

And in the sense that Spirit-power thus pervades the Totality of Being, effectuating all physical and spiritual processes, every form of life in the Whole, the Spirit Himself is truly omnipresent. In the words of the Psalmist:

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
 Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
 If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
 If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou are there.
 If I take the wings of the morning,
 And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 And thy right hand shall hold me.
 If I say, Surely the darkness shall overwhelm me,
 And the light about me shall be night;
 Even the darkness hideth not from thee,
 But the night shineth as the day:
 The darkness and the light are both alike to thee.
 For thou didst form my inward parts:
 Thou didst cover me in my mother's womb.
 I will give thanks unto thee; *for I am fearfully
 and wonderfully made:*
 Wonderful are thy works;
 And that my soul knoweth right well.

(Psa. 139:7-14).

7. The Spirit of Beauty

"And God said, Let there be light: and there was light."
 In all probability, this statement has reference to the birth of light generally in the world, whatever may have been the form in which it first existed. The Spirit of God is the Source of the Light that goes out from God. The Light, moreover, always emanates from the dark world-forms, but only after they have been energized by the Spirit of God as the formative Principle. This is true, both of the physical light which emanated from the primordial Chaos after the latter had been energized by the Spirit, and of the spiritual light which emanates from the faculties of the natural man when energized by the Spirit.

The entrance of light, at the physical creation, marked the beginning of the revelation of the Spirit in Nature (using the

term "Nature," of course, in the sense in which it is used in common parlance). Undoubtedly the first light which emanated from God, at the beginning, was *psychical*, and then "physical," even as the first man was "of the earth, earthy," whereas "the second man is of heaven" (1 Cor. 15:47). Indeed it seems evident from the Scripture that the first Light was the Logos Himself with His decrees, the Logos who, later in time, became flesh and dwelt among men: "*In him was life: and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not . . . There was the true light, even the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not*" (John 1:4-10). In Creation, however, as in all other works of the Godhead, the decrees of the Logos were effectuated by the Spirit. As Lange writes:

The Spirit of God is the spiritual light that goes out from God; *therefore its working goes before the creation of the outer light; and therefore, too, it is that this light is the symbol, and its operation similar to the operation, of the spirit—that is, the formation and revelation of beauty.*¹

The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Beauty. "By his Spirit the heavens are garnished; His hand hath pierced the swift serpent" (Job 26:13). Where the Spirit of God operates, whether in the external world of matter or in the sacred precincts of the human soul, His handiwork is the very essence of beauty.

As Matheson writes:

[Hence we read in 1 Chron. 28:11-12]: Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch of the temple, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper rooms thereof, and of the inner chambers thereof, and of the place of the mercy-seat; and *the pattern of all that he had by the Spirit, for the courts of the house of Jehovah, and for all the chambers round about, etc.* [Cf. the Spirit-inspired artistry of Bezalel and Oholiab in the construction and adornment of the Tabernacle and its furnishings, Exo. 31:1-11, 35.30-35].

What! could the Spirit condescend to such a gift as that? Could it stoop so low as to inspire a man with the imagination of an architect? Why not? Is not the Spirit of God the spirit of beauty? Was it not the inspirer of beauty before it became the inspirer of goodness? Did not the heavens declare its glory and the firmament show forth its handiwork ere ever it had breathed into man the breath of its Divine life? Why was there chaos before the Spirit moved if beauty be not a gift of the Spirit? Why, when the Spirit moved, did God say, "Let there be light," if the vision of material glory be alien to the life divine? Say not that matter is vile, say not that beauty is sensuous, say not that the forms of earth are the antithesis of the kingdom of

1. J. P. Lange, *op. cit.*, 165. (Italics mine.)

God. There is a room within thy heart which God has dedicated to the beautiful; thou callest it the imagination. Let the Spirit furnish that room. Let it say to this inner chamber, "Let there be light," "Let there be a firmament," let there be herb and plant and tree. Let it hang upon the walls the brightest and fairest forms—forms too bright and fair ever to be seen below. So shalt thou know that thy imagination had its birth in héaven, that the fountain of the stream of beauty has its home above.¹

Now we all know that *order* — that is, the orderly arrangement of all the component parts of a composition — is the essence of beauty. Hence, we are not surprised to read, in the *Genesis* cosmogony, that, at the termination of the creation of the successive "parts" of the physical world, that is, at the end of each succeeding stage in the process, God looked upon His handiwork and pronounced it "good" (Gen. 1:10, 12, 18, 21, 25); that, moreover, at the conclusion of the whole process, the Creator looked out upon the finished product and pronounced it "very good" (Gen. 1:31): "And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."

1. George Matheson, *op. cit.*, pp. 27-28. I must respectfully dissent from Matheson's use of the pronoun "it" for the Holy Spirit, throughout his excellent little book. This error seems to be characteristic of many writers on this subject. The error is corrected, of course, in the American Standard Version of the Bible, in which, with but few exceptions, the pronoun "he" is used.

[Cf. Gen. 2:18]: And Jehovah God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet for him. [That is, he could not, without a proper mate, realize his potentialities as a man; without the woman to complement the man, there was a great gap in the natural creation. Hence the woman was created, and brought to the man, to serve as a helper meet for his needs, vv. 19-25.]

What does the word "good" mean in this connection? Obviously, it has reference to the universal order which prevailed as a result of the creative activity of the Spirit of God. This order was, in the first place, in the Creative process itself. Light and atmosphere necessarily preceded the appearance of plant life, which could not have existed without either. And plant life necessarily preceded animal life, because both man and beast depend upon plant life and photosynthesis for sustenance, indeed for their very existence. The general order of the process of Creation was, briefly, as we have seen, as follows:

Day One: Energy, Motion, Light, Matter
Day Two: Atmosphere

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Day Three: Physical Features of the Earth,
and Plant Life

Day Four: Mathematical Time (Chronology)

Day Five: Water and Air Species

Day Six: Land Animals, Man and Woman

Day Seven: Rest

This, as we have seen, was a necessary order, an order demanded by the very nature of things; hence, it presupposes a directing Intelligence and ordering Will. In the second place, this original universal order consisted in the harmony—hence, unity—of all natural non-living and living processes. Every created thing was fulfilling the function, and attaining the proper end, for which the Creator had brought it into existence; in a word, there was perfect harmony and unity of all the component parts of the whole natural Creation. This universal order continued to prevail, of course, until sin entered the world. Sin is transgression of the moral law—"lawlessness" (1 John 3:4), and this is *disorder*.

Moreover, it is of the utmost importance to note here that the order (sequence) in which the various parts, non-living and living, of the natural Creation are said to have been brought into existence, in the account given in the first chapter of Genesis, is precisely that which is hypothesized by modern science.

This perhaps is the proper point in our study at which to call attention to the fact that a *kenosis* (i.e., a self-emptying or humiliation) of the Holy Spirit is necessarily involved in His expression of Himself in "degrees of reality" lower than that of His own order of being. Obviously, such a *kenosis* takes place, whether the Spirit operates through the medium of the human mind (which is, in turn, in man's present earthly state, always conditioned to some extent by the body), in the regeneration of sinners and in the sanctification of saints; or whether He operates through the "laws of nature" in the physical universe; and perhaps in greater measure in the latter kind of operation than in the former, because when operating through the medium of human mental processes He is working in or with material that is essentially of His own order of being. The purely spiritual of necessity lays aside some of its attributes and power when clothing itself in the "material." Every revelation of the Spirit is bound to be conditioned more or less by the medium employed

as the instrument of that revelation. This is true, as it has been pointed out heretofore, especially in the Spirit's unavoidable use of human language as the means of communicating Divine Thought. And this we may reasonably believe to be true in a special sense of the revelation of the Spirit in Nature. Thus Plato conceived the Demiurgos as working upon a pre-existent "Receptacle" (Space), the disorder of which, in the very nature of the case, could never be reduced to perfect order, the result being that struggle, conflict and change are introduced into the cosmic processes, both non-living and living, by this unreduced residuum of the "world-stuff."¹ Leibniz found the source of imperfection and "evil" in the principle of finitude, which, in his view, applies both to the order of inanimate nature and to human life: "the creatures have their imperfections from the influence of God, but they have their imperfections from their own nature, which is incapable of existing without limits."² This, in general, was also Spinoza's view.³ A. H. Strong comments:

Upon this view sin is the blundering of inexperience, the thoughtlessness that takes evil for good, the ignorance that puts its fingers into the fire, the stumbling without which one cannot learn to walk. It is a fruit which is sour and bitter simply because it is immature. It is a means of discipline and training for something better—it is holiness in the germ, good in the making. . . . The Fall was a fall up, and not down.⁴

The Scriptures, on the other hand, reversing the Platonic tradition, expressly affirm that the travail-pangs of Nature are but the curse which followed inevitably and naturally upon human sin; that, in a word, when man fell, all Nature fell with him. This is clearly implied in the penalty of sin pronounced upon mankind in general, as announced in Gen. 3:16-19:

Unto the woman he [Jehovah God] said, I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy conception; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee. And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

1. Plato, *Timaeus*. Vide F. M. Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*.
2. G. W. Leibniz, *Mondaology*, sect. 42.
3. Vide Spinoza, *Ethics*, Part 4, Prop. 20.
4. *Systematic Theology*, One-volume Edition, 563.

The same general idea is explicitly asserted by the Spirit through the Apostle Paul, Rom. 8: 18-23:

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. For the earnest expectation of the creation waiteth for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only so, but ourselves also, who have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for our adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

"The common feature in these and all similar explanations," writes H. Wheeler Robinson,

is the recognition that the medium, or the medium as we know it, is inadequate to the expression of the creative art of God; from which it follows that the revelation of Spirit discerned in the product must be subject to the principle of kenosis.¹

I do not propose to enter into a discussion here of the primary origin of evil and imperfection. As far as I know, no solution of this problem, in its ultimate aspect at least, has ever been offered that completely satisfies human reason. Indeed the real solution, I am sure, awaits us only in the fulness of the knowledge that shall characterize the Life Everlasting. Now we see as in a mirror, darkly, but when we shall see God "face to face," then we shall know fully even as also we are fully known; the mysteries of this present state will be dispelled by the Vision of God. For the present, then, the mystery of the Kenosis of the Spirit, and that of the Logos as well, will have to remain to a large extent inscrutable. Suffice it to say, however, that the denunciations of Nature's "immoralities" which have appeared in the works of different modern writers, are exceedingly ill-founded. The moral judgment of Nature as "red in tooth and claw with ravine" cannot be justified. In the first place, it is doubtful that subhuman Nature can rightly be regarded as either moral or immoral: it is essentially *amoral*. In the second place, the fundamental morality of any activity or process is to be determined primarily by its ultimate end and by its proper adaptation of means to the attainment of that end. It takes no great amount of discernment to realize that conflict and struggle play very significant roles in the building

1. H. Wheeler Robinson, *The Christian Experience of the Holy Spirit*, 89.

of human character; that toil, adversity, suffering, and even physical death itself—all have their part in the development of personal righteousness and holiness. It is only by such means that the “fittest” to survive *morally* are made manifest—to God, to themselves, and to their fellow-men. Hence, it is made very clear, in the Divine pronouncement itself, that the penalty put upon mankind for sin was, and is, a *benevolent* penalty. Gen. 3:17—“Cursed is the ground *for thy sake*,” etc. Indeed the Divine ordinances are never designed to benefit God Himself; on the contrary, they are invariably issued for *man’s* moral and spiritual good. This principle is clearly enunciated by Jesus, Mark 2:27—“The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath.” The moral philosophy of all Divine ordinances—and I mean *all* of them—is embodied in this statement. Every drop of perspiration that steals from man’s brow as a result of honest toil; every thorn, thistle, or weed that grows in forest or garden; every form of disease and pain that may rack the human frame; every slow-winding procession to the city of the dead: all these things are but to remind proud man that he is in a fallen state morally, alienated from God, and that, unless he accepts the salvation provided for him through the sacrificial death of the world’s only Savior, he is hopelessly lost, both in this present world and in the world to come. “For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world” (John 3:17). Why not? Because the world is under Divine judgment, under the curse of sin, and has been so, ever since man permitted sin and disorder to come into it. Hence God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world, “but that the world should be saved through him” (John 3:17). Toil, suffering, and even physical death, I repeat, play their significant role in the moral and spiritual growth of God’s saints. Without such means of arresting his attention, of drawing his interest away from himself, and of impressing upon his mind the facts of his own creaturehood, frailty, and dependence, the chances are that man would have become so puffed up in his own conceits that long ago he would have destroyed himself from the face of the earth. Toil, struggle, suffering, in fact all forms of “physical evil,” are essentially—and necessarily—*disciplinary*.

[Prov. 3:11-12]: My son, despise not the chastening of Jehovah, Neither be weary of his reproof: For whom Jehovah loveth he reproveth, Even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. [Heb. 12:7-11]. It is for chastening that ye endure; God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father chasteneth not? But if

ye are without chastening, whereof all have been made partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore, we had the fathers of our flesh to chasten us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed good to them; but he for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness. All chastening seemeth for the present to be not joyous but grievous; yet afterward it yieldeth peaceable fruit unto them that have been exercised thereby, even the fruit of righteousness. [John 16:33, the words of Jesus]: In the world ye have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

In Hebrews 2:10, we read as follows: "For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." If it was necessary for the Author of our salvation, the Only Begotten Son of God, to be made perfect through sufferings, in order that He might lead many sons into glory—how can those very sons, the saints themselves, expect to attain perfection (holiness) short of the discipline of suffering? Struggle attended by suffering is a fundamental factor in both the natural and spiritual orders. It is essential to progress in every realm—natural, moral, and spiritual. Even man's historical march upward in the scale of civilization is marked by his own bloody footprints on the sands of time. The basic principle of all true progress, cultural or moral, seems to be this: "Apart from shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). In view of these facts—facts of human experience as well as of Divine revelation—to bring the blanket charge of "immorality" against Nature and Nature's God, on the grounds of struggle, conflict, and alleged "cruelty," is to manifest a spirit totally incapacitated to discern spiritual values. How inspiring to compare, by way of contrast, the profoundly spiritual sentiment so eloquently expressed by the Apostle Paul:

Yea verily, and I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but refuse, that I may gain Christ, and be found in him, not having a righteousness of mine own, even that which is of the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; *that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, becoming conformed unto his death; if by any means I may attain unto the resurrection from the dead* [Phil. 3:8-11].

Moreover, the fact remains that there is beauty—beauty ineffable and full of glory—throughout all Nature, even as Nature now exists and is known to human experience. In the first

place, there is *causality*, and *efficient causality* at that, in Nature; even those sudden and unexpected events which are commonly designated "catastrophic," have their natural causes. Science, I think, would be unanimous in affirming that Nature knows of no *uncaused* event throughout her entire domain. In the second place, that there is *purposiveness* throughout Nature is evident from the universal adaptation of proper means to specific ends characteristic of all natural processes. That, in the third place, there is *intelligence* back of Nature is obvious, both from this very purposiveness, and also from the basic mathematical design according to which the whole of Nature seems to be constituted. Atoms of the different elements are differentiated according to the number of protons in their respective nuclei and to the corresponding number of electrons in their respective orbits. Living species are differentiated by the number of chromosomes in their respective reproductive cells. Varying human sensations, as of vision, sound, color, seem to be determined by the length and frequency of the different elemental vibrations which impinge upon the sense receptors of the organism. Even the movements of the heavenly bodies may be interpreted mathematically with such precision as to make possible the dating of celestial events, whether occurring in the past or in the future, regardless of the extent of intervening time. Such computation, moreover, is the basis of all chronology. As a matter of fact, practically all, if not all, natural processes seem to be reducible to description in terms of mathematical formulae. One is reminded by these facts of the ancient Pythagorean doctrine, that numbers are the ultimately real things in Nature, a doctrine which modern scholars are certainly not in a position to disprove.¹ In fact no less distinguished a modern physicist than Sir James Jeans expressly asserts that the universe gives every evidence of being the construct of a Supreme Mathematician. Again, in the fourth place, there is *sublimity* in Nature. One glimpse of Niagara Falls or of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, not to mention the many other awe-inspiring spectacles of earth or the wonders of the heavens above, is sufficient to establish this fact beyond any possibility of doubt. The two supreme proofs of God, said Immanuel Kant, are the starry heavens above and the moral law within. Nature attains sublimity both in her physical magnitudes and in her spiritual qualities. The whole of the sterner side of Nature has, in fact, this aspect of sublimity. Finally, these qualities which characterize and pervade Nature

throughout—causality, purposiveness, intelligence, and sublimity—all add up to one fact, namely, *order*. And order is the essence of *beauty*, as it is the potentiality of human science. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psa. 19:1).

The gospel of the Spirit, even in Nature, is, as Matheson points out, the gospel of sacrifice:

The heavens are garnished by the Spirit of the Son of man—the Spirit of the Cross. The beauty of the heavens is the beauty of sacrifice. Nothing shines by its own light. The radiance of everything is a borrowed radiance; all things live by the life of others. One star differeth from another star in glory, yet the one cannot say to the other, "I have no need of thee." The universe depends on each one as much as each one depends on the universe. If one of the least of these should perish there would be a crash of all worlds. What is that law which I call gravitation but the sign of the Son of man in heaven? It is the gospel of self-surrender in nature. It is the inability of any world to be its own centre, the necessity of every world to centre in something else. The eyes of all wait upon the Father, and He gives them their meat in due season, but He takes care that it is not the interest of any one to receive its bread alone. The Power that has garnished the heavens is the Spirit of Him whose many members constitute one body.¹

Of all forms of beauty, moreover, moral beauty is by far the most exquisite, the most priceless. It alone is eternal and unchanging. It is holiness. We are not surprised, therefore, that Jesus, who possessed the Holy Spirit without measure, possessed and manifested the fulness of moral beauty. He is the Rose of Sharon, the Lily of the Valley, the One Altogether Lovely (Song of Sol. 2:1, 5:16).

Spirit of Christ, Spirit of the "altogether lovely," in Thee alone is realised my ideal of the beautiful. There are patterns hung up in my heart to which I can find nothing outside that answers. The light within my soul is a light that never shone on sea or land. All attempts to copy it are vain. There are spots in every sunbeam, there are thorns in every rose, there are crosses in every life. I have never seen the perfect landscape, I have never beheld the cloudless day. I have never looked upon the faultless human soul. Never till I found *Thee*. But Thou hast answered to the pattern in my heart, Thou hast realised the ideal in my spirit. Thou art the spotless sunbeam, Thou art the thornless rose, Thou art the cloudless day, Thou art the faultless life. My imagination cannot transcend Thee; though I shut my eyes a hundred times, I can fancy nothing more beautiful. In the vision of Thee I have received the fulfilment of my dream; Thou hast realised my pattern for the courts of the house of the Lord.¹

1. Vide J. Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 99-108; also F. M. Cornford, *Plato and Parmenides*, 1-27.

1. George Matheson, *op. cit.*, 39-40.

1. George Matheson, *ibid*, 28-29.

Second only, moreover, to the incarnate Logos, the most beautiful creation of the Divine Spirit is the spiritual House of God, built up, as it is, of living stones which are moulded according to the Mind of Christ and fitly framed together by the Spirit, thus growing into the holy Temple of the Lord, the habitation of God in the Spirit (1 Pet. 2:5, Eph. 2:21-22). Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the imagination of man to conceive of the beauty ultimately to be revealed in God's saints, when they shall stand at last in His presence garbed in the white linen of righteousness, clothed in glory and honor and immortality.

[Rom. 8:18]: For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us-ward. [Dan. 12:3, here we are told that in the last great Day] they that are wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever. [1 Cor. 15:41-45]: There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. [Rev. 19:7-8]: Let us rejoice and be exceeding glad, and let us give the glory unto him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And it was given unto her that she should array herself in fine linen, bright and pure: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. [Rev. 21:2]: And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband.

The Church of Christ—that mystical living organism which has been “cleansed by the washing of water with the word,” and which shall ultimately be presented to its Divine Head “a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing,” but “holy and without blemish” (Eph. 5:25-27)—is the most beautiful of all the creations of the Spirit of God.

8. The Spirit and the Cosmos: A Recapitulation

We may now sum up, with reference to the work of the Spirit in the first phase of the Creative Process, as follows:

1. The bringing into existence of the old or physical Creation was characterized by the projection of new and successively nobler increments of power into the Creative Process, by the Spirit of God, at each forward step, that is, at the beginning