

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_174338

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

PRINCIPAL MILLER ENDOWMENT LECTURES (1938-39)

INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL PROGRESS

BY

H. D. BHATTACHARYYA

I

Let us start with a confession of ignorance and a consequent spirit of humility. To none of us has been vouchsafed the privilege of knowing the fullest meaning of even the most insignificant things of the world—much less of “the inner meaning of human history.” We may readily agree that to us has been accorded a much fuller knowledge of nature and man than to our ancestors; but we must admit at the same time that the expanding circle of our knowledge has also served to bring us face to face with a bigger field of encircling nescience. In stating this we are not passing any judgement on the value of knowledge, namely, whether it is folly to be wise where ignorance is bliss. We are simply recording a fact when we say that man now knows more things than his primitive forbears and that, although with increasing knowledge his sense of ignorance is also increasing, his wit and wisdom far exceed those of people of ancient times. To-day we are in wider and deeper contact with both nature and man, and every day the walls of narrow isolation are crumbling to pieces. Many hidden mysteries have yielded up their secrets to the inquisitive and persistent scrutiny of man and the frontiers of our knowledge are extending by leaps and bounds into the once unknown realms of nature. We possess greater understanding too of the inner springs of human action—of the motives of personal and social life. We know more of individual and collective minds, of minds in sanity and in aberration. The psychology of primitive minds, of peoples and races, of interacting social groups, of nations in war and peace, of classes and crowds, is more or less known to us to-day; and a study of these social phenomena has enabled us to detect and dissect unexpected motivations in human conduct. The study of lower forms of life and mind has thrown considerable light upon our understanding of personal conduct and social behaviour among

human beings, even though it may be admitted that the predominantly objective attitude in our study of minds has temporarily thrown introspective self-analysis into the shade. A new method of studying the mechanism of mind has been evolved in recent years in the psychoanalytical schools and has ushered in an era of depth-psychology as opposed to the surface-psychology of the introspective-analytical method of mind-study. The influence of attitude and environment, of climate, diet and bodily condition upon the nature and amount of human output in art and industry is being widely studied now. Economic, political and social organizations are being scrutinized, criticized and rectified in the light of their effects upon personal feeling and social efficiency. All these studies have materially enriched our knowledge of the intricacies of the human mind and enabled us to tackle them with surer chance of success.

But with the expansion of knowledge the universe of nature and mind has gone on expanding too. If we know more to-day about the inner constitution of stars and the laws of their being and becoming, newer stellar regions with more complex problems have also come within the purview of our astronomy and astrophysics. We are recasting and rejecting many of our older conceptions of light and ether and space to accommodate our newer findings about Nature's facts. We are less sanguine now about the finality of our dicta about the material universe, and our Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics are bidding fair to rival Metaphysics in their abstruseness and the tentative character of their theories of the ultimates of Nature. Our knowledge of the infinitely small is becoming similarly riddled with obscurities and symbolizations. Gone are the fixity of weight and the rigidity of the atoms. In the works of Aston, Bohr and others we are presented with a world of atoms where weights are fixed on the basis of a statistical average and qualities are determined by the number and arrangement of electric particles. The positive nucleus and the negative rotating particles and the delicate balance of energy that maintains an atom in existence and in its proper chemical form are to-day text-book topics of information. But they open up a much vaster field of study than the Daltonian atoms did, and we are yet far from an accurate knowledge of the nature of the different elements that go into the composition of an atom or the precise way in which they maintain or lose their balance. Here again we can only theorize and try to imagine whether the rotation of single particles or a wavy motion would give a more adequate picture of the behaviour of the electrons. In the train of sub-atomic physics have

come the problems of formation and disintegration of atoms, of transmutation of elements, of the age of the earth, of the possibility of utilizing solar radiations and liberating the locked-up energies of atoms in the event of the normal fuels of the world running short. Once possessed of the knowledge of their properties, we have begun to enquire about their kinds and capacities and about the uses and abuses to which we can put visible and invisible radiations of different kinds. We have already learnt the trick of converting one kind of energy into another—heat, light, electricity and magnetism we are using as battledores between which we throw energy as a shuttlecock, changing one kind of energy into another as need or contingency arises. We have partially battered the wall of separation between physics and chemistry and drawn them both towards mathematics. But with all our knowledge we are obliged to confess that Nature is still an enigma to us and that the more we know about her the more mysterious does she become and the more does she allure us towards her profounder depths.

The same complexity meets us as we progress in our knowledge of living forms. When people complacently accepted the theory of special creation and credited God with creating life and life-forms and Noah with preserving the existing species of animals during the Deluge, they did not bother their heads about the interrelation of living forms and their relation to the inorganic world. But we have dared since to raise fundamental questions about life without reference to God ; and while we have not succeeded as yet in originating life artificially in our laboratories or detecting any natural case of spontaneous generation, we have learnt a good deal about the nature of life and the laws of heredity and variation. The science of plant-breeding, experimental zoology and genetics have familiarized us with types of plants and animals which even Nature could not create in ordinary course and with modes of reproduction and regeneration altogether unknown to Nature. Plant and animal hybrids produced by Burbank and Loeb respectively, artificial parthenogenesis initiated by Boveri and Loeb, rejuvenation of the type mentioned by Child and Loeb, and artificial insemination and test-tube babies are not ordinary natural phenomena ; and yet, relying on Nature's own laws, man has succeeded in varying Nature's method of reproduction and regeneration, although he has not always succeeded equally well in making the monstrosities live long or the heterogeneous hybrids breed and multiply and establish new species. We have partially succeeded in tracking down the bearers of racial and individual heredity and succeeded

also in many cases in improving the stocks of plants and animals by judicious cross-fertilization and cross-breeding. We have been enabled by our knowledge of the laws of heredity to scent danger in the multiplication of social misfits, aments and dements, and in progressive states the idea of sterilizing the idiot, the lunatic and the criminal is already in the air. Not only in our knowledge of the laws of species but also in our knowledge regarding the potentialities of the living organism we have made notable progress. We have more precise information now regarding the powers of adaptation and acclimatization possessed by a living body. We know more accurately now the way in which disease attacks an organism and spreads to other organisms and we know also how it can be combated, curbed and cured. Our knowledge of the laws of infection and resistance has led to remarkable developments in the science of preventive medicine. Not only are we now able to secure immunity beforehand by suitable prophylactic treatment but we are also able to arrest the spread of toxin in the system through various agencies—biological, chemical and physical. We know a good deal now about the ductless glands and the hormones that act as chemical messengers between different parts of the organism and help to unify the same as also to develop particular traits in body and mind. Our knowledge of the results of experiments on animal bodies we have utilized in the service of man, and our knowledge of the chemical composition of the blood we have found helpful in detecting the presence of deleterious factors and also in the transfusion of blood in cases of anaemia and even in settling disputed facts of paternity.

But here also increasing knowledge has brought us face to face with an ever widening nescience. The triumph of the mechanical sciences in inorganic fields raised hopes in some quarters that in the world of life also the laws of mathematics, physics and chemistry would completely explain all phenomena and that it would be possible one day to effect the great synthesis artificially, just as it was probably done by Nature sometime at the beginning—if it is not being done by her even now in suitable circumstances. There are others who are struck by the unique qualities of life—reproduction, regeneration of parts, repair of injuries, assimilation, growth and irritability, and would rather think of the whole physical world as a living system than a living organism as a machine which possesses none of these capacities—not even as a crystal, which mimics some of the phenomena of life. If life had no tellurian origin but came from some other realm, did it originate there spontaneously? Did it come here riding on a

meteorite or wafted by radiant energy? Does it fill inter-stellar space, waiting for a vehicle to land on a suitable planet in order to grow and multiply? Do we possess any accurate knowledge of the strains and stresses that determine the ultimate form of each living organism? Do we know why there should be any atavism and regression to the type and why ontogeny should recapitulate phylogeny? Have we any exact knowledge of the chromomeres that are responsible for developing this or that feature in a body and of the forces or agencies that marshal the forces and elements to a predestined bodily form? What controls the phenomena of reorientation of cleavage-cells even after disturbance, regeneration of all forms, restitution of function, vicarious function, orderly growth, symmetry, chemical correlation, and similar other vital activities? Is it a kind of blind ideation or incipient consciousness (Von Hartmann, Hegel), a non-material and non-spatial logical agent called entelechy (Driesch), an unconscious memory (Butler, Hartog, Orr), a mnemonic factor (Semon), molecular vibration (Haeckel, Hering), supergene (Von Uexkull), nervous accumulation and discharge (Rignano) or a constellation of elementary substances and forces (Weismann)? What are the respective functions of the cytoplasm and the nucleus in determining growth and structure? What part do external factors play in bringing about differentiation of organs? Does matter contain within itself "the promise and potency of every form and quality of life" (Tyndall)? Are living creatures only "whirlpools in the universal ocean of matter and energy" (Cuvier, Huxley, J. A. Thomson)? Or is life co-eternal with matter, if not its *prius* (Bergson)—a directive force (Descartes, Sir Oliver Lodge) or an entelechy suspending physico-chemical operations (Driesch)? That the pendulum should swing from mechanism to vitalism within the 19th century itself and should still be swinging between these two opposite poles of thought shows the imperfect character of our knowledge of the nature of life and the law of its operation in organizing the bodily forms of plants and animals.

If from the individuals we turn to the species, our ignorance is no less profound. We all swear by the theory of evolution now-a-days and there is no doubt that the light thrown by the biological theory of evolution on other fields has been considerable. We talk now of mental, social, political, moral and religious evolution as also of cosmological and atomic evolution; and those who are acquainted with the works of Herbert Spencer know how he tried to apply the same formula to explain the phenomena of evolution in the different fields of enquiry known in his time. The genetic

method of study is now a well-recognized, if not indispensable, mode of handling a problem, whether of nature or of life or of mind. But as we are indebted to the biologists for a precise formulation of the theory of evolution, we might turn to them for appreciating the extent of our ignorance. We many take the fact of evolution for granted, even though religiously minded people are beginning to assail the doctrine or put a theistic interpretation on the same and even though Darwin and Wallace did not agree about the place of the human mind in the scheme of evolution, the latter reserving a place for God in the origin of the human soul. But waiving aside the question of teleology, for which philosophers and theists have alike fought when they failed to defend special creation, and of a new interpretation of life-phenomena, which is neither mechanical nor teleological, as supported by Bosanquet and Bergson, let us turn to the natural scientists themselves for discovering a uniform explanation of the march of life and the formation of species. We are disappointed to know that the bifurcation of the protophyta and the protozoa out of a common protistan stock is still a matter of conjecture and that whether plant and animal forms came one after another or have been running side by side all along is yet far from being settled, apart from the fact that plants with the nutritional capacities of animals and *vice versa* have not yet totally disappeared from view and suggested a third possibility of their mutual relation, viz., original oscillation between opposite tendencies and subsequent bifurcation. The same uncertainty hangs over the problems of sex, although sexual dimorphism is admitted to be a later phenomenon; and we are told that we are all hermaphrodites with one sex-tendency keeping down the other and making the sex that we are. We do not know, again, the exact rôle played by external and internal factors in determining an individual and we are unable to say, therefore, if nature creates forms suited to her needs or simply selects the successful variants. We are still debating whether structure determines function or just the reverse, and how far acquired characters are transmitted to later generations and get fixed in the family and the class.

Supposing that the present living forms have all been derived out of one or a few microscopic types, do we know why, how and when mitotic division of one unicellular organism into two was replaced by a multicellular organization in the plant and animal worlds? Was it accident or spontaneous variation that brought about this happy change? When once a multicellular organism came into being, how did itself vary in the direction of variety and new species? What again fixed the type that arose by variation

or accident? How do heredity and variation maintain their balance, the one making for the stability of the species and the other for ushering in new types? Taking into consideration the fact that types generally change at an exceedingly slow rate and induced changes seldom persist beyond the life-time of the individual, it has not been unreasonably held that unless there is some germinal change, whether spontaneously produced or induced by such a violent treatment as affects the germinal matter as well as the body itself, there is no permanent deviation from the existing type. But there is no unanimity of opinion on this subject and the upholders of the theory that long subjection to a constant set of stimuli may induce variation are not extinct and they quote with approval the pangenetic theory of Darwin and the experiments of Brown-Séquad on inherited epilepsy in guinea-pigs. Still, it must be admitted that the neo-Darwinism of Weismann, viz., that spontaneous variation of the germplasm is responsible for variation and evolution, is to-day the dominant hypothesis. But if variation is so much dependent on chance, how does it maintain itself and start an evolutionary process? Can there be no reverse variation which would nullify the earlier deviation from type? What again is the amount of each individual variation? Shall we subscribe to the Darwinian supposition of continuous insensible variation, or shall we side with Galton and De Vries in their view that variation is saltatory and that, therefore, the Darwinian missing links are mostly fictitious? Of what use to the individual, again, is an infinitesimal change and how does this enable the individual to win ultimately in the struggle for existence unless correlated changes in other parts of the body are forthcoming at the same time? Does the Mutation Theory with its belief in the possibility of a large number of simultaneous variations then offer a better explanation? But what guarantee is there that the so-called saltatory variation is not a mere dissociation of the Mendelian unit-characters that went into the composition of a hybrid type in which the dominants completely submerged the recessives in the parent stock? Have we again any exact notion of the nature and function of the ids, unit-characters and genes, by whichever name the ultimate micromeric elements may be called, that determine the character of the individual and the type? Again, how do variations accumulate and form the basis of evolution? Is there any orthogenetic impulse in life-forms, as Eimer supposed? Or is it by a lucky accident that variations have been heaped on variations and led to the evolution of higher forms of life and mind? Is there any purpose behind the process of variation—a purpose to advance the forms of life along the road of progress? Why should death and

decay overtake every form of life and the worms eat up the noble frame of a Goethe, a Shakespeare or a Śaṅkara ? Who will answer all these perplexing questions connected with the world of life ? How, again, are we to relate the body and the mind, to explain the origin and evolution of consciousness, the relation of bodily structure and mental function, the relation of animal mind and human mind, and the nature of consciousness, if any, that might be present in the vegetable kingdom ?

Our main object in drawing attention to the gaps in our knowledge of matter, life and mind is to bring out the fact that progress in knowledge does not necessarily mean perfection—in fact, very often it makes us painfully aware of the imperfections of our intellectual achievement. You can no more encompass the immensities of reality with your intellect than you can bale out the waters of the ocean with a bucket. Reality has always new surprises in store for our apprehension, and we are constantly obliged to amend, recast or alter our theories in the light of its new revelations. Our attitude towards the world must be that of a wayfarer who takes delight in the travel itself and to whom destination is so remote that the next step forward alone is what counts. We should be satisfied with being led onward by the kindly light of our intellect and following knowledge like a sinking star beyond the utmost bounds of human thought. Of course, the one consoling thought that must accompany every endeavour is that we are making progress, which means, again, that we must have some kind of awareness of the direction in which advancement or achievement of higher magnitude or value lies. We need not discuss just now whether without the assumption of a knowledge of the highest or absolute value it is possible to arrange the stages of progress or whether a consciousness of 'more' suffices to indicate progress without there being necessarily a knowledge of an absolute scale of values. There are difficulties in both assumptions, for the realization of an absolute scale of values would demand a type of perfect knowledge which we do not unfortunately possess while the assumption of a relative scale, on the other hand, would necessitate a knowledge of the direction in which the highest value is located. The distinction between progress and process lies exactly in this that progress implies a direction while process need not necessarily have that implication and can be identified with a mere temporal succession of events if we do not stick to the etymological significance of the word. If we accept the position that knowledge has increased in all fields, we must accept at the same time the implication that we have a knowledge of an ascending scale,

whether of quantity or of worth or of both combined, even though the consciousness of increased knowledge be accompanied by a feeling that the realm of nescience has grown wider at the same time. It is as if a man ascending a hill leaves behind the circumscribed vision of his position in the plains and yet, as he mounts higher and higher, gets a better idea of the immensity and expansibility of the field of vision and the recession of the horizon with every higher step taken. There is something more involved in the idea of progress. A process, inasmuch as it primarily signifies a change, need not implicate any organization or order. A given collocation will be replaced by another grouping the next moment, and provided the continuity of the changes is maintained, it is immaterial whether they are leading to any definite direction, higher or lower. The end result is of no consequence to the events that are concatenated in time—it is their product and not their objective. In progress, on the other hand, we are forcibly reminded of the goal towards which the process is moving and of the order that subsists among the different parts which are deemed to form a single whole. In process, ups and downs being of equal value, we do not care to enquire about the relative worth of any event in the series. In progress, on the other hand, every event is assessed as being either a help or a hindrance towards the realization of the better or the best; and where faith in the irresistibility of advance is absolute, even the so-called obstacles are regarded as necessary means towards the realization of the objective just as backward pace is helpful in taking a long-jump or dealing a cricket ball or as the fatigue of exercise is indispensable for making the muscles grow stronger.

We shall take it for granted that the world is a process—that it is a realm, not of static facts or spasmodic changes, but of a series of continuous events. We shall assume, that is, that continuous becoming constitutes the life-history of the phenomenal world and time as the principle of change is a real factor in the life of that world. We shall go further and assume that the changes that fill the flow of time seem to be qualitatively distinct so that the phenomenal world is a field of diversity as well. In fact, the apprehension of change is in most cases the apprehension of qualitative difference. Every event is what it is by virtue of its special characteristics—even if these characteristics are no more than its position in the spatio-temporal series, and transition from one event to another is detected by a change in the character of our experience. A change that is not apprehended does not give rise to the idea of process, and it is only when cumulative changes

have altered the character of the experience that we grasp that an imperceptible process has been going on all the time. The motion of the sun across the firmament is the classical illustration of Indian philosophers—the successive positions occupied by it cannot be made out by the naked eye and yet when a number of points have been traversed we notice that a change in the position of the sun has taken place. But more fundamental changes than mere shifting of the space-time position may similarly remain unnoticed, and then one day we may wake up to the fact that things have altered their character or that a new order of things has come into existence. When the theory of the evolution of species was originally attacked, one of the arguments adduced was that we do not notice any change in the character of the species that might justify the assumption of variation. As the original theory advanced by Darwin contemplated only infinitesimal variations, and not sudden leaps, the critics had to be silenced by the assertion that the process of change being inconceivably slow, it could not be perceived except after the lapse of a considerable stretch of time. The age of the world demanded by the evolutionists to explain the formation of the different species of plants and animals, when calculated according to the principle of insensible variation, would naturally run into many figures; but the point of interest for us is that a process may not be apprehended as such on account of its extreme slowness. And what is true of living forms may be true of social organisms also—these too may seem to have remained stagnant and stationary for ages and lost all momentum. Here also patient watching for years, if not decades and centuries, can alone enlighten us as to whether there has been process of any kind—for good or for ill—in the life of the community concerned.

Now, the question may be asked whether process as such interests us at all and whether we can refrain from seeing in every process something additional to change or movement. Let us take some typical examples. When we notice and record the movements of stars and planets we do not ask whither they are going. The change of seasons may mature other things but the seasons themselves come and go in an endless procession without any objective of their own. Seas heave and roll, winds blow and rage, rocks form and decompose, and similar things of nature go through processes of change without any obvious end in view. The brute elements and forces raise no curiosity in us about their doom or destiny. Similarly, stones, meteors, leaves and fruits, when they fall, draw our attention as things in motion but not as means to

any end. What does it matter to us if stars are forming or exploding in distant space or atoms are being composed or disintegrated? Till we are able to associate these processes with some order of value, they remain mere processes or driftings of cosmic matter which are of no interest or consequence to spiritual beings. Of course, it is quite possible sometimes to mark an artificial progress in these processes, as when the rolling of the earth is used to mark the progress of time and to measure out the years; but it is evident that here the progress is not of the earth but of beings which are affected by the efflux of time. Plants and animals grow in stature as years pass and our wisdom increases with the rolling of the sun—this is why we think of progress in connection with the process of time. But without that reference to life and mind the processes of nature are mere changes even though we punctuate them by days, months and years. When the process is circular, as in the rotation of the year, the time-cycle monotonously repeats itself. In such cases we may think of intra-cyclic progress; but even there we are not obliged to think of the progress of the system as a whole unless the movement ceases to be circular and assumes a spiral form. The informed reader will recall at once the many theories of eternal return or recurrence with which some eastern and western thinkers have familiarized us. In the Stoic philosophy and the system of Nietzsche such a conception of the eternal return of all things and events is to be found. In the preaching of Buddha we are introduced to the theory of the Tathāgata whose life-history in different births in different periods of the world repeats itself in its essential details. Occasionally, each cycle is considered to be composed of an organizing and a disintegrating phase—a phase of progress and ascent and a phase of decline and descent, and yet this biphasic (or polyphasic) cycle is supposed to repeat itself. Herbert Spencer's theory of the alternate formation and dissolution of the universe, the Jaina belief in the succession of the *utsarpiṇī* (uprising) and *avasarpinī* (declining) periods of the ethical universe, the Hindu belief in the repeating cycle of *satya* (golden), *tretā* (silver), *dvāpara* (brazen) and *kali* (iron) ages are instances in point. Here the process is not random or equational in character but is characterized in one part by an ascent or acquisition of worth and in another part by the liquidation of the value attained so laboriously. Once the peak of perfection is reached the downward journey begins, to be succeeded once more by the ascending movement, and so on without end.

Such a conception is obviously based upon our experience of living forms. Life begins with a lowly seed and gradually acquires

the plenitude of power and perfection. Growth, differentiation and organization characterize the vital process in all higher living forms for some time, and then decay sets in and the organisms die. But their seeds begin the same process over again and repeat the life-history of the parent organisms; and in this way the different species maintain themselves in unchanging existence for an indefinite period of time. Except when spontaneous variation or artificial improvement pushes the stock on to a higher level of excellence, the life of each living species is, as Bergson aptly points out, like an eddy where marking time seems to be the only occupation. Birth and death are the pulse-beats of life in every species and all growing things march with the beating of time to their certain grave. There is no indefinite growth anywhere and most often the process is cyclical—returning like a circle upon itself to the same point, and not, like a spiral, to the same starting line but at a higher level. If the world were to represent the same phenomenon on a larger scale, we are to admit that, as in individual species, process is characterized by repetition and there is no forward movement leading to a more valuable mode of life in the long run. Intra-cyclical progress is replaced by gradual decay till the Sisyphean task of mounting upward begins anew. In the Brāhmaṇic speculation about the succession of *kalpas* or cycles of existence we have such a picture of the world and in many other primitive cosmogonies also we meet with the theory of one or more deluges overwhelming creation and forcing a repetition of the world-process. If we believe that the end of such a world is sudden and catastrophic, and not slow and gradual, we may maintain that the picture is one of progressive development all through till that end; but the usual method is to postulate a progressive advance during the earlier period and a progressive decay during the closing period and extinction at the end of the period of decay. Whether the iniquities of finite spirits bring down Divine wrath upon the world or the alternation of cosmic rise and fall in the scale of values is governed by an inexorable law or by mere chance or by Divine caprice need not be discussed just now. If we could be assured that a catastrophic end did not stop the wheel of progress but that the suspended world-process resumed its progress from the point at which it had temporarily halted, then a succession of worlds would not have mattered, although it would then have become unmeaning and unnecessary. But generally in the theory of great dissolution (*mahā-pralaya* of Hinduism) this assurance is not forthcoming and we start with a new heaven and a new earth which are in no way an improvement upon their predecessors. Matters would have been different had the succession of worlds imitated the evolution of

species so that each later world was better than the one that had gone before ; but in that case the assumption of a deluge or such other catastrophes would have been unnecessary and unmeaning, for the same world might have gone on developing indefinitely without having its continuity and progress interrupted by cataclysmic events. Lurking somewhere is the belief that, like a machinery or a living body, the world must decline in course of time and that renewed vigour of growth, like that of a seed, tuber or graft, can belong only to a new world which rises phoenix-like out of the ashes of the old. Not being cognizant of any instance of indefinite progress in our experience, we interpret the universe in terms of the kind of progress with which we are familiar, namely, that of the world of life which exhibits the alternation of growth and decay. Although an appeal to the progressive development of the mind would have furnished a more satisfactory analogy, we somehow think that even the mental powers suffer decay towards the close of our individual lives and repeat the tale of vital processes—with, however, one significant difference, namely, that the social heredity they leave behind is cumulative in character even though each mind has to start afresh in its quest of materials like a living germ and to build up its body of experiences.

It is possible, however, to conceive of indefinite progress in individual life on two suppositions. We might believe that in never-ending time men have been coming again and again to this world and that it is possible by the acquisition of personal merit to advance one's spiritual status. We might suppose that a life well lived begets a better life in the next birth and that in this way men might progress indefinitely in perfection. Unfortunately, however, apart from the fact that the doctrines of Karma and Transmigration have not been universally accepted, or understood in the same sense even by those who accept them, there is the additional difficulty that the individual concerned does not know that he is progressing, if he is really progressing at all. The breach in the continuity of consciousness would alone rob progress of all its real meaning when individual lives are concerned. Besides, the theory of Karma admits ups and downs in moral fortune and does not permit the assumption of automatic progress in time ; and quite logically so, as it makes status dependent upon personal achievement, which may be either good or bad. A glance at the *Jātakas* (Birth-stories) will show that even Buddha was credited with many lower forms of existence in his different births and did not show a steady progression in the scale of being through successive lives. He even

combated the theory of automatic perfection through the efflux of time. Hence the first assumption of continued progress in individual life through successive births in this world must fail.

Nor does the second assumption fare any better. Suppose we believe that progress cut short here below is resumed in a separate realm. Students of philosophy are familiar with the Kantian postulation of immortality as a requirement of our moral life. We refuse to believe that after ascending the scale of values man should utterly perish and so much effort to achieve perfection should end in nothing. Hence the necessity of believing that in a supersensible world we shall by constant progress in goodness approach nearer the ideal of perfect holiness. Similarly, in the Vedāntic theory of *kramamukti* (gradual liberation) we have the supposition that men might by good act attain a higher world and thence achieve salvation by further acts of goodness and wisdom. Howsoever plausible these views might be, it is evident that we are obliged here to leave the sensible world behind to establish the continuity of personal progress. It is believed that between the littleness of man and the greatness of his ultimate destiny—whether this be salvation or proximity to God—such a wide gulf is fixed that, unless other fields of activity are provided, man will never reach the full stature of his real being; hence the necessity of postulating other realms where the soul might start with the perfection it has already attained here below. Obviously, without the further assumption that the progressing soul retains its individual existence and memory in the supersensible world this theory is in no way an improvement upon the theory of transmigration mentioned above. The craving for personal immortality proves ultimately to be a transcendental application of the instinct of self-preservation as the individual refuses to have his substance or character dissolved at any time and wishes the persistence of time beyond this sensible world so that his identity and progress might be maintained in a supersensible realm as well. As is well known, early Buddhism, in spite of its birth-stories and Karma doctrine, ridiculed the belief in pre-existence and post-mortem existence alike and orthodox Hindu speculation also mostly decried all belief in the continuance of the finite personality in the state of salvation. We need only refer to similar speculation in the writings of Bradley and Bosanquet about the nature of the finite selves in an ultimate reference to show that indefinite progress of the finite individual is not a universally accepted creed of religion or philosophy and even his persistence in a supersensible world has been widely questioned.

All considerations seem inevitably to suggest that progress that is indefinitely continuable cannot belong to any single individual. The limited span of existence that is allotted to him cuts short his career here below and we have no means of ascertaining whether, why, and in respect of what characteristics he should resume his career of progress in some other realm or mode of existence. Besides, we cannot distinguish the deserving and the undeserving by any absolute criterion nor can we be sure if a merciful Providence should not be more solicitous about souls that have degenerated than about those that have more or less fulfilled Divine expectations. If every soul is a thing of value, then God cannot allow any to go out of existence or become eternally stagnant or regressive unless we hold that those who have misused or neglected their opportunities have forfeited their right to consideration at the hands of God according to the Biblical principle that to him that hath more shall be given but from him that hath not the little that he hath would be taken away. Society has, in fact, established the convention that moral worth should alone count in the scale of spiritual values, and religious progress is the only consideration that should weigh when personal immortality is concerned. No philosopher has yet seriously suggested that an atheistically inclined scientist or an artist of eminence should have his prospects of further progress assured in another realm. Under the dominating influence of social need we have reserved such persistence for the morally good and the spiritually devoted, for into our connotation of holiness, intellectual knowledge and apprehension of beauty do not materially enter, even though we describe Heaven as the house of song and insist on the knowledge of self and God as a fundamental requisite of spiritual life. The suggestion that only those through whom some Divine purpose can be realized have a right to continuance and progress in another realm does not settle whether their progress or persistence is eternal and whether the purpose for which they persist is designed to benefit them personally or only uses them as means to some ulterior Divine end in the sensible or supersensible world. We must point out at the same time that progress in knowledge has in one sense contracted the sphere of the knowable. We no longer dabble in cosmic ages, theogonies, and the different levels of heaven and the underworld which an earlier generation loved to people with different types of superhuman and non-human beings, possessed of diverse powers and of opposite types of moral qualities. The genealogies of the gods do not interest us any more nor their occupations in their respective heavens; and in demons we have still less faith. No wonder, therefore, that we should discourage eschatological

speculations of all kinds as having very little bearing upon our duties here below and should applaud such religions as the early Hebrew religion, Buddhism and Confucianism for their avoidance of the question of the condition of the soul hereafter in connection with the problem of individual moral perfection in this life. Our latter-day philosophy, mostly under theistic influence, has seen fit to dissociate life and mind—the latter more than the former—from brute matter, because, according to it, the last never becomes genuinely individualized while the first two can be thought of only as embodied in unique objectively real individuals, each with an independent career of its own. Naturally, therefore, the individual becomes the object of attention and interest in the worlds of life and mind.

It is indeed difficult to dissociate progress from individual life for it is in and through individuals that all advance has to be made. We may be thrilled by the conception of an original vital impulse or a universal mind, but we have to confess that the only life and mind with which we are acquainted are associated with individual beings. Naturally, therefore, we think of progress in terms of individual things. Besides, just as we cannot conceive of reality progressing as a whole, so also we cannot understand a universal life or mind as subject to waxing and waning. Either we think of it as the expression of a higher principle and, therefore, capable of advancement when giving a fuller expression of that principle, or else we think of the principle itself as a unity in diversity which, although incapable of affecting the integrity of its indwelling factors, is able to change their relations and thereby increase its own value as a systematic whole. If we think that life is only a stage in the evolution of consciousness—because the ultimate principle is spiritual and nothing non-spiritual has any existence of its own, then we can explain why life should assume higher and higher forms in order to bring out progressively the element of spirituality that is latent in it and is working within it for fuller expression. We can even explain why the externality of relation which characterizes the world of dead matter should be superseded by the internality of relation to be observed in the world of life and this in its turn should culminate in that intimacy of relation among mental facts with which we are acquainted in our own conscious life. Proximity in space, organization and personal identity represent an ascending scale of excellence for the universal spirit that is operating in the world. Similarly, chance impact, constant assimilation and deliberate association represent a progressive scale of values when we pass from the inorganic to the organic and

from the organic to the conscious. Or we may think that the elements that make up the texture of the world are themselves unalterable in their nature—what changes is their configuration or organization. The materials that make up the physical world, when taken up in the living world, acquire a new value because of the organization they receive, and these, when forming part of the organism of a conscious being, get an intimacy of relationship which is not found in the non-sentient world of life. Reality is always a system but the worth of the system varies according to the type of relation that holds among its constituents. Like the embryonic stages of a developing animal, lesser perfections are successively passed over so that greater perfection may be progressively achieved (Hobhouse).

But in spite of the undoubted value that individuality possesses we must reject the view that the perfection of any individual is the objective of the world-process. Time not only matures us but callously rejects us after gathering the seeds of vitality and wisdom from our life and mind. We are not, as Nietzsche thinks, a bridge to the superman but we prepare the way for a better race. Life knows not only of the unchanging species but also of the evolution of better forms—the lower forms may not die out in the process, but the best of them sow that seed of variation which lifts the type to a higher pedestal. Let us learn the lesson of human destiny from the world of life. Most of us would merely carry on the lower form of cultural existence in which we found ourselves at birth. But some of us are destined to start the upward march of mind—to be the heroes, saints, prophets and progenitors of the incoming era. Each successive age uses the preceding age as a jumping board to mount to higher things. This does not necessarily mean the disappearance of the lower forms of culture just as the evolution of higher forms of plants and animals has not meant the disappearance of all primitive forms of life. Apart from the cultural stratification of the different races we have in the same culture-group people of diverse attainments and abilities. The levels may differ absolutely and yet there may be heights and depths in each level, just as the Eastern Ghats rise abruptly from the sea-level while Mount Everest towers above the table-land of Tibet. What forces are at work to raise a few individuals above their fellows we are unable to guess. These are akin to biological freaks or sports which may prove the starting points of a higher synthesis of culture. But even they are not the final aims of nature, for they too must make room for others who would reap the benefit of their vision and provide the point of departure for their own supermen. There is this difference,

however, between biological heredity and social heritage that we are all equally the inheritors of the wisdom of all the preceding ages in our social life whereas in our biological existence we inherit traits from our own line of ancestors only. In our social life we draw from a common fund of culture into which our predecessors had all thrown their individual insights and acquisitions. But just as the individuals perish and yet the race grows more and more and better and better, so also the progress we achieve we bequeath to our posterity and we personally cease to be. Just as the biological unit persists in the race, so also the conscious unit lives in the social culture that he has been instrumental in enriching. The indefinite progress of the individual can be raised to a creed only by abstracting the moral and religious aspects of human nature from the intellectual and aesthetic aspects and then conceiving of the former as achieving indefinite progress in some other realm or realms. But, apart from this question of abstraction, the existence or the nature of the hostile factors that might give opportunities of moral growth through struggle in any supersensible world is not easy to comprehend, and automatic perfection or perfection by mere rumination in that world over the doings of this world is fundamentally opposed to our idea of the nature of moral growth. Like a flower that has faded but has left its perfume behind, we leave a legacy of culture behind us to uplift the race and the only persistence we have is of this impersonal kind, namely, in the memory of the race and in the blazing trail of wisdom, beauty and goodness that our personality leaves in the social firmament. We prolong and better our existence both biologically and mentally in the race; and, thanks to the instinct that does not grudge a gift to the race, we do not spare ourselves and deprive posterity of our contributions to its well-being, just as our predecessors did not deny us the privilege of a better life, which was made possible through their contributions to social progress. The cultural heritage of the race has been made possible by the synthesis and organization of the contributions of the earlier generations, and the diffusion of culture through contact has been on a far larger scale than the cross-breeding of different biological strains. We are far more indistinguishable as the founders of culture than as the progenitors of our individual families and clans, and to that extent we have far less of individual immortality in the cultural life of society than in the biological life of the species. In many primitive and ancient mythological beliefs the hero or the clan-leader was alone supposed to have an immortal life. In the cultural life of the community also only a leader of thought can be said to have substantial persistence. The multitude that quickened his thought and resisted or assisted the

diffusion of his ideas form an indistinguishable mass, if they persist at all in the racial civilization. In the formation of social tradition or the furthering of social arts many more may have a share ; but their individual contribution is either forgotten or not ascertainable, and hence they suffer from complete social oblivion.

Whether there is any other persistence to enjoy the fruits of merit or demerit and, if so, of what character it is, we shall not discuss here ; but if such there be, we should be constrained to deny that there is any progress in such a type of persistence. Hindu philosophy generally thought of heaven and hell merely as places of reward and punishment respectively for a specified period. It generally refused to apply the law of moral action to spirits enjoying the sweets and bitters of heavenly and hellish life respectively and reserved progress for earthly life alone. We would rather favour that position and refuse to postulate indefinite progress in the purgatory or some other supersensible realm or to accept the contention of the theosophists or psychical research enthusiasts that spirits may belong to a different plane of existence and yet come down to, or interfere with, the events of this terrestrial plane. Nor would we be justified in believing that others can speed a departed soul on to higher perfections by their oblations to the dead or gifts in honour of the dead or masses for the benefit of the departed ; these would take away the main element, namely, personal endeavour, from the concept of individual progress. All of us may share equally in the legacy of the race, but nothing comes down from the past to benefit specified individuals ; similarly, no one can get individual benefit from a later generation and attain a better state with the help of a pious posterity. Apart from other considerations, its pragmatic value would be negative from the standpoint of social progress ; for while a gift in the spiritual interest of a departed soul ennoble the giver, the hope or prospect of receiving such a gift from pious descendants (and gifts would naturally be greater for the benefit of the worse souls) and of evading the consequences of a sinful life would take away the main incentive to moral action from a person even if he believes in a hereafter. A meed strictly in consonance with personal worth or worthlessness is a far better hypothesis than a mitigation of post-mortem suffering or an improvement of post-mortem status effected by prophetic intercession and by pious gifts of posterity. Let us admit that funerary rites and pious offerings, in so far as they widen the sphere of benevolent thought and action so as to include unseen worlds, do have an educative value and not only foster the sense of kinship but also expand the charitable attitude of man. But let us admit also that

ancestor-worship of all forms has oscillated between the utilitarian motive of providing material and moral sustenance to the departed fathers and the egoistic motive of receiving blessings from them in return, especially in the shape of increase of family and good luck, just as funerary rites are intended as much to prevent the dead from returning as ghosts as to help them in attaining a good hereafter. Those who trust more in personal merit and yet feel that moral achievement can never fulfil adequately the requirements of a blissful immortality rely more upon faith in God or prophetic intercession and fondly believe that the deficiency in works may be made good by faith, if not totally replaced by the latter, and that even death-bed profession of faith in a particular creed can advance the post-mortem status. Repentance that implies a genuine change of heart is sometimes so indistinguishable from formal confession and mechanical repetition of a creed that professions of faith are often designed to overload the scale of merit in the eyes of God. We have to repeat the same warning here : faith may be a moral act in so far as it implies a determination to establish a right relation with God's creatures ; but it cannot replace morality or, when divorced from moral attitude, benefit the sinning soul in any way. The recluses and mystics of all races and ages have mostly found faith, meditation or contemplation sufficient for their spiritual needs and have not shown any great willingness for shouldering the duties of social life ; but their omission to practise active charity can in no way be compared with the attitude of those who believe that once spiritual illumination or correct devotion has been cultivated the ordinary laws of morality cease to have binding force and they are permitted to indulge in any immoral act without risking the safety of their soul.

Let us return from this digression and reiterate the view that till belief in transcendental persistence and indefinite personal progress cease to dominate our thought and conduct we shall not be able to appreciate the value of social immortality or further social progress in a disinterested manner. History becomes a biography of heroes when society is reduced to a background for the exploits of the heroic leader. How far such a leader is able to pull society up with him becomes a matter either of no concern or only of secondary concern. He attains an isolated eminence and hands over the society to the next strong man to rule. When the masses are sunk in poverty, ignorance and squalor, the odds are heavily against a regular succession of great men ; and the absence of ability and incentive to emulate them is so marked that nothing short of a miracle can improve the condition of such a society.

Unless the light and air of the cultured world outside can effect an entrance into such a community and kill the germs of ignorance and imbecility and sweep away the mass of superstition and primitive credulity, such a community would be condemned to a perpetual darkness and chronic inactivity. If it could be shown that the breath of culture is not vitalizing any considerable part of the globe at any time, then it would be difficult to discover any meaning in human history. We wish to maintain, in other words, the thesis that human progress is not to be judged by the advancement of any single race, tribe or nation just as it has no meaning when applied to single individuals here or hereafter. It is not to glorify the Israelites by making them the chosen race or to establish the Prussian State as a complete expression of the Objective Spirit or to reach self-consciousness in and through the philosophy of Hegel that the Ultimate Principle of the universe works. The Universal has no particular individual's benefit directly in view although it has to use the individuals as tools of its operation.

If then we must limit our consideration to social groups as the objective of progress, how are we to read aright the meaning of history? The drama of human life does not embrace the whole race within its cast; and when groups live in isolation or in mutual ignorance of one another's existence, there can possibly be no single history of the human race. We shall not enter here into the vexed question of the monocentric *versus* polycentric origin of the human race. We shall not attempt to ascertain if the ape-like anthropoid ancestors of man gave up arboreal habits in different parts of the globe and evolved the different types of primitive men whose skulls have been excavated in widely separated regions of the world, or if, after originating at one centre, the human race broke up its original home and migrated in different groups to different parts of the world and then these groups not only lost touch with one another but created a babel of tongues that took away their capacity to understand one another. We shall discuss later on the nature of the progress that we consider to be ideal and which, in our opinion, constitutes the inner meaning of human history. But before we can do that we are faced with this formidable difficulty that unless human history is itself a fact there is no sense in trying to fathom its meaning. By the very nature of the geographical distribution of the habitable parts of the globe the different human races could not have had a single history. The distribution of land and sea in earlier geological ages was possibly, as scientists point out, somewhat different and lands now separated were joined to one another in those times and *vice versa*. But it is doubtful, if

not improbable, that man had evolved so early and in any case the same problem was possibly present then as now although in a different form. We are obliged, therefore, to ask if each region had its own history of the human race and yet all developed on identical or similar lines like the geological strata in different parts of the world and thus the operation of a uniform principle was visible from the very beginning. Apart from the fact that we have no recorded history of all regions or all times, the simultaneous presence of different grades of civilization and types of culture down to the present times is itself an evidence that the different races moved with unequal paces through the ages, and, what is worse, even the capacity for cultural development did not grow at an equal rate in these races and their power of adaptation to a civilized mode of life was so unequal that many of the primitive tribes seemed to be doomed to extinction in a cultured environment. In these circumstances the only consolatory surmise seems to be that the existing races must have been better than those they had supplanted in point of adaptation to environment, for otherwise they could not have survived in the struggle for existence. And if the survival of any human race implies that its members were more keen-witted and better organized in peace and war, if not also more courageous in mind and strong in body, than the members of rival races, then the evolution of such a race would certainly be a proof of the operation of a principle of selection. But as different surroundings require different talents for adaptation and advancement, it would be risky to postulate any single trait as the uniform objective of the evolution process. The utmost that can be conceded is that the brain developed everywhere in keeping with the needs of adjustment to a more complex situation and a greater intelligent opposition, perhaps not less often than as a result of some favourable chance variation. As spirit answers to spirit, we may suppose that the absence of intelligent individuals to whom they might respond was responsible for the backwardness of some groups and that to that extent progress in any primitive group with very limited opportunities of intercourse with more intelligent groups was a matter of luck, depending upon the chance appearance of intellectuals within the group by birth, capture, find, or migration from some other group.

But does our admission end here? Can we assert that the drama of human progress has been enacted on a uniform pattern all the world over on the principle of the triumph of the better over the worse? Has progress been steadily and consistently maintained in all fields of racial development? Have we no ups and

downs in the fortunes of the races in any region or any time? Does human progress march like a steadily ascending curve—sometimes slowly perhaps and sometimes quickly but never with any break or fall? Or does it move in a dialectic fashion—with occasional falls that are necessary preparations for higher successes? Or, lastly, does it move with no plan whatsoever or only in a serpentine fashion, but still accidentally attain higher and higher levels and thus produce an illusion of planned advance? We should clearly dissociate in our reading of the march of history the subjective category of purposiveness from the objective presence of purpose. The extolling of the later conditions of things over earlier ones may be only an extended egotism—an indirect claim that we the latest are the best. It may also be that we cannot understand the meaning of the flow of time except as a change for the better, interpreting every cosmic movement in the analogy of our own acts as an attempt to get away from an absolutely or comparatively undesirable state to a more satisfactory condition. We may even put a palliative meaning on uncomfortable facts in the shape of a hope that they too would introduce a better state of things in the future. Who in the ancient world did not deplore the extinction of the glorious Roman Empire at the hands of the barbarian hordes? And yet have we not been told that it was necessary that the effete Mediterranean civilization should perish in order that the less sophisticated barbarians might accept, and be instrumental in spreading, Christianity? Who in the modern world except the aggressors concerned would not deplore the enormous loss of innocent and valiant lives in Abyssinia, Spain and China, which ambitious nations and individuals have caused to satisfy their lust of conquest and power? And yet in course of time would appear apologetics and defences of the cruelties of these wars with a catalogue of goods that the world would not otherwise have achieved. The healthy instinct of seeing the bright side of things, without which life would have been more miserable and intolerable, makes us incorrigible optimists, and so we interpret worldly happenings as being always designed for the best. Even natural catastrophes we take in a similar light. The Great Fire of London was taken as a providential arrangement for making a cleaner and more healthy city possible. Religious historians of earthquakes would probably regard the great earthquakes of Lisbon, Quetta, Tokyo, Monghyr, Shillong and other places as similar providential decrees for better town-planning and structural construction! As every calamity affords an opportunity for learning

by experience (possibly the primitives learnt less and could counteract evils less), it is not difficult to find out some justification for every untoward and injurious event. Had man acquiesced in these calamities (as probably he did in olden times, but even then perhaps only partially), they would have been unmitigated evils; but the human mind refuses to be subdued and every misfortune teaches it how best to counteract or minimize it in future. Hence we have learnt to regard every event as an example or opportunity of progress—whether the event is good or bad at the time does not matter, for ultimately the human mind benefits from each happening. We are presented in fact with two alternatives. If their bearing upon human life is excluded, then natural events are mere transformations of matter and energy and are beyond the province of valuation. If, on the other hand, they do affect human life and are utilized by man as opportunities for improving his conditions of existence, they cease to be pure evils and can in fact be regarded as designed for educating the race in knowledge and adaptation to environment. It is this habit of reading beneficence into all events and acts that is responsible for the view that a personal providence is at work in the world, arranging things always for the best, whether in the form of uninterrupted progress or in the form of occasional or systematic disturbance of peace in order to elicit from a man a more satisfactory method of overcoming the evil and improving his position and prospect.

It is not easy to say where this subjective way of reading purposiveness into happenings ends and an apprehension of objective purpose begins. That from the experiences of the same world a Leibniz should be able to say that it is the best of all possible worlds and a Schopenhauer that it is the worst of all worlds, or that a Hegel should build up a rationalistic theory of the universe and a Von Hartmann or a Bahnsen a pessimistic and irrationalistic theory is enough to prove that much of philosophical speculation depends upon the temperament of the thinker concerned and that even philosophers are not free from the faults of omission and commission when dealing with the universe at large. With an admittedly warped attitude towards life, a perfect and impartial view of things is not expected of man, and much of our so-called knowledge would naturally be nothing more than personal opinion. But just as subjective idealism in philosophy has failed to give entire satisfaction because even after making allowance for the ideational character of all knowledge we have to admit that certain ideas, because of the force and liveliness with which they strike upon the mind and of the regularity and uniformity with which they

appear in different minds, seem to reveal an objective world, so also certain stubborn facts of nature and history raise the presumption that something akin to the presence of an ideal is at the root of cosmic operations. The evolution of plants and animals and the contact of cultures are not subjective fancies even though we are unable to say whither they are all tending. That both naturally and artificially a better adapted and probably a more artistic world of things should gradually come into being betokens the presence of a principle that creates and conserves values. Possibly a similar adaptation to a primitive world was made by an earlier type of life ; but the complexities of a later world were probably absent at the beginning and the level attained by later forms of life was unknown at that time. Adaptation is not the only criterion of progress for plants and animals may by regression also adapt themselves to their life's situation, as is done, for example, by parasites. A neurotic and a person suffering from inferiority-complex may similarly sink to a less diversified and less advanced social life to find an environment that fits them. It is the capacity to accept higher and higher developments of the universe in his particular sphere of life with appropriate faculties and organs that marks an individual's path of progress. And if such progress is present—and a candid examination of the world will show that it is, then the reality of something akin to purpose in cosmic happenings has to be admitted even though a detailed knowledge of its operation is not possible on account of the dimensions of the object and the limitations of the thinking subject. It is this purpose that gives meaning to the world-process.

Does this purpose act whimsically and in contravention of law? Are we to suppose that to benefit single individuals the purpose neglects the constancy and steadiness of happenings, faith in which is the basis of all rational thought and uniform conduct? Does it take things out of their proper turn and snatch at this or that perfection according to its sweet will and pleasure? Or have we only one standard by which to judge progress in every sphere, and are the stages thereof rigidly fixed so that, even if skipping be possible, reversal of procedure is not permissible? We have to confess that things act uniformly in the universe and that the ascent also follows a uniform law all the world over. Not only is the physical world subject to uniform laws, but life also evolves according to a uniform procedure and is unable to make a direct ascent from an amoeba or an ant to a man. Man also is subject to uniform laws in his mental behaviour and in psychology we undertake to study the laws of his mental life. Even in the appre-

ciation and pursuit of ideals men do not differ from one another, for otherwise aesthetics, ethics and logic would have been impossible and all philosophical, academic and religious endeavours to educate the different races of men in a uniform system of culture and appreciation of values would have been futile and unmeaning. Now if there be universality and uniformity in progress, we have to assume the operation of a single principle all throughout in space and time. But we are not necessarily bound to assume at the same time that a personal power is behind this uniformity, for a spiritual principle operating according to law would serve the purpose of explanation and would not introduce complication about the possibility of arbitrary deviation from plan in individual cases. In fact, the real difficulty is not about the principle but about the personalities through which all progress has to be achieved. Whether a personal power overrules all events or whether an impersonal principle of spiritual law is in operation, the share of free individuals in shaping the destiny of the world is not easy to understand. Are we permitted to interfere in any way with the scheme of things or is the plan of the universe so unalterably fixed that finally, whether we co-operate with or oppose the ultimate principle of things, that plan always realizes itself? Like an eddy in a river we seem for a moment to have an individuality of our own and to run counter to the main flow of the stream of reality; but in the end we are carried downstream and then lose our individuality, and the stream resumes its downward course as if nothing had happened to ruffle its bosom. If it is a God that overrules the destiny of the universe, He may give us a measured latitude of freedom; but He does not allow us to interfere with His scheme of the world. Even if we cease to believe in the miraculous interference of God in the affairs of the world to set right a disjointed world, or in the dissolution of the world when things are past remedy, we still hold the view that the scope of human interference is extremely limited and that we are condemned to the laborious task of building up monuments of art and industry which the ruthlessness of nature or man destroys in a moment or which crumble to pieces in course of time by a slow but irresistible process of natural decay. Not only the evil but also the good that we do seem to have no abiding effect on the course of things, and the spirit of the world seems to move on regardless of what we do or undo. This is enough to breed pessimism about our own worth and our contribution to the progress of the world. A way of escape may indeed be found in the consoling thought that we are here not to make the world advance (the Zoroastrian *frashokereti*) but to advance our own spiritual interest here and hereafter so

that we may ultimately deserve well of God and enjoy eternal felicity. But, apart from theoretical difficulties attending this position also, we have to confess that this solution does not appeal to us and that like the Mahāyānists who disapprove of the idea of personal liberation as held by the Pratyekabuddhayānists, we too think that in an ultimate reference life for others is what counts.

II

It is perhaps disquieting to be told that a disinterested study of the worlds of life and mind reveals the fact that it is only by a universal living for others that species and societies have been maintained and improved. If each individual had insisted upon living for self, then neither race nor culture would have been possible. Each organism is used as a bridge by which life passes on from one generation to another and each species is similarly used by the life-force to pass on to higher forms. It seems as if reality is permeated by certain forms or configurations that act like universals and also that there are not only forms but also a *nisus* which is responsible for the evolution of higher specific types. While consciously pursuing our selfish ends, we unconsciously allow ourselves to be used as tools by the racial impulse for propagating the species. While our intelligence acts as an individualizing agent and we build up a personal history and a personal objective with its aid, our instinct acts as a universalizing force and makes us work for the benefit of the race. The egoistic instinct is thwarted not only by the erotic impulse but also by the instinct of sympathy which is incidental to the operation of the parental instinct and is also aroused in other situations. In our solicitude for the children, in our pity for the distressed, in our love and kindness towards the weak, we reach out beyond ourselves spontaneously except where a cold intellectual calculation of the profits and losses to self keeps us back from expressions of sympathy and succour. Whether to gratify our impulses or to derive a feeling of complacency and pride in dominating others, we get wives and rear up families, and this becomes instrumental in pushing us from egoism to altruism. The creative impulse of the poet and the artist refuses to be contained within the four walls of their private personalities and issues forth in music, poetry, dance, painting, sculpture and similar artistic expressions that may incidentally enhance the self-feeling of their authors but primarily subserve, whether intended or not, the interest of a social group for whose delectation, in fact, they take an objective form. Similarly, a prophet or a seer may have revelations from on high that make him personally a better man; but he cannot contain himself and goes out to preach a message of salvation for the benefit of

others and not for glorifying himself. Even a funny thought we cannot keep to ourselves but must express in a witty utterance or a catching cartoon. Joy is doubled and sorrow halved in company. For protection as well as for enjoyment we require the presence of others. In distress we require friendly help, and in attacking others we similarly want social assistance, even though after the fight is over we may fall out among ourselves. In our opinions and acts we require social backing; in fashions we follow social tastes; and even in our appreciation of things of value we follow the social standard. Thus, in spite of our engrossing pursuit of self-interest, we cannot get rid of all social reference; and on last analysis, it will be found that much, if not most, of our personal enjoyment borrows its vitality and colour from social appreciation and approval. Just as a procession would be off colour if there is no crowd to watch it, so also we shall not enjoy many of our egoistic pleasures without being assured of social observation, approbation or support. When we wish to enjoy thoroughly our wealth or strength, we parade it in public. We take delight in being seen when driving a car or wearing costly dresses and ornaments. Even our capacity to inflict punishment must be noticed, or we shall not relish the cruelty of our conduct; and our calamities must be noticed and our bereavements mourned by others if we are to feel our personal worth in the social group. A social outcast or a political outlaw, with all the resources of enjoyment at his command, would feel miserable, for in the absence of social notice our enjoyments prove ashes to the taste. Except by special training in the art of solitary living, no individual can stand a solitary cell for long—he loses wit or health or both in the absence of the customary social contact even when all his physical comforts are adequately attended to and he is supplied with necessary physical and mental recreation through bodily exercise and literary pursuit.

Now it is this instinct of living for, in and through others that lies at the basis of social progress. A group of living beings neither requiring nor offering assistance of any kind is to be found only among the lowest organisms where living in groups, if at all present, has no social significance. Each lives unaided and unaiding, pursuing its preys and avoiding its enemies, while mitotic division makes it unnecessary for the members of the species to seek out a mate. There is no mutual imitation or any danger cry or any concerted action in attack or defence. The race survives by its sheer capacity of rapid multiplication as the plants do. Above this level we have species which have periodical matings or flights in swarms where the reproductive function comes into play. In many species the reproductive act terminates the life of the individual—

the single social act is the culmination of the animal's career ; like the cereals and annuals in the vegetable kingdom it only lives long enough to hand down the lamp of life. It is only when we come to animals that live in herds, shoals, flocks or swarms, whether habitually or seasonally in order to raise the next generation-or to attack others or to defend themselves, that we have the genuine beginning of social life, however short-lived this might be. It is not the number but the degree of interest in others that determines the cohesiveness of a group. A large concourse of people does not necessarily develop a sense of unity till some stimulus makes them of one mind as, for example, in a crowd. Judged by this criterion, individuals living apart might be better knit together by mutual attachment than those living together in loose mental association with one another. A herd of cattle or a flock of sheep grazing apart from one another in the same field is more socially disposed than a thick cluster of millepedes or worms, for in weal and woe they have a tendency to gravitate towards one another and present a combined reaction. Where herds develop a kind of leadership, as among monkeys, elephants, migrating birds, etc., the unity achieved is greater in spite of the fact that the association may be purely temporary. In all these cases, however, each individual is self-contained regarding function and each duplicates the work of the rest in its own life. The structural resemblance carries with it a functional resemblance and none is expected to specialize in a particular direction and to be relieved of other functions in consequence. Barring the respective functions of the male and the female on account of sexual dimorphism, the other functions are discharged uniformly by all the members of the species.

The most notable departure from this repetition of functions is made by social groups where a division of labour is established by structural polymorphism. Bees and ants furnish the most instructive examples of such structural differentiation and of a type of society where an allocation of different functions is forced by the structural dissimilarity of the component units. As Bergson has pointed out, such groups stand, as it were, for individuals with the different organs located apart in space. The group works as a whole, for its component types dovetail into one another to form a single viable unit. Under the exigencies of circumstances the members of each type may be varied in number or occasionally transformed in character (as when a worker bee is changed into a queen bee) ; but once the typical structure is attained, the function becomes stereotyped. In rigid social groups an imitation of this condition is met with, as when professions go by castes and guilds and a turning over to other occupations is regarded as impossible

—at least, not at all easy. Here the polymorphism is not corporeal but mental—there is somewhere an inertia which prevents a swift turning over to new occupations in keeping with the changing demands of life, and thus the inner mobility of the social groups is paralysed. Here perfection has been attained at the cost of pliancy. Like instinctive animals that function more accurately in accustomed environment than intelligent beings but lack the adaptability and progressiveness of the latter, a rigid social organization is best suited for routinized life but proves defective in rapidly changing conditions of existence. Social unity must not, therefore, follow too closely the social organization of polymorphous bees and ants. The ideal social life is that in which individuals are allowed to specialize in certain functions but can switch over to other functions as circumstances demand or talents permit.

The evolution of complex human society has been made possible not only by the liberation of the hand from the function of locomotion but also by the progressive division of labour among different groups. In primitive times each man was expected to be a jack-of-all-trades and to satisfy most, if not all, of his personal needs himself. In family life the beginnings are made of the distribution of work, and naturally the member who most excels others in any particular direction is entrusted with that particular type of work oftener and becomes an adept in that line. But it is in society that this division of labour attains perfection, and, instead of each man doing all necessary things imperfectly, different men do different things with greater perfection. The founding of cities accentuates the process of specialization as mass production becomes indispensable for meeting large needs, and gradually in course of time castes and guilds are formed to concentrate works of particular kinds in the hands of select bodies of people specially trained in their respective arts and crafts. But cutting across the principle of aptitude comes the principle of inheritance, for families naturally attempt to keep particular arts and avocations a close preserve for their descendants and resist the intrusion of other families or groups into their special domain. But as the inheritance of special aptitudes is not absolute but limited, all persons born in a particular caste or family are not fitted to follow the caste or family profession, with the effect that either they have to abandon the profession or they bring it into disrepute by their slovenly performance. Besides, tradition is the greatest enemy of innovation and this, in a changing world demanding rapid progress, is one of the greatest drawbacks of routinized production. One born in a caste or guild can perhaps improve the *technique*, but the

importation of *ideas* is less satisfactorily achieved through hereditary groups of craftsmen. As the spectators often see more of the game than the players themselves, so people outside the group can often detect blemishes and suggest improvements which escape the notice or transcend the intelligence of the traditional performers. To exclude individuals from groups to which they belong by nature, though not by birth, is to keep out men who can sometimes take the profession out of a rut and push it on to a further stage of progress. Hence while one section is needed to conserve the conquests already made, another section, which is capable of making original contributions in that particular realm, should not be denied the right of operation simply because it does not possess a hereditary right to that domain.

It is essential for social progress, therefore, that those who have ideas should have the right to express them. No less essential than freedom of conscience is the freedom of thought and of its expression with due respect to the legitimate sentiments of the people at large. No existing social evils or superstitions can be attacked or dissented from without offending somebody; if it is demanded that free thinking should be conceded on the understanding that it offends none, then this concession is illusory. You cannot attack abuses in any sphere without affecting vested rights—you cannot even set a fashion without injuring some interest somewhere. To dare to offend and to be a nuisance are not identical—one can do the one without being the other. It so happens sometimes that men's minds are insensibly and widely prepared to receive certain changes; in such a case they seize the occasion of a free critic's expression of views to side with him, and then the contagion of advance spreads rapidly among the people at large. The spread of western culture in eastern countries is an instance in point. As a consequence of the liberal secular education received, a particular section may be more prone to change unsatisfactory modes of thought and action than another, which clings more tenaciously to ancient culture. But this does not always happen, and a prophet or a reformer may have to fight long and single-handed, or with a small following, to spread his ideas among the people at large. Think of Socrates, Jesus, Muhammad, Zarathushtra, Galileo, Gandhi and others who had to face contumely and persecution to spread an idea or a truth. If those that have vision are not permitted to show the way to others who, like the chained persons in Plato's allegory of the Cave, stubbornly refuse to turn towards the light, how would the world progress at all? The birth of a genius who sees better and farther is an essential condition of social advance and this type of variation the spirit

of the world has achieved in all times and climes, albeit at different rates of progress.

Far more effective, however, than this unaided advance of any group is the contact established between a more advanced and a less advanced cultural unit. We are accustomed nowadays, with exceptions that are recent and by no means rare even in a civilized age, to peaceful penetration of more advanced ideas, institutions and cultures into less advanced culture-groups. Even in ancient times the eastern religions, which were not identified with any state policy, were disseminated in distant countries by peaceful missions. But in primitive times war was a potent instrument of the spread of ideas, and not only savages but even civilized nations learnt a good deal from their more cultured enemies, whether these simply fought and departed or conquered and spread their ideas by peaceful means or thrust them upon the vanquished people by force; conversely, the victorious in arms had to submit sometimes to the vanquished in matters of culture. Think of India's indebtedness to the Greeks and Romans in astronomy and art and of Rome's to Greece in culture to appreciate our statements. When nations go to war, do they intend it as a cultural mission? The religious zeal in early conquerors might account for a few such wars; but although a pretence of this kind was put forward in a recent war of conquest very few people believed it to be anything but an exhibition of lust of power and property. The conquest of the New World by the Europeans and the spread of Islam were not achieved without bloodshed; but it is not unlikely that many Spaniards and Musalmans felt themselves like crusaders against paganism and superstition. Many of them, again, went with the primary motive of pillage or trade and followed up their financial venture with a missionary activity. Many, again, married or carried away women to satisfy their love or lust; but this also served a missionary purpose inasmuch as the mothers and the children were converted to the religion of the conquerors or the traders.

Now this has been possible because of the operation of two factors, one physical and another mental. The geographical location of countries is responsible not only for certain national traits but also for certain wants. Arabia cannot grow enough delicacies and either trade or conquest must supplement the national food and fund. The heights of Afghanistan do not afford much luxury; nor do the countries of Europe grow or possess all the requisites for food, shelter, wealth and armament—in respect of many objects not

singly, and in respect of some not even collectively. No wonder, therefore, that the Arabs should spread out or that the hilly gates of India should be knocked at by a succession of invaders from the north-west or that the European nations should choose a career of conquest in the defenceless East, West and South. The problem of over-population or growing population also complicates the geographical difficulties of raising enough foodstuff of the requisite kinds. But climate and population do not explain migration to or invasion of other lands. The Tibetans do not descend upon Nepal or India from their inhospitable bleak plateau nor does China with the densest population of the world go to swallow Japan or Siberia. Without dissatisfaction, venturesomeness and ability a nation may suffer all the hardships of an unkind geographical position and not think of migration or attack. The strong and the ambitious may wait for a pretext or may create one or even dispense with its necessity and the needs of self-preservation may outweigh considerations of justice and propriety in the national mind ; but where strength or disposition is lacking, it is only migration to regions of easier life or livelihood, or cultural mission that is resorted to and the sword is completely laid aside. But whatever might be the motive of transcending the geographical bounds of national existence, two things stand out prominently, namely, unequal distribution of the amenities of life and the refusal of the human mind to remain content with the apportionment of nature. Nature has prevented an entropic condition by her unequal distribution of the blessings of life and has thus forced a perpetual circulation of the adventurous, intelligent and able section of her population through different regions and made it the instrument of spreading ideas, institutions and ideals.

As wants create desire, we are faced with the paradox that human progress is linked up with a progressive increase of wants. We may not go so far as to support Mandeville's thesis that civilization depends upon the vices of society ; but there is no doubt that a curtailment of wants would make us not only self-contained but also lacking in incentive for wider contact. What we call raising the standard of living is really creating necessities of cultivating larger interests and establishing wider contact with the world at large. Naturally, it is the material aspect of foreign countries that interests us at the outset, for we are dependent upon it for some of our bodily comforts ; but contact on the material plane has a tendency to be supplemented by a desire to meet foreign people on the mental plane also, and with the interchange of merchandise grows up an active intercommunication of thoughts—also, together with it, a quickening of personality,

specially in the less cultured of the two parties. The explorers, the traders, the missionaries and the scholars form an ascending ladder of inter-regional contact, each paving the way for the succeeding one in understanding the mind of the foreign nation or group. Those who advocate the blessings of isolation, national and individual, believe in intensifying a small contact of the soul; but those who advocate the cause of expansion in national and individual lives believe in establishing a wide contact for realizing a fuller life. History bears unmistakable testimony to the progressive breaking down of all national and regional frontiers as a consequence of the spirit of adventure and enquiry of the nations of the earth. A tribe or a nation that has never had any connection with other nations it is now difficult, if not impossible, to find. For gain or adventure or out of curiosity or love, even the most isolated tribes in the remotest corner of the world are being visited by civilized races. Civilization as a capacity to take interest in the affairs of the world at large has made the modern newspaper possible. The extension of interest to distant groups is responsible for material improvement in modes of communication. The civilized nations of the world have not only built ships, railways, automobiles and aeroplanes but also invented instruments for telegraphic and telephonic communication and wireless transmission. In other words, as the necessity and amount of contact are increasing, space and time are contracting, thanks to the rapid advance of science in all fields. And not only are meat and vegetable put in cold storage for longer stay and transit but speeches and songs and sights and scenes are packed in material frames for preservation and wafted to the remotest parts of the world. Gramophone and literature, photo and cinematograph bring distant things near and establish contact with unseen persons and things. In all these ways the bonds of isolation are visibly breaking on all sides.

Do these facts carry a moral for us? Man does not completely possess himself at any time and his own capacities become more and more manifest as he comes into contact with wider groups. Man in society is a much fuller man than man in isolation—he realizes his failings and strong points much more effectively and keenly through his dealings with other men. Blemishes that go unnoticed and excellences that remain undetected otherwise come out in our social dealings; and the larger the points of contact and the more alien in thought and belief the groups with which contact is established, the more conspicuously do our defects and capacities reveal themselves. But unless we give free scope to those instincts that bring us into contact with other men and groups and peoples, our capacities remain undeveloped. Nationalism breeds a narrowness

which is related at bottom to the instinct of self-preservation and is justifiable in situations where self-preservation is permissible, namely, where the existence of the individual as a free agent is threatened and his attempt to better himself is thwarted. But a nationalism that breeds insularity and prevents an understanding of national limitations and a development of national capacities is akin in a way to retirement and solitude in individual life. Just as sympathy is natural to man, so the cultivation of neighbourly feelings is the natural culmination of national life. Similarly, just as the only effective way of promoting social good is to form a league of honest men pledged to prevent social injustice and social disorder, so also the only proper method of ensuring peace in the world and promoting prosperity and freedom is to form an international league pledged to combat injustice and aggression in international relations. Once the blessings of liberty are appreciated in personal lives and the achievements of free nations in art, industry, science and literature are noticed, no intelligent or cultured race is likely to remain content with a position of humility and servility. Apart from the limitation which foreign domination imposes on individual progress, it cripples a nation's capacity for mediation in international conflicts and for armed intervention to bring an unjust and offending nation to book. Imperialistic nations that fail to realize that distant subject nations become restive and difficult to keep in bondage with the rise of new strong nations in the neighbourhood and that they become a subject of weakness and anxiety rather than strength and complacency if they are unwillingly kept within the empire, are blind to the lessons of history. Just as adult children are encouraged to set up independent households, instead of jostling together under the same roof and creating perpetual bitterness by their quarrels, so also a timely concession of power to intelligent and puissant subject races binds them with ties of loyalty to the sovereign state and increases their usefulness as component units of a far-flung empire. Once this right is conceded, the other troubles incidental to inferior position will disappear automatically; then there will be no colour bar, no discriminative legislation, no differential treatment in any part of the empire and no restrictions on movement and residence except such as are in the national interest of any particular country and apply to all aliens. A heterogeneity that is not organized properly cannot form a unit; and the circulation of power in the periphery of the empire being naturally slow and the privileges of citizenship being rather intangible, big empires have always been threatened with defection when

they failed to keep the subject races attracted to themselves by fair and equal treatment and timely endowment of power and privilege. A single nation cannot police a whole world of dependencies. The history of the world points to the free association of equal partners within a big empire as an effective bulwark against international struggle for the domination of weak and backward nations. Some recent imperialistic wars waged against inoffensive nations have served to show that, without greater understanding and mutual co-operation for justice among the powerful nations of the world, peace on earth cannot be secured and maintained. One of the essential conditions of peace on earth is goodwill towards men, i.e., a forsaking of the narrow outlook that refuses to look beyond the immediate interests of self. When the conscience of the world points its accusing finger at any backward or tyrannical country, that country cannot long refuse to accelerate its rate of progress. But backwardness of one nation is no pretext for another nation to overrun the country and occupy it for self-aggrandizement. No conquering nation has willingly vacated a conquered realm after temporarily occupying it for purposes of accelerating culture. It has tried, on the other hand, in most cases to perpetuate the ignorance and the subjection. Mandatory powers have shown a general unwillingness to release their charges when it is not to their immediate interest to do so. But the spirit of the world is wafting the message of emancipation from ignorance and sloth to every subject country to-day in spite of the inaction and opposition of the powers in possession. The time-spirit is doing its work slowly and silently but surely enough. Free association, as individuals and nations, of the emancipated in thought and action is what human history is painfully achieving through the ages and will continue to do—in peace if the nations cultivate sympathy, and through struggle if they remain selfish. If you lubricate the wheels of progress, the friction is avoided and the creaking ceases; but even if you do not, the friction itself wears down the resistance and brings about smooth running in time.

What then prevents the advent of the age of the association of the free? It is the development of the intellect out of all proportion to the development of the feeling and willing aspects of mental life. Man carries the habit of callousness he cultivates in dealing with the material world over to his dealings with the sentient world. The necessities of existence thrust upon man the task of keeping in check and utilizing the forces of the material world which threaten his life. Sun and wind, rain and cold, he must avoid and resist properly to live at all, and a considerable part of human civilization is concerned with the discovery of the methods

of harnessing the forces of nature and resisting their destructive energy. Using the materials of nature for adornment and luxury is a secondary development, made possible by the primary discovery that they can be moulded and directed to meet the necessities of existence. A house is a greater necessity than a monument or a stone figure, and the former must have suggested the latter. But, while hammering and chiselling and piecing things together, man has not to consider the feelings of the materials he deals with. The same remark applies to his treatment of wood and metal—the other materials he uses for constructing his house and articles of everyday domestic use. Now this habit may easily be carried over to man's dealings with the sentient world. The cult of *ahimsā*, so sedulously preached in India, combated this habit of mind by drawing pointed attention to the clinging to life exhibited by all types of living beings, and urging the duty of remembering this fact when dealing with any sentient being. A widespread prohibition of killing in all forms (and consequently for food as well) was intended to instil into the mind the lessons of kindness and compassion and to prevent thinking of killing merely as a partitioning of organic molecules like the breaking of a stone or metal into pieces. An insatiable hunger for readily assimilable nitrogen has made the major portion of the human race insensible to the cruelty of killing for food, and this additional callousness has helped to prevent kindly thoughts and amity among nations. When people get into the habit of thinking their own bodies as destined for length of life and other bodies as means thereto, whether as supplying food or as supplying labour, the seeds of cruelty are properly sown. Capitalism that grinds the poor and militarism that uses the youths of the country as gun-fodder are only refined forms of the cruelty of killing for the pleasure of the self. Vivisection has at least one redeeming feature, namely, that the knowledge gained is used in alleviating human suffering; but every scientific military invention is ultimately directed towards quicker devastation and greater massacre. The fact is that the cruelty inevitable in the struggle for existence we have voluntarily introduced in our social and international relations. In spite of the fitful advocacy of mutual aid as a potent factor in evolution we have chosen to vote for the survival of the fittest with the connotation of struggle for existence and weeding out of the unfit which it carries.

It would be ungenerous to accuse science of the manifold evils which its inventions have introduced. But it is important to remember that the cold intellectualism of the spirit of research has something to do with the multiplicity of lethal discoveries in

modern science. When Buddha attained enlightenment under the Bo-tree he hesitated for long as to whether he should preach his new message of salvation and was ultimately persuaded by one of the Great Brahmās, Brahmā Sahampati, to declare it for the good of gods and men. Would that the same Brahmā had approached the author of a destructive invention and dissuaded him from the resolve to publish the same on account of its injuriousness to life ! It is no consolation to learn that the aerial bomber has brought into being its antidote, the anti-aircraft gun, or the poison-gas the gas-mask. We wish that neither had been invented and that human ingenuity had stopped with the invention of the aeroplane. Disinterested search after truth is not without its dangers, for like the scriptural apple-tree there are discoveries of which the fruits are better left untasted to prevent a lapse from the duties of human relationship. Surely the beneficent secrets of nature have not been all exhausted so that it is necessary to explore her destructive mysteries to keep our brains and hands engaged ! It is necessary to remember that just as the devil can quote the scripture, so also the wicked can use an innocent or beneficent invention for evil ends. Hence a special responsibility rests upon those who wrest from Nature her secrets, for unless the moral faculties develop along with intellectual acumen there is every chance that scientific inventions would be misused and, instead of being the blessings that they are intended to be, they would turn into veritable curses. If scientists allow their curiosity to get the better of their morality and allow their murderous inventions to be applied to human beings, they would fail to come up to the standard of an ideal perfection, namely, of the personality as a whole. What is necessary, therefore, is that the bearing of all discoveries on human life should be scrutinized first and then given out to the world. If that is impossible, for man is not omniscient and much good may be thrown away with the bad, it is essential that the education of the human race in moral conduct and sympathetic dealing with fellow-men and, in fact, with all creatures, should be vigorously pushed forward and all tendencies towards a misuse of knowledge checked in time. This seems to be a Utopian ideal ; but the lessons of civilization give grounds for hope that the moral sense of mankind is progressing steadily, if not as rapidly as its intellect, throughout the ages. There is more of control and sublimation of the primitive urges of life in civilized societies than in savage ones.

It is well to emphasize, therefore, the instrumental character of all intelligence. Originally developed and primarily designed to meet the needs of adjustment to our surroundings, the intellect has a tendency to outgrow its original primary function and to be

changed from a means to an end. Just as the need of keeping the body fit for work may beget the habit of taking regular physical exercise and this habit may pass over into the professional career of a gymnast or an acrobat, so also the intellect may, after fulfilling its primary function of adjustment to pressing needs, go forward to speculate without reference to the actual problems of life and, instead of meeting needs, create them and then invent fresh methods of adjustment. Intellectual dissatisfaction is, it is true, the source of higher standards of living; for if needs had not been multiplied artificially, life would have been a much simpler affair and mostly monotonous. But there is the obvious danger that when the intellect goes beyond the actual necessities of life and makes discoveries, it does not know whether they would always be utilized properly. Drugs discovered for alleviating human suffering have, for instance, been used by addicts to their utter ruin. When out of curiosity, men began to taste and collect fermented liquids they did not anticipate the evil effects that alcohol would have on the health and happiness of future generations. When surplus knowledge is available, it is quickly put to some use—something has got to be done with the device that human ingenuity has discovered. Besides, the discovery that things meant to meet the necessities of living can be utilized for other purposes also, tempts man to extend their use and also to abuse them occasionally. It is here that moral training is necessary to keep the discoveries within the limits of usefulness or at any rate harmlessness. A fascination for multiplying discoveries without reference to their usefulness is a sign of developed intellect, no doubt, but it does not always betoken a higher morality. Like the antlers of the Irish elk that grew out of all proportion to the rest of the body and were probably responsible for the extinction of the whole species, an intellect developed out of all proportion to the other faculties of the mind may prove the ruin of mankind. The intellect may have unrestricted excursion in the realm of the non-sentient and the lifeless, for we are not called upon to establish a moral relation with them or enter into their feelings for adjusting our behaviour. But things are quite different when man has to deal with fellow-men and the world of sentient beings, for here the possibility of establishing another kind of relation than that of a mere knower and fashioner cannot be ignored. The main attitude towards inorganic things and plants is one of appropriation and use. Infliction of cruelty on animals may not be avoided in all cases on account of the need for non-vegetarian food and also for preventing injury by them. But the main attitude towards other human beings is social relation

—interchange of thoughts, sharing of feelings, co-operation in action. Hence callousness, indifference or refusal to acknowledge the rights of others is not a justifiable attitude so far as our fellow-men are concerned. Even when they are wrong or wantonly aggressive, the way of dealing with rational beings is not the same as taming or getting rid of brutes or controlling the blind forces of nature. We must develop not only the power of understanding their thoughts and motives in order to deal with them better, but also the power of sharing their joys and sorrows, of understanding their wants and limitations and of acting for their advancement and also of co-operating with cultured peoples for the betterment of the human race as a whole. We must develop, in short, those aspects of our personality that knit us closer to one another as human beings.

This throws upon us the responsibility of instituting, maintaining and developing all such institutions as help the fruition of the ideal of understanding, amity and co-operation. The venturesome spirit of the modern man is the tool with which the spirit of progress is achieving the aim of establishing contact among all races. Trekking into unknown regions which are full of hazards and sailing into unchartered seas, man has discovered peoples and cultures of all kinds. The immensity of the task of mutual understanding men have realized with the discovery of cultures extending from savagery of the most revolting type to civilization almost akin to their own. The diversity of tongues is not the only obstacle to mutual understanding, for, when that is surmounted, such a bewildering variety of mental capacities, social customs, religious beliefs and moral ideas are disclosed that one often despairs of establishing effective contact with the different races and pulling up the intellectual, moral and spiritual levels of the backward peoples of the world. If curiosity had been the only factor in human adventure or cupidity had been the only additional incentive, then discovery and conquest of lands and planting colonies of emigrants from one's own country would have completed the work of contact. But a conquering nation has been obliged to establish closer contact with the local populace, whether to get brides or to secure labour or to ensure safety; and this has been instrumental in developing the need and the desire to know more about the conquered race and to take an interest in its welfare and progress. Conversely, the conquered race is attracted by the superiority of the conquering tribe or nation in strength or culture and responds readily to sympathetic treatment. This, then, is the cunning of the world spirit that out of strife it achieves understanding and out of difference and discord it gene-

rates unity and amity. Whosoever reads aright the lessons of cultural contact cannot fail to be impressed by the strange ways in which assimilation of culture is going on all over the world and people are groping for a formula of life that will fit the whole human race. Man refuses to accept diversity at its face value and tries to ascertain if it is not possible to probe the depths of the human mind in order to discover the fundamental similarity of constitution whereon to build a lasting edifice of mutual understanding and universal concord. Possibly it will be discovered at the end that all diversity is not banishable and that constitutional dissimilarity is ineradicable. It is then that we shall need sympathetic understanding and large-hearted tolerance. Universal equality or exact similarity is neither possible nor desirable; possibly to draw the best out of us there is need of diversity and gradation as of calamity and conflict. Would there be pity if there were no distress or helplessness in any quarter? Would there be compassion if there were no want or sorrow? Where would be patient toil if there is no ignorance, disease, spiritual darkness or moral obliquity? Nature does not require man's aid to perpetuate these—they are always present and crying for human aid to eradicate them. Whether in endless time things would so materially improve that all these would totally disappear and the kingdom of heaven will descend on earth is more than what the human intellect can divine. Possibly uncontrollable natural forces will remain as injurious as now although man will bring them increasingly under subjection by a knowledge of their laws. But it is permissible to hope that human suffering will substantially diminish and that, with more of knowledge, mutual understanding, active sympathy and inter-social co-operation, the artificial distinctions of wealth and opportunity will progressively disappear.

What human history teaches is the discovery of the value of personality. Useless perhaps in an ultimate reference, each individual is unique in qualities and capacities, and a society that puts any impediment in the way of any individual's mental and spiritual growth is as guilty as the Chinaman who still wants to cramp the feet of his daughter. Each man has a right to contribute his share to the development of culture and to equip himself for that task. The original social condition where the individual figured only as a member of his tribe or socio-political group is still retained in organizations where individual freedom is subversive of discipline and is an impediment to concerted action. We lapse back to such a condition in crowds and political parties, because success there depends upon

following a leader, and in military organizations where want of directive intelligence and unitary control reduces the fighting units to mere rabbles. In all situations where collective action is a vital necessity and right of independent thinking would interfere with the realization of a unitary plan or delay the execution of any urgent measure, individual liberty has often been suppressed or subordinated to the will of an authority. But what is permissible or even desirable in a state of emergency cannot be made into a law of social action for the very simple reason that no state or society can hope to have a succession of benevolent and wise despots and it is a positive disadvantage to kill independent thinking and prevent the possibility of the collective thought and concerted action of the wisest in the group. A state or a society may owe its initial greatness to the genius and energy of a single man, but its continuance depends upon the wisdom and effort of the multitude, just as a tree may grow out of a single seed but lives with the help of its many roots and leaves. As thought is quickened by intellectual contact, a wide divergence in mental equipment between the highest and the lowest strata in society is not conducive to an all-round development, for due to want of education the lower classes do not get the quickening in thought that comes from intercourse with the cultured. At bottom the refusal to educate the lower classes would be found to be based upon the belief that unquestioning obedience to authority should be habitual with the uneducated section in the society or in the state so that acts of defence and offence may be readily undertaken by at least one section of the populace without questioning. International, inter-tribal and inter-communal jealousy, suspicion and antagonism are primarily responsible for this necessity of maintaining an unthinking inflammable mass ; with the disappearance of the former this necessity will disappear also. No elevation in the status of the masses is likely unless we follow the Kantian dictum 'Use human beings, including yourself, always as ends and never as means.' A person is not merely a member of a group—he has a distinct individuality of his own which he is capable of developing under favourable circumstances. The world is slowly awakening to the fact that a labourer is not born to labour only and to do nothing else—that he is not all hand but that he has a head and a heart also. We do not assign to him a destiny like that of a beast of burden for he is a bone of our bones, a flesh of our flesh, and what he is to-day we may sink to at any moment under an adverse economic, social or political condition.

The recognition of this fact will mean a good deal. Once we abandon the habit of thinking of and dealing with individuals as

members of classes, we shall have to discard the system of permanent classification which pays no heed to the possibility of deviation in individual cases. Sir Henry Sumner Maine has remarked that the movement of the progressive societies is one from status to contract—a movement distinguished through all its course by the gradual dissolution of family dependency and the growth of individual obligation in its place. We may stretch this point further by suggesting that human history discloses a gradual recognition of the right of the individual to be treated on the basis of his personal equipment and merit and not on his ancestry and parentage. Prejudice dies hard and the how and the where of birth are still potent considerations for determining our attitude towards our fellow-men. A Jew is hated and persecuted in Europe because he is a Jew, even if that Jew happens to be an Einstein or a Freud. Simply because he was born a Kṣatriya, what amount of trouble did Viśvāmitra have to get his spiritual status recognized! To-day in India communalism pays, for worth is measured not in terms of personal merit but in those of birth in a particular community. The Hindu and the Muslim, the Brahmin and the Non-Brahmin—this is how we divide worth. It goes without saying that those who belong to my caste or community come with a weightage of merit to me. No consideration of efficiency of public service, no question of the personal qualification of the individual, will weigh with me when he does not belong to my group. In these dark days of mistrust and misunderstanding we must put our faith in the lessons of history that the right of the individual is an indefeasible right and that all over the world the emancipation of thought is characterized by the extension of democratic institutions and the recognition of personal worth. It is ignorance and fear that prevent the recognition of these basic facts of civilization. When mistrust will have been laid and the main motive in organizing communal solidarity will have disappeared and when intellectual illumination will have dispelled unjustifiable prejudice and unnecessary fear, the necessity of looking upon an individual as a member of this or that class or community will vanish and a man harbouring such a narrow opinion will look positively mean and ridiculous. To-day the bonds of artificial segregation into classes and communities are breaking and cracking all around us. Where orthodox societies refused to move, progressive legislatures stepped in and accelerated the pace of advance. Slavery, disabilities of women, economic bondage of workmen, undue restrictions about food and marriage, religious disadvantages have been all more or less removed from among the most progressive nations of the world and are destined to pass away in course of time. The rear-guard action of ortho-

doxy and obscurantism will not succeed in stemming the tide of liberty, equality and fraternity or the gradual enlightenment of the backward classes and races of the world. Sympathy which is the mainspring of all social progress will see to it that the neglected, the weak, the oppressed and the down-trodden get due justice and opportunities of ameliorating their condition. Here again the cunning of the world-reason may use designing men as tools to achieve its own object. It is not always by the promptings of our better nature that we extend a helping hand to the oppressed and the outcast—very often it proceeds from the ignoble motive of gaining a following to advance the interest of self. The fomenting of strikes, lock-outs, formation of trade-unions, and no-tax campaigns may be due to the intention of an agitator to capture political power or gain personal importance, if not something worse. But rousing a slumbering mass of ill-educated and half-starved people may ultimately mean raising a Frankenstein. You cannot make people conscious of their power without being prepared for their exercising it in their own interest. Tenancy legislation and formation of debt-settlement boards, which are fast transforming the character of the rights of the tillers of the soil in India disadvantageously to the landlord and the money-lender, adult education movement, free and compulsory primary education, mass contact organized by hostile political parties, election campaigns, religious propaganda, women's education, discarding of seclusion and *purdah* by women and all such contemporary liberal movements in India are bound to break down the walls of class separation and hasten the advent of a spirit of democracy, whether they do or do not bring the goal of human equality and brotherhood nearer in view in all cases. Those who pine for the lost respect for authority and the lost privileges of class and caste should do well to remember that inherited rights have shared the same fate in all progressive countries but that this has not necessarily meant the extinction of all spirit of reverence. Where the class faded out of sight the individual loomed large before men's eyes and personal merit determined the depth of respect and devotion. The trappings of wealth, ancestry and caste have invariably fallen off the shoulders of men with the advancement of culture, and with the disappearance of the accidental what has stood out prominently before public eyes is the essential worth of each man. This does not mean that a man may not be to manner born because of his class or caste; but it does mean that it is only when he is so born that he commands reverence. A close alliance between conduct and caste, which was primarily responsible for the original social stratification, must be re-establish-

ed in individual lives if emancipated thought is to leave us on our former pedestal of social eminence.

What delays the realization of the ideas of political democracy and social equality is the unequal tempo of progress in different countries and communities. The state adjacent to a democratic one may be totalitarian in its ideals and practices, and if it is a hostile one, the democratic state has to abandon partially its principles for the sake of sheer self-existence. It might be argued that the democratic state might end all hostility by allowing itself to be swallowed up by its totalitarian neighbour and thus ensure peace. But this would be the abandonment of a principle and not merely of a principality. It would mean a reversion to that primitive rule in which individuality and freedom found no place. Besides, there is a limit set to the expansibility of a totalitarian state, for not only can it not control effectively and for all times a far-flung empire but sooner or later it comes into conflict with similar totalitarian states. The whole develops at the cost of the parts and this works adversely against those tendencies towards individual liberty which culture and free thought engender in all places and at all times. It is after all a conflict of ideologies, for once you admit that a strong majority has the right of coercing the lives of a weak minority, you give a free charter not only to despotism but also to aggression. Even if it be admitted for argument's sake that a civilized nation has a right and a duty to quicken the pace of culture in a backward country, it does not follow that forcible occupation is the only method of spreading ideas; for many times in the past has the more peaceful method of religious and cultural mission been found successful in achieving this object. The fact is that we are prepared to uplift others if it can be done without patient toil; so we disarm and destroy the more troublesome elements first and then begin to spread our ideals. The test of our *bona fide* motive, again, lies in our relinquishing the temporary charge as soon as the object of our occupation has been achieved; but conquests have been used not for spreading culture but for spreading the empire further and the excuses for indefinite occupation are always transparent. It is not the planting of ideals but the planting of vassal states that has been the main motive in occupying backward tracts. But the future of the world rests with those who recognize the value of personality, the inevitability of the recognition of that value in individual lives, and the final doom of any system of society, religion or government which ignores that value or its recognition. Factors that retard the appreciation of personal worth and the equality of all those who possess culture and intelligence act against the spirit of the world, which is

solicitous for the advancement of all individuals through free association and the co-operation of the spiritually and culturally advanced in the task of uplifting the backward races and individuals. Democracy has failed in many cases because the recognition of the equal right of citizenship has not been accompanied by an organized effort to put all individuals on an approximately equal level of culture. Plato fought for aristocracy because in his opinion the best alone had a right to rule the state, and Aristophanes ridiculed the idea of treating all as equal by picturing the dumb animals as proceeding to the polling station along with men to record their votes. Possibly the training necessary for shouldering the responsibilities of government is not capable of being imparted to all alike on account of a congenital difference in capacities; still each man is entitled to the utmost development of his abilities irrespective of the accident of birth or social status. We prefer to think that all distinctions of class should disappear in the presence of God, and in our philosophy too we plead for the equality of all things through their common identification with Brahman or the Absolute. But as soon as we descend to secular levels or the practices of our every-day life, we revive the distinctions and deny equal opportunity to all. The vision of an all-inclusive whole, which characterizes the religious or philosophical attitude, is obscured by the mist of nationalism and class-interest. Internationalism and Humanity are still far-off objectives of our national and personal life because we keep our philosophy and our practice in separate compartments.

It is not expected that effective contact would ever be established with the whole world and practical charity would flow in all directions equally in times of distress and danger. The world is too big still in spite of the devices of science to shorten spatial distances. The instincts of men are sometimes partial towards certain objects and justifiably so on many occasions. A mother would not, and should not, leave her own starving baby to its fate and act as a wet-nurse in a foundling hospital—that charity would be unnatural. Similarly, when one's own country is in danger, one should not sympathize with the ambition and greed of the rapacious neighbour and betray the motherland to the invader. What is needed, however, is the cultivation of a capacity and a habit of feeling for humanity at large in all cases of physical catastrophe and bodily ailment; of wanton aggression upon its life, liberty and possession; of social, economic and political backwardness; and of intellectual, moral, aesthetic and spiritual deficiency. It is not the amount of assistance rendered that is always a true index of the depth of feeling. Of course, sanctimonious sentimentalism has no

value as a humanitarian impulse, for we may poetize on human agony and yet do nothing by our practical conduct to remove human suffering. Reference is very often made to the Russian nobleman who weeps over the misfortunes and calamities of the suffering hero on the stage while his footman is being frozen to death outside the opera hall. Similarly, we may draw a doleful picture of the suffering of the poor and make an impassioned appeal to others for their succour in our speeches and writings and yet do nothing practical ourselves to remove this suffering. It is not enough to understand intellectually the existence of suffering or express emotionally our concern about it; it is necessary to act in accordance with what we understand and feel. It is easier to advise others than to act ourselves. In every civilized state, however, we have to-day men and women who are ready to condemn wrong, howsoever exalted might be the position of the wrong-doer and however ineffective might seem their voice of protest. We have also the beginnings of an international assembly to judge the conduct of nations and to pronounce verdict thereon even though a system of effective sanction has not yet been evolved and nations are still unable to think in total disregard of their own interests. The present League of Nations, which is still wedded to the present alignment of national interests and which ignores the subject races of the dominant powers, may fail in its purpose of bringing peace to the world; but the ideal of humanistic attitude is bound to germinate and grow with greater understanding, firmer concerted action and finer moral appreciation among the nations of the world. The world to-day is like an inflated balloon in which pressure in one part brings about a readjustment in other parts.

I have mentioned already that greater social understanding and sympathy seem to be indicated as the objective of human history. Much in which the ancient world gloried has passed away without any chance of return. Theogonic speculations no longer interest us—with the virtual disappearance of paganism and polytheism the genealogy of the gods and their exploits no longer hold our attention. If, as a matter of habit or make-believe, we still read and relish the Purāṇas, we do not compose new ones. The virus of monotheism has affected all our religious beliefs, and curiosity about the daily life of the gods is a thing of the past. Even monotheistic beliefs about the composition of the heavenly court, the dimensions of the heavenly kingdom and the materials used in its roads and mansions, the types of heavenly retinue, the occupations of the angels and of just men made perfect, and the suffering of the damned in hell no longer interest us. According to some of the

greatest living religions even Divine revelation through prophets has ceased to function so that that also has ceased to be a matter of experiment with many earnest souls. We no longer consult Divine wishes by demanding miracles or casting lots, and the various taboos hedging in the man of God or the priest of God are no longer matters of cultured belief. Many may take all these as rather disquieting symptoms betokening a general regression in spiritual life. To this pessimistic attitude our reply would be that poetry and imagination might appeal to a child—they ill become a grown-up man. In a famous sentence Macaulay has told us that as civilization advances poetry almost necessarily declines. So far as religious belief is concerned we must admit that this contention is substantially true and that human history discloses a progressive decline in the imaginative aspect of religious life. We wish to add that belief in personal immortality being based on imagination, mankind will one day outgrow rationally this clinging to personal continuity although it is not unlikely that in moments of weakness it would occasionally hug the illusion. Too long has advancement of spirituality been conceived in terms of personal immortality in an eternal heaven. It has been feared that neither as an ideal nor as a fact would impersonal persistence appeal to the human mind. It is a happy sign of the times that people who do not believe in personal immortality can still feel the call of ideals. The individual of the future is indirectly affected by the better world that we are all helping to create. If we are reborn, we reap the benefit ourselves ; if transmigration is not true, others do so. We have never in our instinctive lives been able to live only for ourselves. Why should it be impossible in our conscious life to live for others and, instead of benefiting only ourselves, to leave a better universe behind ?

The present scriptures of the world were revealed through men with circumscribed knowledge of men and things. There is no reference in them to places and their occupants which were unknown to the prophets themselves. If they are the last revelations of God, His omniscience would be seriously at stake. Many facts of nature were absolutely unknown when these scriptures came into existence and the things and events mentioned therein, which are not in accordance with facts as now known, are not few. We must dissociate from the scriptures all topographical information, whether of heaven or of the earth, and all attempts to teach facts of nature and history. It is with the discovery of moral and spiritual relations that the scriptures are primarily and solely concerned. Certain fundamental relationships and the attitudes and obligations

they imply lie open to the gaze of all earnest minds of all ages ; but the complexities of modern social life and national contact are so great that these outstrip the older relations of societies and tribes and render much of older scriptural revelation inadequate and imperfect. To none has the counsel of God been revealed unto perfection and the intolerance of other creeds, based upon a belief in the completeness and infallibility of one's own scripture, betrays a narrow conception of human history and a scant regard for the immensities of the Absolute. Far more satisfactory is the view that revelation is periodic and that the plan of the world is unfolded progressively to the gaze of the seers and prophets, just as with philosophers the formula of reality changes with every substantial acquisition of new knowledge. If we are unable to understand aright the inner meaning of human history, we can still get an inkling of the increasing purpose that runs through it. We may gradually appreciate our own littleness and the futility of all attempts to upset the eternal verities that in spite of our opposition realize themselves. We need not go to the length of supposing that whether we shine in virtue or sin in profusion, there will be ultimate salvation for all, as some Indian philosophies suppose. It may be or it may not be ; but on pragmatic grounds we would be justified, in a matter about which we have no definite knowledge, to separate the chaff and the grain and to assume that the meed of merit and the doom of demerit are not identical—that evil in individual, social and national life is fundamentally opposed to the spirit of the world and has no chance of thriving in a realm of growing spirituality. We have to live in the hope that the Spirit that has given man greater intelligence day by day and with it greater appreciation of beauty and greater control over the forces of nature has not suspended its beneficent operation and that mankind is slowly moving towards the ideal of universal sympathy and love by learning the costly lessons taught by the horrors of mutual distrust and destruction. Those who fear over-population of the globe need only remember that the human intellect is ever busy devising methods of meeting the needs of a growing national population in all countries and that the destructive natural elements will not cease to take their toll of human lives in spite of human effort and progress. The inscrutable mysteries that nature still holds will perhaps solve some, if not all, of the difficulties of over-population. The indomitable spirit of man has refused to admit defeat in its struggles with the unkind elements of nature. Why should it quail before the unsocial tendencies of nations and individuals? If in our own individual life we can sublimate our instincts and turn our questionable thoughts into beautiful symbols, why should

we not make a collective effort to work up the potentialities of that rational faculty which distinguishes us from mere animals? Once we realize the call of the Infinite within us, we realize at the same time the ultimate spiritual oneness of all creatures and our responsibility in furthering the interests of the whole. This is the quintessence of the Upaniṣadic teaching—*yo vai bhūmā tat sukham nālpe sukhamasti bhūmaiva sukham bhūmā tveva vijijñāsitavyaḥ* (Verily, Infinite Being and Pleasure are identical. There is no real pleasure in the Small. Only the Immense is Pleasure. So enquire after the Plenum).

