

**I BELIEVE  
IN  
MAN**

**LORD SORENSEN**



I BELIEVE IN MAN

LORD SORENSEN

EXCHANGE

*I thank you . . .*

*For all your cherished gifts of fellowship and thought,  
Your heart's loving-kindness and stalwart constancy,  
The faith you made manifest in the good you sought  
And kinship in striving to shape the world to be.*

*I give you . . .*

*Gold from a vein in my own invisible mine,  
A casket of treasures that last eternally,  
A flask of sun-blest juice drawn from memory's vine,  
And a star that came from a shrouded galaxy.*

R.W.S.



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## FOREWORD

I HAVE been impelled to embody my reflections in this small book not, I hope, out of vanity, but because a few have urged me from time to time to do so, and because I feel there may be some thoughts that I may contribute from my experience which may prove helpful to some modern minds. I am very conscious that there are many who are more qualified academically than I am to deal with profound issues involved in the nature of man, but my long activity in the fields of worthy causes of politics, human problems and spiritual needs may have its own singular value.

Organised religion has waned through the diffusion of scientific knowledge, the substantial raising of living standards by human effort, and the ampler leisure that has provided greater scope for the expression of the human spirit. Nevertheless, I believe that in at least some among the mass of those who are or appear to be irreligious, indifferent, cynical, self-satisfied or hedonistic, or who find fulfilment in humanistic movements, there persists a deep need for "more abundant life" and an enduring faith that can inspire their minds and hearts.

In my theme of "I believe in Man" I seek to explore what I call "unconscious" and "conscious" Humanism in the conviction that ultimately we cannot be satisfied with iconoclasm, physical contentment, platitudes or shallow optimism. Even if traditional religious claims may appear to be irrelevant to our age, within and beyond them are essential values that we must cherish. I am concerned with the foundation of those values.

In my youth I was as rebellious as is modern youth, and although my original zeal has mellowed, I trust that it still charges my testimony to those spiritual realities that survive inevitable frustrations and failures. Maybe this will convey something worth-while to my readers.

Walthamstow  
December 1969

R.W.S.

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## CONTENTS

	Page
I RELIGION TODAY . . . . .	9
II HUMANISM . . . . .	30
III OUR COMMON HUMAN DILEMMA . . . . .	43
IV CREATURE AND CREATOR . . . . .	58
V VITAL FORCES . . . . .	72
VI HUMANISM AND RELIGION . . . . .	88
VII THE PART AND THE WHOLE . . . . .	104

## I

### RELIGION TODAY

ADVERTISING, we are told, benefits both seller and buyer by stimulating mass demand and production. Presumably, therefore, were it not for wheedling, crunching, sucking or jingling commercial television advertisements children would lack delectable, teeth-rotting sweeties, housewives would collapse over greasy sinks, maidens would weep over listless hair, husky young men would be parched with thirst, and our linen would be permanently off-white.

It would be going too far to claim that a really expert salesman could sell electric blankets on the Equator or pork pies in Tel Aviv. Nevertheless, ad-men and publicity agents do appear to achieve remarkable success in sales promotion, and some earnest Christians have wondered whether this technique should be employed to boost religion. It may have had some success in America, but pilot trials of it in Britain do not encourage any hope that it would arrest the continuing decline of religious observance here.

From 1880, with a passionate desire to reach the souls of irreligious masses the Salvation Army has departed from ecclesiastical convention, but valiant soldiers behind their "Blood and Fire" banner are confronted today with the same desert of indifference as that which depresses so many others who preach the same Gospel. Less dramatically the "Brotherhood Movement" was launched about sixty years ago to popularise Christianity with an hour's programme of lusty hymn-singing, orchestral music, religious solos, a robust sermonette and a breezy atmos-

phere of hand-shaking fraternalism. Alas, this has dwindled from an ebullient flood to a feeble trickle in which surviving Brotherhoods are compelled to augment the brothers with a multitude of sisters to avoid disappearing altogether.

In spite of ardent prayers and strenuous efforts, fewer than 15 per cent (in my own home area, about 6 per cent) of British adults gather for Sunday worship. The Roman Catholic Church appears to remain well supported; it has the advantages of antiquity, massive world-wide organisation, comprehensive discipline and ritual, nostalgic loyalty from Irish, Polish and other immigrants or exiles, the inflexible adherence of simple people and plentiful casuistical explanations for problems raised by intellectuals. Outwardly it maintains impressive strength, but the defection of the outstanding theologian, Charles Davis, is evidence that Roman Catholicism is not immune to the erosive forces of contemporary life. A rock's external appearance can mask the existence of internal fissures.

These facts should not obscure another fact—that approximately five million regular worshippers have an influence in Britain which is significant beyond statistical measurement. To them religion means something deep and abiding as a source of inspiration and consolation. Whatever the defects or inconsistencies of organised religion, only the prejudiced would deny its past and present value to adherents who by their faith have practised moral discipline, performed acts of self-sacrifice, nurtured an inner experience of transcendent blessing and exercised fortitude under persecution.

Yet many men and women are not merely indifferent to churches and worship, but are critical of all theological claims. Under the impact of that criticism many religious denominations and leaders have been compelled to modify

some aspects of their dogmas, creeds or articles of faith to bring them into greater relevance to scientific thought.

Throughout Christian history it has been deemed imperative that we should "find salvation" by accepting a story of creation in which a paradisaical Garden of Eden was inhabited by our first progenitors, Adam and Eve, until by sinful disobedience they brought dire punishment on themselves and the whole human race. The only escape from this doom was by belief in the vicarious passion, crucifixion, resurrection and heavenly ascension of Jesus Christ. This nominally remains the foundation of Christian theology, even though now in many quarters that Edenic episode is reinterpreted as a legendary embodiment of majestic psychological truth.

Apart from members of fundamentalist sects, intelligent Protestant ministers are apt to become peevish with those who appear ignorant of the partial ecclesiastical abandonment of its former liberalism, and we should recognise this abandonment even if it has been due to cumulative pressure. Most theologians, including some Catholics, belatedly now accept the theory of evolution, so long as this does not preclude supernatural intervention, the metaphysical uniqueness of the soul, innate human propensity to sin and conditional redemption through Christ as "Saviour".

Intellectual difficulties have been resolved by investing ancient terminology with wider meanings than those intended by the original authors. This has provided a helpful escape-ladder from many critical fires. Even so it cannot be forgotten that when Darwin and Wallace expounded evolution in the mid-nineteenth century they received violent verbal assault by Christians who felt their faith had been outraged. Only the Rev. Charles Kingsley and a few others dared to dissent from a chorus of religious

wrath. Unitarians, always a small minority dismissed by the orthodox as beyond the pale, not being intellectually tethered could welcome new truth without fear of nervous paroxysm or spiritual catastrophe.

My reminder of theological retreat from former positions may be as superfluous as assurances that Queen Anne is dead or that not all Christians believe that Noah and his wife superintended the ark with its zoological tenants of two of every creature from elephants to ants. I only refer to this because I believe the general acceptance of evolution is largely responsible for the indifference to Christian theology. There is appreciation of the pastoral services of the church, but not of its intellectual probity. Even in the City of Rome most citizens do not attend mass.

On one occasion after I had trooped with Borough Councillors to an annual Mayoral Service I asked one or two what they thought about the content of the hymns, lessons and sermon. They looked at me as if I had spoken Punjabi or as an infants class would react if I tried to teach it algebra. I suppose the civic dignitaries considered my question as indecently out of place. For the Mayor's sake they had observed customary ritual, and that was that. I never repeated my friendly enquiry, for "once bitten, twice shy". That incident is fairly typical of a current attitude.

### *Biblical Criticism*

Among reflective non-churchgoers the Bible has ceased to have the authority ascribed to it by the Nonconformists with whom it replaced the Church as the guiding authority. To them it was the inspired "Word of God" and still is, even though its previously accepted literal infallibility has been qualified. Etymologically the word "Bible" signifies a library, and it comprises an invaluable, unique

collection of Judaic history, anthropology, sage axioms, moral laws and exhortations, poetry, biography, theological expositions and metaphysical eschatology. The specifically Christian New Testament became compiled as an authorised Canon of Scripture by the fourth century A.D. after a mass of material had been sorted out.

This was classified into three categories, one being considered authentic, another dubious and the third untrustworthy. This discrimination was undertaken by sincere devout men, but some material must have been included in a wrong category just as on the lowlier level of a Mothers' Union jumble sale, ladies may get the two shilling articles mixed up with the sixpennies. Moreover, in those days even more than today rumours and hearsay could become transmuted into alleged fact. Most of us can recall examples of how someone starts an imaginary hare which after circuitous leapings becomes a flying elephant.

Not only has this transposition to be taken into account, but also the risk of errors and misconceptions in translation; and New Testament English versions are translations of translations. It is impossible to guarantee that any textual record is authentic beyond the shadow of a doubt or that meanings attached to particular words are identical with their original content. Further, there have been interpolations and mistranslations by pious editors. To take two examples: the concluding sentence in the Lord's Prayer, "For thine is the Kingdom . . ." is a doxology added much later than the lifetime of Christ, and "virgin" in the New Testament need not signify a sexually unblemished maiden but can simply denote a chaste though not necessarily celibate young woman, a mature woman or simply a daughter.

Nevertheless upon Biblical texts dogmas of mighty significance have been erected to question which in past

times brought charges of grave heresy. With today's fuller knowledge and toleration we can scan Christian Scriptures sympathetically yet objectively and with the aid of qualified specialists judge for ourselves what is of value, what seems amplified legend, what is enigmatical mysticism, what are helpful psychological insights and what is open to diverse interpretations. The Dead Sea Scrolls have revealed much similarity between the life, discipline and ardent beliefs of the ascetic Essenes and the ethos of the New Testament.

Many Christians who are aware of serious intellectual difficulties preserve their faith by "believing where we cannot prove". Those who reject any theology either are inclined to believe the figure of Jesus Christ is a composite of several personalities or accept him as an historical person of rare spiritual and moral significance, holding that the general impression of his life, but not an indisputably accurate record, is contained in the New Testament. They may also be critical of certain words and deeds attributed to him, as with stories of his occasional intemperate vituperation, his harsh treatment of his mother and kindred or his unethical transference of the "unclean spirit" supposed to inhabit a lunatic into an innocent herd of Gadarene swine. Instances of his miraculous powers to heal, raise the dead, multiply abundantly a few loaves and fishes and convert water into wine they take as typical accretions in all religions accepted by unsophisticated minds prone to believe in supernatural signs of singular persons or events.

Such elements are outweighed by the far greater number of incidents and pronouncements of high moral value and the insight, courage, compassion and resolution of Jesus. The modern critical mind can respect this, as did the agnostic H. G. Wells who wrote in his *Outline of History*: "In spite of miraculous and incredible additions, one is obliged

to say, 'Here was a man. This part of the tale could not have been invented' . . . Is it any wonder that to this day this Galilean is too much for our small hearts?" That, I surmise, represents the attitude of most thoughtful unbelievers as distinct from the stodgily indifferent, brazenly cynical or aggressively hostile.

The hunger of "small hearts" for emotional enrichment has caused countless millions to find this in churches, to which they give unwavering loyalty. It is this that enables clergy, ministers and congregations to remain steadfast in the majority of churches where worshippers have dwindled, sometimes to a handful, although there are larger congregations here and there. One can appreciate why some churches have hailed the injection of streamlined evangelism from across the Atlantic, and have sent coachloads of the faithful to mingle with mere curious quidnuncs in massed arenas in the hope that the Victorian days of revivalism have returned. One can also appreciate the sad discovery that this results in a paucity of permanent converts. Undeniably in those campaigns, and continuously in regular church life, many people find great inspiration, but this can also be said of those in unconventional religious communities such as Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, and Spiritualists, and in various esoteric groups and in non-Christian religions. Some ecclesiastical quarters are not over-insistent on belief in the Virgin Birth, although the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ, his exclusive incarnation and a version of Atonement remain essential. Modernist thinkers in most denominations cautiously or boldly seek to educate churchpeople in new interpretations of the Christian faith, but not all are as challenging as Dr. John Robinson, till recently Bishop of Woolwich, or Dr. Leslie Weatherhead when Minister of the City Temple in London. (It was at the



City Temple that some sixty years ago the Rev. R. J. Campbell startled orthodoxy with his "New Theology". Later, Campbell entered the Church of England, but in his day he influenced many thousands, some of whom ultimately found a spiritual home in Unitarian churches.)

On the Person of Christ there have been many unorthodox presentations, from Renan's *Life of Jesus* to those as diverse as Dr. Albert Schweitzer's *The Quest of the Historical Jesus* and Anglo-Catholic Rev. Conrad Noel's *The Life of Jesus* portraying Jesus as God Incarnate in a revolutionary social leader.

Of great significance has been the formation of the Protestant World Council of Churches, and the Ecumenical Movement to which previously rigidly aloof Roman Catholicism has responded since Pope John XXIII spread his benign influence. Possibly this will subdue mockery by outsiders at Christian disunity. One wonders to what extent these developments have been stimulated by external criticism and the wilting strength of organised religion. Secular shopkeepers smarten their window-display to recapture falling trade, but no matter how British churches do this ecclesiastically, potential customers mostly pass by unheeding.

#### *Moral Significance of Social Protest*

Scientific thought is only one cause of theological retreat. Another is the social expansion of moral consciousness which has issued as much from non-religious sources as from the Christian Church and non-Christian religions. Religious institutions have no monopoly of the virtues, but are prone to adopt what at first they denied or ignored and then claim this as part of their property. Even as "the devil can cite Scripture for his purpose" so holy men can borrow from heretics polish for their halos.

Our ethical and moral stock has been enriched by such

men as Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, the Egyptian Akhnaton, the Buddhist King Asoka, and Chinese Confucius, and from social movements within and beyond Christendom, as with Roman plebeian protests and the Buddhist foundation of hospitals and schools. The human spirit has many moral expressions which become identified with Christianity in due course in a predominantly Christian society and with other religions elsewhere. "The wind bloweth where it listeth". It blew through the fourteenth century English Peasants' Revolt in which John Ball, "the Mad Priest of Kent", used religious idiom with his cry "When Adam delved and Eve span who was then the gentleman?" in an agitation that would have risen whatever the prevailing religion had been. For many centuries in Christendom it was perilous for either social agitators or enlightened thinkers openly to step outside ecclesiastical boundaries. This was also true of the later Wycliffe and the Lollards, Winstanley's "Diggers" and "Freeborn John" Lilburne's "Levellers", each being both a religious and a humanitarian movement.

The wind during the industrial revolution influenced the formation of trade unions and co-operative societies. When the type of co-operation propounded by Robert Owen, an agnostic mill-owner, collapsed, the principle was given more practical application by the 1848 "Rochdale Pioneers", by working men's "Friendly Societies" and local radical and socialist groups. None of these was encouraged by organised religion. Another stirring of the human spirit produced the Chartist Movement with its demand for the Parliamentary franchise for artisan men who had gained very little for participating in agitation for the 1832 Reform Act which enfranchised middle-class industrialists. The "wind of change" about which Harold Macmillan spoke so memorably in South Africa has had many earlier manifestations.

Social discontent was stimulated by a sense of moral values outraged by intolerable social conditions, for which religious bodies offered charity and philanthropy. The well-known story of the mainly Methodist Tolpuddle Martyrs of 1834 exemplifies the contemporary religious attitude. After their sentence for unwittingly taking an illegal oath, though actually for trying to raise their wages from six shillings to seven shillings a week, pleas for aid to the Methodist Conference met with a deaf ear. No clergy or ministers publicly supported the substantial Vicar of Warwick (he weighed 22 stone) in demanding their release, although some religious ministers and M.P.s did so subsequently. Early trade unionists had slowly to overcome severe hostility from employers, State and Church before winning improvement in their lot and recognition of trade union status as representatives of organised workers.

This does not mean that no individual Christians shared the labours of social pioneers or that Christian faith had no influence. Primitive Methodism inspired and mentally equipped many early leaders of the miners and other trade unions; the Christian ethic was constantly a criterion of reference for many who fought for social justice and civic rights; parsons like the Rev. Charles Kingsley and the Rev. F. D. Maurice openly proclaimed themselves socialists; Cardinal Manning espoused the claims of dockers on strike; the Unitarian minister Henry Solly helped to found Working Men's Clubs even if today they sell beverages of which he might not have approved; Christians were active in many societies promoting specific reforms; Roman Catholics were stirred by the anti-capitalist, non-socialist Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII; Christian radical M.P.s urged social legislation and noble Conservatives like Lord Shaftesbury successfully pressed for factory legislation; the Salvation Army and numerous societies were active among waifs and

strays, orphans, indigents and homeless. In earlier centuries religious orders established hospitals, succoured the poor and provided some educational opportunities. At the beginning of the nineteenth century two organisations, one Anglican and the other Nonconformist, established rival "National" and "British" schools respectively for "children of the labouring classes".

Granted this, nonetheless many in social movements were, like Co-operative leader George Jacob Holyoake, avowed secularists and disbelievers. Karl Marx, dying in comparative obscurity in London, had little immediate effect on the British proletariat, but his thunderous "workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose but your chains", together with his materialist social philosophy, dismissed religion as the opium of the people and cumulatively generated an influence that still shakes the whole world and is embodied in communist nations. However indirectly this has had stimulus from religious sources its main impetus issued from expanded moral consciousness within human experience.

For seventeen hundred years black slavery was unchallenged by Christian churches until the Quakers began to assail it, although it took about one hundred years before even they were united here and in America on this issue. The Anti-Slavery Society founded in 1823 (and still existing), led by individual Christians Wilberforce, Clarkson, and Buxton, campaigned against black slavery and ultimately achieved success, although it was Denmark that led the way. In Europe slavery and later serfdom lapsed for economic, sociological and moral reasons and not because of authoritative ecclesiastical prohibition. Christians have had an obligation required by their faith to treat slaves, serfs, subjects or subordinates with responsibility, and many acts of manumission rewarded the

good conduct of slaves, but slavery as an institution was accepted by the Christian Church throughout the major part of its history.

The infamy disappeared both because of sociological change and the expansion of moral consciousness, irrespective of whether its vehicle was religious or secular. It can be argued that implicitly the incompatibility of slavery with Christianity inhered in a verse in the Epistles, "there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for all are one in Christ Jesus". That this did not repudiate slavery seems evident by the fact that some original Christians were slave-owners and others slaves, by St. Paul's sending back a slave to his master and by his "servants be obedient to them that are your masters . . . with fear and trembling." The Christian attitude was one of benevolent paternalism with recognition of the spiritual equality of all souls.

#### *Feminine Emancipation*

Feminine subordination to men, although women also might possess merely spiritual equality, was endorsed by the Christian religion and other. Milton's line "He for God only, she for God in him" was gratifying even to men who were not aspirants for godliness. The Decalogue reflects traditional disparity by "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house . . . wife . . . manservant . . . maid-servant . . . ox . . . ass", these being chattels. To bid a woman to desire her neighbour's husband would have been as absurd as forbidding ox or ass to chew in a particular field. Woe betide any woman who took advantage of that omission, for this would not have diverted the hail of rocks from irate men who worshipped the masculine deity responsible for the Sinaitic Commandment.

Why is the Judaic-Christian-Muslim God a supernatural male? Why was Eve formed from Adam's subtracted

rib, the Bible mostly concerned with masculine deeds and utterances? Why were the Apostles and priests all of one sex? Why were there no Early Mothers mentioned with Early Fathers and why is the Trinity two-thirds masculine plus the possibly a-sexual Holy Ghost and the Catholic addendum of the Virgin Mary? These are pertinent questions asked by critics who already know the answer that scriptural recorders and interpreters were all male. Men made religious and secular laws by which women were "given away" on marriage either as jettisoned domestic cargo or choice nubile goods in an erotic auction. Men made laws to chastise women, duck them for shrewishness, burn them as witches, confiscate their property, stigmatise them for bearing "illegitimate" children, restrict their higher education, bar them from professions and prevent them from being enfranchised.

The ancient Christian Church had its Abbesses, Prioresses, Mothers Superior and a few canonised feminine saints. By venerating Mary as the Mother of God it could claim it honoured motherhood, but apart from this and provision for women in misfortune the Christian Church took no initiative to emancipate women from age-old social inequalities. A woman was expected to become a competent housewife, the mother of as many children as nature and God gave her and the chaste spouse of her husband, by which she could earn praise such as the Old Testament describes: "for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her . . . She will do him good and not evil". This was fortified by the Pauline injunction "Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, even as Christ is head of the church." The Church has insistently transmitted this to its female members. St. Paul's Cathedral is a token of respect for St. Paul's authority

which is frequently quoted to verify theological doctrines.

It would be incorrect to assume that women have been in constant revolt against their subservience or junior partnership. Some women like it that way. They exercise their own devious forms of power, and beneath almost synonymous virtues of modesty and obedience many have passed from initial pleasure of masculine adulation to a gratifying sense of wellbeing through domestic devotion.

Mediaeval chivalry toward women had some beneficial influence among nobility although it was less applicable to peasantry. Some women demonstrated their ability in former centuries by managing farms, estates and businesses when widowed or when husbands were absent or incapacitated, and they have exercised authority as sovereigns, princesses and noble ladies. In the industrial revolution poor women laboured for long hours in mills and factories, and in domestic service they had a basement and attic as their habitat. Some could aspire one lowly step upward to the respectable status of governess and with due piety could become deaconesses or lay sisters. Quakers have never placed restriction on feminine religious testimony and the Salvation Army from its beginning appointed women officers.

Not until Mary Wollstonecraft published her *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792 did subterranean feminine resentments become articulate. This evoked incredulity, derision or ponderous reprobation until well into the nineteenth century the feminist movement erupted in a "Votes for Women" campaign. It was pursued by various methods, "constitutional," restrained militant, or fiercely militant, the last, led by Mrs. Emmeline Pankhurst, engaging in arson, window-smashing and other violence. Among feminist agitators other than the Pankhurst family

were Mr. (later Lord) and Mrs. Pethick Lawrence, Mrs. Despard and Mrs. Fawcett. While such as Pethick Lawrence, a Unitarian, George Lansbury and Dr. Maude Royden, Anglicans, were motivated by religious convictions, churches did not actively intervene. The first World War brought a suspension of the campaign and at the end of the war Government and Parliament conceded the suffrage for women over thirty years of age in 1918; this was extended in 1928 to all women on the same terms as for men electors.

Equal sex enfranchisement has been attained, women have entered many professions, thousands serve on public bodies, scores have become MPs, and a few Cabinet Ministers, and latterly Peers, to the dumb disgust of eighteen petrified Barons of old who, as statues, stand on niches around the gallery of a House of Lords which in its feudal past paid scant attention to women's rights. Progress has been made towards equality of pay for women, in teaching and nursing professions women abound, half the married women in this country now work part-time or whole-time outside their homes for an independent income, and many feminine disabilities have been swept away. All this has been won by human effort without ecclesiastical initiative or encouragement.

#### *Religion and Sex*

In the sphere of sex, the revolution by non-theological effort has been outstanding. Until recent years the churches did nothing in this vital realm, apart from giving negative warnings and exhortations. While Catholic and Anglican Churches claim to have enhanced marriage by elevating it to a sacrament, Catholicism emphasises the vocational spiritual superiority of the religious celibacy of its priests, monks, nuns and friars. The implicit fear or denigration of sex as a devilish carnal temptation has left

a legacy even within Protestantism. Sex still retains among some Christians a taint of spiritual peril, as if marriage was an expedient concession to human frailty. As the old Anglican Prayer Book put it—matrimony “was ordained for the procreation of children . . . to avoid fornication; that such persons as have not the gift of continency might marry and keep themselves undefiled members of Christ’s body” and “for mutual society, help and comfort”.

Voluntary celibacy for religious or altruistic reasons deserves great respect, but unfortunately many religious celibates, from Christian Augustine to Hindu Gandhi (who after begetting four children lived celibately with his wife for forty years) have mistakenly attempted to apply their own austerities to normal people. Mystics can become dangerous when they do this. For many centuries interference with the biological consequences of copulation was denounced by official Christianity as wicked, obscene, outrageous in the sight of God and contrary to divine and natural law. Population control was confined to celibacy, “moral restraint”, high infant mortality, miscarriage, infertility, disease, and war. Although clandestine contraception has existed from ancient times its open advocacy and practice is comparatively recent. The Anglican Bishops’ Conference of 1908 declared: “This Conference regards with alarm the growing practice of the artificial restriction of the family, and earnestly calls upon all Christian people to discourage the use of artificial means of restriction as demoralising to character, and hostile to national welfare”. Twenty-five years later the Bishops thought that perhaps, possibly, in some circumstances it might be condoned. However, the 1958 Lambeth Conference Report of the Prelates declared “. . . the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the con-

sciences of parents . . . this planning . . . is a right and important factor in Christian family life . . .” In fifty years “demoralising to character” becomes converted to “a right and important factor”. It would be blasphemous to suggest the Almighty had changed his mind, so we must assume that the delay in receiving true spiritual enlightenment was due to a human defect. May not other episcopal dicta have been affected by similar impediments?

The Roman Church has continued sternly to denounce birth control as mortal sin, but after its last Vatican Council and the pleas of such men as Archbishop Roberts, S.J., it became engaged in a prolonged search for divine revelation of a means of birth control that was not birth control. Meanwhile Catholic wives prayed earnestly “How long, O Lord, how long?” Ultimately Pope Paul, to wide-spread consternation in some Catholic circles, announced with “much anguish” that means other than the “safe period” were unchristian and forbidden. It is not impossible that even as Rome has with divine guidance reinterpreted its earlier condemnation of usury it may yet do so in respect of “artificial” birth control. Meanwhile it remains sinful.

As with slavery, so also with contraception; I do not know any Christian theologian, moralist or leader who until recent years advocated or supported this. Some referred to it as sinful “Onanism” because Onan “spilled (his seed) on the ground” which “displeased the Lord: wherefore he slew him”. That was truly a vicious punishment that no sane person would endorse today, even if, contrary to assumption, Onan’s offence was not that he practised *coitus interruptus*, but that he evaded an order to inseminate his brother’s wife.

Humanists and others must be forgiven by Christians if they ask why prayers for guidance on matters of dogma

have been clearly answered while no divine revelation or inspiration has enlightened the petitioners about the prevention of unwanted pregnancies and "population explosion." Instead, on contraception Christians until recent years were either dumb or given to vituperative intolerance. Nineteenth-century atheists Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant (later a Theosophist) openly espoused birth control and suffered legal prosecution. Sixty years ago Dr. Marie Stopes published *Married Love* and received support from eminent people, but I think not from any religious spokesmen. The subject even then was treated by the religious as tabu and unfit for open discussion.

Contraception, birth control, or family planning is now taken for granted among religious and irreligious alike, although opinions may differ about what are the best methods. The Christian Church can take no credit whatever for this human boon which yesterday it condemned as inimical to holy matrimony, purity and divine law.

#### *Freedom, Liberty and Democracy*

Religions are autocratic in so far as they postulate a divine authority whose theological and moral instructions must be obeyed. Priests claim that they are stewards of that divine law, and formerly the Christian Church and other organised religions repressed, sometimes savagely, any who deviated from what was declared divine truth. Roman Catholicism claims that it is the monopolistic guardian of that truth, although the guardian is now more charitable to heretics and schismatics. Hence birth control, having evoked confusing Catholic statements on the priority of either conscience or Papal authority, has brought this pronouncement from the present Pope Paul. "The conscience is not a unique voice which can guide all

human activity. Its voice can be clarified and strengthened when it is united . . . with legitimate authority".

Conscience can endorse weird convictions, and this is true as much of Popes and theologians as of other human beings. What in effect Pope Paul asserted was that the Vatican must determine on what, and when, individual consciences are sound. In other words, they must be indoctrinated, as is also the claim of communist and other totalitarian States. The Byzantine schism and the Protestant Reformation repudiated Papal authority and in so doing demolished a formidable barrier to human freedom and liberty. Within the Roman Church itself some contribution to this came from such men as Erasmus in his plea for toleration. Inconsistently Protestantism also became despotic toward Nonconformists who endured harsh persecution under the 1662 English Act of Uniformity. Quakers particularly suffered grievously in England and also under the rule of other Dissenters in America; and Calvin caused the Unitarian Servetus to be burnt in Geneva. The English Declaration of Indulgence of 1687/8 and Toleration Act of 1689 brought some relief, though not to Catholics or Unitarians. It took a long time since then to reach our present complete religious freedom.

Political liberty, freedom and democracy were won only after prolonged struggle. Subsequent to abortive working-class Chartist demonstrations Conservative Disraeli's Government enfranchised urban working-men householders in 1867, incidentally thus out-manoeuvring the Liberals who had been agitating for this. From then onwards parliamentary democracy progressed by stages to our present full, equal enfranchisement, but Jews remained unenfranchised until 1860 and not until after atheist Bradlaugh had repeatedly been prevented from taking his seat because he could not conscientiously take a theistic

oath did Parliament after 1886 permit the alternative of a solemn affirmation.

#### *The Penal System*

For many centuries the Church contrived that the State should do the dirty work of imprisoning, hanging or burning heretics. Although it once provided "Sanctuary" for offenders against the law and secured some mitigation of harsh penal laws and practices, whippings, brandings and dungeons do not appear to have received ecclesiastical censure, and stocks and pillories were often placed near parish churches for the punishment of ne'er-do-wells and non-worshippers. John Howard in the eighteenth century, and the Quaker Elizabeth Fry in the nineteenth, pioneered prison reform, and since then many inspired by religious faith have been active in the same cause. In the dichotomy between divine wrath and compassion, contemporary efforts to reclaim and rehabilitate wrongdoers have infiltrated compassion along with deterrence and retribution in modern penology.

#### *War and Peace.*

Religious wars, including Christian Crusades against Muslim Saracens, and enforced conversions by Christians and Muslims alike, are well-known, but secular ideologies and inflamed moral consciousness can also issue in bitter strife and war. Bernard Shaw declares in *Man and Superman* through Don Juan: "But men never really overcome fear until they imagine they are fighting to further a universal purpose—fighting for an idea, as they call it". When men are seized with conviction that they must fight for freedom, independence, patriotism, justice, a new society or an ideal, they can do so with as much ruthless fervour and carnage as any who fought for religion. "Fight for the right" is the same cry, whether uttered by Crusaders or Saracens, Greek or Turkish Cypriots, North or South

Vietnamese, Protestants, Catholics, Muslims, Arabs, Israelis or Communists. Many Christians have construed "I came not to send peace, but a sword" falsely in anti-thesis to the Prince of Peace.

Against that misinterpretation is the Beatitude "Blessed are the Peacemakers". This has inspired service to reconciliation in individual, social and international relationships even if not invariably with success. It is the spiritual impetus of the "peace testimony" of the Quaker Society of Friends and of Christian pacifism. The Holy Roman Empire was a Christian Emperor's attempt to unify Christendom and ensure peace, but its foundation did not accord with its purpose. The International Red Cross by its very title indicates its merciful intention to serve victims of war irrespective of nationality. Churches today support this and the United Nations, and other forms of world-wide service, and thereby help to counter-balance any unfortunate impression that Churches form the Supernatural Department of the State.

## II

## HUMANISM

I HAVE sought to illustrate how human welfare advanced through the expansion of moral consciousness, often despite the hostility of organised religion and irrespective of theological sanction. Indeed, it has been argued that the function of religion is to guide and nourish the individual soul rather than to meddle in earthly matters, and that Jesus Christ was not a social reformer, but a divine Saviour who declared "My kingdom is not of this world". He refused to adjudicate on a disputed inheritance by asking "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" neatly parried an awkward question with "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's" and stated, "the kingdom of God is within you". The populace, when offered the option of having Jesus or Barabbas released, chose Barabbas, "a notable man" and popular political agitator.

Nevertheless, Jesus was a moral teacher who gave drastic directives. He scandalised the pious with "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath", preached forgiveness for offenders, bade men not to seek or hoard riches, scattered money-changers, spoke cryptically of social upheavals, paradoxically commended shrewd investment yet urged beneficiaries to distribute their wealth, was accused of sedition and executed as a danger to religion and an imperial State.

If he was, according to the Anglican Church's Second Article of Religion "very God, and very Man" his humanity

was as real as his divinity. If he was "Son of God" he was also "Son of Man" who "increased in wisdom and stature" and thus grew to greater knowledge; and if he "was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin" he must have felt very human, erotic and other impulses. However majestic Deity was incarnate in him, humanly he would not know that our earth was a minor speck in one of innumerable galaxies, that our human race did not originate with Adam and Eve, that insanity was not due to demonic possession, that Gautama the Buddha centuries before him taught noble, exalted precepts or that Indian and Chinese civilisations were older than Judaism.

Jesus did not wear trousers, read daily newspapers, use a typewriter, know that cloth could be made by power machines more abundantly than by hand apparatus or that aircraft could fly faster than sound; he did not direct a public company or know anything about antibiotics, human organ-transplantation or inoculation. Possibly he was familiar with medical folk-lore, for he annointed a blind man with an unhygienic mixture of saliva and earth. While reputedly he healed a few individuals, twentieth century medical and surgical knowledge has healed a myriad of sufferers. Recognition that being "very Man" he was therefore limited by contemporary ignorance, customs and social traditions does not necessarily refute his alleged divinity, but it does remind us that scientific knowledge and deepened moral consciousness have enabled human life to escape many disabilities and infirmities that in his day imposed pain, suffering and early death. Although modern science has brought new and terrible perils, it has also released multitudes from social wretchedness and superstitious ignorance.

Whatever significance we attach to the mystical allusions and claims of Jesus, his ethical and moral teaching



has intrinsic power, and this is not diminished if, like the Golden Rule, it has similarities in other religions. He drew on his own Hebrew inheritance, but enlarged it, and in homely, arresting parables conveyed this to his hearers. His brief ministry was charged with insight and compassion, and its climax was deeply moving, even if we may explain the later release of his devoted followers from gloom by their certainty that he would ever be in unseen fellowship with all his disciples.

I believe that behind accretions he was a vivid, historical person, but even if that were disproved the New Testament story would be everlastingly precious. The cumulative effect of scientific knowledge, scholarly research and evidence of moral consciousness developing outside ecclesiastical channels (or having no specific religious origin) has led many thoughtful people not to deny the highest Christian ethics, but to reject Christian metaphysics and to discard all theological assumptions. Others who do not go so far may retain nominal theistic belief. This is very nebulous, for what they mean by "God" has variable connotations.

Some people use that word casually, as when they cry "Oh, my God", which neither indicates theistic belief nor personal possession of a deity, and "God bless you" usually is a homely synonym for automatic bibulous greeting when raising a glass in a pub. "By Jove!" or "By heavens!" substituted for "By God!" suggests a residual fear of blasphemy. There is evidence of recognition of some kind of "other world" by belief in totems, lucky or unlucky days, newspaper astrologers, fortune-tellers, charms and St. Christopher medallions in cars. If Burke's aphorism "Superstition is the religion of feeble minds" is true, there are many feeble minds in our scientific age.

There is evidence of vague theistic belief among most

parents; public opinion polls are said to disclose that 90 per cent of parents of state school pupils want religious instruction to be retained, although they may themselves never darken a church door. I suppose that what they really want for their offspring is not dispensation of theology, but guidance in decent behaviour to supplement their own meagre crumbs. This can be embarrassing for teachers who may be as agnostically confused as the parents.

Clergy, ministers and church members find spiritual strength to face the strains of daily life in their faith and worship, and are thus inspired to render service to those in need. Numerically they may be far less than spectators at football, dog-racing and other sports who have their own rituals, and with football crowds their priests and acolytes, who perform on the green sward of their temple before congregations with circulating scarves, concerted chants, howls of ecstasy or woe and occasional oblations of bottles and other objects. The contribution of the latter to the quality of life cannot be favourably compared with values that both Christians and humanists seek to foster.

Humanists who ignore or reject theological concepts contend instead that Man is a product of evolution in which has emerged human self-consciousness, intense rational capacity and a profound sense of values. This enables Man to recognise the formative factors of inheritance and environment, but also in some measure to direct his behaviour and shape his society in a manner no other creature can do. Just as organic life has proliferated into countless forms, from bacteria, insects, reptiles, fish and birds to mammals and Man, and Man himself has branched out ethnically, so also Man's psychological world has become variegated and complex. This is demonstrated in his ability to calculate, investigate, analyse and philosophise,

to create visual, aural and tactile art and in his sense of moral responsibility. His philosophies and religions are fallible emanations subject to modification, improvement, replacement or elimination with the advancement of knowledge and comprehension. Some facts discovered by Man may seem to be final, but the human mind must ever be open to receive new truth.

This contrasts with the assumption of final, complete, dogmatic truth ascribed to divine revelation and embodied in an authoritative definitive statement. Take as an example the Christian Nicene Creed. This compilation by intelligent theologians in A.D. 325 is an interesting historical record of the reflections of its authors who were fallible men subject to the limitations of their time. To accept what they thought and to reject, evade or denigrate what later thinkers thought seems quite indefensible to free-thinking minds. Even the contention that there are supernatural revelations beyond human disputation issues from human minds that can be affected by human mental refraction and distortion. This also applies to non-Christian metaphysical claims whose different divine revelations make belief in divine revelation exceedingly confusing.

The Humanist contends that a valid alternative to the Christian Creed beginning with "I believe in God . . ." is "I believe in Man" as a conscious registration of the natural humanism within scientific exploration and social agitation. This Humanism claims to be unfettered in honest quest for truth, and it has had and has many eminent men and women supporters. The Rationalist Press Association, National Secular Society and the South Place Ethical Society (founded in 1793) propagate aspects of Humanism. The last-named describes its purpose as "a progressive movement which today advocates an ethical humanism, the study and dissemination of ethical principles based on

humanism, and the cultivation of rational religious sentiment free from all theological dogma". "Rational religious sentiment" is a legacy from distant days when the South Place Unitarian Church began its transition into the South Place Ethical Society, and other Humanist bodies would avoid that phrase. At one time there were Ethical Churches, and Labour Churches, but these faded away years ago.

Ethical Humanism appreciates that because demolition is easier than construction much more than iconoclasm is needed to meet human need. Even a church is better than nihilism and a slum is better than nothing. Ethical Humanism must offer something richly satisfying for human minds and hearts, or agnostics may become corrosively cynical, wander hopelessly in a void or turn to once-discarded irrational faiths. There are varieties of Humanism (though not as many as those of Christianity) such as Classical, Confucian, Renaissance, Scientific, Marxist, Stoical, Ethical and perhaps Yoga and Mystical Humanism. These may overlap, and Scientific and Ethical Humanism may be twins.

Many not calling themselves Humanists would, if pressed, confess that they treat religion as outdated as stage-coaches or as irrelevant as African ju-ju. "Humanism" would appropriately describe their outlook, and others would admit to being virtually Unitarian. In the universities Humanist groups are active, and elsewhere exist a few Humanist groups of professional people. Aggressive secularism and rationalism made headway in the nineteenth century, particularly in combating sabbatarianism, for then most Christians thought it wicked to attend concerts, stray round museums, play cricket or football, or take cheap sea-side excursions on Sunday. The Lord's

Day Observance Society continues to perpetuate obscurantism even today.

Most churches have few industrial workers in their congregations, but the assumption that these were formerly staunch church attenders is erroneous. E. R. Wickham states in his *Church and People in an Industrial City* that in Sheffield in 1841 with a population of 112,429 the fifty places of worship had "sittings" for only 40,000, and doubtless these were rarely completely filled. In the reign of the first Queen Elizabeth when non-attendance was punishable by law there were, not surprisingly, large congregations in parish churches, but it would be as misleading to deduce from this that piety then abounded as it would be to assume that this was also so with troops who had to attend compulsory church parades.

Certainly relatively more people went to church years ago, but the immense decline since then shows no sign of reversal. Will Humanism become a popular substitute? This is most unlikely, and conscious Humanism will have to be content with slowly spreading its influence and holding local lecture and discussion groups. Religious people urge that this promotion of ethical and moral values is quite inadequate because the deep human need is for the worship of God, and ardent Christians would assert, for the Living Christ. May it not be, however, that mystical religious experience depends largely on temperament, education and habit? Many find sufficient satisfaction in enjoying music, art and literature and others in sport, gardening, politics, handicrafts, spiritualism, football pools, drugs or alcoholic conviviality. There are also many who find complete fulfilment in their professional vocation or in home life.

I once asked a business tycoon whether he had any interest outside his business world. He replied that apart

from his cosy week-end home he was happily absorbed during the week in his work and nothing else, adding "If I do a good job and meet public need what is better than that?" Many beneath his apex are fully satisfied with their job, the evening's "telly", a hobby, domestic comforts, their family, a circle of friends or relatives for gossip, occasional outings, an annual holiday, a daily paper and good standing among neighbours and colleagues. Intellectuals may scoff at that routine, but at least it is a social balance to the exotic, the feverishly ambitious and neurotically restless. In any case that is the life of many, just as surely as normal eggs are ovoid and most mothers gurgle excitedly when their babies smile, whether responsively or as a side effect of burping. The average common life may not play with the stars or grow adventurous wings, but it can possess its own tranquillity — or complacency.

Who has contributed more to mankind — the mystic whose devotional discipline brings him ineffable bliss, or the discoverer of means to cure a disease? Are frantic prayers to a god to stop a locust plague more beneficial than scientific prevention of locust-breeding? Does India require more priests, fakirs, sadhus and swamis or vastly increased food production and a lower birth rate? Although we are told there is joy in heaven over a repenting sinner, is it an inferior joy when an ordinary non-religious couple live happily without being harassed by insecurity, poverty and ill-health? For a feeble infant which is better — that he be christened with holy water or saved by secular oxygen?

It can be said that there need be no antithesis. But if spiritual realities are paramount, this can determine assessment of priorities. Man does not live by bread alone, but he cannot live without it. Many cathedrals, temples, mosques and synagogues have been built by means of

wealth and labour that could have been devoted to meet urgent human needs. Although this is over-simplifying the issue it remains true that religions have often failed to possess an adequate sense of social obligation.

This does not deny that religions do emphasise some moral principles which adherents are expected to observe. The Christian Church initiated service to the sick, indigent, aged and illiterate, although that expression of moral consciousness has also activated non-Christians, and religious service to the needy and proselytism have been in close alliance. Dedicated Christian missionaries who dispensed medicines and established village schools also strove to secure converts who swallowed theology with their physical medicine and absorbed dogmas along with non-metaphysical subjects in the school curriculum.

Religious charitable service in Britain has become far less necessary in our welfare state which embodies a national sense of social responsibility for all its citizens of different races, creeds and status; and those citizens meet its cost as taxpayers and ratepayers. Former religious denominations or philanthropists did not fulfil such functions as providing contraceptive advice.

Moral consciousness having developed both within and outside organised religion is inherent in the growth of Man who is the centre of the world he knows. In our present age we have broken through many ancient traditions and restrictions, although elsewhere many still live within the continuum of past customs and moralities and others have a modern context different from our own. Some thinkers contend that previous ages have been pre-scientific and we have now entered a rational Humanist Age. Those who believe this and subscribe to "I believe in Man" may quote Protagoras as a prophet of the future in the fourth century B.C. when he said "Man is the measure of all things",

and also eighteenth-century Alexander Pope's "The proper study of mankind is man".

The initial requirement of a Humanist affirmation is to determine what is meant by "believe". It implies that what is believed is a potential which should and could be fulfilled. We can believe in garlic as a cure for colds, in charms, in a particular political leader, in Britain's future, in phrenology, a social philosophy, vegetarianism, ourselves, or in "God the Father Almighty". To believe in Man cannot simply mean that we recognise him as a fact, as we do sand or sun, but that despite so much in the cosmos and in the human race that is inhuman, repugnant or brutish we have trust that Man and his "goodness" will survive and reach fulfilment.

This predicates a moral criterion by which we decide what is good and bad for Man. Beneath ambiguity it is possible after sustained scrutiny to discern certain basic human necessities which we call good. With sheep lush grass is good and juiceless stubble is not, tramps prefer sunshine to rain, pickpockets believe a fat wallet is good, Parliamentary candidates think it bad if they lose their deposits, and rationalists believe that pursuit of truth is good and superstition bad. In determining human goodness we choose among many human components those we believe should be encouraged and reject others that we believe lead to debasement. Those human components range from primitive instincts to compassion, from the sense of gregarious relationship to wholesale genocide like the periodic mass-suicide of lemmings. Unlike lemmings Man can become aware of the possibility of his lethal consummation, but does he possess a "death-wish" entangled in his survival-tactics? His frightful wars may seem evidence that he has, as may also be his propensity to maltreat and corrupt human life. When Swinburne

declared "Glory to Man in the highest. For Man is the master of things" his inebriated conceit seduced him from veracity. Man is only the master of some things, and these he has often misused. Similarly, W. E. Henley's lines once sung by bellowing baritones

I am the master of my fate:

I am the captain of my soul

sound very brave, but are also deceptive, for fate is impersonal necessity which its victims cannot control or it would not be fate; and although gallant captaincy can navigate storms there are plenty of wrecks on the ocean bed. Splendid self-reliance does not make us gods. Within limitations we can control and guide our ship, but the question remains on what course should we sail and with what resources?

#### *A Human Problem*

Both Humanist and theist can be accused of bias in their selection of moral values, whether those are attributed to an idea! or to a deity. Nietzsche could claim justification for choosing among human components the lust for power and strength of will, dismissing meekness as weakness and gentleness as pernicious anaemia. Who of the following is nearest to being representative Man — Socrates, Nero, Jesus, Genghis Khan, Sir Thomas More, Henry VIII, Napoleon, Wesley, Mazzini, Hitler, Einstein, Stalin, Gandhi, or of the feminine half of Man, Sappho, Cleopatra, Jezebel, Mary Magdalene, Catherine de Medici, Elizabeth Fry, Queen Victoria, Mrs. Baker Eddy, Madame Curie, Baroness Wootton or Lady Dartmouth — if this incongruous assortment could ever be said to represent Man.

We all possess common human characteristics, but, like George Orwell's "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others" in *Animal Farm*, there is also irregular distribution of the same human ingredients. Objectively

it can be argued that any predominant ingredient is as valid as any other, as much as giraffes, cobras, parrots, sharks and tsetse flies are all products of evolution. Preference for particular human qualities depends on subjective evaluation, often with an implicit assumption that our preference should be universal for mankind. By what right do we choose courage, compassion, love, unselfishness, sagacity or good humour for general assimilation? Against our selected elevation of what is considered good there have been revolts from those who repudiate these and any directives.

Revolt is incipient in every child, and intelligent parents make allowances for it. Nevertheless, wise, baffled or foolish parents have a responsibility to their children to provide more than food, bed, clothing, soap, clouts, shouts and education. They have to offer guide-lines for behaviour. Parents who seek to raise their families in complete freedom and yet fail to leave a deep impression on their children that cheating and bare-faced lying are reprehensible, that if they do scrump apples from a neighbour's tree they should not steal money from a blind man and that they should not engage in scratching or kicking those who displease them, should not complain if their son lands in Borstal or their daughter runs off with a bookmaker. Directly or indirectly parents and teachers transmit their standards, and because of this they have an obligation to discriminate between decent and shoddy values for our own sakes and posterity's.

Humanism takes free thought, mental integrity, toleration, human service and social justice as essential values, and these are as subjective as compassion, magnanimity, fortitude, forgiveness and any other values we honour. We commend these as good, but juvenile or adult delinquents can spurn them and insist on an instinctive primitive

right to please themselves without regard for others. This is the crude philosophy of those with criminal hostility to "coppers" and "screws" who interfere with that primitive "right" of each one to be a law to himself.

To invoke supernatural authority for moral necessities becomes less effective when it becomes realised that this reference has been employed to sanction great variability, from the Jewish-Muslim prohibition of eating pork and the Hindu avoidance of eating beef to slaughtering heretics or sanctioning bloody wars, from permitting polygamy to insisting on monogamy, from making pilgrimage to Mecca to accepting ex-cathedra Papal infallibility, from infamies like the Inquisition to women not being hatless in church, from Yahweh's command to Abraham to slay and burn his son Isaac to the poor domestic servant Gladys Aylward's moving decision that she must save up enough money to become a missionary in China.

Apart from singularities and disciplines in every faith is the imperative necessity of determining what are the essential values for all mankind, for only this can provide the foundation of a peaceful world.

### III

#### OUR COMMON HUMAN DILEMMA

HUMANISTS and Christians and other religious adherents base their affirmations of authoritative values on trust, confidence and assumptions that cannot scientifically be proved. They strive for ever-widening acceptance of them, whether or not they have theological vesture, and they believe that their selected potentials can be ultimately fulfilled. Humanism confines this belief to racial development; religions assert that the fulfilment will continue in a supernatural world. Both are optimistic because they believe that supreme values will survive, provided Man does what he should.

This presents an acute problem. The age-long "Martyrdom of Man", repeated triumphs of ruthlessness, trickery and cunning, treacherous betrayals, subtle or gross forms of exploitation, resurgent tyrannies, acrid cynicism and congealed apathy all appear to shatter both Humanist and religious faith, and make people of faith look like children building sandcastles destined to collapse before an incoming tide. This has happened frequently and there can be no assurance that it will not happen again. Hence—

The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.

Kipling's *Recessional* has the same theme:

Lo, all our pomp of yesterday  
Is one with Nineveh and Tyre.

and again in Edward Fitzgerald's translation of Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* (which critics have scornfully alleged contains only a drop of Khayyam in a pint of Fitzgerald)—

The Worldly Hope men set their Hearts upon  
Turns ashes—or it prospers; and anon,  
Like snow upon the Desert's dusty face  
Lighting a little Hour or two—is gone.

This pessimism today lies within the gnawing fear that our social aspirations will disappear in nuclear explosion for which atomic stockpiles are now ready, or that Man will suffer incurable contamination in horrible bacteriological warfare. The mighty civilisations of Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Rome, the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru that had their day and ceased to be, all are reminders that our whole modern interlocked, compacted world could also suffer fatal decay or destruction.

Some contemporary novels and also plays like Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* have a note of delusive expectancy, as if hope and faith were futile. Constant social progression is now unfashionable, and against our technological and cultural achievements in the western world is the grim reality that most people live in dire poverty, with a life-span of between 25 and 45 years compared with British expectancy of about 70. Only a small number of earth's 3,500,000,000 people enjoy anything like our standard of living, and hard as are the burdens of many aged persons in Britain their lot is well above wretched multitudes in Asia, Africa, Latin America and parts of Europe. Oxfam, War on Want, Christian Aid and similar voluntary service to underdeveloped countries may sup-

plement the services of the United Nations, but their effect remains quite inadequate.

#### *Harsh Realities*

Assessment of the average life of Man should encompass his past history, including myriads of serfs, slaves and primitive lives who knew nothing of the real splendour of life. The peasant is more typical of Man than I am. It would be as foolish to ignore this as it would be for us to pretend that a modern baby-show winner is a true sample of all infants, or for a museum curator to include a refrigerator in the model of a cave-man's dwelling. We must take the life of Man as it has been and not as it now is for a fortunate minority.

Deeper knowledge and a more sensitive moral consciousness result in greater awareness of the existence of suffering and degradation. We realise now that Man may appropriately be symbolised by a brutishly impressive Epstein statue or in Edwin Markham's *The Man with the Hoe*—

Bowed with the weight of centuries he leans  
Upon his hoe and gazes on the ground,  
The emptiness of ages in his face  
And on his back the burden of the world.

Perhaps a crucifix is not too extravagant. But dramatic excess must not be allowed to distort the human picture into caricature. Human life has not all been impregnated with tragedy. There have been compensations, and psychological adaptations have bestowed simple pleasures and comforts amid elemental hardships and frustrations. Nonetheless, a face engraved with lines of harsh endurance would be nearer the truth about Man than the features of an Apollo.

There is also death, and the semi-death of disease, decadence or atrophy that brings "a killing frost" to human promise. This recurrent thwarting of individual and racial

hopes may have impelled T. S. Eliot (before the advent of nuclear weapons) to conclude *The Hollow Men* with

This is the way the world ends  
Not with a bang but a whimper.

This may be dyspeptic morbid stuff, but it can have a salutary influence on those whose optimism is a hothouse plant. Humanism has honestly to face cold, wintry facts, and idealists who evade those facts may collapse into a ditch, or despairingly reverse their steps to find comfort in strange places. Only altruists who train themselves for a long, often heart-breaking, journey will preserve their optimism mellowed but intact. Like Cain and Abel, Scientific Humanism can slay Ethical Humanism. There is truth in Oscar Wilde's words, "Yet each man kills the thing he loves . . ."

When Man broods in melancholy upon mortal futility, as did the writer of Ecclesiastes, and echoes his ". . . vanity of vanities; all is vanity", he does so because he is conscious of the stark contrast between his cherished values and external reality. No Southdown Sussex sheep worries about sheep slaughtered in New Zealand, nor is a tomcat deeply distressed because his mistress of yesterday has been run over. "How much more then is a man better than a sheep?" As much as makes Man conscious of joy and anguish that sheep never possess. No sub-human species can be conscious of reflective selection from diverse inner impulses, of an imaginative moral purpose, of deliberate self-sacrifice for others (save in the maternal instinct or other semblance of this among higher animal species) or of the poignant sense of frustration when a spiritual quest proves elusive.

John Masefield in *The Seekers* wrote—

We seek the City of God, and the haunt where beauty dwells,

And we find the noisy mart, and the sound of burial bells.  
Friends and loves we have none, nor wealth or blest abode,  
But the hope of the City of God at the other end of the road.

This need not have any theistic connotation, for it signifies a constant search for a Golden Age or an inner and external realm of truth, righteousness and peace which some call the City of God and others do not.

Frustration is frequent in all life. Birds become bewildered at the loss of nestlings, and dogs pine for an absent master, more so than the haughty cat who "walked by himself, and all places were alike to him". Monkeys can display neurosis induced by mental conflict. Such tensions are filaments connecting beast with Man's vaster range of heaven and hell. The poignant sense of inner discordance issues from human consciousness of a profounder world which beasts cannot enter, so that while music can enrapture Man it evokes from a dog a resentful howl — which some forms of music may justify.

Self-sacrifice for an invisible goal is a human capacity, but so are cruelty, hatred and depravity. Both Humanists and Theists who extol self-sacrifice are open to scepticism and ridicule from those whose priority is instinctive self-preservation. If we opt for self-sacrifice we make an act of faith based on an evaluation of Man's true nature and fulfilment, although this may seem arbitrary and sentimental. Is this so, or is it rooted in reality? The answer depends on our interpretation of the nature of the cosmos. One judgment considers human evaluations as minor phenomena less significant than earthquakes or flashing meteors, and another that self-consciousness possesses validity as certain as gravity, nuclear energy or our vital metabolism.



In our analysis of Man his purposive self-sacrifice has been emphasised as supremely significant. Admittedly from this rises another problem: if that quality should be nurtured, how can we reconcile it with its employment for diametrically opposite ends? Young Nazis self-sacrificially dedicated themselves to a purpose which others believed to be a menace to civilisation. English Royalists and Parliamentary "Roundheads", American Federal and Southern troops, Israelis and Arabs, Pakistanis and Indians, and countless other rival communities have fought, injured and slain each other with equal conviction that their respective causes were just, sometimes involving divine sanction and aid, and sometimes not. Were those outpoured energies utter waste, or does all self-sacrifice enrich the human spirit, even in carnage and bitter conflict? We may retain the conviction that one day wars will cease, but how fatuous today seems the blithe optimism of Tennyson's forecast of universal peace "In the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world", even if the United Nations is a milestone toward it. Peace is often only a pause between wars, and swords that were to become ploughshares and spears pruning hooks have become shells and tanks. Man is a rational animal who acts irrationally, "a little lower than the angels" yet often diabolical, "noble in reason . . . infinite in faculty" but capable as no brute is of perverse debasement. He can compose a Beethoven symphony and cold-bloodedly thrust millions into gas-chambers, build the Parthenon and bombard it, generate both Tolstoy and Stalin, deliberately sacrifice himself and also trample underfoot any who stand in his way, fly round the moon and sink into mud.

#### *Moral Patterns*

Despite the sense of apprehension, pessimism or futility pervading some philosophers, poets and novelists the

resilient human spirit has survived catastrophes, tragedies and local collapses. It has accumulated splendid cultural legacies, built many civilisations and woven moral patterns by which it sustains communal interdependence. Conscious Humanists do not attribute those patterns to supernatural authority, but to variable social experience. They have relative and not absolute importance.

The Decalogue has been revered as emanating from Almighty God, but many Christians and others today will admit that the story of Moses and Mount Sinai must not be taken too literally and that while the Ten Commandments form a valuable anthropological record of moral prohibitions and directives in a primitive society they are rudimentary, inadequate and ambiguous.

"Thou shalt not kill" obviously did not mean that under no circumstances must animal life or the lives of enemies or malefactors be destroyed, for the Old Testament contains divine commands to slay and reports of divine satisfaction at its accomplishment. Man could be as bloodthirsty in his infancy as he can be now. "Honour thy father and thy mother" theoretically can buttress reproof of progeny who treat us with levity, although "that thy days may be long upon the land" may not impress them. The warning not to make graven images because "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God" could embarrass sculptors and does not discourage human jealousy, and the vindictive threat of "visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me" (why only unto the fourth?) is not made less repugnant by "and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me".

Those who do not believe that Moses received the Decalogue from the Deity on Mount Sinai suggest that certain tribal regulations became ascribed to a super-

natural source because this strengthened them when misbehaviour was currently rife. Even so, compared with the United Nations "Declaration of Human Rights" the Decalogue has many omissions. It did not forbid tribal, national or racial prejudice, wars, cruelty, slavery, feminine subjugation, intolerance, alcoholism, and much else, even if it can be argued that these were somehow implicit.

Christian inheritance of these as necessary for all mankind is confusing because of variable interpretations, but they are still inscribed on many church walls. I knew a member of Parliament (now deceased) who used to begin his speeches, "Within the four walls of the Ten Commandments . . ."; this was entirely irrelevant to his political observations, but no doubt it registered the assumed bedrock of his faith.

Christians and Jews disagree on Sabbath-keeping, and while Liberal Jews have modified or modernised orthodox Jewish teaching the Orthodox will avoid switching on electric light on the Sabbath, and in Synagogues segregate men and women worshippers. As religious obligations Jews and Muslims practise boy circumcision and will not eat pork, and Muslims add to these the necessity of almsgiving, daily prayers, pilgrimage to Mecca and permit restricted polygamy. Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Parseism, Confucianism, Taoism and other faiths have their own moral and spiritual disciplines as variable as in Christianity. Surveying such diverse moral codes, we perceive that those considered essential in one community, place or age become replaced by new moral concepts, fall into abeyance or are disowned in other areas or times.

Clergy or ministers accustomed to assert dogmatically that this or that is the Will of God ignore this diversity of moral codes or imperatives that seem to make the Deity capable of contradictory injunctions. By divine authority

wars have been sanctioned, birth control has been declared anathema, monarchs have claimed they reign by "Divine Right", evolution has been denounced as monstrous blasphemy; it was once held that women must suffer agony in child-birth by divine ordination and that the Bible was literally infallible. Quaker Christians believe that it is wrong to take oaths or participate in war, but most Christians believe otherwise.

Roman Catholics, unlike Nonconformists, do not condemn restrained gambling and do not permit divorce with the right of remarriage. Socialist Christians denounce capitalism, and other Christians denounce socialism, The South African Dutch Reformed Church defends *apartheid* as zealously as all churches once condoned slavery, but their ecclesiastical brethren in Holland dissent from them. Liberty and freedom are virtues in Britain, but not so in Communist Russia or Catholic Spain. Lying is reprobated, but not in war-time if it is to deceive a national enemy. Stealing is punishable by general consent, but acquiring overseas territory has been laudable if it adds to the glory and economic advantage for either Christian or pagan nations. Henry VIII's despoliation of monasteries was acclaimed as one of his better deeds, but it is wrong to filch a Sunday offertory. Widow remarriage was immoral and child marriage moral in Hinduism, but a newly independent Indian Government made child marriage illegal and widow remarriage permissible. Ancestral veneration is required among Chinese, and among Mormons (who incidentally must not drink tea, coffee or cocoa), but not among other religions or cultures. Private property is sacrosanct according to some social philosophers, but has largely been abolished on moral grounds by communist States. Drinking alcohol is condemned by Islam and some Christians, but extolled by Chestertonian Christians as a

God-given gift. Selective decapitation among the Dyaks in Sarawak was a good custom until Rajah Brooke and the British suppressed it, more or less, and then it became evil.

Examples of such variations in moral patterns are endless, because they are customs subject to changing circumstances, and "morality" is indeed derived from the Latin "mores" or "customs". Hence, illustratively again, kissing in public is illegal in some lands because it offends customary "mores" of chastity, but not in others where such "mores" do not prevail; and bull-fighting in some countries is a popular, traditional custom of pagan origin while unthinkable in Britain where blood-sports have been confined to foxes and stags. Moral patterns fluctuate, but from some of these develop moral values that expand beyond utilitarian origins and local or transitory codes. "Thou shalt not kill . . . steal . . . bear false witness . . ." acquires more than prudent obedience to social necessities when this becomes integrated in normal individual life. So it is with children, who pass from restraining their impulses through fear and irksome discipline to "naturally" liking to behave considerately, even if they can woefully digress or regress.

No laws among early Israelites required that motor cars must stop at traffic lights, because automobiles were then unknown; but good motorists today desire neither to question nor dodge this regulation. The use of breathalysers at first aroused indignant protests from publicans, brewers, customers and some newspapers as being an intolerable interference with the liberty of the subject, even if this saved thousands of lives; but it is now respected as a social discipline and not merely because drinking motorists do not want to lose their licences. In past centuries women wore long skirts as befitting feminine modesty, and the sight even of their ankles was considered unre-

spectable; 17th century Sir John Suckling hints at this in—

Her feet beneath her petticoat,  
Like little mice, stole in and out,  
As if they feared the light.

But now young lassies gaily wear mini-skirts without fear of admonition (although this perhaps should be applied to elderly stout ladies who wear such garments).

#### *Moral Values*

Fashions change in respect of dress and morals, but there must be rules, appropriate to current social needs, to check disturbing aberrations. Social expedients, however, while being the root should not be identified with the fruit of sensitive moral consciousness. Concern for the well-being of others and personal integrity outstretches remote origins and can become authoritative within the human spirit. To a greater or less degree universal moral values penetrate through all distinctive religions and cultures. Take as example the following—

"Hatred is not diminished by hatred at any time. Hatred is diminished by love—this is the eternal law": (from the Buddhist *Dhammapada*).

"Equanimity, and charity which spies no Man's faults, and tenderness toward all who suffer . . . an unvengeful spirit, never given to rate itself too high; such are the signs of him whose feet are set on that fair path which leads to heavenly birth": (from the Hindu *Bhagavad-Gita*).

"No man can be considered a True Believer who does not seek for his brother what he seeks for himself": (from the Muslim *Hadith*).

"Hatred stirs up strife, but love covers all sins": (from the Jewish *Proverbs*).

"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who spitefully

use you and persecute you": (from the Christian New Testament).

These quotations from World Religions have a similar essential moral content above transient or communal codes. This also applies to such values as fraternity, charity, courage, duty, forgiveness, sincerity, humility, justice, fortitude, loyalty, mercy, compassion, truth, wisdom, self-control, renunciation and peace. They vary in priority, emphasis and mode of implementation among diverse faiths, but they all bear evidence to qualities that have emerged through human experience to impregnate the human spirit, however inconsistent be those who profess to honour them or see only dimly how they should be translated. Some maxims or teachings are in conflict between one religion and another; nonetheless the affinities remain.

Moral consciousness has expanded and flowed through many channels, some religious and some not, and is a psychological phenomenon of paramount significance for mankind. By it we evaluate human life and find light in the dark places of our human predicament and meaningful purpose to what otherwise could seem "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing". The fact that aspects of moral consciousness are similar in different religions does not imply that the singularities of religions are unimportant. Christianity has claimed uniqueness by affirming that Jesus Christ is the specific, divine Saviour of Man. This and all other convictions of exclusive supernatural revelation are open to examination, and while some will be unconvinced after careful scrutiny that one or any such claim is true, others will continue to believe that they are by an act of faith or as a communal inheritance, even if this cannot be upheld by impartial evidence. Personally I see sparse benefit accruing to

moral consciousness from spending much time in attempting to demolish either firm or crumbling walls protecting meta-physical idiosyncrasies or dogmas. These may appear irrational or untenable to me and others, but what is of greater importance is that we respect whatever in any faith genuinely enriches human lives and inspires human service. The rest is optional according to imagination or disposition. Neither mystical nor profane love is very susceptible to argument.

Records of rare individuals who have been activated by high moral values or radiant perception can be profoundly impressive. Thus among these the story of one young man of humble parentage proclaiming his message in Palestine, falling foul of his countrymen and the State, being arrested and executed will always appeal to many human hearts beyond any elaboration because he is representative of spiritual vision and travail in human life.

To claim that the spread of Christianity can be explained only by the conviction of Christ's resurrection ignores the fact that neither Buddha nor Muhammed was slain and physically rose again, yet Buddhism and Islam have millions of adherents. What is true of religions and morally-charged social movements is that they have persisted despite repression or persecution and the passing of their founders or notable leaders. To that unquenchable spirit in Man Christianity bears its own witness.

#### *Faith*

Christians by faith believe in all or parts of their ancient creeds, even if faith becomes elastically overstretched. I have submitted that humanists also have a faith in certain values that they believe will persist against whatever threatens them. This rests on the assumption that scrupulous thought is trustworthy in the quest for truth, even if the human mental instrument cannot itself prove

that it is not deluded. Extravagant forms of faith cannot be disproved, but lack of verifiable evidence can make them dubious.

Some Christians do admit that faith can be too far-fetched. Roman Catholics explain that not all alleged miracles reported since the time of Christ are accepted as authentic, and Protestant Christians repudiate Catholic faith in Mariolatry and in transubstantiation. Free Church members do not share Roman and Anglican faith in the Petrine transmission of divine authority through the Episcopacy. All non-Catholics because they do not accept the "true faith" are schismatics or heretics according to the Roman Catholic Church, including our Archbishop of Canterbury, notwithstanding ecumenical benevolence.

Christians reject the Muslim faith that Muhammad was the last of four holy prophets and had special revelation from Allah; they reject Hindu faith in reincarnation, Brahman, Vishnu and Siva, Sikh faith in Nanak and succeeding gurus culminating in Gobind Singh, Buddhist faith in Gautama the Buddha, Malay faith in invisible djins, Irish faith in leprechauns and the faith that some ladies have in omens revealed in the tea-leaves of empty cups. Many have faith in angels, and some in fairies (but mostly only the very young). Catholics have faith in saints, while Anglicans acknowledge only pre-Reformation saints and have no Protestant hagiarchy to which suitable Protestant sanctified souls are elevated. Similarly, other religions reject much in Christian faith.

When Shelley wrote—

And all that faith creates or love desires,

Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes  
possibly he was thinking of the wide range forms of faith can take. Unbalanced by reason, faith can become candy-floss for simpletons or an intoxicant for fanatics. Religious

creeds are statements of theological faith expressed intellectually, but as just as Ptolemy was an intelligent map-maker whose limited knowledge has been replaced by superior cartography so faith should pass from imperfect to more enlightened forms. Man grows continuously, and so faith should likewise grow in rational maturity.

## IV

## CREATURE AND CREATOR

THE New Testament Epistles contain records of early church developments in doctrine, discipline and organisation, achieved conspicuously by St. Paul. He elaborated metaphysical conceptions of the relationship between Jesus and the Deity and also gave various moral instructions, but I doubt whether modern educated Christian women seriously heed the Pauline "Let your women keep silent in churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are under obedience . . . And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home." I also question whether invariably they comply with the Apostolic injunction to "be in subjection to your husbands" and "receive from husbands honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel . . .". If it be argued that Paul in this matter was conditioned by the ethos of his times (and maybe by unfortunate personal experience) one wonders why temporal fallibility is not also discernible in his theological commentaries.

*Fallible Judgments*

Unswerving Christian loyalty under persecution before and after the Diaspora of A.D. 70 testifies to the tenacity of that faith, but this does not prove its dogmatic elements, for there have been martyrs for many types of faith. Throughout early Christian years variations of Christian faith were propounded by such sects as Ebionites, Gnostics, Montanists, Arians and Nestorians. Following acrimonious confrontation between Arius and Athanasius, fiercer than

at a Blackpool political conference, Arius was defeated and packed off to distant exile. Disputation raged round the question whether Christ was of *like* essence (*homoiousios*) or of *one* essence (*homoousios*) with God the Father. Every theological student knows of this historic quarrel about the insertion or omission of the letter "i", and to many of us today the issue may seem a strange triviality; but it was not so then, nor is it to orthodox theologians now. Athanasius received majority backing against the "i" and its advocate, Arius, and thenceforth no further debate or revision was permitted. Infallible truth established by majority decision at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 gratified the Emperor Constantine, but did not save Athanasius later from an exile similar to that of Arius.

Early Christian conflicts were followed in succeeding centuries by many deviations that involved much hardship, persecution and strife before the arrival of our present age of religious toleration in which democratic peoples freely form their own judgments and accept any kind of religion or none. Heretical views can circumspectly exist even within traditional religious bodies. In Britain today we have (apart from Christian deviations) Orthodox, Reformed and Liberal Judaism, various Buddhist, Muslim and Hindu centres and several Humanist groups.

A good deal of religious observance is only nominal. Schoolchildren can by order lustily sing hymns about Cherubim and Seraphim and "One in three Persons, blessed Trinity" without understanding a word. Bride and bridegroom in a conventional Anglican marriage service hear curious references to Abraham and Sarah and archaic allusions by the parson as a formal incantation to be endured automatically as part of the whole traditional business of getting married. The prosperous stockbroker who occasionally accompanies his wife to the parish church

smiles sardonically at pleas for mercy for "miserable sinners". Quiet sceptics temporarily dissolve their doubts when congregationally singing seductively tuneful humns. (Did healthy heterosexual men ever really sing without diffidence "Safe in the arms of Jesus, Safe on his gentle breast"?) Vestigial religious rituals are perfunctorily performed, as with "grace" before banquets, and National Anthem invocations to Providence to save Her Majesty from sundry dangers as a kind of patriotic insurance policy.

Rituals, specifically religious or otherwise, are a useful means of promoting social amenity. Queues are better than scrambling mobs, handshakes encourage amiability, deference to a chairman conduces more to intelligent discussion than a vocal whirlpool, momentary collective silence at a meeting is a seemly homage to a deceased colleague, wedding rings are conventional indicative tokens and a barman's "Time gentlemen, please" is preferable to throwing out bibulous customers at closing time. These rituals or formalities are projections of the need to resolve ambivalence between contrary human impulses. Rival impulses are also active more elementally in other gregarious creatures, as when instinctive association of a pride of lions under the authority of a dominant male conflicts with individual leonine hunger or lust. Human ambivalence is more complex because of Man's vast vocabulary, subtleties of feeling, aspirations, reflections and sense of frustration, failure and guilt.

Man's impression of his outer world is conditioned by his inner subjective life, so that sensory stimulation transmitted to his consciousness becomes translated by his values. If "beauty is in the eye of the beholder" the significance of phenomena depends not only on whether that eye squints, but also on the individual's criterion of beauty. This could mean that each ego is isolated in his own world, but

all individuals have a large measure of common pleasure or distaste, as when all find delight in a garden of flowers or all hold noses near a cesspool. Many objects affect everyone pleasantly or disagreeably, although we individually register these through separate individualities that may make no two individual impressions completely identical. The sun's rays pour upon many at one time, but each of us has particular clouds that filter the rays.

Human imagination recreates Man's environment. It did so when primitive man made an axe or pot and when modern man made a moon-rocket and anti-ballistic missiles. It was not primitive necessity that caused him to decorate his utensils and learn how to make music, weave words together for poetry and literature, transmute lust into love and seek to "remould the world nearer to our heart's desire". Distressed by consciousness of contrast between what is and what should be, Edwin Markham in *The Man with a Hoe* quoted earlier proceeds with

Who made him dumb to rapture and despair  
A thing that grieves not nor ever hopes,

How shall we ever reckon with this man,  
Rebuild in him the music and the dream?

That sense of gross disparity arises when any of us brood over martial desecration of human life and earth's fair treasures or air reeking with poisonous hatred. D. H. Lawrence expressed his own distraught, frustrated spirit in

O build your ship of death. O build it!  
For you will need it.  
For the voyage of oblivion awaits you.

Both writers convey an evaluation of human tribulation. Others have different assessments because each individual

experience has singularities. Detestation of squalor or love of one's country may be common, but words like "Leyton" and "my family" will evoke a reaction from me which is unique.

*Man the Maker*

I need not dive into philosophical idealism, with Plato or Berkeley as swimming instructors, to emphasise the crucial importance of ideas. I am subject to an external world, but my world of ideas and values determines what that world means to me.

Marx demonstrated how prevailing economic systems condition social behaviour, cultures, moralities and politics. He made a massive contribution to our understanding of economic factors in sociology, but R. H. Tawney's exposition of "The Acquisitive Society" was more fundamental because it is the acquisitive drive that fashions its acquisitive tools. Economic processes and institutions embrace bio-psychological forces in their interaction with our environment. Among Indian Adavasi aboriginals I once drank an unpalatable concoction from a receptacle of concave leaves held together by thorns. That object did not make itself, but was made by Man who also originally discovered how to make many utensils and weapons to serve his needs. At first he used stones, rocks, sticks or leaves, later learned to shape a flint, thong or fix it to a shaft, mould clay, grow crops and build structures and then combine tools to form a machine. His mind made these and also banks, stock exchanges, limited liability companies, judiciaries, executive and administrative instruments and all the apparatus of our present industrial organisation. These are the means by which he satisfies his needs and greeds.

Man-made economic systems do influence their makers, but can disintegrate, collapse or become replaced, because

nothing is permanently static. "Change and decay in all around I see" should not be sung morbidly, for without change there can be no creative life. I cannot wear children's shoes, only odd women wear ten-year-old hats and those who once had to trim oil-lamps, as I did, are glad they can now switch on light like a god. ("Let there be light, and there was light.") There can also be disconcerting disruptions, and though rightly we take thought for the morrow, whatever Jesus said to the contrary, we must allow for unpredictable intrusions. It is a good thing "The best-laid schemes . . . gang aft agley", for this checks our conceit in assuming that everything must turn out exactly as we wish.

Man is both creature and creator, but his creativity is circumscribed by dependence on other personal and impersonal factors. His pigmentation and other physiological characteristics are genetically determined and his speech, nationality, historical legacies and prevalent moral patterns were not of his choice. But he has some capacity for discriminatory selection, for he can swim against the stream and also redirect it by engineering.

*Heightened Consciousness*

Innate disposition and temperament affect our attitude to life. Melancholic temperaments are inclined to brood darkly over frustrations and sanguine natures ignore gloom and nihilism as pathological infirmities. With most people some element of poetic imagination crosses over utilitarian frontiers. From one with an unusual endowment comes this familiar verse of William Blake—

To see a World in a Grain of Sand,  
And Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand,  
and Eternity in a hour.



Is this fatuous nonsense? How can cosmic magnitude be compacted in a speck? What has fictional bliss to do with a botanical specimen, what has my hand in common with the unimaginable and how can a moment contain the timeless? Yet there are some who find those words flowing through their minds like a refreshing rivulet. Take another example, this time from Shelley, a professed atheist—

To suffer woes which hope thinks infinite;  
 To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;  
 To defy power which seems omnipotent;  
 To love and bear; to hope till hope creates  
 From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;  
 Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;  
 This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be  
 Good, great, and joyous, beautiful and free;  
 This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

Some never tire of those lines; they convey a brave vibrancy even to the sluggishly dormant. Are they rational and scientific, or do we here invade a sphere of human consciousness in which scientific analysis falters and becomes impotent? This sphere is as much part of Man as his shrewd calculations and physical requirements. Aesthetic emotion is a human component that all possess, though often in crude or intermediate forms. So is it also with profound human love. Wordsworth, Richard Jefferies and Edward Carpenter translated nature in terms of emotional experience, as when Wordsworth speaks

Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 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.

What fluffy rhapsodising all this can be to some of those absorbed only in intellectual activity; although that activity also can have times of ecstasy. They could

justifiably remind nature-poets or writers that whatever be their imaginative interpretation of nature, realism dispels its rapture when we see a cat with a mouse, vultures scavenging fragments from a gazelle's carcass, typhus bacilli under a microscope, or slime in a fetid swamp. Moreover there are those who declare that there is greater fascination in a cosmonaut's enterprise than in sentimental whimsies. Even so, fascination itself is an emotion, whatever be its occasion. No scientist is absolutely cold-blooded.

I have deliberately chosen familiar poetic flights. Now I give another quotation, less familiar, no doubt, from Joseph Mary Plunkett, Catholic Irish rebel executed by the English Military Command at the time of the 1916 Irish uprising—

I see his blood upon the rose  
 And in the stars the glory of his eyes,  
 His body gleams amid eternal snows,  
 His tears fall from the skies.  
 All pathways by his feet are worn,  
 His strong heart stirs the ever beating sea,  
 His crown of thorns is twined with every thorn,  
 His cross is every tree.

Some would describe this critically as mystical hyperbole and others as an attempt symbolically to impress on the natural world the sacrificial suffering of Jesus Christ to typify the tribulation of the heart of Man. If this is imagination run riot, then may not Shelley also deserve similar derision for his words designed to lift the human spirit above despair or vengeance? Equally, quoting Blake again, does this verse become liable to derogation?—

For Mercy has a human heart,  
 Pity a human face,  
 And Love the human form divine  
 And Peace the human dress.

Perhaps it can be excused because it has a Humanist tone. This and my other examples of poetic efforts to convey in emotive imagery a deeper sense of human experience I call expressions of "Heightened Consciousness".

Freud, Jung, Adler and other psychologists have enlightened us on stratifications in the human psyche containing ores of precious metal in primaeval substance. Psychiatrists now apply their therapy with good effect, though so do physicians and surgeons, for there is intimate interaction between mind and body. We know that we all have elements akin to those of a Hitler, Gandhi and Arthur Koestler's Yogi and Commissar. Their mothers must have once adored their babies with similar emotion, though without seeing signs of extravagant "original sin".

Congenital defects are not sins, because sin implies volitional responsibility. To attribute this to infants because in later years they burgled, forged, became alcoholic, got divorced or uttered heresies is as preposterous as blaming a baby for having its mother's ginger hair. Hindus and Buddhists explain diverse fortunes by the theory of reincarnation, which raises as many problems as it presumes to solve and can engender complacency among brahmins and passive resignation among peasants. To suggest that the appearance of excessively hirsute young men denotes reincarnated cave-dwellers is fallacious. Man can regress, but the necessary attribution of personal culpability at some point can be difficult. Pragmatically we recognise that some persons, like apples, become bad and some good, and according to criminal statistics far fewer women than men become bad, although figures can mislead.

Heightened consciousness can become divorced from moral values. St. Bernard of Clairvaux wrote verses of intimate devotion to Christ and yet was a vigorous advocate

of bloody Crusades. Oscar Wilde was homosexual, and a brilliant literary poseur, but he wrote *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. W. B. Yeats appeared to be attracted to fascist ideas. Such severance also applies to scientists who invent nuclear weapons and economists who defend colonial exploitation. Streams from the separate sources of religion and morality converge because self-conscious Man cannot tolerate internal alienation. This is also true of heightened consciousness if it is to avoid resembling a brightly-plumaged cage-bird or an artificial flower.

Brueghel, Hogarth and the early van Gogh in their portrayal of aspects of earthly common life were not in that category, nor were Shakespeare or Shaw. This emphatically does not mean that art must always be moralistically didactic, like the Victorian painter G. F. Watts. The artist need not mount a preacher's pulpit if he remembers that he and his art cannot be isolated from all human life in an ivory tower. Our specialised interests, talents and imaginative experience are interlocked with all human activities and social responsibilities. Sculptors rely on workmen to supply them with stone or marble, poets need others to make paper, ink or typewriters, the surgeon's anatomical knowledge is utilised by painters, teachers receive salaries from taxpayers and worshippers depend on craftsmen who may be not of their faith to build churches, synagogues, mosques or temples.

The foliage of human consciousness must have roots in good social soil, but, even as soil can also produce weeds, scrub and fungi, so can our elemental impulses and crude atavisms choke or entangle choicer growths. Human fulfilment requires many forms of "goodness", each contributing to our whole being, represented by the social idealist, poet, scientist, artist, philosopher, seer, pioneer and martyr. Evil exists not only in recognised vices or

in those legally prosecuted, but also in those who defame beauty, intimidate truth, dispense cynicism or evade social obligations.

#### *Beyond Egotism*

Expansion of human consciousness can be perverted into inflated egotism by which "Great Men" arise with ruthless power or evil genius. To resist these demands sustained struggle, and from this arises the danger that those who strive against a social menace themselves may be infected by the ruthlessness they seek to overcome.

We all begin as self-centred egotists craving satisfaction for our needs. From infancy we have to learn that we cannot always receive self-centred attention and that we must restrain our natural impulses, at first within our domestic environment and then in a wider society. Some individuals grow up without ever becoming emotionally adult or under strain or provocation revert to infantile egotism and fly into rage or sulk. Some only accept social discipline or exercise loyalties within the limits of a local community, family, club or gang, and others only accept the chauvinistic patriotism which asserts "My country, right or wrong".

Internationalism is a frail concept compared with patriotism, as those have sadly discovered who have built their hope of peace on international human brotherhood. Religious or Humanist advocacy of this can become treachery in war. Nevertheless national insularity is becoming modified by the international influence and operation of the United Nations and of science, medicine, art, sport, scholarship, research, overseas aid and travel. Some political ideologies also encourage an international sense, but restrictedly because they have become so variously interpreted. Numerous official and voluntary organisations and international maritime, postal and other agreements

all help to develop a wider consciousness of our human interdependence. Select six or seven eminent persons of different national origins, say Milton, Goethe, Pascal, Turgenev, Spinoza and Cervantes, and we know of these that while they had different birthplaces they also belong to all mankind.

Economically we know that all nations and peoples are affected by agricultural and industrial fluctuations. Radio and television have made us aware of events, scenes, customs and personalities as if they were just round the corner. As never before we have become acquainted daily with disasters, tragic incidents or violent strife thousands of miles away. We can become moved by reports of Asian famines or floods, indignant at acts of foreign Governments or excited at distant scientific discoveries. Our minds are now partly occupied with matters of world significance and to that extent our egotistical obsessions have been beneficially deflated.

In times of national crisis, as with threats to our independence or fears of war, we may again contract into narrow limits of national loyalty. That caustic, stout patriot, Dr. Johnson, declared "Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel", by which he only meant that scoundrels can unscrupulously screen and sanctify their crimes by hiding behind a national flag. I would aver, however, that even scoundrels are capable of something beyond self-interest when possessed by genuine patriotic desire to serve their country in time of peril.

The sense of national gregariousness has not entirely or invariably absorbed tribal, clan or local gregariousness. Scottish Highland and Lowland corporateness is distinctive even if this coalesces in Scottish nationalism; Belgian Walloons and Flemings are in conflict; Bretons assert they are not French; India has linguistic and communal separa-

tists; and "Biafran" Ibos sought with violence to secede from Federal Nigeria. Conscientious objectors to the demands of the State in war time embarrassed Christian churches because of disparity between those demands and the teaching of clergy and ministers to love our enemies and transcend mortal gregariousness.

Class consciousness is another form of sectional gregariousness. Events so far in Britain have falsified the Marxist expectancy that working-class consciousness would become an irresistible mass political force. "Workers of the world, unite" today looks rather tattered now that so many cars stand outside wage-earners' homes and "tellies" hypnotically stand inside. Most Labour Party supporters think "The Red Flag" is an insurgent folk-song nostalgically revived at Party Conferences in a quaintly solemn ritual sung by the elders for old time's sake.

Gregarious unity can have catalytic value if it is not misdirected to resist necessary change or split into implacable rivalry. At its best it can remind us that "no man is an island", but only an upthrust above the sea-level of what beneath is common substance. Man shares a universal energy and each individual has areas of consciousness no more peculiar to an individual than is his tissue, bloodstream and organs. "Is not a Jew . . . fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases . . . warmed and cooled by the same winter and summer as a Christian is?"

Yes, Jew and Gentile, bondsman and free, communist and capitalist, baron and bookmaker, Hindu and Muslim, "The Colonel's lady and Judy O'Grady", Liza Doolittle and Professor Higgins, are projections of the same physiological and psychological stuff. Individual self-consciousness is elusive, but very real, for I am the conscious pivot of the world I know until I sleep or am precipitated into

oblivion by a concussing fit or car crash. Even then my incoherent or curious dreams provide evidence of mental activity that can be interpretable. I can also perform many acts simultaneously, as when an organist uses hands, feet, eyes and brain to transmit music or when a conveyor-belt serf twists a nut or bolt while silently composing an ode to his girl (or, more likely, ruminating on what he should fancy for the 3.30 race tomorrow).

This human self-consciousness is a wonderful world, in which there is perpetual intercourse between the realities of the "I" and the impact of that which is external to it. To distinguish one from the other may be difficult or impossible, but we are conscious of both. We inherit instincts and impulses and absorb environmental influences so that individual isolation is impossible, but even our capacity for creative self-consciousness is a legacy. The fact that at one time racially and individually it did not appear to exist and does so now, and the fact that by it we strive to refashion our environment, are portals through which we can pass into mysterious territory.

## V

## VITAL FORCES

OUR amazing self-consciousness may not amaze us until we compare it with the estimated mental world of our pre-historic ancestors. We can then appreciate the long, awesome evolution of Man from his dawn.

*Our Unconscious*

When we strive to fathom our depths we often flounder and have to return to shallow waters. Equally, my comprehension of other persons becomes hazy when I try to pass beyond their surface features. They remain in my consciousness as vivid or vaporous impressions less concretely visual than still or kinetic photographs, although those chemical imprints are inferior to my impressions, because they are only captive echoes of the past without vitality. Portrait artists may remedy this by conveying their personal impression of a subject, but even this can only be subjective and selective. Apparently those to whom portraits of themselves are presented or who have commissioned an artist are expected, like Narcissus, to be entranced by their aesthetic mirror. This does not always happen, and some may feel like one merchant Peer, now deceased, who was so enraged that he returned his picture to the artist with his painted head scissored out.

Intensely or languidly our self-consciousness receives incalculable impressions, those we love or know well being more deeply incised. The living reinforce impressions by the repeated stimulation of their physical presence. Much personal experience rests in our unconscious, and under

hypnosis some of this can reappear in consciousness, like mermaids or marine ogres. Auto-suggestion can trigger off dormant appetites, so that an advertisement of a smiling, muscular young man holding a frothy glass can drive a casual viewer to the nearest pub; or a musical chord in a street can bring clamouring youngsters to an ice-cream van.

Brain-washing is not a modern device. In the past it was employed by prison interrogators and by clever religious, political or commercial propagandists. Modern knowledge has simply improved the techniques. Continuously we are influenced or manipulated for good or ill by suggestibility, emotional stimulation, pictorial seduction and oral or printed opiates or exhilarants. This is almost inescapable, because none of us is controlled by reason alone, and reason itself has emotional associations. Our unconscious sways us more than we generally recognise.

We need to discriminate between comparatively innocuous stimuli and deliberate psychological trickery. Market-place hucksters with glib patter seek to induce gaping crowds to purchase deceptive bargains, preachers rely on hymn-singing to aid emotional cohesion in their flocks, actors modulate their voices and employ gestures to captivate audiences, and politicians shout partisan slogans or play on prejudices, aversions and desires. A girl deliberately assumes pensiveness to attract a young man, a husband sinks wearily into a chair to prompt his wife to fetch his slippers, a detective cross-examines a suspect with disarming geniality and an insurance canvasser stresses our domestic obligation to be prudent. These are various techniques of inducement.

Our consciousness has several means of communication. Apes communicate with grunts and screeches, dogs with barks and cats draw on their repertoire of mieows to convey pleasure, resentment, warning or desire. Even fish make

communicative sounds, as I first discovered from Malay fishermen. Individual human impressions are tintured by subjective moods, and values are affected by cellular and chemical changes, including puberty and either feminine menopause or possibly by masculine metamorphosis. Penetrating and powerfully influencing human behaviour is sexual libido.

### *Mating*

Previously I wrote of sex in order to illustrate one of several fields in which organised religion had been mainly negative and obscurantist. I return to it now because I wish to stress it as one of the mighty forces governing human life with authority like a god.

Organic life generated itself long before sex emerged initially as a bifurcation of biological function, and this operated for millions of years before Man arrived. By it beast and Man have reproduced themselves but with Man it is no longer confined to its original purpose or to a restricted mating season; it finds expression also in nurturing companionship and aesthetic sublimation. It can be repressed superficially, with the liability of this issuing in neural disorder, although it must be individually and socially controllable.

Modern romantic monogamous marriage is not the only sex arrangement Man has devised, for there have been or are polygamy, polyandry, marriage by capture, concubinage, trial marriage, and parentally determined marriage. Modern Western marriage has been supplemented by prostitution, divorce is available in some countries but not in others, religious or civil marriage is generally optional and pre-marital intercourse today occurs with most couples. When a Christian priest or minister declares marriage was "instituted of God in the time of man's innocency" it might be assumed that this institution had always existed.

There is no evidence that an ordained priest conducted a Marriage Service over the first pair in Eden attended by a choir of angels and cherubs. Perhaps we have had to believe that Adam and Eve lived together in innocence and ignorance and possessing no sexual desire until with the advent of self-conscious knowledge they then did and became sinful.

From this it would seem to follow that non-Christian marriages are irregularities in which couples "live in sin". The Anglican Church does not go so far as that, but the Roman Church can permit marriage between a Catholic and divorced non-Catholic because it considers Catholic marriage alone binding, and forbids divorce with remarriage for Catholics. Humanists do not believe that Deity ordained one true type of marriage nor that marriages are made in heaven. Their view is that while monogamous marriage has evolved into being the present appropriate social norm, other social conditions have required and may require different sexual arrangements. Theological colleges should make Westermarck's *The History of European Marriage* compulsory reading.

Christian spirituality has appeared scared of sex and some early Fathers were pathological about it. St. Augustine declared that sexuality must be exclusively procreative, that "the pleasure of the flesh (even in marriage) . . . has venial fault" and marital avoidance of procreation meant "the wife is in a fashion the harlot of her husband or he is an adulterer with his own wife." W. E. H. Lecky in his *History of European Morals* said "Woman was represented at the door of hell, as the mother of all human ills". From this, of course, the Blessed Virgin must be excluded, although she had other children than Jesus.

Ecclesiastically "lust" became synonymous with sin,

marriage being provided for those who "have not the gift of continency", although couples must remain ascetically "pure" until after the marriage ceremony, a discipline often as difficult as trying not to enjoy floral perfumes without certificated permission. Catholicism from the 11th century insisted on clerical celibacy, and while Protestants rejected this they shared until recent years their Catholic brethren's belief that conjugal joys must pay the natural price at any cost.

Archbishop Lang, in approval of the Bishops' *Lambeth Conference Report* of 1908, said, "We must do something more than denounce these practices [i.e. birth control]. We must make men feel that it is better . . . that a large family should be trained in self-denial through the bracing discipline of life, than that a small family should be reared in ease and comfort". Pious matrons, who, like Queen Victoria, had privately resented repeated pregnancies may have prayed for grace to bear this episcopal guidance with fortitude and found consolation by rejoicing that each new little one added to the glory of the Lord.

The station in life to which the Primate had been called did not require the "bracing discipline" of living in a couple of rooms with a scrambling brood of malnourished children, such as was the lot of many families in his day. The present Archbishop, Dr. Ramsey, would not speak like his predecessor because he has absorbed a moral consciousness that neither Archbishop Lang nor his clergy had reached. Nowadays leading Christians assure us that sex has blessings other than philoprogenitive.

Sex can be mercilessly despotic with Man if it is unrelated to the needs of his whole being and social necessities. Jealousy, insensitivity, irresponsibility and temperamental conflicts can inflict misery, but with generosity, honesty, forbearance, reciprocal confidence and wisdom marriage

can generate unfolding radiance. By-products of irresponsible or uncontrolled sexuality issue in prostitution, promiscuity, nymphomania, illegitimacy, abortion, some forms of homosexuality and lesbianism, rape, venereal diseases, neuroses, excessive fecundity, bitterness or hatred, and divorce. British divorces number about 40,000 annually (far more proportionately in America) affecting over 80,000 persons. Apart from this are the countless separated couples or those living resentfully or coldly in "Unholy Deadlock". Further divorce reform will release many more thousands from this.

#### *Sublimation*

There is no Amorists Anonymous corresponding to Alcoholics Anonymous, but Marriage Guidance Councils do something positively to enlighten and assist the maritally bewildered. Priestly and other celibate advice in such matters may be useless; just as it is difficult for normal persons to comprehend the consciousness of a monk or nun so it is hard for a celibate to appreciate marital happiness. My wife in hospital became acquainted with a nun from an enclosed Order who, because it was imperative for her to have a serious operation, had temporarily to leave her convent from which she had not departed for thirty-five years. She had known practically nothing of the outside world beyond the sound of traffic, and was amazed at what she learned in the hospital. She was a devout, gentle woman, but to compare her consciousness with that of my wife is impossible because their worlds are so different.

Some religions have sought through celibacy and other disciplines to repress, intimidate or sublimate libido, from fasting, scourging, submitting to uncomfortable postures and long hours of prayer or meditation to stern parsonic homilies and warnings, parental and pedagogic admonitions

or canings for salacious misdemeanours, enforced physical exercises and the exaltation of knightly chivalry. Many religious people, although born because of a sexual act, have treated sex as if it were a shameful weakness.

Sex as a "Life Force" is an amoral god worshipped blindly or rationally. It is as inescapable as air, gravity or our pulsating veins. Many Christians have today a better sense of proportion in respect of sex under the cumulative impact of humanist influence, and elderly spinsters do not resort to smelling salts when young people discuss the Pill. Christian prejudice against analgesic interference with the travail of confinement because it flouted the Biblical injunction "in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children" has disappeared, and sex can now be discussed as sensibly as we do cooking recipes or rose-pruning.

Freud initially, and subsequently Jung, Adler, and other analytical psychologists, in their invaluable contributions to our understanding of human nature have differing judgments on the operation of sex. I believe it is one powerful expression of creative vitality that has other expressions. Instinctive pressures for self-preservation and survival involve sex, but those pressures were pre-sexual in time and can thwart or direct the sexual drive, even if that drive can sometimes become paramount or take an indirect course.

Sexual love and marriage can be imperilled by emotional diversion, instability, and confusion, and debilitated by banality, tedious familiarity and boredom. Jealousy is not exclusively sexual, but can become intensified through sexual fear because as sexual consummation technically is confined to two persons any threat of intrusion or separation instinctively arouses fierce reactions at prospective frustration. Hence inhibitions and prohibitions have evolved to minimise consequential confusion and

danger. These vary somewhat not only in different ethnic or national communities, but also in class divisions so that while in one intellectual or social class friendship with a member of the opposite sex can be countenanced beyond a sexual partner this would arouse suspicious criticism among manual workers. Nevertheless, there is comedy in the fact that even with those who nobly disclaim primitive possessiveness primitive flickers often flare into scorching flame.

Wise, generous toleration is becoming necessary in our age of sex equality and frequent proximity, in which as never before the sexes are constantly mixing and discovering mutual interests. Moreover, when women were chattels or it was assumed that they should find their fulfilment in and through man, sexual tensions were less likely to become infuriating. Today it is more honestly recognised that it is exceptional for a couple absolutely to coincide in interests and temperament. While there is wisdom in traditional sexual disciplines, much in them is based on assumptions no longer tenable, and modern equivalents of mediaeval chastity belts are repulsively intolerable. Double standards for the sexes have been greatly modified, however much we still tacitly appreciate powerful intrinsic differences of sex. The existing situation has its own hazards and our rising generation in their reaction against the sex *mores* of their elders can run into personal wretchedness.

Sexual love needs stability and security. Common domestic responsibilities generally determine this, but while it is foolish to dogmatise on human relationship it is essential that a deep sense of responsibility should be accepted wherever the sexual element is or may become active. Eroticism is "selfish," even in marriage, and thus can conflict with ethical, compassionate or self-sacrificial love.



Eros and Philia are not invariably good companions. Few men and women cohabit or marry out of pity and normally a lover who intimated he or she did would receive short shrift. Sex relationships must frankly solve the problem of relating naturally egotistical impulse to the broader love of others. Religious celibates can claim that their course liberates them from the problem, but so does that of a schoolchild who finding school homework too perplexing solves that problem by shoving the exercise book down the drain.

Because sex can be capricious, impulsive, and infatuating, responsible disciplines are imperative, and for the young unsanctimonious guidance should be available to assist them to avoid catastrophe. Our age has much to learn in order to establish sexual love on sound foundations. Human experience demonstrates this and not divine revelation.

Libido, sexual impulse or "Life Force" will always be impervious and receive homage from its worshippers. Whatever gods are repudiated that "power beyond ourselves" has few erotic atheists.

#### *Other Vital Forces*

Among other forces than sex conditioning human behaviour are the maternal and paternal, the fraternal and the gregarious. The maternal is associated with sexuality but is not identical with it. Without assistance from their sexual mates cats mother their kittens and bitches their puppies until they can fend for themselves. Human maternal care lasts much longer and indirectly throughout life. There is no feline or canine equivalent of "Mother's Day" when with commercial encouragement sentimental assurances of grateful homage are despatched to human mothers. Animal maternal impulse can cause some animals to mother other progeny than their own, and

human mothers do likewise and also find expression in nursing, welfare work and teaching. Most women want to mother something alive whether children, pets or men, though mothering can also become smothering.

Compassion is not exclusively feminine. Both boys and girls absorb maternal qualities and predominant elements in each sex have some elements of the other. "The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world" contains some truth, which may explain why babies tipped out through clumsy rocking can become cantankerous adults. The paternal force is biologically secondary among beast and bird, with certain exceptions where males assist in brood-care or nest-building. Because males do not gestate, maternity is profoundly different from paternity, notwithstanding considerate human fathers who change and wash nappies.

Paternal insemination biologically is a transient function, but as this gives the male relatively greater freedom his assertive masculinity encourages him to exercise possessive protectiveness, to hunt and explore while the female performs more restricted tasks because of her gestatory exigencies and family duties.

Another influential force in human life is what I term the fraternal or consanguine. Brothers and sisters are physically linked and their consciousness of this and their other physical relatives can consolidate a domestic unit of tenacious strength, even if affectionate "brotherhood" and "sisterhood" can lapse. Cain and Abel were brothers whose jealous enmity is frequently emulated. In times of domestic crisis the bond of relationship becomes reassertive, so that then brother will help brother despite one having given the other a black eye, and sister will comfort sister though one thinks the other "the very limit". Consanguinity becomes amplified into clannishness.

The sense of fraternal obligation has become diffused to enrich gregariousness until emotionally it embraces all mankind. This has inspired devotion to humanitarian movements and in particular the Labour movement. British socialists formerly sang "The People's flag is deepest red", not so much, as their enemies assumed, because this symbolised bloody revolution as because it represented the truth in the Biblical text "And he hath made of one blood all nations".

To these specified several "forces" of instinctive self-preservation, sexuality, maternalism, fraternalism and gregariousness I add aestheticism or the sense of beauty, from primitive cavern-scratchings and non-utilitarian decorations to civilised forms of art, music and literature. Something in Man impelled him to artistic activity, as surely as it made him adapt and assert himself for survival and to breed, foster childcare, protect, explore, invent, integrate comradeship and develop corporate activity. Whether for this we use the term "forces", "innate impulses" or any other synonym they are dynamically generic within Man and as "natural" as his physiological frame.

#### *The Expansion of Self-Consciousness*

In response to these forces self-consciousness sorts out variegated material, encourages some human components more than others, reflects on their relevance to personal fulfilment, imaginatively weaves cloth of gold or fustian, nurtures values, deepens love and strives to translate ideas into facts. As Man's brain becomes more convoluted through the complications of his mental computer, his realm of consciousness becomes deeper and vaster. Objects acquire new significance and the visible and invisible, the tangible and intangible, are constantly fused so that objects are invested with qualities similar to his own. A

tree, rock, mound, skull or utensil is assumed to possess an "anima" or interior entity.

With mental refinement and reflection animism passes into polytheism in which clan or tribal experience becomes projected into divinities governing various aspects of nature, and from thence it proceeded into a theistic hierarchy with a supreme deity, such as Zeus, Brahman or Yahweh. Rival or subordinate divinities can become denigrated and then, in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, eliminated excepting for one Supreme Being for exclusive worship. "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God" is consequential on the preceding Commandment "Thou shalt have no other gods before me", thus fortifying Yahweh's insistence that there must be no flirtation on the sly with other deities.

Although Hinduism postulates over-all Brahman it retains among the orthodox a retinue of deities, but Buddhism has cast away these. Gautama Buddha is venerated, but neither Theravada nor Mahayana Buddhism has a deity. Hindu Brahman is pantheistic, or the pervasion of spiritual reality through the whole universe. Christians believe in that divine immanence, as in the notable text "For in Him we live and move and have our being", but also in divine transcendence. Some people believe that Humanism will replace all theistic concepts, and others by intellectual attrition arrive at nihilistic scepticism of everything. All these and other interpretations of Man's experience of his world are derived from human reflection. His self-consciousness, however, cannot be isolated from his whole environment, for it is an individual focus of the larger life of which he is inescapably a part.

This inter-relationship does not mean that man is clay completely moulded by environmental or congenital forces,

for he possesses reflective, calculative and creative capacities by which he makes his external world serve human ends. He becomes the human environment of the non-human as he converts wood, stone and metal into tools, utensils and weapons: captures wind-currents to fill sails; selects wild grasses for cultivation into seed-pods to be ground into flour which he then bakes into bread; and he invents words and writing. Ten fingers become the abstract quantity "ten", and visual reproduction of familiar things becomes hieroglyphs and then stylised letters that when combined become words signifying sounds recalling to himself or conveying to others specific objects, actions, qualities and ideas.

Nouns, verbs, adjectives, prepositions and adverbs are mental instruments used in the building of our inner world. A child's growing vocabulary is incomprehensible to a chimpanzee which if it acquires more than a dozen distinguishable word-sounds throws zoologists into great excitement. Beyond the child are the vocabularies and thought-patterns of mathematicians, philosophers, scientists and poets. This demonstrates that the human world is unique, although having been born from mother-earth it remains related to it. Individual self-consciousness draws sustenance from the human race as surely as each tree does from its roots in the soil.

#### *Religion and God*

A sense of vital relationship between an individual and his race and full environment is the source of religion, which linguistically probably is derived from "religare" which means "to bind". The psychological content behind religious forms lies in their nourishment of spiritual "bondship" between men and with the assumed supernatural or invisible realm.

The term "God", as previously mentioned, has many

meanings. To those who do not know English it is meaningless, and while most English people would know or guess the linguistic affinity of "Gott", "Dieu" or "Dios" with "God" and that "Allah" is its Arabic equivalent, yet to them the Hindu "Brahman" or "Om", the Masai "Engai" or the Polynesian "Taaroa" would be meaningless. Our familiar word can mean the Hebrew "Elohim" or "Yahweh" (Jehovah) who vanquished Baal and became exclusive supernatural Ruler with qualities of jealousy, wrath, justice or mercy, the Holy One of Israel, the Heavenly Father incarnated in Jesus Christ, The Supreme Being, the First Cause, the Grand Architect of the Universe, the Divine Principle, the Absolute, the Lord of Lords and King of Kings, Life Force or a synthesis of all virtues.

Several of these generally exist in fusion or confusion in Theistic minds or in those who aver colloquially "I'm not an atheist, but I'm not religious. I believe there's a God, but it's no use asking me to talk about this. All I can say is that I try to live a good life".

Some people firmly assert they are atheists, by which generally they mean they see no evidence of a supernatural Power or Deity, but if they positively deny the existence of this then paradoxically their dogmatic assertion rests on faith, for as limited beings they cannot logically claim to know the unknown. Beyond our mental limitations may be other dimensions than those we now know. facetiously it could be argued that anyone who asserts there is no god can only do so if he knows everything, and if he does he himself must be god! "Agnosticism", the term coined by Thomas Huxley, seems more appropriate for unbelief. Those lines of Shakespeare are acceptable to some in that category — "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy".

In my own attempt to explore the meaning and depth of selfconscious Man I have stressed the fact that although theistic concepts may be ignored or rejected this does not dispose of the natural reality of forces that at least partly govern our lives. These impacts of universal energy embodied as corporate entities or anthropological beings represent Man's pre-scientific attempt to humanise and rationalise his world. If we are divested of these we are still left with their natural content.

Venus or Aphrodite was the Greek goddess of conjugal love, but dismissal of her as a legend cannot destroy the force or organic impulse of conjugal love. Let Neptune be drowned in his sea, but the heaving ocean remains. Thunder does not disappear with the vanishing of Thor or rain cease when the Rain-mother Bedouin Umm al-rejt has been buried in the desert. The Babylonian moon-god, Sin, and the Egyptian Hapi, personified god of the Nile, are to us only foreign terms, but moon and Nile are familiar facts. Non-Indians and sophisticated modern Indians classify the Hindu Vishnu and Siva as mythological, but the forces of creation and destruction they represent are not myths.

We are subject to control by superhuman power or powers whether we denote this fact by employing personal or technical terminology. The real issue is whether those forces are indifferent to Man or are in any sense benevolent? Monotheists claim there is a Supreme Power and that he is "personal", but it is possible to use the word "god" as an impersonal, comprehensive allusion to the whole of reality. The elevation of certain selected human qualities to imaginary deification and the object of worship is illustrated by both Biblical references and Christian hymnology. Human martial qualities are adapted to the hymn "*The Son of God goes forth to war A kingly*

*crown to gain*" though the following line "*His blood-red banner streams afar: Who follows in his train?*" is alluding neither to socialism nor railway transport. Majesty is projected in "*Judge eternal, throned in splendour*", awe in "*O Maker of the mighty deep*," security in "*Rock of ages cleft for me*" and love in "*God is love; his mercy brightens All the path in which we rove . . .*". Scripturally the same process has occurred in attributing to Deity such human qualities as love, graciousness, compassion, vengeance and "consuming anger".

Deity is also invested with human values in such Jewish ascriptions as "O Lord . . . O King, helper, Saviour and Shield". Christianity extends this with Heavenly Father, King of Glory, and Merciful Shepherd, Islam's Allah is the Compassionate, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Hinduism prays to Vishnu as "the Mighty over all" and Parsees invoke the Preserver of Preservers. All these are transferred from human experience and evaluations. We humanise apparent impersonal mystery to disperse our fears of the inscrutable.

## VI

## HUMANISM AND RELIGION

THEOLOGY cannot escape Humanism. In the credal tapestries of theologians divine mysteries have been interwoven with human qualities. We can see this in Biblical records where Deity intervenes with warnings, exhortations and miraculous events, as if the human drama required for its complete unfolding a stage which extended into the supernatural. Humanists consider that this is a delusive pretence, and that we should train human minds to face harsh facts with fortitude. Even so, some Humanists may feel that simple folk who are incapable of stoical adaptation are better left with their delusions of a benevolent Deity and a compensatory after-life; otherwise they may become emotionally distraught.

Belief in personal continuation beyond death testifies to a high evaluation of personality, and conviction that divine love can comfort the human heart arises from an expanded conception of human love that makes its annihilation unbearable or unthinkable. Theological doctrines themselves are attempts to propound supernatural solutions to human problems. The doctrine of the Trinity, for instance, seeks to relate in consciousness three diverse elements in the natural universe. This necessity also exists continuously in human society in the disparate claims of order, freedom and creativity, and a society failing to establish an effective equilibrium of these can suffer schizophrenia as surely as individual minds can, and may disintegrate into anarchic chaos.

To avert that danger, France accepted De Gaulle's personal authority although then, like the Old Man of the Sea, he became difficult to get rid of. More viciously for similar reasons Germany submitted to Hitler's one-party Nazi domination, Italy to Mussolini's Fascism and Russia to the ruthlessness of Stalin. Franco in Spain, Salazar in Portugal, Mao Tse Tung in communist China and Castro in Cuba are accepted foci for social forms of cohesion, and Pakistan, Egypt, Burma, Ghana and Nigeria are newly independent countries that strive by civil or military means to prevent national disruption. In essence our contemporary political problems are the same as those that concerned Plato and Aristotle. In our country we believe we have solved the problem with our own type of democratic constitution, but others have done so with different democratic or non-democratic systems. The South African Republic recognises freedom for only its pale minority, and the U.S.A. emulates the spirit of apartheid in its Southern States.

*Diversity*

Because early Christian thinkers were concerned with this problem of diversity within unity they felt compelled philosophically to relate the person of Jesus Christ to a paternal, omnipotent Creator. Hebrew thought contributed to their cogitation the concept of Messiahship; from Greek philosophers came the idea of a divine emanation, and from Rome came a systematising, unifying law. These converged finally in preliminary statements on the cosmic significance of Jesus the Christ or Messiah.

Speculations had abounded concerning his nature, and something had to be done to decide what was valid among confusing conjectures. Thus Jesus was declared to be not simply an august prophet who drew on ancient Judaic moral values, but also the authentic Messiah, the specific

human presentation of the Divine Being, in indissoluble association with the out-breathing Logos or "Word" of that Being. After prolonged debate had culminated in the Nicean Council's declaration of the authoritative doctrine for all time, further argument had to cease, and Christians had to confess belief in "God the Father Almighty", in Jesus as his exclusive incarnation and in the invisible, direct communication of the Holy Spirit or divine afflatus. Each of these was a distinctive, yet related, "persona", a term originally meaning the mask Greek players wore to express a particular mood.

Not only have Christians synthesised diversity, but Hinduism has also its related triad of Brahman, Vishnu and Siva. In more modern times sociologically Marxism has transformed Hegelian dialectic into economic class thesis and antithesis, issuing in the ultimate synthesis of socialism or communism. There is no intrinsic necessity to restrict unified elements to three. The human family begins with father, mother and child, but generally more are later added, annually we have four seasons, twelve months comprise a year, 24 hours a day, the decimal system is based on tens, there are five toes on one foot and 630 M.P.s form one House of Commons. This is a reminder, frivolous perhaps, that triplicates are not sacrosanct and that esoteric numerology may end with attempts to unify bats in our belfry. Suffice it that officially the Trinity was integrated with other dogmas in massive doctrinal architecture which since then has had several discreet renovations and a virtual closure of the post-mortem torture basement. Had Arius been more ingenious or accommodating, he might have won the battle with Athanasius and the Church then would have been Socinian or Unitarian, as was the pre-communist national Church of Transylvania.

In England credal recitation has had less influence in

preserving central theological concepts than has the popular hymnology of John and Charles Wesley and the revival initiated by the preaching of John. The chantings of other religions have the same influence with their adherents. Christians have failed to appreciate this, and need to realise that the Bhagavad-gita and Upanishads to Hindus, the Koran to Muslims, the Pali Scriptures to Buddhists and the Granath to Sikhs are as sacred to them as the Bible is to Christians.

All Scriptures contain expressions of heightened consciousness by which the objective and the subjective coalesce and invest the mundane with numinous significance. This process is exemplified in ordinary life, for my country is not only a geographical and political entity, but a community whose history, traditions, culture and familiarity can arouse rich emotions. So also a book can be more than printed pages, but a world of vivid imagination or reflective thought; a violin is not simply glued pieces of thin wood strung with catgut, but an instrument for conveying entrancing music; and a person is a physical body representing a living soul.

#### *Leader and Messiah*

Because we possess this exalting experience only partially; we seek its enlargement in veneration of those who have it in fullness. This can ascend to the apotheosis of worship, and Jesus was one recipient of this through many tributaries of love and adoration. The assertion "Never man spoke as this man" is evidence of a magnetic attraction that generated in his followers a sense of his constant, spiritual presence. To a greater or less degree this adoration has also been given to other impressive personalities of varying types, from Pharaohs and Caesars to Buddha and Mohammed, and even in some measure to Saints. An approach to this psychological infusion and transfiguration

is in the adulation given to beloved national leaders. I have seen enormous crowds over-awed in the presence of Gandhi and Nehru, some pressing forward to touch their clothing, reminiscent of that reference to Jesus, "And, behold, a woman . . . touched the hem of his garment . . . and the woman was made whole".

Mental deference or subordination to another is natural because it is believed that the limited knowledge or capacity of the individual is thereby supplemented. Soldiers obey officers, musicians learn from great masters, congregations formerly "sat under" famous preachers like Spurgeon who expounded histrionically "the Word of God", and Indian gurus give enlightenment to docile listeners. Krishna and Buddha, as well as Jesus, received the appellation of "Lord" and were raised above vulgar questioning. This was once almost true of Lords Temporal, although those Peers are now sometimes regarded with as much levity as in Gilbert and Sullivan's *Iolanthe*.

Critical questioning of the "Lord" may be deemed as impertinent as arguing with the Queen. (It may be that there is one exception to this in Her Majesty's household). But if Jesus being "very man" in whom Deity dwelt, was in his day humanly ignorant of much we know today then there are modern problems for which the gospel records cannot give particular solutions. This is why exhortations to "trust in the Lord" or "follow Christ" can seem meaningless to all who realise that those modern problems require persistent thought to find solutions and not ambiguous generalities. Nonetheless there is some advantage in relying on special authorities where this is appropriate, like doctors, air navigators, trade union organisers or guides to describe commercialised "Stately Homes" at 5/- per head.

"Most certainly" say theological experts "and that is

why instead of lay amateurs people need trained minds who can rely on nearly two thousand years of ecclesiastical experience and wisdom in expounding divine truth. We are in such matters special authorities". To which the reply is that theological experts are not of one mind, and they have had their fallible ignorance and resistance to facts repeatedly exposed. They are no more acceptable experts than other intelligent human beings who may have more modesty than they appear to have in seeking to unveil a little of the mystery of life.

#### *Invisible Reality*

The unique world of self-consciousness is a reality as certain as the material world in which it was born. If it is only an aspect or property of matter, non-existent in other material phenomena, then matter requires redefinition. Does Mount Everest think, is the Atlantic Ocean a fluid mass of meditation, are forests and jungles concerned with intellectual problems, can planets write poetry, meteors make music or jellyfish soar with imagination? The fact that Man does so is as distinctive of him as are the particular qualities of a lump of rock, a spurt of gas or the cells in living tissue.

The properties of the solidity of the rock and the tint of a leaf may have no more separate existence than the smile of the Cheshire cat. Nonetheless, while some material patterns of energy have subtle or intricate properties not present in other patterns, so self-consciousness may not simply be an emanation, but possess inherent properties or qualities as yet only faintly suspected. This, though hypothetical, is no more irrational than were early anticipations of magnetism, electric power, radiation or nuclear fission. It is more rational to assume the possibility of unfamiliar dimensions affecting us than categorically to deny this.

Energy may have patterns expressed otherwise than in material atoms, protons and electrons. Man's uniqueness encloses cosmic forces that endow him not only with these we know consciously, and one day we may discover abnormal facts through the medium of extra-sensory perception or parapsychology. So far only a modicum of evidence for this has become available from the Society for Psychical Research and other sources.

Although much psychical evidence can be attributed to auto-suggestion, clever deductions, ambiguous generalisations or coincidence, there is some evidence for telepathy and even Russian psychologists, despite State Marxist dogma, have undertaken experiments similar to those of the American Professor J. B. Rhine. There are authenticated cases of abnormal therapy in psychosomatic and neural disabilities, sometimes interpreted as rather arbitrary divine intrusion, as at Lourdes, sometimes as remedial hypnosis and sometimes as spiritual healing. In many complaints medical practitioners now recognise and apply psychological, psychiatric, psychoanalytical and hypnotic treatment. This is not occultism, but appreciation of the intimate interaction of mind and body.

Most of us have had inexplicable experiences, possibly including precognition, clairvoyance, clairaudience, apparent telepathy and other strange events, and one day we may find a valid explanation for these. I recall only one personal, relevant experience. After the last war when our younger son was in China with the Friends (Quaker) Ambulance Unit my wife told me one day she had suddenly felt acutely about him. Two days later when she was seriously ill in hospital I received word that he had been killed in an air crash, and the exact day and time of the tragedy proved to be the same as my wife's emotional impression. This may have been coincidence, or conceiv-

ably telepathic contact under great stress may have flashed between mother and son. If telepathy could irrefutably be established, it would be evidence of temporary direct mental communication, although this would not demonstrate personal survival after death, belief in which may have to rest on one's philosophy or faith.

Religion, initially sprung from apprehension of the mysteriously unknown, becomes translated with human development into metaphysical conceptions with accompanying crude or refined rituals, incantations, prayers and worship. Yet worship need not be theological, for forms of cosmic experience existed in the authors of my quotations. They possessed a sense of a deeper union with life and adorned the commonplace with beauty or moral significance. This can also encompass human poignancy, as in the spiritual dignity of Socrates about to drink the hemlock and the passion of Jesus during his final days. Disclosures of human depths expose tribulation as well as glowing wonder. When Jesus cried "Father forgive them for they know not what they do" what arrests us is not so much his appeal to a Father-God as the moving magnanimity of his spirit that penetrated great darkness.

#### *Exactng Values*

Forgiveness is humanly difficult because it is unnatural not to resent great wrongs committed against us or those we love, or against humanity. Can those who lost whole families in Nazi gas chambers forgive the perpetrators of the infamy? Should those who hounded Jan Masaryk to death in Czechoslovakia, or those who foully outraged a child, or the man who deserts a young mother and leaves her destitute, deserve or receive forgiveness? Contempt or anger is instinctively more natural and even the ancient legalistic curb of only an eye for an eye places a strain upon human nature. Yet we can possess the ability to transcend



normal reactions. Jesus believed this not only by exemplifying it, but also by urging forgiveness "unto seventy times seven". The Hebrew Ecclesiastes also teaches "Forgive your neighbour the hurt he has done to you", in the Holy Koran is "Repay evil with good and, lo, he between whom and you there was enmity will become your warm friend", and Confucius said "Those who are willing to forget old grievances will gradually do away with resentment".

Contrary to the Koran and Confucius, forgiveness does not invariably ensure reciprocal response, any more than loving-kindness toward Nazi officials would have saved victims from the gaschamber. Nor does it mean that wrong-doers should be released from justiciable penalties or the obligation of restitution. Forgiveness (extolled in the New Testament more frequently than in any other Scriptures) requires responsibility by the offended for the offender irrespective of the processes of law or the mood of the offender. The culprit is held in the heart and mind of his victim as if he or she were close kindred.

This exacting exercise is practised by most of us only in small ways or when pity and passage of time have diluted natural impulses. Conversely, unresolved resentment can issue in endless vendetta and even when not translated actively silent bitterness and camouflaged retaliation can persist, sometimes with otherwise gracious souls, like a psychological cancer. Inflexible unforgiveness is a never-sheathed sword. The value of forgiveness is that it fertilises goodwill and reclamatory love, while vengeance exudes poison that affects both the individual and the race.

To some extent our penal system, based as it is on deterrence and reprisal, is being infiltrated by positive forgiveness through efforts to rehabilitate prisoners rather than inflict harsh punishment. This is not always success-

ful, and critics assert that it is mere sentimentality, or that law-breakers must be taught severe lessons they will not forget. Apart from the rejection of moral values involved here, this ignores the fact that a social offender who is saved from his warped nature is less costly to the State than a recidivist or one who cunningly converts himself from a Bill Sykes to an Artful Dodger. Alike in penology and personal life our attitude to the repugnant, the anti-social and the depraved depends on whether we separate fellow human beings into distinctive categories of sheep and goats or accept them all responsibly as indissolubly related to us. It was once said "For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not the publicans the same?" In other words, it is easy enough to be nice to the nice, and kind to those we like; it is infinitely harder not to be malicious to the malicious or beastly to the beastly, to search for good in the degenerate, and be considerate to the vicious thug or the mean moron.

I asked Otto Frank (father of Anne Frank, whose diary describes how she and her family hid for months in a top room in Amsterdam during the last war until they were betrayed) what he had felt about his brutish Nazi gaolers at Auschwitz. He replied, "I tried to think of something good about them, perhaps that this or that one had lovely teeth or delicate fingers".

If wars begin in the mind of man, so does the power of reclamatory forgiveness. It is because we have learned in some measure to restrain natural reactions and investigate the causes of delinquency that we now recognise a correlation between juvenile delinquency and unhappy or squalid homes. We are therefore more disposed today to manifest a degree of intelligent forgiveness for the delinquent, together with attempts to encourage his self-respect and his responsibility for his own more worthy living.

Enlightenment on the many sources of misbehaviour and corrupted, stupid or bewildered lives may enable us to appreciate there is profound truth in that lyric which contains not a word of theological doctrine — “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am nothing . . . charity never faileth”. That quality of “*caritas*” or limitless love is the singular flower of human self-consciousness.

Whatever measure of this we possess, we are moved by it when we see it in others because it reveals sublime human capacity. No wonder it became deified and that Christians have divinely personalised it in Jesus Christ, although it can also radiate through others.

#### *Human Need*

While some consider that identification of Jesus with Deity is a kind of metaphysical intoxication, they should appreciate how and why this belief arose—from a human desire to raise something supremely precious to an authority transcending the mundane and mortal.

Energy, nature, matter, “the Whole” or reality are terms descriptive of forces or powers transcending and conditioning our lives, and “God” or some linguistic equivalent is to theists an alternative term. If Humanists think this meaningless or associated historically with untenable assumptions, then so can be much other terminology. “Rationalism” yesterday was in vogue, but less so today than “Humanism”—probably because “Humanism” appears less negative, not exclusively intellectual and conveys the need for human service. “Love” is ambiguous and can denote conjugality, infatuation that causes some theatrical or film stars to have multiple marriages, warm friendship, compassionate care or the professional footballers’ ecstatic hugging when a colleague scores a goal. “Socialism” can mean democratic public ownership,

totalitarian communism, a social ideal or perverted Nazi “National Socialism”. “Force” can be interpreted as energy, compulsion, violent war or the police, and “Heaven” indicate either “a place for little children above the bright blue sky” or Beatrice’s description of her day out on the river with her Dante.

While it has been necessary to clear away accumulated irrational rubbish and vindicate scientific facts, it can be a waste of time to destroy poetic imagery. Those who want to clothe the intangible with symbolic representation are entitled to do so, provided they do not dogmatise, for imaginative descriptions and even theological rhapsody can embody the psychological content of human needs and aspirations. Take, for example, two lines of a Christian hymn—

O worship the King, all glorious above;  
O gratefully sing His power and His love.

The author, Robert Grant, who died in 1838, transferred through his words his impression of the regal splendour of monarchy to symbolise divine majesty. It would have been peculiarly droll if he had written “O worship the President” or “the Queen”, for American Independence could have made one allusion treasonable, and of the other, though he knew of Queen Anne and Queen Elizabeth I, feminine equality was then remote. He thus conformed to his national context by adopting the simile of Kingship and in its supernatural elevation associated with this concepts of omniscient authority and benevolence. He made extravagant affirmation that human values reigned celestially.

My prosaic rationalisation will not deter criticism that such lush imagery is childish sentimental, but when sung with emotional fervour that and other hymns have helped many to acquire a sense of release from morose frustration.

Non-theologically, and on a lowlier level, similar assurance is generated by ballads or pop songs affirming that "Happy days are here again", that we must keep right on to the end of the road, not be down-hearted, keep our chins up and so forth. They testify that though "hope deferred maketh the heart sick" the human heart refuses to succumb. Magnificent are Shelley's words, "to hope till hope creates from its own wreck the thing it contemplates" because this has been the repeated achievement of Man. "These things shall be, a loftier race than e'er the world shall rise", which I sang in my early days, is rarely heard today, but its content still inspires those who believe that despite an apparently heartless, mindless universe the human heart and mind will yet triumph.

It is because of faith professed by such men as Robert Grant and Shelley in their different ways that both can be shot at for essentially similar reasons and have similar defences, although their fortifications are miles apart. I am not claiming that there are not serious differences, nor do I condone dishonest evasion of them, but they are not crucial and the controversy over how strangely Man is inspired has little earthly use. What matters most is the reality of inspiration that leads to "more abundant life".

Under the momentum of demolishing myths, legends and faded or dangerous moralities, iconoclasts often waste energy by tilting at windmills, smashing stained-glass windows depicting tepid saints, and trampling over gardens because they dislike the flowers. It is better to grow the finest flowers we do like and foster friendly toleration of old or eccentric neighbours. Always it takes all sorts to make our human world.

#### *Moral Consciousness and Religion*

Wherever religion encourages moral consciousness there is common ground between theists and humanists, because

there they discover they have the same basic needs, obligations and fears. Both those who believe in a personal God and those who do not may find a common danger in the liability that Hitlers and Stalins may arise who can be merciless with those who will not bow down and worship them as men-gods. In totalitarian States bullets, barbed wire, gas-ovens and padlocks do not distinguish between religious and humanist recalcitrants.

The common need is not confined to moral consciousness; it comprehends all values that enhance human life, including "heightened consciousness" or a sense of something glowing beneath the crust of existence. To appreciate either the implications of human interdependence or the presence of beauty is an enhancement of self-consciousness so different from mundane, cruel, frustrative normality that some term this spiritual reality, others cosmic consciousness and others God or a synonym for God. Whatever terminology we employ, this sense is a human fact.

George Santayana in his *The Sense of Beauty* says "Beauty is a pledge of faith in the supremacy of the possible conformity between the soul and nature, and consequently a ground of faith in the supremacy of the good". When Sir Julian Huxley, President of The Humanist Association, broadcast in 1960 under the title *The Faith of a Humanist*, he said "Religions are of many kinds, but they have one thing in common—they help man to cope with the problem of his place and role in the strange universe in which he lives. Religion always involves the sense of sacredness or reverence, and it is always concerned with what is felt to be more absolute, with what transcends immediate, particular, everyday experience. It aims at helping people to transcend their petty or selfish or guilty selves". In the last edition of his *Religion without Revelation* he states "Had the word God not come, almost universally,

to have the connotation of supernatural personality, it could be properly employed to denote this unity [i.e. the underlying unity of life] . . . For the moment I shall call it the Sacred Reality. The precise term, however, does not matter. What does matter is the recognition that the experience of the universe as affecting human life and therefore as invested with sanctity is a reality, and is the proper object of religion".

It is because of "heightened consciousness" that Huxley calls his sensitivity to richer life "Sacred Reality"; but some Humanists may react as critically to this as they do to "God" even though it need not connote "supernatural personality". The Hindu "Brahman" is pantheistic and the Buddhist "Nirvana" is impersonal absorption. As for "supernatural" is it very different from "supernormal" as indicative of what in nature lies beyond normal experience? What, indeed, is "natural"? The word is ambiguous and can be used in a limited sense to denote either the external world as registered by our senses or all that exists. But all existence is certainly vaster than our fallible knowledge encompasses and no matter what advances we make intellectually mystery will enshroud what we still do not know. What we call that unknown, whether "supernatural," "supernormal," "vaster world," "uncomprehended reality" or "God" depends on individual semantic preference, and one is not more or less rational than another.

"Sacred Reality" are words that have signified the holy, divine or consecrated and could be dismissed as effete religious hyperbole; but this could also apply to much else to which we attach invisible significance. To augment the illustrations I gave a few pages earlier of "heightened consciousness", Waltham Forest is the name of a Metropolitan Borough and my heart the description of a physical organ,

but to me these have deeper meanings than to most people. "The Heart of Humanity" can mean mumbo-jumbo, but it can have profound significance.

The word "personality" can also be elusive when we probe into its complexity, but whatever it is or however it is defined it encloses self-consciousness, and just as some may feel it perplexing that "personality" could emerge in an impersonal universe, so a belief or assumption that there must be some correspondence between personality and universal reality at least does not merit scorn from those who cannot rationally accept this. The objective is interpretable by our subjective evaluation. Constantly we are seeking to determine linguistically how we can best convey our finer experiences, and ultimately we find this requires poetic imagery.

Said the late Professor J. B. S. Haldane, eminent scientist and assertive atheist, "It is, I think, true that there are facts about human experience, which cannot be stated in words. I suggest that language will never be developed to describe all our experience precisely" (Essay on *Beyond Agnosticism*, 1962). Because this is so inevitably all attempts to expound a reasonable faith cannot exclude metaphors, symbols and verbalisms that link our customary life with intangible, inescapable intrusions from the realm of imagination and, at present, the scientifically inexplicable. We must be tolerant with those who for temperamental or intellectual reasons prefer words different from our own to describe efforts to translate luminous experience. We do not all speak the same language, but each language is a precious means of expression and communication to the utterer, however childish, obscure or extravagant this may seem to be.

## VII

## THE PART AND THE WHOLE

RABINDRANATH TAGORE'S truism "Life is immense" can be complemented by Immanuel Kant's "Two things fill the mind with ever-increasing wonder and awe . . . the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me". I would substitute "self-consciousness" for "moral law" because it is more comprehensive. In either case the two facts are impressive. Tagore believed that self-consciousness finds fulfilment in conscious relationship with the Whole and wrote, "The One in me knows the universe in different aspects . . . [it] seeks unity in knowledge for its understanding and creates images of unity for its delight; it also seeks union in love for its fulfilment. It seeks itself in others". For Western minds we can turn to Shelley:

The One remains, the many change and pass;  
 Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly;  
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,  
 Stains the white radiance of eternity.

There may be a similar content in these quotations to the mystical words attributed to Jesus, "I and my Father are one". Maybe our self-consciousness is like a coastal inlet into which sweep the ocean's tides.

We may pray for that sense or experience of larger unity, though prayer is not inevitably theological, nor is meditation. Formally we "pray silence" before a speaker bores us at a dinner, we pray for people to take their seats, and Members of Parliament technically "pray" against a departmental order. Prayer to the Deity can be mechanical,

childish or incongruous, as when petitions supplicate the omnipotent for rain, good weather, heavenly lollipops, victory in sport or in battle. To urge the Creator to have second thoughts because the petitioners were dissatisfied with his disposition or to grovel for his mercy demotes monotheism to the level of an irascible drill sergeant or a Chief before prostrated tribesmen.

Attempts have been made to adjust prayers to twentieth century minds while retaining some archaisms to placate vestigial sixteenth century minds—"thee", "thou", "wilt" and "art" presumably evoking traditional solemnity. *The New English Bible* and other modern versions have idiomatic and grammatical modifications, but preserve "Thy" for the Lord's Prayer which, like our National Anthem prayer, is repeated ritualistically.

Prayer can be therapeutic and cathartic, releasing tensions and inducing receptivity to inner reinforcement, but if it is a frantic supplication for divine intervention, evidence of success is obscure. "Give us this day our daily bread" may be less effective than improved agricultural techniques, and prayers for release from pain can produce less result than anaesthetics.

Jesus declared "your Father which is in heaven . . . sendeth rain on the just and the unjust", even as when war-time bombs fell they did not discriminate between the prayerful and the unprayerful. Those who thanked God if they and their house escaped destruction did not thereby mean that God had directed the bomb to fall on a neighbour instead of themselves. *The Prayers of Man* by Alfonso M. Dinola is a revealing anthology of both primitive and later prayers, from magical spells and Tibetan praying wheels to dignified liturgies and meditations. All indicate a craving for relationship between the self and a larger life.

*The Deeper Humanism*

My cursory reference to prayer is secondary to my main theme of exploring the significance of "I believe in Man". The quest for truth is itself a prayer by being a reaching out of the human spirit toward fuller preception and absorption of what it lacks. Human self-consciousness is aware of a realm lying beyond it awaiting exploration, and although the Humanist would assert its impersonality, nevertheless it is a similar psychological operation to seek union or greater knowledge of "it" as with those who believe this has objective spiritual reality. Dr. John Robinson, the former Bishop of Woolwich, much influenced by Paul Tillich and Dietrich Bonhoeffer, describes in his *Honest to God* the terrain extending beyond self-consciousness, as "the ground of our being"; and Martin Buber, cold-shouldered, like Spinoza, by Orthodox Hebrew co-religionists, speaks of "I and Thou".

Wrote Buber, "Each person is a new thing in the world, and he should bring to perfection what makes him unique . . . the unique is not the Whole, but part of the Whole. We feel the universe as a sea, and oneself as a wave in it—this is humility". This is little different from the pleas of Tagore and others for realisation of relationship with "the One". Whether the vaster reality is "It" or "Thou", it is not static, for there is persistent transformation. Dynamic creativity generates children who as they pass from their mothers to a new, separate, life are still part of the whole process; and a seed germinating by inner pressure in order in time to produce more seeds is a continuation of vital unity. Eggs are made to be broken. Thus each part of the whole is as important as the whole, because it participates in creation. A function of each individual is to disturb and replace one unity by another.

This has sociological relevance. Feudalism as a social

"whole" was steadily replaced by another social structure, the social unity of Tsarist Russia was replaced by Soviet Communism and British contemporary society is being transformed. The cosmology and cosmogony of a flat earth central to the universe has disappeared before modern scientific knowledge. Tennyson wrote "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" and A. W. E. O'Shaughnessy:

For each age is a dream that is dying,  
Or one that is coming to birth.

Many modern thinkers have helped to refashion concepts of Man and the cosmos, including the Jesuit Pierre Teilhard de Chardin in his religious interpretation of evolution and Albert Schweitzer, doctor of medicine, philosophy and music, who with autocratic devotion supervised for many years his African hospital. These and philosophers throughout the centuries have responded to the perpetual flow of existence, in which the outer environment of Man steadily changes, by stressing different aspects of the phenomena, some the influence of objective facts and others the significance of human reaction to these. Both aspects are facts, but in recent years stress has been laid particularly on the external elements of geography and economics. This is a necessary corrective of philosophical theories detached from objective reality. A malformed embryo will not enjoy full human life, no matter at what point theologians fancifully decide the soul is initiated, nor can Stone Age mentalities or those retarded by gross social conditions. A good society would ensure social conditions that ensure opportunity for human fulfilment, though these alone will not guarantee that the opportunity will be used rightly, for that depends on human effort and values. This is why democratic persuasion of the public mind is of supreme importance, lest insidiously

or despotically false guidance or spurious unity are imposed on perplexed or unstable people. Human beings can become docile sheep or degenerate for a very long time.

### *Politics*

Politics are inescapable because none can escape his society, and by political decisions we are all affected for good or ill. Political propaganda is often adulterated with powerful economic and sectional interests, intrigues, ambitions, impulsiveness and sharp practices that infect all parties and partisan conflicts. But politicians are neither better nor worse than their electorate and mostly possess a genuine sense of public service. Frequently in complex situations they must compromise or choose the less of two evils, and critics would be equally bewildered or apparently inconsistent if they had to exercise political responsibility. Reckless poachers can become tough game-keepers.

Political expediency operates but does not invariably strangle social idealism. Idealists must press toward the society they desire, but they have to accept the fact that meanwhile politicians have to deal with people as they are and not as they may be one day. The severe conflict between social idealism and entrenched economic interests, reactionary emotions and mental inertia, cannot be resolved by reliance on starry-eyed visions or saintly personal virtues. What have gentleness, graciousness, sweetness and light or pious prayers to do with wars, violent revolutions, cruel suppression, callous exploitation, natural calamities and the ruthless evolutionary struggle? The Nazi and Fascist menace was not frustrated by amiability and platitudes. Ardent reformers and transformers, unless willing and able to endure defeats and bitter disappointments in sustained struggle, are subject to creeping dis-

illusionment or desperately plunge for illusory short cuts to attain their purpose.

We cannot escape politics, although this does not mean that all of us have to be active participants. Robinson Crusoe's insulation was not normal. Human beings live in society and would not remain human if they did not, whether the society be sparse, primitive, congested, autocratic or democratic, and no society can last without the acceptance and exercise of social obligations. If Man Friday had not arrived, Crusoe would have gone mad in time. The good society depends on what is the goodness generally endorsed, and on this there are diverse judgements conditioned in large measure by what interests dominate or are permitted to dominate. Gregarious instincts operate originally, but in due course this natural association forms a pattern of inter-related functions with which its members are compliant until society becomes discordant through internal tensions and conflicts. How these are resolved depends on our concepts of human relationship and moral evaluations.

My re-emphasis on harsh realities is not morbid defeatism, but a further reminder that religious and humanist values are under constant challenge both from recurrent tragedy and from the incidence of daily life. Challenge in Britain today comes from betting shops, bingo halls and elite casinos, superficial, sensational and meretricious columns of the daily and popular Sunday press, alcoholic inanities often thriving in clubs and pubs, grey processions through Magistrates' Courts, the floating miasma of racial prejudice, smugness in middle-class suburbia, the arrogance of opulent tycoons, slick pilfering, cynical dishonesty and the avaricious pondering of investors over the financial attraction of, say, Amalgamated Norfolk Dumplings Ltd. or Paraguay Cosmetics Ltd. Against this the enclaves of

lofty theorists, poetic dreamers, earnest reforming societies, shuffling marchers rhythmically bellowing slogans or the mystical euphoria of church congregations may appear like fluttering moths.

*The Faith that Matters*

Despite intimidation, social idealism and choice values survive because of faith in their human necessity and their cumulative social diffusion. They serve Man not as he is, but as he can become, and thus assist politicians who must work within the limits of immediate practicability. That faith born out of sensitive human experience involves infinitely more than some Humanists initially realise.

The human condition demands that belief in Man will be powerful enough to sustain him through grim trials and failures. "Where there is no vision the people perish" is perennially true, although the vision must be fortified by reason and not be a mirage. Humanists and Christian or other religious adherents may contend that this is too nebulous and that an antithesis between contrary beliefs in God and in Man must be precisely defined. This oversimplification is useless because some believe neither in God nor Man, because others deny an antithesis and because any definitive formula emanates from fallible Man himself in his attempt to clarify relationship between his selfconsciousness and the whole of reality. That relationship concerns every thinking person whether he does or does not entitle the whole of reality and the infinite as "God" and finite "Man" as separate from or part of the whole. Nomenclature in this respect again is a matter of personal preference or tradition and can vary considerably, like accents or dialects.

Metaphysical concepts issue from the human mind as much as do forms of art, music, poetry and all imaginative expressions. They embody psychological activities con-

cerned with human needs and while reason is a component of those activities, human nature seeks harmony of all its components of instinct, reason, emotion and volition. Disease ("dis-ease") is the symptom of human failure and decay, and this can only be healed (made whole) by seeking unity through concentric circles from the individual to the race and the whole of life. Through wars, tumults, emigrations, class conflicts, revolutions, alliances and assimilations there is also pressure to achieve diversity within unity because otherwise there is degeneration. Animals in their limited worlds can only touch the verge of the human world, and human clans also remain constricted until dim consciousness of a wider community dawns, be it through nationhood, religious association or international co-operation.

Meanwhile we can suffer from over-integration of the communities with which we are identified. What do Europeans know of Chinese culture older than that of Europe, and what does the average Christian know of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or other world faiths? The World Congress of Faiths, whose Patron is Dr. Radakrishnon and whose President is Archdeacon Edward Carpenter, seeks to promote not a synthetic hodge-podge of diverse faiths, but friendly understanding of them; yet its growth is obstructed by denominational guards behind barriers of fear. The United Nations and international organisations have constantly to wrestle with the national egotism of old or new Nation-States. Psychological frontiers are very rigid.

Hypothetically other forms of life than ours could exist among the myriad galaxies, but intercourse with them might well prove impossible because their and our senses have conformed to different environments. Science-fiction writers who portray stellar strangers as flying-



saucer tourists, lumps of gristle with elongated antennae or gravel-voiced, gliding Daleks may therefore be off-track because interlopers may swarm around us without our capacity to comprehend them—a disturbing speculation that suggests our habitation of an invisible gorgonzola cheese!

More soberly I submit it is neither irrational nor inconceivable that dimensionally we may be enfolded like rose petals or prosaic onion leaves, or we may be affected by subtle penetrations like rain that soaks garments or electronic vibrations that penetrate solid objects. On such speculations we can be agnostic without dogmatically asserting their impossibility. If these were ever proven true our present scientific and moral convictions would require even more drastic revision than that demanded by our sociological and cultural transitions. What by experience and insight we come to accept as essential values that endow us with ability to reconcile earth's disparate individuals and communities will remain available if ever we do stumble into contact with unfamiliar entities.

This does not mean either that personality must be sacrificed in the interests of fraternity or that communal singularities must disappear to achieve world unity. All parts of reality are as the spokes in a cart-wheel, the stars and planets in constellations or the multitudinous cells in human bodies. Our task is to avoid lurching into either gregarious totalitarianism or anarchic confusion. Individuals have an obligation not to exploit the commonweal by irresponsible egotism and to find fulfilment in service to their inescapable communities, but sometimes they have to resist attempts by Lilliputians to enrope Gulliver in mass mediocrity.

Shelley's "many-coloured glass" does not stain "the white radiance" in the sense of "spoil" or "sully", but is

prismatic enrichment. Snow-like emulsion is only anti-septically pure, and flame is also pure. Diverse individual and social foliage can only flourish in harmonious conditions in which freedom and liberty are reconciled with law and order, where there is respect for both worthy traditions and creative innovations and when it is rooted in the soil of an equitable social order.

Christian theologians have provided spiritual unity either in One Holy Catholic Church or evangelically in a community of the "saved" in contrast with the "unsaved", and nominally these still prevail. But now there are admissions that non-Christian good intentions will be taken into account on Judgment Day. In view of the muting of the former doctrine of eternal damnation for sinners, non-Christians are entitled to ask what therefore does "salvation" really mean? If the modern, diluted version means simply salvation from evil or sin then this cannot be exclusively Christian because of the host of men and women with lives of blessed quality who belong to other religions or none. Neither an ecclesiastical nor a theological lifeboat to save them from disaster is of relevance because they navigate at least quite as competently as the voyagers in a doctrinal ark.

It is these with whom this book is mainly concerned in the hope that a few of my reflections will encourage them to appreciate the deeper significance of their conscious or unconscious humanism and, perhaps, also a more acceptable interpretation of clarified religion. I do not pretend to offer an academic, philosophical treatise and I am aware that what I have written is very inadequate and leaves scores of questions unanswered — and some, unanswerable. Let me, however, summarise some of my propositions.

#### *A Summary*

1. Traditional religion in Britain suffers persistent decline

mainly because of scepticism induced by scientific thought and the diffused realisation that improved social wellbeing has been achieved by democratic pressure, expanded moral consciousness and economic technology, generally independent and in advance of organised religion.

2. Moral criteria have varied and will vary, but predominant moral values have emerged through many channels as intimations of the direction for true human and spiritual fulfilment.

3. Man has learned to discriminate and cherish among his human components those qualities that serve this fulfilment.

4. Doctrinal statements of human thought and speculation about Man and the universe are records which are fallible and subject to revision.

5. Self-consciousness as our focus of the world we know is a cosmic phenomenon as real as any sensuous or tangible manifestation.

6. We are constantly conditioned by internal and external forces of basic energy that have been personalised into supernatural beings, but which remain inescapable influences when depersonalised.

7. Although we are creatures of circumstance we can within limits become responsibly creative.

8. Our full environment is vaster than we may assume and is transmitted through media that include "heightened consciousness".

9. We should seek not only to probe the mystery enshrouding Ultimate Reality, but also sympathetically to appreciate the inner content of patterns of faith and the significance of rare personalities behind historical accretions.

10. Our human aspiration and service involve an act of faith which may not be demonstrable scientifically, but which testifies to an inherent purpose or teleology in Man

despite his travail, frustration and confusion.

Much of my exposition may appear platitudinous. Some readers will amplify it theologically, and others will criticise it as imprecise or venturing beyond familiar facts. Nevertheless I trust it has sufficient substance as a broad indication of what one human being finds as a bridge between religion and Humanism. I have distinguished between unconscious and conscious Humanism because while conscious Humanism has both contemporary and also historical exponents reaching back to Confucius, Epicurus and Seneca and to such later Renaissance humanists as Erasmus, it is the unconscious Humanism of social protest that has been the moral impetus within the human spirit, irrespective of theological doctrine or ecclesiastical authority.

Christian theologians have differentiated between "natural" and "revealed" religion. This is arbitrary, for, to take one example, though the Decalogue has been attributed to divine revelation its prohibitions and orders have also arisen elsewhere in social evolution as "natural" necessities; and much now considered moral or immoral received no specific divine revelation. Slavery was formerly "natural", and contraception "unnatural" and wicked, until expanded moral consciousness made the former evil and the latter good, except for Roman Catholics who remain distressed by repercussions from Pope Paul's *Humanae Vitae* encyclical. Protestants believe that the Reformation brought a salutary revelation of Christian truth, and Nonconformists that this was divinely amplified by their 17th century struggle for freedom of worship. Some Christians may hesitate to agree that the equal freedom now enjoyed by agnostics, humanists and atheists was also due to a further divine revelation.

Two denominations have translated religious freedom

more consistently than others. The Society of Friends (Quakers) imposes no theological test although it has its Book of Discipline. By employing Christological terminology with diplomatic ambiguity it preserves some affinity with the Free Churches. This is hardly so with The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches which also require no credal conformity, so that some types of humanists are within its membership. Between these religious communities there are substantial differences, but there is similarity between Quaker reliance on "The Inner Light" as a spiritual authority and Unitarian trust in "Freedom of reason and conscience in the search for Truth". There are several publications on Quaker history, and on Unitarianism *The English Presbyterians* (Allen and Unwin, 1968) by four Unitarian ministers gives an informative description of one among several Unitarian tributaries.

Incidentally the book illustrates how some former Unitarians could be as insensitive to the moral significance of the movement for social justice in their day as were orthodox Christians. It declares of the then debated "Ten Hours Bill", limiting the hours of labour, "influential Unitarians opposed it on middle-class grounds". So did Quaker John Bright. Honour must be accorded to Quakers for their pioneer repudiation of slavery, their "peace testimony" and work for prison reform, and to Unitarians for their devotion to wider political enfranchisement, education and public service.

With our democratic freedom and liberty we can think and say almost anything, in sad contrast with some other lands, and we can do so trivially, critically, cynically, generously or responsibly. Those who use this freedom positively to nourish their inner lives and human service are to be found in many religious, ethical, cultural, political and philanthropic organisations, but many people appear

to live their little lives unconcerned with a purpose beyond their own narrow interests and pleasures. On matters of vital importance to the quality of life and deepest human needs either their attitude is epitomised in the hackneyed phrase "I couldn't care less" or they lapse into a mood of indifferent futility with the excuse that life's problems are too complex for them to bother about. Both paths lead to a mental and spiritual wilderness.

We all know that here and abroad a multitude of people are so heavily burdened and harassed by poverty, strain, ill-health, social disorder or oppression that they cannot be expected to comprehend or assimilate richer values. There are other multitudes, however, whose burdens are not so crushing that they have no time or opportunity for more than the effort to survive. These who by the exertion of their whole spirit transcend the superficial world and enter into a larger life have an immense responsibility to serve those who need guidance.

The sense of a vaster realm than the egocentric is a profound human need. In elementary forms it can be experienced in gregarious emotion when individuals feel themselves fused into a palpitating, sometimes delirious, unity. By psychological direction aggregated human beings can become whipped into frenzied elation or hatred particularly when nationalist or racialist feelings are electrified. Rival crowds have been similarly intoxicated for Luther or Pope, Hitler or Mussolini, Kosygin or Mao Tse Tung, for or against England or France, Russia or China, Arabia or Israel, Pakistan or India, Black or White Power, Everton or Spurs, Pinks or Greens, Mangolds or Wurzels, rival gods, or any other person or cause. These were essentially the same human beings, only separated and conditioned by birthplace, but all congealed into collective,

hypnotic adulation or wrath, and in the process losing their lives to find them in psychic submergence, not ascension.

That is what Man can be like when immersed in dark torrents released from his underworld. It can happen anywhere, for no portion of our race is immune from this liability. It can course through varied religious, ideological, national or racial channels and can be exploited by demagogues, zealots, charlatans or despots with fine intentions or with brazen hearts. To blame religion or political movements for this is false and futile, for it is phenomenal of Man himself. The time was when communists, and indeed socialists, sang with unquestioning ardour "The International" with its rousing rhetoric—

Then comrades come rally

The last fight let us face

The Internationale unites the human race.

Russian, Chinese, Hungarian, Yugoslav and Czechoslovakian communists may now begin to realise that as their Marxist "International" has been torn asunder as tragically as have Christian and other religious faiths, we are all confronted with the fact that human nature needs far more than revolutionary change in its institutions.

The mutual savage abuse of Russia and Chinese might have led to more than frontier skirmishes had not fear of wholesale military involvement and its frightful consequences been a deterrent. Surely it is now obvious that ultimately world fraternity and peace rests on decisions within the innermost life of Man and his acceptance or rejection of essential values. Whether that sounds parsonically unctuous or not it remains a crucial fact. Too many critics and adversaries of religion fail to realise that Man will live by what he believes, not by what he rejects. Criticism of traditional religious concepts has been necessary, and with this Voltairean or milder satire is not

illegitimate, but if this is not subordinate to the purpose of clarifying realities and strengthening the growth of Man's finest qualities then nothing but scintillating jewels and sharp stones are offered to the famished who need bread.

Mankind needs enlightenment, compassion, reconciliation and beauty more than derision, polemical victories, barren negations or shallow hedonism. It needs also sympathetically to appreciate real values within diverse beliefs and faiths and not indiscriminate disdain. They are expressions of precious self-consciousness, within which the abysmal and the sublime wrestle for dominance.

Signs of our menacing fears are displayed in grotesque carvings and like other personalised embodiments of natural forces their entity remains when we have laughed at or cast away the images. Those forces remain as real as the gods and goddesses, hobgoblins and angelic beings in which Man has ever believed in his ignorance or stupidity. But there have been and are other forces by which Man has been impelled to love abundantly, pierce mysteries and fashion things of delight. However perplexed Man has been (and is) at the paradox of his capacity for cruelty and compassion, brutality and beauty, and of his heart in a seemingly heartless universe, transcendent sublimity is real and offers him meaning, purpose and light. In those we must repose our absolute trust.

Churches and religious institutions will continue to decline, but many human souls will always find comfort and strength in them and in hallowed forms of worship. Of those who do not there are some who must be stewards of a modern faith that all sensitive men and women need, even if this they may not consciously want. Whether those stewards employ traditional theological terms with a wider content or prefer a new terminology is of less importance than the reality, for words at their best are only our

semantic instruments. What is of paramount importance is that we find means of meeting that profound human need. In this I affirm that we should not be seduced into thinking that the only reality is the tangible and sensuous, but that reality is vaster and more permeative of our material environment than we can neatly tie up with intellectual string.

We must emulate the strange writer who declaimed "Behold, I make all things new" so that in a spiritually baffled world and age we can combat Mammon-worship, moral irresponsibility, devastating hatreds and frantic fears with affirmations transmitted through a new idiom. Those fascinated with modern technology contend that by biological and mechanical manipulation the future condition of Man can, and even will, be determined. To some extent this is already taking place, for increasingly the future is being planned and not left to the free play of natural and sociological circumstances, and not only are our minds influenced by mass psychological media but also our disposition and behaviour can be directed by medical means. This is a new determinism that could depend on a few manipulators to decide our destiny, and what that is to be also depends on what those few believe should be the world of tomorrow. Thus, it is assumed, the ecclesiastical, political and economic directive agencies of the past will be replaced by a technological elite who will prudently ensure reasonable social conditions for the masses by the intelligent deployment of the vast resources of wealth production now available and the imposition of a requisite social discipline.

Those technologists inclined to think this, and to expect with this a transformation and realignment of politics, assume too much. Apart from the fact that beyond the technology remains the initial, crucial issue of human values,

they do not allow either for the intrusion of the unpredictable or for the irrepressible human urge to seek a spiritual fulfilment that technology can never give. Planners of all kinds postulate a purpose, but their purpose is limited to material achievements and although these can be of immense benefit to mankind they could also be disastrous without the recognition of the full meaning and need of the human spirit.

Theologies, philosophies and ideologies will wax and wane, but through them all that human spirit has responded and will respond to an impulse some call divine by which it can transcend crudities and cruelties, fears and enmities, and find portents of the Infinite in finite life.

In that sense I believe in Man.