

¶One of the greatest living scientists says—

I BELIEVE IN GOD

THE best reply to the question "Do you believe in God?" is that it requires an education rather than an answer, for it is obvious that anyone who does not know all about the universe can not have any sharply defined conception of *the integrating factor in it all*. It seems to me that everyone who reflects at all believes in one way or another in God.

From my point of view, the word atheism is generally used most unintelligently, for it is to me unthinkable that a real atheist should exist at all. I may not, indeed, believe in the conception of deity possessed by the Congo negro who pounds the tom-tom to drive away the god whose presence and influence he fears, and it is certain that no modern religious leader believes in the god who has the attributes which Moses, Joshua, and the Judges ascribe to their deity.

But it seems to me as obvious as breathing that every man who is sufficiently in his senses to recognize his own inability to comprehend the problem of existence, to understand whence he himself came and whither he is going, must in the very ad-

mission of that ignorance and finiteness recognize the existence of a Something, a Power, a Being in whom and because of whom he himself "lives and moves and has his being."

That Power, that Something, that Existence, we call God.

I am not much concerned whether I agree precisely with you in my conception or not, for both your conception and mine must, in the nature of the case, be vague and indefinite. Least of all am I disposed to quarrel with the man who spiritualizes nature and says that God is to him the Soul of the universe; for spirit, personality, and all those abstract conceptions which go with it, like love, duty, beauty, *exist* for you and for me just as much as do iron, wood, and water. They are in every way as real for us as are the physical things which we handle in everyday life.

Everyone who is sufficiently in his senses to recognize his own inability to comprehend the problem of existence bows his head in the presence of the Nature, if you so desire to call it—the God, I prefer to say—who is behind it all and whose attributes are partially revealed

to all of us, and increasingly so revealed as our knowledge grows, so that it pains me as much as Lord Kelvin said it did him "to hear crudely atheistic views expressed by men who have never known the deeper side of existence." Let me, then, use the word God to describe that which is behind the mystery of existence and that which gives meaning to it.

I think you will not misunderstand me then when I say that I have never known a thinking man who did not believe in God.

I do not see how there can be any sense of duty, or any reason for altruistic conduct which is entirely divorced from the conviction that moral conduct, or what we call goodness, is somehow or other worth while, that there is Something in the universe which gives significance and meaning, call it value if you will, to existence and no such sense of value can inhere in mere lumps of dead matter in-

teracting accordingly to purely mechanical laws.

Job saw thousands of years ago the futility of finite man's attempting to *define* God, when he cried, "Can man with searching find out God?" And similarly wise men ever since have always recognized their own ignorance and finiteness, and have been content to stand in silence and reverence before him.

Einstein states the scientist's conception exceedingly well as follows: "It is enough for me to contemplate the mystery of conscious life perpetuating itself through all eternity, to reflect upon the marvelous structure of the universe, which we can dimly perceive, and to try humbly to comprehend even an infinitesimal part of the intelligence manifested in Nature."

I myself need no better definition of God than that, and some such idea is in all religion as a basis for the idea of Deity.
—*Robert A. Millikan, in The New Current Digest.*

* * *

Aim

AN aim in life is the only fortune worth the finding; and it is not to be found in foreign lands, but in the heart itself.—*Robert Louis Stevenson.*