with the cultured and kindly. It deepens just as experience ripens, interests develop and wisdom accumulates. But then it is just in our most intense moments that the thought of annihilation is untenable. Not only in the ecstasy of affection, but in the anguish of bereavement, we are confident that love is stronger than death. The parting cannot be for ever. Those two lines did not simply run side by side for a while, afterwards to diverge indefinitely, never again to meet in all the infinitudes of space and time. Nor can we imagine that the personality who still inspires us through his thought or his music is himself no more.

“ The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the earth to lose itself in the sky
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it by and by.”*

* R. Browning, *Abt Vogler*

But when the mood of exaltation passes, doubt sometimes returns. If only immortality did not seem so impossible from a scientific standpoint!

Well, it no longer does. It has always seemed absurd to some of us to try to explain consciousness in terms of brain—something like the attempt to explain a poem in terms of the letters. But if brain is only the instrument of mind, it is at least possible that the death of one need not mean the annihilation of the other. Furthermore, there is now evidence that even in earth life we are not always dependent on material means for intercourse. Vivid experiences are sometimes flashed from mind to mind by some unknown process with far more detail than coincidence can explain. Sometimes it would even appear that similar messages pass over the gulf between the worlds. A great deal of spiritualism is sheer self-hypnosis; but not all. It is no longer fanciful to suggest that the change which came over the disciples after the crucifixion, giving them renewal of faith and unprecedented courage, was due to actual intercourse with their risen Master.

But apart from these abnormal experiences there is abundant and increasing suggestion of survival. Memory is an amazing faculty, which we too often take for granted. By its aid you preserve your past, and return from time to time to long-vanished days. The schoolroom where you learned to read, the office where you worked in earlier years, the farm where once you laboured in harvest-time, the mountain valley where years ago you spent a holiday—these things return in vivid detail, and bring all the old associations and all the old faces with them.

Now science formerly suspected that all these recollections were stored in the brain as pictures in a gallery. That conception has gone. Bergson some time ago showed that the brain was not a store-house of memories at all. Born in sensation, the memories henceforth abide in an immaterial self. The function of the brain is to select the particular

ideas and recollections we need at any given moment. The brain is not a library—only a catalogue. Injury to it cripples the power of voluntary recall; but the memories are still there, still liable to return at random. They are immaterial, then surely they may also be indestructible? The numbness of the brain in dotage need no more trouble us than the tiredness of it at night. Nor does its decomposition in the least imply the dissolution of the memory. Though you destroy a camera, the pictures taken by its aid may still exist.

You may say this implies a state of reverie merely; that a new body, a new brain and a new world are necessary for a future life. True, and why not? Matter would certainly appear to be essential for the expression of thought. But matter itself is in the last analysis immaterial: its ultimate particles are mere centres of force. Possibly, therefore, two or more material orders may actually fill the same space, the inhabitants of the one unaware of the very existence of the other, because their senses are not “tuned in” to it. At the moment several plays are traversing the ether around, and I become aware now of one, now of another, as I turn the radio dial. So innumerable worlds may fill the same space, though at present we are confined to one of them, because we are not yet masters of our own tuning-board!

In a lakeland valley I met an old shepherd who had done a good deal of quiet thinking for himself. He told me he had given up most of the old beliefs, but he still clung to the resurrection of the body.

“I love this old glen,” he said, “every little nook and corner of it. I don’t want to spend eternity in any rare strange heaven. Nor does missus. No, we don’t mind how long t’ sleep is if we wake int’ same dear old place!” The outline of the hills against the sky, the curve of the lake against the common, were dear to him as the face of his beloved.

There is something of that mood in all of us. We don't want a "rare strange heaven," unless somewhere in its wide expanse we discover again the haunts we roamed on earth, unless the old intimacies are renewed, unless the air throbs to the same immortal harmonies that inspired us in the earlier life.

Now I am persuaded that the old shepherd may be right. Not that the mortal body will be miraculously reintegrated; but that two material worlds, gross and refined, may co-exist, and death be the gateway in between. Swedenborg is probably very near the truth. Perhaps, after all, there are hills and dales, trees and animals in the other world; maybe even corresponding districts. Surely also the love of man and woman, which is spiritual in essence, and to which procreation is, after all, but incidental. The *raison d'être* of death may be the gift of a body which will no longer half-express and half-conceal the soul, but wholly reveal it; so that painful reserve, misunderstanding and hypocrisy alike come to an end.

On the other hand, the future life may be not merely a continuation and an enlightenment, but something more. Death may endow us with a wonderful new sense. Think how impossible it would be to explain to an intelligent starfish the amazing faculty of sight, by virtue of which one could get a clear idea of the shape of a distant object! To say nothing of the inconceivable quality of colour! Perhaps death will endow us with a new sense as far transcending sight as sight touch.

God's universe is infinite. We need not fear we shall ever exhaust its possibilities.

"I know not where His islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care."*

* Whittier, *Eternal Goodness*

CHAPTER VIII

THE PRESENT DUTY

WE have come to the end of our argument; but there is still one word more to be said. It is good to know that we need never plunge again into the nothingness from which we emerged, that we have limitless time in which to explore an infinite universe; but while living here, our chief interest must be centred here. We must learn to serve the highest, apart from all thought of reward, apart from any assurance of earthly success even—for its own sake merely. Only so shall we be worthy of the vision, there or here.

It is good to worship God together, and so increase our faith. It is well that our first thoughts in the morning and our last thoughts at night should be of his great love. It is good that we should meet him in the beauty of the world, and in the joy of human affection.

But unless our faith is going to make a difference to our life, unless it is going to permeate our whole outlook, social and political, it is worse than useless. We ought never to enjoy the good things of life—nature, literature, music, intimate human love—without thinking of those who cannot share them: whose souls are so under-nourished that nature means only a day in the village tavern, music at best but a few sentimental ballads, and human love a mere physical passion. We should think of them with no shadow of self-satisfaction; but with deep shame. For they have been robbed of their birth-right, and we, perhaps, have had something more than ours.

The dearest human affection must never make us selfish or jealous. Nature, art and worship must never be for us mere means of escape from a sordid world; but rather means of inspiration, that we may play our part in the remoulding of that world. Never must we become so wrapped up in our communion with God that we forget our fellow-man.

It is a strange world in which we live. We can soar to the heights with Lowell and plumb the deeps with Browning. We bring music from Germany and Italy to our own fireside. We have increased the fertility of mother earth many times over, and with a little common sense we could so arrange things that no man or woman need ever again "be anxious for the morrow!" Yet poverty and ignorance are still rife; true culture is still the monopoly of the few; children are still unintentionally brought into the world; and Christian nations still seek the solution of unemployment by undercutting each other in the world market!

A great tug-of-war is going on between the forces of good and of evil. Vested interests are striving to perpetuate national prejudices and to justify outworn privileges. Learned folk (sometimes unwittingly) are prostituting reason and religion in their service. Meanwhile the Spirit of God is also in evidence, though not always where we should most expect to find it. Not always in the churches; but among the men of all nations who have vowed never again to take up arms, among the men and women everywhere who are striving to replace competition and monopoly by co-operation.

Now the free faith should be the inspiration behind every movement which has for its aim the removal of some ancient wrong, the scrapping of some outworn institution or the hastening of a new social order in which it will be possible for all men and women to live human Christian lives; saving such movements from all danger of violence or bitterness; giving them untiring patience, unconquerable resolution and God-like energy.

The issue would not long be in doubt.

"Hearken how they cry, 'Oh happy,
Happy ye; that ye were born
In the sad slow night's departing,
In the coming of the dawn.'"*

* W. Morris, *All for the Cause*

RELIGION: ITS MODERN NEEDS AND PROBLEMS

Editor: RAYMOND V. HOLT, B.A., B.LITT. (OXON.)

Volumes Issued

1. Progress and Christianity: R. V. Holt, B.A., B.Litt.
2. Religious Experience: J. C. Flower, M.A., Ph.D.
3. Psychological Research: L. J. Belton, B.A., M.Sc.
4. The Revelation of God in Nature and Humanity:
Basil Viney.

In the Press

The Bible To-day: *Principal H. McLachlan, M.A., D.D.*

The Church as a Fellowship of Friends:
A. H. Lewis, B.D.

Religious Cults and Movements To-day: *H. Crabtree.*

Miracles and Modern Knowledge:
S. H. Mellone, M.A., D.Sc.

Volumes in Preparation

The Philosophic Aspects of Science:
W. L. Schroeder, M.A.

What is the Use of Religion?: *S. Spencer, B.A.*

Syntheses: *R. F. Rattray, M.A., Ph.D.*

The complete series will contain twenty-one volumes

THE LINDSEY PRESS