RICHARD BURDON HALDANE

(*Viscount Haldane of Cloan*)

1856–1928.

RICHARD BURDON HALDANE was born in Edinburgh on 30 July 1856. His father, Robert Haldane, Writer to the Signet, and head of a legal firm in that city, married in 1853, as his second wife, Mary Elizabeth Burdon Sanderson, and Richard was the eldest surviving son of this marriage. The Haldanes were connected ancestrally with Perthshire, where the estate of Gleneagles had been in their family for many centuries, and Robert Haldane had purchased the neighbouring property of Cloan (also for many years called Cloanden), which was the summer home of his family and the centre of their youthful associations. Miss Burdon Sanderson belonged to a well-known Northumberland family, and her father was an important landowner in that county. Two of her grand-uncles had held high legal office: Lord Eldon had been Lord Chancellor for the best part of twenty-five years, and Lord Stowell, his brother, had been a great jurist and judge. The succession of her son to the Woolsack, greatly as it pleased her in her later years, seemed to her therefore quite in the family tradition and the natural order of things.

But perhaps the most significant fact to be gleaned from the genealogical record is the intense preoccupation with religion which characterized the immediately preceding generations, both on the father's and the mother's side. The father, Robert Haldane, was a son of James Alexander Haldane who, as a young man, resigned the command of one of the East India Company's ships, to devote himself entirely to evangelistic work. In 1796 he made a tour of Scotland with Simeon of Cambridge, the well-known leader of the English Evangelicals. Although at first shrinking from public utterance, he soon after proved his powers as an

impressive speaker; and during the next year he made repeated missionary journeys of the same description, preaching to large audiences, mostly in the open air, in all parts of Scotland and even beyond its borders. About the same time his elder brother, Robert, was selling the greater part of his fine estate of Airthrey in Stirlingshire, in order to provide funds for the evangelization of India. His proposition was that he with certain friends should 'go to Bengal and spend the remainder of their lives in endeavouring to communicate the precious truths of the Gospel to the Hindoos who were living under the British Government'.[1] When the Directors of the East India Company refused to sanction this scheme, Robert Haldane found scope for his missionary zeal in the formation of a 'Society for the propagation of the Gospel at Home'. This Society was to support such mission-preachers, to build chapels (or 'tabernacles' as Whitfield called them) for the congregations thus formed in different towns, as well as seminaries in which young men could be educated for the work. Henceforward the two brothers worked hand in hand. In the course of the next twelve years Robert expended upwards of £70,000 in support of these objects. James, besides continuing his preaching tours till old age overtook him, was ordained in 1799 as permanent but unpaid pastor of the tabernacle established in Edinburgh, a post the duties of which he discharged for fifty years. Both brothers also laboured unweariedly in the press—in pamphlets and letters as well as in many solid treatises—in defence of what they held to be 'the truth as it is in Jesus'. Robert Haldane the elder extended his activities even to Geneva and Montauban, where he lectured in 1816 and 1817 to theological students of the French Protestant colleges. If we pass to the next generation, we find that Robert Haldane of Cloan inherited, though in a more unobtrusive fashion, the missionary zeal of his father and uncle as well as their rigid Calvinistic theology. 'He was very devout,' his son writes, 'and had

[1] *Memoirs of Robert and James Haldane*, by Alexander Haldane, p. 97.

fitted up a barn, where he used once a fortnight to preach to a considerable audience of old-fashioned Scottish country folk, who came to hear the word of God in all its strictness. On alternate Sundays he used to ride miles to various villages and preach there.'[1]

The same traits are observable in Richard Burdon Sanderson, the grandfather on the maternal side. He had a distinguished career at Oxford, where he was the contemporary of Keble. He there became 'very much concerned about Divine things', his daughter writes in her reminiscences of her young days, 'used to attend early services, and indeed never allowed anything to stand in the way of his presence at chapel twice a day. He also hurt his health by fasting every Wednesday and Friday. He was nicknamed 'the Methodist Parson' by his acquaintances.... After leaving Oxford his close study of the Scriptures brought him to a further point than he had so far reached; and he was also greatly influenced by reading the letters of the Rev. Mr. Romaine.'[2] The narrow Evangelicalism in which he finally settled cast a deep shadow over an otherwise happy home. 'If it had not been for the atmosphere of introspective religion,' writes his daughter, 'I should have enjoyed my life.' 'I was often kept awake by thought of the sinfulness of my nature, and with the sense that at any moment judgement might be passed upon me. I knew and felt that I was a great sinner and that God was my Judge and must sentence me. I used to try to keep the Commandments of God, which I learned by heart, but constantly failed, and I was miserable.'[3] As time went on, her father became, like the Haldane brothers, more and more immersed in the writing of religious pamphlets. He was a correspondent and friend of James Alexander Haldane, and it was indeed the identity of their religious creeds which

[1] *Autobiography*, p. 9.

[2] *Mary Elizabeth Haldane: a Record of a Hundred Years*, edited by her Daughter, p. 34.

[3] Ibid., p. 62.

commended Robert Haldane to him as a suitor for his daughter's hand.

Widely as Richard Haldane's view of the world soon came to differ from what we may describe, in a current phrase, as the 'Fundamentalism' of his parents and grandparents—philosophy taking for him the place which traditional theology had held in their theory of God and man and human salvation—I cannot but feel that the family history helps us to understand how much philosophy meant to him, how central it remained for him to the end of his own life, and how time after time he returned to expound to an untoward generation the fundamental features of the spiritual idealism in which he had found an anchorage. He philosophized to satisfy a religious need, and the philosophical conclusions in which he rested were held by him with all the intensity which religious convictions possess for the ordinary man. Abstract as the reasoning may be, he writes throughout as a philosophical evangelist. Philosophy is offered by him in Fichte's phrase as 'die Anweisung zum seligen Leben'—the Way of the Blessed Life.

Lord Haldane in his *Autobiography* gives an attractive picture of the family life at Cloan during his boyhood. The winters were spent in Edinburgh, where he received his school education at the Edinburgh Academy; but school, he says, 'was never an interesting period to me'. To his years at the University, on the contrary, he always continued to look back with gratitude as to a seminal period in his life. He matriculated in the University of Edinburgh, in the autumn of 1872, as a lad of sixteen, an early but then not unusual age. The Edinburgh professors of that day, celebrated some ten years later by Barrie in his *An Edinburgh Eleven*, were a distinguished band. To Sellar and Masson in particular, Haldane refers in terms of personal affection, as well as to the stimulus he derived from Campbell Fraser. From Sellar, 'a great scholar' as he justly calls him, he learned to appreciate the roll of the Lucretian hexameters,

and to Fraser he owed his first introduction to philosophy. 'It was Sellar', he writes, 'who influenced me most. He was kind to me and used to ask me to his house, when he had men like Jowett and Matthew Arnold staying with him there. I learned so something of the wider outlook on life which literature could give, and his own influence was always strongly in that direction.'

In the 'seventies of last century the *Zeitgeist* (to use Matthew Arnold's favourite phrase) was very active in Edinburgh as elsewhere. The historical criticism of the Old and New Testament documents, as its results penetrated to wider circles, reduced to an absurdity the doctrine of plenary inspiration on which Haldane's grandparents and parents had so confidently founded their theological scheme. In another quarter the Darwinian theory of biological evolution, so recently given to the world and then being preached with apostolic zeal by Huxley, seemed to cut at the root of any kind of theistic belief. Small wonder then, that the young man, at that time, as the *Autobiography* tells us, 'much under the influence of religion of an emotional kind,' became disquieted and depressed as he felt the foundations of his inherited faith crumbling beneath him. He could find no guidance from those to whom he applied for help, and it was in these circumstances that his parents, on the advice of Blackie, the Professor of Greek, sent him to Göttingen with a letter of introduction to Lotze, then probably the most eminent and the most spiritual of German philosophers. This was in April 1874, at the end of his second winter at Edinburgh University, and he spent the summer semester at Göttingen, entering into the life of the students there and perfecting his knowledge of German, while Lotze, with sympathetic understanding of his needs, set him to read Fichte's popular works (the *Vocation of Man* and others) as well as those of Berkeley, with which he had already some acquaintance. Under the same advice he began a thorough study of Kant, and when he returned to Scotland at the end of three months, his religious depression

had entirely passed away. 'My attention had become concentrated on a search for light about the meaning of God, Freedom, and Immortality. Lotze's influence had set me to pursue the search in a new spirit, and with a fuller consciousness of the vast theoretical obscurity in which these subjects were buried.' Lotze's was not the philosophy destined to capture Haldane's allegiance; much of Lotze's work is indeed a protest against what he deemed the extravagant claims of the Hegelian Idealism. But in an address on 'The Soul of a People' thirty-six years later, Haldane paid a noble tribute to the memory of his early teacher.

> 'Göttingen was in these days full of great men. Yet the figure that stood out above all the others was that of my old master, Hermann Lotze. I had the privilege, boy as I was, of seeing him often in his study, as well as listening in his lecture-room, and to the end of my life I shall hold the deep impression he made on me—of a combination of intellectual power and the highest moral stature. It seems to me but yesterday that he used quietly to enter the lecture-room where we students sat expectant, and, taking his seat, fix his eyes on space as though he were looking into another world remote from this one. The face was worn with thought, and the slight and fragile figure with the great head looked as though the mind that tenanted it, had been dedicated to thought and to nothing else. The brow and nose were wonderfully chiselled, the expression was a combination of tolerance with power. The delivery was slow and quiet, but the command of language was impressive. Our feeling towards him, as we sat and listened, was one of reverence mingled with affection.'[1]

During the two years that remained of his Arts course in Edinburgh, Haldane continued with a rare tenacity of purpose to pursue the search thus began. The study of Kant led on to a fuller study of Fichte, and finally to a grim wrestle with Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* and *Wissenschaft der Logik*, as the culmination of the great idealistic movement. Contemporaries used to tell with bated breath how he was accustomed to rise and light his own fire between

[1] *Selected Addresses and Essays*, pp. 186–7.

five and six o'clock in the dark winter mornings to carry on his reading of the latter work. Whether this be fact or legend I cannot say, but in any case we have his own testimony that after his labours on these philosophers, nothing in his legal experience seemed to present any difficulty.

The intelligent study of German philosophy was then only beginning in Edinburgh University, as throughout the country generally. Pioneer work had been done in the previous decade by Hutchison Stirling in his *Secret of Hegel* (1865) and the translation, with notes, of *Schwegler's History of Philosophy* with which he followed it up in 1867. During the years that followed, the substance of Hegel's teaching was being absorbed at Oxford by T. H. Green, Edward Caird, and William Wallace. Since 1866, Caird had been teaching in Glasgow, more or less on Hegelian lines, but as yet he had given nothing to the general public. Green's massive 'Introduction' to Hume, and Wallace's translation, with introductory essays, of Hegel's smaller *Logic* appeared together in 1874, Caird's *Philosophy of Kant* not till 1877: so that up to these dates the student of Kant or Hegel had to attack his author's text almost unaided by commentary or any trustworthy exposition. For the next twenty years philosophy at the English and Scottish Universities was to consist largely of such expository work, but at the date we are considering no lectures had as yet been given in Edinburgh on the Critical Philosophy, and of course none on Hegel and his system. Nevertheless there was at Edinburgh University in the 'seventies an active and growing interest in philosophical questions, and there passed through the classes a number of men who afterwards held Chairs in one or other of the Universities. Fraser, the Professor of Logic and Metaphysics, had just completed (in 1871) his monumental edition of *Berkeley's Life and Works*, and in his hands the Berkeleian Idealism was made an effective instrument of philosophical analysis. The subjective idealism of Berkeley, when purged, as it was in later versions by Berkeley himself,

of the sensationalism and nominalism of his original statement, forms indeed no bad propaedeutic for the rational and objective idealism which British thinkers were then beginning to distil from Kant and his successors. Fraser possessed a genuine power of awakening and stimulating the philosophical instinct in the best students. Most of these, after their initiation in the Junior Class, used to join the University Philosophical Society, and the weekly debates and essays there were in themselves a tribute to the stimulus of the class-teaching. Haldane was an active member of this Society as long as he remained in Edinburgh, and it was there that I first made his acquaintance, though it was only later, after my own return from two years' study in Germany, that our acquaintance ripened into intimacy and a life-long friendship.

Haldane graduated M.A., with First Class Honours in Philosophy in April 1876, and in the autumn of the same year carried off the Ferguson Philosophical Scholarship open to the four Scottish Universities. During the winter that followed, he began the study of Law in the offices of two Edinburgh firms, eating dinners at the same time at Lincoln's Inn. He had been destined from the first for the English Bar, and after his father's death in 1877, he went to live in London, where he began, he tells us, to feel something like a passion for law. His powers of work were prodigious, and barristers in whose chambers he worked as a pupil soon began to hand over to him their most difficult cases to look into and to draft an opinion. In the end of 1879 he was called to the Bar and took chambers himself at 5 New Square, Lincoln's Inn. In his first year as a Junior he acquired valuable experience, 'devilling' for Horace Davey, who was then probably the keenest lawyer of his day and overwhelmed in consequence with briefs in the most important cases. Two cases in which Haldane had to appear on short notice in Davey's place, before the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the Court of Appeal, brought him into prominence, and he soon became fully

employed. After working ten years as a Junior, he took silk in 1890, and from that time onward his work consisted mainly of appeals to the House of Lords or the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. 'My mind,' he says, 'which had not been really well suited to work in the Courts of First Instance, went along much more smoothly with those of the judges of the Supreme Tribunals'; and he became increasingly interested in the constitutional cases which came to him from Canada, India, and other parts of the Empire. The function of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (on which he afterwards sat as a judge) he regarded as specially important, from the point of view of the Empire, as an embodiment and acknowledgement of imperial unity.[1] At the end of 1905, on his appointment as Secretary of State for War, Haldane gave up his practice at the Bar finally. He had by that time been twenty years in the House of Commons, and the demands of public life had been becoming more and more exacting. During his last year at the Bar, his income from fees was at the rate of at least £20,000 a year, and might have been more but for the claims made upon his time by his parliamentary duties and other activities.

It will not be expected that I should recapitulate here the details of his political career; it will be enough to indicate the main 'causes' which enlisted his sympathy and in what direction his efforts were successful in realizing his own conceptions. A Liberal by heredity as well as by conviction, he won a notable victory for his party when, in the election of 1885, he wrested from Lord Elcho the representation of East Lothian, till then considered a safe Conservative seat. He held it through five subsequent elections till his elevation to the peerage in 1911. Before his election

[1] This formed the subject of an interesting paper on 'The Appellate Courts of the Empire' in his first volume of addresses, *Education and Empire* (1902). He returned to the subject in 1923 in a paper contributed to *The Empire Review*, reprinted in the volume, *Selected Addresses and Essays* (1928).

to Parliament Haldane had already been politically active as one of the founders of the Eighty Club, so named after the year of Gladstone's Midlothian triumph. He was its first Honorary Secretary and its Chairman during several years. He had also formed a close friendship with Mr. Asquith, then also a rising barrister, four years his senior. Asquith entered Parliament in 1886 as member for East Fife, and immediately made his mark in the House. He soon became the informal leader of a small group of the younger Liberal members, including Haldane and Sir Edward Grey. Later on, during the Boer War, the group came to be known as the Liberal Imperialists from the position they took up on that question in opposition to that of Campbell-Bannerman and the majority of their party. But in 1886 Gladstone's Home Rule policy had rent the Liberal party in twain, and with the exception of a short period in the 'nineties, they remained out of office for nearly twenty years.

Till 1905, therefore, or at all events till the turn of the century, Haldane's activities were mainly devoted to objects of a non-party character, in particular to the development and organization of higher education in this country. Education was, for him, from first to last, as he says, 'a subject of nearly paramount importance'; and as he found no particular enthusiasm for it among the Liberals, he worked freely with men of all parties in its support. Thus we find him in the 'nineties in active co-operation with Arthur Balfour and Sidney Webb in drafting and carrying through Parliament the London University Act of 1890, which transformed the old University, till then merely an Examining Board, into a teaching University which should be worthy of the metropolis of the Empire. When the Bill was in imminent danger in the Commons from a combination of its adversaries, an impassioned speech by Haldane saved the situation, and carried the second reading without a division. Speaking from the fulness of his knowledge he impressed upon the House his

conviction how far, in matters of education, we were behind Continental nations, and how grave a menace this constituted to our scientific and industrial prospects in the near future. The effect of his intervention was such that both Chamberlain and Asquith referred to it as almost the only case they had seen of the House being turned round by a single speech. A little later, as Chairman of the Departmental Committee which prepared the charter of the new Imperial College of Science and Technology, Haldane had the satisfaction of seeing the constitution of the new college so framed as to ensure its ultimate entry into the reconstituted University.

Meanwhile, in a series of addresses delivered in different parts of the country, he proceeded to develop for a wider public the arguments he had used in his speech in the House. Two of these, 'Great Britain and Germany: a Study in Education', and 'Universities and the Schools in Scotland', delivered towards the end of 1901, are included in the little volume *Education and Empire* published in the following year. Taken together with the later address on 'The Civic University';[1] delivered on his installation as Chancellor of the University of Bristol in 1912, these papers give us the clearest and most convincing statement of his educational policy and of the noble faith both in knowledge and democracy by which it was inspired.

> 'Educate your people', he says, 'and you have reduced to comparatively insignificant dimensions the problems of temperance, of housing, and of raising the condition of your masses. These things solve themselves if you only get the right spirit into your people.' 'What is really essential', he says again, 'is that every one should have a chance, and that there should be the nearest possible approach to equality of educational opportunity. Without this the sense of injustice will never be eliminated, and we shall in addition fail to secure for our national endeavours the help of our best brains.'

Reviewing in this spirit the educational institutions of the

[1] Included in the volume *The Conduct of Life and other Addresses* (1914), and reprinted in *Select Addresses and Essays* (1928).

country, he notes, as Matthew Arnold had done before him, the lamentable insufficiency of the secondary education provided for the great body of the people, and, largely as a consequence of this, the isolation of the older Universities, their failure to exercise a directive influence on national education as a whole. Much had been done for elementary education since the Act of 1870 first made it compulsory; but there was too great a tendency— a disposition, he notes, in the elementary teachers themselves— to treat elementary teaching as if it were a thing in itself, as if it could be separated from the whole of knowledge and from the rest of culture. There existed, in fact, no conception of the process of education as a single and indivisible whole. Hence the central contention of these papers is the necessity of the 'linkage' and 'coordination' of the different stages—'the welding of the educational system of this country into one complete whole, in which elementary education, secondary education, and the University shall be indissoluble parts of one system'.

In this system the Universities are to be the dominating influence, permeating from above downwards. But if they are to exercise this function they must evidently be largely increased in number, and the new Universities must be established in centres of population. If they are to shape the spirit of the schools in their districts, every great town in England should have a teaching University of its own, with the academic spirit and standard which can only be maintained in the atmosphere of such an institution. This explains the importance which Haldane attached to the idea of 'the civic University'. The movement for the provision of education at a university level had begun in the great towns some time earlier. University colleges existed, as we have seen, in London, and had been founded more recently in Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield, and Bristol. But these institutions, though they did excellent work, and formed in the end the nucleus of independent Universities, suffered from the poverty of their endowment

and in some cases from the restricted nature of their curriculum, which resembled that of a technical college rather than that of a fully equipped University. In any case they had not yet evoked the local pride and enthusiasm so strikingly manifested later, when they one after another applied for and were granted university status. The University of London, as a teaching institution, was founded as we have seen in 1898, and Birmingham with Chamberlain's support followed suit in 1900. But the rapid extension of the movement may be said to date from 1902 when the Liverpool University College (then federated with Owens College, Manchester, and University College, Leeds, together constituting the Victoria University) applied for a charter as an independent university. Owens College acquiesced, making a similar request for Manchester; but the Liverpool petition was strongly opposed by Leeds, and the case was argued for three days before a Committee of the Privy Council. Haldane gave valuable evidence before the Committee in support of the Liverpool petition, and an Order in Council of 10 February 1903 pronounced that Liverpool and Manchester had made out their case for the grant of university charters.

> 'The date of this Order in Council', said Haldane, in his Chancellor's address at Bristol, 'is, I think, a memorable one. It gave State recognition to a new policy but for which we might not have been assembled here to-night. The principle was accepted that the number of the English Universities was to be increased, and their head-quarters were to be in cities. The conditions were that the chief responsibility was to be entrusted to the cities themselves, and that the cities should be large enough and keen enough to ensure that the required local resources for the maintenance and development of the Universities should be forthcoming.'

The multiplication of university centres (which is still proceeding), it must in fairness be admitted, has justified none of the gloomy anticipations of its opponents, who prophesied as its results an inevitable deterioration of university standards. On the contrary, it has been the

index, if not the cause, of a keener interest in the things of the mind in the districts concerned. Although Haldane in his campaign took full advantage of the argument supplied by the menace to our industrial future as a nation from the systematic application of science to industrial processes, as exemplified in Germany, he insisted throughout that the education he had in view 'must not be merely technical or designed as a means to material ends. That is a narrow aim which in the end defeats its own accomplishment. . . . Applied science is in its best form only possible on a wide foundation of general science. And the fruitful scientific spirit is developed to-day on a basis of high intellectual training, the training which only the atmosphere of the fully developed University can completely provide.' In this respect he criticized the separation made in Germany between the Universities and the 'Technische Hochschulen'. 'You cannot without danger of partial starvation separate science from literature and philosophy. Each grows best in the presence of the other.'

In 1902 and the years that followed, the question of Imperial Preference became the dominating political issue. Enthusiastically championed by Chamberlain as a means of welding the Empire together, and more haltingly supported by Mr. Balfour, then Prime Minister and Leader of the Unionist party, the policy was discussed on every platform, raising as it did the old issue of Protection and Free Trade. The group of Liberal Imperialists took a prominent part in the discussion. While agreeing with Chamberlain in his aims, they sought, as convinced Free Traders, to demonstrate the impracticable nature of the means by which he proposed to realize them.

> 'Asquith and I', says Haldane, 'made speeches not only in Parliament but all over England. Our cardinal point was that what was threatening our industrial position was want of science among our manufacturers. . . . The campaign in which we were engaged against the policy of Protection was our opportunity for pressing the counter-case for science and organization.'

Three of his speeches are preserved in the volume he afterwards published, *Army Reform and Other Addresses*. During the same years he was delivering his Gifford Lectures in St. Andrews. When we remember the volume of his practice at the Bar at that time and the variety of his political activities, we hardly need to be told that those lectures were difficult to prepare. The mode of preparation and of delivery was in fact so different from that of most Gifford Lectures that it deserves to be put on record.

> 'I used to go on', he says, 'with the fruits of research made at odd times, and of the meditations in periods spent every autumn at Guisachan, the Highland home of my great friends, Lord and Lady Tweedmouth. There I occupied during the day, while the others were stalking and fishing, a ruined cottage, and composed elaborate notes for the Gifford Lectures. They were delivered extempore from the results of those notes and taken down in shorthand, and so fashioned into the two volumes which were published under the title *The Pathway to Reality*.'

In 1905 the long spell of Unionist ascendancy came to an end, and Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, as the recognized leader of the Liberal Party, was sent for by the King to form a new Government. As regarded the personnel of the new Ministry the group of Liberal Imperialists held strong views and felt themselves strong enough to insist upon conditions. They accepted the Premiership of Campbell-Bannerman as inevitable in the circumstances, rather than desirable in itself; but they were strongly of opinion that he should take a peerage, and that Asquith should lead in the Commons as Chancellor of the Exchequer. Asquith, Grey, and Haldane were at first prepared to insist on this arrangement as a condition of their joining the Ministry. Grey, in that case, was clearly marked out as Foreign Secretary, while Haldane would naturally have become Lord Chancellor. Campbell-Bannerman, however, although he offered Asquith the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, refused to be thus in a manner shelved. He was resolved at least to start in the House of Commons, and for the Lord Chancellorship he had another man in view. Grey, in these circumstances

was equally resolved not to become a member of the Ministry. Haldane, in his *Autobiography*, relates in detail how a compromise was ultimately arrived at, Grey and himself entering the Cabinet as Foreign Secretary and Secretary for War respectively. Campbell-Bannerman had originally offered Haldane the Attorney-Generalship, which he did not want. He now offered him the Home Office. 'I said, "What about the War Office?" "Nobody", answered C.-B., "will touch it with a pole." "Then give it to me. I will come in as War Secretary, if Grey takes the Foreign Office."' And so, almost as it might seem by accident, there came to him the opportunity of which he was to make such splendid use. The appointment was naturally received by the public with some surprise, tinged perhaps with amusement. A successful career as a Chancery lawyer, and the continuous study of German metaphysics, seemed an odd preparation for the problems awaiting the Minister of War. 'We shall now see how Schopenhauer gets on in the Kailyard', is said to have been Campbell-Bannerman's sub-acid comment. He had been himself at the War Office and knew the difficulties. But after little more than a year, we find him writing:

> 'Let me most sincerely and warmly congratulate you upon the great success you have wrought out of your complicated problem and your worrying labours over it. It is a great triumph to have carried such a large body of opinion with you, and I hope you will have as much satisfaction when you proceed to carry out and superintend the details of your *magnum opus*.'

This is not the place to retell the story of that *opus*, the state in which Haldane found the British Army, how he transformed it into an efficient instrument of modern warfare by the creation of an Expeditionary Force of six divisions in instant readiness to sail, with the Second Line of the Territorial Army behind it, and by the creation at the same time of a General Staff. He had, of course, his professional advisers, whom he chose with a fine instinct, but the fabric as a whole was his own conception. It was

a remarkable result of clear and resolute thinking applied to a concrete situation of admitted difficulty; and as the author of it—as the man who, almost unaided, carried the scheme through Parliament, not to speak of his countless meetings all over the country to stimulate the organization of the new Territorial Force—so great an authority as Lord Haig did not hesitate to describe Haldane as 'the greatest Secretary of State for War England had ever had'. The quality of his work was only too soon put to the test. Whereas, in 1906, a careful inquiry disclosed the fact that to put even 80,000 men on the Continent, preliminary preparations involving at least two months would be required, in August 1914, when the call came, the whole Expeditionary Force was mobilized and safely transported to France within nine days from the declaration of war. This was the Army of the Old Contemptibles, whose presence in France in the first weeks of the war did so much to save Paris and to drive back the Germans in the Battle of the Marne.

Haldane found his work at the War Office of enthralling interest, and he was very popular with his subordinates and on the best of terms with the generals and others with whom he was brought in contact. The reorganization of the army was completed by 1911. During these years of growing tension between England and Germany, Haldane had also on more than one occasion figured prominently as an intermediary—an apostle of goodwill—between the two nations. This was a natural consequence of his frequently expressed admiration of German literature and philsosophy and his appreciation of German thoroughness generally. His annual holiday-visits to Germany for a number of years with his friend Professor Hume Brown—to his old University of Göttingen, or to Weimar, Ilmenau, and other haunts of Goethe—were also sufficiently well-known. In 1906, during his first year at the War Office, he was present by the Emperor's invitation at the annual army manœuvres near Berlin, and had conversations with various German

ministers, as well as an opportunity of studying the organization of the German War Office. In the following year the Emperor paid King Edward a State visit at Windsor, accompanied by several of his ministers; and again there were conversations on pending political questions, more especially the question of the Baghdad Railway, in which Haldane took an active part. And when the Emperor again visited the country in 1911, after the accession of King George, he was a guest, by his own proposition, at a luncheon given by Haldane in his own house in Queen Anne's Gate. Finally, in January 1912, when relations between this country and Germany had reached a critical stage, owing to the continuous increase of the German Fleet, Haldane was deputed by the Cabinet to go to Berlin in a semi-official capacity, in the hope that personal contact and a frank interchange of opinion might ease the situation and promote a better understanding between the two peoples. This mission was practically without result, for Tirpitz and the war party were in the ascendant at Berlin, and they proved immovable on the question of the new Fleet Law. Perhaps the British Cabinet ought to have taken the public fully into its confidence regarding the negative result of a mission which had been undertaken with their authority and at their request—though it is not easy to see what end could have been served by such a step. So far as one can see, it could have tended only to precipitate the crisis. But for Haldane the obscurity in which the Mission of 1912 was left, had most unfortunate results of a personal nature. When war actually broke out eighteen months later, the character of the mission came to be misrepresented, and he was accused of having misled the Cabinet as to the true state of affairs.

In March 1911, while still Secretary of State for War, Haldane had been sent to the House of Lords, in order that he might act as Liberal Leader there, while Lord Crewe, the official leader, was absent with the King in India. Although he had not held judicial office, he was invited

about the same time to become a member of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and in June 1912 he succeeded Lord Loreburn as Lord Chancellor. For an estimate of his legal work in these capacities I am happy to be able to refer the reader to the appended Note by his old friend and colleague, Lord Dunedin, than whom no one is better qualified to judge. Haldane has himself given some account (in chapter VIII of the *Autobiography*) of the measures in which he was specially interested, as well as of his hurried but interesting visit to the United States and Canada to deliver an address to the American and Canadian Bar Association at Montreal, the first occasion on which a Lord Chancellor had been out of the United Kingdom during his term of office as Keeper of the Great Seal. As befitted the occasion, the address, published under the title, *The Higher Nationality: a Study in Law and Ethics*,[1] is sustained throughout at a high level of thought and feeling. Taking the conception of 'Sittlichkeit' as something more than legal obligation—'the instinctive sense of what to do and what not to do in daily life and behaviour, which is the chief foundation of society'—it urges the extension of this conception to international relations as the ultimate sanction of international obligations and the only sure foundation of a world-peace. 'There is apparent at least a tendency', the address concludes, 'to seek for a higher standard of ideals in international relations. . . . There are signs that the best people in the best nations are ceasing to wish to live in a world of mere claims, and to proclaim on every occasion "Our country, right or wrong".' But, quoting the prayer with which Grotius concludes his great work on 'War and Peace', Haldane warned his audience that the prayer had not yet been fulfilled, 'nor do recent events point to the fulfilment as being near'. 'All seemed smooth at the time,' he says in the *Autobiography*, 'but I was haunted somehow by an uncomfortable feeling. The Balkan War had disclosed how unstable the inter-

[1] Included in the volume *The Conduct of Life and other Addresses* (1914); reprinted in *Select Addresses and Essays* (1928).

national situation really was, and how much vigilance was required.' Within less than a year of his own eloquent plea for the cultivation of a better spirit, the World War was upon us.

The campaign of calumny against Haldane in certain sections of the Press after the outbreak of war has already been referred to. Now that the passage of time and the flood of documents relating to the war and the eventful years that preceded it have so signally vindicated his patriotism and the inestimable services he rendered to his country, it would serve no purpose to dwell on an episode so discreditable to all concerned, the victim alone excepted, were it not that his attitude through it all illustrates strikingly the character of the man. In her short preface to the *Autobiography*, Miss Haldane says truly of her brother and the story of his life: 'There were times when the whole-hearted esteem of the world was present and times when it was absent. . . . To those who looked on with inner knowledge it seemed that the latter were the periods which more certainly revealed the character of the writer.' That he felt keenly the injustice of the treatment meted out to him there can be no doubt; he would not have been human otherwise. But he uttered no word of bitterness or complaint. Conscious of his own integrity he took no steps to defend himself, however gross the misinterpretation of an act or incident might be. It might have been better perhaps if he had met his enemies in the gate—if, for example, he had made public the actual text of the letter sent him by Herr Ballin on the very eve of the declaration of war, which was made the basis of such grave insinuations. But explanations were in general not easy to make without touching on Cabinet secrets, and he was chivalrously anxious not to expose his colleagues to the same kind of criticism to which he had himself been subjected. Doubtless too he felt that, in the excited state of public feeling, any explanation he might make would be so distorted by his enemies as to serve only as the foundation for some fresh attack. So he held on

the even tenor of his way, and when the clamour against his continued presence in the Government reached such a pitch that it threatened to endanger the successful conduct of the war, he placed his resignation unreservedly in the Prime Minister's hands. 'It is best that I should have gone,' he wrote to a friend just after doing so, 'to secure national unity is a paramount obligation just now.'

What his friends, looking back upon these days, find it not easy to pardon is the action of his colleagues in the Cabinet, especially of such an old friend as Asquith, in accepting this self-effacement. Knowing, as they did, the true state of the facts and the grotesque injustice of the charges brought against him,[1] it was surely an exhibition of moral cowardice to throw him thus to the wolves. Haldane himself, one would think, must have felt it as something of the kind; but neither at the time nor in the after years did any expression of resentment cross his lips. Characteristically he quietly set to work to rearrange his scheme of life, according to his sense of public duty on the one hand, and the dominant interests of his life on the other. He held strongly the view that an ex-Lord Chancellor's pension of £5,000 carried with it the moral obligation of continued service in the judicial work of the House of Lords. That he resolved, therefore, to make the first claim upon his time. Four days of the week were usually thus occupied, and he also continued to act as a member of the Committee of Imperial Defence and Chairman of some of its Sub-Committees. There were other important committees over which he was called to preside, such as the Committee on the Machinery of Government in 1918, and

[1] He was represented, for example, as anxious to delay the departure of the Expeditionary Force. 'Haldane at the War Office' was one of the sensational placards of the newspapers of the day. So far was this from being the case that, as Lord Grey of Fallodon has testified, 'he alone among civilians was at once unreservedly for sending the whole of the Expeditionary Force abroad immediately, showing himself thereby as prompt and courageous in action as he had been energetic and wise in preparation'. (Speech reported in *The Times*, 23 August 1928.)

the Expert Committee appointed in 1922 to report upon the reforms required by the proposed union of the two great Scottish Churches. But, as the main channel for his surplus energy, he turned naturally towards the old subject of Higher Education which he had made throughout so specially his own. Much, as we have seen, had already been accomplished in the foundation of new Universities and the further multiplication of University Colleges. But there still remained the question of Adult Education for industrial workers and others who had had, and could have, no opportunity of becoming University students. The question was already being tackled by the Workers' Educational Association, founded as far back as 1903 by Albert Mansbridge. It was a question of enabling and inducing the Universities to provide teaching of a University character in the evenings for working men and women who were willing to take advantage of them, and Haldane threw himself with all his old enthusiasm into the movement. The important thing to do, he saw, was to rouse the workers themselves to an interest in the idea, and at the same time to convince the general public of the value of such instruction and the practicability of organizing it. With this end in view he undertook long journeys to speak at meetings held in likely centres throughout the country, addressing as many as fifty or sixty meetings in a single year. The journeys and meetings reminded him, he remarks incidentally, of the similar campaign which he undertook as a younger man when the Territorial Force was originally being raised. He met with a ready response from the workers and succeeded also in enlisting the interest of the University authorities. As a result there was founded the British Institute of Adult Education, of which he was active President for a number of years, indeed as long as his strength permitted.

Besides the public activities with which he filled his time, he returned in these years with a fresh zest to the philosophical meditations which had been thrust, to some extent

at least, into the background by the engrossing claims of his public work between 1905 and 1915. He had published nothing of a directly philosophical nature since his Gifford Lectures in 1903 and 1904 beyond a paper on Hegel in the *Contemporary Review* for 1905, but now there appeared in rapid succession *The Reign of Relativity* in 1921, *The Philosophy of Humanism* in 1922, and *Human Experience* in 1926.

The years between 1915 and 1923 witnessed his gradual drift away from the Liberal Party in the direction of Labour. He had never been a party man in the ordinary sense of the term. In 1902 he had supported Mr. Balfour's Education Bill because in his view it represented an important advance in the national conception of school education. The Liberal Party, on the contrary, opposed the Bill hotly on account of the grants which it involved to increase the efficiency of the Church schools; and even the other members of the Liberal Imperialist group felt bound to the Nonconformists in the matter. Later on, when he was at the War Office, it was only by an appeal which passed beyond party limits that he succeeded in carrying through his scheme of reconstruction. The rank and file of his own party were more concerned about keeping down the Army estimates than about any scheme of Army reform. After the War it was again on the subject of Education that he felt himself estranged from his party.

> 'On educational policy', he writes in the *Autobiography*, 'the Liberal Party had for long been very defective. In 1902 they had been unduly dominated by pressure from the Nonconformists over elementary and secondary education. In the movement for the establishment of more Universities they had shown no interest. It was the same thing with the development of adult education. This interested individuals away in the country, but the Liberal politicians in Parliament not at all.'

On the other hand one of the most promising features of the Labour party was precisely the genuine keenness of the leaders about the education of the people. The ideal of equality of chance in life, as we have seen, had been from

the first a leading motive in Haldane's educational work; and now his meetings up and down the country brought him into sympathetic contact with the Labour rank and file, whom he found responsive to his appeal because they were inspired by the same ideal. In this way a gradual *rapprochement* took place. The Liberal Party was split into factions, and so reduced in numbers as to be, at least for the time being, politically impotent. Haldane noted in it too the want of fresh ideas, and gradually came to feel that Labour was the party with whose ideals at least he had most in common, and with which, therefore, he could most successfully work. In this spirit he began to speak at Labour meetings, not as toeing the line in regard to any of the party programmes put forth from time to time—items in which he frankly criticized in his speeches—but as an expression of general sympathy with the policy of social amelioration for which the party stood. It was in the same spirit that he replied to Ramsay Macdonald's invitation to become a member of the first Labour Government (the letter is given in full in the *Autobiography*, pp. 321–3), and on that understanding he became for the second time Lord Chancellor at the close of 1923, taking at the same time the Chairmanship of the Committee of Imperial Defence and acting in general as 'Constitutional Adviser' to an inexperienced Cabinet. The Labour Government lasted rather less than a year. Looking back on his short tenure of office Haldane wrote:

> 'I have never ceased to be glad that I accepted his [Ramsay Macdonald's] invitation to serve him in the office I held, and I think that during his administration the public got rid of many prejudices and rose to a fuller comprehension of the duty of the well-to-do towards the less fortunate. . . . Macdonald was a Socialist, but a moderate one. He did not believe in any sudden revolution, and he never, as far as I could observe, gave countenance to any such plan. But he did much to make the ideals which underlay Socialism understood, and to win over to his views Liberals and Conservatives alike. They may repudiate the suggestion that to-day they have pronounced

socialistic leanings. But the study of the Statute Book and the debates and public speeches since 1924 suggests another view. It seems pretty clear that in twenty years' time the Conservatives will be socialistic in just the same sense as Ramsay Macdonald is to-day.' [1]

In the new Parliament Haldane continued to act as spokesman of the Labour Party in the House of Lords and therefore as Leader of the official Opposition there. He was also constantly at work in a judicial capacity either in the House or on the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. But the strain upon his physical strength was harder than he would himself admit. Through his long career he had taxed too imperiously an originally strong constitution. He felt deeply the death of his mother in 1925. She had celebrated her hundredth birthday a few months before. Mrs. Haldane was a very remarkable woman and the serene beauty of her mind and character impressed every one who had the privilege of knowing her. The bond between mother and son was an unusually close one. When they were separated by distance, he wrote to her every day, even in his busiest times, from 1877 to the time of her death. In the religious domain the relation between the two recalls rather strikingly the attitude of Thomas Carlyle to his mother, as we note it in his correspondence. Mrs. Haldane had retained throughout her life the Evangelical faith of her youth, but purged of all its gloom and exclusiveness; and her son took pleasure in assuring her that although the symbols of their belief might differ, yet 'in essentials' they were at one. 'She passed in the spiritual splendour of her personality,' he wrote to me after her death, 'the highest level not let down. That is reason for rejoicing. But the void created is hard to bear. She and I were very close to each other. My sister had devoted her life to care for her. And now it is gone, and I feel very old.'

But his mental energy was far from being exhausted.

[1] *Autobiography*, pp. 333–4.

He was, of course, still regularly carrying on his judicial work, and he was also busy with what he intended to be a final statement of the philosophical conclusions in which he had come to rest—a statement in comparatively short compass and as far as possible intelligible to the general reader. It appeared in 1926 with the title *Human Experience*. 'It represents', he said in the preface, 'what I myself believe in and its description contains a confession of faith.' And even as late as 1928 there appeared in the *Hibbert Journal* two characteristic articles from his pen, the one on 'The Churches and Higher Education', called forth by the increasing shortage of candidates for the ministry, especially in the Church of England—a very fresh and thoughtful and, at bottom, eminently practical paper—and the other on 'East and West', drawing attention to the need, even in view of the practical problem of governing India, of a more sympathetic study of Indian philosophy and religion. As in most of Haldane's writing, the thinker and the statesman are seen moving hand in hand. But by far the most valuable legacy from these closing years is the *Autobiography*, the survey of his crowded years which he was induced to write during the vacation-intervals at Cloan in 1927 and 1928. Much of his work was unknown to the public because it was done, in a sense, behind the scenes; but here all his various interests and activities are co-ordinated and set in their proper perspective. Written with an ease and animation of style for which his other writings hardly prepare us, and with a power of self-detachment extremely rare, it disarms criticism at the outset by the unaffected modesty of its claims and the frankness with which the writer acknowledges, and indeed emphasizes, the absence of 'certain gifts physical and social', which are necessary if one is to achieve the highest political success as the accepted leader of great masses of men and women. He claims for himself almost nothing beyond 'an inclination to work hard'. 'I have no sense of success on any very large scale in things achieved,' he writes almost on the concluding

page, 'but I have the sense of having worked and of having found happiness in doing so.' The record of work is indeed amazing, and the success which crowned it was of the order which lasts. He has an assured place in the history of his country at one of the greatest crises of her fate. The volume is of the utmost value for the student of affairs during the period it covers. It is equally valuable as the revelation of a singularly sincere and lovable personality. I think one may say that in the whole volume there is not a single harsh judgement or ill-natured criticism.

The last weeks were spent at Cloan. He had left London before the end of the session seriously ill, in the hope that in the quiet of his Perthshire home he might once more regain something of his former strength. But it was not to be, and on the afternoon of Sunday, August 19, 1928, he passed peacefully away. Four days later he was laid to rest in the old family burial ground at Gleneagles.

It gave him pleasure in these last weeks to know that he had been unanimously elected Chancellor of the University of St. Andrews. He had delivered his Gifford Lectures there more than a quarter of a century before, and it was a spontaneous act of recognition such as he valued. He had been Chancellor of the University of Bristol, as we have seen, since the establishment of that University. The students of his own University of Edinburgh had elected him as their Lord Rector in 1905, and when he came to deliver his Rectorial Address on 'The Dedicated Life' they listened in respectful and appreciative silence to his high-toned discourse—a marked contrast to the rowdy interruptions to which the speaker on such occasions was in those days too commonly subjected. It would be useless to enumerate the academic degrees showered upon him by different Universities, but mention may be made of the Order of Merit conferred upon him in 1915. He had been Privy Councillor since 1902 and was also Knight of the Thistle, Fellow of the Royal Society and Fellow of the British Academy.

It remains only to give some account of the philosophical gospel which he preached so insistently and to which through life he turned for spiritual sustenance. Something has already been said about the beginning of his philosophical studies at Göttingen and Edinburgh. After he went to London in 1877 and became absorbed in reading Law, Philosophy, he says, 'receded'. But that can have been only relatively and temporarily so, for in the years that followed he translated, in collaboration with a friend, Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Idea.* His first independent paper of a philosophical nature was contributed to the volume of *Essays in Philosophical Criticism* which he and I edited together. This appeared in the first days of 1883, dedicated to the memory of T. H. Green. A Preface by Edward Caird indicated that the volume was of the nature of a manifesto by a number of the younger men who were in general sympathy with the line of thought opened up by Kant and developed by Hegel.

The second essay in the volume, on 'Philosophy and Science', was written by Haldane in collaboration with his brother, now Professor J. S. Haldane, who had then already begun to work out the conclusions as to the nature of Life, with which his name is so prominently associated. The essay shows that Haldane had already formulated for himself the main principles which he expounded so persuasively on a larger scale in his two Gifford volumes twenty years later. The method followed in the essay is that which was more or less common to the earlier English exponents of German Idealism and of which Edward Caird was the typical representative. Accepting from Kant the synthetic activity of thought in the constitution of experience, Haldane rejects Kant's arbitrary limitation of the organizing conceptions or categories to the well-known table of twelve, which yield us only the scheme of mechanical interaction to which physical science reduces the world. There are obviously many aspects of human experience of which the physicist, as such, takes no note. There is the

behaviour of the living organism as a self-determining whole; there is the world of the Beautiful and the world of moral action. And, accordingly, Kant himself is found supplementing his first *Critique* by the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*, in which he seeks to determine the conditions of the possibility of such further experiences. Haldane's argument runs that we have no right to restrict the term knowledge to the physicist's scheme, and thereby to treat that scheme as the ultimate account of the real world. So far from being such an account, the mechanistic scheme is to be regarded as an abstraction, made by the physicist for the purposes of his own science, from the concrete world of our experience. It is that experience in its totality which has to be explained; and in the world as we know it, the aspects of beauty and life are as real as the mechanical aspects. The true conclusion, therefore, is rather the idea of 'a sort of scale of modes of existence', and a corresponding series of categories which may be arranged in an ascending scale according to the degree of adequacy with which they interpret the complex whole. In such a scale we rise from the categories of mechanism to those of organic life, and from the categories of life to those of Consciousness in all its varieties.

This idea of a stairway of categories by which we mount from lower to higher aspects of the world supplies a key to the meaning of the title chosen twenty years later for the Gifford Lectures. *The Pathway to Reality* is not intended to suggest that the real world is like a distant realm to which we can only penetrate by turning our back on the familiar world of ordinary experience. The author takes early occasion to disabuse us of such an idea by referring to the incident in *Wilhelm Meister* in which Wilhelm learns that 'here or nowhere is his America'. The problem of philosophy is simply to account for the actual world of the plain man,—to get the most adequate and complete conception of it; and no conception can be adequate which does not take account of all its phases. If we do include all the

phases, we end by seeing them, higher and lower, in their due proportion or value; and by interpretation through the highest we come nearest to a true account of the ultimately real.

> 'We ought to be prepared to believe in the different aspects of the world as it seems—life for example as much as mechanism; morality as much as life; religion as much as morality—for these belong to different aspects of the world as it seems, aspects which emerge at different standpoints, and are the results of different purposes and different categories in the organization of knowledge. And if Philosophy gives us back what Science threatens to take away, and restores to plain people their faith in the reality of each of these phases of the world as it seems, then Philosophy will have gone a long way to justify her existence.' (i. 119.)

Such a passage, and the recurring use throughout the lectures of the expression 'the world as it seems', suggests that the title of the Lectures was probably intended to convey an allusion to Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, published some ten years previously. For Bradley also makes prominent use of the conception of 'Degrees of Truth and Reality'; but whereas, under his sceptical analysis, all the degrees of 'appearance' are exhibited as alike riddled by contradictions—the conclusion eventually arrived at being that to reach Reality or the Absolute we must discard relational thought altogether—Haldane declares that 'if the standpoint of these lectures be a true one, we are free to believe in the world as it seems, and not driven to sacrifice any aspect of it on one altar or another'.[1]

It is in these Gifford volumes, it should be noted, that we find, on Haldane's part, the strongest and most unqualified statements of his Hegelian discipleship. 'All that is in these lectures', he says at the conclusion of the first year's course, 'I have either taken or adapted from Hegel, and in Hegel there is twice as much again of equal importance which these lectures cannot even touch.' Aristotle and Hegel are mentioned together throughout as the two supreme thinkers of the world; and Hegel, it is said, 'first taught the world

[1] vol. i, p. 169.

how to read the Aristotelian philosophy'. Hence 'it seems as if the best preparation for the would-be philosopher must still be to find out what Hegel really meant and to learn to read him'. The last few words are an accurate description of his own practice. He once told Professor J. H. Morgan that he had read the *Phänomenologie des Geistes* nineteen times.[1] I cannot speak to any definite number of times, but whenever we met, one was sure to find that he had just been re-reading one or other of the Master's works, perhaps the *Phänomenologie* most frequently of all. It is hardly out of place to speak of them as his bedside companions; they were certainly the books to which he most frequently turned for relaxation, if one may so speak, at the close of many a busy day. This constant communion with the Master, though in Haldane's case, with his enormous capacity for work, it was far from excluding attention to anything of importance that appeared in contemporary thought, was, I think, not without certain disadvantages to himself as a writer. In the first place, the excessive abstractness of Hegel's usual style tended to infect that of his expositor; and secondly, the very familiarity with the formulae in which Hegel stereotyped his doctrines perhaps obscured for Haldane the difficulties which phrases that meant so much to himself might present to other minds, and the ambiguities, real or possible, which they might cover. He himself remarks upon the disadvantage under which philosophy suffers from the nature of its subject-matter. It moves professedly in the region of abstract thought, whereas religion and poetry—art generally—express themselves in images and appeal to the emotions. He was himself very accessible to the poetic appeal, as is shown by the quotations he makes in the course of his lectures. 'Something of direct insight', he says, 'would seem to have come to great men, to great artists, to great poets. . . . In the poets, when at their best, we have the discernment of

[1] See the second of two interesting articles on 'The Riddle of Lord Haldane' in the *Quarterly Review* for 1929.

what has been the last and perhaps the highest result of the greatest speculative thinking in the history of philosophy.' But when he sits down to write as a philosopher, he seems resolved, as a matter of conscience, to eschew all use of image or symbol and to talk only the language of the 'Begriff'. This seems to me to be especially true of his later writing, and it is perhaps particularly the case when he is avowedly striving to be as simple and direct as possible. The result makes very difficult reading. The spoken word of the Gifford Lectures with its more vivid personal appeal and more natural flow of language is easy in comparison, and the two volumes of *The Pathway to Reality* are likely, in my opinion, to remain the most attractive and representative of his philosophical writings.

The second volume of the Gifford Lectures contains his exposition of Hegel's doctrine of God and man, as he understood it and was prepared to accept it. If we start from the position reached in the first volume that Mind or Self-consciousness is the highest category known to us, then it is to our experience as knowers or thinkers that we must turn for the most adequate conception of God. The universe in its ultimate reality must in fact be conceived as an Absolute Mind, that is to say, a Mind, in its fundamental structure resembling our own, but freed from those features of our experience which we can see to be due to our limitations and imperfection. Now the fundamental structure of Mind—of Knowledge or of Thought as such—consists in the subject-object relation. This relation is all-comprehensive, for existence is meaningless out of relation to knowledge. When we speak of anything as existing, we mean its existence as an object of actual or possible knowledge. It is in this sense that Haldane so often uses the expression 'Knowledge is foundational'. Knowledge does not supervene upon a world of self-existent things; it is itself the supreme and all-embracing Fact within which all our distinctions fall. It is, accordingly, as the universal and all-inclusive Subject or Self that we may, at the outset, best

conceive of God. The term Self is habitually used in a double sense. We men, whose experience is mediated by our organic equipment, exist, each of us with our individual history, in a world which contains innumerable other such individual selves. In that sense our individual self is for us an object correlated with other objects within the total world of knowledge. Yet we are more than that object-self. We are also the subject for which this individual self is object, for, as knowers, we each of us place ourselves at a super-individual standpoint, as spectators of all time and all existence. And in this latter sense Hegel says there is only one Mind, one Thinker, the single subject which has the universe for object, and sees in it all nothing but its own manifestation. Hence, Haldane, summing up the result of his second volume defines God as 'Mind that comprehends itself completely'.[1] Its comprehension is complete because its 'object can only be itself'.[2] 'Mind as it is in man is this same self-comprehension but at a plane or stage which is imperfect.' And it is the imperfection of our finite comprehension which gives to the world of nature its 'hard-and-fastness', as if it were something external to mind, with an element of contingency irresoluble by intelligence.[3]

Some interpreters of Hegel have taken his doctrine of Absolute Mind as meaning no more than the formal unity of knowledge wherever knowing comes to pass, and have sought accordingly the ultimate reality of the universe in the abstract universals or categories which Hegel analyses in his *Logic*, and which they suppose somehow to focus themselves in the human organism into concrete persons that think and act. The Absolute, on this view, first comes to consciousness of itself in men, and the process of its life is identified with the course of human history. Nothing, however, could be farther from Haldane's conception of the Master's meaning. He brushes aside the idea of impersonal self-subsisting thoughts as a contradiction in terms. The abstract universal has no subsistence. Reality, he

[1] p. 170. [2] p. 156. [3] p. 133.

argues constantly, is throughout singular or individual—the concrete unity of universal and particular, which are both but abstractions from it. And this is pre-eminently true of Absolute Mind, the ultimately Real; it is 'individual, unique and singular',[1] 'living, concrete, self-conscious mind'.[2] God is therefore certainly 'in some sense a Person',[3] though the limitations associated with finite personality suggest that superpersonal (in the sense not of impersonal, but of personality and much more than what we know as such) would be the more appropriate term.

Emily Brontë's *Last Lines*, which he quoted so often in life, to his friends as well as in his books, do in fact best express his own intimate sense of this Supreme Reality:

> O God within my breast,
> Almighty, ever present Deity!
> Life that in me has rest,
> As I—undying Life—have power in Thee.

Philosophy in short is necessarily abstract, and although 'for the intellect of God the conceptions of philosophy can be no abstractions, for us they will always be such.' Hence, as he says in his concluding pages, 'we turn quite naturally to Art and Religion for the *direct* sense of the presence of what is truly closer to us than breathing and nearer than hands and feet'. The language we meet there may be only symbolical, but it is none the less practically true. 'Abstract reason', he says elsewhere, 'has no monopoly of the means of access to reality, although I hold it to be the only competent guardian of the pathway.'[4] 'It is for Philosophy to pursue the narrow path to the summit, and there to join hands with Art, and Morality, and Religion. The accomplishment of this is for her the test of success. It is only when he finds that the world as it seems to the artist, to the good man, to the godly man, seems real to him also, that the Philosopher has done his work.'[5] Hence the characteristic tenderness with which he habitually treats 'the faith of simple minds'.[5] There is such a thing as 'the undue

[1] p. xvii. [2] p. 70. [3] p. xx. [4] p. xiv. [5] p. 32.

exaltation of the abstract mind', which, if persisted in, is no better than 'pedantry'. Those who are supposed to regard highly the faith of simple minds would do well, he says, to bear this in remembrance. 'For that faith is in itself a correction of abstractions: it is the sense of the fuller significance of experience.'[1] 'Art and Religion', he says in the concluding chapter of the *Autobiography*, 'are never superseded by metaphysics.'

The *Reign of Relativity* is in substance a fresh presentation on a large scale of the same fundamental philosophical position. After fifteen years' silence he had begun such a restatement in the long and careful paper on 'The Doctrine of Degrees in Knowledge, Truth, and Reality', read to the British Academy in 1919. The gist of this reappears in the *Reign of Relativity*, together with critical chapters on contemporary philosophical thought, as represented by Bergson, the New Realists, and others. The volume is connected by its title with the mathematico-physical theories of Relativity put forward by Einstein in 1905 and 1915, which were then the subject of eager debate. Haldane was greatly interested in these far-reaching scientific developments, and several chapters in this volume (as well as in its successor, *The Philosophy of Humanism*) are devoted to an exposition of the new theories and a historical survey of the advances in modern mathematics, which led up to them. These chapters are a striking testimony to the tireless energy of the writer in keeping himself abreast of the latest developments of science, and they undoubtedly attracted many readers to the book, which went through a number of editions and was translated into French. But, so far as I can judge, Einstein's theory does not throw any fresh light on the doctrine of different degrees or levels of knowledge, while Haldane's basic doctrine of the 'relativity of all existence to knowledge'[2] and the consequent interpretation of the real as ultimately spiritual, is essentially independent of any change

[1] *Reign of Relativity*, p. 413. [2] *Philosophy of Humanism*, p. 35.

in physical theory. The fact is that 'relativity' has proved in the history of thought a fatally ambiguous term. Originally intended to signify the subjectivity of our judgements, and the impossibility of reaching an objective standard of truth, it is used approximately in that sense by Haldane in his Gifford Lectures, when he describes the chief topic of his first course as 'the complete relativity of our knowledge in everyday life and in physical science'.[1] That is to say, our knowledge in these regions is stated in terms which depend upon the end we have in view. One set of terms serves the purposes of everyday life; another set of terms may serve the purpose of the physicist, who deliberately in the interest of his own science abstracts from important aspects of reality; and so on. But when we talk, with Haldane or with Hegel, of 'the principle of relativity in its comprehensive form' as 'the all-embracing scope of mind',[2] what we have in view is not any partial or 'relative' truth in the sense just indicated, but precisely, as Haldane says, 'the final and complete truth', which 'cannot be less than a systematic whole of knowledge within which all particular and partial outlooks have their places as levels or degrees in knowledge'.[3] Relativity in this comprehensive form is in fact the very thesis of Absolute Idealism, and as far removed as possible, therefore, from the associations of the term in its original and still most common use. And, as Haldane points out, it is only so far as we are confident of having reached ultimate philosophical truth—the idea of 'a perfect entirety' as he calls it[4]—that we can establish the doctrine of degrees or levels of knowledge. 'All forms of knowledge are reconcilable, if construed as aspects within one entirety.'[5] And that may perhaps explain the use of the same term to cover two precisely opposite meanings. It is only because we have a glimpse at least of such an entirety that we can arrange our degrees or levels in an ascending scale and sum up our philosophy, as Haldane did, in the doctrine that 'the more

[1] vol. ii, p. x. [2] *Reign of Relativity*, p. 384.
[3] Ibid., p. 419. [4] Ibid., p. 401. [5] Ibid., p. 409.

things are interpreted spiritually, the more they are found to be real'. In that faith he lived and died.

'Truth', said Berkeley, in a well-known passage, 'is the cry of all, but the game of few. Certainly, where it is the chief passion, it doth not give way to vulgar cares and views, nor is it contented with a little ardour in the early time of life; active perhaps to pursue, but not so fit to weigh and revise. He who would make a real progress in knowledge must dedicate his age as well as youth, the later growth as well as first fruits, at the altar of Truth.' I know of no one in our own time who realized this description of the unwearied seeker more fully than Haldane.

A. SETH PRINGLE-PATTISON.

Note on Lord Haldane's legal work in the House of Lords and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.

BY VISCOUNT DUNEDIN

I HAVE been asked to write a few lines as to Lord Haldane's life so far as passed in the legal work of the House of Lords and the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. My only qualification for so doing—for I have no literary aptitude—lies in the fact that I am the only one of his colleagues who combined close personal friendship with presence in the two Tribunals during his whole career there.

Though our early professional experiences were in different countries, yet after 1891 when I got into the House of Commons, he being already there, we saw a great deal of each other. After he went Special I met him from time to time in Scottish cases before the House of Lords. We were generally opposed to each other, for those who employed him naturally wished him to lead and that was incompatible with my position as Solicitor-General and Lord Advocate from 1895 to 1903. But I was well aware of his

professional career and, in particular, knew what an attraction he found in the constitutional questions which were being fought out in Canada and reached the Judicial Committee.

After he definitely left the Bar and went to the War Office, he, although a Privy Councillor, was not qualified to sit on the Judicial Committee for he had never held high judicial office, which is the necessary condition for membership. It was felt by his friends, and particularly by Asquith, that it was a pity that his talents should not at times be available. Accordingly, advantage was taken of a clause in an old Act of 1833, which allowed the King to nominate not more than two members to sit on the Judicial Committee although they had not the ordinary qualification. By this time I had myself become qualified to sit, so that I was a member when he made his début. He did not sit very often, but he did take occasion to follow out cases on his favourite subject.

I may pass at once to his first Lord Chancellorship. I remember distinctly his speaking to me shortly after his appointment. He was very keen to turn out thoroughly good work, for he had a very high idea of what the Supreme Tribunal ought to be. This was, of course, his début in the House of Lords. He certainly did his very utmost to carry out his ideal. I remember quite well how, with a certain feeling of pride, he sent to his friend Asquith, by this time Prime Minister, a sample of the cases we had been deciding. Shortly after his appointment as Chancellor, my own appearances in the two Tribunals, which had up to that time been sporadic, became continuous and, after that to the end of his first Chancellorship and throughout the whole of his second, I was in close touch with all his work. Very naturally, he maintained an especial interest in his old special subject, constitutional cases, and, as Lord Chancellor and so having the arrangement of business in his own hands, he arranged whenever such cases came up to sit if possible in the Judicial Committee. But his efforts were not

at all confined to one class of case. As I have already said, he had a real ambition that the two Tribunals, being the Supreme Tribunals, should turn out superior work, and he spared no efforts to attain that object. If he could have had his own way, he would have liked to combine the two bodies in one Supreme Imperial Court; but the difficulties were many, including the building of a new Court House, and though he held to his opinion firmly, the matter never came within the range of practical politics.

It is a little difficult and a little invidious for a colleague who valued and enjoyed a close friendship with him to play the critic. It would be foolish to claim for him too high a place. He will not go down in Lawyers' history as a Baron Parke or an Earl Cairns; but I think it will be found, and more generally acknowledged as time goes on, that he was thoroughly sound in his judgements. He was, I think, very seldom wrong. In style he was perhaps too much of the philosopher, but he was very painstaking and not at all obstinate, and these two qualities generally lead to good results. Quite apart from personal affection for him, I found him always easy to deal with, for he would always listen if one had anything to say worth listening to. He was not abnormally quick, but he was very sure. I think his judgements will be found to wear very well.

One little matter I have hesitated to mention, but I think it is kinder to do so because I know that he has suffered from a false impression. When he was thinking he had a way of shutting his eyes, with the result that he was often accused of being asleep when he was not asleep at all but merely following out the train of his own thoughts. Counsel are often given to repeating themselves; it is not altogether their fault for they have more minds than one to which they must address themselves, but during these periods of repetition there is room from a Judge's point of view for periods of reflection and, as I say, it was a trick he had to shut his eyes when so reflecting.

There certainly never was a judge who more consistently

tried, not only to secure justice to the litigants, but to do his utmost both by individual effort and by stimulation of his colleagues to raise to the highest level possible the quality of law which it is the task of the highest Tribunals to pronounce.