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978-1-107-60494-0 - Evolution, Knowledge and Revelation: Being the Hulsean Lectures Delivered Before the University of Cambridge, 1923-24

Stewart A. McDowall

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SYNOPSIS

I

LIVING AND THINKING

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These lectures aim at establishing a Theory of Knowledge based on the facts of Evolution and in sympathy with the spiritual interpretation of Nature by the best metaphysical systems	I
<i>Inquiry into the Biblical conception of the meaning of Knowledge</i>	
(a) Isaiah, Hosea and Psalmist all identify knowledge with "the fear of the Lord" or with "righteousness"	2
(b) Later writers, e.g. the author of Job, speak with a less certain voice	3
(c) But, when Jewish thought had recovered from the shock of the impact of Greek ideas, the old Jewish identification of knowledge with "the fear of the Lord" emerged triumphant	5
(d) The conception of the Immanence of God is latent in the Book of Wisdom, and also the corollary that all knowledge is of value	5
(e) Christ preached the doctrine that the knowledge of God is an immediate knowledge of the spirit, not an intellectual knowledge of the mind	6
And that knowledge is the living of a life	6
Essentially a life lived in relation with other lives, with God and with men	7
Christ also showed the inadequacy of the old Jewish belief in a merely Transcendent God, and emphasised the fact of His Immanence	7
(f) St Paul laid stress on the difference between "wisdom which is foolishness" by which he meant abstract intellectual knowledge, and "wisdom unto salvation," direct immediate knowledge of God and His Will, gained by living a life in fellowship with Him	8

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The teaching of the Bible leads to the truths that <i>ultimate Reality is God and man in relation</i> , and that <i>Knowledge is the living of a life</i> , and can be summed up in the Revelation "God is Love"	10
<i>Inquiry into the conception of the meaning of knowledge based on study of the facts of Evolution</i>	
Evolution signifies the triumph of the living organism over its determined environment and the emergence of an increasing freedom in successful organisms,	12
In short, progress from the lower to the higher,	16
Till self-conscious man is evolved, able to control his individual destiny in considerable measure,	18
And to re-act in a greater degree to the Whole Environment than any other creature as his activities become more spiritual,	19
Till at last he becomes conscious of Beauty, which urges him to create;	19
But different men give a very different account of Reality, when asked to explain what they mean when they say "I know"	20
There are two distinct meanings of <i>to know</i> :	
(1) Knowing about things, a one-sided activity; and	
(2) The mutual knowledge and understanding obtaining between two people who know each other	23
And similarly two distinct meanings in which <i>to love</i> is used:	
(1) To describe a one-sided activity, akin to the apprehension of beauty, and	
(2) To describe mutual love	23
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It is the aim of these lectures to suggest a line of thought that may point towards the solution of some of the famous antinomies: for we shall find that Freedom expresses itself by Self-limitation, that Unity is saved from nothingness by Multiplicity, that Transcendence establishes itself perpetually in Immanence, and that Good is only good where Evil is possible	26
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II

KNOWING AND LOVING

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III

THE KNOWN AND THE LOVED

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