

Experiment With A Life

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Now that I have reached my seventh decade I have time to reflect upon my life and upon its possible meanings.

My childhood ended soon after Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee; my youth swept past during the Edwardian Era. During the summer of 1914 I qualified as a doctor and served in the army for the greater part of the First World War. In 1919 I settled in general medical practice, and drifted through the "Years of Illusion" (1925-36) awaking, as from an uneasy dream, to find that the autocracies were already in power in most European countries, and that England was in the direct pathway of an economic blizzard that threatened universal destruction. My middle life has been overshadowed by the Second World War and its consequences.

Many of my generation suffered from a form of mental schism, a conflict produced by a "lie in the soul." Although we were outwardly normal, even self-assured, our inward balance seems to have been precarious. This lack of balance arose, I think, from the fact that we closed our eyes to half of our experience. The history of the last thirty years might have been different if more of us had kept our eyes open onto the whole of life.

I was brought up amid the security and affection, of a lower-middle-class Victorian home, where I lived, as a child, a restricted but happy life. As boys, we revolted against a parental discipline which seemed to lay too much stress upon outward conformity and to place needless physical burdens and hampering mental shackles on us children. The young nonconformist of half a century ago was usually given too little opportunity to develop the self-reliance he would require during the days ahead of him. An aridity lay, moreover, like a blight, on the average Victorian home — a lack of vision, a failure to love beauty for its own sake.

Nonetheless a Victorian home like mine was a “good” home, comfortable and secure. The religion central to its life was sincere, warm and practical; though it was often unenlightened. There were certain real assets, which stood us in good stead later on: integrity and honesty were valued; self-restraint and moral discipline were taken for granted. In the neighborhood in which I lived there were many “bad” homes to be seen. As the town advanced upon the countryside, endless rows of red brick, slate roofed cottages engulfed the fields in an advancing tide. Here I could see pale, neglected children who sat on doorsteps, munching crusts of bread; drunken, slatternly mothers; and, on occasion, the excitement of a fight outside the local pub.

The seeds of religious skepticism were planted in my mind at an early age. I was taught as a child to “pray in faith.” I took this teaching all too literally. One night I prayed with complete conviction for a toy horse and cart which, I directed, should be standing by my bedside in the morning! Somewhat later I was shocked to discover that a supporter of “the Chapel,” pious enough on Sundays, was cheating my mother in his shop on weekdays.

When I reached the Upper Third in the local grammar school, I came up against the conflict between science and religion. I recognized that the science I learned at school and the fundamentalist Biblical science I had been taught at home could never be reconciled with each other. In my youth the Darwinian controversy was still a live issue.

After I reached the University, where religion was either derided as superstition or completely disregarded, I became impressed, as a medical student, by the practical value and the empirical efficiency of modern science in the relief of suffering and in the healing of the sick people who thronged the hospitals. Here a gospel of healing was proclaimed in deeds rather than in words; it was proclaimed by humanist science and not by the church.

Notes

1. *Form* is here, and throughout this paper, used to mean the mysterious inherent nature of the individual, while *shape* refers to the fortuitous circumstances and personal experiences which are the stuff of life, worked upon by, and in turn working upon, the *form*. See W. D’Arcy Thompson: *Growth and Form*.
2. *Journal of George Fox*, ed. by Rufus Jones, Vol. I, p. 97.
3. *Ibid.*, Vol. I., p. 86.

historic Quakerism, I should say that the Divine Seed, which is also “that of God in every man,” was planted at my birth in the unitive form of my life, that mysterious and unique quality which determined the growth of my individuality. In due time and also mysteriously, the Seed germinated and produced a flower. This flower, the “mystic rose,” had many petals. One was conscience, another was reason. As they developed and unfolded, they were seen to be the Inward Light of Christ.

There remain before me now the years in which the fruits of the tree of the form of life will ripen and should be gathered. This last period of human life should be a period of joy and serenity, of richness, during which the Divine Seed, that of God within, reveals itself in its fullness as the Inward Christ.

What conclusions do I draw from my own experiment with a life? As a doctor I see how immensely important religion is to wholeness and to all forms of healing. I see that a new theory and practice of healing has come into being during my lifetime. I can see how that theory and practice, if thoroughly put to use, could solve many of the social disorders of the modern world — war, class strife, international disunity. I see that human life is a process of growth, not only of the body, but also of the soul; the spirit, a process which commences in infancy and should not cease until we die. Indeed, it seems to me that it is always true that “the best is yet to be.”

Three major convictions, above all, are left in my mind and in my heart. The first is that truth is trustworthy and that those who seek surely find her. The second is that the “Cross is ingrained in the structure of all reality.” And the third is that life can be fully lived only in fellowship, that our many and varied relationships are the experiences through which we touch and enter into the Eternal Life that is our present and our future heritage.

Several of us decided to believe in the practical truth which we could see, rather than in a speculative truth which denied the basic assumptions of science. Happily we did not surrender completely to the materialism of the day. We told ourselves that in the end we might discover that science rested upon an underlying bedrock of truth to which we had not yet been able to penetrate. Nor were we without grounds for such a hope, since rumors of Einstein’s relativity theory began to penetrate at this time even into the backwoods of medical school. If the relativity theory were once established, some of the cherished assumptions on which materialist science was founded would be blown sky high. We hoped that Einstein’s theory might be the scientific harbinger of a reconciling truth, as, indeed, it seems to have proved itself to be. In a spirit of free inquiry we determined to follow wherever truth might lead.

My personal creed at this time was typically humanist, and might have been stated as follows: “I believe in the goodness of good people and good things. I believe in truth, honesty, and the service of others. I believe in science. I believe that truth can be found by all who sincerely follow the scientific method. I believe that in this search for truth we must be prepared to accept the risks as well as the rewards of the search.”

Our basic attitude to life, then, was “scientific.” We believed in the experimental method, although we did not always realize all that the honest practice of the experimental method demanded of its votaries.

At the time when the modern scientific method was determined — that is, when Francis Bacon published the *Novum Organum* in 1620 — it was universally agreed that the experimental method must be confined to the search for natural truth. In the search for supernatural truth — that is to say, the truths about God and the soul — the authoritarian approach was still considered to be valid. This

arbitrary subdivision of experience into two separate departments produced the conflict between religion and science, the deeply rooted mental schism from which my generation has suffered.

Medical Practice

The long years of the First World War dragged slowly to their end. These years spent as an army doctor added considerably to my meagre stock of experience. Certainly I saw life and death at first hand and in the raw. During long periods of enforced idleness in the trenches, in rest camps and at sea, I read a good deal.

As soon as the war ended, I settled in general medical practice in an industrial district. There I soon discovered that humanist medicine was quite as open to criticism as the religion I consciously rejected. Religion, I had come to believe, disregarded certain facts. Now I began to see that science also disregarded some of the facts: those less tangible factors which brought my patients to me. Some of my patients were at the same time anxious to remain ill and anxious to recover. What was the source of this dual anxiety? What was its effect? Science knew no way of measuring the will, nor of weighing a purpose; it could not even classify morale, that elusive condition whose presence or absence seemed to determine the outcome of many cases of serious illness. To say there was nothing the matter with someone because X-rays and laboratory tests did not show the signs of disease was, I thought, both futile and unkind; it was also unscientific.

During the years that followed the First World War the new mental sciences were beginning to be studied. In the face of great opposition, the view that mind is a significant factor in the cause and cure of illness slowly won its way to general acceptance. After a few years in general practice, I

beside my bed in an hour of great weakness. Dressed in the garments of a simple Galilean shepherd, He stood beside me in a blaze of sunlight, although at that particular moment the full moon was shining in the sky outside the window of the hospital ward where I lay. What shall I say about this vision, this inward awareness of the Christ? No longer a stranger, no longer a human figure, He had become a personality invested with the divinity that brings peace, rest, security and joy to the troubled soul. Shall I say that I experienced a subjective vision and that it was wholly produced by and entirely located in my own psyche? Or shall I say that He was indeed as transcendent and objective as He appeared to me to be at that time?

I am sure that He was neither one nor the other, that what I saw was the embodiment of an actual relationship between my form on the one hand and the Eternal Form of God in Christ upon the other. At long last through this experience, and through others like it, the nature of my true self and the nature of my form became explicitly clear to my consciousness. Through the relationship that is called "communion," the transcendent Christ showed Himself to me. He revealed to me the fact that an in-dwelling immanent Christ, who is but a shadow, an imperfect counterpart of the Eternal Christ, had been slowly forming, growing within the compass of my own self since the earliest years of my life on earth.

Thus my journey was ended and I had found my true self. I had found Christ Transcendent and in doing so I had come at last to my true self and to a measure of conscious self integration. Upon the ancestral Well of Life, the Inward Christ is now seated. There He is the center of the self and there, I trust, He is enthroned. On the hill in the center of my form, the Inward Christ is crucified, is dead, buried, and raised within as I rise towards my own fuller life.

Translating my experience into the phraseology of

its origin in the primitive form of life the soul is neither “he” nor “she”; sex differences are irrelevant. In poetic symbol, the Well is “where the Secret Dweller in the Innermost” is to be found. In later life the Well becomes implicated in the growth of the sex characters and is later transformed into the anima of the male and the animus of the female. Sooner or later in the working out of the form, the human component, it seems to me, can be distinguished from the divine elements in it. As I reflected upon the story of the Woman at the Well, I seemed to perceive that this separation had occurred in my own experience, that the human elements in She were symbolized by the Woman at the Well and that the divine components in the soul were now symbolized for me by the Stranger who sat beside the Well.

But the Stranger was no stranger to me. I had met Him again and again in the meeting for worship and a hundred other places and ways. He had become for me the Christ of the modern world. I had not hitherto realized that He was actually within the compass of my self. I had not “known experimentally” that He was, as He said, in me “a well of living water springing up into eternal life.” Looking back over my own experience I now realized that at the time when I first joined the Society of Friends, He had long been forming within my self. Symbolically He had lain as an infant in the inward manger of my form, or individual potentiality. During youth, adolescence and manhood, He had been slowly growing, but had been hidden from my awareness. During the many years when I had been alienated from my soul, I had raised an altar to an Unknown God. My Unknown God had been the Stranger — Jesus of Nazareth — the Dweller in the Innermost, where He had been seated upon the Well of Life and now, at length, He was showing Himself, the Inward Christ.

When I actually saw Him for the first time, when I became clearly and explicitly conscious of Him, He stood

reached the conclusion that many of the accepted theories of medicine were in need of radical restatement. Medicine, I thought, was waiting for a scientific investigator who, like William Harvey with the circulation of the blood, would discover the truth about the circulation of the mind, and how the mind influenced the body.

At about the same time, Christian Science and other unorthodox healing systems began to make a great stir in the world. Their challenge to medicine was direct and uncompromising. In my own practice, I saw a considerable number of patients who recovered following the use of these methods of healing; some of them, moreover, were patients whom I had not expected to recover. I was assured by my medical friends that these recoveries were outside the realm of science, that they were due to chance, to coincidence, or to suggestion. But it seemed to me that chance and coincidence were direct challenges to the experimental scientist whose sole aim was to exclude exactly these elements of chance and accident from his explanation of experience. Certainly a strong case had been established for a widening of the field of study, for a complete reconsideration of the basic philosophy of medicine. It seemed to me that, as an honest man, I ought to give up medical practice if the Christian Scientists were right. Hence I began to make a study of unorthodox systems of healing.

Little by little, an outline of a new pattern of medical theory began to form in my mind. Certain facts needed to be explained. Any method of treatment at all, or no treatment whatever, was sufficient to cure very many cases of illness. In a smaller number of cases, varying types of religious healing seemed equally successful: Faith Healing, Christian Science, or Buddhist practices. In a number of apparently hopeless cases, prayer or the laying on of hands was followed by a cure. The reverse was also true: the refusal of medical help by some of my patients — and in those days such a

refusal was by no means unusual — was often followed by disastrous results.

The new theory and practice of medicine for which I was seeking seemed to me, therefore, to be an integration, a synthesis of physical, psychological and religious healing. I did not yet feel able to outline that theory and practice, but I was content to wait while it clarified itself in my mind. Meanwhile I saw clearly enough that I should be a fool to discard my old boots until I was reasonably sure the new boots did not pinch my feet. In other words, I continued to practice medicine, trying to keep both eyes open to the whole of my medical experience.

I have discussed my experiment with life chiefly from the medical point of view because clinical medicine is the only subject about which I can claim at all to be an expert; and because my clinical experience seems to illustrate vividly the universal problem of the age — namely, the conflict between the ponderable and the imponderable, the finite and the eternal, the sacred and the secular, the flesh and the spirit. I could also write, to a degree, about my experience in other aspects of life. No one can practice medicine and fail to recognize the importance of the social causes of illness — bad houses, no houses; bad food, no food; unemployment, overwork. No doctor can fail to note the effects upon health produced by drink and gambling. In my practice, which lay partly in the fields of public health and in factory medicine, I tried to understand the relation between the economic, social, cultural and strictly religious causes of health and welfare. Everywhere I met the same basic problems. I became convinced of the urgent need for a new theory and practice of social life as well as of medicine.

In this practical way the mental schism presented itself to me as a doctor. How did it present itself in my inner personal experience?

what gifts God gives to man and who I am, you would have asked a drink of me and I would have given you of the water of life that never fails.”

As I sat in Meeting the entire story was re-enacted before my mind. It came to me that this was not only a fragment of history rescued from time’s oblivion, but an exact diagram of my total self. “I” was present as the concerned and interested observer. In the woman of Samaria I saw not only herself but, at one and the same time, My Lady and the Painted Woman, the two aspects of my soul. One might even say my masculine shadow self, Sambo, was symbolized by the woman’s husband who was not her husband. I was able to realize that if the story were true to life then my inward She would be transformed as a result of her meeting with the Stranger and drinking the living water.

As I came away from that meeting for worship I carried with me a vivid memory and a continuing conviction that I must try to discover in myself the meaning of the Well of Jacob and who and where He is who sits beside the Well in the center of my personality.

Where was that Well, that source of life, in my experience? It lay, I concluded, hidden in the form of my life. The Well was the locus of my individual identity and at the center of my true self. The Well was the source of the unitive life, the life of reflection and worship. The Well was the spring of life and fellowship, of truth and beauty and goodness, in so far as I had experienced them. Deep down in my unconscious experience, the influence of my form had gradually determined the shape of my life and experience. Sometimes this vague unconscious influence had plunged me into difficulty and misfortune, but it had also been the source of such success as I had achieved. The Well was, therefore, a symbol of both the divine and the human components in the soul.

This Well was, of course, neither male nor female. At

friendships, and indeed with every one of our human relationships. Failure to recognize this primitive motivation is the source of the almost magical complications that often bedevil even the most innocent friendship between men and women. From the same source come certain of the less desirable manifestations of the religious life.

When, however, this distinction has been made, and acknowledged, it becomes possible seriously to undertake the transformation of the human She as a necessary preliminary step towards a better acquaintance with that other She, the inward divine enigma who has long been a powerful and formative influence in the growth of our character and personality.

The Well And The Form

The second episode in the transformation of the human She and the unveiling of the inward goddess took place during the silence of a meeting for worship. Sunlight flooded the meeting room, a thrush was singing in the garden and the muffled sounds of the city streets blended with the silence without disturbing it. For no reason of which I was conscious, the familiar story of the woman at the well of Samaria (John IV) recurred to my mind in a peculiar pictorial form. It seemed as if the story were being played out again and I were myself present as an onlooker. The sun burned down upon the stone well-head on which sat a man who seemed both a familiar figure and a stranger, upon the white and yellow houses of the nearby village, and on the figure of the woman of Samaria as she approached the well carrying on her shoulder an earthen water jar. I seemed to overhear the conversation between the woman and the stranger. He asked her for a drink of water and, startled, she asked: "How is it that you, being a Jew, ask a drink of me, who am a woman of Samaria?" I heard his quiet reply: "If you did but know

A Lost Soul

On a certain summer afternoon toward the end of the first quarter of this century, I came home after a long and tiring day and, sitting down in the shade of the garden, I fell into a brown study. Quite unexpectedly I began to talk to myself and, to my surprise, I heard myself saying to myself: "If you don't take care, you will end up by losing your soul!" The humor of this remark struck me, since, as far as I was aware, I did not believe at that time that I had a soul to lose. Looking back now I realize that particular afternoon marked a turning point in my life. Anyone who begins to refer to his soul as something that can be lost and found has discovered a new field of experience and a new inner reservoir of facts to be studied and related to the outward facts of his ordinary life.

This redirection of my search — from an outward search for truth in nature to an inward search for truth in myself — was the next step necessary for the healing of my own divided mind.

Meanwhile, as a general practitioner, I lived laborious days and nights while the years slipped by. Little by little, I began to recognize a few of the ways my daily outward life was frustrating my nature and failing to satisfy my needs.

The practice of medicine is a highly social occupation but it can, nevertheless, be a lonely one. I began to feel a need for what the old craftsmen used to call fellowship. A fellow is by definition one who "lays down a fee in order to enter into a partnership in work" and man is a social animal. While I recognized that in the last analysis creative research must always be carried out by the individual, it became increasingly clear to me that both fellowship and cooperation were important to successful modern research, particularly research into the more fundamental facts of life. I realized also that I needed instruction in the arts of reflection and

especially in what I shall call high grade reflection — that kind and quality of reflection which engages the entire personality, not just a small part of the mind. I felt also an urgent need for more experience, for more data, and especially for first hand data concerning the life and experience of the soul.

I made a survey of those religious organizations, orthodox and unorthodox, which claimed to be able to help men and women acquire soul experience. My choice was limited in several directions. Any kind of speculative mysticism unrelated to a life of personal and social action could not, I thought, be fitted into the experimental method. Even if my head needed from time to time to be in the clouds, the obvious place for my feet was on the common earth. My work had to be done; suffering and poverty must be alleviated; the demands of my daily life must be adequately met even if, in consequence, I should miss the Great Experience. Equally, any unreflective religion of good works or of social salvation by efficiency methods was to be rejected. These religions are at the best empirical and as such unsuited, I felt, to the search for truth. In the end I applied for, and was accepted into membership in the Religious Society of Friends.

The Search For Intellectual Coherence

At this stage in my journey I became aware that I had been misunderstanding the experimental method; that I had, indeed, sadly misused it. I had already realized that the scientist must try to take into consideration all of the facts, that he must consider mental experiences as well as physical states. It now became clear to me that the mere accumulation of facts of any kind does not bring us to the truth. A knowledge of truth was, I saw, a blend of insight with outsight, of fact with interpretation, of observation with

an aura of divinity that suggests “She who must be obeyed” is compounded of other ingredients than passion, human love and human hate. From my own experience I should say that the progress of the personality towards self knowledge and integration will be arrested until we have persuaded this dark character to show herself under the light upon the stage and until we have made a distinction between these two components of the soul and their particular aims and needs.

Two episodes in the realm of recollection and imagination dramatized this recognition in my own case. The first one occurred rather startlingly while I was attending a meeting of persons professionally concerned with personality problems. A photograph was shown of a woman who was typically and unmistakably a Painted Woman. None of the others present seemed disturbed by this picture, but its effect on me was sudden and profound. Instantly I was carried back in memory to a French port where, as a young army doctor returning to the front, I had been approached by a woman of that kind. After a brief hesitation that part of myself which I have called My Lady asserted her sway and I rebuffed the Painted Woman and, I had supposed, forgot the episode. The sudden sight of this photograph moved me deeply because I realized this figure was still a powerful force in my psyche. At the same time I knew the Painted Woman could not possibly carry all the components that belong to the semi-divine enigma, although it was clear she carried some of the characteristics of She. To make this distinction between the human and largely sexual component in the unconscious soul and that other still unknown and divine component is a landmark on the inward journey. Until we recognize the strength and insistence of the sex component in the unconscious soul, human motives and human passions of a very earthy nature are liable to interfere seriously with our religious life, with our

could write much about this from my experience. Certain it is that my character would have been weak, deformed and pallid if it had lacked the spirit of Sambo. A dispirited man is well nigh a dead man; he lacks drive, zest, adventure and hope. The transformed Sambo became ultimately the strength with which I learned to love God, my neighbors and my self. To him I owe my fund of fun, my humor, and my tolerance and understanding.

My Lady also, shorn of her ivy clinging sentimentality and her cloying sweetness, became and must remain the guardian of my values and the keeper of my soul. My Lady holds in her hand the lure for goodness, truth and beauty. She is the inspirer as well as the censor of my acts. But she also needs a vast deal of stern discipline. She needs the help of Sambo to keep her feet planted upon the solid real earth. Unreal enthusiasms, a tendency to mistake the will for the deed, and a love of fantasy are some of My Lady's weaknesses. The restored and transformed Lady soul, however, holds in her hands the chalice of our hopes. She must guard them for us. Aided by the endurance, courage and good humor of Sambo, My Lady ultimately became my inward counselor and guide and no longer only a sentimental idealist. Before that desirable end was achieved, however, My Lady had to come to terms with her own shadow self.

If my experiences are typical much solid work has to be done before we are able to deal successfully with the problems posed to us by that enigmatic She. In the first place, She is reluctant to show herself in consciousness. To become conscious of her nature and her needs is usually one of the most difficult of human tasks. Moreover she is not one personality, but several. For most practical purposes we may say she manifests herself as two more or less distinct persons in our experience. The first of these two components of our unconscious soul is of the earth earthy, not to say fleshly, while the second component carries about with her

sound theory. How were sound theories formed, I asked myself. In this perplexity I read the life of William Harvey.

The essential elements of the experimental method are clearly seen in William Harvey's own account of the way he discovered that the blood circulates and does not, as had been supposed, ebb and flow in the arteries and veins. The first step was taken when he realized the accepted theory did not fit the facts as he observed them. The second step was taken when he began to reflect, as he tells us, upon these facts, both old and new.

During this period of Harvey's reflection a new idea, a new hypothesis, formed in his mind. Armed with this new hypothesis he returned to his experimental studies, devising experiments specially designed to test his new hypothesis. At length he reached a settled and certain conviction. We see, therefore, that the essence of the experimental method lies in the combination of reflection with observation. Its practice depends as much upon competence in the art of reflection as it does upon accurate observation of the facts.

History and our own experience show there is an element of clairvoyance, insight, intuitive feeling, inspiration, call it what you will, in every act of reflection. Scientific reflection requires the same kind and quality of mental activity as the poet and artist employ. There is an interplay of reflection with action, of symbolic imaginative thought with factual experience, of interpretation with observation, of theory and practice, worship and work. This interplay actually is the experimental method, the method on which modern science was founded and by which it has been advanced.

Anyone who accepts the experimental method as the one means by which he can guide his life and thought cannot cease for even a moment trying to reduce his experience to a coherent whole. Not all scientists, however, interpret the word experience in the same fashion. As I understand the

matter, experience consists not only of the actual outward events that occur in our lives; it consists also of all that we have thought, felt, desired, hoped, loved and learned. The books we have read, the plays we have seen, the addresses and speeches to which we have listened — all belong to our experience. Finally, our experience of life is profoundly shaped and conditioned by the particular culture into which we happen to have been born. All of these together make up my experience of life and, as such, provide the data for my experiment with life.

Pure science, so called, may choose to select certain parts of that whole field — namely, those parts that can be weighed and measured — and to shut its eyes to all the rest. There are practical reasons for such an artificial selection from the data of experience on the part of the pure scientist. But if we are to exclude the soul and God from our field of study we ought, then, to limit our conclusions to the measurable only. This, scientists have not always been willing to do. If, moreover, we pick and choose among the data available for study, we abandon, by implication, the primary aim of science which is to give a coherent account of the whole experience.

During the years between the end of the First World War and the time I joined the Society of Friends, I tried to work out a coherent explanation which would do justice both to the scientific and to the religious data with which experience had gradually provided me.

In the earlier phases of my intellectual experience the two cardinal events were, first, the day on which I accepted as true the evolutionary view of life and, second, the day on which I grasped the immense significance of Einstein's theory of relativity and its general application to all aspects of experience. When I realized that subjects and objects, ideas and things did not exist independently the one of the other, but only in relationship, I crossed a mental Rubicon over

be capable of carrying her husband's inward image of My Lady, or that any man could carry his wife's image of the ideal husband. The inevitable failures to carry successfully the ideals formed for us by our partners only cease to be serious causes of conflict when each one comes to realize that his or her own ideals are part of his or her own character and are not necessarily part of the actual character of the marriage partner. Failure to realize this fact has broken up many a marriage, as well as many a friendship, as I have often observed in my medical practice. When married people fail to find their ideal partner in the actual character of their chosen partner, the way is open for disaster. If, however, they can accept the chosen partner as he or she is and recognize their ideals as their own and an integral part of their own character, the way is open to understanding and mutual accommodation.

A similar process needs to take place within our own personalities. We must recognize that Sambo, My Lady, the Ego, and She are, in fact, integral to our character — stubborn facts about ourselves. A real accommodation is then possible. In brief we can make friends with our various characters and encourage them to act in a friendly fashion towards one another. This is one of the greatest and most difficult achievements of the religious life.

Since every personality is unique it is sheer folly in this slow transformation of character to attempt to copy one another's pattern of growth. We do the best we can with the material in our hands. Certain changes, however, seem to be almost universal. The Egoist remains something of an egoist; he never surrenders entirely his distinct individuality. But the hand of time and the gentling influence of love and the Light of Christ appreciably soften some of his hard, harsh contours. Sambo, in his turn, has to be helped to grow up. Attitudes and actions that are tolerable, even amusing, in a boy are unpleasant in a youth and intolerable in a man. I

Transforming A Character

It seemed to me that in recognizing and naming these aspects of myself I had made progress in the search for wholeness to which I was committed. It is not easy, however, to accept the less appealing character trends as aspects of ourselves, to reconcile them to one another, and to learn to live with them. I knew in my own case that Sambo and She must be transformed into reasonably respectable members of society and that they must be accepted on friendly terms by each other and by the conscious Ego and My Lady. Only as these inward character trends, by whatever names we call them, are transformed and integrated into our personalities can our inward schism be healed.

I find it difficult to give an honest and accurate and objective account of this phase of my experiment. Many persons beside myself are bound up in my experience. Not only must I preserve their confidences, but also I realize that any event which occurred to me would be described in very different fashion by others who lived through it with me. Nor can I avoid all reference to that aspect of experience which, by common consent, is one of the most important elements in the formation of character, namely, sex.

My wife and I met in romantic circumstances on a hospital ship during the summer of 1915. We experienced all the circumstantial difficulties that confronted young people of our generation. We have worked together, lived together, raised a family together and, in a word, have managed to make good. In the deepest sense our marriage has been a success. But it would be idle to suppose that two people, both of them more or less infected by the mental schism of the age, have not had their share of difficulties and of ups and downs.

As I look back over the years, it seems each of us made the common mistake of supposing that any human wife could

which there could be no retreat. Since those days I have watched the steady growth of a new psychology and sociology, a new conception of history and process, a new science, and a new conception of religion.

I naturally found my chief intellectual interests in medicine, biology and psychology. In these fields many individuals and groups have contributed to theory. Four have seemed to me particularly original and important: J. S. Haldane, D'Arcy Thompson, Charles Sherrington, and C. G. Jung. Haldane emphasized the interaction between a living organism and its environment. Thompson wrote of organic form¹ as that which gives to the organism unity, continuity and stability, and of the relation between the whole and the parts. Sherrington studied the integrated responses made by higher animals to many different situations and the function of the central nervous system in such total response. Jung, in his work in analytical psychology, called attention to the component aspects of personality and the processes at work in realizing and absorbing them into the unified self.

As I reflected on the work of these men it seemed to me that the form, the essential unity of the self, was observable during life and could be studied by the experimental method. I seemed to be able to detect the influence of my inner form upon the actual shape of my own life, upon my character and experience. I could see evidence of its activity in those subtle influences which cause our innate inherited character to grow into one kind of mature personality rather than another.

Along with the influence of these scientists came the crucial experience of reading Alfred North Whitehead's *Philosophy of Organism*. Whitehead points out that the great problem before modern philosophy is to state a sound doctrine of the form of life, "a sound doctrine of personality and a clear explanation of the undoubted fact of the enduring

identity of the experience throughout its entire life." For me the concept of the form of the self has provided such a doctrine and such an explanation.

At this time in my life, then, my inward search and my outward search met at a point. That point lay somewhere with my form. That point, moreover, lay at the intersection of the outward with the inward life — at a point of relationship, as it were, between my self and its environment.

The Unity Of The Self

Reflecting upon my experience I was startled when I realized how plainly the facts relating to the unity of my life had been presented to my attention and with what blind obstinacy I had failed to see them. There had always been large regions of normal everyday experience in which I had felt the influence of my own form upon the shape of my experience. Among these everyday experiences the following are important: joy is the awareness of a harmony, a perfect fit, between the form of our life and its shape, or between our desire and the facts; love is joy experienced in and through personal relationships, especially those relationships that are of an intimate kind; fellowship is joy experienced by the solitary when he finds companionship; truth is the perfect marriage of theory with fact and of insight with oversight, of the inward with the outward; beauty is awareness of a harmony between the subject and the object of aesthetic reflection or contemplation; goodness has been called "love in action" and "truth and beauty personified." The core and essence of all these normal experiences is surely that they are experiences of the unified self, of the form, and not experiences of mind or body as such.

From my earliest childhood experiences of the unitive life have come to me from time to time. My earliest recollections of this experience center, as is natural, around

to suspect, however, that My Lady, like the Ego, was carrying a mask before her face. She was really too good to be true! Where, I asked myself, could I find the remainder of my soul, my feminine traits? Where was the shadow counterpart of My Lady? At the same time I took pride in the fact that My Lady belonged, in a real sense, to me. This I found to be a cheering thought. She was, after all, a substantial part of my own being and not a mere projection.

Years later I became consciously acquainted with the fourth character in my drama. When I did meet her I called her She after the character in Rider Haggard's novel of that name. At a later date I realized that She was the unconscious shadow of My Lady; she was the woman behind the mask in My Lady's character. Like Sambo, She was capable of assuming many disguises. She also had a history and a life story of her own. In one sense and at one time, She presented herself to me as the most human of women, rather too human and fleshly for my comfort of mind. At another time and in another connection, She appeared clothed in the vestments of a semi-divinity. In her more primitive manifestations, She was the serpent who tempted Eve in the Garden of Eden. She was also the bronze serpent of healing raised up by Moses in the wilderness. Destroyer and saviour, poisoner and healer, She could be one of the brood of vipers whom George Fox saw and she could also be "She who must be obeyed." Mother, wife, elder sister, cruel nurse, harridan and harlot, She haunted the dark recesses of my stage for a long time before she made her appearance under the spotlight of consciousness.

At first She visited me in dreams, a vague and elusive figure. On her first appearance she seemed wholly evil, dangerous and greatly to be feared. She was a vamp and a virago. But that was only one aspect. She was also a woman whose ancient wisdom and unbounded power made her She who *ought* to be obeyed. Many and varied were the types of the enigma, She.

inhabitants of my basement formed a motley crew.

This Shadow was skillful, also, I found, in assuming a number of disguises, although he seemed a simple person. Each of these disguises had its origin in a different period of his life. Thus in his most infantile disguise he appeared as a black dog — the nature of swine, dogs and vipers of which George Fox spoke. The black dog was a mood of stubborn fury into which I sometimes fell and his name was derived from a remark my mother sometimes made to me. “What is that black dog doing on your shoulders, my boy?” she would say. “Please turn him out of doors; I don’t like dogs in the house.” The Shadow appeared also as a ragged, neglected urchin, like many of the poor boys who used to live near my old home and threw stones and mud at me on the street. Lastly my shadow self appeared in the guise of a young man, a veritable Hercules in strength and a gypsy in appearance, quite as if he had stepped out of Lavengro. I called him Sambo and came to think of him as a real, if lovable, villain.

To meet this motley crowd as actors on the stage of my own life raised a number of serious moral and other problems. But I was cheered to realize that even Sambo and his satellites possessed not only negative traits but some positive ones including doggedness, zest, courage, drive and, above all, a strong sense of fun and humor. The Egoist was solemn, priggish and not easily amused. He was a coward, also, I am afraid.

The third character in my play was a woman and she proved to be one aspect of the soul in search of whom I had set out many years before. I recall my surprise when I first realized every personality is both male and female.

In this third character, My Lady, I recognized my ideal woman, the like of whom, it must be admitted, never was seen on land or sea. She was my conscious soul-self and carried the projections of some of my feminine ideals. I began

my mother. The sudden discovery of a bunch of blood-red peonies in the garden, the scent of violets, the sight of the moon riding across the sky at night — these, together with a thousand other joyful memories of home, of love and fellowship crowd upon me as I sit and reflect upon my past life. These memories, however, are mine and can mean little to others. I believe, nevertheless, that all ordinary people, even the most practical, have sometimes experienced the influence of their form upon the shape of their experience. Unitive experiences of this kind are the foundations upon which the spiritual and religious life is to be built.

For my own part, I conclude that what we call the “life of the spirit” is nothing else than the activity of the form of the self whether or not we are conscious of its activity. If the self develops normally, we become increasingly aware of the activity of the form as we grow older.

At this point in my story I must try to give an account of the gradual development of my inward experience, my knowledge of myself. This is not an easy undertaking but it is perhaps the only means by which I can show how my original schism has been healed.

The first effects of my membership in the Religious Society of Friends were thrilling and emancipating. I shared in the experience that George Fox described when he said: “All things were new; and all the creation gave unto me another smell than before, beyond what words can utter.”²

It was not long, however, before I experienced a different reaction. Learning during worship to turn my attention away from myself and me and mine, I soon, by a strange paradox, began to see myself as I really was and, because I discovered that I was in fact a much less estimable person than I had previously supposed, I was uncomfortable and ill at ease. A classical description of this stage in the experimental life has been given by George Fox who passed through it himself. “The Lord showed me,” he says, “that the nature of those

things which were hurtful without, were within, in the hearts and minds of wicked men. The natures of dogs, swine, vipers, of Sodom and Egypt, Pharaoh, Cain, Ishmael, Esau, etc.; the natures of these I saw within, though people had been looking without.”³

To see those qualities in ourselves that we have hitherto been projecting upon other people and to see ourselves as truth sees us — these are experiences that are likely to shake the self-esteem of the hardiest. I have known people who gave up the search at this stage. They were unwilling to face the true facts about themselves and were unprepared to stoop down, to crawl on hands and knees, as it were, through the low entrance of the “strait gate.” Assuring themselves, therefore, that they were good enough as they were and that, in any event, they were better than many and no worse than most, they turned off from the road to self-knowledge.

Everyone ought to be warned to expect his lower self will launch a fierce counter attack soon after the initial spiritual victory. We read in the first chapter of Mark’s Gospel that Jesus himself was driven straightway into the wilderness as soon as he had emerged from the waters of baptism. Moreover we are told that the Spirit that drove him into the wilderness was the same spirit whom he had encountered at his baptism. This is a point of great significance. It is a common experience in the spiritual life to find after an initial period of inspiration and emancipation that a period of deflation, even of despair, follows. But those who persevere soon find their boat sailing out into calmer waters again.

As I persevered with the practice of worship I began to experience a measure of divine healing. A semblance of order, the outline of a coherent pattern, began to appear in my conduct as well as in my intellectual life. During this early period of renewed contact with religion most of my attention

wish to draw special attention. One of the greatest of sins, a sin against the Holy Ghost, is to fail to appreciate our own good points. The Egoist is not wholly bogus. Courage, individuality, a readiness to do the unconventional thing and, above all, a determination to become an individual in one’s own right — these are among the more valuable traits that belong to our ego character.

As I looked for the man behind the mask, my second character, who for a long time had been lurking in the shadows at the back of the stage began to make more frequent appearances. As I grew more familiar with this Shadow Ego, I discovered he was the counterpart, the mirror image, of my conscious Ego. He was the Ego who walks by night. These two characters, the Ego and the Shadow, had been organized during childhood by the separation into two groups of the active male traits in me. To the building up of the Egoist had gone all the traits that won approval in a Victorian nonconformist home. To the building up of the Shadow had gone those male traits not approved by my Victorian aunts! The center of the Egoist lay in my conscious experience, but the center of the Shadow lay in the unconscious and, in particular, in crude self-interest. The Ego was deeply concerned for his own status in the world; the Shadow, when he was on the war-path, acted on the principle that “What I want, I will have, and let the devil take the hindmost!” During my early life I learned to display my “good” qualities in the bow window of my essentially Victorian self: I thrust my “bad” qualities into my equally Victorian basement where, alas, they lay neglected, unused and ill disciplined among the disused pots and pans and coal dust. Aggressive instincts, a longing to inflict pain, self display, all my natural lusts and hates, belonged to my Shadow self. Moreover, because of the three major Victorian taboos — the taboo on tenderness; the taboo on self expression, especially showing off or “side”; and the complicated sex taboos of that era — the shadowy

although most people recognize rather vaguely the fact that they think and act “as if” they are several different persons at different times in different circumstances. In my case I learned to recognize these characters in my life’s drama and even to give them names. These names will perhaps seem strange and even offensive to some readers, but they have been helpful to me in coming to terms with these aspects of myself. The principal characters appear in the order in which I have become acquainted with them. There are five characters, four of whom appear during the earlier part and the fifth only during the last act. Two of the four are male, two are female; two are more or less conscious and two emerge from the unconscious.

The first person to make his appearance in my play was a familiar figure although I came to realize I did not know so much about him as I had supposed. I shall call him my daytime, ordinary, empirical self, or Ego. One of the most vivid descriptions of the ego as I have known him, although it is also a caricature, is contained in George Meredith’s novel, *The Egoist*. In Willoughby Patterne, in his vices and his virtues, I recognized many of my own traits. During the earlier years of my self-analysis I made the acquaintance of my own Egoist and realized that like the Greek actors he moved about his own world holding a mask before his face. In unguarded moments he allowed this mask to fall from before his face and revealed, if only for a moment, the man behind the mask. Other people could sometimes see the man behind the mask and so could I when I had once learned to look out for him during periods of irritation, moody discontent, and anger. Sometimes, I thought, the man behind my mask resembled Willoughby Patterne; sometimes he was like little Jack Horner, saying: “What a good boy am I!” And sometimes he bore an uncomfortable resemblance to Uriah Heep or even to Bill Sykes.

At the same time I was cheered to realize that the Egoist possessed a number of real positive virtues. To this point I

had of necessity to be given to the neglected art of reflection and I thrust into the background a number of difficult intellectual problems that were pressing themselves on my notice.

Hitherto I had accepted the liberal-humanist hypothesis as my intellectual guiding star. I presumed that the Sermon on the Mount and a life of practical service were the solid sum and substance of religion. I had now reached a point at which this hypothesis failed to account for the facts, especially the newly discovered facts about my soul and about reflection. It failed also to work in practical life. It was one thing to start a long race, another to finish it. A person might be filled with righteous indignation at the sight of social injustice, but it was not so easy to persevere in the face of discouragement with various experiments in social welfare, to say nothing of the almost magical complications which beset me in work, home, and ordinary human relations. My battery was overcharged with ideals, but the energy never reached the wheels and I was undercharged with drive. In a word, the humanist hypothesis was liable to break down in periods of adversity when the winds of failure, frustration and discouragement blew with hurricane force around the ship of life.

At the same time I became aware of the positive impact of many new influences upon me. These influences were exerted, for example, by the friends I made within the Society of Friends. I was influenced also by what I heard in the Meeting for Worship and by my own reading in Christian, Quaker and other books and biographies. Moreover I started to read the Bible again. I had abandoned this practice because the familiar, and often misunderstood, phraseology of the Authorized Version was linked in my mind with childishly false associations that had long made it a closed book to me. I was helped by the results of modern Biblical criticism and especially by the writing of Albert Schweitzer

and B. H. Streeter. The results of the higher criticism are among the most notable achievements of the experimental method and as such are of special interest to all scientifically trained persons. Looked at through modern eyes the Gospel narratives spring into new life.

All these influences seemed to converge toward one place. They directed my attention more and more to a unique historic figure, Jesus of Nazareth, whose spiritual, intellectual and moral grandeur stood out like a mountain in a flat country, high above the level reached by ordinary men and women. Jesus of Nazareth came alive for me and I began to see him as he was, shorn of the sentimental trappings of Victorian piety that had hid him from my view. The more clearly I saw him, the more insistent became the question: Why must such a man die on a cross? Why must his mission fail? Why did I, who could be thrilled by ideals, fail lamentably to attain them?

The Cross of Christ which, Paul said, was a “stumbling block” to legally minded Jews and a “rock of offence” to humanist Greeks, became a stumbling block to the scientist within me and an offence to my humane feelings. The Cross became a challenge both to the reason and to the heart.

Thus I reached an impasse. The humanist hypothesis no longer made sense of my experience, the alternative Christian hypothesis seemed incredible. John Crook, one of the early companions of George Fox, writing to Isaac Penington, recalled his experience at a similar time in his own life. He tells us that having wandered a long while in the wilderness, “torn by briars and pricked by thorns,” he realized at last that he was far out of the way and was lost. “Then I determined,” he writes, “to venture upon some way where I was likely to find a lost God.” Thus he accepted a new hypothesis.

Returning home one morning from my daily round of doctor’s calls, I paused in the hall to hang my hat upon its

peg. As I did so my hand was arrested in mid-air. I found myself standing in the center of a bright light. In this light I felt that I was about to learn something of great significance to me. Many years later I discovered that Juliana of Norwich, the 12th Century anchorite, had described a similar experience by saying: “I saw the whole world in a point.” As I stood for a moment in the dark hall I felt sure that if I could clearly comprehend and express all I was experiencing at that moment, I could unlock “all mysteries.” In the center of the light a cross-like shadow appeared. The light faded and I was left, hat in hand, with a single sentence in my conscious mind: “*The Cross is ingrained within the structure of Reality.*”

As I reflected upon this experience and these words, everything I knew or had experienced seemed to fall into a fresh and coherent pattern. I saw how atoms might be said to dance to their death in order that they might be reborn as molecules, molecules as colloids, colloids in living things. I saw the seeds lying in the dark soil in winter, waiting for spring; I saw tribes becoming nations; nations, a true community. Men and women also, it seemed, gave up their private selves in marriage, family and social life and in so doing found a new and wider freedom. I saw a similar pattern in philosophy, in psychology, in sociology, in history, ethics and aesthetics. The entire creation, from nebula to man, each in his own place and order.

The Inward Drama

Reflection made me aware that within myself a drama was being enacted. Increasingly I realized that on the stage of my experience there was actually a conflict of wills, a conflict which was both tragic and comic, which was almost like the inexorable progress of a Greek play. Not everyone is so acutely aware of the sub-characters within himself,