A DIVINE VISION OF MAN NATURE AND GOD

C. JINARĀJADĀSA

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TO
MY BROTHER

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I

A DIVINE VISION OF MAN

IT is a true saying, and one experienced and proved by us all, that we rise to higher things on the stepping stones of our dead selves. The life of man is a continual change of vision; as experiences come to him one after another, it is as if he rose from one level to another as he climbs up a mountain side, and therefore his vision steadily changes.

We recognise that there are two kinds of vision possible for us, that of the ordinary man of the world, and that other vision which is presented to us by the great leaders of humanity, the founders of the religions. But we are apt to imagine that that lofty vision of the great teachers is something reserved for them alone, that we men in these lower levels are not capable of a divine vision. Yet the whole purpose of the message of Theosophy is to show that what the greatest of mankind has achieved shall some day be the achievement of every human being. In the course of these three lectures I shall try to show how there is possible for us a divine vision of man, of nature, and of God.

Taking the divine vision of man, let us first note what characteristics we find in the ordinary vision of man. What is the attitude of the average man towards those around him? You will find that, in one form or another, it has in it something of resentment. The average man does not like to see things round him that are different from him; he does not feel at home if people think differently from him; he does not feel at all happy if there should be any kind of challenge to his thoughts and feelings. The result is that each one of us carries with him some subtle form of antipathy —antipathy to non-nationals, and antipathy to those who profess religious ideas differing from our own; and if not positive antipathy, then a sense of superiority. We go about with a critical sense, and we make the standard of our judgment our self and its needs. What will help our self we call 'good'; wherever there is anything which seems in any way to narrow the expansion of that self, we call that 'evil'. Therefore we have the ordinary vision of man which is full of criticism, and we are very little influenced by that larger sympathy of which we are indeed capable.

But there is a different vision possible, and every cultured man and woman knows something of it, for it is given to us by the great poets. For what makes a poet is a larger vision and especially is the larger vision of man a characteristic of the great poets. The great poet stands apart from mankind;

you find that Shakespeare, who looks at all men as if from a Mount Olympus, notes their foibles and foolishnesses, and yet smiles on them all. There is the spirit of the divine vision when he makes one of his characters say about another, 'God made him, and therefore let him pass for a man.' You will note that, wherever Shakespeare deals with a villain, he has no kind of antipathy to him, whether it is to Cassio or Iago; he makes his villain live his life and expound himself, for Shakespeare has no resentment of the evil in the villain. Even in the case of Falstaff, full of coarseness and trickery, Shakespeare sees the man as he is, and there is no condemnatory judgment. A poet observes men as they are; therefore we find in the poets a larger vision than that of which the ordinary man is capable.

When we pass on from those, the great poets, to the greatest of mankind, those who gave the scriptures of mankind, then we have the widest vision possible. Take three great teachers, and consider the way that they looked upon men. Think of the great Christ, when He opened His arms and said, 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' Was there any distinction as to who should come to him, and who should not? 'All that labour and are heavy laden' are His, and He looks on all men as to be cherished—sinner and saint, good and bad, young and old; for all man are part inseparable of Him.

There is one other place where we find the same great divine vision shown by Him, and that is when He describes His coming again 'to judge the quick and the dead'. He describes how he will separate men on to His right hand and on to His left, and how He will call on those on His right hand to live with Him. And when He judges men, would you not think that the first question He would ask of those who are to live with him would be, 'were you baptised?'—for you look upon Christ as the Master only of Christendom, and therefore you would naturally think that His chief standard of right and wrong must be whether people had accepted Him or not as the Christ. Not a word does He say about such a judgment; His judgment is, 'Have you fed the hungry, given drink to the thirsty, visited the sick and those in prison?' Then will He say, 'For as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me.' And does He say His brethren are only those who have been baptized into the Christian faith? No; He merely says, 'the least of these My brethren'.

Turn now to the great teacher Sri Krishna of India. It is that same divine vision of all men which He shows when He says, 'by whatsoever path men approach Me I welcome them, for the path that men take from every side is Mine.' It is that same splendid divine vision which is shown by that other great teacher, the founder of Buddhism, when He

gives as the code of conduct for all those who would imitate Him, 'As a mother loves her son, her only child, so let a man shed love on all sides, when he sits or stands or sleeps.' Love on all sides! It is that splendid vision of man, where there are no divisions of race or creed or religion, which is given to mankind by the greatest leaders of men, those who have opened the gateway to heaven.

But we imagine that this lofty vision is only possible to these few, the great giants, the lofty peaks of our mountain range of humanity. But the message of Theosophy is, that what the greatest has achieved, that shall each one of us in this hall here present now, and each one of the myriads outside, achieve. And so it is interesting to study the way of achievement, in what way all men shall come to the divine vision.

When, with the aid of Theosophy, you analyse life's processes, and especially when you begin to understand the mystery of your own suffering, you begin to realize that life is forcing us, driving us, to learn certain lessons; and one great lesson is that of the One Life. Slowly, slowly, men are driven to understand that there is a Unity. This Unity will be discovered by men according to their temperament, and the names which they will give to the One Life matter not at all. There are those of a religious temperament who will say, 'All is the life of God.' Such, for instance, are the Hindus, born and bred in the ancient philosophies, and to them the One

Life comes as 'Brahman', that mysterious principle which is the root of everything, which makes a universe, which is man, which is God, which is the plant, which is living thing, and which is also the dead thing. The Hindu, when he mysteriously whispers the word 'Brahman', feels that he has realized something of the great Unity.

But those travelling along other lines equally come to that same recognition. When you find someone who is not specially religiously inclined, but who has the warm heart of the philanthropist, who throws himself into great human causes, when such a man or woman says that he or she believes in the 'solidarity of humanity', then in that phrase too the One Life is sensed, and the first step to the divine vision has been taken. People of another temperament, those more scientifically inclined, who see dimly some kind of great purpose—'a far-off divine event towards which the whole creation moves'—they too, through their intellect, begin to have a vision of the One Life. When that vision comes, whether through religion, science, philosophy, art or other means, the man has found the first step of the path that leads to the divine vision of man.

First, then, comes the recognition of the One Life. But that is not enough, for there is the necessity also for the discovery by man of his immortality, his deathlessness, while living in a frame that dies. We have sooner or later, each one

of us, to solve the problem of immortality. We must be utterly sure that we are immortal. We may look about with the mind; we may go to this philosophy or the other, but we shall find the proof of immortality only as we discover some kind of consecrated work. It is only as we offer ourselves to a consecrated work, in the toil and the sacrifice for it, that we shall have for the first time a glimpse of our immortal nature. And when that glimpse has come, and when also we have felt and known something of the Unity, then all our fellow-men have for each one of us a new message.

The man who is beginning to tread this higher path soon finds that every man has for him a message. What kind of a message? Think of those few who are bound to us by ties of love and tenderness, our friends, our beloved. What is the message such an one gives to us? Who shall describe it? Do not all the poets fail when trying to tell us what is the mystery of the friend or the beloved? Everyone who loves, when he reads the poems of past lovers, feels that he has discovered something new that was never felt before, for he knows that all life is transformed because one man, one woman, a child, a brother or sister, some one human being, frail as he himself is, has revealed to him something new about life. Perhaps one of the swiftest ways of describing what is the message our beloved brings is in the lines of the poet who said:

For oh, the thing that made you
What you are,
Will send me worshipping
To every star.

It is such a creed of the divinity and loveliness of all life that the friend, the beloved, can give.

Another kind of message comes to us when we find our 'spiritual father in God', he who is called in India the 'Guru'. When you have found your Master, that great personality who sheds on you the light of the meaning of the mystery of life, then it is that his message to you reveals all that is greatest. They say in India that when a man has found his Guru, the end is in sight, for as says a famous prayer: 'Guru is Brahmâ, Guru is Vishnu, Guru is Mahâdev, verily is Guru Parabrahman itself.' Therefore, to him who has found his Guru, the Guru brings the meaning of life, and in the Guru its full message is revealed.

No less great, but more difficult to understand, more mysterious, is the message of life which your enemy brings. We do not think of our enemies, those who hate us, as having any kind of a message to give to us. But if we will only stand detached from our enemy, if we will dispassionately try to understand him, we shall begin to realize that he hates us only with what is in us. It is a part of our self, which we have already sent out into life, which our enemy returns to us, and we call that part of us hatred. Our enemy can teach us something of the

mystery of life, how to stand detached, how to stand serene amidst things that come to us both of pain and pleasure. And so from all sides, men—the friend, the beloved, the Guru, the teacher, the enemy—will teach us something of life.

He who has thus far learnt the message that the few round him have taught to him, will begin then to see that every man also has for him a message. These myriads in the city whom you meet in the street, in the buses, in the trains, they are now to you but as a cypher, a figure of nought; but one day that cypher will be as if you put '1' before it, and at once it comes into significance as 10. Take a string of cyphers; put '1' before them, and millions and trillions come into existence. And so, to the one who begins to discover the mysterious quality of man, each man has for him a message. The purpose of that message fundamentally is to release in each one of us something that is there.

What happens to me when I love my friend? A great joy indeed, but more than that. He releases in me a capacity of love and tenderness, and from the moment that tenderness is released in me I can give it to others also. I, who have thought myself incapable of anything great, of any sacrifice, find that because I love I am capable of a great thing. That great thing was always in me, but I had to await the moment when there came one who knocked, who had the key of the door, and who could release me. The friend is always he who releases hidden capacities in another.

There are some whom we cannot love with the intimate tenderness we give to the friend. These, it may be, we merely admire; yet what is the admiration which we give to a hero but a discovery of a heroic capacity within ourselves? When I admire a hero, and my heart is thrilled at his great act of sacrifice, it is a way of discovering in myself the power to be a hero. When I pledge myself to live his life, when I enroll myself as his follower, it is only the freeing of myself from the bonds which bind me, so as to rise to live at his level. When we go into the picture galleries and admire the great artists, what is happening? We discover something of the nature of beauty which is within us. It is because the beautiful is awakened within us that we reverence it as it is presented to us. When in this great hall, year after year, the message of music is given, and tens of thousands hear and feel enraptured, what is the mystery that is being performed? Is it only that Beethoven is speaking of the greatness of life as he knows it? It is far more; he is calling out the greatness of life in each one of his hearers; he is releasing the hidden musician in all those who throng to listen to his wondrous music.

That is one meaning of life. Life is constantly releasing us. And so as we look round and see our friends, each friend releases in us the capacity of divine life. The hero releases within us an endurance that is divine; the artist releases in us a

beauty that dwells within us and is divine. All the time, by the interchange of thought and feeling, by the interplay of hidden forces from man to man, each one of us becomes released, and slowly our mortal self is laid aside, and we discover something of our hidden immortal nature.

When he who is seeking the divine vision has come thus far, and feels that every man has to him some kind of a message, when he has those 'other larger eyes' with which to gaze at men, then it is that there dawns on him, as a part of the divine vision, a wonderful scene. It is as if all his life of duty, all his life of tribulation, all that makes the world so full of darkness and gloom, were transformed; it is as if suddenly this world were transformed into mighty workshop where lives a mighty artist who has made hundreds and thousands of magnificent statues, and this artist takes him by the hand and removes the veil which covers each statue, and shows the great creations of his dreams. It is these great creations which God is fashioning out of us that were called by Plato 'archetypes'—those fundamental modes of divine thought and feeling which the Divine is trying to manifest through our nature here below.

When we come to the stage of seeing men from the new standpoint, that each has for us a message, then behind each man and each woman we begin to sense and to see this wonder of a divine archetype. Just as a picture gallery shows the great creations

of the artist, so all life becomes full of the creations of God, and behind each man you see a great archetype, the primal type of his thought and feeling, through which God is trying to fashion out of frail mortality a divine, immortal thing. Ruler and teacher, saint and artist, philosopher and scientist, philanthropist and hero, these and many other archetypes are on all sides of us.

And when you have gained the vision—even if only a fleeting vision—of man as seen by God, then as you look into the faces of men sunk in ignorance and sin, weak and failing in a hundred ways, then you begin to see the archetypes behind them all, and your judgment becomes so different from that of men. For then, for the first time, you begin to understand something of the interplay of the good and the evil in man, and you begin to put aside the lables which the world has given, of good and evil and begin to see that there is a divine purpose fashioning through a man's good and evil, through his pain and agony, through his glory and renunciation, something not for one life but which shall be for eternity.

When behind the sinner you can see the archetype, then you can understand why he sins; then you sympathize with his fall, because you know that even as he falls he is struggling to achieve; and why, blinded as he is by the light, he goes astray. No man consciously, purposely sins; he is only striving to see something of the light. But

hindered, trammelled by the dark forces of his past, he is blinded and goes astray. But when you have seen the archetype behind each man, then, with eyes of tenderness, you will look on all men, and then, indeed, will you say with a powerful reality, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.'

It is this vision of the divine archetypes behind all that is indeed the great message which life teaches you, when you are ready to learn it. For the first time mankind appears to you in a new way. Then, all men, irrespective of race and creed, caste and colour, the greatest of mankind as the least, is seen by you as divine.

We are accustomed to look on a few great ones of humanity as divine. Christ, Krishna, Buddha, Zoroaster, Mohammed, such and such a great person, we say, is divine; for we feel something of the divinity in them. Sometimes we feel it to such a tremendous extent that we are almost annihilated by it in their presence; we can only think of ourselves as merely human, and of them as transcendently divine. We feel that all life is transformed for us because they are divine incarnations, because God has descended and become 'the Word made flesh'. But all that rapture which the Christian has for Christ, which the Hindu has for Sri Krishna, that rapture which the Buddhist has as he contemplates his Lord and Master, that same rapture can be discovered in

every man and women that lives for there is no difference in kind between the greatest of mankind and the least of mankind. All men have the same wondrous divine nature; only, in the Christ, in Krishna and in Buddha, that divine nature is fully released, and in those others who are to you as cyphers, whose faces teach you nothing, it is still hidden, still imprisoned. But when you begin to possess the divine wisdom, then the rapture which you know concerning your beloved is possible from everyone.

Does it seem as if all the tenderness and exquisite and wonderful greatness which you have found in love diminishes, if it is said that you can find that same wonder in all? Ah! but there is a vision possible when, as you look on those who are sinners or strangers, you realize that there is something in each sinner or stranger that makes you bow the head and reverence and love him, though he be a sinner or a stranger. It is because Christ, Sri Krishna and Buddha have found these wonders that They came to the world, to show us that there is a divine way of looking at things.

Wherever you see an archetype, you must love it, bend the knee and worship it. Therefore there is a vision of all mankind, when the rapture and adoration, which you give to the great *Avataras,* the divine Incarnations, you feel capable of giving to all. Life will teach you how; when someone comes, a stranger of whom you know nothing, it

will be as if he suddenly unveiled himself, and stood forth in a divine majesty, and you can but stand enraptured, and love and worship.

This life, that seems so dark and dreary, can at times transform itself, if only we will watch the transformation. He who has something of the great divine vision sees the wonderful transformation on all sides. That great transformation can never be fully described, though it is found partially in the sacred scriptures of the world. Yet they fall short of the reality which each one of you will some day achieve—this vision of the One, indescribable, beautiful, transcendent, all-inspiring, enthralling, enrapturing, something which is ever before you and which you can never fully reveal in words. Yet poets attempt it; and so in the *Bhagavad Gita* the poet sings of it, and says:

> Wonderful, wistful, to contemplate!
> Difficult, doubtful, to speak upon,
> Strange and great for tongue to relate!
> Mystical hearing for everyone!
> Nor wotteth man this, what a marvel it is,
> When seeing, and saying, and hearing are done.

Just as before some magnificent sunset you gaze and gaze and have no words to describe it, and just as it is transforming itself and new colours are coming all the time, and your imagination fails, and you can only say, 'it is wonderful; it is

beautiful!' so is life when the divine vision comes. Then it is that every human being that lives is indeed 'the true and the living God'. Then it is that, much as you may love your religion, your creed, your nation, or a particular type of culture, you pass beyond these barriers which are placed on your imagination, and leave all cultures, all religions, all faiths, and fall and worship the true and the living God everywhere.

It is true that most of us have trained ourselves to seek God in a particular church and in a particular temple. The millions in the world today can only see Divinity afar off, in the church and in the temple. They see God through a tradition, through a particular form of worship presented to them. Rites and ceremonies, formulas and beliefs, these are the ways through which they tread the road to God, to the God of tradition. But when God has shown you His face, not through tradition, but direct, immediate, then it is that all tradition drops away. It was said by Sri Krishna to the Hindus, that 'when the flood waters are on all sides, what need is there to go to a well for water?' When the Hindu has discovered the truth direct, what need is there for him to go to the Vedas? And so, similarly, when a man has come to Christ, he needs no longer a Christian Church nor an Old or New Testament, for the Christ suffices. When a Hindu has come to Sri Krishna, he does not need to go to shrines and temples, on pilgrimages, or

perform sacrifices, for all these things then mean nothing to him. He may still go through an orthodox routine because, sometimes, as pointed out in the *Bhagavad Gita,* if the wise man expects all to live up to his standard, he makes the children to fall. But if he subscribes at all, it will never be to the narrow forms of religion, never to the narrow limits imposed on the mind by churches. True that only a few can see God always near. Ah! if only that few would demand to see God near.

We complain often that we are seeking God but do not find Him. But are we seeking Him with sacrifice, or are we seeking Him, asking Him to appear to us in the particular images which we present to Him? We go to Him with our particular type of longing and say, 'O God, come to us in this particular longing.' We limit Him and do not allow Him to come to us as He desires to come. If we would only realize that He requires absolute liberty for His manifestation; that we must not go to Him clothed in our creed, our religion, our culture; but must stand utterly naked, ready to wear the garment which He is going to give us; then we shall see the face of God whom we desire to see.

How often has it been said that if man makes one step towards God, He makes ten towards man? How is it then that we come to lecture halls like this, seeking God? Only because we have not yet learned to make the step towards Him in the direction in which He is making the ten steps

towards us. When once you have seen the face of God, you do not need lectures, books, churches, services or ceremonies. He is the omnipresent God, and His face is shown to you in everything everywhere in the world. How truly was it said by George Macdonald, the mystic, who must have had something of the divine vision:

O God of mountains, stars and boundless spaces,
O God of freedom and of joyous hearts,
When Thy face looketh forth from all men's faces,
There will be room enough in crowded marts;
Brood Thou around me, and the noise is o'er,
Thy universe my closet with shut door.

All the magnificent gifts of God in the universe are ready to come to us here and now, if only we will look for God on the road on which He is seeking us. When the divine vision of man comes to you, when through friend, beloved, teacher, stranger, or enemy, something of that vision has come to you of what man is, then you will long to release all men from their thraldom. For each man and woman now in the slums of London and Paris and Berlin, or anywhere where there is any misery, is a diamond soul of indescribable wonder. You go into the streets; you see unhealthy, ignorant, sodden faces; but you only see the man rising up out of the brute. But there is the other vision also, and so you know that behind each one of them is

the wonderful message which life is waiting to reveal. Every one of these, the ignorant and the sinful, has some word to speak to you concerning life, and until that word is spoken, life's message to you is not complete.

And then, having seen the archetypes of God on all sides, you work for men and you know the nobility of sacrifice for men. What matter then to you if God is a Trinity or a Unity, whether God exists or not? You have found the Supreme Godhead in the world here below, in all His myriads, and they tell you what is the life of God, and without them you will not understand what is God's nature. It is then indeed that life for the first time begins. We imagine we know holiness because a transformation comes in us in a church or in a temple, but that is only the first beginning of holiness. When the rapture of holiness can be sensed by you in the slum and in the presence of the sinner, then, for the first time, holiness begins in its full splendour. Again and again we say, 'God, God,' and look up into the sky. But why do not we look here into the faces of our fellow men? If only we had the eyes to see, the mystery of God is there. All the Testaments, all the Vedas, all the Tripîtakas, all are there as open pages, in the faces of these men and women around us. God's great book of revelation is humanity. It is His wonderful message that each man is the antidote for all the world's ill. It is quite true that God exists, that His

power is here, there, and up above. All that the religions have taught us about the nature of God is perfectly true. But they have yet to reach us much concerning the divine nature of man. They have to teach us that each of us has within him this wondrous mystery, that each man is both church and temple, that each man is not only the worshipper but also the worshipped, that the divine sacrifice is being performed not only in consecrated buildings, but also in the hearts and minds of the myriads around.

It is to teach this message that each great teacher comes. Why did Christ come in Palestine? Was merely to call men to fall at His feet to worship Him? No, but rather to show that each individual could live the Christ life. Why did Sri Krishna come to us? To say that He was another *avatār?* No, only to show that each could play the role of Brahman revealed. Why did the great Buddha come? It was to say as He did, 'I, like yourself, am a man among men; I have striven; I stand now as a saviour of mankind to show to every one of you that, if you tread the path and live the life, you too shall be as I am.' It is to show us that divine vision of which They are capable is something for us also, that all the greatest in the world have come, and will come again and again. That is Their joy of sacrifice; a thousand times They will come, until more and more millions will rise with Them to become of Their band, possessing Their divine vision.

My brothers, the wonder of life for us is yet to begin. It will begin when those souls, who have been looking upwards to a heaven to understand the mystery of life and mystery of God, will look downwards here among men, and search in their hearts and, putting aside all prejudice of race and colour, will sympathize with all men, toil for them, sacrifice for them. There in Regent Street is the mystery of God, and there, as you go, even in Regent Street, you will find that the divine vision is ready to burst upon your sight, if only you will dare to live the life which the great ones have lived. You can live such a life as They have lived if you, who have enrolled yourselves under the banner of your Master the Christ, will dare to throw open your arms and say, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' If each one of you will be that kind of a Christian, you will know that the divine vision is yours. Then you will also know what is His nature, the true nature of your Master.

It is the same for every follower of every faith; if he will not merely put his teacher upon a pedestal, but will dare to rise to the level of the teacher and, even though he fail a thousand times, determine to be as the teacher, then the divine vision is his. That divine vision is ready to burst upon some of you today, because you have already freed yourself to some extent, for you know something of the larger culture of the world; your hearts are open to many

more religions than your own, and you are ready to begin to tread the great road to deification. From some of you only a few sacrifices more are needed. If you will only make those sacrifices, putting aside all that limits, even in nationality and in the narrow ideas which are proclaimed as the only possible patriotism; if you will rise to a higher conception of humanity; if you will make yourself and your country as the chalice of a divine offering, not as a rival to any other chalice, then the path to the divine vision is clear before you, and the great transformation of life will begin.

Life today is not all full of splendour; there are so many thorns below the roses, so many wearinesses and so many anguishes. Yet through all that dark cloud of agony, you can hear a wonderful melody, for love is at the heart of it. That song will remind you of your own joyous nature, and that the greatest of good and loveliness and you are one, not two. You can possess all these treasures of the realm of God. They are not kept up there above in heaven for you to possess when you have died and entered into heaven; heaven and all its splendour can come to you now, if only you will dare to live and work for the divine vision.

And so, my brothers, do not imagine that to be spiritual is a question of going to services or lectures or of reading books. It is a matter of looking into the hearts of men, sharing their joys and anguishes, and feeling that you, because you

are just a little older and stronger than most, can strengthen the weak and purify the miry places of the world. Dare to begin to work for that great life, and the divine vision of man will inevitably be yours.

II

A DIVINE VISION OF NATURE

In our attempt to understand the meaning of life, I have placed as our first topic, 'The Divine Vision of Man', and as the third and last, 'The Divine Vision of God'; in between the two there comes, 'The Divine Vision of Nature'.

The word 'nature' usually connotes to us what is not God and what is not man. When we think of that aspects of the world which appeals to our deepest emotions, swaying us with religious aspirations, we use the term 'God' to describe our sense of the infinite majesty of things; and similarly, when we feel most profoundly the tragedy of man, then we think of 'man' as distinct from 'God'. But, as not partaking of the character either of God or man, we usually mean by nature the world of inanimate things.

In the common use of the word, we mean by nature the sky, the sea, the woods and the forests, and we say that we long to go out to nature, meaning thereby, away from man's habitations. Sometimes, we also mean by the term nature living

life, through a sub-human life, of the plants and the animals. There is, however, a third use of the word which is more characteristic of the scientist, when he terms the *process of Eternity* in which we exist, nature. When he looks at the stars and the planets, when he sees mighty cosmic forces at work, he uses the word nature to signify the totality of an evolutionary process.

What is this nature, which is on all sides of us, of which we are a part, and which sometimes so dominates us that we feel utterly helpless before her? If we approach the subject from the standpoint of our modern learning, represented by science, nature is seen as a mechanical process. All natural phenomena, says the scientist, are the result of forces which began with the beginning of time. If the earth revolves on its axis, it is because the earth received a spinning motion from the original nebula whence it has condensed. If any water is exposed to the air and bacterial life there appears, the scientist says it is 'natural,' because there are germs in the air, and those germs, finding a proper medium, propagate in the water.

Generally speaking, then, the modern attitude towards nature is, in the main, that it is something mechanical. Not completely so, however, because here and there we find a scientist who senses that perhaps the mystery of nature cannot be explained by merely labelling it. Let me read you the description by Huxley of a natural process, because

he almost sees with an intuitive vision that nature cannot perhaps be so mechanical after all.

'The student of nature wonders the more and is astonished the less, the more conversant he becomes with her operations; but of all the perennial miracles she offers to his inspection, perhaps the most worthy of admiration, is the development of a plant or of an animal from its embryo. Examine the recently laid egg of some common animal, such as a salamander or a newt. It is a minute spheriod in which the best microscope will reveal nothing but a structureless sac, enclosing a glairy fluid holding granules in suspension. But strange possibilities lie dormant in that semi-fluid globe. Let a moderate amount of warmth reach its watery cradle, and the plastic matter undergoes changes so rapid and yet so steady and purposelike in their succession, that one can only compare them to those operated by a skilled modeller upon a formless lump of clay. As with an invisible trowel, the mass is divided and sub-divided into smaller and smaller proportions until it is reduced to an aggregation of granules not too large to build withal the finest fabrics of the nascent organism. And, then, it is as if a delicate finger traced out the line to be occupied by the spinal column, and moulded the contour of the body, pinching up the head at one end, the tail at the other, and fashioning flank and limb into due salamandrine proportions in so artistic a way that,

after watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic microscope would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work.' (*Lay Sermons,* chapter, 'The Origin of Species'.)

There we have just a faint inkling of a new vision of nature, which Huxley was half on the verge of discovering. And, indeed, if you look at creation around you, for example, at the marking of animals, especially of the birds, you cannot help feeling that there is an artist behind it all, for much of nature is so exquisitely artistic; you feel that nature cannot be merely mechanical, because of the balanced beauty in natural things, a quality of creative beauty which is the despair of the artist.

We all know the non-mechanical explanation of nature which is given us by religion. We are told that God created things, and that therefore everything which exists must show something of God's hand. In ancient days, in Greece, they postulated that the universe was the expression of a divine reason, which they called the Logos. Similarly, in ancient India, in Buddhism, a religion which postulates no Divinity or Creator, the process of nature is held to be intelligent and idealistic, but it is an eternal Dharma or Law 'which moves to righteousness' that is at work from the beginning of time.

But it is in a religion like Hinduism that we have in a very marked fashion the conception that all creation, that which we call evolution, is the work of a Creator who toils to build; so that what we call nature is not a mere happening, but a purposeful planning and achieving. Let me here quote to you from one of the ancient Hindu books, which gives us in the form of a myth the great story of creation. Just as we have in *Genesis* an attempt to give, in the form of myth, what is the meaning of nature, how behind it there is a Builder at work, so we find in ancient India, in very graphic form, the idea of One who builds and unbuilds and builds again. This mighty personage is called Prajâpati, the 'Lord of Creatures'. Let me quote to you the quaint, concise words of this myth of the Builder who is behind everything.

In the beginning the universe indeed was non-existent. Now this person Prajâpati desired, 'May I be more than one, may I be reproduced.' He toiled, he practised austerity.

Being worn out with toil and austerity, he created first of all Brahman, the Triple Science.

Resting on that foundation, he again practised austerity.

He created the waters out of *Vach*—speech. It pervaded everything here.

He desired, 'May I be reproduced from these waters.' He entered the waters with that Triple Science. Hence an egg arose. He touched it.

'Let it exist, let it exist and multiply,' so he said.

All this universe appeared as one form only, namely water.

He desired, 'May it become more than one, may it reproduce itself.'

He toiled and practised austerity, he created foam.

He was aware that, 'This indeed looks different, it is becoming more than one; I must toil indeed!'

Worn out with toil and austerity, he created clay, mud, saline soil and sand, pebble, rock, ore, gold, plants, and trees; therewith he clothed the earth.

Having created these worlds, he desired, 'May I create such creatures as shall be mine in these worlds!'

By his mind he entered into union with speech, he became pregnant, he created the All-Gods; he placed them in the quarters. *(Shatapatha Brāhmana,* vi, 1, 1. S.B.E.)

It is in these ancient ideas also that we come across a conception about nature from which we parted long ago in building our modern civilization, and it is that nature is ethical. We think that our codes of ethics can only be derived from human experience; since we are men, we think that right and wrong can only be taught to us by men who have tried to live rightly and have suffered by living wrongly. But in ancient days, for instance in Greece, nature herself was considered the teacher of what is right and wrong. They said

that the planets move as they do because there is a right action and a wrong action in the motion of a planet. It is this same conception of the moral basis of natural phenomena which we have in a touching, simple myth from ancient India.

And I might here remark that the ancient Hindu, as the modern Hindu, has an attitude to what we term 'evil' which is somewhat different from that which we usually find in the West. The general attitude of Christianity is that if there exists a devil, either one cosmic devil or myriads of little devils, they are all against the Will of God, and must therefore be annihilated. The Hindu sees in 'evil' what mystics have called the 'dark side of good'. Hence, therefore, you must not be surprised if demons are brought into a myth side by side with angels and men, nor when you find that Lord of Creatures, God Himself, is perfectly friendly even to the demons.

1. The threefold descendants of Prajapati, angels, men and demons, dwelt as students with their father Prajapati.

Having finished their studentship, the angels said: 'Tell us something, Sir'. He told them the syllable 'Da.' Then he said, 'Did you understand?' They said, 'We did understand. You told us *Damayata*—be subdued.' 'Yes', he said, 'you have understood.'

2. Then the men said to him: 'Tell us something, Sir.' He told them the same syllable, 'Da.' Then he

said, 'Did you understand?' They said, 'We did understand. You told us *Datta*—give'. 'Yes', he said, 'you have understood'.

3.Then the demons said to him: 'Tell us something, Sir'. He told them the same syllable 'Da'. Then he said, 'Did you understand?' They said, 'We did understand, you told us *Dayadhvam*—be merciful'. 'Yes', he said, 'You have understood.'

The divine voice of thunder repeats the same, Da, Da, Da, that is, be subdued, give, be merciful. Therefore let this triad be taught —subduing, giving, mercy, (*Brihadāranyaka Upanishad,* v.2, S.B.E.)

I do not know which is the more important conception for us as human beings, that we should know with science that thunder is a discharge of electricity, or imagine with the children that the voice of the thunder is telling us to be self-controlled, to be charitable, and to be merciful.

There was a time in the world's history when men thought that all nature had this ethical meaning, that the elements in their action taught us lessons; the sun rose and set then, not to itself alone, but also to teach us something of the mystery of God. It is that conception of the ethical nature of everything that we have slightly reflected in some poets, especially in Wordsworth, when for instance, he mentions his feeling that:

To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

It is 'the tears in things', the wisdom in things, which the ancient Hindus give us in those magnificent hymns in praise of natural phenomena in the Rig Veda, in praise of the sun, of its outer nature that gives warmth and life, in praise of the hidden Sun who impels all men to unfold their inner divine nature, in praise of the winds, in praise of the storms, in praise of the fire, in praise of the twilights, and in praise of that wonderful exquisite being Ushas, the dawn maiden. In these days we have travelled so far from nature that, when we read these ancient songs, we say they are only poetical imagination. Yet I wonder if they are after all only poetical imagination! For what is meant by that phrase? We shall understand what is meant by that phrase if first we can define what imagination is and what poetry is. Then perhaps we shall know that the ancient sages and seers, when they looked at the Sun and sensed its mystic greatness, and felt its mighty force streaming on them, saw with their intuition a vision of deeper truth than any manual of physics or astronomy can give to us today.

The divine vision of nature begins along several ways, and of these I will only touch upon four, as representing four temperaments, four avenues of approach to this magnificent vision.

One way is by the worship of nature. This way of the worship of nature is in some ways the oldest.

You will find that all primitive peoples sense something mysterious in nature that must be worshipped. The savage, who does not understand that thunder is the discharge of electricity, worships the thunder. He worships the volcano, though he does not know what is the cause of an eruption. It does not matter for the moment that he is ignorant of the laws of nature; the most important thing to notice is that the savage has an attitude of true reverence, and that he is able to put aside his personality, and see for a fragment of time the thing which is outside of himself 'as it is'. He regards nature with awe, for nature is indeed terrifying. Nature is truly awe-inspiring, and it is not a little thing, even for a savage, to put aside all his savage nature and fall down in worship of a thing that is worthy of the utmost worship. But not only the savage worships nature; for it is one of the characteristics of the highest civilisations, that the more men are cultured, the more they begin to feel by intuition that nature is instinctive with a mighty power, a mighty wisdom. The highest of mankind also worship nature. Though they may have within the mind a clear scientific understanding of what nature is, yet when a higher part of their nature is called out, they then feel that rocks and clouds have another meaning for them, a meaning which impels them to utmost admiration. I do not think that in English there is any more glorious expression of the worship of nature than in

Tennyson's poem, 'The Higher Pantheism', where, speaking for the modern world, he tries to voice what all the highest feel who live in their fullness:

The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains—
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He? tho' He be not that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee: thyself art the reason why;
For is He not all but that which has power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and thou fulfillest thy doom.
Making Him broken gleams, and a stifled splendour and gloom.

Speak to Him thou for He heareth, and Spirit with Spirit can meet—
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law, the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have the wit to see is a straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not He?

And along that path indeed, of the worship of nature, man begins to tread the first steps on the journey to the glorious, divine vision of nature.

But there is another avenue of approach and that is by the study of nature, by such a study, for instance, as is possible for us today with the help of modern science. We are apt to imagine that science will take away from us the sense of reverence. Science can never take away anything from our sense of reverence, if the science we are dealing with is true and complete knowledge. Science never robs us of faith. There can never be any quarrel between faith and reason whilst there may be a dispute between faith and reasons. Give a wrong reason and science rebels; give the right reason, and science and the highest in man begin to feel a

sense of reverence. It is the same with us theosophists, who feel profoundly that the more knowledge we gain along all lines of science the greater is the vision we have of the divine work. To us, all the departments of science, as they are today working to discover knowledge, are adding a little more wisdom towards the comprehension of the mighty processes of the universe. Whether it be biology, astronomy, physics or chemistry—it does not matter what is the department—only go deep enough, and you will come to the vision of a divine mind at work.

That is one of the wonderful, inspiring things rising from the study of nature, that we begin to understand nature, and the understanding of her mighty processes brings utmost reverence. And here let me quote to you an understanding of nature which was expressed by an old Scotsman some seventy years ago, Thomas Erskine, of Linlathen. In his day there was not one-hundredth of the scientific knowledge of nature that we have today, but along the lines of such science as then existed, he came to such a wonderful conclusion as this:

'We are evidently in the midst of a process, and the slowness of God's processes in the material world prepares us, or ought to prepare us, for something analogous in the moral world; so that at least we may be allowed to trust that He who has taken untold ages for the formation of a bit of old

red sandstone may not be limited to threescore years and ten for the perfecting of a human spirit.'

What a wonderful lesson that is to come to, by examining the rocks of nature! Another lesson, exquisitely using the fuller knowledge that science gives us today, we have in the well-known verses of W. H. Carruth, written by one who is a teacher of science:

EACH IN HIS OWN TONGUE

A fire-mist and a planet,
A crystal and a cell,
A jelly-fish and a saurian,
And caves where the cave-men dwell;
Then a sense of law and beauty,
And a face turned from the clod,—
Some call it Evolution,
And others call it God.

A haze on the far horizon,
The infinite, tender sky,
The ripe, rich tint of the cornfields,
And the wild geese sailing high;
And all over upland and lowland
The charm of the golden-rod,
Some of us call it Autumn,—
And others call it God.

Like the tide on a crescent sea-beach.
When the moon is new and thin,

Into our hearts high yearnings
Come welling and surging in;
Come from the mystic ocean
Whose rim no foot has trod,—
Some of us call it Longing.
And others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
A mother starved for her brood
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
And Jesus on the rood;
And millions who, humble and nameless,
The straight hard pathway plod,—
Some call it Consecration,
And others call it God.

Surely in these words of the poet-scientist we have a revelation of nature when approached with the keenest and profoundest intellect.

There is also a vision of nature possible by loving nature. I differentiate the worship of nature from the love of nature, for usually, in the worship of nature, there is, as it were, a little barrier between man, the worshipper, and nature, the object of worship. But when we come to the love of nature the man delights in a kinship with the sky, the clouds, and the animals; each little thing in nature speaks of a brotherliness, of a tenderness, of a younger brother towards an elder. It is this exquisite love of nature which we have again and

again in Wordsworth. Wordsworth, prosy as he often is, and dull to our modern minds, yet stands out supreme amongst the poets of England, because throughout his poems there is an intense truthfulness to nature and a linking of man to nature.

It was Wordsworth who sensed that striking mystery of the two types of souls among men, the sea souls and the mountain souls. As we go out into nature and learn to love nature, we feel a sense of utmost brotherliness, as child to mother, as brother to sister, as friend to friend, and thereby comes for us the possibility of a new vision, a divine vision of nature.

Then comes the fourth way of approach to the divine vision, and that is by 're-fashioning nature'. You will ask what I mean by 're-fashioning nature'. How can we re-fashion nature, for nature is nature and, it may be, there is a Divinity behind her workings? How then can men re-fashion nature? But that is exactly what man does as the artist. When a man has looked at many sunsets with his artistic nature keen in him, and then, inspired by one particular sunset, he paints a picture, he paints not the nature which he sees or has seen, and which a camera could reproduce with greater accuracy; for, though he makes a picture of a sunset in a nature which for two seconds is never the same, yet his creation is a picture of that permanent nature which does not change.

It is the work of the artist, in every department of art, to grasp the fleeting, to find reflected in it the permanent type, the 'archetype' as Plato would say. And then as he paints, as he composes, as he sculptures, as he creates the dance, as he makes the poem—it does not matter what is the form of art in which he specializes—he does re-fashion nature. Let me illustrate the way that nature was re-fashioned by one man: I refer to Wagner and the way in which he has described nature. Take, for instance, the forest murmurs in *Siegfried*. In the forest murmurs we are given not merely the murmurs of a particular forest of the play, but forest murmurs everywhere. So when summer has vanished with her leaves, when the world is frozen and cold, the forest murmurs of *Siegfried* will bring summer before us again. When we understand the significance of Wagner's 'nature music', then we know that he is giving to us the eternal forest, the eternal water or fire; when we hear the call of Donner and the mists gather around him, and the 'elemental essences' of water all come together as the music calls, we begin to realize an aspect of nature that is permanent.

The artist it is who is able to re-fashion nature, and give us the thing as it stands eternally perfect, and inseparable too from our own unending life. That is what I mean by saying that the artist's work is to re-fashion nature.

Whatever is the mode of approach whether we

come through worship or love, through study or refashioning, we shall begin to discover certain mighty mysteries in nature. And of those, one which is easy to discover, is her tremendous power which seems at times utterly ruthless. When Tennyson contemplates nature in her evolution, he sees that she is so 'careful of the type,' but so ruthless of the individual. There are times, when you stand before some mighty aspect of nature—Niagara, the Himalayas, or a storm at sea—when all seems power, ruthless power, before which man seems nothing indeed. But pass beyond that stage, and you will begin to feel one with that power. You will find that Niagara is telling you of a Niagara of power within you, that the mountain range is telling you of a mountain range of power and peace in you; the storm at sea will tell you the mystery of your own storms of love and despair. Nature releases from within us the sense of power.

When we watch nature with a vision of worship or of study, or by whatever mode we have tried to understand her according to our temperament, we begin to feel the rhythm in life. That rhythm in life is obvious to us with an understanding of Theosophy—how life comes, possesses a form and grows in it, and then, when it has come to the limit of its growth, vanishes, and then, after an interval, comes back again. These entrances and exits of life tell us something of the great rhythm of life, of those cyclic processes in things, how nature has a

law of cycles, and how in men too there are cycles, for there is rhythem in all things. We pass on through that to the discovery that this rhythm is not mechanical, not merely a crushing fate, but indeed the dance of life, that wonderful dance of Shiva the Destroyer, the first aspect of God of which we hear in Hindu tradition. Shiva, who is the mighty Destroyer, only destroys so that life can build again. And so Shiva reveals to us the wonderful rhythm of life, which has within it the elements of joy, of expression, of creation, of release.

In all these ways man begins to feel the mystery of nature. Then 'naturally' (and I use that very word because it shows the logical processes of everything), man begins to change as a living human being. He will change first with the realization that nature is living, for when he looks at the clouds, at the hills and the waves, they are not merely things of matter. They are life veiled indescribably in matter. Just as in the ancient days of India, when men saw the sunrise, they said, 'This is Ushas, the dawn maiden,' so will the man who goes along the line I have outlined begin to feel towards nature. He will feel everywhere in her the mysterious quality of life.

As his soul expands to sunrises and sunsets, he will be almost on the verge of seeing behind them the joy of the angels; the myriads of blades of grass as the sunlight plays among them, the creatures of

earth and air, the very rocks around him which seem lifeless, all these will give a mysterious unity to life. Then, because nature has revealed to him a little of her meaning, he will sense something of his own hidden power. We imagine that it is only from books and poems and gospels that we discover the meaning of ourselves; but if we will go out into nature, with the right attitude of heart and mind, the very life and death struggles in nature will tell us of those processes of life and death within our own hearts. For nature always will tell us something of the hidden possibilities of ourselves.

Let me here mention three great poets of England, and how they have helped us to gain something of the divine vision of nature. It has been well said that Wordsworth bound the whole world of man and nature together in a new bond of emotional life; Keats revealed afresh the visible creation clothed in a new magic of beauty; Shelley saw everywhere the invisible spirit of the universe, and those who could follow his soaring flight found themselves caught up into regions beyond the limits of flesh or even time and space.

It is not a small experience to travel with Shelley and look at a cloud and feel the life beyond the cloud. And what is so difficult for most people in Shelley is that he is not dealing with things 'as they are'; he is dealing with the divine ideas behind the things. People have the same difficulty in understanding the pictures of Watts; you may

remember that once, when Watts was questioned about this difficult quality of his pictures, he replied, 'I paint ideas, not things.' When you have learnt to look beyond the things, and commune with the ideas, then indeed the divine vision of nature begins to be yours. Nature then manifests in an utterly new way, and you accept nature with her full message of life.

But also nature must be subdued. I have said that nature is ruthless; if we think of ourselves as infinitesimal fragments in her process, we are indeed helpless. But I have also said that the artist can refashion nature. We have to learn the mystery of subduing nature, just as when Wagner created his fire music he subdued the fire not only of our earth but of the whole universe. When you merely look on at crowded Regent Street and Piccadilly, you may be repelled; but when you paint Regent Street and Piccadilly, you will have seen them with 'larger other eyes,' and you will have subdued Regent Street and Piccadilly, and so transformed them that they live within you for ever, not as streets of luxury and shallowness and lust, but as the really glorious places as they exist in the divine plan. And so it is with the artist when he composes, or sculptures, or when he creates anything. He then subdues nature, and thereby he releases himself from his thraldom to nature.

The artist who knows the true mystery of creation can stand forth in life as the Liberated

One; and every great and mighty teacher who is a Liberated One is indeed an artist. Have you noted how intensely artistic Christ is in all his similes and parables, and in the way He presents things? The mighty founder of Buddhism was an exquisite poet. You might not, perhaps, have thought of the Lord Buddha as a great eastern poet; but his sermons are full of verses composed by Him. Every great teacher has in him the quality of the artist; that is why he sees men as creators, and comes to teach them what we call his 'way', his technique of religion. It is by that 'way' that man becomes nature's high priest.

How can one describe the nature of the man who has come to the divine vision? Just as the human priest, who is consecrated to the divine vision, is mediator between God and man, it matters not to what God the offering is made, so is it possible for men and women, such as you and I are, to stand midway between nature and all the humble representatives of nature. For the rocks, too, long as men long; the plants have their own aspirations; and all nature, which is the embodiment of divine life, is dimly feeling after a great redeemer. The plant is hungering for Him; everything which seems to be merely matter is dreaming of the day when it shall be released from matter, and shall receive in the divine plan a full embodiment of the divine life. When one has discovered the vision of nature, his life is so blended with nature, with the

plants and the trees, that steadily all things begin to feel that he is their high priest, who will express to God something of their longings.

It is one of the most wonderful and exquisite things of life to go out into the fields, and as you admire all nature to know that all the little plants and the little animals and the clouds are stirred by a longing to feel through you, to make you their high priest, so that they too may join with you in your offering. Indeed, it is some such quality of the nature of the high priest that is suggested in that exquisite poem of James Stephens,'Little things':

Little things that run and quail
And die in silence and despair;

Little things that fight and fail
And fall on earth and sea and air;

All trapped and frightened little things,
The mouse, the coney, hear our prayer.

As we forgive those done to us,
The lamb, the linnet and the hare,

Forgive us all our trespasses,
Little creatures everywhere.

The man who loves nature can go out into the woods and fields, and though he be saddened by all the suffering which man has inflicted on animals, and by the uglinesses with which man has blighted the face of nature, he can give the blessing that

God has for nature. That is one of the mighty discoveries which come to those who love nature.

There is still another wonderful discovery, and that is, to know that you can be mankind's saviour. What does that word 'saviour' mean? It may mean many things, but I think in the main the idea is that a saviour is one who releases mankind from bondage. That is what you do, with regard to your fellow men, when you begin to seek and to possess the divine vision. For, from then, if you are the true artist, the one who understands the inner mysteries of his art, as you create you create for others. When a poet, out of the depths of his depression, writes a sonnet, not only does he release himself, but he flings wide open the door out of depression to the thousands who read him. When some great mystic writes a human of devotion, he makes others feel that devotion with him. When a mighty musician in terms of his abstract conceptions describes in music things which seem utterly indescribable, he takes us by the hand with him into that other land. Always he who has lived with nature is enabled to release his own fellow man. Nature comes to you then as mother, as brother, as sister, as friend; she leads you to your own Beloved, that ideal you have placed before yourself.

Then you know that all that you have achieved, all you have felt with your Beloved, is for man. For it is a striking thing that when you come to fashion

the real, the inner nature of things as in art, there is no such thing as 'art for art's sake'. What you achieve is always for the world's sake; and since the closest thing to you is man, it is always for man's sake. Everything you do throws open the door of release to man, to the plant, to the animal, and to the angel. That is one of the great indescribable joys of him who possesses the divine vision of nature. Not only is he the high priest, he is also the keeper of the prison, for he has the keys in his hand; and from rock, from plant and from animal, he releases the divine nature that is in them.

It is in these ways indeed that he who has seen the divine vision goes from stage to stage towards divinity. All life means then to him inexpressible happiness, and each happiness is a sacred experience in trust for the use of all. Then to him a sunset is a scripture, a symphony is a gospel. How may he describe what these indescribable things are to him, except by the life he tries to live?

And lastly, there comes to him that experience which is his who is on the threshold of divinity. Then the might of this mighty nature, of which we are all tiny fragments, comes back to him again; and he, who is but a fragment, is one with the whole and the spark at last is one with the Flame. Then you, a helpless human being still under the thraldom of death, can stand and live among men, flashing to them the power of immortality. Is such a thing possible? That is exactly what does happen;

and I cannot do better than quote to you a poem of George W. Russell (A.E.), where he describes the childhood of Apollo, and what nature sings to Apollo:

Now the roof-tree of the midnight spreading
Buds in citron, green and blue,
From afar its mystic odours shedding,
Child, on you.

Now the buried stars beneath the mountains
And the vales their life renew,
Jetting rainbow blooms from tiny fountains,
Child, for you.

As within our quiet waters passing
Sun and moon and stars we view,
So the loveliness of life is glassing,
Child, in you.

In the diamond air the sun star glowing
Up its feathered radiance threw,
All the jewels glory there was flowing,
Child, for you.

And the fire divine in all things burning
Yearns for home and rest anew,
From its wanderings far again returning,
Child, to you.

He who has this vision of nature longs to make every child of God like himself. That is why all who love Nature cannot separate themselves from man. They long that man, every man, too, should be

released; and those who love nature long to bring their inspiration into the city, into the slum, and to make the creative power of God, now so feebly felt by men, surge to its full through all their days.

It is a wonderful mystery that life tells us, that all the majesty of the world is ours, and that all its joys are somewhere hidden within us. Nature has given them to us all, and we shall find if we will seek the divine vision of nature. With that divine vision comes at-onement with man, and God, and nature, and the realization of that indescribable truth, that the All returns to the All.

III

A DIVINE VISION OF GOD

[As a commencement to the lecture, the audience sang, at the request of Mr Jinarajadasa, the following hymn by the late Rev. G. Matheson, Minister of St Bernard's, Edinburgh, to the tune *Langram*.]

Gather us in, Thou Love that fillest all,
Gather our rival faiths within Thy fold;
Rend each man's temple's veil, and bid it fall
That we may know that thou hast been of old.

Gather us in; we worship only Thee;
In varied names we stretch a common hand;
In diverse forms a common soul we see;
In many ships we seek one spirit-land.

Thine is the mystic life great India craves,
Thine is the Parsi's purifying beam,
Thine is the Buddhist's rest from tossing waves.
Thine is the empire of vast China's dream.

Thine is the Roman's strength without his pride,
Thine is the Greek's glad world without its slaves,
Thine is Judea's law with love beside,
Truth that enlightens, charity that saves.

Each sees one colour of Thy rainbow light,
Each looks upon one tint and calls it heaven.
Thou art the fullness of our partial sight;
We are not perfect till we find the seven

Some seek a Father in the heavens above;
Some ask a human image to adore;
Some crave a spirit vast as life and love;
Within Thy mansions we have all and more.

O glorious Triune God, embracing all,
By many Paths do men approach Thy throne,
All Paths are Thine; Thou hearest every call!
Each earnest seeker has Thee for his own.

When an audience such as this will, with utter gladness, sing a hymn of such splendid beauty, it is obvious that we are at the opening of a new epoch in religion. The day is over when cultured men and women could imagine that all the truth of religion necessary for mankind could be found in one religion alone. So far as Christians at all advanced stages in thought are concerned, the day is happily over when they could believe that 'the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone'. That old idea that for the first time in Palestine, God's great light shone upon the world, has happily passed away. We can see the dawn of a new day, even where Christian propaganda is concerned, in the different training given to young men and women who are to go forth as missionaries; in their training today they have to know the splendid ideas

of India, or of China, or of Persia. They must, if they are to work in 'heathen' lands, first know that already the Truth has shone there; and if they are to bring any 'not of this fold' into the fold of Christendom, it is only by convincing them that the teachings of Christ are a supplement to all the teachings that have gone before.

Because this new attitude exists amongst those who seriously seek God, it is now possible to approach the problem of the divine vision of God free from the old prejudices of a day that is gone. But we still have certain prejudices—I should perhaps call them handicaps; it is necessary, therefore, to examine some of them which still clog our thought.

One handicap is the attitude which we have towards the problem of God, of always trying to fit His nature into some anthropomorphic concept. We cannot think of a divine nature, which is the substratum of everything, unless, in the West for instance, we think in terms of manhood; we talk of 'the Father', and we talk of God as 'He'. It may be that here and there some talk of the Father-Mother God, but they are few.

Usually we feel that if the Divine is to be brought near to us, it can only be through some idea of a human image. In India it is much the same, although the attempt is on a little wider basis, because in Hinduism there are many-armed and many-headed Gods. But with anthropomorphism,

there is all the time a certain limitation in our thoughts; it is a handicap when we cannot conceive of any other intellectual mould into which the realization of the divine nature can be poured.

I have often wondered how the concept of God might appear to certain of our animals, supposing they should be given the high powers of reason. And here let me quote to you an exquisite poem of W. B. Yeats, who took the idea from some Indian legend. He describes the Indian Rishi Kanva listening to what the creatures are saying; the poem is a beautiful parable for us all:

I passed along the water's edge below the humid trees,
My spirit rocked in evening's hush, the rushes round my knees.
My spirit rocked in sleep and sighs; and saw the moorfowl pace
All dripping on a grassy slope, and saw them cease to chase
Each other round in circles; and I heard the eldest speak:
'Who holds the world between His bill and makes us strong or weak
Is an undying moorfowl, and He lives beyond the sky,
The rains are from His dripping wing, the moonbeams from His eye.'
I passed a little further on and heard a lotus talk:

'Who made the world and ruleth it, He hangeth on a stalk.
For I am in His image made, and all this tinkling tide
Is but a sliding drop of rain between His petals wide.'
A little way within the gloom a roebuck raised his eyes
Brimful of starlight, and he said, 'The Stamper of the Skies,
He is a gentle roebuck; for how else I pray could He?
Conceive a thing so sad and soft, a gentle thing like me?'
I passed a little further on and I heard a peacock say:
'Who made the grass and made the worms and made my feathers gay,
He is a monstrous peacock, and He waveth all the night
His languid tail above us, lit with myriad spots of light.'

Surely if we were peacocks, should we not see the splendid tail of the divine Peacock clearly before our eyes in all its beauty, should we not find in it the proof that God is a peacock? We think that all the experience which we have had convince us that God is a Father, or a Mother, or a Beloved. Because we are human beings, we approach God along our particular line. But, as you will see

presently, though it is full of inspiration, such a concept has also certain elements of handicap.

There is also a second handicap which many of us have, especially in the western world; it is due to our attitude towards science and art, because we think that these two great departments have no special relation to religion. Because we know that science in many ways contradicts our preconceived ideas of religion, we do not see that there can be any kind of interplay of science and our religious convictions and realizations. We are apt to imagine that religion is a matter of profound emotion and mysticism and deep intuitions. We have got far away from those ancient days of Greece, when one of the disciples of Pythagoras said that 'a purified intellect is a chorus of divinity'. Our modern religious attitude, because science does not find itself able to endorse all our religious claims, is that science stands quite outside the problem of who and what God is.

Similar is the attitude, among some people, towards art. Because the arts are somewhat too independent, and will not be moulded into the shapes which religion gives, they leave art aside. They do not recognise that in the creations of the artist—creations, remember, which mark the high water-mark of civilization—there may possibly be revelations as to the nature of God.

But surely it is obvious to anyone who is seeking truth, not by way of tradition only, but also by

looking directly for himself, that wherever there is any kind of truth which helps man, it does not matter in what department, that truth must reveal something of ultimate Reality. For truth must surely be one, and it is only human limitations which divides truth into that of science, of religion, of philosophy and of art. God's own truth cannot but be one and indivisible. The seeker without prejudices soon realizes that wherever is any kind of truth—whatever the field it may be in—which has helped mankind, something of the divine nature is there to be discovered in understanding and living that truth.

If there is any kind of a Divinity who has made the universe, not only this speck of dust in that universe which we call the Earth; if this vast process of life is not a 'fortuitous concourse of atoms', but rather the splendid manifestation of some divine mind and purpose; surely then it is obvious that this human brain of ours is able to know only one aspect of that purpose. How can men and women with brains which, as modern science shows, are not to be distinguished in any wonderful way from those of the anthropoid apes, presume to understand and to grasp the full mystery of the universe? A part of that mystery, yes; but how can we now dare to presume to know all that the universe has to teach us through science, philosophy, art, religion and all the many kinds of social organization which it will unfold in the course of the ages?

It is because of this complete inability of the human brain to conceive of the fullness of truth, that one of the greatest philosophers that the world has seen, Gautama the Buddha, never talked of the problem of who and what God is. Whenever a question was asked of Him concerning the nature of creation, whether there was an infinite or finite God, and concerning problems which could not be adequately grasped by the human brain, He always remained silent. Edwin Arnold, in *The Light of Asia,* truly describes the Buddhist point of view, in the opening words of Buddha's first sermon:

> Om, Amitaya! measure not with words
> Th' Immeasurable; nor sink the string of thought
> Into the Fathomless. Who asks doth err,
> Who answers, errs. Say nought!

It is exactly this attitude which was taken in India before the Buddha with regard to the same problem. One of the most daring concepts that the Hindus have achieved is, when asking if there is a divine purpose in things, to say that perhaps that divine purpose itself cannot answer certain questions, such as 'Why did the universe arise?' A most famous hymn in the Rig Veda thus ends:

> Who knows for certain? Who shall here declare it?
> Whence was it born, and whence came this creation?

The Gods were born after this world's creation;
Then who can know from whence it has arisen?

None knoweth whence creation has arisen,
And whether He has or has not produced it;
He who surveys it in the highest heaven,
He only knows, or haply He may know not.

It is in that splendid presumption as to the mystery of the universe, that perhaps even the Creator Himself knows not what is the mystery of it all, that we have the most daring point of Hindu speculation.

If any of you in this hall, as you sang 'Gather us in', felt the splendour of its conception of universal religion, it is because in other places in other lives you have known the partial conceptions of the individual religions, and have loved them, and so have transcended the part to grasp the whole. It is in the fact of reincarnation that we have the possibility of understanding, of discovering, the larger and fuller nature of God. If, when looking at some simple-minded savage, you find you have a larger sympathy, that your conception of the world is larger than his; and if, because of that, your idea of God is more splendid, and you can worship God with love, with self-sacrifice, and not merely with burnt offerings; it is because you have known that primitive type of worship long, long ago; it is

because you have lived in Atlantis, known the ancient teachings of China as to the Tao; it is because you have lived in India, and known the teaching as to Brahman; it is because you have known in the past other aspects of God, that you have come stage by stage to the larger vision which is yours today.

In the realization of this larger vision of the Divine, we find various stages. I do not know that I have any particular right to describe one stage as earlier than another. I can only say there are stages—some higher, some lower, but which who knows? But one stage which is very interesting, though it is not very well known today, is that known as polytheism, when the human mind grasps the divine nature through manifestations of the many gods. There are the many gods of India, the many gods of Greece, the many gods of Egypt; through these many gods, the attributes of the One, the indivisible Godhead, are more easily grasped. The attributes of God of power, wisdom, love, strength, peace, beauty, and many others, came to us once, crystallized, we many well term it, in the manifestations of many gods whom we have worshipped in the past reincarnations. The polytheistic idea of God is more easily understood by mankind, particularly at a certain stage. There are also certain periods in the world's history when the idea of God seems to stand more clearly revealed as the many rather than as the One.

Polytheism is in truth one way of approach to the understanding of the nature of God.

Then of course there is that other stage which is known as pantheism, the conception that since all is of God, since the whole universe was created by Him, since in some mysterious way it must have its being in Him, therefore God Himself must also be that universe. It was that conception which existed once upon a time in Christian thought as the 'immanence of God'. The 'transcendence of God' is thought of, on the other hand, as creating and yet standing apart from His creation. While the transcendent God is one conception, there is the other conception of the immanent God which teaches that in all that is mysterious, in all that reveals beauty and awe, the divine nature can be seen and worshipped. The doctrine as to the immanence of God comes to us in a fragment of the Christ's teaching, which was found in the excavations at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt:

> Raise the stone and there thou shalt find me,
> Cleave the wood and there am I.

This conception of pantheism is given us in noble and beautiful words by the Pythagoreans:

> God is one; and He is not, as some suppose, outside of this frame of things, but within it; but, in all the entireness of His Being, is in the whole of existence, surveying all nature, and

> blending in harmonious union with the whole—the author of all His own forces and works, the giver of light in heaven, and Father of all—the mind and vital power of the whole world, the mover of all things.

Pantheism, then, is another avenue of approach to the divine vision.

You who are born in a theistic religion like Christianity know what is your own particular approach to God through various forms of monotheistic religion. Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Islam are monotheistic religions. Sometimes I think that absolute monotheism, which will tolerate no image, no symbol, no kind of human limitation of it, is found clearest in Islam. So abstract and yet so intimate and real is the conception of Allah, that a devout Muslim is the purest devotee I know of monotheistic religion. In a country like India, where we see so many images of God, where the nearness of God is like an atmosphere that presses on one, sometimes I think that, even in India, many Muslims have come to a deeper understanding and realization of the monotheistic idea than most Hindus today.

But it was in India, too, that they worked out a conception of religion for which Max Müller had to coin a special word. We find it in Egypt also,

[1] The Pythagoreans, according to Clem, Alex., *Exhortation to the Heathen*, Chapter 6, p. 72. Ante-Nicene Lib.

though perhaps not so clearly. It is called 'henotheism'. It arises out of such a polytheism as is found in Hinduism. There are many gods in Hinduism, but there is also the One of many names, and they call that one God Parabrahman. A very famous verse in the Rig Veda is that which proclaims,

> The wise call the One Being by many names; they call It Agni, Yama, Matarishvan.

Hence we find the striking fact in the Rig Veda, in the hymns for instance to Agni the God of Fire, that after describing him as one of the many gods, suddenly he is revealed as being also at the same time all the possible gods of the Pantheon. Varuna, God of the firmament, Indra, God of the heavens, Surya, the sun, are each seen as embodying the complete Pantheon. The polytheistic god becomes thus the monotheistic God also. It was in order to describe this phase of religion that Max Müller coined the word henotheism.

So we find in religion polytheism, pantheism, theism and henotheism. But not only these; for there has been a discovery of God along quite a different road, though many people might deny any discovery of Him along such a road. I refer to atheism. I have said that wherever any truth is proclaimed which helps man, behind that truth the divine nature stands revealed. When, therefore, we consider a life of sacrifice like that of Charles Bradlaugh, who did not believe in the existence of

God, who found no inspiration in any doctrine of salvation, who was not drawn to the idea of a heavenly reward for leading a moral life dictated by the ordinary principles of humanitarianism; when you find such a man living a life not of ease but of struggle, dreaming and working for the greatness of man, suffering for his ideals and standing like a rock of ages on which are to be founded the dreams of men; when we find hundreds of others like him who suffer nobly and give their lives in order that man's future may be freed from theocracy and priestcraft and superstition; can we think that the God of the universe is so small that He cannot build their dreams also into His plan? And so I say that, even in atheism, there is a discovery of God. Do not be hypnotized by labels; do you think God cares for labels? He is the One behind all dreams of service.

Worshipping either the God of theism, the God of pantheism, the God of polytheism, or the God of humanitarianism, we rise stage by stage as on the rungs of a ladder. For I hold that it is only after you have seen the splendour of the separate colours, and studied the science of life in its myriads of embodiments, that you are ready to be led to the One Life and to be blinded by the splendour of the One Light. It is only because some of us in past lives have been theists and pantheists, polytheists and atheists, that now we seek the divine vision in man and nature also.

This way which so many of us are seeking today is described in splendid language by one of the greatest men whom the East has produced. I refer to the Emperor Akbar of India. The great Muslim was one who sought truth diligently. He built in his capital of Fatehpur Sikri a Hall of Audience, where every Friday, the Sunday of the Muslims, when he was back from his campaigns, he called together the learned for religious discussion. He invited Muslim *moulvis*, Roman Catholic *padres*, Zoroastrian *mobeds* and Hindu *shastris* to expound to him their faiths, and he listened to what they all had to say about God. Year after year Akbar pondered on the problem of what is God. Slowly he began to perceive the nature of the divine vision of God, and he has described it in a famous poem:

O God, in every temple I see people that seek Thee, and in every language I hear spoken, people praise Thee.

Polytheism and Islam feel after Thee.

Each religion says, Thou art One, without equal.

If it be a mosque, people murmur the holy prayer; if it be a Christian Church, people ring the bell from love to thee.

Sometimes I frequent the Christian cloister, and sometimes the mosque.

But it is Thou whom I seek from temple to temple.

Thy elect have no dealings with heresy nor with orthodoxy, since heresy and orthodoxy stand not behind the Screen of the Truth.

Heresy to the Heretic, Orthodoxy to the Orthodox; but only the Dust of the Rose-petal remains for those who sell perfume.

As slowly the divine vision dawns on one who seeks it, one thing is utterly sure. He may not be able to state, in terms of any labels known to man, what is the nature of that vision; but one thing is sure, and it is this, that whatever be the final truth concerning the nature of God, or the Absolute, man and that Absolute are one, and not two. Every one who aspires, who through suffering rises to some realization at least of the final achievement, comes to that stage when he knows that every thought of his, all his highest dreams of realization, are only the great thoughts and dreams of God returning to him. Man came from that Oneness; out of it he developed his nature and became an individual soul; and to That he ever returns. Just as a circle drawn on a sphere is only one out of many which can be drawn on that sphere, each individual and separate; just as all possible circles are only segments in two dimensions of one sphere in three dimensions; just as not all the millions of possible circles will ever reveal the third dimensional quality of the sphere; so does the spiritually-minded man know that all his highest thoughts, dreams and aspirations are

only God's thoughts returning through him back again to God. Man is the holder of the vase of flowers which he offers. When he thinks that he is aspiring, that he is worshipping, it is only God who returns to Himself, it is only the mysterious All which came from Itself returning to Itself.

It is this discovery which makes a man spiritual—this knowledge that there is a mightier Doer than he, a more majestic Life than his. Spirituality for him is the realization that he is only a window, a channel, a finger in a hand. By a hundred similes the spiritual man will try to describe this great experience. When a man has sensed it, then he is pure of heart. Then what St Augustine said is true of him: 'Love and do what you like', for he wants nothing for himself. That is why such a man, who has reached this realization directly, is usually impatient of tradition. The spiritual man is not a man of tradition. When the Christian, who has steeped himself in the idealization of the New Testament, lives the life, then he makes of himself a new type of Christian, and he blossoms on the Christian world like a new variety of flower. Such a Christian is the true saint, whether the Church canonizes him or not. So long as a Christian is guided only by the traditions of the centuries of his Church, he has not yet discovered the Christ.

When you discover your Truth, your Lord and Saviour, directly for yourself and not through any

kind of tradition, then you follow your own royal road. And to discover Truth directly, to know directly the mystery of things, there is only one way. You must create. Even out of your sufferings, out of your anguish, you must create something, and give to the universe what never existed before. Are you capable of a wonderful devotion? Read if you will all the descriptions of devotion which you can find, and steep yourself in the ecstasies of all the saints; but it is only when, out of the offerings of your own devotion, you have created something new (and that always means intense suffering), that you will see directly for yourself the divine vision. Are you capable of intense love? When, after experiencing all the types of loving which the world has known, you discover some other type of loving still, and reveal to the world your own splendid truth as to loving, then you will see the divine vision. When, out of all your perplexities and doubts, you create some aspect of philosophy, and give out of yourself something that is new to the universe, a new blossom of God that has opened and gives its perfume, then it is you stand by yourself, and see the divine vision not through a tradition, but directly for yourself. And similarly, even if you are not particularly moved by devotion, nor influenced by philosophy, you yet feel that the greatest thing in life is to serve man, and to strive to put an end to the world's abuses, when you give yourself to create a new ideal, a new consciousness

of what life can become, then, too, the divine vision is yours.

When the divine vision comes to you, there is a great marvel in it for you. It is, that you cannot focus it in one place; for it is continuously shifting. One day, one year, you may feel that the divine vision comes to you, in its profoundest truth and intimacy, through theism, or through monotheism or through polytheism. Then, later, as the splendour of the vision shifts, the vision will appear from some new direction. Polytheism, pantheism, monotheism, atheism, all these become, as it were, many mirrors around you, many windows through which you look and understand the truth of what is without and within you. That is why, when a man comes to the real crowning of the spiritual life, he cannot be held bound; he breaks through all possible conceptions and forms and bursts all bonds. A man who has the divine vision is nearly always a heretic; he will not be bound by any tradition; if a Christian, he will not be tied, even to the utmost splendour of the events of Palestine. For he will see new splendours revealing, new creations, as the universe unfolds itself to him age by age.

It is at this stage, as his gaze shifts and the divine vision is seen along all these many avenues, that one great fact will ever confront him, as a mystery; it is the mystery of the transcendence and the immanence of God. It is that mystery which is

known in Hinduism as the mystery of Nirguna Brahman and Saguna Brahman—the That which is without attributes, and God who has attributes. There are two paths outlined in Hinduism: one is the path to the Mediating God, and the other to God the Absolute. In the great poem, the *Bhagavad Gita,* Arjuna asks Sri Krishna which of these two ways men should choose to follow.

Arjuna

Lord! of the men who serve Thee—true in heart—
As God revealed; and of the men who serve,
Worshipping Thee Unrevealed, Unbodied, Far,
Which take the better way of faith and life?

Sri Krishna

Whoever serve Me—as I show Myself—
Constantly true, in full devotion fixed,
Those hold I very holy. But who serve—
Worshipping Me The One, The Invisible,
The unrevealed, Unnamed, Unthinkable,
Uttermost, All-pervading, Highest, Sure—
Who thus adore Me, mastering their sense,
Of one set mind to all, glad in all good,
These blessed souls come unto Me. Yet, hard
The travail if for such as bend their minds
To reach th' Unmanifest. That viewless path
Shall scarce be trod by man bearing the flesh!

They both come to God. But those who travel the direct road, and find their inspiration not in forms or creeds, nor even in *avataras* or incarnations of God, but only from within themselves, theirs is a hard road; note the way it is described by Sri Krishna:

Yet hard the travail is for such as bend their minds
To reach th' Unmanifest. That veiwless path
Shall scarce be trod by man bearing the flesh!

Sooner or later, each individual has to tread that difficult path, because, beyond the mediating God, he must find the way to the divine transcendence. That is why the man who has come to the divine vision is heretical; he will not be bound by creeds and forms. He may or may not subscribe to ceremonies; he may sometimes conform to them, to help others who have not yet reached that stage. But, while worshipping the immanence of God, he knows also the wonderful mystery of the transcendence, and his eyes ever seek to be blinded by a vision which is as nothing to others, who can come to achievement only by the lower road of a mediating God.

Let me quote to you how these same truths are put by a Sufi mystic Ibn-i-Yamin. He is talking of himself, and note how he rises from stage to stage, until finally he goes beyond his inmost self and, as it were, ceases to be.

From the void of Non-Existence to this dwelling house of clay
I came, and rose from stone to plant; but that hath passed away!
Thereafter, through the working of the Spirit's toil and strife,
I gained, but soon abandoned, some lowly form of life;
That too hath passed away!
In a human breast, no longer a mere unheeding brute,
This tiny drop of Being to a pearl I did transmute;
That too hath passed away!
At the Holy Temple next did I foregather with the throng
Of Angels, compassed it about, and gazed upon it long;
That too hath passed away!
Forsaking Ibn-i-Yamin, and from this too soaring free,
I abandoned all beside Him, so that naught was left but He;
All else hath passed away![1]

We come then to that magnificent stage described by Plotinus in words which seem almost meaningless, especially to us in our modern world. For now on all sides there are so many churches

[1] *A Persian Anthology*, by E.G. Browne.

and temples, so many intermediaries and ecclesiastical hierarchies, that we have almost forgotten that there is another vision of truth possible than what they reveal. Plotinus describes the direct road which he found in these words: 'This therefore is the life of the Gods and of divine and happy men, a liberation from all terrene concerns, a life unaccompanied by human pleasures, and a flight of the alone to the Alone.' But in these days, where there are so many mediators and saviours, there are only a few of us who dare to stand alone, and make that 'flight of the alone to the Alone'. Yet mankind's evolution is not complete till each of us makes the great discovery, and free of all scriptures and all saviours, dares to fly 'alone to the Alone', direct to the transcendent Godhead.

When this stage has been achieved, then such an individual is called in India by a most significant word. He is called Muni, 'the silent one', for he has then discovered the final truth concerning the nature of God, and his lips are sealed. How may he describe it? He may make the attempt, by using those thought moulds which religions have created, he may use the labels of all the greatest philosophies, but he will always fail, always, always, because he has come to truth directly by himself and not through any tradition. That is why, in India, beyond this achievement of intimate communion with a divine Beloved a further stage is

hinted at, a stage difficult for devotional people to understand because it seems so cold, so abstract, so utterly aloof. As the Muni contemplates all his experiences of the bliss of communion, as he gazes at the divine vision before him, he must whisper to himself, *'Neti! Neti!' 'This* is not THAT! *This* is not THAT!' To rejoice in the splendour of the gods, to worship very God of very God face to face, and yet to say, 'this is but the phenomenon, not the noumenon; I seek THAT which cannot express itself in any vision'—that is the greatest teaching which India has given. *'Neti! Neti!'* is India's greatest contribution to the spiritual problem, and how great only a few will ever know. Certainly the teachings of all the religions are helpful; certainly mediators appear to help men on the road to God; but they are only fingerposts on the road to the divine vision which leads us beyond all the experiences which they describe.

He who has come thus far towards the final realization and lives as the Muni, the silent one, never describes with words all the splendour that he sees, for it is indescribable. But silent though he be, his life becomes a parable, and without speaking, without debate, he produces changes in the world of thought by what he is, for he radiates the power of the transcendent God. Concerning that final truth as to Brahman, which only the Muni knows, it was said of old in India, 'If you tell this to a withered branch, it will put forth leaf and flower!'

For that final truth is not a negativity, a cold intellectual abstract truth; it is truth which is power, the power which made all things by uttering a Word.

As such a silent one lives, disciples gather round him, and try with their little minds to measure the greatness of his achievement. And after he has passed away, they dispute among themselves, 'what did he mean?' They do not realize that he was like the diamond which flashes colour after colour by mere movement, and is not of any one colour at all. Was it not so with Christ, with Buddha, with Krishna, and with every other great teacher? Their disciples dispute and quarrel, and found sects and churches and establish the lesser road; but They only meant one Truth—the divine vision of God which is the divine vision of man.

All questionings fall away from him who possesses the divine vision. And you shall all come to it, my brothers, some day, for we are all treading the path to that vision. But we have certain lessons now. We have to learn first to see the divine vision in the face of our fellow men, and then to see it in the faces of nature, for they tell us of the mysteries of the immanent Godhead. As we arrive at that stage, then begins for us the vision of the trancendent God, that Absolute which is beyond all names. When we gain even only a partial glimpse of That, then we needs must stand forth in life as the martyr, 'the witness', to the truth that there is but *one* Divinity, *one* Divine Law, *one* Mankind, *one*

Salvation, *one* Life, indivisible, and, as we say in India, *Ekam-advitiyam* - 'One without a second'.

He who thus stands in the realization of the 'One without a second' is the strongest soul in the world. Churches may martyr him, but his blood becomes the cement to weld men into greater love of him; the orthodox may burn him at the stake, but he lights with his sacrifice a flame which burns throughout eternity.

Such are the souls who come to liberation, the knowledge of the One, the indivisible. And to their achievement you and I are travelling. If, on the way, we at our lower levels feel that the vision of the transcendence is not yet for us, that for us the immanence suffices, that we cannot divest ourselves of the craving for some mediator, for some ritual of worship, let us at least beware of erecting barriers between one form of worship and another, between one creed and another. For, some day, we must transcend all barriers, and learn to gather the whole world into our hearts and say with the Christ, 'Come unto me!' For when we come to liberation, we have to make the world our own; when we become wise, we have to banish the ignorance of mankind; when we are strong, we have to transmute the weakness of our brothers into the strength of God.

And all these splendours are for you and for me, as stage by stage, and each for himself, we come to the divine vision of God.

ERRATA

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