RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD:
UNITARIANS STATE THEIR FAITH

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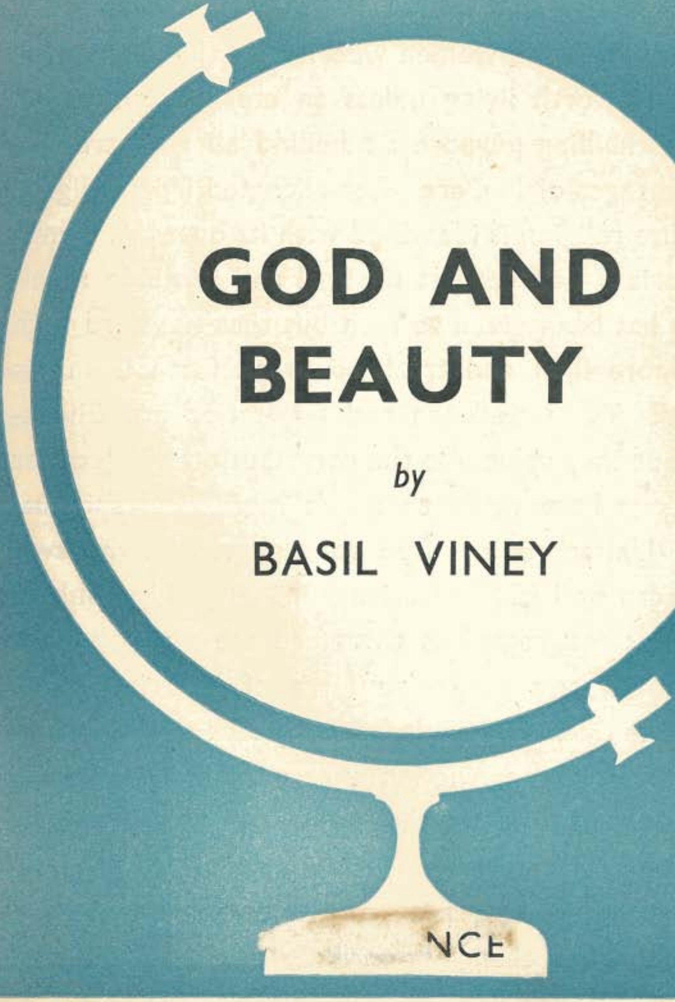

GOD AND BEAUTY

by

BASIL VINEY

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RELIGION IN A CHANGING WORLD

Many men and women who realize that their lives are not worth living unless an eternal significance and an abiding purpose lie behind all the strivings and changes of life, are often alienated from religion because religion is identified with its outworn forms. Unitarians believe that no final and infallible revelation has been given to men but that the Lord hath yet more light and truth to break forth from his Word. Their tradition and inspiration are Christian, but they value also the contribution which other religions have made to man's moral and spirtual life. Unitarians are free to seek truth wherever they can find it. Unitarian ministers and members of their congregations therefore are not asked to assent to any particular form of doctrine. This freedom does not result from any lack of faith but is rooted in the conviction that no discovery which man can make about the world can do anything in the long run but deepen man's sense of the glory of life. Only such a faith can face the tremendous problems of a changing world.

GOD AND BEAUTY

By the Same Author

- "THE REVELATION OF GOD IN NATURE AND HUMANITY." (1*s.* The Lindsey Press.)
- "GOD, COMMONWEALTH AND AFTERLIFE." (1*s.* The Lindsey Press.)
- "FROM MONTEVERDI TO SIBELIUS." (5*s.* Allenson & Co.)

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BASIL VINEY

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PREFACE

THIS book is a brief statement of what one Unitarian believes about the value of beauty as a witness to the divine presence in a world where all the old standards are being challenged.

Something is said about the beauty of Nature, but nothing about the apparent cruelty thereof; nor is any reference made to certain scientific theories which would explain away much of that beauty in terms of use or advertisement. These problems are discussed in the third and sixth chapters of " The Revelation of God in Nature and Humanity ".

In section 3, Chapter III of " God, Commonwealth and Afterlife ", more will be found about unchanging and objective æsthetic standards.

B. V.

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I. THE CHANGING WORLD AND ABIDING BEAUTY

Once most men lived between the country and the cathedral. But with industry came slums, and beauty withdrew. Yet railways opened a vaster countryside to the workers. And though later inventions have made war viler, they have brought the best music to the poorest homes. The world changes dangerously; but beauty abides.

1. Castles and Cathedrals

IN the changing, challenging and chaotic world of to-day Unitarians hold fast to the unchanging ideals of goodness and beauty in which the mind of God is revealed. And this little book deals especially with the spiritual significance of beauty in its various forms: with abiding beauty in a changing world.

In more than one town in this land of ours you will find a castle-park. Gay flower-beds are there surrounded by the ruined walls of the grim old building, themselves half-hidden in ivy, or screened by ancient yews, and lapped on the far side by the quiet waters of river or moat, beloved of the irises and swans. Those walls harmonise well with the natural features of the place, and enrich not only its interest, but also its beauty.

Here you have evidence at once of the mutability of all human effort, and the enduring beauty of Nature.

Many centuries have passed by since that castle was roofed over and inhabited by men and women. It speaks of the bad old days, when the various provinces since united to form Great Britain were severed and hostile. When the first fort was built there, not only the Welsh and Scottish borders, but also others whose very lines are disputed by archæologists (as between Mercia and Wessex) were scenes of almost constant bloodshed. Those narrow loyalties and cruel and stupid feuds are now all forgotten. The very sting has gone out of the memory of them. Only the picturesque ruins remain.

A time came when the castles declined (not to be used again except in the rare event of a civil war) and the cathedrals increased instead. That was for the most part a far more restful age. At least the townsman (merchant, artizan or craftsman) enjoyed a plenitude of beauty. For in those days the houses and shops clustered round the cathedral, the centre alike of worship and the arts. Architecture, painting, sculpture and music all gave of their best only to the church. There the merchant, artizan and craftsman alike wended their way every Sunday, and often on holidays as well. (Not many people think of holidays as holydays now!)

The countryman, too, was surrounded by natural beauty, though he probably thought little about it. But the trees and hills made a peaceful and welcome background to the daily life of rustic and citizen alike. For no town was too large to walk out of in a half-hour at most!

2. The Industrial Revolution and the Discovery of Nature

Much later came the discovery of the power of steam and its application to drive machinery. And this discovery made a greater change in the life of the average peasant and artizan alike than either the abolition of feudalism, the Protestant Reformation or the overthrow of the despotic monarchy. It brought a greater change than had ever been known before in the habits of daily living; and ultimately, too, a greater change in the ways of thought and faith.

No longer were men roused by the sunrise, or the lark, to go about their hard but healthy and simple duties in the fields, under the open sky. Far more likely they were disturbed by the siren, to trudge through drab town streets to the factory; to tend machines instead of animals, to make screws and cogwheels instead of corn-ricks. The market towns were still there (country towns they were now called), but were far outsized by the new industrial slums, with the hideous factory chimney for symbol, instead of the cathedral spire. The world was changing as never before.

But there were compensations, for a new and deeper love of Nature than had ever been known outside ancient China arose: megalopolis its ugly, but apparently necessary, midwife. This Nature-lore begins near the close of the seventeenth century —its birth roughly synonymous with the invention of the steam-engine and the achievement of religious and political freedom. It is in the eighteenth century that most of the English parklands are planned—still among the chief glories of our countryside. It is in the eighteenth century that the first holiday resorts grow—most of them planned in good taste, though definitely urban. Then, too, some of our poets (stimulated perhaps by the scenic passages in Milton) for the first time regard Nature as sufficient in herself, and good in all her moods. She is no longer (as in Shakespeare or Spenser) a mere backscreen for drama or allegory. Artists like Wilson and Constable paint the country for its own sake: not as a background to portraits or buildings. And abroad, composers like Rameau and Haydn weave something of their love of Nature into the orchestration of their operas and oratorios.

As the Industrial Revolution gathers force, and materially affects the lives of the masses, this love of Nature spreads. It is no longer adequately represented by a minor poet like Thomson (splendid pioneer though he was) or Cowper, but by Wordsworth, with his mountain grandeur and mystic faith. It is no longer a mere orchestral background in opera, but fills the whole score in Beethoven's pastoral symphony.

The world was changing, but beauty was holding her own. Changing her forms—inspiration and recreation are now being sought in Nature and orchestral music rather than in madonnas and gothic aisles and ritual—but the solace is still there.

Early in the nineteenth century compensation comes for the workers too. The sordid side of the Industrial Revolution is toned down somewhat by the growth of trade unionism from below and the imposition of Factory Acts from above. The standard of living never rises as much as it would have done had there been less competition and more co-operation from the outset of the new order, but still it does rise. Railway and steamer take the tired worker to seaside or mountain resorts his grandfather never saw even in picture. These resorts spring up in all the more famous beauty-spots—not all of them eyesores, either. Modest houses surround themselves with flower-gardens. The slums still increase, but the new-born love of Nature grows deeper and broader yet.

3. World Wars and White Magic

Late in the nineteenth century and early in twentieth comes a sudden spate of new inventions—the electric light, the motor, the gramophone, the kinema, the aeroplane and the radio tread on each other's heels. Collectively, these affect the lives of the masses as much as the previous invention of the steam-engine: and again the result is a mixture of good and ill.

The standard of living is again raised for both rich and poor by elements which would have been unthinkable a few generations earlier. For the cost of a few meals you can now have not only the world's best books on your shelves, but the world's best music sounding from your hearth. Devices which would once have struck the king in his palace with superstitious awe are now commonplaces in the cottage.

But too often the worker feels neither superstitious awe nor reverence as he switches on his radio. What need for fairies or for God when clever electricians or mechanists (of whom he may be one) do all the tricks? The profounder mysteries of birth, growth and death (ever present to the heart of the crudest countryman) are forgotten, save when they strike home for awhile; and these other mysteries of steam and electricity and sound-tracks in disks and moving-pictures are no true magic at all, only clever conjuring!

So faith is a diminishing quantity. And the scepticism engendered by nearly two centuries of mechanical invention is crystallised by the outbreak of the first World War; the most terrible till then known: and by the world depression that followed. What is God worth anyway, if He can't or won't stop things like that? And when faith in God and in immortality go, only those of rare calibre still hold to a moral ideal. Morals to the unchurched masses now seem as man-made as everything else, and too often only fear or custom restrain. The ability to discriminate between the man-made and the God-inspired wanes pitifully. Else how could whole peoples yield to the cruellest forms of nationalism ever known?

Small wonder that some of those brought up outside our culture, and unaffected by it, like Gandhi, deem it a tragic mistake from the outset, and regard the machine as the quintessence of evil.

The world is changing again, and apparently for the worse. Beauty is no longing holding its own—it would seem. In World War No. 2 architecture and human life are destroyed indiscriminately with equal ruthlessness. And even in peacetime beauty is ravaged. Red-brick tentacles strangle the countryside (thanks to the car). The home is more likely drenched with jazz than cheered by music.

But we are too near the events to judge aright. The machine is not evil in itself. We shall surely open our eyes before long to the obvious solutions of warfare and unemployment. The machine makes it possible for the masses to enjoy the higher forms of beauty as never before. Ribbon development itself only threatens because so many already prefer lanes to streets and open skies to chimneys. Our courtship of Nature is often foolish, but it is usually genuine. A minority still, but a rapidly increasing minority, enjoy good music and old architecture too. Many who no longer worship in the cathedral yet rejoice in the splendour of it, both outside and inside: enjoy the music they hear there too, though for them Jesus lives only in the passion of Bach!

It is a strange thing, that architecture and music inspired by an obsolete creed survive that creed so healthily. To this we may return later. For our problem is to consider awhile the various forms of beauty—the beauty in Nature and the beauty of the human arts—in relation to faith.

II. BEAUTY IN NATURE

We sometimes see beauty and evil in vivid contrast. That makes atheists. Does God care? But the beauty is still there, and suggests a realm beyond evil, and our kinship therewith.

1. The Sunset and the Plane

Beautiful sunsets are so plentiful that we take them for granted. But sometimes there comes one of such breath-taking loveliness that the most hardened, shrivelled souls pause to look, and perhaps to wonder.

There was one like that the other evening. The sun was cushioned in flaming clouds above—below was a rippling golden sea—and in between, stretching out into the water, dim in the brightness, a steep green-and-yellow peninsula of woodland and gorse. All this, seen from a hilltop on the mainland,

*

was framed between the grass at our feet and some over-arching birches.

We were waiting for the bus to take us into town. Suddenly there loomed into sight a plane, making the horrid rhythmic zooming then usually associated with enemy aircraft. The next minute the warning shrilled out into the still evening air, completely drowning the pretty twittering of some tits nearby.

" Good God! here they come again," said a pale, nervous woman in the group.

" I'd only like to know where God is in it all," retorted her florid, fat companion. " What's 'e doing? I'd 'ave a few things to tell 'im if only I could find 'im."

" You don't really suppose 'e's there at all, do you?" said the first speaker. " 'E's a blinkin' fairy-tale, that's all 'e is. Unless 'e's the devil," she added, with a last vicious afterthought. " Seems to be on 'Itler's side as far as I can see, 'e does!"

In which we have our whole problem, surely. A Godless world—or at least a God-consciousless world. And in which, too, we have, surely, a suggestion of the answer?

2. Whence this Beauty?

That sunset, once you give yourself to its influence, is not merely beautiful. It suggests something beyond. A vague something, perhaps. Many who are keenly aware of the unearthly beauty of earth would never think of associating it with God—with the God of the Bible. God has long ago ceased to have any meaning for them. Yet it seems part of a higher order of being, and far beyond all evil. And if you open your mind to it, it will so take possession of you that all petty desires and mean emotions will wither in its presence. Instead, you will feel a vague but warm beneficence to everything that is conscious.

This nobler emotion may wither as the beauty passes from your eyes, or it may turn into active goodwill. But either way your instant response proves something in you which also belongs to that same higher order of being.

Now let us put this in the negative way. In the presence of beauty you find it impossible to hate any living thing. Is that still true? Not altogether. You may hate with an even

greater intensity those who would harm or destroy the beautiful, the innocent and trusting. You may hate the rattlesnake, the tiger, the human thug driving that Nazi plane. They are out of harmony with it all. You can scarcely credit their existence in the same world. They would be better annihilated.

But all the harmless things, all the unspoiled people, you want to do good to. All whom you have wronged (should you happen to think of them at such a time), you would ask their forgiveness; all who have wronged you, you would forgive. You would not let the night fall on your wrath.

Even those others you wonder sadly about. That they should do evil in so beautiful a world seems incredible. Is there no way of redeeming them? It would be better to redeem than to kill, were it possible.

> The essence of all beauty I call love.
> The consummation to the inward sense
> Of beauty apprehended from without
> I still call love. As form, when colourless,
> Is nothing to the eye—that pine-tree there,
> Without its black and green, being all a blank—
> So, without love, is beauty undiscoverèd
> In man or angel. . . .*

But men fight in the sunset, you tell me? Yes—but then they don't look at it. They regard the sun merely as a lamp, and curse it for going out before victory is won or escape made good.

Or if they do momentarily respond, a sense of tragic inconsistency will appal them. They will deplore the need to slay. They will remember that

> The quality of mercy is not strained.†

So they will be purged of bitterness, even though they may feel the need to steel their hearts for the occasion. If any good is ever to come of war—of this war—it will be because the men on one side at least are touched with loathing of the thing they must do; because they are still sensitive to sunset glows; because they can still re-echo Shelley's lines:

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* E. B. Browning, " A Drama of Exile ".
† Shakespeare, " The Merchant of Venice ".

> It doth repent me; words are quick and vain.
> Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.
> I wish no living thing to suffer pain.*

Lenin once said that he could not listen to Beethoven's music in the midst of the Russian revolution because it made him feel like befriending everybody, including his foes, when he knew his duty was to crack their skulls. What tragic pathos is there! And what light it throws on the mellowing power of beauty, as well as on the nobility of the reformer!

Now, if beauty has this immense power of generating kindly impulses, it must surely itself come from some great original kindly impulse. If it thus gives rise to love in the heart of the human beholder, it must surely itself have arisen from love in the heart of the vague something whose existence it suggests. But a something that loves is a someone. And so by a circuitous route we arrive at the love of God.

> And out of the darkness came the hands
> That reach through Nature, moulding man.†

Not necessarily the God of the Bible. Certainly not the God of the cruder parts thereof. But the God of the lake-lapped mountains and the starlit sky; the God of the flowers and birds whom Jesus worshipped. That is the God who to-day in beauty sometimes snatches us awhile from the temporal to the eternal, that we may recover our sense of proportion, and see even the Nazi plane as a contemptible gnat in the sunset glory.

God has indeed vanished as ancient magician; but only to reappear as the divine artist.

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* Shelley, " Prometheus Unbound ".
† Tennyson, " In Memoriam ".

III. BEAUTY AMONG THE ANIMALS

With few exceptions animals enhance the scene; and in bird-song we trace the birth of conscious joy in tone.

1. The Charm of Animals

One might say that the final touches of beauty in the scene are given by the gentler of the animals. It is earth herself, with the gaunt mountains for her bones, that gives the background: uninteresting in itself as a rule, but awe-inspiring when clad in gorse or heather, with here and there a peak or crag of naked rock glinting through.

It is the plants—the trees and bushes and flowers—that lend the note of distinctive beauty. It is the animals that lend enhancement; the waterfowl on the lake; the thrush in the tree; the bees and butterflies (animated flowers) among the herbs. This added charm is largely due to their being conscious. Not only do their minds give grace to movement and shape (and so unwittingly express themselves), but further beauty is sometimes deliberately sought.

It may be debated whether animals can truly think—whether the cat who opens the door by pressing the latch has ever grasped the principle of it, and not merely profited by having once accidentally pressed it. It may be doubted whether they have any true conscience—whether the dog who has stolen a chop and slinks off with tail between legs is really ashamed, or only artful. It may be argued how far they are conscious of themselves (though they are certainly aware of one another).

But one faculty, which is usually later to appear in the human than either reason, conscience or affection, some few of them certainly possess—the æsthetic. Most birds at least have it. The magpie has a passion for anything that sparkles—from the petal of a flower, or a highly tinted feather of a bird more splendid than himself, down to things as low in the æsthetic scale as precious stones. It is a crude taste. But it is definite enough to give rise to bad collecting mania! He stores up these quite useless things as the red squirrel nuts or the dog bones.

Where music is concerned the taste is not by any means always as crude. Furthermore, the thrush, skylark and nightingale make their own music.

2. Bird-song

Prosaic naturalists will tell you that it is only the human listener who hears the music in bird-song: that to the birds themselves it is sheer utilitarian noise.

Thus the thrush sings loudly from the tree-top merely in order to warn all other thrushes off his feeding-ground. In other instances the song is a useful "leading motive": a recognition call, hearing which the wanderer will return to the flock, or, sounding which, he will attract the flock to the good meal he has just discovered. Possibly in some instances there may really be a love-song, but it is sung less to charm the female than to challenge other males.

Now, this really will not do. Of course there is something in all these theories. But even taken together they are less than the full truth. Each one fits some special instances. But usually the warning and the recognition call are mere notes, or at best short phrases endlessly repeated. Consider the farmyard cock, or the tits. Whilst the love-song is surely real music. Even in a bird a feeling of affection and a search for beauty of expression evidently go together.

Then it is more than likely that in many instances what starts as challenge or hailing becomes something more. This is obviously the case with the robin—a possessive, combative little bird. Sometimes you can fairly see him forgetting his pugnacity in the pleasure of his song!

But, says the dogmatic naturalist, it's all instinctive. Well, even if the young bird inherits its song from its father, it may still enjoy it. But more likely the song is imitated, and not always mechanically, either. Folk-songs grow in much the same way (allowing, of course, for far more rapid growth on the human level).

Furthermore, some individual birds still make up their own songs! They are composers, executants and listeners all in one (like the old-time improvisors). Some starlings add bits from the songs of other birds to their own music; and you have only to watch the starling on the chimney-pot, flapping his wings in his obvious excitement, to see his delight in his music. There is love in it doubtless, and challenge—more challenge than love. But more prominent than either is sheer *joie de vivre*, finding outlet in music for its own sake. Sometimes with variations in it, too.

Hudson has a delightful description of a flock of Patagonian mocking-birds (*Mimus patachonicus*) engaged in a genuine competitive musical festival. One discovers quite suddenly a new phrase. He repeats it with great zest. Often this new phrase startles his neighbours into silence. They listen intently. And presently the whole flock is fluting it! Later on another will improvise for the rest!

> That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over
> Lest you should think he never could recapture
> The first fine careless rapture.*

What Browning says of the thrush is at least true of the Patagonian mocking-bird.

No doubt, however, in spite of what we have just said, bird-music gives more pleasure to the human listener than to the bird. We hear more in it than the bird does. The bird probably enjoys it much as the boy enjoys whistling a tune. But to the human it voices the emotion pent in the twilit birch-wood, the blue sky, the hawthorn copse under the moon.

It is not God's way to work mechanically, or in isolation overmuch. Thus early in creation's story the Creator invites the co-operation of the creature in the making of beauty!

This may trouble those who draw a rigid line between man and the animals. But it will be no unwelcome thought to Unitarians, who, in the far-off days when orthodoxy raged against Darwin, cheerfully accepted his discovery of evolution (though not necessarily his explanation of it) and have never been repelled by the blood relationship of all living things.

IV. PORTRAIT AND SPEECH

Nature shows the divine beauty more fully than humanity the divine love. Thus we often feel God most when alone with Nature. But we feel, too, that much human art and literature are inspired.

1. The Face and the Painter

We are often awed by Nature; but scarcely by one another.

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* R. Browning, "Home Thoughts from Abroad".

It is easier to think of God living in Nature than in us. This seems paradoxical. For, as far as we know, man is the head of creation. We say that a single human soul outweighs the stars:

> . . . the mind of man becomes
> A thousand times more beautiful than the earth
> On which he dwells, above this frame of things
> In beauty exalted, as it is itself
> Of quality and fabric more divine.*

Yet Wordsworth would be the first to re-echo his fellow-recluse:

> There is a pleasure in the pathless wood,
> There is a rapture by the lonely shore. . . .
> I love not man the less but Nature more.†

We all feel like that sometimes. But why?

One reason is that Nature, just because it has no consciousness of its own, suggests the immediate presence of God as our fellow-man cannot, his human personality intervening. Then our sense of humour rightly forbids undue reverence. We know what frailties beset the best of our fellows. Humanity, of a higher order than Nature, is but brokenly revealed even in the best of men and women, and has barely advanced beyond crude infancy in the mass. Maturity is far off, and probably in other spheres than earth.

Then again the human face deceives so often. Man is more mental than the animal; he is a larger soul, with deeper emotions, shown in the face. But he lives on a plane where moral issues suddenly assume an importance hitherto unknown, and inheritance complicates matters immensely. The physique gives a rough idea of the temperament, but not of moral merit or demerit. It may be either too good or too bad for the indwelling soul, and either way there is conflict. Ugly, plain, pretty or beautiful features often mislead about the character. A noble-looking man is not necessarily in the least noble. A beautiful or pretty girl may be neither beautiful nor pretty in herself. Her plain sister may be sweeter, more affectionate, and more intelligent, too. Even physical strength or frailty are no sure signs of self-reliance or mental spinelessness.

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* Wordsworth, "The Prelude".

† Byron, "Childe Harold".

Yet, after all, the beautiful face should be the sign of a fine character: even as the beauty of Nature of God's beneficence. There is a sense of deception as well as disappointment when it is not so. And the earlier European artists found almost all their inspiration in the human face and figure; and many artists do so still.

But they often concentrate on expression. And a wise, kindly expression may beautify the plainest of features, and a suspicious or greedy expression disfigure the handsomest. And whereas callow youth is likely to deem a beautiful face of the opposite sex the most beautiful thing there is, the more experienced will trace a higher type of beauty in the kindly face, though it may be plain enough, and wrinkled with age as well.

Herein surely lies the superiority of Michaelangelo or Rembrandt to Titian or Greuze.

Not that these artists paint only the wise and kindly people. Great art, like great literature and great music, takes the whole of life in its stride, and does not blink at the tragic. Nor does it gild the sordid, but shows it in all its vileness. But of this more later.

2. By or Through?

Man, we have seen, is seldom reverent in the presence of his fellow-man. But in the presence of his creative works—of his buildings and paintings, of his books and compositions—we often feel as hushed and awed as in the woods or the mountains.

A cathedral, viewed from without, may not only be an essential part of the scene, but the crown and chief glory of it—whilst viewed from within, the massive grandeur of the Norman, the mystic beauty of the Gothic or the enlightened spaciousness of the Renaissance is a world of manifold beauty in itself. Yet the architect was probably a very fallible person, and the builders in no way superior to any ordinary crowd. Turn to literature, where the relation between worker and work may seem more intimate. Wordsworth the man amuses us with his colossal egotism, or angers us with his political and theological backslidings; but we agree with Southey that you might as well try to crush Skiddaw as "The Excursion". Shelley is certainly not without reproach in his treatment of Harriet; but Shelley the prophet-poet is as little to be questioned as the sun. Adoration of the work rightly soars far beyond admiration of the worker. The masterpiece outshines the human medium through whom it has come. That medium has indeed been

> Touched to a sudden glory round the edge.*

But, though the eccentricity of genius has been often exaggerated, only in rare instances—*e.g.*, Franck and the Brownings—do we feel that the man or woman measures right up to the work. That is why *through* really seems a more appropriate preposition than *by* to indicate the relation between man and his art.

The implication is that the art work comes from a deeper source than the personality of the individual. This, of course, is the original meaning of the word " inspiration ". It may be held to come from a disembodied personality still living on a higher plane, from the subconscious race-soul or direct from God. Spiritualists will incline to the first theory; psychologists of certain schools to the second; Christians and Theists to the third. Wise people will admit that these theories are not necessarily contradictory. There may be a measure of truth in all three. Much depends on the nature of the work under consideration.

Whatever the explanation, it is surprising how often the poet nurtured in a bigoted creed which he never openly repudiates, transcends all narrow dogmas and rises to universal theism whenever he lets himself go. There are numerous examples in Pope, Young, Cowper, Coleridge and Wordsworth. (I do not instance the Brownings or Tennyson, as they were admittedly broad in theology, whilst Lowell was an avowed Unitarian.)

But a grave danger attaches to all theories of inspiration, especially to the theistic. It is easy so to forget the human channel altogether, or (still more dangerous) to identify the human with the deific. And either way the theory of inspiration then becomes a dogma of infallibility. No longer is the psalm, prophecy or parable an instance of human striving and divine response. It is altogether superhuman, and therefore final.

When this dogma is attached not to an art work, but to a treatise, not to a poem or psalm, but to a creed, the mischief is still greater. Though that lies outside our present province. But even a poem or prophecy becomes a hidebound creed when pronounced not only inspired, but infallible. I have known a gentle soul tortured beyond endurance by the phrase " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting flames ", because it occurs in a prophecy attributed to Jesus, whom he identified with God.

And in purely artistic realms this same doctrine of inspiration, pressed too far, obstructs future development. The growth of music, for instance, was long arrested in Europe by the undue attention paid to worthless Greek ideas about the emotional significance of the different modes or scales—and similar ideas, similarly derived from primitive compositions, are largely responsible for the absence of any great Asiatic schools of music. It is significant, too, that it is the professionals and connoisseurs who usually oppose new developments in any of the arts! Wordsworth, Turner and Wagner all knew this, to their cost.

I do not suggest this is still so to-day. We tend to the other extreme: to lose faith in the genuine inspiration of the masters, and then to hail the mere novelty as a diversion.

But the doctrine of inspiration should not so lightly be dismissed. Provided it is not too confined, or confused with infallibility, it is helpful and true. The Hebrew prophets really were often inspired. So were our poets, and the European painters and composers. Haydn was not mistaken when he said that the music of " The Creation " came from God.

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* Lowell, " The Cathedral ".

3. Why Poetry ?

We must, of course, guard against mere credulity. True art does not suffer from intelligent criticism. The primitive peoples were so credulous that the mere discovery of a rhyme seemed to them like inspiration. In Anglo-Saxon the word " rune " means both rhyme and spell or magic. Even to-day there is a charm in rhyme and metre for those of us who rate the best poetry above the best prose. The defect of articulate language is its arbitrariness. There is no reason in the nature of things why love should be called love and hate hate. But metre and rhyme lend to articulate speech the inevitability and spontaneity we find in a laugh, a groan or a tune. They make language seem natural. A rhyme, in this respect, is the reverse of a pun. The pun takes advantage of accidental resemblances of sound (as between sea and see) to make language seem ridiculous. The rhyme takes advantage of accidental similarities (as between love and above) to make it sound natural and inspired. Of course this does not mean that poetical prose may not also sound inspired. Still less that poetry always succeeds. Rhyming verse can be absurd, intentionally or unintentionally. Bad poetry is the worst of literature. Only in his most inspired moments can the poet use his special devices of metre and rhyme to heighten his inspiration. But really good poetry is even better than the best prose. Some verses sound inevitable as do some tunes. You wonder they were not thought of before. They seem as dateless as the hills or the flowers. It is not difficult to think of them as direct creations of God.

> Love seeketh not itself to please,
> Nor for itself hath any care,
> But for another gives its ease
> And builds a heaven in hell's despair.*

A verse like that, in which thought and expression fit happily as hand and glove, does not suggest Blake in particular. One reflects with some surprise that Dr. Johnson never heard it. Yet in nearly all great poetry there is the individual note blending with the universal, though you may not become aware of it till you compare the work of one poet with that of another. It is rather in the style than in the message. But there is more of the man in the poem than of the bird in the song. God takes the poet into partnership, so that he is fully aware of the significance of his work. And his message will be the keener and his style the purer the cleaner his character and the sweeter his life. The work may transcend the life, but there is interaction. Wordsworth's poetry would have gained as much as his character had his too serious sense of vocation been tempered by a vein of humour. The flame might have burned longer, and not latterly been stifled by so much smoke.

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* Blake, " Songs of Innocence ".

This individual note in the poetry should be a source of added wealth. The divine ray pierces through the window (the human agent) which may defile and obstruct; but which it is God's intention should tint the white light, giving now this colour and now that, according to the temperament of the poet, the artist or the musician.

Incidentally, it is only by a figure of speech that we call the story (apart from the telling of it) beautiful. Even as it is only by a figure that we call a good deed or a fine character so. But beauty and goodness, though distinct qualities, are intertwined in life and literature; each magnifying the other. The emotion of human lovers, severed and reunited—of the truth-seeker, renounced but undismayed—these live so intensely in the poetry of a Longfellow or a Browning that we think of " Evangeline " or " Paracelsus " as timeless expressions of the eternal beauty. They differ from " the forest primeval " or the " mountains rough with pines " only in that they are more heavily charged with human sentiment.

Their beauty is freighted with human goodness as the beauty of the forest or mountain with the beneficence of God.

V. MUSIC

Music seems at once the most universal and the most spontaneous of the arts—in some ways the tonal equivalent of scenery, in others the apotheosis of poetry. Significantly the greatest music belongs to the last three centuries.

1. The Universality of Music

Music, even more than poetry, suggests inspiration. For the composer also takes us to a realm where evil is forgotten or transcended. And more than the poet, he seems rather the medium than the source of his art. It is true that he has his own idiom, that the greater he is the more pronounced that idiom will be—sometimes so unmistakable as to be recognised in a few bars. Furthermore, it will bear the marks of his period, and, if dating since about 1800, also of his nation. He belongs to a " school ".

Nevertheless, far more than great painting or great poetry, great music suggests the universal: at once inevitable and spontaneous. Its rhythm suggests the inevitable, its melody and harmony the spontaneous. It is hard to imagine a time when " The Messiah ", " Norma " or the " Unfinished Symphony " were not. It is at once obvious yet curious to reflect that Purcell heard none of them. How much he missed through being born too soon! (But doubtless he knows them all now.)

Now, in some ways music is more like poetry than painting. It lives in time, not space; and even when inspired by scenery is more charged with emotion. But in other ways it resembles scenery more closely. It cannot argue, or describe in detail: so it either ignores words, or deepens the emotion suggested by them. Yet for its composition, and in some degree for its appreciation, it calls for more intellectual grasp than scene or poem. The scene lives in space, so you can take your time over it. You relax, and let it paint itself on your mind. But music is even more vitally related to time than literature, and if you slacken an instant you miss some subtle difference in the curve or orchestration of theme on repetition, or some significant strand in the polyphonic web.

2. The Origin and Growth of Music

Music, as we have seen, starts with the birds. But the mammals (unless we except the gibbons) make only noises; whilst for ages human music was like rhyme, a mere accessory of verse. Slowly through the Middle Ages, then suddenly in the seventeenth century, she won through. The manifold history of the world's greatest music is clasped by three centuries. Only three hundred years separate the oratorios of Carissimi from those of Elgar, with all the wealth of Purcell, Bach, Handel, Haydn, Cherubini and Gounod in between. The same period witnesses all the changing moods of opera, from the dramatic realism of Monteverdi to the tunefulness of Scarlatti; thence to the more lyrical music-drama of Rameau and Gluck; thence again to the deeper and more dramatic lyrical opera of Mozart, Auber, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti and Verdi; or to the orchestrally woven music-drama of Weber and Wagner; and to yet other modes of expression in the fantasy of Korsakoff, and the impressionism of Mussorgsky, Debussy and Puccini. Whilst a mere two centuries encloses the symphonic chain, rising through Vivaldi and Haydn to the beauty of Mozart and the splendour of Beethoven; thence continuing through the romantic realms of Schubert, Schumann and Brahms to the mysticism of Franck; or deflecting into the verdant hills of Mendelssohn, Chopin, Grieg, Smetana and Dvorak; or into the rugged peaks of Berlioz, Liszt, Tchaikovsky, Borodin and Sibelius.

This late and rapid growth of music may well appear in perspective as the outstanding fact of the age, something in very deed " new under the sun ", a glory that will endure when world wars and tyrannies and slums are almost forgotten nightmares of the past.

Now all this great music either ignores words, or, moulding itself on them, yet transcends them. In oratorio, mass or opera, as in symphony and concerto, it is the strings that spiritualise. And in all these forms art reaches the summits. In voicing the extremes of human fear or love, religious contrition or praise, poetry falters. But music is still eloquent and spontaneous—the apotheosis of poetry.

And in between the realms of the lower music, the music of pretty bird-song and merely pretty tunes, and those of the higher, are the realms of intellectual argument and concrete emotional narrative, where prose, prose-poetry and poetry hold sway. But the higher music is born of emotional speech, as man's love of landscape is born of the industrial giant city. The higher music, too, seems to have needed the touch of the great city to bring it into fruition. It grew (as we have seen) along with a sordid industrialism. But now we have many compositions which will last as long as humanity.

Works such as those we have named have an emotional beauty which neither deteriorates into sentimentality nor hardens into mere technique. They are as inspired of God as any ancient scripture or modern poem: of all works of apparently human origin they alone show forth aspects of the eternal beauty different from, but comparable with, the starry heavens or the twilit glens.

It is God's way to co-operate with his child.

VI. BEAUTY AND EVIL

How does beauty weigh in the balance against pain, death and human cruelty? Sometimes there is an intimate relationship. Much noble art is born of crisis. The crisis passes, the art abides.

1. Volcanoes and Sunsets

Whenever one puts the case for theism one is met sooner or later by the problem of evil. The very existence of evil convinces many people that God is a myth. All the evidences of his reality seem mere feathers in the scale when weighed against this hard and horrible fact.

What, *e.g.*, are even the highest manifestations of beauty—the setting sun glinting through the larchwood in spring; the mystic tones of voices and strings in the gothic cathedral—weighed against the hatred, the sin, the viciousness in human hearts; or even against the sheer, hard, inescapable fact of bodily pain? A mere cloud, touched to elusive perishing tints; half hidden already by the ugly mass of barren volcanic cone in the foreground.

Well, let us indulge in no escapism. Let us deliberately confront beauty with evil; with sin, pain and death. Let us go right back to where we began—to the war-plane flying across the setting sun. But let us search for the reality underlying the appearance, since the appearance may be deceptive. That war-plane may not be a Nazi weapon. It may be British or American. And if so, it is at least possible that the airman in charge of it loathes the work which yet he feels it his duty to do. It may be he is out to bomb Nazis, not Germans as such. It may be he is as keen to liberate German liberals and pacifists and socialists from the concentration camps as to defend Britons and Czechs from Nazi tyranny. It may be that he has the love of God and man in his heart, even as the softly gilded clouds the eternal beauty. And if, as we hope, he is typical, then even this terrible war may force a way to a happier world. The way of violence is a perilous one, and we missed it badly last time, but perhaps we shall do better this. If so, even the war-plane will not of necessity be remembered as a thing of unmitigated evil—a mere defilement of the sun. A day will surely come when war between Britain and Germany or Japan will be as unthinkable as war between Wessex and Mercia is now, and the plane be assimilated to the skyscape as the ruined castle to the landscape.

But now let us return to our other figure, of the distant, filmy, delicate cloud sinking behind the horrid volcano in the foreground. We choose the figure deliberately, because volcano and cloud are not merely in chance juxtaposition, like the sunset and the plane. Were it not for tiny dust-spects in the air, most of them of volcanic origin, there would be no gentle, widely distributed rain, nor any beautiful clouds for the sun to paint. Water-vapour can condense only on solids and but for those floating dust-specks it would all condense on land itself, and mostly on the mountains, dividing earth between floods and deserts. All but the lowest forms of life would be impossible. Thus the volcano (whose destructive powers we can easily avoid by not building in the neighbourhood) has an important part to play in the natural order, and in engendering those very sunset clouds behind it.

May there be some such relation also, if we search far enough, between beauty and evil—between the beauty which seems to be not of this world, in the presence of which we sometimes feel ourselves lifted out of the earth-plane and all its sordid problems, and the evil which threatens the very existence of that beauty, and makes the contemplation of it a mockery? Are we here confronted with the mere chance juxtaposition of a good and an evil thing, or with something quite other than that?

It has often been argued that evil of some sort is the thing on which good feeds. You cannot know what courage is till you confront danger outside you and fear within. And in some cases at least it is suffering in another that first brings pity and then love to birth in the self.

Even below the moral realm something similar is true. Are we really aware of well-being in the body until there has been some slight disease? Could we really appreciate summer at its full value if we knew nothing at all of winter (not that there is anything evil in winter).

Now, what is true in the realm of mere animal pleasure and displeasure, and in the higher realm of right and wrong, seems also to hold in this other higher realm of beauty and tragedy.

Poetry reaches its highest levels in the tragedy of heroism and pathos. A lyric of dawning love may be a thing of exquisite beauty; but after sorrow has mellowed affection the poetry grows richer. A cheery song before the strife is welcome; but the song that rises after the event, be it of triumph or failure, goes deeper.

And as in poetry, drama or painting, so in music. The summer happiness of a Mendelssohn is fortunately outlasting the petty criticism of temperamental decadents, but it is surpassed by the spiritual exaltation which a Beethoven wins only through bitter strife.

A good comic opera is a joy for ever. But, strange as it may seem, there is a deeper joy shot through the pathos of the *dénouement* of " Norma " or " Aida "—in which tragedy or untimely death severs companionship, yet in which the music hints at reconciliation or reunion beyond.

Now, death is the one inescapable evil which no earthly Utopia could destroy. How should we face it?

> Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat,
> The mist in my face,
> When the snows begin, and the mists denote
> I am nearing the place . . .
> . . . sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
> The black minute's at end,
> And the element's rage, the fiend voices that rave,
> Shall dwindle, shall blend,
> Shall change, shall become first a peace out of pain,
> Then a light, then thy breast,
> O thou soul of my soul, I shall clasp thee again,
> And with God be the rest.*

So wrote Browning, after he had lost his wife some years. Death was a half-friendly antagonist, with whom we wrestle to gain entry to the larger life beyond. Thus the deepest, highest, most moving art arises in large measure out of the conflict with evil: depends for its existence on pain, death, bereavement; and even sometimes on the sinful deeds of other men.

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* R. Browning, " Prospice ".

2. By Means of the Sinners

" It must needs be that occasions of stumbling come," said Jesus. He was thinking of the development of good, strong character. We are thinking of the creation of inspired poetry and music. It makes no difference. Without death Elgar would never have risen to the unearthly beauty of " Gerontius ". Without it we should never have won our way, with Tennyson, through doubt to the larger faith. And without the evil deeds of bloodthirsty rulers Shakespeare would never have risen from " The Midsummer Night's Dream " to " Julius Cæsar " and " The Tempest "; nor Rossini from " The Barber " to " William Tell ".

But " woe be it unto them by whom the occasions [of stumbling] come ". Always, as in ethics, so in æsthetics, the evil must be fought without the least compromise. It is ONLY THERE TO BE FOUGHT, and so transmuted. And it is in the battle with it that the noblest character is aroused, and much of the divinest art created.

Under the Czarest oppression a great Russian school of music arose; in its ranks masters like Tchaikovsky, Mossourgsky and Borodin—all of them radicals and potential revolutionaries. In Soviet Russia music is encouraged as never before and nowhere else. The way is made easy for workers with any real talent to pass into the profession, and the democratic appreciation of the best music (and drama) is widespread.

But Soviet Russia (despite the eager search for creative genius as well as interpretive talent) has produced no master composers—and whilst it is early to speak, one cannot help thinking that there may be a profound significance in this. She may well find another Haydn or Korsakoff; but probably not another Beethoven or even another Tchaikovsky. Or, if she does, it will be because of her strife with the Fascist enemy beyond her borders, not because of her own equalitarian society.

This does not imply any criticism of the U.S.S.R. Justice and equity, and the spread of culture among the folk, come far before the search for further realms of artistic creation. And, as we have seen, it in only in the grappling with injustice and the conquest of it that your Beethovens arise, or at least reveal their full power. But when the battle is won, then, it would seem, comes an artistic repose, in which, however, the art of the greater creative periods loses none of its old power. It is only that to the highest art is now added the widest goodwill. Scarcely anti-climax, after all.

But in the meantime, before the attainment of Utopia, human anguish is so terrible, the sufferings of the innocents so appalling, that we may well ask, "What are a few works of art, a few symphonies or operas, poems or novels, in the balance?" Perhaps? But characters are moulded in the furnace. And "eye hath not seen nor ear heard . . .". But when we "know even as we are known", what then?

> . . . Ages pass away,
> Thrones fall, and nations disappear and worlds
> Grow old and go to wreck; the soul alone
> Endures; and what she chuseth for herself . . .
> That only shall be permanent.*

A small boy was crying over a lost ball. I was moved by his howls to buy him another one. I fully expected to see the little tear-stained face light up with smiles, like a sun-flecked April day. But it didn't work. One glance at the stranger, and the eyes looked away. The small hand grasped the new toy right enough, but the sobs went on. Presently he brokenly explained, "It's not my old ball—the one I put under my pillow every night since my birfday."

A babyish little boy, undoubtedly. We are amused at such childish sorrow—much as we are at the not very serious quarrels and fights of little boys and girls. But they seem big and tragic enough to them! I wonder whether, in the dim future, in some other life, we shall look back on our deepest earthly sorrows and conflicts like that?

On our sorrows I think not; emotion and art have sanctified them. On our conflicts, perhaps; though scarcely on the moral and æsthetic consequences of them. On our hatreds surely.

But remember this. Human travail is also God's travail. He is sharing our ordeal with us, that later on we may share

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* Southey, "Roderick".

his triumph, in and through us, with him. And it is the Unitarian's faith that in the ultimate triumph all must share: even those who were "occasions of stumbling". Not only because they are our brethren and God's children, but because the good are indebted, as we have seen, to the very sins of the bad for some of their best virtues. Clearly then

> . . . not one life will be destroyed
> Or cast like rubbish to the void
> When God hath made the pile complete.*

VII. WHAT BEAUTY IS

Rules about symmetry and contrast indicate only technique. Good art expresses gracious personality.

1. The Technique of the Arts

We have come so far without having attempted to define beauty. We have discussed many different expressions of it *en route*, but we have not yet said what it is. Nor is this an easy thing to do. Truth may be readily, if superficially, defined as accordance with fact; goodness as consideration for others. Or again, the essential nature of goodness may be indicated by a group of synonyms—generosity, unselfishness, love, trustiness—each of which is more precise in meaning, and isolates some one aspect of full-orbed goodness for our consideration. But synonyms for beauty—charm, grace, loveliness—these are all equally vague.

Nevertheless many varied attempts have been made to define beauty, some of them very wide of the mark. It has been argued that the appeal of the beautiful is nothing more than the appeal of the familiar: which is really an attempt to explain it away. Steamers and trains, it is said, were once condemned as ugly—but now we quite easily assimilate them to the landscape. But the matter is not as simple as that. The smoke from an engine rounding a curve, the carriage lights shining in the deepening twilight, is one thing—a goods train chugging along a straight, bare embankment quite another. Nor has anyone ever been able to assimilate coal-dumps or factory chimneys to the landscape; though they have long been painfully familiar in many places. Others have equated beauty with novelty. These two absurd theories can be left to cancel each other out.

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* Tennyson, "In Memoriam".

There is more to be said for the efforts to find the common element in diverse types of beauty in terms of accordant contrast: as between plain blue sky and rounded white cloud, or simple aria and elaborate orchestral accompaniment, as between the fast and slow themes of a symphonic movement, as between the metre and words of a poem, or the rhythm and tune of a composition. Others will stress symmetry (as in a face, a flower, or a cathedral), and yet others variety, or repetition with a difference (as in the trees fringing a wood, the repetitions of a leading motive in an opera, or the "development" of the symphonic theme.

2. The Spirit of the Arts

Now all these elements are relevant to beauty, though the proportions in which they occur varies from art to art. Thus in landscape and music the absolute symmetry which is essential in architecture and in the face and body of human or animal would be detrimental. Furthermore, all this analysis refers only to the technique of art. Some of the above qualities are essential for any manifestation of beauty: but they do not ensure beauty. All symmetrical faces are not beautiful. Music and poetry can be made which are technically flawless but merely academic, and therefore quite dead. Nor does any theory of technique allow for beauty of expression—facial, literary or musical. But this beauty of expression is the essential. And it implies a personality—a good and lovable personality —behind the face, the music, the literature, the scenery: the personality of man, or God, or both.

So whilst on the technical side we might analyse beauty in terns of contrast, symmetry, variation and proportion, on the spiritual side we might define it as the expression of a good and gracious personality: as the moulding of material things like earth and flesh and sound (or their etheric equivalent) into gracious shapes and colours and tones, so that they become expressive of spiritual emotions.

VIII. BEAUTY AND GOD

Truth is the servant of goodness; beauty its expression. All three have their source in God, who is the perfect lover and the supreme artist. In worship, inspired art or music redeem questionable dogma; but we should strive for both integrity and beauty.

1. A Unitarian Trinity

We now turn to our last problem—the place of beauty in the Godhead. The simple-minded trinitarian is usually a tritheist, picturing three Gods, though calling them only one when using the language of his creed. The philosophical trinitarian usually thinks of but one divine person manifesting in three ways—or modes. His view is called modalism. Divest this modalism of its needless association with Jesus: equate the Creator with the divine Power which reduces chaos to order, and so implies constancy or truth: equate the Father-Mother Spirit with Love: equate the Word with Beauty, the emanation or expression of Love: and you have a trinity of qualities which really are interpenetrating but distinct. Beauty and goodness both imply truth, and beauty is good, and goodness makes beautiful. Yet they are different. In human imperfection, they are even sometimes contrary, as when passion for beauty allures us from housing the homeless or healing the sick. When there is this clash betweeen beauty and duty it is beauty that must wait awhile. To court her unduly is to sin. Yet beauty, rightly understood, is higher than duty, sweetens duty, and speaks of a sinless realm beyond.

Now we may regard God from two aspects, according to whether we look on him from below, or try for a moment, in all reverence, to look on him from within. (All terms are so hopelessly inadequate.) Looking on him from below, he is the one Person who is always constant to the eternal truth, love and beauty, after which we brokenly strive, and in the light of which we judge our poor attainments. Truth is truth, goodness is goodness, and beauty is beauty not because he wills them (they are eternal and unchangeable), but he is altogether true, good and beautiful because he always works according to their laws, which we so often trample or ignore.

Looked at from within, he is the SOURCE of truth, goodness and beauty: the uncreated mind in whom alone they can abide till man is born to share them.

2. The Greatest of These?

Our trinity is not an equal one. Of the three values, truth ranks lower than the others, of which it is the servant.

But what of Love and Beauty?—which of these comes first, either in God or in man? Of their intimate relationship we have more than once had something to say. Is there anything more to be added?

Just this. If we regard beauty also as the servant of love—natural beauty God's message to us; the beauty of art or music the message of love between humans (or either way between man and God)—we must also realise that even love-life would be vapid without beauty. God's love satisfies him and us because he has his eternal beauty to share with us. Human love is full and enduring just insofar as it has beauty of its own to offer, or God's beauty to share, with the beloved.

Farther we cannot go. Truth, love, beauty—these three are in God; these three he shares with us insofar as we open our souls and let him in. This is to live the life eternal—on either side of death. But no one of us can live this life other than spasmodically till all the others are lifted up into it. That universal redemption God waits to achieve through us—both in the earth life and beyond.

And when the evil is finally overcome? Despite what has been said, further adventures doubtless await us when the rest wearies. Here or beyond there is still

> The soul's east window of divine surprise.*

3. Beauty in Worship

A final word about the place of beauty in worship may be not amiss. The Roman Church gradually magnified the simple commemoration of the Last Supper into a highly artificial ritual based on a literal interpretation of the words attributed to Jesus, "This is my body". Part of this ritual consisted in the intoning of one of the dogmatic creeds. Later on the creed was set to music—sometimes to music of such intense spirituality that one who had no patience with the mummery or with much of the dogma could still worship with the composer. But the Roman Church has since vacillated between a wise æsthetic breadth which welcomed the beautiful but often emotional and exuberantly orchestrated masses of Haydn and Mozart, Gounod and Rossini, and a stupid æsthetic bigotry which forced even Cherubini to produce his masses in the concert-hall, because, severe though they were, they used strings and wind as well as voices. In architecture Rome gave us the strength of Norman, the mystic depth of Gothic, and the illumination of Renaissance. In painting and sculpture she has always tolerated tinsel as well as art.

In some Protestant sects all the arts have been forbidden (a cube is not architecture). In others any tinsel is welcome.

Unitarians, though often forced by a lean purse to an æsthetic poverty far from their wishes, have always seen in architecture, music and stained glass (or in the view through plain-glass window of hill or tree) invaluable aids to worship. Though the words of a hymn or chorus may be re-phrased and broadened, there is naturally no such cleavage between Unitarians and Trinitarians in æsthetics as in theology. But we have perhaps been the first to stress the divine presence in Nature, and in much literature and music dubbed "secular" by the orthodox. Thus we use writers like Wordsworth and Tennyson, and our own Lowell and Martineau, for "lessons"; judging them as inspired as any old Hebrew prophet or apostle. We welcome the drama back to the church; and I think most of us would admit a "secular" play like "Outward Bound", dealing with immortality and purgatorial retribution, as readily as one based on scripture, like "Good Friday". Nor would many of us hesitate, given the chance, to welcome appropriate chamber or orchestral music during the service. The symphonists are more at home in the church than the concert-hall, with its applause. A symphony may be as religious as a fugue, and string tone is more spiritual than organ tone.

There is good art that is not appropriate of course. But much art usually considered as "secular" enriches worship, and gives up all its content only when listened to reverentially, as an act of worship.

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* Lowell, "The Cathedral".

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