DISRAELI THE NOVELIST

WILHELMINA GORDON

THE celebration of centenaries has become something of a social and intellectual fashion, and indeed once in a hundred years should not be too often to pause and consider work well done. In 1845 Disraeli was in the midst of his best work as a novelist, and in that year *Sybil*, perhaps his most important novel, was published. As Lord David Cecil points out in *Early Victorian Novelists*, the clothes and the mental fashions of the last generation seem absurd to the next one; "the Edwardians could not admire the Victorians". But we may now realize "that the fact that they may be Victorian is no more a cause for praise or blame than the fact that Chaucer is medieval"; we may now get rid of "the nauseous jargon of the 1920's".

A hundred years ago a period was beginning of outstanding English novels and novelists. Appearing serially in magazines, fiction was read and eagerly awaited by very many people who might not have bought books and who knew no lending libraries. By 1845 Dickens had roused to tears and laughter the readers of *Pickwick, Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop.* Thackeray had begun his work. The Brontës were busily writing; within fifteen years their novels would be published, as would Mrs. Gaskell's, and Charles Kingsley's, the best of Trollope's stories, the earliest of George Eliot's and Reade's and Meredith's. To admire Disraeli and to enjoy his novels is not necessarily to rank him with the great novelists who were his contemporaries. No serious critic would suggest that he shows the creative imagination of Dickens in making impossible people real and delightful to meet. Nor is his imagination like Emily Brontë's, violent, aloof, intense. He is not chiefly concerned, like George Eliot—and this is what makes her so much of a modern novelist—with discussing serious problems of the ordinary individual, moral ideas, spiritual values. Yet Disraeli's best-known novels have a modern note, a stirring interest for our own times, which other Victorian novels lack. Like Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens, but without Dickens's rollicking humour, Disraeli exposed the devastating results of the Industrial Revolution and the cruel hardships of the poor. Like Thackeray, he satirized fashionable London society; like Trollope, he drew intimate and often satirical pictures of "county" life. But, unlike the other novelists, he

flashed his satire over the intrigues of politics; and the conversations of Taper and Tadpole, with the slightest of changes, might be heard now in Canada. The rights and claims of Jews are emphasized by some novelists of our own time, but not so eloquently as by Disraeli, who loved to link the Hebrew faith with the Christian. Now, as on many occasions since 1918, the political situations and questions of the Levant are much in the minds of thinking people; *Tancred*, based on first-hand knowledge of that country a century ago, might be presenting the essential problems of 1945. H. G. Wells and Somerset Maugham have turned to the East—at least in novels—in a new search for old truth; their readers might find something startlingly timeless, as well as engagingly sincere, in Tancred's effort to pluck out the heart of "The great Asian mystery". The welfare of the people is now alleged to be the nearest concern of every political party and leader; it is the central idea in *Sybil*. Above all, what makes Disraeli's novels peculiarly akin to the thought and feeling of the present is his earnest and eager belief in the power of youth.

It is possible to look on Disraeli's novels, with Lord David Cecil, not as novels at all, strictly speaking, but rather as discussions on political and religious questions put into the form of fiction. But few critics would agree in defining the function and scope of a novel, and many writers since Bunyan have used fiction, as others have used the drama, to make their ideas known as widely as possible.

Keen satire, expressed with brilliant wit; high ideals, determinedly held; these are qualities not often found together as they are found both in Disraeli's personality and in his novels. Not many great English writers have also been eminent leaders in public life. Chaucer, Sidney, Milton, Addison were familiar with the work and ways of Court or Parliament, but it is by their poetry and prose that we remember them. A closer parallel to Disraeli occurs in Mr. Winston Churchill, productive as a writer during the years when he was not busy as a statesman. As André Maurois puts it, "A literary man who is a man of action is a two-edged weapon." Disraeli was a biographer as well as a novelist; his imagination was concerned with presenting actual and eminent men and their ideas, as well as with creating characters and expressing his own opinions through them. This practice may well have trained his observation and disciplined his imagination. His imagination, alert, creative, sympathetic, was essential to the work he did both as novelist

and as statesman. His most severe censure of Sir Robert Peel, linked, in a measured statement, with critical appreciation and praise of the Prime Minister's able intellect and systematic industry, was that he lacked imagination. Disraeli's novels gave him, as well, an emotional outlet. In them he not only developed his political ideas dramatically; he could also freely express, through his characters, his feelings as well as his opinions; in political life he came more and more to cover emotion with a mask, a surface calm.

Like every notable statesman, Disraeli was both an idealist and a realist in politics. In a letter to O'Connell in 1835 he described himself as "not a sentimental, but a practical politician"; he used his eyes and ears as well as his intellect, and was far from being one of the "theory-tailors" whom Meredith speaks of in *Beauchamp's Career*, a type familiar now. Through experience and repeated disappointments he had learned much of men and affairs and methods, as *Coningsby* shows. By 1845 he had overcome some of his difficulties, but he was still far from achieving his ambition or fulfilling his ideals. Many an able young Canadian has had to spend years of his youth in making money to help him through college; he has perhaps gained wisdom through struggle, but he has been handicapped beside the sons of well-to-do fathers. Disraeli had not, indeed, suffered from poverty, and his education had been carefully supervised. His Jewish grandfather, Benjamin D'Israeli, who had come to England from Italy, had made money in London; his father, Isaac D'Israeli, a quiet scholar and writer, lived comfortably, first in London, then in the country at Bradenham. Throughout Isaac D'Israeli's life his son's letters show affectionate admiration for his father and his work. The children were given Christian baptism; it was no religious barrier or lack of money that kept young Benjamin from Eton and Oxford and sent him to a private school and into a solicitor's office, with intervals of travel. Through his father the young man met writers and John Murray the publisher, but it was his own daring and self-confidence which introduced him to Lockhart and Sir Walter Scott, and led him into an ambitious financial and publishing enterprize, which left him, at twenty, with heavy debts. Before he was twenty-seven he had written and published three novels and some short stories, and had travelled for two years about the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Affectionately admired by his devoted sister, indulged

at home by his kind and scholarly father,—who, however, counselled patience—he was petted in town by ladies of beauty, of fashion, and of wit. Sure of his own ability and eager to be famous, but shy and sensitive, he buoyed up his spirits with colour and originality in clothes and manner. His glossy black hair was carefully arranged in curls:

"With lokkes crulle as they were leyd in presse."

And his clothes were as gay as those of Chaucer's young Squire. But Disraeli—he dropped the apostrophe as too foreign—was no knight's son, no young officer home on leave, whose high spirits could be tolerated and welcomed. When he wanted to enter politics, he had far more varied experience than most of the young candidates, but he had no family influence; he was protected by no party. Twice, in the neighbouring borough of Wycombe, he ran and was defeated as an independent candidate —"a Conservative to preserve all that is good in our constitution, a Radical to remove all that is bad."

He set himself to study public affairs; in *Coningsby* he shows a detailed knowledge of the history of the Whigs and the Tories, and a choice based on political principles. He had little regard for the Tory party as it appeared in the early nineteenth century, after the great days of Pitt. "This factious league had shuffled themselves into power by clinging to the skirts of a great minister, the last of the Tory statesmen . . . Impudently usurping the name of that party of which nationality, and therefore universality, is the essence, they made exclusion the principle of their political constitution." In *Coningsby* he shows his scorn for the Tamworth Manifesto of 1834: "An attempt to construct a party without principles; . . . The leaders indeed might profit by their eminent position to obtain power for their individual gratification, but it was impossible to secure their followers that which, after all, must be the great recompense of a political party, the putting in practice of their opinions; for they had none." Beyond the Conservatives of the time, "without a guide and without an aim, distracted, tempted, and bewildered", Disraeli looked for fundamental principles and a political way of life. In becoming a convinced Conservative he set up a creed which satisfied the romantic and the realistic elements of his nature, reverence for what was great and stable and continuous in history and tradition, with a clear view of contemporary conditions and a distrust of mere theories and catch-words. In 1835 his *Vindication of the English Constitution* brought him serious political attention. In the same year he ran as a Con-

servative in an election at Taunton. Again he was defeated. But his friend, Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, led him to a safe Conservative seat, and in 1837 Disraeli, like the young Queen, entered public life for the first time. His maiden speech was laughed and shouted down, but he took advice and encouragement from expert politicians; he trained himself to speak without wit and colour but with knowledge of his subject, and the House came to want all three characteristics. He had revelled in the society of beautiful ladies, well-born and witty, but when he was thirty-three he married Mrs. Wyndham Lewis, twelve years his senior, not witty, comfortably but not remarkably rich. She was devoted to him, and he to her. She was capable, kind, and wise, and never bored him; and, as long as she lived, her town house, her care, and her interest gave him an admirable setting as host, and relaxation after long sittings in the House.

And yet, when Peel became Premier in 1841, Disraeli was not in his Cabinet. Sir Robert was not the man to encourage originality, especially when it was linked with a keen mind, satirical wit, and firm and high ideals of Conservatism. The Chief himself was more than a little attracted to the reasoning of the economists and the policies of his nominal opponents. In *Coningsby* the party hanger-on, Taper, puts it in this way: "A sound Conservative government, I understand: Tory men and Whig measures." Disraeli needed all the patience which his father had long ago urged. He trained himself to make interesting speeches on uncontroversial subjects, full of statistics. He came to be a friend of Lord George Bentinck, a man, as he said of himself, "virtually uneducated", but with a strong will and keen sense of duty; disliking political life and loving horses, he sold his stable and weakened his health to ally himself with Disraeli and lead the Protectionist rebels against Peel. Still more striking was Disraeli's friendship with three young Cambridge men, who formed in Parliament the group known as Young England. He became their leader and their chief spokesman, and in *Coningsby*, in 1844, he set forth the principles and the ideals which held them together. They were no party "Yes-men"; they were a thorn in Peel's side, but their rebellion was based on principle, not caprice. They voted with the Radicals in support of a bill for the protection of children in factories; they sympathetically investigated conditions in Manchester; they disregarded gibes about their love of the medieval; they irritated their critics by expounding in the House

the doctrine of popular Conservatism. During Parliamentary recesses they foregathered at great country houses. The friendship and the confidence of these young men, their common ideals, the hope of putting them into practice, the new and keen zest which this gave to political life,—all this put new heart into Disraeli.

"We few, we happy few, we band of brothers!"

In linking these events of Disraeli's life with his three novels, *Coningsby* (1844), *Sybil* (1845), *Tancred* (1847), it is important to realize how clearly he set forth, for all to read, his political ideals, his views of political reform, and to remember how eagerly and how far, many years later, he tried to put them into effect when he was in power as Prime Minister. But to turn the novels into biography, to try to identify each important character with an actual person whom Disraeli knew, is of no importance at all. Disraeli wrote biography, and he wrote novels; he did not produce that hybrid of modern literature, the novel which draws its interest from biography but escapes the responsibility of biography by using imaginary names and details. A creative artist, he drew from his experience material from which his imagination fashioned men and women and incidents in his novels; he was not concerned, like some story-tellers to-day, with protesting to his readers that any connection with actual persons and places should be regarded as accidental. One of the chief differences between these novels and others which deal with politics is that they are written from the inside. In *Felix Holt* George Eliot realistically presents the views—or lack of views—of many electors, and the difficulties of an eager and honest candidate; in *Beauchamp's Career* Meredith analyzes different types of political minds and attitudes; in the *Phineas* novels Trollope is at some pains to sketch a background of Parliamentary life. But only Disraeli gives the exciting impression of snatches of conversation heard in lobbies or committee rooms or remarks made in clubs by those who think they know what is going to happen.

In his novels, as in his temperament, Disraeli is both romantic and realistic. Romantic novels are often set in unfamiliar places or periods, with rugged or gloomy scenery, preferably seen by moonlight or in a storm; heroes and heroines are beautiful in face and feeling, villains are unmistakably black; the course of true love is beset only by external obstacles, not by inward misgivings; plot and atmosphere are complicated

and coloured by the use of mystery and the supernatural; under stress of emotion speech becomes elaborate rather than abrupt. There is something of this in Disraeli's novels, though nothing like the melodramatic touches in *The Last Days of Pompeii*, by his friend Bulwer Lytton. *Coningsby* and *Sybil* are set almost altogether in England; *Tancred* moves from England to Syria; all three stories occur in the thirties and forties. But in scenery the unusual is emphasized, especially in *Tancred*, where frowning mountains, treeless desert, and exotic gardens form the background for lovely women, lavish feasts and Arab steeds. But the romantic Fakredeen, athirst for action, is satirized as an unbalanced visionary, fond of his debts as "the source of his only real excitement", intriguing and treacherous, "lost in the mazes of some fantastic plot", and deceiving himself rather than others with his incredible political "combinations". There is exciting adventure in plenty, but there is also sardonic humour shown in the shrewd Levantine bargaining. Tancred's adventures partly suggest Beckford's *Vathek*, partly a satirical comment on Beckford, partly the realistic, sympathetic pictures and tales of Lawrence of Arabia. The supernatural is used, not as a device to produce shuddering excitement, but in a mystic, symbolical way, disclosing visions of beauty and truth, revealing and satisfying deep spiritual longing.

Disraeli's men and women are often strikingly beautiful or at least attractive; it is characteristic of his tolerance that even unpleasant and selfish men are often shapely and dignified, and his chivalry toward women seldom presents them as even plain. Chivalry for him was no mere gesture; at home, in the House, as in his novels, he practised courtesy and respect, and expected it from others. His sense of humour made his relations with the Queen, when he became Prime Minister, entertaining for them both, but he never saw her as less than Queen and his liege lady. Like Scott, he tends in his novels to idealize his women, especially those of high degree, but boring talkers, however fashionable, are treated with a mocking smile. He can be as satirical of brainless beauty as Jane Austen, and he has almost her distaste for the ill-bred rich, although he is amused rather than irritated by the skill and perseverance of Mrs. Guy Flouncy. He sees quite through the use of beauty to bring favours; his picture of the dewy-eyed damsel in distress desperately seeking help from the young and susceptible Tancred to retrieve her losses on the Stock Exchange suggests H. G. Wells or P. G. Wodehouse at their wittiest. Often his very

satire reveals his ideal; in *Coningsby* Millbank's scathing comments on the peerage, with its alleged ancient lineage, suggests what a genuine aristocracy might be, if it were based on distinction.

The merely romantic novel makes no study of character; individuals are stock figures, little more than types or personified abstractions. Disraeli does not, like Dickens, amuse us with unforgettable figures, complete with name-tag and identifying gesture or phrase. His humour, like Scott's, is happiest when it plays on his less exalted persons, Tancred's home-bred servants in Syria, becoming more and more English as their master falls more and more under the spell of the East; the French *chefs* in London as they consult together in the early pages of *Tancred*, where their dwellings and manners are described in detail as crisp as Thackeray's but with kindly amusement. In the picture of Lord Marney, on the other hand, in *Sybil*, there is satire and insight, but little humour; Disraeli was ready to laugh at the flirt or the bore, man or woman, but the gentle, brow-beaten wife roused his tenderness and sympathy. "Lady Marney absolutely had no will of her own. A hard, exact, literal, bustling, acute being environed her existence; directed, planned, settled everything. Her life was a series of petty sacrifices and baulked enjoyments. If . . . she had asked some friends to the house, the chances were she would have to put them off; if she was reading a novel, Lord Marney asked her to copy a letter; if she were going to the opera, she found that Lord Marney had got seats for her and some friend in the House of Lords, and seemed expecting the strongest expressions of delight and gratitude for his unasked and inconvenient kindness . . . As if it were possible for a wife to contend against a selfish husband, at once sharp-witted and blunt-hearted."

Most of all in *Sybil* does Disraeli show his sympathy for the suffering and the down-trodden. There is a striking likeness between the fundamental ideas in this novel and those of Carlyle as expressed in *Chartism* and especially in *Past and Present*, which was published in 1843. Both men were idealists, sensitive, shy, ambitious, often discouraged. But where Carlyle glowered and roared, Disraeli, the accomplished actor, scintillated and appeared impassive. Both looked back with definite admiration to the system of life in the Middle Ages. "A Feudal Aristocracy is still alive, in the prime of life;" wrote Carlyle of the twelfth century, "superintending the cultivation of the land . . . judging, soldiering, adjusting; everywhere governing the people,

—so that even a Gurth born thrall of Cedric lacks not his due parings of the pig he tends." Carlyle's picture of Abbot Samson, his trials and his achievements, is vivid, humorous, sympathetic, a model for the writer of history. Disraeli's treatment is much more vague; Sybil looks wistfully back to a golden age of benevolent ecclesiastics and conscientious land-owners and happy peasantry. But both writers stress their argument that in those days there was a vital, spiritual relation between employer and employed, not the mere "cash-nexus" of the Industrial Age. Disraeli evidently read Carlyle's work carefully and was influenced by his ideas. Carlyle might well have been gratified. But his eyes, often so keen to pierce beneath the surface, were holden when he considered Disraeli. The Scot was profoundly suspicious of the Continental Jew. He saw clothes as symbols, and this mannered foreigner seemed to him another Byron, affected and frivolous. To many people, for long years, the nickname "Dizzy" suggested an unstable, irresponsible charlatan, perhaps a conjuror, certainly a mountebank. It was Gladstone, not Disraeli, who seemed to many the man of moral worth and force. In 1874, as Prime Minister, Disraeli wrote Carlyle, offering him, in recognition of his "uncontested superiority"—along with Tennyson—"in the literary world . . . the highest distinction for merit . . . the Grand Order of the Bath" and delicately adding to this offer a pension in the form of "a good fellowship". Carlyle declined the honour, but he was much touched by the unprejudiced judgment, the courtesy and consideration shown by the man whose political actions he had derided and to whom the students of The University of Edinburgh had preferred Carlyle himself as their Lord Rector in the election of 1865.

Disraeli agreed with another great Scotsman in condemning the way in which the nobles grasped for themselves the lands confiscated from the Church after the Reformation. Had John Knox had his way, the State would have used these riches to provide adequate parish schools for Scotland. Disraeli stresses the contrast between the monastery as a landlord and the descendant of the grasping noble—or his successor as landowner. Lord Marney was satisfied with the condition of his farm laborers; "people who work in the open air instead of a furnace don't require such wages. They get their eight shillings a week; at least generally." Disraeli speaks as bitterly as Carlyle of the "intolerable serfage" in England, in city and country alike, which the "spirit of rapacious covetousness" has brought.

Here and there an enterprising and enlightened employer built a model factory; in Mr. Trafford Disraeli shows ideas and methods which to some people are essentially of the twentieth century. His building had an excellent and ingenious system of ventilation, space, light, and comfortable conditions for work. He provided schools, public baths, wells, and houses for the workmen, and encouraged them to grow gardens. "The investment of capital has been one of the most profitable I ever made," declared Mr. Trafford. Yet Morley, one of the Chartist leaders, thought little of such individual influence. "The domestic principle", he insisted, "has fulfilled its purpose . . . Home is isolation; therefore anti-social. What we want is community." This sounds like 1945 rather than like a century ago.

Sybil is, indeed, definitely a novel with a purpose, which is frankly set forth by Disraeli at the end of the book. In *Coningsby* he had urged "the rising race not to despair, but to seek in a right understanding of the history of their country and in the energies of heroic youth, the elements of national welfare. The present work . . . would draw public thought to the state of the people whom those parties for two centuries have governed . . . It is the past alone that can explain the present, and it is youth alone that can mould the remedial future . . ." There are romantic elements in this novel, mystery, adventure, violence, rescue, sudden death, the restoring of stolen property and title to the rightful and beautiful owner. But the treatment is chiefly realistic and intensely earnest. Beginning lightly with a clever sketch of a fashionable London club before the Derby, Disraeli goes on to contrast the "two nations; between whom there is no intercourse and no sympathy . . . the Rich and the Poor." He shows, on the one hand, the social and political intrigue among the idle or the grasping rich and, on the other, the sorry physical and spiritual state of the workers on the land and in the factories. "My heroine, Sybil, is a Chartist." These were Disraeli's words to Thomas Cooper, "a Chartist red-hot from Stafford Jail," as the friend called him who sent him to Disraeli with a note of introduction soon after *Sybil* was finished. Cooper was anxious to find a publisher for his memoirs, and Disraeli showed his sympathetic interest by giving him a note to one publisher after another until they found one willing to risk publication. In the House Disraeli had shown his concern over the Chartist riots and the misery which caused them. Before writing *Sybil* he studied Parliamentary reports and reports of Royal Commissions over a period of nearly ten years; in the

novel he presents the grim facts with imagination and sympathy and realism, not shrinking from describing conditions which are revolting even to read about. The child called Devilsdust might be one of the small boys for whom Dickens sought and roused sympathy. "All his companions were disposed of . . . Some were crushed, some were lost, some caught cold and fevers, crept back to their garret or their cellars, were dosed with Godfrey's cordial and died in peace. The nameless one would not disappear . . . They gave him no food: he foraged for himself, and shared with the dogs the garbage of the streets . . . And slumbering at night on a bed of mouldering straw, his only protection against the plashy surface of his den, with a dung-heap at his head, and a cess-pool at his feet, he still clung to the only roof which shielded him from the tempest." The lad's mind was as keen as his body was tough, and he became one of the thinkers among the younger Chartists.

One of the most dramatic and vivid scenes is at the "tommy-shop", one of the more ingenious iniquities practised by the oppressors, who were themselves of the same class as the workers but slightly more greedy and prosperous. The conversation is natural and lively, giving the reader considerable information and showing their remarkable pluck and high spirits; it might be a cockney crowd to-day. "I don't care so much for a good squeedge; one sees so many faces one knows." There is no queue, only "pushing, squeezing, fighting, tearing, shrieking", when the door opens. The policeman, strong and helpful, would mark the greatest difference to-day; it was only in 1829 that Sir Robert Peel founded the Metropolitan Police.

With one view after another, based on carefully acquired information and made alive by his imagination, Disraeli presents the nation of the poor, their lives wasted when they might have been usefully and happily serving the country. In constant contrast he gives views, from his own experience, of the titled rich, in manor and castle and town house and club. There is little sympathy in this presentation, but keen satire. Between the two extremes are Sybil, the earnest Chartist's daughter, and Egremont, the aristocrat, unconcerned but tolerant. Each becomes broader in outlook, deeper in sympathy, realizing that neither riots nor repressive measures will serve, that men like the fantastic "Liberator" are more popular than quiet, earnest thinkers, that Parliament cares little for the welfare of the people. Egremont himself, converted and convinced, spoke in the House, and "pronounced his conviction that the rights of

labour were as sacred as those of property, . . . that the social happiness of the millions should be the first object of a statesman . . ." His speech puzzled party members, as it did not follow party lines. But it appealed to Sybil, who "found to her surprise . . . that human affairs are the subject of compromise", and that the want of sympathy is due to ignorance. Again Carlyle's voice sounds, insisting on real education, genuine interest, a feeling of brotherhood.

Dickens roused the heart and conscience of the English when he showed the suffering of poor children, but he had little to suggest in the way of constructive reform. It is well to remember that, as Prime Minister, Disraeli worked hard to put the ideas of *Sybil* into practice, to pass laws which would make the life of the working-man more tolerable.

Another theme which Disraeli treats with insistent eloquence is the great moral and intellectual contribution made to human civilization by the Hebrew race. In *Coningsby* and *Tancred* Sidonia appears, first as a mysterious stranger, then as the man of almost fantastic financial skill and power, "lord and master of the money-market of the world, and of course lord and master of everything else", proud of his descent from the Hebrew Arabs who were nobles in Arragon, a man of keen intellect, artistic tastes, wide and original benevolence and high imagination. No doubt the character was based on one or more of the Rothschilds—and almost with a sight of the future, for it was a Rothschild who made it possible for Disraeli, as Prime Minister, to give Britain control of the Suez Canal. But Sidonia is in a large measure an ideal figure; many of Disraeli's own hopes and ideas are expressed by him. It is significant that he turns his great power to constructive work, whereas some writers of fiction, like Mr. Oppenheim, when they create a super-man of international finance, fill him with thoughts of war and destruction.

The young Tancred feels the strong influence of the East and particularly Palestine, with its traditions and its beauty. He goes to the Holy Land as a Crusader, not intolerant of Jews, but conscious of his Western and English superiority. His education has been carefully and tenderly arranged and supervised by his devoted parents—did the Queen, years later, detect no similarity between this picture and the education of the Prince of Wales? But this was when the future Lord Beaconsfield was only a rebel against Sir Robert, when he and his friends were, like the new Lord Marney—the Egremont of *Sybil*—looked upon by Tadpole and his fellows "as a little

short of insane". "He might be Privy Seal, and he throws it all away for the nonsense of Young England!"

Tancred, a pilgrim to Mount Sinai, has a mystic vision, showing the Christian religion as the culmination of all that was finest in that of the Hebrew, and calling him back to the service of "the God of Sinai and of Calvary". "The equality of man can only be accomplished by the sovereignty of God. The longing for fraternity can never be satisfied but under the sway of a common father. The relations between Jehovah and his creatures can be neither too numerous nor too near . . . Cease, then, to seek in a vain philosophy the solution of the social problem that perplexes you." The language of the New Testament is more simple and beautiful, but here is its authentic theme; the brotherhood of man must mean the fatherhood of God. Here is the essential answer to the utilitarians and the economists.

In many ways Disraeli stands alone. As man and novelist he left no descendants. Perhaps the last of the romantics, he looked to the East for his inspiration, and gave to his country the work of his life. Familiar with the Jewish ritual of cleanliness, he was appalled at the grimy and unhealthy surroundings of English workers in factories and on farms, and he laboured to improve them. Always a foreigner to many of the English, his more subtle intellect understood the devious working and the suave phrasing of the East, and in foreign affairs his consummate statesmanship could match all others. He did much to strengthen and establish the Empire which many to-day resent and would discard, and his constructive imagination gave a new meaning to that often misunderstood term. His novels were not to him a way of escape from the business of life and government; they were a means of making his ideas clear to himself, of rousing his countrymen to realize what needed to be done. Then he went into action.