

CANADIAN
UNITARIAN
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WHAT EASTER MEANS FOR UNITARIANS

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PREFACE TO NEW EDITION

Though I wrote this more than 40 years ago, I am surprised at how little revision I felt compelled to undertake when preparing this edition, to answer questions that are still being asked.

Phillip Hewett

When I first became a Unitarian, it was with very mixed feelings that I viewed the approach of Easter. Although our society as a whole shows more interest in Easter eggs and bunnies and the Easter parade than in any traditional religious observances, it is still part of the conventional procedure to go to church, even if this is the only occasion in the year when you do so. Tacit approval, at least, is given to the things that are said in church at Easter. Unless you happen to be Jewish, or have some equally obvious excuse for being different, you are expected to pay lip service to the idea that Easter commemorates certain supposedly historical events dating from nearly two thousand years ago.

By the time I became a Unitarian, I knew that I certainly could not pay lip service to these ideas. I could not accept the view expressed, for example, in Article 4 of the Anglican Church:

"Christ did truly rise again from death, and took again his body, with flesh, bones and all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature wherewith he ascended into Heaven..."

I knew I didn't believe that. And yet that, a little bit watered down in some cases, was what was celebrated at Easter in every church that I had hitherto known.

The easiest reaction was one of cynicism about it all. After all, there were many superstitious beliefs that were once widely held but which I am sure I felt I had outgrown. Why then keep up the celebration?

But I felt a curious reluctance to let Easter go. The triumphant hymns of the season that I had learned in childhood could no longer be accepted literally, but the spirit of rejoicing they expressed was still there, seeking expression. Why and how? Perhaps as a Unitarian I would find the atmosphere within which I could explore.

It certainly did. I don't think any two Easters have meant exactly the same to me since. And I honestly believe that each one has meant more than the one before. I find no difficulty at all in determining just why this is. Briefly, it is as though being a Unitarian has been taking me on an exhilarating climb up the slopes of a mighty mountain. Each Easter as it comes finds me at a higher point than the one I had reached a year previously, and with a correspondingly wider view. And the key to the whole understanding of Easter lies in this wider view.

The view of Easter against which I had reacted, and against which so many people have likewise reacted, was not only the conventional view, but the narrowest view. And narrowness in religion is what is driving multitudes of people away from what they conceive religion to be. A conspiracy of silence among practically all who speak for religion at a public level prevents them from knowing that the wider religious view is even possible.

But as a Unitarian I found it possible to explore. I found help in my exploration. And exploration led, as it can hardly fail to lead, to wider horizons.

EXPLORATION THROUGH HISTORY

It is possible to ask questions about Easter. The first question that comes to mind is why Easter varies in the calendar so much from year to year. One year it is in March; the next year it can be more than halfway through April. Why? It's because the date is fixed by the moon. Easter is always celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the first day of spring. Two factors are involved then: the phases of the moon, which are very variable, and the vernal equinox, which is always on March 21. Neither of these factors is so much as mentioned in most of what we see written or hear spoken about Easter, but it seems reasonable that the vernal equinox – the time of year when the hours of daylight begin to outnumber the hours of darkness – must always have been felt to have a very particular significance.

When we examine the pages of history we find that this is certainly true. The vernal equinox was celebrated with legends that dramatized the victory of light over darkness, of resurgent life over the apparent triumph of death in the winter. There was hardly an ancient race anywhere in the world, which did not have rites and legends, associated with this season. Usually the story speaks of a god or hero who has been slain and who returns triumphantly to life with the coming of spring. With pageantry the people reenact the story, identifying themselves with the risen god and thereby rising with that god to newness of life. As ancient civilizations progressed, so these cults became more elaborate, the most famous ones being those of Tammuz, Adonis, Osiris and Attis.

When I first encountered these facts they began to put Easter into a new perspective for me. It was no longer a celebration of one supposedly historical event, but a spontaneous expression of what had been natural to the human spirit in all times and places. What Christians had done to Easter was the same as they had done to Christmas; they had taken over an existing festival and adapted it to their purposes. According to Sir James Frazer, many of the early Christians celebrated Easter regularly on March 25, the exact date of the vernal equinox in the old Julian calendar, and incidentally the date also of the celebration of the resurrection of Attis. Frazer comments how before Christianity came to power in the Roman Empire there were bitter debates between the Christians and the followers of Attis, each accusing the other of stealing their festival. Since the cult of Attis was the older one by far, the Christians might have seemed to have a weak case, since an original is normally older than a copy. However, they demolished this argument by pointing out that Satan had shown his subtlety on this occasion by inverting the normal order of things!

It is not necessary to describe in detail the significance for ancient religions of the phases of the moon. Surely, this is well known. Again it is universal, for the moon provided a ready-made calendar for early peoples.

This exploration into history is not simply an antiquarian exercise, remote from present realities. We do not feel as utterly dependent upon the regularities of the natural world around us as our early ancestors did, but still for us there is something elemental and inescapable in the upsurge of new life in the springtime. How many of us can stand by unfeelingly as before us the green shoots are bursting through the sod and thrusting upward to the sun? The legends woven in the ancient past to express in pictorial form how this season affected those living then can certainly retain some of their spell over us too.

The same is true of the symbols of Easter, all of which stand for new life. The rabbit is a symbol of fertility. The Easter flowers express the rebirth of nature. The egg, perhaps the most common of all the symbols of Easter at the present time, has had its place in religious celebrations right back to pre-historic times. Often it is a symbol of creation: according to traditions found in many scattered parts of the earth, the whole world was born from an egg. Certainly, the chick bursting from the darkness of its prison inside the shell and coming out into the light and life expresses the same idea of life triumphant as the flowers bursting from the darkness of the soil.

I have heard the use of this sort of symbolism at Easter described as shallow and sentimental. That such a criticism can be made shows how far we have cut ourselves off from the world of nature – a process that may have fatal results for us if it goes on indefinitely. We need to recapture within our own hearts the sense of kinship with the natural world that marked our ancestors in earlier times. Eggs and flowers are natural symbols of Easter: so too is the finery in which human beings deck themselves at this season, in imitation of the exuberance of nature.

Another obvious question about Easter that might be asked, after we have satisfied ourselves as to why it is celebrated when it is, concerns the name itself. Why is it called Easter? The only source of information we have on this subject is the Venerable Bede, an eighth century English monk whose sources are usually reliable. According to him, Easter was named after the Anglo-Saxon goddess of the dawn, Eostre, whose principal festival was at the vernal equinox.

Many of the Easter observances are at dawn, and there is probably some connection between 'Easter' and 'East', which is where the sun rises.

In many European languages the name for Easter comes from a different root – the Latin and Greek word Pascha, which is in turn derived from the Hebrew *Pesach*, or

Passover. This name indicates another of the strands that have gone into the development of Easter, the one deriving from the Jewish tradition.

The origins of the Passover are lost in antiquity. Theodor Reik suggests that it may originally have been a celebration of coming of age, of dying to the world of childhood and being born again to adult life.

Be that as it may, it is now celebrated as a commemoration of a new birth of freedom, an escape from the living death of slavery in Egypt to new life in what tradition celebrated as the Promised Land. The rebirth theme is as closely bound up with Passover, therefore, as it was with the spring celebrations of early peoples. As the cold of winter recedes, the frozen streams come gaily to life and freedom. So as the grip of the Pharaoh upon the ancient Israelites relaxed, they too moved in freedom.

No doubt this is an over-simplification of the actual historical events, but human imagination always moulds history to its purposes in illustrating truths which are felt to be perennial in their meaning and importance. We can hardly claim that the emphasis upon freedom is a sentimental or superficial one in the world today, where all our ingenuity and devotion are going to be needed to ensure that real freedom shall be established and maintained in human life.

EXPLORATION THROUGH THE CHRISTIAN TRADITION

With this background in mind it is now possible, perhaps, to turn with fuller understanding to the more specifically Christian story of Easter. In its orthodox form, this story declares that Jesus, after he had died and been buried, rose to life again and subsequently ascended into heaven about the sky.

How did this story arise? Since more than one account has been preserved from among the early Christian documents it is possible to trace fairly clearly the way in which it took form. There are five separate versions in the New Testament and others among writings not subsequently included in the Bible.

The earliest account is that of Paul (1 Corinthians 15: 3-8; written about the year 54). He speaks only of an apparently visionary appearance of Jesus to his disciples after his death, an experience of the same sort as he himself had on the road to Damascus (Acts 9: 1-9). He says nothing about the discovery of an empty tomb. This appears for the first time in the next version, that of Mark (Mark 16: 1-8; this passage was written about the year 65, but the remainder of the chapter was added much later). But still the tone of the story is subdued and quiet: "they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid."

In Luke, (Luke 24: 1-12; written about the year 85) the events are more public and spectacular. He substitutes two men in the tomb for Mark's one. In Matthew (Matthew

28: 1-15, written about the year 90) we are in another world again. There is an earthquake and the descent of an angel, and all this takes place in the presence of Roman guards. While in John (John 20:1-18, written about the year 100), there is again an angel, and Jesus himself appears on the scene in risen form. The later documents, such as the apocryphal Gospel of Peter (written about the year 150) have many more miraculous stories, including a dialogue between God and Christ and the story of how Christ broke down the gates of hell before rising triumphantly to the earth.

To interpret this continuous development of the story as the product of conscious fraud would be to miss the point. Stories of this sort grow spontaneously as a result of psychological processes that operate below the level of conscious intention. Recollections and hearsay were mingled with imagination and the influence of other stories, myths and prophecies.

The writers of these accounts were rather in the position of someone just a few years ago recording the conquest of Palestine from the Turks during the first World War by gathering the recollections of local Arabs who were present at the time; in fact, the writers of the latest gospels would have been entirely dependent on the previous generation. It goes without saying that these recollections were coloured to a greater or lesser extent by the current belief in Jewish prophecy as foretelling the future, and by the numerous resurrection myths which were current in the Mediterranean world at that time.

How, in the face of all these difficulties in arriving at the truth, can we find out what really happened? That is a formidable task, but it can be pursued in one or two directions with fair prospects of success.

Let us return again to the words of Paul, the earliest of the witnesses. He was a firm believer in life after death, and he believed equally firmly that it had been revealed to him that Jesus had entered into a life beyond death. But he gives no indication at all that this involved a resurrection of the body of Jesus. He does not appear ever to have heard of the story of the empty tomb. In fact, he explicitly contradicts the idea of a bodily resurrection. Here are his own words (he uses the metaphor of sowing and growing, the agricultural metaphor typical of all the resurrection myths of the ancient world):

"What is sown is perishable; what is raised is imperishable...It is sown a physical body, it is raised a spiritual body...Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable." (1 Corinthians, 15:42-50)

In other words, whatever (according to his theory) survives death is so different from the physical form in which we now appear that it would be improper to use the word resurrection at all. But this was not the doctrine that prevailed in the growing Christian

church which dictated the final form of the gospel narratives and from which is derived the general doctrine of "the resurrection of the body", incorporated into the creeds.

It was not the finding of an empty tomb that produced the story that Christ had risen again in physical form. It was the other way around. It was the belief that Christ had risen again in physical form that produced the story of an empty tomb. All the explanations of the empty tomb that have been made -- the theory that Jesus never really died, but was later revived after he was thought to be dead, the theory that the disciples removed the body, and so on -- all these are beside the point. They do not belong to a consideration of what really happened, because they try to deal rationally with what is really a work of imagination: a poem or myth. We just don't know what happened to the body of Jesus, and we have no means at all of finding out. Of him it may be said, as of Moses before him, "no one knoweth of his sepulchre to this day."

We can get much further with our question about what really happened if we turn to look at the disciples -- the first Christians. Unquestionably they came to hold a firm belief that Jesus was not dead, but alive, and this was something that occurred quite soon after the crucifixion. Their belief was not like the popular belief in the resurrection of Osiris or Attis, because they believed in the continuing life and presence not of a god, but of a real human personality whom they had come to know and love.

From a psychological standpoint much can be said about this. It has happened many, many times before and since that people have been possessed of a feeling of absolute certainty about the continuing presence of one they love from whom they have been parted by death. Whether this feeling is valid or not is a question outside the scope of the present discussion. But it certainly exists, it occurs frequently, and it is found in the presence of strong desires.

It appears among the disciples of any strong personality. In nineteenth-century England a forceful woman preacher gathered a small band of fervent disciples, to whom she predicted that at a given time after her death she would rise from her grave. At the appointed time, the disciples gathered for an all-night vigil at the graveside. Nothing visible occurred, but many of them went away in the morning utterly convinced that the predicted resurrection had in fact taken place.

On September 30, 1955, James Dean, Hollywood actor and teen-age idol, died in a high-speed car collision. He was buried in the ordinary way, with no mystery. But thousands of teenagers all over the world stubbornly refused to believe he was dead. So far as they were concerned, he was still alive, in the normal meaning of that word 'alive'. And the slogan "Elvis lives" long decorated the walls of many cities. If this can happen in our own time with regard to persons who could hardly claim to be historically memorable, it is not difficult to see what forces must have played upon the minds of the

earliest followers of Jesus. Their first reaction to his death must have been one of despair. Many of them had expected that, like the Maccabees before him, he would lead a national uprising against foreign tyranny, and liberate the people. Their hopes had risen as he made a triumphant entry into Jerusalem, only to collapse in ruin with his arrest and death. There can be little doubt that their attitude at that time is accurately reflected in the report of what one of them said on the road to Emmaus: "Jesus of Nazareth... was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people... We had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel." (Luke 24:19-21). "We had hoped..." but now their hopes were no more.

Then something happened – something that made them forget forever their frustrated hopes for a national revolution. As if for the first time, a fuller realization of what the mission of Jesus really was began to dawn upon them. That mission was one of inward renewal. It was personal, not political. The kingdom of heaven, as he had said, is within you. That had not failed. That could continue. It could continue through them. Death had not meant the end of his mission. "He is risen," they cried. And he was. The things which were most important in his life –the principles for which he lived and for which he died –, had risen in their hearts. It was almost as though he were still physically with them. They were now the agents in carrying out the work to which he had devoted himself.

You can see from the scanty records that have come down to us how this spirit moved upon them. They felt that the spirit of Jesus had risen in them and was directing their lives to exalted ends. Paul gave utterance to it very clearly. "It is no longer I who live," he wrote, "but Christ who lives in me." It is the same feeling that was later expressed in the words attributed to the risen Christ in the Gospel of Matthew: "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world." They had not been parted from what was most meaningful and permanent in his companionship by the work of the High Priest and the Roman governor. It remained with them because it was within them. As Albert Schweitzer pointed out, this feeling remains valid right down to our own time:

"Jesus means something to our world because a mighty spiritual force streams forth from him and flows through our time also. This fact can neither be shaken nor confirmed by any historical discovery. Not the historical Jesus, but the spirit which goes forth from him in our spirits strives for new influence and rule, is that which overcomes the world."

Here lies the permanent significance of the work of Jesus, and the way in which he returned to life not once but many times within those who have shared his spirit. And if this is true of Jesus, it is likewise true of Gautama the Buddha, and Socrates, and Jeremiah, and Francis of Assisi, and Gandhi and of multitudes of others that have lived by the same spirit. Again, the universal aspect of Easter appears.

EXPLORATION THROUGH PSYCHOLOGY

Whether we look at ancient peoples responding to the rebirth of nature, at the enactment of the mysteries of salvation associated with Osiris, Dionysus, or Odin, or at the Christian's faith in the resurrection of Christ – all these varied interpretations of Easter deal in one way or another with attempts to come to terms with the fact of death and to cherish the conviction that life is not vanquished and overthrown.

A seemingly paradoxical point of departure for further exploration of this perennial concern might be the words of Goethe:

"For as long as thou dost not know
the way to die and come again to life,
thou art but a sorry traveller
upon the darkling earth."

Most people would not claim much knowledge in these matters, which is why they have felt it necessary to take the ancient legends literally and build all their hopes upon them.

But what, after all, is life? And what is death? The two are usually regarded as opposites, just as light and darkness are opposites, or love and hate. And yet there is good reason to look with suspicion at the notion that opposites can never be reconciled. If there is anything at all in the so-called dialectical process, then it means that opposites are each necessary to the other in order to produce new growth and progress. Psychology is uncovering the way in which supposed opposites in human reaction are basically one. The proper diagram for showing opposites may turn out not to be a straight line with extremes at either end, but a circle in which the opposites meet, just as east and west meet if you follow them round the world.

Is it so with life and death? Are these two opposites simply differing approaches of one reality? There seems to be a radical break between the two. The fact of death is the end of life. The human mind has employed its thought and skill for countless centuries in trying to devise bridges to throw over the gap. But is this the right way? "Life and death," says Kahlil Gibran, "are one, even as the river and the sea are one."

Easter stands as a symbol of the perennial human preoccupation with this problem, and the many and varied ways of celebrating Easter show clearly where we as individuals stand with regard to this preoccupation. If we look again at the celebrations of the rise of nature to new life in the spring, we can ask what is the real significance of this "parable from nature"?

Is it that there is a battle between life on the one hand and death on the other, and that life has been triumphant? Not exactly. That is the way in which it has often been put, but

it is not a fair inference. The earth is renewed; it reclothes itself in green. But what of the individual plants that go to make up this resurrection in glory? Some have survived the winter from last year, and appear once more in almost the same form. Some have divided and propagated themselves so that the individual has gone. It is not dead, exactly; it has become two or three or four instead of one. And some are dead: they fall into dust and disintegrate to form the nutriment for new life which springs up in their place. These are the various elements that go to make up the resurrection of nature in the spring. Life is triumphant, but it is life that includes and embraces death as a part of the whole.

That is the real meaning of the parable of nature. Life is a whole of which death is a part, and of which the individual living or dying entity is also a part. It finds its meaning only in the larger whole. If we were to concentrate all our attention on one individual plant then we could fill the air with lamentation and mourning one spring when it fails to be reborn. But this is just what we won't do. We look at the picture as a whole. Yet in human life we tend so very often to do exactly the opposite. We shift our attention and our focus of meaning from the universal to the individual.

We are so preoccupied with our own self-importance. This is I. This is my house, this is my car, this is my bank balance, this is my country, this is my race, this is my creed. And this is my life. This life is my property. I can do what I like with it. It belongs to me. Death is my enemy because he comes and steals my property. And no matter how many walls and padlocks and watchdogs I use I can't stop him from being successful in his robbery at some time or other, sooner or later.

So Death comes to be feared. He it is who will rob me of my dearest possession. We don't talk about it very much, but that's the way we so often feel, when we come to think about it. And to those who feel the opposite way, who go to meet Death as a deliverer, this is frequently because the individual treasure that will be stolen has come to seem so worthless anyway.

But all this sets up an artificial division between life and death, and it does so because of our preoccupation with ourselves as individuals. That radical nonconformist Thoreau, who could always be counted upon to say or do the unconventional thing, once remarked, "I hear a good many pretend they are going to die... Nonsense! I'll defy them to do it! They haven't got life enough in them... Only half a dozen or so have died since the world began...in order to die you must first have lived."

He wouldn't want us to apply a strict textual analysis to that, of course. Half a dozen is a pretty small number. But the point remains valid. In order to die, you must first have lived. Then your death will be not simply an event, but an achievement, a natural part of a whole:

"I laid me down with a will."

Knowing how to live is knowing how to die. In finding death we find life, and in finding life we find death. Those who would save their life shall lose it, and those who would lose their life shall save it. Life, death and immortality are part of one process, and the quality of all is the quality of each. So Matthew Arnold writes:

"...He who flagged not in the earthly strife,
From strength to strength advancing – only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life."

Here is one of Thoreau's 'half-dozen'. Again, Edgar Lee Masters says:

"Immortality is not a gift,
Immortality is an achievement,
And only those strive mightily
Shall possess it."

What is this immortality? What is it that is immortal? Nature is a parable of it: life renewed, new life beyond death, yet not beyond the power of death, for death is a part of the whole. What is immortal is the whole in which the parts find meaning, an advancing, ever-changing, diversified, beautiful, whole.

Is it then true, as the saints and the mystics have said in all ages, that our salvation, our immortality, lies in a death to the self, to this preoccupation with the "I" and the "mine", and in a rising to new life in the whole of which all are parts and of which the unifying bond and enveloper is to be called God?

If you seek ultimate and abiding significance in life, you are not going to find it within the narrow and constricted limits of your own life as an individual. You are going to find it within a larger, deeper, richer whole. It has been called by many names; it has been grossly misrepresented in popular theology, which is all too often an attempt to make the greater whole serve the petty purposes of me as an individual. But it is here that lies the meaning of life and death and immortality. The Unitarian poet Sir Edwin Arnold says in his beautiful translation of the Bhagavad-Gita:

"Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;
never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!
Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit forever;
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!"

This thought is exactly parallel, if you come to think of it, with what we see around us in nature: the life, the death, the immortality. Individuals perish but life goes on, and that which sustains life maintains the values of being. Has nature lost anything through the untold millions of deaths of the past thousand years? Nature is much the same now as then, and even to speak of her untold millions of deaths is an unwarranted abstraction from the general flux of events.

The contrast between that order of affairs and the attitude we so often take is summed up by Alan Watts in The Wisdom of Insecurity:

"How often has the spring returned to the earth? Does it come faster and fancier every year, to be sure to be better than last spring, and to hurry on its way to the spring that shall out-spring all springs?"

That caricatures our own pretensions, certainly, but do you see where the point of the comparison comes? Each spring has no opportunity of comparing itself with the springs that have gone before or the springs that will come after. It is part of one ongoing natural process in which all boundaries are subsidiary to the whole. It exists in and of itself, in the present and for no past or future.

Albert Schweitzer once wrote: "Just as the wave has no existence of its own, but is part of the continual movement of the ocean, thus I also am destined never to experience my life as self-contained, but always as a part of the experience which is going on around me."

This metaphor of the wave and ocean has a long history in religious thought, and it is well worth considering. Certainly each wave has a brief individuality. It exists for a period of time with a shape and size of its own, ever changing, ever moving. But it would be wrong to speak of it as beginning or ending; it is simply a movement on the surface of the ocean, an ocean that is without beginning and without end. Waves come and go; the ocean remains, and that which composed the wave remains. It does not remain the same. But birth, death and immortality are all terms that are equally appropriate or inappropriate. And what dies to one wave is born again to another.

Is this a fair study of human life? Would it be true to look at the individual self as a wave, or perhaps, even better, as a series of waves? – for this is what would be implied by the words of Goethe quoted above.

Are we any nearer to an answer as to how we die and come to life again? Is it not to free ourselves from the illusion of self-centredness, and find larger life as a part of the ocean of life itself? This is a continuous process. Many have been the voices in religion that have summoned us to rebirth: "you must be born again." Yet to be born again – and

again – one must die again and again. John Donne spoke of "the manifold deaths of this life." We die, we are reborn, like the waves on the sea. Each night we die and are reborn in the morning. Each day sets before us new tasks, new opportunities for creative participation in that which is greater than our individual selves and to which we can give ourselves.

In this perspective, see how so many of the puzzles of religion fall into place! "Love your neighbour as yourself." In the last resort your neighbour is yourself – or rather, you and your neighbour are part of one greater whole. "Don't worry about tomorrow". It will not be you who faces tomorrow – it will be tomorrow's rebirth of you.

These ideas run counter to our Western ways of thought. All the great religions came from the East, Christianity and Judaism no less than the others. We listen to what they have to say. We then decide subconsciously that their teachings are impractical, and live by other standards. But are we pleased by the results? And however strongly we cling to our individuality, can we evade the last challenge of all: the challenge of the death of the body?

It's true that in popular religious talk we have tried to carry the process as far as a resurrection and permanence of the body itself, but not many of us fool ourselves in that way any longer. But how far have we emancipated ourselves if we only struggle constantly for material satisfactions in a tomorrow that never comes?

These things are difficult to express and difficult to understand. They are even more difficult for us, living where and when we do, to live. Yet we have some glimpses of what they mean when we read the words of those who have lived by them, or when as at Easter, we feel throbbing within ourselves the tides of life, sweeping from the beaches the dross of our past, renewing with power for the days that lie ahead, teaching us our kinship with all that lives and grows and dies and is re-created.

It is therefore to life through death that Easter summons us, not the abolition of death, not some impossible prolongation through endless time of an individuality that is dwarfed and distorted if it remains the same here and now through any extended period of time. There must be change, there must be growth, and there must be impermanence. And death, however absolute it may appear when peered at through the key-hole of one individual's self-centred hold upon biological existence, is in fact but one great and awe-inspiring instrument in the orchestra that celebrates everlastingly the triumph of life.