

MAN AND NATURE: A THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

by Hugh Montefiore

Christian theology presupposes the Christian revelation and acceptance of the Christian faith. It is the product of a Christian's passionate search for truth aroused by his intellectual curiosity. This is a discipline which requires rigorous intellectual criticism so as to enable insights to be refined and errors to be purged. At the same time it needs imaginative insight in order to construct a theological schema which brings together things that ought to be brought together in a fresh and illuminating way. Theology also demands, as I understand it, more than an intellectual grasp of the Christian gospel. It requires also an existential experience of Christian life if it is to be spiritually as well as intellectually adequate. It is obvious therefore that anyone who dares to theologize is taking a very great deal upon himself.

Here I would like to quote some words which I have recently written in a report published by the Church of England's Doctrine Commission because I think that I put my point of view there as succinctly as I can:

There are different kinds of truth and theological truth differs from other kinds. A true statement is usually understood to be one which corresponds to what is the case, or that which is internally self-consistent, and coherent with other truths. But a theological statement cannot tell me what is the case, for the subject of theology is God, and my finite contingent intellect cannot precisely comprehend what is infinite and necessary. . . .

What then am I doing when I make a statement about God? Theological statements are models, or more usually they contain a combination of differing models in a sophisticated interrelationship, through which different aspects of the reality of God may be conceptualised and therefore communicated. I cannot hope that any theological statement that I make about God can be fully adequate to his reality, nor can I necessarily expect a completely logical self-consistency or coherence in a theological statement. For if I am

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trying to conceptualise a Reality who lies beyond the signification of human language and for whom no adequate models of thought can exist, then I may have to be content with seeming paradox and inconsistency. Even in the subatomic sciences (in the cases of light and matter, for example) description through analogies and symbols may give rise to apparently paradoxical statements; and *a fortiori* in theological statements, where different aspects of divine activity may require different and to some extent contradictory models, some degree of paradox is to be expected.¹

If that is what is meant by theological statements, you will want to know by what criterion I can dare to theologize. In brief, I would reply that the canon is adequacy. A theological statement must be adequate to my experience and to my interpretation of that experience; it must be adequate to my understanding of the world of nature and of people; it must be adequate to what is known through the behavioral sciences as well as the natural sciences; insofar as it is connected with Jesus it must have an adequate historical base; and it must be adequately related to the divine self-disclosure recorded in Scripture and to the mainstream traditions of Christendom down the ages, with the proviso that our belief and theology are bound to be affected to some extent by the relativity of the culture in which we live and in which past generations of mankind have lived. Because of this relativity and because every formulation of faith is what Hans Kung has described as “imperfect, incomplete, partial and fragmentary,” all theological assessments are “provisional” rather than ultimate.² This does not mean—or it is not intended to mean—that divine revelation is merely relative but that our understanding and interpretation of divine revelation have changed and will continue to change and that new knowledge can bring us fresh insights into the ways of God and his world.

After this preliminary explanation of the nature of theology and theological method, let us move toward our subject. But before attempting any theology, let us consider briefly the somewhat alarming situation in which mankind finds itself over against nature. Whatever else *Homo sapiens* may be—and we shall have to consider this when we come to a theological assessment of man—he is part of nature and absolutely dependent upon nature for his basic necessities of life (air, water, food, shelter, and clothing). And yet we find a grave imbalance. Natural ecosystems, elastic as they are, are sometimes stretched to their limits; we find a threat of famine which is much more than a problem of maldistribution of supplies; we see the approaching exhaustion of most metals and of conventional natural fuels; we see the devastation of many parts of the world’s forests, the degradation of its water supplies, the pollution of its soil and water, and the possible

threats of greater dangers ahead through the mass use of nuclear energy. We see also the extinction or near extinction of species either for the convenience of mankind or as the by-product of human exploitation. The impact which man now has on the natural world is so great as to form a threat even to man's own future. Something seems to have gone wrong. Man has tended to regard his mastery over nature as almost absolute. He has tended to exploit it as though it were there merely for his use. He has failed to recognize what his own proper relationship to nature should be.

CREATION

This is the situation which now confronts us, and it was with this scenario before them that a small group which I chaired was set up by Michael Ramsey when he was Archbishop of Canterbury. Our report, *Man and Nature*, was published recently, and I mention it because my own thinking of course has been influenced greatly by chairing this group and little of what I have here now is original.³ It seemed to us that Humanism, precisely because it is based on human values, can regard nature only in terms of human utility; and Marxism has particular difficulties because it deduces values from human society and yet at the same time regards human nature as subject to endless transformation. If we are to find a view of life in which nature has intrinsic value as well as man, we need to take our source of values from Him who is transcendent both to man and to nature; and Him we call God. We must start with a theology—and it is to this that I now turn.

The doctrine of creation is the Christian response to the two questions, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" and "Is there a reason for the world's existence?" It is not an answer that can be produced by scientific hypotheses because it lies beyond their frame of reference. It is compatible with the concept of a big bang, or with continuous creation, or with prescientific accounts of how the world began such as contented Archbishop Ussher. It is best described in terms of myth, using that word in its proper sense of a story which interprets the facts of science and history. The classical expression of this myth is found at the beginning of the Bible, where we read that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"—"in the beginning," for it is integral to the myth that creation took place in time (or, rather, with time) and that there is a purpose which unfolds within the space-time continuum. Whatever else we mean by God, we must include personality and rationality and purpose. The purposefulness of God is compatible with the thesis that nature evolves by chance since we have to account for the fact that there is a potentiality

in matter which enabled evolution to take the course which it has done. This potentiality may be ascribed to the purposefulness of God. Creation includes "heaven and earth," that is, the whole universe, the billions of galaxies billions of light years away as well as the micro-world of subatomic structures and the everyday world which we experience on this planet Earth.

My commentary on the myth of creation so far has been silent on the idea of creation itself. Since by the nature of the case it is unique—only God creates—there is nothing else quite like it. There are three theological modes of describing it: by negation (by saying what it is not like, which is not very constructive), or by paradox (which may be necessary but which hardly assists logical thinking), or by analogy. If we use the third method, we find ourselves with certain models for creation. In the history of Christian theology transcendent models of creation have been overwhelmingly dominant, showing God beyond and outside his creation. The model of making or construction is preeminent. But there are other models too which suggest a relationship of God within his creation as well as beyond it—for example, the relation of an artist to his work, not only transcendent to it but also putting himself within it. There is also the model of creation as a garment which God wears, so that he is to be found within it; there is the model of the Spirit of God working within creation or of Wisdom emanating from God and also found within what is created. If we look at the classical Judeo-Christian myths of creation in toto we see a belief in God who is mainly transcendent within his creation but who is also to be found within it. The use of the emanationist models to supplement purely transcendental models has had a great and beneficial influence on man's actions, for if it were believed that God is totally separate from nature, then it would follow logically that nature is literally God forsaken. And nature is a fit object for exploitation if it is without intrinsic value. In fact, when we look at the history of theology we find that this is just what has often happened within the Calvinist tradition, and it is this particular tradition that has been most influential in our modern world of developing technology. But if we combine with this transcendent model other models of God at work within creation, then the world has intrinsic value and is to be treated with respect.

The theologian, of course, must respect the description given by the natural sciences about how the species *Homo sapiens* has evolved within nature. Man has emerged within the evolutionary process. Just as life seems to have evolved when the conditions were right and when there was the right combination of elements, so man has emerged as a result of a process of evolution which has combined

random genetic mutation with a continuity which is in other respects regular and stable. As yet we do not know the full powers of man. He has achieved dominance over the world of nature, but, apart from his massive intelligence, he has appeared on the evolutionary scene as a nonspecialist. He is still investigating his own origins, the origins of life, and the origins of the universe in which he finds himself. He is capable of self-consciousness as well as consciousness; he has powers of creative imagination and analytic reasoning. What is unknown as yet is the nature and extent of his *psi* potentialities in extrasensory perception and telekinesis. I do not want to harp on such evidence, but I feel bound to suggest that there remains a lot about man's potentialities about which as yet we know little.

Ethological research has made much headway in recent years, and it is now becoming clear that man is more like the animals than used to be thought. He is a territorial mammal with hierarchical tendencies, and many of his patterns of behavior, such as pair bonding or grooming for example, can be paralleled among other animal species. Theologically speaking, according to the ancient myth of the Bible man is said to have dominion over nature and to be made in the image of God. The first claim is straightforward, and that very dominion is in process of being realized before our eyes. But what does it mean to claim that man is made in the image of God? Originally, the phrase may have intended some physical similarity—we cannot be sure. But the form of the question is in the present—not what *did* it mean but what *does* it mean to claim that man is made in God's image? Man has the capacity to develop personal relationships with other human beings, he is capable of rationality, and he is by nature a responsible being, however irresponsibly he may behave. These are the distinguishing features of humanity. This is not to deny that there are traces of personal relationships among animals—we know that this is so, particularly in the case of domesticated animals. Similarly, signs of rationality can be found in animals, and they are not totally incapable of responsibility. But in *Homo sapiens* there is a difference of degree which effects a difference in kind. It is these capacities which make man resemble the nature of God and which justify us in saying that man is made in God's image. A principle of the greatest importance follows from this. If man has dominion over nature and if he is made in God's image, it follows that he must exercise that dominion in a way that is both rational and responsible. The idea of responsibility is one of great depth. A person is responsible to himself, for he has the ability to choose what he shall become. He is responsible also to society, for no person can live in isolation and our responsibility to society reaches both forward to posterity and outward beyond national fron-

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tiers. But this responsibility extends also to the whole world over which man is given dominion. This does not mean that the natural world cannot be altered or ought not to be altered; but it does mean that it must be altered responsibly, and it should be exploited for man's use in what is a responsible way.

It is clear that the natural world is often unsatisfactory. The purposes of God are on their way to realization. There are many more possibilities to come to birth, and so the world is unfinished. Man can either hinder this realization or cooperate with his creator. The human impact on the environment is such that evils, which may have had their origin in the sinful will of man, often acquire a momentum of their own; and it is probably this which underlies the myth (which finds expression in the Bible) that there has been a cosmic Fall or that the whole universe is under the domination of demonic powers.

A distinction may be made, so far as evil is concerned, among those evils which may be called metaphysical (which concern the imperfections and limitations which belong to a created world), moral evils (which are the direct consequence of human misdeeds), and natural evils (which describe those evils which seem to fall into neither category). From time to time we may raise our eyebrows at the thought of a Creator whose nature is love, who creates and evolves a process which, anthropomorphically speaking, seems to have within it unnecessary evil. But further reflection suggests that natural evils are in fact metaphysical evils. Wild nature is the raw material on which man is intended to build and fashion a better world. Wild nature is to be admired for its beauty and adaptation of means to ends, but, according to the myth of Eden, man was created to till the garden of nature, and the natural world can be used by man for his own creative activities, embellishing it, tilling it, and building works of art and beauty out of it. Man can mitigate the effects of earthquake; he can relieve the consequences of other natural disasters; he can assuage some of the pain felt by sentient creatures; and he can add to its beauty, its utility, its adaptation of means to ends.

REDEMPTION

It is sometimes assumed that the relationship between man and nature arises only from the doctrine of creation insofar as man is made in God's image and has dominion over nature. But this is not the case. It arises also from the doctrine of redemption. Just as a pietistic transcendentalism has tended to alienate God from his creation, a narrow and individualist doctrine of redemption has tended to confine salvation to the saving of souls. Usually, Christianity has tended to think of redemption in a negative and individual way, such as plucking brands

from the burning, saving souls alienated from God by sin and purging their guilt. We have heard a little, say in the writings of Reinhold Niebuhr, about the redemption of society; but we have heard comparatively little, at any rate so far as contemporary Western theology is concerned, about the redemption of the world. The desacralization of the world has tended to divorce the spiritual from the material, leaving the world God-forsaken and therefore beyond the scope of redemption, a kind of backcloth for the saving of souls.

However, if we look at the biblical tradition, we see there the affirmation that the whole world is God's world, and therefore it is good. Because God is holy, man too is called to be holy and to express this holiness not only in worship but also in the natural world by the ways in which he treats his animals, his tools, and his earth. The close connection between the land and the vocation of Israel is a necessary prerequisite for understanding what Zionism is about today; but it is also relevant to the Judeo-Christian view which binds nature and man together in a single whole. It is the sin of man that has destroyed this unity. In Psalm 104, for example, man and nature combine to praise their creator:

The young lions roar for their prey
 seeking their food from God
When the sun rises, they get them away
 and lie down in their dens.
Man goes forth to his work and to his labor
 until the evening.
O Lord! How manifold are thy works
 in wisdom hast thou made them all.

The ancient unity between man and nature is shown in the creation story in Genesis 2 by the fact that man is vegetarian; as in the vision of *Paradise Lost*, so also in the vision of *Paradise Regained*, "the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid . . . they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain" (Isa. 2: 6-7, 9a).

According to the myth of the Flood, the waters were sent on the earth because of man's sinfulness. The covenant which God made with Noah is not just with man. God promises that he will never again destroy all living creatures—a promise five times repeated in Genesis 9. A new start is given to the earth, but the sinfulness of man shows a sad deterioration in the prevailing situation contrasted with the visions of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Man has lost his love for nature, and so we read (in Gen. 9:2): "The fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every

bird of the air, upon everything that creeps on the ground and all the fish of the sea: into your hand they are delivered." This is the language of conquest, exploitation, and ruthlessness. Man has become the enemy of nature. In the Book of Job man is properly put in his place concerning nature—"Were you there when I created the springs?"—and we are told that nature is created for God to take pleasure in. But the story of Noah reminds us that sinful man sees nature as merely an object for exploitation and other living beings as creatures to be reduced to fear and cringing.

If we look at the Old Testament we find the uncompromising assertion: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." We find too that man has been given control over nature and that this dominion has been made possible because God has made of no effect the demonic powers against which man could not otherwise prevail. Man can use his God-given dominion over nature in a rational way. In fact he misuses it and often acts tyrannically, and it is with this misuse that the "redemption of nature" is concerned.

According to Christian thinking, the world has a point and a purpose and in the providence of God moves toward an end. Man has a part to play in furthering that end and acts not only as cocreator with God in nature but also as coredeemer in the sense that he assists the purposes of God in the natural world. As cocreator he adds his own creative contribution to the beauties and adaptive processes of wild nature; as coredeemer he assists in putting right what he himself has succeeded in destroying or degrading in the world of nature.

Does this idea of man as coredeemer detract from the uniqueness of Christ as the only mediator between God and man? By no means, for man, in order to cooperate with the purposes of God the redeemer, himself needs a radical change of attitude. And it is precisely this radical change of attitude that the classical theories of the atonement set out to explain. Acceptance of this altered attitude is expressed in Christian terms by baptism. Baptism includes the renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But these renunciations do not mean that man turns away from the creation to retreat within himself. On the contrary, this way of renunciation is precisely the only true means of affirmation. The movement of repentance is necessary as a preliminary to the life of faith. Christian experience is that this movement, far from being world renouncing, is world affirming and life giving. What is being renounced is the world seen as a thing to be grasped at, an entity that has no relationship with God. When the flesh is renounced, an attitude that looks on the world simply as a source of gratification, something to be "raped" and possessed rather than something to be loved and respected for its own sake, is being

eschewed. When the devil is renounced, a further attitude which regards the world as an area of life which man can tyrannize with his power is forsworn. And so to renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil, so far as the natural world is concerned, is to make a radical reorientation toward it, a *metanoia*, an act of repentance. This reorientation goes so deep within the psyche that it cannot be effected by a mere conscious effort of will. It requires a moral change of being in the depths of a man's being, and it is here that the specifically Christian doctrine of Christ's redemption continues to play a vital role. Perhaps I could quote here from our report:

What is renounced is a turning in upon oneself and a turning in upon the world as something to be possessed and used in a self-regarding way. To renounce the world is to renounce the attitude of greed and grasping at things and people, which (as man experiences from childhood onwards) spoils his enjoyment and appreciation of things and people to be enjoyed. To renounce the flesh is to renounce the attitude which demands immediate returns in pleasure and prestige. Because it is basically self-centered, this attitude ignores the rights of others (both things and people) to their own existence. To renounce the devil is to renounce the power which inclines men to demand the immediate satisfaction of their own wishes, and which nourishes in them the illusion that they are the centre of the universe, and that all things are arranged around them and for them. Hidden beyond these renunciations is the affirmation that all things exist in themselves as God's creatures, that man can contemplate and enjoy them, and that, in collaboration with the Creator, he can take part in their creation and transformation.⁴

We cannot attempt a theological assessment of man and nature without an attempt to see the goal to which they aim. God has enabled the species *Homo sapiens* to evolve so that creatures which are capable of sharing the Creator's love and making a self-conscious response to it can emerge within our evolutionary process. The end of man is toward that maturity and ripeness of being which will enable him perfectly to respond in love to his fellow beings and thus to share for all eternity in the being of God's love. There is therefore a real sense in which this world is a vale of soul making. Outward conditions are as important as inward dispositions precisely because the environment can nourish or stunt the growing psyche and because man is his body as much as he is his soul. He is an embodied soul, and there is no part of him that can be compartmentalized as a body or a soul. The Christian therefore looks forward not to the continuation of a divine spark within him after death but to Resurrection, that is, to the re-creation of his whole personality in a new mode of being when he has died.

At the same time we look forward to the coming of the Kingdom of God on this earth. We do not expect it to come completely, for "flesh

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and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.” Yet the Christian prays at the order of his Lord: “Thy Kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.” The Christian view of history is not a cyclic repetition of meaninglessness, but it involves the concept of purpose and design. Saint Paul looks forward to the time when God will be “all in all.” Revelation looks forward to the new creation, a new heaven and a new earth, when the new Jerusalem comes down out of heaven from God, made ready like a bride adorned for her husband. All will be recapitulated. Nothing will be wasted. To say this is not to deny the reality of judgment, the law of entropy, or the possibility of hungry “black holes,” or the hypothesis that the sun will swell into a red giant and swallow up the earth. It is simply to assert from the perspective of faith that God has positive purposes for the whole almost unimaginable universe, that he has purposes for this planet circling round a medium-sized star in the Milky Way, and there will come a time when this purpose will be fulfilled. The work of redemption must not be constricted simply within an individualist frame, nor must it be confined to a merely negative meaning. Redemption is, in Christian theology, to be extended to the whole divine purpose for the world of nature, bringing to birth new possibilities at present unknown and enabling the whole world to reach the fulfilment of its potentialities. Within that divine purpose man is called to play an active role in promoting it as well as a more passive role in enjoying the natural world for its own sake.

SANCTIFICATION

In traditional Christian thinking it has been the Holy Spirit who has been understood as God in his world leading men toward a fulfillment which they can as yet neither understand nor grasp. The Holy Spirit is not a religious form of “vitalism,” as though there were an added factor to all existence which we could describe as the activity of God. God is not the *élan vital* within creation in the sense that his activity can be separated from his essence. When we speak of the immanence of God we mean that all things exist in God, yet he is not thereby diminished or limited by his creation. The Holy Spirit offers a creative interpretation of the world from the standpoint of faith: He gives a unifying vision of reality in which the power of God who brings it into being is seen as dynamically present within it.

Central to this explanation of the Holy Spirit is the Christian doctrine of Incarnation, which is now seen to be wonderfully congruent with our knowledge of emergent life in the process of evolution. I am the last person to explain this to scientists: I should rather be listening to their explanations. But I am sure it is agreed that our knowledge of

molecular biology and biological evolution leads us to understand all being, whether it be the natural world of air or water or stone or earth or the living world of birds, insects, mammals, fish, or men—all being shares common molecular structures, and all being forms stages in and products of a common development in time. To quote A. R. Peacocke: “The very stuff out of which we are made and the way it has become organised as ourselves is an inherent part of the ongoing development of the physical cosmos which we survey. We, and all other living creatures, have emerged in time out of the non-living world of water, air and rocks which seem so distinct and different from us.”⁷⁵

I have tried to describe some of the distinguishing characteristics of man. His personal relationships, his intellectual and aesthetic activities, his self-consciousness, and his ability to apprehend and even to comprehend truth—these are no less real and no less valuable for being grounded in physical process. New potentialities of matter emerge at fresh levels of organization and complexity. And so the inner life of man, what we may call, if you like, his soul, has emerged naturally from the potentialities of the primeval concourse of hydrogen atoms and subnuclear particles. Spirit is not separable from matter. It is an aspect of all matter, and at a high level of organization (such as occurs in *Homo sapiens*) spirit manifests itself in the spiritual self-consciousness of man. All that makes for the riches of human personality is therefore part of what is given in the developing cosmos, which through scientific investigation we have become able partly to comprehend.

This concept of spirit as an aspect of matter is surprisingly similar to the Christian doctrine of sacraments and in particular to the supreme sacrament where God honored matter with his own presence and being. Christians claim that the whole process of evolution is the outworking of the Holy Spirit, that is, the outworking of the creative being of God in his world; and they claim this process has culminated in the manifestation of God as a man within his created world. This paper is not concerned with the doctrine of Incarnation or yet with the doctrine of sacraments; but I mention them here to show that, if God has so honored matter with his own presence and if matter is capable of Incarnation, then it must be worthy of great respect. Once again Christians have tended to restrict the doctrine of sanctification, just as they have restricted the doctrines of creation and redemption. But if all matter has the potentiality of spirit, if human beings with all their talents and capacities consist of matter organized and structured in certain ways, if matter could be so perfectly structured that it was congruous for it to be used as the instrument and expression of God

himself, then matter is not to be despised but to be held in honor: Matter is the vehicle and expression of the Holy Spirit. We see this kind of insight in the biblical statement that the Holy Spirit brooded over the face of the waters and, from the Apocrypha, in the claim that "thy incorruptible Spirit is in all things" (Wisd. of Sol. 12:1). If this is so, then here is a theological explanation why matter should be regarded as having intrinsic worth and why men should not treat it simply as something to be manipulated for their own pleasure and power and prestige.

Of course, there is a hierarchy of spirit insofar as at the higher levels of organization of matter the potential Spirit in all things is more developed, and in *Homo sapiens* it has taken a new direction through activities and purposes which can be described only in terms of mind and self-consciousness. And insofar as we are identified with Christ we take a further new direction—we fulfill our own potentialities as human beings by being united to God, and so we experience what Christians call the Holy Spirit.

I have tried to assess man and nature chiefly in terms of the doctrines of creation, redemption, and sanctification, although in so doing I have touched on many other doctrines as well, for example, the doctrines of incarnation, sacraments, eschatology and the church. This is inevitable, for Christian doctrine is one interconnected organic whole. I have tried to draw upon mainstream Christianity as evidenced in the Bible, and I have tried to do this in a way which is consonant with our experience and our scientific insights into the nature of man and the world in which he has developed.

I have said little about Christian tradition except to draw attention to its inadequacies when it has narrowed the range of many Christian doctrines into a pietistic individualism. However, it would have been possible to quote passages where a much more healthy tradition has been retained—not only in the writings of Saint Francis of Assisi but in other medieval writers and in the writings of the Eastern fathers. Our own Anglican tradition, stemming from Richard Hooker, embraces the *via media* of an incarnational theology, including not only the Cambridge Platonists and the Laudians but also the later Romantics and the great Victorian giants such as John Keble, B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort, Charles Gore, and right down to twentieth-century theologians such as Charles Raven, Lionel Thornton, and Michael Ramsey. What I have been trying to do, therefore, is not so much to strike out a new line of theology as to articulate what already has been in some sense present within Anglican theology before the advent of our ecological crisis of resources, population, and pollution.

Lest this be thought very removed from the everyday problems of this technological world, let me point out that our actions are affected by our attitudes and our attitudes are shaped by our beliefs; and to ask people to change their actions without inviting them to alter their beliefs is to invite a sterile moralism.

How do our beliefs alter our attitudes in a theological assessment of man and nature? Let me quote again from our report:

To accept God as the creator of all things implies that man's creative activity should be in co-operation with the purposes of the Creator who has made all things good. To accept man's sinfulness is to recognise the limitations of human goals and the uncertainty of human achievement. To accept God as Saviour is to work out our own salvation in union with him, and so to do our part in restoring and recreating what by our folly and frailty we have defaced or destroyed, and in helping to come to birth those good possibilities that have not been realised. To accept the Christian doctrine of Resurrection is to persevere in spite of setback and disaster, to resist the temptation to slip back into fatalistic resignation. . . . To accept God as the Sanctifier of all existence implies a respect for all existence. To accept our nature as created in God's image involves responsible use of those godlike powers which God has put into our hands. To hold that God has created the world for a purpose gives man a worthy purpose in life, and a hope to lift up his heart. . . . To believe that all things will be restored and nothing wasted gives added meaning to all man's efforts and strivings. Only by the inspiration of such a vision is society likely to re-order this world and to find the symbols to interpret man's place within it.⁶

NOTES

1. *Christian Believing* (London: SPCK Press, 1975), pp. 145–46.
2. Hans Kung, *The Church*, trans. R. and R. Ockenden (London: Search Press, 1967).
3. Hugh Montefiore, ed., *Man and Nature* (London: William Collins & Sons, 1975).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 77–78.