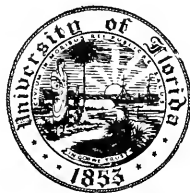




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# ASPECTS OF ETHICAL RELIGION



# ASPECTS OF ETHICAL RELIGION

*Essays in Honor of*  
FELIX ADLER

*On the Fiftieth Anniversary of his  
Founding of the Ethical Movement, 1876*

By his Colleagues

*Edited by*  
HORACE J. BRIDGES

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# To Felix Adler

DEAR FRIEND AND LEADER:

I have the honour, as spokesman for the writers who have collaborated in producing this volume, to present it to you as a small token of our affection and esteem upon the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Ethical Movement, which you founded in 1876, and of which you have for this half-century been the guide and inspirer.

In these pages you will find various aspects of our common faith illustrated and defended. No attempt has been made to secure unity of theme or unanimity in thought. In accordance with the broad mental liberty which has ever been and must ever be the distinctive characteristic of our fellowship, each man has chosen his own topic and presented freely his own arguments and conclusions. Indeed, with the exception of myself, to whom was entrusted the task of editing and seeing the volume through the press, none of the writers has seen any part of the book save his own contribution. Such unity as our work has, therefore, is due to the spontaneous and uncoerced agreement of independent minds; and, in addition, to the loyalty and personal love which all of us entertain towards you.

In the central thought that animates all you have done, and all you have said with tongue or pen, each of your colleagues finds his cardinal inspiration. With you we all share the conviction of the inherent, inderivative, intrinsic sacredness

of that common nature which is uniquely differentiated in every member of the human family. And, like you, we find the authentic stamp and seal of this lurking divinity not in what man empirically is, but in the unsleeping law, the voice of his potential and most real self, which ever condemns his actual state and record, and summons him to self-transcendence and self-regeneration. Again, we are at one with you in the certitude that the only path of progress in this infinite task is that which men follow when they seek to awaken and liberate the shackled and slumbering perfection which the intuition of faith affirms to be present in every man. It is in the light of this postulate of Spiritual Worth that we perceive the graded series of life's duties, our duties to family, vocation, nation and humanity, the effort to fulfil which is the sole means of vindicating and verifying the faith from which they spring.

In offering this contribution to the celebration of a great occasion, we unite in the fervent hope that you may be spared for many years to inspire the growth and extension of the work to which your life has been devoted, and that its progress, through our efforts and those of our successors, may be ever true to the direction given to it by your far-piercing vision and exalted standards.

On behalf of the writers of this book, I have the honour, dear Dr. Adler, to subscribe myself,

Yours ever sincerely,

HORACE J. BRIDGES.

*Chicago, February 23, 1926.*

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# ASPECTS OF ETHICAL RELIGION



# Ethical Mysticism

By STANTON COIT (London).

As to my empirical self, I let go my hold on it . . . I affirm the real and irreducible existence of the essential self . . . I affirm that the ideal of perfection which my mind inevitably conceives has its counterpart in the ultimate reality of things, is the truest reading of that reality whereof man is capable . . . a part of our living in the infinite manifold of the spiritual life. The thought of this, as apprehended, not in terms of knowledge, but in *immediate experience*, begets the peace that passeth understanding. And it is upon the bosom of that peace that we can pass safely out of the realm of time and space.

*Felix Adler.*

## I.

**I**N THIS ESSAY I purpose to tell how the Ethical Movement strikes a contemporary who, except for the first five years of its half-century of work, has viewed it from within and has felt not so much that he was part of it as that it was the better part of him. It was thus that Porphyry in the third century of our era wrote about the neo-Platonic school of Plotinus, to which he belonged. Porphyry gave only his intimate impressions and personal estimates and not an authoritative record, but his account is not without objective value. In reading his *Life of Plotinus*, while one notes the individual peculiarities of the disciple,

yet one can easily discriminate between what is Platonism, or Plotinus, and what is merely Porphyry. I hope that in the same way I shall not misrepresent the Ethical Movement, although I give free expression to my own convictions as to what it is and what it means.

Why I have named such an Essay Ethical Mysticism will soon become clear, and the reader can then draw his own conclusions as to whether the naming of it in this way is to be set down to eccentricity in the writer or to some essential characteristic of the thing he is writing about.

In England it has been customary to speak of the fundamental attitude of the Ethical Societies towards life and religion as "Ethicism"—an ugly word, but useful till a more fitting term is devised. It was coined about 1888 by Mr. Frederic Harrison, at that time President of the English Positivist Society. He must have realized that the starting-point and the method of procedure of the Ethical Movement are unique, differing not only from those of Positivism but from those of the historic religions; else he could not have felt that our position required, and deserved the distinction of, a new label. The question I shall here raise is: What is "Ethicism"? And in its briefest form my answer will be: It is Ethical Mysticism.

Our distinguishing mark cannot be, as is sometimes alleged, the special emphasis we lay upon the supreme importance of morality. For in their own way Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism have placed equal stress upon duty, by their insistence that behind or within it is the will of the almighty Creator of the universe. No

less insistent upon the same point was the teaching of primitive Buddhism; for it turned the minds of men away from the whole universe of power and concentrated their attention exclusively upon right thinking, right action and the like. It could not have been, then, the mere emphasis with which we stress the significance of character and conduct, which induced so scholarly a thinker and writer as Frederic Harrison to invent the word Ethicism. He saw something which was unprecedented, pulsating at the heart of "Ethical Culture." What was it?

Anthropologists and historians agree that every great ethical religion began as, and evolved from, a worship of a Power or Energy or Being — impersonal or personal — which overwhelmed and amazed the mind of man and filled him with a sense of the stupendous and uncanny, but which he did not at first see or believe or feel to be ethical in character. Only after ages of collective experience had disclosed the social urgency of right conduct were moral qualities ascribed to the deity, although undoubtedly men were prompted to establish religious cults by the felt pressure, and by a subconscious and confused foreboding, of social obligation. Thus, through religion, morality was not only rationalized but projected outward — carried over into the object of religious veneration. This process, so far as ancient Judaism is concerned, has been recently laid bare to our view by the higher criticism of the Old Testament. Rudolf Otto, perhaps the most influential theologian of Germany now living, in his book entitled *Das Heilige*, says: "The noble religion of Moses marks the beginning of a process which

from that point onward proceeds with ever increasing momentum, by which 'the numinous' (the divine) is throughout rationalized and moralised, *i.e.* charged with ethical import, until it (the ethical import) becomes the holy in the fullest sense of the word."<sup>1</sup> In a different way primitive Buddhism is also an instance of the rationalization and moralisation of an earlier religion: instead of charging an external power with ethical import, it ousted the external power altogether and retained only man's subjective states of mind and an inward discipline. Unhappily, however, in dropping the external object of religious worship, Buddha also abandoned the objective factor in ethical experience itself, as if man's thinking were the whole of moral reality.

Now the Ethical Movement, it seems to me, begins where the historic ethical religions have ended and halted. Through thirty centuries, by a zig-zag line, they have been arriving ever closer to morality, whilst the Ethical Movement starts with it. They began with divinity; we, with duty. They went on to moralize deity; we, to deify morality. They said that the Real is good; we say that the Good is real. The difference in starting-point and procedure is fundamental as regards intuitive and logical implications and practical fruitfulness. Whereas they charged the object of religious veneration with ethical import, we charge the object of ethical import with religious veneration. But Power — the Almighty — still remains the object of their worship, while Principle — the spiritual ideal — will continue to be the object of ours. Power is the substance of their

<sup>1</sup>*The Idea of the Holy*, Oxford, 1923, p. 77.

deity and goodness its attribute. God is their noun and good their adjective. With us Good is the subject and reality the predicate. We start with goodness as something which confronts us and is seen to be not of our making, that is, with an absolute value; and we sanctify it. They started with a fact which confronted and overawed them but had not shown itself to be good; and they proceeded to ethicise it.

In the judgment of Rudolph Otto their process of moralising deity has been carried too far. He would bring them back to the originally holy thing, which was not perfect truth, beauty and goodness, but something inscrutable, non-rational and inaccessible to conceptual investigation: that is, he would bring them back to the veneration of raw fact, of crude and elemental power. But if the complete moralisation of deity is repugnant to Otto, how much more would be our idea that no power is holy except that which is inherent in the spiritual principle of truth, beauty and goodness.

The older religious systems and organizations have not succeeded in convincing the world that the power which reigns in or over the universe of fact is wholly good; but it will be comparatively easy to demonstrate to a thinking and critical age that the universe of absolute values is by an inherent right all-powerful, thus leading men to bring whatever might is at their command to the side of right. And yet, if one perceives the ethical ideal to be the eternal order of things to which the mind of man is open and with which it is in vital touch, and if, although it is not yet realised in finite individuals and social groups, it is nevertheless already *real* in itself, — its ever-present

reality tends to become the primal and abiding principle of one's life. This being so, the question whether the ethical ideal ever is to be actualised in any finite entity or not, becomes a secondary issue.

In moments when ethical experience grows clear and vivid, the ideal is seen and felt to be an ever-present, inexhaustible and indestructible energy. In the eyes of reason, it is ultimate and self-evident Truth; for the heart, it is all-satisfying and chastening Beauty; and for the will, the creative principle of Personal and Social Activity.

Those who are familiar with the essential feature in all mystical experience, as it has been portrayed by gifted men and women in the East and West, in ancient as well as modern times, under pagan no less than theistic systems, will already have anticipated the reasons which have led me to apply the name Ethical Mysticism to the intuitive experience that the ethical ideal is *real*.

## II.

The Ethical Movement has issued from two great historical traditions. The one — of which I have spoken — is the increasing ascription of morality to Power as the object of worship. That process is now completed and transcended; it is giving way to an ascription of power to Morality as the object of worship. This transformation has been rendered possible by the influence of the other great tradition which has lived on for more than two thousand years and, despite unfortunate arrests in development, has matured in its self-



expression. The best name for this tradition is Platonism; for Plato taught that the Good is the self-evident ultimate of reason, and he more than once hinted that it is dynamic and impinges upon the world of the senses. In the Neo-Platonic school, culminating in Plotinus in the third century after Christ, this hint became the germ of the doctrine of Emanation, of Descent, or Incarnation. Thus has been preserved the discovery of power in Goodness, in opposition to the dogma of goodness in Power. Although the Platonic philosophy has been, as Dean Inge never tires of repeating, the "old loving nurse" of the Christian symbol, it is now again feeding its own child, the universal moral sentiment, which is at last beginning to take on corporate life in religious organizations.

### III.

The *Standard* of May, 1923, printed the Presidential Address to the English Ethical Union, which had been delivered the year before by Prof. J. H. Muirhead, of the University of Birmingham, who in 1885 had assisted in founding the London Ethical Society and became its first secretary. The title of his discourse was "A New Faith for a New Age." Under it he treated of what he called Prof. Adler's "new inspiration" as compared with his "old one," that which animated the New York Ethical Society at its foundation in 1876. He appealed to the members of the English Ethical Union with these words: "Trust Felix Adler's new inspiration as you trusted his old one." His point was that between 1876 and 1922 the times had changed and

advanced; that then the problem was the interpretation of the *moral* consciousness and that now it "is nothing less than a reinterpretation of the *religious* consciousness on the same level and on the same lines as the reinterpretation which we sought thirty or forty years ago to give to the moral consciousness." He maintained that Prof. Adler's thought and message had advanced with the times and that his new inspiration met the need of the new age. "It was he, so to speak, who led ethical-minded people out," said Prof. Muirhead, "and set their feet upon the rock in the interpretation of the moral consciousness. I am just as convinced to-day that Felix Adler's new inspiration is right as I was in 1885 when I first came under his influence."

My only hesitation in accepting fully Prof. Muirhead's judgment is due to the fact that, in my opinion, Prof. Adler has not given utterance to two inspirations fifty years apart, but has only issued two instalments of one inspiration. Those who were in daily personal association with him many years ago see nothing in his recent books which was not clearly foreshadowed and well outlined in his earlier publications and lectures, and especially in his private talks with colleagues. I do not mean to imply that his thought and utterance have not ripened, nor, when I say that his teaching has not changed, that this ripening has not been in great part stimulated by the special need of the new age. One cannot call a thought new, when it has merely unfolded and expanded from within, however much it has been nourished from without. Prof. Adler's method of communicating his message has also not changed. He does

not now attempt, nor did he formerly, to impose the religious side of his teaching upon others as a condition of membership or leadership in the Ethical Societies.

Prof. Muirhead's main contention, however, is right, that now the leader of the Ethical Movement is reinterpreting the religious consciousness on the same level and on the same lines as at the first he interpreted the moral consciousness. But his new task would not now be possible for him, had he not at the beginning seen the reciprocal bearings of ethics and religion. From the first he did not omit to indicate these bearings; but it was necessary then to disentangle the ethical from the religious elements in consciousness and proclaim the autonomy and spiritual priority of ethics, in order that both the ethical and the religious consciousness might be cleared of alien materials which had penetrated from man's animal instincts and assumed fantastic forms. Prof. Adler held from the first that the ethical ideal is not transient, not temporal, not subject to the vicissitudes of place and time, and not dependent upon recognition by finite minds, but that it is itself the real and eternal world which conditions but is not conditioned by the realm of the senses; and it is on this account that he held and still holds that the ethical is the true bond of religious union. Although his spiritual teaching has with the years become more explicit, it was from the first never absent and never purely implicit.

#### IV.

Bernard Bosanquet, who during the last thirty years has been, next to Bradley, the most influen-

tial and original expounder in England of Absolute Idealism, was also one of the organizers of the London Ethical Society in 1885. He also, like Muirhead, soon withdrew from its membership. He, too, has expressed in his books the opinion that the Ethical Movement stands for the moral, but not for the religious, consciousness. And as he did not continue to follow even at a distance the thought and spirit of our Societies, he remained unaware, even to the time of his death in 1923, of the "new inspiration" which Prof. Muirhead found in Prof. Adler's *Ethical Philosophy of Life*. In his posthumously published essay on "Life and Philosophy," which appears in the recent volume entitled *Contemporary British Philosophy* (Personal Statements, First Series),<sup>1</sup> Bosanquet refers to the Ethical Movement in the following terms:

At this point I have in mind especially the fundamental contrast between the moral and the religious attitude, according to which morality lies essentially in a recognition of the "ought-to-be" which is not, and therefore involves an individualistic conception of perfectibility in particular finite spirits throughout a temporal progression. While religion, implying as a subordinate feature all that morality can imply of duty and self-improvement, is understood to lie essentially in a union by faith and will with a real supreme perfection in which finite imperfection, though actual, is felt to be transcended and abolished. The very wide-spread influence of the ethical culture movement and a progressive temper akin to it, throughout our higher civilization, appears to me to show that the philosophical lesson typically inherent in the argument to

<sup>1</sup>Edited by J. H. Muirhead, London, 1924.

which I am referring has not at all been mastered by the enlightenment of to-day; and that, in the latter's lofty aspiration to a pure humanistic ethic, it has lost hold of the truth which had been won by religion in the ancient doctrine for which justification was essentially by faith. (P. 59.)

Now, whoever has been acquainted with the ethical culture movement from within and at its centre will see instantly that Bosanquet is ascribing to it a doctrine, or point of view, which it rejects as vehemently as does Bosanquet himself; and on exactly the same grounds. Like him, the ethical leaders have taught in season and out of season that morality lies "essentially in a union . . . with a real supreme perfection in which finite imperfection, though actual, is felt to be transcended and abolished." On lines parallel to Prof. Adler's, Bosanquet's inspiration unfolded and expanded with the years; but as he did not understand at first and never informed himself later as to the full import of "ethical culture" as the ethical leaders conceived it, he fell into the error of inferring that what he did not see, did not exist. One need only compare Bosanquet's later books with Prof. Adler's, to discover the striking similarity in their ethical and religious views. Like Prof. Adler, Bosanquet continued to regard as incredible: miracles, a special incarnation in the person of Jesus, individual immortality and a personal God; and all these he accounted as detachable from religion without injury to its essential significance. He believed that the object of religion transcends humanity, that the concern of religion (and ethics) is with values more than human. So does Prof. Adler. He believed that the supreme end of man's life

was not contingent upon the future, or upon the inevitability of human progress or the fate of the human race. So does Prof. Adler. "What we are offered is a share in the eternal deed which constitutes reality," Bosanquet says, "and I am unable to see what more than this our largest wishes can demand."<sup>1</sup> It seems to me necessary to point out these striking similarities between Bosanquet's attitude towards life and religion and ours, chiefly because his interpretation of the Ethical Movement has been, in England at least, widely accepted by philosophical and theological writers and their students, and has caused our Movement to lose the approval of the very men who, if they understood it aright, would be the first to give us their support. Through Bosanquet's misunderstanding many others have misunderstood and been biased against us. For instance, Prof. Webb of Oxford, in writing in the *Hibbert Journal* of October, 1923 on "Bernard Bosanquet's Philosophy of Religion," says of the Ethical Movement: "He (Bosanquet) subsequently severed his connection with it, being increasingly dissatisfied with its substitution of the attempt to abolish evil by a progressive reform of society for a religious faith in its subordination to a divine purpose, the fulfilment of which does not merely lie ahead of us in some better age which, if it ever come at all, we cannot hope to live to see, but is eternally present, and can therefore afford us, through the conscious identification of our wills therewith, the satisfaction which the 'meliorism' of the devotees of what they called 'ethical culture' postponed

<sup>1</sup>Quoted by Prof. Webb in his *Hibbert Journal* article.

to an indefinite future." (pp. 84-5.) Now, as a matter of fact, which any one can verify and ought to verify before presuming to write on the subject, the Ethical Movement does not presume to abolish evil by a progressive reform of society *instead of* by conscious identification of our finite wills with an eternally present world of spiritual reality. We do not postpone spiritual satisfaction to an indefinite future. That is just what we turn away from, as we open our minds to the descent of the ever-present ideal reality upon us and into us.

Again, Prof. Webb in his *Hibbert Journal* article says: "In his revolt from the 'mere morality' of the Ethical Societies and his ever stronger insistence on the need of religion to give the assurance which 'mere morality' can never yield to the man engaged in the battle of life. . . ." (pp. 85-6), and so on. But there is no occasion to finish a sentence which begins so inaccurately. The be-all and end-all of the Ethical Societies is to proclaim and demonstrate that morality is never "mere morality." Our whole meaning is that expressed by Emerson in the passage where he rebukes those who chatter about mere morality, saying that they might as well talk about "poor God, with nobody to help him." The members of Ethical Societies have found the ethical ideal "quick with immense vitality." This it is which has drawn them into religious fellowship. Pure goodness, they have found, overbrims with spiritual healing power and its help is always at hand; *it* is not to blame if any man be not cured instantly and lifted into an atmosphere free from the poisonous hopes and

fears of self-centred existence. According to Prof. Webb and Bosanquet, the Ethical Movement does not know this truth; Prof. Muirhead thinks we have taken fifty years to discover it. But these scholars had not been listening-in, although we have been broadcasting this message from the first.

I have said that the Ethical Movement is the only religious organization which sets up the Good instead of the neutral stuff of Power as the ultimate reality. But so to characterise our Movement is not to imply that its leaders have originated ethico-spiritual teaching, or have any monopoly of it. On the contrary, they are, as I have said, inheritors of an ancient and high tradition; and they rejoice in the fact that many individual persons are teaching a similar doctrine. Ethical mysticism is more widely accepted to-day than ever before as the foundation of sound religious belief. It is beginning to be preached from many Christian pulpits. In the Anglican Church, under the leadership of Dean Inge, something which looks like the nucleus of an ecclesiastical party, in addition to the High, Low and Broad, seems to be forming itself about the idea that Truth, Beauty and Goodness are God; and there is a bare possibility that in a few generations such a party will be in the ascendant, and will then not only reinterpret but revise the formulae of all denominations in England in this ethical sense. But, until then, Ethical Societies will remain the only religious fellowships based on the experience that the Good is the eternal reality.

For upwards of a generation, however, the



English and Scotch Universities have been conspicuous centres of the thought that the ideal of what ought to be is the only object of an illuminated religious consciousness. Prof. Muirhead and Bosanquet are but two representatives of this academic movement. Another, of still greater reputation and influence, was Bradley. Take, for instance, the closing chapter of Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, which was published in the same year in which the New York Ethical Society was founded. There he offers a view of the relation of ethics to religion nearly identical in detail with that set forth by Prof. Adler. No two men of marked originality have ever presented the same truth independently in forms so closely alike, despite the long co-operation in thinking and expression among philosophers concerning the deeper realities of life. I will not quote the corresponding passages from Prof. Adler's writings, as they are accessible to my readers; but Bradley's book has now been out of print for many years, and the rare copies still obtainable can be purchased only at ten times their original price.

One seems almost to hear Prof. Adler speaking, when Bradley says:

Are we to say then that morality is religion? Most certainly not. In morality the ideal is not: it for ever remains a 'to-be.' The reality in us or the world is partial and inadequate; and no one could say that it answers to the ideal, that, morally considered, both we and the world are all we ought to be, and ought to be just what we are. We have at furthest the belief in an ideal which in its pure completeness is never real; which, as an ideal, is a mere 'should be.' And the question is, will that do for religion?

No knower of religion, who was not led away by a theory, would answer Yes. Nor does it help us to say that religion is 'morality touched by emotion'; for loose phrases of this sort may suggest to the reader what he knows already without their help, but, properly speaking, they *say* nothing. (p. 281.)

Religion is more than morality. In the religious consciousness we find the belief, however vague and indistinct, in an object, a not-myself; an object, further, which is real. An ideal which is not real, which is only in our heads, cannot be the subject of religion; and in particular the ideal self, as the 'is to be' which is real only so far as we put it forth by our wills, and which, as an ideal, we cannot put forth, is not a real object, and so not the object for religion. Hence, because it is unreal, the ideal of personal morality is not enough for religion. And we have seen before that the ideal is not realized in the objective world of the state; so that, apart from other objections, here again we cannot find the religious object. (p. 282.)

Religion, we have seen, must have an object: and that object is neither an abstract idea in the head, nor one particular thing or quality, nor any collection of such things or qualities, not any phrase which stands for one of them or a collection of them. In short it is nothing finite. It cannot be a thing or person in the world; it cannot exist in the world, as a part of it, or as this or that course of events in time; it cannot be the 'All,' the sum of things or persons,—since, if one is not the divine, no putting of ones together will beget divinity. All this it is not. Its positive character is that it is real; and further, on examining what we find in the religious consciousness, we discover that it is the ideal self considered as realised and real. The ideal self, which in morality is to be, is here the real ideal which truly is.

For morals the ideal self was an 'ought,' an 'is to be' that is not; the object of religion is that same ideal self, but here it no longer only ought to be, but also is. This is the nature of the religious object, though the manner of apprehending it may differ widely, may be anything from the vaguest instinct to the most thoughtful reflection. . . .

In the very essence of the religious consciousness we find the relation of our *will* to the real ideal self. We find ourselves, as this or that will, against the object as the real ideal will, which is not ourselves, and which stands to us in such a way that, *though real, it is to be realised, because it is all and the whole reality.* (pp. 284-5.)

We find in the religious consciousness the ideal self as the complete reality; and we have, beside, its claim upon us. Both elements, and their relation, are given in one and the same consciousness. (pp. 286-7.)

We have the felt struggle in us of two wills, with both of which we feel ourselves identified. And this relation of the divine and human will in one subject is a psychological impossibility, unless they are the wills of one subject. . . . The religious consciousness implies that God and man are identical in a subject. (p. 288.)

Has the divine will of the religious consciousness any other content than the moral ideal? We answer, Certainly not. Religion is practical; it means doing something which is a duty. Apart from duties, there is no duty; and as all moral duties are also religious, so all religious duties are also moral. (p. 297.)

And so the content of religion and morality is the same, though the spirit in which it is done is widely different. (pp. 288-9.)

Bradley always writes from the point of view of metaphysics; that is to say, whatever particu-

lar event, thing or value he is treating of, he sees it in relation to experience as a whole. He is nothing, if not comprehensive and systematic; and his chief interest is with the whole and not with the parts of truth. He would also have wished to be judged by the validity of his system. But the remarkable thing about great metaphysicians, like Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Leibniz, Kant and Bradley, is that they are at the same time great psychologists, logicians and moralists, acute observers of particular facts and discerners of vital relations existing among particulars. Evidently, devotion to metaphysics, the science of things in general, does not incapacitate a man for detailed research and discovery. On the other hand, men may be great specialists who have no capacity for metaphysics. But whether any one could be a great metaphysician without pre-eminent gifts for minute research and discovery is questionable. This is certain, however, that to judge a philosopher only by the adequacy of his thought-structure as a whole and to overlook his contributions to logic, ethics, psychology and the natural sciences, or to disparage these on account of the deficiency of that, is to do him an injustice; while to ignore these contributions is also to rob oneself of invaluable treasures. At least it holds good of Bradley that his system might be shattered to pieces and yet that every fragment in itself would be worth preserving and reinstating in a new system of thought and life.

It will not have escaped the reader of the passages I have quoted from him, that his brilliantly analytical and synthetic interpretation of the relation of ethics to religion is purely psychological.

All he is doing is to report the nature of the moral and the religious consciousness, their differences and identities, and the way they coalesce in the individual mind to reinforce each other.

Now, it may be bad metaphysics to affirm, as Bradley does, that in each of us are two wills, two selves; the one finite, the other infinite; the one actual, the other ideal; the one temporal, the other eternal. But from the point of view of psychological observation, the facts appear that way; and appearance and reality are in the mental realm one and the same thing. To perceive two wills in one's self, two selves in one subject, and to see them struggling against each other, is to have or to be two wills and to carry on war within one's own consciousness. One cannot help perceiving these facts; and, I repeat, in the sphere of consciousness to-be-perceived is to be. Metaphysics may explain or not explain the facts, but it cannot, and must not attempt to, explain them away.

Bradley's *Ethical Studies* presents, as I have just said, not primarily an ethical, but a psychological, treatment of moral and religious experience, although the audacity of its logic and the soundness and fervour of its ethical and religious insight and passion may at first divert the reader from its psychological acumen and sweep of vision. Bradley's significance for adherents of the Ethical Movement is that he reduces ethics and religion to the same ultimate terms as are indicated and formulated by the Founder of the Ethical Movement in *An Ethical Philosophy of Life*. So far as I know, no other writer on the

*religious* consciousness, except Bradley, has first treated the psychology of *ethical* experience independently and systematically and *then* shown how the religious differs from the moral consciousness only by the fact that it subsumes the contents of the concept "good" under the category of "reality." The purely moral consciousness starts with the discrimination between good and bad, right and wrong; but it suspends judgment as to whether a thing is right simply because men are so constituted that they cannot help thinking it right, or whether it is right because the objective nature of things constrains them so to believe. To the religious consciousness, suspension of judgment on this point is intolerable. Religion, although it may embrace much else, is an affirmation by the intellect that the good is real, with the surrender of the will to this existential judgment. Religion involves the belief that absolute values, although purely ideal, are "there." Herein it asserts the existence of a supersensible order, which consists of nothing but ideal truth, beauty and goodness. Its ground for this affirmation is the known, felt and accepted claim which the absolute values make upon our empirical selves and upon the collective mind of communities of men. How the religious consciousness, thus reduced to its elements and linked with other primary factors of sane mentality by the ordinary canons of observation and logical construction, can be brought into a universal system of truth, does not concern us here; but of this we may be sure: that no universal system of thought can presume to ignore these ultimate data of religious experience. Happily, however, science, art and

spiritual discipline will not and need not wait for the universal science. *It* must include *them*, but they need not on their own account be included in it; yet, doubtless, they would gain prestige in the popular mind by being assigned a worthy place in an organic body of truth.

## V.

One reservation, it seems to me, must be made to Bradley's account of the relation of ethics to religion, although it concerns perhaps more his manner of presentation than his meaning. He seems to imply that in religion as such, and therefore *in all religious systems and practices*, the "content" or "object" of veneration is, vaguely or distinctly, the moral ideal. But if this is what he means, his meaning is not borne out by historical and psychological knowledge. For four thousand years, the world over, there have been religions of which the "object"—or the worshipped attribute of the object—was anything but moral. If deities are essentially moral, or if morality was naturally the thing that was deified, how are we to explain the indubitable fact of history that there has taken place in many religions a gradual moralisation of deity? Facts force us to say that at the root of the religious consciousness, as such, is only and simply man's existential judgment. "IT IS," constitutes the essential object of worship always, or "I AM"—if the object is imagined as speaking. From the religion of the savage to that of Carlyle we find homage to FACT, a surrender to the inevitable, a submission of man's spirit to WHAT IS. The moralisation, therefore, of deity is, as I have said

above, an importation into religion of what is alien to it, just as the deification of morality is an importation into ethics of what is alien to it. In the latter process, "I OUGHT" is made to declare "I AM." This ascription of existence and potency to I OUGHT is only one species of religion, a species so rare that it is as yet without a name, although in need of one. Few have ever seen a specimen of it; and not many have ever heard of it; or, having heard, they refuse to recognize that it is a religion at all. It is this rarest type of religion over which Emerson lamented that it had never been concreted into a cultus, and the neglect of which Matthew Arnold bemoaned in his sonnet entitled "The Divinity":

*Wisdom and goodness, they are God! What  
schools*

*Have yet so much as heard this simpler lore?  
This no Saint preaches, and this no Church  
rules;*

*'Tis in the desert, now and heretofore.*

Clearly, Bradley does not give us the psychology of religion as it is but as it might be and ought to be, and as it will be if it is to survive the tests of philosophic and ethical examination. But he is strictly right in affirming that no religious consciousness can be satisfied with anything short of the "real"; and he is wrong in seeming to imply that the essence of that "real" of religion is always or necessarily man's real ideal self. He ought only to have maintained that nothing but this can satisfy a fully illuminated moral consciousness. These two words, ideal and real, however, demand our attention for a moment, otherwise we may not appreciate the full meaning



of the assertion that the "object" of the moral consciousness cannot become an "object" of religious consciousness unless the moral ideal is, and can be shown to be, real.

No words are in more common use than these two, and none are better understood or less in need of definition. Yet they are generally placed over against each other, as if they could not be applied to one and the same object at the same time. What, then, can the religious consciousness mean in asserting that the "ideal" self is "real"?

It means, in the first place, that the ideals of truth, beauty and goodness are not figments of each man's free fancy. They are not to be classed with delusions or hallucinations or illusions. They do not belong to the world of dreams, but are of such stuff as facts are made on. They confront the wide-awake, critical and sane mind and constrain it to believe that it has not conjured them up out of nothing. Yet these ideals occupy no space and the passage of time is irrelevant to them; they can neither move nor be moved by material objects and are in their nature imperceptible to any of our present senses and would forever be impalpable to any new senses which the human mind may acquire or evolve from within. If, then, they are "real", but do not belong to the realm of the senses, they must constitute another order of existence; and on this account those who believe in their reality say that there is a super-sensible or spiritual world.

In the second place, the religious consciousness in affirming that the ideal is real means that it is not merely an output of an *a priori* disposition, that it is not due merely to a constitutional mode

of valuation by which consciousness reads into outside objects qualities which are not there. On the other hand, however, by asserting that the good is real, religion does not commit itself to the belief that the absolute values exist apart from the mind. Rather does it imply that the perceiving spirit, and the spiritual world perceived, and the intuition which unites the perceiver and perceived, all three, constitute together the one spiritual reality. "The spiritual world," says Plotinus, "is not outside spirit"; nor is spirit outside the spiritual world; nor does the intuition of it exist by itself. No one of these is prior to the other. The perceiver, the perceived, and the perceiving exist together or not at all. At least this is the doctrine of real-idealism, which is found in Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, and which all those modern philosophers accept who acclaim the moral ideal to be the object of the illuminated religious consciousness.

The reader of Bradley's *Ethical Studies*, however, no sooner becomes reconciled to accepting the ideal as real, than he is confronted with the still more striking paradox that the ideal is *a reality which is not yet realized*. How is such a thing possible? If it is yet to be realized, it is surely not real.

Now the appearance of contradiction here will begin to vanish if we first consider an architect's design for a building. If his design is such that it never could be executed in steel and stone or any other materials, it is not a real design. But if in every detail it is feasible, the reason must be that it has itself, so to speak, sprung into the architect's mind out of the real properties of the

materials to be used, the end to be served and the ground and situation where the building is to stand. There is, therefore, nothing arbitrary in speaking of some ideas in a man's mind as real-and-yet-to-be-realized, and of others as incapable of being realized because they are not real.

This analysis, however, has not probed to the root of the paradox, inasmuch as the ideal of a thing is not the same as any one's idea of it. No finite architect has ever had complete insight into and mastery over the material he wishes to shape, or the shape he wishes to give it. The *ideal* of his building, therefore, is not the *idea* which is in his mind, but is the external reality with which his idea would have tallied, if his insight and mastery had been perfect. The real ideal of anything, accordingly, can never be more than approximately imagined in finite thought and never fully realized by a finite will. Hence, in the domain of ethics and religion, there is no sophistry nor vain subtlety in the assertion that there is in each of us a real ideal self which is not yet realized.

It is, furthermore, consistent with the existence of our real ideal self that there should be inextricably bound up with it many actual imperfect selves. For, at the beginning, every finite consciousness is aware only of the outermost surface of its own sphere of being. Through experience it may gradually penetrate toward its centre, and in this advance thitherward the astonishing truth may flash upon it that, while there are many finite selves, there is at the centre of them all one and the same real ideal self. This seems to me good social psychology and logic, and many philosophers would add that it is good metaphy-

sics. At least it lays bare the elements and relations of the moral and the religious consciousness. It also tends to clarify, deepen and quicken one's spiritual insight.

Bradley's analysis and synthesis of the ultimate factors in ethical and religious experience, being, in my judgment, good psychology and logic, are in accord with the methods of investigation and of constructive thought which are recognised as valid in all the sciences and in critical philosophy. If it be so, it will put an end to any conflict which may have legitimately existed between science and religion; but it will achieve this greatly-to-be-desired result only as it rids both the existing religions and the existing sciences of elements which antagonise the principle that the moral ideal is real.

## VI.

Whenever any one has had, or claims to have had, an immediate experience of a reality that is supersensible, it is the custom of common speech and the universal practice of scholars, to apply to him the term "mystic" and to call his experience "mysticism." Take, then, the case of a man who says that he knows and feels, not through any of his bodily senses, but directly, that the moral ideal is a reality, more real even than the things which on the testimony of his senses he believes to exist. How can such a man escape being classed among the mystics? And what is his unmediated knowledge of the reality of the ideal, with his accompanying response of heart and will, but mysticism? If we withhold this term as inapplicable to such ex-

perience, it must be on other grounds than those of logic. It must be that we are inhibited from doing so by some mere association of ideas, some prejudice or misconception. Often the abuse of a word casts discredit upon its legitimate use. But one of the functions of science and criticism is to rescue words from misuses which dull their edge and mar their delicacy as instruments of discrimination.

One can well understand why special classes of mystics should not wish to extend the term so as to include the intuitive belief in the supreme reality of the ideal self. They wish to retain the monopoly of converse with the unseen world, which they have interpreted as something more than and very different from the real ideal self; and their reputation would suffer if a purely ethical mysticism came into vogue. They have declared that by direct revelation they know the unseen spiritual world to be an all-wise and all-powerful person or a society of discarnate finite spirits, with or without a person at its head. They have often presumed also to assert that they see by direct intuition the absent in time and space. According to their own testimony they can foretell coming events and can conjure up the past. They likewise have announced that they have received super-normal powers over disease and over sinister influences of an occult kind. The words "mystic" and "mysticism" are a part of their capital; and they are naturally alarmed when a new class of persons arises and declares, also on the basis of direct experience, that the whole of mystic experience consists of three things only (for if it consists of these, such is their nature,

that it cannot consist of anything else): (1) authoritative and final insight into the ultimate reality of the moral ideal, which includes Truth and Beauty as well as Goodness; (2) enthusiastic love of it and (3) access of power adequate to the service of it.

Only the cultivation of this sort of spiritual experience — only “ethical culture” as a religion — can arrest the modern recrudescence of superstition which is spreading again as it did in Rome in the third century of our era. Nothing can lift men above an interest in personal survival after death and communication with the dead but a new insight into eternal life, which is one with ethical living and which renders men indifferent spiritually to the contingencies of the future, either those before or after death, whether the contingencies be those which await oneself or one’s friends or the beloved community to which one belongs.

Again, only insight into the spiritual nature of the ethical life can put an end to “fundamentalism.” Take the one point in theological controversy which concerns the personality of God. Already the enlightened public accepts the fact that evil is not any more real to those who believe in a personal devil as the essence of it than to those who never think of personifying it. When the public becomes still more enlightened spiritually, it will see that the good is also real in itself, and gains nothing in sanctity or power by ascribing self-conscious intelligence to the ultimate reality of things. It will know that Emerson was right when he said: “He does not know what evil is, or what good is, who thinks any ground

remains to be occupied, after saying that evil is to be shunned as evil. I doubt not he was led by the desire to insert the element of personality of Deity. But nothing is added."<sup>1</sup>

Once more, only a religious devotion to ethical experience can stop the widespread interest in the practice of mediumship, of clairvoyance and occultism generally. That alone will cause the public to see and feel that, again, Emerson was right as against all such practices, in his comment upon the visions of Swedenborg. Of this mystic he says: "His revelations destroy their credit by running into detail. If a man say that the Holy Ghost has informed him that the Last Judgment (or the last of the judgments) took place in 1757; or that the Dutch, in the other world, live in a heaven by themselves, and the English in a heaven by themselves; I reply that the Spirit which is holy is reserved, taciturn, and deals in laws. Ghosts and hobgoblins gossip and tell fortunes. The teachings of the high Spirit are abstemious, and, in regard to particulars, negative."<sup>2</sup> What norm or measure or standard of valuation can we have which will expose the falsity of spiritual aberrations, if we do not regard the moral ideal itself and its claim upon us as the essence of the spiritual world? How, except by it, can we discriminate between morbid fancies and religious verities?

Perhaps more misleading, however, than the symbols which are mistaken for things signified are the pompous systems of speculative thought which have been built upon fantastic vagaries. What else can overthrow these systems by under-

<sup>1</sup>"Swedenborg; or the Mystic."

mining their foundations, but the intuitive perception that the only content of the supersensible world is that which the moral consciousness supplies? Otto traces the defect of these systems to a confounding of figurative ways of expressing feeling with rational concepts; but their original error consists in the taking of figures of speech, instead of the primary data of moral experience, as the ultimate stuff which is to be generalised and systematised under the concepts of the understanding. Perhaps, however, this is what Otto really means in the admirable sentence: "The characteristic mark of all theosophy is just this: having confounded analogical and figurative ways of expressing feeling with rational concepts, it then systematises them, and out of them spins, like a monstrous web, a 'Science of God,' which is and remains something monstrous, whether it employs the doctrinal terms of scholasticism, as Eckhart did, or the alchemical substances and mixtures of Paracelsus, as Böhme did, or the categories of an animistic logic, as Hegel did, or the elaborate diction of Indian religion, as Mrs. Besant does."<sup>1</sup> Never will the general public be safe against ensnarement in such monstrous webs of rationalized fancies, until it sees that the content of the religious consciousness is nothing but the content which the moral consciousness discloses in immediate experience to every sane mind that will give to it the attention which is its due.

<sup>1</sup>*Op. cit.* pp. 111-12.



# The Ethical Import of History

By DAVID SAVILLE MUZZEY.

“**I**N HISTORY,” wrote Emerson, “an idea always overhangs like a moon and rules the tide which rises simultaneously in the souls of a generation.” This is but expressing in poetic language a truth which is generally recognized by the scientific historians of the present age. For example, Karl Lamprecht, the famous Leipzig historian and founder of the *Institut für Universal Geschichte*, in his monumental work on German history, begun in 1891, develops the thesis that every phase of civilization is the expression of a collective psychical orientation (*seelischer Gesammtzustand*) which dominates the period and “like a diapason penetrates all the historical events of the time.” In his lectures on “What is History?” given before the Congress of Arts and Sciences at the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, and repeated at Columbia University, he substituted for the “hero” theory of Carlyle and Michelet, according to which history is the collective biography of men of superior force and genius, the doctrine of the socio-psychic determination of the trend of history, including, withal, the very shaping of the ideas of the men of genius themselves. Like testimony is furnished by Professor James T. Shotwell in the supple-

mentary chapter to his *Introduction to the History of History*, by the summary statement: "Looking back over the way we have come, from the Greek philosophers to the modern economists and psychologists, one can see in every case that the interpretation [of history] was but the reflex of the local environment, the expression of the dominant interest of the time."

In general accord with this socio-psychological interpretation of history, there have been numerous suggestions of schemes of successive epochs or eras of history, schemes not differing essentially among themselves, but all contrasting sharply with the hallowed division of history into ancient, mediaeval, and modern, or with such fantastic theological conceptions as the Augustinian antithesis of the waning terrestrial and the waxing celestial "cities," Joachim of Flora's triune dispensation of the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, or the five monarchies of the seventeenth-century sectaries. Permitting ourselves a modicum of syncretic privilege, we might summarize the successive eras of history according to the generally accepted views of progressive scholars today as follows:

First of all was the period of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of centuries preceding the earliest written records of civilization, variously called the primitive age, the custom-making age, the pre-historic age, the symbolic age, which the researches of the anthropologists have revealed as a period of incredible conservatism, consecrated by taboos and regulated by an inviolable rigidity of custom: a period in which fantastic guesses as to the forces of nature and fear-ridden depend-

ence upon capricious divinities made slavish imitation the norm of life and punished the least deviation into originality as a crime which might bring dire calamity upon the whole tribe. Gradually migration and conquest brought the consciousness of conflicting customs, and with it the beginnings of comparative civilization. In the struggle of competing customs, with the consequent elimination or absorption of the weaker types, there developed great military states with preferential customs, still rigidly conservative, still preserving taboos and traditions under the powerful and jealous guardianship of their priest-kings. War was the dominating note of this era, and the great military empires filled the stage of history. The records of the earliest civilizations are largely the chronicles of military expeditions with their incidents of loot, slaughter, and slavery. It is true that the foundations were laid in these ancient empires for the emergence of the civilized mind—in the technological achievements of the Egyptians, the science and commerce of the Babylonians, and the political experiments of the Persians; but the subordination of all these interests to the exigencies of conquest was far more complete than in any of the militaristic states of the modern age. Even with the Greeks, who inaugurated a new intellectual era by casting off the shackles of mythological authority and subjecting inherited institutions to the examination of reason, it is significant that the absorbing concern of the historians, from Herodotus, who first divined the Mediterranean world, to Polybius, who chronicled its unification under Roman rule, was war. What in our eyes has shrunk to a

petty quarrel between two Hellenic city states was to the master artist Thucydides the central event of history, whose incidents were to be handed down to posterity as an "everlasting possession." Julius Caesar was Dictator, Pontifex Maximus, — and historian.

The intense particularistic nationalism of the ancient city-state (a political mold which Rome had not broken through even at the height of her empire) was shattered by Christianity. Here was a doctrine of universalism, in which there was no longer distinction between Greek and barbarian, bond and free. Here was, except for a few hints in Polybius, the first conception of a philosophy of history, of a universal principle of integration for human thought and action. But, unfortunately, that very principle was more fatal to a constructive investigation of history than was the narrowest conception of ancient particularism. For the Christian dogma, by its rejection of the world, which is the only stage of history, put out the footlights and rang down the curtain on the whole performance, halting and amateurish as it had been. In spite of the obvious import of Jesus' teaching, that this world was to be redeemed by the coming of the "kingdom of heaven" in the hearts of men (what other meaning could the parable of the leaven have?) the Church, which substituted worship of him for faithfulness to his gospel, transferred its whole interest to a supernal kingdom of heaven supposed to be inaugurated presently; and, by a singular mixture of Pauline sarcophobia, prophetic millennialism, Neo-Platonic asceticism, and a despondent, degenerate Greek philosophy,

which, in the phrase of Gilbert Murray, had "lost its nerve," abandoned the world to a damnable partnership with "the flesh and the devil." For a while the noblest element of the decadent Roman Empire, the Stoic philosophers, tried to stimulate a mundane ethics, but their company narrowed to a little group of "intellectuals," in striking contrast to the cosmic comprehensiveness professed in their doctrine; and when the "conversion" of Constantine threw the vast authority of the Empire to the support of the Church, the stage was set for the millennial drama of supernaturalism.

Nearly four centuries after the crucifixion of Jesus, when it would seem to have been evident that the world was likely to continue to be the scene of human action, and when, indeed, the Church itself had so far departed from its creed of world-renunciation as to acquire great material wealth in basilicas, landed estates, and donations, Augustine, in a work which was destined to exert the influence of a divine revelation upon the mind of the Middle Ages, set the imperishable, supernal City of God over against the moribund, sin-riddled city of earth; and his pupil Orosius furnished the "pièces justificatives" for this philosophy of mundane despair by collecting into a voluminous "Universal History" all the horrors of calamity, war, pestilence, flood, fire, misery, treachery, and debauchery in the pagan world on which he could lay his hands. The idea which overhung the Middle Ages, but more like the sword of Damocles than like Emerson's placid moon, was the *Dies irae*, that dreadful day when the earth should be dissolved in God's avenging

flames and the heavens be rolled up like a scroll, revealing the New Jerusalem, the everlasting abode of the saints.

Naturally, there was no history worthy of the name during the Middle Ages. The only men sufficiently educated to write were the clerics, and the only interest they had in writing was to chronicle such facts or fables as illustrated their hypothesis of the vanity of the world, the ultimate triumph of the saints, and the utter discomfiture of Satan. Hence the interminable monastic annals, the monotonous thousands of lives of saints, the inexhaustible stock of miracles wherein the devil is defeated by holy water, gestures, prayers, runes, and relics.

From Augustine to Anselm there was slight promise of any relief from the tyranny of the supernatural psychosis. However, towards the close of the eleventh century there came into European life a number of influences which were bound in time to result in a new birth of mundane interest, and therewith to make the progress of real historical writing, which had been virtually broken off with Ammianus Marcellinus, possible. The exploits of Charlemagne, Hugh Capet, and Otto the Great had stayed the tide of barbarian invasion and prepared the way for a relatively stable social order, in which the local security offered by feudalism became of waning importance. Towns began to multiply north of the Alps as centers of trade, artisanship, and political experimentation. The Crusades introduced both a vast number of new commodities and, what was of more importance, the knowledge of new customs and cultures from the East. English,

French, German, and Italian scholars began to exploit the wealth of Greek philosophy and Arabic science which had crossed over to Spain with the Moslem conquerors, but had been for three centuries shut off from Christian Europe behind the barrier of the Pyrenees. Besides valuable knowledge in mathematics, optics, astronomy, geography, and medicine, the philosophy of Aristotle was transmitted in this way to Europe, and, though condemned at first as "heathen" by the University of Paris, it was in less than a generation accepted by Christian scholars, who used the Aristotelian categories and dialectic as the framework and method in rationalizing the orthodox dogmas in the great *Summae* of scholasticism. The Church, with its immense prestige of centuries of power and its formidable means of compelling obedience through excommunication, interdict, and inquisition, was able for some centuries still to absorb the accumulating secular influences, although they are clearly visible in the work of some of her greatest champions: witness Thomas Aquinas' speculations on political theory and Albert the Great's investigations in natural science. It was really this rising tide of secular interests from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, rather than the brilliant cultural epoch of the Renaissance (the conspicuous "seventh wave" of the tide), that caused the downfall of the mediaeval ecclesiastical domination and opened the way for the eventual validation of human and mundane activities. Had the Renaissance itself been more heavily weighted on the scientific and ethical sides, and less slavish in its precious imitations of Greek

epigrams and its worship of Greek busts; had it followed the lead of Roger Bacon and Dante rather than that of Boccaccio and Cardinal Bembo, the sixteenth century might have been an age of progressive enlightenment instead of a period of barren theological disputes and devastating religious wars. As it was, the Reformation, in both its Protestant and its Catholic form, gave renewed vigor to the domination of the supernatural, and rejected with loathing the idea that human reason, natural science, or secular learning could be a reliable guide of life. Martin Luther called his intellect "the bride of Satan," and the "Magdeburg Centuries" and the "Ecclesiastical Annals" show little advance over Orosius as models of historical writing.

Rehabilitation of secular interests, which we repeat, can form the only basis for the appreciation of the history of mankind, is generally conceded to have begun effectively with the work of the generation of Montaigne, Descartes, and Francis Bacon. These men shifted the point of view of thinkers from retrospection to prospect, summoning them to cease from vain disputations on inherited dogmas and to devote themselves to the patient inquisition of the world of nature and the nature of man. Bacon, in his "Advancement of Learning" (1604), proposed that a new inventory be taken of the "general state of learning to be described and represented from age to age," and declared that "nature is more subtle than any argument." In the first phrase he laid the basis for that comparative view of civilization which is the very source and condition of history, and in the second he substituted science for scholasticism.



It would be vain to argue, in the face of the proceedings at Dayton, the glare of burning crosses, and the propaganda of 100 per cent. chauvinism, that the influence of man's long inheritance of superstition and savagery, supported by the emotional rhetoric which appeals to the "mind of the herd," has been eradicated from our civilization. The student of social psychology realizes that ages of collective habit leave their deep impress on the mind of society, just as years of personal habits make their "grooves" in the brain of the individual. Nevertheless, with the work of men like Bacon and Descartes a new intellectual orientation was furnished, and from their day on the progress of scientific and rational thought has been uninterrupted.

The stages of this progress are measured by the multiplication of scientific societies in the seventeenth century, the rise of the Deists, the Encyclopaedists, the economists, and the "philosophes" of the eighteenth century, and that vast expansion in the whole field of cultural interests which has followed the researches of the geologist, the biologist, the anthropologist, the social psychologist, and the sociologist in the last hundred years. The wealth of material necessary for any adequate comprehension of man's past development and present social status has grown far beyond the mastery of the most diligent and competent student of today. The historian can no longer shut himself up in his little corner with his paraphernalia of written sources and compilations to portray the episodes of military and diplomatic history, and to tabulate their results in the changes of boundaries, the chronicles of

courts, and the struggle of parties for the control of governments. He must be aware of the psychic processes, deeply rooted in the experience of the race, which control and condition the events of history; and must reckon with the complicated social mind upon whose workings the researches of the anthropologist, the psychiatrist, and the social economist have cast so much light in the last few years. Instead of regarding his narrative of facts, or alleged facts, furnished by the documents, as the consummation of his work, he will rather see these facts themselves as documents needing interpretation by the psychic and social urge which motivated them.

How numerous are the elements of this urge and how different their appeal to the historian may be seen by the various "interpretations" of history which have been championed by antagonistic "schools." Orosius considerably sublimated by Hegel, still has his followers in the scholars who envisage history as the working out of a divine plan. *The Hand of God in American History* is a recent title. Other writers find the key to the interpretation of history in the will of "heroes" who dominate their age. Others in the type of thought of a dominant social class. There are advocates of economic determinism, geographical determinism, and cultural determinism. There are historians who agree substantially with Freeman that "history is past politics," and there are those who would make history a function of bio-chemistry (*Mann ist was er isst*). I have deliberately avoided the title "The Ethical Interpretation of History" in this paper, lest it should be misunderstood as an attempt to show

that history supports the postulates of some ethical system or to apply the test of utilitarianism or altruism to explain the actions of Napoleon Bonaparte or Abraham Lincoln. It is not another "interpretation" of history, along with the varieties just mentioned, that I am suggesting, but rather some of the points of contact between an ethical view of life and the modern attitude and approach towards the understanding of history.

First of all is the obvious fact that modern historiography is based on an ethical principle: namely, the determination to be scrupulously honest in the acquisition and the presentation of the facts set down. Even the best of the ancient historians were not free from the faults of inventing, expanding, suppressing, and distorting sources of information for the sake of rhetorical effect or national glory. The historians of the patristic era and the Middle Ages regarded the record of the past as a storehouse from which they could bring forth treasure in the shape of edifying examples of God's providence and terrifying testimonies to his wrath. The voluminous histories of the Reformation period were elaborate polemical treatises in justification or in condemnation of the rule of the Roman Church through the centuries. Mystic and Deist, rationalist and romanticist, all allowed their selection and emphasis of facts to be governed by their devotion to doctrine. It was not until well into the nineteenth century that a truly scrupulous conscience was developed in historical methodology, largely, I believe, through the admirable example set by the natural sciences. To discover and record

what actually happened (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), without prior caution as to the possible effect of such discovery and revelation upon cherished religious, political, or social doctrines, became the first duty of the historian. Under this stimulus the machinery for getting at the facts of history, sifting the evidence, and testing the sources was enormously improved through the refinements of textual and methodological criticism. Undoubtedly, the scientific historians became guilty of too much absorption in the apparatus of factual criticism, to the neglect of the wider aspects of their subject which were suggested by the growing body of knowledge in the allied fields of anthropology, anthropogeography, psychology, and sociology — a fault which is being increasingly appreciated and remedied by progressive historians today. Nevertheless, no shortcoming in this respect can obliterate the primary virtue of faithfulness to the truth in so far as it can be discovered by the most painstaking research. This is, after all, the effective prophylactic against the insidious propaganda which would distort the facts of history to exalt Americanism, Protestantism, Catholicism, socialism, or any other *ism*; and it is due to an ingrained respect for the truth that all such attempts inspire the reputable historian of today with the same sort of nausea that quack medicine inspires in a reputable physician or shyster methods in an honest lawyer.

Indispensable as fidelity to the facts is, however, as a first principle of history, it is by no means the be-all and the end-all of the matter. Von Ranke's formula *wie es eigentlich gewesen*

is ludicrously inadequate as a definition of history. How can we ever know all that "actually happened" in the past? What has come down to us is a highly adventitious collection of data; and in spite of all the improved methods of criticism and verification, so much uncertainty still attaches to many of the accepted facts as to give a certain force to Voltaire's cynical remark, "*Les vérités historiques ne sont que des probabilités.*" Moreover, even if we had a complete and verified catalogue of the events of the past, it would be still only a catalogue. To know what happened satisfies curiosity but does not satisfy inquiry. We want to know the *how* and the *why* of history (*wie es eigentlich geworden*), as well as the *what* of history. We want to understand events, and not merely to "hear of" them. Even though this desire may be unrealizable, as the historical skeptics declare, we refuse to be discouraged in the attempt. The discrediting of a hundred theories of the interpretation of history will not cure men of the hope of finding an interpretation of history. We may admire the subtle skill of Henry Adams' argument for cosmic pessimism or chuckle over the delicious humor of Clarence Alvord's "Musings of an Inebriated Historian," but such moods are only a kind of holiday relaxation induced by the complexity of the problem. Fundamentally we insist that history shall have a meaning: otherwise, the labor of historical accumulation looks as silly as counting the paving blocks of a city street.

This faith in the significance of history, like the fidelity to the facts of history, is an ethical manifestation. Ethics on its practical side

(morals) is the art of right living; on its theoretical side it is the elaboration of the conviction that such behavior is based on a sound philosophy. Where can the data for such a philosophy be found except in history? The intuitionist may answer that ethics is God's direct revelation to man in conscience. But we cannot trust a God who implants the zeal for the inquisition in the conscience of a Torquemada, the delusion of the divine right to ruin the lives of millions of men in the conscience of a pious Hohenzollern, or the fatuous conviction of the duty to enforce the teaching of the Hebrew legend of creation in the conscience of an ignorant Tennessee farmer. Neither can we accept the necessitarian theory of ethics, which robs men of their power of moral choice and reduces them to mere puppets, animated phenomena of natural laws over which they have no control and of whose working they have no inkling of an understanding. It is only in the conception of history as a product of human will-relations that ethics can find the data for its philosophy.

These reflections suggest a further corroboration of the intimate contact between ethics and the point of view of the newer history. For the latter also rejects the transcendental and necessitarian interpretations of human behavior, and insists that the purport of history is to furnish the data and the stimulus for a fresh attack upon the problem of throwing off the traditional trammels of our animal, savage, and conventional heritage, and remolding our conceptions and our institutions to accord with the scientific and psychological discoveries of the last two generations.

Instances of this earnest exhortation could be cited by the hundreds of pages from the writings of the progressive students of the social sciences today. They are all alive to the fearful danger, made doubly vivid by the catastrophe of the World War, of trusting complacently in the bungling, unscientific, rule-of-thumb policies of state, supported and justified by irrational survival-forms of tribal ethics, for the regulation of society in an age made ominously efficient in its material civilization. They are using objurgation, sarcasm, entreaty, and dire vaticination to rouse us from the lethargy of conservatism. Whether civilization can be "salvaged" or not depends on the outcome of the "race between education and catastrophe," says Mr. Wells: and he is none too confident that the odds are in favor of the former. Professor James Harvey Robinson in *The New History* asks what more vital thing the past has to teach us than the manner in which our convictions on large questions have arisen, developed, and changed. "We do not assuredly owe most of them to painful personal excogitation," he says, "but inherit them along with the institutions and social habits of the land in which we live. Many widespread notions could by no possibility have originated in modern days, but have arisen in conditions quite alien to those of the present. We have too often, in consequence, an outworn intellectual equipment for new and unheard-of tasks. Only a study of the vicissitudes of human opinion can make us fully aware of this and enable us to readjust our views so as to adapt them to the present environment. If it be true that opinion tends, in the dynamic

age in which we live, to lag far behind our changing environment, how can we better discover the anachronisms in our views and in our attitude toward the world than by studying their origin?" And Dr. Wilfred Trotter, in his study of *The Herd Instinct*, substitutes a prophetic ultimatum for Professor Robinson's persuasive interrogation: "We see man today," says Trotter, "instead of the frank and courageous recognition of his status . . . and the determination to let nothing stand in the way of the security and permanence of his future, which alone can establish the safety and happiness of the race, substituting blind confidence in his destiny, unclouded faith in the essentially respectful attitude of the universe toward his moral code, and a belief no less firm that his traditions and laws and institutions necessarily contain permanent qualities of reality. Living as he does in a world where outside his race no allowances are made for infirmity, and where figments, however beautiful, never become facts, it needs but little imagination to see that the probabilities are very great that after all man will prove to be one more of Nature's failures, ignominiously to be swept from her work-table to make way for another venture of her tireless curiosity and patience."

These opinions are not cited here for the sake of arguing for or against their soundness, or of criticising any particular remedy offered by their authors, like Mr. Wells's project of universal adult education or Professor Robinson's proposal for the "humanization of knowledge" by the circulation of popular hand-books containing those results of the newer studies in the natural and so-



cial sciences which are of most importance in forming new standards of belief and behavior. My object is to call attention to the ethical import of the warnings. The burden of the message of the social sciences today is that it is clearly up to mankind to save its civilization by its own efforts. There is scant sympathy with the pious "trust that somehow good will be the final goal of ill." Neither leaving matters in the hands of God nor throwing up our own hands in baffled resignation to the course of events will avail. We must return to the invigorating doctrine of the competence and the prime duty of man to discover the way to make the world a worthy habitat for a better posterity.

Nullum numen habes, si sit prudentia, nos te,  
Nos facimus, Fortuna, deam, coeloque locamus.

It is obvious that the role of history in the social sciences under such an ethical conviction will not be to magnify national pride by the rehearsal of political, diplomatic, and military triumphs, nor to glorify the present age as the culmination of a steady march of progress, but rather to furnish some help, from the record of the struggles, the failures, and the partial victories of the past, in the appreciation and rectification of the faults of our own generation. The man who is preoccupied with the contemplation of his own virtues and greatness is on the high road to moral destruction. Yet there are misguided "patriots" who are insisting today with the zeal of an inquisitor that the chief duty of the historian is to nurture national megalomania. True patriotism covers its head with the ashes of

repentance for a nation's past sins and present insolence.

Most marked of all the points of contact between ethics and the newer history is their common attitude of receptivity of truth from every quarter of human experience. Realization of the complexity of the social mind, with its heritage of animalism, barbarism, and mediaevalism dwelling side by side in thinly partitioned chambers with the noble aspirations for freedom, righteousness, wisdom, and peace, has justly convinced the historian of the futility of proceeding on the assumption that man is a constant factor amid the mutability of events. The "historical man" is just as fictitious an abstraction as the "economic man." The events of history do not explain human psychosis, but the reverse is the truth. Therefore the historian cannot ignore or regard with serene detachment the labors of the anthropologist, the psychologist, and the psychiatrist. These are his intimate collaborators and, indeed, often his indispensable guides. He cannot, of course, master the details of their science, but he should be alert to recognize the bearing of the facts and theories which they have to offer upon his own science. He will, therefore, hold his interpretation of history open to modification, revision, and, if need be, to repudiation in the light of new truth which may emerge from their researches. In a word, he will eschew the dogmatic, *apriori* methodology of the historical "school" for the tentative, exploratory receptivity of the scientist.

This, I believe, is the very basic principle of ethical philosophy and practice. Ethics, too,

eschews dogmatism. It is an exploratory discipline. It rejects the theory that an infallible revelation has once for all furnished mankind with the divine rule of conduct, carrying its own sanctions of reward and punishment. It insists that man is the architect of his own spiritual fortune, and it is intent in the search for specifications of alterations and improvements in the structure. Far from reposing in the comfortable popular delusion that we all know what is right by the voice of conscience, in spite of frequent lapses in obedience thereto, the serious student of ethics realizes the enormous complexity of modes of thought and motives of behavior, due to the psychic confluence of biological urge, inherited habit, conscious or unconscious social pressure, self-justifying rationalization, self-deceiving transference auto-suggestion, introversion, and the more or less elusive mental lesions with which we are all to some degree afflicted. If the resulting human material with which ethics and history alike have to reckon is somewhat more mottled than the neatly standardized man of the rotarian conception, it at least has the advantage of reality—"the spotted reality," as Henry Osborn Taylor has wittily phrased it.

There follow from this tentative and exploratory attitude of mind corollaries of the utmost importance for our present well-being and future progress. Let us dwell briefly on two of these in closing: namely, toleration of variety of opinion and modesty in the estimate of our present achievement. There is perhaps no more crying need, in this day of the regimentation of public opinion by legislative enactment, inquisitorial

incompetence, and mass demonstration, than the cultivation of respect for the freedom of thought, research, and expression. Unless the influence of the small minority of original and fearless thinkers, which has always been the saving element in civilization, be allowed to leaven the lump of mediocrity and conformity, we may expect to witness a progressive degeneration of culture. For the demagogue's job of piping to the multitude is fatally attractive and remunerative. " 'Tis as easy as lying," as Hamlet said to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. He has but to govern the stops and blow with his breath. He will have no difficulty in persuading ignoramuses that their opinions are as good as those of experts — because they believe it already. He will invoke the sacred names of "religion," "democracy," and "patriotism" to cover appeals to persecuting zeal and levelling obscurantism. Because one man's vote is as good as another's in electing a President, it must be as good in deciding what professors shall be allowed to teach. Mr. Bryan's late pronouncement that the common people of Tennessee, the farmer Butlers, would decide the purely biological question of the evolution of the human body, was, in spite of his incidental profession of friendliness to science, a complete repudiation of science; just as the demand of certain patriotic zealots that boys and girls in our schools should be taught that the fathers of our Republic were impeccable and that the army and navy in President Madison's administration were invincible, in spite of any documentary evidence to the contrary, are a complete repudiation of history in the name of purifying

history. What these misguided people cannot see is that it is the historian's sense of ethics, and not his "bolshivism" or his British subvention, which makes it impossible for him to tell lies *ad maiorem gloriam patriae*. With ludicrous inconsistency, these arch-propagandists of patriotism accuse the truthful historian of—propaganda!

Finally, the undogmatic attitude of history and ethics in their hospitality and, indeed, their expectant welcome, to new truth is an effective antidote to the poisonous delusion which every generation is prone to cherish, that it has arrived at the peak of civilization. Even the great majority of men today, in the midst of the greed and hatreds, the vanity, venality, and vulgarity, the injustice and cruelty which are manifest on every hand with the slums of our cities, the bitter war of the classes, the sordid national rivalries, and the still lingering shadow of a catastrophe which brought civilization to the verge of the abyss hanging over us like a pall, can still pursue the same fatal paths of self-aggrandizement, vain contentions, vainglorious propaganda, and persecuting prejudice, with bitter hostility or, at least, scornful indifference to the labors of the enlightened minority who are devoting their lives to the survey and construction of the only road that can lead mankind out of the slough. The lines of cleavage, political, racial, religious, economic, and moral, run through society have been many, separating men into the rulers, and the ruled, the privileged and the unprivileged; the educated and the ignorant, the freemen and the slaves, the rich and the poor, the white and the colored, the sheep and the goats,

the saved and the lost. But from the historic-ethical point of view there is but one valid dichotomy, namely, the progressive and the stagnant. On the one side are the men, of whatever rank, station, race party or religion, for whom the present is the golden opportunity to utilize the lessons that the past can furnish for the creation of a future worthy of the highest human aspirations. On the other side are those who exploit the present is the golden opportunity to utilize the lessons came, and leave the future to God — or the deluge.

# The Tragic and Heroic in Life<sup>1</sup>

By WILLIAM M. SALTER.

**I**T IS CURIOUS what a tangle our life is. We reduce it to a few rules, and then something happens or has to be done outside the rules. We say that life is active duty, and lo! there come times when we cannot do. We say all is well in the world, and everything is for our good, and then comes an accident that nearly undoes us, and shakes the very foundations of our existence.

Ordinarily we move through life — at least the fortunate among us — with a certain smoothness. We have our food from day to day, and our bed to go to at night. The sun rises cheerily for us. We do not suffer pain. If we are at all decent we have our friends, even those who love us, and we find much to enjoy: books, society, adventure, even labor and toil — for there is a joy to the healthy human animal in asserting his strength and achieving something. And we think this is life — when suddenly something breaks the illusion. Disease assails us, or a car knocks us over, or our horse runs away, or we narrowly escape drowning or freezing, or worse, burning — and everything seems different: we realize that pain and horror are close at hand. It is true that all

<sup>1</sup>I need scarcely say that this is not a formal essay on the subject, being little more than a set of reflections that I have used more or less in popular Sunday addresses.

may pass and we may almost forget, and yet whenever we reflect, the old confidence is gone. We know that life is not necessarily what we before imagined — yes, it may come over us that disaster in some form or other is bound to come, that alien as well as friendly forces are about us and will some day appear in all their power, that there will be no way out, that the time for pleasing expectancy and all the consolations we mortals like to give to one another will be forever passed.

Yes, there is tragedy in life. We have glimpses of it now and then, we taste it to the full in time. The happiest of us, the securest — those who have come safely out of every accident and recovered after every illness — have yet something to face from which there is no escape, no recovery. For this is the final meaning of tragedy: no change for the better; there is the solemnity of the irreparable, the unalterable about it.

How can we adjust ourselves to a situation like this? Alas! many of us do not adjust ourselves. We sink beneath it, it is too appalling. We may be happy when we are well, when all is cheerful about us — that is, when the tragic is not in sight; but when we face it, even if only in imagination, somehow the heart sinks within us. Indeed, some of us acquire a more or less constant undertone of melancholy in contemplating this side of things — the zest and joy of life have passed now that we have felt the shadow of the end. What is the use, we say, when insecurity is ever about us, with but one termination? From habit, or mere animal shrinking from death, we may go on with our daily tasks, but the heart is sick.

Professor James, in discussing types of relig-



ious experience, distinguished between the once and the twice born. These terms might almost apply to the two kinds of human beings I have now in mind. For the man who thinks of life and the ways of life, the occupations and the joys of life, and has no clear vision of anything else, is one being; and he who has seen the obverse of all this, who has looked on suffering and death, is another. True, the second man may not be born again, he may rather quail before his wider discovery, and become almost as if unborn; but only he who has the vision, only he to whom it has struck home, can pass on to that larger and deeper life which may not inaptly be described as a second birth.

The true answer to the tragic in life is the heroic. The heroic action is different from the ordinary, in that it involves the overcoming of a difficulty, and the asserting of superior force. By heroism, we must not think necessarily of anything spectacular or even of anything public — it may not be on the battle-field, it may not be in the public eye at all. An obscure unnoticed man may be a hero, a woman in a small domestic circle may be a heroine, anyone may be a hero who faces difficulty and danger and doubt and uncertainty, and who says, "Come what may, I will do the right thing, the strong and manly thing." The specific kind of heroism I have now in mind is that which knows the uncertainties, risks and accidents of existence, the facts of suffering and defeated hopes, and yet instead of being timorous and slinking out of the race, enters perhaps more vigorously into it, resolute to do and dare, taking the risks, braving the dangers, simply because

this is a man's part. It is an inner attitude, a thing of the spirit. You would not know the hero I am thinking of from any other man or woman you met on the street. But where another is unnerved by life, he is serene. Where another is listless, he is energetic. Where another asks, "Of what use?" he is making himself of use. Where another has dark thoughts, he has light and cheerful ones. It is not that he is fortunate in life, successful and prosperous, while others are unfortunate; outwardly he may be more unfortunate than they—the difference is in his reaction, his adjustment, in the quality of mind and will he puts forth.

Of course, this heroism rests upon or rather goes together with a certain general view of life.

The view is that we live in a world not made for us, but into which we have to fit. If man, his comfort, his happiness, the prolongation of his life, were the end of things, how differently would everything be arranged! The sea does not roll up its devastating waves on occasion, or the earth quake or volcanoes pour forth their fiery floods for the benefit of those living near-by. Yes: rain and wind and storm and tempest, the moving earth and the shining sun and the stars, all pursue ends of their own; the animal world too; and when the ends of these other creations cross with ours, we suffer, or they suffer—and sometimes the suffering is simply inevitable. In other words, it is a mixed, contrary world in which we live; and man, thrown up in the course of its evolution, has to hold his own in it. There are, of course, secret forces of nature friendly to us—else how could we be here?—but we are not the sole object

of nature's concern, and have to battle and to fight. Goethe, who saw life so clearly and sanely, says the same:

Dieser ist ein Mensch geworden,  
Und dass heist ein Kämpfer sein.

To live, to be a man, is to put forth force, to contend.

It makes all the difference in the world whether we have this general view, and whether it is not merely an idle, speculative conception, but one burned into us, and become a veritable habit of our thoughts. We have so often a sense of hurt in life when there is no need of it. We are chagrined, mortified, cast down, because, forsooth! we fancied ourselves particularly cared for. We have not been brought up from childhood to the view that while nature bears us, she leaves us to help ourselves and to help one another, and that we have to take a man's part, and take a man's chances as we go through life. While the race is growing and learning, and before we have acquired the mastery of forces below us (if indeed we can ever have a complete mastery), we must expect injury now and then, must expect to be worsted now and then — accident and sickness are practically bound to come. What is the use of living in false dreams of security? What is the use of fancying the world other than it is? Why think that we are always going to be well and happy? Why think that accidents may befall others, but cannot or at least will not touch us? Why think there is a Providence, whether we call it luck or God, that looks after us and will not allow those dreadful things to happen

that have happened to other people? It is disillusion, disappointment, that often makes our experience so hard;—we had not thought of it, had not dreamed of such a thing, and our tears are doubly bitter.

Surely I am not advocating a gloomy view of life, nor do I mean that we should be holding before us the ills that may come, but simply that along with our natural joy in life and our eager expectation of good things, there should always be this underthought that things may be different. We should not bank too heavily on joy and good; we should strive for them, and not let our whole heart go into the striving, but in a corner of our being, keep a readiness for whatever may befall, a determination to bear and endure, as well as to strive and contend.

I am aware that this view may seem different from the ordinary religious one. And yet the idea that we are the favorites of the Heavenly Powers, and that they have arranged everything for our benefit, the idea that there is a Providence watching over each of us, has always had a limitation. The religious believer in praying or trusting for life and safety, is always obliged, if he reflects deeply, to add, “if God wills!”—for it is impossible, in view of the facts of life, to have one’s confidence absolute. In other words, God may not will our exemption from sickness and accident, may not even will that we should live at all — may will our death. It is the same facts, at bottom the same view of life, that I have been setting forth — only now covered by theological phraseology. An inscrutable, unfathomable will of God is the same to all practical intents and purposes as an

inscrutable, unfathomable order or law of nature. It simply *is*, and we have to reckon with it, and bow to it, whether we call it by one name or another. Even the current religious view, then, has to admit that the world that we see and know is a mixed and contrary one, that there is tragedy, human undoing and defeating, that life is often hard, that we have to have will and courage and a touch of heroism to go through it, that we must be inwardly prepared for the worst, and have "a heart for any fate."

After all, it is in a way a bigger, grander world with all these contrary tendencies and tragic possibilities in it, than one would be in which all was arranged for man and made soft and smooth for him. Personally he may be inconvenienced, but in the background of his thought, he feels that a system of things which sweeps around him and beyond him is greater than one ordered for his special benefit, and in his heart he would rather be a citizen of the greater universe than of the less. Man loves greatness, singular creature that he is; at the same time that he is so enormously selfish and self centred, he may be not without respect for that which disdains him, for that which is so lofty that it would be humiliated in his eyes, if its sole function were to serve him. That is why we love the sea, the winds, the mountains, the high heavens — they have a range and sweep of energy all their own; in their mighty power we love in imagination at times to lose ourselves. And that is why we are willing members of a total system of things which serves us only incidentally, which is too great to make its arrangements simply for our personal good, or even for the

good of the human race. That we are the sport of accident, that we die, that whole generations pass, that even the race will pass at last, are signs that we are incidents in the scheme of the Powers that bore us, that there is something more and greater than we to be considered.

Thoughts like these are, I trust, something, and yet I know that practically the heroic attitude has a deeper basis. In an essay of Emerson on "Heroism," which every young person, or for that matter, every old one, might well read once a year, Emerson says, in speaking of Plutarch's "Lives"—"A wild courage, a Stoicism not of the schools but of the blood, shines in every anecdote, and has given that book its immense fame." "A courage not of the schools *but of the blood*"—the phrase somehow sticks in my ears. Views and thinking are not all. One who is sometimes supposed to stand for pure intellect and the power of ideas, says they are not all—the blood, the unconscious part of a man, his elemental constitution counts for something.

My own experience is—for I have had a little—that after being shocked, frightened and momentarily unnerved by accident or illness, something not logical, not born of any thinking, but instinctive, a part as it were of our life-force, rises in us and makes us willing to risk and try again—makes us ready to take chances almost as if we had not been hurt at all. It is not reasoning, or calculation, but a stirring of the blood—it is what we do because deeper than our thoughts and views is the well of living energy within us, which continues to flow when we are not thinking, even when we are sleeping and unconscious, like

the ceaseless and sleepless motion of the blood — indeed, this is one example of it. This unwillingness to be cowed, this rising up to face difficulty and run risks, is, I hold, natural to us — a part of our life-dower. With life (which comes to us we know not how) comes the will to live, the readiness to dare. After a blow, given time enough, we pick ourselves up, not because we feel we ought to, but because something within us makes us. Here then is a case where we may trust to healing operations of nature itself in normal individuals — a case where we are prompted to thank and bless nature for impulses rising unbidden within us; and if we find those who do not react in this way, we have not only, I think, to reason with them and try to persuade them, but somehow to touch and to quicken these natural impulses; for we may well believe that unless such persons are wounded nigh unto death, the impulses are still there, and only need, like some part of the body that has been stunned or is unused, to be brought into play. It is wonderful what simple physical medication will sometimes do — what soothing sleep will do, sleep the great restorer, the rejuvenator, sleep that laps us into unconsciousness and in unconsciousness makes us strong — wonderful what fresh air and sunshine will do — what a clear sky or a ruddy sunset will do — what the sight of a child's fresh face will do. Anything to touch the inner springs, to waken what is dormant but not dead within us — anything, that is, to give us ourselves again; for within ourselves *are* power and courage, and all the possibilities of an heroic attitude to life.

Heroism, I have said, is not altogether to be

got at by reasoning — it is in the blood and constitution of us men — and yet nature may be aided by the sight or knowledge of heroism in others. When you see a hero, or hear of one, it somehow becomes easier, or seems so, to be one yourself. You could hardly be sensible of the heroic quality, had you not an affinity to it, a capacity for it; and yet the sight makes it real, and your own feeling rises, as it were, to meet it. How we admire a child that picks itself up after a tumble and runs on again undaunted! — we are ourselves refreshed. How it cheers us to hear of a farmer or business man who has had odds against him and still not lost heart! All who make mistakes, whether in teaching or in singing, or painting, or keeping house, or public speaking, and rise above their discouragements, and are bent on winning — these are our teachers and inspirers, just as potent, though their sole thought is about themselves, and they know not the lessons they give.

The classical type of hero is the soldier — and this is why we admire him, not because he kills people, but because he takes the risks of being killed, because over against that possible fate, he pits his will and personal force, because he is a match for death, and in his spirit, its equal. And the soldiers in peace have a similar charm for us — those who battle against abuses, those who take their chances of being abused, of having their names cast out as evil, even of bodily harm — for when interests are at stake, as they may be, brutal passions are often aroused, and an effort may be made to choke the voices that thunder against wrong. We think, for instance, of Garrison, who



never breathed a thought of violence in his life, yet was mobbed by the "gentlemen" of Boston; we think of Lincoln stricken down by an assassin; we think of that earlier son of Illinois, Lovejoy, who gave his breast to the bullets of a mob for the rights of free speech and opinion; we think of those who bore obloquy because they were for peace when others were clamoring for war in 1917. All such examples stir our own slumbering heroism—we too, we are sure for the moment, could be firm and face obloquy and wrath, not to say worse things, if an occasion required.

And this leads me on to another point and a wider view. I have spoken of reacting against the tragic in life, despite its naturally unnerving and depressing influence, but I may also say that the sight or consciousness of the tragic may even make us the more earnest. The opportunities of doing and of daring may become the more precious, because a limit is drawn around them. That which sickens the weak, may give added determination to the strong. We look at the glories of the sunset, we know they will soon be over, and this foreboding may sadden you; but, on the other hand, it may make you prize and enjoy that exquisite beauty the more. The imminence of change may make, as a poet has said,

sense more fine,  
And light seem holier in its grand decline.<sup>1</sup>

It is so with life. Life may be the more precious in our eyes because there is an end to it. Instead of our days acquiring worth, as is ordinarily

<sup>1</sup>George Eliot, "The Legend of Jubal."

argued, because they will go on forever, it may be just because they are limited that they are so valuable. The same poet I have just quoted has pictured the early world of man when the thought of death first came home to him:

It seemed the light was never loved before,  
Now each man said "'Twill go and come no  
more!"

No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,  
No form, no shadow, but new dearness took  
From the one thought that life must have an end,  
And the last parting now began to send  
Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,  
Thrilling them into finer tenderness.

Instead of the fact of death necessarily making life and its interests and duties less worth while, I sometimes think that it is partly because we do not realize the fact of death that we hold life and the opportunities in life so cheap. We cannot imagine but that we are going on forever, we have no keen, piercing sense that our days are few, and we allow ourselves to do many things and put off doing many things, to say things and to leave things unsaid, as we could not if we knew that our opportunities might at any moment suddenly be cut off.<sup>1</sup> It is often said nowadays, in antithesis to appeals of older types of religion, "Think on living"—and I have spoken in that way myself; but as I go on in life I realize that, if we are anywise normal, thinking on death may *make* us think on living. I have heard that once a man had it inscribed *on his tombstone* "Think on Living"; there, I think, it was most effective.

<sup>1</sup>The earnest solemn mood that the thought of death may bring is also well pictured in the lines of a distinguished Englishman recently passed away (Wilfrid S. Blunt):

One more point. The characteristic note or mark of the tragic is, as I have said, the finality of it—it is an undoing that cannot be made up, a defeat that is irrevocable. The perfect instance of it is death—the various tragedies in life, and that still leave life, are but lesser examples. And yet I know there is something that jars on us in speaking of human life as involved in absolute tragedy. Must we admit then that we are to be defeated, defeated absolutely in the end? Is the last word to be said of every human life, even the bravest, death and undoing?

As I analyze the matter a little more carefully, I see that when we speak of the inevitable tragedy of death, we mean from the standpoint of life and happiness as objective things continuing in time. These are undone, undone absolutely; but how about the will and character, the vital spirit of a man? Must these be broken, must these disintegrate and dissolve away? My question is not now one of theory (I am not discussing immortality), but of fact, and I hold that the will may

If I could live without the thought of death,  
Forgetful of Time's waste, the soul's decay,  
I would not ask for other joy than breath  
With light and sound of birds and the sun's ray.  
I could sit on untroubled day by day  
Watching the grass grow, and the wild flowers range  
From blue to yellow and from red to grey  
In natural sequence as the seasons change.  
I could afford to wait, but for the hurt  
Of this dull tick of time which chides my ear.  
But now I dare not sit with loins ungirt  
And staff unlifted, for death stands too near.  
I must be up and doing, ay, each minute.  
The grave gives time for rest when we are in it.

Cf. the Biblical language, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might—for there is no work or device or wisdom or knowledge in the grave whither thou goest."

be unbroken to the last, may go down into the valley and shadow of death, strong, alive, conquering.

Was the spirit of Socrates broken when he met the death to which he was condemned by his judges? Did he weep or sicken or retract or allow his great strong life purpose to be overcome? Really, when we read his "Apology" and the last scenes of his life, as reported by Plato, the sense of tragedy almost goes from us. There is of course his death, and in a sense all death is tragic, but never is Socrates more Socrates than in face of it. And our own thought, as we read, is not of tragedy at all — we have rather a sense of victory and of noble life. In an old English play, there is a scene that gives the same feeling. There is a Duke of a city who is captured; he will not ask for his life. His captor is touched with the beauty of his wife, and seeks to save him. All the same he will not entreat. The execution of both husband and wife is about to proceed, when the conqueror addresses his victim: "Dost know what it is to die?" and receives the answer

Thou dost not, Martius,  
And therefore, not what 'tis to live.  
.....Thou thyself must part  
At last from all thy garlands, pleasures,  
triumphs,  
And prove thy fortitude, what then 'twill do.

The calm superiority to fortune which the answer revealed touches the native nobility of the captor, and he sets the prisoners free, saying to the executioner,

This admirable Duke, Valerius,  
With his disdain of fortune and of death,  
Captived himself, has captivated me;  
And though my arms hath ta'en his body here,  
His soul hath subjugated Martius' soul.

No, from the highest point of view, there may be no tragedy. And let me say this: The deepest tragedy of all is not the loss of happiness, not the loss of life, but the defeat of the spirit, the failing of the purpose, the falling of that inmost citadel of a man which we call his will. Always a man may say, I will try to be a man: if an accident befalls me, I will try to be a man: if I do not attain my ambitions in life, I will yet be a man; if I am crossed and thwarted and outwardly defeated, I will still be a man; if I am laid on a bed of sickness, I will not moan nor fret, but try to show the fortitude of a man; and if I have to face death, I will try to have the composure that becomes a man. When we are thus strong, tragedy ceases to be a word that applies to our life — in a new and deeper sense, death is swallowed up in victory. When we know of such, we do not wail when they pass away, nor simply fold our hands and submit, but we have a sense as of wings — we praise, lift up our heads and rejoice.

Sometimes we console ourselves, or there are those at least who seek to console us, with the thought that even if we are weak and defeated in this life, in another life all will be different, that all will go well. No: we must be strong here: I do not say we must succeed in all that we do, but we must be strong, strong in will and purpose, keep ourselves well knit together. Strength

here may lead to greater strength hereafter, but weakness, cowardice, loss of heart, lead to nothing either here or hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly in one sense, as we move toward the end, our forces fail—our physical forces: perhaps in a lesser degree and after a certain point, our mental forces. But the forces of the spirit, the strong will and purpose, that in us which, if it had power as it has will, would still remake the world—that need never fail. In old age, the fires of the spirit may still burn. We may say with Emerson:

As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time,  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime.

Or with Tennyson's Ulysses:

Though much is taken, much abides; and tho'  
We are not now that strength which in old days  
Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we  
are:

One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Matthew Arnold's lines,

"Foil'd by our fellow men, depress'd, outworn,  
We leave the brutal world to take its way,  
And, *Patience: in another life*, we say,  
*The world shall be thrust down, and we upborne*,  
And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn  
The world's poor routed leavings? or will they  
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day  
Support the fervors of the heavenly morn?"

No, no! The energy of life may be  
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;  
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,  
From strength to strength advancing—only he,  
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,  
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life."

# Distinctive Features of the Ethical Movement

By ALFRED W. MARTIN.

INTRODUCTION: THE FUNDAMENTAL RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF THE ETHICAL MOVEMENT.

**I**T SURELY will not be inferred from the title that my aim is anything so puerile and ungracious as the glorification of the Ethical Movement to the detriment of the historical religions. Let it be said at once and emphatically that there is but one motive worthy to warrant discussion of the subject, viz. the cause of clarification and justification. For, on the one hand, there exists in many minds considerable vagueness — and not a little positive error — as to what the Movement stands for. On the other hand, there are those who claim to be thoroughly conversant with its principles and aims, yet regard it as *passé*, as devoid of any genuine *raison d'être*. Its intense devotion to morality, they say, has long since been reproduced by “liberal” churches and “reform” synagogues.

Obviously within the limits prescribed for this volume, one cannot hope to deal with *all* the features that are distinctive of the Ethical Movement. It must suffice to select some of the more important and then indicate, by a brief exposition of each, the grounds on which the existence of the

Ethical Movement is justified and the consequent impossibility of forming a merger — as has been proposed — with “liberal” Christianity or with “reform” Judaism.

At its very inception the Ethical Movement was a religious movement. The group of men and women who met on that memorable Sunday morning, May 15th, 1876, were in search of something wherewith to consecrate their lives. They were of one mind in the belief that the human spirit is all starved and forlorn save as it comes into vital contact with an ideal of holiness. They were further persuaded that this spiritual desideratum could not be derived from any traditional doctrines which, however true and precious to others, had ceased to hold any meaning for them. Thus their prime concern was not with any such scriptural and theological issues as absorbed contemporary liberalism; not with any refutation of the dogmas of fundamentalism; not with any negative, iconoclastic programme; rather was their souls' cry for something positive and constructive wherewith to consecrate their own lives and still more, perhaps, the lives of their children. Like him whom they called from his chair in Cornell University, and who forthwith became the founder of the Movement and Leader of the first Society for Ethical Culture, they were conscious of a deeply-felt need for a religion to replace that which had failed to satisfy. In other words, Professor Felix Adler and his hearers at this initial meeting, half a century ago, found themselves in the selfsame plight as were those Palestinian Jews of the first century, referred to in the Book of Acts as “God-fearers,”—men



with a religious nature, but without a religious home; men dissatisfied with the religious institutions and forms of their day and place, yet conscious of the need of coming into vital touch with something transcendently holy. They went from one organization to another, finding in each much that appealed to their religious nature, but more that offended it. From the Synagogue they turned to the Meeting House of the Mithraists and thence they moved on to the temple of the Roman state religion, but nowhere was what they sought to be found. Religious wanderers they were, seeking a religious home and finding none.

So was it with the "God-fearers" of 1876 in New York. They, too, went forth in search of a satisfying religious home and found none. For, both the Jewish synagogues and the Christian churches of that time were encrusted with dogmatism, ecclesiasticism, formalism; woefully deficient they were in vital and vitalizing religion. Over against these institutions stood the ultra-radicals — confirmed materialists, caring naught for religion, so that affiliation with them was no more possible for these seekers of a religious home than with the dogmatists and formalists. Thus these earnest dissatisfied people, who *did* care for religion and who were eager to come into vital communion with something supremely holy, had no alternative but to organize a religious association of their own, one that would give a conspicuous place to moral and social reform and at the same time put its members in touch with something transcendently holy, — an ideal of ethical perfection with which indeed religion has to do, — an ideal, which depends for its au-

thority not on something alien to itself, but on its own sublime excellence when contemplated and on the constraining influence it exerts upon the will.

It should then be clearly understood that the Ethical Movement originated not in the attempt to find a substitute for religion in philanthropic activities and moral reforms. On the contrary it started with a great hope in the heart of Prof. Adler and his followers — the hope of finding a satisfying religion, *i.e.*, one which would put its people into vital touch with a transcendent good, of infinite and eternal worth. Not in despair of religion, not in opposition to religion, but in the hope of finding a new and satisfying religion did the Ethical Movement originate. Does any one challenge the propriety of applying the adjective “new” to this great religious adventure? It *was* new because it approached religion from an ethical and practical as against a theological and speculative standpoint; *new* because it did not mean the adding of one more to the sects already in existence, but a new departure in religious fellowship, one which unites men, not on the explicit or tacit acceptance of a creed or creedlet, but on the desire to live the moral life, to explore the field of duty, to clarify their perception of what is right and then incarnate the vision in personal life and in social institutions, — regardless of theological or philosophical beliefs and affinities.

Before proceeding, let me pause to put on record my immeasurable intellectual indebtedness to Dr. Adler. Without the quickening influence of his original ideas neither this nor any

other paper of mine on an ethical subject could have been produced. So true is this and so deep the hold it has taken upon me that it would be treason to my deep and constant obligation were this *Festschrift* to be published without due acknowledgment to him who has been — if I may speak for my colleagues as well as for myself —

The fountain-light of all our day,  
The master-light of all our seeing.

What, now, are some of the characteristics of the Ethical Movement that warrant its existence, that forbid its being merged either with “liberal” Christianity or with “reform” Judaism and that distinguish it from all other forms of religious organization?

### I. SUPREMACY OF THE ETHICAL END.

Foremost among the distinctive features of the Ethical Movement is the supremacy it assigns to the ethical end. It declares that there is a *sovereign* end to be acknowledged, one to which all the superior and inferior aims of men must be subordinated; and that this supreme end can be none other than the ethical. To it all other ends, scientific, aesthetic, economic, social, must be made tributary. And by the ethical end is meant the formation of right relations between personalities. It is supreme because nothing under heaven counts for so much as human personality with its latent potentialities and the existence of right relations among beings so endowed. He is most entitled to be called ethically-minded who believes, and acts on the belief, that nothing exceeds in importance the establishment of right personal relations, as between husband and wife, parents and

children, the social classes, nation and nation. Nor is this highest place assigned to the ethical end because of the happiness that right relations, when established, may bring in their train, for that would be to make the ethical end a means to something beyond itself. No, the creating of right relations is valued above all else because such spiritual activity is the very highest kind in which a human being can engage. The supreme good of life is to be found in the *act* of creating harmonious relations. And for the dissemination of this view-point touching ethical-mindedness — *i.e.*, recognition of the supremacy of the ethical end, the formation of right relations between personalities — for this an Ethical Movement is indispensable. Why? Because the opposite viewpoint so widely obtains. Outside the Ethical Movement morality is looked upon as a means to the securing of some non-ethical objective as the real end. There are those who put scientific pursuits above all else as being most worthy of human endeavor, but in the estimation of the Ethical Movement science is only a superior, not a supreme end. It owes its worthwhileness chiefly to the fact that it can increase the fund of knowledge wherewith right personal relations may be established. Similarly, the creation of beautiful art-works is only a superior, not the supreme human pursuit; for art derives its highest value from the power of the created harmonies to put the mind into at-one-ment with the most entrancing harmony of all, — the right interrelationship of personalities.<sup>1</sup> Once more, there are persons for whom the real

<sup>1</sup>See Professor Adler's pamphlet "The Aim of the Ethical Movement."

ultimate end is prosperity or social position, and morality is made a means to the securing of these non-ethical ends. But here again, the most that can be claimed for them is that they are superior ends, not the supreme end. The daily press has just apprized us of a startling instance of defalcation on the part of a prominent member of a Christian church. Evidently it is possible for a man to be a Presbyterian and a defaulter, but it is not possible for a man to be an ethical person and a defaulter, because the two are mutually contradictory. And if the elders of the church reply "it is not possible for a man to be a *good* Presbyterian and a defaulter," they introduce an *ethical* criterion and so admit the primacy of ethics. We speak of some persons as being scientifically-minded, of others as artistically-minded. What we imply by the designation is that for these persons something other than the moral end is esteemed of highest worth. They are not ethically-minded in the strict usage of the term, for to be ethically-minded means to believe and to act on the belief that right personal relations are the most important thing in the world, that "the distress caused by wrong, twisted relations to other persons is more intolerable than any other, far more poignant in the anguish it gives rise to than want, or sickness, or any other kind of suffering."

When we consult the great historic religions with reference to this first distinctive feature of the Ethical Movement we find they all alike subordinate morality to one or another ulterior end. In the Greek religion, for example, morality is made subservient to an aesthetic end. The ideal

of personal life to which the ancient Greeks aspired was simply the harmonious development of the physical and the intellectual self. The *sum-mum bonum* was the acquisition of *mens sana in corpore sano*, a sound mind in a sound body; the end for which they strove above all else was an aesthetic end; and all their architecture, sculpture, painting, poetry, music, bear witness to the fact. Even sin and virtue were interpreted by Plato in terms of an aesthetic end. Sin, he said, was to be avoided because it is ugly, because it does violence to our aesthetic sensibilities; virtue is to be practiced because it insures the harmonious balanced order of those sensibilities. "The good is the beautiful." Again, in the Confucian religion we see the ethical end subordinated to order, itself one of the products of order. To reproduce in human life the calm, unbroken order of Nature — that, according to Confucius, is the desideratum to be sought after more than aught else. In the Christianity of the New Testament the ethical end is clearly made subordinate to "faith," — the mystical "putting on of the Lord Jesus Christ," as expounded by the Apostle Paul in his letters to the Romans and to the Galatians. Even in Judaism, the most markedly ethical of all the historical religions, morality is not supreme; for everywhere in the Old Testament, we find morality subordinated to the will of Yahweh, He being conceived as the determiner of ethical standards and relations. But, so far as morality is concerned, Infinite Will cannot change one jot or tittle of the eternal Right. It is prior to all else. God himself cannot be more ultimate than the uncreated eternal Right. He

can be but its faultless mirror. To it both finite and infinite will alike must bow. Thus in this sense, also, morality is the supreme end, and it is, therefore, no mark of irreverence to respond to the mandate: "Do this because I, Yahweh, say so," with the words, "No, not even though thou be God who speakest." But to the command, "Do this because it is right," we give our whole-hearted assent though it be uttered by the feeblest child that ever lisped.

## II. DEED AND CREED.

In its reversal of the relation of creed to deed as it has stood throughout the Christian centuries, a second distinctive feature of the Ethical Movement is revealed. The part played by *belief* in the Christianity of Paul, — who created the new religion as his substitute for Judaism — is familiar to all readers of his Epistles, and will be readily contrasted with the part played by *character* in the teaching of Jesus. The Ethical Movement, sympathizing with the latter and enlarging upon its content, holds that the value of any creed consists above all in the relation it bears to the moral life. Do you, for example, believe in the doctrine of the Atonement because it is "in the Bible," or because it helps you to make progress in the upper zones of your being? Do you accept the doctrine of the Incarnation because you regard it as "a divinely revealed truth" and therefore to be accepted, or because through it you are helped to worthier manhood or womanhood? In other words, the final test of a doctrine's worth is not the Bible, but life; not revelation, but moral growth. Prof. Adler

has compared the moral life to a mansion of many locked chambers and the creeds to a set of keys. The Christian, the Mohammedan, the Hindu, the Parsee, — each comes with his creed-key, claiming that it and it only can open the doors. The Ethical Movement allows the dispute over the keys to go on, because it cares for the opening of the doors. And this marks a far-reaching contrast between the Ethical Movement and the historical religions. For, while the latter have been concerned about the *key*, describing it, setting up claims for it, securing converts to belief in its fitness for the locks, the prime concern of the Ethical Movement has been entrance to the chambers. It has no dogmas to defend, no creed to mend or amend; it has the problem of the closed doors and a spiritual passion for getting into the unentered rooms of the moral life. The best creed a man can have is that which character shapes and which enlarges and deepens with his own moral growth. For the creed that issues from deed, from moral experience, for *that* creed the Ethical Movement cares most of all. And when the three great missionary religions, with their respective reachings out to Buddhist unity, Mohammedan unity, Christian unity, shall have learned to reverse the rank they all alike have assigned to creed and deed, their dreams of brotherhood will be realized. For the religious rivalry and jealousy that obtain in each of the sects of each of these great religions are fundamentally due to the precedence given to creed over deed. Touch the sectarian sores and instantly the sectarian nerves respond. When, for example, we hear it claimed that Christianity is



“the only true religion”; Protestantism, “the only true Christianity”; Episcopalianism (or any other sect) “the only true Protestantism”; the “High” Church, “the only true, Episcopal, Protestant, Christian religion,”—we see sectarianism doing its deadly work, we see creed superseding deed and paralyzing all earnest effort to make human brotherhood a reality in the world. Hence the practical importance of a movement which refuses to fall in line with the traditional ranking of creed and deed, which reverses it and estimates the essential value of the former solely in terms of the latter. In other words, a man’s moral worth does not depend upon his theological beliefs, but the value of those beliefs depends on the degree to which they develop moral worth in him.

### III. INDEPENDENCE OF MORALITY.

Without attempting to assign to the distinctive features of the Ethical Movement an order of relative importance, let the third feature for consideration be the independence of morality as to origin, sanction and binding force. We start with the fact that man has moral experience, and that the most awe-inspiring and commanding of all his moral experiences is the authority with which the moral law speaks, an authority inherent in the moral law itself. The one most certain item of our moral experience is this pressure of the “ought” impelling us to acknowledge the higher of two rival claims upon the will. Just as the authority of *reason* is both real and binding in relation to alternatives of truth and error, so the authority of *conscience* is real and binding in re-

lation to alternatives of right and wrong. And precisely as the law of reason forbids our "*thinking* as we like," so the law of conscience prohibits our acting as we like. In other words, the inherent constitution of our personality as rational and as moral beings constrains us to acknowledge the law and make our choice. Morality is thus independent of any *external* pressure upon us; it has its basis in the very law of our nature as moral beings, and needs no power beyond itself to authenticate its claim upon us. It was this very thesis that the Fundamentalists of the last quarter of the nineteenth century so vehemently attacked, forcing the leaders of the Movement into protracted controversy on the possibility of living the moral life without first accepting religious dogmas. Little did those Fundamentalists realize the danger besetting their doctrine that acceptance of religious dogmas concerning God, the Bible, and retribution is an indispensable prerequisite for leading a moral life. For, if morality has no independent standing of its own, if without fundamentalist theology morality is impossible, if moral truths have no vitality in themselves but depend for their validity and effectiveness on theological beliefs such as Divine fiat, the hope of heaven, the fear of hell — what must happen when these beliefs become discredited, when their foundation-stones begin to crumble, as they already have to an alarming degree? Nothing other than the very spectacle of moral deterioration in all walks of life that we are witnessing today. For the present moral débâcle is explained in large measure by the fatal denial of the

fundamentalists that the moral law is aboriginal, sovereign and inherently obligatory.

So far as the origin of morality is concerned, it is clearly proved to have been independent of theology. To the student of primitive culture nothing is plainer than the separateness of origin for theology and for morality. It is not true that "man first knew God and then from that knowledge derived his sense of justice and of love." No, man first knew, through experience, justice, mercy, love, and then, out of that experience, he fashioned the picture of a perfect embodiment of these qualities and called it "God," investing it with ever finer attributes in proportion to his own moral growth. Man first knew an earthly father's love and thereupon conceived of a heavenly Father's love. In support of this point we have the testimony of such authorities as Tylor, Lubbock and Spencer. Even to-day there exist tribes that illustrate the original separateness of morality and theology, — witness the Arafucas, inhabitants of islands in the southern seas, who practice the brotherhood of man without ever having heard of the fatherhood of God. In the "Ramayana," — that noble epic which forms part of the Hindu sacred scriptures, — we read: "Virtue is what a man owes to himself, and though there were no God to punish and no Heaven to reward, virtue would nonetheless be the binding law of life." So, too, thought those Russian revolutionists of the nineties who sacrificed rank, luxury and even life itself, in their allegiance to the sovereignty of the moral ideal as the ultimate spiritual reality. In the fourth chapter of the first epistle of John we

read: "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Could one ask for a more explicit acknowledgment of morality as independent of theology?

Confucianism and Buddhism are rooted in the same conviction. Both arose as moral reform movements, and both left theological problems severely alone. Not only were the founders of both systems agnostic on all theological beliefs, but they never even raised the question of the independence of morality. It would seem to have been taken for granted. The Ethical Movement, however, forced into controversy on the issue, took a position quickly recognized as distinctive, holding to the complete independence of morality and ascribing to it a threefold connotation. In the first place, by the independence of morality is meant that so far as Ethical Societies are concerned, the question of the *basis* of ethics — scientific, philosophic or whatever else, — is entirely an aside, *i.e.*, a matter upon which members are wholly *free* to think as they choose, and when speaking on the issue, bound to speak only *for themselves*, never *for the Society*. Leaders, too, are *free* to discuss the basis of ethics from the Sunday platform, but *bound* to do so with scrupulous regard for others' freedom as well as their own, avoiding even the semblance of an attempt to commit the Society to the Leader's point of view. Truly does the genius of the Ethical Movement and its sole safety as a vital and progressive institution, depend upon its refusing, and with adamantine inflexibility, to stand committed to any one of the rival bases of ethics put forth in the fields

of science, philosophy and theology. A second signification attaching to the independence of morality is that in itself morality has binding force, be its alleged philosophical or theological implications what they may. In other words, the validity of the moral law is not, as was just now intimated, contingent upon any theological sanction; because moral obligation belongs to "the nature of things," by which we mean that totality of necessary and universal relations without which nothing could exist. Deeper than this no plummet can sink. The moral obligation to be just does not depend upon any decrees, divine or human, but carries *within itself* its constraining influence. Precisely as there is an absolute condition without conformity to which a square cannot be drawn, so there is an absolute condition without conformity to which no moral being can exist in social relation. As the formation of the square depends upon its diagonal dividing it into two equal triangles, so the coming of two moral beings into social relationship depends upon mutual moral obligation. The two moral beings might never have existed, in which case moral obligation would have had only potential existence, as the predetermined law of social relation for moral beings; but the moment that relation became objective, the *necessity* of moral obligation was made manifest as part of "the nature of things." No alleged celestial origin ascribed to a command can make it right, nor can "Infinite Will" change, to even the slightest degree, the eternal relation of right and wrong. If a divine command be cruel or vindictive, as we find it in some of the older books of the Bible, that com-

mand cannot be deemed right just because it is "the word of God." In other words, there is an ethical standard by which we have to judge even the recorded "word of God."

Thus in this second sense in which we speak of the independence of morality there are implied the mighty convictions (a) that man has, as his most priceless possession, both that which calls to duty and that which answers the call; (b) that he is never permitted to go unpunished if he disobey; (c) that the obligation to strive for the good life is inherent in man as part of his nature as a human being; (d) that the moral sense is an organic part of his nature, a fundamental reality in him, like the sense of sight or the gift of reason; (e) that in proportion as one lives the moral life deeply and intensely one gains spiritual insight. Instead of viewing morality as derivative from theism, after the manner of the synagogues and churches, the Ethical Movement reverses the point of view, holding that the highest spiritual beliefs result from living the moral life. "Blessed are the pure in heart," said Jesus, "for they shall see God." First purity of heart and *then* the beatific vision. Let it be clearly understood that toward any and all philosophical and theological bases for morality the Ethical Movement takes a position of strict neutrality. But it would be a sorry mistake to construe either its specialization in morality apart from theology, or its refusal to stand committed to a theistic basis for ethics, as tantamount to a confession of atheism. So prevalent is the false notion that Ethical Societies are atheistic, that one is warranted in putting the reader on his guard against

it. Because these Societies do not require of members belief in God as a condition of fellowship, either explicitly, in a creed, or implicitly, through participation in prayers and hymns that are essentially theistic; because Ethical Societies are differentiated from "Free" synagogues that retain a minimum of Hebrew ritual, and from "Community" churches in which "central to all activities is the Sunday morning service of worship," it does not follow that they are atheistic. The truth is that Ethical Societies are neither atheistic nor theistic, but of necessity neutral, because the freedom of Ethical fellowship requires it. Were these Societies to commit themselves either to theism or to atheism, they would automatically exclude from fellowship all those persons who could not accept one position or the other. It is just because of its strict neutrality or non-committedness that it is possible for both atheists and theists to be included in the fellowship of the Movement. Among the members the greatest diversity of belief exists and is encouraged. "As individuals we have all sorts of creeds; as a Society we have none." So spoke Dr. Adler in response to an inquirer on the subject, succinctly stating one of the cardinal and distinctive features of the Ethical Movement, clearly differentiating it from all kinds of existing synagogues and churches which implicitly, if not explicitly, commit their members to theism.

There remains a third meaning attaching to the independence of morality that must be elucidated. It will be understood best when seen in relation to the Pauline doctrine that supernatural grace is an indispensable aid to fulfilment of the law of

righteousness. In that most remarkable of all self-revelations in sacred literature — the seventh chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, he confesses his utter inability to live the moral life by his own unaided effort. He must fall back for help upon Jesus Christ. Let me borrow, thought Paul, of the superabundant righteousness that is in Jesus the Christ, and I will then be enabled to "do the good that I would." He believed himself morally impotent to rise from his dead self to higher things; someone must lift him, someone who has succeeded in fulfilling the "law of righteousness." In contradistinction to this Pauline doctrine, the Ethical Movement holds, with Jesus, that there are latent potentialities in every human being, that there resides in even the lowest of our kind a constant residuum of capacity for improvement, no matter how many times they fail. How else could Jesus have enjoined "Repent," "Be ye perfect," "Strive to enter in"? How meaningless these appeals apart from faith in man's power to improve, apart from the conviction that the morality in man is sufficient to make him independent of reliance on such help as was for the Apostle an indispensable prerequisite for living the moral life!

#### IV. FREEDOM OF FELLOWSHIP.

Since morality is independent of theology and since there is no *theology* on which all good men agree, but only a *morality* upon which all are agreed,<sup>1</sup> it follows that it is possible to organize a fellowship on the basis of that morality, leaving men and women free to entertain any theology

<sup>1</sup>See p. 107.



they choose, or none if they so prefer. And it is here that we touch a fourth distinctive feature of the Ethical Movement — the freedom of its fellowship. An illustration or two will make clear the real distinctiveness of this feature. All the way from the most orthodox of the Christian Churches and Synagogues to the most liberal, we find that there is required of anyone who would identify himself therewith, assent either to a creed, or to a creedlet; a tacit, if not explicit, confession of faith or form of worship. Even the great religions themselves, — from which the sects derive, — condition fellowship on acceptance of their respective Founders. Islam presents its infallible Mohammed; Buddhism, its deified Gotama; Parsism, its inspired Zoroaster; Christianity, its supernatural Jesus. The fellowship of none is cosmopolitan and free. Mohammedanism, for instance, seeks to unite all men in the bonds of *Mohammedan* love; it does not aim to unite Mohammedans, Jews, Christians, and the rest in the bonds of *human* love. Christianity admits to its fellowship all Christians on equal terms, but all non-Christians on no terms. Not one of the various Christian denominations ever voted, as a body, to stand for a strictly free fellowship with no theological terms whatever in its constitution. But the Ethical Movement absolutely refuses to break the bond of brotherhood by imposing on applicants for membership any such requirements. It leaves its individual members entirely free to hold whatever religious beliefs they choose and to worship or not as they choose, binding them only to that morality which all men accept. And if brotherhood is ever to be

anything other than the grim caricature we see in the rival sects with their conflicting creeds and claims, then it is of the utmost importance that there should exist at least one Movement which exemplifies union on the only basis practicable and universal, *viz.*, devotion to "the ever-increasing knowledge, love and practice of the right." Nor should it be at all surprising that while we of the Ethical Movement are not accepted as brothers by any of the sects, Jewish or Christian, we accept them as brothers, because we are not a sect, but a fellowship. As its derivation (from the Latin *sectum*) implies, a sect is a part of humanity that has cut itself off from all the rest in order to live for itself and to convert all the rest into material for its own growth. But a part of humanity that lives *both for itself and for the whole in one universal aim* is not a sect at all, but a fellowship. Whether few or many, the part is nonsectarian and universal if the end it lives for be such. And so, while the vast Christian Church is but a sect, the Ethical Movement is not a sect at all, because it exists for no sectarian end but rather to help the world to grow for itself into its own ideal form, without presuming to dictate what that form shall be. What a gratuitous insult it would be to ask representatives of the non-Christian religions, for example, Prince Chung, the Confucian; or Dharmapala, the Buddhist; or Swami Abhedananda, the Hindu; or Rabbi de Sola, the orthodox Jew (all of whom have been in this country), to accept the "Apostles' Creed" or the "Bible" or the "Westminster Confession" or "the religion of Jesus." Surely the only religion we can rightly ask them

to accept is the religion of universal Man, the religion that pays due homage to Moses, to Jesus, to the Buddha, to Confucius, according to the amount of truth each has to teach and the inspiration we can derive from the record of his life. Hence, every Ethical Society opens its doors and says, in the language of the New Testament Apocalypse: "Whosoever will, let him come"; whereas the Episcopalians say: "Whosoever will accept the 'Apostles' Creed,' let him come"; the Unitarians say: "Whosoever will accept 'the religion of Jesus,' let him come"; the Congregationalists say: "Whosoever will accept 'the Bible,' let him come"; the Free Synagogue says: "Whosoever will accept a minimum of Hebrew ritual and agree to worship on Sundays, let him come"; the New York Community Church says, "Whosoever will join in 'the Sunday worship central to all the activities' of the Church, let him come." But the Ethical Movement, rejecting all these fellowship-restrictions and taking its stand on the morality which all good men accept, simply says: "Whosoever will, let him come."

Doubtless individual representatives of each of these sects will repudiate the claim that the Ethical Movement is *distinguished* by this freedom of its fellowship; but the fact remains that not one of these sects, *as a body*, ever voted to adopt a strictly free basis of fellowship. A distinguished Unitarian recently pointed with pride to the personnel of his church, including in its fellowship Christians, Jews, agnostics and atheists! "What could be more free than such a fellowship?" To which we make answer that Unitarianism in

1894 took a definite position as a Protestant sect, in terms so precise that any member who objects to it for himself has no alternative but withdrawal. Many who are Unitarians in private belief are admitted members of Episcopalian churches. Does that make those churches any less Episcopalian? So the admission of Jews, agnostics, etc., to Unitarian Societies does not make the latter any less Unitarian, any less Protestant, any less Christian. Such confusion is patent to every thoughtful observer. The masquerading of Unitarians as Episcopalians is not admirable, and Unitarian preachers there are who have hotly denounced it. But we have yet to hear them denounce Jews, agnostics, etc., when they masquerade as Unitarians. Is it not high time to have manliness in religion and only one rule of honor and sincerity for all men alike?

Toward worship, theism, prayer, Ethical Societies take an attitude of strict neutrality, in order that the freedom of ethical fellowship may be kept absolutely inviolate. Some of us are theists, but none of us could ever be induced to join or to lead a Society that made belief in God a condition of membership. Freedom of thought has led some thinkers in every community into theism, others into agnosticism, and still others (fewer in number) into atheism. Yet all three classes of thinkers may find themselves consistently at home in the Ethical Fellowship, because in its bond of union, or statement of purpose, there appears nothing that commits its members to worship, or to religion as a confession of faith in things superhuman. In the "bond of union" of every Ethical Society stands the statement that neither accept-

ance nor denial of any theological or philosophical opinion precludes one from membership. Therefore at the Sunday morning meetings of Ethical Societies only that "minimum of public observance" is adopted in which all the members, with their divergent theological and philosophical views, can consistently participate. And if it be said of these Sunday "services" that they are "cold and barren," it must be conceded that they have at least the grace of consistency, doing no violence to the reason or conscience of members by the intrusion of elements that nullify the professed freedom of fellowship. Incidentally it may be well to recall the fact that it took three hundred years of Christianity for the beautiful prayers of Chrysostom to crystallize. It ought not, then, to surprise us that adequate substitutes for such Christian sources of inspiration have not as yet been created by Ethical Societies. Fifty years ago the founder of the Ethical Movement foresaw that its distinctive character would disappear were its members committed to "worship," or to acceptance of theism and prayer. Therefore, to insure the perfect freedom of the Movement, he kept his "statement of purpose" absolutely devoid of these elements. Let theistic members, if they will, organize within the Society a group for the holding of theistic services, even as Socialistic, Individualistic, Kantian, Hegelian and other groups might be formed; but never let the Movement *as a whole* be committed to the position of any group. In such wise did he safeguard the freedom of fellowship. He compared the Movement and its groups to a cathedral with its chapels, the integrity of the Movement depending in-

exorably upon the persistent refusal to permit the particular cult of any of the chapels to represent the cathedral.

Let it not be supposed that the Ethical Movement aims to unite *all* men in its fellowship. Rather does it seek to draw into fellowship all those who would enjoy spiritual freedom and yet feel themselves bound to the claims which the moral ideal makes upon them. It aims to unite all those who would live upward toward the supreme realities of life — truth, love, duty. Those who deliberately prefer to live the downward life of irreligion, it cannot gather into fellowship *while that choice persists*, because morality excludes immorality by an irreconcilable antagonism. Only weak and confused minds will flinch from admitting this fact. We are bound to distinguish things that differ and not swamp all sense and sanity by a refusal to recognize essential differences. But, let it be borne in mind, and very clearly, that while we cannot hope to unite *all* men in *one* fellowship, we can hope, and ever more must hope, to rouse indifferentists to warm interest in the ideal life, to redeem the deliberately immoral and win them over to morality; to rescue those who have chosen to live downward, and so include them, at last, in the religious fellowship. Remembering that in the best of us is something bad and in the worst of us something good; remembering that the most immoral man is not always immoral, but has his better moments in which he looks down with shame and horror on his life, we are bound to maintain hope and to strive to help him rise and fit him to

enter the fellowship of imperfect people whose pole-star is the perfect.

### V. ETHICAL PROGRESS.

When the Ethical Movement was born it was intended to be, and it still is, above all else a forward-looking movement morally. And this fact brings us to a fifth of its distinctive features, its belief in the possibility and the imperative need of ethical progress. But by this is not to be understood the popular notion of more adequate and more widespread practice of the moral precepts preserved in the Scriptures of the Jewish and Christian faith. To insist on this desideratum would not be distinctive of the Ethical Movement. All synagogues and churches are agreed on the necessity of moral progress in this sense. What the Ethical Movement contemplates, and what it means by its belief in moral progress, is the acquisition of new ethical conceptions, insights, new moral formulas, to supplement those which have been found inadequate for many a modern moral need; the attainment of new ideals of righteousness beyond those revealed by the great moral teachers of the past, ideals, — mental pictures of what it is supremely desirable to have in the relations that subsist between personalities. The distinctive feature of the Ethical Movement is the conviction that the moral standards set up by the illuminated seers of the past are not sufficiently comprehensive to cover the new moral situations that have been created by economic, social and other conditions, unknown to the Great Masters of antiquity. Over against this conviction that we need more light on the moral life

than has been furnished by any of the historic Guides, stands the conviction characteristic of Jewish and Christian bodies alike, that within the pages of their respective sacred scriptures all the moral guidance man needs is to be found; that in the teaching transmitted by the prophets of their respective faiths all necessary moral truth is encompassed, making superfluous anything beyond the all-sufficing moral "revelation" of their religion. It is precisely at this point that the distinctiveness of the Ethical Movement appears. For, the very "revelation" which to the devotees of these faiths is a *terminus ad quem*, — a final and complete statement of ethical truth, — is to those of the Ethical Movement a *terminus a quo*, a station from which new journeyings into the realm of ethical insight are to be undertaken. By the followers of the Old Masters in ethics their message is deemed the last word that can be said on the moral life, so that development is possible only within the limits of the prophetic vision. Thus, for example, the Christian, believing that all the moral help man needs has been supplied by the New Testament revelation, conceives of development as confined within the circle of scriptural teaching, whereas the Ethical Culturist, holding that none of the ancient revelations shed the needed light on peculiarly modern moral problems, construes development as reaching out for new ethical conceptions and formulas, beyond the general maxims and precepts of the great Bibles, to new statements that will cover the moral requirements of the new day. In short, the Ethical Movement actively conceives of progress in the ideals of righteousness beyond the highest hither-



to put forth. Does any one question its distinctiveness in this respect?

In what synagogue is it unequivocally declared that the limits of Old Testament ethics must be transcended if we are to meet the moral needs of the modern world in marriage, in business, in politics, in international relations — to cite only the more conspicuous fields in which existing conditions betray the insufficiency of the ancient codes? In none. What we hear instead is the unqualified claim that the Hebrew prophets and poets have given us all the moral guidance we need, and for all time. And what we see is the pathetic and painful spectacle of learned rabbis straining the meaning of Old Testament texts to make them teach something other than their authors plainly intended. Similarly, we ask, in what Christian church is the contention clearly and unfeignedly put forth that the ethics of Jesus, notwithstanding all its undisputed and eternally valid excellences, yet needs to be supplemented if the moral problems confronting “a world morally out of joint” are to be adequately solved? Again the answer must be, in none. Any liberal Christian preacher who would dare to show forth the insufficiency of the ethics of Jesus and illustrate it by examples from the gospel record would be in serious danger of losing his pulpit. Indeed two such enforced resignations within the Unitarian fellowship have been brought to notice within recent years. I know no Christian who hesitates to confess that Jesus is the complete, perfect, all-sufficing Way, Truth, Life; that Christianity includes the whole of religion, needing nothing outside itself to make it any truer, higher, better.

But whosoever attains a glimpse of Religion as truer and holier than Christianity and dares to give utterance to that insight and to confess his allegiance to that higher faith, would, to say the least, jeopardize his standing in any church, for there would be those among the members who recognize the solemn command laid upon him who took the view of Religion as holier than Christianity and yet sought to wear the Christian name and hold a Christian pulpit. In our war with Germany a man might have worn the German uniform in Germany yet have remained at heart a loyal American, yet it is difficult to see how any man of conscience would ever consent to put inside and outside so at variance.

To synagogue and church alike is the idea intolerable that their Bible does not contain *all* the moral teaching the world needs or ever will need; and, as a consequence, the unethical practice prevails of putting constructions upon texts which were clearly not in the minds of their authors. As among the rabbis so among the Christian clergy we see the most astounding liberties taken with scriptural words, phrases, sentences, in order to make them vehicles of the best ethical thought on moral problems for the solution of which the record, fairly and unbiasedly interpreted, offers no help. And the inevitable result of this pernicious practice of crowding new meanings into ancient statements is a confusion of ideas and the defeat of all efforts at clarification in ethical thinking. Orthodox Christians argue that the teaching of Jesus is complete and final because he was God, and hence what he taught must be sufficient for all time. And though Unitarians

and other liberal Christians disown this doctrine of the deity of Jesus they nevertheless hold to the inference which their orthodox brethren have drawn from it. Both the liberal synagogues and the liberal churches have abandoned the *theological* element of the orthodox creeds because it has been utterly discredited by modern research, but neither synagogue nor church has abandoned the idea that the *ethical* element of the creeds is fixed, complete and final. On the contrary, each group sees in the ethical teaching of its scriptures, the ultimate pronouncements of moral truth, valid for all people and all time, progress being confined to fresh application of the precepts enunciated. Contrast with all this the position of the Ethical Movement. It starts where the Jewish and Christian communions stop, seeing in the ethical precepts of the Old Testament and in those of the New, stages in the evolution of moral standards beyond which we are now to advance. It takes the ground that moral truth, like scientific truth, is progressive, that in the development of civilization new conditions have appeared, giving rise to new and vexing problems for the solution of which more help is needed than either the Old or the New Testament has supplied, thus making it imperative that the *ethical* element in the Hebrew and in the Christian tradition, no less than the theological, be advanced upon. Our civilization is not that of ancient shepherds, living a nomadic life in the wilderness; nor is it that of settled farmers living in Judea two thousand years ago. Ours is an industrial age, a scientific, a democratic age; an age of machinery and factories and popular government. As a con-

sequence new problems have arisen of which neither Moses nor Jesus ever dreamed, and for the solution of these *new* ethical concepts and formulas must be furnished.<sup>1</sup> As against the position taken by the synagogues and the churches, the Ethical Movement insists (and herein its distinctiveness lies) that the same impulse which animated Jesus to advance on the ethics of Moses must animate us, to supplement the ethics of Jesus with new light for guidance on the unsolved problems of the modern world. Loyalty to the acknowledged progressiveness of moral truth requires us, even as it required him, humbly to press on to new moral concepts, while reverencing every great teacher of the past for his contribution to the stock of moral knowledge. Thus the Ethical Movement is marked by its conviction that excellent and of immortal worth as are the general maxims "love one another," "return good for evil," "judge not," etc., they are too general to serve our modern need; that new ideals of righteousness beyond those already revealed must be set up; that never yet has the moral code been completely revealed; that no one of the world's Bibles with all its imperishable excellences is comprehensive enough to embrace the total of moral requirements in modern society; that not merely better moral behavior on the basis of what ethical teaching we have is needed, but also *new moral knowledge* to meet situations for which the historic codes do not provide. When Matthew Arnold

<sup>1</sup>And I sometimes think that were Jesus to return to earth and find himself amid an order of society so radically different from that in which he taught, he would feel constrained to modify much of his recorded teaching and supply its inevitable lacks.

declared "we have all the moral knowledge we need, our only difficulty is in applying what we already possess," he uttered one of those commonplaces of modern thought against which we need to be constantly on our guard. For, not only is his statement incorrect but the exact opposite is the grim truth that so often confronts us. Everyone who has grappled with the pressing problems characteristic of our time knows that one reason why they are still with us is that we are still without the needed moral light to shed upon them. The world has not advanced beyond the stage of elementary moral *practice* because the teaching offered has not reached beyond elementary moral *ideas*. And both free synagogues and free churches are vainly struggling to make these do the work for which they are not fitted. Both institutions remind us of the distinguished Viceroy of China who in 1909 had become thoroughly enamored of Western ways of thought and life, yet sought to satisfy Oriental needs by formulas taken from Confucian books written twenty-four centuries ago! So the liberal Christian churches, while increasingly alive to the necessity of facing the social problems of our century, yet rely exclusively on moral formularies drawn from the New Testament. How often have we heard Unitarian clergymen urging the claim that the "Golden Rule gives us all the help we need if only we would apply it faithfully." But the truth is that the Golden Rule permits of only limited *personal* application. Situations there are, in the industrial world for example, where this "rule" cannot be effectively applied, as ex-

perience proves.<sup>1</sup> Most unfortunate it is that the familiar maxim, "Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you," was ever called the *Golden Rule*. For, strictly speaking, it is not a rule at all. It does not tell us precisely what to do in any given situation. It simply indicates the spirit that should control and animate our action, leaving it to us to find the appropriate deed. Beware of the shallow notion that any reflection is cast upon the Bible or upon Moses, Isaiah and Jesus because what they have bequeathed to mankind of moral precept proves insufficient for our time. They regarded it as no part of their mission to legislate or prescribe for the moral needs of centuries beyond their own era; nay more, they owed their success as teachers of ethics to the very limitations they put upon their work. Surely, then, it ought not to surprise us if, in relation to those issues upon which just now we are sorely in need of guidance, the ancient codes fail us. To illustrate this fact, to make still clearer the truth that more moral light is required than the historic guides supply, let us call to mind some of the paramount moral needs of our time, touching briefly upon each.

One is an ethicized conception of the State (and its corollary, an ethics of citizenship). In vain do we search for it in the Bible. Jesus did not touch upon it for several reasons, but chiefly because it lay outside the sphere of his wisely-limited mission as a teacher of personal ethics. Said an Episcopalian professor of Oxford University in a recent issue of the *Hibbert Journal*:

<sup>1</sup>See *The Standard*, March, 1923, pp. 237-8, for Professor Adler's exposition of this point.

“Our Lord carefully refrained from expressing an opinion on political and economic problems, which were beyond the scope of his mission. His concern was not with the State but with the individual, not so much with Humanity as with Man.” With the State he was not concerned because, according to his belief and that of all of his Jewish contemporaries, the State was a temporary institution, destined soon to be replaced by the expected Kingdom of Heaven on earth. So full of this great expectation was the apostle Paul that he could advocate a doctrine of unrestricted submission to the dictates of the State. “The powers that be are ordained of God” was his plea—a doctrine positively harmful for us who believe in the persistence of this old world for many an aeon yet, and who are fully persuaded that “the powers that be” in the State are too often “ordained” by anything but a divine Power.

A second paramount moral need of our day is an ethics of big-business, involving the relation of employer to employees in unprecedented ways. The problem of the right relationship between these parties in industry is only a century and a half old. It dates from the time when the “domestic” system of industry gave place to the “factory” system, when machinery was substituted for tools, and when the old, close, personal relation of master and workmen was replaced by a cash nexus and the wage-system. How, then, should we find in any Biblical record the necessary light on this dark problem? The most that the ancient moral repositories can supply is a group of general maxims, unquestionably true

and precious, yet as plainly insufficient to be of direct help.

Another of our paramount moral needs is more light on the spiritual significance and purpose of marriage. Is it realized that there are only two verses (and their parallels) in the Gospels that touch the subject of marriage, and neither sets forth its *spiritual* meaning? Moreover, Jesus exemplified and exalted celibacy as against the marriage relation—witness what we read in the nineteenth chapter of the Gospel according to Matthew, at the twelfth verse.<sup>1</sup> The plain truth is that Jesus left no direct teaching wherewith to meet the marriage problem as we have it among us to-day. And the apostle Paul, it will be remembered, saw in wedlock only a concession to human weakness. “It is good for a man not to touch a woman, nevertheless to avoid fornication let each man have his own wife and each woman her own husband.” If they (the unmarried) “cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.” Furthermore, as against the spiritual conception of mutuality, reciprocity, complementariness of influence in the marriage relation, Paul taught the subordination of the woman to the man—due fundamentally to his inheritance of Hebrew tradition.

Still one other of the crying moral needs which must not be overlooked is that of an international morality, to supplement the man-to-man morality which we find in the Old Testament and the New. In neither book do we find any teaching on *in-*

<sup>1</sup>See my book *The Modern Ideal of Marriage* for a detailed discussion of these points.

<sup>2</sup>I Corinthians vi, 1, 2, 9, and I Corinthians xi, 3-9.



*ternational* morality, and for very excellent reasons which cannot be here discussed. But the point to be noted is that this lack has created the need of more light to help solve the vexing question of international amity and peace. We need an ethicized nationalism to replace the narrow, nefarious, chauvinistic nationalism now rampant throughout the world. But this ethicized nationalism has to be worked out as part of a code of international morality; we do not find it furnished in any of the ancient scriptures. It is essentially a modern concept, and it lay wholly outside the range of Jesus' teaching, concerned as he was with the ethics of *personal* life.

Here, then, is a group of great moral needs, bound up with economic, social, national and international problems. On all of them there exists much difference of opinion. On none of them have we as yet a consensus of moral judgment. In vain do we look for light on them from the moral repositories of the past. Even as to the personal ideals that are held up as patterns worthy of emulation an astonishing variety of opinion obtains. One finds his ideal in the Christian saint; another, in the Greek sage; a third, in the Gothic gentleman; a fourth, in the self-centered, strong, free Superman of Nietzsche. Hence a literature of conflicting ethical ideals, a "chaos of ethical convictions," but no consensus of opinion upon personal ideals. Hence, too, the conspicuous place given to moral education in the Ethical Movement and the *distinctiveness* of its belief in ethical progress. Precisely as the American Association for the Advancement of Science invites its members, while enjoying abso-

lute intellectual freedom, to explore the field of Nature and make fresh discoveries there, so Ethical Societies bid their members go out into the field of Duty, and with like intellectual freedom, shed new light on the open, unsolved problems of the moral life.

If, now, the further question be raised, how is the needed new moral knowledge to be acquired? the Ethical Movement answers in terms equally distinctive,—by moral experience.

## VI. MORAL EXPERIENCE VS. REVELATION.

When Brunelleschi, the famous Florentine architect, successfully competed for the construction of the dome of the cathedral, he closed his series of specifications for the structure with the following significant suggestion: When the dome shall have reached the height of fifty-seven feet (that is, just before it is to be closed in), let the master-builders, then in charge of the work, determine what the next step is to be. For, said Brunelleschi, “*la pratica insegna quello si ha da seguire*,”—practice teaches what the next step to be taken shall be. So in constructing the dome for the cathedral of the moral life, inner experience is our teacher, practice in moral architecture our basis of decision as to how we shall supplement the moral principles transmitted from the past. Thus there is this very real sense in which practice precedes theory. To know the spiritual meaning of love one must live the life of love. Only by “doing the will” does one “know the doctrine.” We of the Ethical Movement take our stand with Brunelleschi. We believe that by striving to get into right relations

with our fellowmen we shall find just what these relations ought to be: by working toward an ideal of justice in social and in business life, we shall learn what the true ideal really is; by experiencing the deeper contents of the moral life we shall approximate adequate statements of the moral Ideal.

Beginning with reverential and grateful appreciation of the immortal contributions made by the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus toward the upbuilding of the moral life, cherishing and treasuring their teachings, making them an integral part of the moral instruction given to the children and young people in its fellowship, every Ethical Society proceeds to indicate the directions in which more light is needed and how it is to be sought.

The Ethical Movement begins with the accepted norms of human conduct, *i.e.*, with those which by "the consensus of civilized peoples" have long since been put beyond the pale of further question. That we should be kind, just, honest, grateful to our benefactors, sympathetic towards the unfortunate,—that honor, justice, love bind us regardless of our explanation of them, or of our fidelity to them,—these are moral beliefs about which men generally agree. Here, then, is common standing-ground. Here we can come together and work together, and push on thence into new and unexplored fields of the moral life, no matter what our theological and philosophical opinions may be.

## VII. TAKING SIDES.

We are thus brought directly to a seventh dis-

inctive feature of the Ethical Movement,—it refrains from taking sides on debatable moral issues. Again and again have various religious bodies committed their entire membership, — by “resolutions” and similar collective pronouncements,—to a particular standpoint on some vital debated issue. Ethical Societies have ever been marked by their refusal to stand committed to any position on an “open” question, one on which the conscience of civilized mankind has not yet been made up. For, an Ethical Society cannot take sides without instantly forfeiting the priceless freedom of its fellowship. On the right of the single standard to prevail over the double standard in the relation of the sexes; on the duty of humaneness; on the obligation to act honestly and justly in business transactions; on all such issues there is now general agreement everywhere among civilized peoples, and it is therefore part of the function of Ethical Societies to encourage the ever wider application of these accepted forms of right conduct. But on compulsory military training in the public schools; on Socialism or Communism; on vivisection; on all such issues concerning the rightness of which the conscience of mankind is not yet agreed, Ethical Societies, as such, cannot take sides. Were they to do so they would automatically shut out from their membership all those who differed from the majority in their moral judgment on the given issue. To quote the published “statement” of one of the Societies: “We are convinced that any expression of opinion by the Society, as a Society, not only tends to embarrass freedom of individual thought, but is contrary to the spirit of our

organization; and we beg further to submit, that any attempt to embarrass, by resolution or otherwise, the individual member or lecturer in the enjoyment of his opinions on the great questions of the day will prove detrimental, if not dangerous, to the welfare of the Society." Leaders of Ethical Societies may and do express themselves publicly on all sorts of mooted moral questions; but they are pledged not to speak for any one but themselves. In matters of practical administration or of expediency every Ethical Society permits the majority to rule; but in all matters of conviction as to what is right it pays absolute respect to the view of even the smallest minority, safeguarding its cherished freedom by refusing to commit the Society as a whole to what a majority believe to be right. Is, then, the Ethical Movement a flabby, invertebrate institution because it refrains from taking sides on burning, open issues of the day? So to believe would be deplorably to misconceive the character and function of the Movement. There is a higher, more difficult and more august task devolving upon the Ethical Movement than that of taking sides. Let the churches and synagogues take sides if they will; the Ethical Movement is dedicated to a different sort of constructive mission with reference to debatable questions. It is (a) to surround the conflicting viewpoints and controversialists with a serener atmosphere, (b) to foster that ethical modesty which admits there may be some wrong on one's own side and some right on the other, (c) to elucidate that measure of right which is on the side of those whom the majority think altogether wrong, (d) to use

Socialism, Communism and all other proposed solutions for the social problem as a means for advancing our knowledge of the *complete* right, (e) to encourage an attitude of friendliness among those who differ; because each can learn something from the others, because no one has the *complete* right, nor is the right ever wholly on one side or the wrong wholly on the other. All through the years of the Great War the "pacifists" were believed by the majority to be wholly wrong, yet they had an element of right on their side. They insisted that the fellowship of nations must not be forgotten at a time when we are at enmity with two of them, because the ultimate object of the war—as President Wilson had so nobly declared—was "the creation of a comradeship of justice that shall include *all* nations, even those with whom we are now at war." Again, the erring pacifists were right in holding that the end peace does not justify the means war, a truth which the non-pacifists overlooked. For no end whatsoever can *justify* war, though it may *necessitate* war. There are some things which seem to us necessary but which we are humiliated in doing, and one of them is the manufacturing of thousands of tons of shells to be hurled upon battalions composed of human beings like ourselves. And we ought to have been humiliated to the dust instead of glorying in bayonet practice and other necessary military performances. By as much, then, as our grasp of the *complete* right is an ideal yet to be attained, the Ethical Movement has for its task a worthier object than that of taking sides—viz., striving to bring to light knowledge of the complete Right.

## VIII. SOCIAL REFORM.

It remains to touch upon still another distinctive feature of the Ethical Movement, remembering, indeed, that this eighth one does not exhaust the total series, though the most important are included in our survey. Note the outstanding characteristic of the Ethical Movement that differentiates it from contemporary social schemes and "betterment" enterprises. It begins where these leave off. They halt at securing to the oppressed the material wherewithal of well-being; the Ethical Movement pushes beyond this to the spiritual or true ends of these human lives, unwilling to stop at shorter hours, higher wages, sanitary conditions, etc., absolutely and obviously necessary as all these are. The Ethical Movement, while recognizing the imperative need of betterment plans, and ready to help them, deprecates *resting* on the material and physical plane which marks our socialistic literature and platforms. Again, instead of declaring that in the absence of improved social and industrial conditions it is idle to press improvement of character, the Ethical Movement maintains that even under existing conditions, bad as they are, we *must* find out how the moral life *can* be lived. We cannot wait for the advent of a social Utopia. Personal morality presses for attention, and the solving of its problems cannot be made contingent on external social conditions. The various social issues of our time concentrate attention on external readjustments and rearrangements of society. The Ethical Movement focuses attention on internal improvement, promoting better con-

ditions of life and simultaneously seeking personal regeneration, assured that all social morality rests at last on a basis of private morality, and that beyond necessary concern for material welfare lie the ultimate issues of our life. Thus the Ethical Movement is devoted not so much to any "betterment" as to the *best*. For there is of necessity a loss of power in concentrating attention on betterment. We need the vision of the best to give inspiration. We need to look above and beyond the physical interests to the infinite worth which we ascribe to each human soul by virtue of the moral nature inhering in us all. Hence, at bottom, the Ethical Movement is spiritual and optimistic rather than material and melioristic. Not to do the work of charity-organizations, but to sustain and develop in the workers *the spirit behind* all true charity work; not to stop child-labor, but to inspire and quicken the sentiments that shall control those devoted to the abolition of child-labor,—such is the characteristic aim of the Ethical Movement. To furnish inspiration for social workers, to set the faces of men and women steadfastly toward the Perfect, the Ideal which forever flies before us however eagerly we pursue; to keep before men and women the spiritual view of themselves—as possessors of a spiritual nature having infinite worth,—this the Ethical Movement seeks above all else to achieve. Behind and within all the various philanthropic and educational activities it conducts is this spiritual conception of man, while above and beyond all its undertakings broods the supreme and all inclusive aim—the ever-increasing knowledge, love and practice of the right.



# Ethical Experience as the Basis of Religious Education

By HENRY NEUMANN.<sup>1</sup>

**S**OME MEMBERS of Ethical Culture Societies are apt to grow restive at seeing the word "religious" in connection with the educational activities of their fellowship. They prefer to accentuate, as against the belief of the churches, the conviction that the best life is possible even where no theological sanctions are accepted. To such it is enough that men's minds be captured by images of a world whence wrong and misery have been banished, and where truth, goodness, and joy abound in ampler measure than today's, and that people therefore give themselves wholeheartedly to personal charity, self-improvement, civic betterment, and other quite secular duties.

But in others among us, there are needs which these activities do not wholly satisfy. We desire to see, as far as we can, life all of a piece. We wish to unify the outgivings of moral energy, to bring them under the guidance of a supreme, all-embracing purpose, the highest we can conceive. Under such a desire, Ethical Culture becomes religious experience whenever deeply earnest living is felt to possess an infinite mean-

<sup>1</sup>Much of this article appeared in the columns of *Religious Education*, to whose editors thanks are hereby acknowledged for permission to reprint.

ing, or when today's attempts at right living are seen in their linkage with things eternal. What this implies for the education of both young and old in spiritual living will be clearer if we first examine how religious insight is indebted to ethical experience.

Let me illustrate this relation in terms of some one duty. Take, for example, the "service" to which people are everywhere exhorted to give themselves today. To thoughtful minds, genuine service is vastly more than a succession of kind acts, whether little or big. So much more meaningful is it that its implications become eminently religious when we think what the persons are who merit being served. They have their ideal potentialities; and the gift is a tribute to these higher selves. They may be unresponsive. History is full of instances where noble attempts at human benefaction were thwarted. Few tales are more common than those of the stoning of the saviors. But it is also true that the saviors were aware of an obligation to keep on. Why? Or how can one be sincere in serving people whom one dislikes? The reason for mentioning these problems is simply that if service is to mean more than sporadic acts of giving, we need thorough-going ideals. It is only partly true that deeds of service are made admirable by being offered freely. The readiness is indeed a sign of something good about the one who serves. But a fact not always lifted to its due importance in our thinking and conduct is the nature of the other party to the relationship, namely the ideal self (some would call it the divine self) in the person to whom the service is rendered. The implica-

tion is that there is something great about the recipient which deserves the gift. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me"—for the least of these bears the image of the Highest.

Fathers and mothers are especially fitted to understand such an interpretation of the service motive. Though their efforts to call forth the best in a child may meet with failure, even with rank ingratitude, they continue. Why should they? All of us have received from our parents more benefits than we can count. Did we deserve them because we were always as unfailingly excellent as they wished? If the services they proffered were merited by us for what we actually are, there would perhaps be none too much that we could call our due. But fathers and mothers labor patiently with their children for the sake of something better than the children actually exhibit. They see above and beyond the present, imperfect selves, lives more excellent; and they spend themselves for the only object which deserves their devotion, this finer, truer and rarer nature in their children.

Parents who have no vision of this potential greatness are disheartened by the failures to draw out the right response. Where the vision is present, however, the very defects only intensify the father's love of the nobler personage he wants the child to become. Here is one approach to religious experience—in this deepened seeing into the higher nature. The sense of an ideal best, profoundly loved and deserving of love's utmost, is a salient mark of every finely religious life; and such a conviction is ethical in

its origin. Or suppose that the parent's service succeeds. The higher his ideal for his child, the more he will be spurred to help the child to reach levels still further off. Every honest effort to serve, or to perform any duty whatever, thus opens up new vistas of the kind of life which we know at heart is best.

Such experiences become religious when the ideal self in the child or in the better society is seen, not in such isolation as might be inferred from this imperfect example, but in relation to an infinite pattern. To those of us who accord with Professor Felix Adler's thought upon this subject (no such unanimity is required of our members), the infinite pattern is the eternal company of perfect lives, or the spiritual commonwealth wherein the highest in each life is evoked in and through the process of setting free the highest in all the others. The child, for example, belongs to a family; the family is a member in the community; and beyond this are one's country and all the countries of the world. See these united with the generations before and still to come. Imagine over and beyond these generations a collective life for all mankind infinitely more excellent than the eye can ever behold—where people not merely refrain from hurt, but exercise affirmatively the energizing effect mentioned a few sentences above. Picture each generation in its time and place turning its efforts in the direction set by that lofty pattern, so that what is most distinctly human in mankind may be more human still, or if you please, more God-like. The image will give some hint of how ethical experiences may lead to grasping the fact that

there is a spiritual universe sublime as that spectacle of the starry skies which Arnold characterized as

A world above man's head to let him see  
How boundless might his soul's horizons be.

Indeed there would seem to be a marked tendency in modern theology to make the approach to divinity precisely along this line of moral reality.<sup>1</sup> Religious philosophy to-day proceeds upon the assumption that over and beyond the world of things which we can see and handle, like stones, pieces of wood and metal, there is also this other world, of noble heroisms, high longings, endless outreachings toward exalted behaviors—a world which existed long before we were born, whose grandeur will be beheld even more splendidly long after we have closed our eyes, a world of which we are members now by virtue of our highest capacities for excellent living—not because of what we are empirically, but because of what, at our ideal best, we have it in us to be.

These truths are brought home in the experiences both of moral defeat and of triumph. To the religious nature, the defeat only heightens the splendor of the reality which the failure has dishonored. Just as the parent sees a brighter image of the good man he would have his son become, so to the spiritually-minded person, the rebuff to his ideals makes him behold in a new way the glories of the life which does not fail. He

<sup>1</sup>If the criticism may be ventured at this point, theology is still too tied, however, to the idea of the unity in the Perfect Life and insufficiently concerned about preserving the irreducible integrity of the components.

also realizes, even in the glow of success, that the triumph is only partial. Necessary as it was to emancipate the slaves in 1863, will anyone say that the negro problem in America has been at all settled? The best we ever succeed in making of ourselves and of our world looks up always to a better which lies beyond. No earthly society, no matter what paradise of efficiency or better distribution of happiness it may succeed in establishing, is ever likely to have no still grander aims toward which the race is to press. We never reach the goal; but all that makes us men and women tells us that we ought not to cease moving in its direction. The reward of so moving is a renewed sense of the worth or supreme excellence in people, and a firmer conviction of the reality of the perfect life in which all people at their highest are members. It is only by serving this highest that we make ourselves better fit to give it a service still better, and to see ever more clearly how deserving it is of our deepest best.

Thus it is that experiences in human service may lead to certain religious convictions. Such outcome may be the fruit of many other kinds of experience. For example, though some people find it hard to get these images of the perfect life from their contacts with those whose conduct brings the pain of disillusionment, yet in other ways they feel a freshened sense of certain supremely valid obligations. Even, for instance, when earlier affections are bankrupt, when things are at their worst, and when all life seems to be but a vast and dead futility, such people recall that there are certain rooted loyalties to which they had pledged themselves in their

brighter hours and to which they must, because they ought, be faithful. This living conviction that there is an ideal Right, which though it slay them, is yet to be trusted, surely makes of ethical living something more than a succession of praiseworthy deeds.

Such a devout loyalty sometimes opens up another avenue of experience and insight, the one described in the saying from the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." The words "hunger" and "thirst" mean little to us who live in our modern world of comparative comfort and luxury. Thirst is now a momentary craving which we can satisfy very quickly. We can have our drink for the merest asking, the turn of a faucet, the paying of a coin. But in a land where the springs of water often ran dry, where travel frequently meant journeying over hot desert spaces, "thirst" meant a burning desire which repetition of the word now can only faintly suggest. Yet it was such a passionate yearning which the words connoted when they spoke of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And what reward was mentioned as the blessing upon those who did so crave? Not power, not money, not good repute, but a return endlessly more precious. The reward was the freshened, ampler righteousness with which they should be filled. People may differ in their interpretation of the source from which this replenishing proceeds; but the experience itself is familiar enough.

Or to take another type of experience. As the result of struggling to put down the baser in-

clinations in himself, a man may come to realize that what is most truly himself is a free spirit beyond the power of the lower propensities to make him their own. Socrates in the prison at Athens might have availed himself of the opportunities offered to escape to another country. All his life, however, he had taught his disciples obedience to the state; and now that acquiescence was required on his part, he refused to be exempted. One of the remarks which Plato attributes to him illustrates beautifully the reality of the higher nature: "I am inclined to think that these muscles and bones of mine would have gone off long ago to Megara or Boeotia . . . if they had been moved only by their own idea of what was best, and if I had not chosen the better part." In the ethical sense what constitutes a person is not this body of flesh and bone which we carry about with us, but the veiled being which calls itself by our name, which acts through our hands and brains, and which can show itself, although not always, to be sure, free to give forth its best.

The illustration from the life of Socrates is old; but the principle of a higher self—in religious terms, of the immanent God—is just as true in our modern age. Note that it was an ethical concern for his disciples which so helped Socrates to assert the spiritual nature. Their regard for what was greatest in him put them upon their mettle; and in turn his love for them made him seek to be worthy of them. Men in whose friendship there is a high respect, know what this kind of interaction means, when what is greatest in the soul of either inspires the essen-



tial self in the other. As Felix Adler summed up the thought in his recent Hibbert Lectures: "Seek to elicit the best in others, and thereby you will bring to light the best in yourself. . . . Seek to educe in the other the consciousness of his membership in the infinite spiritual commonwealth, and in so doing you will not *save* your soul but achieve the unshakable conviction that you *are* a soul or spirit."

There are many such experiences to convince us that what is best within us lives most truly only as it is rightly related to this deepest life in other persons. The best in me is the life which quickens the highest in you and in all the others whom it affects. So is the best in the dealings of group with group, nation with nation. The worthiest use of life is the effort to convert the actual ties which bind us, such as the family life, or community or national life, or co-partnership in the vocations, into the recognition of this spiritual relationship. Ethical religion asks us to eternalize our casual contacts by making them the occasions to lift up in one another the sense of kinship in the City of the Light.

How does all this bear upon the problem of education? Plainly two courses are indicated. If education is to be inspired by the spiritual motive, it must provide for a series of developing moral experiences; and second, it must offer an interpretation of those experiences. Obviously, with younger children, the more important of these two functions will be the providing of the experiences. "Life must be lived in order to be known." Children learn what responsibility

means only by living out experiences in responsibility. The same is true of service, gratitude, loyalty, courage, and all the other traits that enter into the making of excellent lives. If ever our children are to reach the idea of a Being, or of a Society of Beings, desiring that men be perfect, such a belief must be born of their own longings—and their own endeavors—for better living now.

To make the right beginnings, many ways are open. The new Project Method is one—provided we do not see its distinctive merit out of relation to other essentials. Practice must come first, last, and always. But it must constantly be interpreted and led on to still finer outcomes. Reflection on moral principles must be encouraged and enlightened. Certain basic skills must be mastered; and fundamental contributions handed on to the present from the past must be appreciated. Here is a signal opportunity to bring home something of the thought suggested in the foregoing pages, that over-arching the lives of individuals and generations, there is a best life for all the race. The school turns to the past in order that the present may make its better contribution, if it can, to the future, so that the ages ahead may in their turn serve the Highest more ably. Through inspiring biography, vivid history-teaching, pageants, festivals, dramatic celebrations of great moments in the life of the race, children can be made to feel some sense of linkage between their own lives and lives past and to come, and something of the conviction that “life is good to the extent that it is given to good causes.” Gratitude, reverence, hero-

worship, joy in the triumph of exalted principles, should all be fed through some such means as these. Every subject or skill taught in the day-school has its inspiring tradition. Literature and the other arts should be pressed into service to permit the children to identify themselves vicariously with the best moments of living that the race has known or can hope.

Take the teaching of history as one such opportunity. While we may not agree with Mr. H. G. Wells as an authority in this field or accord with his hedonistic conception of the goal for human society, he is doing an important service today in reminding teachers to treat history as a record of how the race has attempted certain great collective and uncompleted tasks. The sense of an over-arching collective task for mankind has never been more necessary than in this age of disruptive nationalisms, egotistic racial prides, and class-strife. History-teaching must breathe life into that requirement. It must interpret the task of mankind in terms of a moral struggle, often defeated, partially successful—and even then at bitter cost—and unending in its noble possibilities. It must try to touch the pupils to the shame of the great failures, *i. e.*, those instances where the excellence in man has been outraged (as in wars of conquest, persecution, slavery, etc.). It must make them feel the joy of those moments when the great task of the race was advanced; and especially must it help to quicken the eager, but always (in contrast with fanaticism or with merely impulsive, unappreciative revolt) the thoughtful and informed, de-

sire to push the unfinished task still further ahead.

In carrying out such an educational program, we must be mindful that it must cover the child's entire life from infancy through old age, and that at certain stages some items need a special emphasis. For instance, in childhood heavier stress will be laid on experiencing through right filial relations the meaning of dependence, of trust in a love which sometimes inflicts pain but which wants always what is best for its objects, of faith in the triumph of the right here and now. Initiative is of course highly essential even in these early years. But the influence of parental love and parental example must still remain well toward the center.

As the child approaches adolescence, other tendencies become more marked and should be ethically cultivated. Such, for example, is the rebellious desire for independence, especially when the shortcomings in parents, brothers and sisters are now more apparent. The discovery of faults in parents or other relatives more or less uncongenial, should be educated into a new sense that there is a collective task uniting even those who are disliked (*e. g.*, the functions of the family need the co-operation even of those inclined to rebel), and that even in those who make love difficult, there is a higher self to be respected and to be worked with in the over-arching task. Other special opportunities for this period are the introductions to disinterested love in the eager friendships so characteristic of youth, and the promptings to warm humanitarian service.

A further difference between the earlier and

the later educational stages is the treatment of evil. Little people need to see the unshadowed and constant victory of right over wrong. "From the age of twelve on, though the children still need to be encouraged by seeing how the good wins, their confidence should be interpenetrated with some sense of the immensity of the task. At this stage they begin to be aware of the shadows accompanying the brighter side of life's pictures. They see the long roll of centuries it took the world to rid itself of such evils as slavery. They begin to realize that poetic justice is not always done in life as it is in their literature, but that often good men and good women suffer. Or they see how the excellence in life is accompanied by its evils, how the liberties of men, for example, have been purchased by the cruelest of bloody conflicts, how religion went hand in hand with persecution perpetrated by people who were not deliberately cruel but often quite sincere in believing such conduct to be a duty. Or they grow conscious of imperfection in those whom they had once beheld in the light of full-orbed hero-worship. In many ways this period is full of questionings unfamiliar to the earlier stage.

"This is therefore the time to prepare for appreciation of the supersensible character of genuine ideals. Now that the young people begin to realize that perfection is further off than they had once supposed, they are better prepared to understand how the ideal of the best always out-runs the very best of achievement. When the adolescent, unlike the child, realizes that there are ills which cannot be cured by immediate acts

of charity, we can use this new understanding to intensify what desires he has for a world of progress. Not at all that youth is pessimistic or ought to be. The normal adolescent, if he is aware that things are wrong, is buoyantly confident that they can all be set right. His faith needs to be fused with some perception of the immensities of the problem and of the sublimity of the ideal goals, once these are pitched as high as the truth requires."<sup>1</sup>

The leading ideals for later stages have already been partly suggested in the illustrations with which these pages began. If space permitted, we might consider the religious implications of thorough-going ideals for the vocational life, for marriage, and for citizenship. Religious education is a process which extends throughout the whole of a person's years. It should be a matter not of receiving once and forever certain ready-made answers on the ultimate problems, but of an ever richer, deepening and broadening sense of individual worth as bound up with co-partnership in a supreme world-task, and a firmer conviction of rooted obligation so to perform one's share in that chief obligation and privilege as to promote the worthy performance of their functions by our fellow-spirits.

The beginnings of such growth will consist mainly of two kinds of experience, the children's own practices in the fundamental excellences, and the partly vicarious experiences made possible by the other business of the school. At every stage from the school years on, both types of experience

<sup>1</sup>From the present writer's *Education for Moral Growth*. (New York: Appleton.)

need a spiritual interpretation. Whether this interpretation should be offered in the public schools, or in homes and churches, raises a problem, however, the full discussion of which is not within the scope of this paper. It is to be regretted, we may however say in passing, that those who are demanding religious instruction in the schools do not see that the public schools, where the unitary needs of our democracy should receive the major stress, would therefore do better to supply an effective moral training. This need not in the least conflict with the religious teachings in the home. On the contrary, it can offer essential contributions to the right sort of training in all the various religions. The value of any religious teaching whatever is ultimately a matter of its ethical depth and soundness. There are noble conceptions of God; and there are ignoble ones. The better a man's moral training, the bigger and better, if he is religious at all, will be his idea of religion. If at heart his ethical ideals are mean and poverty-stricken, his religion will do no more than make these mean and poverty-stricken ideals more intense and hurtful, as it does for those people today to whom religion is largely a bigoted spying-out and hunting-down of practices which they dislike. A religion is as good or as bad as the ethics out of which it springs. To the saint, religion means saintliness; to the money-minded, religion means divine sanction for the sharp teeth and claws. The soldier does not pray for a heart to forgive his enemy; he prays for victory. When men pray sincerely, they pray to get such things and to become such persons as their ethical training and

their ethical instruction permit them to conceive as ideal. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."

Therefore let the schools cultivate, among other essentials, the love of the brother. Let them, that is, develop the moral aptitudes which people of all sects and beliefs can unite in honoring. Though the Catholic is marked off from the Protestant, the Jew and the Freethinker by his religious beliefs, there are moral practices which all honorable men and women, much as they may differ in religion, are alike in respecting. Upright, conscientious, high-minded, truth-loving doers of justice and mercy are found not in one religious group alone but in all. Their practices and ideals can be taught without setting up the dividing lines of theological belief. These are the only ones that deserve a place in schools dedicated to making our democracy a unity.

With the love for the brother on earth taught in the schools, let the home, if it is so minded, carry the child on to the love of the heavenly Father. Let the churches give their special religious interpretations to these moral experiences. But the experiences come first in order of time. They come first in point of importance. Whether eventually we come or not to love the Father in heaven, learn to love the brother on earth and to act toward him as a brother should. So of the other ideals that make the truly successful life. They are the monopoly of no religious body. They are universal. They lay the best foundation for whatever beliefs about man's destiny the various groups may cherish.



The point of chief importance is simply that in the experiences of the growing moral life are to be found the most fruitful approaches to a life of developing religious experience. The ultimate proof is the moral quality of the fruitage. This is the test which the Ethical Societies accept for their experiment. Surely there is no better measure by which any religion should be judged.



# "All Men are Created Equal"

By GEORGE E. O'DELL.

## I.

**I**N THE LITERATURE of politics no documents could well be more significant than Plato's "Republic" and the Declaration of Independence. However different in form, elaboration and temper, both are the product of intense reactions to bad statecraft; they are, in fact, political tracts. Plato served in Athens under the Thirty and in the subsequent restored Democracy; in Syracuse (like Goethe later in Weimar) he assisted an autocrat to manage affairs of state, only presently to flee for his life, an innocent victim of a palace intrigue. At some time in this career of close but invariably disappointing political contacts he composed the "Republic," with its spirited argument for a form of government in which only a caste of philosophic intellectuals, because of their detachment loath to rule and above corruption, should be placed in control.

Equally was the Declaration, with its echoes of French pre-revolutionary thought, as well as of Milton and John Locke, written against a background of political breakdown, albeit one more illuminated than were any of Plato's with vitalising hope.

Each document, again, depends for its argu-

ment on an opinion about human nature. But here we must pass at once from likeness to unlikeness. For in their unlikeness the "Republic" and the Declaration present what is surely one of the most striking paradoxes in the history of thought. Plato was a man passionately devoted to ideas, moving in preference among abstractions, a visionary, intensely poetic, habituated to thinking of our world as but the shadow of one more real. But, having set out to devise an ideal political constitution, and looking out upon the men who walked the streets of one or another Greek city-state, in search of a fundamental human fact on which to base his system, he selected the simplest and most immediate. What was the most obvious circumstance about human nature? *That men are unequal.* Judged by any obvious factor,—physique, intelligence, political insight, horse sense,—they are not only dissimilar but of unequal social value. Some, he has it, are golden, some of silver make, some only of clay; the business of politics is to get the golden natures on top and keep them there—and to persuade those of inferior texture to accept permanent, choiceless subordination gladly.

On the other hand, the men who appended their names to the Declaration of Independence were for the most part neither philosophers nor dreamers. They were lawyers, farmers, country squires. Compared with the subtle and literary Plato they were mostly as hard and as direct as nails.

But these statesmen in their turn also needed to envisage the common man and fix on some

essential characteristic, in order to have a corner-stone for the new political edifice they proposed to build. Jefferson was no voice crying in the wilderness; he was these men's interpreter and pen. Stating that which they should presently affirm, he fastened not on the superficial showing of common sense, but on something which lay so deep that its presence could only be guessed. *All men*, so he wrote and they signed, *are created equal*.

What they meant, and what America today means, what she and any other such democracy ought to mean now or in the future by this postulated equality, may not be wholly the same thing. But, however defined, it must involve a fundamental emphasis that is the reverse of Plato's. And the future trend of government in the world, whether it be nominally democratic or otherwise, will depend largely on the issue between these two conceptions as to what matters most in the natures of men. Advocates of rule by a caste turn—with certain very grave discomforts—to Plato. Believers in democracy turn—also with uneasiness and reserves—to the Declaration. Meanwhile, almost all the world's peoples have begun to live, or to agitate for living, in accordance with the equalitarian temper of the Declaration. Suppose that it were, after all, meant only as a resounding box on the ears for King George III? "You, King George, would have it that your Englishmen at home are of some better quality than we, and are entitled to govern us without our voice; but, Your Majesty: *All men are created equal!*" Yet it *did* resound, and the governance and cul-

ture of the nations are being slowly changed thereby. Because of it, even the Christianity of most Christians, to some Puritan who had fallen asleep in Massachusetts a mere century-and-a-half ago and awoke today, would seem a religion perplexingly different from that which he had known.

## II.

*All men are created equal.* To its early readers, there was a possible dash of metaphysics in the phrase. Neither the freedom with which the equality was coupled, nor the "inalienable rights" which followed it, necessarily meant the same thing as itself. It was so much bolder a word than they. To call the equality "created" appeared to raise it, unlike the rest, to the plane of religion. For all the increasing hesitancy as to just what it may mean—as to whether indeed it may at bottom mean anything, or only something preferably forgotten<sup>1</sup>—innumerable Americans during a hundred and fifty years have felt that it was at least a great slogan. It might signify merely that everybody must have a fair start or a square deal. Or in its obscurity might hide some spiritual truth that must not be contemned. In any case, it rang, and still rings, like a tocsin. Let no one deny the saying! Let no one sneer!

This attitude may have been crude, but it has been essentially a right attitude. All men may not

<sup>1</sup>Before me is an elaborate re-affirmation of the second paragraph of the Declaration, in the form of a pledge, drawn up by a committee of the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce, and "endorsed by business, fraternal and religious organizations throughout the United States," in which, while the "inalienable rights" are again asserted, the statement as to inborn equality is pointedly passed by.

live up to such a slogan, but some men do. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the peacemakers. Blessed are the persecuted for righteousness' sake.* Certainly, it needed an authority no less than an archbishop of the Anglican Church to hint at the awkward truth—that this Sermon must not be taken very seriously, for, if it were, human society would not hold together for a day! Nevertheless, because these strange sayings were ostensibly of genuine report, because they have been widely lettered on church walls, because the young have been taught to lisp them — by those who lacked the winking archiepiscopal eye,—there have been in a hundred generations countless men and women who have therefore sought purity of heart, have curbed their baser desires and won a larger life, have been chastened by sorrow, or have suffered every pain and ignominy in order that the truth as they saw it should be established on the earth.

"*Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité,*" was the slogan which, as a young man on vacation, I read over the doors of churches, schools, police posts, city halls, in republican France, and at the sight of which I aired a superior contempt. For it did not appear that my own country, which set up no such sentimental shibboleth (and had wallowed in no such excesses of revolutionary blood) allowed any less liberty, or was less brotherly, or less ridden by oppression. But years and acquaintance brought a humbler understanding. France had suffered more bitter trials, had been plunged more deeply in the Valley of the Shadow.

And now, if but once in a day some passing youth, still building ideals for a life, should look at his country's historic slogan and dedicate himself to live in the spirit of it, was not the battle-cry with which poor France, her back to the wall, once faced Europe, justified of its continued place on the public lintels under the tri-colored flag?

So, too, with Jefferson's mystic and doubtless ill-worded assertion of equality. Suppose it is true that the tissue of American life is shot through with unjustifiable inequalities; that its discrepancies of wealth, power, prestige, and culture are little less than those to be found elsewhere; that corruption plays a glaring part in its politics, and inhumanity only slowly recedes in its industries. Yet the slogan works. *All men are created equal*: without question the equalitarian tendency enters into the American spirit; it is a permeating influence, a constructive force. It liberalises social intercourse, lessens the forbidding height of social barriers, puts an unescapably new look both of self-respect and of friendliness into the American face. It even saps at the monarchical character of conventional religious beliefs. Mrs. Eddy, in a new venture of religion-making, sets up, it is true, an autocracy to which the Sacred College would seem a mere circumstance; only God and she may speak on Sundays in her church. Nevertheless, the spirit of equality is at Mrs. Eddy's elbow; like George Fox, she challenges the long centuries of masculine dominance in the Christian communion, and essays to place woman spiritually on a level with man. Or Mr. Sunday electrifies his thousands, and crowds the sawdust



trail, by patting Jesus on the back and treating God the Father as no more able to escape shaking hands with him than the President of the United States would be. But it is only a perverse and vulgar vagary of the same equalitarian trend — Mr. Sunday would level his God down. Elsewhere in America, the stranger from Europe is continually meeting with an unexpected levelling up of men, with a new gentility which in social life shows a kindly general respect, and in religion no longer insists on the sectarian label as a badge of propriety, or on the outer profession of one's inner faith as a passport to friendship and mutual spiritual help. Like yeast in the bread-stuff, the slogan works.

Furthermore, although there are aristocracies of one sort or another in America, there is a profound difference between their position and that of certain aristocracies abroad. They do not exert the same kind of social "pull." The British peerage, for example, is an aristocracy of families which have lived in a greater or lesser degree according to the principle of *noblesse oblige*; their life has been bound up in the nation's life; they have provided it with statesmen, viceroys, ambassadors, bishops, warriors; in war time its sons have marched always ahead of the commonalty and have been the first and proportionately the most numerous to be killed. And, at least until recently, the British peerage has been taken by the mass of the people at its own valuation. Even now, since the clipping of the political power of the House of Lords, and the subsequent social levelling produced by the exigency of complete national service in the Great War, a peer is

certainly still a peer; something of the hereditary sanctity indubitably remains; even a gathering of British anarchists (if there be any anarchists in Britain of native birth!) would, I am sure, be ill at ease were a duke to enter the room; they would be canvassing the recesses of their minds as to how a duke might properly expect them to behave.

But who can imagine any such doubt arising in the minds of an assembly of native-born Americans, however lacking in worldly goods, were any of the Four Hundred (or Four Thousand) announced as being in their midst? What full-blooded American would be seriously embarrassed in the presence either of a Vanderbilt or a Rockefeller? What shirt-sleeves-to-shirt-sleeves American hobo would have any awkwardness about shaking a Presidential hand? Now, the amplified Four Hundred are one kind of American aristocracy; Mr. Rockefeller belongs to another variety; Mr. Taft, let us say, or Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, belongs to a third. The ladies and gentlemen whose somewhat multitudinous forefathers came over in the *Mayflower* constitute a fourth—with sundry overlappings. And there are others. But where in America is the aristocracy either of birth, or brains, or wealth or culture that, in so far as rightly or wrongly it may set a high valuation on itself, is accepted by the masses at its own figure?

In every city there is a group of families who practise an undemocratic exclusiveness, on grounds of birth or wealth or culture, or all three; and usually with various cross-divisions within itself. A fringe of climbers may hanker

and angle to achieve membership in it. But the most important psychic characteristic which differentiates America, so far as it is democratic, from Europe, so far as it is still feudal, is that the mass of the people remains outside any actual or would-be aristocracy in spirit as well as in fact.

As the mass of the people does not value these cliques or classes in the sacrosanct way in which they may endeavor to value themselves—it may even be largely oblivious of their existence—its soul is untouched. It is not warped by subserviency, seared by humiliation, discouraged by the fact or belief that it cannot achieve the socially highest. The socially highest it may think of mainly in terms of money, however gained. It may crave money, but it assumes that money can be got. And how far better it is that it should adopt this attitude than that it should allow itself to be browbeaten or discouraged by any tradition that might be accepted by it as to caste superiorities that it cannot possibly attain. For thus its spirit remains free—very crudely free, but still free.

### III.

Money, in fact, contrary to a common opinion, is one of the great liberators of the human soul. Hereditary aristocracies live on property; let the property be mainly in land, and a people might conceivably continue in servitude to its land-owners until the crack of doom. But let there be a means of ready exchange which increases rapidly in quantity, and a landed aristocracy is socially doomed. Or it changes its character.

For the principle of class heredity cannot continue to stand against the pressure of money; rather will the owners of money insist on their right to stand before kings. Capacity, however born, if it achieve wealth, is enabled to assert itself. The sovereign, at first grudgingly, then with furtive acquisitiveness, will admit brains-plus-money to ennoblement. Or a dominant political party will do this. And to admit the *nouveau riche* is to acknowledge the claim of brains to be as good as the claim of heredity—if not better, since aristocratic heredity would prefer to see the claim of brains denied.

A middle class is a standing challenge to the idea of hereditary aristocracy; and a middle class is made possible only as the depths of the earth yield up their treasure of the means of exchange. Gold is a social alchemist; it is the great leveller. Because America has more money *per capita* than any other nation, she has the least care for hereditary claims. And so far as there is such a thing as an “Americanisation of Europe,” it is chiefly a slow yielding to this crude logic of gold.

Science is a second powerful factor making for equality, wherever the main ideas of democracy have taken root. Certainly science does not ignore the obvious facts of inequality in personal endowment, but it sees good heredity to transcend all class barriers, and that apparently only by an initial toeing of the line can the natural inequalities of men be tested out.

Nothing in this connection could well be more dramatic, and more unconsciously American, than an utterance of Mr. Arthur James Balfour (now

Earl Balfour) made at a great London demonstration which paved the way for various measures of social legislation that, in the early nineteen-hundreds, gave to the British working classes for the first time some measure of real security against the harsher shocks of fate. At this meeting the Liberal Party was represented by Sir John Simon, the Labor party by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, and the Conservatives, the party of landed gentility and cultural prestige, by Mr. Balfour, who happens to be, as regards temperament and family inheritance, easily the most typical aristocrat in England. For a generation he has been the foremost champion of his order; nevertheless it was he who at this historic meeting made the one and only revolutionary plea—and he made it in the name of science. *Modern science*, he said (I repeat his thought out of a very vivid recollection), *tells us that at the time of birth and for some considerable period afterwards, no expert could tell the difference, if any, between the child of the woman who lives in a palace and the child of the woman who lives in a slum. If there is a difference to be detected it will probably, on the average, be due to the fact that the poorer mother was underfed.*

Shades of Independence Hall! One could hear the voice of Jefferson, see those grim signers around the table, thrill again to the slogan: *All men are created equal!*

The speaker proceeded to his moral. Perhaps the great differences in society were due less to class heredity, if at all, than to further matters of food, sunshine, care, and all the stimuli im-

pinging on the young brain from without. How could we know whence ability, even genius, might not arise? Was it not, then, a national calamity that children should be born in destitution? Was it not a national duty to prevent the deeper tragedies of the poor, and to be solicitous that every child should have its chance of food, sunshine, air, education?

#### IV.

Doubtless the premises were not very good science. Science, presiding at birth, merely confesses a present ignorance of innate qualities, and a refusal of certain reliance on blue blood. Blue blood, indeed! It is open to any member of the unprivileged classes to appeal also to science, and to urge that the argument cannot stop where Lord Balfour left it. What about natural selection, sexual selection, the survival of the fit? Hereditary aristocracies do not survive, fit or not. Even in America, the only group that can well be compared with the aristocracies of Europe, the "true Americans" who play proportionately the largest part in the national "Who's Who," have a low birth-rate that ensures their extinction. The new stocks sweep ahead, and the future belongs to them. Furthermore, amongst hereditary aristocracies, nature's promptings to selection are frequently thrust aside. Men and women choose one another from all sorts of extraneous considerations, including the respective number of hereditary acres and the length of family bank accounts. But amongst the so-called "lower orders," young men, however crudely and even unwittingly, do tend to con-

sider character. Will the girl be a helpmeet, a homemaker? More than equally, acting from deeper biological motives, the girl tends to select also for character, wanting the man who will be a "prop," will be industrious, will not drink or gamble away his wages at the week's end. The exceptions, doubtless, are legion. Nevertheless, why may it not happen, we can imagine some pert son of Labor to ask, that (since we are talking science) the finer stock, finer because more often selected for character, is being produced, not by my lords and ladies, but by the common folk who must toil for their daily bread?

Certainly it is a startling fact, if we will face it, that America—save for that remnant of old stocks, intellectually fine, but selfish as to reproducing themselves—is a peasant nation. The mass of the populace are off the land of the Old World. They or their immigrant parents or grandparents were no aristocrats; only rarely were they middle class; they belonged mainly to the common folk. Let us first note this, even if it should incidentally humble someone's personal or national pride. Then let us envisage the American people—its tumultuous vitality, its indomitable energy, its unmatched resourcefulness, its record of individual initiative, the purple strand of romance in its character, its strangely mingled idealism and common sense. Of a truth, the argument from science is a dangerous one—for aristocrats. The pendulum may swing too far.

But for the purpose of democracy, in so far as it is interpreted to mean the right of all to an equal start, the indistinguishable infant may be considered argument enough.

In so far! . . . But here we reach the heart of our subject, and the purpose of this discussion; which is to urge that the true message of democracy, above all in pioneer America, cannot be mere equality of opportunity, but must more and more become concerned with equality of another sort.

*There can be no such thing as equal opportunity.* One measure of the New World's youth and inexperience is to be found in the persistent assumption that equality exists or is conceivable under this head. The equality that can be thus provided is external and mechanical; the reality of opportunity is an inward and spiritual thing. If the boy next me in school is clever and I am dull, let the school be excellent, it still merely mocks me with the pretence that my chance of learning is the same. The chance is primarily in me, or not in me, and only secondarily in the school books or the teacher. Unless, indeed, I have the fortune to be so dull that a special mechanism of books and teachers is set in motion to draw out whatever of capacity I may chance to have; and even this can never equalise my powers. The clever fellow will still forge ahead; and it is good that he should. "Equality of opportunity" is as though a row of fine shoes were placed before a rank of shoeless men, in order that they might all have the same opportunity of being well shod; but one has a wooden leg, and another has no feet at all. How, then, shall they all toe the line together?

That "equality of opportunity" does mean something; does, indeed, profoundly differentiate democratic from undemocratic nations, is un-



deniable. But its meaning is five-sixths a negative one. The hereditary class barriers, privileges, handicaps, of the more firmly hierarchised nations are sought to be removed, and the resources of nature and civilisation are placed openly, at least in theory, at the disposal of all, in order that natural inequality may be given the fullest chance to display itself, to its own and the general advantage. Hence the deepest interest of the American people is really not at all in equality; it is centred, passionately centred, in inequality. Let all toe the line at twenty: at forty-five who will be first? It is Europe over again—with a difference; the chance of achieving a splendid inequality is held out apparently to all.

"Equality of opportunity" is an interpretation that does not interpret. If the politics of democracy have been venal, is it not because equality of opportunity has set every man and every corporation after a fortune? Why trouble to check the local grafters, when my time is money? Suppose I am fleeced, may it not cost more in time and money and brains to protest effectively than to pay? If Labor and Capital distrust and seek to thwart one another with untold bitterness, equality of opportunity, by its breakdown, is surely a main source of the conflict. Is not Golconda at stake for the one, and his vaunted American chance of prosperity for the other? If every generation lands its little plutocracy high and dry, where its sons may meet only their like in some "gentlemen's" school, and its daughters need not stain their fingers with any dirt more vulgar than the scant grime of a high-priced automobile—why not? Surely the value of equal

opportunity must lie in some chance of escape — from equality! Equality of opportunity means aristocracy put up to auction and sold, unguaranteed as to quality, to the highest bidder.

If there has long been a steady reaction against democracy amongst thinking people in America, toeing-the-line equality is, I should say, the fundamental cause. If Europe, however ridden by the twin devils of hereditary caste and militarism, and all but broken by them, has long looked and still looks askance at American government, politics, big business, labor wars, child exploitation, art, music and religion; and foreign Tory wiseacres have shaken their supercilious heads at America's unkinged but boss-ruled, caucus-ruled, dollar-ruled polity, and warned against the spread of Americanism abroad, let us say again that toeing-the-line equality is the true "jinx." The equality is largely an illusion to begin with, and it has the actual reverse of itself as the supremely engrossing object which by its use may be achieved.

## V.

Meanwhile, the intelligent stranger who escapes from a mere parlor-car outlook and gets into close touch with the American people, cannot well make the mistake of supposing it to be really dollar-mad. The American's dollar is not loved for its own sake; it is not a hoarded dollar, it is a dollar to be spent, a sign of capacity, a means to power. It is an index of expended energy, and energy is a factor in human worth.

The intelligent stranger will also meet many times a day with that touch of man-to-man re-

spect and expectation which is at least as characteristic of America as the desire to "make good." For light on these very diverse tendencies, as well as on the strain of high idealism which runs through American life, let us turn aside for a moment and take a rapid glance at certain trends in the nation's literature.

In his story, "A Far Country," Mr. Winston Churchill envisages America as the Prodigal Son among the nations. He places his young American, for his beginnings, in a Puritan family. The colorless rigor of its spiritual life drives him out into the garish world, where he amasses wealth, but in the end his own materialism shocks him, and he passes to a finer, less self-centered mood. America, Mr. Churchill would tell us, revolted from Puritanism, and in the revolt lost its soul, which only a new idealism will give back to it.

But this is hardly an adequate account of the matter. The revolt from Puritanism took a high form as well as a low one. Let us recall the early annals of American life. The Pilgrims and Puritans brought with them from Europe certain doctrines about the essential vileness of the human soul, the vanity of our life in the world, and the impossibility of salvation hereafter except by means of vicarious atonement and grace. These doctrines were not very liable to proof or disproof by experience in the comfortable rural districts from which, for the most part, the forefathers of the nation came. But the religious *emigrés* and their children and grandchildren found themselves up against unaccustomed elemental things of life. They had to outface the icy winters of New England, to fight the abori-

gine, to uproot and plant the wilderness, to push after the setting sun. At hard grips with Nature, over a course of generations the nation's pioneers gained three first-hand revelations which by no means accorded with the harsh doctrines of the early settlers. Man, with his capacity for herculean labor, his loyalty to comrades, his devotion to loved ones, his pluck, endurance, inventive skill, was no longer easily to be thought of as merely vile. Life, the passionate life of conquest and settlement, had too great a zest to be only vanity; it was worth while. And salvation surely depended as much upon an inner development of character as on external means of grace. Meanwhile, along the Southern littoral similar lessons were being learnt against a religious background of a less stern character, and a political background that owed more perhaps to Magna Charta and less to the Bible.

When the time was ripe, the new faith in man made possible the Revolution. The Declaration is an embodiment of it. And presently it took further heroic shape in the production of Neo-Puritan literature.

For Neo-Puritan it was. The great New Englanders who first gave America an individual poetry and philosophy were Puritans—with a difference. Their spirit was bathed in the atmosphere of American experience; the conquest of the wilderness spoke its message through them.

They had a passionate belief in this present life. Certainly, if other-worldliness gave way in their writings to a new worldliness, this was of no sybaritic order. It was strenuous, and almost austere. Yet nothing about it was more remark-

able than its insistence on the immediate worth of life. Some Americans have said of America that she is the Land of the Future, and the assertion is true and thrilling. Yet it must be qualified in the terms of what other Americans, or Americans in another mood, have said. Longfellow, it may be true, was not a poet's poet. But no verse in the English tongue has so echoed around the world, so electrified countless thousands of English-speaking youth, as this:

Trust no future, howe'er pleasant;  
Let the dead past bury its dead;  
Act, act in the living present,  
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

that is, sure of your own intrinsic worth, and that the eternal order of things is not against you, but on your side. Or there was the Quaker Whittier:

The Present, the Present is all thou hast  
For thy sure possessing;  
Like the patriarch's angel, hold it fast  
Till it give its blessing.

These were deeply religious Americans, direct heirs in time, place and moral spirit of the men and women of Plymouth Rock. There is no alloy of materialism in them, and no declension from the Hebrew-Christian love of God. But what a far cry from the Genevan gloom of Jonathan Edwards! And they were typical.

America had spent its forty days and nights in the wilderness, struggling with bodily strength as well as with power of soul; and when it had well emerged these men spoke its new word. Emerson spoke it. Emerson has been judged a

cold intellectualist—by those who have not felt the white heat of the mystical experience that tempered his soul to flashing steel. “Trust thyself!” he cried; and America and Europe rang with it. To such of the old Puritanism as remained (and still remains, dying hardly) it was the bottom depth of blasphemy. Trust God, rather! But for Emerson it was no other thing. It was God lost in the skies and rediscovered in the heart of man. He said “whim”; but he did not mean whim; he meant that man, seeking to be true to his inmost self, was most sure thereby to be true to the eternal order of things. The “Divinity Address,” “Nature,” “Self-Reliance,” scandalised the conventional religious world of his day, as the sermons of Jesus scandalised Nazareth. But their thought, at first or second hand, has soaked into the fabric of religion and philosophy and helped immeasurably to liberalise and democratise it. Only because Americans are ordinarily so blind to the worth of the interpreters of their own spirit, and fasten their eyes on the ends of the literary earth, do they fail to be commonly aware that for fifty years, through their Emerson and his New England confrères, American spiritual experience has been a teacher of the world. They read and love Maeterlinck and do not realise that whatever is helpful in him is but Emersonian gold—beaten out flat. They delight in Shaw, and do not see that “Fanny’s First Play” is but a dramatisation (and incidentally a vulgarisation) of the passage: “Say to them, O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the

truth's. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law!" Or they read Nietzsche — can they find a nobler greatness in the tortured spirit of the oppressed Pole, seeking, however adventurously, mechanisms of compensation and escape, than in the serene splendors of the free American? Or Bergson, — have they forgotten, or never read, that most thrilling passage of all in the "Self-Reliance:" "And we are now men, and not minors or invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty Effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark"?

*Advancing on Chaos and the Dark!* Now, there may be much difference between Bergson's plea that we can dream pragmatic dreams and weave the future out of them and Emerson's faith in an immutable order that we may discover and embody. But the mood of emancipation from fate, from predestination, the mood of proud confidence in the worth of human intelligence and human love, is the mood of both. And if Bergson's denial of a foredoomed future is in revolt against machine-science, and towards a new expression of France's eternal youth, Emerson's valiant challenge of Chaos and the Dark vibrated with the tones of eight generations of American pioneers.

## VI.

Which brings us by an inevitable transition to Whitman, and will enable our argument presently to come full circle. "Pioneers, O Pioneers!" was one great *motif* of his song. But there was another. The slogan, *All men are created equal*,

made a new, more mystic and more passionate appearance in Whitman's bursts of song.

Many a man who, like the present writer, has come from a country whose best traditions of thought and practice have had a great share in the making of America, and who has faced the challenge of a new citizenship, must have shrunk hesitantly from the change. He might well feel that he carried over with him from his older loyalty much that was priceless in its human worth; but must he not, to be content, find this matched by something of at least equal worth in the new tradition that adopted him as a son? Let us suppose that he found to be gone the burden of an hereditary aristocracy accepted according to its own conceit by the plain people who could never rise into it; he might yet find himself asking, fairly or unfairly, Is American freedom, however exhilarating, only a negative thing—is American equality no more, in the end, than the equal right, and duty, to achieve if one can, in one's own generation, a temporary aristocracy, without the grace and even the remaining vestiges of *noblesse oblige* which characterised the old? He might find himself reading, as I did, Mrs. Wharton, Mrs. Canfield Fisher, Professor Herick and Mr. Churchill, with their constant insistence on the "problem of the American marriage," and the soul-destroying effect both on husbands and wives of the race for wealth, power and social prestige. He might miss the fact that these also were Neo-Puritans, representative not of America exultant but of America protestant, ashamed, craving to save her soul; as he might miss it also if, reading the younger rebels of our



immediate day and jarred by their morbidities, perversities and bitternesses, he did not get shadowy glimpses of Plymouth Rock looming in the national background of these as well. The moral uncomfortableness of the old Puritanism is in them, if not its faith and hope.

But, let us hope, he would turn for relief to the older literature. A nation's poets, visionaries, historians, are interpreters of her soul. He would go to Emerson, Thoreau, Parkman. Perhaps the Parkman heroes would smack too much for him of the Odyssey; perhaps even Emerson's doctrine would seem to make too much for heroism alone. True, he would find that Holmes had written the most touching American song (is it not?) of his time:

We count the broken lyres that rest  
Where the sweet wailing singers slumber,—  
But o'er their silent sister's breast  
The wild flowers who will stoop to number?  
A few can touch the magic string,  
And noisy fame is proud to win them;  
Alas, for those who never sing,  
But die with all their music in them!

But he would find this sad, not tonic. And it concerns the dead. Truly it is the voice of democracy, but harping still on the string of capacity—these dead men and women were village Hampdens, mute inglorious Miltons, whom opportunity, unequalled, had passed by. What of those who have not sounded the depths of tragedy, or burned with unexpressed poetic fire?

But let our neophyte turn, perhaps heartsick, to the pagan pages of Whitman, hoping that

possibly the soul of America had found some profounder depth for its abiding even in this uncouth and sinful son of its loins. Indeed, he would discover the American message more passionately struggling for expression there:

Painters have painted their swarming groups,  
and the center figure of all,  
From the head of the center figure spreading a  
nimbus of gold-colored light.  
But I paint myriads of heads, but paint no head  
without its nimbus of gold-colored light.  
From my hand, from the brain of every man and  
woman it streams effulgently forever.  
Whoever you are, now I place my hand upon you,  
that you be my poem.  
I will leave all and come and make the hymns  
of you.  
None has understood you, but I understand you.  
None has done justice to you, you have not done  
justice to yourself.  
None but has found you imperfect; I only find  
no imperfection in you.  
None but would subordinate you; I only am he  
who will never consent to subordinate you.  
I only am he who places over you no master,  
owner, better, God, beyond what waits in-  
trinsically in yourself.  
There is no virtue, no beauty in man or woman,  
but as good is in you,  
No pluck, no endurance in others, but as good  
is in you.  
I sing the songs of the glory of none, not God,  
sooner than I sing the songs of the glory of  
you.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The lines are given as rearranged to be sung as a canticle, in *Social Worship*, vol. 2. Edited by Stanton Colt and Charles Kennedy Scott.

After Emerson, Whitman. Here is a poetic voice even more racy of the American soil, and of all the blood and tears fallen upon it. The wilderness which yielded up to those who conquered it a new gospel of trust in man, gave also the vision which, however crude and indefinite, flooded Whitman's soul; the vision of the worth not only of Man but of all men. He saw a halo surrounding every head. Not because he fled the crowd and merely dreamed about it; on the contrary, he loved the crowd; he delighted to rub shoulders with the Manhattan hordes; he did a nurse's chores in the hospital camps of the Civil War. He *knew* men; yet he saw the nimbus.

Now, if the interpretation here essayed is right, to be an American spiritually, to be an American in a highly distinctive sense, should be to escape from exclusiveness, from aristocratic pride of birth or race, from social sets and cliques and religious sectarianism, insofar as the "holier than thou" spirit has possessed them, and to seek to see the nimbus of gold-colored light surrounding every head. Equality, the "created" equality of the Declaration, must finally be interpreted to mean this, or there is nothing in it to save its life; it is only another passing convention, an illusion, a sham.

But what is this nimbus, and how shall we see it? How shall we render it visible to the unseeing of our day? For clearly no such sign can satisfy if it is not so revealed that the fire of it brands the merely birth-proud aristocrat, or the upstart over-conscious of his superior wits, or the exploiter of the sweat of other men's brows, the battener on the toils of underpaid women and

children, the devourer of widows' houses, with or without long prayers. To such a one the heart's cry of Whitman, "Whoever you are — !" is but sentimental blather. There is no Platonic common sense in it; surely the man raves?

The doctrine, obviously, has to be rationalised. If it is to be so stated that it can be put tellingly before the face of every class or caste that seeks to raise its head, not into a realm of finer service, where it might well be gladly acknowledged, but into ostentation and exclusiveness, it must be made so patent that it is difficult without shame to deny it. Poetry alone will not do.

Now, the distinction of the revered and beloved Leader in whose honor these essays have been assembled lies first, surely, in the fact that through him, and the Societies founded by him, the voice of America has again spoken, with a new and greater clarity and certainty. Out of the heart of democracy has again come an interpretation, and a deeper one, of itself. What the Continental Congress declared by way of trouncing Lord North and King George III, what Whitman felt after with a mysticism to which he could give only a vague and barely intelligible form (although it thrills us), the founder of the first Ethical Society saw with a sharpness and fulness which his predecessors in the spiritual understanding of democracy had not attained. He fastened on two immediate facts;—first, that while equality does not and cannot exist intellectually, physically, aesthetically, and it would be absurd to assume it, equality *can* be postulated and *ought* to be postulated on the moral plane, which every consideration relative to the past, present

or future of man confirms—if there be need of such confirmation—as being the highest plane.<sup>1</sup> And, secondly, that morality fully conscious of itself is expressed in a dynamic attitude towards the web of human relations. Equality may not—may never be—achieved morally in this our world. But the will to righteousness cannot be denied as a potential factor in any man, and to postulate its potentiality in all and seek to elicit it in all is the adventure of adventures, whether for individuals, or social groups, or nations. Let every man be respected first because he is an actual or potential moral being; and only in the second place let him be admired or appreciated because of his heredity, his brains or his culture. But let it be a dynamic respect, that challenges, expects, educates, organises, and with endless patience seeks to bring unawakened moral beings to a spiritual birth.

## VII.

Here, then, should be the key to rationalising the American assertion of human equality, so that it may become eternally potent, and be a means to the spiritualising of democracy throughout the world. *On the moral plane we can postulate all men as potentially equals.*

<sup>1</sup>That, if we postulate the plane of moral ideals and purposes as being the highest, this must in the end be justified metaphysically, goes without saying. Professor Adler has, himself, of course, made profoundly important contributions in this respect. But my purpose here is simply to present the view that the attitude of the Ethical Societies is in the line of the American tradition, in their insistence on faith in Man, on the supreme worth of moral personality, and on the dynamic call of the modern conscience to further the knowledge, love and practice of the right.

But let us at once seek to meet the objection that flashes up at the sight of such a doctrine: Surely inequality is as patent on the moral plane as on any other, and as inevitable, and there is such a thing as moral genius?

But what, in terms of moral being, is morality? Is it not the will to do disinterestedly what one conceives to be the right thing in this or that group of circumstances? It is, shall we say, the will to tell the truth and shame the devil. It is the will to keep one's hands out of one's neighbor's pockets. It is the will to give a clean vote at an election. It is the will to be a faithful husband, wife, parent, worker, employer, friend. Certainly the code grows as civilisation advances, and our relations become at once more complex and more understood. But, at bottom, morality is not a matter of intellectual capacity, or expert knowledge, or even subtle intuitions; it is a matter of the disinterested bent of the will. Moral genius is genius only in so far as to the good will may be added exceptional intellectual capacity, sympathy, imagination, education, experience of men and affairs; but these are not the good will itself. And Immanuel Kant was so far right; there is nothing higher than the good will. The man who has refused a bribe, curbed a passion in order that he may harm neither others nor himself, told the truth at a cost because he disinterestedly prefers the right rather than his own comfort or profit, has achieved the highest. In the same circumstances, no God Almighty, in so far as he was morally good, could or would have willed more rightly than he.

The moral life, in the utter simplicity of its

essential disinterestedness, is one life. The street-sweeper and the archbishop, in so far as they attain unselfish devotion to their respective spheres of duty, are one. The honest President of the United States and the honest cobbler of his shoes, if their honesty as President or cobbler is not for some "best policy's" sake, but for its own sake, are brothers in the highest. And only when we have equally respected them for it, recognising that it is and should be the highest reverence we can pay them, are we justified in according them any difference of regard based on less important facts.

The door of the plane of honesty and unselfishness is open to all. Furthermore, to the end of a man's life, we have no right to say of him that not by any concatenation of circumstances can he be brought to will the good and not evil. All true religion, after all, except in so far as it may have fallen into the pit of predestinarianism, is one or another way of asserting this very thing—or there is no excuse for its propaganda. But it is only too true that a man cannot save himself; the responsibility of salvation is upon us all. Even though with all our education, our exhortation, our pleading, our social betterment and our personal helpfulness, we should not have brought the liar to the point where he will turn and tell the truth because it is the truth, nor persuaded the thief to cease to steal because it is wrong to steal, nor caused the sweater or rack-renter to blush with shame, nor won the captain of industry to see that his vocation must be not only the making of steel rails or what not but equally the making of men,—it is not that he is

proved incapable of the will to righteousness; we can rightly say only that, alas! we have not yet discovered the avenue to his soul. The possibility of awakening him is somehow there; perhaps we have failed because we secretly doubted; we did not see the nimbus. Besides, he was born into a democracy that we have not spiritualised, a democracy that puts intelligence, wit, shrewdness first, giving to these lesser qualities the highest rewards and considerations, and only as a matter of supererogation respecting men as men; that is to say, as beings capable of moral purpose and will. A democracy that will be spiritualised (and therefore will never damn souls, but only save them) will be one, progressively worked towards, in which it will not be a matter of "treating all men as equal in order to find out who are the best," but in which, while inequality and dissimilarity are given the full play to which they are entitled, and which is necessary to richness of the general life, the highest aim will be progressively to make actual, through a right education, a right play of motives, a right reverence for personality, the potential equality on the moral plane which it has come to recognise as its true foundation.

### VIII.

"There is no endowment in man or woman that is not tallied in you. There is no virtue, no beauty, in man or woman but as good is in you." If it is not the true spirit of democracy which is figured in these poetic terms, then has America as yet no message. But how could democracy more greatly express itself (whether or not we



take Whitman to mean this by his triumphant claim) than by seeing in every man and woman the potentiality of admission into the realm of the highest?

The democracy of opportunity to win monetary reward and social prestige may unloose the energies of the strong; but for the less gifted and the self-disparaging its trumpet call has a merciless sound. Whereas the democracy of the will-to-righteousness, though it also can on occasion be terrible, keeps its wrath rather for ruthless dealing by the strong. To the humble it brings not fear, but self-respect.

Is it some moral and physical starveling, crushed by commonplaceness? He hears the tale of Lincoln, the "Great Heart"; of his noble statecraft, his wise solicitude both for White and Negro, his tireless devotion to duty, his pity, his sacrifice. Was not this wonderful personality in a world apart? Could any but elect souls breathe the same spiritual air? But the nobody has felt the thrill of the story; his blood has danced at the tale of Lincoln's moral strenuousness, his eyes have moistened at the mention of the endless mercies of the man! With every stirring of his own better feelings he has shared in the hero's life. Even in the humility that has overwhelmed him at the thought of the greatness of Lincoln, he has entered into Lincoln's own mood of abasement in the presence of his ideals. He has entered Lincoln's world, shared his will, achieved awhile moral disinterestedness, has felt, *had he been Lincoln, even thus and thus would he have done.* Could Lincoln but meet him and read his heart,

would he not in utter democratic fellowship grasp his hand?

Or is it some poor little woman who grinds out her days in a third-rate department store, some worm that has never turned? She hears of the great women of the world. There was Susan Anthony, who stood night after night before rough and angry audiences to plead the cause of the slave, while the sheriff sat beside her with a gun across his knee. Or Florence Nightingale; she hears how the great Englishwoman may indeed, once in a while, have carried a lamp, and have had her shadow kissed by some wounded man as she passed by. But the real daily spirit of this master woman, this consummate leader and organizer (she is further told), was rather that which animated her when the British Government failed to send by the same boat the orders to deliver to her the necessary stores, and routine-bound officers ordered her to await the next ship. For then she drew up her nurses in military array, sent for an axe, marched to the place where the stores were held, and with her own hands broke down the door. Here, surely, was genius, moral genius? Does our department-store slave feel but the more of a worm at the tale of so valiant and wise a deed? Perhaps so. But the feeling is illusory. She too has experienced the thrill. She has willed the action, marched with Florence Nightingale, grasped with her the fateful axe and helped to strike the blow. She has entered the same sphere, lived awhile on the same plane. Such is the mystic oneness of the spiritual life that for awhile she has been Florence Nightingale herself. She may drop back to the

old heartbreaking world of nonentity, but that is because, in our still so often inhuman social economy, we provide her with no better encouragement. That she could be for the precious moment filled with fire and tears at the brave story proves her intrinsic sameness; proves that the sacred moral personality, however imprisoned, is there. She has neither Florence Nightingale's brains, nor her peculiar culture, nor her money and social position, nor her opportunities. But she can enter into her will; she too is human, and to be human is to belong to the fundamental democracy.

This essay began by indicating an antithesis between Plato and the American Fathers. It would be both foolish and unjust to close without saying that the antithesis is, of course, only in part real. Plato is right, and Jefferson is right, in so far as we must recognise both Equality and Inequality as factors to be legislated for in the constitution and organisation of a genuinely righteous State. But Inequality has already had a long and terrible day in the world; it needs no advocate. That all men belong in a common brotherhood of the spirit may be expressed in one or another halting form at one or another religious altar; but the idea has yet to enter into the warp and woof of our life. When, if ever, it does, then the superiorities of some men's mental gifts will take their place, not primarily as a means to escape from the multitude, but as a means gladly used towards the quickening of the lives of all.

Meanwhile, no man need wait for opportunity

to live in the light of the principle that the most essential quality of humanity is in the moral will. If he has the true spirit of democracy, he will assume the potentiality of right willing no less in others than in himself. He will pay everyone the respect of untiring moral hope, expectation, and demand. Hence, he will not enslave any, nor despoil any, nor give himself birth-proud or purse-proud airs towards any; and he will seek less to be served than to serve.

For he will know that otherwise it may happen on some day of humiliation that he shall see the nimbus of gold-colored light about some despised and rejected head, so that his eyes are cast down because of the glory, and his face is mantled with scarlet shame.

# How Far is Art an Aid to Religion?

By PERCIVAL CHUBB.

## I.

**P**ERHAPS THE THESIS of this paper may best be introduced by an illustration. The youth of whom my story tells was a youth of Quaker ancestry who developed a great love of beauty which led him to the study and practice of painting. Enabled at last to make a pilgrimage to Europe, he went straight to Venice by way of Genoa. There he stood in the great Piazza of crowded memories, facing the strange Byzantine sanctuary of St. Mark. He entered, wandered slowly about, submitting himself to first impressions, felt overwhelmed by the wealth of the treasure, and paused at the entrance for a final glance at the whole: "This a place of worship?" he asked himself. "No! Impossible! There is too much beauty here. Worship could begin for me only when I closed my eyes to it. Even then I should feel its disturbing presence. Give me a simple cloister for worship: let me stray here for beauty."

He came of a family of cultivated Quakers who lived in an almost sumptuous home amid beautiful surroundings of garden and woodland. His father continued Sunday morning attendance at

the old meeting-house; and the lad had often accompanied him—with what result he now began to realize. Unconsciously there had grown in him something of an esthetic feeling for the austere, clean plainness of the raftered hall, in association with the impressive and mysterious ritual of silence. This ostentation of beauty was like a noise across that spiritual reticence.

Now he was confronted by a great historic fact which plunged him into skeptical reflection,—the fact of the intimate and long association of religion with art, and the axiom implied in it, that the more beauty in worship, the better. All the great cathedrals he would see would carry the same message; they would all have the same disquieting effect upon him. They would preach to him a gospel of beauty. What had that to do with religion,—a religion of inwardness,—of the Inner Light illuminating the sanctuary of the mind?

He was thrown back upon the intimacies of his Quaker nurture. After all, what connection was there between all this pomp—all these intricacies of symbol, these visualizations of dogma—and the simplicities of the Gospel narratives upon which he had been reared? Did not all this spectacle mean distraction, dissipation, dilution? It would for him. His mind took the offensive. Perhaps here was the explanation of the impotence of religion in the face of the Great War,—aye, and of the Greater War on Social Wrong,—its lack of ethical earnestness? It was too external, too heavily embroidered. Ritual and the etiquette of religion had usurped the place of righteousness,—of love of one's neighbor, of justice and

mercy, of peace and goodwill. Worship had become a form of sentimental and sensuous indulgence. He would keep the distinction clear. He would exploit and absorb all this beauty, he would treat it as best he could with a sympathetic reverence and in its historical setting; but he would not be deluded by the notion that it was an aid to a religion of the spirit. Was he not right in attributing a certain spiritual vulgarity to this display? Religion was overdressed.

## II.

We must break with our illustration; but not without remarking that it does not cover the larger issue we have to deal with. Suppose that lad had entered St. Mark's during service; suppose he had been musically sensitive and educated. His ears would have been wooed as well as his eyes. More than that, his sense of smell would have been stirred by the incense; and his dramatic interest appealed to by the ceremonial of the Mass. His senses assailed thus, what chance would the spirit have to be "religious"? Or is religion, is worship, this complexus of sense-appeal? The answer here is to be, No; but this negative must be carefully guarded against some confusions and misunderstandings which may easily lead us astray.

And the first step toward clearness is to warn that we are not dealing with the place of beauty in *life*. We are not putting beauty under suspicion as ministering to the nobler needs of living. As to that, the postulate will hold,—the more, the better. But as to its association with religion, so that religion may play its distinctive

part in energizing the spirit to maintain and develop right relationships with Man and the cosmos,—that is another matter.

As an understanding of terms, especially of the word “religion,” is essential, let me say that I shall assume here that “religion” is primarily the conquest of a Way of Life (“I am the Way”),—life in its totality. It is a clarification and a synthesis of ways of behavior which begets loyalty to principles of conduct. It is therefore at bottom the discipline and formation of the character (*ethos*) which determines conduct. To “do” right, one must “be” right. To put it in another way,—we face the ultimate energy of life in the ethical personality. The handling of personality so that an Art of Life may be conquered is the business of religion; and this Art will comprehend all the forces and factors involved in the harmonious functioning of our human powers in relation to our total environment; the result to be aimed at being a harmonious society of developing human personalities. In this endeavor every human interest and endowment will count and be co-operant,—our urge toward Truth and Knowledge, Justice and Mercy, Beauty and Excellence, Order and Proportion.

The question before us, therefore, is as to the rôle which beauty should play in the attempt to accomplish this distinctively religious synthesis; to achieve this spiritual wholeness; to effect this integrity or integration of such diverse claims and interests and activities. It is a work of the mind,—this holding together and fusing of a variety of elements in the light and warmth of an ideal of human perfection. It is a task for the



social self, bent on a social salvation. Of course there is no other self and no other kind of salvation in a social world,—the individual being a member of a society of selves whose common rational nature involves a Common Good and the realization of that “Beloved Community” (to use Royce’s phrase) which shall satisfy the essentially social nature of Man.

### III.

With this brief intimation of the point of view (raising many controversial points, which cannot here be gone into), let us return to our thesis, and to the assumption already referred to, namely, that the wider and closer the association of beauty with religion (*not life*), the better. “Get all the beauty possible into your churches and your ritual, and thereby vitalize and heighten your worship,”—such is the position I am going to contest. It is the key-note of a recent volume which brought my mind to boiling-point, and led me to come again to close quarters with this problem as it concerns a new-born movement like the Ethical Movement, which must reckon with the powerful urge toward beauty in shaping its course,—building its homes, planning its services, educating its young.

The volume referred to is “Art and Religion,” by Von Ogden Vogt (Yale University Press); a comely volume which it is a pleasure to handle, written in a broad and liberal temper by the pastor of a Congregational Church in Chicago who welcomes the many signs of a renaissance of beauty in the Protestant churches, some of which signs are cited in a dozen or more striking illus-

trations. Mr. Vogt would speed the new age of recovered beauty in worship; but frankly and finely says at the outset (p. 3), "We cannot enter the new age until the old churches give up their concepts of an authoritative faith 'once delivered to the saints,' and freely accept the spirit of modernism."

For this author "the art of worship is the all-comprehending art" (p. 4); it is "the combination of all the arts; the experience of worship is the consummation of all experience, whether of beauty or of goodness or of truth" (p. 6.). The appeal is to history. Religion and Art were one originally: "Religion has been historically the great fountain source of art, and the art of worship the mother of all arts" (p. 18). Basing religion "upon a definite intellectual faith in the oneness of reality" (p. 24), he describes it as "joy and exuberant abundance of life. It is that experience beyond thinking and doing which engages all the faculties in the highest spiritual adventure" (p. 25). Or again, "Religion says, Be a lover of Life as a whole, God's Life; love God. There is a profound identity of attitude between these two,"—that is, Art and Religion (p. 27).

This is as thorough-going a statement of the position I would combat as could be asked for the purposes of this discussion. I must not pretend to conduct it altogether impersonally. I am going to speak out of a life-long experience, and not merely out of an intellectual conclusion. My own nurture in the Church of England (which brought me very close in an impressionable boyhood to the very heart of its temperate estheticism by three memorable years as a chorister in a beauti-

ful London church) should enable me to deal with this attitude understandingly. I was bred in it; but I have slowly grown away from it until I have become almost Quaker-minded;—not as a matter of logic or theory under the influence of modern ethics and esthetics (which I shall consider presently), but as a much deeper matter of personal experience and development. However, this is to be no *argumentum ad hominem*. I have come to see, I think, the disastrous fallacies, historical and psychological, which underlie the attitude: and, I should add, the disastrous consequences of it. My contention will be that this vague blending of all values in religion, as expressed in the foregoing quotations, is neither historically justified nor psychologically sound. It lands us in a mysticism of misty sentimentality which saps the intellectual vigor and practical effectiveness of religion and puts ethical values in shadow,—delicate values as well as robust ones. I append these words because I have no sympathy with the sledge-hammer moralism which many critics seem to confuse with a religion of ethics.

#### IV.

First of all, the historical generalization is too facile and indiscriminating. It takes a leap over the greatest religious inheritance of Christendom, the Hebraic. Strange oversight! For the religiously-gifted Hebrew race there decidedly was *not* “a profound identity of attitude,” but an antagonism between the two attitudes. We must forget our Plato for a while, and turn to our Amos, and later to our Paul.

Let the historian of Art, Elie Faure, speak to

us on this point. With the Hebraic contribution to history in mind, he postulates a rivalry rather than a fundamental harmony in our human make-up, based on our dual nature,—body and soul, sense and spirit; and he traces the alternating ascendancy of one and the other in history. This friction drives at the very core of the religious problem. Matthew Arnold saw that problem in the difficulty of harmonizing what he called the Hebraic and the Hellenic sides of human nature; and Faure also sees it from this general angle. For him, too, the solution lies in harmonizing “our animality,” which, he says, “is sacred,” with “our reason, which is also sacred.” Now this harmony was jarred when the first great ethical religions appeared. (He is loose and sweeping in his language, surely,—speaking as if there were really a primal or pre-existing “harmony”; but let that pass now.) Thus Hebraism brought into the very different occidental world of a materialized and idolatrous civilization the imposing and sterile spirit of the desert solitudes. It feared and fought the “animality” of Babylonian, Canaanite and Egyptian ritualism. The Hebrews hated and condemned form,—the graven image and all encouragements to idolatry. Art played little part in their life. They and their religion survive. Egypt survives in her shells of sepulchral magnificence. Life is more than raiment, however splendid. And righteousness is more than ritual.

According to Faure, in order that this triumphant Hebraic austerity might be changed, there was needed a contact with a sunnier, blither world,—Europe, with its bays, mountains, fertile

plains and vivifying air. It took ten centuries of struggle before the peoples of Europe tore themselves free from the powerful embrace of the Semitic idea (I use largely the language of the translation of "The History of Art"). And then the pendulum swings: the day of the sway of external beauty arrives, and we reach the pagan Renaissance,—and the corruption of excess. There is no harmony; there is inevitable battle. The Reformation had to come—or ruin. And battle there continues to be today between, at the one extreme, a flabby sentimentalism of estheticism—and at the other a coarse insensitiveness to beauty; or, avoiding extremes, between the vanity of an external monumentalism, based on an infatuation for size, which will build "the biggest and costliest cathedral yet,"—in New York, in Washington,—and the cry for an inwardness which demands a transforming movement of sympathy, of justice, of fineness and nobility manifested in business, politics and social affairs.

Buddhism illustrates, in Faure's view, a similar conflict and alternation. The Buddha and his teaching stand in the same relation to reassertive Brahmanism as the Christ and his teaching stand in relation to ecclesiastical Christianity; only in the former instance it took but seven or eight centuries for the pendulum to swing. The great Emperor Asoka, yielding to the long-suppressed demand for art or the sensuous element in religion, caused or allowed some eighty thousand temples to be built in commemoration of a man who had never spoken of the gods! Astounding paradox! Hear this: "From the depths of the Indian nature rose the materialistic mysticism to

stifle all the desires for humanity aroused by Buddhism." The two could not live together—would not harmonize. As well try to harmonize the simple gospel of Jesus and the sophisticated creeds of the Councils; the outdoor preaching of the Nazarene on the hillside of Galilee and all this elaborate, theatricised ceremonial of "divine worship" under Peter's dome!

It is this aspect of history which is lost sight of by Mr. Vogt, as it is more conspicuously by the estheticians,—symbolists and ritualists like Mr. Cram, who are lost in the mere upholstering and vestmenting of religion. The ethical soul of religion, the "beauty of holiness," languishes; the beauty unbeheld—"seen only with the eyes of the mind"—is submerged. We have a millinered masquerade instead of an earnest, illuminated inwardness which inspires men to active righteousness and urges them to build a social world whose beauty is the sign of spiritual health, of truth and justice and kindness in daily life. Yes, we palter with externalism, show and perfumery, when we should be heeding the voice, "Wash you, make you clean!—the inside of the cup,—cleansed homes and shops and factories and marts and mines—cleansed politics and business!" No! we prefer to be busy with our toileting!

What we need is more beauty in life, not in the sanctuary; not more cathedrals, but more people's homes and dwellings; not more Sunday retreats from the world, but more week-day centers of a dignified and gracious community life, in ample parks, noble civic centers and such agencies. Ten times ten millions for that!

Let me leave this outbreak of feeling as it stands, even though it interrupt the course of the argument. Just two more sentences from Faure should be added, in closing this reaction to Mr. Vogt's reading of history, which shows that religion has meant not the alliance of art and ethics, but rather the renewed conflict of these,—the difficulty of achieving a proper union, the danger of the eclipse of a real religion of the spirit by an appeal to the senses. As Faure puts it, when the image of Sakyamuni himself appeared in the temples, his teaching was forgotten, and an instinctive sensualism overcame the moral needs. "What did it matter? The hosts of India needed forms to love."

There we have it; in India, as in Europe, reversion to "forms," to the religion of ritualism and sacerdotalism,—eye-mindedness, and, with it, magic and miracle, priestcraft and authority; and a materialistic as opposed to a poetic and imaginative mysticism. Let it be reiterated that we are not here antagonizing the love of "forms" as such; we are not antagonizing the love of beauty in any of its manifestations. What is in dispute is the character and extent of the alliance of this hunger for beauty *in life* and in all the arts and crafts, with religion conceived of as the conquest of the most difficult of all arts, the art of living together, with its fundamental ethical tasks,—its girding of the loins to bring the spirit and the technic of truth and justice and kindness, the spirit of reverence for man and his social life, into all the relations of human beings. Nor is the argument here that there should be *no* association of beauty with

religion. The question is as to how far the admixture can go without weakening the spiritual and ethical dominion of religion and its one clear call to rightness of living in *all* the relations of life, industrial, political and social, as well as domestic and personal.

## V.

And now, postponing some further deductions from the conclusions to be drawn from history, let us proceed to the second half of the argument, that which has to do with what we may call the psychology of synthesis.

When we try to grapple with the synthesis of impressions which pour in upon one as one worships in a beautiful and ornate church, the question arises as to how many streams of impression the mind can attend to and fuse. There are bits of music,—say, stretches in Beethoven's seventh symphony—which of themselves fill the cup of receptivity to the brim. So are there in a more complex work of art, like Wagner's "Meistersinger." As one listens to the all-absorbing Prelude with full attention, it is as if one were being distracted when the curtain rises and one's attention is asked for other almost equally fascinating impressions. The ear must now divide with the eye; and soon the dramatic action and the crowding historical memories of the Nuremberg of Sachs and Dürer's time press also for inclusion. I, for one, am undone. I cannot compass this range of appeal. I cannot synthesize the impressions. They must be dulled down to a blur before there can be any totality of effect. I may rebel, close my eyes, choose the



music, and let the rest fall away. And this embarrassment is felt in proportion to one's sensitiveness to each art-medium and one's education in each of the arts involved.

The same is true of elaborate worship in a church. "Listen!" cries the anthem; and if you are versed in church music, you will be absorbed. But "Look!" says a rose-window, a rood-screen, a fresco, a madonna (I think of Notre Dame),—and so much else; and if visible beauty speaks commandingly to you, your focus of attention will be shifted. Is all this "religion"? What would Buddha, Jesus, Epictetus,—even A Kempis—have said? Milton welcomed the symphony of effects; it "dissolved him into ecstasies, and brought all heaven before his eyes." But that expression clouds all. Besides, we have to proceed to ask as to the effect of all this on a man's ethical nature when he returns to earth. After being caught up into the seventh heaven of ecstasy, how is the experience going to register in his world of human relations? Does it connect? Or is it just an "esthetic experience"? "Yes; that's it! that is all!" say the theorists.

It is at this point, then, that we make connection with the modern estheticians. Mr. Vogt enters this field, and quotes, among others, Mr. Roger Fry. Very well; Mr. Fry's "Vision and Design" is a stimulating book, and offers a theory pat to our purpose. For in effect Mr. Fry's view is antithetical to the position taken by Mr. Vogt; it amounts to saying that the more beauty there is, and the greater the response to it, the less religion can there be. Beauty is a jealous mistress: she demands "intense disin-

terested contemplation"; and "a complete detachment from any of the meanings and implications of appearances."

Let me interpose that I am not saying "Amen" to Mr. Fry's affirmations; but merely using his contentions to get an extreme and antithetical theory into the field of discussion. I think his assumption of a "complete detachment from meanings" in a work of art is unthinkable; because the esthetic part of a man cannot wrench itself loose from the whole man. Mr. Fry is really back in the old "faculty psychology" which sections a man's mentality departmentally. It is because he and others (like Mr. Clive Bell) *try* to do this that they speak as fractions of men. A work of art sets the whole man vibrating, and liberates a complex of associations; and therefore when Mr. Fry asserts

Those who indulge in this [esthetic] vision are entirely absorbed in apprehending the relation of forms and colors to one another, as they cohere within the object,

he is maintaining the impossible, and is headed for esthetic monomania. If there is such a momentary absorption, it cannot last; the beholder will "come to himself," his total self, and will no longer be the fool of his eyes only. For this reason an entire indifference to the subject-matter of a work of art implies a contorted mind and a dismembered personality. Accordingly in a church an altar-piece of a madonna and child which necessarily touches the stops of deep human feeling in us, cannot be in the same class with a lily or a piece of pure imaginative design; which means (for its bearing on our argument)

that the distracting power of such works in a church is greater than Mr. Fry would make out, and not less. Mr. Vogt agrees to that. The spell of the formal beauty is there, the magic of the design and the color and the treatment generally; but this spell inevitably coalesces with the feelings evoked by the subject-matter of the work. Hence we must dissent from the esthetic abstractionism which implies that the beauty we enjoy in a cathedral cuts us loose from all other significance than the purely esthetic. When Raphael was admonished that he must not paint such beautiful madonnas, his critics implied that such human beauty,—and not merely so much engaging line and color, light and shade, mass, space, rhythm — was too distracting and disturbing to them in their devotions. Hence our protest against such a position as that which is expressed thus:—

. . . The greatest object of art becomes of no more significance than any casual piece of matter; a man's head is no more and no less important than a pumpkin. For [he adds] it is the habitual practice of the artist to be on the look-out for these peculiar arrangements of objects that arouse the creative vision and become material for creative contemplation,

in which Mr. Fry is assuming that we *can* forget the difference between a face and a vegetable.

This is an extreme of reaction from the opposite and exclusive absorption of the insensitive beholder in the subject, the purely literary reading of a work of art. It will land one in the esthetic attitudinizing of Mr. Clive Bell.

This excursus into esthetic theory seems to be

carrying us far from the point with which we started; but I have used this theoretic extremism to throw a sidelight on my thesis that it is not possible to synthesize the multiplicity of impressions which pour in upon us in an elaborate service of worship; not possible to fuse or co-ordinate them under the general concept of religion or worship. The element of truth in Mr. Fry's magnification and isolation of the esthetic experience serves to strengthen the view that the more appreciative we are of beauty, *including* the formal element,—be it the beauty of the music, pattern and all, or the beauty of the vision,—the more difficult is it to find room for that attentive and contemplative work of the mind, with its ethical and spiritual preoccupations, which is the very heart of the religious experience.

Mr. Fry does concede in one place that under certain conditions "the rhythms of life and of art may coincide"; but he forthwith adds that "in the main the two rhythms are distinct, and as often as not play against each other." Obviously, they will do so in proportion to a man's esthetic sensitiveness. The more he has of such sensitiveness, the less chance will religion have to get in its word. And the more this sensitiveness is appealed to, the fainter becomes the religious appeal. And this conclusion is driven home when Mr. Fry comes to speak specifically of the relation of art to morality and religion. Thus:—

Morality appreciates emotion by the standard of resultant action. Art appreciates emotion in and for itself. [There is no bridge.]

Art is an expression and a stimulus of the imaginative life which is separated from actual

life by the absence of responsive action. Now this responsive action implies in actual life moral responsibility. In art we have no such moral responsibility — it presents a life freed from the binding necessities of our actual existence.

. . . Here comes in the question of religion; for religion is also an affair of the imaginative life; and, though it claims to have a direct effect upon conduct, I do not suppose that the religious person, if he were wise, would justify religion entirely by its effect on morality, since that, historically speaking, has not been by any means uniformly advantageous. [Much virtue in "advantageous"!]

Exactly! Religion, divorced from morality, sets up a sort of mysticism of its own which disdains the application or intermixture of ethical values and considerations. Joy, life, ecstasy, — the delirium of the spinning dervish or the hashish-eater or what not, — let religion be that! Once cut loose from all association with the central ethical concern of religion, and we are adrift without any moorings to life, without any compass for a way of life, without any basis for an art of living in which beauty in its various modes becomes one of the elements to be synthesized by the reflective intelligence.

I referred before to Plato; but how different from the ethical estheticism of Plato is this modernism! In the soul's ascent to the Absolute Beauty, as we have it described in the "Symposium," we carry our ethical vision and urge with us as we near the top of the mount of vision. Beginning with the love of earthly things for the sake of their loveliness, we rise "from fair forms to fair conduct, from fair conduct to fair prin-

ciples, until from fair principles we finally arrive at the ultimate principle of all, and learn what absolute beauty is."

To bring this discussion to a head, we may say that the crucial word being "synthesis," we have to be clear as to the kind of synthesis which religion involves. I have been contending that it is not a synthesis of sense-impressions; not a synthesis of the utmost fulness of art in worship with a religious intentness on seeing life whole. That richness of sense-impressions will simply overwhelm the spirit; and the powerful appeal of audible and visible beauty will distract the attention,—aye, absorb the attention,—in proportion to one's responsiveness to that beauty.

And now, after this consideration of the position that the more Art in religion and worship, the better, from the historical and the psychological and esthetic points of view, we may in conclusion press toward a more positive presentation of what is sound and hopeful doctrine.

## VI.

The practical situation toward which the modern spirit has long been moving is the disengagement of religion from social functions and cultural interests and entanglements which it is no longer fitted to represent, and which (as I contend here) obscure and weaken its power, and especially its appeal through worship. For reasons not to be traversed here (the lust of power, foremost) priesthoods and the church have functioned in law, medicine, education, charity, and have had to resign these functions to secular agencies. Similarly, the arts which formerly had their home together

in the church now live their independent life outside the church. The music-lover will go to a symphony concert for the adequate gratification of his musical nature. He will find himself in an auditorium which does not attempt to ravish his eyes; and he will yield himself to a symphony which asks and gets his undivided attention. So with pictures, sculptures and other forms of art in the museum; so with drama in the theatre. All these are signs that we moderns care for beauty not less, but more, than aforetime. We do not starve of beauty because we do not get it or seek it in the church—in which it should be only a mild auxiliary. That is no longer what the church is for. Religion is purified and liberated for its own true office. Esthetic satisfaction is no longer the object—even the secondary object—of worship. No longer encumbered by adjuncts of beauty, religion concentrates upon its true task,—the supreme and the most difficult of all tasks. So freed, it may exercise a quite unprecedented power.

But this, I must reiterate, does not mean the total exclusion of beauty from religious edifices and meetings—or “services” or “communions,”—whatever we may call this fellowship of souls. By no means. Windows will be opened for glimpses of fair prospects. There will be a reticent use of symbols perhaps; and there will be a simple and quiet beauty of design and line and color, in the place of assembly. Just as a concert hall with its distinctive use will have a becoming beauty of its own, which will mildly blend with the auditory beauty of the music which is the focus of attention; so there will be a becoming marginal

beauty or pleasantness in a religious meeting-place; and in the "service of worship" there will be a simple suggestive heightening of emotional tone by well-proportioned aid from music. But the religious focus of attention will be dominant and steady, and these other things auxiliary and subordinate.

In fine, then, if we say that the purpose of religious gatherings—or "worship," if the old meaning of paying tribute to worth be preserved—is to make us think and feel deeply and imaginatively about the soul and the destiny of Man and his relations to his fellows and to the cosmos, then we shall avoid diverting or overtaxing the mind by forms of stimulation which it can enjoy better in other ways. Religion, understood as I have described it, has its own specific and proper emotions; and these gather round ethical ideas. Are these ideas thin without the enrichment of art? The love of man for man,—sympathy, compassion, pity, mercy,—is there anything more self-sufficing than that? Enfolded in these ideas and emotions are the deepest affections and experiences in a man's life. The vision of the ideal of a just and harmonious society, where Truth and Virtue and Beauty come by their own,—is any vision more quickening than that? And as all emotion tends to become lyrical and poetic, so these constraints of perfected love and a perfected society will naturally press for certain simple forms of collective expression;—but always simple!

Given the right atmosphere in a gathering, ethical emotion will kindle to a flame by the simpler kinds of ethical provocation. The reading



of a noble passage or poem will communicate a glow, generate a warmth. A simple strain of music or a song or hymn, if it is good enough, will evoke deep emotion, the deepest we are capable of.

What is implied is a distinction and discrimination of the emotions according to the objects to which they attach themselves. The emotion which attaches to a beautiful picture is not the same as that which attaches itself to an act of heroism or a potent personality. People who complain of bareness and plainness in our places of Sunday meeting are, one ventures to say, lacking in sensitiveness to other spiritual values. The Quakers deliberately seek plainness as an aid to the religious mood. It is from a Quaker I shall take a closing illustration, as I began with the instance of a Quaker-bred youth.

My witness shall be William Penn. In concluding a preface to George Fox's Journal, he takes leave of the gentle reader by signing himself as

One to whom the way of Truth is more lovely and precious than ever; and who knowing the beauty and benefit of it above all worldly treasure, has chosen it for his chiefest joy; and therefore recommends it to thy love and choice, because he is, with great sincerity and affection, thy soul's friend, — WILLIAM PENN.

What a gracious and affecting simplicity! We are reminded of Emerson's lines,—"Why need I volumes, if one word suffice?"—which contain the whole philosophy of all deep culture. We may allow for the mind's expansion in the presence of grandeur or an extraordinary opulence of effect; but it is not by any agitation—

largely of the nerves — springing either from size or sumptuousness, that the depths of the mind — the contemplative mind, — the actively contemplative mind of Aristotle — are reached. “There is great stillness in the courts of heaven”: in that stillness the “one word suffices.” The mind, instead of ranging over wide surfaces, gazes into clear depths, and a genuine spiritual wonder replaces a bewildered astonishment of the senses. Wordsworth’s mind was stirred to its depths not only by the light of setting suns but by the meanest flower that blows.

We come finally, then, to a discrimination of the essentially “religious” experience from the esthetic experience; and to a realization that the intrusion of powerful sense-appeals diverts and stampedes the mind from its concentration upon spiritual and ethical values. The mind is not so compartmented, not so cabined and confined, that its emotionalized thinking, its energetic contemplation, does not take on color and radiance. The mind is its own place; and a light, a fire, burns there. Visitations of visible and audible beauty may help the fire to draw and the flame to grow; but no more. Too many of these visitings will check the glow and dim the light. “The fire that in the heart resides” is not to be kindled by piling high the brushwood of the senses. Art must be the meek and modest servant of an undisputed master, religion.

# Evolution & the Uniqueness of Man.

By HORACE J. BRIDGES.

§I—SCIENCE VERSUS DOGMA: PRESENT STATE OF THE CASE.

**T**HE PRESENT revival of the so-called “conflict between science and religion,” which has made theological and scientific debates acceptable “copy” for newspapers and periodicals, is altogether welcome. The whole-hearted advocate of any system of thought will prefer the recognition of antagonism to the chilling politeness of neglect, and would rather have his views die—if die they must—on the battlefield of controversy than in the peaceful isolation of indifference and oblivion. All who are interested in the progress or retrogression of civilization are given opportunity by these noisy discussions to estimate, on the one hand, the relation of our American culture-stage to that attained in other lands, and, on the other, the general position of thought and morals in the world to-day as compared with former periods.

In the smoke and dust of the conflict between our “Fundamentalists” and the motley congeries of their opponents—who are united only in opposition—it is none too easy to survey the battlefield as a whole; and, as in other struggles,

there is room for much uncertainty as to the precise *casus belli* and the identity of the aggressor. Each side disclaims the latter impeachment. The Evolutionists declare that their dogmatic opponents are but repeating the secular aggression of theology against science. They entertain us with detailed parallels between the Dayton trial and the condemnation of Galileo. The Fundamentalists harp on the difference between "true" science and the kind that is "falsely so called"; meaning by the former the knowledge that the churches have been compelled to accept as verified, and so have managed either to square it with their dogmas or to forget its conflict with them; and, by the latter, the facts and hypotheses which they imagine themselves still to have a fighting chance of discrediting, whether by argument or force.

The resort to coercion, in the form of laws to prohibit the teaching of certain phases of evolution, is—let us not forget—a confession of defeat and of despair. The late Mr. Bryan combined amazing ignorance with remarkable shrewdness in catching by intuition the trend of the times. He would never, we may be sure, have resorted to the Tennessee method had he felt that there was the remotest chance of a reversal of the consensus of scientific conviction in favour of the truth of evolution. He knew that whosoever studies the evidence for this hypothesis, in any one of a score of sciences, becomes convinced of its truth; and this although he may retain those dogmas of the orthodox faith, Catholic or Protestant, which Mr. Bryan felt to be incompatible with it. Had he thought for a moment

that there could be a movement of scientific men against evolution,—had he supposed that further pursuit of the secrets of nature could lead the experts to unsay what they have been unanimously saying for so many years,—his political expertness would have led him to trust to this. He would far rather have induced the schools to use text-books in which real authorities could be cited against the hated theory, if such were obtainable, than have resorted to the ostrich policy of trying to keep from the knowledge of the rising generation a doctrine which, though false (as he believed), has yet this peculiar power to convince the ablest and fairest-minded students of its truth.

When, therefore, we try to descry the outlines of the situation as a whole, it seems evident that science, whether or not the aggressor, is the victor. Times have changed since the seventeenth century, when the Papacy, by punishing Galileo and burning Bruno, could indirectly silence Descartes and hold back, for a time, in Catholic countries, the rising tide of knowledge. They have changed since the early nineteenth century, when theology was able at least to thrust stumbling-blocks in the path of the geologists. Our contemporary Fundamentalists seem to lack the resourcefulness of their predecessors, who got over their terror of the conflict between Genesis and geology by blandly discovering a meaning in the Hebrew word for “day” which nobody, Hebraist or other, had ever dreamed of before. By that notable invention, it proved possible to offer the geologists all the time they wanted for the process of creation, without offence to Moses

(who was then still, but is not now, the author of the Pentateuch). Later, taking heart of grace from Origen and other respectable ancients, some theologians boldly declared the whole account of creation an allegory. The suggestion that it had a heavenly and spiritual significance has reconciled and still reconciles many to the evident fact that it has no earthly meaning; at least, no correspondence with the ascertainable facts of earthly history.

The change of policy by the Fundamentalists, from the effort to reinterpret the Bible and reconcile its words with scientific discovery, to the method of the Inquisition, is thus evidently a confession of defeat. They have decided that the infallibility of the Bible must be identified with the plain meaning of certain of its words. It must not be like that of the Papacy,—a kind of fact at the end of the rainbow, to be believed in by its devotees on the strict condition that it never commits itself to any decision on any matter of fact within the possible reach of human verification or disproof. The Pope can keep his reputation for infallibility by offering only oracles on matters where God alone knows. But the Bible is in harder case, since it pronounces on matters that man can investigate.

When, therefore, Genesis says that God made man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that man became a living soul, this is to be taken—so our Fundamentalists valiantly decide—as the description of a fact that occurred at a definite moment in time. Fundamentalism stakes its case upon it. Christians may not be permitted

to explain its real meaning to be that, by a process graduated through thousands or millions of years, the brain and nervous system of an anthropoid ape became organic to the distinctive powers which constitute the essential human nature. And if men of science persist in declaring that the latter is what really happened, and the former is only a myth, or at best an allegory, they are to be prohibited by law from allowing their words to reach and sully the pure minds of the sons and daughters of Main Street in Main Street's educational institutions. If the facts accessible to investigation fit wholly with the evolutionary hypothesis, and flatly antagonize the story of Genesis, so much the worse for the facts. The Fundamentalists know that the Bible is infallible, by the same means as Catholics know the Pope is, and Mohammedans that the Koran is. That is, their belief is a matter not of reason but of will: the kind of will against which no conviction can prevail. Force of argument against it is merely converted into heat; and the stronger the arguments, the greater the heat.

Unfortunately, the Fundamentalists' state of mind, however satisfactory it may be to themselves, is not well adapted for producing conviction in the minds of others. For that purpose, facts and arguments are necessary; and there are *no* facts to prove the infallibility of the Bible. Nor is it easy to persuade those children of Main Street, whose intelligence quotient is above C minus, that when Fundamentalism speaks they are to abandon the otherwise commanded use of their reason and swallow the oracle with blind faith. And the net result of these conditions is the

evident fact of the victory of science. The hundred-years' struggle was long of doubtful issue; but now the issue is no longer doubtful. The proportion of church members to our total population, even if we take without discount the statistics of the churches themselves, is smaller than ever before; and, what is worse, a tremendous fraction of the enrolled adherents are under conviction of the sin of Modernism. Messrs. Bryan, Machen and Straton, following the example set by the Pope when dealing with the army headed by Loisy, Tyrrell and Fogazzaro, call them apostates, and deny that they are Christians; for they do not believe in those essential dogmas without which, as Fundamentalism declares, there is neither salvation nor Christianity. They are of the school of Dr. Fosdick and Dean Shailer Mathews. They take the creeds in a Pickwickian sense, and limit the "revelation" in the Bible to those elements of its teaching which chance to commend themselves to their independent reason and moral judgment. Their predecessors taught them that the word "day" in Genesis may mean a thousand or a million years, or what you will. They have bettered the instruction. They extend a similar latitude of interpretation to any other words of the Bible which, in their plain and literal sense, are repugnant to their highly-civilized, scientific perception and moral discrimination. They are quite ready to adopt in earnest the exquisite thought at which Sir Thomas Browne shuddered, that the water of Elijah's miracle may have been naphtha.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Our endeavours are not only to combat with doubts, but always to dispute with the Devil . . . Having seen some



If, then, there are now sixty per cent. of the population outside the churches, and of the forty per cent. within, one-half or two-thirds have no business there, but are traitors within the camp (as Fundamentalism declares), what is this but a victory for science of the most complete and crushing character? And since it is evident, according to the statistics which so horrified Mr. Bryan, that the process of dogmatic disintegration shows no signs of arrest, but proceeds ever farther and faster, we are surely guilty of no exaggeration in describing the present position in America by the curt phrase: *Dogmatic religion defeated; dogmatic science triumphant.*

## §II—HOW THE MIND OF MAIN STREET WORKS.

But now I must explain what I mean by using the adjective "dogmatic" to describe the science which has triumphed.

He would be not only an optimist but a fool who could believe that there has been a victory of science in the sense that its marvellous method, its high and exacting standards of accuracy, and the advanced mentality necessary to employ that method and observe those standards, have become the possession of the masses of mankind, the common property of Main Street, in America or elsewhere. To suppose that the unchurched sixty per cent. of our population are so because they have become scientific in the sense in which Dar-

experiments with bitumen, and having read far more of naphtha, he whispered to my curiosity the fire of the altar might be natural, and bade me mistrust a miracle in Elias (*sic*), when he entrenched the altar round with water: for that inflammable substance yields not easily unto water, but flames in the arms of its antagonist."—"Religio Medici."

win or Steinmetz was scientific, would be to suppose a miracle compared with which any in the Bible would be but a conjurer's trick. The mass of mankind live, as Stevenson said, not by bread alone, but principally by catch-words. They are the predestinate adherents of authority. That is why the authoritarian religions are always the popularly successful ones, and the history of the conflicts of sects and creeds is the record of struggles between rival claimants to authority. That is also why the history of politics can be written only in terms of the ascendancy of successive personalities.

The general rule,—subject, of course, to a standing qualification of *exceptis excipiendis*,—is that conversion from one religious creed to another, from one political theory to another, or from dogmatic theology to what is ironically called free thought, means only that the convert has been enamoured by the extra-rational, psychical allurements of some new leader, whose ideas, themselves a synthesis of current sub-conscious tendencies or desires, become effective, not through the appeal they make to reason, but through their being steeped in the attractiveness of his or her personality. It is as Whitman, with the clairvoyance of poetic genius, declared:

Surely, whoever speaks to me in the right voice,  
him or her I shall follow,

As the waters follow the moon, silently, with  
fluid steps, everywhere around the globe.

Nor do I say this ironically or censoriously. It may indeed sound like irony even to state a fact which makes nonsense of nine-tenths of our

political pretences; but when what one states is a fact, it is the plain dictate of intelligence to recognize it and abandon the illusions it destroys. And the simple fact is that the mass of men, apart from the pedestrian daily activities of self-preservation, are and always have been incapable of self-direction, of independent thought and reason; incapable of mastering the immense areas of fact and law which yield only to their masters those quintessential perceptions and convictions of which sciences and philosophies are compact. Whether Mr. Bryan's God directly and of set purpose made Mr. Babbitt what he is, or whether Mr. Babbitt represents but a momentary stage in the ascending effort of those forces whose trail we call evolution, the fact remains that he is born a follower and not a leader, a pupil and not a teacher, a routineer and not an initiator. Mr. Babbitt is in no wise to blame for this. Blame is due rather to those politicians and religious teachers who pretend to think him what he is not, in order that they may flatter and beguile him into supposing that they are doing his will, when all the time he is being manipulated into doing theirs.

It follows that, when Main Street is converted from "religion" to "science," what happens is the substitution of a new set of dogmas for an old; the new being received, precisely as the old were, upon faith. This is the case, quite irrespective of the truth or falsehood of the rejected or accepted beliefs. What Main Street knew of its old religion was not that it was true, but that somebody had told it that somebody had testified that somebody who could not err had declared it true. And what Main Street knows of its new

science is, likewise, not that it is true, but that somebody has told it that somebody who is competent has endorsed the discoveries that somebody has made. The prophecy of Huxley is fulfilled; a generation educated under the influence of the "Origin of Species" is accepting its doctrines with as little reason, and *therefore* with as little justification, as so many of its contemporaries rejected them.

It would be idle to complain of this fact. If by the nature of things the bulk of men cannot think for themselves, so as to arrive independently at the possession of ideas, they must receive them from others as they can. But this fact is the conclusive justification for a perpetual vigilant scrutiny of the ideas that are set floating in the air of Main Street. Ideas imbibed from that atmosphere by the dwellers in the Street will work for good if they are sound and true, for harm if they are false. We proceed, then, to inquire just what body of beliefs is covered by the term Evolution in the Main Street mind.

### §III—WHAT MAIN STREET MAKES OF DARWIN.

As extracted from the writings of Mr. Bryan and other trustworthy reflectors of the sub-popular intelligence, these beliefs are in the main as follows:—

*First*, that Evolution is a theory originated by Darwin.

*Second*, that Evolution is the name of a force or cause.

*Third*, that it is a substitute for creation, in the sense that if the world was not created it must

have been evolved, and if it evolved or is evolving it cannot have been created.

*Fourth*, that man is the descendant of a monkey.

*Fifth*, that therefore he has no nature or powers different in kind from those of his monkey ancestor, but only the ancestral powers raised to a higher degree of complexity.

That of these five beliefs the first three are mythological nonsense and the fourth a misunderstood half-truth, is so patent to any instructed thinker that I shall dispense myself from the labour of restating their confutation. Even if it were possible to set Main Street right about them (which it evidently is not, since the refutation of these errors has been made a hundred times in the last fifty years, and yet they were all in full bloom in Mr. Bryan's mind to the moment of his death), I should not wish to make it my own particular task. One must choose one's task according to one's sense of the comparative importance of things, as well as with reference to one's own particular relative competence. I assume that my readers know as well as I that the general conception of evolution is at least as old as Thales of Miletus; that Darwin offered only a theory of the cause of evolution in one particular province of reality; that one may largely disagree with Darwin's theory, and yet be a thorough-going evolutionist; that, as John Morley said fifty years ago, evolution is neither a force nor a cause, but merely a process or law—that is, a summary description of all that has happened and is happening in the world, the acceptance of which commits one to no special view as

to the forces causing the happenings; that, therefore, evolution may perfectly well be a method of creation, there being no opposition whatsoever between the two ideas; and that the true evolutionary theory of man's pedigree is that both he and the existing anthropoids are the descendants of a common ancestor, now extinct. In all the sciences concerned, the dictum of Professor J. Arthur Thomson holds good,—that the competent specialists are more sure than ever about the *fact* of evolution, but perhaps more doubtful than ever as to its *factors*. For the purpose of my present investigation I must let it go at that, because I wish to direct attention to the fifth of Main Street's evolutionary beliefs: namely, its notion that man, if he be of animal descent, can have no nature or powers essentially new, and different in kind from those of his apelike progenitor.

There is the best of excuses for Main Street's entertaining this queer delusion. For this, unlike the others listed, is not the mass-mind's perversion of a belief presented in more accurate and rational form by the men of science; it is an erroneous inference drawn by some of the greatest of those men of science themselves. Darwin himself, having unfortunately little turn for philosophical analysis, found in the supposed limitation of man's mind to powers developed from those of the ape, ground for believing that it could not be trusted to speculate on such problems as that of theism. Thus he wrote in his Autobiography:

But then arises the doubt, can the mind of man, which has, as I fully believe, been developed

from a mind as low as that possessed by the lowest animals, be trusted when it draws such grand conclusions?

And he repeats this with added stress in a letter written in the last year of his life:

But then with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?

This doubt has more consequences than Darwin realized. Some of them we shall have to notice. For the moment, I must point out that the most successful of Darwin's German popularisers, Ernst Haeckel, was completely infatuated with the belief that mind is a product of the brain. He was even ready to point out the particular areas in the brain which, as he said, "*produce* thought and consciousness." True, he never doubted the possibility that a mind so conditioned could solve the riddles of the universe; his once popular volume, "*Die Welträtsel*," being, in effect, a proclamation that they had been solved by 1899. Needless to say, his "solutions" are a tissue of baseless dogmatizings and self-contradictions.<sup>1</sup> But this in no wise hindered—rather it helped—the popular acceptance of his book, which was circulated by hundreds of thousands throughout Europe and America. Nothing helps a pseudo-philosophical treatise like utter super-

<sup>1</sup>I may be permitted to refer to a detailed analysis of Haeckel's chief philosophical dicta in my "*Criticisms of Life*." (Houghton Mifflin, 1915.)

ficiality and dogmatic assertiveness; and of these Haeckel's volume is full.

An immeasurably greater man than Haeckel, and one who, as a philosophical thinker, was far ahead of Darwin, was Huxley. He had the merit of seeing and clearly stating that consciousness cannot without the maddest paradoxes be regarded as a mode of force or matter, "or any possible combination of either." In the plainest language he rejected materialism—though this is often forgotten by people who take his name in vain—and declared that if the choice between it and idealism were compulsory, he should decide for the latter. But the natural predilection of the popular mind for the obvious, the rarity of the gift for metaphysical analysis, and the shyness of Huxley himself about working out the logical implications of his own admissions, have conspired to rob this side of his teaching of its proper influence and effect.

There are, to be sure, many writers of high scientific competence who have protested against Darwin's limitation of man's mental powers to mere complications of those possessed by animals. In another book<sup>1</sup> I have cited at length what seems to me the conclusive statement of St. George Mivart on this point; and Mivart was one of the earliest, as well as one of the best, of those critics who, gratefully accepting from Darwin the general conception of Evolution as the master key to the history of life, have yet differed from him, both by thinking that natural selection alone does not suffice to account for the origin of all

<sup>1</sup>"The God of Fundamentalism, and Other Studies," p. 159 ff. (Chicago, Pascal Covici, 1925.)



species and all animal and plant organs, and by holding that Evolution permits of the appearance of organs and powers altogether new, in the sense that not even a prophetic rudiment of them may be present in a creature's ancestors.

Not only has there been manifold testimony to this effect from many writers of authority in the sciences, but every competent philosopher who has dealt with the matter has seen, on the one hand, that Darwin was wrong in his limitation of man's possibilities and in the reason he assigned for it; and, on the other, that the recognition of powers in man that are unique to him, is in no sense inconsistent with the utmost conviction that man is physically descended from an apelike ancestor. To cite but one from a great multitude, I may refer to the Essays of Thomas Hill Green on Spencer and Lewes, which show—irrefutably, to my mind—that our human equipment cannot rationally be resolved into a mere general growth and complication of the powers to which the animal brain was organic. Unless that brain, through the process by which it became human, had become organic to mental powers of an order entirely unprecedented, the subsequent evolution of our race from savagery to civilization would have been impossible; as impossible as it has remained for all animals except man. The powers possessed by animals might have continued to evolve on their own lines to a further indefinite extent; but unless the new capacities had struck in, there could never have been speech, or that self-distinction of the subject of experience from its object-matter which, by rendering a connected experience possible, has gradually built up the

fact-world of reason on the one hand, and the value-world of conscience on the other.

But all this, as I have said, has passed over Main Street's head. And what is the result? To put it briefly, the result is that man is regarded not only as an animal (which he most undoubtedly is), but as *nothing else than an animal*. The everlasting reiteration, by the followers of Haeckel, that man differs from other animals "only in degree and not in kind," has become an unquestioned article of faith with Main Street's evolutionist population. The statement is chanted as a kind of creed among those select companies who have accepted what they call free thought on faith. You may hear it anywhere in America or Britain, or on the Continent of Europe.

#### §IV—WHAT THEN OF MAN'S MORAL NATURE?

Now, it has always been rationally evident to students of ethical philosophy, and intuitively perceived even by unphilosophical adherents of the old religions, that this superficially plausible doctrine leaves unexplained, and indeed renders inexplicable, one thing about man that is a manifest fact. This fact is his moral nature. Accordingly, the most strenuous efforts have been made by evolutionists of the Haeckelian orthodoxy to explain it away. They seek to resolve it into a mere complication of the play of instinct. We are referred to instances of the "gregarious bias" among herding animals, and of the self-sacrificing maternal instinct among many creatures, especially the higher apes. Nobody, of course, can deny, or wishes to deny, that these things are facts. Among dogs and apes we often see action which,

if taken by human beings, would attest a very high moral development. And so the argument is, "How can you pretend that analogous action among men bears witness to a different nature, responding to different springs of action?"

On this point careful discrimination is necessary. We begin by admitting that the instinctive nature is common to man and the animals most nearly related to him. *Quâ* animal, man doubtless has the same "consciousness of kind" that produces a quasi-social life among his closest congeners; the same imperious instinct of self-preservation, the same reproductive urge, philo-progenitiveness and maternal affection, as they. Out of these, if he were to be deprived of his distinctive type of consciousness, there would assuredly arise much action identical with that which he now performs. Causes which in other animals are adequate to the production of such effects, would naturally be adequate to their production among men, if, remaining what they are in all merely physical respects, men should cease to be what they distinctively are in the matter of their self-consciousness and reasoning powers. The first wrong turning to be passed by in the scientific study of ethics is the attaching of ethical labels to conduct which is sufficiently accounted for by the blind, sub-rational prompting of the impulses of instinct. But, without for a moment forgetting or seeking to minimize this consideration, we must yet proceed to indicate other facts which are necessary to place it in the right perspective.

The first is this: that the same act takes wholly different rank, when estimated from the

ethical standpoint, according as it is voluntary or involuntary. Whenever we are assured that an act resulted from compulsion, and arose in the absence of any alternative possibility, we cease to classify it as moral or immoral. This distinction, which is universally accepted, is at the present moment causing great practical difficulty, because of the specious use now frequently made of the plea of insanity or irresponsibility in murder cases. That plea naturally supposes that any act committed irresponsibly, by a person whose nervous and mental condition was such that he could not judge it as right or wrong and could do no other than he did, is thereby lifted out of the category of *deeds* and into that of meaningless *accidents*. This plea on behalf of murderers is often made by advocates who profess to think that *all* human acts are irresponsible, and express only the blind necessitation of the world's sub-personal forces. Yet the very urging of it necessarily implies that those to whom it is addressed are responsible, and free either to accept or reject it. This may indeed convict such advocates of preposterous self-contradiction. Still, it none the less testifies to the universal admission, by the normal mind, of the principle of moral judgment upon which I am insisting. That an act may be classed as right or good, we must be assured that he who did it had first reflected upon its nature and foreseen and intended its consequences. We must also be assured that at the moment of doing the act he was free to refrain from it, or to do another of a different character. And, before any act can be classed as wrong, we must possess the like assurances.

From this radical fact it logically follows that the race-regarding and self-abnegating activities of animals can be invested with a properly ethical character only as the result of a fallacious assumption: the assumption, namely, that they possess the same powers of self-distinction, of foresight and of choice that men possess. If they do not, their acts are no more moral or immoral than those of a somnambulist or a lunatic. Now, although we cannot emancipate ourselves from the wise agnosticism of Cardinal Newman as to the question of what the consciousness of animals is for them,<sup>1</sup> we yet inevitably assume that it differs from our own precisely by the absence of these human powers. We assume this because, for one thing, we constantly see the animal obeying its instinctive impulsion under conditions in which it is entirely useless. The beaver in captivity will build its dams across the floor. The chimpanzee will make a nest, or part of a nest, and sit contentedly in it, inside his cage. The dog on your hearthrug will turn himself around before lying down, thus performing an action necessary in the environment of his woodland ancestors, but meaningless in your drawing-

<sup>1</sup>Can anything be more marvelous or startling, unless we were used to it, than that we should have a race of beings about us whom we do see, and as little know their state, or can describe their interests or their destiny, as we can tell of the inhabitants of the sun and moon? It is, indeed, a very overpowering thought, when we get to fix our minds on it, that we periodically use — I may say hold intercourse with — creatures who are as much strangers to us, as mysterious, as if they were the fabulous unearthly beings, more powerful than man, and yet his slaves, which Eastern superstitions have invented."—From a sermon of Newman's quoted by R. H. Hutton, "Modern Guides to English Thought in Matters of Faith," 1891, p. 62.

room. In other words, the actions of animals, however amazingly skilful, are teleological *only from the point of view of the rational onlooker*. By the animal they are performed without insight into present conditions or foresight of those future conditions for which they nevertheless prepare. And it cannot logically be disputed that this is true also of the preventient care of birds and animals for their young, and even of their occasional self-sacrifices for the sake of the herd.

To make the point clearer, I would ask whether it occurs to anybody to censure an animal for the non-performance of any such act, in the same way as—whatever his theory—he would undoubtedly censure a human being who omitted a commonly recognized duty. When a cat or a sow neglects its young, we may feel that there is something abnormal about the creature, but it never occurs to us to pass a *moral* condemnation. If we hear a child reproaching an animal under such circumstances, we smile at the naïve anthropomorphism which the reproach betrays, and we tell the child that the cat or sow is not to be blamed, because it knows not what it does.

Obviously, then, in spite of the warmest affection for animals, we cannot rationally permit ourselves to ascribe moral praise, even tacitly, to those fulfilments of instinctive impulses which are sometimes praiseworthy in man; any more than we can seriously bestow blame on animals for irregularities of behaviour which in men would be culpable. And this establishes my contention, that the very same act in a human being, notwithstanding its original prompting by the urge of the same instinct that drives the animal,

may rightly be the occasion of moral appraisal. For where the animal acts without insight and foresight, man acts with both; where it is somnambulising, man walks awake; where it has no alternative, man confronts an indefinite range of possible courses.

#### §V—SOME RESULTS OF DARWIN'S INFERENCE.

Thus far, then, our position is as follows: We accept the evidence which links man phylogenetically with the animal world. Existing types of apes are his cousins, but were not his ancestors. The blood-test proves the closest possible consanguinity between him and them; in his embryological development man, as it has been said, "climbs up his own genealogical tree," recapitulating the entire development of life from the unicellular stage onwards; and the fossils, bones and tools of manlike apes and apelike men prove beyond question that there have been many forms in man's ancestry that were intermediate physically—and, doubtless, mentally and psychically also—between present humanity and the ape world. The evidence is so complete and conclusive that in relation to any other creature than man nobody would for a moment dream of disputing it. Nor can the utmost energy inspired by human vanity, or the stubborn determination to maintain special creation for theological reasons, avail to shake the evidence or weaken the conviction it irresistibly produces. Mr. Bryan's assertion that "there is not a single fact in the universe that can be cited to prove that man is descended from the lower animals" was a mere forensic audacity. In all he wrote about evolu-

tion, he never mentions the evidence. He makes no allusion to the remains of the Java pithecanthropus, the Heidelberg, Neanderthal and Pilt-down bones, or the artifacts which testify to the former wide distribution of such intermediate types. One strives to retain one's belief in Mr. Bryan's sincerity, but in view of the virtual impossibility of his having failed to hear of these universally familiar facts, it is very difficult to reconcile it with such a statement as the one quoted.

Now, according to the facts of evolution, when new departures take place, all the materials and powers associated with previous forms continue to occur, being recombined and further complicated, and made contributory either to higher modes of the former functions or to new ones. Thus, it is certain that man's life includes all the manifestations of life that characterize the lower animals with which he is physically connected. Like them, man is endowed with instinct. In him as in them, instinct expresses itself in spontaneous desires, antipathies and sentiments. And he shares with them four modes of psychic or mental activity: the reflex action of the nervous system, sensation, sensible perception, and the association of sensible perceptions.

It is from these facts that Main Street's article of faith, "Man differs from other animals only in degree and not in kind," is derived. Here, as we have seen, Main Street can cite in its support the weighty testimony of the great Darwin. It can also appeal to Herbert Spencer, whose evolutionism is an attempt to explain the gradual acquisition by experience of those ideas of space,



time and causality which now seem like inborn intuitions. That which now truly is innate in the individual, according to Spencer, was nevertheless acquired by the race. We are descended from ancestors who did not bring this rational framework with them to the encountering of their environment, but gained it by slow degrees in their struggle with the world.

On the same basis of fact and inference rests Haeckel's expression of the gospel according to Materialism: "Humanity is but a transitory phase in the development of the eternal substance, a particular phenomenal form of matter and energy, the *nothingness* (*Nichtigkeit*) of which we perceive when we place it in contrast with boundless space and endless time." That is the gist of Haeckel's "Welträtsel": a statement so unwelcome even to some of his adoring followers that in the English translation of the book it was carefully doctored and toned down. And among us in America to-day, my friend Mr. Clarence Darrow is preaching a doctrine of mechanism which is but a variant of Haeckel's, and making it the basis for a system of complete, pitch-black pessimism. Man, according to Mr. Darrow, is the puppet of blind necessity; and his consciousness, while it leaves him utterly helpless, serves only to make him aware of his misery.

Now all this turns, not on the *facts* foreseen by Darwin and confirmed by his successors, but on the soundness of Darwin's *inference* from the facts. If that inference be sound, we must of course accept it. None but a fool would wish to dwell in the fools' paradise of an illusion; no-

body *can* do so, once the illusion is recognized as such. Yet also, none but a fool would accept such a view of man's nature, powers and destiny on anything short of the most complete and compulsive proof. I have never been able to convince myself of the logical validity of Darwin's inference; and accordingly I proceed to set forth my main grounds for doubting it.

#### §VI—REASONS FOR DOUBTING THE DARWINIAN ESTIMATE OF MAN.

1. The first of these is the obtrusive fact already hinted at, that it proves far too much. Let us recall the argument: Can the mind of man, being developed from one as low as that of the lowest animals, be trusted when it draws "such grand conclusions" (*sc.*, the theistic belief)? Are its conclusions "of any value, or at all trustworthy"?

Not only will this consideration, if it is of force at all, upset the doctrine of theism, against which Darwin invokes it, but, obviously, it will overthrow the whole of science as well. For it removes all ground of distinction between reality and illusion. If, because of the source of his mind, man's convictions are of no value, then among the convictions thus discredited must fall those of Haeckel, Darrow and Darwin, as much as those of Plato, Jesus and the theologians. The possibility of science, and equally of the common-sense knowledge of which science is the ordered development, depends on the sure validity, the absolute trustworthiness, of certain mental apprehensions intrinsically impossible to any ape, or to any creature possessing only a higher degree

of the selfsame powers of mind which apes manifest. If, then, the result of the Darwinian argument is conclusively to limit man to these powers, we shall be landed in a universal scepticism, which must extend to the Darwinian argument as well as every other.

Darwin, of course, is by no means the only thinker who has fallen into this intellectual booby-trap. Much of our current psychology and pseudo-philosophy is a standing exhibition of the same paralogism. I offer Mr. James Harvey Robinson's popular treatise on "The Mind in the Making" as a lurid current instance.<sup>1</sup> It would be amusing, if it were not tragic, to watch the spokesmen of science serenely sawing through the branches of the tree of knowledge on which they sit. They use powers no ape possesses to prove man's non-possession of those powers. Every argument they urge against the reality of the capacities in question presupposes it. And if they could avoid assuming that which they deny (which is impossible), then with their success would collapse the validity of every syllable of their own reasoning.

*Per contra*, if science is possible—or, rather, *since* it is possible: for nobody can do more than pretend to doubt the reality of knowledge—it must be because there are in the nature of man powers higher in kind, as well as more complex in degree, than anything in the nature of the ape. The followers of Haeckel and Darwin can have it whichever way they like, but they cannot

<sup>1</sup>A critique of Professor Robinson's book may be seen in an essay entitled "Are We Wiser or Better Than Our Fathers?" in my volume, "As I Was Saying" (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1923).

have it both ways. Either there is something new in man's mentality, different in kind from that which is in the animal, or else their own science is a bundle of illusions, and stands on exactly the same footing as dreams and old wives' tales.

The first great thinker in modern times who took the stand followed by Darwin in this matter was Hume. Without affirming the animal origin of man's intelligence (a position which in his day could have found no scientific basis), he yet declared that the whole mental life of man was reducible to "impressions" and "ideas,"—meaning by the former sense-impressions, and by the latter the fainter copies of sense-impressions which survive them in memory. *Nothing could be an element of knowledge which had not originated as a sensation.*

This is the philosophic counterpart of the Darwinian inference. But Hume was acute enough to perceive, and candid enough to admit, that his theory destroyed science, since it reduced what we call natural laws to the level of fictions (engendered by our "propensity to feign"), and took all the certainty out of mathematics. The inevitability of this conclusion is obvious. For natural laws are relations, excogitated by the mind, and inserted by it between and around the data provided by the senses. Mathematical figures as such (*sc.*, in distinction from the sense-data which are their mere raw material), and the axioms they illustrate, and the theorems formulated in terms of the axioms, are neither sensations nor memories of sensations. If, then, the title of knowledge is to be reserved to sense-im-

pressions and surviving ideas of them, mathematics and science of nature are impossible. Now, the science of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries has been very largely based on the sensationalistic idealism of Hume, whereas its professors ignore the awkward conclusion—*i.e.* the fictitiousness of their own fundamental conceptions—to which, by the confession of its author, that system unavoidably leads.

2. I pass now to my second ground for doubting the Darwinian inference: namely, the scientific work recently done in investigating the actual mentality of apes. We are told that we possess only a higher measure of the ape's powers. Very well. Go to the ape, thou sluggard; consider its ways, and be instructed.

Four years of laborious and highly competent effort were devoted to this investigation in the island of Teneriffe by Professor Köhler of Berlin, a man of the highest qualifications in psychology and of admirable skill and powers of logical discrimination. The result is a scientific demonstration that the mentality of the very sharpest ape is incredibly lower than one had supposed possible *a priori*. It never rises beyond the most elementary adaptation of means to ends in a present concrete case, after much clumsy trial and error, and the concrete memory of the creature's own prior performances awakened by the renewed presence of the same stimuli. Leave out (and be most discriminating in doing so) all that is clearly due to the inherited tendency of the animal to act in specific ways upon its environment,—leave out all that can be done and is done in the somnambulism of instinct,

—confine attention to what can only be the result of elementary thought. That result proves to be so absurdly trifling that to speak of the thought involved as a lower degree of human endowment, or of man's intellect as a mere higher degree of the ape's, is to play with language in an utterly deceptive fashion.<sup>1</sup>

The truth is, most of our popular belief in ape-mentality is due to the illicit reading of our own mental operations into the ape's mind. Critics of theology, with entire justice, are always warning us against the fallacious absurdity of supposing that the ultimate reality of the universe is of the same nature and mode of operation as man. "Anthropomorphism" is admittedly a delusion and a snare in theology. But it is no less so in relation to our imaginative constructions of animal psychology. Even when the ape does what we should do in a given situation, we have no ground for assuming him to have thought it out as we should.

But here arises another consideration which to me seems weighty, though I cannot recall having ever seen it introduced into this argument. (However, this may be due, and probably is, to the limitations of my reading on the subject.) It

<sup>1</sup>In a recent newspaper article, Mr. H. L. Mencken declared that the mentality of higher apes is equal to that required for many classes of unskilled human labor, and that gorillas, for instance, if only they knew a few words of English, could well do the work, say, of street-car conductors. Omitting the other absurdities of this statement, I point out only the delicious *ignoratio elenchi* of the proviso about the vocabulary. Mr. Mencken cannot see that the utter inability of the ape to learn one word of English or any other language is itself the proof of that unbridgeable gulf between apes and men, the existence of which—solely in the interest of a preconceived theory—he and many other contemporary writers so eagerly deny.

is this: The anthropoid apes, including the chimpanzees, are descended, says science, from the same hypothetical ancestor as man. We and they represent divergent stems from a common branch. So be it; but this means that they are racially as old as man. Yet in half a million years man has developed from that half-brute in Java to the spiritual and mental peaks called Socrates, Aristotle, Jesus, Shakespeare, Newton, Einstein. Meanwhile, the chimpanzee has stood still. There is, I believe, no shadow of evidence that the anthropoid apes are any more or less advanced, or in any wise different mentally and psychically, from what they were five thousand centuries ago. Now, we are asked to believe that at the point of divergence from the common stem, the creatures that have remained apes were to all intents indistinguishable from those that became men. The difference between them was one of degree only; and, at *that* stage, of a degree so slight that to any rational onlooker it would have been indiscernible.

How, then, if man has only the same mental equipment, so far as kind is concerned, can we understand the colossal difference in the sequel of the two stories? Why the miraculous expansion "in degree" on the one side and the utter stagnation on the other?

Moreover, Main Street's creed overlooks another quite important consideration. Main Street is sure that our minds are not different in kind from those of apes, but contends that they are gigantically different in degree. To me, from what I have been able to learn and observe of animal psychology, the affirmation in this state-

ment seems as groundless as the denial. I submit that in all those departments of mental and psychic life which we share with the higher animals, so far from there being evidence that the degree of our participation in them is any higher than theirs, the actual evidence is largely the other way. Where is the reason for believing that our emotions are any more intense, our reflex responses to stimulus any more sensitive, our sense-perceptions any more acute, our power of automatically associating impressions any surer, than those of the anthropoid apes? For lack of analysis, we commonly forget that every one of these powers can be possessed in full development, without ever exfoliating into the two distinctive powers of man: self-consciousness, and rational thought determined by mental relations. Sensation is not thought, nor would any amount of sensation ever produce the first rudiment of thought or of the conditions that render thought possible. And, as St. George Mivart well pointed out half a century ago, the two kinds of powers—those common to man and animals, and those special to man—tend to increase in inverse ratio: which also seems conclusive against their being “identical in kind and only different in degree.”

3. And now for my third ground of dissent from Darwin's dictum and from the Spencerian evolutionism. Darwin's inference requires, and Spencer's reasoning supposes, that those powers in man upon which depends the possibility of his acquiring any experience, have been produced by the experience which depends on them. How



could this be so? How could experience begin until the preconditions essential to it were there?

In the folklore story of Genesis, anybody can without difficulty perceive that the character of Adam is an anachronistic fiction. For Adam, the first of men, is depicted as a civilized man, endowed with developed speech; that is to say, the late and mature product of ages of social evolution is placed before the beginning of the social evolution which alone could produce him. He precedes his only possible preconditions. Now, the Spencerian account of human evolution rests upon an anachronism of an opposite kind. It does not, indeed, date the mature result of a social process before that process could have begun; but it represents the prior conditions, without which that process never could have begun, as gradually arising in and through the process itself. It is an elaborate attempt to account for the indispensable original acorn as a by-product of the growth of the oak that springs from it.<sup>1</sup>

Here, surely, we reach the fundamental and crucial point. The human child can grow mentally, where the chimpanzee and the gorilla cannot, because the child possesses an endowment of living and growing powers *sui generis* which the anthropoids have not. Experience, in its proper human sense, could never *begin* for the child unless it possessed these powers: the intuitions of time, space and causality, the ability for inference and induction, the consciousness of itself as thinking, and the power of distinguishing itself from

<sup>1</sup>For a full and, as it seems to me, an unanswerable exposure of this fallacy I refer my readers to the Essays, already mentioned, by Thomas Hill Green, on Spencer and on Lewes, and to the first ninety pages of Green's "Prolegomena to Ethics."

the objects of its thought. And what is true of the child is true of the race. The attempt to explain these powers, without which experience could not start, as gradual products of the experience they alone make possible, is a *hysteron proteron*; it is, literally, preposterous. Spencer and his followers mistake the gradual accumulation of the results of exercising these powers for the gradual acquisition of the powers themselves.

The truth of this conclusion is in no wise invalidated by the fact that the child or the savage cannot analyze and define the powers he uses. One can have cancer without knowing what one has; and a patient has it just the same, though he be one to whom the physician's diagnosis is utterly unintelligible. The logician can discriminate and name the reasoning processes which do actually regulate the thinking of people who have never heard of logic. The grammarian can illustrate the laws of his science from the speech of well-bred children who cannot tell a noun from a verb. So this truth about man's mental make-up, which is not overthrown by any particular man's self-ignorance, is established by the fact that the trained mind cannot otherwise account for what is done by the child and the savage as well as by the master in science or philosophy.

A student accustomed to this kind of analysis, who cares for nothing but truth, and gladly recognizes that most men of science are equally disinterested, may sometimes find himself puzzled by the stubborn resistance of scientific men to the recognition of new and unique powers in man. Why are they so unwilling to admit what seems

so certain? Why do they resist the only possible explanation of the fact that they *are* men of science, whereas the apes are not scientific, and never can be unless they cease to be apes? I suppose the answer is the apparent impossibility of accounting for these powers by the ordinary procedure of evolutionary science. Not only is there nothing in the traceable antecedents into which these powers can be resolved back, but the very idea of resolving them into anything other than themselves—the very notion of describing their origin without presupposing them—involves a self-contradiction. Add to this the unfortunate rarity of discipline in philosophical and metaphysical thinking among experts in the physical sciences, and their very frequent antipathy to it, and the seeming puzzle is solved. Even the great Darwin talked on these matters like a child; and Haeckel, for all his admirable scientific skill, like a parrot.

Yet it would be the height of absurdity to make our inability to account for a fact a reason for denying the fact. We never think of doing this in connection, let us say, with the ideas of matter and of motion. Both matter and motion can only be apprehended under conceptions that are shot full of self-contradiction. Neither the origin nor the unoriginated perpetuity of either of them is rationally conceivable. From the days of the Eleatic paradox to those of Einstein, motion has been the standing puzzle of every man who could and did think about it. As to matter, all we really know of it is that it is the hypothetical negation of consciousness, the mere name for an assumed but unknown cause of our states of consciousness.

Science itself in our time, thanks to the recent progress of physics, has analyzed it into something that cannot really be called matter at all, and has re-discovered and re-vindicated the great truth announced ages ago by philosophical idealism, but hitherto generally ridiculed by science.<sup>1</sup> Yet our blank and total failure to understand these constant data of experience never leads us to deny their proximate and partial reality.

We are equally unable to understand life, or to account either for its origin or its perpetual existence. I say this without forgetting the admirable and masterly work of researchers like the late Professor Jacques Loeb, but rather remembering that the labours of such investigators really consist not in finding what life is, but in describing certain of the conditions of its manifestation. Whether science finds itself constrained to stick to the doctrine of biogenesis, or discovers reason to suppose that abiogenesis once took place in a world previously lifeless, we shall still know only the fact, and have no glimmer of insight into the real inner nature of life.

But evolution, surely, has never meant that there cannot appear in the world things radically new. On the contrary, it is an attempt to explain the factors that have conditioned the manifestation of novelties: the word "explain" being taken in the only proper scientific sense, of telling *how* and not *why*. *Why* things happen, science has never presumed to tell. Its explanations are only descriptions, and its work is done when for any

<sup>1</sup>This, as much as the Einsteinian revolution in the ideas of space and motion, is what underlies the admission of J. B. S. Haldane, in "Daedalus," that henceforth men of science will have to build on the basis of Kantian idealism.

phenomenon it has furnished a complete, and completely accurate, description of its conditions.

## §VII—CONCLUSION: A STEP TOWARDS RECONCILIATION.

Self-consciousness and reflective rational thought, then, we say, are limited to man among animals. It is no answer to this to say that the rudiments of them are found in other creatures. *If they are, in so far as they are*, this would raise those creatures above what we properly understand as the animal level; it would not reduce man to it. Yet, even as to rational thought, what is found in the apes is an incredibly exiguous and stunted rudiment, which remains, in the highest animal below man, as petty and jejune now as it was a million years ago. Reflective rational thought, properly considered, is precisely a capacity for *growth*; consequently, the application of its name to the few, rare, discontinuous flashes that at far-sundered moments illumine the darkness of the anthropoid ape, is erroneous. And, as to self-consciousness, the awareness of a self-distinguishing subject, there could in the nature of the case be no manifestation of its operation except by such communication as is normally mediated through speech.

In other words, when we attribute to lower animals some degree of man's distinctive powers, what we really do is to infer from the *actions* of dogs or chimpanzees or elephants a rudimentary process of thought. I do not say the inference is totally false; my contention is that, if true, it cannot be certainly verified. Nor is there any

warrant for the inference that the animal, if it thinks, is conscious of itself as thinking.

Where knowledge is impossible, but yet we cannot refrain from guessing, we are practically compelled to choose between two guesses (or hypotheses, to be more polite) in regard to the new powers manifested in man:

a. A variation in brain-capacity, which we loosely speak of as a "chance" or "spontaneous" variation, by way of confessing that its cause is unknown to us, produces thought and consciousness by some mysterious natural transubstantiation of the matter of the brain. Thus, for instance, Haeckel in "Die Welträtsel" speaks of "the four great thought-centres, or centres of association, which . . . produce thought and consciousness."

b. Consciousness and the power of reflective rational thought are potential everywhere, and pressing for channels of manifestation upon the world of "matter"; and at that particular point of matter which we call the human brain, they find a vehicle, an instrument organic to them.

The former is the materialistic account. To many of us it seems fundamentally irrational, because it undertakes what Schopenhauer called the absurd enterprise of "deriving the subject from the object." It makes that consciousness of events as a related series, which must be equally present to all the events it embraces, a product of some one or more of a series of events of which, *ex vi termini*, there had been no consciousness. But this latter conception is a contradiction in terms. And it attributes to a moment in time the origination of that consciousness of which

time is the mode of working. In short, it supposes the world of our experience, which is what it is solely in virtue of the apparatus of sense-perception and reason with which we are endowed, to have been what these things make it when these things were not; and it supposes these things, which make the world what it is for us, to be effects of their own effects. It is the Spencerian anachronism in another form.

The alternative supposition, which looks upon consciousness as everywhere potential and seeking channels of manifestation, is at least a rationally coherent hypothesis. I make no pretence that it is more than an hypothesis; that is, an attempt to imagine how a given fact *may* have arisen, in the absence of any verifiable knowledge as to how it did arise. It at least accords with the facts which provoke the inquiry. It enables us to accept, without doubt, the truth that man is physically of animal origin, yet also to perceive that the essence of him is not animal, but that synthesis of the rational, moral and volitional which in its totality, for want of a better word, we call spiritual. Man consists truly not of his bodily organism, but of those powers to which his body is organic.

This view also will consistently cover any glimmering of mentality we may detect in apes, dogs, or other creatures. If "mind-stuff," or "consciousness-in-general," is everywhere pressing for organs, and finds a fragmentary organ in the animal brain, naturally it will appear there; as electricity finds many conductors, yet only flashes into light when a special kind of conductor encounters a special sort of obstacle.

Now if the line of reasoning I have attempted to pursue in these pages is sound, it yields a conclusion which should help towards putting an end to the wearisome and disheartening controversy between evolutionists and "Fundamentalists" to which I referred at the outset. For what the Fundamentalists (the intelligent ones among them) really want to vindicate is the dignity and uniqueness of man. They put themselves in an impossible position by tying this up with the myths of Genesis, which from beginning to end are incredible to-day, and would be no less so even if evolution had never been heard of. And they also make their case hopeless by identifying it with root-and-branch opposition to the doctrine of evolution, which for every instructed man is now, as Professor Henry Fairfield Osborn says, "as well and as soundly established as the eternal hills. It has long since ceased to be a theory; it is a law of Nature as universal in living things as is the law of gravitation in material things and in the motions of the heavenly spheres."<sup>1</sup> It is surely an imprudent and a dangerous course to annex ethical and spiritual values to affirmations that have no basis of evidence and denials that affront the knowledge and intelligence of all who are acquainted with the proven facts of science.

In this paper, I have sought to show that the nature of man remains as distinct and unique when the evolutionary evidence is fully accepted and properly interpreted as it could possibly be if man were regarded as a special and miraculous exception to the general process of creation.

<sup>1</sup>"The Earth Speaks to Bryan," p. 4.



On the other hand, while nothing can excuse the temper and methods of our current Fundamentalism, it is fair to remind ourselves that evolutionists, by insisting upon what (as I maintain) is a false inference from their established facts, have given some cause for the misunderstanding, dislike and repugnance which their doctrine has encountered. By saying, "Man is no more than an animal; he has only a higher degree of the animal's powers; and it is nothing but your vanity that makes you want to think otherwise," they have put themselves as much in the wrong, and committed themselves to as untenable a position, as the Fundamentalists who desire to ram Genesis down our throats. It is no vanity, but the strictly intellectual necessity of doing justice to palpable facts, which leads us to reject their dogma, to re-examine the evidence from which they have extracted it, and thus to find that they had misinterpreted the testimony of the facts.



# The Spiritual Outlook on Life.

By HENRY J. GOLDING.

**E**VERY EXPERIENCE of greatness seeks to impart itself. A noble work of art, an instance of heroism or of sublime self-sacrifice, the illumination of a new scientific concept, make heralds and propagandists of us. We desire others to share in this glory. At a more familiar level, the worship of the athlete, perhaps the oldest and still the most popular of cults, unites men in a disinterested admiration which is never reticent. He vindicates their native pride in humanity and incarnates life triumphant. Of the higher achievements and aims, and particularly of the ideal aspirations enshrined in religion, it is true that they reveal themselves as no man's private possession. Only as he communicates them to others will they come to fullness of life in him. And, notoriously, the contagion of their power is spread less by words than by the attitude and conduct they irradiate.

Those in whose lives religion has established its mastery realize most clearly and strongly the irrelevance of the dogmas to which men have sought to bind it. Dogmas perish of their irrelevance rather than of their incredibility. Probably never before has the study of religion engaged so many minds at once trained, unbiased, and re-

verent; never before has the traditional theology appeared so remote and unreal, its cosmology so false, and its dramatization of human history so naïve; yet never before, certainly, has the sublime insight of Jesus been so spontaneously acclaimed. Compared with the whole range of the spiritual life of humanity, every theology has been provincial, its language a dialect. The Roman Church strove for a synthesis of reason and faith within the compass of its horizon, limited, as Loisy puts it, by "a formula of the universe" which it proclaimed as divinely revealed, definitive and immutable. It imposed its supernaturalist reading of the faith by which men live, and sought by its symbols to interpret and exalt their sense of awe and love, their reverence for something greater than themselves; and by a coercive discipline to habituate them to respect the Christian virtues. Our civilization bears the impress of the Christian tradition. The historic beliefs in which Western humanity voiced what it felt and thought on the greatest of all themes command a respect that need not be purblind. To-day it is evident that to chain morality to unverifiable dogma was to imperil it. And the claim of the Church to be the sole repository of revealed truth has resulted in a spiritual tyranny that exalts obedience above inquiry, and places credal orthodoxy on a level with right conduct, if not above it.

Whereas, said Kant, "the proof of religion is not in historical facts, miracles, revelations, and so forth, but in the moral law, that will in ourselves which is bent on achieving the supreme good." Moved by this truth, discerning theo-

logians seek to disencumber religion of the incredible and meaningless, and thereby to accredit its appeal. They have dismantled, if not demolished, the traditional theology. The doctrines of the creation, the fall, original sin, the virgin birth, the atonement, the last judgment, heaven and hell, are either shed completely or attenuated to wraiths. Moral goodness is declared to be the greatest thing in the world. God is interpreted as the power needed to ensure that the good shall prevail. By striving to mould our lives in accordance with our moral ideals, we shall come to realize that God exists and attain to communion with him. We cannot find him by any other path.<sup>1</sup>

Religion has ever to establish its place and function in a larger world. If it is really alive, and has not dwindled into spiritless ritual and code, the challenge of denial brings it out of the shadows of institutionalism, to find its own vitality in the shock of crisis. It must take account of needs that have changed their aspect with the new conceptions of the universe. Obviously a man's religious aspirations are conditioned by his view of the world. The courage that faces all facts, however disquieting, a scale of thought and feeling that welcomes truth from whatever quarter, are required of religion if it is not to be the travesty of its own ideals. Not only without miserable reservations, but with joy, it must admit to its mind the ampler, though still insufficient, light in which science reveals man's origins and history. Without a passion for truth, to which the thought of duplicity and accommoda-

<sup>1</sup>See McGiffert's *The Rise of Modern Religious Ideas*.

tion is vile, religion sinks. The light fades out of it. The flush and glow of its inspiration die. It can no longer inflame the heroic in man, bear the standard of great causes, and command the attention of men, even the unwilling attention of its foes, as enthroning, above all else, the ideals of truth and righteousness.

For essential religion has been well defined by Mr. Lowes Dickinson as "a conviction of the supreme importance of our highest ideals, and of their place in the structure of reality." It is an impassioned affirmation of what irresistibly declares itself to us to be sacred, against all that would deny it; it is an undying effort to realize these ideals, and in their light to transform our lives.

Religion gathers power in an agony of soul. It has the strength of transcended despair, and the nobility of suffering overcome. It sees beyond pessimism, not by overlooking it, but because it has felt in their full force the facts at which pessimism halts, and has found what can surpass them. No theodicy, but experience alone, yields the assurance of its faith. The suffering that raises religion to mastery over all lesser interests in the soul has a twofold source. On the one hand, our belief in the supreme significance of our ideals seems, as Dr. Adler says, to be mocked by the cosmical relations of man—by the apparent belittling of humanity. On the other hand, we are afflicted by the constant spectacle of the profaning and outraging of what is holiest to us, human personality; that in which the life of the spirit is manifested.

Year by year science opens ever vaster perspec-

tives, vertiginous distances in space and time. We have learned, if one may instance a fact of common knowledge, that in order to traverse the abyss that separates us from the furthest stars of the Milky Way, a ray of light must travel for more than two hundred thousand years; and beyond these outposts of the system to which we belong—several times more remote—are the spiral nebulae, galaxies in all respects comparable to the Milky Way. While this more vividly felt immensity of the physical universe appears to reduce to insignificance our place in it, the individual's span of time in the life of the world is little more impressive. Evolving humanity has left its traces through hundreds of thousands of years. Its recorded history testifies to the "heritage of the brute." Cannibalism, war, massacre, disease, crime, vice, and oppression rebuke any shallow optimism, and forbid light dismissal of the blunt dictum of a powerful writer,<sup>1</sup> that "from the first breath to the last, life is in essence cruel. There is nothing that lives but lives on the life of something else." Life, however, has itself given birth to that judgment, and to the moral consciousness, which demands that in human life cruelty shall have no place.

A tenable outlook on the world cannot ignore or evade these facts. Without the glamour of myth it must attempt to establish human dignity, to discover what constitutes man's worth.

Of all beings we know, man alone awakens to the unimaginable adventure of life, atmosphered by infinite space and time, and surrounded with a splendour that no poet could have dreamed. He

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Stephen Ward, in "The Ways of Life."

finds in him that which can thrill with awe to the overwhelming grandeur of it all. It is given to him for a while to know himself a part, however infinitesimal, of this magnificence, to feel an enchanted wonder before the revelation of infinite power, and to feel pride also in the tireless quest of knowledge which has helped humanity to this vision. No slighting and derogatory view of mankind can leave out of account its power of response to the infinite. The modern thinker feels none of Pascal's terror before the eternal silences of space; he is elated rather than depressed by every new revelation of the vastness of the cosmos, and a return to the traditional view of the human episode, seen, as it were, in a crystal, with the Cross central and all-significant, would be mentally suffocating. He has made his peace, as most men have not, with the Copernican revolution, grasps its significance, and learns its lesson. He is reconciled, for he sees that the greatness of man's environment does not dwarf, but exalts his soul; he feels a pure joy in sublimity, which owes nothing to the struggle for existence and lifts him above his self-centred affections into a sense of participation. The world is not all alien to us. Man is a pulse of "the infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed." In him "glows the fire that burns at the heart of the world." Because he roots in the life of the universe he can pierce its immensities, unveil some of its secrets, analyze, measure, and predict, and can unconsciously carry something of this larger vision into his daily life. Mere size is not greatness. It is not alone the scale of the cosmos that enchains man's reverence, but its felt



mystery, and the unfathomable spiritual potentialities he divines in it. In his own life he has had a glimpse of these, as of a far-flashing splendour. His soul can kindle to their challenging greatness. The search for truth, "with truth as its sole reward"; the heroism of self-forgetting love, and the rapt delight in "beauty visible and invisible,"—these are realities, which are not trivialized by our discovery that the cosmos is without conceivable limit.

And progress is real, even if it be not assured. How real, we may grasp if we envisage humanity, not as striving to regain a lost perfection, but as winning its way, at its furthest point, from the jungle to Athens, from the ape to Plato and Shakespeare—through what difficulties, and sustained by what indomitable courage and tenacity, we cannot even imagine. Does it not enlarge our idea of the riches of the human spirit to realize that without special revelation mankind has manifested the power to write its Bibles and develop its faiths? The human mind and heart are as rich, as instinct with creativeness, as ever. Man's powers and ideals are what they are, whether they were the result of a separate creative act or have been unfolded through a long and toilsome evolution. It is transparently fallacious to assume that because man's faith in special creation and revelation wanes, some glory has passed from the world. All the great faiths have flowered in the soul of man. Men have projected their own ideals and worshipped them. These ideals have ever to be incarnated afresh, not in the figures of myth and legend, but in our own lives. It is a blasphemy of man to attribute his good to his

gods, and only his evil to himself; to regard his sin as original and his virtue as vicarious. Ethical religion proclaims that the element termed divine is in all men. It sees in every human being a potential centre of spiritual energy which, though hidden and repressed, might yet be set free.

What most fatefully distinguishes man from even the highest of the lower animals is manifestly the fact of self-consciousness, and all that self-consciousness involves. In him, life surveys its course, looks before and after, and strives to seize, in their marvellous complexity, the laws of its own being. Man marks a crisis in the evolutionary process. He urges his way from "is" to "ought," from brute fact to truth, from brute force to right; and he attempts so to relate himself to the world as to give fullest scope to his distinctive nature. What is great in him speaks in his quests. Not in his origin, but in his ideals we must look for the evidence of his intrinsic worth. All origins are lowly, all beginnings humble. Not by its roots but by its fruits, as William James emphasized, is the tree known.

Man, then, finds inwrought with his being the faculty of conceiving ideals of compelling majesty, and the impulse, the felt obligation, to endeavour to realize these as in experience they define themselves more and more clearly. They at once challenge and defy achievement. Because they are unattainable, they raise man's stature. Through all halfness and imperfection they shine completely, and they find their response in his insatiable craving for the perfect. That he can take upon himself the burden of a task never to

be fully accomplished is his patent of nobility, and the core of all faith and hope is man's power to devote himself, in disregard of lesser goods, to the work of raising life to an ideal. It is to those who have thus overcome the world that mankind pays the tribute of worshipping love. They speak, in different tongues, the same great language. They had faith in humanity; they believed that men can be touched to finer issues, and they witnessed to the reality of the spiritual life incarnate in them.

More and more, as man judges the world of fact in the light of his ideals, he confesses his responsibility for so transforming his institutions as to express these. A growing mastery of his environment, through knowledge and control of the great natural forces, lessens his subjection to such untoward exhibitions of nature's indifference as drought, flood, famine and pestilence. The caprices and inequalities of nature intervene, like adverse gods, between desert and reward. Social justice enlists the collective power in an attempt to safeguard the individual life against the full effects of these, and to place it above the uncertainties of chance and unreason. As morality discloses its implications, the first narrow kinship widens into a recognition of the brotherhood of man—the patriotism of humanity affirming itself and its ideals *contra mundum*.

In a well-known phrase, Huxley announced that "the ethical process consists, not in conforming to the cosmic process, still less in running away from it, but in combating it." His philosophical lapse was patent. New departures are, of course, part of the cosmic process. A fact, which

Huxley's vigour over-stated, is that evolution is not only compatible with breaches of precedent, but depends upon them. Ethics, with its basic thought of the interdependence of men, demands that in human relationships co-operation shall replace strife. It throws its arm about all mankind. It seeks that every human being shall achieve the undeflected growth of his spirit.

Of the conditions governing the more effective emergence of that ideal, not the least important is man's increased command over nature. A main concern of the social reformer is not only to point out the respects in which civilization fails to keep abreast of mechanical progress, but to show that the evils he indicates are avoidable. Whenever any social inferiority becomes unnecessary it becomes, at the same moment, an injustice. In democracies, statesmanship tends to found on the principle of equality. The adoption of that principle is not simply an expedient to furnish statesmen under challenge with a popularly defensible theory of practice; nor does it merely reflect the distribution of political power. It answers, also, to a dawning sense of the stifled possibilities in the mass of men. The true spirit of equality is an impatience, not of excellence, but of inferiority, and implies an assertion of human dignity.

Ethics more explicitly affirms "the moral equivalence of men." Is this assertion a sheer dogma, incapable of proof and enounced in the teeth of appearances; or is it based on some quality that strikes through all the diversity of men's endowment, and proclaims them, in the supreme regard,

as intrinsically precious, unique, and incommensurable?

In approaching the question, one notes first the commonplaces. Knowledge widens sympathy, and checks the native tendency to stigmatize as inferior those of other classes, nations, or races. A moment's reflection shows us the contingency of many of the distinctions on which men are apt to plume themselves. The notion that our social inequalities reflect with sufficient accuracy the degrees of ability and virtue cannot survive inquiry—or a sense of humour. Humour, too, contrasts all pride and vainglory with the trifles that can overthrow even the most pompous. In his lucid moments a man faces the truth that he did not wholly make himself, and that he owes most of what he is and has to the effort of countless generations. Even genius is not self-begotten, and can fulfil itself only in and through society.

A consciousness of our own failures and shortcomings saps the arrogance that denies worth to other men, and opens a way for the truth that their personality is as important to them as ours is to us. They incarnate the same mystery as do we. In them as in ourselves there are depths below depths, and potentialities beyond imagining. They are "sacred vessels of experience," inconceivably complex and transcending our crude valuations. The realization of this marks the dethroning of the egocentric attitude, and the problem of equality assumes for us a more intimate aspect. Not "Must I treat all men as equal to one another?" but "Must I treat all men as equal to me?" becomes the cardinal question; and to that there can be but one answer. Only the

mean soul insists on its opined superiorities. To a generous mind, to be feared is the last humiliation. It desires to see men grow to their full stature. Everything that stunts and enslaves man, from without or from within, is the enemy; whether it be ignorance, fear, animalism, or the tyranny of circumstance. Man should be dwarfed by his ideals, not by the oppression of force. We resent as humiliating the compulsion of non-moral power; it is an anachronism, and affronts our dignity as human beings. And, as moral outlook derives ultimately from moral insight, it is in virtue of what we find to be supreme in our own nature that we affirm human personality to be sacred. The spiritual progress of mankind is reflected in a substitution of "ideals which attract for force which drives" as the determinant of human action.

Morality involves a claim to inner sovereignty. Before we can be accounted moral beings we must accept the moral law as our own. It is a truism in ethics that whatever be the end proposed to us as supreme, whether it be obedience to the divine will, the raising of the human type, the release of spiritual energy in all men, the greatest happiness, or any other, our conscience must first pronounce it to be highest. And in conscience the individual recognizes the authority of a greater life which includes and transcends his own, and summons him to share in the upward effort of humanity. Only as we freely identify ourselves with it can the moral ideal draw to itself our full loyalty and unite in its service all our powers. Therein lies the deepest ground of our respect

for men. We feel that in every human being there is the possibility, obscured as it may be, of a birth into moral freedom.

Illuminating these bases of our reverence for human personality is a larger truth, to which Dr. Adler has given original expression; the truth that to hold men cheap is spiritual death, and that our own salvation is bound up with our recognition of their intrinsic worth. We live in and through others. We find ourselves in them and we reveal them to themselves; our own soul's best is achieved only as we kindle into flame the distinctive life in them.

The full import of this law of give-and-take comes into the mind with a flooding realization that may change the course of a man's existence. It mounts in him to an overmastering sense of obligation. He feels with new power the links that bind him to others. His reverence deepens; it suffuses him with a new humility and clothes the world with a fresh wonder. Suddenly the earth is peopled with souls for him. His supreme privilege would be to divine what is of surpassing worth in them, and, by divining, help it to expression. With the central change in his life, the sight of souls trodden in mire inflicts a more poignant suffering. He sees men and women held cheap, not only by others but by themselves, denied their growth, and blind to their inheritance. Our own part in evil becomes intolerable as we realize with an intenser conviction that our relations to others outweigh all else. We feel that without communion with other souls our own soul starves. What we know, with a certainty beyond

the reach of scepticism, to be the height of realization — a scale and plane of being attained in the rare men and women whom the world in its heart acknowledges to be its greatest—is so to live that a man's life should be a radiance and an evocation. It should be the free imparting of whatever gifts he has to bestow, the inspiring of hope, courage, strength, joy, and self-respect, a rejoicing in the varied wealth of human endowment, and a sense of the majesty of the spiritual life which speaks in our ideals and gives nobility to human existence. Instead, the shadow of futility seems to rest upon us. We fail here in insight, there in active helpfulness; we are timorous, slack and unresponsive. The gulf between ourselves as we are and as we feel we ought to be widens as our ideals take firmer hold upon us and claim a larger place in our lives. This disharmony leads to a revaluation of the customary aims.

For good or evil, the conventional ideal visibly determines the outlook of most men and women, and decides their course through life. Pecuniary success as the blazon of efficient effort and as the guarantee of security, the acceptance of current standards in social usage, in economic enterprise and in religious observance,—these are its high lights. It makes proximate ends supreme. This social idolatry helps to obscure for the mass of men the question of the meaning and value of life. The awakened man cannot resign himself to its dyarchy of custom and fashion. Not what is correct but what is right is the chief concern of religion, and in the moral life it is more import-



ant to take thought than to save it by a mindless drift. Success in his vocation has neither satisfied nor stilled his deeper cravings, and the distance his success puts between him and the less fortunate creates uneasiness in a sensitive nature. The sharper conflict of the opposing strains gives rise to a haunting anxiety. When he resolves on the finer choice, and decides that henceforth he will place first the exalting of life in others, this tension disappears, and yields to a fresh illumination and joy that irradiate his being. He gains the assurance that he has found his way.

The man who has attained to the spiritual outlook on life increasingly entrusts himself to the magnanimous and creative impulses to which it gives fresh urgency. He sees danger and goes to meet it. "To risk all for nothing, not even for the flattery of history," said Kierkegaard, "that is the heroism of ethics." He may come to know the exaltation that lifts the heart, not indeed above all fear, but beyond the fear bred of concern for his career, or happiness, or even safety. Explain it how we may, surrender to his ideals unseals the fountains of his life and brings the sense of release. There is quickening in the thought that he can in some degree serve to enhance life, and lesser interests are made subservient to this end, which transfigures the common life for him. Growth in the moral life implies a wider range of perception and appeal, and a more perfect attuning of the soul to the inner life of others.

Seldom, if ever, is this development a steadily continuous unfolding; rather it goes from stage

to stage through conflict and crisis. The benumbing shock of realized evil drives a man back upon himself. The spiritual law he has violated defines itself with an accusing clearness; he knows as he has never before known its authoritative power, he sees himself as he is, and resolves in an agony of self-condemnation never again to transgress. Gradually the inner waves, which threatened to overwhelm him, subside. An un-hoped-for calm gathers out of the tumult, and he feels that whatever may await him, he has known a worse bitterness than death. He faces life again with a profounder humility and tenderness.

The religious life appears in its full grandeur when it lays aside the extraneous and the outworn. It ministers to man's need of that which will enlist all his powers and justify his utmost allegiance. For the ideal is no illusion. As a man attempts to express it in his life, he gains the assurance of a supreme reality, revealing itself in ever more majestic vistas. Ideals are the challenge of the infinite in the finite, raising it to a higher power. They alone can satisfy our craving for a perfection that is ever beyond achievement, yet constrains us to its quest. They declare the existence of a spiritual order whose design is implicit in us; their authority is self-avouching, for their power derives from their consonance with what is most real in ourselves, with the very law of our being.

It is at least certain that a life devoted to ideals becomes fraught with a fuller meaning. So to live is the practical answer to the riddle of existence. A man wins his moral certitudes not

by reflection, but by living in a certain way. As he finds self-fulfilment in seeking and communicating truth, in the love of beauty, in the appreciation of the gifts of others, and in realizing the links that bind him to mankind, he finds also that he has risen above the plane of self-love, where, it has been said, most of our wounds are received. He feels most deeply the blow when the great cause is wounded, and justice seems to be overborne by force. He has attained in his degree to the attitude that alone makes possible great art, and science, and is the secret of all noble morality. We perceive the beauty of the world when we see it out of relation to our utilitarian ends. The scientist achieves most greatly when he loses sight of the immediate profit of his search and is possessed by the passion for truth; morality shines with its own light when we rejoice in the good of others and seek to give to all their part in the heritage of mankind.

Humanity's distinctive achievement is to have entered a "realm of ends," wherein every soul shall count, and whereto our control of nature shall be made instrumental. The aim of religion is to "forge personality out of mere individuality," to spiritualize the raw material of passion, impulse, desire, affection, so that these shall subserve the exaltation of life in all. It builds upon man's power of self-transcendence. It appeals to that in virtue of which he can despise his own baseness as a betrayal of what he knows to be sacred, and can start up afresh from every failure. It calls to the hero in him. It summons him to the hard and the dangerous, and gives him a

task that can never be dulled by the satiety of complete achievement. It liberates creative energy. Freedom is of the essence of the spiritual life, for to enlist mind, heart and will in the service of ideals is liberty. It is, in Loisy's words, "a realization of real freedom, of sanctity in human conduct; it is at once an exaltation and a beatification of man in his devotion to humanity."

# The Ethics of Abu'l 'Ala al Ma'Arri

By NATHANIEL SCHMIDT (Cornell University).

**M**ANY POETS, prophets, and philosophers have rebelled against the religious ideas and practices current in their environment. The reaction has expressed itself in different ways, according to temperament, mental habits, and force of character. Sometimes it has taken the form of loud protest, scathing criticism, and biting sarcasm; sometimes, of quiet disapproval, unbiased investigation, and genial reconstruction of the world of thought and the manner of life. Now and then, the humorist's laughter has mingled with the poet's insight, the prophet's earnestness, and the philosopher's mature reflection. Among the dissenters there are pathfinders exploring fresh realms of religious and moral experience, destroyers clearing the road from harmful obstructions, and builders erecting new structures. If a few are mentioned here out of the large number whose spiritual independence and moral enthusiasm entitle them to grateful remembrance in this connection, the purpose is chiefly to point out the variety of type and the importance of some whose work is often discounted as in the main negative and destructive.

There is no danger that the names of Amos and Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, Jesus and Paul will be forgotten; but there is a danger that their emphasis on ethics and their radical attitude toward tradition may be overlooked or minimized. Modern readers are becoming aware of the deep significance of the Book of Job, now widely recognized as one of the masterpieces of the world's literature. But how many recalled during the World War, on either side, the important message of the Book of Jonah, that delicious satire on prophethood by a true prophet possessing a rare sense of humor? The great philosophers of ancient Greece will continue through the generations to command the attention of serious thinkers. But the playful wit and brilliant satire of Lucian sometimes obscure his remarkable insight and genuine moral concern, just as the rhetoric and allegoresis of Dio Chrysostomus tend to cause forgetfulness of his manly struggle against slavery and other evils, and the close scientific reasoning of Lucretius, as he scales the *flammanitia moenia mundi*, and his impassioned battling with the irrational fears of man, only occasionally open the portals to a new world, as they did to Victor Hugo in the cottage at Romorantin. Why should not Plotinus be as carefully studied as Origen; and Arnobius, the disciple of Hypatia, as Augustine? Abélard and Francis of Assisi, so different one from the other, are as worthy of consideration as Thomas Aquinas and other scholastics. From an ethical standpoint, Ibn Gabirol, insisting on the autonomy of morality, is not less important than Ibn Ezra and Maimonides. All honor to Luther and Zwingli; yet if Erasmus is

coming into his own, the prejudices of the reformation period should not prevent us from seeing in Hans Denck, the radical hounded to death by Protestants and Catholics alike, one of the noblest and most far-seeing spirits of that age. Spinoza's position is now secure, and there can be no question that Kant was in a very real sense a precursor of the Ethical Movement. There are many, however, who look askance at such men as Montaigne, Molière, and Voltaire, failing to perceive the unmistakable moral urge and the ethical significance of a generous measure of scepticism and of what George Meredith called "the comic spirit." Pascal is rightly admired; another Port Royalist, Pierre Nicole, left a little book on "How to Live in Peace with Men" which should be pondered by all thoughtful persons. The moral and intellectual significance of Quietism, as represented by Fox and Penn, has perhaps never been more clearly set forth, against a broad historic background, than by Bruno Bauer, himself a victim of theological intolerance. The scientific builders of a new conception of the universe, men like Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Laplace, Lamarck, Darwin, Haeckel, Huxley, and Spencer, have also paved the way for a new conception of the moral law as something to be sought for and discovered by man, and then loyally applied to his conduct of life. Nor would it be just to omit such men as Karl Marx and Henry George, who, from different points of view, with their insight and moral enthusiasm helped to create a fresh hope among the masses of men for a nobler social order. While homage is paid to Ralph Waldo Emerson and Theodore Parker, it is also fair to remember

Thomas Paine, so unjustly described by Theodore Roosevelt as "that dirty little infidel"; Robert Ingersoll, so persistently vilified in his day; and Samuel Clemens, the humorist, with his prophetic anunciation of shams, wrongdoing in high places, and barbarous institutions like war.

In the Oriental world, Kung-fu-tze's tremendous emphasis upon morality, albeit of a conventional type, to the well nigh complete exclusion of religious speculation, is generally recognized. The profounder thought of Lao-tze still waits for an adequate appreciation, partly because of the obscurity of his language. Gautama, the Buddha, the greatest thinker of India, is often accorded less serious consideration than he deserves because of his pessimism, and there is a hesitancy, no longer quite creditable, to acclaim the mighty deed of this founder of the religion of pity in sweeping the heavens clear of gods and the earth of altars and genuflections, while pointing the road to deliverance through moral effort affecting every element of man's nature. Other Indians deserve to be mentioned: Mahavira Jina, whose *ahimsa* doctrine again stirs the world through Gandhi; Sankara; and Keshub Chunder Sen, with his resolute endeavor to break the shackles of tradition, accept the truth wherever it may be found, and abolish social customs standing in the way of moral progress. Among the Muslims there have also been prophets and philosophers characterized by spiritual freedom and actuated by high moral motives. Because of his many obvious limitations, the services rendered by Muhammad himself to the moral advance of his own people and the millions that came under the influence of Islam has



seldom been estimated fairly. There is no room for questioning his essential sincerity, nor his fearless attack upon degrading customs, nor his insistence upon what appeared to him the duties of man, nor the growth of morality due to his teaching, however impeded by admixture of coarser elements. Radical views were held by the *Mu'tazila*, the *Zindik*s, the *Ikhwan al Safa*, or "Brethren of Purity." The intellectual independence and ethical insight of such men as Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd have long been acknowledged. But the social teachings of Farabi should be more widely known than they are, and the real significance of Ghazali's revolt against the philosophical systems of the schools more clearly perceived. There is nothing prophetic in Umar Khayyam; but from the hope of heaven and the fear of hell he called men back to the present, with its problems and duties, its joys and sorrows, in accents that have a universal appeal. There are flashes of moral insight in Mutanabbi, the most popular of Arab poets, and a more serious rebellion against unsatisfying orthodoxy in Abu'l Atahiya. Even Ibn Khaldun, greatest of Arab historians, and one of the greatest philosophers of history of all time, clever diplomat as he was and cautious not to offend religious sensibilities, clearly hints that religion is a product of social development, and incidentally gives expression to very high moral ideals, notably in the reasons he assigns for condemning slavery and war. His friend Al Khatib lisan al din had the sad fate of being lynched by a mob for his religious heresies. None, however, seems to such a degree to represent at once utter abandonment of external authority, implicit con-

fidence in reason and the sense of right, recognition of the absolute supremacy of ethics, and loyalty in thought and deed to the dictates of conscience, as the blind poet of Ma'arra. This lonely figure looms up large, not only challenging our attention, but also eliciting our admiration, whatever we may rightly deem the defects in his philosophy of life and in his character. One may, indeed, sympathize with the rebuke administered by that quaint old poet Thomas Lynch to those "who use the light that shines upon the prophet's face to count the wrinkles on his brow." Yet we, of course, owe it to those who lived that we might think more clearly and act more nobly, as well as to ourselves, to cultivate the gift of spiritual discernment, to learn the art of observing, in modesty and without censorious judgment, what may appear their errors, faults, and failures, while rejoicing, with gratitude and reverence, in what seem to us their forward steps, fine traits, and true achievements.

Ahmad ibn Sulaiman Abu'l 'Ala al Ma'arri was born in 973. His native place was the little town of Ma'arrat al Nu'man, a short distance south of Aleppo. He belonged to the tribe of Tanukh, which seems to have settled in this region already before the Muslim conquest. This tribe was famous for its poets, vying in this respect with the better known tribe of Hudhail. His grandfather was a judge at Ma'arra. His father was a poet of some distinction, yet a very modest man, of whom his son said that "he would avoid the crush on the judgment day." There had also been men of eminence in his mother's family. In his fourth year he was attacked by smallpox. As a

consequence he lost completely the sight of one eye, and his face was marked by pocks. Not long after this he lost the sight of the other eye. Only in his early childhood was he able to see the world of men and things he so graphically described in his poems. In spite of this serious handicap, he found it possible to acquire an education. He was first taught by his father and other scholars in Ma'arrah. Then he went to Aleppo. Under the enlightened rulers of the Hamdanid dynasty this city had become a great centre of Muslim learning, poetry, and art. Here Mutanabbi had flourished just before the time of Abu'l 'Ala, and the young poet became fascinated by the music of his lyric strains. It is quite possible that caravans from Persia and far-off India brought with them to this city strange ideas and customs that came to the knowledge of the curious seeker after truth and left a permanent impression on his mind. If some of Abu'l 'Ala's peculiar thoughts and practices developed to some extent under such foreign influence, as seems likely, it is not necessary to assume that it could only have reached him during his sojourn in Baghdad. He became a vegetarian in his thirtieth year, long before his journey to the Abbasid capital. For some time he continued his studies at Antioch, then belonging to the Byzantine Empire. According to a tradition, he was greatly affected by the teaching and life of a Christian monk, and though some similar stories about other Muslims may well be questioned, it is not altogether improbable in his case. He also studied at Tripoli. A marvelously retentive memory enabled him to store up an amazing fund of information. Particularly rich was his knowledge

of Arabic poetry. If it was not always accurate, as the eye could not verify what the ear had heard, an astonishing measure of exactness was preserved by the acuter sense of hearing that must perforce compensate for the loss of sight. With this there also developed a delicate sense of rhythm and rhyme, of grammatical form, of shades of meaning and beauty of expression.

It is natural that Abu'l 'Ala should have cherished the ambition of becoming a professional poet. But there was one serious obstacle in the way. Not his blindness, for blind poets had sometimes met with marked success; but his conscience. Enormous sums of money were paid by princes and rich men to the clever eulogist; his was a lucrative career. Abu'l 'Ala, however, could not purchase patronage by insincere flattery. It is not quite clear whether the threatened withdrawal of a small stipend he enjoyed led him to try his luck in Baghdad. With his eagerness to learn, he naturally wished to visit the great city, to browse in its large libraries, to come into contact with its distinguished scholars and poets, to recite his poems in its salons, to feel the pulse of its stirring life. In 1008 he left for Baghdad, and he remained there until 1010. If there were disenchantments, there were also real gains; and he occasionally referred in later years with something like regret to the year and a half he spent in the capital. How epoch-making for his spiritual development his stay in Baghdad may have been is difficult to say. There were no doubt ampler opportunities here than in Aleppo to become familiar with the various winds of learning that blew through the Muslim world. Chance and

determined search may have brought him into touch with thinkers who knew something, not only of Zoroastrianism, but also of Indian philosophy. He may never have learned that there were Buddhists who looked for Nirvana, and Jainists who refused to eat honey. Yet ideas travel without passport far and wide, too fast for the recorder's pen to note down all their devious ways, and they find a lodging where there is a hospitable mind. Why Abu'l 'Ala left Baghdad is not certain. The cause may have been a reported instance of too bold and outspoken criticism on his part, or anxiety about his mother's health. He was deeply attached to her; she died in 1010, and we possess a touching tribute by him to her worth.

After his return to Syria, he settled at Ma'arrah, and remained in this little town for almost half a century until his death in 1057. Here he lived his simple life of integrity, self-denial, and independence. "The doubly imprisoned" he called himself; he was blind and shut out from the world. Capable of tender affection, often beautifully expressed, he was without family ties, for he never thought it right to marry. Filled with sympathy for all living beings to the point of unwillingness that they be slain to furnish sustenance for him, he was unable to see, except in imagination, the life he held too sacred to be touched. Most of his slender resources, derived from a pitiful pension of thirty dinars a year, went to the servant who took care of him. His own personal wants were reduced to a minimum. He lived on vegetables and water, and the water of Ma'arrah was not good. As old age advanced, he became a cripple, unable to raise himself from his

seat, and suffered from illness. But he was inwardly a free man, free from passions, prejudices, superstitions, in control of his appetites and master of his soul. In this sequestered nook of nature he wrestled incessantly with the great problems of existence; he listened to the music of his people's songs before the Prophet came and after this event, and to the strident notes of spiritual dissent, with unmistakable fellow-feeling; he gave his fancy wings to fly through realms that had no reality to him, and let his subtle irony and mordant wit play with childish hopes and groundless fears he did not share; he freely voiced his criticism of the current religious ideas among Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Magians, and urged reliance upon reason and obedience to the dictates of conscience. And to his little town the world from which he was shut out came: renowned scholars to hear him discourse on the literary treasures of the past, their age, their form, their meaning; young men to listen to his recital of inspiring lines; ambitious poetasters to learn the road to success; timid or reckless seekers for esoteric wisdom; suspicious heresy-hunters on the scent of fresh evidences of infidelity; earnest souls anxious about the pilgrimage, the food they ate, the wine they sipped, the infallibility of the Kur'an, predestination, the houris of paradise. Whom went they forth to see? Not a man clothed in fine linen and purple, faring sumptuously each day, but a blind old seer, broken in health, living in poverty, with no favors to bestow and no influence with earth's mighty ones; a fanatic who might have had luxury and preferred squalor, who insisted upon being more merciful and

just than the Creator; a whimsical fellow who might have sold waters from his rich well of pure and undefiled Arabic at the highest market price, but chose to pour out for naught, in verses curiously shaped, his doubts and questions, his denials and assertions, his guesses and convictions; a radical laying his axe at the tree of superstition, laughing at heaven and hell and condemning the present order of things, yet commending virtue and valuing above all reason and righteousness. This, too, was attractive, and each went away with what he could carry. There were friends who defended him against the charges of heresy on the ground of his asceticism. How could a man be a saint, lead a life untouched by the breath of scandal, true to principle, unselfish, and scornful of the good things so eagerly sought by others, if he were indeed an infidel? There were enemies also, hit by his shafts of irony and sarcasm, his innuendo and denunciation of shams, who thought it sufficient to point to his incriminating utterances, and knew that morality, at best a secondary matter, or the semblance of it, could well exist even where the all important thing, the saving faith, was absent. And if good morals were insisted upon, for what loose ways were not these freethinkers responsible, even though they managed themselves to be respectable? Disciples coming from distant lands no doubt left behind substantial tokens of appreciation. Hence the story that he was surrounded by wealth. A Persian traveler who visited Ma'arrah, but did not see Abu'l 'Ala, heard from the town gossips that he was a very rich man, although he spent next to nothing on himself, and likewise that he was a very wicked man who had written a

burlesque on the Ku'ran, which he thought would be as good as the original "when it had been licked by four generations of believers." The aged poet died in 1057, his eighty-fifth year. His tomb was visited by pilgrims, like that of Umar Khayyam at Nishapur. Commentaries were written on his poems. Treatises were published in defence or refutation of his views. Fantastic tales were told concerning his feats of memory, his thaumaturgical powers, his acquaintance with black magic, his choice of death rather than acceptance of Islam, his martyrdom (dated eleven years before his quiet departure), his real journey to the hell whose existence he had denied.

Abu'l 'Ala is said to have written some fifty-five, or even sixty works. As Muslim civilization declined, most of these ceased to be preserved and copied. Only a handful are known to us today, and a few more by their titles. His youthful poems, of which he did not think much himself, retained their popularity and became to some extent known in Europe before the nineteenth century. Some of his daring sentences were quoted by Abu'l fida as horrible examples and aroused a limited curiosity when the chronicles of the Syrian historiographer were rendered into Latin. It was Hammer-Purgstall, the discoverer of Ibn Khaldun's real significance, who also first proclaimed Ma'arri as a great poet and philosopher (*Litteraturgeschichte der Araber*, 1850-56). Charles Rieu had already published, in 1843, *De Abulalae Vita et Carminibus*, a biography taken from Ibn Khallikan, and an account of the earliest poems entitled *Sakt al Zand*, "Sparks from the Fire-Stick," the only collection known to him. A passage from *Luzumi-*



*yat* was quoted by R. Dozy (*Het Islamisme*, 1863, p. 227). But it was through A. von Kremer that a more adequate knowledge of this work came. In the *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (xxix-xxxi, 1876-77; xxxviii, 1884) and in the *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften* (Wien, 1889) this scholar published most of the Arabic text, with a masterly German translation, imitating the difficult metre and rhyme from which it derives its title, *Luzum ma la yalzam*, or *Luzumiyat*, illuminating notes and generous appraisal. In 1898, D. S. Margoliouth made known "The Letters of Abu'l 'Ala" in the *Anecdota Oxoniensia*, in Arabic text and English translation, and gave a fuller bibliography based on the new material that had come to light. It was a great surprise to students of Ma'arri when R. A. Nicholson briefly described in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1899, a manuscript in his possession of the *Risalat al ghufran*, or "Letter of the Forgiven." In 1900, he presented, in the same journal, an outline of this remarkable production, excerpts from the text of the first part, translations of some sections and summaries sufficient to indicate its general character; and in 1902 the text of the second part dealing with *zandaka*, or free thought, and translations of many sections. In the form of a letter, probably addressed to Abu'l Hasan Ibn Mansur, of Aleppo, a poet who had recently, though advanced in years, taken to himself a young wife, he describes this sheikh's visit to heaven and hell. So far as the scenery is concerned, he finds, of course, in paradise the marvelous things with which Muslim imagination usually decorated that

place, and many more; but the company he encounters is chiefly made up of "the forgiven," i.e., the heathen poets who lived in the days of ignorance before the Prophet. They have been forgiven, they are in bliss, but their minds are still moving in the old grooves, their interests are the same as they were on earth. Heaven is a glorified *salon*, where these literary Bohemians are assembled to discuss the weighty matters that occupied them in the flesh; and the sheikh questions them as regards the integrity of the *textus receptus*, errors of transmission, interpolations, grammar and prosody, historical allusions, deeds ascribed to them. A great theologian is said to have repented on his death-bed of the early date he had persistently assigned to a Hebrew document. Would the Christian heaven solve this problem for him? No one can be so naïve as to suppose that Abu'l 'Ala was describing his ideal of a future life. He approached the subject not with the faith of a Dante, but in the comic spirit of an Aristophanes or a Lucian, yet with the earnest purpose of a Lucretius. Nor should the ejaculations of horror at the sentences of some *zindiks*, or freethinkers in Islam, in the second part, be taken at their face value. When his only comment on a really fundamental heresy is that a rhyme is faulty or a verb wrongly used, while the punishments of a hell in which he did not believe are invoked on the perpetrator of a less obnoxious sentiment, there is little excuse for the modern interpreter who fails to perceive the vein of irony that runs through it all. Some scholars are perturbed by his apparent condemnation of Ibn al Rawandi for having written his imitation of the

Ku'ran, in view of the circumstance that he had himself in his youth produced a similar work, the *Fusul al ghayat*, or "Sections of the Foundation." In this case his indignation may have been genuine, for he had heard that Ibn al Rawandi made pretensions to divinity. A man who wrote "The Letter of the Forgiven" in his sixtieth year may very well have taken up Muhammad's challenge thirty years before; and what he later said about the Ku'ran, assuming that the text is sound, may represent his maturer judgment. In 1902, Margoliouth published from a MS of Yakut's "Dictionary of Literary Men" in the Bodleian Library a "Correspondence concerning the Abstinence from Meat" between Hibat Allah Ibn Musa and Abu'l 'Ala, in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Hibat Allah held a high position at Cairo. As Chief Caller to the Faith, Instructor of Converts and Head of the Shi'ite Academy, he was next in authority to the Grand Kadi and entitled to the same kind of robe. Without revealing his identity, he wrote to Abu'l 'Ala as one ailing in understanding, seeking medicine for the ills of his soul, and particularly in need of the hidden wisdom that lay behind the curious practice of vegetarianism. The poet found out who his correspondent was, addressed him with his proper titles, and thereby greatly annoyed him, showed no eagerness to have his world-view passed by the Fatimid Board of Censors, claimed the right and necessity of a poor blind man to practise self-denial beyond what was permitted by the law and the duty of considering the sufferings inflicted on animals for the pleasure of men, and pointed with deprecating gestures to the deeper problems

hinted at by some irreverent singers. Hibat Allah was willing to argue the matter from the standpoint of natural law, if the Ku'ran did not count, maintained that man need not be more just and merciful than his Creator, promised the patronage of a wealthy man who would furnish him with the luxuries of life, expecting nothing in return, thought it strange that Abu'l 'Ala should quote so freely, and with such apparent gusto, from sources tainted with heterodoxy, and closed with expressions of disappointment but also of regard and good will. This distinguished ecclesiastic reveals himself as a thoughtful person, a clever controversialist, a man of the world, probably at heart a tolerant and good-natured latitudinarian, incapable of appreciating a deep-seated conviction that calls for self-abnegation. In 1904, a French scholar, Georges Salmon, published *Un précurseur d'Omar Khayyam. Le poète aveugle. Extraits des poèmes et des lettres d'Abou'l 'Ala Al Ma'arri. Introduction et traduction*; and Ameen F. Rihani *Abu'l 'Ala. Quatrains selected from his "Lozum-ma-la-yalzam" and "Sact-uz-zind" and now first rendered into English*. Excellent sketches of the poet and his works by Nicholson are also found in *A Literary History of the Arabs*, 1907, and in *Enzyklopaedie des Islam*, 1908. Abu'l 'Ala collected his writings with utmost care, and wrote comments on some of his poems. He expressed his confidence that, though he himself would not endure, his word would. His youthful lyrics were produced before 1008. To the same period, no doubt, belongs his imitation of the Ku'ran, of which a sura has been preserved by Bakharzi (cp. Ignaz Goldziher, in

*Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, 1876, p. 640). The "Letters" come from various times after his return to Ma'arrah in 1010. The collection known as *Luzumiyat* was known to Hibat Allah in Egypt before 1046, and may have been produced in the course of twenty or thirty years. The "Letter of the Forgiven" was written in 1032, and an historic allusion clearly assigns the "Correspondence on the Abstinence from Meat" to the year 1046.

It is justly held that, if a poet has gone to extraordinary trouble to cast his ideas and fancies in the mould of exquisite verse, he has a right to expect of his translator not to make prose of his poetry, but to some extent at least endeavor to imitate his rhythm, metre, and rhyme. For the fuller enjoyment of the form, the renderings of Kremer, Nicholson, Rihani, and Salmon should be consulted. Here we must dispense with any such attempt and occupy ourselves with the substance of Ma'arri's thought, and even that less in detail than would be desirable.

The leading ideas of Abu'l 'Ala stand out in bold relief. There is no possibility of mistaking their true import. He absolutely rejects all external authority in matters of religion and morality. There was a time perchance when he hesitated between Islam and Christianity. A passage from one of his works quoted by Mustafa Effendi Sbair to Goldziher (*l.c.*) reads as follows:

In Jerusalem arose a noise between Ahmad and the Messiah;

The latter beat the bell, the former called aloud to prayer.

Each raises up his own religion. O! could I know Which of the two is in the right!

But even this is doubtful. He persistently affirms that neither in the Torah nor the Gospels, neither in the Ku'ran nor the Avesta, can he find a divine revelation.

Muslims are stumbling, Christians all astray,  
Jews 'wildered, Magians far on error's way;  
We mortals are composed of two great schools—  
Enlightened knaves, or else religious fools.

Religion is a human product, born of man's fears and aspirations, his helpless search and guesses at the riddle, and maintained by the force of habit, the unquestioning regard for tradition, and also the love of power and of pelf. The rules of conduct laid down in the sacred books are of the same human origin. On fundamental points there is no discrimination in favor of Islam.

Of all the goodly doctrine that I from the pulpit  
heard  
My heart has never accepted so much as a single  
word.

Is it then indifferent what a man thinks, or how he lives? Is he without a means of discovering the truth, without a guide in picking out the path he should pursue? By no means. It is of utmost importance that the truth be fearlessly and eagerly sought, that life be purified from every form of unrighteousness and filled with justice and mercy. And there are faculties within on which reliance may be placed.

Take Reason for thy guide, and do what she  
Approves, the best of counsellors in sooth.  
Accept no law the Pentateuch lays down;  
Not there is what thou seekest — the plain truth.

There is no heaven and there is no hell. These are

groundless fables, furnishing false motives for a righteous conduct. There is no resurrection from the dead, no return to life after death. "Take the mirror of the astronomer and search the heavens; it will make the taste of the sweetest honey bitter; for they point without doubt to dissolution, but they give no hint of resurrection." "Death is a long sleep without an awakening, and sleep is a short death quickly followed by an awakening." "Were it true what Aristotle taught the masses, and the dead were to awake, the heavens would be too narrow for them." "If the inhabitants of the tombs should arise from their sleep, there would be no room for the living." All things are subject to the cosmic order. When Abu'l 'Ala speaks of Allah, he obviously has in mind this universal law, this inescapable destiny, this irreversible sequence of cause and effect, not a personality fashioned in the image of man, making and destroying things, interfering in the course of nature by miracles and special providences, picking out his favorites, fighting for them and crushing their enemies, punishing and rewarding them, listening to their requests and affectionate praise, telling them about himself and his plans, and watching with pleasure their gestures of submission and adulation, their pilgrimages, prostrations and ritual performances. Such current Muslim notions he rejects.

Praise God and pray,  
Walk seventy times, not seven, the Temple  
round —  
And impious remain!  
Devout is he alone who when he may

Feast his desires, is found  
With courage to abstain.

The world seems dark to the blind bard. It is a sorry scheme. Its transitoriness gives pain. Wistfully, like Job, he contemplates the passing of things so beautiful and curiously wrought; but, like him, he resolutely brushes aside all tempting illusions. Things are what they are. One star shines in the darkness: the light of reason pointing the way. One foundation is sure: the moral law which man may discover for himself and is bound to obey. This, too, means struggle, resignation, control of passions, sacrifice; but also human dignity and self-respect, freedom from fear, independence, a sense of being "on the right guidance," and a consciousness of service to mankind. The just man must protest against wrong, cannot be a silent spectator. Abu'l 'Ala raised his voice against all manner of social evil: iniquity in high places, arbitrary government, oppression of the poor, luxury and self-indulgence, killing of men in war, slavery, polygamy, cowardice and knavery, dishonesty in trade, injustice in the guise of law, ignorance and superstition winked at and fostered by the learned, the *'Ulema*. The inhumanity of man towards his fellow-creatures in the animal world aroused his indignation. He became convinced that they should not be slain for food, or robbed of what they needed. With him this could not remain an academic opinion. He abstained from meat of all kinds; and his logic carried him to abstinence as well from milk, and eggs, and honey. The dominant motive, in each case, was consideration of what these helpless fellow-beings



were in need of for themselves. So Abu'l 'Ala reasoned, and so he lived.

Obviously, this interpretation of life cannot be accepted *in toto*, and this attitude toward its problems cannot be approved without important reservations. However strongly we may sympathize with Abu'l 'Ala's negative conclusions, we have learned to approach the various religions of the world in a different spirit. It is natural that, in earlier times, the reaction against what seemed irrational conceptions should take a crude form of denial and assertion, emphasizing intentional deception, pious fraud, bold imposture, and arrogant priestcraft, and failing in sympathy, discrimination, and just appreciation. With a broader outlook upon history, a more comprehensive knowledge of religious phenomena, and a more scientific method of evaluation, we understand to-day somewhat better the way of the human spirit, and are prepared to appraise more adequately the value of its products. This applies, not only to metaphysical ideas, myths and creeds, but also to rites and ceremonies, mystic devotion, and hierarchical organization. With a truer conception of the course of nature, and a deepened insight into the spiritual universe, life has been clothed with new significance and glory, and a chastened joy is taking the place of disillusionment and Stoic resignation. A sense of potential and realizable worth in man has also affected the estimate of whatever tends to bring it out.

Asceticism makes a strong appeal. To men wrapped up in the life of the senses, happy when they can satisfy every appetite, taste every pleasure, enjoy their prosperity without interrup-

tion or restraint, one who persistently denies himself the good things they so highly value, lives in poverty when wealth could be had, abstains from what to them has become a necessity, is a person to be marveled at, a saint whose conduct makes them uneasy in the midst of their indulgence, a being from another world than theirs. Why does he throw himself away? If he does it for a reward after death, it is intelligible; if only to perfect himself before he ceases to be, why seek for self-development at such a heavy cost? Is this the way all men should live? As perfection seems to lie in this direction, it is worthy of homage. Perchance it is required only of an esoteric circle, and may redound to the benefit of those who cannot, and need not, follow the example. To earnest souls admiration is not sufficient; there must be emulation. Hence the long procession of ascetics, hermits, fasters, vegetarians, total abstainers, celibates, self-castigators. The noblest motive is the *ahimsa* doctrine: that no living thing should be injured. Abu'l 'Ala maintained that no animal, beast, bird or fish should be killed to provide food for man, no milk be drunk, no egg eaten, no honey tasted, since these were intended by nature for the maintenance of animal life. Had he possessed our knowledge, his logic would have prevented him from eating lentils and beans, drinking from Ma'arra's well, and even breathing the Syrian air. An Indian botanist has registered by a sensitive scientific instrument the death-spasm in the plant; millions of animalculae are taken into the body with every drop of water and inhaled with every breath we draw. Suicide by voluntary starvation would be the universal moral law for

man. Is it so important that animal life be preserved and infinitely multiplied, that malarial districts be perpetuated, epidemics spread, and wild beasts increase to tear to pieces the remnant of mankind? And is the human race alone unworthy of consideration? Abu'l 'Ala was not a misanthrope; he did not hate humanity. But he preferred to contemplate its destruction rather than its continuance in what he deemed wrongdoing. He commended monogamy, but placed above it celibacy. He is said to have composed the following epitaph for his grave:

This wrong was by my father done  
To me, but ne'er by me to one.

To us the preservation of the human race may well seem worth the while, its maintenance through such supplies as nature furnishes legitimate, and its gradual improvement a rational hope. Plenty for all, a full dinner pail, material prosperity, leisure and amusement can never be a satisfactory ideal; but neither does the recognition of moral integrity as the supreme law point to a life of universal misery, poverty, disease and abnegation, ending in voluntary self-destruction. Nevertheless, there are many aspects of the question which deserve most careful consideration. Our treatment of the life by which we are surrounded, whatever its character, reflects the moral progress that we make.

Abu'l A'la at times appears to use ambiguous language, intended to conceal rather than to reveal his real thought. It is an art cultivated by many in every age, especially when plain speaking is likely to have disagreeable consequences, affecting livelihood, position, influence and a good name

among men. How far is it justifiable? Is it imperative to open to every stranger the innermost chambers of the heart? Should the heresy-hunter be furnished with all available material to assist him in his nefarious trade? From the standpoint of pedagogy, is it wise to offer even ripe fruits of long reflection to those unprepared to derive nourishment from them? Clearly, lying is not permissible; there must never be a conscious intent to deceive; and in the long run it is better to pour the new wine into new bottles, to speak the truth as it is seen with courtesy and kindness, in simple and straightforward language. This, however, is sometimes rendered difficult by the exercise of natural gifts which in themselves are not without great value. Abu'l 'Ala was a master of subtle irony, keen wit, and sharp-edged sarcasm. Such weapons are effective and have their place in the struggle with superstitions, absurdities, and false pretensions; but they are dangerous to handle. One trouble with irony is that some cannot understand it at all, while others understand it only too well. Failure to perceive it is, *e. g.*, responsible for the curious notion that Abu'l 'Ala approved of the *jihad*, the Holy War, so utterly foreign to his way of thinking. Humor delights to play with words, gambol with turns of expression, fill shop-worn phrases with new meaning, upset the perspective, and mystify the unwary. On the other hand, those who follow the real drift may resent the spear-thrusts or the pin-pricks directed against cherished beliefs as personal attacks. They may prefer that serious things be dealt with in a serious way, that notions generally held, however antiquated and repugnant to

reason, be treated with respect or at least be passed over in silence. Should a man allow himself to be so inconsiderate of sensitive consciences as to poke fun at the Muslim heaven, smile at the blessed doctrine of eternal damnation, and speak irreverently of the Prophet's substitute in Baghdad or Cairo? It cannot be denied that there is occasionally in Abu'l 'Ala's satire, as in Voltaire's, the bitterness of gall, if not the poison of malice; and here the line must certainly be drawn. Yet how unbearably solemn and dreadfully monotonous this world of ours would be were there no good-natured laughter in it and no humorist cracking his whip at the ridiculous! Abu'l 'Ala was in his own time now and then accused of a vain and ostentatious parade of learning. While we have every reason to be grateful to him for enriching our knowledge of early Arab poetry, of conditions in the Muslim world, and of the currents of free thought in Islam, if vanity was the prevailing motive, it certainly reflects unfavorably on his character. Some things, however, deserve to be considered. His love of poetry was genuine; his eagerness to acquire knowledge was sincere; his passion for a critical evaluation of whatever came within his purview was intense; and his willingness to communicate from his vast fund, freely and without hope of reward, was unmistakable. It may be that what seems unnecessary display was made in self-defense. Where there is much erudition, many sins of heterodoxy may be forgiven. To be able to cite numerous precedents removes the sense and to some extent the stigma of unpardonable innovation. How many a higher critic makes it a point to quote predecessors with-

in his own ecclesiastical fold! And at times, when the faucet is opened, the water will flow copiously without any special intent.

Whatever exceptions may be taken to his views and practices, it must be recognized that Abu'l 'Ala al Ma'arri is a challenging and fascinating personality, a remarkable poet, an eminent scholar, an independent thinker, a man of noble character, strong convictions and unflinching loyalty to what he deemed the right, a precursor, not only of Umar Khayyam and his spiritual kin, and of the modern students of the science of religion, but also, in his way, of the leader to whom this volume is dedicated, who during the last fifty years has urged the supreme importance of morality and commended an ethical philosophy of life.

# Life's Unused Moral Force

By HARRY SNELL, M.P. (London)

"We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." (II. Peter i. 19.)

**I**N THE HISTORY of human thought concerning moral problems, the precise relation of moral theory to moral practice has not been settled. It may be that, in the present state of our knowledge, it cannot be settled. The difficulties are in any case so great as to make it unwise, if not also dangerous, to lay down dogmatic rules upon it. We do not yet know what is the absolute good, nor whether all the good that we now perceive is transient or permanent; but the fact that men fail to realise in practice their own conception of right is not a wilful denial of the light they see, for man's individual power over the facts of life is so limited and uncertain that achievement must of necessity lag behind perception. If, however, we take heed of the ideal "as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in our hearts," the separation that appears to exist between that part of the moral life that rests upon ideals, and that which rests upon practice, will not assume too serious an aspect.

Matthew Arnold once declared that "conduct is really, however men may overlay it with philosophical disquisitions, the simplest thing in the world so far as understanding is concerned; as regards doing, it is the hardest thing in the world"; and few are the men who cannot bear witness to the general truth so expressed. The right that we often see so clearly we find it difficult to practise, and experience of frequent and tragic failure to do what we know to be right, so bites into our souls that we give up the fight and allow ourselves to accept lower standards of conduct than, with hopeful and sustained discipline, we might actually achieve. It is not, however, the extent of the victory over temptation or difficulty that is the true measure of character, but rather the unshaken loyalty which we give to the moral ideal as the desirable goal of endeavour.

When we reflect upon the vice and ugliness that surrounds our lives, on the organised power of evil and the harsh discipline of failure which we are called upon to endure, the spirit droops and the heart grows sick; but if we take a longer view of life, and compare man as he is with what he was when "dragons of the prime, that tare each other in their slime, were mellow music match'd with him," despair gives place to hope and doubt to assurance. Had life been plain and simple and a mere swine-trough happiness the end of striving, its history would not have been worth recording. It is the patient effort to weave the garment of his own manhood that makes the human story so precious and inspiring. Man, after all, has something to his credit. He has



made himself at home in the world. He has created for himself an artificial climate in which to live; he has harnessed the lightning to his service; he has tamed the beasts of the field and made the ocean his highway; but his achievement of power over the forces outside himself is but a small part of his task. To be able to make engines and to build ships is fine; but it is small in comparison with the task of the remaking of himself. He is now faced with a competitor who will in the end subdue him—that other man, the man who is to be. For all his looms and buildings, his inventions and his monuments, his crowning work, always silently proceeding, is the creation of a new brain and heart, the sketching of that vaster human structure which his children will surely build. “Man’s capabilities have never been measured; nor are we to judge of what he can do by any precedents, so little has been tried. Whatever have been thy failures hitherto, be not afflicted, my child, for who shall assign to thee what thou hast left undone?” (Thoreau.)

The greatest spiritual need of our time is the destruction of the death-in-life fatalism which is holding captive man’s creative powers, and the awakening in him of a new faith in his own power to make the world a better place. Evil is tolerated because it is falsely believed to be inevitable, and it is the rightful business of religious enterprise to restore to man a living faith in his own creative power.

This was one of the main purposes for which the Ethical Movement was founded fifty years ago, and for which it now exists. In comparison with older religious organisations, its teaching

has been forward-looking, challenging and revolutionary; for whereas they taught that the whole duty of man was to fear God and to prepare himself for death, the Ethical Movement has insisted that his chief obligation was the culture and discipline of his own powers, not that he might the more comfortably fit himself into an inherited environment, or qualify himself for rewards after death, but that he might employ them in service which would ennoble his fellows and help to shape his surroundings to the pattern of the ideal which was in his heart. An Ethical Society is therefore a new religious enterprise, a centre of moral renewal and a Court of Appeal for the conscience that is perplexed and the spirit that is weak.

That the soul needs stimulation and encouragement is beyond question. The human brain is prone to follow the ready-made or easily formed tracks, and systematic training to new functions and powers is required to prevent it from falling back into the old ruts. A certain depravation of the mind is indeed almost certain when the higher qualities of life are stunted, or perverted through over-elaborate attention to, and concentration upon, the purely physical or material, and this want of harmony between the individual and his social medium sometimes goes so far as to reveal a definite lack of mental or moral balance. There is therefore placed upon every man the moral obligation to develop to their fullest extent the spiritual qualities which are nascent in his being, and so to discipline his physical appetites and powers that they too may serve spiritual ends.

It is as easy for the individual as for the race to lose what it has taken ages to win, and the delicate fabric of the moral life may be injured and deteriorated far more quickly than it was constructed. A few generations of unarrested degeneration might very well throw civilisation back for a thousand years.

It is therefore as necessary that we should guard against moral as against physical sickness or fatigue, for the spirit no less than the body requires the stuff of renewal. Wastage and weariness of the body we repair by food, sleep and recreation; we restore it to health by medicine, fresh air, careful nursing and change of scene; but moral fatigue, more insidious but not less important, we ignore, often with quite disastrous results both to body and mind, to the individual and to society.

This lack of healthy balance in the mind expresses itself in impatience, irritation concerning little things, in indolence and sometimes in derision of ideals which we know are right and helpful. We allow ourselves to drift, to weaken in resolve, to ignore obvious duties and to content ourselves with a tardy or partial fulfillment of our recognised obligations. The man who by diligent exercise has disciplined all his faculties, is like a country that is protected against invasion by its enemies; in him the invader is met, not with hospitality or indifference, but by the quick resolute resistance which has been bred and nurtured by past effort.

The law of life appears to be that to prevent actual deterioration, there must be actual progress. The spirit of man is not static; it advances

or it recedes. It cannot be neglected under the assumption that what it is it will remain. It will retreat or march forward; but it does not merely mark time. "Wrong thoughts and feelings there will always be from inadequate attention, bad reasoning, passion, prejudice, tradition, custom, and other causes of error, to be corrected by better information, sounder reasoning and more wholesome social sympathy." (Henry Maudsley.)

The culture of the moral life also demands the recognition of the fact that, although a man may be on guard and armed against the major crimes and weaknesses against ourselves or against society, he may be weak in defense against the average temptations of the day. Thus, if he does not actually bear false witness against his neighbour or invent and publish the mean lie which will injure him, he may preserve an even meaner silence when others do these things in his presence, because to speak out on behalf of truth involves courage and inconvenience.

It is well to remember, too, that the deterioration that manifests itself so suddenly and dramatically in a human life is rarely immediate in its origin, but has been preceded by a slow, perhaps unconscious, slackening in moral discipline and descent to lower standards of conduct. "Our deeds pursue us from afar, and what we have been makes us what we are." Thus, the unexpected follies that we exhibit and that are frequently so tragic in their consequences are just so many incarnations of error and wrong tendencies.

The bough that went, when green, awry,  
Will not come straight when old and dry.

On the other hand, whenever we conquer temptation and master a wrong impulse, our strength is increased and the forces working for evil within us are correspondingly weakened. Every time that we refrain from an unworthy action we have made each succeeding resistance easier. Thus, when the Queen says, "O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain!" Shakespeare makes the Prince reply:

Oh, throw away the worser part of it,  
And live the purer with the other half.  
. . . Refrain to-night,  
And that will lend a kind of easiness  
To the next abstinence; the next more easy:  
For use almost can change the stamp of nature,  
And either curb the devil, or throw him out  
With wondrous potency.

When the spirit droops and vigilance ceases, the zealous man may become listless, the abstemious man may acquire the habit of indulgence or show lack of self-control, and there is a gradual, subtle change of outlook towards life and duty, which alters his whole attitude towards his fellow men and destroys his capacity for service. This danger was well described in an article in the *London Times* on March 4th, 1925. "Refusal to discharge a duty because it is irksome, failure to follow an ideal through love of money or fear for reputation, or compromise with conscience, at once easy and damaging, combine to blur a man's vision of the ideal and destroy his spiritual desires. He who refuses to follow the light must walk in darkness, and those who will not move

forward on the path of life surely enter the way of death. And because when a man so deteriorates he not only ceases to feel the glow of spiritual attraction in himself, but comes to disbelieve in the possibility of spiritual life for others, the reality of moral distinctions becomes unreal, and the world appears a chill and gloomy prison, where guilty men live in mutual suspicion, or a battle-field where they are at constant war with each other."

Who has not known the man of fine quality of mind and character, the tried and trusted friend, the reliable business man, who, as a result of domestic or other troubles, goes morally to pieces, and falls back upon alcoholic stimulants to an extent which appears to make him the helpless slave of appetite? And how many homes have been robbed of the chance of permanent well-being because the foundations on which they were built were selfish, and therefore immoral. Two young people set out together on the journey of life with every desire to promote each other's happiness and welfare. They are both clean, upright, fine-grained persons, and the bargain that they make with each other is the expression of an almost fierce mutual love. The man undertakes to work for such business success as will secure and sustain a comfortable if not luxurious home; the woman will devote her life to the task of making it sweet and attractive. It is to be their whole world; everything outside its walls—duties, pleasures, opportunities of service—is to be ignored; they will live only for each other. Their mutual surrender of personal liberty is equal and complete. Yet such marriages seldom

give the happiness so ardently bespoken and desired. They are unable to withstand the trials and cares of daily life; the first attractions of the beautiful home begin to pall, the physical allurements count for less and less, and instead of happiness there is sorrow and disappointment, and in the place of desire there is antipathy. They fail because they are built not on mutual love but on mutual selfishness.

And who has not heard of the energetic and ambitious youth who started his business career with a healthy desire to succeed, to win wealth, to make a name in his profession, and who, impatient of the results achieved by diligence and steady loyalty to the highest standards of his calling, sought to reach his goal quickly by the method of the smart device, the questionable bargain and the sometimes dishonourable gamble which destroyed his reputation among his fellows, and brought upon him both ruin and disgrace?

These are merely dramatic illustrations of a danger which confronts us all — viz., the irregular or even perverted development of our faculties, to an extent which, unless arrested, may become actual deformity. The sensuous nature of man is not the whole of his being; it is but a part. Complete self-development requires that a man's life should be built up in harmonious proportions and its various elements shaped and disciplined for the good of the whole.

What is a man,  
If the chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.

Every man may therefore rightly ask himself this question: "Am I exerting my spiritual

powers to their full capacity, and thereby acquiring a finer sensibility to all that is pure and beautiful in myself and in the world; or am I weakening in my powers of defence against the forces of evil that are in me and about me?"

Most men fall below their own highest levels, but the average man accepts life as he finds it and obtains satisfaction in a languid conformity to the conventional standards of his time. It is, moreover, the recognition of these standards as sufficient unto personal and public salvation that is at the bottom of our failure to make the world a more desirable place. Why is it that, notwithstanding the almost universal desire for human happiness, mankind is unable to abolish the poverty, civic ugliness and disease that are born and bred in our present social system? Why, in spite of man's greatly increased powers to satisfy his wants, do hunger and privation persist? There is no lack of material goods in the world. Science is continually fashioning new and wonderful tools for our use; the magicians of the laboratories are constantly enlarging our minds and increasing the returns on our labour. Nature gives in abundance to her children; where our fathers produced two ears of corn we are able to produce ten. Yet with all this enhanced productive power at our disposal there are as many poverty-stricken people in the world as before steam and electrical power were invented. Wealth is gathered into the hands of a few, while the many remain poor and are deprived of the training and environment in which human souls can develop to healthy moral stature. Why does human effort to bridge this gulf between oppor-



tunity and achievement fail so miserably? There is a general desire for better social arrangements, and few men are satisfied with the conditions that prevail. The world is full of societies, leagues, unions, local, national and international, yet chaos and misapprehension persist; class struggles against class, nation against nation, and the City of God cannot be reached. Why is it?

The Ethical Movement has its own answer to these great questions. It affirms that in the hurry and the complexity of modern life, some essential guiding principle which might have saved us has been missed, and that until we find and apply it there is no deliverance from our captivity. It further asserts that the help we seek is to be found in the unused moral force that resides in a rationalised and humanised religious enthusiasm. What else is left to us? The soldier has tried to carve out a better world with the edge of his sword; the doctor has sought to ease its pain and heal its wounds with his drugs and hygienic surgery; the statesmen have tried to save it by their laws and social devices; the priest has offered to it the consolations of a postponed felicity. Man has given to the puzzle the best powers of his brain, but his prayers are unanswered and his problems remain unsolved.

The Ethical Movement believes that our failure to obtain individual and social well-being is due to our neglect of the great principle of moral idealism. We have regarded our human problem as being mainly political or economic, whereas, in a quite unrealised degree, it is moral and spiritual. "The mind of England," said the Archbishop of Canterbury a few years ago, "is

becoming increasingly convinced that the question of industrial unrest is not solely, or even mainly, an economic question, but that it concerns spirit and character, and our whole attitude as men towards a problem which affects us all"; and Mr. W. L. Hichens, one of England's greatest captains of industry, has asked whether it might not be that in seeking "to solve the problem primarily by legislative measures and mechanical devices, or by precise adjustments of relations based on force or self-restraint, we are putting the cart before the horse. . . . It may be that the solution of this industrial problem, which is the greatest we are called upon to meet, lies beyond legal formulae, beyond all economic laws and doctrines, and depends on our attitude towards social existence—in plain words, on our moral code."

The central belief of the Ethical Movement, that before we can bring peace either to ourselves as individuals or to mankind we shall be compelled to draw upon the vast unused moral forces of the world, is thus admitted by the head of the English Church and by one of its leading industrial magnates. If we desire to secure goodwill and co-operation in industry, we must recognise the man behind the workman. The economist has thought of the worker as a productive unit, the politician has regarded him as a voting unit; he awaits his call as a creative, living soul.

In claiming that the wonderful economic power which man has acquired should be increasingly associated with a recognition of and a sane reverence for the spiritual quality of man himself, we do not deny the beneficence of that

power, nor do we withhold gratitude from those whose lives are devoted to wealth-creating occupations. Far from it. But we believe that the benefits which we derive from their labours would be increased if the worth as well as the wealth of man was recognized.

The Ethical Movement acknowledges with pride and thankfulness the fact that millions of our fellow men do actually live a Monday-to-Saturday religion, and that they do indeed erect their altars wherever their duties call them. When we travel to other lands we fearlessly entrust our lives to the humble, fearless men who go down to the sea in ships and have business with the mighty waters, who do actually reach the highest levels of service. They represent a knightly chivalry of the sea which rarely fails, and in their watchful care, "rocked in the cradle of the deep," we are, so far as human skill and devotion may prevail, as safe as though we were sleeping in our own beds.

In the end everything depends upon the will and the character of those who do the work of the world. The legislature may pass beneficent laws, but unless those who administer them are both efficient and incorruptible, they will fail to achieve their purpose. The law, it is true, may punish those who, by flagrant and wilful negligence, betray their trust; the community can also address to them suitable admonitions, and in other ways associate dereliction of duty with unpleasant consequences. Such safeguards are, however, purely negative, and do not enlist that positive enthusiasm for honourable and effective service without which the State is deprived of the

protection which its laws were designed to give.

The legislator, perhaps more than other men, needs constant contact with the sources of spiritual power, for his chance of giving effective service depends in no small degree upon his own character and his attitude towards the universe and his neighbours. "Woe unto them that decree unrighteous decrees" was the warning given to the politician who betrayed his vocation and pandered to the forces of evil. The legislator is daily driven to ask himself what he conceives to be the end and purpose of government, and what he wishes his own part in it to be. He also sees the seamy side of life as few others see it, and he requires a stronger defence against the temptation to covenant with evil than is commonly recognised. The suggestion that morals have any meaning for the legislator may appear grotesque to the cynic, but for no duty which man has to perform are moral fervor, probity and steadfastness more needed.

Lord Morley once complained to Professor J. H. Morgan that "people are always talking as if a politician ought to be so much better than men in other professions"; but so, in a very real sense, he ought. He has chosen a vocation in which great moral issues are involved, and his personal character cannot be separated from his fitness to pursue it. The average man who goes into business does so for reasons which are more or less selfish, and the most that he undertakes is to conform to the prevailing conventional standards. But the politician is the professed guardian of the common interests; he is the people's shield against oppression, and a fairly high

standard of personal character is rightly expected of him. He is frequently called upon to advise in the material and moral perplexities of his individual constituents, and far oftener than is realised by the general public, his work is of a definitely spiritual nature.

What greater moral responsibility can rest upon any man than that which the legislator has to bear when, for instance, he is called upon to decide as to the quality and kind of the education that shall be given to the children of his country? The incapable man in a carpenter's work-shop may do bad work and the result is—wasted wood: but waste in the school is seen, not in shavings, but in human lives. "The public man is then on safe ground when he boldly applies the simple ideas of right and wrong to the affairs of nations. He may easily be mistaken in his judgment of what is right and wrong, but if he denies that there is a right and wrong above expediency and self-interest, he has no other foothold. The public life becomes meaningless and statesmanship a vain thing, unless it is boldly assumed that man is in some sort master of his fate, and can control events to ends that may be called righteous." (J. A. Spender, "The Public Life," p. 155.)

The affairs with which the legislator is called upon to deal cannot be reduced to the simple code with which we seek to guide our own individual lives, for into these historical, racial, scientific and religious influences do not consciously enter; but these influences do affect the policy of nations, domestic and international. The individual, submissive to his rulers, industrious,

courageous, is self-sacrificing to the extent of his life for any cause which touches his heart, and, as Mr. Spender further points out, "the statesman is in the service of this high, chivalrous, religious being, and unless he can conceive himself as on the side of good against evil, and right against wrong, he is as much out of place as the unbeliever in the sanctuary."

We can rightly urge that both individual and public responsibility must conform to some standard of right and wrong, without thereby insisting that the public man should refuse to accept the possible good for the sake of the impossible better; for men have to live and work in the world as they find it, and

The common problem, yours, mine, everyone's,  
Is — not to fancy what were fair in life  
Provided it could be — but, finding first  
What may be, then find how to make it fair  
Up to our means; a very different thing!  
No abstract intellectual plan of life  
Quite irrespective of life's plainest laws,  
But one, a man, who is a man, and nothing more,  
May lead within a world which (by your leave)  
Is Rome or London, not Fool's Paradise.

Our fathers sought to secure the fulfilment of moral obligations by methods which are no longer effective. Their church-going habits brought them into regular contact with the moral teaching of their age, which, although it was associated with the inducement of reward after death and fear of everlasting punishment for evil-doing, did nevertheless continuously remind the worshipper that moral issues were important and that they could not safely be ignored. The church and the synagogue kept the problem of life and

destiny before the greater part of the nation, and the habit of weekly worship supported by daily family prayer had a powerful and persistent influence upon men's lives. The teaching given may have been based upon false assumptions; but the golf and motoring enthusiasm of our own day is no adequate substitute for the moral training with which it was associated.

To admit this is not to contend that there has been no advance in man's sense of responsibility as a result of the growth of the scientific spirit. We doubtless see more clearly than our fathers saw; but we are less heedful of what we see, and it is doubtful whether, with all our increased knowledge, we are nearer to mastering the problems of our day than they were those of their own.

It would be foolish to assert that church-going, or attendance at religious exercises of any kind, is an indispensable adjunct of the moral life. Thousands of men who never associate themselves with religious organizations or attend any form of public worship frequently attain to a level of character and service which is a challenge to us all. They are independent both of the priest and the preacher. They are disciples of young Jotham, who was "twenty and five years old when he began to reign . . . and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord . . . howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord." They claim to get their strength from the open fields and the running brooks in the presence of which they are lifted up and strengthened. And why not? It is only for our convenience that we reserve particular times and places

as appropriate to religious meditation; but fundamentally, Sundays and churches are no more sacred than are week-days and mountain-tops. The altar of the ideal may be erected anywhere where useful work is to be done, and men may as rightfully present themselves before it in one place as in another.

It is not with robust souls of this kind that we are concerned, but with those who give themselves no systematic moral training, and to whom the primrose by the river's brim is just a primrose and nothing more; for, as Maudsley has pointed out, "virtue is not safely lodged until it is so grounded inward in the nature that it is a habit and its exercise a pleasure." Satisfied with his inherited stock of moral energy, the average man imagines that it possesses a radium-like indestructibility, or that, like the widow's cruse of oil, it will be automatically renewed without his personal thought or effort. Such a philosophy does not stand the test of time and trouble very well, and the man who has become its dupe is notoriously less able to meet and master the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune than he who by will and conscious effort has trained himself to be the master of his own soul. And there is a world of difference between a man who is just negatively correct in his relationships and him who by will and conscious discipline sweats the ape and tiger out of his blood. The mere absence of sin does not of itself prove the presence of virtue, for "when a man leaves his sin he is invigorated by the victory; but when his sin leaves him, it leaves him debilitated."



We see an aeroplane riding proudly in the sky, perfect in its balance and its beauty. The pilot sits serenely in his place. Lord of the air, his mastery over his instrument appears to be complete. But even as we look there is a sudden change; first there is an ominous quivering of its wings, and then a headlong descent to lower levels. The pilot has unexpectedly entered an "air pocket" which will not bear its burden, and the machine passes out of his control until at a lower level he reaches an atmosphere of the required density. We who have to meet unexpected dangers as we walk with our feet upon the earth should, like the pilot, be prepared to overcome them.

The Ethical Movement believes that the religious aspect of a man's life is exhibited in his work quite as much as in his prayers, and that if he sets an example of righteousness anywhere it should be in the way that he does his appointed task. It aims to promote the religion of the common day; it is a new spiritual home in which the soul of man may find itself and also find rest. The moral obligation that it imposes upon the man who enters into its fellowship is one that strengthens him in his defence against evil and helps him to endow his service with the highest qualities of his own life. What more can man desire or religion give? "All the grand sources of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them almost entirely, conquerable by human care and effort; and though their removal is grievously slow—though a long succession of generations will perish in the breach before the conquest is completed, and this world becomes all that, if will and knowledge were not wanting, it

might easily be made — yet every mind sufficiently intelligent and generous to bear a part, however small and inconspicuous, in the endeavor, will draw a noble enjoyment from the contest itself, which he would not for any bribe in the form of self-indulgence consent to be without.” (John Stuart Mill.)

# Is the Ideal Real?

By GEORGE A. SMITH (London).

**T**HE QUESTION I have asked in the title of this paper may be as futile and unanswerable as the question whether there is an end to space or a limit to time. We can conceive neither an extension which goes on without limit nor an extension which stops in any direction anywhere, we can imagine neither time without end nor time that ceases. In the same way, as we are all evolutionists, we cannot conceive a cessation of change, the final arrival at a state of perfection, the end of all the travail of the evolutionary process; nor can we, as I think, imagine that the change and the striving are not towards an ideal, a perfection, an end which in itself is real and established in the scheme of things. The attainment and cessation are unthinkable, but the aim at perfection, the purpose underlying all the change throughout the whole evolutionary process, seems, to me at least, to be a necessity of thought. We feel it to be the purpose continually present in our own efforts and strivings. Dare we, who are ourselves the product of the evolutionary process, attribute to nature a similar tendency? Is there a movement towards perfection along all the evolutionary lines, or is the very notion of perfection a chimera, a confession of our weakness, an admission that we cannot con-

ceive perpetual never-ending change save towards an end, and that end the perfect?

The question, though unanswerable, has attracted thinking men throughout the ages, and must probably always challenge us and divide us. The Stoics accepted things as they were without question, with all their limitations and imperfections, submitting to the will of whatever Gods there were, but holding fast to the life of virtue, honour and courage. The Platonists held also to the life of virtue and justice, but saw the end beyond, the ultimate goal of attainment, the perfect forms toward which all things of the spiritual and material universe should tend. To them these were the only realities. The whole of the stages towards this perfect attainment were fleeting, were unreal. The end of attainment was real, fixed, static, with nothing beyond. Perfection of every growing thing in nature, of every material thing of human construction, of every desire or thought of man, of beauty and harmony in all the arts and in all the universe, was stored up in the mind of God, was a real existence now, and had been through all time. In Buddhism we have the doctrine of perfect attainment, and of cessation from all striving and all the evils of existence, in the state of Nirvana, a state which could have no attraction for men of the more robust Western world, who rejoice in difficulty and opposition, and in the effort to overcome them.

Latterly, there has grown up a school of thought, the teaching of which is neither Stoic nor Platonist, but which regards God as himself growing and developing, as a sort of Elder Brother to man,—a few stages ahead, yet not so

far ahead as to be able to do without our co-operation, and as all the time helping man forward. This school is well represented by Dr. Alexander of Manchester in his "Time, Space and God," and, in a more popular manner, by Mr. Wells in his "God, the Invisible King." In this conception there is no end to the process, whether it be called evolutionary or creative. God is always "becoming," always the next step beyond. There is no "perfection," for perfection means the end of the process, cessation from change, seeing that any change forward or backward must be to the less perfect. There is, therefore, no particular end or purpose in the change beyond the change itself, the ever-renewing experience, the one-thing-after-another of the aimless life. This view need not be condemned by us as unworthy of our respect. Change itself is a good thing, if it is from one state of beauty to another. Variation is itself a worthy end. There need be no numerical limit to the states which are altogether desirable and honourable.

But with such a philosophy we must give up talking of steps or stages, must cease to think of a process towards an end, and must think only of renewal of experience. Dr. Alexander, however, thinks of God as the "next stage beyond," and so does think of the process; and if of the process, it must be *towards* something, and cannot be a mere aimless wandering through experiences. If a process be admitted, a "next stage beyond," I do not see how we can stop short of a goal. It would seem to be a necessity of thought. And with the goal we get back to Platonism and idealism, attainment and perfec-

tion. I do not see how we can harbour both views in our mind at once. If God is "becoming," and man also is "becoming," though at a few stages behind, there must also be a "become," and the "becoming" God is not God at all.

Is there an "orthodox" ethical view on this question? The Ethical Movement is entirely rationalistic, but so, also, is every philosophical system; for every philosophy is of human construction, the result of human investigation and reasoning. Theologies are not philosophies. To say that our Movement is rationalistic, therefore, does not end the matter. We still have to reason and to appeal to the reason of others. But we are limited to the universe, the region of phenomena, and can recognise nothing as valid which is supposed to act upon the universe from outside. If we have a God, therefore, he is no Creator God. He must be within the Universe and not standing without. That is something gained, and must carry us a good way together. But the universe is wide enough for our investigation, and there is room within its limits to keep us busy till the end of our existence on the planet, and to lend a savour to all our investigations by showing how we can continue to differ and form opposing views.

We are ourselves of the universe, our thinking and feeling and willing part as well as our bodily part, and are proper subjects for investigation. We have evolved through the ages from the stardust. Somewhen and somehow life entered into the dust and made of it self-contained organisms with power to sustain themselves and to reproduce themselves in other similar living forms;

also to change themselves by combination with other living forms and to add to their structure new capacities. And so the evolutionary process continued until in time consciousness arose in the living forms and the approach to man began. At last man stood erect upon the planet, conscious of himself and his environment, dimly aware of his latent powers over his own personality and over the things of the earth, and with a curiosity, the parent of science and invention, as to himself and the things around him. With a curiosity also as to the origin of these things and their meaning; and so religion and philosophy began.

The Ethical Movement, as I understand it, does not attempt to satisfy this curiosity of man as to the origin and meaning of life. It is rationalistic, but its rationalism does not preclude a theistic interpretation of phenomena. It is not either atheistic or agnostic. It denies neither the existence of a God nor the possibility of ultimate knowledge. Its concern is solely with the way of life. But the way of life has to be found. It is not revealed. There is no guidance save from our own experience and searching. We are put down in a universe filled with everything that we can ever want, and there left to look after ourselves. We have life and the desire for life; also we have a sense of obligation to do what is right; but we are not told the use of anything, or how we must sustain life, or how we can ascertain what is the right. All has to be found out by experience; often painful experience, but more often joyous and radiant experience. For there are few greater joys than the conquest of difficulty, the triumph over opposition. And though men may

have railed at such a universe where pain and sorrow are ever present, we know in our hearts that the true stature of manhood can be reached only through effort and suffering and the overcoming of obstacles, that all that is to go into the fabric of man and become his very own must be acquired by him in this way. An easy universe would not be our universe, and would produce a being inferior in essential respects to man. A perfect scheme of life laid down for us would not be an ethical scheme, would not be a human scheme. Under it we should be automata and not men. We are for ever at war with evil and obstacle and difficulty; but we know that we could not attain to our stature as men without them, and we know that the only authority we can ever respect is the authority that man has himself acquired by experience and research.

And yet this authority is itself conditioned. It is not an authority which roams at large, and settles where it will. Man is not free to act as he will and call it good, nor to think as he will and call it true, nor to construct as he will and call it beautiful. There is upon him this certitude, that in his spiritual universe there is already for him a destiny, to act in a certain way and to think in a certain way and to construct in a certain way, if ever he is to act rightly, or to think truly, or to construct beautifully. The obligation is certainly real, even though the way in each of these cases is not clear before him, but has to be found by him laboriously, and with no assurance even that it *will* be found by him in his own lifetime, or by his successors in theirs. We know, as by an intuition, that if an act is not right



we cannot make it right, that if a thought or statement is not true we cannot make it true, and that if a work of art is not beautiful we cannot by willing make it beautiful. These qualities are theirs or not theirs just in proportion as they accord with and express, or do not accord with and express, the eternal and unchangeable aspects of goodness, truth and beauty; and these were not made by man. These are the constituent elements in the spiritual universe in which we are placed, and they have to be found by us, just as the laws operating in the material universe, and its constituent elements, have to be discovered by us.

These are the conditions within which we can gain authority, and surely we do continually enlarge our authority within them. We have not lived for nothing all these thousands of years upon the planet. We have achieved something in all the spheres set out by Plato as the ultimate realities of our being. We know something of the divine in human form, and can see something of the ideal actually realised in human experience. The example of Christ will go down through all the ages as the life of perfect love and sacrifice. We cannot go beyond it. We cannot conceive a greater literature than that of Shakespeare. Surely the ideal is visible in both these instances. And in a hundred other lives of great men and women, the Buddha, St. Francis, Plato, Newton, da Vinci, Michelangelo, Beethoven, the divine shines through, the human material has become translucent. But does it not radiate also from the lives of humbler people known only to their immediate neighbours? In every mean street love abounds, pure and unselfish; not only

mother-love and father-love, and love of the young man for his sweetheart—there may be selfish interest to some extent there—but in the help and care generously given by one neighbour to another where no self-interest enters in. The ideal proves itself to be real in all such action, and it is manifest everywhere. Is it not to be found also in the hundreds of agencies which have sprung up in recent times for the betterment of the lives of the people, societies whose workers give their time and money voluntarily, without thought of reward? And in the many State institutions which have been established in this generation? Though it may be argued that all these agencies and institutions are an adverse comment on the evils which are fostered in the present state of society, they yet are an evidence of the recognition of these evils and of the necessity under the law of love of hastening forward with some remedy for them. They are to that extent indubitable evidence that the ideal is real.

The achievements of science are evidence of the reality of the ideal of truth. There can be no suspicion of any ulterior motive actuating the research student. It is the truth and nothing but the truth which he seeks. And in that spirit the advancement of our knowledge of the universe is continually hastening its pace. Is it possible to assign any limit to the achievement which may yet be ours?

And so too with beauty. Surely the ideal has been made manifest in the Greek temples, in the Moonlight Sonata, in many mediaeval Gothic cathedrals, in the Venus of Milo, in Keats's Hy-

perion, in the Lord's Prayer and in many passages of Isaiah. We know what beauty is, whether or not we can define it. And we know what ugliness is, and how much there is of it which should be eradicated. And Beauty which we have not made, but can take into our being, beauty of the cloud and the flower and the landscape, beauty that runs riot throughout nature, is ours if we have eyes to see, though we can never say what it is that makes it beauty.

But if it can be said with some degree of truth that we know our ideals, and have in part at least realised them, how much more true it becomes that there is an endless road to traverse before we have completely realised them. The realisation of what we have accomplished makes all the more clear the work that is yet before us. The great ones whose lustre shines down the ages are so few, and humanity is so many. The end cannot be attained till all are great and good. We cannot rest satisfied so long as there are any ill-nurtured, uneducated, or evil-disposed people in the human family from end to end of the earth. If we have any faith in an ideal of manhood, we must believe that that ideal is open to all, and that every obstacle to its realisation should be removed from the path of every one of us. It may be a long road strewn with obstacles which appear at present impassable, but we know that it is the road we have yet to traverse, and it is as well to set that further ideal clearly before us. It is not sufficient for the race to throw up men and women of genius, or of saint-like character, once or twice, or twenty times in a genera-

tion, and to have hundreds of millions dull of intellect and harassed with cares that warp and twist their natures, natures which are capable of saintliness, and intellects which might—for all we know—if trained aright from their early years, have produced works of genius and beauty. For there is no logical reason why perfect health should not be the lot of every one, and unfailing happiness; why any item of knowledge, or any skill of performance, or appreciation of truth or beauty, or excellence of character, or enjoyment of the amenities of social life and order, should be denied to anyone; nor can any reason be assigned why these excellent virtues and capacities should not continue to enlarge with the years beyond any dream that we can at present form of them. We know the ideal in part and have in part attained to it; but the end we do not know, and we still have to grope our way, though with ever increasing light upon it, through group reform and nation reform and world reform. And as we find it step by step, the divinity which is in every man will be more and more liberated. For the divine is our true nature. There can be no doubt about it. Those Platonic ideals are the ideals which appeal to every man, well-born, well-educated and properly nurtured. It is only adverse circumstance and accident which can prevent them from finally becoming the possession of every one.

But does it really matter whether we have this faith in an ideal of manhood set up, as it were, in the very nature of things? Does it make any practical difference? Is it necessary for us to look more than a few steps ahead? Can we not

guide our wagon on the earth just as well as, or perhaps a little better than, if we hitch it to a star? Is there really a set path to be found, or can we go along any one of a large number of paths, picking our way without regard to any ultimate goal? Seeing that we cannot determine the goal, is not any ideal which we may formulate just our own imagining and idealising, and as likely to be right or wrong as any other ideal which anyone else may formulate? Can we not dispense with the notion of an ideal altogether, as being an unknown quantity which cannot affect any of our calculations? Is not "betterment" quite sufficient to go on with? I cannot deny this for those who think so. It is really a matter of personal temperament. Many of the best workers in the Ethical Movement move and act as men and women inspired, thinking no more of ultimate ideals than they do of a personal God. I can only bring my own testimony to the fact that these compulsions which I experience, and rejoice in, of a right to be found and brought into action, of a truth to be sought and boldly stated, of a beauty to be expressed in every construction, compulsions which seem to me to come out from the very heart of nature, do help me and fortify me. It is as if the universe was really on my side, as if righteousness and truth and beauty were as truly laws of reality as is gravitation itself. And I am sure that this has been the experience of the religious teachers and the prophets of all time. "Underneath are the everlasting arms." Fidelity, loving-kindness, justice: If these are what we seek, the whole order of things is with us; and I think

it must strengthen our hands in the work we have to do to hold such a faith. The ideal is the real, the eternal, established in the very fabric of things, the God within us seeking ever for liberation, and we have to bring it into actualisation in our own lives personally and in the life of humanity as a world-wide brotherhood.

# Some Ethical Tendencies in the Professions

By ROBERT D. KOHN.

**I**T IS DIFFICULT to judge of the actual result of any educational movement upon the whole body of citizens who are supposed to be affected by it. If an industry or a business adopts a Code of Ethics it is impossible to say how many of those engaged in that industry really live up to it; indeed, to estimate how many even know that such a thing exists. In the same way it is almost impossible to judge of the effect of the present tendency towards the wider "socialization" of the professions upon the whole body of professional men. There is such a movement in each profession. The group of forward-looking, socially minded practitioners in each field is searching for wider opportunities for service. There is also an easily discernible (and much larger) group in each profession which had no interest in change except it be to gain greater recognition for the service rendered, and, incidentally, greater reward for it.

It is obviously of value that the social importance of the professions should be recognized and that they be more adequately rewarded. As compared to industry they have always been handicapped in these directions. Particularly since the war these and all other "white-collar" jobs

have suffered economically. But within the limits of this brief review we must ignore this element of the problem, since in its ethical implications it does not differ materially from those of other vocations. Neither the reward nor the recognition accorded any vocation is ever based on a system whereby there is a just appraisal of the relative value of the service rendered to society. And even were such an appraisal possible, we should, of course, still be far from a truly ethical scheme of compensation.

At the very outset of our discussion it is important to distinguish between those movements within the professions which tend to enlarge the sphere of their usefulness and those few movements in the professions which are really new experiments towards a more democratic organization of function. The former are indeed merely enlargements upon that spirit of helpfulness which has always been a concomitant of professional practice in its best manifestations. But in recent times there have been interesting extensions of this principle. The practice of the profession of the doctor has for centuries been honored by its notable work for the relief of suffering. It is the most obvious example of a profession working for the perfection of a service independently of the monetary return. In this field the great extensions of preventive methods, the elaboration of research work, and the cleaning up of the infection-spots, even into remote corners of the earth, are all elements of the wider "socialization" of the Doctor's function. In this same direction we have, since the war, the allied societies of Engi-



neers trying to bring their expert knowledge to bear more largely upon the governmental problem of construction and the industry problems of production, efficiency and organization; of the Lawyers, to assume a larger responsibility for the doing away with the delays, complications and expense of securing justice for the poor; of the Architects, to help the poor to better homes; and the efforts of a profession hardly recognized as yet, that of the Community Planner, to bring order out of that world-wide chaos of city growth which has been caused by our unrestrained individualism.

Medicine, law, engineering and architecture have thus shown in recent years evidences of an ever-growing realization of their responsibility for the extension of their respective services over a much larger share of the public. The Webbs, in their surveys of the professions made under the auspices of the Fabian Society in 1910, spoke of the absence in all of the professions of an appreciation of this responsibility for the full extent of their respective services which the public had a right to expect. They referred also to the fact that the professions in their most competent exponents have always been attached to wealth; that is to say, the highest quality of each service was generally available only to those who could largely reward it. But this, fortunately, is no longer entirely true. Some of our most competent medical men are engaged in the preventive work of the Public Health Service, in the reduction of the tuberculosis evil, and in the fights for pure food legislation; some of our most able technical men are in the educational work to prevent acci-

dents, and in national and local fire-prevention campaigns. The same spirit is also evident in the alliances between engineering societies and architects to do away with "pork barrel" legislation in Government as affecting our public works programmes; and housing betterment is being advanced by co-operation between the leading Architects of the country whose individual services the poor could never previously have commanded.

But the movements for change within the professions which have the greatest interest for us are those few, as yet only in their beginnings, which seek to develop a clearer idea of the functional relation of any professional service to the whole process of which it is a part. That such efforts are of ethical import cannot be doubted, for the lack of understanding of the function of the individual as related to the functions of all the others in the democracy, and the inter-dependence of the function of one with the others, is one of our most serious problems, and causes most of our difficulties.

In this direction, while the signs of progress are only faint, there are none the less very definite tendencies worth recognising because of their potentialities. Such are the inter-professional organizations of the Middle West, the movements towards greater inclusiveness in the membership of various professional organizations, and the single example of an experiment in all inclusiveness—the building industry organization known as the "Building Congress." Perhaps the attempts at co-operation which cut across vocational lines during the war were as much respon-

sible as anything else for the breakdown in caste which these various movements indicate. Not that the separatist sentiment was a characteristic of the old-time professional organization alone. The American labor unions suffer from the caste spirit as much as the professions or the bankers' organizations.

It would be absurd to fail to realize that there is a field of valuable study of inter-relations between persons of the same vocation; but the ethical codes, the customs and even the techniques that are thus developed have always suffered from the lack of those correctives that can only be brought to bear upon them by persons engaged in other but related vocations. It is that test which has always heretofore been lacking. It was not only the soldier who during the war period found it necessary to subordinate and to co-relate his efforts to and with those of his comrades. In civil life any particular line of conduct was instantly subjected to the test of judgment as to whether it was or was not likely to advance what was for the moment considered the supreme common good. In that procedure the foundation of many vocational conventions was considerably shaken, and we see the result today in certain liberalizing tendencies, particularly in the professions.

It may be well to note in passing that there are elements within each vocation which must be kept distinct; a craftsmanship of the vocation, which can only suffer if it is vaguely to be mixed up with other techniques. In any effort to clarify functional relationships it is important to preserve intact those elements of a distinctive char-

acter in each function which are in part the cause of, and a just excuse for, an exclusiveness within certain limits. It could not be a forward step towards a democracy of function to wipe out distinctions between functions. The value to be discovered in the professional tendencies that we are considering lies in the fact that though the distinctions be kept clear, the inter-relations and the thereby resulting interdependence of different functions are to be more clearly appreciated.

Reference has been made to certain inter-professional conferences as being the first of the noteworthy signs of the times. Although an attempt was made in 1919 to organize such a movement nationally, it was unsuccessful, because the main impulse came from the East. There, in the larger cities, it was particularly difficult to bring together diversified groups of the different professions in centers where each profession was separately well organized. The movement, which had been inspired by Dr. Felix Adler took hold (from the original impulse given by the Detroit meeting) in the cities of the Middle West, and there are now a number of "Inter-professional Clubs" or "Inter-professional Groups" in Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska. In each of these there is substantially the same programme; monthly conferences on civic topics of common professional interest and discussions on the Ethical Codes of the different professions. There is every indication that in many of these groups a mutual understanding of function is being developed that is of great educational value to the participants.

The second move to which reference has been made is that general tendency of the various pro-

fessional groups to be less exclusive, or rather to be more inclusive. A number of the leading national organizations in the professions have taken steps indicating that they wished to include in membership and consider the problems of all of those practitioners who are trying to live up to the ethical standards set by their more prominent fellows, even though their work lies in those modest fields of endeavor which make them neither rich nor distinguished. This tendency has naturally met with the opposition of those who have considered election to a professional organization as a reward for distinguished achievement. It has receive the support of those who see in the contacts made possible in a more democratic professional organization a most effective educational force for raising the standards of the totality of the profession, extending the service and comprehending the function as a whole.

The third movement to which reference has been made, and which is on a distinctly higher plane, is the experiment of the Building Congress—a movement started by professional men, and at their invitation joined by all other elements connected with the industry. As yet only in its beginnings, there are already evidences that this type of organization is able to draw effectively into co-operation the most economically antagonistic elements of an industry, because of three basic principles. Firstly, it prohibits any action by majorities only; every element of the industry, acting as a unit through its representatives, must agree that any proposed action is desirable, otherwise no action can be taken. The second is that it includes in its field of action

only such subjects as all elements represented agree to be for the advancement of the service which the industry may properly be expected to render. It excludes contentious subjects; accordingly, the subjects of unionism or open shop and that of pay-rate are rigidly excluded. The third is that in its membership is included the technique of the building process, and hence it breaks down, to the advantage of the professional man as well as to labor and the employer, some of the barriers within this service which have always stood in the way of progress. The English war-time experiment of the "Parliament of the Building Industry" was apparently never intended to include (or, at any rate, did not include) the technical men. We have already learned that their presence in this American movement for the functional organization of an industry is absolutely essential, else no part of its educational programme could be advanced. As a rule the technical men of the organization are asked to assume leadership by choice of all the other elements. The resulting education of the professional man is by no means less important than that of labor, employers, manufacturers, or the financial interests in the industry, which are also included in the conferences. The reports of the "Building Congresses" in half-a-dozen cities indicate that prejudices are breaking down on all sides and new understandings are being developed.

It is unquestionably a step forward in the ethics of a profession to expand its horizon from the limited field of the interests of those who employ it to the wider interests of all who partici-

pate in the function. Particularly is this necessary in the relation of the professional man to labor. And the converse is of course also true. The manual worker feels himself much closer to the professional technique of his industry (because it is merely another kind of craftsmanship) than he does to the series of management and finance elements that stand between.

Thus, then, a beginning which has great potentialities has been made in this field. In reality it is a form of adult education, though as yet hardly recognized as such even by those leaders who are directing its course. It is not to be doubted that it will profoundly affect, and for the better, several of the professions. If it does so, other professions and other industries will follow the example set.





# On the Art of Living

By WILHELM BOERNER (Vienna).

**I**T IS ONE of life's most common and also its most trustworthy experiences, that the aspirations of man are toward the things he lacks, the gifts that have been denied him. The sick have an intense longing for health, the poor for riches, the weak for strength, the ill-favored for beauty. The wishes, hopes and ideals of the race reflect actualities, but with the conditions reversed. In the ideal, we place that into the foreground, which is lacking in reality. That with which we are endowed by nature is lost sight of in the ideal, the objective of our desires.

In this sense all Utopias, air-castles and visions of a life beyond are but reflections of actualities. And this explains why most people long for that which is almost universally lacking, namely, the "Art of Living."

Experience teaches us that among the many thousand bunglers and amateurs of life, we find scarcely one artist. How do we account for this scarcity? First let us try to conceive what this art of living is. Naturally, like all other arts, it is the forming, shaping, and we might almost say humanizing of a certain medium. Taking the word art in the narrower and more usual sense,

these materials are language in poetry, sounds in music, lines and color in painting, stone in architecture and in statuary, metal in sculpture, and bodily movements in the dance. But the material for the art of living is found in our aptitudes, our physical and moral powers, and our abilities; in the experiences and events of our lives, *i. e.*, that which, in its widest sense, stripped of all mysticism, is called our destiny. So the art of living demands our thoughts, our emotions, our convictions, and our actions.

The problem of the art of living lies in giving to this manifold, varied and complicated material a unity, a system, in short a definite form. But this problem can be solved only under certain conditions.

The first condition is a knowledge of the material to be formed. Only he who *knows himself*, knows, that is, his own strength, his limitations, his shortcomings, his faults; only he who has at his command a wide knowledge of human nature, and to whom life's industrial whirl is not a closed book — only he can arrive at the true art of living. It will always require a certain vastness of mental horizon. A narrow-minded, cloistered, inexperienced person can never be an artist in this sense, can never acquire the art of living. For this reason, all training, all thorough education, must consist in opening the eyes of even our children to the facts of life; and not only to its external aspects, but to its inner, spiritual, social and moral phases. We must point out and make clear to children, the relations of cause and effect in human behavior. We must show what motives are the standard for certain actions and what

effect our actions have on our fellow men, on the actors themselves, and on the community as a whole.

Educational trips and outings should be made to industrial plants and to cultural and humanitarian institutions. Older children and young people should be taken to visit schools for the blind, for deaf mutes, for the feeble-minded; to hospitals, asylums and penal institutions; in order to show life at its best and its worst; in order to give them an insight into the beauty and ugliness of life. Everybody knows the story of Marie Antoinette, who, while out driving with her lady-in-waiting, came to a large gathering of people. She heard loud cries of "Hunger! hunger! hunger!" The Queen asked her companion what the shouting meant. She answered: "They cry 'Hunger,' because they are so poor they have no bread." Whereupon Marie Antoinette suggested: "Why don't they eat cake, then?"

Whoever faces life so ignorantly, so childishly, can never become a master of the art of living.

We frequently hear the remark that we must not rob the child of his paradise, or even the grown man of his illusions. Our answer is that a paradise, a state of happiness, built on illusion, on lies and deceit, has no value for us, because it can have no solidity and no permanence. Precisely here lies the difference which distinguishes the art of living from every other art. Every other, by its very nature, deals with some appearance; but the art of living deals with reality itself.

The second prerequisite to an understanding of the material for the art of living is largeness of heart. He who cannot free himself from his

“dear ego,” who, instead of having a conception of the world and of life, has but a conception of self; he who reacts to all things in a uniform manner; who has a single, definite, one-sided view of the world; who looks upon life either as a torture or as a mere May-time frolic; who, in other words, considers man as an angel or as a devil,—he can *never* be one of life’s artists. He is the victim and the slave of his one-sidedness; either he will hate and despise life or he will trifle with it; but his life will never be a harmonious whole. And precisely in the harmonious development of life lies the essence of the “art of living.”

The third factor in the art of living is the progress made, the distance gained, in the tussle with opposing forces.

There are those whom life emaciates; who are carried along by its stream, floating without conscious thought; those who are swallowed up by life, who never find time to ponder either over its social problems or the meaning of their own existence. They are the “also rans” in life’s race, as it were. One is tempted to say: “Such people do not live, their lives are lived for them; their connection with life is not active, but passive merely.”

That surely is one of man’s most difficult problems: not to stand aside like a bored aesthete, and yet not to be engulfed by life; to lend a hand in the whirl of community affairs, and yet not lose one’s identity; to prove oneself in carrying forward the day’s work, and yet, in so doing, not to lose sight of the main trends and conscious goals of the personal life.

It is certainly true, that only as co-workers in

the community, only as participators in the common lot, only *with* men, *alongside* men, and *among* men, can we become real men. As soon as we withdraw from the life of the community, we surrender life's most precious gift; but it is not less true that in order most nearly to approach perfection, we *must* take with us into our own personal lives, an aim, a purpose, and an inclination. For this reason, a perspective of life is indispensable.

The fourth condition for the art of living is a graded scale of life's values. There are transitory, fleeting values and lasting goods; purely individual and social values; materialistic and idealistic values. He who faces all these without a standard, without criticism, thoughtlessly; he who sees no gradation in all this; who does not choose, discriminate, and then create a *cosmos* out of this *chaos* of values—he cannot possibly be one of life's artists.

And finally, the fifth prerequisite for the art of living is a strong will. Man must evolve a power to transform into action and realize in practice that which he has recognized as socially necessary and ethically good. Here the art of living means control and mastery of life, according to a definite, fixed plan. But this requires strength, endurance and courage.

Looking over these conditions for the art of living, we can readily see why there are so few masters of the art, why such people are so extremely rare; for the simple reason that there are so few people on whom the prerequisites for the art of living have been bestowed.

Knowledge of life, in its varied forms; large-

ness of heart; perspective; a rational gradation of life's values, and will-power—how easily these requirements are counted off on the fingers, yet how immeasurably difficult of realization! Indeed, because the art of living is so extremely difficult to acquire and hence so rare, for this very reason it is so highly prized and so ardently desired.

No doubt it must be clear that this valuation and longing strikes root deep, deep in the soul of man. The art of living seems not an end, but a means to an end.

We wish to exercise control over the art of living, not for the sake of the art itself, but because this art grants us that which has always been and always will be denied to the bunglers and amateurs of life:—inner satisfaction, contentment and happiness. And this longed-for inner satisfaction, the will to be happy, is, in the last analysis, the main spring of every human endeavor; be it a slight unconscious movement of the finger, or a far-flung social demonstration of the masses.

Man's pursuit of happiness assumes the most varied forms, masks and disguises; but it is ever present, ever at work, never resting. This never-ending search for happiness, functioning as a spiritual foundation and as the real cause of our longing for the artistry of life, is universally recognized.

Even by pessimists it is recognized. For they base their doctrine of the badness of the world upon this very fact; asserting that since this longing for happiness is active in all men and yet can never be actually realized, this world must

be the worst of all worlds. It is easy to prove that the philosophy of pessimism is one-sided and that it never can justify its stand in the face of complete, actual facts. But here another question is worthy of discussion.

We could take the view that "world-sadness" is a diseased state of mind, that pessimism, as a philosophy of life, is without foundation and that it cannot hold its own. Nevertheless, it must be affirmed, that while there is such unspeakable misery as at present, no human being is justified in being happy, contented and at ease. It should be considered unethical; one has no right to use the art of living to strive after personal happiness under such conditions. Let us not close our eyes to the terrible tragedies which are enacted all over the world, year in year out, in the haunts of the poor, in hospitals, in insane asylums and in prisons. Who could be happy and content in the face of such infinite misery? Do not the sufferings of the sick, the pain of a cancer patient, the grief of an orphan, the despair of a freezing, starving, homeless man, suffice to banish the slightest sense of contentment and satisfaction and to nip in the bud all joy of living? No doubt, such questions have a certain justification. Unless one is just marking time, unless one is stupid and superficial, one must sooner or later face the question: Has man to-day a *right* to happiness?

Before answering this question, another fact must first be considered. No matter how unjustifiable pessimism may be; no matter how firmly we may believe in social and ethical progress, and no matter how convinced we are of

man's ability to mitigate the sorrow, misery and wretchedness in the world, we cannot for one moment hope that we shall ever be able to wipe out all life's wretchedness completely.

We can eliminate only the wretchedness which man himself has caused. But all the evil arising from causes in nature beyond human control, must and will continue to exist as long as the world is constituted as at present, or until human nature undergoes an essential change. Under this head come all the ills caused by natural phenomena. This group includes the perishability of material forms; old age; death; the monotonous flow of time; the separation of human beings in space; the fact that past events cannot be recalled; the fact that every human being is an integral part of the age in which he lives; and finally, that external nature has no regard for man, and pays little or no attention to him.

In the face of such ills, we shall ever be helpless and impotent. Thus envisaging the misery and wretchedness to be found in the world, the objection might be sustained for all time that man has no right to be contented and happy.

If such an objection is justifiable *now*, it must be justified hereafter; and if at some later date it shall prove unjustified, then it cannot be really justified even now.

This too must be considered: as has already been said, the pursuit of happiness is the basic foundation of all human endeavor. To deny or doubt this would be to contradict all experience and fly in the face of the most certain facts. If there were no pursuit of happiness there would be no will to do, no motion, no action, no develop-



ment, no progress in humanity. That would be equivalent to the suspension of all life. Or, one may express the matter thus: the affirmation of life and the quest of happiness are one and the same. The question as to why this interdependence exists, is as idle as it is futile. Here we are brought face to face with one of the fundamental facts of nature, and the question "Why?" can only lead us into metaphysics and the boundless. If we acknowledge the right to live, we must accept also the pursuit of happiness as justified.

To be sure, this does not solve the problem. We seem to observe a kind of contradiction in nature. We notice a quest for happiness, necessities and desires among countless people, which do not promote life, but on the contrary retard it. Man possesses qualities, the exercise of which does not serve life but impairs it. All these cases point to an imperfect adaptation of our instinctive and emotional life to reality, to nature; and this disharmony can be observed from two aspects: from the standpoint of the individual and from that of the race. In this respect animals are better adapted to their environment than mankind. In the animal kingdom, instinct effects the harmonisation between natural conditions and the pursuit of happiness. Instinct, that unconscious urge, guarantees to animals the correct and proper adaptability.

These securely-working instincts, however, man possesses in no such measure. Yet to compensate him for this loss he has something incomparably more distinctive, and of higher worth. He has reason, the capacity for insight into the

relations of cause and effect among human actions; and he has self-control, the capacity to regulate and master his will, his impulses and inclinations.

These two capacities raise the entire sense-life of humanity to a higher plane. Not only are the passing impressions and conceptions of human beings associated with pleasure or pain, but so, too, are the most complicated thoughts and the most remote objectives of the will. Then, too, man finds contentment and joy in exercising his powers of reason and imagination, and in fostering ethical principles. Thus the pursuit of happiness is of the greatest significance, not only for life in general, but especially for the development of man's mental powers, for the promotion and development of technical skill, of science, art and morals.

It is self-evident that not every sort of pursuit of happiness can be considered justified, but only those can be counted right which enhance the life of the individual and of the race by contributing to the completion and the harmonisation of the general well-being. When a conflict arises between the life of the race and the life of the individual, the former is invariably to be placed first. And when we take into consideration that in judging and estimating happiness, the criterion is a two-fold standard—namely, the duration and strength of the condition of happiness, and also its extent, *i.e.*, the number of people benefited by it—then a scale of values for the blessings of life is established.

One of the most important tasks of all ethical culture, and of the art of living, consists in the

gradation of values: that is, in the right appraisal of the materials of happiness.

Now, if it has been proven that our striving for contentment and happiness is unceasing and inevitable, that we cannot renounce it, then the necessity for the feeling of happiness becomes self-evident. If human beings never reached the stage of feeling themselves genuinely happy, the pursuit of happiness would be abandoned in despair, because they would have learned to recognize it as an illusion.

We must have some experience of happiness, even in order to recognize and properly to estimate pain and misery. Pleasure and displeasure, gladness and sadness, are interdependent and imply each other. Sorrow as such could not come into our consciousness were it not thrown into relief against gladness. But since the experience of happiness is so vitally important, we must be able, at least transiently, to forget all sadness; both that which is avoidable and that which is not.

Thus we actually have a genuine right to be happy and feel contented, in spite of all the unspeakable misery here on earth. Were we to be continually thinking of the sorrow, the blackness, and the misery of life, we should eventually become not only grief-stricken, but inwardly maimed and shattered. We must be able to forget sorrow and devote ourselves to feelings of joy, because otherwise we could not be active, toiling, social human beings. Happiness has a strong, unifying, binding, socializing effect on men—it imparts vigor and energy.

He only can fully understand sorrow who

knows the feeling of joyousness. He who can be supremely happy, will sympathize deeply with the afflicted and feel himself powerfully constrained to help the suffering. Not until we have experienced great joy, can we realize what it means to be miserable.

Therefore, we maintain, that man has not only a right to happiness but a *duty* of happiness. This sounds like a paradox, because often, in fact as a rule, we assume an antagonism between duty and inclination. We can hardly bring ourselves to recognize as a duty that toward which our inclinations and wishes are directed. This conception, however, is not correct; and we shall later try to show, in how far one may rightly speak of an ethical "duty" of happiness.

Most people fall into the great error of looking upon happiness as something objective; they believe the gods, the divine Providence, or nature bestow joy or sorrow upon man. That is a child-like, a naïve conception. Happiness is always essentially human, subjective, personal. Nature as such, *i.e.*, viewed apart from thinking, feeling and appraising conscious beings, holds in itself as little of joy or sorrow as it does of wisdom or foolishness, of beauty or ugliness, of good or of evil.

Of course, nature has no such attributes; we but invest her with them, by virtue of our thoughts and comparisons; by virtue of our wishes, our hopes, and purposes. Nature exhibits only relations, changes, incidents, processes. These all lie outside such states of consciousness as gladness and sadness, truth and falsehood, beauty and ugliness, good and evil. The thought

and feeling of man create these categories. There are certain connections given between man and the surrounding world of nature. Nothing else! Even as these connections are reflected in his consciousness, in his intellect, in his feelings, even so is he made happy or unhappy. The same things, the same occurrence, may be reflected in one person as painful, in another as indifferent, and in a third as joyous. Nevertheless, in spite of these differences and variations, there is an orderly and constant connection between man's experiences and his feelings of joy or sorrow. If this relation of causal connectedness did not exist, there could be no laws of hygiene, no sense of right, no moral standard. Because there is a broad similarity between most men's spiritual and physical natures, they are approximately unanimous as to what is joyous or sad, beautiful or ugly, good or evil. Thus, the belief in an "objective" happiness has a certain justification; or, more correctly, an excuse, an explanation. Every opportunity to be happy may be spoken of as a happiness. Goethe's well-known lines express this thought:

Glück haben ist Schickalsgunst,  
Glück haben ist Schicksalsgunst.

("Good fortune is a gift of the gods; to be ever joyous is the real art of living.")

In the same sense is to be understood the epitaph which the German poet, Franz Dingelstedt, wrote for his own tombstone: "There was much good fortune in his life, yet he was never happy." ("Er hat im Leben viel Glück gehabt, und ist doch niemals glücklich gewesen.")

What he meant was that the external conditions and relations of life, which as a rule make for happiness in man, were present, but their joy-bringing effect was absent. This state of things is not seldom to be met with in life. There are many more conditions conducive to happiness in the world than we generally suppose. Precisely here lies the duty of happiness,—that we exhaust all these possibilities, with an eye to the utmost possible enhancement of life. We are justified in speaking of it as a duty, because the sense of happiness has such great social and ethical value.

One of the principal considerations in the art of living must be: "What should be our attitude toward life, in order to obtain the maximum of happiness?" Our most commanding duty lies in *not* looking at life through the eyes of the pessimist, because his is a one-sided view. A world which could give birth to such a poem as "Faust," to a Ninth Symphony and a Venus de Milo, is not wholly degraded; a world which has produced Plato, Kant, Mozart, Shakespeare, Michael Angelo, Copernicus, Edison and Darwin, is not altogether stupid; a world which possesses a Socrates, Giordano Bruno, Lincoln and Tolstoi, is not entirely evil and wicked; a world which embraces the starry firmament, the Alps, the ocean and the plains, is surely more than ugly! It is a falsification of reality to forget the exalted and beautiful, while gazing on stupid, common and ugly things. It is a "tendency-view"; in other words, a blind prejudice.

A further duty in this art of living is an accurate valuation of all the positive goods of life.

We overlook so many things in our judgment of the world. The general attitude is this: If a thing be good, pleasant, normal, we accept it as a matter of course; if it be improper or bad, we are indignant. Our attitude toward health shows this very plainly. What well person ever duly and properly prizes health? Who, for example, ever stops to think what a never-ending source of happiness we have in vision? The same may be said of the intellect, of a happy family life, of faithful friends, of success in one's affairs. He who possesses these blessings, bears himself as though they existed by necessity. Yet there is no necessity, no matter of course, about it.

Not otherwise is it with the loyalty and responsibility of our fellowmen. When we fail to come across them—when a business man breaks his promise, a waiter is inattentive, a street-car conductor is discourteous, a servant forgets something, a telephone operator gives us a wrong connection, a letter is lost—then we are highly excited and disgusted. No doubt, we have a right to be provoked at every neglected duty. Yet, why not rate the endless number of positive accomplishments of man correspondingly?

We condemn people unmercifully when they fail to act in accordance with our wishes. Yet, for the most part, we overlook it and express no thanks when our orders are correctly carried out and things are done well. This again shows a thoroughly distorted, one-sided, and unjust conception of the world.

Then, too, most people will always compare themselves with those who are in some way their superiors; as, for instance, with such as are

better equipped, in better health, more intelligent, more successful, or better situated than they. Why do we not just as often form comparisons in the opposite, the downward direction? This one-sidedness must again, of necessity, lead to a false estimate of life.

It must further be reckoned among the duties of the art of living, that one should rejoice in the so-called "little things" life has to offer. We have reason to take pleasure in every kind word, every friendly glance, every good deed, no matter how small. This open-mindedness, this receptivity for life's gifts is what we find so beautiful, so precious, in childhood. In this sense everyone should retain throughout life this art of being like unto little children. Here the moralist Bartholomaeus Carneri may serve as a worthy example to us. This artist of life was a cripple, and for many years sick and blind. But all his life he was cheerful and happy, because he was truly grateful for all the actual gifts which life afforded him.

Yet another duty lies in the suppression and control of our fits of temper, peevishness, anger and discontent. For from these comes suffering, both for the uncontrolled man himself and for his neighbors. As a rule, these moods spring from an over-estimation of outward things, or an under-estimation of the self. The more petty and mentally poverty-stricken a person is, the greater the danger that he will succumb to fits of temper. Hence such disturbances are always a sign of limitation of mind and spiritual penury. The noble-minded and open-hearted individual



will never let trifles embitter his life's happiness, nor let them interfere with the joy of living.

Finally, then, it is also a part of the art of living and of the duty of happiness that we may not pursue happiness for ourselves alone; i.e., we should not make our personal happiness the chief aim in life. He who is guilty of such conduct, will never quite realize true happiness; he will miss the opportunities; like the egotistical Peer Gynt, he will always be traveling along on the edge, and will just miss the realization of happiness.

He who madly pursues happiness for himself alone, has lost the race at the start. So the supremely important duty in the art of living consists in being filled with great social and humane ideals and purposes. So equipped, many things will be seen in a new and different light; then new perspectives will open up to us, and the pursuit of happiness will for the first time take on its real meaning.

Following the unalterable laws of his psychic nature, man covets a state of happiness. But yet, this desired state of consciousness must reach out ever farther beyond the purely personal sphere, and take on an ever more social, general and all-embracing character.

In other words: The supreme goal of the art of living consists in recognizing and finding our personal happiness in universal happiness, i.e., in the social welfare of all.

No one person may consider himself really and truly happy until he has contributed his share of strength, of labor, of love to the general happiness of all.

Let every man seek happiness thus, and he will surely find it.

Because the pursuit of happiness must necessarily follow a social trend, the "artist of life" must be a person who sincerely thinks and feels in terms of the common good of all.

He who would be an "artist of life" in the ethical sense, must experience within himself the fraternizing effect of a real state of happiness. And he will be life's master-artist who is most purely, most deeply and most practically possessed and inspired by the sentiment to which Schiller has given expression:

Seid umschlungen, Millionen!  
Diesen Kuss der ganzen Welt!

("Embrace, ye multitudes, and give to all the world the salute of love!")

# The Relation of the Ethical Ideal to Social Reform

By JOHN LOVEJOY ELLIOTT (New York).

**I**N MY RECOLLECTION of the ceremonies that marked the Twentieth Anniversary of the Ethical Movement, one expression of Dr. Adler's stands out vividly: "Thank God for the idea which has used me."

When the word idea is used as it is in this sentence, it is a term not easy to define; nor would a brief description be adequate. One way of learning its meaning would be to trace the idea in its effects, but that would require writing the history of the Ethical Movement. The purpose of this paper is much more limited. It is to sketch only one phase of the record, — that which the Ethical Societies have made in the field of social work. While the purpose of these activities has been in part to relieve suffering and to aid in philanthropic enterprises, even more the ultimate purpose has been to express some phase of our Ethical Ideal, and to reach out and establish better ways of living among men.

When Dr. Adler returned to America after his student years, he had already become deeply interested in labor problems, and one of his first undertakings was the establishment of a co-opera-

tive printing shop. This enterprise had a considerable degree of prosperity, but the plan had to be abandoned because many of the workmen preferred the greater material benefits to be derived from a return to the competitive system. A friend said to the young reformer, "If you wish to make a success of co-operation, you will have to begin in a school where it is taught." This was the origin of the Ethical Culture School.

While the chief practical work of the Ethical Society has been its educational activities, many other achievements stand to its credit. The building of the first model tenement houses in New York City was promoted by Dr. Adler. District nurses were placed in the free dispensaries in 1878, and since that time not a year has passed without leaving the record either of some new social enterprise begun in the Ethical Movement, or an enlargement of those already founded. Economic conditions have been affected in a number of ways, chiefly perhaps when Dr. Adler and other of the Ethical leaders have acted as arbitrators and impartial chairmen in the matter of labor disputes and crises caused by threatened strikes. In the matter of political reform changes have also been brought about. At one time an appeal came from the young men of the tenements presenting the situation of those self-respecting parents whose neighborhoods and houses were being invaded by prostitution, and the response made by Dr. Adler led to the formation of the Committee of Fifteen, which created a substantial and permanent reform in the City's life as well as the election of a great educator as Mayor. But the greatest effect which the Ethical

Society of New York has had on the City's life has not been exerted through any one specialized activity, but rather through the influence of the Sunday platform, where there have been discussed from the Ethical standpoint the paramount political and economic problems of the day.

That the connection of the Ethical Movement with social undertakings is not an accident nor due to the interest of a single man is proven by the fact that every Ethical Society in this country and every leader has been active in this field. Dr. Coit established the first social settlement in America. In St. Louis Mr. Walter Sheldon built up Self Culture Halls in various parts of the city, where for years they were among the outstanding features of educational progress and marked out in a clear way what has since been called the Workers' Education Movement. Mr. Chubb in later years has developed the method of expressing communal life through festivals and pageants, and he has repeatedly spoken on matters like that of municipal ownership.

Chicago never had a more useful member of its municipality than Mr. William Salter in the days of the great Chicago strike, when he went from workingmen's organization to employer and finally induced the conflicting parties to discuss the cause of their bitter and dangerous struggle in the open and before the public. Henry Booth House was founded and has been supported by the Chicago Society for years, and Mr. Bridges is to-day proving himself an effective and helpful friend of the colored people.

The Sunday platform of the Society in Philadelphia plays in part the rôle of a great forum

for the discussion of social as well as religious and ethical questions, and Southwark House is a product of the strength and vigor of the Ethical Society. After taking part in many courageous and helpful social and political activities in Brooklyn, Dr. and Mrs. Neumann have recently led the way in the founding of the second Ethical Culture School in this country.

Meanwhile the social work in New York has been constantly growing. Settlements like those of Madison House and Hudson Guild have been in existence for years. Fresh-air homes and camps and a co-operatively managed farm have been built up. In the larger fields, too, the Ethical Movement has made its effort. The first International Moral Education Conference was assembled by Dr. Adler, and shortly before the War a great Races Congress was held in London under his leadership.

There is a difference between the work done by the Society immediately under its own auspices, such as the education and Sunday Schools, and the attempts made in these larger fields of social and political reform. The activities undertaken in the wider fields have been carried on in conjunction with others, and express not only the particular point of view of those in the Ethical Society, but represent the interests and faith of other people as well. What has been accomplished in these ways has been done not only under the inspiration of the idea which founded the Ethical Societies but with the impetus which we share with others that comes from the ideas that are moving groups, classes and nations. Every organization has behind it some motivating idea

or power, and very often we find that those who are furthering the interests of some other organization than that of the Ethical Society are also helping to express ethical ideas and ways of living with which our own activities are fundamentally in accord.

To give an example of this unity from the practical work with which I am best acquainted, the Hudson Guild has not infrequently been called a peculiarly American institution. If this is true, it cannot be because we lay claim to being counted with those who represent "one hundred per cent. Americanism," or because we have always chosen the popular side. If the statement is a just one, and with a great deal of devoutness we hope that it is, it can only be because the Hudson Guild has attempted to found itself on democratic principles and methods. It is my firm conviction that between the ideals of democracy and the ideals of ethics there is a close connection, and that social organization acting under the inspiration of the Ethical Ideal has the responsibility and opportunity of developing and attempting to realize essentially the democratic point of view.

While I have no desire to be party to the poor and pathetic attempt made by many to exalt the achievements of the time in which we live, it is perhaps not too much to claim that the spirit of our age has its own great and distinctive message, and that our seers and prophets and statesmen have created that which is not only new but of permanent worth. The high tides of thought and intellectual power, of artistic genius and spiritual insight of other periods have left their eternal

marks. For those who seek knowledge and wisdom and beauty, the records of the Greeks are a permanent possession. When men strive to realize or embody the fact of life's significance in moral or spiritual terms, there is the history and thought and experience of the Hebrews that will always be their guide. A new kind of law and world order began with the Romans. But it may not be too much to claim that our own age has not only a worth-while but a distinctive insight into life, and one which is different from any other. The fathers of America who met at Philadelphia to form a new nation were trying to embody a new purpose.

Statesmen and reformers have received from many sources the impulses which guided them. The men and women of our time who have been most influential in shaping human life have most often been moved by a faith which had its origin in a deep and passionate belief in human beings; not only in those human beings who were fortunate and gifted, but their faith is one which takes in all mankind. It is Lincoln who, better than anyone else perhaps, has stated the case for the common man, and it is characteristic that the first great impulse, which dominated his whole life, came to him when he was standing by a slave-pen and an auction-block.

Miss Jane Addams has often been called the First Lady of the Land, and she has told us in "Twenty Years at Hull House" of some of the earlier experiences which led her into the paths which she has since followed. Vivid among them is the picture of the poorest people in the City of London bidding for decayed and discarded vege-



tables in Covent Garden, with a hunger and want which led them to act almost like animals as they devoured this food. Probably everyone who has devoted himself to social reform carries through life memories of a time when he witnessed the degradation of human beings. Jacob Riis stirred city-dwellers by his pictures of "How the Other Half Lives," and most especially with his description of children who were in want.

There is no experience connected with the memory of the war more vivid for me than the day spent in Vienna not long after the signing of the Armistice, when I was an onlooker in the feeding-stations and hospitals established for the starving and sick children. At one place there were gathered many hundreds suffering from rachitis, consumption and malnutrition. As I watched them in the wards and marching by in the playgrounds with their twisted limbs, their dwarfed and misshapen bodies, deformities so great in some cases that it hardly seemed as though they could belong to the human family, I thought of the words of the Founder of Christianity, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And walking up and down the room in the hotel that night, I had the experience of realizing that those poor little creatures were really kin of mine. They were my poor relatives, and I was their poor relative. It was little enough, almost nothing, that I could do for them. They surely could be of no service to me, and yet I knew that somehow we had one fate, and in their suffering the whole race was degraded. As

in Christ men have seen vicarious suffering, so I saw in them vicarious degradation.

The case for democracy has seldom been put better than by Dr. Adler when he said that democracy rests on the faith that there is an uncommon good in every common man; and this statement also puts clearly the case of ethics. Both democracy and ethics rest on a common basis. It is not the capacity for suffering as a source of intellectual, economic or artistic power in every common man, but that he is the embodiment of an inalienable worth.

The institutions of democracy, like the instruments of all governments, have to be made practically effective; and in the attempt to make them effective and permanent, there is always the danger that they may become alienated from their original purpose and depart from the ways in which they can achieve their sole purpose. It is peculiarly the function of ethics to point out the aim of democracy; and at this time, when our own country has achieved such enormous growth, and when the formation of a League of Nations has turned men's thoughts in the direction of even greater control from central powers than has ever been known, it is indeed an opportune moment for the statement of those propositions on which the Ethical Societies have based themselves. While in our Movement there can be no authoritative statement of the terms of our faith by one person for another, I believe it would be safe to say that there are three conceptions on which most of us will agree, which have a direct bearing on social organization, and which well

may guide the ideas of social change and betterment.

There is first the idea of the sacredness of the individual. Governments indeed have been based on the fundamental principle of vesting the final authority in majorities and giving to one man one vote. Religion has declared the brotherhood of man and the worth of the individual soul. But it has been left for the Ethical Movement, particularly in the writings of Dr. Adler, to point out that there should be recognized in social organization the differences as well as the similarities of men, that the differences are just as important to the individual as the similarities. And in social organizations these differences are constantly being overlooked in the interests of mass action; and in the desire for simplification there is always the tendency to treat people not only as units, but as perfectly similar units. I believe it is the failure to recognize this innateness of difference that hampers the work of many of our social institutions. We are beginning to recognize that it has to be taken account of in education, but we have not yet seen its significance in our political and economic associations. We have stressed similarity at the expense of difference; and I believe it is a message of eternal truth, and one which the Ethical Movement ought more and more clearly to state and attempt to exemplify, that the fundamental social principles must be based on unity and difference.

It is true that often the rights of the individual have been stated and often individualism has run rampant in thought and sometimes in action. So the second principle which I believe is largely

snared among members of Ethical Societies is that the worth of a human life is to be measured by the effect which it has upon other lives, and it is only possible through the family unity, through the social and political institutions which unite men in common activities, that the individual can find his use or the meaning of his life. Not in anti-social but in social activities are even the individual satisfactions to be found. The ethical life is essentially that which is dynamic, outgoing and positive, which draws people into association with each other, not merely for the sake of association but for that of achievement.

The third fundamental social conception is that there is an over-arching task for mankind; that, as the individuals are not separated in their purpose, neither are the groups, classes, nations or races; that in the establishment of a better life each has his contribution to make, and without the contribution of every distinctive element there can be no establishment of permanent good, neither lasting peace nor real progress.

While the statement of these aims, or principles, has been somewhat abstract, they are, I believe, the real, although perhaps vaguely held, ideas, not only of the majority of those who belong to Ethical Societies but of those who earnestly have attempted to work for social change. It is true that we may be moved by the memories of actual instances where human beings have been mistreated, or by the example of some great man or woman; but the social reformer is always moving out into the future and attempting to create new ways of living which embody new principles. We want law courts that establish justice; a

fairer distribution of wealth that will not only give new opportunities but will beget finer ways of living; better ways of dealing among the clashing, struggling and contending people that will lead to the establishment of better understanding. And unless the social reforms are guided by a clear conception of ends and principles they are likely to lose their way in the maze of practical affairs.

If I have not over-stated the case, and the social reformer really is animated by such fine purposes, why is it that social work and social reform have often had such a hard road to travel? Why does one so often hear the expression, "I hate a social uplifter"? There are probably many reasons; and some of them at least are inevitable, and not derogatory to one who works for social change. It is natural that those who are in power and have more than their share of opportunity and wealth should not wish to be disturbed. "Lass mich schlafen," says Fafner as he lies on his heap of gold. "Leave me alone," says Alberich as he applies the whip to the backs of the dwarfs. "Leave us alone," say the dwarfs themselves, "and let each one of us get as much as he can." "What do you know about government?" say many of the elder statesmen. "There have always been secret diplomacy, war, and destruction of the backward races."

So great are the obstacles that meet those who attempt to achieve the great reforms in government and industrial systems that these reforms can be accomplished only by those who are exceptionally endowed; and even they, indeed, are successful only when favored by rare circumstan-

ces. But there are today a great number of men and women who can make no claim to unusual gifts, who nevertheless are interested in attempting to create in practice new ways of living and working, new forms of social life. Many thousands of college students have been attracted to this field. So many today are entering the ranks of social workers that it might be said that our time is witnessing the creation of a new profession, a profession whose aim is clear enough, but in which the methods and standards have not yet been definitely determined and fixed.

It is a matter of primary importance for the future life of our communities and states that these methods and standards should be in conformity with the best that these young workers are capable of conceiving and achieving. And there is real danger that the difficulties in the way of making alterations in the habits of men, whether they be individual or social customs, and that the ambition for immediate and personal success, may change those who would really be social reformers so that in the end they become nothing but social conformers. Not only the ideal and hope for a better society must be clear, but the ethical principles which affect methods and immediate human relations must be achieved.

The pressure to make all activities conform to present-day industrial standards is almost irresistible. It is true that methods of social work should be made efficient, but if they only conform to the standards of efficiency their cause is lost. It is indeed a real struggle into which the social worker has entered, and unless he is aware of the nature of that struggle, unless he senses the

worth and preciousness of the life of the individual and the group, which under our present system is being degraded, he will never have the courage and the force to hold on and go on.

It is only natural that those who strive for better ways of living should be subject to all the ills that other flesh is heir to,—the impatience with delay, the desire for personal success, the weariness and discouragement that come to them as well as to all other human beings. The ability to secure funds to carry on an organization is dependent on being able to show immediate and altogether “practical” results. The desire of a worker to stand first, or at least to be considered among the first, is natural. The eagerness for power and place and distinction probably is to be found in all groups of men; but it appears most unfortunately when the purpose of an undertaking is the achievement of an ideal; and it is particularly obnoxious when, as in the case of social work, success depends on co-operation and uniting individual efforts into a great and common undertaking.

In some of the larger cities community chests have been formed, and for the sake of being relieved of the unpleasant task of collecting money the different social agencies have combined in a certain form of co-operation. In a number of communities there are welfare councils to prevent duplication of effort, but very rarely do we find groups of social workers uniting in any cause or in any way that is worthy of the finest aspects of their vocation, combining in a real fraternity whose purpose is joint action for a better civic, social and human life.

Community workers representing charitable and philanthropic enterprises are conscientious and hard-working people, but rarely does one find that their faces and words and actions carry with them the sense of the greatness of their calling. It is indeed a difficult thing to deal with poverty and crime and sickness and not become infected with depression. It is a hard task to be held to the rigorous standards of efficiency and not be satisfied with just being efficient. Many who have long been in the field and have known its life might well join with the colored people of the South as they sing their refrain, "I didn't know the battle was so hard."

But if those who seek to change society in its very structure, who are not satisfied only to improve and heal small injuries, to cure the lesser troubles, but who long in their hearts to see human beings living better lives, lose their faith in the best and finest possibilities of man, where shall we turn for hope? If the very vocation which seeks to improve all vocations has not its close touch with the finest life, how will it be possible to affect other occupations and professions?

The great leaders of democracy have had their vision. It was stated by Lincoln in his address at Independence Hall in Philadelphia when he said, "The Declaration of Independence was not merely the severance of the connection with the mother country, it was the expression of the hope that in due course of time, the burden should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and all men should have an equal chance."

If all men are to have an equal chance, not little but great changes will have to take place;



and it is in this direction that social work and social reform must always tend. The true object of social reform has been stated by Dr. Adler. "Social reform is the reformation of all the social institutions in such a way that they may become successive phases through which the individual shall advance towards the acquisition of an ethical personality."

It is to this appeal that the younger people from the colleges and universities have responded. It is this faith which many of the older workers through the years of their service have tried to keep. It is this ethical or spiritual element which is the living force of democracy, and which, despite all the failures and wars and frustrated attempts, still lives, perhaps a more widely spread hope now than ever before, in the hearts of old and young.

A new word is being spoken, or perhaps it would be better to say that an old message is finding a new response. For thousands of years the Hebrews have said in their temples, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord Thy God is one God." Through social work and through social reform at its best, that message is both being carried out and broadened. The call is not to one nation or one people, but rather to all men: "Hear, O People of the Earth, your life is one life." It is this message which ethics attempts to express in thought and words, and which social work is striving in practical ways to realize.



# Concerning Tolerance

By ROY FRANKLIN DEWEY (Chicago).

**"THE HERETIC** of today becomes the arch-enemy of all dissenters of tomorrow." In his sprightly, colorful work "Tolerance," Mr. Hendrik Willem Van Loon thus pithily sets forth a rather melancholy conclusion which must inevitably be confirmed by anyone who studies the history of man's struggle for freedom of thought and expression. That courageous figures in all ages, with a love for truth and a fiery desire to promote it, should have suffered and bled in devotion to their ideals is intelligible enough. But that many of these same men should later have donned the vestments of tyranny and oppression, playing the very rôles against which they had vociferously protested in the name of liberty, seems, at first glance, a little strange. Nevertheless, it is a serious historical fact that not a few individuals and groups who clamored most for toleration were anything but eager to practice it when the opportunity was given them.

Witness the implacable Calvin, who, taking up the cause of the Reformation against the intolerance and other iniquities of Rome, became obsessed with the will to discover and propagate the divine message of the Scriptures, and was soon engrossed in the amiable art of heresy-hunting. Directing his attention, for example, to the anti-

trinitarian blasphemies of Servetus, he succeeded in trapping this itinerant, conscientious Spaniard with the insatiable mind, and burned him at the stake. Consider, too, the case of the Puritans, who, harassed by the unyielding authorities of the Church of England, which they had tried to reform, migrated to America, only to employ here even worse tactics against the indomitable Roger Williams and the defenseless Quakers. In fact, the Christian Church as a whole derived singularly little benefit from the lesson of toleration which it should have learned during its persecution by the emperor Diocletian and his predecessors.

Obviously, the limits of this essay do not permit an extensive catalog of similar disfiguring incidents, with which the story of humanity is replete. Let it suffice to say, however, that the intolerant *volte face* was not confined to the Church, as one is reminded by turning to that ghastly welter known as the French Revolution, which, despite the slogan, "Liberty, equality, fraternity," was marked by the tireless activities of Robespierre and the guillotine.

How shall we explain such distressing changes from an attitude of loud insistence against persecution to one of despotism and abuse? We must begin by recognizing that the desire for self-protection, fear for the safety of one's own opinions or other interests, is invariably the root of intolerance, and that this unruly instinct, by virtue of its power, may easily become dominant in those who have been freed from oppression, as well as in those who have never known it. But does not this mean that, in all cases, the persecutors who have but recently been champions of sufferance

deliberately abandon their mercifulness for sheer malice or unalloyed self-interest? Certainly not. To reply in the affirmative would be a temptingly easy, but unfair, disposition of the problem. Such men may simply be unconscious of the fact that they are guilty of the same kind of reprehensible practices as they had condemned before.

While the unique thing in man is his self-consciousness, his ability to conceive of himself as both the subject and object of experience and to think in terms of relations, this power is merely incipient at birth, and develops only through experience. Moreover, during the entire period of life, it is exercised largely on those matters in which we are immediately interested, or toward which our attention is especially directed.

Now, tyranny is likely to inspire tolerance in men who are denied the right to think and to act as reason dictates, by forcing them to see themselves clearly in relation to their oppressors. Their own pitiful powerlessness is contrasted sharply with the overwhelming advantage of their persecutors, and they realize then that only through toleration can they follow the urgent gleam of the inner light. If we would behold how crystal-like the spirit of religious liberty may be formulated under such conditions, we have but to observe the credo drawn by the followers of Socinius, near the beginning of the seventeenth century: "Let each one be free to judge of his own religion, for that is the rule set forth by the New Testament and by the earliest Church. Who are we, miserable people, that we would smother and extinguish in others the divine spirit which God has kindled in them?"

Such ennobling indulgence, however, may be short-lived; for, when the down-trodden have been able to shake off coercion, and have the whip-hand themselves, it is possible for them to go their way without considering others, whose rights and needs are then merely ignored. In brief, those formerly persecuted lose the perspective which gave birth to their tolerance.

This limited, canalized self-consciousness, this failure to apprehend ourselves completely in relation to our fellows and to the events in which we figure, is revealed on all hands. Nowhere is it more piquantly recognized than by John Stuart Mill in his essay "On Liberty," when he says that "while everyone knows himself to be fallible, few think it necessary to take any precautions against their own fallibility, or admit the supposition that any opinion, of which they feel very certain, may be one of the examples of error to which they acknowledge themselves to be liable."

The poor day-laborer, struggling, hardly able to secure the meagre necessities for maintaining his family decently and for educating his children, denounces the luxury and extravagance of his wealthy neighbor, who is oblivious to the privations of the poverty-stricken. But if, or when, this disgruntled, discouraged toiler becomes affluent, does he bestow a tithe upon those whose circumstances he once shared? Probably not. He falls a victim to a profitably unserviceable memory.

Here, too, is an adolescent who bewails the parental misunderstanding of his needs and ambition, and vows that he will approach the problems of his own children with truly helpful, paternal solicitude. Will he later keep vividly in

mind the anguish of his childhood and put himself in the position of his sensitive son?

The point is, that although men may, and do, tyrannize over others, knowing full well what they are about, many are actually unconscious of their own intolerant tendencies, or have never analyzed toleration. So they readily extol it in the abstract, but think of its opposite in terms of the Inquisition, or of a variety of events separated from themselves by time, by "psychic distance." Believing in the principles of religious liberty, and separation of Church and State, they yet agitate vigorously for Sabbatarian legislation; proud of the Declaration of Independence, they are still ardent supporters of the Ku Klux Klan; branding the treatment of Galileo as an incomparable piece of folly and infamy, they nevertheless seek to prevent the teaching of evolution in the schools of their own land.

Among the classical pleas for freedom of thought and worship, one is especially noteworthy, because it contains an allegory, sometimes cited by muddle-headed preachers of tolerance. I refer to Lessing's drama "Nathan the Wise," in which he has recourse to a story invented by Boccaccio. A Mohammedan prince, desiring an excuse for depriving a poor Jewish subject of his property, shrewdly hits upon the device of asking the fellow which of the three great religions, Jewish, Mohammedan and Christian, he considers best. The Jew, having an enviable gift for parable, answers with the story of the wealthy man who owned a costly ring, and provided in his will that the son who, at his death, possessed the ring, should inherit his estates. In this way the ring passed from genera-

tion to generation. Finally, the owner, unable to decide which of his three sons to favor with the treasure, ordered two other rings, exactly like the first, and gave one to each. After the death of the father, a quarrel ensued over his property, each son holding a ring which was indistinguishable from the others, and each claiming to have the one valuable ring.

Without pausing to assay the paternal love which could express itself through this conveniently evasive scheme, let us admit that the narrative constitutes a graphic argument for sympathy with men of sincere, but divergent, convictions. To contend, however, that truth is imbedded in all great religious systems, and that each has some value for its adherents, is one thing; to argue that no one of them represents a clearer apprehension of the truth than any other is quite different. Insofar as the Boccaccio tale implies that Judaism, Christianity and Islam are practically as much alike as the three rings, it probably has led astray more than one earnest seeker for a solution to the problem of tolerance. Can we be tolerant only when we refuse to recognize a scale of values or to consider one body of doctrine as more worthy of acceptance than another? Even the thoroughgoing pragmatist, one imagines, would look with suspicion upon such reasoning.

No wonder, then, that alert, progressive-minded people, alarmed over the reactionary, prohibitory movements of the day, which are initiated and maintained by those who hold passionately to their opinions and purposes, should protest against the spineless attitude of declining, in the name of tolerance, to combat error and oppres-



sion, even by the appeal to reason. Nor is it difficult to understand why men, carelessly assuming that tolerance demands such negativism, should brand it as enervating rather than elevating.

Probably nothing has become more trite than reference to our deplorable habit of employing words and phrases mechanically, ignoring their implications, the result of which is confusion of thought, controversy and a variegated assortment of half-baked theories. But, since the word "tolerance" is rapidly achieving a place in our list of perversions, we cannot do better than to remember the devious paths followed by misguided interpreters of such doctrines as "the equality of all men."

The impelling necessity, consequently, for a re-examination of the whole problem of toleration is by now apparent. Only when we realize distinctly what tolerance signifies and requires can we hope to escape from the woful inconsistency between profession and practice. Only then shall we be able to determine how far, and in what way, to tolerate intolerance, which, as the eloquent Phillips Brooks once suggested, is the acid test of clear thinking on the subject.

Before considering some implications of the tolerant attitude, let us get down to definitions. What does the word "toleration" mean, as commonly used? When we tolerate an opinion or an act, we permit it to be held or to be performed without prohibition or prevention; we put up with it, although it is something which we dislike, or from which we dissent. And tolerance may be defined as the disposition to allow others

to believe or do what we ourselves do not believe or do.

Can we, then, be imbued with this spirit only when we have no positive convictions; or, holding them, only when we refrain from giving them utterance? Nothing could be more absurd. The differences which we endure in others often are definitely formulated opinions or conduct springing from them. Surely no labored argument is required to prove that it is both possible and consistent to permit others to hold fast to their beliefs while we adhere firmly to our own. As one who is not aware of any compulsive evidence for immortality, I may express to another, who believes there is proof of it, the grounds of my doubt, without denying him the right to cherish whatever fanciful theory he may choose. What is more, I may wish, even urge, him to think as he does until reason induces him to change.

There are Jews, Mohammedans and Christians, of course, who subscribe to their respective creeds simply because they have blindly inherited the traditions and faith of their fathers. At least some, nevertheless, have rationally embraced one religion rather than another, believing that it was nearer the truth and better able to meet their needs, not because they fatuously considered all religions on a par.

Positive convictions are indispensable guides to a well-ordered life, and may go with an open mind, ready to alter its viewpoint with the introduction of new, incontrovertible facts. As moral creatures we must act, and are continually confronted with situations in which we unavoidably have to determine whether love is nobler than

hatred, or truth more sublime than falsehood. Perceiving clearly the true ideal of human conduct in living so as to enhance the lives of others, one can still recognize that the experience of mankind will necessitate marginal changes in that ideal. For Plato and Aristotle the goal of life was the perfection of humanity, but it did not mean to them precisely what it implies to us now. Perfectible humanity, in enlightened democratic thought today, includes all men, not only the select classes of the ancient Greeks. Again, certain that the expression of our belief in the sanctity of human life will necessarily alter with expanding knowledge, we may still hold firmly to the conviction that we can never repudiate that doctrine itself without proving recreant to our rational and moral nature.

As the lives of martyrs and the immortal voices of men like Locke, Milton and Jeremy Taylor have testified, the progress of civilization has ever been stimulated by the staunch faith of individuals who stood out unflinchingly against the opposition and persecution of their fellows. The resolute, lucid vision of Jesus eventuated in the Christian religion; Luther's in the Reformation; that of Copernicus, in the heliocentric astronomy. Recall the words of Mill: "The peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is, that it is robbing the human race; posterity as well as the existing generation; those who dissent from the opinion, still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right, they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a bene-

fit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by its collision with error."

Let us remind those who vigorously contend that tolerance and certainty cannot go hand in hand, that we frequently are most tolerant when we have rational, demonstrably true convictions. It is when we have no reasons for our positions to marshal against those differing from us that we blindly and passionately seek to overthrow by force the objects of our fear and dislike. We look rather indulgently upon the poor fellow who refuses to admit that the earth is round, that the whole is greater than any of its parts, or that a cause is bound to be followed by an effect. These scientific facts are readily verifiable, we know, and are in no danger from the attacks of the incompetent. When Mr. Voliva, therefore, vouchsafes the information that our well-known planet is disk-shaped, we smile and go about our business. So much the worse for him, if he wishes to live in a fairyland.

Phillips Brooks once made the comment that, significantly enough, we are often more tolerant of those who differ from us by a wide gap than of men whose view varies but slightly from ours; and Seeley wittily remarks that the mortal extreme of intolerance can be observed among men who do not differ at all, but have adopted different words to express the same thing. Where the divergence is great, the reasons for it are likely to be more apparent. Fundamentalist Christians who have clearly thought out their position may be more compassionate toward Mohammedans, whose religion proceeds from radically different premises, than toward their modernistic brethren, with

whom they have much in common. What could be more repugnant to a devout Catholic than the apostate liberalism of a George Tyrrell?

All this, obviously, is not to say that adherence to definite beliefs may not be accompanied by repressive or coercive measures, as the atrocities of the witch-hunters and similar persecutors abundantly demonstrate. They undoubtedly had what to them seemed a reasonable, sound *Weltanschauung*, but they resorted to quite unedifying methods in their attempt to impose it on others. The point of the argument thus far is merely that man, as a rational being, inevitably holds and expresses definite ideas about the world he lives in and about his relation to it, and that only by so doing can he develop or contribute to the common task of the race. Also, that, while invoking the reason of others for the confirmation or acceptance of his beliefs, he can tolerate theirs, refusing to put them down by any kind of compulsion.

But to proceed. Tolerance having been defined as the attitude of mind impelling us to endure opinions or practices at variance with our own, how can we be considered tolerant, accurately speaking, when we try to get rid of them by argument, if in no other way? Further explication of the word is imperative. Tolerance implies not only positive convictions of our own, but a spirit of kindness and helpfulness toward those who differ. And this demands that, at times, we refrain from *expressing* our convictions, preferences or aversions. While endeavoring to change the beliefs of others through a challenge of their reason, we may be sympathetic and genuinely

helpful; but, *per contra*, we usually betray a lack of that spirit when we attack, if only by logic, everything which has no place in our own lives. Therefore we justifiably fasten the label of intolerance upon the man who incessantly and gratuitously criticises the viewpoint, dress or mannerisms of another. Insistently proclaiming, for example, his religious outlook, in season and out, he fails to see that it cannot mean to others, at the moment, precisely what it does to him, and that consequently he may be far more destructive than inspiring. Tolerance, then, is not only a disposition, but an art.

If someone inquires your opinions on Buddhism or the Prohibition Amendment, you may tell him as unmistakably as you can; but you desire him to become, or to continue to be, a Buddhist or a disciple of Mr. Volstead, according to his own judgment. Or you may voice your beliefs on these or any other subjects, to a group of people, who, by their very presence and attitude, unquestionably indicate their desire to know them. Again, I may protest against the establishment of a state church, whether the advocates of so retrogressive a movement want to hear from me or not, simply because I am sure that, under such a scheme, I should probably not be able to express my religious nature in my own way. All of which, consistent with a feeling of serviceable sympathy, is quite different from the egocentric obsession displayed in the effort to batter down, in every passer-by, the convictions or customs which he considers sacred and sound.

In the final accounting, the *sine qua non* of tolerance is respect for man *qua* man, regardless

of color, creed or temperament. Firm, clear-cut convictions, while compatible with, and usually concomitants of, tolerance, are not indispensable to it. That is to say, we may permit others to promulgate the doctrines of Henry George or Karl Marx, and still be mentally amorphous ourselves on the questions of the single tax or the economic interpretation of history. But without sympathy and reverence for those who differ from us we cannot be truly tolerant.

The plea for freedom of thought and expression on the narrow utilitarian ground that it is necessary for the advancement of mankind in the sciences and arts is feeble indeed. If, let us say, the search for scientific truth and the creation of works of art were our sole or chief concern, persecution and tyranny might at times be justifiable. We espouse the cause of freedom, however, precisely because, as moral creatures, we believe that human life is sacred, personality inviolable, and that every one possesses a potential best which it is our common duty to evoke. So we protest against the law of the jungle in the relations between human beings, reject the doctrine that might is right, and denounce the artist or scientist who places his professional interests above the sanctity of personality.

We must not forget, then, the two fundamental elements of tolerance: respect for man, and firm convictions which result from unbending devotion to truth. To rule out either of them, or to see them in false perspective, inevitably leads to persecution or stagnation. Considering the security of the Church of primary importance, the authorities of the Inquisition snuffed out the lives of

innumerable saintly men and women. And over against such myopic fanaticism we must set the devitalizing, obscurantist influence of those confused individuals of our own period who think that tolerance or respect for man excludes positive beliefs and determined purpose.

Having analyzed the spirit of tolerance we need not scrutinize at length the transparent counterfeits which parade under its name. But we may recall the fitting remark of Lord Morley: "Let us be quite sure that we are not mistaking for tolerance what is really nothing more creditable than indifference." Furthermore, let us not confound with that virtue those snakes in the grass, impotency and expediency. While multitudes of sincere Catholics are no doubt tolerant individually, we are still awaiting the day when Catholicism as an institution shall clear itself of the dark suspicion that its frequently alleged tolerance is merely its present powerlessness to coerce others in America, its belief that the time is not ripe for vigorous action.

Now, having concluded that we may endure the opinions and acts of others without being genuinely tolerant in disposition, we still must grapple with another question of profound importance. Are the persons who profess tolerance never justified in opposing the objects of their disagreement by anything but moral suasion? Do love of truth, and reverence and affection for our fellows, forbid us to resort, at any time, to legal restraint or compulsion? Bearing in mind the palpable necessity for such laws as those interdicting murder or theft, all of us, no doubt, would promptly answer in the negative. A moment's



reflection, however, will indicate that here we are touching the crux of the problem of tolerance, the difficult question of the limits of an individual's freedom insofar as he is part of an organized group.

Probably we can best come to grips with this phase of the problem by discussing a situation which almost invariably provokes distasteful controversy. A man holds office in a long-established church, representing a definite body of doctrine which is presumably known to all its members. Growing radically away from the historical position of his church, which is still, at least tacitly, subscribed to by the majority of communicants, he yet refuses to resign his function. Should he be allowed, in the name of tolerance, to continue to exercise it, when in so doing he misrepresents the institution's viewpoint and purpose?

The authorities of the Episcopal Church in America apparently were confronted with this unpleasant dilemma when they ejected from the episcopate the Rev. William Montgomery Brown, who, according to the charge, was publicly placing an heretical interpretation on the creed and liturgy of the church. If the indictment was correct, what else could these poor churchmen have done? The argument that the venerable, kindly and high-minded cleric, having devoted long years to the service of his church, should have been indulged, is not without its tender appeal. But remember that the organization had been founded, and is maintained, not as a refuge for men of his latitudinarian views, but for avowed adherents of a specific faith.

We in the Ethical Movement may well regret

that it should be deemed necessary or prudent to demand unequivocal assent to a narrow, hide-bound creed; but when men *do* form a religious fellowship on that basis we cannot deny them the right to exclude and to send elsewhere one who does not accept it. To insist otherwise would be to say that a society established to promote the interests of engineers should not bar lawyers, or request the resignation of a member who had turned to the practice of medicine. Suppose that a leader of our movement should require of applicants for membership in his society the repudiation of belief in the efficacy of prayer; or, becoming enamored of the high Anglican liturgy, should arbitrarily incorporate part of it in the Sunday service. Ought the members, under our non-credal, non-sectarian bond of union, to tolerate such aberrances? I admit that this is an exceedingly grotesque supposition, but it illustrates the point.

The problem of the liberty of the individual in his relation to the state is also undeniably intricate, and cannot, unfortunately, be solved by any thought-saving rule of thumb, as innumerable well-meaning reformers have discovered to their sorrow and chagrin. It would be mere presumption, therefore, to pretend that the subject could be readily disposed of here. All we can hope to do is to indicate roughly the direction which, it seems, our future efforts for freedom should take, in line with the foregoing argument for tolerance.

Standing out unmistakably above the ludicrously puerile agitation of "loyalists" and of pseudo-historians for the teaching of "one hundred per cent. American" history, is the fact, now known

to every school child, that our colonial fathers availed themselves, in 1776, of the opportunity to try a new experiment in popular government. The keystone of the structure of these United States being equality, each citizen to have the same kind and amount of liberty as is enjoyed by others, the question is, What are the boundaries of this freedom? Broadly and negatively, the answer is, of course, that no one is free to commit, and the state cannot permit, acts which are inimical to the reign of law and order forming the very foundation of the Republic, or which ignore the personal rights clearly specified in its Constitution. No one, in brief, can be accorded liberty to disregard or violate the essential purpose of our organization as a democratic government. But the growing social needs of our complex national life render it ever more imperative that we determine to what extent the state may justifiably augment its list of prohibitions and undertake constructive tasks necessary to the general welfare, thereby imposing upon its citizens responsibilities which many do not wish to assume.

Here we come abruptly upon the conflict between the adherents of the *laissez faire* doctrine and the advocates of an enlarged sphere of government. As early as 1735, the Marquis d'Argenson insisted that non-interference was the only safe and sound political slogan: "To govern better it is necessary to govern less." And it was Wilhelm von Humboldt who maintained, with a commendably zealous concern for freedom, that "the state is to abstain from all solicitude for the positive welfare of its citizens, and not to

proceed a step further than is necessary for their mutual security and protection against foreign enemies; for with no other object should it impose restrictions on freedom."

The fear of these early political individualists, that the state, in attempting what can adequately be done by individuals, would become paternalistic and tyrannical, was not without foundation, and has found its confirmation even under the democratic method of government. For it has become increasingly evident that the majority of citizens, which in a democracy constitutes the sovereign power, may be just as intolerant and oppressive as any other sovereign.

Nevertheless, the miserable weakness and flagrant negativism of the *laissez faire* theory cannot be denied. He who is dominated by it is apt to see his relationship to his fellow-citizens only when he actually harms them; at other times, to conceive of himself as an atomistic individual. When you tell a man that he may do what he wants to do, provided he does not prevent others from doing as they please, you appeal largely to a narrow self-interest, and foster a complacent apathy toward the social initiation of measures indubitably requisite to the improvement and enrichment of the common life. And, unless we do undertake these things collectively, when no individual is able or willing to do so, how are they to be accomplished? Think how deplorably lacking we should be in such beneficent institutions as schools, libraries, parks and playgrounds, if their establishment had been left entirely, or primarily, to private effort.

Can we rest with the old, negative conception

of freedom, which supposes that a man is free simply because he has the privilege to vote and to stand on a legal parity with everyone else in a court of justice? Fortunately, the implications of freedom are forcing themselves upon us with ever greater insistence, and we are beginning to perceive that disease, filth, ignorance and extreme poverty are momentous obstacles to liberty in the fullest sense—obstacles which may be broken down or reduced by the united, persistent attacks of all of us. The ideal of freedom, therefore, must be reconstructed, so that it will mean freedom to do what we ought to do as members of a society of like beings: to call forth in others, and in ourselves, the unique potentialities of mind, heart and will which are indispensable to the highest life of the community.

Vigilance will always be the price of liberty, and to accept this ideal of freedom is not at all to simplify our task or to relieve ourselves of the necessity for carefully scrutinizing all proposed compulsive or prohibitory legislation. Guided by it, however, we shall be better able to guard, on the one hand, against paternalism and tyranny, which paralyze the initiative and will of men; on the other, against stark atomism, with its cold indifference or frank hostility toward a better social order. For this ideal, based as it is upon love of truth, passion for growth and reverence for the personality of every individual, is opposed to paternalism, tyranny and atomism alike. And it exposes the nonsense of tolerating the destructive forces of life, which, after all, are intolerable.



# Ethical Culture in Germany After the War

By RUDOLPH PENZIG (Berlin).  
(Written in 1915.<sup>1</sup>)

**I**F THE MOVEMENT for Ethical Culture were that which many enemies of the term accuse it of being, namely a purely philosophical, intellectual sport indulged in by certain social circles, we could well ask for the meaning of the designations "before" and "after" the war in this connection. For a philosophy is right or wrong the day after to-morrow as well as to-day, and its truth is never influenced by occurrences in

<sup>1</sup>EDITOR'S NOTE.—The condition of Dr. Penzig's health unfortunately rendered it impossible for him to write a special contribution to this volume. Rather than let this book appear without any message from so old and respected a colleague, I availed myself of his suggestion that we should translate a paper published by him in 1915, which could not, under war conditions, be made accessible to readers of English, and indeed has never before now appeared in our language. Lapse of time has rendered some portions of this essay obsolete, and considerations of space have necessitated some abridgment; but what is here printed, apart from its permanent intrinsic value, has the special charm of demonstrating how magnificently the humane and catholic temper of the Ethical Movement was maintained by our German colleague during the most trying years of the war. The reader should bear in mind that every word here reproduced, including the kindly and courteous references to the then enemy countries, was written by a German in Berlin in 1915, solely for a German audience, and with no expectation that it would ever reach the outside world.

practical life, no matter how important they may be.

Entirely different is a social, ethical, political or economic movement, which seeks to achieve definite practical results. Here it is evident that radical changes in the external career and in the internal experiences of a people will bring about important changes in the desires, feelings and thoughts, as well as necessitate postponement of the most outstanding tasks, that any societies or organizations for the advancement of ethical culture may have set for themselves. Fundamental changes in the nature or in the aims of such a society may not be necessary—that has not even been the case with such societies as those for the advancement of peace, and the like, whose activities, although interrupted by the war, had their existence justified by the same war—but rather certain of the tasks of such organizations are brought into the foreground, while others are temporarily relegated to the background; so that, on the whole, the external character of the organization does appear somewhat changed.

That the Society for Ethical Culture did not find it necessary to be untrue to its original purpose and reason for existence when suddenly the sham culture of the well-bred and educated European peoples collapsed before the force of the still unconquered bestiality of war, is a fact in which we can find no little satisfaction. When the question was asked us: “What shall happen now—when we are at war—with ethical culture?” we were able, in August, 1914, calmly to reply that we should see our brothers in our



enemies, and keep resolutely in mind the ideal of the cultural unity of mankind.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps to many, it may seem still too early for us at this stage, when the war is still raging, and when no one can predict in what economic and spiritual conditions our people and humanity will find themselves after the war, to seek to plan the future programme for ethical societies. May not the work differ, according as it may be done for a victorious or a conquered people?

It is certain that there will be minor differences, especially in the *national* aspect of ethical culture. But let us not forget that ethical culture is, primarily, a matter which concerns *humanity at large*. Dr. Friedrich Jodl wrote, as early as 1893:

Ethical culture can no more be limited in its activities by political boundaries than by the differences between economic and social classes. It is the common concern of the entire human race, and can achieve its greatest amount of good only when it is not kept within the limits of a single nation or a single race, but when its spirit pervades all of human society. Ethical Culture is fundamentally international, not because it disparages nationalities, or regards them as ethically valueless, but because it believes *that the highest development of a national life is impossible except under an ethical organization of the whole of humanity.*

Let us remember also, that, just as after a battle there are no longer friends and enemies, but only *wounded*, so after this war there will be in all probability neither *victors* nor *vanquished* in the strict sense of the words, but only a *humanity*, bleeding from deep wounds. The task

<sup>1</sup>See *Ethische Kultur*, vol. xxii, No. 16.

of Ethical Societies after the war will not be merely to act as a "Society of the Red Cross" for the social struggles of mankind, but in their work of healing the wounds which morality, justice, humanity, mildness and mutual respect have suffered, they must bear in mind a still higher purpose, the creating of a union of mankind which will make impossible the inflicting of such wounds, in the future, and forever. At all events, it is possible to-day to secure an insight into the great work that must be done after the war by all men of good will, even though additional special tasks concerning the treatment of this or that particular people on account of national peculiarities may later on appear.

It will be of value to us now to enumerate succinctly all the moral tasks which our movement had set for itself before the war, preparatory to an investigation of what we may expect to accomplish after the war. In 1892, as now, our work was closely tied up with, and determined by, the state of affairs in which national politics in Germany found themselves. This was one of great complexity, due to the struggle between the Government and the Socialists, and to the strife of Catholic and Protestant, with the attempt on the part of the Protestants to denominationalize the entire school system.

Into this infinitely difficult and strained situation the founding of the German Society for Ethical Culture came as the attempt at a conciliatory force which, independent of party lines, sought to bring about better understanding between the educated and property-owning classes and the powerful labor movement. It was natur-

ally destined, despite its sincere and upright protestations of political neutrality, to incur the distrust and hatred of all fanatics, the fanatics for authority, denominational politics and violent "Realpolitik," as well as of those agitators who were exponents of the class struggle and the demolition of capitalism. The movement for Ethical Culture did not find the support it expected in the leading circles of society, despite the strong interest that was at first shown in intellectual circles, who saw in it a possibility for advancing their own particular purposes. Dr. F. W. Foerster very fittingly characterized, in a report of the international ethical secretariat for 1898, the opposition that was met on all sides:

The apparently unpunished success of an era of a ruthless governmental policy of coercion on the one hand, and the apparent powerlessness of idealistic efforts at a unification of the fatherland on the other hand, have stifled in all levels of society, irrespective of political lines — but particularly in the circles of academic idealism — the faith in the historical power of a moral ideal, and have allowed to take root in its place the conviction that all great social changes are brought about only through a pact with the devil, and that humanity advances, not by means of the gradual growth of fidelity, sympathy, and insight, but by means of so-called great, decisive acts.

The "ideology" of the advocates of Ethical Culture was ridiculed in the same manner as a "bludgeon-pedagogue" would laugh at the idea that an education of the will is possible without the use of physical violence. The type of society which all ethicists are striving to attain, a society

in which justice and truthfulness, humanity and mutual regard would prevail, was regarded as a beautiful Utopia, a golden age, the necessary requisites for which were, however, totally absent in actual humanity. It was not denied that everyone was suffering under the existing conditions, in which selfishness, violent greed, insincerity and untruth, unbridled sensuality, intolerance and quarrelsomeness were reigning factors; but these circumstances were either regarded as unavoidable imperfections of this world, or it was thought that change could be brought about rather through a sudden revolution than through any such infinitely slow and painstaking process as the education of an entire people. There was no lack of movements for the reform of our order of society, for the alleviation of the sick organism; but that such movements must begin *with the individual*, that perforce we must begin with the conscious creation of a good will, of an "inner consecration"—these were tones that had hitherto been heard only here and there in narrow religious circles, and were looked upon as the penitential preachings of ecclesiastical recluses. Prof. Jodl says: "Ethical culture has at bottom no other aim than to instil in its students and adherents the spirit and courage of sacrifice." "Ethical societies," wrote Hugo Reinhold, "should, above all, be societies for the cultivation of the *inner life*. . . Never has there been a successful reformer, whose reform did not begin with his own life. What unites us all, then, is the firm determination to ascertain what constitutes our duty." In almost religious tones, Ferdinand Toennies wishes to "assemble all those who are

firm in the conviction that there is a *peace of the soul* that is more valuable and indispensable than what is called soundness of body, namely a frame of mind that daily cleanses itself of desires and lower emotions, steels itself in work and thought, and refreshes itself in simple, wholesome joys." And in strong terms, Felix Adler, at the Congress of Zurich in 1896, warns us of a reformation which begins always with *the others*, with society:

The Ethical Movement has the task before it of warning man of the danger of losing his individuality in an ill-understood zeal for the welfare of others and of expending his entire energy on social reforms. In truth, a man cannot be a source of help to his fellow men when he fritters away his personality on strangers, but rather when he uses it up *within himself*.

As an essential prerequisite for all further activity, then, there was recognized the necessity for the moralization of the Self. As everyone who understands human nature will know, however, this does not mean that therewith it was done. To what extent such activities as public lecturing, practical welfare work, the establishing of public reading rooms and libraries, bureaus for free legal advice, charitable agencies, etc., have contributed to the possibilities for the elevation of the Self, can only be conjectured. The conditions of the times determined the direction which the *outward* activities of ethicists were to take. Deviating from the policies pursued by the American and English societies, which attempted to replace religious cults with ethical culture, the German Ethical Society set as its task the bringing about of a reconciliation between the opposing

social elements in the nation. To relieve the great social strain was its task.

It is well known that the voice of the Socialist leader Robert Seidel, who approved our objects, and a number of similar voices, remained isolated, and that the social-democratic party, under Bebel's leadership, rejected the Ethical Movement as a "product of fear on the part of the bourgeoisie," merely because the movement declined to be unconditionally subordinated to the prevailing party programme and dogma. The development of that party, especially since 1903, and the close contact between the so-called revisionism and the Ethical Culture work, seems nevertheless to indicate that a neutral and non-partisan study of the entire run of social questions would contribute more to a solution of our social problems than anything else. The feeling is gradually growing, that the solution of our problems lies not in the triumph of any particular group, nor in the socialization of the means of production, but rather in a popular education of personalities, founded on social-pedagogical principles. We are indeed still far removed from the clear acknowledgement made by the speaker of the English socialist-labor party, who, as early as 1898, publicly said:

Even if to-morrow we were given the most perfect social organization and constitution, our social questions would by no means be solved, if these institutions were not permeated and supported by a far higher understanding of the duties of a citizen and of a human being. The Ethical Movement must become the religion of the Labor Movement.

To what extent the quite obvious moderating of the antagonism between social-democracy and the middle classes in the last two decades has been due to the work of the ethicists in intellectual circles, among those of education and wealth, cannot be determined with any degree of certainty; perhaps we can nevertheless point out modestly that only since 1892 has the idea of an "ethical" aspect to all political questions appeared in the broadest publicity, to remain permanently.

The two great lines of action of its public activities were given to the Ethical Society almost against its own wishes, by the circumstance that it had its origin in the opposition to the denominationalizing of the schools. Even up to the present time it has had to defend itself—with more or less justification, inasmuch as occasionally isolated personalities must be excepted—against the accusation that it is fundamentally an anti-clerical or even anti-religious society. Of course, the very fact that it wishes to accomplish its aim of moral education of the masses "independently of all shades of religious belief" was destined to incur the enmity of denominationalism, which regards religion only in the garb of creed. Whoever, like Prof. George Gizycki, wishes "in religion, in philosophy and politics to grant complete freedom, and wishes so to serve the purpose of mutual respect and reconciliation of opposing sides," never succeeds in convincing the partisans by his declaration of neutrality. There the old maxim "Whoever is not for me, is against me," is applied. If, in addition, there is set forth a firm, scientifically founded theory of the essential independence of morality from re-

ligion, and furthermore a practical propagandist work for the solution of all moral educational tasks outside of the limits of the parish, it would seem indeed almost impossible to expect that the Church should not see in this new spiritual movement a competitor, if not an opponent to its endeavors, and not, as we originally hoped, a co-worker in the winning back of the people to the service of an ideal. In support of the thesis of the independence of morality from religion, we cite the words of Jodl:

Two facts must be admitted, even by the most zealous defenders of religious belief. The first of these is that the religious manifestations, by means of which people seek to order or govern their lives, vary very widely among the various groups. This no one can deny; religious societies themselves exemplify this fact most clearly, in that they make use of a variety of symbols, and exclude each other from their respective societies, and often harshly attack each other. The second fact is the steadily progressive disintegration which has been going on for the past two hundred years in the entire domain of Christian culture.

The task which we have set for ourselves is the elevation of the moral life, the cultivation of a cleansed mankind, the development of a genuine humanity, independent of all the religious or metaphysical considerations with which mankind has hitherto largely associated its ethical ideals.

We stand on the conviction that there is a science of ethical life, as there is a science of nature and a science of economics. This science of ethical life, or morality, we want to carry from the chair of science into the market-place; we want to make it popular, and give it a voice in public life and in education. . . .



It is clear that, with such a fundamental position, through which the education for moral self-sacrifice is completely separated from the otherwise untouched religious world of emotion, there must occur a further opposition to the many philosophical societies which arose so numerous towards the end of the last century and the beginning of the present one. The "Egidyan" movement for a religion of life stands close to us in a personal way; the "societies for free religion," the "free-thought societies," and the later "Monists," although having much in common with us, and at times running in parallel courses in practical matters, have not been able to keep up an enduring connection with our movement, in spite of efforts to secure such connection. Each one of these organizations is subject to the accusation that it *separates* people, whereas the ethicists are seeking to *unite*. In vain has Felix Adler reminded us that the Sermon on the Mount said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," and interpreted it to mean that the purity of heart is not the consequence nor the result, but the pre-requisite for the "seeing of God"; the ethical experience must come *before* all religious or philosophical acceptance of God and the world. He throws out to us the question:

How can one reap a philosophy, when one has not sown a character? Values of faith cannot be merely accepted, they must be slowly *earned* — and earned, not through mere belief, but through the power of the will and the cleansing of the heart. If you go your old way with the idea that philosophies of life are lying ready-made and prepared so that you need only to select one

of them, then you are working not only against your own spiritual growth, but against the development of the finer elements of your character. A genuine faith is a flower, not a root; a result, not a beginning. . . . The man who on the threshold of life says to himself: "What I need, before I begin to work and to live, is a creed, in order to guide and sanction the conduct of my life," would be entirely on the wrong track. No, he should rather say: "Before I can deserve a genuine faith of my own, I must, through the manner of conducting my life, gather the necessary facts through experience out of which the faith grows."

With this survey of the fundamental activities of the Ethical Society, which had as their aim the moral ennobling of personality, and of the two principal directions which were given to the movement by the conditions existing at the close of the last century,—namely, the field of social reconciliation on the one hand and opposition to denominational dogmatism on the other,—we can perhaps close our consideration of the task set for itself by the Movement before the war, without going into a discussion of a large number of possible avenues of activity which were entered into as side issues. Among these minor activities are the battle against the frenzy for power and coercion, against the clamor for territorial expansion, against imperialism in certain circles, and against militarism; also the advancement of all movements for the education of the masses, the active support of women in their struggle for greater rights and duties, and the co-operation with the Peace movement in the matter of bringing about unifying organizations, mutual under-

standing, and agencies for securing greater political rights.

If we now turn to the most urgent tasks which after this stupendous conflict will confront the organization of all people of good will, it immediately becomes clear that in the field of tasks and aims, "the last" will, of necessity, be "first." The remark is here appropriate, that the Ethical Movement makes not the slightest pretext of claiming that any of the tasks which it has set for itself have been completely accomplished and therefore done away with. None of the previous aims must be lost sight of. But it must be emphasized that the coming task, which will involve enormous expenditures of energy for generations, is the work of gradually allaying the inconceivable store of hatred, distrust, slander, greed and loathing, and removing these obstructions from the road to peaceful international unions, and of renewing the ties of mutual understanding, so as slowly to eradicate the effects of the reversion from nationality to bestiality. Making possible further progress toward the aims of humanity must be our most prominent task after the war. Already in the second congress of the International Ethical Union in Zurich in 1896, it was stated as part of the general programme:

We heartily support the endeavors to create a general world peace, and designate as our especial part in this enterprise, the overcoming of militarism, the limitation of the power which this militarism exercises, particularly on the minds of our youth, and to work toward the purpose of so changing the militaristic element that only those of its constituents which have definite

ethical value shall appear; furthermore, we shall attempt to curb that national egoism and super-patriotism, which are to-day just as dangerous enemies of peace as are the prejudices and interests of the ruling classes; finally, we shall try, in times of hysteria and blind hatred, to re-establish the reign of conscience and reason.

And in the platform laid down by the sixth annual convention of the German Ethical Society, in 1901, the following was set down:

The Ethical Movement has, with respect to the moral standards of mankind in general, a fundamentally international character. But, in order to work most successfully in the field of national culture, it is forced to concern itself with national forms of political and social life. Insofar as Germany is concerned, the movement knows itself to be in harmony, in its entire field of endeavor, with the noblest spiritual forces of the country in its efforts to suppress all national conceit.

That the Ethical Movement will be justified in counting upon the co-operation of the great peace societies and committees for mutual understanding, and, in fact, of all international organizations, is equally as clear as the special task which will fall to all organizations of its kind in the various countries. For Germany—and elsewhere as well—the crucial question will be whether the partly justifiable national emotions which, in our people, have been stirred to their deepest depths, can be brought under the control of reason and discretion. An enormous amount of wisdom, understanding sympathy, and tact will be required in the task of drawing the fine line between the easily understood disillusionment

which the great amount of soul-sickness, misery, fear, and need have engendered among the people, together with the indignation over the injustice which has been done them, and the national pride which the heroic efforts exerted by these same people on the battlefield and at home, and to separate the elements of these emotions which have ethical value from those which have none, without injuring in the slightest degree any of the valuable sentiments which may lead to greater solidarity among mankind.

This humane ideal has a long path of passion behind it, but perhaps the tombs of martyrs that bestrew its rocky way from barbarism to civilization are still too few. Originally the idea of a common union of mankind seemed in direct opposition to the desired moral strength of a narrow social group. The increasing moralization of family life and the consolidation of the horde-like national existence went hand in hand with the ruthless annihilation or enslaving of all those outside the tribe; the tighter the ring of morality and right drew itself around the members of such a group, the sharper became the injustice and disrespect for all "barbarians." Wife-stealing and plundering, oppression and seizing of territory, wars of conquest and crusades against all unbelievers, accompanied the growth of national power. Everywhere it was thought that a united mankind could be brought about only through the creation of "world-empires," held together by the might of the victor, or, on the spiritual side, through the phantom of a unified religion, to which unbelievers would be forced to adhere. Thus may have originated the gigantic empire

of the Incas in South America, of the Chinese in Asia, of the Babylonians, Assyrians, or Persians, until after the short episode of Alexander's world-empire, the monstrous Roman Empire spread over Europe. The last examples of this idea were the attempts of Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation (on the spiritual side the Papacy),—the idea of uniting civilized humanity by force, up to the dreams of the first Napoleon, who, in the name of the general rights of man, of liberty, equality and fraternity, sacrificed the blood of hundreds of thousands.

A purely illusory form of this idea of a great brotherhood of man occurred in the eighteenth century literary "enlightenment," where, in conscious opposition to the universalism of the Papacy, a common religion of love among mankind was hoped for—

Tho' Christian, Jew or Hottentot,  
We all believe in one same God;

and, more ethically, by our classicists Lessing and Herder, up to Schiller's

Seid umschlungen, Millionen, diesen Kuss der  
ganzen Welt!

With the prevalence of such emotionally extravagant brotherly love the iron fist of the Corsican was bound to weaken its grip. As a reaction against the unscrupulous re-division of the European map, with total disregard for all national boundaries, there arose in the nineteenth century with increasing fury a powerful wave of nationalism, which, to all appearances, has not yet reached its fullest dimensions. In the last

hundred years not only Prussia-Germany and Italy have developed into separate national entities, but it is familiar to all, how Greeks and Czechs, Slavs and Latins, Serbs, Bulgars, Roumanians, China and Japan, America, etc., have striven for national isolation and political independence. And the spirit of national expansion, once awakened, became transformed again into imperialistic designs. In the same breath in which it shouted its cries of "Every country for its inhabitants! America for the Americans! The Philippines for the Filipinos," etc., it denied to the weaker nations of Africa, Asia and the East the same rights which it was so loudly claiming for itself. The policy of colonial exploitation, pursued in recent times principally by England, found imitators. After England had seized Egypt, India, Africa and the Boer regions, Russia and England together grasped for Persia, Belgium took the Congo state, France seized Morocco, Tunis, and Indo-China, Italy seized control of Tripoli, and Germany, clearing up the meager remnants, "leased" Kiauchau.

We have, then, a remarkable mixture of *nationalism* with *imperialism* before us, as whose servant there appeared — by no means exclusively Prussian-German — *militarism*. In the ethical purification of these existing powerful movements according to the principle of a peacefully co-operating cultural humanity there lies quite evidently the great moral task of the near future.

It was a great mistake to suppose that the internationalism of this mechanical age, with its extensive commerce, traffic, industry, science, and engineering feats, yes, even of art, would of neces-

sity call a halt to this immoderate nationalism. All these things have prepared the ground for a future union of mankind, when the *will* for it shall be present; but the *will* itself they did not create. These international undertakings have not wholly tended to hinder the too narrow nationalism, but have actually on occasion tended to intensify national might and greatness, because they loosed the great competitive forces and encouraged the great natural principle of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, just as much as their activities might have tended to advance the ethical principle of co-operation.

As still stronger must we consider the influence, in spiritual matters, which this world trade and world commerce had upon the intensification of nationalistic feeling. This international exchange brought about a widespread consciousness of the differences in the feelings, thoughts and desires which distinguish one nation from another, and awakened national pride, *patriotism* in the narrower sense. Everywhere—even in the most isolated regions under foreign rule—people began to emphasize and emotionalize the distinguishing elements of their particular national characters: common language, identical customs, common rights, shared treasures of literature, from the folk poetry to the untranslatable classical works; common history, even external similarity of physical type. With this growing consciousness of individual type, dignity and contribution, there must, according to psychological laws, go hand in hand the notion that one's own people represent a particular sympathetic characterization of humanity which none of the others possess.



And what is the worst (or is it the best?) about all this is: *every nation is justified in this assumption*. It is not merely an honest subjective opinion, but objectively *true* that the Frenchman, the Englishman, the Russian, the German, the Belgian and the Jap each represent a particular note in the harmonious concert of humanity. The present hatred cannot deceive us in this respect. But an understanding of this fact must be awakened. As Felix Adler advised: We have need of a *Science of Nations*, which could be taught in the secondary and higher schools, a folk-knowledge, which would concern itself not with the curiosities of African or Australian wild men, but with our neighbors; a biology of European species: *homo sapiens*. Granted that the German in general has to-day more and better information concerning such matters than the others—that is not enough! This war must have brought this fact home to us in a sinister manner. But the others should know us. Out of such a knowledge there would grow a respect for the justified differences; and, still more, a conscious elevation of humanity. Through exchanges in art and in science, technique and civilization, there arise the greatest fruits of intellectual and moral culture, and these would be enhanced by the crossing and intermingling of nations. *Commercium* is always followed by *Connubium*.

Although there lies no great danger in the honest and partly justified notion that each nation has, of its being the chosen one, the ethicist must nevertheless battle energetically against the intolerance and exclusiveness of an imperialism

which seeks to shut out all other nations from supremacy on land as well as on the sea. No nation has a monopoly of any one of the rights of mankind, and it is the duties and not the rights which are apportioned to the nations according to their greater or less ability to exercise them. The aim is not equality or uniformity, but the right fullness and harmony of a differentiated mankind, in life, as in religion, art and science.

This superheating of the national fever has brought on the world crisis with all its horrors, its wildness, and the unjust accusation of barbarism. The national egoism is of distinct ethical value, like the naïve self over-estimation of the child, that feels itself to be the central point in its world, and like the battle for self-maintenance and the assertion of individual rights with a man. But it must not infringe upon the foundation stone of human rights, *justice* (as does the repulsive English<sup>1</sup> phrase "my country right or wrong"); and also the second factor of morality, *kindness*, must not be disregarded. It is to be hoped that we are cured of the purely emotional enthusiasm for the idea of human brotherhood, and of the religious fanaticism for a herd under a single shepherd. It is unreasonable to try to ignore race, nationality, cultural history, national consciousness, local interpretation of a religion, etc., and to reverence the bloodless spectre of the tenet: "All that bears the countenance of mankind is sacred to me." National peculiarities persist like the infinite number of individual differences, according to race, outer or inner edu-

<sup>1</sup>In 1915, the Germans generally ascribed to this phrase an English origin. It is, of course, American, not English.—Ed.

cation, level of culture and—amiability. There exist natural aversions between races and peoples which it is useless to deny or try to philosophize away. But they can nevertheless be mitigated, and in the service of mankind, for all practical purposes, be put into the background. It is logical that we do not love all men equally with an infinitely broad, and therefore thin, general love of humanity, but rather graduate our affections. We need to make ourselves cognisant of the fact that generous, kind treatment in place of power and oppression in our colonial policies, would eventually make even the most backward and weaker peoples less repulsive to us. What the religious mission has failed to accomplish—if it has not actually incurred enmity—remains for the Ethical Movement in our colonial policy to do. A significant beginning was the assembling of the Races Congress in London in 1911, convened through the efforts of Prof. Felix Adler. This Congress sought “in the light of the modern conscience to foster a better understanding, more friendly relations and a wholehearted co-operation among the peoples of the earth.”

The questions of gradual, uniform disarmament, and of the building up of courts of arbitration, the creation of a real law of nations, through an international law-giving body, composed not of professional politicians, diplomats and jurists, but of the best representatives of the productive classes of society among all peoples, the possibilities for stronger politico-economic combinations within Europe—in short, such technical problems of popular enlightenment—we ethicists gladly leave to those agencies which

are best qualified to deal with them, retaining for ourselves the task of cultivating a spirit of co-operation which will penetrate our peoples to their innermost depths.

Having found the most pressing task of Ethical Culture after the war in the creation of moral forces which shall permeate nationalism, colonial policy and militarism, there remains still a large mass of further problems that await solution.

It is well known that in ecclesiastical circles there is expected to result from the war a revival of the religious spirit, similar to the rebirth of patriotism which is awaited in political circles. The hot-blooded advocates of this mystic idea speak of the divine judgment which is to be visited upon all unbelievers, inveigh against the indifference of the times toward religious values, and against the hatred and enmity focussed upon Christendom from many sides. The movements which have reduced church attendance, such as monism, freethought and Ethical Culture, are expected to be overcome.

Such statements are made by fanatics, who in deep self-delusion confuse real religiousness with ecclesiasticism, and one can dismiss them with the calm assurance that no one would more joyfully and warmly welcome a genuine revival of real piety (not to be confused with the running to church of agitated unbelievers whom "need has taught prayer") than would the ethicists. True piety differs only in form from moral idealism, and is surely its best aid, even if temporarily confined to ecclesiastical channels. A religious revival, although it may have enormous effect in its first enthusiastic surge, would perhaps not be

lasting. We are confirmed in this belief by the fact that in great crises the two great opposing religious groups have not succeeded in putting aside their eternal quibbling over dogmatic formalisms and working together for the common good. If something of a spirit of ethical-religious piety has spread among our people, it has been based on the realization of how unimportant are the differences of creed which have separated, in daily life, those who in the dire necessity of war cast their common lot for the welfare of the fatherland. A spirit of comradeship arose again in the trenches, amid the roar of battle, in the quiet watches of the night, at the common Sunday services, and also on the brinks of undenominational trench-graves and in the co-operative care of the wounded. People who, throughout their school careers and under the leadership of their churches, had been trained to be antagonistic toward each other, here united in the common work of humanity.

The battle which the Ethical Movement, through the pressure of necessity, has been forced to wage, not against religion as such, but against over-zealous denominationalism and dogmatic subordination of the school to the church, will, according to all indications, be made easier rather than more difficult after the war. Whether or not the new orientation of large social groups will take the direction which I have indicated in "German Religion" (which was written entirely from my own viewpoint, and in no wise under the auspices of the Ethical Society), we need not consider at present. In no event will it lead to a strengthening of denominationalism.

After the war, just as in the past, there will be necessary a conscientious vigilance, especially to protect the schools from clerical domination. With ultramontanist and Protestant zealotism, as with all "isms" that are dogmatically exclusive, no reconciliation will ever be possible. More likely is a reconciliation with our excellent South and West-Germans, Bavarians, Alsations, Tyroleans, who, although they will long adhere to their narrow creeds, have nevertheless, in the hour of need, demonstrated themselves to be genuine German men and women, spirit of our spirit, and blood of our blood. It will indeed be one of the most important tasks of ethicists to look behind the masks of provincial patriotism and denominationalism and find the countenances, and cast away the things which outwardly seem to separate people from one another and bring to light the unifying, common good-will.

One of the inevitable consequences of even the most enthusiastic war of defense is the moral callousness of the people who take part in it; or, less crassly put, the lack of sensitiveness, or the numbing of sensitiveness, to the sufferings of fellow-beings, the cold indifference to property damage and the total disregard for the rights of others. We have numerous reports of the self-conquest that is required of the soldiers (particularly those from rural sections) who are forced, for the first time, to march rough-shod over a waving field of grain, or to trample upon any cultivated ground; or worse, in a hand-to-hand battle, to use the drawn bayonet against an opponent for the first time. The frenzy of blood and battle and the dire need of the moment help many

a one to conquer this sensation and to dull permanently any feeling of horror or aversion for such acts. A necessity, to be sure! But a moral gain? The need of preserving one's own body and soul eventually closes heart, ear and eye to all suffering on the part of others. "The habit of sympathy must be broken," such is the repeated sigh of the soldiers; and, moreover, of the solid, moderately well-meaning element among them. What effect may such experiences have upon the morally weak characters, upon the youths who even in times of peace are only too ready for quarrels and violent deeds? What reaction will be produced in those who have grown up in the slums of great cities — some of whom, despite the selection that is exercised in recruiting soldiers, to eliminate those who are unfit to wear the national uniform, nevertheless find their way into the ranks? Although the iron German discipline may make atrocities almost impossible, yet discipline is not education; it is at best but a pre-condition for it. In the souls of many of these young people there will undoubtedly remain a sediment of low desires which will reason as follows: "In war it was permitted, even commanded; why may we not in time of peace, in our class struggle, do likewise, if only we are not caught?" The ruthless inroads upon private property breed a brutal joy at destruction and lead to mistreatment of unarmed civilians and a disregard for human life, a readiness to act at the slightest pretext of secret opposition or the slightest suggestion of deception. Particular consideration is demanded by the fact that in the war of 1871 the percentage of venereally diseased in the German army was approxi-

mately 45% ; which brings up the sexual-ethical question.

These facts concerning the moral degeneration that accompanies a war have been demonstrated so often in history, and scientifically so often established, that everyone concerned with the education of the masses must concern himself with them.

Even before the war we complained bitterly of the frightful lack of true education for our youth, in the home, in the school, and in the field of schematic religious instruction, for that dangerous span of years that lie between the school bench and the barrack-room, and even in the latter itself. Our efforts were directed towards an education which has for its aim the creation of a genuine humanity. It is, then, clear how the need for such a moral education has been intensified by the war! For even if we do nothing toward moral education of the returning soldiers we must consider that, inasmuch as the growing generation looks up to the soldiers, in a sense, as heroes, therefore the moral ideals of the soldiers will be reflected in the hearts of those who admire them. The thing whose influence we fear most is that admiration will be aroused for those elements of the military life which deal with the lack of restraint when in the enemies' country, the disregard for human life and the disrespect for peaceful pursuits and private property, to say nothing of the horrors and the joy of exercising deception and cunning.

The Ethical Societies would therefore forsake their greatest duties to their nations and to humanity, were they, at this time, to give up their



battle to substitute a true moral education for the worn-out denominational education in the schools. The great necessity for such a reform must have opened the eyes of many of our former opponents and of many more or less lukewarm friends.

Difficult tasks await us in the reconciliatory work in the fields of social and economic endeavor. We may hope that the war has swept away many prejudices, and that some of the comradeship of the trenches will be retained, for a while at least. But economic distinctions and deeply-rooted habits are not easily disregarded, and many signs already indicate that the carefully maintained "truce" between laborers and employers will not long survive the war. In addition to this, the experiences of the war, particularly the attempts to starve Germany, will, after the war, lead to agitation for a strengthening of the agrarian policy, and a revival of the Fichtean idea of the "closed commercial state." The attitude of the working classes toward the "bread-controllers" under an enormously strengthened capitalistic industrial system is apt to become considerably worse, especially as the economic burdens of the war and the tremendous debt will weigh most heavily on the poor. Here the greatest amount of emphasis will have to be placed upon the *ethical* viewpoint in the consideration of problems which the class struggle will bring up.

For a genuine re-birth of our German people, we shall need indeed to revive the spirit of *brotherly love*, mutual understanding and hand-in-hand co-operation, as these are being shown during the war in gratitude toward those of our fellows who are battling at the front. From every

side there are coming offers of aid from hundreds of thousands who wish to do something to allay the cares, misery, sickness, deformities, and unemployment among returning soldiers and their dependents. Large groups of industrial leaders have declared themselves prepared to desert the principle of the use of the greatest amount of man-power, at minimum pay, in the interests of those who have incurred losses as a result of the war; great property owners and garden-cities have given land to be occupied by such invalids as desire a tract of land of their own in return for the sound limbs which they have sacrificed for their country. True, all these are only beginnings; and we must take care that the ardor does not abate. To make this spirit permanent there is necessary, on the part of hundreds of thousands, an *inner moral transformation*. Many who hitherto looked only for "profit" for their own or their family interests will have to turn away from the "Manchester" principle, which has been overcome in politics but not in economics, and which believes that each individual, by advancing his own interests to the uttermost degree, automatically furthers the interests of the group. There must be a change from the anarchy of purely capitalistic production to the powerful federation of consumers.

Obviously, if there is to be brought about a remedy for the ills of our social-economic life and the popular morality which is so closely dependent upon it, as well as for the unsatisfactory conditions in international relations, the fundamental principle of competition for a *place in the sun* will have to be replaced by the powerful

thought of a co-operative striving for the attainment of a higher social and ethical culture. The principle of *Power*, which is based upon the assumption that constant clashings between the wills of individuals, classes and nations can lead to an enduring state of society, must be superseded by the principle of *Justice*, which sets forth the thought that through the co-operation of the members of society alone can a condition of stability be obtained which will not be affected by every storm of selfishness and emotion, and wherein freedom, justice and equality before the law will prevail.

An enduring inner peace in our society can be purchased only at the cost of willing and far-seeing sacrifices, which every individual, every social class and every economic group will have to make. The property-owning class will have to give up a part of its historically acquired privileges; industry and capital must learn that they need, not only hands, but a thorough-going peace; they must give up their unholy hunger for unearned income, and rid themselves of the stupid terror of a "red peril"; the laboring classes will have to give up their fanaticism for the "class struggle" and their isolation from the national life. Only in this manner can a sound economic and inner-political organization originate, which will be able to form a foundation for later projects with a view toward an international organization of justice, which would guarantee a real cultural co-operation among mankind, in place of the battle of all against all, commercial strife and armed peace.

Next to fraternity, we must demand equality

before the laws of the community. In this respect the war was an educator in the general and equal duty of sacrifice, of equality before the enemy and before Death. Whoever is familiar with our political organization, particularly in north Germany, knows how much historical rubbish and débris in the line of prejudices and privileges remains to be cleared away. I am thinking not only of the suffrage question, or of the overcoming of the militaristic and bureaucratic domination, or the unequal distribution of the tax burden, but also of the questions of equal educational opportunities, equal legal rights, the abolition of the idea of "state-supported" parties, and much else.

The accurate political instinct of the French people designated as the third of the great rights of man, *liberty*. Freedom correctly understood, ethical freedom, means not liberty to do what the whim of the moment suggests, but what the *conscience commands*; the highest subordination to the inner law of the spirit by means of sincere co-operation. Above all, there stands naturally the fact of the freedom of conscience and of belief, which necessitates the abolition of the well-meant but infinitely harmful domination of the Church in politics, for the welfare of the German people. In fullest freedom — only binding themselves to consideration for the rights of others — may denominations and philosophical societies let their adherents gather and teach, and exercise their influence. In the world of the intellect, and here only, "Manchesterism" still holds with full force, as we have it in the words of Gamaliel in the Acts of the Apostles: "If this work is of God, it cannot be overthrown; if not, it will come to naught."

And next to this freedom of intellectual endeavor, let us have also freedom of vocational opportunity. Without interfering with the well-established rights of those who live "happily in their possessions," we should not allow the movement for free land, and land reforms in general to die. All the old ethical demands of such parties who see, next to properly constituted authority, the fundamental principle of free vocational activity for citizens as a great factor for the welfare of the fatherland, may be assured of our support. Free trade, at least within our national boundaries (if an extension of this principle to all civilized nations is as yet impracticable), freedom of commerce, freedom of travel, industrial freedom, autonomy, freedom to organize for co-operative purposes, and, last but not least, freedom of the schools and popular education in general from the bonds of denominational and bureaucratic domination: if the Ethical Societies can contribute a modest share to the accomplishment of these things, then their mission may gradually approach fulfillment, and our posterity may enjoy with Goethe-Faust the "last, highest moments":

To many millions let me furnish soil,  
 Though not secure, yet free to active toil;  
 Green, fertile fields, where men and herds go  
                   forth

At once, with comfort, on the newest Earth.

A land like Paradise here, round about:  
 Up to the brink the tide may roar without,  
 And though it gnaw, to burst with force the  
                   limit,

By common impulse all unite to hem it.

Thus here, by dangers girt, shall glide away  
Of childhood, manhood, age, the vigorous day:  
And such a throng I fain would see, —  
Stand on free soil among a people free!  
Then dared I hail the moment fleeing:  
“Ah, still delay — thou art so fair!”  
The traces cannot, of mine earthly being,  
In aeons perish, — they are there!<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Bayard Taylor's translation.

# A Confession of Faith

By S. BURNS WESTON (Philadelphia).

**T**HE CONTRIBUTION I make to this volume in honor of Felix Adler, on the occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Ethical Movement, is a frank statement of my own Ethical faith. My present position may be made clearer if I review briefly the steps that have led to it.

This will not be a story of a sudden and radical change from one set of religious convictions to another, but rather an account of the gradual development from early boyhood of a theologically creedless but positive and constructive ethical faith.

Going back to the early years of my life in a New England rural community, I cannot recall having any strong religious convictions inconsistent with those I hold today. Though brought up under the influence of a mild type of evangelical Christianity, though I heard the daily reading of a chapter from the Bible, the family prayer, and the blessing at the table three times a day, though I went to Church and attended a Christian Sunday School, the theological views that were preached and taught made no marked impression upon me. They did not win my heart or take hold of my convictions. Prayer meetings and revivals were held, but the theological appeal totally failed in my case. Consequently, I was not "con-

verted," and never joined a Church. Jesus, it was taught, was a supernatural being, the "Son of God," in whom one must have faith in order to be saved from the future torments that were to be meted out to unbelievers. But I remember saying to myself when a boy of nine or ten, that I believed that Jesus was only a man, not a divine being.

Convictions of this radical kind were silently entertained, and I gave no indication of a special interest in religion. Yet it was predicted by my maternal grandmother that I would some day be a minister, a calling that was the farthest from my mind or desire. To become a preacher of theological doctrines, to make public or private prayers to a supernatural being, to foretell what is going to happen to us after this earthly life has closed, would require a kind of conversion I never underwent. My other grandmother showed her breadth of mind by saying that though I was an unbeliever and had not joined a Church, she thought I would be allowed a place in heaven.

This early attitude of doubt and scepticism in regard to theological teachings was strengthened during my preparatory and college years. Radical religious opinions were voiced and liberal religious thought found frequent expression at Antioch, where I graduated in 1876. The idea began to grow upon me while at college that a church or religious society, based on a purely humanitarian and ethical view of life, could be a great moral and spiritual force for good. The time-honored creeds and rituals might be given up, yet that which is of vital importance in re-



ligion—its practical ethical teachings—would remain.

In that frame of mind I graduated from college and entered the Harvard Divinity School, without committing myself to the acceptance of any Church creed whatsoever. The School allowed perfect freedom of thought and speech, and also freedom of action in choosing one's future career. The liberty allowed in the expression of opinion is shown by the fact that in one of the Divinity School debates, I maintained that Unitarians or others, who hold that Jesus was a purely human being, with no more claim to divinity than can be accorded to the founders of any of the other great religions; who say that the teachings of Moses and the prophets, of Jesus and Paul, have no special divine authority, and are to be accepted only in so far as they commend themselves on strictly rational and ethical grounds, have no right to call themselves or to be called "Christians."

The study of the Old and New Testament, the History of Christianity, and Comparative Religion at the Divinity School, revealed to me the striking similarity and great value of their ethical teachings, and at the same time showed how conflicting, unsatisfactory and untenable were their various theologies. The Divinity School course did not create in me a desire to be a "Christian" minister. I felt a strong and growing desire, however, to be the advocate of the kind of Ethical Religion that was being proclaimed at that time by a young Jewish leader in New York, whom Francis E. Abbot described, in an address in Boston, as a remarkable example in the modern world of the ancient Hebrew prophets. The news-

paper reports of Felix Adler's Sunday addresses were read from week to week with the greatest interest. During my Divinity School course I attended the meetings of the Free Religious Association held in Boston, and heartily sympathized with the emphasis that was laid upon freedom, fellowship and character in religion.

After graduating from the Harvard Divinity School in 1879, I occupied, for a year and a half, a very liberal Unitarian pulpit at Leicester, Mass., my predecessor in which had been a radical preacher. The message of my Sunday addresses was from the standpoint of a strictly humanitarian and ethical view of religion, without any admixture of the kind of supernaturalism for which the Churches in general stood.

At the end of nine months the question was raised by a trustee of the Southgate Fund, from which the Church derived considerable income, whether it would be entitled to it, if I continued to occupy its pulpit. The Church maintained that it would. The matter was referred to the Council of the National Unitarian Conference, which, at the end of another nine months, decided against the Church. I immediately resigned, and my connection with the Church ceased.

The next two years, 1881-83, were spent abroad, studying chiefly in the Universities of Berlin and Leipsic, with the distinct purpose of fitting myself to become a leader of a Society for Ethical Culture. While at Berlin, I visited various Churches and was impressed by the fact that hardly any men were present at the Sunday services. On the other hand, meetings of the "Freie Gemeinde" had a large proportion of men.

German students often remarked, "Ich gehe nie in der Kirche." The distinguished Friedrich Paulsen, whose brilliant lectures I attended, told me that the Churches had no hold on the educated classes in Germany. That was in 1882. In those days my mind went back constantly to the Society for Ethical Culture of New York, where the leader was proclaiming an ethical and spiritual message that sceptical Germany would, I felt sure, gladly listen to, if it had the opportunity.

After returning from abroad, I spent two valuable years in work and study with Felix Adler and his Society in New York, which deepened my faith in an Ethical Religion.

Coming to Philadelphia in the spring of 1885 to address the first public meeting that was held for the purpose of organizing an Ethical Society in this city, I took as my topic "The Need of an Ethical Religion." A Society was soon organized, with which I have ever since been actively connected. For the first five years I held the position of Lecturer of the Society, and afterwards, for now close to thirty years, that of Director. In the interim between these two periods, William M. Salter was lecturer of the Society for five years.

With this brief review of my religious history, I will now state more explicitly some of the cardinal points of my ethical faith. Two things already stand out distinctly: first, that a theocentric religion, as expressed in theological creeds, has never appealed to me: second, that a homocentric religion, expressed in efforts to raise the moral standards of society and of personal life, and in trying to promote the realization of higher ideals

in all social, national and international relationships, has found a warm response both in my mind and heart.

I believe in the supremacy of ethics in religion. I believe there is nothing more sacred and more truly religious than whole-hearted devotion to that which one holds to be of supremest worth—one's ethical ideal. For each and every individual there can be nothing higher than that. In so far as that ideal is made the lodestar of daily life, one is religious in the best sense of the word.

"Conduct," said Matthew Arnold, "is three-fourths of life." Conduct in all the relations of life, guided and inspired by moral idealism, is ethical religion. "Hitch your wagon to a star," said Emerson. Fasten the eyes of your soul on the moral ideal, says Ethical Religion. This is not an easy thing to do. The insistent forces of a materialistic and hedonistic nature that surround every individual, offer alluring prizes that divert attention from the supreme aim of life. This is but to say that the lower self wars against the higher self, and in too many cases wins the battle; and wretched lives, unhappiness, misery for oneself and others, are often the direful consequence. The aim of Ethical Religion is to strengthen the whole moral fibre of man, so as to enable him to maintain his ethical integrity in all the relations of life.

The work of ethical education begins with the very youngest, and concerns itself with every stage of development throughout the whole span of life, however long it may be. The moral problems of childhood and youth, those that confront the adult in home life, in business life, in the vari-

ous professions and occupations, and those that beset old age, are matters of prime ethical importance. And not these problems alone, but those that arise in the relationships of groups within themselves and to other groups, including the ever-widening circle of groups until it compasses the whole world, are the very sum and substance of the absolutely essential things with which Ethical Religion must deal.

The kind of religion that means the worship of beings supposed to have been supernaturally revealed, the modern mind is more and more discarding. The claims of supernatural revelation cannot stand the test of a thorough examination by scientific methods. When the light of historical research, scientific investigation and philosophical reasoning is thrown upon them, they fall. They fare no better when weighed in the balance by the free intelligent conscience of mankind.

Yet superstitions, once they have been thoroughly believed, die hard. When they have been organized into a cult, when great institutions have been built upon them, when a vast priesthood is endeavoring to keep them alive and insisting that man's salvation depends on accepting them, it is easily seen why they persist for generations and even for centuries. Yet the process of time and the logic of events bring changes. As knowledge grows and widens, theological controversies arise and radical differences of opinion are expressed. Gradually theological ideas undergo a transformation, and conceptions once held to be sacred and absolutely true are discarded. This evolutionary process is still going on, and will continue until the belief in a supernaturally revealed religion

is entirely outgrown, as it is already by a vast and increasing number of people.

Does this leave religion in a negative and hopeless state? On the contrary. "The progress of theology," said Emerson, "is steadily toward its identity with morals." Whatever happens to the beliefs of men in regard to a personal God, a supernatural Christ, a personal immortality in heaven, man still remains man, and the world he lives in remains real. This life is sure while it lasts; and, while in it, man cannot divest himself of the fundamental realities of his own rational and moral nature. These fundamental facts are a firm basis for the religion of the future — an Ethical Religion — with roots as deep as the very nature of man. This indestructible basis of Ethical Religion is not only as enduring but as old as the human race. It is that which has given to all the great religions of the world, whatever they possess that is of permanent value and transcendent worth; and it is in the ethical principle alone that they have a real unity.

The conflicts between religions that have arisen because of their creedal, ecclesiastical or ritualistic features, based on supernaturalism, have made dark chapters in human history. Our present-day Fundamentalists are those who are trying to perpetuate the theological dogmas formulated in by-gone times, from which they see the world drifting away. If their interest and their energy were centered on the great essentials in which all religions agree, namely, the fundamental ethical verities, they would be helping the intellectual, moral and spiritual progress of humanity, instead of retarding it, as their efforts are now doing.

Out of the depths of our common, ever-aspiring, moral and spiritual nature, all religions have arisen. In each stage of development the spiritual ideals of a people have been limited by their ignorance or state of culture. Knowledge has grown slowly. For that reason we do not condemn the lower ideals of the past. For their time and for the people who accepted them, they stood for the best they could conceive. Neither should we hold up to ridicule the beliefs of those who are in that same stage of thought and cultural development today. The religious ideals and institutions that give to any group of people the kind of spiritual food that satisfies them should not be ruthlessly destroyed.

One should not be deterred, however, from stating clearly one's liberal or even radical views. Under all circumstances, one must be intellectually honest in the expression of one's convictions. This is especially demanded of those who assume the office of public teachers of religion and morality.

It is wholly unethical to use words with a double meaning, and make it appear that one holds religious doctrines one no longer really believes. "It makes me shudder," said a prominent clergyman to me some time ago, "when I realize that what I affirm, in repeating a creed, I no longer believe." That is the tragic situation of many progressive clergymen who are occupying Christian pulpits. They salve their conscience by saying they are using the old theological terms in a purely symbolic sense. Many of their fellow clergymen and Church members believe literally in what to them is mythical and only to be used

symbolically. If they spoke out boldly and clearly their honest convictions, they would probably lose their positions. It is a trying dilemma to face. Whether one holds religious views similar to those of the late Mr. Bryan or to those held by Robert G. Ingersoll, one can equally honor the genuine sincerity of both.

Ethical religion, as I view it, not only calls for absolute intellectual sincerity, but it has to do with this life and this life only. If there is another life in another world, there cannot possibly be a better preparation for it than to do all we can to make this life of highest worth to ourselves and to others. That this infinite universe is an unfathomable mystery, no one can deny. We see the process of evolution going on in the small sphere we inhabit, but as to the ultimate origin, ultimate nature, and ultimate end of all things, no one can say. What precedes birth and what follows death—the old, old question of Whence came we, and whither are we going?—time has not yet solved. We do know, however, that between birth and death we have a period of responsible conscious life. The fact that this is the only life of which we are sure, cannot fail to impress upon us the importance of utilizing to the fullest the golden opportunities that lie before us to make our own life, while we possess it, what it should be in personal worth and in helpfulness to others, for each day, each hour, each moment, passes away never to return. In these fleeting periods of time between the cradle and the grave, we are not only creating our own personal character and shaping our life's destiny, but helping to influence and shape the future course of humanity.



Inborn within man, or acquired by him, is the idea of the perfect. That is the goal that ever beckons him on, though he never reaches it. The era of perfection is never attained, and never can be, since ideals grow and expand as man grows in knowledge, culture and ethical spirituality. Hence, the glory of the pursuit is never lost. The aspiring spirit of man is ever searching for something higher and better than he has yet attained. As the poet says, "The soul sees the perfect which the eyes seek in vain." The absolutely perfect individual has never existed. Even Jesus of Nazareth said, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God."

God is the mental picture of the Ideal—an ideal which is never higher than the intellectual and moral conceptions of those who create it. The Gods of the past have been creations of the human mind. No God ever existed as he has been pictured, except in the mind of man. The same may be said of the various conceptions of heaven and a future life.

I have tried to express clearly my own fundamental moral and religious beliefs and my own conceptions of Ethical Religion, not those of other Ethical leaders, who are in no way to be held responsible for what I have said.

In this age of great religious and moral unrest, equally earnest and thoughtful people not only hold different metaphysical and theological views, but differ also as to the unsolved problems of human relationship in our social organism. As for me, I have learned to respect every man's beliefs, no matter what they are, if they are sincerely held, and if, underlying and over-arching them,

shining through and transfiguring them, there is the clear white light of high moral aspiration;—if, in other words, they receive radiance from the ethical ideal.

It is an old saying that there are many paths to heaven. There are in truth many paths to right living, many roads leading towards the kingdom of heaven on earth. Ethical Religion offers its way to such a goal. To follow it does not require committing oneself to or against any theological views. The one essential thing is an ethical purpose. That is the very core of Ethical Religion.

An ethical philosophy of life has been developed by the founder of the Ethical Movement, which I feel confident will gain a larger and larger number of adherents as time goes on. The Ethical Movement, however, received world-wide recognition before that philosophy was published. Other ethical philosophies will be given a hearing. The Ethical Movement is broad enough to include them all. The whole spirit of the Movement is focused on the aim and the way of life, regardless of the various speculative views which its leaders and members may hold.

I believe, finally, that the Ethical Movement, as represented by the various Ethical Societies in this and other countries, has all the essentials of the future religion of mankind.

# “Hearing the Witnesses”

## THE PLACE OF PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES IN ETHICAL CULTURE.

By JAMES GUTMANN (New York).

**F**OR THE TITLE of this essay I have borrowed a phrase from him to whom this volume is dedicated. To a reader acquainted with Dr. Adler's teachings it will, I hope, be apparent before he has read far in this brief paper, how much more than the title the present writer owes to Dr. Adler. I rejoice at this opportunity for making grateful acknowledgment of that unique obligation which a pupil owes to a master who stimulated his initial interest in philosophic themes and has guided his subsequent studies. It is with this indebtedness in mind that I shall seek to set down my impressions of the relation of philosophic discipline to that great educational enterprise which we call the Ethical Movement.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>For the information of readers not familiar with the history of the Ethical Movement, it is appropriate to note some facts from the record of the Ethical Societies during the past fifty years, which have a bearing on the subject of the present discussion. It may be mentioned that Dr. Adler has himself been for many years a Professor in the Faculty of Philosophy in Columbia University, and is known as a representative of a noble philosophic tradition as well as a pathfinder to new philosophic positions. Dr. Adler's numerous writings in ethical philosophy, the philosophy of education, etc., are widely known, and his two most recent books, "An Ethical Philosophy of Life" and "The Reconstruction of the Spiritual Ideal" (the

The phrase "hearing the witnesses" suggests the nature of the special interest in the history of ideas and ideals which is to characterize our approach to the philosophers. The thinkers and seers of bygone ages are looked upon neither as the spokesmen of authoritative and final revelations which must be accepted as such, nor as purveyors of outworn doctrines which are to be set aside in favor of more up-to-date, or hot-from-the-press, utterances. It is rather as testimony that their words come to us, the testimony of witnesses whose messages on human life and human destiny deserve reverent attention and may yield us increased insight, understanding and vision.

Philosophy, conceived of in this way, includes all those precious documents and records of the past which render more intelligible the Odyssey of human life and increase our understanding of the world and man's place in it. The witnesses whom such a conception of philosophy recognizes, include not only those philosophical writers in the canon of academic tradition, but also "lovers of wisdom" whose philosophic views have been expressed through other media than the treatise

latter being the Hibbert Lectures delivered at Oxford University in 1923), give the systematic formulations of his thought. Other leaders of the Ethical Societies have also contributed to the field of philosophy. Mr. William M. Salter's "First Steps in Philosophy" was published in the early days of his connection with the Chicago Ethical Society; latterly he has devoted his time largely to philosophic investigations, of which his volume, "Nietzsche the Thinker," is a noteworthy product. Mr. Walter L. Sheldon's, Dr. Stanton Coit's, Mr. Alfred W. Martin's and Professor Nathaniel Schmidt's contributions to the philosophy of religion and to comparative religion; writings by Dr. Henry Neumann and others in the philosophy of education; treatises on ethical theory by such representatives of the Ethical Movement in Europe as Dr. J. S. Mackenzie, the late Bernard Bosanquet, Dr. Friedrich Jodl and others, may be cited,

and text-book. Aeschylus as well as Aristotle must be heard if we would gain in full the advantages of hearing the testimony which the Greek world has to offer us; Dante will take his place with Thomas Aquinas in acquainting us with the majesty—and, perhaps, the limitations also—of the mediaeval mind; Goethe together with Kant will speak for Germany.

But this inclusiveness is not the only result of the approach to philosophy which we are endeavoring to sketch. Our attitude will also in large measure determine the nature of our study, and it will affect the methods to be employed in "hearing the witnesses." Indeed, an arduous and exacting discipline is implied if the testimony of the past is to be made genuinely significant for us. This discipline requires scholarship far more difficult than that involved in a merely formal recitation of the facts of the history of philosophy. It necessitates a fuller knowledge, the utmost scrupulousness of interpretation, and an informed and disciplined imagination.

These tools—knowledge, power of interpretation, imaginative reconstruction—must be employed in listening to the evidence of the witnesses.

as well as less comprehensive works by other leaders of the American Societies.

These philosophic interests were by no means limited to the group of leaders and lecturers of the Ethical Societies; indeed, as is characteristic of the Movement, they constituted a field of joint activity between leaders and members. Philosophic interest found expression in the programs and undertakings of the Societies, in study groups, special classes, in "self-culture clubs" founded by Mr. Sheldon, in adult moral education, in periodical publications, and, most notably, in the Sunday meetings of the Societies. There, philosophic themes were discussed, and from 1876 to the present day such names as Marcus Aurelius, Spinoza, Kant, Emerson, etc., appear again and again as subjects for the address.

As is the case whenever testimony is to be heard, we must be possessed of "rules of evidence." Three factors, at least, can be discriminated if we are to approach our office with understanding: (1) we must have some knowledge of who the witness is, that is, his biography and philosophic personality; (2) we need to know something of his social setting, his relations to other men and institutions, and (3) we shall want to be informed about his place in the current of ideas and intellectual and spiritual traditions.

In the first place, then, we are obliged to recognize that the writings of the philosophers cannot be understood, save in the rarest instances, if they are taken as so many printed pages, bound together and placed conveniently on the library shelves. So unhuman a conception overlooks the intimate relation between the personality, experiences and development of a thinker and the growth of his thought. Though the scriptural injunction to "Remember now thy Creator" was intended in a different sense, it might none the less serve as a useful reminder to every reader of a book, that the book has issued from the mind and experience of an author, and cannot be understood in isolation from them.

This first point is, indeed, generally accepted and more or less adhered to in contemporary literary criticism. It may, therefore, be well in passing to suggest certain dangers which are involved in carrying biographical interpretation beyond its legitimate limits. Important as it is to relate a work to its author, this cannot be accomplished by the too impressionistic method of singling out a few perhaps striking, or even amusing, incidents

in an author's life or aspects of his personality, and using them to explain all the qualities and peculiarities of his work. A man's life must, after all, be considered as a whole; to discover a few, often unrelated, episodes and make everything else depend on them is a violation of the very method it pretends to exemplify. To explain the philosophy of a Schopenhauer or a Carlyle by reference to digestive disturbances is hardly an instance of the genuine application of biographical data to criticism. Many a man has been a dyspeptic without becoming a philosopher; and, for that matter, many a philosopher has doubtless suffered from maladies which failed to produce a pessimistic strain in his work. To account for Socrates' willingness to drink the hemlock by referring to Xantippe would be a poor way — though scarcely worse than that followed by several popular biographies recently published—of increasing the understanding of a philosophy by seeing it in relation to the life of its author.

A second objection to the uncritical use of this method, lies in the failure to distinguish the basis of understanding from the basis of judgment. Whereas the intelligibility of a philosophy may be greatly increased by reference to its origin, the question of its validity will not be affected thereby. The evidence which is brought before the court of reason cannot be understood, except in rare instances, without asking who the witness is who is testifying; but the value of the evidence must be determined on other grounds.

Our second point is closely connected with the need of studying a work of philosophy in relation to the life and experiences which gave rise to it.

We have mentioned the need of seeing a philosophy in the general setting of the period in which the philosopher lived. For it would surely be quite as perverse to attempt to read and comprehend an author without regard to his *milieu*, as to study any one of his writings without considering its place in the whole body of work of its creator. It has been pointed out that to follow the history of "Utopias" it is but necessary to consider the most glaring defects of the age in which each ideal society was conceived. The ideals are, so to speak, compensatory to the blemishes in current life. To understand the political thought of Plato or Aristotle, in any case, it is necessary to see them against their background of the Greek city-state; in reading the "Republic" or the "Laws" one must also bear in mind the tragic circumstances of the Peloponnesian War; in studying the "Politics" one gains by noting the ironic neglect of the Alexandrian Empire. To fathom the full meaning of Stoicism the reader must pay heed to the political factors operative in that period which Professor Gilbert Murray has described as characterized by a "failure of nerve." To understand mediaeval philosophy without reference to the influence of Christian faith and the current ecclesiastical polity would be manifestly absurd; and no more would it be possible truly to comprehend the course of philosophic speculation since the seventeenth century without constant reference to the state of the natural sciences. Moreover, this is true not only of those philosophers who, like Bacon or Comte or Spencer, explicitly based their teachings on what they took to be scientific grounds, but equally



applies to those thinkers who reacted against the domination of the physical sciences.

The third general influence which we have indicated as being of essential importance in the study of philosophic systems, is the intellectual tradition of which, in one way or another, the philosophy is a part. In a sense this factor is really a part of the total environment, a most pervasive part. But since it has a special significance not attached to any other portion of the general setting in which thought operates, it seems well to consider it separately. Not only is the terminology of technical philosophy strongly affected by its origin, but many of the actual problems to which thinkers have addressed themselves must be studied in the light of earlier controversies or difficulties. Where problems have lost their relevance to genuine contemporary interests they thus come to appear barren and trivial. The stock example, the mediaeval conundrum as to the number of angels who could dance on the point of a needle, gives its impression of triviality and futility not so much because of the inherent absurdity of the query, as because of its total meaninglessness in our present intellectual scene.

But many problems which continue to excite and interest, are no less intimately connected with traditional bases. Questions concerning the nature of the soul—where in the body is it located? what becomes of it after death? and the like—are commonly answered in accordance with certain definite traditions, influenced, to be sure, by the other factors previously mentioned, the personality of the individual and the influence of his specific social environment. But the crux of

the matter is the fact that the questions themselves take the peculiar form which is theirs, by reason of past beliefs rather than present thought.

It is, therefore, only by recognizing the intimate connection between any set of ideas and the traditions to which they are related, that the individual can attain to philosophic convictions of his own, commensurate with his own legitimate needs and interests. That these will, in their turn, be largely determined by his own peculiar character, experiences, education, cannot be denied. Nor would philosophic discipline, conceived as part of ethical education, aim to lessen the specific and personal differences in the philosophic views of the individual. Quite the reverse. It is precisely because of the insistence on the fact that the acceptance or rejection of any philosophic theory depends on the individual, that philosophic studies have special importance in ethical culture. Not to train disciples of any philosopher, but to develop lives which are justified in the integration which they attain, in their own inner unity (whether this be accompanied by any explicit philosophy or not) is the aim.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, to many persons, the formulae of philosophy are by no means congenial. Many will view with scant approval the pursuit of interests which they regard as unbearably "theoretical" and "impractical." To say that such judgments themselves imply a certain type of philosophy

<sup>1</sup>In this connection may be mentioned the position of the Ethical Societies throughout the fifty years of their existence, which Dr. Adler has summarized in the Preface to his "Ethical Philosophy of Life": "The Ethical Societies as such have no official philosophy."

would be true, though paradoxical. But the fact to be kept in mind is that such a conception of philosophy as we are outlining, aims to do justice to variations in interest and approach, as well as to make full allowance for diversity of philosophic views.

But though a variety of philosophic interpretations of life be inevitable, indeed desirable, the common fruits of philosophic study may, in a general way, be indicated. Though the purpose of "hearing the witnesses" is not to be the making of disciples for any one philosophy, nevertheless a common purpose may well be present. The philosophic conclusions will vary, but the particular contributions of such study to ethical education may be considered as threefold. First, the study of philosophy, undertaken from some such point of view as has above been indicated, should bring those consolations which are familiarly associated with "being a philosopher"; second, it should yield an intellectual emancipation, act as a liberalizing influence; and, third, it should not only console and liberate the student but should inspire him as well. Of each of these three general aims we shall, in conclusion, briefly speak.

The Roman, Boethius, author of the "Consolations of Philosophy," is in a sense a symbol of humanity in its attitude toward philosophy. Deprived of worldly goods and of the high offices and honors which had been his, punished not only through his own suffering but through the distress of those dear to him, he stands, with Job, as a noble sufferer. Imprisoned by an emperor who had been his friend, he maintained, centuries before Lovelace penned his poem, that "stone

walls do not a prison make." He wrote of the consolation which philosophy may bring to those who face hardship and loneliness, and his phrase has been repeated by many who never heard his name. The common injunction: "Be a philosopher," itself suggests the supposed efficacy of this attitude in bearing pain and in achieving a noble demeanor in times of stress. The pursuit of philosophy itself may be less effective than one would desire, and many who have had no notion of what the word signifies have achieved its implied excellence. But in less dubious ways, a study of philosophy may genuinely bring consolation, through the satisfactions which disinterested intellectual activity affords.

Not only are these benefits in times of special distress possible, but philosophy may, to a unique degree, minister to that need which all men feel, though in varying measure, of finding assurance that their lives are not meaningless, that the universe is in essence in harmony with their own best purposes, and that—however rude and unsatisfactory the world about them may seem—they can discern, though dimly, a more adequate order which will comfort and console for the defects of the immediate scheme of things.

In the second place, the study of philosophy must, it would appear, almost from its very nature, act in such a way as to liberate the mind from the thralldom of provincialism. Not only can it dissipate the literal provincialism of place, but the reading of the record of man's thought and aspiration—crossing as it does the artificial boundaries of group and class and time—should liberate from the provincialism of the calendar as

well. A mere listing of the names of the great "witnesses" is a significant and salutary check on any excess of national and racial pride; a graphic representation of lines of influence and indebtedness would reveal the extent to which intellectual obligation is an outstanding fact in the history of ideas.

Another type of provincialism, and one to which the scholar's mind itself is especially prone, was perhaps suggested as infecting what has been set down above. For is there not here an excessive pre-occupation with the past? That such an interest might, in a sense, be justified by the prevailing tendency to dismiss history as in every respect *passé* is an insufficient rejoinder. More adequate is the reply that such a conception of the history of philosophy as has here been outlined, implies no glorification of the past. If the philosophers are summoned as witnesses, the defects of their testimony are by no means to be overlooked. Though it is on the excellences of the evidence that our attention is especially focussed, the limitations are not disguised nor minimized.

But the essential thought to be borne in mind is that the history of philosophy—like all history—has a "third dimension," though this has too often been neglected; and this ethical culture seeks to emphasize. To vary the figure somewhat, it is a very false conception of history which sees it as a line running from a point in the distant past of primitive times to a terminus in our present day, the line being there suddenly ended. History extends in two directions from our present, and a sense of the future is by no means the least

important awareness in the mind of the ethical student of ideals.

Mr. Gilbert K. Chesterton is said to have deprecated such an absorbing interest in the future. He expressed his preference for ancestor-worship as against "posterity-worship," and remarked that he would feel it an absurd thing to be seen "on his knees to his descendants." The personal reference aside (and the picture suggests a delightful opportunity for the brush of Mr. Max Beerbohm), it is to be pointed out that Mr. Chesterton is fundamentally mistaken in the posture which he assigns to those who seek increasing realization of their ideals in the future rather than in the past. Not on their knees should such worshippers be found, but on their feet, and striving energetically towards that future which they envisage as excellent.

A more serious objection to this sort of "futurism" perhaps, and one which touches both our conception of history and of the inspiring influence of philosophic study, involves a criticism of the relation of present to future satisfactions. Does an intense desire for future achievement tend to decrease present goods? Such a thought gives point to the tale of the "log-rolling" congressman who, when urged to vote for a measure in the interests of posterity, demanded to know what posterity would, in return, do for his constituents. The truth of the matter is that posterity may work enormous benefits for contemporary society if the latter only recognizes its spiritual relationship to the future.

A conception of philosophy which holds that it arises from human needs and ethical experience

will also portray it as effective in human situations and serving ethical ends. It is in this sense that we may refer to the inspiration of philosophy. For genuine inspiration, as Dr. Adler has recently said, is that which produces effective aspiration. Consolation alone, may result in the individual's withdrawal from rude contacts with the actual world; and if it does so, not only will the world remain as rude as ever but his philosophy will go to seed and decay. Intellectual liberation, good as it is, may be sterile and barren if the freedom which it secures is not utilized. Philosophy, as part of ethical education, will yield consolation and seek intellectual liberation; but, beyond these, it will strive to produce effective aspiration. If it succeeds in this, and only when it does, it will fructify itself. Not Truth, but its ardent pursuer, "though crushed to earth will rise again."









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