

THE FUTURE OF THE INDIVIDUAL

(The Samuel N. Robertson Memorial Lecture)

A. E. KERR*

Principal MacKinnon paid me a very high compliment indeed when he asked me to deliver the first Samuel Napier Robertson Memorial Lecture. There is no man in Canada who would not count it an honour to inaugurate this series, which undoubtedly will some day become celebrated because it perpetuates a name that the people of this Province and particularly the Alumni of this College are delighted to honour.

It did not require any extraordinary virtue in me to suggest to Principal MacKinnon when he first broached the matter to me that he look further afield for his lecturer. This is a very important occasion, and it could well be graced by some internationally famous figure in the public life of our country, or by one of the many outstanding graduates of Prince of Wales itself. When in the course of time the Principal renewed the invitation, I justified to my own conscience my acceptance of it, on the ground that I had at least not snatched at the distinction.

There is, however, something to be said for the decision reached by him and his colleagues to ask the president of Dalhousie *ex officio* to be the first lecturer, because the late Dr. Robertson took both his Bachelor of Arts and his Master of Arts degrees from Dalhousie, and Mrs. Robertson did the same. It is also well-known that he had a strong prejudice—I should perhaps call it, in the words of Edmund Burke, a "salutary prejudice"—in favour of his Alma Mater. It is commonly reported that when one of his students indicated a preference for any of the other highly reputable universities that attract the young people of these Maritime Provinces, Dr. Robertson would expect him to tell why he had chosen that university when he might just as well have elected to go to Dalhousie. We do not feel, however, that in that respect there was anything strange or extraordinary in his attitude. Dalhousie is sufficiently true to its Scottish name and tradition to have a good conceit of itself, and it seems to us by no means unreasonable that a wise and discerning teacher should require any student to justify the peculiarity of his choice

*President of Dalhousie University. The Samuel N. Robertson Memorial Lecture, to be given annually, was founded by alumni and friends of Prince of Wales College (Charlottetown), of which institution the late Dr. Robertson was Principal, 1901-1937.

if he passed Dalhousie by! Nevertheless it was not because of Dr. Robertson's personal devotion to Dalhousie, but because of his own solid reputation as a lover of learning and an inspiring teacher of youth that the University conferred on him the Degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, when it celebrated its Centenary in 1919. It is therefore not entirely inappropriate that a representative of Dalhousie should be permitted to join you now in recalling the service that the late Dr. Robertson rendered during the thirty-six years in which he presided over the destinies of this college.

There is one matter that I take the liberty of introducing here, with the consent of your Principal, and there could conceivably be no fitter occasion for mentioning it.

It has been in our minds in Dalhousie to create a monument to Dr. Robertson in the form of a scholarship for which only students from Prince of Wales College should be eligible. As I perused your College calendar one day I was disturbed to discover that you already had a "Samuel N. Robertson Scholarship" here. My first thought was that this might prevent us from carrying out our plan but as I read on I saw that your scholarship could be held only within the College itself, so it would not really conflict with our intention. I am now happy to tell the faculty, students and friends of this College, that the Board of Governors of Dalhousie have decided to designate by the name of Principal Robertson a scholarship of the value of \$150.00 a year, to be awarded on the nomination of your principal, to a student who, on the completion of his course in Prince of Wales, enters Dalhousie in Arts and Science, or Commerce. The scholarship will be tenable for two years on condition that the recipient maintains satisfactory academic standing. I can well imagine there is no Prince of Wales student who would not feel proud to receive a scholarship that bears so illustrious a name.

The Board of Governors at the same time attached to a second scholarship, to be given on the same terms and in the same amount, the name of another teacher to whom successive graduating classes have looked with affection and respect. That teacher is Miss Lily H. Seaman; and I know that all her colleagues will be glad to endorse our Board's action in recognizing her splendid service this way. We shall cordially welcome the winners of these two scholarships, year by year; and we shall expect much of them.

The subject that I have chosen for this lecture is the Future of the Individual. Perhaps I should begin by warning you that I am not going to say much about the future as such, although I hope I shall justify my inclusion of the term in my title. The fact is that although man, according to an ancient account, is a creature who looks before and after, the visibility in the first direction is by no means good. The most gifted of men cannot discern with clarity the shape of things to come, as a comparison between their predictions and the actual course of events reveals. Oswald Spengler was so sure that he had found the wave of the future that he said when he announced the coming victory of Nazi ideology that others might speculate, he *knew*. Anyone who consults the prophecies that men have made and then enquires how far they have been fulfilled will find little encouragement to make divination his trade. There is so much that is contingent in human affairs; and no one can anticipate the new factors—ideas, inventions, discoveries, personalities, coincidence of events—that may prove to be determining considerations in new sets of circumstances. If certain things had worked out differently in our own time—if some accident had befallen Winston Churchill when his determined resistance to the enemy was an inspiration to the whole Empire; if some German scientist had been able to produce the atom bomb, although as it turned out there was never any imminent danger of it, if Lenin had not been stricken with paralysis shortly before the meeting at which he planned to denounce and repudiate Stalin—how different the present world situation would be.

While I am on the subject I should like to say that I have been using the term prophecy in the conventional but erroneous sense in which it is almost synonymous with soothsaying and fortune-telling. Actually the proper business of the prophet is not to *predict* at all, but to *proclaim* the clear insight that has been mediated to his own consciousness. He exceeds his commission when he yields to the temptation to cast the horoscope of the unknown to-morrow.

Some well informed men do take a chance on forecasting events in spite of the risk to their reputation involved in this pastime. Not long ago I heard a noted journalist lecture in Halifax on "The Next Ten Years": and he charted in advance for us, in a most fascinating manner, the line that the nations would follow in the decade that lies ahead. I could not help feeling as I listened to him that he could console himself with the thought that for the present at least he was in an impregnable position.

For no matter how strongly any of his hearers might disagree with him, no one could prove him wrong; only the unfolding future itself would disclose whether his augury was true or false. Besides, he had no intention of coming back to Halifax, and I sincerely trust that I shall have the privilege of returning to Charlottetown; so I shall neither emulate his daring nor claim his kind of immunity.

My emphasis tonight will fall on the second term in my title, the individual: and my concern will not be to try to tell you how he will fare in the stages of his pilgrimage that lie beyond the horizon of our time, but to maintain that a genuine regard for the individual will characterize any future that we can contemplate with satisfaction.

Now the one fact upon which it is imperative that we lay firm hold for the purposes of this discussion is that human society is composed of individual men and women. They are the realities that think and feel. The masses are made up of individual persons, and according to a famous epigram, if you scratch one of them he will bleed. Nations, races, societies simply represent convenient ways of organizing or classifying them in the aggregate. This is a truism, and if I dwell on it for a little while, my object is not to prove it, for it needs no proof, but to hold it before your attention long enough to let it make an indelible impression on your minds. One way of accomplishing this is to recall a few significant passages from eminent scholars that show different facets of this important truth.

Approaching the subject from the standpoint of *science*, Sir James Y. Simpson, a former Professor of Natural Science in Edinburgh University, wrote a chapter in one of his books entitled "The Evolution of Individuality". Having read it many years ago, I remembered it when I began to arrange my thoughts on our theme for tonight and looked it up to see what he had said. In his exposition Sir James traced the ascent of life from the simplest unicellular beginnings, through multicellular forms, to the highly complex separate structures in which at last it found its highest expression. The evolutionary process, he said, "presents itself as a movement towards ever higher individuation," and reaches its culmination in human beings who are, potentially at least individuals in the strict connotation of the term. I say potentially, because, as Sir James maintained, individuality in the final sense is a spiritual achievement, just as freedom is. Browning had something like this in mind long ago when he wrote that "man partly is and wholly hopes to be". What Saint Paul

graphically called the groaning and travailing of creation resulted in the emergence of the individual, and, the cynics and misanthropes notwithstanding, the goal was by no means inglorious. It is the climactic product of this mundane life. A critical study of the meaning of individuality would call for a special dissertation, and we obviously cannot turn aside to anything of that kind now: but the scientist's view of it as the sovereign end towards which the whole creation has moved, encourages us to think of individuality in exalted terms and to hold dear the enduring values for which it stands.

Approaching the subject from the standpoint of *history*, two of the ablest scholars have recently made impressive pleas for the recognition of the individual as the one absolutely important consideration in the story that they recount. Professor Herbert Butterfield, who holds the chair of Modern History in the University of Cambridge, has just published a series of lectures which reviewers have called "the most outstanding pronouncement on the meaning of history by a professional historian in England since Acton's Inaugural." That, incidentally, was more than fifty years ago. Professor Butterfield remarks that "the patterns that matter are the patterns that end in personalities", that history is simply the record of "the manufacture and education of human souls", and that one of the priceless lessons that the Hebrews learned when they lost Jerusalem and were carried into exile or scattered among the nations was that God was not merely the God of peoples: "He was God for individuals as such". Individuals are the flesh and blood realities in the drama of life. History is progressive if individuals advance to richer, fuller personality: it is retrogressive, however spectacular it may be, if they lose the qualities requisite for greatness in rational spiritual beings. Professor Butterfield can be cited as a champion of the paramount significance of individual personality.

The other historian is Professor Arnold J. Toynbee, who is certainly the best known authority on his province at the present time. In one of the chapters in *Civilization on Trial*, in which he gathers together the conclusions of his monumental "Study of History", he discusses the assumption, sometimes made, that "the important thing in human life is not the spiritual development of [individual] souls, but the social development of communities", and he rejects it as both false and mischievous. "The proposition that the individual is a mere part of a social group may be the truth about social insects,—bees, ants, and termites—but it is not the truth about human beings!" "We may conclude",

he says, "that individuality is a pearl of great moral price, when we observe the moral enormities that occur when this pearl is trampled in the mire". It is needful of course to examine the phenonema of society and to study its laws, because man is a social being. But this need does not in the slightest degree contradict the view that his crowning glory is inseparable from his individuality.

There is, you see, no equivocation in the witness of these eminent historians to the fact that the highest values in history inhere nowhere but in men and women as individual souls.

Approaching the subject, finally, from the standpoint of *theology*, Professor Emil Brunner, the Swiss theologian, whose writings have given him a world wide reputation, touched on it in his recent Gifford Lectures, the blue ribbon series in the realm of sacred scholarship. He calls attention, in *Christianity and Civilization*, to the fact that "the history of mankind begins with collectivism". The emancipation of the individual from the corporate body was the work, he says, first of the Greek, and then in a richer sense of the Christian mind. In both traditions the noblest humanism implies "a recognition of the indestructible worth and dignity of the individual man." The discovery and appreciation of the individual marks one of the permanent gains in the long story of mankind.

It has taken me some time to review the statements of these celebrated thinkers, but that time has not been wasted if the quotations have helped to convey or confirm the impression that the business of mankind is man, and that the test by which civilizations must be tried is the extent to which they have provided for his manifold wants and enabled the individual to grow towards the ideal measure of his stature.

If this truth about the individual is ever forgotten, the state, which is the organization of society for certain necessary purposes, becomes a Leviathan whose existence provides ample ground for apprehension and fear. If it is forgotten, the efforts to achieve a finer social order, which should always appeal to the imagination, ends in the regimentation and enslavement of men instead of their promised emancipation. If it is forgotten, the economic activities that engage most of man's waking thoughts and that should always remain subordinate to his higher interests result in the enthronement of things instead of human values and in the refinement of the creations of workmanship at the cost of the degradation of the character of the worker. Thoughtful people

who have watched world affairs during the present generation will scarcely need to be told that such disregard of the individual is actually possible and that widespread enthusiasm may be generated for doctrines that deny the basic principle of human worth.

It is timely therefore, to underscore the doctrine of the value of the individual and to insist that his authentic good be the criterion by which we judge the success of all our social experiments. It does not follow that we must become advocates of what is commonly known as "rugged individualism", for that is a misnomer. It is often rugged and ruthless enough, to be sure; but it has no concern for the individual as such. In its most familiar form it looks suspiciously like an interested protest against restrictions on competitive economic activities. I do not wish my plea for a recognition of the value of the individual to be confused with the advocacy of that position. The question of how far public authority should go in the regulation of private enterprise, for the good of all concerned, for greater stability of employment, for the improvement of social conditions, and for the insurance of the average man against the mischances of life, is one that cannot be answered out of hand. Only wise statesmanship can determine, and only actual experience prove, where desirable protection ends and doubtful paternalism begins, where government intervention is a help and where it becomes a positive hindrance to the development of man's true life. The social reformer, impatient to ring out the old and ring in the new, has an indispensable part to play in the progressive improvement of the lot of man: but he, above all men, should heed the admonition of the old negro preacher who said, "Good intentions ain't enough: they can give you the worst singing in the choir". As social beings we are acting according to our true nature when we seek to create a good society. At the same time it behooves us to remember that the individual remains the ultimate consideration and that the institutions of society, like the Sabbath mentioned in a familiar passage in the Gospels, are made for man and not man for them. Man alone is an end in himself, and not a means to something else. If we ever forget this, we shall find ourselves involved in confusion and in misery.

Now there are three spheres in which we have reason to expect the importance of the individual to be fully recognized. Our chance of keeping this appraisal central and creative in our thinking depends largely on them. There can be little doubt of their identity by anyone who has reflected on the subject.

(1) The first is the sphere of Political Democracy.

The state may be the friend of the individual or his foe. It may hold his life and liberty inviolate, or it may place them in serious jeopardy. It may be his defence against tyranny, or it may become the greatest tyranny of all.

The totalitarian state is the natural enemy of these liberties without which the vital interests of the individual cannot thrive. Its rise and rapid expansion in a short time, until it already rules one quarter of the human race, is one of the most sinister developments of the present century; and the darkest forebodings that some brilliant minds entertain about the future spring from the fear that the state may attempt to seize the whole of life and build its kingdom there. It does not matter whether the totalitarianism is of the "left" or the "right"; it will of necessity make demands that are hostile to the free and creative expression of individual life.

The democratic state, on the other hand, would deny its own genius if it ever defaulted in its trusteeship of the rights of the individual. In actual practice it may evince many weaknesses and become the instrument of selfish men who care nothing about its spirit, but if it should ever begin to operate on the theory that the state can admit no limit to its prerogatives we should know beyond doubt that it had become apostate.

The English Puritans whom we may consider the pioneers or parents of our political democracy saw this very plainly. As one of their prominent spokesmen phrased it, the first principle that must be honored by the kind of government that they wanted to set up was "the poorest he in England has a life to live as well as the richest he". The weakest and most obscure man in the land has rights, they held, that the state must never be permitted to usurp; and these include freedom to declare his mind with impunity on the manner in which the public affairs of his country were conducted. Deny these, and a government is no longer democratic, in the traditional British sense of the word. The historic relation that exists between belief in the transcendent value of the individual on the one hand, and the ideals that strive for expression in the democratic constitution on the other is a matter of record.

The corollary that a democracy can only be healthy if its individual citizens have intelligence, independence and high moral ideals is also clear. This was the element of truth in Carlyle's criticism of his contemporaries who thought that the extension of the franchise was the cure of all social ills. You cannot get wisdom,

he thundered, out of even twenty-seven million men, if they have not that wisdom in them. "As well wash Thames's mud, by improved methods, to find more gold in it." The voice of the people is simply the chorus of the voices of the multitude of individual men and women who constitute it. It is implicit in the ideal of political democracy, therefore, that it do everything within its power to enlighten the mind, elevate the sentiments and strengthen the integrity of the average citizen. Thomas Mann, who left his native Germany because he found the pressures and restrictions of a totalitarian regime intolerable, understood this. Democracy, he said in an attempt to formulate a definition, is the kind of government that respects "the dignity of the individual".

(2) The second is the sphere of Education. Every self-respecting nation to-day recognizes education as a necessity and devotes immense sums to its support. I have already suggested one reason why this policy agrees well with the essential character and interests of a democracy. It is obvious that education broadly conceived has a vital interest in the proper development of the innate capacities of individuals. It is not surprising, therefore, that fresh attempts are constantly being made by progressive educationalists to discover how far the formal training that we are giving our youth may be made more effective in achieving the desired ends.

Almost everyone who discusses education invokes sooner or later the name of Plato. His writings contain so many profound observations and suggestions on the subject that no serious student can afford to be ignorant of them. He was undoubtedly mistaken on many points, but, as a distinguished man once remarked in another connection, it is no disgrace for one to be proved wrong if he can prove that Plato is on his side.

The illustrious philosopher was deeply concerned with the training of youth, which in that age consisted mainly of the memorization of poetry, the performances of physical exercises, and the correction of wayward tendencies by the imposition of punishment. It was characteristic of him that he re-examined the entire system in the light of what the end-product of the training was supposed to be. For himself and for those who followed him, education meant *the devices designed to bring the soul to its highest perfection*. The individual in the proper sense was one whose powers of personal discrimination and judgement were well developed, whose opinions and attitudes reflected a mature mind, and whose character was grounded in respect for the

fundamental moral virtues. I heard one of my classical colleagues remark the other day that the unbelieving cynical, traditionless sophisticated man, who is unfortunately not too rare among us, is removed by the width of a whole wide world from the Platonic ideal. The true development of the personality of the individual is the guiding light of which the educator must never lose sight. Our education does not deserve the name unless it promotes our growth as rational, moral, spiritual beings.

Contrast with this inspiring conception the implication of the view of Adam Smith, that the children of the working classes should be taught to read and write and cipher, first because these arts were useful in the ordinary affairs of life, and secondly because this rudimentary knowledge made those who had it less prone than the illiterate rabble to wild unreasoning revolution. We may safely assume that the teaching of the three R's and of the other subjects now found in every modern curriculum not only serves this utilitarian end but has also an *incidental* value in forming the minds of the young in the process of learning and in the associations which the school provides. If we are really serious, however, about getting the best results from our public education we must take higher ground and not allow the chief end to become a mere by-product. We must try our educational systems from time to time by the classical test: how far they are consciously planned as a means of bringing out the potentialities of our youth and giving the noblest direction to their activities. I suggest that the results of our educational enterprise are satisfactory only where individual teachers keep this fundamental end in view.

A very popular conception of education is that it is essentially a training for citizenship. What other, or better, purpose could it have, some men ask, than the making of good citizens. The question is rhetorical, and those who raise it suppose that the answer is obvious, and that it is *None*. It is well therefore to remember that many critical minds have found it far from obvious, not a few of them have set it aside as unsatisfactory for various reasons, and some who have accepted it have done so with definite reservations. Mr. Bertrand Russell, for example, who always argues his case provocatively, even if his conclusions in some matters are repugnant to many who admire his great intellectual gifts, discusses the main purpose of education in one of his books, and commences by distinguishing between those who think of education in terms of individuality and those who think of it in terms of citizenship. He states categorically that citizenship

as an ideal is inadequate. He bases this judgement on the "absence of creativeness" and the "willingness to acquiesce in the powers that be" that are involved in it. Citizenship may easily be too narrowly conceived to accommodate the abiding values of the individualistic tradition, although on the other hand it may indeed provide room for them. His conclusion of the whole matter is that considered "absolutely", "the education of the individual is a far higher thing than the education of the citizen," but "considered politically in relations to the needs of times" the latter must have his vote. This condition, which is no more than a second best, and a concession to expediency, will not however be necessarily permanent. "When the world as a single economic and political unit has been made secure, it will be possible for individual culture to revive."

The temporary preference that Mr. Russell gives to the education of the citizen is based on certain assumptions that should not pass unchallenged. Mr. Russell takes it for granted that the distinctive characteristic of the individual is that he is "self-consistent", while that of the citizen is that he is "co-operative" and the world is in desperate need of the spirit of co-operation. But, as I shall indicate later, the Christain doctrine of the individual combines both features, and Mr. Russell is notoriously blind to the virtues of the Christain view. His criticism applies to certain historic ideas of individuality but it leaves the Christian conception untouched. Moreover, the best citizenship, as he admits, may not express itself in simple "acquiescence with the powers that be" but may range itself in definite opposition to the existing order. The English barons who wrung from the reluctant hands of King John the precious Magna Carta were excellent citizens, and their excellence consisted in their determination that the laws of England should guarantee certain inalienable rights to individual men and women. The best kind of citizenship makes the amplest provision for the things that rebound to the noblest life for the individual. This is the test by which all types of citizenship must finally be tried. Niemoeller, who defied Hitler, and went to a concentration camp for his pains, was really a better citizen of Germany than any of the regimented multitude that supported the Nazi regime. It is admittedly true, as the reference that I have just made suggests, that at times a conflict may arise between the two ideals of education, the one concerned with the perfection of the individual in himself, and the other concerned with the integration of the life of the community: but in a free, enlightened democracy these ideals

should tend to coincide. In any case the general proposition stands, that among the public influences that make for enhancement of individuality, education should have a prominent place.

(3) This brings us to the third sphere to which we may look hopefully for a high regard for the individual, namely Religion. When we talk of the value of the individual we are dealing with religion's specialty. It is in religion that the highest appraisal of man's value receives its final sanction, that belief in his unique worth is given an indefeasible basis, that a dignity of an incomparable kind is conferred on him.

The religion in which we were nurtured teaches that this poor weak, sinful creature, about whom so many discreditable things can be said, belongs in one aspect of his life, to a divine order, and that he is dear to God, who alone is great. He is made in God's image: that is to say, he is a spiritual being, and all his other impressive capacities are crowned with that of entering into personal fellowship with his Maker. In the act of worship he answers with the love of his own heart the eternal Love that is in the "hid heart beneath creation beating." Religion is not just a metaphysic; it is a "Thou and I" relation: and when the "Thou" is the ineffable spirit of God, the human "I" appears in a transfigured light. Man is no longer a mere creature of the earth but one whose ultimate citizenship is in the world of the unseen.

This account of his nature is no mere embroidery of the Christian Gospel but part of its enduring essence. It is so familiar to us that we often fail to appreciate the extent to which our feeling for the sanctity of the individual derives from it and would disappear with its demise. In this connection let me quote Professor Butterfield again. He refers to Hitler as an outstanding example of those who lack "our customary sense of the all-importance of personality." He was "willing to be prodigal with the individual lives of real men, because only the fate of the species mattered, only the collective noun had reality for him." The tragedy into which he precipitated the world is a warning of what may happen, what does happen, when the individual is forgotten and his sacredness denied. "I am not sure", the historian concludes "whether there exists a firm barrier against this kind of effort save for those who hold the Christian view that each individual soul is of eternal moment and has a value commensurate with the value of anything else in the created world."

One of the peculiar merits of the Christian doctrine of man is that it preserves his dignity without neglecting to impress on

him his responsibilities to society. If our religion were concerned solely with the individual it would make a much needed contribution to our thinking by emphasizing his worth so strongly that we would never become indifferent to it. During the early part of its history it seemed to be interested in the individual alone, and some critics have complained that it had no place for civic virtues. This circumstance is explained in part by the fact that at first Christians had no place in the life of the state and little reason to think well of it, and in part by the fact that the promise of personal salvation captured men's imagination so exclusively that other elements in the Evangel were forgotten. It would be remarkable, however, if a religion with a concept like the Kingdom at the centre of its teaching were really devoid of social interest; and some modern thinkers have done much to recover the implications of our Faith for us by pointing out that a social outlook is implied in the Christian doctrine of the individual itself. For according to the Christian view, the divinest attribute of man is not self-consistency as Mr. Russell holds, but love, and a being endowed with love is bound by strong ties to his brethren and is under obligation to seek their good. The logic of love leads inevitably to the consideration of the community and, as it grows in "knowledge and all judgement", to a solicitude for everything that affects the general good. I mention this merely to indicate that there is no inconsistency between the individuality of the Christian religion and the loftiest conception of social duty and idealism.

These, then, are three principal sources from which a philosophy that maintains the pre-eminence of the individual may expect strong support: political democracy, education, and religion. It is no mere whimsical wish to provide a parallel to a familiar verse in the New Testament that prompts me to add, and the greatest of these is religion. For if democracy should lose its vigour, as it may do; and if education should become an instrument for evil indoctrination, as it became under totalitarian auspices in our own time: and even if the Church should be reduced to a department of the state, with little real autonomy of its own; yet the radical incompatibility of the Christian religion with any system that denies the value of the individual may still prove to be the power that will save us.

In conclusion, let me relate this doctrine of the supreme importance of the individual a little more directly to the future whose features I refused at the outset to forecast in detail.

The nineteenth century belief that mankind was moving irresistibly forward, that it was advancing under the operation of an inescapable law, that progress was a beneficent necessity finds few subscribers now. Progress appears rather as a possibility to be realized, a process to be won; and the meaning of it has to be carefully defined.

The incredible advances of science within living memory compel us to believe there are still vast and unsuspected treasures of knowledge awaiting discovery; and new knowledge will mean new power, which may prove either a blessing or a curse, depending on the use that men make of it. The contemporary discoveries in connection with atomic energy furnish a convincing illustration of this. Many years ago the late Sir Oliver Lodge wrote about the power that physicists suspected to be hidden in the atom, and expressed the hope that man in his present imperfect state of moral development would not gain control of it. Others have shared this apprehension and a leading American scientist confessed that while he waited to see the theory of atomic energy put to the test, he had hoped that the experiment would disprove it, because he feared what might happen if man were given an instrument by which he could bring his house down in ruins. But now the secret is out, for good or ill. Some men were filled with despair by the first announcement. They could think of nothing but dark impending disaster. Now more than a few of them are finding some comfort in the recollection that while the sinister possibilities are real enough, fears often have been liars, and they are beginning to wrestle with the problem presented by this terrific power with a confidence that is neither naive nor cocksure.

In the days that are ahead new arts will undoubtedly flourish, new skills appear. New inventions will revolutionize our manner of life. New facilities of communication will overcome distance and physical isolation and place undreamed comforts at our command. None of these expectations is in the least fantastic. But no one should be so foolish as to suppose that all of them together will make the earth a paradise. Thoreau, the American philosopher, thought that the triumph of man would be sealed when the whistle of the steam engine was heard in the passes of the Rocky Mountains. The leaders of the Russian Revolution thought that the ideal age would be ushered in when the muzhik mounted the seat of a tractor. Experience has taught us to be more critical in our judgement and more realistic in our estimates. We have the steam-engine and the tractor, but as for man "we see not yet all things put under him."

The future will confront men with old tasks that are still unfulfilled and fresh ones that need to be undertaken. Toynbee selects for special mention the three that, in his judgement, challenge us most urgently, and you will notice that they do not lie in the realm of science and mechanism at all. They are, first, the creation of a world wide political authority capable of putting an end to war; secondly, the discovery, without kindling ideological passions, of the fields in which government activity and private enterprise, respectively, can best serve the common good; and thirdly, the re-establishment of the whole of life on religious foundations, which alone can give it abiding meaning. A man would be dull of soul if he were not stirred by such prospects. But even when these shining goals are reached we know that new occasions will still teach new duties and present new problems; history, whatever its pattern, will still be the saga of individual souls, and faith, and freedom of spirit, and courage, and hope and honour and compassion will always be as necessary for noble living as they are today.

We shall help mightily to keep the development on the right lines if, in all the changes that occur in our time, we do not allow the individual to become the forgotten man.