TO A GIVER OF

LIGHT, INSPIRATION AND COURAGE,

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THE POET AS PHILOSOPHER

A STUDY OF THREE PHILOSOPHICAL POEMS

NOSCE TEIPSUM : THE ESSAY ON MAN : IN MEMORIAM

BY

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THE POET AS PHILOSOPHER

I

One of the passions of the human mind is the passion for definition. Were it not so, the dictionary maker would not have found so large and so constantly growing a place in the sun. This, in spite of the fact that one of the discoveries of maturity is the futility of the effort to define. Like other passions mental and emotional, the definition is elusive. The mental concept, so clear while merely a concept, is a very butterfly in its power to evade the grasp. All too many words are required for the sufficient verbal analysis of an idea that, while it remains merely a visualized image, seems self-evident. The perception which flashes "upon the inward eye" becomes confused and dulled when the feeble reason attempts justly to reproduce it through the halting medium of language. Even the daily homely commonplaces refuse to be "cribb'd, cabined, or confined." The concrete fabric of wood or metal dissolves into thin air before our effort to imprison it in words. No better means exists of proving the objects of everyday life to be "such stuff as dreams are made of" than to seek to formulate their character in words. Since, then, anything made the object of definition becomes nebulous and refuses to crystallize, why not snatch at something recognizably elusive, and ask, "What is a poet?"

What, then, is a poet? The answer must be in terms of what the poet makes himself. To-day he is a maker of pictures; and the charm of a dawning English Mayday, painted in vivid primary colors, lures us with Arcite out into woodland paths where the hawthorn breaks into blossom and the "busye larke" soars into the blue. To-morrow he is a singer of songs; and we dance with Ariel, or surfeit on the food of love to Feste's music; with Heywood we borrow the birds' notes to give our love good-morrow, or with Greene and his Sephestia we weep for the coming grief of the child who smiles upon her knee. To-day he is the stern apostle of a religion of righteousness, preaching harsh judgment against the "blind mouths" that starve "the hungry sheep"; to-morrow he is the herald of the gentler creed of truth in beauty. Now he is the epicurean cynic, bidding us live for to-day alone, gathering rosebuds while we may; again he is the seer, with vision of that

deathless something "whose dwelling is the light of setting suns." To-day he is the voice of revolt against things as they are, wailing "for the world's wrong"; to-morrow he is the voice of an unforced optimism, singing that "God's in His heaven." The poet is all these, and more than these, and none of these. Surely a definition which so refuses to be held within bounds leaves room for a poet who is a philosopher.

Of philosophy there must be much, underlying and implicit, in all poetry as in all life. But of poets who have felt their art to be a medium for presenting a connected and well formulated philosophical system there have been few. Three such, because of a common element in their theme and in their attitude thereto, can be brought into collocation. That theme, the soul of man, its nature and its immortality, is the problem with which in all ages the thinker has wrestled, ever failing to solve it, ever returning, drawn by the fascination of the unsolvable. From Job and Socrates to Sir Oliver Lodge and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle a long road leads, marked as with milestones by man's attempts to find answers to the age-old questions, "What is man?" and "If a man die, shall he live again?" In England three at least of these milestones are the poetical philosophies, or philosophical poems, with which this discussion is concerned. He who set up the first of these, Sir John Davies, too little known as the creator of the earliest philosophical poem in modern English literature, closed Elizabeth's lyric and dramatic century with "Nosce Teipsum," a work, according to Nahum Tate, on the "origin, nature, and immortality of the soul." A century and a half later, Alexander Pope turned his gift of rhetoric and epigram to the task of versifying Bolingbroke's philosophy in "An Essay on Man." Again a century passed, and all the divers tones of Tennyson's clear harp were tuned to the theme of the deathlessness of man, in the most loved of English elegies, "In Memoriam."

There is no doubt that these poets philosophized, or that in each of the works named a system of philosophy is presented. Does that make the poet a philosopher? The great leaders of metaphysical thought have been those who have built upon a structure already begun, a new elevation; or who have themselves laid the foundation for other men to build upon; or who, as pioneers, have blazed the trail into an unbroken wilderness of abstract reasoning. Bacon, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel—these are

creators. The poet, too, is a "maker"; but is his creative power adapted to the realm of metaphysical originality? Can a poet be an original philosopher?

An answer may be arrived at by an investigation of the work of the poets who have turned their art to the use of metaphysics. From the measure of their success may be established a conclusion as to whether the poet can be as fittingly a leader in abstract thought as he is a maker of pictures, a teller of tales, a singer of songs, a voicer of emotions; or whether his philosophy is notable, not for its depth or originality, but for the grace and vividness of the image which the polished mirror of his mind reflects for us of the current thought of his time.

II

Were the poet not made of impressionable material he would be no poet. His appeal lies in his universality, in his voicing of the thoughts and emotions of all times and all classes. Were he not so sensitively keyed to the moods of men, to the temper of his time, to life around him, he would express in his verse only a personal and therefore a limited and subjective feeling or idea. It is the poet's power to focus within himself impressions from without, transmitting them through the lens of his own mind, that gives his work a claim on the world's attention. His theme, therefore, however old and however often treated, will show in his handling of it the influence not only of personal mood and temperament, but also of personal circumstances and environment, and of the spirit of the age for which he is a spokesman.

In a first casual reading of "Nosce Teipsum," "An Essay on Man," and "In Memoriam," it is easy to see that the writer's attitude to his subject was in each case colored by the exciting cause of the poem. Without falling into the fallacy that the artist's work always, and, to a large degree, only reflects the artist's life, we may yet grant that in the case of the reflective, the philosophic, or the emotional writer more than in that of the imaginative one, life and its circumstances disclose the springs of art. Could we trace the events of Shakespeare's life in the careers of Orlando, Troilus, and Hamlet, then "the less Shakespeare he"; but Goldsmith is not the less Goldsmith nor Burns the less Burns because the "Deserted Village" and "Sweet Afton" are autobiographical. As for the three poems under consideration, they are all more easily understood and more fully appreciated in the light of the circumstances of their origin.

In "Nosce Teipsum" is recorded the result of a piece of youthful extravagance on the part of the lately fledged barrister, not yet full grown into the grave statesman and lawyer so honored of King James the First.[1] During his years of law study, John Davies had counted as his "deerest friend," quoting the dedication of his poem "Orchestra,"[2] one Richard Martin, elsewhere char-

[1] *Complete Poems of Sir John Davies*, ed. by Dr. A. B. Grosart, 1876, Vol. I, p. xxxiv.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 159.

acterized as "fast of tongue and ribald of wit."[1] The intimacy suffered the fate that often attends extravagant youthful friendships. For reasons never known to the public, Davies took grave offense at Martin, and the quarrel which ensued not only changed the course of the poet's life, but was indirectly responsible for his greatest poem. The dramatic scene when Davies, cudgel in hand, entered the dining hall of the barristers in the Middle Temple, sought out Martin sitting at table, and beat him soundly over the head, displays a most unjudicial and unphilosophic fieriness of spirit, and was not unreasonably followed by the expulsion of Davies from the Temple and his dismissal from the bar. Humiliated, he retired to Oxford.[2] The year which followed seems to have been a turning-point in the young man's ; life for disgrace drove him to reflection, and unhappiness to introspection. We have his own word for it:

> "If ought can teach us ought, Affliction's lookes,
> (Making us looke into ourselves so neere,)
> Teach us to know ourselves beyond all bookes,
> Or all the learned Schooles that ever were.
>
> "This mistresse lately pluckt me by the eare,
> And many a golden lesson hath me taught;
> Hath made my Senses quicke, and Reason cleare,
> Reform'd my Will and rectifide my Thought."[3]

At the end of a year, the golden lessons were embodied in "Nosce Teipsum," the earliest purely philosophical poem in English literature.

It is obvious that a poem, the theme of which is the nature of the soul as revealed to the writer by the hard mistress Experience, with a view to guidance in his future conduct of life, must voice a subjective interpretation. It treats of the nature of the soul as Davies has found it out in experience, in observation, in reflection; particularly it is his own soul that is analyzed, for most of all he has learned to "know himself." The poem is a revelation of self, for the sake of those who by reading may arrive at a similar self-knowledge. Davies does not stand apart from his concept, man, and survey him with a detached and scientific scrutiny. He is a part of his own concept, and his treatment of the theme is correspondingly warm, intimate, and human. There is in "Nosce

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. xxii. [2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. xxiii. [3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 23.

Teipsum" no egotistically elaborate or self-conscious intention to produce a philosophy. It is a philosophy, to be sure, but a philosophy that overflows in childlike naivety from within the unhappy heart of its writer. It is hard to avoid the feeling that Davies wrote the poem to comfort himself in his humiliation by an act of self-expression; as if to him, as to Wordsworth, "A timely utterance gave that thought relief."

Equally obvious is it that a poem the philosophy of which is essentially one of conduct must be primarily interested in the soul as it lives on earth, where conduct is its outer garment. Moreover, it is not the soul of man in general that is so analyzed, but a single soul, real, animate, individual. Davies' conclusions were as empirical, as full of common sense, as thoroughly based on his own observations of the things that his own soul could and did do, as were Locke's, a century later. The problems of metaphysics are everywhere subordinated to the problems of conduct, and however far afield theoretical speculation may lead the writer, he always returns in time for his application of the theory to practice. For instance, in a carefully reasoned passage on free will, the strongest argument for freedom is that without it man could not do the things right standards of conduct demand of him—

> "If love be compeld and cannot chuse,
> How can it gratefull or thankeworthy prove?
>
> "Love must free-hearted be, and voluntary."[1]

And a thorough analysis of the power, worth and beauty of the soul leads to the conclusion

> "that God did meane
> This worthy mind should worthy things imbrace;
> Blot not her beauties with thy thoughts unclean,
> Nor her dishonour with thy passions base."[2]

Of such a practical and didactic nature was necessarily the metaphysics taught as "golden lessons" in the school of experience by the mistress Affliction, with a view to reforming and rectifying the will and thought of the learner.

Quite different was the exciting cause of Pope's "Essay on Man." Here is no "spontaneous overflow of powerful emotions"

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 59.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 115.

or even of tranquil reflection induced by regret for an act of folly. The poem grew, not out of Pope's life experience, but out of Bolingbroke's, and its initiation was due to the friendship between the statesman and the poet. Far from being "pluckt by the eare" by affliction, Pope was only too ready to give audience to the specious optimism which his St. John was so willing to impart. The source of the "Essay" is to be sought, then, rather in Bolingbroke's story than in Pope's, except in so far as Pope's lack of philosophical knowledge, coupled with his worship for his noble patron, made him open to suggestion from the master of Dawley.

The outstanding features of the first period of Bolingbroke's brilliant and unscrupulous career[1] need here be only indicated rather than rehearsed—his rise to power under Anne; his fall and exile at the accession of George I; his retirement into philosophical leisure in rural France; his declared intention, more than a little successful, to make himself the arbiter of European thought if he could not be of European politics; his return to Dawley and his subsequent gathering around him of the most illustrious wits and literary men of his time, while he pursued his double career, of philosopher at his country seat, of factious intriguer in London. The man of whom Chesterfield wrote that he joined "the most elegant politeness and good-breeding that ever any courtier and man of the world was graced with" to the "deepest erudition,"[2] was easily able, by his grace and dignity of manner, by the charm of his conversation, and by his generous sympathy with men of genius,[3] to command the admiration of the "sickly, solitary,"[4] sensitive poet of Twickenham, whose passion for literature and literary men made him quickly susceptible to the condescension of the host of Voltaire, Swift, and Arbuthnot, and the patron of Gay.[5]

Bolingbroke's ambitious philosophical aim was no less than to demolish the existing systems of theological and philosophical dogma, and to reconstruct a new metaphysics along his own original lines, presenting an organic and harmonious view of the

[1] See *Bolingbroke: A Historical Study*, by John Churton Collins.
[2] Chesterfield's *Letters*, ed. by Lord Mahon, 1847, Vol. I, p. 355.
[3] Collins' *Bolingbroke*, pp. 8–9.
[4] *Alexander Pope*, by Leslie Stephen, p. 2.
[5] Collins' *Bolingbroke*, pp. 186–188.

universe.[1] But a merely academic hearing, by scholars and churchmen, did not offer to his propaganda sufficient range. A popular audience was his goal. At his hand he found a poet whose already established reputation would secure the popular audience. A philosophy however abstruse, if presented in Pope's admired couplets, would command the attention of the reading world. Together Bolingbroke and Pope sketched the plan for a great didactic poem, of which the cantos contained in our "Essay" were to be but a fraction.[2]

That portion of Bolingbroke's works which embodies this phase of his philosophy was couched in the form of "Letters to Mr. Pope." But these were not written until after the "Essay."[3] According to Doctor Warton, however, Lord Bathurst saw the whole scheme of Pope's poem drawn up in Bolingbroke's handwriting, consisting of "a series of propositions, which the poet was

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 217–221.

[2] Collins says: "It was he who sketched the plan of that magnificent work, of which the 'Essay on Man,' the 'Moral Essays,' and the fourth book of the 'Dunciad' are only fragments—a work which would in all probability, had the health and energy of Pope been equal to the task, have been the finest didactic poem in the world." P. 189.

Stephen quotes Bolingbroke as saying to Swift in 1731, "Does Pope talk to you of the noble work which, at my instigation, he has begun?" P. 160.

Bolingbroke writes to Pope in letter introductory to *Essays on Human Knowledge:* "Since you have begun, at my request, the work which I have wished long that you would undertake, it is but reasonable that I submit to the task you impose upon me." *Works of Lord Bolingbroke*, Bohn's edition, 1844, Vol. III, p. 40.

[3] Stephen's *Pope*, p. 165.

Bolingbroke's letter to Pope, cited above, says: "You have begun your ethic epistles in a masterly manner. . . . While your muse is employed . . . I shall throw upon paper, for your satisfaction and my own, some part at least of what I have thought and said formerly." *Works*, Vol. III, pp. 40–43.

The Advertisement to the *Fragments or Minutes of Essays* says: "The foregoing essays and the Fragments or Minutes that follow, were thrown upon paper in Mr. Pope's lifetime and at his desire. They were all communicated to him in scraps, as they were occasionally written. . . . They are all nothing more than repetitions of conversations often interrupted, often renewed, and often carried on a little confusedly." *Works*, Vol. IV, p. 111.

These quotations make it evident that Pope's versification of Bolingbroke's philosophy was written before the formal arrangement of the prose essays.

to amplify, versify, and illustrate."[1] Poet and philosopher joined to construct a system of ethics which they determined should "descend to posterity clothed in more attractive form than those to be dug from ponderous folios. The sentiments, the design, the philosophy were to be Bolingbroke's; the poetry, the ornament, and the fame Pope's."[2]

The "Essay on Man," then, represents a deliberate, conscious attempt to express in poetry the systematic analysis of the soul in its relation to life which is a part of Bolingbroke's philosophical system. Art is not here the medium through which the poet interprets the soul as life has revealed it to him; the poet himself is rather the tool of a propagandist. The motive is not, "Woe be unto me if I utter not the thought that burns my lips"; but rather, "Go to, now, let us build us a philosophical system that will reach unto heaven, and let us make of it a poem that shall command the popular ear." The impulse is wholly didactic, and the poetic form in which the teaching is couched has an artificiality not wholly due to the literary fashion of the time.

"Nosce Teipsum," to be sure, is no less didactic; but its spontaneous voicing of something valuable that the poet has found out and wants to pass on to others makes it real and sincere. Using one's art to interpret the truth of the soul as one has found it in experience is very different from entering into a literary partnership wherein a philosopher is to win audience for his system by means of a poet's pen, and a poet is to win fame by using an immortal theme as mere ready-made material for his art. The treatment of any subject under such circumstances must necessarily be abstract, coldly logical, and to a great extent objective. For the ideas are not evolved from Pope's consciousness; the garment which he cuts is from another man's cloth, and his interest is in shape rather than substance. He does not care greatly about the nature of the soul; his enthusiasm is for the cut and polished epigrams from whose facets are to glitter the truths he has been told about the soul.

With the sources of inspiration of both Pope and Davies thus before us, it is not hard to trace the spiritual kinship of our third poet. If "Nosce Teipsum" bears witness to the sweetness of the

[1] *Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke*, Vol. II, p. 100, footnote.
Collins' *Bolingbroke*, p. 190.
[2] *Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke*, pp. 100–101.

uses of adversity, even more does "In Memoriam" stand as monument to the triumph of the "faith that looks through death." Davies wrote from the Valley of Humiliation; Tennyson, from the Valley of the Shadow of Death. And proportionate to the greater depth from which the cry came was the height to which the soul attained

> "Upon the world's great altar stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God."

The story of the grief of Alfred Tennyson for his friend Arthur Henry Hallam is too familiar to need re-telling. Less trite, perhaps, is an allusion to the testimony of their contemporaries as to the beauty and power of the character of the subject of the "Elegies," as the separate poems were at first called. The man whose father could speak of his "almost faultless disposition"; whom Lord Houghton called "a most wise and influential counsellor," and Henry Alford a

> "gentle soul
> That ever moved among us in a veil
> Of heavenly lustre";

and of whom Gladstone wrote, long after, that had he lived he "would have built his own enduring monument,"[1] was surely worthy of the seventeen-year-long poetic tribute that embodies the still dearer gift of unforgetting friendship.

The very length of time over which the composition of "In Memoriam" extends is proof of the sincerity of its spirit. That it was begun immediately after Hallam's death is attested by a group of manuscript lines containing its germ and bearing date of the winter of 1833.[2]

> "Where is the voice I loved? Ah where
> Is the dear hand that I would press?
> Lo! the broad heavens cold and bare,
> The stars that know not my distress!
>
> The vapor labors up the sky,
> Uncertain forms are darkly moved!
> Larger than human passes by
> The shadow of the man I loved,
> And clasps his hands, as one that prays!"

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[1] Wace's *Tennyson*, pp. 30–34. [2] *Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 107.

Moreover, in the manuscript book containing the earliest draft of "The Two Voices," published in 1833, appear five of the poems later to be a part of "In Memoriam."[1] The date of publication, 1850, would not alone be proof of the long process of development of the whole poem; but identification has been made of events and persons alluded to that did not enter the poet's life until dates as late as 1845.[2] The last step in the progress of the work was the arrangement of the parts in the order in which they stand. Of the gradual evolution of the poem Tennyson himself wrote, "The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many."

It is easy and superficial to say that the poem originated as an outlet for personal grief. Undoubtedly personal grief inspired inquiry into the great subjects of God, faith, and immortality, as likely to afford comfort.[3] Equally surely the poem is subjective in its initiation. Sorrow awakened the consciousness of the need to know by personal investigation what are the grounds for belief in the great tenets of faith. Tennyson, when Hallam died, was at the doubting age; his struggle with the doubts common to youth was merely precipitated by the loss of his friend. And because "In Memoriam" voices doubts that are common, it became, as its maker said of it, "a poem, not an actual biography." It partakes of a dramatic quality, by which, wrote Tennyson,

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[1] *Memoir*, p. 109. The poems are the following:
Fair ship, that from the Italian shore. ix.
With trembling fingers did we weave. xxx.
When Lazarus left his charnel-cave. xxxi.
This truth comes home with bier and pall. lxxxv.
It draweth near the birth of Christ. xxviii.

[2] A. C. Bradley, in *A Commentary on Tennyson's "In Memoriam,"* pp. 15–17, mentions Charles Tennyson's marriage tour in 1836 (xcviii); allusion in lxxxv to Edmund Lushington, whom Tennyson did not become a friend of until 1840, and whose marriage to Cecilia Tennyson in 1842 is celebrated in the Epilogue; removal of the Tennysons from Somersby to Epping Forest in 1837 (c–cv); visits to Barmouth, 1839, and Gloucestershire, 1844, where certain poems were said by Tennyson to have been written. Lushington wrote in 1845, "Tennyson showed me those poems of 'In Memoriam' which were finished," implying that more were to come.

[3] E. H. Sneath, *The Mind of Tennyson*, pp. 9–10.

"the different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given. . . . 'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him."[1]

In another way than as an elegy "In Memoriam" was inspired by Arthur Henry Hallam. Much of the spirit of his few writings is apparent in Tennyson's philosophy. Hallam was much more a philosopher than was Tennyson in his youth, and in their walks at Cambridge, in their journeyings in Europe, in their vacation days at Somersby, the friends must have talked much of the great topics that lie at the heart of all philosophy. It is not hard to detect a possible source of inspiration in the lines found by Hallam Tennyson among his father's treasured letters from Arthur.[2]

> "I do but mock me with the questionings.
> Dark, dark, irrecoverably dark
> Is the soul's eye; yet how it strives and battles
> Through the impenetrable gloom to fix
> That master light, the secret truth of things,
> Which is the body of the Infinite God."

Not only out of Hallam's death, then, but equally out of Hallam's life sprang the "wild and wandering cries" which grew through the years into an unexampled expression of the passion and the pain of the heart that "feels after God if haply we may find Him"; to discover at last triumphantly that "He is not far from everyone of us."

If the circumstances in which the three poems originated are responsible for their quality, not less so are the temperaments and personalities of their writers. Sir John Davies was a lawyer, and from all we can learn of him an eminently practical person, whose legal acumen no less than his poetical achievement commended him to the shrewd King James the First. Nor was he without the social graces of a courtier, while at the same time displaying the typically sturdy English temper of the parliamentarian who stood for right against privilege, even when privilege was a royal monopoly.[3] His practical achievement found its best expression in his earnest, intelligent, and untiring efforts for the right government of the ever troublesome Ireland.[4] His mind was legal, his

[1] *Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 305.
[2] *Memoir*, Vol. I, p. 104.
[3] Grosart's ed. of Davies, p. xxxiii.
[4] Grosart's ed. of Davies, pp. xxxv–lxiv.

temper judicial, his habit of life active. In "Nosce Teipsum" the legal mind seeks to prove its belief; the judicial temper provides motive for such effort to prove, in the ethical application which is the *raison d'être* of the poem; and the active practicality of the busy man of affairs presents the abstractions of metaphysics in the plain blunt language and with the simple faith characteristic of the writer's manly, straightforward attitude to life. It is a practical working philosophy that Davies embodies in his poem. And yet it is philosophy as such, not implicit in allegory or drama, lyric or heroic narrative, according to the fashions of his time. Davies was a thinker and a worker, not a singer; life to him was a problem of conduct, not the material of a stage-play.

No less is the character of the "Essay" determined by the character of Alexander Pope, an exponent in his own person of the cynical temper of his day. Embittered by the ill-health and deformity which cut him off from the active life of men, and by the Catholic disabilities which barred him from a political career; little inclined to mingle in a wide and tolerant friendliness with men outside the circle of his chosen friends; prone, when irritated, to jealousy, suspicion, and petty quarreling; catering to popular wits and aristocratic Tory leaders, and priding himself on his position as "authorized interpreter of the upper circle"; having the gift neither of sympathetic and kindly laughter nor of the tears that spring "from the depth of some divine despair"—thus poorly equipped for poesy, Pope can hardly be expected to handle with adequate sympathy or with spontaneity the great theme through the variations of which throbs the heartbeat of human longing. Problems of conduct were secondary to a man whose guide was expediency and whose pastime was intrigue. The great truths of religion brought no thrill to a man to whom his own religion had been only a limitation of opportunity and all other religion but a hostile environment. Pope's interest in God and immortality is primarily neither ethical nor theological, but speculative. An intricate and unimpassioned chain of logic, illuminated by Pope's rhetorical gift of brilliant epigram, leads to rationalistic and purely abstract conclusions, as cold as they are clever.

To Davies the practical and Pope the rationalistic succeeds Tennyson the introspective. His passion is neither conduct nor speculation, but faith, the intuitive faith of the mystic. As truly

religious and moral as Davies, with the conventional religion and morality of the nineteenth century, he yet lives, unlike Davies, a life far removed from public affairs. As aristocratic and conservative as Pope, he yet possesses, unlike him, a pulsing human sympathy and a love and knowledge of nature which are his heritage from the poets of the Revolution. Side by side with his gift of self-analysis is his capacity for experiencing to the full every human emotion—love, joy, grief, friendship, hope, despair. Where Davies based his treatment of the problems of the soul of man on the foundation, "I have inquired and learned to know"; where Pope proceeds from the starting-point, "I have reasoned and reached a conclusion"; Tennyson's heart "Stands up and answers, 'I have felt,'" and to his expression of feeling finds continuing echo in numberless other hearts.

In spite of their single theme, then, our three poems are likely to be widely divergent in character—the first, an earnest, unaffected expression of a soul enthusiastic, sturdy, sincere, seeking to impart to others salutary lessons learned by him in a hard school; the second, a studied, brilliant piece of artifice, issuing from a nature shallow, cold, vain, whose effort to convince men of eternal truths grew not of heart but of brain; the third, a record of struggle from darkness to light of a sensitive, introspective, intuitively religious soul, voicing with pulsing sympathy an experience common to every such soul and therefore universal in its appeal.

And the divergence to be expected in view of these differences of circumstance and temperament is likely to appear still more inevitable when studied in the light of the times from which the poems emanated. Can our poet be an original philosopher? In so far as he reflects his time, he is but a mirror, not a creator. Before he can be estimated as either, he must be seen against a background Elizabethan, Georgian, Victorian.

III

Of the Elizabethan age,[1] with its overflowing, superabundant vitality, the keynote is surely "More life and fuller." Not a century had passed since intellect, religion and national consciousness had had their new birth under the touch of Erasmus and More, Grocyn and Colet, Henry VII and Wolsey. From a negligible island, torn by civil strife and backward in civilization, England had been made by her great minister the arbiter of Europe; the often ridiculed economies of her first Tudor king had added to her international prestige the backing of a well-filled treasury; stirred to emulation by Italian and Portuguese example, British voyagers had made their first timid attempts to try their "woven wings" upon the dread Atlantic; and all within less than a hundred years of the accession of Elizabeth. The spirit of the Italian Renaissance came late into England, having undergone transformation at the hands of the austere and ethical genius of northern Europe into a spirit whose dominant note was moral and religious.[2] English scholars caught from Italy the zeal for classic philosophy and literature, the fascinated pursuit of ancient learning, the revolt against authority and the sense of the value of the individual, which in Italy had been accompanied by a purely pagan delight in beauty for its own sake. In the Oxford and Cambridge of Henry VII and VIII there was no paganism; the methods of classic study were applied with keenest zest to sacred writings, and among the treasures of antiquity it was the graver literature that commanded attention from the master minds of the time. The reviving intellect was the handmaid of religion; religious instruction and moral training were the ultimate goals of the study and teaching of the classics; and serious literature, not secular, supplied the material in shaping which the intellect was to achieve its mastery of the new tools of culture. The period of

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[1] For facts implied in the historical and literary summary see the following:
A. D. Innes, *England Under the Tudors.*
E. P. Cheyney, *England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth.*
F. A. Pollard, *Political History of England from Accession of Edward VI to Death of Elizabeth.*
Cambridge History of English Literature, Vols. 3 and 4.

[2] Adams' *Civilization During the Middle Ages*, Ch. xv.

the humanists in England was a learning period, gravely intent, as a child upon a new lesson, upon its task of making practical and accessible the wisdom of the ancients.

Before the opening of the Elizabethan period the intellect has found itself. The first ventures into new realms of thought and knowledge are complete. Knowing that it has wings, the spirit of Elizabethan England is ready for far flights. It is the age of youth, enthusiastic, exuberant, out-reaching, eager to try its newly realized intellectual strength as well in realms of art as in those of graver learning. So art seeks new channels, by experiment in the use of every medium—lyric, dramatic, fictional, metrical, linguistic. Travelled courtiers come home from France and Italy bringing new art forms, and England bursts into song. To find new modes of expression poets and pedants juggle with classic metres and euphuists strain rhetoric to the breaking point. Vogue follows vogue in kaleidoscopic succession of miscellany, allegory, pastoral, and sonnet. Religion refuses to be bound by the shackles of authority, either Roman or Anglican; and, as the method of the humanists applied to sacred documents produces the English Bible, the Puritan spirit comes to birth, itself a great adventure. National pride grows with Elizabeth's greatness, reflected in chronicle, historical play, and poetical history, where Camden and Harrison vie with Shakespeare and Daniel in celebrating the glories of England. Across the western ocean the first of the empire builders sail out to meet the Spanish galleons homecoming under silken sails and laden with the treasures of the Indies. The flag of England follows the little ships of the merchant adventurers into the Orient. In the pages of Hakluyt magic casements are opened upon the foam of perilous seas. A new world lures to its exploration both poet and mariner. To seek, to strive, to fare forth upon the great adventure, whether armed with pen or with sword, is the temper of the time.

Youth unspoiled is unsophisticated. The age of Elizabeth was an unsophisticated age. Its judgments were based on its own often mistaken, but always sincere sense of values. Its thinkers, with intellects newly set free from the trammels of ecclesiastical and scholastic methods, turned from the study of the classics to the study of life. They were for the most part unconscious philosophers, whose conscious interest was all in men and their affairs. Little abstract metaphysics emanates

from the age of Elizabeth. But a deep and simple understanding of life and its problems is implicit in their writings; and is not that, after all, a working philosophy?[1] Life was their study; all life, all manifestations of life, seemed to them new, vivid, full of wonder, a great adventure, luring to exploration as the far lands lured. A twentieth century which inherits the constructive thought of three hundred years can be startled into attention only by a radical innovation. But the thinkers of an age which inherited only crystallized tradition, and which had discarded that tradition as an outworn garment, found that the body of truth within the garment, hitherto by them unseen and unrealized, had all the beauty of Venus to Praxiteles. They looked at the mere externals of this body of thought; they knew as little of the intricate possibilities of its inner recesses as contemporary physicists knew of the circulation of the blood. The simpler acts of life and of the universe, which a more complex age takes for granted, offered to them inexhaustible material for analysis. Simple emotions, rudimentary mental and spiritual processes, basic philosophical truths, are dissected with the garrulity, not of age, but of youth discovering something new. However much Plato or Zeno or Plotinus may have discovered it before, to the Elizabethans each fresh explanation of the meaning of life is naively a new discovery. It is a discovery which will out; it must find articulate expression. Thus the passion of love provides stuff for poetic meanderings through sonnet sequence after sonnet sequence, all voicing feelings which to our worldly wise generation are trite enough to be left implicit in something subtler, but which to them were full of the charm of things never before expressed. However often Greek or Latin or Italian poets might have said these things, Englishmen had not said them before. Nothing was too trivial, too obvious, to be put into words.

As unsophisticated of spirit as his age, young John Davies took as his theme the explanation and proof of these great self-evident fundamentals, God, man, and immortality, which the

[1] *Touchstone:* Hast any philosophy in thee, shepherd?

Carin: No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means, and content is without three good friends; that the property of rain is to wet, and fire to burn . . .

Touchstone: Such a one is a natural philosopher.

—*As You Like It.* Act III, Sc. 2, ll. 21–33.

professional metaphysicians, ancient and modern, from Plato to Calvin, had already analyzed and formulated. The young adventurer into philosophy had nothing really new or profound to add to the body of their thought, but to himself his discoveries of truth were as new as if made for the first time. Since he had not known these things before, he took for granted they were equally new to others.

It is probable, too, that to his contemporaries the philosophical discoveries of Davies had all the charm of novelty. It is to our print-satiated age that they seem trite. The men and women who read his work knew Plato and Aristotle, to be sure; but here were Plato and Aristotle popularized and made English. And these readers were not constructive thinkers, each in possession of a well-formulated system of metaphysics. Among the men of learning of his time, Davies was one of the few conscious philosophers. While he was no more really the philosopher than was Spenser, and while his work no more truly contains a knowledge of the deep things of the thought of the ages past than does the "Faerie Queen," nevertheless Spenser's philosophical reflections are so intermingled with the thread of his allegory and with vivid images of sensuous beauty that the philosopher seems all poet. For the writer of "Nosce Teipsum," on the contrary, poetry was merely the medium of expression of an abstract philosophical theme—the ship which carried the adventurer through the deeps of thought, into a country to him as undiscovered as was the Eldorado which lured Sir Walter Raleigh to his death.

With the query, "Why did my parents send me to the Schooles?"[1] Davies begins an introduction that laments the vanity of human knowledge. He reminds the reader that "the desire to know first made men fools," and goes on to describe the "fond fruitlesse curiositie" with which "in bookes prophane we seeke for knowledge hid." The seeking is to no purpose:

> "when all our lamps are burned,
> Our bodies wasted, and our spirits spent;
> When we have all the learned Volumes turned,
> Which yeeld mens wits both help and ornament:
>
> What can we know? or what can we discerne?"[2]

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[1] Grosart's ed. of Davies, Vol. I, pp. 15–17.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

The idea is not new; to search no further, it is at least as old as Koheleth. Davies, however, as the gentle cynic did not, finds a reason for this purposelessness which at the same time affords a hope for an ultimate knowledge that shall be of some avail:

"For how may we to others' things attaine,
When none of us his owne soule understands?

. . . . . .

"We that acquaint ourselves with every Zoane
And passe both Tropikes and behold the Poles,
When we come home, are to ourselves unknown,
And unacquainted still with our owne Soules."[1]

If, then, the seeker after knowledge will but study his own soul first, he may hope to arrive at true wisdom. Had it not been for the poet's misfortunes, he tells us, he would have been as blind as others, having a mind wholly occupied with

"the face of outward things,
Pleasing and faire, agreeable and sweet."[2]

But catastrophe has driven the young man back upon himself:

"My selfe am center of my circling thought,
Onely my selfe I studie, learne, and know."[3]

With this preliminary statement of his theme and his reasons for choosing it, Davies proceeds to a detailed definition of the soul in terms both positive and negative. The theories of various "great clerks" are catalogued and dismissed with the verdict that

"No craz'd braine could ever yet propound,
Touching the Soule, so vaine and fond a thought,
But some among these masters have been found,
Which in their Schooles the self-same thing have taught."[4]

Reaching the conclusion that the soul is "a spirit, and heavenly influence,"[5] the poem continues to give proof from nature and theology that this spirit was created by God, in contradiction to other theories of its origin.[6] The explanation of the relation of the soul to the body, by means of physical senses and mental faculties, ends the first part of the poem.[7] The second part is devoted to a careful proof of the immortality of the soul, with a refutation of current objections to the doctrine.[8]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 27.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 45–60.
[7] *Ibid.*, pp. 60–82.
[8] *Ibid.*, pp. 82–116.

Neither are these new ideas; they are as old as Socrates or as Job. But to Davies they are new; and he approaches them with all the enthusiasm of that explorer into new realms who is the best type of the Elizabethan Englishman. He has no more hesitation in attacking an insoluble problem than has Gilbert in attempting a Northwest Passage or Drake in singeing the beard of the Spanish king. His daring spirit is undaunted; he will answer the question for which the centuries have found no adequate reply. He will define the indefinable; "unknowables" are left to the nineteenth century. Poets of his time have already blazed the trail of the love song, of the historical narrative, of the pastoral lyric, of the sonnet sequence; Davies will blaze the trail of the philosophical elegy. The twentieth century, far on the road to an understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, may look with amused wonder at the length of the argument which Davies thinks is necessary to prove that the soul can exist without the body, or that the soul has no need of food. Such propositions as he spends ingenuity and poetic power upon are of a sort to be either assumed or discarded, but no longer debated. In a time when every public school child may know if he will the uses of the five senses, a careful analysis of the subject by an adult for adults seems superfluous. Yet to feel a sence of redundancy or undue multiplication of words in Davies is to argue a lack of historical imagination; for in the naive simplicity which expresses what a more complex age would take for granted, the poet is only the exponent of the youthful outspokenness of his time. These things were to him worth talking about, worth writing his best verses about. Moreover, they were things about which the poetry reading public of his time thought and talked, and as to which Davies wished to persuade them to right views. They elicited from him many a brilliant stanza, many a fresh and vital interpretation of the meaning of life. That they did so merely shows him the child of his period, when to think was to put into words.

Davies' problem was the problem of Job; it is the problem of Sir Oliver Lodge; it is ageless because unanswerable. But his approach to the problem, compact of philosophical commonplaces though it may be, voices ideas that to his contemporaries were worth voicing, because to their simple, youthful enthusiasm everything was interesting, nothing trite. After all, with all the

sophistication of the moderns, it is hard to find a deeper, surer, more penetrating summing up of the whole nature of man than this:

> "I know I am one of Nature's little kings,
> Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall—"[1]

To gain wisdom has been to lose wonder; the twentieth century psychologist has reduced to a science the mental and spiritual processes, soul-stuff having become to him merely material for experiment, a substance as self-evident as oxygen to the chemist. It was the sixteenth century guesser at truth who cried out in reverent ardor,

> "O ignorant poor man! what dost thou beare
> Lockt up within the casket of thy brest?
> What jewels, and what riches hast thou there!"[2]

But between our over-scientific age and the young enthusiasm of Sir John Davies and his contemporaries lie three centuries whose history is that of the swinging pendulum.[3] The splendid figures of Elizabeth's court passed into silence; the great queen herself laid down her regal power; heroic adventure gave place to the petty intrigue of a Stuart court. Instead of the reverent wonder that took shape in lofty poetry appeared fanatic superstition whose emotional outlet was witch-hunting. The consummate feminine tact was gone which, capitalizing the native English chivalry that made men loyal to a whimsical and arbitrary Gloriana, had held a liberty-loving nation in happy subjection under an autocratic paternalism. In its stead reigned a shrewd, stubborn, antagonistic self-will, king by divine right, according to the fashion of continental monarchs. Administration by favorites, coupled with the failure of the royal pedant to comprehend the laws and liberties of England, goaded the free-born Englishman into resentment and revolt. Enthusiasm found a new outlet;

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 114–115.

[3] For facts underlying the ensuing historical summary, see the following:
Trevelyan—*England under the Stuarts.*
Hassall—*Balance of Power in Europe.*
Wakeman—*Seventeenth Century Europe.*
Lecky—*History of England in the 18th Century.*
Robertson—*England under the Hanoverians.*
Innes—*History of England and the British Empire*, Vol. 3.

not Eldorado, not Virginia, not the treasures of the Indies lured the adventurous spirit, but an ideal of freedom from tyranny, of government by the consent of the governed. Play and poem gave place to political pamphlet; art became the handmaid of an austere religion, or fled in fear from the noisy confusion of a nation in civil strife. Great literature is not born of civil war, nor great art of religious bigotry.

On the pendulum swung through the descending arc of regicide, Protectorate, and Restoration, to reach its lowest curve in the decadence of the Merry Monarch's reign. Of the corruption of the public taste, permeated by the contagion of a corrupt court, no further evidence is needed than the total absence of ethical ideals in the Restoration drama. The reaction against Puritanism was displayed in two forms: the frivolous mind, resenting the trammels that had been placed upon conduct by the rigid morality of Presbyterians and Covenanters, burst all bounds in an orgy of dissipated pleasure; the thoughtful mind, flinging off the shackles of creed with which a Calvinistic establishment had loaded it, either became indifferent to all religion, or inclined with cold curiosity to the rationalistic movement which was beginning to dominate thought under the influence of Hobbes and Descartes. In parliamentary circles reaction was the rule of the day, embodied in Poor Laws, a Penal Code, and acts of religious intolerance which made the great Tory families supreme in state and church, and created an insurmountable cleavage between the upper class, Tory and Anglican, and the middle and lower classes, democratic and Dissenting.

National prestige, so high under Elizabeth, had fallen to the lowest figure perhaps ever reached by English stock—a figure indexed by the subsidy paid to Charles II by the king of France, and by the signatures of the Cabal to a sham treaty by which an ally was sold out. English military power was negligible, her strength sapped by the civil wars of two decades, and by the emigration of her sturdiest and most independent spirits to the free air of the New World. Men had changed "swords for ledgers," and forsaken "the student's bower for gold"; for one tremendously vital force in English life in the seventeenth century was the developing commercial life of the nation. Colonies were encouraged as a source of new markets; navigation acts were made law as a means of controlling and monopolizing those markets; the

soon-to-be great aristocracy of trade was in its infancy. In these facts lay the germs of eighteenth century material prosperity; yet prosperity bought at the price of a commercialized national life is bought too dear, and the period when the commercializing process takes place may be not unfairly called a nation's lowest watermark.

Still the pendulum swung, now through an ascending arc whose degrees are marked by the birth of the Whig party, the Glorious Revolution, the Bill of Rights, and the conquests of England's first foreign wars of commerce. The colonial empire expands; growing commercial and sea power means growing prosperity, growing smugness, growing national self-satisfaction. England becomes to Europe the pattern of the constitutional monarchy, with a government really representative and a ministry really responsible. Dating from the Treaty of Utrecht, eighteenth century England represents the extreme opposite from the England of Elizabeth. A nation which has suffered from its unchecked enthusiasms—for freedom, in the stress of the Civil War; for religion, in Puritan bigotry; for pleasure, in the demoralized court of Charles II—turns with relief to a life bereft of enthusiasm. No more do the "woven wings" of the little ships of England flit down the Channel on their way to wrest from the Spaniard the wealth of the Indies; rather her merchantmen ply the African slave trade in the infamous service of the Spanish crown. Bribery and place-hunting are the passions of an England made prosperous and peaceful by Walpole's statecraft. Formalism and artificiality are the natural outgrowth of revulsion against great genuineness of feeling, great sincerity of action. At all costs, whatever may be beneath the surface, let a seemliness of outward appearance be maintained. And since there are no great issues to be faced, with traditional insularity separating England from vital interest in European wars, with religious tolerance breeding religious indifference, with the love of system, of order, of a universe reduced to form and law becoming the sole meditation of the thoughtful—since there are no great issues there *can* be no great enthusiasms, and men's minds are left free for attention to the small, surface non-essentials.

Thus the eighteenth century is as truly an age of artificiality as was the sixteenth an age of enthusiasm. Preservation of the balance of power is the keynote of international relations, as

preservation of the balance between classes is the goal of domestic statecraft. So delicately adjusted a system, man-made and man-upheld, whose treaties, as Alberoni said of Utrecht, "pared and cut countries like Dutch cheeses," without regard for racial affinities or natural boundaries, must needs be both artificial and mechanical. The wars of the eighteenth century are not wars for principle, not wars of national pride, not wars for glory or for right; they are wars for boundary lines and for the right allotment of colonial possessions, so that no nation may have too much power. It is a time sordid, treacherous, unworthy, without touch of high adventure or of idealism. It is a time of unscrupulous invasions of Silesia, of ruthless partitionings of Poland, of secret treaties germinating the seeds of future wars.

England, insular and isolated, pushes about her colonial pawns and knights upon the international chessboard; but her domestic life goes on apart from continental strifes. Apart, that is, except as the artificial spirit of the age finds outlet in an artificial social system, and except as her colonial conquests increase her command of world markets and consequent commercial prestige. Prosperity at home, on which the character of eighteenth century English life is based, grows out of conquest abroad. Under the nurture of the Mercantilist policy, a constant outward flow of English manufactures keeps a golden stream flowing inward far in excess of the cost of imported raw materials. Accessories of life which had in Elizabeth's day been the luxuries of the upper classes became the necessities of humbler folk. Artisan of the town and country squire desire to be comfortable as well as free and independent. The material conditions of life for the middle and lower classes improve; the upper classes increase, including in their charmed circle the newly born aristocracy of trade. The leisurely and luxurious life of the country estate is no longer the perquisite of the nobility. New types of amusement develop, of a sort to occupy the erstwhile bourgeois ladies and gentlemen whose center of social activity is the country house. Infinite leisure means infinite opportunity for elegant conversation at polite tea-drinkings among people of fashion. As formal as the "stiff, brocaded gown" of the eighteenth century lady, as artificial as the "patterned garden paths" of the primly laid out shrubberies and lawns where she walked, as superficial as the Chesterfieldian gallantry which cloaked an actual contempt for women—so

insincere and shallow was the conversation which skimmed the surface of the deep realities of life, mistaking itself for the language of true culture, while in fact its brilliancy was the veneer of elegance and taste rather than the substance of thought and knowledge.

It is an age of political adventurers and religious sceptics; an age when men of letters write in bondage to the wealth of their patrons; an age when statecraft busies itself with intrigue and delicate finesse, uninspired by sweeping motives of patriotism or reform; an age without a grand passion. It is an age to produce a Frederick of Prussia, a Voltaire, a Swift, rather than a Gustavus Adolphus, a Montaigne, a Milton. Reason is enthroned, as must needs be in a time when everything, from the states of Europe to the Chinese vases in the lady's boudoir, is arranged according to a system. Even religion undergoes the same process; and the preacher systematizes his doctrine in accordance with the newly venerated laws of reason, and formalizes his ritual in harmony with the social conventionalities. It is an age when

> "Life in her creaking shoes
> Goes, and more formal grows,
> A round of calls and cues."

Enthusiasm, moral passion, spontaneous emotion, lofty patriotism, —all these are dead. The pendulum has swung to its extreme of convention and formality.

Of such an age Alexander Pope fittingly became the mouthpiece. Where Davies was unsophisticated and enthusiastic, Pope was worldly wise and world weary. Where Davies was natural and spontaneous, Pope was artificial and rhetorical. His poem (or "Essay," as he more suitably called it, for rhetoric is not poetry) has no concern with the nature of man and God in relation to conduct; its concern is with the nature of man and God as material for brilliant epigram. He is like the conversationalist of his century, who cared not so much what he said as how he said it. God, man, and immortality are made the means to a glorification of the principle of that order which "is heaven's first law." Not the individual soul, not the relation of the individual soul to God and life, not the destiny of the individual is here presented, but the system, the great machine, in which the individual is but a tiny cog. Davies wished to know himself in the concrete; Pope, as he himself tells us, wishes to consider "Man in the abstract," and, true to his century's love of system, "what condition and

relation (he) is placed in, and what is the proper end and purpose of (his) being."[1]

That the discussion is rationalistic, too, is evident at the outset. The writer who inquires "What can we reason but from what we know?"[2] and sees in the negative answer a limit to his power of thought, has evidently no room in his philosophy for faith or intuition. The purpose of the dissertion is ambitiously stated as to "beat this ample field" of the "scene of man" which Pope beholds thoroughly systematized—

"A mighty maze! but not without a plan."[3]

The whole of the first of the four "epistles," presumably addressed to Bolingbroke, is devoted to the proof of order in the universe, unrefuted by the evils and imperfections which offer an apparent contradiction to the belief in a benevolent Providence upholding this order—this chain which stretches

"from infinite to thee,
From thee to nothing."[4]

The universe is compact of system upon system.

"And if each system in gradation roll
Alike essential to the amazing Whole,
The least confusion but in one, not all
That system only, but the Whole must fall."

What a similarity to the arguments for maintaining in precarious equilibrium upon its apex the trembling pyramid of the balance of power in Europe!

The succeeding parts of the poem study the nature of man with respect to himself, to society, and to happiness, thus echoing the topics which engaged the philosophers of the period onward from Hobbes. Reason is glorified as "the God within the mind" which negotiates between the good and evil passions that spring from self-love.[6] It is Reason that has developed man from the State of Nature to the State of Art,[7] showing him that his best means of saving himself is by saving the social whole. Happiness, since no individual exists alone, but only as a part of the system, must consist in seeking the good of all; in other words, in the final conclusion,

"Virtue only makes our bliss below."[8]

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[1] Ward's ed. of Pope's Works, pp. 192–3.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, l. 18.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, l. 6.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 240–241.
[6] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 247–250.
[7] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, l. 204.
[7] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, l. 169.
[8] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, l. 397.

One need but contrast this unexceptionable conclusion with the known facts as to the virtues and the social love of Bolingbroke, the inspirer of the poem, to realize its utter artificiality. Artificial, too, are the brilliant epigrams, often dragged into the argument by an obviously forced connection because, having flashed upon the witty mind of their maker, they are too good to be lost. The polished, sparkling hardness of the couplets is like the polish and sparkle of the literary circle that enjoyed its own wit at Dawley or Twickenham. The couplet was the convention of the day, so that its use alone could not convict Pope of formality. But the couplet as used by Pope has no similarity to the couplet as used by Goldsmith. Form in itself is not destructive to feeling. But the end-stopping not only of lines but of thoughts becomes mere mechanism; and the sincerity that laments not only the vanishing of the substance of a boyhood memory but the ill fate of a land

"Where wealth accumulates and men decay"

has no precursor in the specious argument that seeks to prove that

"God sends not ill, if rightly understood,
Or partial ill is universal good."[1]

Neither sincerity nor high ideals can be predicated of a man who in a poem on virtue proudly apostrophizes the vicious Bolingbroke as his "guide, philosopher and friend"; or who, vain, selfish, and deceitful in his private affairs, enjoins unselfishness, charity, and honesty. This is not the counsel of the humble learner sharing his lesson for the good of all; it is the arrogant advice of the self-appointed teacher, who least of all had learned what he presumed to teach. Nor can spontaneous enthusiasm be discovered in a poem that runs its cycle between a not-too-modest statement of aim, to "vindicate the ways of God to man,"[2] and a declaration that the great purpose has been accomplished to his own satisfaction.[3] The enthusiasm was not for the theme, but for Bolingbroke its inspirer and for Pope's own treatment of it.

Yet the merits of the eighteenth century are Pope's. Its surface brilliancy is reflected in the scintillating couplets of his verse, readable, entertaining, thought-provoking. Its surface courtesies, which made life graceful and gracious, have their

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 113–114.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, l. 16.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 391–398.

parallel in the facile grace of his phrasings. Its formal gardens, like his precisely turned epigrams, had a patterned beauty of their own. An age of reason is less stirring than an age of enthusiasm, but less deadening than an age of bigotry and fanaticism. Order may not be heaven's *first* law, but chaos was dispelled by light, the first of created things. Pope, like his century, has the virtues of his defects. Convention is no more all bad than revolt is all good. The pendulum of poetry, as of life, must vibrate between the two, and Pope and his period represent the end of the swing toward the artificial and conventional.

Extremes mean change. Once the extreme is reached, nothing remains but to turn back. When the extreme is revolt, the turn brings reaction. When the extreme is convention, the turn brings revolution. The record of the revolution that spans the century from Pope to Tennyson is too familiar to need rehearsal.[1] The England that saw Tennyson at Cambridge was an England that had witnessed a struggle, hitherto unsuccessful except in the American colonies, for freedom from conservative Tory control; an England that had watched the First Republic and the First Empire rise and fall in France; an England whose Revolutionary poets had echoed Rousseau's ideals of human brotherhood and of the return to that nature where dwelt the "motion and (the) spirit" which were God; an England where economic control had passed from the hands of the merchant and the agriculturist into the hands of the manufacturer, and where industry had moved from the home to the factory. In the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the period during which "In Memoriam" grew, there began to be worked out in this England, in terms of practical social and political action, the hitherto vague economic doctrines centering around the value of the individual human being, and the consequent necessity of human brotherhood in fact as well as in theory.

In spite of the intervening Revolution, the first quarter of the nineteenth century shows lingering traces of the eighteenth century love of order and system. Now it is economic theory

[1] For facts underlying the ensuing historical summary, see the following:
Marriott—*England Since Waterloo.*
Robertson—*England Under the Hanoverians.*
Slater—*Making of Modern England.*
Innes—*History of England and the British Empire,* Vols. 3 and 4.

that is reduced to a code. Adam Smith has bequeathed to his country the *Laissez faire* doctrine of the French physiocrats, by which all social ills are to be remedied. The laws which govern population and wages are formulated with scientific accuracy and rigidity by Malthus and Ricardo. If the order lauded by Pope and his deistic contemporaries is but left to work out its own perfect devices in "the best of all possible worlds," whatever is will soon be right. But alas for system! Left to itself the world grows worse. The so-beautiful theory does not materialize in fact, for childhood still grows up in hungry ignorance and weak old age is still "in corners thrown." Moreover, while a revolutionary bogie, as yet unseen in England, makes itself perceptible to English ears in the savage mutterings of rick-burners and of blanketeers at Peterloo, it is impossible for an aristocratic government to leave the world quite to itself, unhelped by repressive measures.

So the failure of the *laissez faire* doctrine to accomplish practical results leads to an opposite movement in the direction of government control of economic forces, a movement slight and tentative at first, but steadily gaining impetus. At the same time the restlessness of an unhappy, poverty-stricken multitude under the oppression of laws forbidding free speech, free assembly, free association, makes it evident to eyes which can read the signs of the times that some panacea other than repression is needed to heal the economic sores of England. The self-interest of politician, landlord, and manufacturer, seeking to safeguard place and wealth, joins hands with the awakened conscience of the thinker and the philanthropist, striving to ameliorate the wretchedness of the masses. The humanitarian movement is born and the period of experimental reform begins.

Reform begins at the top. In 1832 an aristocratic parliament, with a side-glance across the water at a newly made Citizen Monarchy, remakes itself into a bourgeois but yet more nearly representative body. The reformed parliament enacts measures never sanctioned by its Tory predecessor. The long pleading of Wilberforce is listened to at last and slavery is abolished throughout the Empire. The first prison reform act rewards the efforts of John Howard and Elizabeth Fry. A series of factory laws asserts the right of the government to regulate the hours and conditions of industry, especially as concerns children. A new

poor law seeks to reduce the pauperization of the laborer by indiscriminate charity. For the first time public money is appropriated for the maintenance of schools—a small sum, to be sure, less than that for the royal stables, and used only for primary education, the only sort necessary in a time when any child over nine years old is permitted by law to work. Agitation by the Anti-Corn Law League, helped by the Irish famine, puts an end at last to the infamous duties on imported wheat which for so long have taken bread from the mouths of the workers. The struggle begun by the ill-fated Huskisson culminates in free trade and the consequent possibility of better living conditions for labor.

These manifestations of the reforming spirit of the years immediately before and after Victoria's accession were all in the form of work done *by* the upper and middle classes *for* the lower classes. They were benevolent and philanthropic, not democratic. The poor were not expected or desired to seek to help themselves. Trade unions were permitted, but feared and hated. And the great ebullition of democracy among the masses, the Chartist movement, was shuddered at with the same horror that its descendant, Bolshevism, was one day to engender. None the less, the reforming tendency which directed English domestic policy in the years from 1830 to 1850 had for its motive the desire to help the individual citizen as a means of benefiting the social whole, and for its inspiration the sense of the value of that individual as such, and of human brotherhood as the basis of social organization.

The passion for reform has underlying it much of a restless desire to change an existing order. Such a passion for change is apparent in others than the reformers of the period. Poets, essayists, novelists preached the gospel of social reform. Scientists and philosophers were opening new and startling, and, to their own age, dangerous-seeming paths of thought. Evolution had been discovered; a live utilitarianism had developed from rationalism. The nineteenth century strife between science and religion, so unnecessary and so inevitable, was beginning. Doubt and question were in the air. Every man who thought—and more men thought than formerly—wondered about life, about his own relation to life, about God, about his own relation to God. Abstract and introspective problems filled the minds not

only of the Teufelsdrockhs but of the Alton Lockes. The sense of the value of the individual reverted to its source; each self was of supreme importance to himself.

Introspective thought oftenest means moral or religious thought. The term "Victorian" has achieved, because of the developing character of the Middle and Late portions of the period, an unenviable connotation which makes the morals indicated by it mere prudishness and the religion only religiosity. But Early Victorianism was free of both taints; what had become conventional in 1860 was fresh and spontaneous in 1840. A religious enthusiasm that later would find outlet only in the bigotry of the Bradshaws and Bulstrodes and the Sabbatarianism of the Mrs. Proudies was, in the third decade of the century, making channels for itself in two directions, both due to reaction against the decadent, lifeless condition of the Anglican Church. Tractarianism sought to elevate ideals and standards within the church by asserting its Catholic position; latitudinarianism sought to broaden the field of the church by making less rigid its insistence on dogma and ritual. Standards of judgment were religious and ethical; just as entrance to Oxford and degree-holding from Cambridge were tested by the applicant's religious affiliation, so art, literature, and educational progress were estimated, not by their aesthetic or intellectual effect, but by their probable bearing on belief and conduct. What matter that Shelley sang divinely, if he lived, according to his countrymen's ideals, diabolically? As Elizabeth gave her name to an age of enthusiasm whose passion was adventure; as Anne bequeathed hers to an artificial age whose passion was (paradoxically) system; so did the third great queen, Victoria, become sponsor for a humanitarian age whose passion was religion. And because religion, stronger than any human motive except the patriotism and the love to which it is akin, has power to inspire great emotion, great enthusiasm, great poetry, Tennyson's religious outburst of emotion in the eloquent cantos of "In Memoriam" is a natural expression of the life of his century at its best.

The introspective character of the time, when generalization was based on self-analysis and when consciousness of the unity and the needs of the social whole grew out of an enlightened self-consciousness, is reflected in the attitude of Tennyson to his subject. Davies, with didactic intent, analyzed the soul—any

—exhorting other men to similar study. Pope, rhetorical and systematic, established the soul—any soul—as a part of the eternal order of things. Tennyson, out of agony and struggle, let his own soul speak, in a self-revelation more convincing than analysis or logic. It is not the soul of man in the abstract with which he deals; rather he chooses to record, in words pregnant with personal emotion, the travail of his own soul on the journey from doubt to faith; and, in recording, to imply his philosophy of the soul, not formulated in a single short-lived exertion of reason, but growing through long years "from more to more." Never for a moment does the poet of "In Memoriam" forget the relation of the theme of immortality to his own "grief for one removed." Therefore never for a moment, however he may generalize, does he cease to be introspective.

Nor is the interpretation of the theme ever psychological and metaphysical, like Davies'; or rhetorical and rational, like Pope's. Always the religious chord is dominant, from its inception in thrilling harmony in the "We have but faith" of the prelude,[1] through the minor thirds and sevenths of "calm despair and wild unrest,"[2] to the triumphant major diapason of confidence in

"That God, which ever lives and loves."[3]

Davies, true Elizabethan that he was, inscribed his work to his great queen; Pope called upon his St. John for inspiration; but Tennyson, as deeply religious as his contemporaries, will dedicate a poem of immortality to none but the

"Strong Son of God, immortal Love,"[4]

in whom, bereft of proof, he still believes.

The struggle of faith with doubt so characteristic of the middle nineteenth century finds voice in many a familiar line of "In Memoriam." Now it is the honest agnostic who speaks, he who

"after toil and storm
(May) seem to have reached a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form";[5]

or he who can only

"stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what (he feels) is Lord of all."[6]

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[1] *Works of Tennyson*, Cambridge Edition, p. 163.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto XI.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 198.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 163.
[5] *Ibid.*, Canto XXXIII.
[6] *Ibid.*, Canto LV.

Now it is the latitudinarian Christian, realizing the narrowness of the formal creed, but clinging to the heart of love behind it, who speaks his loyalty to that Word who wrought

"With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds";[1]

or who, in a sincere and spiritualized version of the false old platitude "Whatever is is right," trusts dimly

"that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all."[2]

Much of the spiritual struggle of Tennyson, as of his age, grew out of an awareness of the achievements of that science to which the Wilberforces and Gladstones obstinately closed their eyes. A dread of the materialism which he saw on every side surely inspired his view of Time as "a maniac scattering dust" and life as "a Fury slinging flame,"[3] and was repudiated in the conviction that man, who loved, suffered, and battled for truth would not

"Be blown about the desert dust."[4]

Echoes of the evolutionary discoveries of the period are not absent, ringing with a conservative dislike of a "Nature red in tooth and claw;"[5] refusing to countenance the science which might prove men only "cunning casts in clay"; claiming a higher birth than to

"shape
His action like the greater ape."[6]

Most of all, perhaps, is the humanitarianism of the period fragrant in the loveliest stanzas of the poem. True blessedness is theirs "whose lives are faithful prayers."[7] The man of pure deeds, however "perplext in faith," at last will "beat his music out."[8] New Year's bells are to "ring out the feud of rich and poor," to ring in "the larger heart, the kindlier hand."[9] A deep voice sounds

"across the storm
Proclaiming social truth shall spread."[10]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Canto XXXVI.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto LIV.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto L.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto LVI.
[5] *Ibid.*, Canto LVI.
[6] *Ibid.*, Canto CXX.
[7] *Ibid.*, Canto XXXIII.
[8] *Ibid.*, Canto XCVI.
[9] *Ibid.*, Canto CVI.
[10] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXVII.

Honor for purity and kindliness of deed, reiterated and resung, might serve as keynote of an age when kindliness of deed was made the substance of acts of Parliament. How far afield is this love of sheer kindness from the selfish egotism that praised without conviction an academic virtue!

As the three poems are unlike because of the variant characters of their makers, so equally are they unlike because of the characters of the times that produced the makers. Patriotic enthusiasm, artificial rationalism, religious humanitarianism—like fruits cannot grow of such soils any more than grapes can be gathered of thorns or figs of thistles. How can the poet help reflecting his time? His mind, by his very temperament, is not so much a mirror as a sensitized plate. And how, then, can he be original in his philosophy? Yet so summary a view of the poets in relation to their times is but superficial, and prone to the injustice of hasty generalization. A detailed study of the three poems in relation to certain phases of the thought of their periods, as seen in scholarship, in literature, and in theology, will either corroborate or disprove this incomplete view.

IV

The scholarship of the artist, unless his mind is of purely academic growth, must form little more than the background for the play of his creative or interpretive imagination and of his artistic technique. Sound science may lie back of Shelley's "Cloud"; but too clear a perception of Shelley the scientist would mar the magic of the music and imagery of Shelley the poet. The artist's pioneer work is done in his own field, not in that of the scholar; so, however original he may be in thought or style, his scholarship is not likely to be in advance of the scholarship of his time and will be more or less dependent for its limits upon the condition of knowledge among his learned contemporaries. Is such a proposition wholly true of the philosophical poet? Or is the very nature of his theme such as to call for independent progress in the realm of knowledge?

Scholarship informs every line of "Nosce Teipsum." Is that scholarship determined by the advancement of the age in learning, and merely an index of that advancement? The question can be answered only by a survey of the educational conditions of which Sir John Davies was a product.

Long before Davies began to write, the humanist movement had reached its triumph in all learned and cultured circles. Scholasticism, as a controlling influence in the universities and among the learned, had had its day. Yet a method of thought dominant for six centuries was not to be cast aside and forgotten in fifty years. Humanism among the learned did not mean humanism among the people at large. And even among the learned, against their will, scholasticism lingered, cropping up to the surface without intention, often without recognition, so much a part was it of the scholar's mental make-up. An ingrained habit of thought, like an ingrained belief, is hardly to be outgrown in a generation. As the modern agnostic, set free from the orthodox creed in which he was reared, is humiliated to find himself in unguarded moments reverting to the orthodoxies of his childhood, so must the humanist of the sixteenth century not infrequently have rebuked himself for thinking scholastically.

Nor was mediaevalism dead. The popularity of Spenser's allegories attests its life. The creed of the early poet, that poetry

had a right to exist only as the servant of morals, was not an outworn creed, even though poets of wider vision were discovering that beauty and poetic significance in verse were their own excuse for being. The didactic spirit was as mediaeval then as it is Victorian now. And while mediaevalism lived, scholasticism was alive. Its influence was sure to be more evident in a philosophical poem than in any other art form; for though Renaissance art had superseded mediaeval art, and Renaissance learning had displaced mediaeval learning, there had as yet arisen no Hobbes and no Descartes to usher in a modern school of philosophy. The surprise is not to find Davies influenced by scholastic philosophy, but to find a man, by profession a lawyer, by avocation a poet, and only by accident a philosopher, whose system of thought is anything other than scholastic.

A study of Davies' analysis of the soul, its nature, its origin, its relation to the body, its faculties, and its immortality, reveals immediately a close resemblance to the famous Aristotelian system of the Schoolmen. In a decade when Plato's philosophy, no less than Aristotle's ethics, had been brought to the attention of a poetry-loving public by the great poetic achievement of Spenser, appears a philosophic poem based wholly on the philosophy of Aristotle, and containing references to Plato's doctrines only for the purpose of refutation. This could hardly have been the case, had Davies not been willing to accept well-established and familiar philosophical opinions as he found them, devoting his effort to putting them into the literary form that at that time would command most notice from a generation that loved verse. That a graduate of Oxford and a barrister of the Temple knew Aristotle in the original is no more to be doubted than that he knew Plato. But the Aristotle whom we find in his pages is the Aristotle of the Schoolmen, used by them as the provider of a method by which they could carry out their purpose of making faith and reason agree.[1] And nowhere, not even in the portion of "Nosce Teipsum" which deals with immortality, the reality of which Plato discussed in the "Phaedo" which Davies must have known, is there the least sign of any consultation of the Platonic philosophy.[2] This adoption of Aristotle and indifference

[1] Perrier, in *Revival of Scholastic Philosophy*, p. 17, quotes from Elie Blanc's "Dictionnaire de philosophie ancienne, moderne, et contemporaine."

[2] Sneath, *Philosophy in Poetry*, p. 210.

to Plato suggests that Davies was content to follow in the path of Aquinas and Everard Digby rather than that of Erigena and William Temple.[1] His contribution to thought is literary rather than philosophical; he is not concerned with making a new system, but with presenting the old system in a form hitherto unused. If he knew the work of Giordano Bruno,[2] who before this time had visited England, he shows no signs of being touched by his revolt against the scholastic system or by his message that humanity and nature alike were animated by a world-soul. The pantheistic idealism of Plato, brought to life again by Bruno,[3] has no place in Davies. To him, as to the Schoolmen, the universe was not an organic unity but a dualism[4] of God and the world, just as man was a dualism of soul and body.

Besides the metaphysics of Aristotle's "De Anima," there are echoes in Davies' pages of the teachings of the church fathers, notably Origen and Nemesius;[5] but the ancient Greek philosophers are quoted only as perpetrators of ideas which the poet wishes to refute. For example, in discussing the question what the soul is, Davies answers first negatively, by cataloguing various things which the soul is not, but which many "great clerks" have thought it to be.[6] Professor Sneath, by a comparison of this passage in "Nosce Teipsum" with similar passages in Aristotle, Cicero, and Nemesius, who mention the philosophers responsible for the various opinions, has identified the author of each of the theories which in Davies' view show so "little wisdome."[7] Thus, it is Diogenes who "thinks the soul is aire"; Zeno and the Stoics called it fire; Critias explained it as "blood,

[1] *Cambridge History*, Vol. IV, p. 315, sq. Everard Digby taught logic at Cambridge, 1573 sq. William Temple was his pupil and later also taught logic until 1582. About 1580 occurred a controversy between them regarding the old and the new logic, in which Digby defended the Aristotelian and Temple the Platonic method.

[2] 1548–1600.

[3] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 239–242.

[4] Lindsay, *Studies in European Philosophy*, p. 142.

Rickaby, *Scholasticism*.

Grosart's ed. of Davies, pp. 45, 52–60, where the poet explains the creation of the soul by God.

Sneath, *Philosophy in Poetry*, p. 113.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 38, 39–47, 115–129.

[6] Grosart's ed. of Davies, pp. 26–27.

[7] Sneath, pp. 65–79.

diffus'd about the heart"; Plato traced it to the conspiring of the elements; while Galen the physician, a materialist of ancient time, made it spring from "the bodie's humours, temp'red well," and the Sophists and Sceptics thought it "a fine perfection of the sense." As all these views of the soul were by the Schoolmen rejected in favor of Aristotle's, not because they were pagan, but because they were adapted but poorly to the process of upholding faith by reason; so they are rejected by Davies, who in a less academic and more practical way is attempting, like the Schoolmen, to establish a faith which will serve as foundation for conduct. Indeed, one of the ways in which he most shows that his work is colored by their influence is the fact that he thought religious doctrine admitted of rational proof.[1] There was little more of the mystic in Davies than there was in Thomas Aquinas, in spite of the prelude in which he ascribes all possible power to understand the mysteries of the soul to "the cleare lampe of Thy Oracle divine." Having declared his faith in revelation, he follows the path of reason.

A close comparison of "Nosce Teipsum" with any outline of scholastic philosophy[2] will serve to show how little Davies' metaphysics is in advance of that of his teachers. For instance,

> "The soule a substance, and a spirit is,
> . . . . . to the body knit."[3]

In scholastic definition, the soul was a substantial form of the body,[4] essentially simple and spiritual. In both cases, substance meant that which exists by itself, so that the soul's existence was assumed to be independent of the body. On this dualism both the Schoolmen and the poet based their proof of the soul's immortality. Davies devotes considerable space to the proposition that the soul is a separate entity, basing his argument on the things the soul can do without the body, and concluding,

> "Then her selfe-being nature shines in this,
> That she performs her noblest works alone."[5]

But the soul, though independent, has no bodily form of its own. "Shee her selfe is bodilesse and free," says Davies, although

[1] Lindsay, pp. 119, 129.
[2] Eg., Lindsay, Perrier, Rickaby, Seth.
[3] Grosart's ed. of Davies, p. 29.
[4] Perrier, p. 115.
[5] Grosart's ed. of Davies, p. 35.

"she is confin'd" in the body.[1] The substance of the soul, say the Schoolmen, is immaterial and incorporeal.[2]

One of the famous theological controversies of the Middle Ages, between the creationist and the traducianist theories of the origin of the soul, is perpetuated by Davies.[3] According to the first of these theories, "every individual soul is an absolute, immediate creation on the part of God." According to the second, all souls were created once for all in the beginning, and as each body has come to birth its particular soul has been detached from the mass and united to the individual body. This theory grew up as an attempt on the part of some of the church fathers to absolve God from the responsibility of having created man's sin along with man's soul. It was the creationist theory that triumphed among the Schoolmen, and it is the creationist theory that Davies defends, citing and refuting the objections of believers in pre-existence and in traducianism. Both were objections that must have been represented among the contemporary readers of "Nosce Teipsum." For we are told that the Lutherans favored traducianism,[4] and Shakespeare, in "The Merchant of Venice," "As You Like It," and "Twelfth Night," supplies us with evidence of the popular interest in the doctrines of Pythagoras.[5]

Having taken his stand with the Schoolmen on creationism,—

> "As God's handmaid, Nature, doth create
> Bodies in time distinct, and order due;
> So God gives soules the like successive date,
> Which Himselfe makes, in bodies formed new:"—[6]

Davies is compelled to follow scholastic leadership on the subject of the harmony between divine sovereignty and human freedom. His interpretation of sin and the fall, a topic to be considered more fully in the discussion of the theology of the poem, is based on Aquinas's casuistic argument which seeks to establish predestination while avoiding determinism.[7]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 41.
[2] Lindsay, p. 140.
[3] Sneath, p. 116 sq.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 133.
[5] *Merchant of Venice*, Act IV, Sc. 1, ll. 130–138.
As You Like It, Act III, Sc. 2, ll. 186–188.
Twelfth Night, Act IV, Sc. 2, ll. 54–65.
[6] Grosart's ed. of Davies, p. 47.
[7] Perrier, pp. 151–152.

Enough has been said to show the reality of Davies' debt to scholasticism. But had his work stopped with the mere versification of a moribund philosophical system, he would not be remembered as the earliest confessedly philosophical poet of England. For except as a system of Catholic theology, scholasticism was dying, or dead. In a strong affirmative Davies answers the question asked at every time of transition from an old system to a new, "Son of man, can these bones live?" It is not the philosophy of the poem that makes it alive, but the vivid thought and language that clothe the philosophy, and the fact that while in metaphysics it reflects mediaeval thought, in attitude to other branches of Elizabethan learning it is well abreast of its time.

For instance, the very fact that Davies was so scholastic a metaphysician makes him all the more apparently an exemplar of the period when the dominant theological interest in art and literature was gradually yielding to the secular interest. Davies' motive was both didactic and theological; but evidences are abundant that he was the product of that humanistic age when the treasures of secular classical literature had been made accessible not only to the scholar but to the popular reader. Like all the literary artists of his time, he found in "bookes prophane" the material for simile and metaphor with which to illuminate many an abstract statement. The myth of Eden, the forbidden fruit, and the Spirit of Lies stand cheek by jowl with allusions to the "sky-stolne fire" of Prometheus, the "false payles" of the Danaides, and the "firie coach" of Phaethon.[1] Io, terrified at the watery image of "herselfe transformed she wist not how," is a figure of the fright of the soul at knowledge of itself.[2] The soul travels skyward "without a Pegasus."[3] The harmony of wit and will in which the heavenly choir praises God is

> "Amphion's lyre,
> Wherewith he did the Theban citie found."[4]

Myths of Medea and Ulysses, side by side with stories of Mutius and Marius, are cited to prove the courage and wisdom of the soul. The immediate creation of the soul by God is likened to the springing of Minerva from the head of Jove.[5] Martha, "busie—

[1] Grosart's ed. of Davies, p. 17.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 21.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 31.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 35.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 45–46.

the household things to doe," appears in the same stanza with a "Dryas, living in a tree."[1] Memory, localized "in the braine behinde," is "like Janus' eye."[2] The soul, transported to heaven, "doth . . , manna eat, and nectar drinke."[3] Secular and sacred classical allusions are thus inextricably interwoven in the fabric of poetic art, as they were in the fabric of current thought. For the remarkable fact is that the casual use by Davies of these characters of classic lore, as a means of ensuring a better understanding of his ideas, presupposes a general knowledge of the classics on the part of the reading public. The translators of the sixteenth century had made common property, possessed by churchman and layman alike, of Plutarch and Ovid, Euripides and Plautus, Homer and Vergil. The presence of mediaeval metaphysics in close intermixture with humanistic breadth in Davies' pages shows him the child of a century whose door swung at once back into the past of cold asceticism and forward into the future of radiantly human art.

Standing at the end of a century whose paramount interest in the field of learning had been the development of literary art, Davies stood also at the beginning of the century whose educational advance was to proceed along the line of a paramount interest in physical science. To the dawning light of that new sun of knowledge the poet was keenly awake, and in this progressive awareness of the most recent of contemporary tendencies, he ran far ahead of his metaphysical masters. For one of the reasons for the breakdown of scholasticism was its opposition to progressive knowledge, and its refusal to accommodate its system to the newly developing physical science of the sixteenth century.[4] In the work of Davies, however didactic his intention may be, however theological his terminology in certain passages, it is patent that his wholesome interest in secular learning is that of the layman. For instance, the Schoolmen, wholly theological in motive, had not worked out with anything like completeness any system of psychology. Davies, interested in the soul from other viewpoints than the theological, realized that his analysis was not complete if it did not include a psychological treatment of the soul—though it is quite certain that he did not call it by that name. So, in the section of the poem which explains "How the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 64.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 90.
[4] Perrier, p. 153.

Soul doth exercise her Powers in the Body,"[1] he makes a crude and inconclusive but very real attempt at an exposition of the relations among the senses, the emotions, and the will. To his reading of Aristotle's classification of the senses and faculties he adds his own knowledge of the infant physics and physiology of his time. However unformed may be the scientific method which makes so sharp a cleavage as does Davies between soul and sense, in his presentation of the work of the physical senses as instruments of the mental powers can be discerned the germ of physiological psychology. "These," says he of the senses,

> "are the outward instruments of Sense,
> These are the guards which everything must passe
> Ere it approch the mind's intelligence,
> Or touch the Fantasie, Wit's looking-glasse."[2]

In the same passage where Davies analyzes the work of the senses may be seen indicated the chaotic state of science in the Elizabethan age, when actual observation of fact was only beginning to supplant traditions based on Pliny's "Natural History." Thus, a rudimentary understanding of the infant science of optics appears in a description of the eyes which seems to imply familiarity with the work of Kepler:

> "They no beames unto their objects send;
> But all the rays are from their objects sent,
> And in the eyes with pointed angles end:
>
> "If th' objects be farre off, the rayes doe meete
> In a sharpe point, and so things seeme but small;
> If they be neere, their rayes doe spread and fleet,
> And make broad points, that things seeme great withall."[3]

But close after this fairly happy hit at the laws of perspective, follows a remarkable physiological discovery of the reason for the intricate construction of the ear:

> "That they (sounds) may not pierce too violently,
> They are delaied with turnes, and windings oft.
>
> "For should the voice directly strike the brain,
> It would astonish and confuse it much;
> Therefore these plaits and folds the sound restraine,
> That it the organ may more gently touch."[4]

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[1] Grosart's ed. of Davies, pp. 63–80.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Again, a fairly correct idea of the structure of the nervous system is implied:

"For all those nerves, which spirits of Sence doe beare,
And to those outward organs spreading goe;
United are, as in a center there (in the forehead)
And there this power those sundry formes doth know."[1]

But almost immediately after, the heart, instead of being regarded as a merely bodily organ, is made literally the seat of the passions, as the brain is of the intellect:

"Sith the braine doth lodge the powers of Sense,
How makes it in the heart those passions spring?"[2]

It may not be amiss to mention here the interesting by-products of Davies' discussion of the senses. In the case of four out of the five he points out a special moral and a special aesthetic use of each sense. Thus, the highest use of the eyes is to be found "in another World,"[3] where "face to face they may their Maker see"; the chief use of the ears is to hear the speech

"which God's heralds sound,
When their tongs utter what His Spirit did pen";[4]

while the sense of smell allows incense

"To make men's spirits apt for thoughts divine."[5]

As for the fine arts, the sense of sight is the source of the art of painting; the sense of hearing "gentle Musicke found";[6] taste has developed the art of cookery;[5] and smell is

"also mistresse of an Art,
Which to soft people sweete perfumes doth sell."[5]

Such a passage as this on the senses shows the curious mixture of wisdom and simplicity which marked the passing of the old learning into the new.

In his allusions to facts in the world of nature of which Elizabethan science was beginning to take intelligent cognizance, Davies reflects another side of the widening learning of his time. His list of the things men seek to know recalls the work of geographers and map-makers, inspired by explorations into far-off lands, and

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 73.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 66.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 69.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

hints at the labors of the astronomers of Italy who were setting their misused science free from the chains of superstition.

"We seeke to know the moving of each spheare,
And the strange cause of th' ebbs and floods of Nile;
. . . . . .
"We . . . acquaint our selves with every Zoane
And passe both Tropikes and behold the Poles."[1]

Davies does not, however, accept the Copernican theory; to him the earth is still the center of the universe.

"The lights of heav'n (which are the World's fair eyes)
Looke downe into the World, the World to see;
And as they turne, or wander in the skies,
Survey all things that on this Center bee."[2]

A beginning has been made toward giving natural phenomena their correct explanation, for, Davies tells us,

"Sense thinkes the planets, spheares not much asunder;
What tells us then their distance is so farre?
Sense thinks the lightning borne before the thunder;
What tells us then they both together are?"[3]

Observation of the actual facts of nature has not progressed far, for the discovery of that process as a means to gaining knowledge was to be Bacon's contribution to learning. But hints of a tendency of which Bacon was to be the first great exponent are found in such lines as:

"As Spiders toucht, seek their webs inmost part;
As bees in stormes unto their hives return."[4]

And the physical laws that govern moisture and cloud, rain and river, are manifestly known in fair correctness by the man who can write

"Water in conduit pipes can rise no higher
Than the wel-head, from whence it first doth spring:"

and a little later,

"As the moysture, which the thirstie earth
Suckes from the sea, to fill her emptie veines,
From out her wombe at last doth take a birth,
And runs a Nymph along the grassie plaines:
. . . . . .
"Long doth she stay, as loth to leave the land,
. . . . . .

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 20.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

"Yet Nature so her streames doth lead and carry,
As that her course doth make no finall stay,
Till she her selfe unto the Ocean marry,
Within whose watry bosome first she lay."[1]

In the course of his discussion of immortality occurs a passage which especially shows Davies' illumination of spirit in advance of his time. At a far later date than his, men of enlightened mind still explained insanity or mental weakness on the ground of witchcraft or demon-possession; as so learned a physician as Sir Thomas Browne wrote in "Religio Medici,"[2]

"I hold that the devil doth really possess some men, the spirit of melancholy others, the spirit of delusion others."

Mental disease was treated not as sickness but as sin—witness the pseudo-priest's visit to the pseudo-mad Malvolio.[3] In the midst of such ignorance and superstition, Davies had insight to see that mental disorders were physical, not spiritual:

"Then these defects in Senses' organs bee,
Not in the soule or in her working might."[4]

Though Davies' work, even in such passages, can only vaguely point ahead, by the barest hints, to the era of scientific knowledge that is about to begin, he is, in mastery of his artistic medium, the best of proofs of the literary achievement of the Elizabethan age. His style has the sincerity and directness that grew out of the sincere and direct character of the times; his language has the force and vitality that filled the actions, as the words, of the builders of England's greatness. He has emerged from the mists of allegory and from the icebound cells of casuistic argument into the sunshine and warmth of a knowledge based on the realities of human life.

For instance, as has been seen, his analysis of the nature of the soul is scholastic in origin; but his presentation of the idea is couched in individual and vivid language, in a passage proving the independent existence of the soul by the variety of things the soul can do independently.[5] First, the soul can reason by analogy:

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.
[2] Ed. by John Peace, 1844, Part I, Sec. xxx, p. 63.
[3] *Twelfth Night*, Act IV, Sc. 2.
[4] Grosart's ed. of Davies, p. 102.
[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 30–31.

"She sorts things present with things past,
And thereby things to come doth oft foresee."

It can reason inductively:

"She from sundry acts, one skill doth draw,
Gathering from divers fights one art of warre,
From many cases like, one rule of Law."

It can reason deductively:

"In th' effects she doth the causes know,
And seeing the stream, thinks wher the stream doth rise;
And seeing the branch, conceives the root below."

The soul is possessed of both a reconstructive and a creative imagination:

"She, without a Pegasus, doth flie
Swifter than lightning's fire from East to West,
About the Center and above the skie."

. . . . . .

"Without hands she doth thus castles build,
Sees without eyes, and without feet doth runne."

The soul has power to plan action in advance:

"All her works she formeth first within,
Proportions them, and sees their perfect end,
Ere she in act does anie part begin."

In these fresh, original stanzas is certainly exemplified the art of compressing into a few apt words an idea of magnitude, the vividness being the greater because of the fewness and the aptness.

Again, when the poet answers the materialist who says that the soul originates in the humours of the body, his answer is the more convincing because of the direct simplicity which penetrates the subject like a well pointed arrow.

"Why doth not beautie then refine the wit?
And good complexion rectify the will?
Why doth not health bring wisdom still with it?
Why doth not sicknesse make men bruitish still?"[1]

Abstract ideas are made graspable by concrete images; as, in proving that the soul is immaterial, Davies says,

"She is sent as soon to China as to Spaine,
And thence returnes, as soone as shee is sent;
She measures with one time, and with one paine,
An ell of silke, and heaven's wide spreading tent."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 39. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Even in connection with so academic and theological a subject as the question whether God created evil, we find a terse, modern, suggestive summing up of the whole problem in homely, everyday language:

> "Faine would we make Him Author of the wine,
> If for the dregs we could some other blame."[1]

How much more compelling is such a common sense putting of the case than the "unprofitable subtility" of argument of the Schoolmen who, as Bacon said, "their minds being shut up in a few authors, as their bodies were in the cells of their monasteries, . . . with infinite agitation of wit spun out of a small quantity of matter laborious webs of learning."[2] There lies a century of developing literary power between Davies and his teachers of philosophy.

Davies has profited, too, like all the writers of this last decade of the sixteenth century, by the work of rhetoricians and experimenters with language such as Lyly and Sidney and their lesser imitators. He is far enough away from them to avoid their errors, and yet he finds ready to his hand a literary medium shaped and enriched by their labors. For instance, the wealth of similes in Davies is reminiscent of earlier as well as contemporary writers. But his similes are always to the purpose. He does not use a figure for its own sake, nor for futile rhetorical decoration, but always in order to convey an idea difficult of apprehension. For example, the union of the soul with the body causes the poet some searching to find just the right comparison, but he finally lights upon a happy one:

> "Then dwels shee not therein as in a tent,
> Nor as a pilot in his ship doth sit;
> Nor as the spider in his web is pent;
> Nor as the waxe retaines the print in it;
>
> "Nor as a vessell water doth contain;
> Nor as one liquor in another shed;
> Nor as the heat doth in the fire remain;
> Nor as a voice throughout the ayre is spread:
>
> "But as the faire and cheerfull Morning light,
> Doth here and there her silver beames impart."[3]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 48.

[2] Bacon's *Novum Organum*, Bohn's Library, p. 45.

[3] Grosart's ed. of Davies, pp. 61–62.

Again, the failure of the world to satisfy the longings of the soul elicits a poetic figure:

"Then as a bee which among weeds doth fall,
Which seeme sweet flowers, with lustre fresh and gay;
She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
But pleasd with none, doth rise, and soare away;

"So, when the Soule finds here no true content,
And, like Noah's dove, can no sure footing take;
She doth returne from whence she first was sent,
And flies to Him that first her wings did make."[1]

Davies, however, is sparing in his use of figures; nowhere does he sacrifice thought to rhetoric. And in his original and unforced turns of phrase, when writing figuratively, he seems much more akin to the moderns than to his forerunners, the euphuists. With Daniel, Drayton, and Donne, he stands as exponent of the time when the experiments of the Areopagus Club, together with the success of Spenser in practice, had borne fruit in a well-tried knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of English verse. Through the work of his predecessors, most of them less happy than he in their literary output, the tool was ready to his hand.

In his system of philosophy, then, in his classical knowledge, in his interest in scientific inquiry, in his gift of adapting to his own thought the rhetorical achievement of previous writers, Davies was representative of the best learning of his time. At the same time his treatment of his subject was limited by contemporary learning, beyond which he hardly progressed. God, the soul, and immortality are viewed in the light of scholastic, not modern rational or idealistic philosophy. The material of allusion at the poet's disposal is the classical material made accessible by the humanists. His attention to current scientific knowledge is alert, but his use of scientific fact is as childlike and rudimentary as was that of all the predecessors of Bacon, and his view is colored, like that of his contemporaries, by an orthodox religious and theological bias. His handling of the tools of his art is no more flexible, graceful, or effective than that of other poets who profited by the same wealth of experiment as he. The learning of Davies is the learning of his period. What of Pope?

As the seventeenth century advanced, providing by its progress

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 87.

in learning the background for Pope's knowledge, the achievement of the scholarly world was directed into two main channels, the philosophical and the scientific, closely interrelated and interdependent, and nearly akin in both spirit and method. The philosophical interest, now that dead scholasticism had given room for vitalized and independent opinion, superseded as a subject for the pioneer in thought the study of the humanities. For the time being there was no new experiment to be tried in the realm of the Latin and Greek classics; but metaphysics offered the "fresh fields and pastures new" which are ever the symbol of to-morrow. At the same time, enthusiasm for literary and artistic accomplishment gradually gave place to enthusiasm for scientific experiment and discovery. Men began to look, not into books, but into nature for their knowledge. The method of using experiment to test by induction an initial hypothesis, begun by Galileo[1] and pursued with untiring zeal by Bacon, had no less influence upon philosophy than upon science. The universe was full of facts all conforming to exact law, and the chief end of the life of the man of science was to discover these laws. Nature came to be considered as a vast mechanism; and the philosopher, whose province was abstract conclusion rather than concrete experiment, turned his effort to explaining human ideas and emotions, actions and reactions, as if man were a part of the mechanism. The laws of nature were made to stretch far enough to explain human nature, even to explain God himself.[2] Thus the naturalistic philosophy of the seventeenth century grew logically out of the inductive science of Bacon, both philosopher and scientist. "The task of philosophy in the seventeenth century was to differentiate itself from theology, to assert the freedom of the scientific intellect from the bondage of authority."[3]

As has been said,[4] Bolingbroke's ambition was to conceive a wholly new explanation of the world order which should do exactly that—set philosophy free from the authority of revealed religion. An aim so stated would seem to discredit all the work in that direction of the century preceding him. But a study of the "Essay on Man" in the light of the work of Bacon and Hobbes,

[1] Royce, *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 38–40.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 28–31.
[3] Seth, *English Philosophers*, p. 17.
[4] See page 9.

Descartes and Spinoza, will prove the new system to be far from independent of the naturalism of the seventeenth century philosophers.

Francis Bacon, who determined the trend of metaphysics in the fifty years after him, was not himself a metaphysician. His concern was less with abstract conclusion than with concrete fact. Reason, instead of starting from a general preconceived idea and arguing deductively, should start from a hypothesis and argue inductively, basing its conclusions on facts. Such a procedure was too concrete and homely to be scholastic; it is the declaration of the independence of human thought from bondage to mere speculation. At the same time it is neither idealistic nor imaginative; a philosophy with such a point of departure will be as dependent on observation of nature as the previous school had been upon authority. But dependence on so tolerant an overlord must have seemed to the dogma-wearied thinkers of Bacon's day a bondage both free and fascinating, as with ardor they turned to the deification of nature.

The avowed philosophers, who followed Bacon's lead in making from the new science a new philosophy, did not imitate him in method. To Thomas Hobbes,[1] who represents all that is deepest and most penetrating in early seventeenth century English thought, deduction from mathematical laws is the method for solving the problems of the universe. But equally with Bacon does Hobbes glorify the facts of physical science in his effort to make them account for all mental phenomena. For him there is no ideal or abstract reality; no concept or type exists apart from embodiment in an individual. Philosophy is a reasoned knowledge of effect from cause and of cause from effect, proceeding on lines as inevitable as the propositions of Euclid; and the final cause to which all events are reducible is motion. Even knowledge and consciousness are merely the result of sensations which set up motions in the brain. Such a mechanical interpretation of life was necessarily far more materialistic than that of Descartes,[2] contemporary with Bacon and Hobbes, who followed, like Hobbes, the mathematical and deductive method, but who recognized the

[1] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 255–262.
Seth, *English Philosophers*, pp. 56–78.
[2] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 269–289.
Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 75–77.

existence of abstract and universal intuitions, from which deductive reasoning was to proceed and which he called *innate ideas*. The axioms of mathematics are merely examples of these universal concepts, of which the surest was the existence of self, proved in the famous *cogito, ergo sum*. The truth of any idea could be tested by its relative clearness in comparison with the self's own existence. Thus the mechanical view of the world which Descartes constructs to serve the purposes of science is based on the assumption of the existence of mind in distinction from matter, and leaves room, as Hobbes's does not, for ideas not embodied in individual material form, even for the idea of God.

However original and constructive Bolingbroke desired to be in organizing a new and free world-philosophy, he was the heir of his predecessors in his reverential sense of the all-sufficiency of the law of Nature, which the seventeenth century fastened upon philosophical thought and which remained dominant until its climax in Rousseau and the Physiocrats. "Obedience to the law of Nature," wrote St. John,[1] "is our first duty and our greatest interest." Christianity itself, in its sincere, not its traditional form, he proved to be founded on the law of Nature.[2]

Like master, like pupil; allusions to "great Nature" sprinkle the pages of the "Essay on Man." It is Nature who "wakes her genial power"[3] for man's happiness; who "errs from this gracious end"[3] when earthquakes and tempests destroy him. It is Nature's law which the scientist unfolds.[4] Nature is the mother of the ruling passion in man;[5] her "vigor working at the root" produces virtue from passion, giving

"The virtue nearest to our vice ally'd."[6]

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[1] *Works of Bolingbroke*, published by Bohn, 1844, Vol. IV, p. 251.

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 396.

Bolingbroke's distinction between genuine and traditional Christianity is as follows: "Genuine Christianity is contained in the gospels; it is the word of God. . . . Traditional Christianity . . . is derived from the writings of fathers and doctors of the church, and from the decrees of councils. It is therefore the word of men, and of men, for the most part, either very weak, very mad, or very knavish." Vol. IV, p. 109.

[3] Ward's ed. of Pope's Works, Epistle I, ll. 133–144.

[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, l. 32.

[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 137–145.

[6] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 181–196.

It is Nature who checks man's tyranny over the weak,[1] and who works to weld

"the chain of love
Combining all below and all above."[2]

"Cities were built" and "societies were made" at the mandate of "great Nature."[3] "Nature's light" is a truer guide than "wit's false mirror."[4] Nature is made coördinate with God in linking the frame of the universe.[5] And this implicit reverence for Nature's laws, obedience to which the whole poem enjoins, reaches its highest strain when Nature's laws are made synonymous with God's—

"The state of Nature was the reign of God."[6]

The "Nature," be it observed, about which Pope discoursed is the abstract entity of his period and the preceding one. It is a mere mechanical force, working itself out in cold and unchangeable laws, not a vital life current making lovely the tree and the stream and the flower. Pope was like his time in his worship of Nature's laws; but he did not love her fair works as did earlier and later poets, of the warmer Elizabethan and Revolutionary periods. For him there were no "tongues in trees." The working of a machine may be awe-inspiring and thought-provoking; but neither the machine nor its product thrills the beholder with love. And to Pope as to Bolingbroke, the universe was essentially a machine, with Nature as its dynamic force.

For, however much in his "Essays on Human Knowledge" Bolingbroke may decry the "gross absurdities" of Hobbes,[7] he has not progressed beyond Hobbes in his idea of the universe as a vast and perfect mechanism. "We ought," he wrote, "to consider the world we inhabit no otherwise than as a little wheel in our solar system, nor our solar system any otherwise than as a little but larger wheel in the immense machine of the universe."[8] This same idea is fundamental to the structure of the "Essay on Man." Though Pope nowhere calls the universe a machine, choosing rather the characteristically eighteenth century word system, yet the view of creation presented in his four epistles is

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 49–52.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 7–8.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 199–202.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, l. 393.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 317–318.
[6] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, l. 148.
[7] Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. IV, p. 119.
[8] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 336.

such a composite of wheels within wheels as to admit of no other interpretation than the mechanical. The whole scheme of things is a matter of "strong connections, nice dependencies, gradations just,"[1] held in agreement by the "vast chain of being," from which no link may be broken without chaos.[2] Every part of the eternal order is made to fit into some other part, the parts being mutually essential. In like manner, the passions of man, with every resulting virtue and vice, are analyzed in their relations to each other, in their interdependence. Certain causes will inevitably give rise to certain results. Self-love and Reason react upon each other;[3] all good is ascribed to "their proper operation"; all evil, to their improper operation. Though each individual seems to be seeking "a sev'ral goal,"[4] from the viewpoint of Heaven the whole, made up of interacting individuals, is seen to be one in its working:

> "The Universal Cause
> Acts to one end, but acts by various laws."[5]

The principle of harmonious interaction which balances the passions within a single individual is equally forceful in relating to each other the units which make up society:

> "From the first, eternal order ran,
> And creature linked to creature, man to man."[6]

The identity of man's love to himself and to society is likened to the twofold motion of the planets, which

> "On their own axis . . . run,
> Yet make at once their circle round the sun."[7]

The truly happy man is he who

> "Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,"[8]

and finds the "height of bliss but height of charity" in close contact with the Divine love, the motive force of the whole great mechanism.

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[1] Ward's ed. of Pope's *Works*, Epistle I, ll. 30–31.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 245–246.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 53–60.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, l. 237.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 1–2.
[6] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 113–114.
[7] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 313–316.
[8] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 327–340.

It is in this inclusion of a God in the order of the universe that Pope and Bolingbroke differ from the materialism of Hobbes, who in his rejection of all universal concepts except geometrical axioms leaves but doubtful place for the concept of God. Bolingbroke and Pope, less agnostic and more akin in this respect to Descartes and Spinoza, cannot conceive of a machine without a propelling power, nor of a series of effects without a great first cause. But Bolingbroke's God, who keeps the mechanism going, is not like the God of Descartes, existent only as the projection of the thought of the individual. He is a self-existent entity, like the God of Spinoza; yet, like Spinoza's God, animating all nature, speaking "in the harmony of the universe."[1] Spinoza is alluded to by Bolingbroke only to be dismissed as impious and absurd;[2] and this earliest of the modern mystics is said to have been unfelt by eighteenth century English thought. But there is no little similarity between Bolingbroke's scheme for explaining the whole world order and what Sir Frederick Pollock calls Spinoza's "magnificent attempt at an impossible symmetry of the universe,"[3] in a system where God was the only free cause, and where all things followed by necessity from the infinity of that power whose being embraced the whole creation. As Pope, well tutored, puts it,

> "All are but parts of one stupendous whole,
> Whose body Nature is, and God the soul;
> That, chang'd through all, and yet in all the same,
> Great in the earth, as in th' ethereal frame,
> Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees,
> Lives through all life, extends through all extent."[4]

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[1] Collins' *Bolingbroke*, p. 220.

[2] *Works of Bolingbroke*, Vol. IV, pp. 415–416.

[3] Pollock, *Spinoza, His Life and Philosophy*, p. 168.

[4] Ward's ed. of Pope, Epistle I, ll. 267–273.

It is not easy to escape noting the likeness between this passage, and the famous lines in Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey":

> "Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean, and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man;
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

This is one of the passages that establish Wordsworth as a Platonist, an idealist, a pantheist, none of which Pope was!

Such a passage is not too far removed from the idealistic pantheism of Spinoza, though it lacks the passion and fire of the Jewish mystic whose aim was not only to find but to love "a thing eternal and infinite."[1]

In any case, whatever speculation may arise along the line of the suggested query, there is no doubt that the immediate inspiration for the idea of the "universal harmony" exemplified in Pope's "stupendous whole" was derived from Anthony Ashley Cooper, third Earl of Shaftesbury, the most brilliant English representative of the seventeenth century school of thought that found its God in nature, and for which Nature was the body and God the soul of the universe.[2] The parallelism between the lines just quoted and such a passage as the following is too obvious to require comment. Says Shaftesbury,[3] "All things in this world are united. For, as the branch is united with the tree, so is the tree as immediately with the earth, air, and water, which feed it. As much as the fertile mould is fitted to the tree, . . . so much are the very leaves, the seeds, and fruits of these trees fitted to the various animals, these again to one another, and to the elements where they live. . . . Thus, in contemplating all on earth, we must of necessity view *All in One*, as holding to one common stock. Thus, too, is the system of the bigger world. See there the mutual dependency of things!—the relation of one to another; of the sun to this inhabited earth, and of the earth and other planets to the sun!—the order, union, and coherence of the Whole! . . . Now, having recognized this uniform consistent fabric, and owned the Universal System, we must of consequence acknowledge a Universal Mind."

Whether Pope's acquaintance with Shaftesbury came by way of Bolingbroke or by direct contact, certainly many portions of the "Essay" are mere versifications of Shaftesbury's principles. For instance, we read that the "chain of love" combines "all below and all above."[4]

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[1] Works of Spinoza, Bohn's Library, Vol. II, p. 5.

[2] Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, p. 106.

Detailed discussion of Shaftesbury's philosophy is deferred to the section which considers the deistic movement.

[3] Shaftesbury, *The Moralists*, Part II, Sec. 4, p. 287.

[4] Ward's ed. of Pope, Epistle III, ll. 7–8, 21–26.

"Nothing is foreign; parts relate to whole;
One all-extending, all-preserving soul
Connects each being, . . .
. . . . . nothing stands alone."

That is Shaftesbury's doctrine of the whole, in which every part contributes to the universal harmony.

"Who finds not Providence all good and wise,
Alike in what it gives, and what denies?"[1]

That is Shaftesbury's doctrine of the essential rightness of all existing things, because derived from a benevolent source.

"Even mean self-love becomes, by force divine,
The scale to measure others' wants by thine."[2]

That is Shaftesbury's theory of the derivation of social love from self-love.

"Vast chain of being! which from God began,
Natures ethereal, human, angel, man,
Beast, bird, fish, insect" . . .[3]

That is Shaftesbury's faith in a self-existent God in whom all things live and move and have their being.

Shaftesbury's deism stands as the ultimate to which, in one direction, the naturalism of the seventeenth century worked itself out. But while the trend of his thought is divergent from that of another school of philosophy against the background of which the learning of the "Essay" must be viewed, the two diverging lines of thought are not divorced. Though Shaftesbury finds in nature an assurance to faith, while the strictly rationalistic school finds in natural science a foundation only for scepticism and materialism, yet both developing lines of thought show the motive force of the worship of reason. But Shaftesbury stood as the farthest outpost to which his type of philosophy was at that period in English thought to progress. In the soil of the early eighteenth century the purely rationalistic type of thought found a more fertile growth than did the philosophy of naturalism which was to be brought back to life in England by the poets of the Revolutionary period.

Rationalism had had its origin in the same educational move-

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 205–206.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 291–292.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 237–239.

ment as had naturalism. The growing interest in physical science had worked hand in hand with Protestant revulsion against the authority of dogma to stress the importance, in arriving at real truth, of the individual, independent human intellect. For however intolerant the revolting Protestant came to be, the original motive of Protestantism was an effort to set free the individual mind from outside authority in religious matters. Churchmen, too much in the habit of following authority to know how to do without it, substituted for an infallible church an infallible revelation through an inspired book; but the impetus given to independent thought by the first Protestant revolt set real thinkers free from all such trammels, and showed them the human intellect as the sole guide and source of light in reaching a knowledge of truth. A universe governed by natural laws, not managed by an overruling providence, must be grasped not by the imagination which had been adequate to the religious symbolism, but by the reason, which alone could understand the working of cause and effect.[1] So metaphysics was made secular and brought into the realm of pure reason, while religion was left in the realm of authority and revelation. As experiment was the test of scientific hypothesis, so experience, viewed in the light of reason, became the test of truth. Thus, because reason set forth and explained the laws of nature in their physical implications, a philosophy of naturalism led inevitably to the rationalistic attitude toward the universe which belonged to the latter half of the seventeenth century, and which reached its culmination in the sceptical, critical mood of the eighteenth century—"the hard, mid-morning light of bare understanding."[2]

The "Essay on Man," however second-hand its doctrine may be, has the distinction of being the epitome of both these phases of the philosophy of its epoch. For Bolingbroke, too shallow a thinker to realize that his attempt to reconstruct metaphysics on a new basis was but an echo of the best thought of one hundred years, proclaims the God immanent in nature characteristic of the Shaftesbury school, and at the same time claims not to admit to his philosophy any ideas other than those for the proof of which reason is sufficient. To him as to Shaftesbury, neither one a pure

[1] Lecky, *Rise and Influence of Rationalism.*
[2] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 69.

rationalist though both claimed to be such, proof of the existence of God did not transcend the powers of intellect. Even the moral attributes of God, of which he forms no concept, Bolingbroke explains as merely "various applications of one eternal reason."[1] A rational view of the universe is part of the divine intention, for "God has given to his human creatures the materials of physical and moral happiness. He has given them faculties and powers to collect and apply these materials, and to carry on the work of which Reason is the architect."[2] As for Pope, the use of reason as a source of light is simply taken for granted from the outset of the "Essay." "What can we reason but from what we know?"[3] he asks, with the implication that the rational is the only possible method to pursue in a search for truth. Quite apart from the fact that the poem itself is an example of an intricately reasoned argument, its thesis is based upon the exaltation of reason into a very deity—"the God within the mind."[4] Reason is the restraining principle in human nature, counteracting the impelling force of Self-love.

> "Self-love, the spring of motion, acts the soul;
> Reason's comparing balance rules the whole."[5]

Without Reason, man would "meteor-like, flame lawless through the void."[6] The Passions, controlled and taught by Reason, express themselves in virtuous action.[7] It is Reason that observes the laws of Nature and interprets them for man's instruction, that he may use them as a basis for his social system.[8] Only Reason can order the chaos of the good and ill in man's nature with the great fiat that divides light from darkness.[9] At one point only does Reason fail, for Pope will not attempt to run ahead of his guide, who felt it unbecoming to analyze the attributes of God,[10] though for the proof of His existence Reason avails. Man's

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[1] Bolingbroke, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 286.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. IV, p. 429.
[3] Ward's ed. of Pope, Epistle I, p. 18.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, p. 204.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 59–60.
[6] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, p. 65.
[7] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 93–122.
[8] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 170–198.
[9] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 203–204.
[10] Bolingbroke, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 286.

erring intellect cannot pry into the secrets of the divine nature. "Presume not God to scan,"[1] says Pope to the presumptuous man who essays to scale heaven.

But a half century before Bolingbroke and Pope expounded the power of human reason, other and deeper thinkers had been led by their enthusiasm for nature, by their rationalistic attitude to the laws of nature, to an especial attention to human nature, man being the most interesting of existing phenomena.[2] "The proper study of mankind" appeared to be himself. The topic was not new. Two thousand years before "Nosce Teipsum" the advice of Davies had been given by the wisest of the Greeks. But at the end of a century the best thought of which had been devoted to the laws of the physical universe, a certain newness attached to the doctrine of that first of modern thinkers who defined the problem of philosophy as an investigation of the nature and extent of human knowledge.[3] Until the power of man's mind was known, how was it possible to take much stock in the conclusions of that mind concerning the physical universe? John Locke, heir to Bacon's method of observation and resulting induction,[4] directed English thought to the problems,[5] "How do we come by knowledge?" and "Of what does our limited human reason permit us to be sure?" Thus from 1690, when the "Essay on the Human Understanding" appeared, the glorified Reason itself became the subject of sceptical inquiry, with a view, in Locke's treatment of the question, to destroying false pretensions of knowledge and to declaring just how far real knowledge was possible and practical.[6] The assumed innate ideas of Descartes were shown to have no proved existence.[7] All ideas, said Locke, were either by experience and sensation, or by reflection upon experience and sensation.[8]

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[1] Ward's ed. of Pope, Epistle II, ll. 1–2.
[2] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 32.
[3] Fowler, *John Locke*, pp. 127–128.
Seth, *English Philosophers*, p. 94.
[4] Seth, pp. 3–4.
[5] Royce, p. 70.
[6] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, p. 339.
[7] Seth, *English Philosophers*, pp. 95–96.
Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 79.
[8] Seth, pp. 98–99.
Rogers, pp. 344–345.

"These alone, so far as I can discover, are the windows by which light is let into this dark room."[1]

So much for the source of knowledge, which thus, in Locke's view, "seems to be nothing but the perception of the connection and agreement, or disagreement and repugnancy, of any of our ideas."[2] This agreement or disagreement may be perceived immediately; in that case knowledge is intuitive, such as the knowledge of one's own existence. It may be perceived by a gradual process of analysis and comparison; then knowledge is demonstrative, as is the knowledge of the existence of God, which may be proved by our intuitive knowledge of self and the necessity of a first cause for the existence of self. Or it may be perceived by sensation; such is the knowledge of material things.[3] Without pursuing further an outline of Locke's philosophy, even so cursory a glance at it makes it evident that here is a new method in metaphysics—a common sense method of drawing conclusions as to the laws of mind by observation of the actual working of the mind.[4] The mind becomes its own object, and introspective philosophy is born. The facts of experienced mental processes are substituted, as a foundation for a system, for theories about mental processes. It is the application to metaphysics of the scientific inductive method.

Had Bolingbroke and Pope a place in their universal harmony for a human reason removed from its godlike pinnacle and subjected to a challenging analysis which tested its powers and possibilities in the acid bath of common sense? Or were they content, like all English thinkers before Locke, to take reason for granted as an infallible guide and solution of all life's problems? Is the "Essay" to be classified only as a crowning literary product of the period of naturalistic, rationalistic thought; or does it belong also to the dawning period of empirical, introspective mental analysis initiated by the common sense of Locke?

The very title chosen by Bolingbroke is an echo of Locke. And the "Essays on Human Knowledge," written, as their author says, as a task imposed upon him by Pope,[5] begin with a proof of the existence of God stated thus: "Since there must

[1] *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Bk. II, Ch. xi, 17.
[2] *Ibid.*, Bk. IV, Ch. i, 1, 2.
[3] Rogers, p. 352.
[4] Fowler, *John Locke*, pp. 149–150, 196.
[5] Bolingbroke, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 40.

have been something from eternity, because there is something now, the eternal Being must be an intelligent being, because there is intelligence now; and such a Being must exist necessarily, whether things have always been as they are, or whether they have been made in time, because it is no more possible to conceive an infinite than a finite progression of events without a cause."[1] But this is identical with Locke's proof of the existence of God: "We know that something exists, since we are sure of our own existence; and we know, also, that something must have existed from eternity, since we are instinctively certain that bare nothing cannot produce any real being. Since we possess powers, perception, knowledge, all these things must be present in the eternal reality from which we spring; and we can know, therefore, that a supremely powerful, knowing, and intelligent being exists."[2]

Again, stating his own great question as "What is the precise notion we are to entertain of the human mind?" Bolingbroke confessedly proceeds "in Mr. Locke's method and with his assistance"[3] to analyze the sources of ideas as sensation and reflection and to classify ideas into simple and complex. His emphasis, in regard to the kinds of knowledge, is much more than is Locke's upon the sensational type, leading him to the conclusion, quite in accord with his position as heir of Shaftesbury and the naturalistic school, that, since the facts of nature are incontrovertibly the material for sensational knowledge, "there is no study, after that of morality, which deserves the application of the human mind, so much as that of natural philosophy, and of the arts and sciences which serve to promote it. The will of God, in the constitution of our moral system, is the object of one. His infinite wisdom and power, manifested in the natural system of the universe, are the object of the other."[4]

Though Bolingbroke's inquiry into the "nature, extent, and reality" of human knowledge led him far afield into the region of the attack on revealed and traditional religion which was the real object of his writings, its starting point was certainly afforded him by Locke's "Essay"; and his constant and respectful citation of that philosopher offers marked contrast to his attitude toward

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 67.
[2] *Essay on the Human Understanding*, Book IV, Ch. 10.
[3] Bolingbroke, *Works*, Vol. III, p. 72 sq.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 101.

other thinkers—toward Hobbes,[1] whom he quotes and disagrees with; toward Descartes,[2] whose doctrine he contests; toward Berkeley,[3] whose idealism he dismisses summarily as "inconceivable"; toward Shaftesbury, whose atmosphere he breathes, but whom he does not quote.

In view of this reverence of Bolingbroke for Locke it is the more remarkable to find in the "Essay on Man" no trace of imitation by the poet-disciple of the parts of the master's philosophy which were borrowed from the "Essay on the Human Understanding." So far as Bolingbroke echoes Shaftesbury, Pope accompanies him; discord is "harmony not understood"; "partial evil" is "universal good"; "true Self-love and Social are the same"; through nature man "looks up to nature's God." So far as Bolingbroke stresses attentive study of the facts of nature, Pope exemplifies his principles, for his whole argument is an inductive one based on those facts. So far as Bolingbroke glorifies reason, Pope rhapsodizes in unison. But he offers no proof of God, as does Bolingbroke; the great "Universal Cause" is taken for granted, and on that assumed existence the argument of the "Essay" is based. Why trouble to prove what it is not necessary to doubt? Nor does Pope undertake to analyze the human mind. His attitude to reason is that of worship rather than challenge. The source of all light and leading is not a subject for analysis by the mind utterly dependent upon its illumination. So far as Pope's treatment of this phase of his subject is concerned, Locke might never have written.

Three possible explanations suggest themselves for this difference between the prose and the versified philosophies. Pope may have been less ready than Bolingbroke, because of a native conservatism, to keep abreast of the most recent and radical developments in thought; or, his interest being didactic rather than philosophic, he may have wished to include in a poem vindicating the ways of God no suggestion of a doubt either of God or of the ability of human reason to vindicate Him; or these parts of the subject may have been destined for treatment in later cantos of a work that in its conception was far more extended than the present "Essay." At all events, the deduction is safe that, just as Davies' philosophy represented the philosophy previous to his

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, p. 66; Vol. IV, p. 119.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 74, 95.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 71, 134.

own time, so Bolingbroke's system is a mere compendium of the thought of his predecessors and early contemporaries, and the poem based on that compendium is a reflection of the same thought, cleverly combining in an artistic whole many of its more or less heterogeneous elements.

But there were other sides of current learning beside the philosophical; and in his embodiment of these in his poetical epistles Pope may be looked at independently of his relation to Bolingbroke. St. John taught him his philosophy; but from many another source he may have imbibed the acquaintance with scientific progress, social and political science, and literary development which forms a background for the "Essay."

As was said previously, the philosophical development of the seventeenth century, the trend of which has been indicated in outline, was an outgrowth of the awakening interest in the physical universe. This awakening was the cause of a movement destined to be of far more permanent value in the story of the progress of learning than either naturalism or deism. The inductive study of science laid the foundation for practical rather than metaphysical knowledge, and was the first step in a really modern system of education. If the Elizabethan theater is the great institution left as a legacy by the sixteenth century, no less an inheritance fell to English learning in the foundation of the Royal Society, the memorable contribution of the seventeenth century to the growth of science. But whereas the sixteenth century outburst of literary production was as manifold in its form as the versatility of the typical playwright who was also romancer, sonneteer, pamphleteer, and critic, the rule for the development of the new science seems to have been "One thing at a time." All that could be done with purely physical science was done before any intensive effort was made to pursue other lines. "Herballs" and "bestiaries" seemed to satisfy such botanical and zoölogical curiosity as the intelligent classes possessed; chemistry remained a matter of private experiment so obscure that Pope still confounds the chemist with the alchemist;[1] while geology was not even thought of as a science, and a mid-eighteenth century collector who made a specialty of gathering fossils was laughed at by the wits as an absurdity.[2] Mathematics and astronomy, magnetism and the

[1] "The starving chemist in his golden views." Ep. II, l. 269.

[2] Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 170.

mechanical laws of physics held the attention of the scientists who founded the Royal Society and who sought to awaken the stagnant thought in the universities to a new and vital branch of knowledge. Just as new life came into literature a century before, not from the centers of learning but from popular playwrights and court poets; so now the movement to investigate the far recesses of the universe and find out the "why" of existing physical phenomena came, not from the dons of Oxford and Cambridge, who still mulled over their divinity, their classics, and their logic, but from the practical thinking men who desired a new knowledge sufficient to cope with new conditions of life. The great names, of course, are Gilbert and Napier, Newton and Halley; but the experiments and enthusiasm of many less prominent persons, experiments which worked themselves out in such instruments as the thermometer, the barometer, and the pendulum clock, helped to make physical science popular with commoner as with student—witness the patient Mrs. Pepys, learning the multiplication table for the pastime of her indefatigable husband.[1]

The great master of the period, Sir Isaac Newton, did his epoch-marking work upon the laws of motion as exemplified in the solar system. To him everything in nature was rationally explainable by law. It is not surprising, with motion and law as the keywords of the dominant thought movement of the period, to find philosophers reducing all existence to motion or to mathematical formulas, and theologians referring dogma to the laws of reason. Not only Bolingbroke's conversation must have shown the influence of the work of inductive physical scientists, but the thought and the talk of all Pope's circle of wits must have been conversant with such topics. It was the scientific jargon of the day that crept into Pope's verbiage, with its recurrent figures of systems and chains and circles. And particularly the revelations of astronomy caught his poetic imagination, with the vision of "vast immensity" where "worlds on worlds compose one universe," where "system into system runs." The poet runs ahead of the physicist, to speculate upon

> "What other planets circle other suns,
> What varied being peoples every star."[2]

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[1] Schuster and Shipley, *Heritage of Science*, p. 227.

[2] Ward's edition of Pope's *Works*, Epistle I, ll. 24–27.

No longer is man the center of the universe, as in the pre-Copernican view of Davies. Such an assumption is ridiculed as an absurdity.

> "Man, who here seems principal alone,
> Perhaps acts second to some sphere unknown,
> Touches some wheel, or verges to some goal."[1]

Pope's view of the achievement and the limitation of Newton is apparent in his summary of the work of the seventeenth century scientist:

> "Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides;
> Instruct the planets in what orbs to run,
> Correct old Time, and regulate the sun,"[2]

and in his query whether the "mortal man" who could "unfold all Nature's law" and bind with his rules the rapid comet could "describe or fix one movement" of the human mind.[3] The same unawareness of Locke's analysis of the understanding that appears in Pope's attitude to the sacredness of reason is implicit here; what the great scientist cannot do Pope knows, but what the great philosopher has done he does not know.

A great deal of general scientific information is evident in allusions to the atomic theory—

> "The single atoms each to other tend;
> Attract, attracted to, the next in place
> Formed and impell'd its neighbor to embrace."

to the relativity and indestructibility of matter:

> "All forms that perish other forms supply,
> Like bubbles on the sea of Matter borne,
> They rise, they break, and to that sea return."[4]

and to the dual motion of the planets—

> "On their own axis as the planets run,
> Yet make at once their circle round the sun."[5]

Such nowadays self-evident physical truths seem as unnecessary of mention as the facts about the five senses upon which Davies spent so many lines. But the mention of them shows that to Pope they were not yet too obvious to be marveled at and talked about as of paramount interest. The fact that at the same time

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[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 57–59.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 20–22.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 35–36.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 10–20.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 313–314.

he belittles rather than glorifies the work of Sir Isaac Newton is evidence, however, that to him scientific achievement was but incidental, as compared with the philosophical exploration on which he was embarking with his guide, philosopher and friend. Whether for criticism, for satire, or for analysis, Pope's "proper study," when he followed his own bent, was human nature.

The scholarly-inclined man of the eighteenth century, if he depended solely on the universities for inspiration, could learn little but the classics. The Oxford and Cambridge of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries followed rather than led along the trails of thought.[1] Science was a subject of the curriculum only in so far as mathematics was studied in application to astronomy, mechanics, and physics. Chemistry was a mere experiment in a private laboratory; biology and geology were unknown; zoölogy was merely descriptive, often by hearsay, and botany was hardly pursued apart from its relation to gardening. Geography belonged only to the schools of navigation, while history as a subject for study in the modern sense was reserved for nineteenth century discovery. Individual scholars, in the university and out of it, did pioneer work in all these lines. But Pope was not a university man nor a scholar, nor had he the spirit of a pioneer. His very knowledge of the classics was an unacademic one; and in the allusions to subjects geographical, historical, zoölogical, and botanical that are frequent in his pages he must be representative of the intelligent and independent thinker of the period, who by desultory reading and by the club and coffee-house type of conversation amassed a large and fairly accurate stock of general information.

Pope's knowledge of history, of plant and animal life, even of the habits of the famous "poor Indian" is such as he might have picked up in casual readings of Pliny, of the Elizabethan herbalists, of Ray[2] and Willoughby,[3] and in hearing the talk of travellers returning from far off lands. It is hearsay knowledge that speaks in reference to the "headlong lioness,"[4] hunting by ear rather than by nostril, to the "half reas'ning elephant,"[5] to the "stork,

[1] *Cambridge History of English Literature*, Vol. IX, p. 425 sq.
[2] John Ray, *History of Plants*, 1686–88.
[3] Francis Willoughby, *Ornithology*, 1676; *History of Fishes*, 1686.
[4] Ward's edition of Pope's *Works*, Epistle I, l. 213.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, l. 221.

Columbus-like," who explores "heav'ns not his own,"[1] and to the "little nautilus" who can teach man

"to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale."[2]

Such other facts from the world of living, growing nature as Pope mentions could have come under his eye in his own prized garden at Twickenham, where the grape and the rose renewed

"The juice nectareous and the balmy dew";[3]

where "the nice bee" extracted the "healing dew" from "pois'nous herbs";[4] where he could watch "the wanton fawn," the lark, the linnet, the jay and the hawk; and where the spider designed his parallels "without rule or line."[5] His historical allusions, too, are chiefly to facts and characters upon whom he chanced in his voluminous reading of the Greek and Latin authors, and familiarity with whom he presupposed in his readers. Borgia and Catiline, Alexander and Caesar, Nero and Titus, or even the more modern names of Turenne and Sidney, Charles XII and Prince Eugene—such references imply no special interest in historical research, nor are they cited in any but the traditional light in which the eighteenth century regarded them. Pope's strength lay, not in his learning, but in his wit; his learning, superficial and made up of bits snatched here and there from a wide field, was but that of the average reader of his time, of whose general knowledge, we may venture to suppose, the "Essay" affords a fair example.

In one direction, however, Pope showed himself familiar with and deeply interested in what was a progressive step toward a new subject for study. From Hobbes onward, thinkers had been concerning themselves with the construction of a theory of the state. The rise of the great powers, making necessary a philosophy to explain their existence, produced, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the new type of political philosophy which was the direct ancestor of the modern science of political economy. The angle from which the early seventeenth century writers approached the subject showed that economic questions were beginning to hold an important place as a subject of discussion, though as yet they did not comprise a separate branch of political

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 103–106.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 177–178.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 135–136.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 219–220.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 103–106.

philosophy.[1] Thus Grotius, the Dutch contemporary of Hobbes,[2] treated of the relations of states to each other, of the laws governing property, and of the effects of commerce on international relations. Hobbes,[3] more interested in internal politics, because of his desire to defend the divine right of the Stuarts, discussed the economic motives underlying the institution of society. Harrington drew in his "Oceana"[4] a picture of the ideal state, differing from the "Republic" and the "Utopia" in that its government and politics are based on economic power—a new idea in political philosophy. Mandeville,[5] shocking the moralists of his day by the selfish egoism to which he reduced all human motives, attempted a solution of the problems of demand and supply, necessity and luxury, labor and wage; and by arousing eager champions of an opposite opinion led the way to the foundation of an orthodox economic system.[6] Locke, though more interested in ethics and metaphysics than in politics, none the less[7] took time to develop a social philosophy in defense of his eager belief in democracy, and promulgated the new "doctrine of natural right," by which property rights grew out of labor expended.

The central idea in all these early experiments at economic theory was the doctrine of the social contract on which society was founded. According to them all, the state began in a mutual agreement for the observance of certain laws as a basis of mutual welfare. The idea was not new in modern philosophy. "Epicureanism attributed the origin of the state to a deliberate convention made for natural protection and security."[8] But later thinkers had followed Plato and Aristotle rather than Epicurus; so that the contract theory propounded by Grotius was the equivalent of an original contribution to thought.

Two radically opposite interpretations of the social contract are represented by seventeenth century thinkers. Grotius inclined to the benevolent construction of human nature, claiming

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[1] Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, pp. 84–5.
[2] *Laws of War and Peace*, 1625.
[3] *De Cive*, 1642; *Leviathan*, 1651.
[4] *Commonwealth of Oceana*, 1658.
[5] *Fable of the Bees*, 1714–23.
[6] Seth, *English Philosophers*, p. 188.
[7] *Treatise on Civil Government*, 1690.
[8] Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, p. 49.

that the agreement for mutual welfare grows out of man's natural love for ordered companionship.[1] Rational beings by their inherent qualities follow the just way, and their innate regard for society is the source of all binding laws. The same position is held by Locke, in his declaration that government exists by compact, for the good of the governed, and that the compact grows out of obedience to the law of nature, which wills the peace and preservation of all men.[2] So much for the altruistic side in this early controversy. The egoistic current was set in motion by Hobbes, whose belief was in a contract founded on individual selfishness, the natural basic motive in all men. The first law of nature is self-preservation[3] in the struggle for existence. In the state of nature selfishness rules unrestrained, giving rise to conditions so intolerable that sheer self-interest compels men to agree on some mutual scheme by which, in serving the interests of all, each individual will get the most possible for himself.[4] Men are "anti-social by nature, and social only by a happy invention of far-sighted selfishness."[5] The same egoistic interpretation of the contract is evident in Mandeville, whose bees serve themselves in serving the hive. In his solution of the labor and wage problem, everything that creates demand is good—extravagance, vice, and luxury as well as necessity give rise to industry and art. Therefore the more selfish and unbridled in desire a man is, the better is his service to the welfare of the whole.[6] Shaftesbury and his disciple Hutcheson, shocked at a doctrine so dangerous in its practical bearing on life, went to an extreme along the opposite line, in their declaration that man is naturally social and benevolent, that moral law is absolute and consistent with natural law, and that on this law society is based.[7]

In that portion of the "Essay" where Pope discusses man in his relation to society, it is not hard to trace the influence of these schools of thought, echoes of whose combat reached him through the conversation of Bolingbroke if they did not do so through the

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 72.
[2] Locke, *Civil Government*, Book II, Chap. ii, Sec. 4–14, 74–76, 124–131.
[3] Bonar, pp. 78–79.
[4] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 258–259.
[5] Bonar, p. 85.
[6] Patten, *Development of English Thought*, pp. 204–212.
[7] Seth, *English Philosophers*, pp. 188–192.

pages of the philosophers themselves. It is distinctly the contract idea that has compelled his interest, to the exclusion of other economic problems. His omissions are perhaps as significant of the philosophical calibre of Pope's mind as are his inclusions. He does not touch upon or allude to the questions of trade, finance, property, taxation, increase of population, or popular education, topics which had engaged the attention of Hobbes and Harrington a century before him, in the period when "political economy was growing up in England as an application of political philosophy."[1] He suggests no rules for the machinery of government such as the "Oceana" outlines. He ignores Mandeville's theories regarding luxury as economically right though ethically wrong, and poverty and ignorance as necessary for the maintenance of a laboring, wage-earning class to do the work of the nation. It was the theoretic rather than the practical side of political philosophy that commanded the interest of Pope and his circle. Economic realities were very far removed from the experience of an aristocratic dilettante like Bolingbroke, of a shrewd and caustic analyst of the vices of court, church, and society like Swift, or even of a keenly observant but sheltered-living poet and critic like Pope himself. The fashions, the intrigues of court, the adventures of Belinda, the gossip of literary circles, a contest of wits with Lady Mary, the opening of a new vista among his garden walks; in his more scholarly moments the deeds of Hector or Achilles, and in his tenderer hours solicitude for his mother—these were Pope's realities.

This detached and academic acquaintance with political philosophy may account for the confusion which appears in Pope's explanation of the origin of social laws. He does not seem to have in mind a clear distinction between egoistic and altruistic doctrine. It is not compromise that makes him veer from one side to the other; for usually, once Pope knew his intended direction, he did not trim his sails to suit the wind. Here, however, he seems to have no firm conviction of what his position is. Perhaps in this portion of the work he was less directly under the tutelage of his "guide, philosopher, and friend"; and, according to Leslie Stephen, he was himself incapable of sustained reasoning or laborious and patient meditation, and could work well only on

[1] Bonar, p. 85.

lines provided for him.[1] It is not unfair, however, to charge some of the confusion to Bolingbroke, who was himself but a superficial thinker and to whose pages can certainly be traced Pope's ideas on the state of Nature, and on the origins of political and civil society, of government, and of religion.[2]

A study of Epistle III will show not only what were Pope's independent and second-hand views of the social contract, but also the confusion that is apparent in his presentation of them. For the most part his interpretation of the contract inclines to the benevolent view. The world of nature is proof sufficient that the chain "combining all below and all above" is a chain of love.

> "See plastic Nature working to this end:
> The single atoms each to other tend;
> Attract, attracted to, the next in place
> Form'd and impell'd its neighbor to embrace.
> See matter next with various life endu'd,
> Press to one centre still, the gen'ral good."[3]

The individual exists for the good of the whole:

> "short of reason he must fall,
> Who thinks all made for one, not one for all."[4]

Such a statement is diametrically opposed to Hobbes, who thus, according to Pope, falls short of reason. No happiness is possible unless men live in social relation with each other, for God, in framing the whole,

> "On mutual wants built mutual happiness."[5]

A picture of a Golden Age known as the "state of Nature" shows how instinctive is the social feeling, not only of human, but of animal kinds, beginning in the love of the mate and of the young.[6] Universal benevolence reigned when man followed these natural social instincts.

> "Pride then was not; nor arts, that pride to aid;
> Man walk'd with beast joint-tenant of the shade;
> The same his table, and the same his bed;
> No murder cloth'd him, and no murder fed.

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[1] Leslie Stephen, *Alexander Pope*, p. 162.
[2] Churton Collins, *Bolingbroke*, p. 192, note.
[3] Ward's edition of Pope's *Works*, Epistle III, ll. 7–14.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 47–48.
[5] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, l. 112.
[6] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 113–150.

In the same temple, the resounding wood,
All vocal beings hymn'd their equal God;
The shrine with gore unstain'd, with gold undrest,
Unbrib'd, unbloody, stood the blameless priest."[1]

Like the wise man of long ago, Nature pointed man to the ant as a pattern. Man learned his first lessons in self-preservation by observation of the animal creation, and thence too derived a pattern of a social union or contract.

"Learn each small people's genius, policies,
The ants' republic, and the realm of bees:
How those in common all their wealth bestow,
And anarchy without confusion know;
And these forever, though a monarch reign,
Their sep'rate cells and properties maintain."[2]

Natural laws have been the foundation of civil laws, which yet have never achieved the perfection of their model.

"In vain thy reason finer webs shall draw,
Entangle Justice in her net of law,
And right, too rigid, harden into wrong."[3]

Commercial relations followed political ones; worship of the "Father of all" grew from devotion to the head of the clan or tribe, who became to them the pattern of their self-created God, as they,

"looking up from sire to sire, explor'd
One great first Father, and that first ador'd."[4]

The picture of this ideal state of Nature is both unhistoric and unscientific; historical method was unknown, and Darwin and Spencer were unborn. Yet the account of the development of the state and the church from the primitive family is quite like Locke's view, who presents the family as the original unit of society, acquiring and adapting its own customs, and joining with other families and tribes in a choice of a form of government, and in an agreement with one another to obey and maintain that form.[5] However, try as he will to be truly philosophical, untheological, if possible heretical, Pope cannot conceal his native orthodoxy and his tendency to be influenced by tradition. Behind the verbiage

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 151–158.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 171–190.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 191–194.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 215–228.
[5] Fowler, *John Locke*, pp. 185–186.

of a rationalistic philosopher is recognizable the lingering belief in a Garden of Eden and a Fall of Man.

So far Pope has run true to form in adherence to Locke, Shaftesbury, and the other believers in goodwill as the motive of the social contract. But there is more to be said about the matter. A philosopher writing a comprehensive poetical discussion of so large a question must omit nothing that he has heard on the subject. So there follows a metrical summary of the egoistic philosophy of Hobbes—that all exist for one, and that the individual works for the whole only because thus he best helps himself.

> "The same self-love, in all, becomes the cause
> Of what restrains him, government and laws.
> . . . . . .
> His safety must his liberty restrain:
> All join to guard what each desires to gain.
> Forc'd into virtue thus, by self-defence,
> Ev'n kings learn'd justice and benevolence:
> Self-love forsook the path it first pursu'd,
> And found the private in the public good."[1]

Was such an inconsistency the result of befogged thinking or was it deliberate? An effort to run a safe middle course between the two extremes of thought is indicated by the last lines of the Epistle:

> "Thus God and Nature link'd the gen'ral frame,
> And bade Self-love and Social be the same."[2]

Both motives, says our poet-philosopher, exist; both work to the same end; therefore neither shall be preferred above the other as an ultimate cause of action. This compromise conclusion is identical with that of Shaftesbury, who argues that both self-love and social love are virtuous and necessary, if maintained in proper balance and proportion.[3] Butler, too, in his "Sermons," and in his "Dissertation on the Nature of Virtue,"[4] attempts the same reconciliation of the two contradictory theories of human motive. But both these writers analyze their subject at length, in such a way as to make their conclusion seem, whether acceptable or not, at least well-reasoned and consistent. Pope's hurried appending

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[1] Ward's edition of Pope's *Works*, Epistle III, ll. 271–282.
[2] Ward, Pope's *Works*, Epistle III, ll. 317–318.
[3] *Characteristics*, Book II, Part i, Sec. 3.
[4] Seth, p. 200.

of it after a full presentation of both the altruistic and the egoistic doctrines makes it seem either his own ineffective attempt to make an agreement between the conflicting systems which he has outlined; or, what is more likely, an effort to summarize his reading of Shaftesbury and Butler and thus to include in his "Essay" all that any English philosopher had contributed to the discussion.

Such a passage is excellent proof that Pope was not an independent thinker. It takes straight thinking to copy intelligently another man's work, and phenomenally straight thinking to patch together into a harmonious whole parts copied from several men's work. The betrayal of one's own failure as a thinker appears in any confusion with one another of the parts being copied, or any failure of the parts to coalesce into a unity. An echo is clear when it answers only a single voice; let voices multiply, and the echo vanishes in complexity of sound. In philosophy Pope's poem is an echo, sometimes clear, sometimes clouded.

Moreover, the independent thinker of the times, in the very years when Bolingbroke and Pope were working out their second-hand system, was thinking his way through to a very different conclusion from the fallaciously optimistic one of the "Essay." For Hume, a straight road led from Locke's challenge of the human understanding to the sceptic's refusal to accept that challenge. Such was the path of original reflection. In Pope's willingness to accept as final the conclusions of philosophers before him, discovering no implications or suggestions in those conclusions, appears another proof that he was born to follow, not to lead. The pioneer is never satisfied.

As Davies was typical of style in art at the end of a period of developing artistic consciousness and experiment with art forms, so Pope, too, was typical of the literature of his period. The century of lyric and dramatic outpouring was over; no longer was beauty the idol of writers and readers, but common sense was the object of worship. Meaning and content, not form of expression, were important in literature as in life. Writers wrote not to amuse and please but to teach and criticize. Cleverness had taken the place of grace; didacticism the place of emotion. An art form convenient for the conveyance of thought had been devised, and, content with the heroic couplet, the poet said whatever he had to say in that medium, without effort for variety or

innovation. It was the substance that mattered; why expend energy in making new verse forms when so good a one was ready at hand? Only let the couplets be as witty and polished as the conversation of the clever men and women who comprised the reading public.

In its presentation of philosophical learning, then, Pope's "Essay" only follows, often afar off and uncertainly, the principles evolved by the thinkers of his day. As an index of literary development it shows the current indifference to art for art's sake, placidly employing the vehicle of all poets of the day. And in relation to other than philosophical learning, it is but a reflex of the writer's time, showing all the limitations and patchinesses of the education of contemporary leaders of thought. Pope is, indeed, less a representative of the best learning of his time than is Davies; he was less scholarly, less independent in following a line of thought of his own, less awake to all phases of developing knowledge. Above all, Pope was working under patronage and direction, as Davies was not. Both poets, however, since neither is more than abreast of his time, afford corroboration of the idea that the philosopher in verse is an exponent of current learning rather than a pioneer into new realms.

Before applying the same test to Tennyson, a survey of the educational progress of the intervening century must show how full of change was this period, for thought and knowledge as well as for politics and industry. The conventionality and formality of the intellectual life of the cultured classes in the middle decades of the eighteenth century, together with the rise to influence in politics and society of the uncultured middle class, produced an intellectual indifference and stagnation as clearly apparent in the devotion of literary men to the hack work that supplied wealthy tradesmen and manufacturers with the useful information that they mistook for education,[1] as it was in the classical deadness of the life of the universities. Rationalism had crushed the life out of both theological and metaphysical thinking quite as effectually, in spite of its proud casting off of traditional chains, as scholasticism had done in the Middle Ages. The rebirth of thought and knowledge came to England in the fifteenth century through the study of classic literature and through artistic effort. The channels

[1] Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society*, p. 147, sq.

through which new life flowed into the reason-dulled mind of England in the late eighteenth century were four: the philosophical channel of German idealism; the scientific channel of geological and biological investigation; the economic channel leading from Hume's materialistic scepticism, the *impasse* with which metaphysics found itself confronted, into utilitarianism and consequent interest in the problems of political economy and social relationships, viewed not theoretically but in the light of the newly kindled torch of history; and the literary channel, whereby poetry became not didactic but aesthetic, not moral but emotional, not pedantic but simple.

The name of Hume is noteworthy in this story of intellectual change because with three of these tendencies his work was connected. By a thorough-going empiricism he reached the conclusion that any absolute knowledge, outside the range of sense impressions, was impossible.[1] The extreme scepticism in which his philosophy terminated, and which was the end of the chapter of English metaphysical speculation for almost a hundred years, afforded a point of departure for Kant, in the effort to refute it.[2] So, although modern idealism was not in its transcendental form native to England, it was an English thinker who set its processes in motion. Again, in his ethical contention that the test of conduct is its effect in happiness,[3] Hume was the forerunner of the English utilitarians; and in his interest in human nature, not analytically nor abstractly, but as seen in the everyday activities of life,[4] and in his treatment of morality not as ethical but as social in its motives, he was the ancestor of the early social scientists. Third, he was the first of English philosophers to observe that man as an individual or in his social relationships can be understood only in the light of his past; and with a sense of the value of history to turn from the discouraging sceptical philosophy which he had worked out and win fame for himself as one of the three first modern English historians.[5]

It is to repeat a platitude to say that the German idealists

[1] Seth, *English Philosophers*, pp. 152–153.
[2] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, pp. 126–127.
[3] Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, pp. 108–109.
Hume, *Essays*, Vol. II, p. 176.
[4] Patten, *Development of English Thought*, p. 214.
[5] Leslie Stephen, *English Literature and Society*, p. 184.

shaped the thought of England in the early nineteenth century; and it is wellnigh an impertinence to sum up the essential features of so well known a philosophy, as nevertheless must be done for purposes of convenient comparison with the third of our poet-philosophers. Four distinct tendencies are apparent in the thought of the group of German thinkers who, between 1750 and 1850, transformed philosophy from a cold and rational system to the living, pulsing, inspiring interpretation of life that the earlier German Spinoza had conceived and that the later German Nietzsche, blinded by a less spiritual but more dazzling vision, abandoned. The first and best known of these is the movement identified with the name of Emanuel Kant[1] and called loosely and variously transcendentalism and subjective idealism.

For Kant there was no objective world; his world, nay, his universe was self-created, the projection of his own individuality. "All knowledge begins with experience,"[2] and within the realms of experience human reason is sufficient for knowledge. But knowledge is not limited to experience, as Hume had said; and for the transcendent realities, such as God, the soul, freedom, immortality, which lie outside the range of sense impressions, the reason cannot avail as a solvent. Yet though God is unprovable, He is not unknowable. In order to a comprehension of the world and one's self, a venture of faith, like a leap in the dark, must postulate an ultimate unconditioned reality,[3] hypothetically the basis of all finite things—the reality which men call God. Without such a postulate a world order is inconceivable; for Kant's world order is based on the moral law; and, without a source from which to emanate, a moral law is unthinkable. "Will to act as if God were present and existent" is the command by obedience to which man creates a moral order in the world and in his own soul a belief in God.

Reduced to its lowest terms, the philosophy apparently so abstruse and so involved becomes merely a kind of glorified common sense. Since the world is self-created, why not create, by our will to believe, those great realities which make possible a sane and well-ordered life in our self-world? Believe that God

[1] 1724–1804. *Critique of Pure Reason*, published 1781.
[2] *Immanuel Kant's Werke*, Vol. III, p. 17, Kellermann edition.
[3] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, p. 440.

exists, and for you He will exist. Vitalize your belief and His existence by acting as if the belief were established truth. And finally, since happiness and virtue cannot be attained in this life, and such foreseen failure makes all effort futile, postulate an eternal life[1] in which all things shall be ours. "Truth comes to us," says Kant, "because we make it."[2]

So there blows through the fogs and mists of the analytical ponderings of the eighteenth century rationalists a breath of vital air from the hills from whence strength cometh—an air the motive current of which is the sense of the heroic power and value of man's will. The reason, which has been deified as the most godlike element in man, is dethroned, is itself laid bare to criticism. In its place rules the human will, creating by its determined effort of faith those transcendent realities by belief in which alone can life be made anything but futile.

Fichte[3] carried the idealism of Kant a step farther. In his philosophy, all knowledge was dependent on action. The moral will is the only true reality, and an exemplification of morality is impossible apart from action. We know because we are compelled by moral necessity to act, and thus the active self creates the universe. The world is non-existent except as an object and a sphere of duties[4]—"the stuff for our duty, made manifest to our senses."[5] In asserting itself in action the self exists, and at the same time embodies the one true and infinite Reason, the will of God, which can only work itself out, manifest itself, and so find existence, through the wills of men.[6] Thus God, too, creates Himself, and is at the same time man-created and subjective. As Professor Royce puts it, "God is the pulse of the moral order, the life of lives, the eternal spiritual self-creator, the live and organic unity of all beings."[7]

For the reader who is not a trained metaphysician, the essentials of this idealistic philosophy reduce themselves, for all practical purposes, to three colossal but simple tenets: The world of sense

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 448.
[2] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 117.
[3] 1762–1814; first published work, 1792.
[4] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 453–454.
[5] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 152.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 153. Cf. John XV.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 160.

impressions is but a show world, a shadow of the inner life which by its thinking creates the shadow picture; the real universe is spiritual, with the moral law as its center; and man arrives at knowledge of these spiritual realities by a moral activity which postulates the existence of a God from whom the moral impetus emanates.

From the first of these tenets developed what, to quote Professor Royce once more, has been called the "kaleidoscopic philosophy"[1] of the romantic period, the second tendency in the German thought of the end of the eighteenth century. Out of our own personality we create the world? Very well! Let us create it after the pattern of our dream. Not by the sternness of a categorical imperative shall we arrive at a belief in God, but by a sympathetic emotion which *feels* rather than *thinks* a universe into being. God is the great artist, the great dreamer, the great sympathizer. The man whose dream is most godlike, whose emotion most shares the divine sympathy, he it is who creates the best world.[2] In Schlegel[3] the philosophy is one of fickleness; "the truth best known to me," he writes, "is that erelong my present truth will change."[4] To know truth is to experience all moods, all emotions. In Schelling[5] it is a nature philosophy, partaking of a mystical pantheism not unlike Spinoza's. God is the animating spirit of nature, the motion and the spirit

> "that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Throughout the world of nature the great spirit struggles onward to his own highest manifestation, which is man.[6]

This is romanticism, not science. Yet it is not hard to trace the kinship of the idea implicit here, that man is the highest phase of a progressive development extending through all nature, with the scientifically supported evolutionary philosophy that appears as the third tendency in modern German thought, working itself out first in relation to religion and second in relation to history. Lessing, much earlier than this, had founded modern religious philosophy in his discovery of the evolutional character

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 173.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 173–174.
[3] 1772–1829.
[4] Royce, p. 176.
[5] 1775–1854.
[6] Royce, p. 185.

of religion.[1] Throughout the ages God has been teaching man. Any form of religion is but one stage in this process of divine education. Religion is a progressive revelation of eternal truth; in its progressiveness lies its vitality, and, indeed, its charm for the man who wrote that, offered his choice between truth and a search for truth, he would choose the search.

Lessing said religion must be studied historically. Schelling extended the "growth" idea to the world of nature. Hegel[2] went further in his philosophical expression of the new historical sense. Not only men and things but God Himself are illuminated by the study of the gradual development of history.[3] Hegel did not call this growth by the name evolution; but the evolutionary idea implicit in his philosophy of history was appropriated from the realm of science, where Laplace and Lamarck had lately established it, and extended to the realm of spirit, so that at the great idealist's hands it became "a constituent element in German habits of thought."[4] The subject of evolutionary theory in England belongs more properly to the discussion of the progress of science, for in spite of Spencer's claims to have anticipated Darwin, it was as science and not as philosophy that the doctrine came to England. It is mentioned here only as a necessary background for the understanding of Hegel's contribution to modern philosophy. According to his theory of development, then, personality is a chain of selves, even as life is a chain of experience, whether individual or social.[5] No conclusions are to be drawn by abstract reason, for reason is concrete, existing only in the phenomena of experience, and making conclusions only on the basis of experience. Nor is there any isolated phenomenon, nor any individual life living out of relation to other lives. Man exists only in relation to other men; "no man liveth to himself."[6] As history is the story of the struggle between the uncontrolled natural will and the gradually victorious spiritual principle, so the story of the individual life is a record of struggle, in which alone lies personal existence. Virtue consists not in accomplish-

[1] Lindsay, *Studies in European Philosophy*, Chapter XIV.
[2] 1770–1831.
[3] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 470–479, 457–458.
[4] Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism*, p. 50, sq.
[5] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 206.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 208.

ment but in the effort to be virtuous. It is through struggle that the self is ennobled. "Conflict and active mastery continually enlarge our finite selves."[1] And the infinite self, called God, is that whose existence is complete because it has made full conquest of the contradictions of life.[2]

So positive a philosophy as Hegel's was bound to arouse protest.[3] One was the protest of the intuitive mind, refusing to find the solution for all mysteries in the experience of the world of sense. One was the protest of the agnostic, asserting the insufficiency of empirical knowledge to prove infinite realities, about the existence of which, therefore, doubt must cling. The third was the protest of the pessimist, whose revolt against Hegel marks the last phase of German philosophy prior to 1850. Schopenhauer,[4] embittered, gloomy, despairing, nevertheless bases his hopeless reading of life on the wholesome and virile system of Kant.[5] His world, like Kant's, is but a projection of the self; it lives only as an illusion. The great reality is not, as for Hegel, to be found in experience. It is a thing-in-itself, existing back of the shadow world which is all man can know, except as in a thorough understanding of his own nature he grasps reality. The essential quality in his own nature he will find to be the will, the expression of which in action is man's primary impulse.

So far Schopenhauer follows Kant. But in this will to believe and to do Kant found joy and power. Schopenhauer sees the will, individual or universal, to be a thing capricious, restless, unsatisfied. The will to do springs from desire, and desire implies lack or suffering. *Unless* we will we do not exist; and *if* we will we suffer. The vision of joy in defeat, frustration, sacrifice, was not for Schopenhauer. With such a conception of life, of what good is existence? "The world," says Royce, "is an evil dream," the only way to end which is to deny the will that dreams, and so, in ceasing to exist by ceasing to will, to find peace.[6] It is this tragic interpretation of life, spelling existence in letters of desire, seeing no other motive for the exercise of the will than that of the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 214.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 216.
[3] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, p. 483.
[4] 1788–1860. *The World as Will and Idea*, published 1819.
[5] Rogers, p. 487.
[6] Royce, *Spirit of Modern Philosophy*, p. 258.

demand for something unattainable, that brings us to the mid-century and the date of the completion of "In Memoriam."

Philosophy since Locke, even since Hume, has come a long way. No longer does it measure and weigh and analyze and syllogize. No longer is speculation a matter of nicely calculated propositions with their proofs, or of mathematical problems with their solutions. Cold logic underlies these later writings, to be sure; exposed to rational test, they would come through unscathed. But the fabric woven upon the warp of barren metaphysics is colorful, warm, pulsing with life. There is joy in it, or pain; aspiration, or despair; an enthusiastic groping after the stars, or a descent into hell. The new philosopher is both man and artist, in his intensity of feeling, in his vivid portrayal upon the canvas of infinity of his own shadow-world. He is not hampered by the limitations of reason; his vision is of the unseen, the transcendent, the eternal, surpassing reason. Whether the vision appears to him as affirmation or as negation, the No or the Yes is everlasting.

The poetic philosophy of Tennyson, put beside that of Pope, shows the same difference in content and spirit as the contrast between Shaftesbury, let us say, and Fichte, or between Locke and Kant, or even between Hume and Schopenhauer. In Davies the practical man of affairs speaks more loudly than the philosopher; in Pope the would-be philosopher out-voices the man, though not the artist; in Tennyson the poet is first man, then artist, and last of all philosopher. Moreover, while Davies and Pope consciously set to work to summarize existing systems of philosophy, "In Memoriam" shows such existing systems only implicitly. Tennyson was not interested in recasting into verse the thoughts of other men, nor was he writing a didactic essay. He was recording in an inspirational poem his own emotions, his own reflections springing from experience and emotion. If his self-expression used the idiom of current philosophy, it was hardly with intention. That philosophy was familiar enough to him[1] to have become a natural part of his thought processes.

[1] The *Memoir* tells us, Vol. I, pp. 43–44, that Tennyson was a member of the "Apostles' Club" at Cambridge, who "read their Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Butler, Hume, Bentham, Descartes, and Kant," and discussed metaphysical questions. This interest continued to a date later than 1850, when, we are told, "he took to reading different systems of philosophy," and had in his library "Spinoza, Berkeley, Kant, Schlegel, Fichte, Hegel." Vol. I, p. 308.

It is a matter of but a moment to find in "In Memoriam" traces of the philosophy in which reality transcends the powers of reason. Such a transcendentalism is the keynote of the whole poem, from its initiation with

"Believing where we cannot prove,"[1]

to its conclusion with the resolve to "trust,

"With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved."[2]

With the idealists Tennyson feels that "knowledge is of things we see,"[3] and that the unseen is beyond knowledge, though not beyond perception. Knowledge

"is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul."[4]

For Tennyson as for the German philosophers, the road to this wisdom is the road of the moral will expressed in action. "Our wills are ours, to make them thine"[5] identifies existence with the effort to attain to harmony with the infinite will which Hegel called God. Man's best claim to immortality is that he is one

"Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just."[6]

The beauty of Hallam's life is once summarized as consisting in the determined virtue of action by which he arrived at faith in the unseen:

"Perplext in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out."[7]

Very existence lies in activity and exertion of the will to do:

"How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die."[8]

And if there were no other hint of Tennyson's belief in the philos-

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[1] *In Memoriam*, Prelude, l. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXXI.
[3] *Ibid.*, Prelude, l. 22.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto CXIV.
[5] *Ibid.*, Prelude, l. 16.
[6] *Ibid.*, Canto LVI.
[7] *Ibid.*, Canto XCVI.
[8] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXV.

ophy of the categorical imperative, it is unmistakably stated in the thrilling last canto:

"O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure."[1]

In reading Pope, who presented what claimed to be a complete and ordered philosophical system, one looked with justice for consistency, and failed to find it, because Pope was copying the work of other men. To seek for consistency in "In Memoriam" would be equally disappointing, but not equally just. All that is said here is Tennyson's own; his reading has been assimilated to his own thought, and, for human influence, it is through memory and love alone that his "guide, philosopher and friend" inspires him. But that of his own which he expresses is not a metaphysical system; it is a succession of moods. Moods are not consistent; unstable, variant, shifting, they show now sunlight, now shadow; they reflect in one hour determination, in the next, vacillation. So Tennyson on one page asserts firmly his Kantian faith in the "living will" as the one enduring reality, and on another page veers to the romantic position, declaring with equal eloquence that reality is to be found through feeling. Such a passage is the deeply emotional one[2] where, falling with his weight of cares

"Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,"

he cries out, in a blind faith based on feeling,

"I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope."

And in at least one famous canto[3] he has shown that the final answer of intuitive faith to scepticism must be the answer of the mystic, in terms of emotion:

"If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

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[1] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXXI.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto LV.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXIV.

"A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt.'"

In one respect Tennyson was caught at more than momentary moods in the current of the romantic philosophy, especially in the form characteristic of its leader Friedrich Schelling. Like the poets of the Revolutionary period, he is filled with the consciousness of the unity, the kinship, between man and nature, between nature and God, between man and God, a unity so perfect that the whole universe becomes, not the machine of the eighteenth century physicist, but a great vital organism. Not in specific passages does the feeling of Tennyson for nature appear so much as in the spirit of the whole poem. It is the work of a man sympathetic with the world out of doors, who finds a return of sympathy from that world. Gazing at the gloom of the yew, symbol of the gloom in his own soul, he seems to "grow incorporate" into the sullen tree.[1] The voice of Nature sounds but as a "hollow echo" of the voice of Sorrow.[2] A hushed autumn day, with chestnuts "pattering to the ground" and "leaves that redden to the fall" brings to him a transient calm, the calm of despair;[3] and when "the winds begin to rise" and "the last red leaf is whirl'd away," the tumult of the storm makes harmony with the "wild unrest" of his soul.[4] It is "when sundown skirts the moor" that the spectres of doubt arise.[5] The anniversary of Hallam's death rises dim, howling,

"issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane."[6]

When spring delays, he longs for its coming:

"Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?"[7]

As the poem records the gradual allaying of grief, the passages descriptive of nature grow less shadowed, less stormy. Beyond the "gorgeous gloom of evening," from

"yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'peace.'"[8]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Canto II.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto III.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto XI.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto XV.
[5] *Ibid.*, Canto XLI.
[6] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXII.
[7] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXIII.
[8] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXVI.

The song of a wild bird, whose "passion clasps a secret joy" even "in the midmost heart of grief," echoes the music of his own harp, the strings of which pass beyond his control. When he "would prelude woe,

"The glory of the sum of things
Will flash along the chord,"[1]

and the vision of a wondrous universe, manifest in

"the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust"

in "sweet April" changes despair to regret and regret to hope. The beauties of a fresh, green English spring

"Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair."[2]

Finally, setting bond and seal upon the kinship between the poet and the stuff of his poesy, comes the conviction that the friend so mourned has become a part of the great world of nature, that his life is absorbed into the life of the whole.

"Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

"My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Though mixed with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more."[3]

There are fewer traces of the Hegelian type of idealism in "In Memoriam" than of the doctrines most characteristic of Kant and Schelling. Perhaps the hackneyed "stepping-stones of their dead selves" may contain a suggestion of the chain of selves that Hegel says makes personality, of the continual struggle that he says makes life. Perhaps there is a hint in the last quatrain—

"That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves,"[4]—

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[1] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXVIII.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto CXVI.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXV.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epilogue, last stanza.

of the infinite, all-conquering God of Hegel, as well as of the crown of a developing and unfolding creation that was Schelling's conception of deity. But the feeling for life as a progressive development, growing rather than static—a feeling which had in it the germ of an evolutionary philosophy—has in Tennyson much more the tone of the romanticists, already a familiar note in English poetry through the work of Wordsworth and Coleridge, than it has of the less emotional viewpoint of Hegel's philosophy of history. It is far from improbable that Hegel, a writer later in time and later known in England than Kant or Schelling, had not been long enough familiar to Tennyson for his ideas to have become an integral part of the poet's philosophical equipment.

For Tennyson was always a conservative, in art as in politics and morals. Had he not been so, he would have been as fully abreast of contemporary philosophy as was Carlyle. On the contrary, not only did he show little the influence of Hegel, but he definitely refused to be persuaded by the views of the most recent metaphysicians of his time. That he knew both Comte[1] and Schopenhauer, if not intensively, at least in the way in which the intelligent layman is always aware of the thought currents in his atmosphere, is evident from his repeated refutation of the ideas of the French positivist and the German pessimist. When the voice of Nature echoes the cry of materialism,

> "'I bring to life, I bring to death;
> The spirit does but mean the breath:
> I know no more,'"[2]

Tennyson answers with a refusal to believe in such utter futility as an ending for a life of splendid purpose. "O life as futile, then, as frail"[3] might be a quotation from Schopenhauer; the difference is that Schopenhauer would utter it as a conclusion, while with Tennyson it is a protest. It is the philosophy that abandoned the search for the infinite, to be content with the effort to understand and improve the finite, that is described in the passage which shows the inadequacy of knowledge "cut from love and faith." Such knowledge is like

> "some wild Pallas from the brain

[1] 1798–1857, *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, published 1839–42.
[2] *In Memoriam*, Canto LVI.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto LVI.

"Of demons, fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place
She is the second, not the first.

"A higher hand must make her mild."[1]

Materialism would prove "human love and truth" to be but "dying Nature's earth and lime"; but man's mission on earth is to prove

"That life is not an idle ore,

"But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom

"To shape and use."[2]

Men are not "wholly brain, magnetic mockeries"; not merely "cunning casts in clay," even though the science of which Comte was the philosophical prophet may prove that they are so.[3]

Comte and the English thinkers who followed him held their philosophy of materialism without being thereby plunged into pessimism, for the corollary of a view of life that ends with the finite was to them an activity for the betterment of finite conditions. A belief involving action can never be pessimistic; it is too busy. But had Tennyson been convinced by the positivists, the issue for him would probably have been like Schopenhauer's, for in his thought the only element that saves life as it is from futility is the faith in the ultimate reality "beyond the veil." Postulating, like Kant, that reality, he is ready with his answer for the philosopher who called life an evil dream. No poet, perhaps, has more adequately expressed despair:

"From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying Sun;

"And all the phantom, Nature, stands—
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own—
A hollow form with empty hands."[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Canto CXIV.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto CXVIII.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXI.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto III.

No poet has expressed more comprehensively the hopelessness that comes with disillusionment:

"Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

"Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,
That lay their eggs, and sting and sing
And weave their petty cells and die."[1]

But no poet has more satisfyingly replied to the voices of despair and disillusionment. Perhaps pessimism is a logical outcome of the philosophy of Kant and Fichte; but by virtue of the intuition that is mightier than logic, Tennyson trusts

"that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill."

His is a very different optimism from the casuistry which proved to its own satisfaction that "Whatever is is right." The later and more thoughtful poet dared not assert so dogmatic and assured a knowledge. His antidote for pessimism is not proof, not knowledge, but faith:

"Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all."[2]

The way winds onward drearily enough; but patience in the pursuit of it comes from the purpose

"to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love."[3]

In that belief lies the secret of Tennyson's avoidance of Schopenhauer's gloom. For Tennyson's philosophy is a philosophy of the triumph of love over death, a triumph inevitable while human love is a part of the divine, the "immortal Love." It is the sentinel of Love, the "king and lord," who

"whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well."[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, Canto L.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto LIV.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto XXVI.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXVI.

If we looked solely at the metaphysicians of the period, it might seem that at last has appeared a poet-philosopher independent in his thinking of the influences of current opinion. But, as will be seen later, the idea of love as a solution for life was the central principle of the new religion of the nineteenth century; and in this respect Tennyson was merely influenced more strongly by the religious than by the metaphysical thought of his time.

Thinking of the poem as a whole, however, unmistakably the strongest philosophical bias therein manifest is the doctrine of Kant. Just as it is between the lines that the influence of the romantic school upon Tennyson's feeling for nature is to be found, so Kant's postulates of reality are interwoven with the whole fabric of the argument by which the poet arrives at conviction. He longs to believe in God, because without such a belief life is a futility. So he wills to believe, and postulates the God who alone makes life possible and endurable. He longs to believe in immortality, because, if Hallam is no longer alive, life for his friend is insupportable. So, like Kant, he wills to believe, and postulates the immortal life which alone can make the mortal life anything but vain. Here is something very like pragmatism, long before William James; and yet it is only the application by a layman of Kant's categorical imperative to an agonizing personal problem. For, after all, the philosophy of "In Memoriam" remains a personal one. Tennyson in the writing of it was interested in philosophy, not for its own sake, but for what it could do for him in an acute personal crisis. Its claim to the universality that makes it art lies in the fact that every human soul has sooner or later to face a similar personal crisis.

It is not to be forgotten that "In Memoriam" is far from being Tennyson's only philosophical poem. The fact that he was by inclination, throughout his life, a lover of "divine Philosophy" is evident from beginning to end of a volume of his collected works. He was by nature far more really a thinker on abstract questions than was either Davies or Pope. Davies had the legal mind and the executive temperament; his venture into philosophy was youthful and temporary. Pope was essentially a critic, whose metaphysical flights were on borrowed wings. Tennyson needed no tutor; the ideas to which he gave expression may have been other men's ideas, but he had lived with them until they had become a part of him, in no sense an echo or a parrot-like repetition.

Yet even Tennyson did not go ahead of his guides. Had he been an independent philosopher, he would have followed Kant's premises to their conclusion, and have arrived by his own road at pessimism, like Schopenhauer, or at agnosticism, like Huxley and Spencer; even as Davies, if he had thought independently and progressively, would have taken the step ahead that waited for Hobbes; and as Pope, not content with past philosophies, would have reached the position of Hume.

While German philosophers had been evolving and, little by little, sending to England doctrines pregnant with possibilities of a new and fuller life of the spirit, English philosophy had been progressing along a line no less new but much more practical. Utilitarianism was the contribution to philosophy of late eighteenth century English thought, as the science of political economy was its contribution to the material of education. The development of that side of eighteenth century thought which emphasized economic problems has already been traced. When metaphysical speculation reached the sceptical barrier which blocked Hume's further progress, English thought, instead of leaping the barrier like Kant, went around it, following its natural practical bent. Hume himself, while subordinating the economic to the political element in the life of a state, nevertheless based his really utilitarian ethics on economic considerations. The test of conduct is its effect upon the happiness of the whole community, and the greatest amount of happiness, and consequently the greatest opportunity for virtuous conduct, is possible under such conditions of peace and security as permit the flourishing of industry and art.[1]

Hume's point of view was ethical and his interest in the abstract; yet it is impossible to mistake the presence in his doctrine, as in that of his early contemporaries, Gay,[2] Tucker,[3] and Paley,[4] of the germ of the practical utilitarian teaching popularized by Bentham[5] and James Mill[6] under the slogan, "The greatest good

[1] Bonar, *Philosophy and Political Economy*, pp. 108–112.

[2] *A Dissertation Concerning Virtue*, by Rev. John Gay, published 1731.

[3] *The Light of Nature Pursued*, by Abraham Tucker, published 1768–78.

[4] *Principles of Moral and Political Philosophy*, by William Paley, published 1785.

[5] 1748–1832, *Fragment on Government*, 1776; *Principles of Morals and Legislation*, 1789.

[6] *Political Economy*, 1821; *Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind*, 1829.

of the greatest number." The details of the association of the visionary recluse and the practical psychologist, an association under the guidance of which a new party, the "philosophical radicals," initiated the movement that brought about the Reform Bill of 1832, need not be rehearsed here. There is in "In Memoriam" no trace of interest in the abstract economic science developed as a new subject of education by Bentham and Mill, nor in the more concrete type of political economy which came into its own with the publication of the "Wealth of Nations," and was developed by Malthus with his theory of population, by Ricardo with his theory of rent and wages, and by the idealists of industry with the doctrine of *laisser faire*. If light were to be sought alone from this poem, the question whether Tennyson were a mercantilist or a physiocrat, a Benthamite or a Malthusian, must remain unanswered. But hand in hand with the progress of economic science, which in its turn had grown out of the industrial and social changes of the Revolutionary period, went a deep and wide awakening of the popular conscience to industrial responsibility for "the greatest good of the greatest number." With such a movement, manifest in the social and humanitarian reforms great and small which marked the first half of the nineteenth century and which grew directly out of the educational work of the economists, Tennyson was by temperament deeply in sympathy, as he shows in other poems than this. This spirit of altruism finds reflection in "In Memoriam" in more than one passage of power and beauty, notably the famous New Year's Eve lyric.

Again, in spite of the fact that Arthur Hallam's father was the greatest historian of Tennyson's period,[1] the poem to Arthur's memory shows no trace of the revival of historical interest which marked the years immediately after the Napoleonic era. History in its modern form belongs to the nineteenth century, as the beginning of economic science belongs to the eighteenth. Annals and chronicles, diaries and apologetic biographies had kept records which later were to be invaluable as sources of historical material. Hume had conceived the idea of an impartial history,[2] but his work was superficial and far from scientific, and his interest in his material was that of the philosophical student of human nature,

[1] Henry Hallam: *Europe During the Middle Ages*, 1818; *Constitutional History of England*, 1827; *Introduction to the Literature of Europe*, 1837–9.

[2] *History of England*, published 1754–61.

who, like Hegel, sought in the past an understanding of the ways of men. Gibbon,[1] the first serious literary historian to look upon historical work as a primary interest, made his exhaustive and still authentic story of the fall of Rome an opportunity for a dialectic against ecclesiastical perversions of Christianity which unfortunately attracted an undue proportion of attention, and has tended to obscure the real value and historic impartiality of his work. It remained for a German scholar to become the accepted exponent of the true historical method. So enthusiastic was the interest of English students, during the very years when "In Memoriam" was in process of development, in the work of Niebuhr[2] as translated into English and as imitated by such English scholars as Arnold of Rugby, Thirlwall, and Grote,[3] that it seems impossible for Tennyson not to have realized the significance of this new step in the progress of learning, by which the critical method was applied to history and history became a science. Yet "In Memoriam" shows no trace of interest in the great new world of historical research henceforth open to the mind of the scholar.

The third new element that entered the field of education with the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was a new type of scientific interest. Physical science had passed out of the realm of theory and had reached a concrete climax in its application to mechanics and to industry—witness the steam engine, the modern factory, and the beginning of transportation by machinery. The scientist of the study and the laboratory left the laws of motion to inventors and machinists and turned his attention to the laws which governed existence in a universe newly discovered to be a growing and organic unity. Evolution, as a solution of scientific problems and as a philosophy, was in the world long before Charles Darwin. Lessing and Hegel, as has been seen, conceived the present world and its life merely as a product of the past, as a growth, a progress, a development. Even before he made his famous categories, Kant had attempted to trace the evolution of the universe from primeval chaos to the present orderly system,

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, published 1776.

[2] Niebuhr's *History of Rome*, translated by Julius Hare and Connop Thirlwall, 1828–32.

[3] Arnold, *History of Rome*, 1828–47.
Histories of Greece by Thirlwall, 1844, and Grote, 1845.

by one tremendous leap of the scientific imagination hypothesizing the nebular theory[1] which Laplace and Herschel, a half century later, were to establish scientifically. The historical method, which Hegel applied to the study of human nature and institutions, men of science began to apply to the study of all existent forms of organic life, with their origins and growth.

So the varieties of scientific research that occupy the foreground of thought, in the years that supply the educational background for Tennyson, were geology, zoölogy, biology, and botany. The public interest in these subjects may be estimated from the names of the numerous specialized scientific societies founded between 1800 and 1830,[2] and from the long list of scientific magazines bearing on these topics.[3] Natural scientists accompanied exploring expeditions, for the study of the flora and fauna of distant lands. While chemistry and physics were taking on their modern form under the leadership of Dalton[4] and Joule,[5] geology, the origin of which was due to English scholarship, was coming into its own. As early as 1785, Hutton's[6] "Theory of the Earth" had opened up endless geological vistas revealing down their length the hitherto unimagined age of the earth. Then with William Smith's work on fossils[7] came the beginning of histological geology, reaching its climax in the work of Lyell,[8] and a foundation was supplied for research that would establish the vague hypotheses of the evolution of organic life. Not only existing but extinct species could now be studied.

Tennyson, in the poem under consideration, could not have been under the influence of Charles Darwin, for the results of the

[1] Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism*, p. 50, sq.

[2] 1803, Royal Horticultural Society; 1807, Geological Society of London; 1819, Cambridge Philosophical Society; 1826, Zoölogical Society of London; 1831, British Association for the Advancement of Science; 1839, Royal Botanic Society.

[3] *E. g.*, 1841, *Annals and Magazine of Natural History.*

[4] John Dalton, 1766–1844. Originated molecular theory. Founder of modern organic chemistry. Published, 1810, *A New System of Chemical Philosophy.*

[5] James Prescott Joule, 1818–1889. Discovered relation between heat and energy, and law of conservation of energy.

[6] James Hutton, Scotch geologist, 1726–97. Founder of dynamic geology.

[7] William Smith, 1769–1839. Published, 1815, *First Geological Map of England.*

[8] Sir Charles Lyell, 1797–1875. Published, 1833, *Principles of Geology.*

reflections ensuing upon the epoch-making voyage of the *Beagle* were not formulated and published until nine years after "In Memoriam" was finished. But the idea that present species were descendants of preëxisting simpler forms was in the air. Erasmus Darwin, Goethe, and St. Hilaire had almost simultaneously, in the last decade of the eighteenth century, announced such a conclusion as their belief.[1] In the first thirty years of the nineteenth century the French naturalist Lamarck was,[2] as Darwin himself said, "arousing attention to the probability of the change in the organic, as well as in the inorganic, world being the result of law, and not of miraculous interposition." Darwin's work was only a climax and a convincing conclusion to much previous speculation on a theme that before 1850 had become the subject of discussion not only by scientists but by theologians, whose tranquil confidence in the accepted "scheme of things entire" was badly upset by so revolutionary a doctrine. In "In Memoriam" is reflected the uncertainty of the mind of the general public, neither scientific nor theological—a mind inevitably impelled in the direction of a new knowledge, and yet looking back with longing and regret toward the peace of past certainties.

Such a clinging to past beliefs must underlie the passage where Tennyson declares his belief in ultimate good for all, in spite of the ruthless sacrifice of the individual on the road to "the greatest good of the greatest number"—the cruel road that was later to be called natural selection. "Somehow," the poet protests, "somehow," in spite of the apparently ruthless working of natural law, good

> "Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
>
> "That nothing walks with aimless feet;
> That not one life shall be destroy'd,
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete;

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[1] Schurman, *Ethical Import of Darwinism*, p. 52, sq.

Erasmus Darwin published, 1794, *Zoönomia*. Goethe published, 1790, *Metamorphoses of Plants*. St. Hilaire, French naturalist, 1779–1853, developed, 1795, sq., theory of species as modifications of type.

[2] Jean Baptiste Pierre Antoine de Monet de Lamarck, 1744–1829. *Philosophie zoölogique*, 1809; *Histoire naturelle des animaux sans vertèbres*, 1815–22.

"That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain."[1]

The revelations of science seem an evil dream, dispelling the vision of hope for a future life. To Tennyson as to his contemporaries in the church, God and Nature appeared at strife,

"So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life."[2]

It was the type that evolved through natural selection; it was the law of the survival of the fittest that brought one seed out of fifty to fruition. Longing to think, as in his childhood, that not a sparrow fell unnoticed to the ground, he was forced against his own longings to recognize the implacable working of natural law in the organic as in the inorganic world. Belief in a God of love must be maintained against the shriekings of a "Nature red in tooth and claw with ravine."[3] Nor had the findings of geology escaped him; the voice of Nature cried "from scarped cliff and quarried stone,"[3] where the record of the rocks showed the disappearance of a thousand types. The earth he knew to be not only a "round of green," but the "orb of flame"[4] which Hutton had declared it. The nebular theory found eloquent, though perhaps not convinced, expression in lines of vivid poetry:

"They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

"In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

"Who throve and branch'd from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race."[5]

There is conversance with the evolutionary theories of Lamarck in such lines as those, supplemented by the optimistic moral which is the cheerful side of a belief in evolution, in the admonition to

"Move upward, working out the beast,
And let the ape and tiger die."

[1] *In Memoriam*, Canto LIV.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto LV.
[3] *In Memoriam*, Canto LVI.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto XXXIV.
[5] *Ibid.*, Canto CXVIII.

In the last part of the poem science reached its triumph over tradition, as, by a mental process that might serve as index for what every progressive mind in that period of readjustment had to pass through, Tennyson arrived at a hopeful conception of the doctrine of evolution. His own generation, according to the new view of life, he saw to be merely a link between the lower manhood of the past and the higher manhood of the future—

"the crowning race

"Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book;

"No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit."[1]

At first thought it may seem remarkable that Tennyson showed such familiarity with the scientific side of the new learning of the nineteenth century and not with its equally characteristic historical and economic phases. But his ear found no music in the narratives of wars and treaties, of the risings and downfalls of nations that made up the tale of the centuries. There was neither thrill nor color nor emotion in the pages of statistics and facts that made up the early type of political economy. And poetry, for Tennyson, must have in it music, color, emotion. A holy Roman empire stirred him to no such flights of imagination as did the story of earth's evolution:

"There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen!
There where the long street roars hath been
The stillness of the central sea."[2]

A Malthusian theory of population or an Iron Law of Wages touched no responsive chord in the soul of one who had seen a vision of Science, reaching forth her arms

"To feel from world to world."[3]

It was in science that he recognized material for the play of his

[1] *In Memoriam*, Epilogue.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXIII.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto XXI.

imagination, just as in the idealistic philosophy rather than the utilitarian he found a system of thought with which his poetically imaginative temperament could sympathize.

Is it safe to generalize from three instances? If such an assumption may be ventured, the conclusion seems unavoidable that the poet, however cultured, however familiar with the learning of his day, has no power to advance in thought independently of the scholars and thinkers of his time. He is not the pioneer, opening up the desert path; rather he comes after, by the beauty of his poetic gift making the desert path to blossom as the rose. One by-product of his work, because he himself is aware of the achievements of the study and the laboratory, is the suggestion of their content to the lovers of literary art who follow his guidance. Without the interweaving in the fabric of his poem of the most mature thought and knowledge of his time, his work would be flimsy, futile, and negligible. Yet his imagination and his gift of music are his own; and though his thought is a reflection of the thought of others, his interpretation of the thought gives it wings to fly into the whole earth.

V

With a little alteration, a familiar axiom can be made to read, Things that reflect the same thing must be similar to each other. If a poet reflects his period (as, so far in the discussion, these three poet-philosophers seem to do) in its historical, social, educational and philosophical conditions and qualities, then in spirit and style he will not be unlike the other poets representative of that period. Consequently, a proof that a writer is a mirror of his time requires that he be compared with his contemporaries. The group of poets under discussion have so far commanded attention as thinkers rather than as artists. As thinkers they have been shown to be followers, not leaders. But in a comparison of a poet-philosopher with his literary contemporaries, he can no longer be viewed exclusively as a philosopher. Here is the field where the style, not the thought, is the man. It is his art, not his thought, that demands primary attention in comparing him with other artists. And though as philosopher he may be an echo, as artist he may utter a music all his own. It is therefore necessary not only to show the similarities of Davies, Pope, and Tennyson to other poets, and thus to make evident that all alike express their age; but also to point out the unlikenesses that grow out of the individuality of each as artist.

The position of the three poets under survey is alike in that each was the voice of the end of a movement or phase of English life. The epoch which was closing in the years when the work of Davies began had two radically opposite sides, so far as England was concerned. It was politically an age of an unexampled national enthusiasm, marked by a forward-looking progressiveness that counted no adventure too rash, no enterprise too daring, for England and the queen. At the same time it was an age of not yet outworn respect for the authority of the past—for classic models and ideals in literature, for ancient and mediaeval philosophies, and for the teachings of revealed and traditional religion. Whether recognized or not, the iron hand of the church still dominated the writer who, though in reality free to pursue his art under no mandate but that of his own conscience, yet felt that art for art's sake was pagan, and that his work must be merely the means to an ethical or didactic end. It remained for the nineteenth century to take pride in its aesthetic sense. The

lighter songs and lyrics in the delicate grace and beauty of which lies the charm of Elizabethan poetry were for the most part free of moral intention. But let a poet once conceive an extended and serious poem, and at once his intent became not to entertain but to edify, not to please but to preach. A sonnet sequence might waste its sweetness on so light a thing as love; but the poem which was really to figure as a *magnum opus* must have a purpose worthy of the weight of learning that was to be exemplified in it.

So the crowning glory of non-dramatic Elizabethan poetry was a colorful, vivid, fantastic epic of art, rich in atmosphere, varied in conception, yet dependent for its vitality on the poet's intention to embody in his hero all the Platonic virtues. The "Faery Queen" might easily have been, like the prose "Morte d'Arthur," merely a narrative of the deeds of a national hero, transformed by legend into a tale of magic and miracle. Instead, the Red Cross Knight is a hero, not of England but of Christendom; the lovely lady who rides beside him on her lowly ass is that universal and unchanging truth for whose sake the noblest manhood of all ages strives; the false Duessa wears the ever-changing guise that error is skilled in putting on; dwarf and enchanter, Saracen and giant, all the magical beings of Spenser's faeryland are symbolic of moral and ideal realities. Later poets, not gifted with Spenser's imaginative wealth, but dowered with his Puritan conscientiousness, clothed the morals which they were impelled to utter, not in the gold and purple of fantastic narrative, but in the sober gray of grave and serious verse.

So Daniel, favorite poet of the 1590's, writer of one of the fashionable sequences of "sugared sonnets," and creator of graceful lyrics, spent the largest proportion of his poetic years upon a series of historical narratives known as "The Civile Warres," in which the purpose to instruct his public as to one phase of English history shared the poet's interest with the intention to draw from that history the salutary moral lessons for which it gave opportunity. So, too, he turned from his historical project to a philosophical dialogue in defense of learning. This poem, "Musophilus," because it approaches most nearly in theme the work of Davies, is the best for purposes of comparison to show the ethical import in the work of both poets. "Musophilus,"[1] then, purports to be a discussion between a lover of the

[1] Daniel's *Works*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, Vol. I, p. 225, sq.

world and a lover of learning, in which the former complains that his disputant is spending

"In an ungainefull Arte thy deerest dayes,
Tyring thy wits, and toyling to no end,
But to attaine that idle smoake of Praise."

Musophilus replies, with but few interruptions from the first speaker, by a long dissertation in praise of his "sacred art." Although the religious enthusiasm that breathes in every page of Davies is wholly lacking here, and although Musophilus is evidently one of those fruitlessly curious persons who, according to Davies,

"In bookes prophane - - - seeke for knowledge hid,"

nevertheless the spirit of gravity and earnestness with which Daniel approaches his subject, and the detailed attention which he devotes to its analysis makes it possible to regard the poem as being in the same class with the much longer "Nosce Teipsum."

For instance, the declaration,

"I doe more in Soule esteeme,
Than all the gaine of dust the world doth crave,"

is quite in the vein of Davies when he writes of "the heavenly nature" of the mind, or of the soul's "power to know all things." Davies questions the worth of general knowledge without the self-knowledge for which he pleads:

"What is this knowledge but the sky-stolne fire,
For which the thief still chain'd in ice doth sit?
. . . . . .
What can we know? or what can we discerne?
When Error chokes the windows of the minde,
The divers formes of things, how can we learne,
That have been ever from our birthday blind?"[1]

Daniel sets a higher value on mere knowledge than does Davies, for his contention is that life is valueless without knowledge; yet the passage where this view is first stated is striking in its similarity to the one just quoted:

"For what poore bounds have they, whom but th' earth bounds;
What is their end whereto their care attaines,
When the thing got relieves not, but confounds,
Having but travail to succeede their paines?
What joy hath he of living, that propounds
Affliction but his end, and Griefe his gaines?"

[1] Davies' *Works*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, Vol. I, pp. 17–18.

Yet Daniel is not urging the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge; his aim is as practically ethical as that of Davies, who pleads with men to know themselves so that they may use their powers to the full. Of the art of letters, Daniel writes, with equal emphasis on the virtue of act as well as thought,

> "What good is like to this,
> To do worthy the writing, and to write
> Worthy the reading?"

Daniel's criticism of the world unguided by knowledge is reminiscent of Davies' indictment of the man of learning unguided by self-knowledge:

> "Strait, all that holy was, unhallow'd lies,
> The scattred carcasses of ruin'd vowes:
> Then Truth is false, and now hath Blindnesse eyes,
> Then Zeale trusts all, now scarcely what it knowes:
> That evermore, to foolish or to wise,
> It fatall is to be seduc'd with showes."

This knowledge which Daniel defends is, like Davies' self-knowledge, to be based on experience:

> "Should not grave and learn'd Experience
> That lookes with the eyes of all the world beside,
> And with all ages holdes intelligence,
> Go safer than Deceit without a guide?
> Which in the by-paths of her diffidence
> Crossing the waies of Right, still runs more wide:
> Who will not grant? and therefore this observe,
> No state stands sure, but on the grounds of Right,
> Of Vertue, Knowledge, Judgement to preserve."

Thus it is for the sake of virtue that Daniel enjoins knowledge. And just as the contemplation of the powers of the human mind leads Davies to an acclamation in praise of its Creator, so the defense of learning inspires the less religious Daniel to an ascription in honor of

> "heavenly Eloquence,
> That with the strong reine of commanding words,
> Dost manage, guide, and master th' eminence
> Of men's affections, more than all their swords:
> Shall we not offer to thy Excellence,
> The richest treasure that our wit affords?
> Thou that canst doe much more with one poore pen
> Than all the powres of Princes can effect."

Such quotations, showing the similarity in spirit of two poems, one as didactic as the other, might be multiplied. Equally easy, though much too lengthy for the present discussion, would be a proof by illustrations from the text that the intricate and detailed analysis to which Daniel subjects his subject, human learning, is exactly parallel to the meticulous care with which Davies dissects the qualities of the human mind which make the theme of "Nosce Teipsum." Neither poet trusts to implication for the smallest link in his chain of argument. But whereas in the case of Davies the result of this method is to give to the style a childlike simplicity and directness that makes the argument daylight clear, in the case of Daniel it is rather to befog the issue until the reader is lost in a maze of words.

In some other respects than ethical purpose the two poems are alike. Both show the preference of their period for an abstract theme. But Davies treats his abstract theme in so concrete a manner as to rob it of all pedantry; while in reading Daniel one is tempted at times to sympathize with the utilitarian Philocosmos in his distaste for

"A multitude of words to small effect."

In both poems a wealth of classical learning is obvious as a background, as it was in the work of every writer, great or small, of the Elizabethan age. In the matter of style, one great similarity is in the use of the rhetorical simile, the legacy to literature of Lyly and Sidney. Davies' use of the simile has already been noted; like passages even more extended appear in "Musophilus," where the "humorous world" is compared to the empty bed of a creek which a fickle river has deserted for another channel, and where the soul seeking mere fame is likened to a "wanton curtezan." In both Davies and Daniel, however, these similes make use of more everyday, homely subjects for purposes of comparison than do the highly ornamental and conventional figures of the earlier Elizabethans.

In spite of this sharing by the two writers of the literary habits of their age, there are many ways in which the style of "Musophilus" lacks the compelling power of "Nosce Teipsum." It is less direct, less vivid, less simple. It carries with it a sense of greater effort, less spontaneity. Its long and involved sentences

make the thought difficult to follow. All in all, it is less truly poetry than the work of Davies. For Davies was at his best, as Daniel was not, in his philosophical writing. To compare "Musophilus" with some of the finest of the sonnets to Delia—"Look, Delia, how we esteem the half-blown rose," or "Let others sing of knights and paladins," or with parts of the "Complaint of Rosamond," or with one of the lyrics from "Tethys' Festival"—

> "Pleasures are not, if they last,
> In their passing is their best.
> Glory is most bright and gay
> In a flash and so away"—

is to realize that to write on a grave and philosophical subject robbed Daniel of much of his poetic quality. Davies, on the other hand, possessed of a temperament as much philosophical as poetic, a thinker for whom grave and constructive thought was no effort, was most poetic when he was most thoughtful.

The poet of the period who most thoroughly represented the ethical interest in art and the didactic use of art was Fulke Greville. Even the latter portion of his sonnet sequence "Caelica" is made weighty with moral reflections.[1] And "Caelica" is his sole departure from grave and reflective poetry, the character of which is indicated by the fact that each long poem is called a "Treatise." That upon "Monarchie" discusses and criticizes, often ironically, all the institutions connected with the life of a state.[2] That upon "Religion" shows the deep earnestness and sincerity of faith that underlay Greville's life and work—as in the stanza,

> "Then by affecting pow'r, we cannot know Him;
> By knowing all things else, we know him less;
> Nature contains Him not, Art cannot show Him;
> Opinions, idols and not God express.
> Without, in Pow'r, we see Him everywhere;
> Within, we rest not, till we find Him there."[3]

It is impossible not to see the likeness of the religious fervor of such a passage to the underlying thought of Davies' poem, that the chief function of the human mind is to know God; and the

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[1] Greville's *Works*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, Vol. III.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 6.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 241.

lines quoted may be taken as representative of Greville's passion for a non-ecclesiastical religion.

But Greville's religious position is much more modern than that of Davies, which has been shown to be an inheritance from scholastic theology. In Greville there is no reverence for traditional authority. The church to him is invisible, made up of men who

> "do in praying, and still pray in doing,"[1]

with little stress laid upon ceremonial or creed. Creeds, in fact, are likely to be harmful:

> "Where man presumes on more than he obeys,
> Then straight Religion to opinion strays."[2]

Greville recognizes an authority, but it is not the authority of the past for which Davies' reverence is evident in his echoing without challenge its pronouncements. Greville's authority is the modern Protestant one of individual interpretation of the Scriptures—infallible book substituted for infallible church. "If thou seek'st more light," says Lord Brooke, "search His written Word."[3] The whole thoughtful and dignified poem is permeated with a temper much more modern than that of the young lawyer who was willing to accept the religion of the Church of England as he found it. The religion of "Nosce Teipsum" rests upon the past; that of Greville's "Treatise" looks toward the future.

Another treatise deals with "Warres," and still another with "Fame and Honour"—all subjects adapting themselves to serious reflective treatment. But the poem most suitable for comparison with "Nosce Teipsum" is "A Treatise of Human Learning," the theme of which is almost identical with that of the first part of Davies' poem.[4] A brief study will show not only how like this poem is to "Nosce Teipsum," but how natural an outlet for reflection, for the thinker of Davies' time, was the subject of the nature and qualities of the human mind, chosen as theme by two of the really memorable poets within a comparatively short period.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 260.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 255.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 266.
[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 5.

Greville first discusses the deficiencies of knowledge, which is infinite in its possibilities,

"yet satisfies no minde
Till it that infinite of the God-head find."

Just as Davies recalls the fact that

"the desire to know first made men fools"[1]

by causing them to taste of "that fruite forbid," so Greville regards secular knowledge as

"the same forbidden tree,
Which man lusts after to be made his Maker."

The sources of knowledge are next analyzed, as in "Nosce Teipsum"—sense, which is apt to deceive; imagination, which is apt to exaggerate; memory, which may be "corrupted with disguised intelligence"; understanding, which contains notions "of generall truths," that however

"have such a staine
From our corruption, as all light they lose."

All these defects may be "supplyed by Sciences and Arts." With this statement as introduction, the writer goes on to enumerate and discuss the various branches of learning. In this portion of the dissertation Greville, of course, differs from Davies, who spends a much greater proportion of space on the faculties of the soul and alludes to the branches of knowledge only incidentally—this, because he is engaged in showing that self-knowledge is the only kind worth while. Greville shows the same thing, by pointing out the weaknesses of the forms of knowledge. "High-prais'd Philosophie" is

"But bookes of poesie, in prose compil'd,
Farre more delightful than they fruitfull be."

Music fails, in that it cannot teach

"how to show
No weeping voyce for losse of Fortune's goods."

[1] Davies' *Works*, ed. by A. B. Grosart, Vol. I, p. 15.

Geometry falls short, because it cannot instruct

"how to measure
What is enough for need, what fit for pleasure."

Greville's conclusion is the *vanitas vanitatum* with which Davies began:

"What then are all these human arts and lights?
But seas of errors? in whose depths who sound
Of Truth find onely shadowes, and no ground.

"Then if our Arts want power to make us better,
What foole will thinke they can us wiser make?"

Man-made arts and philosophies can never arrive at the knowledge of God which has been stated as the end of learning, for man's mind itself is faulty and unable by its powers alone to grasp the truth. The maturity of this thought, more mature even than Bacon's belief that the "natural reason" was sufficient for the comprehension of all knowledge,[1] is an advance far beyond the childlike idea of Davies, who, having described and eulogized the power and glory of the human mind, concludes:

"Our Wit is given, Almighty God to know;
Our Will is given to love Him, being known;
But God could not be known to us below,
But by His workes which through the sense are shown."[2]

Davies merely takes for granted that since God has adorned man "with so bright a mind," the quality of the mind must be adequate for every use. The conclusion is the same at which Bacon arrived by the road of inductive reasoning rather than *a priori*. Greville's indictment of the powers of the mind is a challenge to both. Possibly, however, the greater maturity of grasp evident in Lord Brooke was due not only to his more mature years but to the fact that he had for years been intimate with Bacon and knew his ideas even before the publication of the "Advancement of Learning";[3] while Davies, at the time when "Nosce Teipsum" was written, probably did not know Sir Francis, and could not have read a book which was not yet published.

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[1] Croll, the *Works of Fulke Greville*. [3] Croll, p. 23.
[2] Davies' *Works*, Vol. I, p. 80.,

Greville continues his argument with a plea for the better regulation of man's quest for knowledge, so that learning may be adapted to the improvement of conduct. He is thoroughly utilitarian in his view of study; its aim is "life and actions," since "God made all for use." In the succeeding definite suggestions for the regulation of learning by the supervising power of the state, Fulke Greville is far more practical than Davies. Religion, law, physics, philosophy, logic, rhetoric, poetry, music, mathematics, astronomy—all are to be reformed from subjects of "idle contemplation" into subjects for "the practise of man's wisedome." Where Davies was purely metaphysical in his discussion, revelling in philosophical analysis merely as such, content to fill his readers with reverence for that wondrous thing, the human soul, Greville never forgets for a moment what he feels must be the practical issue of all knowledge:

> "Onely that man understands indeed,
> And well remembers, which he well can doe."

The mind, however marvellous, cannot say to hand or foot, "I have no need of thee." Although Greville is much more the mature philosopher in his mode of formulating, developing, and presenting his thought, Davies is more truly interested in thought for its own sake.

Yet the moral exhortation with which the poems close are not unlike, albeit the vivid simplicity of the language of Davies makes his the more compelling of the two.

> "And thou my Soule," he writes, "which turn'st thy curious eye,
> To view the beames of thine owne forme divine;
> Know, that thou canst know nothing perfectly,
> While thou art clouded with this flesh of mine.
>
> "Take heed of over-weening, and compare
> Thy peacock's feet with thy gay peacocke's traine;
> Study the best, and highest things that are,
> But of thy selfe an humble thought retaine.
>
> "Cast downe thy selfe, and onely strive to raise
> The glory of thy Maker's sacred Name."[1]

[1] Davies' *Works*, Vol. I, p. 116.

Greville's summary of the ethics of his treatise contains almost a duplicate set of precepts:

> "Man may well professe
> To studie God, Whom he is borne to serve:
> Nature, t' admire the greater in the lesse;
> Time, but to learne; our selves we may observe,
> To humble us: others, to exercise
> Our love and patience, wherein duty lies."

Making due allowance for the difference touched upon, it is most evident that two poems, the purpose of each of which is to prove that all knowledge is vain except as it is moral and ethical in its intention and result, are alike in theme and spirit. There is in Fulke Greville, too, the same live interest as Davies shows in the infant physical science. Allusions to right lines, degrees of latitude, and the loadstone, to the question whether the heavens stand still or move, to the fact that the Caspian Sea has inlets but no outlet and is therefore salt, to the atomic theory, and to the relation of the sun to the planets—all these show a mind alert to the new intelligence that was beginning to animate the studies of the learned. The style of one poet, also, is as simple as the other, for Greville's thought is not puzzling to trace. Yet, while, in a way, the wholesome, virile sanity of his work inspires more admiration and provokes more thought than the cheerful ingenuousness of Davies', probably because it is more applicable to practical life, there is lacking in Greville the humanly lovable quality that makes Davies a true Elizabethan and that endears even to the modern reader his quaint, naive expression of outworn ideas. The "Treatise on Human Learning" requires much more thought for the following of its argument than does "Nosce Teipsum," probably because, while its language is simple, its style is more mature and dignified, more studied and thoughtful, than that of Davies. Moreover, Greville is more the philosopher and less the poet; he thinks more than he sings. The independence of his thought is therefore not a refutation, as it might otherwise seem to be, of our proposition that the poet-philosopher does little independent thinking.

Three so similar poems will suffice, for a tentative proof at least, to show that the theme, the style, the spirit, and the ethical intention of a poet philosophically inclined at the end of the

Elizabethan age were likely to resemble those of any other similarly inclined poet, and that these respects in which they were alike were consequently results of the time that gave them birth. It is in the things that express poetic individuality that these poets differ. That which makes a man a poet is not reflected from his time but lies within himself. It is only the philosopher half of the poet-philosopher that is an echo. That Davies was essentially a thinker, though not an independent or progressive thinker, is apparent in the fact that he wrote neither allegory, like Spenser, nor lyric, like Campion, nor sonnet sequence, like all the other poets of his time, nor drama, in which most of the serious poets, even Lord Brooke, tried to rival the stage playwrights, nor pastoral or descriptive poetry, like Drayton, nor historical narrative, like Daniel. His native form of expression was none of these. But that he was essentially a poet appears equally in the fact that his grave reflections found outlet in vivid, musical, appealing verse, poetic, not merely metrical, rather than in serious prose like that of Hooker, a man not improbably possessed of much the type of mind of Davies, or in the vivacious essay form adapted by Bacon from Montaigne, or even in such worse than prosaic metrical meanderings through endless pages of Mirums and Microcosms as were perpetrated to the honor of God and the human soul by Sir John's namesake, John Davies of Hereford.

The statement was made at the beginning of this section that Davies was the voice of the end of a period. That this is so appears best in his attitude to the past as compared with that of other writers. While Bacon derided and Greville condemned as pernicious the work of the Schoolmen, Davies based his philosophy upon scholastic teaching. The sixteenth century was the closing epoch of that phase of history where men's lives were determined by their relations to the church and to religion. The normal, average man of the time accepted unquestioningly the creed ordained for him by the powers above him, whether of church or state. So Davies did. His sole attempt is to prove the truth of what he either believes intuitively or accepts with credulity at the hands of his church. In this respect he differs from Greville, whose independence of religious authority belongs to the opening, not the closing, era; and from Daniel, who neither advocates nor speculates upon any religious matter, seeming totally uninterested therein.

To look at a succeeding group of poets, contemporaneous with Davies but writing much later than he, is to see that he stood at the end of one period and they at the beginning of another. Historical ballads and narratives free of morals, in the "Barons' Wars" and "Agincourt"; idyllic description, written for sheer love of the fair English country and of beautiful words, in the "Polyolbion"; graceful, delicate fairy-tales and pastorals, guiltless of allegorical intention, in "Dowsabel," "Nimphidia," and the "Muses' Elizium"—these were Michael Drayton's contribution to seventeenth century literature. He had learned in the school of the Elizabethans, but he had gone ahead of his teachers, and become the modern artist. In Drummond of Hawthornden, indeed, the Elizabethan themes of love and religion survive in lyrics of strength and beauty; but, for the most part, those things of which Greene and Sidney, Southwell and Raleigh wrote with the fresh charm of youth have lost their novelty, and either have become conventional from much repetition, or are superseded by ideas more sophisticated, more consciously artistic, more suited to a worldly wise Stuart court.

Even John Donne, versatile, original, loving verbal and metrical experiment as much as ever did the Elizabethans, direct and outspoken as were any of them, was much more the conscious artist than the singer who sang because he must. The Elizabethan cared little whether the thing he said was new or old, since to him it was new. But Donne cared greatly that, if the matter of his verse were not as new as he desired to have it, at least his manner of expressing it should be a new invention. Donne was a lyric, not a philosophical poet; but in his own vein he showed the fresh independence of thought that did not mark the philosophy of Davies. On the other hand, the spontaneity and freshness of manner that make the platitudes of "Nosce Teipsum" delightful reading were sacrificed by Donne at the altar of brilliant expression —a brilliance often enough attained to repay the sacrifice, and differentiating Donne from his predecessors. Outside the drama, it is lyric poetry that gives opportunity for most universal appeal. Donne the lyrist could do what Davies the reflective poet could not. The strings of the harp of life still vibrate to the strains of "I long to talk with some old lover's ghost," or "So let us melt and make no noise," or "Since I am coming to that holy room." There is in the modern reader's attitude to such poems as these

none of the half-indulgent, half-curious sympathy with which the antiquary approaches a monument of a past era. His gift of condensation of a great thought into a few unusual word-combinations separates him from a past of which one literary temptation was prolixity. But about Davies clings unmistakably the atmosphere of his century. He was of the past; Donne was of the future.

Standing thus at the end of an era, among the last of the typically Elizabethan poets, Davies embodied in his verse the best qualities developed in that age. The culture of which he was a product could go no farther along the same lines; a new time, with a new temper and new interests, must produce a new culture and a new art. But the vital eagerness, the spontaneity of feeling, the direct simplicity, the appreciation of beauty in word and line that were the gift of the sixteenth century to English poetry, are all exemplified in such a passage as that where Davies invokes divine aid for his poetic adventure:

> "O Light which mak'st the light, which makes the day!
> Which setst the eye without, and mind within;
> Lighten my spirit with one cleare heavenly ray;"[1]

or in his introduction to the description of the five senses:

> "These are the windows through the which she views
> The light of knowledge, which is life's loadstar:
> And yet while she these spectacles doth use,
> Oft worldly things seem greater than they are;"[2]

or in the lines which undoubtedly furnished the background for two beautiful lines of Tennyson:

> "that adamantine chaine,
> Whose golden links, effects and causes be,
> And which to God's owne chair doth fixt remaine,"[3]

or in the beautiful Acclamation which forms the climax to the whole fine poem:

> "And when thou think'st of her eternitie,
> Thinke not that Deathe against her nature is,
> Thinke it a birth; and when thou goest to die,
> Sing like a swan, as if thou went'st to blisse.

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[1] Davies' *Works*, Vol. I, p. 16.
[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 65.
[3] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 54.

"And if thou, like a child, didst feare before,
Being in the darke, where thou didst nothing see;
Now I have brought thee torch-light, feare no more;
Now when thou diest, thou canst not hud-winkt be."[1]

With such confidence that his interpretation of the soul has reached a sympathetic and believing public did Davies close his venture into the world of the spirit.

As Davies stood at the end of a period of reverence for the past, of an age so occupied with literary and artistic adventure that speculative excursions did not attract thinkers away from the traditional beliefs which they took for granted, so Pope stood at the end of an age of rationalistic challenge to the past, an age the breath of whose nostrils was speculative inquiry. Enough has been said already to show the development of this temper of the seventeenth century through the influence of growing interest in natural science. The more men found they could explain, by the effort of human reason, the more they wanted to explain. If the old-time theories of the motion of the sun and the shape of the earth were proved absurd, how was it possible not to suspect of an equal absurdity the even more ancient beliefs in heaven and hell? Such philosophies as those of Hobbes and Descartes left little room for a creative, over-ruling God. And when it was proved possible to formulate the laws by which seen things were regulated, a proof of laws governing the unseen seemed equally possible. So one type of mind dismissed as irrational all the ancient faiths, being satisfied with a mathematical axiom instead of a God; and another type of mind, unwilling to destroy without building up, attempted to reason out and prove the hitherto accepted tenets of religion, now for the first time doubted and subjected to an interpretation which would bring them into accord with physical science. On middle ground between these two positions stood the deists, discarding all the traditions of "revelation" and substituting for them a philosophical religion, without creed and without authority, looking "through Nature up to Nature's God." The attempt to make religion and science agree, commonly associated with the first half of the nineteenth century, found its first exponents in the leaders of the so-called orthodox party in the deist controversy. The "Essay on Man," standing at the end of the period of contest,

[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 115–116.

and embodying the crystallized thought of the most prominent deists, may be taken as representative of the kind of speculation by which rationalists, whether religious or merely ethical, sought to establish a position at once religious and rational, spiritual and scientific.

Deist theology and Pope's presentation of it may be left for later consideration. It is sufficient at this point merely to notice that Pope was as fully the spokesman for the end of a speculative age, expressing in his lines the conclusions to which its speculation had brought it, as Davies was the voice of a credulous age, expressing the convictions which it had received by inheritance and accepted on intuition. In relation to truth itself, one writer is as conservative as the other, though Pope reasons where Davies believes. That Pope wrote a speculative poem was no proof of progressiveness on his part, in an age when everybody speculated. The fact that no other poet contemporary with Pope wrote a similarly speculative poem can be readily explained by recalling that Pope's native genius, like that of his age, was the genius of satire, and that his venture into philosophy was due to outside influence. No philosopher was at hand, in Dryden's circle of intimates, to turn the laureate's mind in a metaphysical direction; and it might have been difficult even for the winning Lord Bolingbroke to persuade the caustic Swift to engage in any form of writing to which he did not feel disposed.

The "Essay on Man," indeed, has the distinction of being almost the only successful serious poem of any length, in this early eighteenth century, that is not imbued with the spirit of satire. In an age of wit, laughter is the rule. The eighteenth century writer who was compelled to be serious by what he saw and thought had even to be serious under the mask of a laugh—sometimes a bitter laugh, usually a scornful one. The gentler irony whose outward expression was an indulgent smile lived only in the sympathetic reflections of Sir Roger and the good-humored merriment of the worshiper of Belinda. From Dryden onward, until the spell was broken by Thomson, it was an ironic muse that inspired English verse. So, apart from his dramas, Dryden is best remembered for the sharp political satire "Absalom and Achitophel"; Matthew Prior's single memorable long poem is his dissertation on the relation between soul and body, a cheerfully humorous parody on the metaphysical wanderings of the philo-

sophic mind, bearing the title of "Alma, or the Progress of the Mind"; John Gay's most delightfully characteristic work, with the exceptions of the simple ballads and the "Beggar's Opera," is the humorous imitation of the conventional pastoral known as "The Shepherd's Week." Prose, too, was dominated by the spirit of satire. To think of the early eighteenth century is at once to remember the "Spectator" and the "Tale of a Tub." That Pope departed from the kind of writing in which his "Satires and Epistles" prove him such a master was due to the versatility which at another time made him wholly a student of the classics, as it made him now wholly a philosopher. So long as he chose to be a philosopher he could not be a satirist. No man could be both at the same time, for philosophy implies a mood of calm detachment, and satire a vehement espousal of, or antagonism to, some cause.

With this single exception of its failure to reflect the satirical tendency of the period, the "Essay on Man" is an example of the finished product of that age of formality, convention, and polish that by 1740 was about to give place to a wholly new epoch in art and life. There is less apparent effort in the polish of Pope's style than in that of many another of his contemporaries who strove for formal perfection. The high-flown poetic diction that was fashionable seems less labored and more spontaneous on his lips; his facile pen handles the stiff couplet with more ease and grace. He is unswerving in his adherence to the poetic orthodoxies of his century, yet at the same time he lifts those orthodoxies to the highest plane on which forms so anaemic can breathe.

A few examples will best show this superiority of Pope to his contemporaries in the handling of the popular verse form. For fairness, the examples are taken from poems of a nature equally serious with that of Pope, and represent a fair average of the author's work in each case. Listen first to Dryden, in "Religio Laici":

> "Thus man by his own strength to Heaven would soar
> And would not be obliged to God for more.
> Vain, wretched creature, how art thou misled
> To think thy wit these god-like notions bred!
> These truths are not the product of thy mind,
> But dropped from Heaven, and of a nobler kind."[1]

[1] Dryden, *Religio Laici*, ll. 62–67.

Pope, concluding the passage that reproves man for assuming over-much—a similar idea to that in the lines just quoted—is not even touched by a shadow of the commonplaceness that so often quite eclipsed Dryden's genius.

> "Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions soar;
> Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore."[1]

How far such a couplet is removed from that in which Prior expresses the same thought:

> "In vain we lift up our presumptuous eyes
> To what our Maker to their ken denies."[2]

A little farther on in the same passage Prior reaches a higher poetic level:

> "How narrow limits were to wisdom given!
> Earth she surveys; she thence would measure Heaven:
> Through mists obscure, now wings her tedious way:
> Now wanders dazzled with too bright a day;
> And from the summit of a pathless coast,
> Sees infinite, and in that sight is lost."[2]

But even this is surpassed in skill by the lines in which Pope describes man's imperfection of knowledge:

> "Plac'd on this isthmus of a middle state,
> A being darkly wise and rudely great:
> . . . . . .
> Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
> Whether he thinks too little or too much:
> . . . . . .
> Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurl'd;
> The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!"[3]

Other centuries than the eighteenth might have difficulty in producing a line more complete both in thought and expression than the last one.

Perhaps the closing lines of Addison's famous description of Marlborough[4] come as near to real poetic power as any eighteenth

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[1] *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, ll. 91–92.
[2] Prior, *Poetical Works*, Vol. II, pp. 118–119.
[3] *Essay on Man*, Epistle II, ll. 3–18.
[4] Ward's *English Poets*, Vol. III, p. 5.

century couplet—those lines where, rising above his usual rather mediocre verse, he sees a vision of an angel, who

> "pleas'd th' Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm."

But Pope has a couplet of similar dignity, more beautiful and more thought provoking:

> "On life's vast ocean diversely we sail,
> Reason the card, but Passion is the gale;
> Nor God alone in the still calm we find,
> He mounts the storms, and walks upon the wind."[1]

From a poet who was oftener rhetorical than poetic, such lines are doubly impressive. A more thorough comparative survey of verse written in the heroic couplet would serve to show that in the use of the poetic medium characteristic of his time Pope was approached by none of his contemporaries. Standing at the end of an epoch, he represented the best art of the style peculiar to that epoch.

The didactic habit of mind that modern literature inherited from the middle ages had by no means worn itself out during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The mission of art was still to teach, as it was to continue to be, in the minds of many writers and readers, till a good two centuries after the time of Pope. The particular lesson which Dryden had to impart was, as became a laureate in those days of patronage, loyal adherence to whatever might be the powers that were. Historical poems, showing the power and glory of the ruling monarch and the good fortune of his subjects, and religious poems, defending the faith of whichever church Dryden adhered to at the time of writing, alike urged upon their readers the divine right of rulers. An age of satire of course was a didactic age; without a lesson to teach, satire would have no excuse for being. Even Gay's lively and laughable epistles, eclogues, and elegies carried with them the criticism that points out evils to correct them. Solomon's "Vanity," as transformed by Prior, is one long preachment, without the beauty of language and the originality of thought that Koheleth possessed. Death, immortality, sin, salvation, careless worldliness—these were the subjects that in the minor poets replaced the love songs of Sidney

[1] *Essay on Man*, Epistle II, ll. 107–110.

and of Lovelace. Weighty gravity of exhortation reached its climax in the only important venture into verse made by Johnson;[1] while Young[2] fairly revels in the gloom and grief, meditation upon which he thinks must be provocative of true morality.

Consequently, if Pope had been, in such an undertaking as the "Essay," anything but didactic, he would have seemed as unnatural and artificial as a didactic poet would seem in the twentieth century. Paradoxically, the product of an artificial school of literature is natural only when he is artificial. And the conventional morality of the poets of the eighteenth century was artificial enough, looked at beside their cheerful participation in the social life which they satirized, beside their eager pursuit of the vanities whose worship they deplored. They were abstract moralities that Pope and his contemporaries discoursed upon. As far as the "Essay" is concerned, Pope's preaching was only as regarded opinion. He was urgent that his readers should think properly; the kind of interest in their conduct that is manifest in such a sturdy, wholesome writer as Fulke Greville is quite absent.

For example, the errors against which Pope warned his readers are entirely those of mind and soul, not of practice. Man is not to complain, blaming Heaven for his imperfection; he is to trust the absolute justice and wisdom of the "disposing Power" according to whose disposal "Whatever is is right." He must not allow in himself too lofty a pride, remembering that he is only one small part in a great whole. He is to believe that happiness lies only in virtue—but the virtue which Pope recommends remains a very abstract quality, quite different from the specific ones that Davies and Greville admired. Man is not to make the mistake of thinking that evil has its source in God, though as to its actual origin Pope suggests no satisfactory theory:

> "What makes all physical and moral ill?
> There deviates Nature, and here wanders Will.
> God sends not ill, if rightly understood."[3]

In a very few passages there is a hint that Pope realized conduct as the test of virtue of thought. After his discussion of the

[1] Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, 1749.
[2] Edward Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1742–44.
[3] *Essay on Man*, Epistle IV, ll. 111–113.

origins of government and of religion, he has a momentary flash of clear, practical vision:

> "For forms of government let fools contest;
> Whate'er is best administered is best:
> For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
> His can't be wrong whose life is in the right."[1]

And, of course, in the portion of Epistle IV which proves that happiness is virtue, it would have been difficult for the most abstract writer to exemplify virtue except concretely. The value of right conduct as the test of worth is here contrasted with worldly wealth and position. The famous couplets,

> "Honor and shame from no condition rise;
> Act well your part: there all the honor lies,"[2]

and

> "What can ennoble sots, or slaves, or cowards?
> Alas! not all the blood of all the Howards,"[3]

are certainly practical enough to deserve their frequent quotation.

But a significant contrast on the last page of the "Essay" perhaps is typical of Pope's real standard of virtuous conduct. In an eloquent passage on the development of self-love into social love he expands the ageless theme, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," summing up an approximate perfection as a condition where "height of bliss" is "height of charity." Then with what, if one recalls the story of Bolingbroke, is a lamentable anti-climax, but in language much less perfunctory than the foregoing, Pope describes the man who for the time being was his ideal of excellence, in words that show his actual ideal of virtuous conduct. "Teach me," he cries, "like thee,

> "To fall with dignity, with temper rise;
> Form'd by thy converse, happily to steer
> From grave to gay, from lively to severe:
> Correct with spirit, eloquent with ease,
> Intent to reason, or polite to please."[4]

Selfless love to one's neighbor—it is the highest, the still unattained practical ideal of the ages. But versatility, correctness, easy eloquence, politeness—these are superficial ideals, embodying

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 303–306.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 215–16.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 193–94.
[4] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 378–82.

petty virtues of mind and manners, not great ideals of soul and spirit. They were ideals attainable and attained by a Stuart or a Georgian court, by a Bolingbroke, by a Chesterfield, by Pope himself. By the distance between the two standards may be measured the concrete practicality of Pope's ethics.

A by-product of this eighteenth century love for the abstract was the failure of the poets of the period to illuminate their abstract themes with concrete examples or similes. Their satire, of course, was objective necessarily. But when they were not writing satire they were analyzing the human soul or treating some other topic of a generalized and ethical nature and they were content to think abstractly. The homely illustrations and similes which enliven the pages of Elizabethans—childlike hearts, in the midst of an objective world—are absent, or, if present, are couched in such high-flown and stilted language as to lose the homeliness which makes much of the charm of Davies. The planets and their motions, the forbidden fruit of the tree, a few familiar and usually tame animals, a Biblical or classical character or two—these are reiterated to the verge of weariness in any anthology of the period. More than his contemporaries Pope made use of concrete figures, sketching here and there a vivid word picture in illustration of his abstract theme. The image of the lamb which

> "crops the flow'ry food,
> And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood"[1]

has the pathos Pope is said to lack. The much misused poor Indian is described with a sympathy astonishing in so untraveled and unimaginative a person as Pope. Allusions to contemporary personages must have made the poem interesting to current readers. The results of whimsical observation of men and manners are focused in such telling lines as,

> "So, when small humors gather to a gout,
> The doctor fancies he has driven them out."[2]

But, taken all in all, the "Essay," like its contemporary serious poems, betrays very little care on the part of its writer to please a reading public, if any such existed, interested in facts rather than ideas. In an age of reason, a clearly reasoned generalization

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 3–84. [2] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 160–161.

would compel as much attention as the same work cheapened by an attempt to popularize it with homely figures.

Nor is there in the "Essay" any trace of the emotional appeal by virtue of which poetry usually wins the popular affection. This absence of emotion might be ascribed to the nature of Pope's subject, which gave little opportunity for the expression of feeling. But he was not alone in producing verse innocent of passion. An age in which life flowed gaily along on the surface, in the pretense that, because the depths below were black and perilous and unpleasant to contemplate, there were no depths there; an age in which existence was rounded, not with a sleep, but with a game of cards; an age in which a great passion was a thing to be hidden as if indecent, or felt only to be suppressed; an age in which love was dependent on dowry and poetry on patronage—such an age was not likely to find utterance in emotional verse. If the poet had an idea of more or less brilliance, if he had in his ear the sound of rhyme and meter, if he had the gift of words clearly and cleverly to express his thought, there was no need for his heart to beat red. The spontaneous emotion that alone makes poetry poetic, and which had sung itself so tunefully through Elizabethan pages, waited to be rediscovered by Burns and Wordsworth. It would be difficult to find a line where Dryden was not cool and dispassionate; Gay and Prior, amused but not incensed at the follies they derided, hoped that the satirical criticism would strike home, yet showed none of the reformer's ardor; the love-poems of the time were as artificial as the beauty of the ladies who presumably inspired them. The nearest approach to that sincerity of expression in which one can feel the emotion dominating the poet's interest in his verse form and often, consequently, improving it, is to be found in the musical ballads of Gay, and, at the other extreme, in the bitterly passionate satire of Swift. But, however sincere, neither cheerful narrative nor sharp invective can be said to represent a true poetic emotion.

Pope, then, is like his contemporaries in the lack of emotion which is one of the explanations of his obvious lack of poetic quality. But so far as mere style is concerned, he is raised far above the other writers of his time by his gift of epigrammatic expression. His epigrams do not make him the better poet, but they do make him a writer of verse better remembered and more often quoted than any other verse of its kind. It would be

impertinence to cite the lines that live still on the tongues of people who never heard of Alexander Pope. The eternally springing Hope, the frightful monster Vice, the child

"Pleas'd with a rattle, tickled with a straw,"[1]

the bubble joy which laughs in Folly's cup, the worldly rewards by which

"at sixty are undone
The virtues of a saint at twenty-one,"[2]

the honest man whom so many succeeding poets have honored as the noblest work of God—familiar allusions like these, woven into the fabric of our commonplace conversation, are the best proof of the vital power, not poetic but epigrammatic, that animated Pope's work. No one quotes Dryden; only the ballad-singer and his audience remember black-eyed Susan; Lilliput, indeed, remains one of the enchanted lands of childhood, but the verses of its creator are forgotten. But it would be hard to find a person of average intelligence who has not at some time, taught by experience the truth of the epigram, echoed, humorously or wistfully, the line,

"Man never is, but always to be, blest."[3]

In all the literary qualities, then, in which a poet could be controlled by the spirit and fashion of his time, Pope resembled his earlier contemporaries. He and they alike adhered to the most formal and stilted of English verse measures; he and they alike preached an abstract morality, presented abstractly; he and they were guiltless of spontaneous emotion. But in those elements that were the expression of individual genius, rising transcendent above the dead level of the average Augustan poet, the writer of the "Essay" was a bright particular star in a firmament full of dull and dusty luminaries. The light of his star was, perhaps, a metallic glitter rather than a warm and sympathetic glow; the brilliance of polished couplet and clean-cut epigram was dimmed by the flooding radiance of the poets of the Revolution; nevertheless the star still shines.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, l. 276.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 183–84.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, l. 96.

But Pope was above his contemporaries, rather than ahead of them. So essentially was he a product of his time that there was in him none of the pointing forward to a later epoch than his own that appears in other mid-eighteenth century poets. Young and Thomson, Gray and Akenside were, in all the externals, writers of the old school. The formal measure, the stilted poetic diction, the love of abstractions all linger in the "Night Thoughts" and the "Seasons," the "Elegy" and the "Pleasures of the Imagination." But long before the period called revolutionary there was stirring in the hearts of men gifted with the vision of the poet a spirit of new life, groping for the unseen realities that were to be found, not by reason, but by contact with life. The world wakened, as the age of Pope passed into the age of Johnson, to the idea which revolutionized politics, social feeling, and art—the idea that one individual is worth a thousand generalizations, and that nature, human or otherwise, is to be known not by analyzing her processes but by living in contact with her realities. And contemporary with the social and artistic awakening came the revival of the religious consciousness, reacting against the wearisome pros and cons of the threadbare deistic controversy, calling men to a realization of their own emotional possibilities, and finding expression either in enthusiasm for the new evangel of the Wesleys or in renewed vigor within the ancient church from whose altars "the pomp of method and of art" had driven the pioneers of methodism.

Thus Young, who represented rather the religious than the social change of impulse, and who sought to supply the gap left by the absence of orthodox religion in the "Essay," turned the didactic spirit of his predecessors into a weightily moral and evangelically religious channel—so moral and so religious, that more than a century later a worthy editor[1] writes with unconscious humor that "Night Thoughts" eloquently inculcates "those great Christian doctrines which lie at the foundation of pure morals and sound religion"—as truly Victorian a standard for an art value as Young's own strictly orthodox code and creed. A defense of deism might, according to Young's code, be illuminated by flashes of wit; but an apologetic for Christianity, as grave as any of Wesley's sermons and less eloquent, must be character-

[1] James Robert Boyd, 1854.

ized only by decent gravity. "The new class of readers wanted something more congenial to the teaching of their favorite ministers"[1] than a system of abstract philosophy. Young's popularity in his own time was an index of the interests and desires of his audience, during years when disgust with the hypocrisy and corruption of Walpole's England was arousing a passion for spiritual realities. The equal popularity of Thomson showed the other and more important element of a new life soon to quicken in the mind of England. For with Thomson began the use in modern English poetry of the description of natural beauty for its own sake, and not for the pointing of a moral. Thomson's appreciation of nature was the more remarkable as it preceded by so long a time the work of the French Encyclopedists, and the inspiration of the German romanticists.

Once the love of natural beauty found utterance, it was easy for other poets to follow the way shown by the writer of "The Seasons." That Pope did not so follow shows not only his own artificial bent, but his faithful adherence to the literary tenets which satisfied the first three decades of the eighteenth century. He need not have been a pioneer in art to evince some interest in the beauty of nature which Thomson had pointed out. But his pages are as bare of allusions to concrete, external nature as they are of the creed of which Young deplored the absence. In the accepted conventional verbiage, Gray still wrote of the Muse and the "rosy-bosom'd Hours" and the "Attic warbler" and "reddening Phoebus" lifting "his golden fire"; but with the formalities of poetic diction alternated exquisite "showers of violets," lovely allusions to "rugged elms" or the "old fantastic roots" of the beech, and graphic hints of intimacy with "moping owl" or twittering swallow, or droning beetle. Akenside still referred to the sun as "the radiant ruler of the year" and called upon his lyre to awake; but he could picture the green before a threshold decked

> "with cowslips pale,
> Primrose and purple lychnis, . . .
> . . . and . . . shelving walls
> With honeysuckle covered."[2]

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[1] Stephen, *English Literature and Society in the 18th Century*, p. 153.

[2] From *For a Grotto*, Ward's *British Poets*, Vol. III, p. 350.

Perhaps Pope never saw these things; presumably he did not love them; certainly he never wrote of them. Like Gray, Akenside could picture the humble home where the village-dame, hearing the curfew, remembers as she watches her children at play that

> "At morn their father went abroad;
> The moon is sunk, and deep the road;
> She sighs, and wonders at his stay."[1]

For Pope the village-dame, the ploughman, the "mute inglorious Milton" did not exist; Twickenham was far away from Stoke Pogis. The poetry of the future was the poetry of the beauty of tree and stream and cloud; its philosophy was the message of brotherhood, equality, the value of the individual, however humble. Pope's poetry, Pope's philosophy were of the past.

The past of which Pope was both index and climax was a past of patterned formality. The past which created Tennyson was a past of revolt against all patterns. Into the stiff, outworn old wineskins was poured the new wine from the vineyards of France. A precedent became a chain. To conventionality of form succeeded infinite variety. A Scotch ploughman sang across his fields, and the music of his verse echoed into the souls of lyric poets till their words began to sing. No longer was the stanza form a labored, metallic mould to imprison a conventional idea. It was a tune fitly framed to carry grief or joy. As many as were the complex emotions of rejoicing, suffering humanity, so many must be the lyric forms. Blank verse regained the grace and color, the sweep of rhythm and the aptness to express thought with which Shakespeare and Milton had animated it, and of which the users of the couplet had robbed it. The sonnet came into its own, assuming under the touch of Wordsworth and Shelley a flexibility and a dignity that not even the Elizabethan sonnet had possessed. The elegance of poetic diction, high flown and stilted, vanished; words suitable for poetry were found to be no different from the words that made up "the real language of men." For poetry, newly become the musical medium of emotion, ceased to depend on form.

More important than the transformation of the form of poetry was the change in its spirit. The poet no longer sought to admon-

[1] From *On the Winter Solstice*, 1740, *Ibid.*, p. 347.

ish; rather he sought to inspire. The didactic spirit that looked on poetry only as a vehicle for morality disappeared gradually before the spirit of the artist whose art by its very beauty conveyed a moral impulse. Much of the teacher clung about Wordsworth, but his lessons of uplifting contact with nature and of sympathy with humanity were couched not as precepts but as graphic pictures or narratives, the contagious emotion of which aroused the feelings he longed to awaken in his audience. The teacher as prophet still lingered in Shelley; but with the work of Keats, English poetry arrived at the goal of poetry for the sake of truth and beauty. Verse that did not express or inspire a genuine emotion was seen not to be poetry. The cold ethics of the Moral Sense school gave place to religious fervor, as emotional in comparison with Swift's caustic morality or Pope's casuistic optimism as were Burns's love lyrics in contrast with those of Matthew Prior. For it was emotion that lay at the heart of the new poetry, an emotion stirred in one poet by a cuckoo's song or a tuft of primrose, in another by a wind moaning "grief too sad for song," in another by the perfumed splendor of a summer night, numbing his drowsy senses with its melody.

In subject matter, too, poetry was altered in the half century that preceded Tennyson. Abstractions were no longer interesting in a world where life was real. Why wander into the infinities of space or seek to define the indefinable when there was at hand a world full of concrete realities—of woods and mountains, of lakes and streams, of summer rains and winter snows, of stars and clouds and tempests, of loving, suffering men and women? So Goldsmith wrote of the humble happiness of the Irish peasant and Burns of the toil-worn cotter; Cowper, even before Wordsworth, found beauty in

> "the meadows green,
> Though faded; and the lands, where lately waved
> The golden harvest, of a mellow brown;"

and Blake made exquisite poetry from the evening star, scattering "silver dew on every flower," and from the sunflower, "weary of time," counting "the steps of the sun." Jean and Lucy were the inspiration of the new love lyrics, replacing the Daphnes and Chloes of the old. "The simple annals of the poor" supplied material for the poet of the commonplace who could find "a tale

in everything." The new poetry did not satirize the vices and follies of the rich and great; instead, it held up to admiration the sturdy virtues of the poor and humble, even while it implored sympathy for their hardships. For poetry had become the mouthpiece of the new democratic impulse, of the new social sympathy. In Shelley, denunciation of present ills was as harsh as the severest satires of the time of Pope; but Shelley's denunciation was direct, not veiled, and there was no wit nor laughter in his "wail for the world's wrong." Yet the very ability by which he sounded the deep places of despair, as Dryden and Swift, Gay and Prior, with minds upon more trivial evils, could not do, gave him the capacity for glorious visions of the future which they could not see.

At the end of such a time, a time when poetry had been set free from the trammels of conventionality, when reason had been superseded by emotion, when nature and humanity had triumphed over abstractions as suitable material for the poet, when great realities had replaced trivial superficialities as the dominant interests in men's minds—at the end of such a time came Tennyson. It must be remembered that this discussion concerns the earlier Tennyson, the poet of "In Memoriam," not the maturer poet of the later "Idylls." Like Davies and Pope, this earlier Tennyson shared with the poets preceding him the best of the qualities developed in the age of which he was the heir.

It was a period when, because of the contagion of German philosophy, every poet was inclined to be philosophical. It is difficult to compare the philosophy of Wordsworth with that of Tennyson, because Wordsworth's reflections upon abstract truths are presented by means of the concrete images of nature poetry, rather than by direct analysis and introspective meditation, as are Tennyson's. Wordsworth's philosophy is usually implicit; he makes few direct metaphysical ventures, and none so ambitious as Tennyson's proof of the immortality of the soul. It is in the daintiest of spring lyrics[1] that "Nature's holy plan" is revealed; it is from the story of Lucy[2] that the power of the great teacher "to kindle or restrain" is to be learned; it is through the simple prattle of "a little cottage girl"[3] that Wordsworth's feeling as to

[1] *Lines Written in Early Spring*, Globe ed. of Wordsworth, p. 83.
[2] *The Education of Nature*, *Ibid.*, p. 115.
[3] *We are Seven*, *Ibid.*, p. 73.

immortality is most convincingly expressed. Nevertheless, in all the pages of "In Memoriam" there is reached no surer faith than Wordsworth's "faith that looks through death." For the inspired "Ode" in which the older laureate declared the basis of his belief there is no match in "In Memoriam"; the new interpretation of Platonism sounded deep places where Tennyson's more deliberately philosophical plummet does not reach. Tennyson's recollections of early childhood provide him only with the unhappy belief that, as the man

> "forgets the days before
> God shut the doorways of his head,"[1]

so the happy dead will forget the life of earth. There is less real insight, poetic or philosophic, in such a conclusion, than in the vision which,

> "In a season of calm weather,
> Though inland far we be,"

catches sight

> "Of that immortal sea
> Which brought us hither."[2]

Tennyson has left us record of the process by which he ceased to believe in the persistence of personality. Early he wrote,

> "That each, who seems a separate whole,
> Should move his rounds, and fusing all
> The skirts of self again, should fall
> Remerging in the general Soul,
>
> "Is faith as vague as all unsweet."[3]

Later, the sense of his friend's presence in all the universe about him came to him as a more comforting belief than that in an enduring identity, and he concluded,

> "Thy voice is on the rolling air;
> I hear thee where the waters run;
> Thou standest in the rising sun,
> And in the setting thou art fair."[4]

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[1] *In Memoriam*, Canto XLIV.
[2] *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, Globe ed. of Wordsworth, p. 360.
[3] *In Memoriam*, Canto XLVII.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXX.

Perhaps Wordsworth passed through an equally slow and tortuous process in the development of his similar belief. Eight simple lines alone give us the result of any such thought development. Their pure dignity and impressiveness speak of a mind discerning and sincere in its philosophic quest.

"A slumber did my spirit seal;
I had no human fears:
She seem'd a thing that could not feel
The touch of earthly years.

"No motion has she now, no force;
She neither hears nor sees;
Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course
With rocks, and stones, and trees."[1]

The pages of Tennyson's great elegy contain nothing more complete as a poetic rendering of a philosophic view. Nor is Tennyson's conclusion as to the nature of God an advance over Wordsworth's. The

"far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves"[2]

is only Wordsworth's

"spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things."[3]

and it was hardly to be expected that in understanding of the God

"Diffused through all, that doth make all one whole,"[4]

Tennyson should advance beyond the truly philosophic dreamer who did more than any other one man to make transcendentalism a part of English thought. No passage of Tennyson reaches deeper into the heart of things than Coleridge's

"Life is a vision shadowy of Truth;"[5]

or his longer explanation of the relation of sense to spirit:

[1] Globe ed. of Wordsworth, p. 115.
[2] *In Memoriam*, last stanza.
[3] *Lines on Tintern Abbey*, Globe ed. of Wordsworth, p. 94.
[4] Coleridge, *Religious Musings*, l. 131.
[5] *Ibid.*, l. 396.

"For all that meets the bodily sense I deem
Symbolical, one mighty alphabet
For infant minds; and we in this low world
Placed with our backs to bright Reality,
That we may learn with young unwounded ken
The substance from its shadow;"[1]

or his supremely beautiful expression of the relation between nature and God:

"And what if all of animated nature
Be but organic harps diversely framed,
That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps
Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
At once the Soul of each, and God of all?"[2]

Coleridge, too, summed up in a single line the element of Wordsworth's nature philosophy of which Tennyson failed to achieve an understanding.

"In nature there is nothing melancholy,"[3]

wrote Coleridge. So Wordsworth thought, when he turned to the daisy to "repair (his) heart with gladness"; so he thought when, passing the hour of thoughtless youth, and hearing in the universal harmony

"The still, sad music of humanity"

he found that melody

"Not harsh nor grating, though with ample power
To chasten or subdue";[4]

so he thought, even when he looked at the "sober coloring" of the clouds that gathered "round the setting sun" and seemed to hear echoing from the shadows the triumphant shout,

"Another race hath been, and other palms are won."[5]

For Tennyson there was in nature no remedy, no solace, no uplift, except such as comes from the sharing of grief with a listener, for nowhere in "In Memoriam" is there record that

[1] Coleridge, *The Destiny of Nations*, ll. 17–22.
[2] Coleridge, *The Eolian Harp*, ll. 44–48.
[3] Coleridge, *The Nightingale*, l. 15.
[4] *Tintern Abbey*, Globe ed. of Wordsworth, p. 94.
[5] *Ode on Intimations of Immortality*, ll. 195–98.

nature was to him anything but an echo of his own mood of "calm despair" or "wild unrest."[1]

Nor did Tennyson progress in philosophy beyond Shelley, the prophet of revolt. More truly, he did not progress so far. "In Memoriam" shows no spirit of revolt against the existing order, none of that vicarious passion for freedom, none of that intense, unresting devotion to truth, which in Shelley ever beat its wings against the void. It is freedom that forms the keynote in all Shelley's descriptions of his ideal world—a world where he saw

> "Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
> Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn,
> And dwellings of mild people interspersed
> With undivided fields of ripening corn,
> And love made free."[2]

Freedom and virtue are for him synonymous:

> "All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil."[3]

The triumph of Prometheus is the triumph of truth and freedom:

> "To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
> To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
> Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
> This . . . is to be
> Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free."[4]

The magnificent "Ode to Liberty" is a matchless paean of the Rights of Man, thundering in deep organ tones the glories of freedom. Similar utterances of other poets grow weak and pale beside

> "Like heaven's sun girt by the exhalation
> Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise,
> Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
> Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
> At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave."[5]

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[1] See above, pp. 87–88.

[2] *The Revolt of Islam*, Canto VII, Stanza XXXV.

[3] *Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, Scene 4.

[4] *Ibid.*, Act IV, end.

[5] *Ode to Liberty*, Stanza XI.

Tennyson was too thoroughly conservative to realize the need of freedom; or else his personal problem crowded out of his mind, as he wrote "In Memoriam," needs foreign to his own nature and crisis. Unless such an explanation is accepted, it is hard to conceive why, in a time when world events were making men of sensitive soul alive to the new spirit of freedom, there should be, in a philosophical poem, no hint of the philosophy of liberty. Yet Tennyson need not have been overconservative to fall behind Shelley in this respect. Shelley's might be the voice of the twentieth century radical, with an infusion of idealism.

Nowhere did Tennyson more than approximate the depth, the thoughtfulness, the discernment, the originality of interpretation which can be found repeatedly in Shelley's attempts to read the riddle of the universe. The life of earth is a dream, a shadow, a symbol, a succession of "stormy visions," the awakening from which is what men call death. Behind the phantoms is reality, the reality to which Shelley would attain, though attainment came by way of torment like that of his Titan. So struggling for truth, he reached a perception of the immanent soul of the world.

> "How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
> The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
> Though evil stain its work, and it should be
> Like its creation, weak yet beautiful,
> I could fall down and worship that and thee."[1]

There is a suggestion of such an interpretation of the universe in Tennyson's line, "They are but broken lights of Thee," which amounts to his conclusion of the whole matter. But Tennyson was finally content with the faith of the mystic, who, accepting what he deems to be impossible of proof, relies on intuition for assurance. Through years he tried to reason out a standing-ground for his faith; failing, and knowing faith to be the necessity of his soul, he made the mystic's leap in the dark. But there was in Shelley none of the mystic. His restless soul could not be satisfied with any faith for which his swift intellect gave him no foundation. A philosophical position based on intuitive faith would have seemed to him a wickedness and a hypocrisy. With the intensity of the zealot he sought truth for its own sake; and the solution of life at which he arrived was therefore more truly

[1] *Prometheus Unbound*, Act II, Scene 3.

philosophical, even though in his passionate enthusiasms Shelley seemed to display none of the balance of the philosopher's temperament. Tennyson's problem is not the relation of all the visible life of the universe to the Unknowable behind it; his narrower problem is the relation of one individual soul to that unseen world. Consequently there is in Tennyson no such comprehension of the relation between the seen and the unseen as in the lines from "Adonais":

> "The One remains, the many change and pass;
> Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
> Until Death tramples it to fragments."[1]

Tennyson was too much befogged, in his groping after a solution for the problem of his own personal grief, to have the penetrating world-vision necessary for so tremendous a summary of the universe. His opinions not only were intuitive but were expressed in a manner wholly emotional; but Shelley, with all his passion and wild inspiration, makes use of his emotional appeal only as the garment of a well reasoned and formulated thought. The passion of grief for a single beloved individual is hardly comparable, as a source of vision and power, with the passion of a man who carried the burden of a whole world's grief and oppression on his tameless, rebellious heart.

It is the same generous, impersonal point of view that differentiated Shelley's view of immortality from Tennyson's. The poet of "In Memoriam" was bound by his own desire; how be true to philosophy in the face of his own heart's longing for what philosophy forbade? Shelley, possessed of the philosopher's logic though not of the philosopher's temperament, and under no pressure of a private grief, could write

> "the pure spirit shall flow
> Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
> A portion of the Eternal."[2]

This is the only consistent philosophical creed of immortality; in so far as Tennyson refused to accept it, by so much less was he the philosopher than was Shelley.

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[1] *Adonais*, Stanza LII. [2] *Ibid.*, Stanza XXXVIII.

The philosophy of "In Memoriam," then, points backward rather than forward. It reflects of the thought of the period no more than its predecessors reflect. In the matter of the poetic qualities which were the contribution to English verse of Keats and Shelley particularly, the poem shows no more advance over earlier writing than its thought does over earlier thought. Tennyson's deserved fame as a poet rests largely on the characteristics of music, diction, beauty of sense impression, and the power of word and line to express mood. But his music does not surpass Shelley's; does not equal it, indeed, if to be master of many instruments and many rhythms is a test of the musician. The music of "In Memoriam" is that of the violin, now wailing, now mellow with the memory of gladness, now soaring on a triumphant overtone of joy conquering grief. The verse sings as it tells how

> "round us all the thicket rang
> To many a flute of Arcady."[1]

It sings as it re-echoes the Christmas bells,

> "Each voice four changes on the wind,
> That now dilate, and now decrease."[2]

It sings in the picture of autumn calm—

> "Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
> And on these dews that drench the furze,
> And all the silvery gossamers
> That twinkle into green and gold";[3]

and in the picture of the spring breeze at evening—

> "Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
> That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
> Of evening over brake and bloom
> And meadow."[4]

But always the music is of the violin, and always the theme is one, in a melody as reiterant as that of a Bach fugue, though less formal in its cadences. In contrast, in the single poem "Adonais,"

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[1] *In Memoriam*, Canto XXIII.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto XXVII.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto XI.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXVI.

the work of Shelley best comparable with "In Memoriam," there sounds the plaintive cry of the violin:

"His head was bound with pansies overblown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
. . . . . .
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart;"[1]

and the majestic note of the organ:

"The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil;"[2]

and the liquid sweetness of the harp:

"He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely."[3]

An elegy could not contain such a flute note as that of the "Skylark"; the clarion call of the "West Wind" and the rapid sweep of fingers over keys in the rhythm of the "Cloud" lack the appropriate quality of melancholy. But even in this single rhythm the variety of musical tone shows that Shelley could "speak sweet . . . in many sorts of music." Tennyson, though his melody far surpassed that of predecessors, contemporaries, and most successors, had not learned what Shelley knew. With the possible exception of Swinburne, no poet has learned it.

Again, one of the masterly characteristics of Tennyson is his choice of vivid, expressive words to paint pictures and to convey moods. Even here he was but carrying on the tradition created by Keats and Shelley before him. Whatever the beauty of the diction of "In Memoriam," it contains nothing to surpass the description of Athens in the "Ode to Liberty":

"Athens arose: a city such as vision
Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
Its portals are inhabited
By thunder-zoned winds, each head
Within its cloudy wings with sunfire garlanded."

[1] Stanza XXXIII.
[2] Stanza XLIV.
[3] Stanza XLIII.

In the lyrics of "Prometheus Unbound" there are combinations of words unbelievably lovely:

> "We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,
> And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds
> Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
> Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
> And the white dew on the new bladed grass,
> Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently:
> . . . . . .
> A wind arose among the pines; it shook
> The clinging music from their boughs, and then
> Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
> Were heard." [1]

Such passages as these show not only that if Tennyson was a master of diction there had been masters preceding him, but also that in the rendering into verse of sense impressions he was not unrivalled. Similar citations can be made from Keats, whose point of contact with Tennyson is the vivid sensuous beauty of his descriptions. At one moment, as his pages pass,

> "From the darkening gloom a silver dove
> Upsoars, and darts into the eastern light";[2]

at the next,

> "Here are sweet peas, on tiptoe for a flight:
> With wings of gentle flush o'er delicate white,
> And taper fingers catching at all things,
> To bind them all about with tiny rings;"[3]

"peaceful images" follow:

> "the stirs
> Of a swan's neck unseen among the rushes:
> A linnet starting all about the bushes:
> A butterfly, with golden wings broad parted,
> Nestling a rose."[4]

In view of such comparison, it is doing no injustice to Tennyson to say that in writing his musical verse with its liquid purity of diction and its vivid use of sensuous images for reproduction of scene or mood, he was doing no more than poets before him had done. His work was not creating art of a new character; rather,

[1] Act II, Scene 1.
[2] Keats, Cabinet ed., p. 20.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 24.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 39.

in its power and poise, in the sustained quality of its rich beauty, it made a fitting climax for the art of the closing epoch.

With all that he had in common with his predecessors, in which both he and they were the product of a time of storm and stress, there are in Tennyson, as in Davies and in Pope, individual elements not dependent on the character of his times but rising from his own soul. Whether or not his verse reaches the poetic level of Shelley's, his poetry is better loved than that of any of the poets before him. Shelley is to be admired; Keats is to be wondered at; Wordsworth is to be revered, and sometimes to be borne with patiently; but Tennyson is loved. Perhaps it is the love that one gives to the friend who has shared with one his grief. Perhaps there is a certain popular appeal in Tennyson that the other writers fail of. Shelley's gloom and despair are the index of few actual moods, in a normal existence, for Shelley's tragedy was almost unique. Wordsworth's adoration of nature becomes tiresome with much repetition. There are moments when the sensuous beauty of the images of Keats cloys like too much sweet. But Tennyson expresses, in language lovely enough to satisfy the aesthetic sense, simple enough to come within the ken of the simple heart, a mood consequent upon an experience escaped by no one. The great reason for his appeal is that he puts satisfyingly into words the emotions which men and women who are not poets feel, and long to express, and cannot.

There are other factors in the appeal of "In Memoriam" which differentiate Tennyson from his predecessors. One such factor is his use of similes from the everyday human life which he saw around him—homely similes, endeared by their commonplaceness and familiarity. The maiden waiting for the lover who would never arrive; the lover saddened by finding his sweetheart away from home; the grief of a household for a dead master; the bride leaving her father's house; the village maid who loves above her station; the self-made man; the wife whose husband has outgrown her—all these are figures out of the tapestry of everyday, woven between sunrise and sunset, and holding the attraction of the familiar. Perhaps the strongest appeal of all is the religious element in the poem. It is unsurpassed as an exquisite expression of intuitive faith, as the triumphant answer of mystic to sceptic. As such its appeal will never be outworn, for both mystic and sceptic are immortal.

If to all these excellences be added the poise and balance, unhasting, unresting, with which Tennyson pursues his theme, he may be recognized as the best poetic product of the years before him. But he was a product of the past. As was the case with Pope, there was in his message little of the prophetic. A touch of future vision appears once or twice. The well-known New Year song calls for the ringing in of the new social order, the ringing out of "the feud of rich and poor" and of "the narrowing lust of gold." The deep voice cries "across the storm,

"Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice,"[1]

and prophesying a social convulsion in which thrones shall topple—a consummation, in Tennyson's view, devoutly to be feared. For the most part, however, there is no forward-pointing outlook, no vision of the new time heralded by Charles Kingsley and the Brownings. The man who, in the days when the Revolution of 1830 was giving new courage to the hearts of liberty-lovers throughout Europe, could speak of it as

"The red fool-fury of the Seine";

the man who could say with contempt, in another poem,

"We are not cotton-spinners all"[2]

was too conservative to feel the social sympathy that heard the cry of the children, or conceived an "Aurora Leigh," or expressed through the pen of a clergyman the heart of an Alton Locke, or put into the mouth of a Pippa the philosophy needed by the rich and great.

Moreover, there is no suggestion in the poem of the revived spirit of virility that Browning infused into English verse, freeing it from the sentimental emotionalness that English poets had caught from the German romantic school. The "new poetry" of mid-Victorian times was to be characterized by ruggedness and force rather than by music, by eccentric independence rather than by grace and beauty. Too much of "In Memoriam" makes the reader sad in spite of himself, even in those youthful days

[1] *In Memoriam*, Canto CXXVII.
[2] Tennyson's *Works*, Cambridge ed., p. 269.

before death has touched him. It is an opiate; Browning is a tonic. The wholesome and determined ring of a faith in the essential, immediate goodness of life has in it more of inspiration than the melancholy, far-off hope for final good—a hope so doubtfully expressed, when read in contrast with "Asolando," for example, that it seems to ring its own knell. Tennyson's hope is a hope seen through tears. There are no tears in the soul of the man who

"Never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."[1]

Tennyson, like Davies and Pope, was the voice of the end of a period—in each case a period distinctive, full of movement, productive of change. Each poet sums up in himself the characteristic literary qualities achieved by the writers preceding him or contemporary with him; thus each is a reflex of the literary life of the time. Yet each achieves his individual distinction as a poet, not by virtue of the qualities he shares with or reflects from others, but by those elements of his art which grew out of his own individuality. The poet side of the poet-philosopher is less wholly a mirror than the philosopher side.

[1] *Epilogue to Asolando.*

VI

He who would write on a philosophical theme cannot avoid religion. For philosophy is the eternally persistent, the eternally foiled attempt to answer the "Why?" of the universe—that riddle inseparably connected not only with the seen and concrete, like man and nature, but with the unseen and abstract, like God and the soul, immortality and freedom, terms which, whether looked upon as hypotheses or as facts, represent the great issues of religion. The philosopher, who since the beginning of time has thought that by searching he could find out God, if only to disprove His existence, cannot, though he call himself positivist, sceptic, or atheist, escape religion.

The poet-philosophers of this discussion, essentially conservative in philosophy, and filled with an intense moral earnestness of purpose, did not desire to escape it. Inextricably interwoven with the fabric of each poet's philosophy, serving as inspiration to the most truly poetic portions of his poetry, appearing in one as creed, in another as ethical dictum, in the third as faith, is religion. A complete understanding of their relation to the thought of their times necessitates a brief review of the religious thought of each epoch, and of the poet's religious position in relation to that thought.

The thought-forces that made the movement known as the Reformation did not become a vital part of the mind of the average non-ecclesiastical thinker until long after Protestantism was an established fact. The influences that had made the loyal Englishman an Anglican had worked out in practice long before they had become conscious ideas. Such a man as Davies, with a creed entirely orthodox from the point of view of the established church, was swayed by thought currents set in motion a century before him, but only in his time seeping into the soil of the average individual consciousness. What were the elements that made the background for the religion of Davies' time?

Free thought, a term too often confounded with agnosticism and materialism, was not a nineteenth century product. The first of its modern forms was the rebellion of independent thinkers against the schoolmen. The flooding light of the Renaissance showed too clearly the dust that had accumulated in the mediaeval

storehouse of church doctrine. A church so fearful of its authority that it refused to face the truth presented by Copernicus and Galileo could not command the respect of honestly thinking men. Scholars who, in the face of the discovery of an old world of learning, full of the treasures of art and thought, and of a new world with still unexplored possibilities for adventure and for wealth, could still dispute "with unabated enthusiasm about instants, essences, and quiddities,"[1] and who could still direct their students to the study of the old Trivium and Quadrivium in wretched mediaeval text-books or corrupt translations of the ancients, could not compete with the fresh, humanistic influence of the enthusiasts for the secular classics. Erasmus, the great humanist of the church, who combined a religious purpose with a trained intelligence, had a two-fold work to do, in bringing about the breakdown of scholasticism that paved the way for the Reformation. By his bitter ridicule of the corruption of monastic life and of the bigotry and ignorance of theologians he fed the dissatisfaction with church practices that was leading to distrust of church dogma. And by his application of classical learning and humanistic methods of scholarship to Biblical study and interpretation he paved the way for that individual interpretation of scripture which developed into the substitution of scriptural authority for the authority of the Church of Rome.

Erasmus may be called the first of modern free thinkers. This is not to miscall him the first of the reformers, for he was antedated by Hus and Wiclif. But he was the first thorough scholar to combine with the doctrinal and ethical viewpoint an intellectual approach to religious problems; and the first to see that in the application to religion of scholarly, not scholastic, habits and progressive methods of thought lay the salvation of Christianity from the condition of dry rot into which the bigotry of the ecclesiastic and the credulous ignorance of the layman had brought it. Colet as well as Erasmus saw that an independent, vigorous, intelligent interpretation of the Bible meant new life for the church; but it was Erasmus who used his wealth of scholarship to make the interpretation possible. It was Colet who called the schoolmen dull and stupid fellows; it was Colet who said that Aquinas had "contaminated the whole doctrine of Christ with his own profane

[1] Drummond, *Erasmus*, Vol. I, p. 67.

philosophy;"[1] it was Colet who, in his lectures on the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans, boldly threw off the chains of the scholastic use of proof-texts and treated the Bible as a book like other books, except that it contained more vital truth, and the apostle as a man like other men.[2] But it was Erasmus who not only seared with his scathing satire in "The Praise of Folly" the "supercilious and irritable" race of divines,[3] who spent their time in solving such profound mysteries of divinity as "whether God could have taken upon him the form of a woman, of the devil, of an ass, of a cucumber, or a flint-stone"; who not only exposed relentlessly the corruption of the monastic life and the un-Christlikeness of Christian teaching so-called;[4] but who also, as the earliest of modern "higher critics," applied the methods of secular learning to scriptural translation and interpretation, removing the Bible from its position as a fetich, or as a storehouse of proof-texts for upholding the doctrines of the schoolmen, to that of a guide and standard of spiritual truth, from which, if rightly understood, might be deduced the fundamentals of Christian doctrine. His restoration of the New Testament to its original Greek was the work of a man who cared not only for the purity of religion but for the purity of art; the Bible was to him not only a sacred book but a great work of literature. That he felt such a restoration to be the first step on the way toward translation into the vernacular is evident from his own preface. "I long that the husbandman should sing portions of them to himself as he follows the plough, that the weaver should hum them to the tune of his shuttle, that the traveller should beguile with their stories the tedium of his journey."[5] His edition of the New Testament, moreover, contained daring criticisms of the Vulgate, enraging the monks, who felt that the Holy Scriptures were superior to the rules of grammar. It ventured upon textual criticism, suggesting interpolations, doubts as to authorship, and possible variant readings, quite in the manner of modern critical scholarship, and treating the Bible as the humanists would have

[1] Drummond, *Erasmus*, Vol. I, pp. 82–83.
[2] Meiklejohn, *Erasmus*, in *The Reformers*, p. 161.
[3] Drummond, pp. 192–94.
[4] *Enchiridion*, or *Christian Soldier's Dagger*.
[5] Meiklejohn, p. 176.

treated a piece of secular literature.[1] For in the work of Erasmus were combined the best elements of the humanistic learning and of the new spirit of religious freedom which permeated the Europe of the early sixteenth century.

Had the ideas of Erasmus borne legitimate fruit, there would have been substituted for the papal assumption of the authority of the church to enforce its dogmatic reading of scripture as the only true one, a free and individual interpretation of the Bible, made by each man for himself, each constructing for himself a religious platform based on scriptural authority but shaped according to his own thought. But the habit of submission to authority was too strong in the minds of the mass of the people, and the temptation to capitalize that habit was too powerful, even though unconsciously so, in the minds of men with genius to lead. Instead of dogmatic decrees of an infallible church, people found themselves under bondage to dogmatic interpretation of an infallibly authoritative book, an interpretation dictated by the reformers, who, while repudiating the practices of the Church of Rome, had learned all too well from its example how to control the minds of the masses by the fear of authority. It was the external trappings of the church that the Reformation shook off. Luther and Calvin and the English reformers, while insisting on the rights of the individual conscience and asserting the possibility and necessity of man's individual approach to God, made little divergence from the position of Augustine and Aquinas in their use of scripture as a basis of doctrine. In the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England appear the Trinity, the Incarnation, the bodily Resurrection, the infallibility of the canon of scripture, original sin, predestination, the vicarious atonement—all doctrines of Rome. The divergence from Rome brought about at the Reformation is noticeable in such articles as those having to do with the definition of the church and the limitation of its authority, with its inability to enforce belief, with purgatory, pardons, and the worship of saints and relics, with the use of the vernacular in church services, the number of the sacraments, and the administration of the eucharist in both kinds, and with the celibacy of the clergy. This latter list concerns church usage, not the belief of the individual churchman. It is well known that

[1] Drummond, pp. 310–320.

Luther's attack was upon the abuse of power by the church, upon the corruption of its practices, and upon its interference between the individual soul and God. Except for his emphasis upon faith rather than works there was little new in his theology.

Nor was there novelty in the theology of Calvin, which was in many respects a replica of that of Augustine. Strenuous as Calvin was in his combat with Roman teaching regarding penance, the earning or purchasing of pardons, prayer for souls in purgatory, and the other usages with which his cardinal doctrines of justification by faith and salvation by grace were in opposition; rigorous as he was in establishing and enforcing the laws of his newly conceived theocratic state; the points in his creed most inseparably connected with his name—predestination and election, the fall of man, and eternal salvation or reprobation—are all inheritances from Augustine, to whose severe belief in these doctrines the leaders of the mediaeval church had, by their emphasis on good works, forced the reformers to return.[1] "Calvin invents nothing," says a recent French biography; "he reviews, he analyzes, he develops, and especially he affirms."[2] The God of Augustine was much like the God of Calvin—"unique and supreme, the beginning and the end of all things, in whom all things exist."[3] According to Augustine as to Calvin, the elect are predestined to salvation, the reprobate abandoned to their fate. And in proving from scripture his doctrine of election, Calvin proceeded in a way similar to that of the schoolmen of Rome, "making important the texts favorable to him, neglecting those contrary, and not asking if his viewpoint accorded with the most ancient testimony regarding the preaching of Jesus."[4] Yet, though Calvin thought of the Bible not as a progressive literature but as a mere storehouse of texts and doctrines from which to draw whatever he needed,[5] none the less he saw in the Bible the only true means of communication between God and man, no intermediary priest being needed in the presence of so complete a revelation. In this belief was embodied what was the greatest achievement of the Reformation—the doing away with the work of the priest as go-between. Efforts to win heaven by good works and by

[1] Dyer, *Calvin*, p. 219.
[2] Bossert, *Calvin*, p. 66.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 68.
[4] Bossert, *Calvin*, p. 71.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

penance were shown to be futile. Church organization was transformed. The superstitious worship of relics and blind belief in their healing efficacy were abandoned. Usages growing out of the importation into the early church of heathen rites and ceremonies, such as the apotheosis of Mary to the position of queen of heaven and mother of God, were looked upon with horror. But the fundamental tenets of the creed in its primitive form were accepted with little question. Abstract theology in the sixteenth century was scarcely changed from the theology of the scholastic centuries. The most recent accepted and orthodox Protestant teaching in the church of Davies' time was a combination of Roman doctrine as modified in the Thirty-nine Articles, and of Roman doctrine as modified in Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion."

It was this theology, a direct inheritance from Augustine and the rest of the fathers, that lay, in spite of its conservatism, at the foundation of the sixteenth century religious movements of extreme individualistic revolt. The reformers wished no improvement in doctrine over that of Augustine; "in the authority which they accorded to him, they placed him immediately after the Holy Scriptures."[1] The work of John Knox and the Scotch Presbyterians, influenced by direct contact with Calvin in Geneva, and the struggles of the Huguenots to establish Protestantism in France were efforts not for a change of doctrine, but for a removal of corruption of doctrine and for correction of abuses in church practice and administration. English Puritans, returning from Geneva at the accession of Elizabeth, planned to purify the worship, the preaching, the church government from all traces of paganism, "with their eyes fixed on Geneva."[2] But their revolt was directed toward freedom of usage, not toward the introduction of a new belief. Questions of conformity to stipulated ritual, of the use of a set form of worship, of submission to the ecclesiastical hierarchy were the inspiration of such bitter and tragic contests as the Martin Marprelate controversy, in which the strongest religious individualism asserted itself. The error of such heretics as Udall, Cartwright, and Penry was not a matter of unorthodox belief but of opposition to the tendency of the established church to assert its administrative control over the consciences of men.

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[1] Bossert, *Calvin*, p. 218. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 217.

Some independent religious thinkers there had been before the time of Davies, who had attempted to introduce into theology new ideas about God, life, the soul, nature, and immortality. Their treatment at the hands of Catholic and Protestant alike, for their daring in promulgating new systems of belief, is sufficient evidence that the doctrines of the Protestant churches of the late sixteenth century had altered little from the cardinal doctrines of Rome. Servetus, a Spanish physician, dared to teach a simple gospel of a Christ "who demanded no act of adoration for himself, who walked in the midst of men as one of them"; dared further to assert that "the metaphysical Christ imagined by the theologians was a deceitful mask that hid the real Christ."[1] These heresies, together with the refusal to accept in its absurd mediaeval interpretation the doctrine of the Trinity taken over by Protestantism from the Church of Rome, and together with his belief in a God immanent in the whole universe, into whose being all creation will finally be absorbed, represented a really progressive step in theology. For his ideas he was burned at the stake in 1553 by the Council of Geneva, with the reluctant concurrence of Calvin.[2] Giordano Bruno, a Dominican monk, wandered from country to country of Europe, spreading his message of the God indwelling, of whose thought all nature is a reflection, the God who lives "in the blade of grass, in the grain of sand, in the atom that floats in the sunbeam, as well as in the boundless All."[3] Applying the Copernican theory to religion, he taught that the earth was but one among many worlds, no more important in the universe than any other planet. For a doctrine so subversive of the mediaeval teaching of the plan of salvation, which Protestants still held as an inheritance from Rome, and to maintain which Rome closed its eyes upon all scientific learning, Bruno was hunted from land to land, and finally burned at the stake in Rome in 1600 by the Inquisition.[4] The fate of these two forerunners of Spinoza shows the conservatism of the theology of both branches of the Christian Church, and proves that the progressive theologians of Davies' time were not the Puritans but the pantheists.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[2] Orr, *Calvin*, in *The Reformers*, pp. 274–82.
Draper, *Religion and Science*, p. 216.

[3] Rogers, *History of Philosophy*, pp. 239–242.

[4] Draper, pp. 178–180.

From Davies' relations to current philosophy, science, and literature, conservatism in his religious position is to be expected. Therefore it is not a disappointment that "Nosce Teipsum" shows no sign of the influence of any freer, more progressive thought than that of Calvin. At the very outset of the poem occurs a discussion of the fall of man and its consequences which is Calvinistic in the extreme.[1] Man, says Davies, was made perfect.

> "God's hand had written in the hearts
> Of the first parents, all the rules of good."

Not only his moral but his intellectual nature was in the image of God.

> "Their reason's eye was sharpe and cleere,
> And (as an eagle can behold the sunne)
> Could have approcht th' Eternall Light as neere,
> As the intellectuall angels could have done."

To man in this perfect state the "Spirit of Lies" suggested the desire to know evil, which they could only know by doing it.

> "Ill they desir'd to know, and ill they did;
> And to give Passion eyes, made Reason blind."

As passion awaked, and as experience became man's teacher, reason died.

> "But then grew Reason darke, that she no more,
> Could the faire formes of Good and Truth discern;
> Battes they became, that eagles were before:
> And this they got by their desire to learne."

Of course the idea that "by one man sin entered into the world" is as old as Paul, and was woven inextricably into the fabric of mediaeval and modern religious thought in the forms given to it by Augustine and Calvin. No priest or theologian, except such heretics as the Traducians, sought for any origin of evil other than the taste of that forbidden fruit which

> "Brought death into the world and all our woe."

But the effect of the Fall on the intellect, of which Davies makes so much, has been shown by Professor Sneath to be a characteristic teaching of Calvin, based on his reading of Augustine, and "not

[1] Davies' *Works*, ed. by Grosart, Vol. I, pp. 15–16.

common in Christian theology."[1] Before the disobedience of Adam, as Calvin wrote, "Man excelled in these noble endowments in his primitive condition, when reason, intelligence, prudence, and judgment not only sufficed for the government of his earthly life, but also enabled him to rise up to God and eternal happiness."[2] After the Fall, "soundness of mind and integrity of heart were withdrawn. . . . For although there is still some residue of intelligence and judgment, we cannot call a mind sound and entire which is both weak and immersed in darkness. . . . Since reason . . . is partly weakened and partly corrupted, a shapeless ruin is all that remains."[3]

Closely connected with the doctrine of the Fall is that of original sin. In a discussion of the question of the creation of the soul, occurs a passage that answers the Traducians, who argued that one soul must spring from another soul,

> "As fire from fire, or light from light doth spring,"[4]

because otherwise, if God created each soul directly, He would be "the author of her sinne." In this passage Davies gives elaborate proof that, although God is the direct creator of every soul, the origin of sin is in no way a divine responsibility. God is perfectly able, reasons this lawyer turned theologian, to create the soul without creating its sin. That the soul must be created by God admits of several proofs.[5] No one but the Almighty could create something from nothing, therefore the soul is created by God. Further, the argument continues,

> "If soules doe other soules beget,
> 'Tis by themselves, or by the bodie's power;
> If by themselves, what doth their working let,
> But they might soules engender every hour?"

That such engendering does not take place is a second proof that soul does not spring from soul. Again, such a derivation of the soul would involve change and motion of one into the other; but

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[1] E. H. Sneath, *Philosophy of Poetry*, pp. 55–57.

[2] *Ibid.*, quoted from Beveridge's translation of Calvin's *Institutes*, Vol. I, Bk. I, ch. 15, sec. 12.

[3] *Ibid.*, quoted from the *Institutes*, Vol. I, Bk. II, ch. 2, sec. 12.

[4] Davies, ed. by Grosart, Vol. I, pp. 47–48.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 49–52.

"Change and motion still corruption beare;
How shall we then the soule immortall prove?"

By a succession of such proofs, of which the three given will supply sufficient example, Davies substantiates his proposition. The casuistic method of the argument is unmistakable; his logic is the logic of the schoolmen. Elizabethan in his feeling for the classics, in his naive directness, in his fresh and modern way of presenting many an accepted truth, in his receptive attitude toward such scientific discoveries as had come to his notice, he saw no more than did the schoolmen that the things of the spirit transcended the bounds of logic. Perhaps a naturally legal mind believed that such rules of logic as would do for law would serve equally well for religion. Perhaps the natural product of a credulous age was the supposition that because one believed a thing one could inevitably prove it. An absence of doubt may imply a conviction that if one takes the trouble one can prove the proposition which, since it is not doubted, must be provable. It is the agnostic age, like that of Tennyson, which brings its doubters to embrace by faith the truths that never can be proved.

Having proved that God creates the soul directly, Davies proceeds to show that nevertheless He is not the author of sin.[1] And here Calvin's influence is dominant again. God is the Maker

"Of all the Soules, in all the men that be:
Yet their corruption is no fault of His,
But the first man's that broke God's first decree."

Sin, which began with Adam, was transmitted from generation to generation. In the person of Adam were included all his descendants; he was the root and his posterity the branches, but the root and the branch "are but one tree." The corruption of the root means that the whole tree is corrupt. Therefore, as soon as the soul, which God makes "good, rich, and fair," comes into union with the body, which is the heir of Adam, the whole man is depraved.

The germ of this doctrine, too, is as old as Paul; "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners." But the form in which Davies studied it was Calvin's—a form likely to have been as surprising to the loving-hearted apostle to the Gentiles as it is incredible to the modern Christian. "In regard to human nature,"

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 52–60.

wrote Calvin, "Adam was not merely the progenitor, but, as it were, a root, and by his corruption the whole human race was deservedly vitiated."[1] "Adam's ill desert," says Davies, is "transferred unto his guilty race." Calvin, too, considered guilt an inheritance. "Original sin may be defined as an hereditary corruption and depravity of our nature."[2]

Moreover, Davies, like Calvin, defends the justice of God in the apparently unjust decree of punishment for all men because of one man's sin. Why did not "His high Providence" prevent

"The declination of the first man's will?"

In a few lines the amateur theologian, apparently unaware of the magnitude of the task he is attempting so ingenuously, disposes of the age-long inconsistency between the sovereignty of man and the sovereignty of God. In his answer to the problem, Davies allows more room for the operation of free will than did Calvin, who was a thoroughgoing determinist. If God had prevented Adam from sinning,

> "It had bene one, as if His Word had said,
> I will henceforth that Man no man shall bee.
>
> "For what is Man without a mooving mind,
> Which hath a judging wit, and chusing will?
> Now, if God's power should her election bind,
> Her motions then would cease and stand all still."

In other words, man was no man if his motives were not his own. The reason for the existence of the soul in man was "that he should his Maker know and love." But there is no merit in love if it "be compeld and cannot chuse." Calvin's persecution of Jerome Bolsec shows that he had little tolerance for a belief in free will.[3] It has been suggested that perhaps his uncompromising adherence to the doctrine of predestination was due to an unwillingness to be involved in the inconsistencies arising from the attempt to reconcile two conflicting theories. Davies, who feels no such hesitancy, seems here to show the influence of Aquinas, who held that free will was indispensable as a basis for morality, since acts were not virtuous if compulsory.[4] Aquinas made no satisfactory reconcilia-

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[1] Sneath, p. 135, quoted from Calvin's *Institutes*, Vol. I, Bk. II, ch. 1, sec. 6.
[2] *Ibid.*, quoted from the *Institutes*, Vol. I, Bk. II, ch. 1, sec. 8.
[3] Dyer, *Calvin*, pp. 224–237.
[4] Perrier, *Scholasticism*.

tion of the two contradictory principles, any more than did Davies. But in one way both Calvin and Davies have advanced beyond the schoolmen. They are not satisfied with the conclusions of their own logic. Writing of himself, Calvin said, "The sum of his doctrine is, that God, in a wonderful manner, and by methods unknown to us, governs all things to what end he pleases, so that his eternal will is the first cause of everything. But why God should will what appears to us by no means fit and proper he acknowledges to be incomprehensible."[1] So also Davies:

> "Then let us praise that Power, which makes us be
> Men as we are, and rest contented so;
> And knowing Man's fall was curiositie,
> Admire God's counsels, which we cannot know."

In many minor details Davies showed himself willing to accept on credence the dictum of the church of his time. He had a childlike faith in the legends of "the proud towre whose points the clouds did hit,"[2] of the creation of woman from the rib of Adam,[3] of the forming of man from the dust of the ground;[4] he believed willingly in the virgin birth[5] and the plan of salvation by the death of Christ;[6] he agreed with contemporary Presbyterians that

> "Our Wit is given, Almighty God to know;
> Our Will is given to love Him, being known,"[7]

a declaration later to be paraphrased in the famous "Man's chief end" of the Westminster Shorter Catechism; he concurred absolutely in the worship of the Trinity, carrying his belief even to the verge of superstition, when he likens sense, wit, and will, the three powers of the soul, to

> "A shadow of the blessed Trinitie;"[8]

he echoes Calvin again, as well as all previous orthodox theologians, in his belief in predestination:

> "First, God from infinite eternitie
> Decreed, what hath been, is, or shall bee done;
> And was resolv'd, that every man should bee,
> And in his turne, his race of life should run."[9]

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[1] Dyer, p. 222.
[2] Davies, ed. by Grosart, Vol. I, p. 28.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 45.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 51.
[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 28, 58.
[7] *Ibid.*, p. 80.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 81.
[9] *Ibid.*, p. 53.

But most of all does he seem a product of an age just emerging from the domination of scholasticism in his attempt at proof of immortality. It is a brilliant example of proof defensive rather than constructive; he believes first, and afterwards produces proof to support his belief, instead of proving first, and believing only that for which proof gives ground. The second course is logical, if likely to end in scepticism; but an effort to prove the tenets of an intuitive faith is illogical because superfluous, and is bound to end either in utter rout or in a loss of intellectual sincerity —that is, unless the reasoner has the childlike mind of a Davies, which will let him think he has proved his position whether he has or not.

Although immortality is a fundamental Christian doctrine, it is, of course, not peculiar to Christianity. Traces of other influences than those of Calvin and the schoolmen may be found among the reasons Davies alleges. Cicero and Aristotle are certainly to be identified,[1] and in the portions of the poem which do not seem traceable to one of these three influences, it is hard to distinguish just how much of the argument is Davies' own. At all events, there is not an idea suggested that would have been too progressive or too advanced for the schoolmen to have presented, if they had thought of it. A brief outline of this portion of the poem[2] will allow its logic to speak for itself.

First, man has a passion for knowledge, but his life "so fast away doth slide" that he has not time to attain it. Therefore, if this desire for knowledge is not to be futile,

> "our knowledge, which is here begun,
> Hereafter must bee perfected in heaven."

Second, the fact that the soul's aspiration is toward God shows that the soul, like God, must be eternal. The argument is by analogy:

> "Water in conduit pipes can rise no higher
> Than the wel-head from whence it first doth spring."

Again, if death were the end of all, not even a noble soul could so far go against nature as to feel the contempt for death which "the world's best spirits" feel, preferring honor to life, and daring

[1] Sneath, pp. 199–211.
[2] Davies, ed. by Grosart, pp. 82–116.

to undergo all sorts of perils. Nor, if death ended all, would the wicked be so afraid of death. The universal desire of men for immortality seems to Davies a convincing proof of it. Last of all, the very fact that men are able to discuss an immortal thing shows their capacity for immortality:

> "If himself were but a mortall thing,
> He could not judge immortall things at all."

Having proved his belief to his own satisfaction, Davies proceeds to refute objections. If the soul does not grow old or become corrupted,

> "How comes it then that aged men do dote?"

and

> "How can there idiots then by nature bee?"

Davies answers, in this case with true modern insight, that these defects are due to imperfections in the physical structure which is the instrument of the soul:

> "We must not blame Apollo, but his lute,
> If false accords from her false strings be sent."

A second objection arises. If the body dies, the soul has no instrument through which to exert its powers, and is practically dead itself. By analogy, Davies argues from the case of a man who can play the lute well and is a good horseman.

> "Though both his lute and horse he take away,
> Doth he not keep his former learning still?"

To the query how the soul will be able to know or perceive anything when it no longer has the medium of sense to bring it impressions, the reply is that in another world there may be other means of receiving impressions. The soul living in the body is compared to the child before birth, nourished quite differently from the way in which he is fed after birth.

> "So, when the Soule is borne (for Death is nought
> But the Soule's birth),

it will receive impressions in a different way from that of this world. Again, asked why souls, if they are immortal, do not return,

> "to bring us newes
> Of that strange world, where they such wonders see,"

Davies replies that the soul which has taken up its new abode in heaven has no more interest in the earth, which it scorns; while the soul that is "detruded down to Hell" is tied and imprisoned, unable to return if it would. The last objection of all is that the whole belief in immortality is a lie, promulgated for a useful purpose:

> "Politike men have thought it not amisse,
> To spread this lye, to make men virtuous so."

The answer, clever as repartee but not convincing, is that although virtue is a good thing, a lie is a poor way to spread it, since

> "Vertue and Truth do ever best agree."

Summing up, Davies is assured that the strongest reason of all for believing in immortality is the universal acceptance of the doctrine.

> "For how can that be false, which every tongue
> Of every mortal man affirmes for true?
> Which truth hath in all ages been so strong,
> As lodestone-like, all hearts it ever drew.
>
> "For, not the Christian, or the Jew alone,
> The Persian, or the Turke, acknowledge this;
> This mysterie to the wild Indian knowne,
> And to the Canniball and Tartar is."

Another tenet in Davies' creed made necessary a belief in immortality. Without such a belief, what was to become of the idea of a wise and overruling providence? Davies still adhered to an idea of man's importance which the scientific studies of the next two centuries were to make untenable, and which Pope was to deride in that passage of the "Essay on Man" that shows man to be only a single link in the chain of the whole creation. A world whose rank and file had not yet accepted Copernicus still looked upon man as the center of creation. If the world was created only for man's use, asks Davies, how is there any wisdom or justice in God apart from man's immortality?

> "If man doe perish like a withered grasse,
> How doth God's Wisedom order things below?
>
> "If death do quench us quite, we have great wrong,
> Sith for our service all things else were wrought;
> That dawes, and trees, and rocks, should last so long,
> When we must in an instant passe to nought."

Moreover, the life of the soul is incomplete without a life after death. For the soul has three powers, the quickening power, the power of sense, and the power of reason; and it must have a life to correspond to each. The life of the unborn child in the womb depends on the quickening power of the soul; life upon earth exercises the power of sense; but the power of reason has no chance to develop without a heavenly life. The desertion of the body by the soul men call death;

> "but were it knowne to all,
> What life our soules do by this death receive,
> Men would it birth or gaole delivery call.
>
> "In this third life, Reason will be so bright,
> As that her sparke will like the sun-beames shine;
> And shall of God enjoy the reall sight."

This extended proof of immortality is interesting, not for its argument, which is trite and often fallacious, but for its disclosure of the writer, not as a metaphysician but as a practical philosopher full of homely common sense. The more Davies argues upon abstractions the more clearly does he show that he was not a metaphysician, but merely a keen observer of the everyday things around him and a wise judge of human nature. Some of the analogies, by which, rather than by fine-drawn syllogisms, he makes his meaning clear, suggest that he and Franklin might have been kindred spirits, and indicate a kinship with Montaigne and Bacon that puts him in the van of the thinkers of his time. When he wishes to show that the mind's power of knowledge was not given for such imperfect use as this life permits, he writes simply, saving pages of theorizing,

> "God never gave a power to one whole kind,
> But most part of that kind did use the same;
> Most eyes have perfect sight, though some be blind;
> Most legs can nimbly run, though some be lame."[1]

To supply a reason why men may believe that souls live on, even though they do not return from the hereafter, he argues,

> "If we beleeve that men doe live
> Under the Zenith of both frozen Poles,
> Though none come thence advertisement to give;
> Why beare we not the like faith of our soules?"[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 84.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 109.

And to reassure the dismay caused by the apparent annihilation of the soul at the death of the body, he replies with quaint conviction,

> "We have no cause the bodie's death to feare,
> For when the shell is broke, out comes a chick."[1]

Similarly, that which commands attention in the religious portions of "Nosce Teipsum" is not its well-worn theology, but the fresh, eager spirit of enthusiasm that gives reality to reiteration of dogma and sincerity to assertion of creed. However conservative his religious theory may be, Davies' personal reflections and comments on religious subjects have a modern ring. If a thinker arrives at a real truth, indeed, ancient and modern are hardly the terms to apply, since truth is not for an age but for all time. Who first thought that "When the devil was sick the devil a monk would be"? Whoever originated the aphorism, Davies has his own terse rendering of it:

> "Who ever sees these irreligious men,
> With burthen of a sicknesse weake and faint;
> But heares them talking of Religion then,
> And vowing of their soules to every saint?"[2]

Equally condensed and equally thoughtful is his reflection upon the food of the soul:

> "Bodies are fed with things of mortall kind,
> And so are subject to mortalitie;
> But Truth which is eternall, feeds the mind;
> The Tree of life, which will not let her die."[3]

Most modern in thought of any religious statement in the poem is the stanza which expresses Davies' theory of the incarnation:

> "It exceeds man's thought, to thinke how hie
> God hath raised Man, since God a man became."[4]

Consciously or not, the old-time poet has hit upon a far-reaching religious discovery—that incarnation means not only God in man but man with the potentiality of Godhood.

This religious Davies is not to be dismissed without a word of the spirit of reverence, characteristic of his age, which inspires some of the noblest lines of his poem. Dignity and strength and

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 113.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 92.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 97.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

music are all present in the passages where he most devoutly pours out his sense of wonder at the ways of God with man. One such passage will show Davies at his best—and an appreciation of any man's work should always take leave of him at his best:

"Heaven waxeth old, and all the spheres above
Shall one day faint, and their swift motion stay;
And Time it selfe in time shall cease to move;
Only the Soule survives, and lives for aye.

"Our Bodies, every footstep that they make,
March towards death, untill at last they die;
Whether we worke, or play, or sleepe, or wake,
Our life doth pass, and with Time's wings doth flie;

"But to the Soule Time doth perfection give,
And ads fresh lustre to her beauty still;
And makes her in eternall youth to live,
Like her which nectar to the gods doth fill."[1]

That Davies could be so direct, so concrete, and at the same time so sincere and devout in his expression of religious feeling is perhaps due to the fact that he was not a professional religionist. The same fact undoubtedly accounts for his failure to make in his philosophy of religion any advance step beyond the theologians who preceded him. That advance step remained to be taken by a poet and thinker, who, though a frivolous man of the world and not a professional theologian, was as thoroughly theological in his thoughtful moments as any divine of them all. Lord Herbert of Cherbury set in motion the current of religious thought which, in its final form, the "Essay on Man" sums up.

Between the time of Davies and the time of Herbert the ground had been prepared for the growth of independent thought. The application of the laws of reason to theology was first apparent in the work of Davies' contemporary Hooker (1594), who based his teachings, not on the writings of the fathers or the decrees of the councils nor even on Scripture itself, but on what reason showed of the use of those teachings for making better the life of individual and society.[2] As religious questions came more and more under the jurisdiction of reason, the spirit of toleration grew. "As theology became more reasonable, it became less confident, and

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 98–99.

[2] Buckle, *History of Civilization*, Vol. I, pp. 246–49.

therefore more merciful."[1] The last martyrdom of a heretic in England took place in 1611; and by the time of Chillingworth, Sir Thomas Browne, and Lord Herbert, men were free to hold what religious views they chose, subject to no persecution other than that of an often virulent controversy with the orthodox. Chillingworth, in his "Religion of Protestants," 1637, wholly cast aside the claims of authority to interfere with the right of private judgment. The whole fabric of religion was "made to rest upon the way in which the unaided reason shall interpret the decrees of an omnipotent God."[2]

Against such a background of rationalism developed the movement known as deism, the attempt to construct a theory of deity that should be both rational and universal. The confusion of sects, the conflict of varying doctrines, the concealment of the body of truth beneath the multifold garments of dogma and superstition, all made the obvious necessity of the hour, for the mind that would arrive at a rational religious conclusion, the determination of the fundamentals of all religion. The "De Veritate" of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, published in 1624, contained five such fundamentals—the existence of God, the necessity to worship Him, the identity of worship with practical morality, the obligation to repent and forsake sin, and the certainty of divine recompense here and hereafter.[3] These principles, said Lord Herbert, were the nucleus of all religions, and among them of primitive Christianity before it was corrupted by ecclesiasticism. His statement came to be known as the "Five Articles" of deism.[4] Throughout the ensuing century the development of this type of theological rationalism continued, in conflict with more orthodox thought, which was bent not on founding a rational *religion*, but on showing the existence of a basis of reason for the accepted religion of revelation, and thus founding a rational *Christianity*,[5] not inconsistent with the reverence of the age for reason, and in line with the scientific achievements of the century.

Lord Herbert, indeed, appeared to have little veneration for Christianity, or revealed religion. That, along with all other

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 249.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 253–54.
[3] Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. I, p. 84.
[4] Schaff-Herzog, Article *Deism*.
[5] Leslie Stephen, p. 85.

religious systems, he subjected to the test of reason, refusing to accept any man's judgment in place of his own.[1] Outside his five principles, all dogma was "the work of priests, who have endeavored to establish their own influence for their own advantage by shrouding these five ideas in obscurely worded creeds."[2] Christianity he believed to be the best religion, because most easily reducible to his five points. But he refused to see in it any special revelation, and declared that virtue was the test of a man's religion, whatever creed he chose to adopt.[3]

The deists of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries wrote much, but added little to the original statement of their position by Lord Herbert. Very few of the writers who sought to follow the "inward light" to which he pointed were as wholly intellectual and as antagonistic to revealed religion as were he and his disciple Charles Blount. Few of them were as able and as distinguished as the men who appeared in the ranks of the Christian rationalists —Locke, Berkeley, and Bentley, Clarke, Butler, and Warburton.[4] Of these, Locke, the most purely philosophical, published in 1695 the "Reasonableness of Christianity," which comprised a re-reading and a new, independent interpretation of the New Testament, and which brought to light the purity and beauty of Christianity as its founder intended it to be, swept clean of the rubbish of the theologians. To Locke, Christianity is superior to other creeds because it has been most practically useful in making God known to men.[5] Berkeley, primarily a metaphysician, and Bentley, primarily a literary critic, engaged in the deistic controversy only in the way of replies to the utterances of their opponents. Samuel Clarke, philosopher and divine, clothing his theology in mathematical language like that of Hobbes and Descartes, delivered two series of Boyle lectures in 1704 and 1705, intended to prove, by arguments similar to those of Descartes, Leibnitz, and Spinoza, the existence and goodness of God.[6] Using the old ontological proof, he showed that all existence was con-

[1] Sidney Lee, Introduction to the *Autobiography of Lord Herbert of Cherbury*, p. xxxv.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. xli.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. xliii–iv.

[4] Leslie Stephen, *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. I, p. 86.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 95–98.

[6] *Ibid.*, pp. 120–129.

ditioned upon a self-existent being, or great first cause. So far his argument was at one with the deists. But he went on by a similar chain of reasons to establish the truth of revealed religion, basing his argument on the identity of the clear, changeless, and universal law of nature with moral obligation, and showing that Christianity was a complete revelation of truth, because by the tests of reason it conformed to the law of nature.

Both Locke and Clarke used the deistic method applied to the defense of a rather emasculated Christianity. Bishop Butler,[1] opposing the ordinary deist position, and going farther in his orthodoxy than the rationalists just referred to, took for granted the existence of God. The aim of his argument was to show that the God seen in nature was the same as the God seen in the Christian revelation. The laws of nature were the laws of God. And the revelation of that God was not through an authoritative book nor did it rest "on certain miracles wrought some centuries ago in Palestine, but on that great standing miracle—the oracle implanted in every man's breast." So says Leslie Stephen, adding, "The God whom Butler worships is, in fact, the human conscience deified." From the character of man's conscience could be deduced the character of the God who spoke through it. But Butler, who was no abstract, but only a moral and utilitarian philosopher, evaded all the issues raised by the conflict of metaphysical with religious problems. If he had faced those issues he would have seen that he took for foundation of his position assumptions which had themselves to be proved before they could be used as foundations. In his conviction that duty was the solution of all problems, and that, whether one followed the voice of the God of nature or that of the God of Christian revelation, the secret of the universe was revealed only through morality, he reached the same conclusion as was expressed in the third and fourth points of the deist "Five Articles." But he differed from the deists in recognizing that evil did exist in the world of nature. "No religion can be powerful which does not give forcible expression to men's conviction of the prevalence of natural and moral evil, and of their intimate connection. The shallow optimism of the deists blinked the obvious facts. Butler recognized them manfully."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 282, 287–88, 297, 306.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 307.

A long list of lesser names of churchmen, lawyers, and writers fills up the ranks of the Christian rationalists who opposed the deists. Of the deists—sceptics, free-thinkers, or atheists as their time called them—there were fewer, only two of whom were conspicuous figures in the social, political, and literary life of the period. These two, perhaps because their rank and real scholarship made them less polemic in temper than men who, with less learning and less polish, had also less poise, were not so controversial in their writing as the less gifted but more noisy deists. John Toland, in "Christianity not Mysterious," the book which in 1696 excited a storm among the orthodox, used the term Christianity to mean religion in its purest form. As such it contained nothing mysterious: "There is nothing in the Gospels contrary to reason, nor above it; and no Christian doctrine can properly be called a mystery."[1] The statements in the accepted creed which were mysterious were therefore false doctrines superimposed upon pure religion. Nothing in the Bible or in any system of interpretation of it was to be believed without strict challenge by the laws of reason.[2] Anthony Collins, in his "Discourse of Freethinking," 1713, progressed farther along the same track. Since all belief was to bear the test of reason, obviously every independent thinker must be free to investigate the grounds of his belief, untrammeled by the authority of church or creed. And in Collins's view, everything supernatural was irrational.[3] In a later book[4] he engaged in a critical dissection of the prophecies of the Old Testament, on which, he claimed, Christianity was based; and in showing their lack of reason seemed to display the flimsy foundation of the accepted creed. The prophecies were all very well, but they had nothing to do with the New Testament; whereupon the belief in the Messiahship of Jesus broke down for lack of prophetic support.[5] The answer of the orthodox party was that if there were no proof of Christianity from prophecy, at least there was plenty from the New Testament miracles. This supplied a theme for the maddest and most abusive of the deists, Thomas Woolston, who in a series of what Leslie Stephen

[1] Farrar, *History of Free Thought*, p. 127.
[2] Stephen, pp. 105–107.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 205–206.
[4] *Grounds of the Christian Religion*, 1724.
[5] Farrar, p. 135.

calls "wild rants" sought to prove that there was no truth in the miracles except a mystic and allegorical one.[1] His work was too unbalanced, too vituperative, to add anything constructive to the deist creed.

All these writers had been dealing with the validity of the evidences of Christianity. Another group turned to the consideration of the truth of its doctrines. In 1730, Matthew Tindal published "Christianity as Old as the Creation," a book the title of which is self-explanatory. True religion had existed as long as the world had stood, in the form of a perfect moral and natural law laid down by a perfect God. Christianity, in the form given to it by its founder, was merely what Tindal called a "republication" of this natural moral law, the extent of which, amid the mass of accumulated dogma and superstition, could be discovered by the human reason. The rest was priestcraft.[2] Morgan, the physician, and Chubb, the uneducated tallow-chandler, carried on the controversy in the days of its decline, after 1730, but contributed nothing new to the thought of their forerunners.

In the meantime, one of the really brilliant minds of the period, having allied itself with the deist position, was approaching the subject rather from the ethical than from the theological angle. Natural law, which was the law of God, enjoined morality, said Shaftesbury. Religion was a means to the end of morality. Therefore such a religion as produced the best results in the form of practical virtue was the religion that would best stand the test of reason. Shaftesbury made no direct attack upon revealed religion; but the influence of the deist controversy was tacitly apparent in the contemptuous, sometimes mocking indifference which he showed toward all accepted creeds, as he went about to formulate the system of rational religion that became the platform of the Moral Sense school. In a discussion like the present one, leading to a comparison of Pope with the religious thought that preceded him, the excuse for so detailed a study of deistic argument as the foregoing is that it set in motion the thought currents on the stream of which Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke, the guiding influences in Pope's philosophical development, were carried to the great sea of universal harmony at which their thought arrived.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 136–37. [2] Stephen, pp. 136–44.

For harmony was the keynote and the overtone of Shaftesbury's system of ethics.

In brief outline, Shaftesbury's tenets were few and simple; because he differed from the controversial deists in being constructive rather than destructive, they are easy to formulate. There was a God, whose existence was proved by the order and design in the universe. This universally benevolent God animated all nature as the soul animated the body. That God must be all good followed from the fact that He was universal, since evil could only exist where one interest opposed another, and in a universal being no such opposition was possible. Since God was all good, everything in nature was for the best. What seemed like evil was really good, when looked at not in isolation but in its relation to the whole. And the whole included not only the present but a future life, where the inequalities of the present would be adjusted. In man, the controlling principle was an innate moral sense, by which he approved of right and disapproved of wrong. Man was a naturally benevolent being; virtue in action was the expression of this native benevolence and social love.[1]

Bolingbroke's philosophy has been seen to be a compendium of the philosophical thought of the time preceding him. His religious thought is no less a composite. Writing at a time when the heats of controversy were cooling, and when free thought in the form of deism had run its course, he comprised in his religious system, if opinions so superficial and lacking in conviction as Bolingbroke's can be dignified by the name of religion, both the destructive argument of writers from Toland to Morgan, and the constructive reasoning of Lord Shaftesbury. Like the deists, he sought to substitute reason for revelation; like the deists, he scoffed at the supernatural, the mysterious, the miraculous, used to support the accepted creed; like the deists, he railed at the substitution of a priest-made tradition for the religion of nature. At the same time, like Shaftesbury he held to the belief in a divine ruler of creation, a universal harmony, and a system where all that was was right. He differed from Shaftesbury, however, in the characteristic contention of his theological doctrine. God might be all wise and all powerful, as could be proved from the evident appearance of those attributes in creation. But

[1] Fowler, *Shaftesbury and Hutcheson*, Part I, ch. 3 and 4.

there was no proof of God's justice and goodness; too many things in the world were unjust and unkind to believe in that. Only men could be seen to be good and just. The inconsistency of such a position, in a belief that was supposed to maintain universal harmony, is obvious. But Bolingbroke was little troubled anywhere by a passion for consistency; his avoidance of that bugbear of small minds might have proved him great, had other pettinesses not interfered.

In relation to the religious thought preceding him, the position of Bolingbroke, the last voice of the dying deist movement, is the position of Pope. In theology, as in poetry, Pope speaks for the end of an age. There is no need to examine the "Essay on Man" for evidences of other religious influences than the deistic controversy; that strife dominated the thought alike of churchmen and freethinkers throughout the fifty years that preceded the poem. Ecclesiastics who were not engaged on that main issue were busy with the color of vestments, the length of surplice sleeves, the exactitude of genuflexions, and other such liturgical follies. Assuming, then, that Pope in his creed reflected the deists, among whose number his master was, the expectation would be reasonable that he will be found to have learned his theological, as his philosophical, lesson from Bolingbroke. Surprise comes with the discovery that his creed is Shaftesbury's wholly—Bolingbroke's only so far as Bolingbroke's coincided with Shaftesbury's. Second-hand though his opinions may be, Pope's attitude to his subject is constructive. His concern is not to attack church or creed, but to build up a system so evidently reasonable as to supersede them. A controversial attitude implies a certain degree of respect; such respect is Bolingbroke's when he pays revealed Christianity the compliment of refuting its evidences. But Shaftesbury seems in his discussions of God, the universe, immortality, and virtue to be unaware that there is any opposing system which he must displace; it is as if he assumed that any rational thinker would hold the same views with himself, and the irrational are no concern of his. Such an assumption seems to underlie Pope's attitude. When Pope wished to confute, he turned to satire; but there is no satire in the "Essay." The futility of theological dispute must have been present in his mind when he wrote in the dedication to Lord Bolingbroke: "More good will accrue to mankind by attending to the large, open, and perceptible parts, than by

studying too much such finer nerves and vessels, the uses of which will forever escape our observation. The disputes are all upon these last, and they have less sharpened the wits than the hearts of men against each other, and have diminished the practice more than advanced the theory of morality." So Pope sets about an attempt to steer "betwixt the extremes of doctrines seemingly opposite," a moderate course animated by a spirit very similar to the poised and temperate habit of Lord Shaftesbury.

Whatever is remembered or forgotten of the deists, Lord Shaftesbury's summary of their shallow optimism will not be forgotten. A belief that "Whatever is is right" must necessarily lie back of an intention to "vindicate the ways of God to man," since only ways of whose justice there is assurance can be vindicated.

Pope presents several proofs that heaven's ways and plans are good, in answer to hypothetical suggestions of fault-finding with things as they are. First and most important,

> "Respecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
> May, must be right, as relative to all."[1]

Man is not an isolated being; since he exists only as one link in the chain, that which brings pain or evil upon him may serve some useful purpose for the whole. Partial evil may be universal good. Only God can see the whole, and therefore only God can conceive a proper plan which shall be best for all.

> "Each individual seeks a sev'ral goal,
> But Heav'n's great view is one, and that the whole."[2]

Just so Shaftesbury had defended the perfection of an apparently imperfect universe: "Now, in this mighty Union, if there be such relations of parts to one another as are not easily discovered, if on this account the end and use of things does not everywhere appear, there is no wonder. . . . For, in an infinity of things thus relative, a mind which sees not infinitely can see nothing fully."[3]

Moreover, man should not complain of his partial knowledge His happiness depends upon it. If everyone knew what the future held, life would be unendurable.

> "The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
> Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
> . . . . . .

[1] *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, ll. 51–52.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 237–38.
[3] *Moralists*, Part II, Sec. 4.

Oh blindness to the future! kindly given,
That each may fill the circle mark'd by Heav'n."[1]

Again, it is no injustice on the part of heaven that limits man's endowments, often to what he considers his detriment. The limitation is adapted "to what his nature and his state can bear." His senses are all fitted to the particular use he has for them. Only a fly needs a microscopic sense of sight. Keener touch, smell, or hearing would cause exquisite torture, till a man would "die of a rose in aromatic pain," or listen to a hitherto unheard thunder that "stunn'd him with the music of the spheres."[2] The reason why the plans of providence seem imperfect is twofold: man thinks he sees everything, when as a matter of fact he sees only the small part of the universe that comes within his own experience; and he still clings to the antiquated and superstitious belief that he is the center of the universe. Perishing hero and falling sparrow are of equal importance in the sight of God. But man, mistakenly, feels injustice if he "alone engross not Heav'n's high care." For his use earth revolves and the heavenly bodies shine. "'For me,'" says Pride,

"'kind Nature wakes her genial pow'r,
Suckles each herb, and spreads out ev'ry flow'r;
Annual for me, the grape, the rose renew
The juice nectareous and the balmy dew;
For me the mine a thousand treasures brings;
For me health gushes from a thousand springs;
Seas roll to waft me, suns to light me rise;
My footstool earth, my canopy the skies.'"[3]

To this claim that the great end of creation is human happiness, Pope replies with a series of questions.

"Has God, thou fool! work'd solely for thy good,
Thy joy, thy pastime, thy attire, thy food?
Who for thy table feeds the wanton fawn,
For him as kindly spreads the flow'ry lawn;
Is it for thee the lark ascends and sings?
Joy tunes his voice, joy elevates his wings.
Is it for thee the linnet pours his throat?
Loves of his own and raptures swell the note.
. . . . . .

[1] *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, ll. 81–86.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 183–204.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 133–140.

Know, Nature's children all divide her care;
The fur that warms a monarch warmed a bear.
While man exclaims, 'See all things for my use!'
'See man for mine!' replies a pampered goose."[1]

But this deposition of man from his self-assumed dominance is very like a passage where Shaftesbury answers a complaint as to man's feebleness in contrast to the beasts. "You might as well complain," he writes, "that man should be anything less than a consummation of all advantages and privileges which Nature can afford. Ask not merely, why man is naked, why unhoofed, why slower-footed than the beasts? Ask why he has not wings also for the air, fins for the water, and so on; that he might take possession of each element, and reign in all. This would be to rate him high indeed! As if he were, by nature, Lord of All: which is more than I could willingly allow."[2]

Neither Pope nor Shaftesbury arrives at any satisfactory explanation of the origin of and reason for evil. The so-called proof that everything is done by the design of an all-wise and all-good first cause is rather assertion than proof, and seeks by constant reiteration to establish itself. "If we could see everything, we would know that in its proper relations nothing is evil"; that is one-half the proof. "If we did not know evil, we could not know good"; that is the other half.

"Better for us, perhaps, it might appear,
Were there all harmony, all virtue here;
That never air or ocean felt the wind;
That never passion discompos'd the mind.
But all subsists by elemental strife;
And passions are the elements of life."[3]

Shaftesbury, too, asserts the principle of contrast as essential to consciousness, when he writes, "Much is alleged in answer, to show why Nature errs. . . . But I deny she errs; and when she seems most ignorant or perverse in her productions, I assert her evèn then as wise and provident, as in her goodliest works. For 'tis not then that men complain of the world's order, or abhor the face of things, when they see various interests mixed and interfering; natures subordinate, of different kinds, opposed to one another, and in their different operations submitted, the higher

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle III, ll. 27–46.
[2] *Moralists*, Part II, Sec. 4.
[3] *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, ll. 165–70.

to the lower. 'Tis on the contrary, from this order of inferior and superior things, that we admire the world's beauty, founded thus on contrarieties: whilst from such various and disagreeing principles, a universal concord is established."[1]

The apparent imperfection of the present is with Pope as with Shaftesbury a reason for holding to a belief in a future life.

"The soul, uneasy, and confin'd from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come."[2]

So Shaftesbury: "The plain foundations of a distributive justice and due order in this world, may lead us to conceive a further building. We apprehend a larger scheme, and easily resolve ourselves why things were not completed in this state, but their accomplishment reserved rather to some further period."[3]

The idea of the

"stupendous whole,
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul,"

is Shaftesbury's; on the other hand, the identification of Nature with God, which seems evident in such a line as

"The state of Nature was the reign of God,"

is common property of the deists and of Bolingbroke, but does not seems to occur in Shaftesbury's rather pantheistic philosophy. For the deists, God was apart from his world, not immanent in it. Pope, with his too great facility at making his own whatever came to his hand, did not apparently see the inconsistency of professing in one passage a deist's creed, and in another a pantheist's. His method is accumulative rather than eclectic. And one special phase of his argument was derived from Bolingbroke rather than Shaftesbury; that is the account of the origin of religion in its historical beginnings, until, from revering a patriarch, man came to look beyond him to a Father-God.[4] For one of the matters that most interested Bolingbroke, an interest in which he showed himself ahead of his time, was the history and the evolution of religion.

Even so brief a survey of the passages which reveal the religious position of Pope shows, then, that belief in God, in the duty of

[1] *Moralists*, Part I, Sec. 3.
[2] *Essay on Man*, Epistle I, ll. 97–98.
[3] *Moralists*, Part II, Sec. 3.
[4] *Essay on Man*, Epistle III, ll. 215–268.

worshipping Him, in the necessity of virtue, in a future life completing the present imperfect one, all tenets of the deists' religion of reason and nature, are maintained by Pope, largely from a Shaftesburian angle. But religion is more dependent on emotion than on reason. Creed is a product of the intellect; religion, which, reduced to lowest terms, is action animated by feeling, springs from the heart. And the influence of the deists on Pope's religious position is most apparent in the absence of emotion in the "Essay." His ideas about religion are unexceptionable; but back of them throbs no heartbeat. To compare the detached attitude of Pope toward the cold and unlovable deity created by reason with the ingenuous and enthusiastic faith of Davies in the God of his wonder and devotion, or with the intuitive outreaching of Tennyson for "that God who ever lives and loves," is to realize the deadening effect of deism on English religious thought. Controversy kills enthusiasm even while it strengthens opinion. That which has to be contentiously argued about loses its charm. An over-reasoned religion is no exception to the homely rule. The deists were so interested in defending their idea of God that they had no attention left for God himself. And it is hard to escape the impression that, while to Pope his friend Bolingbroke was near and real enough to be both an ideal of conduct and an object of worship, the Eternal Cause was very remote, very abstract, very vague—a being one might worship, but could never know intimately enough to love or to imitate.

Perhaps this very sense of remoteness accounts for the reverence for the ways of God which is the most sincere element in Pope's religion. In his reproof of man's presumption in replying against God, he seems an eighteenth century Job. Presumptuous man is adjured to hope humbly, to

> "Wait the great teacher Death, and God adore."[1]

Irony meets him who would weigh his opinion against Providence; contempt is the due reward of the "vile worm" who would dare suggest the breaking of the great universal order for a single individual's pleasure.[2] Contemplating man's pride in his own achievements, Pope cries out,

> "Go, teach Eternal Wisdom how to rule—
> Then drop into thyself, and be a fool!"[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 91–92.
[2] *Ibid.*, Epistle I, ll. 257–58.
[3] *Ibid.*, Epistle II, ll. 29–30.

This august being to whom man's whole soul is to submit has no care for the individual; the laws of the great system cannot be broken:

> "When the loose mountain trembles from on high,
> Shall gravitation cease if you go by?"[1]

There was no room in this conception of God for the special providences in which Davies believed so firmly. Pope's deity was not the God of Romanist or Calvinist theology, the dispenser of reward or punishment, of salvation or damnation. Nor was He the sweet human God of Tennyson, making known His nature through "loveliness of perfect deeds." This eighteenth century God was synonymous with Nature, synonymous with the Force that moves the universe; a God like that of the Westminster divines, "infinite, eternal, unchangeable," but lacking in personal nearness, and wholly unlovable. He was the Lord of the whirlwind and the earthquake, rather than He of the still, small voice. He was the source of eternal hope, to be trusted blindly, without even so much question as an effort to understand His ways would entail. Such advice sounds inconsistent enough in the midst of a dissertation whose purpose is avowedly to explain and thus vindicate the ways of God. The whole poem, the author of which exempts himself from his own advice not to presume to scan God, is an attempt to explain and justify a system which he repeatedly urges needs no justification. The rationalist who believes in no special providence exhorts man to trust providence, and even while he counsels trust he reasons every step of the way toward his conviction, with a dispassionate coolness of method that keeps the conviction from being convincing.

Consistency, however, is no more a virtue of Pope's than of Bolingbroke's. The man who sees in flashes and who speaks in epigrams is rarely equipped for a sustained effort of logic. Pope is not thinking his way through from a position of uncertainty to a logical conclusion necessitated by the facts of nature or spirit. He starts with a presupposition, and bases his chain of argument on the very hypothesis which the argument aims to prove. Argument in a circle is not logical; but to ask Pope to be logical would be like asking lightning to strike twice in the same place. In so far as his rationalistic attitude toward his subject is concerned,

[1] *Ibid.*, Epistle IV, ll. 127–28.

Pope is representative of the temper of his period; but in his own failure as a rationalist to present his case consistently, he falls short of reflecting the spirit of a time when every trained mind prided itself on flawless logic, and when the best thinkers strove, like Locke and Butler, to believe nothing beyond what reason supplied proof for. The very quality of Pope's flashing and erratic genius made adherence to logic an impossible task. He would have reflected his century if he could; that he did not is further proof of the inextinguishable element of personal quality that raises the poet above the level of his fellows, and keeps him from being no more than an echo.

The cold and impersonal creed of Pope represents the religious temper of the cultured English mind at the end of the deist controversy. The deists had striven by reason to undermine the foundations of the accepted faith, in so far as that faith seemed to them a tissue of romantic and superstitious self-deceit. The orthodox, with equal zeal and equally by reason as an instrument, had defended the basis of revelation and authority claimed by the established creed. As a result of the strife, spiritual warmth and beauty had disappeared. "Two things," writes Leslie Stephen,[1] "were conspicuously absent from that form of religious doctrine—faith and poetry. What remains when they are taken away? Common sense and candour." Such a remainder might supply the place of religion for the enlightened classes, to whom sound common sense and a sincere search for truth might be sufficient spiritual incentive. But for the unenlightened or half-enlightened masses, for whom religion is always a matter of emotion and enthusiasm, a rationalized creed meant nothing. The established church, with its doctrine robbed of superstition and tradition, offered the people at large little more than a mechanical and unillumined ritual. If Pope expresses the attitude of the cultured mind toward religion, perhaps George Eliot's Dolly Winthrop may be thought of as expressing the religious intelligence of the rank and file of the folk in the country parishes. "I can never rightly know the meaning o' what I hear at church, but I know it's good words, I do."

A religion so lacking in substance, color, and feeling could not control the popular allegiance without an infusion of new life. The failure of so purely intellectual a religion to come into vital

[1] *English Thought in the Eighteenth Century*, Vol. II, p. 335.

touch with the needs and desires of the soul of the masses made the contagion of such a movement as the Wesleyan inevitable. By its adherence to and sympathy with old, popular religious traditions and superstitions, Methodism met the crowd on its own intellectual level. By its refusal to countenance the results of scientific research it satisfied the orthodox and the conservative. By its common sense teaching of morality it appealed to the man of practical mind. In its hatred of Calvinism and enthusiastic teaching of free will it was in line with the movement of the late eighteenth century toward a realization of the value of the individual. Predestination is as much a form of tyranny as is autocracy. But most of all Methodism, by its understanding of crowd psychology, by its emphasis on outward demonstration, by its simple pleadings with men to come into personal relation with a very concrete and personal God, afforded an emotional outlet for the dammed-up streams of religious feeling which the orthodox theologians of the Church of England were powerless to set free.

A revival of such a type was bound to produce varied results. Besides the enthusiastic adoption of Methodism by the "hungry sheep" who were no more fed by their ecclesiastical shepherds than in Milton's time, there must be noted its rejection by the Adam Bedes of every walk in life, for whom the long-tried, firmly rooted habit of the established creed and ritual supplied adequate spiritual nourishment. To minister to such devout or indifferent souls, a new spirit awoke among church leaders. Just as the revolt of Luther caused a purification of the Church of Rome, so the schism of Wesley brought about an evangelical movement in the Church of England and among dissenters other than Methodists, advocating a return to what a religious popular song of our own time has designated as "the old-time religion" of heaven and hell, reward and punishment, vicarious atonement, conversion, and all the paraphernalia which deism had caused to be discarded. But a reaction of such sort in the direction of narrowness and bigotry, was, of course, totally without influence on the mind of the independent thinker. Revulsion against the utter irrationality of Methodists and Evangelicals developed the rationalistic churchman of the eighteenth century into the Unitarian of the nineteenth. Natural progress along the logically rational lines followed so courageously by Hume brought the deist to the sceptical position occupied by Gibbon and Paine. And reason now had as her

handmaid the new historical sense, which at every step subjected the validity of hitherto unquestioned scriptural assertions to the test of the historical critical method.

Another element of confusion was added to the chaos into which religious thought had been plunged before the end of the eighteenth century by the culmination of the strife between religion and science which had existed ever since Rome forced the recantation of Galileo. Just as the Copernican theory had frightened mediaeval theologians with its removal of the earth from the center of the universe and therefore of man from his place of chief importance in the divine scheme of things, so the discoveries of geologists and biologists frightened Evangelical and churchman alike. Laplace presented the nebular theory; and what would become of the old theory of the direct personal action of God upon the universe? Linnaeus, Smith, and Lyell discovered fossils and interpreted strata; and what was to become of the six days of creation and of Noah's flood? Treviranus, Lamarck, Erasmus, Darwin, and St. Hilaire developed the idea of evolution; and what was to become of the Fall of Man, and with it of the whole plan of salvation? Orthodox theologians and believers in the truths of science were alike in their failure to see that the soundness of Christianity was not endangered by the discarding of belief in supernatural occurrences or special providences. If the events of the Bible narrative did not happen in the miraculous, nay, magical way in which the Bible said they did, then the whole Christian revelation was false, for it must needs stand or fall by the truth of the miracles. So the orthodox, ecclesiastic and layman alike, began assiduously to prove that the scientific conclusions were false, or, failing that, that they harmonized point by point with scripture. The honest thinker, unable to hoodwink himself into any distrust of scientific conclusions, began to wonder if the beliefs in creation and flood and miracle and special providence and anthropomorphic God did not, as they fell in ruin, carry with them in one tremendous cataclysm all belief in an unseen and eternal reality. Honesty demanded the disclaiming of possible knowledge; the agnostic was the man too honest to believe in the supernatural, and not wise enough to see of how little consequence the supernatural element was in a Christianity rightly interpreted.

Less honest but more wise was the new type of clergyman

produced by the controversy of orthodoxy with science. The latitudinarian, attempting to broaden the creed of his church and make it sufficiently elastic to stretch over the demands of the hour, represented in religion the spirit of compromise that in the sphere of politics animated the early Reform Bills. Firmness on essentials, elasticity on non-essentials seem to have been the principles of a group that might have been called liberal conservatives. They saw that to command the allegiance of thinking men to the church it was necessary to leave room for individual interpretation of scripture and of creed. Abstractly, the spirit of compromise is despicable and cowardly; practically, it is by compromise methods that reforms have always been effected. The noblest type of character says with Luther, "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise." But such a declaration does not carry its opponents with it. And there is no cowardice or insincerity in such an adaptation of the cardinal principles of the creed as that by which Arnold of Rugby or Robertson of Brighton made the creed possible of acceptance by intelligent and earnest seekers after truth. It was the broad churchmen of the Oriel school at Oxford who first began to see that it was sin rather than heresy that ailed the world, and who made their cardinal principle an absence of dogma, and a generous "sympathy with what was good and earnest in all religious parties."[1]

The outstanding religious event during the years when "In Memoriam" was growing was the Oxford Movement. Its initiation was consequent upon the state of religious confusion suggested by a mere enumeration of the names applied to religious groups of the time. Sectarians and Evangelicals; high, low, and broad church parties; Whigs who believed in an Erastian control of church by state, in disestablishment, in Catholic emancipation, and Tories who clung to the establishment; Athanasians, Unitarians, and agnostics—so diverse were the classifications necessary to include the varying views and doctrines which somewhere amidst the mists of argument and speculation concealed the truth. Such a stormy sea of opinion offered no anchorage for the orthodox mind. Such a bewildering choice of views implied the absence of all authority. The Protestant Reformation, three centuries before, had cut men loose from the comfortable authority of the infallible Church of Rome. Now scientific

[1] Wilfred Ward's *Life of Newman*, Vol. I, p. 37.

research, calling into question the validity and inspiration of the supposedly infallible scriptures, once more removed the element of authority and cut the church loose from its moorings. The salvation of the establishment depended upon the substitution of some other authority in religion for that of the creed and the Bible, now being called into question and likely soon to be abandoned by all but the blindly orthodox. Such an incentive, as well as the wish to revivify the dry bones of formal religion, animated the leaders of the Tractarian party, which sought to establish the antiquity and consequent authority of the Anglican Catholic Church. But a movement aimed to make "relentless war against the 'Liberalism' in thought that was breaking up ancient institutions in Church and State, and would not cease from its work until it had destroyed religion,"[1] as the Tractarians thought, issued actually in causing an irreconcilable split between the moderate Tractarians, like Pusey and Keble, the Romanistic Tractarians like Newman, and the officials of the established church. The sincere souls who set out to save religion in England "by strengthening the English Church as the home of dogmatic religion; by imparting intellectual depth to its traditional theology and spiritual life to its institutions; by strengthening and renewing the almost broken links which bound the Church of England to the Church Catholic of the great ages,"[2] found themselves plunged, not into a work of reform and purification, but into a passionate controversy.

Religious confusion, then, growing out of an ardent religious emotion, out of a sincere devotion to tradition and authority, and out of an equally sincere passion for intellectual and spiritual truth, was one of the characteristic elements of thought in the age of Tennyson. The other dominant quality was something newer than controversy, newer than dogma, newer even than science, so far as its penetration into the life of men was concerned; yet as old as the God who is love. For love, not creed, was the keynote of the new religion that gradually developed as the nineteenth century matured. Called by a longer name, it was the spirit of humanitarianism, of brotherhood and service, that began in the work for social reform of the radical utilitarians, and emerged into the Christian socialism of Maurice, Kingsley, and Denison. Evangelicals joined with philosophical radicals and

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 4. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 5.

philanthropic liberals[1] in reforms that had nothing whatever to do with orthodoxy or heresy—abolition of slavery, prison reform, modification of the barbarous penal code, legislation for the protection of women and children in mines and factories. Just as in the midst of primeval chaos the spirit of God "moved upon the face of the waters," so the solvent for the chaos of creeds and refusals of creeds was the spirit of practical love.

If Tennyson, like his fellow poet-philosophers, reflects the religion of his time, he will reveal these two elements—a confusion of thought, in which now one, now another current of opinion or emotion will be dominant; and a breadth of sympathy akin to the spirit that animated the philanthropists and social reformers. Not seldom a writer's estimate of his own work is the fairest; and Tennyson's final comment on his elegy, at the end of the prologue—

> "these wild and wandering cries,
> Confusions of a wasted youth"—

prepares the way for an atmosphere of unrest and uncertainty which all the early part of the poem verifies. As the categorical imperative of Kant is reflected in "In Memoriam" not by echo or paraphrase but implicitly, by application as a method to the solving of problems; so the confusion of the mind of Tennyson's age is implicitly reflected in the evident lack of assurance in opinion of the writer as he struggles through from doubt to faith.

No one of the religious attitudes of the time is here maintained consistently. In passages which bear upon the Biblical narrative or upon accepted doctrine, there are apparent the results of orthodox evangelical teaching, the influence surrounding the poet's early years, and congenial to the native conservatism of his mind. The God in whom foreknowledge dwells, with whom a thousand years is as a day, is described in the reference to

> "that eye which watches guilt
> And goodness, and hath power to see
> Within the green the moulder'd tree,
> And towers fallen as soon as built."[2]

To this apparent belief in the foreknowledge of God is added a hint of a Calvinistic adherence to predestination:

> "I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
> For nothing is that errs from law."[3]

[1] Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, Vol. I, pp. 156, 163. [2] *In Memoriam*, Canto XXVI. [3] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXIII.

More than a hint of a lingering belief in special providences is contained in the lines

"in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touched him, and he slept."[1]

No more beautiful interpretation of the heart of Christmas could be given than Tennyson's greeting to the dawn of the first Yuletide of the cycle:

"Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born."[2]

The two poems[3] which record the story of the raising of Lazarus and of Mary's grateful offering of devotion are redolent of the faiths of childhood. What the Evangelicals called "saving faith" in Christ as the Way leading to life speaks in the end of the imaginary picture of what Tennyson's life would have been had Hallam lived—

"And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul."[4]

The sacred faiths of childhood weave themselves thus into the fabric of thought. However far the progress of the mature mind may proceed, outgrown habits of belief are inescapable. Yet the same writer whose references to Holy Writ are as ingenuous as might be those of the blue-eyed sister who told him doubt was devil-born shows in other places an equal hatred of tradition accepted merely because traditional. Use and Wont,

"Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new,"[5]

are treated with tolerance only so long as in them remains alive the spirit of a beloved past. When that memory dies, ceremony becomes empty and futile,

"For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more?"[6]

It is almost fanciful to suppose that in the implied attitude to tradition in creed and in form lies any disclosure of Tennyson's

[1] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXV.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto XXX.
[3] *Ibid.*, Cantos XXXI–XXXII.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto LXXXIV.
[5] *Ibid.*, Canto XXIX.
[6] *Ibid.*, Canto CV.

feeling toward the Oxford Movement, about which he must have had an opinion. But except for the single line,

"To cleave a creed in sects and cries,"[1]

there is no other hint of his view upon a subject which no religiously minded person in the thirties and forties could avoid thinking about.

In contrast with the orthodox habit of mind evident in such allusions as those just quoted, are the passages which express the latitudinarian viewpoint. To this Tennyson, creed is relatively unimportant, as he thinks, shut in his sorrow, of

"The Shadow cloak'd from head to foot,"

"Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,"[2]

and realizes that death is the great leveller, not only of rich and poor, but of Dissenter, Anglican, and Romanist. The toleration which he asks from the man

"Whose faith has center everywhere"

for the sister who still clings to her early heaven, and to her faith made real through form, implies a greater sympathy with the soul

"that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer air."[3]

It is this Tennyson who presents a view of a humanized Christ far broader and more beautiful than that of the orthodox creed—the man who made current coin of the truths of the spirit, who wrought

"With human hands the creed of creeds
In loveliness of perfect deeds."[4]

It is this Tennyson who dares, in a day when acceptance of the deity of Jesus was a test question in religion, to run the risk of a charge of infidelity by the declaration,

"Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou."[5]

How like these expressions of breadth and tolerance are to the elastic views of the broadest and most generous churchmen of the

[1] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXVIII.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto XXIII.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto XXXIII.
[4] *Ibid.*, Canto XXXVI.
[5] *Ibid.*, Prologue.

period may be seen in a mere glance at the teaching of Frederick Robertson. "Alas!" he wrote in 1852, "when I see Romanists cursing the Church of England, Evangelicals shaking their heads about the Christianity of Tractarians, Tractarians banning Dissenters, Dissenters anathematizing Unitarians, and Unitarians of the old school condemning the more spiritual ones of the new; I am forced to hope that there is more inclusiveness in the Love of God than in the bitter orthodoxy of sects and churches."[1] Later, establishing his argument for the divinity of Christ, he proceeded in words that read like a commentary on Tennyson's prologue: "Christ claims sonship in virtue of His Humanity. . . . Begin with Him as God's character revealed under the limitations of humanity."[2]

As there was an evangelical Tennyson and a latitudinarian Tennyson, so, temporarily, there was an agnostic Tennyson. For him agnosticism grew out of the effort to prove the great realities. He sought God, but

> "found Him not in world or sun,
> Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
> Nor thro' the questions men may try,
> The petty cobwebs we have spun."[3]

He tried to prove immortality, but progressed no farther than the persuasion that life must continue, since otherwise all life must be futile.[4] His discussion of immortality concerns itself largely with the attempt to determine what sort of life the continuing life will be, seeking to provide proofs of all the hopes that his love for his friend makes him desire assurance of. The life after death is to be marked by a continuance of activity

> "In those great offices that suit
> The full-grown energies of heaven."[5]

Earthly affection must continue:

> "Love will last as pure and whole
> As when he loved me here in Time."[6]

Memory is to persist,[7] and personality,[8] otherwise a belief in the continuance of life is utterly without consolation. But all these

[1] Stopford Brooke's *Life of Robertson*, p. 267.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 279.
[3] *In Memoriam*, Canto CXXIV.
[4] *Ibid.*, Cantos XXXIV, LVI.
[5] *Ibid.*, Canto XL.
[6] *Ibid.*, Canto XLIII.
[7] *Ibid.*, Cantos XLV–VI.
[8] *Ibid.*, Canto XLVII.

are assumptions, based on the "will to believe"; nothing is proved. Assurance of God came to Tennyson through the medium of feeling:

"Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men."[1]

Assurance of immortality, too, came in a flash of intuition, in his midnight vision on the lawn, when the contagion of Hallam's own remembered faith and vigor came to touch him from the past,

"And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine."[2]

The spirit that cries out,

"Behold, we know not anything";[3]

the spirit that is like the "infant crying for the light"; the spirit that can only falter on the stairs of God; the spirit which recognized the faith in honest doubt—this is typically the spirit of the agnostic. "Nothing worthy proving can be proven," says the Ancient Sage.

But Tennyson did not remain agnostic. And the solution at which he arrived in his attempt to prove the realities in which he longed to believe, the solution of an intuitive conviction called faith, was not characteristic of his time. His was the faith of the mystic; and though he reached it by the nineteenth century road of doubt, the mystic's faith is not a nineteenth century growth. The mystic in every age is he who grasps truth through intuition, who has eyes to perceive the invisible. For him there is no Unknowable. Such a spirit belongs to no century; it is a bond that links together across the ages the young men who see visions and the old men who dream dreams. The poet who waited for the "beam in darkness," who listened for the vaster music, was not so far removed in spiritual kinship from the mediaeval saint[4] who wrote, "Blessed are the ears that gladly receive the pulses of the Divine whisper . . . which listen not after the voice which

[1] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXIV.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto XCV.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto LIV.
[4] Thomas à Kempis.

is sounding without, but for the Truth teaching within. Blessed are the eyes which are shut to outward things, but intent on things within."

Perhaps it was because his mind was so intent on things within that Tennyson reflects so comparatively little of the humanitarian movement of his time. There is a hint of awareness of it in the complaint,

> "So many worlds, so much to do,
> So little done, such things to be";[1]

there is a suggestion of consciousness of the social upheaval of the years from 1830 to 1850 in the declaration that "social truth shall spread," in spite of the "red fool-fury of the Seine," and in spite of the toppling of king and beggar, the pillars that sustain the two ends of the social system.[2] But the only passage at all typical of such dawning social sympathy as lay at the basis of the work of Kingsley is the famous poem which rings out the old year and with it old falsities and feuds, old political strifes, old poverty and pride, old greed and coldness, old disease, darkness, and war.[3] Most of the time Tennyson's personal grief and personal problems loomed too large to allow him to see the greater griefs, the farther-reaching problems of humanity.

There is a similarity between the relation of each of these three poet-philosophers to his age as an artist, and his relation as a religionist. The preceding chapter reached the conclusion that, while in the artistic qualities common to all poets of the period each reflected the art development of his epoch, nevertheless in his own peculiarly individual poetic qualities, each poet was himself and no mere reflection. So in the present instance, as far as religious opinion went, each was the echo of the theological leaders of his time. But in personal reaction to religion, each poet was essentially individual. Davies, in religion as in life and art, combined the ingenuous temper of the child with the judicial and logical mind of the lawyer. Pope, in religion as in life and art, was the brilliant and self-conscious rhetorician, arguing without conviction of his own upon a theme of indifferent interest to him, but which gave him opportunity for the exercise

[1] *In Memoriam*, Canto LXXIII.
[2] *Ibid.*, Canto CXXVII.
[3] *Ibid.*, Canto CVI.

of his gift of epigram. Tennyson, in religion as in life and art, looked upon the universe with the eyes of the romanticist and the mystic. He was much less the mirror of his time and much more the individual than are the others, because while Davies and Pope, turned philosophers for a time, were presenting systematized philosophies of religion, Tennyson was merely giving expression to the religious struggles and convictions of one who was at moments a philosopher, but who was always a poet. In other words, in so far as any expression becomes a revelation of personality, it ceases to be only a mirror of its time.

VII

All that remains necessary to complete this discussion of the poet-philosophers is a summary of the respects in which they have been found to reflect their periods. With due allowance made for the personal equation, by which the poet's own individuality, as man or as artist, surmounts the controlling influences of his time, the conclusion seems fair that when the poet enters the realm of metaphysics he becomes a mouthpiece of other men's thought. His art is his own; his feeling is his own; his interpretation and application of the system with which he deals may be his own; but he is not, in the region of metaphysical abstractions, an independent or original thinker. It is hardly safe to generalize from three instances; but so far as Davies, Pope, and Tennyson are concerned, there seems no doubt as to the generalization.

All three reflect the background of history and social condition against which they appear. All three echo the philosophical systems of the periods immediately preceding their own. All three show themselves products of the educational development that shaped their growth, Davies of humanism in particular, Pope of naturalism, and Tennyson of modern scientific study. Each stands at the close of a movement in art, and therefore concentrates in himself the art qualities of the poets preceding him. All three in their religious proclivities exemplify with paramount force the religious proclivities of their contemporaries, If the discussion concerned Davies as a eulogist of Queen Elizabeth. Pope as a social satirist, or Tennyson as a writer of idyllic narrative or musical lyric, the verdict would be different, for in these fields the poets breathed their own element and were essentially themselves, beholden for ideas to none. But as philosophers their merit lies, not in originality or independence, but in the charm or vigor of expression with which they present the thoughts that they have not invented as new creations but have discovered as already in existence.

See p. 164

Pondering upon these poet-philosophers who have interpreted for the lover of literature the thought of their time; observing how they become progressively less positive in thought, less convinced, less dogmatic, one can but speculate on the influences

that will be reflected when the poet-philosopher arises to interpret the twentieth century. His will be the voice of a world in chaos, of an archaic social system tottering to its fall, of an industrial strife which more and more robs life of all ideals except utility and gain. It may be the voice of an international state, united for ideals of peace; or of a persistent international rivalry issuing in such warfare as shames the carnage of the jungle by its savageness. His may be the voice of a generation, as yet hypothetical, that understands the theory of relativity. He may, for the better fortune of art, be spokesman for the end of an epoch of futurism in music, painting, and poetry. He must, if religion is yet to live, give expression to an ideal of human love and service as the pathway to the apprehension of God. He may—who knows? —arrive at such a contact with the unseen world as to prove that immortality which all the thinkers in all the ages have sought to prove. And then—

Will he have arrived at any truer comprehension of man's relation to the infinite than did Davies in his prayer for inspiration?

"O Light that mak'st the light, which makes the day!
Which setst the eye without, and mind within;
'Lighten my spirit with one cleare heavenly ray."

Will he have reached any higher conception of the whole duty of man than did Pope?

"Slave to no sect, who takes no private road,
But looks through nature up to nature's God;
Pursues that chain which links th' immense design,
Joins heav'n and earth, and mortal and divine;
Learns from this union of the rising whole,
The first, last purpose of the human soul;
"And knows where faith, law, morals, all began,
All end—in love of God and love of man."

And will he have attained any fuller knowledge of "the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" than was Tennyson's?

"Our little systems have their day,
They have their day and cease to be;
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they."

For the discovery arrived at by every sincere thinker in every age is one—the littleness of man in the infinite spaces of eternity.

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