

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER

A service in memory of George Burman Foster, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology, 1895-97, Professor of Systematic Theology, 1897-1905, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion, 1905-18, was held in Leon Mandel Assembly Hall at 4:30 P.M., Wednesday, January 29, 1919. The Vice-President of the University, James Rowland Angell, presided. The service was opened with prayer by Professor Theodore Gerald Soares, Acting Chaplain of the University. An address "Professor Foster as a Man," was delivered by Professor J. M. Powis Smith. Professor Gerald Birney Smith then read several tributes from Professor Foster's students now holding positions of importance in universities and seminaries. Dr. William Wallace Fenn, Dean of the Harvard Divinity School, Cambridge, Massachusetts, then spoke of Professor Foster as a theologian and Professor James Hayden Tufts spoke of Professor Foster's philosophy of religion. The service concluded with the pronouncement of the benediction by the Acting Chaplain.

PROFESSOR FOSTER AS A MAN

By J. M. POWIS SMITH

It is my good fortune to have known Professor Foster for the last twenty-three years, first as a student in his classes, later as his colleague in a closely related department, and concurrently throughout the whole period as a friend. It is a solemn privilege to lay this wreath upon his tomb.

The concrete facts of Professor Foster's external life do not bulk large. Like most university professors, he lived the quiet life of the spirit. He was born at Alderson, West Virginia, April 2, 1857. He started his college work at Shelton College in that state, but completed his course at West Virginia University, receiving his A.B. in 1883, and A.M. in 1884. He crowned his course at the University by marrying Mary Lyon, the daughter of one of his professors. He had gone to college to equip himself for the work of the ministry, upon which he had already entered. He took theology at Rochester Theological Seminary, graduating in 1887. He served as pastor of the First Baptist Church at Saratoga Springs, New York from 1887-91. He then spent



Photo by Florence M. Hendershot

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER

a year in Germany at the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, whence he returned to become Professor of Philosophy in McMaster University, Toronto, where he remained till 1895. He was called thence to the Divinity School of the University of Chicago as Associate Professor of Systematic Theology. He was promoted to a Professorship in the same department in 1897. In 1905 he was transferred from the Divinity School to the Graduate School and made Professor of the Philosophy of Religion. Here he stayed until his untimely death on December 22, 1918.

Few men have been more glowingly praised or more heartily damned. It was inevitably so. There was nothing half way in his make-up. He was an out-and-outer in everything. He had no patience with opportunism in any sphere, and gave it short shrift. He saw clearly the desired goal and made straight for it. Such undeviating directness naturally brought friction between him and less courageous or less clear-sighted people. It is not without significance, however, that few of those who denounced him ever really knew him. No one could come into close contact with him for any length of time without yielding to the charm of his personality. He was endowed not merely with brilliancy of mind, but even more generously with warmth of heart. He gathered up people into the glow of his affections which speedily melted all traces of suspicion and hostility. He had a genuine liking for folks and this naturally called forth from them a corresponding attitude toward himself. Kindness was instinctive and spontaneous with him. He wished to be helpful to his fellow-men. He was clothed with gentleness as with a garment, but it was the gentleness of a strong man. Women and children recognized in him a friend. The oppressed did not appeal to him in vain. He was always ready to enter the lists against iniquity and greed. He was a knightly soul, a splendid demonstration of modern chivalry.

In the best sense of the word, Professor Foster was a simple soul. There was a genuinely child-like quality about him that was irresistibly winning. It was impossible to doubt his earnestness and sincerity. He breathed forth an atmosphere of reality. This simplicity of spirit and genuineness of aim and purpose attracted to him all classes and kinds of people. Into the interests of all he entered with sympathetic and appreciative understanding. He had a broad and generous outlook upon life. In the familiar words of Terence he might have said truly, "Homo sum; humani nihil alienum a me puto." He touched life at many points, and gathered the riches of his spirit in many mines. There was

nothing ascetic or pharisaic in his attitude toward life. He sought the best wherever it was to be found, and he gave forth of his best freely in return. He sought to live an abundant life and to live it to the full.

He was a preacher of unusual power. There was a genuinely prophetic fervor about his message. He felt that he was set for the defence of a free gospel. He was restless under every form of restraint upon freedom of thought and speech. He denounced hypocrisy in every form and pleaded for downright sincerity and purity of motive. His ethical passion, coupled with penetrating spiritual insight and finding expression in richly imaginative and picturesque speech, made the hearing of one of his sermons an unforgettable experience. He combined the old-time oratorical manner with the modern social and religious message in a way to produce most stimulating effects. His hearers might, and often did, dissent—they never slept. Naturally a preacher of such gifts had a wide audience. He could not be confined within the limits of any one church; he belonged to the religious world. He was in demand on every hand and in the most widely divergent communions. In fact, his religious message was called for repeatedly in quarters not supposed to be at all in sympathy with a religious interpretation of life. He was willing to talk religion to any group of people that was willing to listen. And he made religion of compelling interest to many who were not stirred in the slightest degree by the ordinary preaching of the churches.

Professor Foster was through and through a Christian. He deliberately dedicated himself to a life of service and sacrifice. He coveted recognition and appreciation, but he was unwilling to surrender his principles or one jot of his self-respect in order to obtain them. He stood for a generously liberal type of Christianity in a spirit of love, but he was not "too proud to fight" for his ideals. He suffered unspeakably in body and spirit from the buffetings of experience, but he maintained a persistent and reasoned optimism. He surrendered three of his children to the Great Destroyer, and yet wrote bravely and confidently upon "The Function of Death in Human Experience." There was no root of bitterness in him. The death of his son in the military service of his country was directly due to the ruthless ambition of Germany; and yet at my last interview with him in the hospital, he spoke in deprecation of the spirit of vengeance that was then finding expression in many quarters, and expressed the hope that Germany might be given a chance to develop its better self. As a philosopher and student of history he preserved a sane and well-balanced view of life, and never became a faddist. His enthusiasm was eager and contagious for everything new

or old that had in it promise and potency of good, and his enthusiasms were so many that he never remained one-sided in his views or blind to the values appreciated by others. Religion was always his supreme interest. He moved continually in that sphere; he was genuinely and incorruptibly religious. If we may bring an ancient word down to modern times, we may call him a saint. There is no other word that quite does justice to the mystic quality in his experience. He lived as "seeing Him who is invisible." The deepest thing in his life was his will to believe. No man ever had greater occasion to doubt. A man less spiritually minded would have succumbed. Disaster followed disaster with appalling frequency, leaving him "clean forespent"; but from these experiences he came forth with a fresh devotion and a more deeply rooted trust in things eternal.

The woes of life were unable to get the better of Dr. Foster. His spirit soared above them; his courage never failed him. He was bright and cheery among his comrades and did not obtrude upon them his own personal griefs. He was ready to meet every friend upon common ground, and brought with him a never-failing stock of interest and appreciation. He was richly endowed with the saving sense of humor. He could give and take a joke with the best of them. I remember well the glee with which he reported a conversation with one of his colleagues in philosophy. His friend asked him how he went about his writing. Dr. Foster answered to the effect that he read extensively upon his subject, he thought long upon it and then, to use his own words, "I sit down and write like a demon." The friend retorted "That is exactly what some people think." This spirit kept him from taking life too seriously and completely freed him from any suggestion of somber gloom. He had a sane and healthy mind and a wholesome attitude toward the problems of life.

Professor Foster's contribution to the life of the church was of a special kind. Neither in his own local church nor in the church at large was he drafted into service upon boards and committees or burdened with the duties of office. This was in part due to his temperament which did not seek and would not have welcomed activities and honors of this kind. He lived in the realm of thought rather than of action. His expansive soul could not have confined itself within the oppressive limitations of official routine. In quite as large measure, however, it was due to the fact that his mind moved ahead much more rapidly than that of the great mass of the church. He was a pioneer in the field of theological thought and pioneers are always lonely souls. His rapid progress

inevitably subjected him to the suspicions of his brethren. He seemed to them to be undermining the foundations of their faith. In truth, however, he was helping to lay the foundations of a better faith. Friendly criticism and intelligent foresight are indispensable to the church if she is to maintain her hold upon the esteem and confidence of intelligent people. No contribution to the church's efficiency exceeds in value and importance that made by her scholars. A church that muzzles or ignores scholarship speedily sinks into slothful ignorance and unspiritual superstition. It is only through the work of such men as George B. Foster that the church is enabled to keep step with the progress of the ages. They do not sit in her councils, but they break out the paths of thought along which those councils will later follow.

It was in the classroom, however, that Professor Foster did his greatest work. Here he was greeted by large numbers of eager students, drawn thither by his widespread renown and actuated by various motives. Some who "came to scoff remained to pray." Many a man who was losing his grip upon spiritual realities was encouraged and enabled to take a firmer hold by reason of the hours spent in the classroom of this most inspiring teacher. His students came to know him, and to know him was to love him. They understood him and thus called forth his very best. His greatest contribution to them was himself. He revealed himself to them in all the wonderful richness of his nature. They saw constantly his unshakable devotion to the truth and his consuming zeal in its pursuit. His transparent honesty commanded their respect. His ability to push through to the heart of a problem, wasting neither time nor energy upon subsidiary and distracting details, filled them with admiration. The catholicity of his mind and his entire freedom from unreasoning prejudice enlisted their co-operation. Over and around the teacher's enthusiasm for knowledge and permeating the scholar's quest for truth was a fine glow of religion which elevated the whole process into a truly spiritual experience.

The news of Professor Foster's death has brought a sense of personal loss into many lives throughout our land and the lands beyond the seas. Words of profound appreciation have come in from former students in every part of the globe. To many of us life will always be richer and finer because of the interpretative insight and contagious enthusiasm of this great teacher. In the age of social reconstruction upon which we are now embarked and toward which he looked forward eagerly, we shall miss his inspiring co-operation, but be grateful for the memory of his exalted idealism. The workman falls; his work goes on.

PROFESSOR FOSTER AS A THEOLOGIAN

By WILLIAM WALLACE FENN
Dean of the Harvard Divinity School

While I was a minister in Chicago, one of the many greatly appreciated privileges of living in this neighborhood was the frequent opportunity to attend the Sunday vesper services of the University, which at that time were held in the lecture-room of Kent. On one occasion I heard Professor Foster speak from the words of Paul: "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content. I have learned how to abound; I have learned how to be abased. In everything and in all things, I have learned the secret, both to be in want and to abound."

The scene is as vivid in my recollection today as if it were of yesterday—the gathering shadows, the tall, spare form of the preacher, partly obscured in gloom, partly illuminated by the lamp at the reading desk; the keen, alert face of the scholar, the wealth of dark hair, brushed back occasionally with an unconscious, meditative gesture. Up to that time I knew him only by sight and by name, as teacher of systematic theology in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. I came away from that service persuaded that I had listened to the most deeply religious man I had ever heard, and that impression was deepened by subsequent acquaintance, ripening into intimate friendship.

I do not wish to speak of Professor Foster particularly as a theologian this afternoon. What I would say is rather in substance this: that he was the most profoundly, purely, genuinely, religious man that I ever knew. In the case of Professor Foster, unlike that of others, we cannot speak of the religious side of his nature. Religion was not a side of his nature; it was his nature, in its wholeness. All his powers were penetrated and united by the religious spirit, and how rich and manifold that nature was. He was a great scholar. It is not as a personal friend, but as a colleague in the Department of Systematic Theology that I venture to repeat here what I have said elsewhere, both in public and in private, that as a systematic theologian, for breadth and depth of learning, for keenness, vigor, and originality of mind, he had not a peer in the world, unless perhaps it be Troeltsch, and I should underscore the *perhaps*. Certainly in this country, no theologian was anywhere near his equal.

He was also a great teacher. Once, in his classroom, he wrote upon the board a single sentence containing a proposition in theology, and asked one of the students whether he agreed with it. The question started a discussion, which was carried on among the members of the

class, with only an occasional hint or suggestion from Professor Foster. The discussion was interesting, but it seemed to me rather wandering, until ten minutes before the close of the period Professor Foster gathered up the lines of the debate, and then it became evident that throughout, unobtrusively, he had so guided and governed the discussion that its lines had converged precisely at the point where he wished them to converge. It was a triumph of the teacher's art. He was a masterly teacher.

Who can ever forget his pithy wit and genial humor? On one occasion, after listening to a lecture on the caution of Jesus, in which the lecturer declared that Jesus did not believe in casting his pearls before swine, that he had many things to say to the people which they were not prepared to hear, that his practice was to lead them along gently, without offending them, until they should by-and-by be prepared for the larger truth, Professor Foster a day or two later happened to meet the lecturer, who remarked rather pointedly that he was glad he was in the audience, to which Professor Foster replied, "Yes, I was there, and while you were speaking, one question occurred to me, and that was, that if Jesus was precisely the sort of man that you describe, I can't for the life of me see how he ever managed to get crucified." As one of my Harvard colleagues said, when I quoted the remark: "That was ultimate."

Professor Foster's literary style was often obscure and labored, but now and then there came a single short sentence which went to the very heart of the matter and illumined the whole discussion. In the last public address that I heard him give, in Boston, nearly a year ago, he said: "If there was perfection at the beginning, why begin?" And that single sentence said what many a theologian had been trying to say, in his dull fashion, in an elaborate essay or even in a book.

I never shall forget the look on his face and the tone of his voice as he said to me one day while we were walking the streets of Chicago together: "Yes, truth may change, but truthfulness is of eternal worth." What tender humanity he had! With the mighty mind was associated the heart of a child. His passion to be helpful had been referred to. Once while he was spending a week with me on the shore of Cape Ann, he came down one morning with an open letter in his hand and a look of dismay on his face. "Here is a letter," he said, "from a man who has asked me half a dozen questions in theology which it will take me hours to answer, and I don't feel as if I had strength to do it." "Why," I replied, "do you know the man?" "Never heard of him in my life before." "Is he an educated man, who would understand the answers

that you might give?" He looked rather dubiously at the letter and said: "I should judge from his writing that he is a very illiterate person." "Then why should you spend hours of your time in writing page after page to a man who will only misunderstand you and misrepresent you?" "Why," he answered, with the utmost simplicity, "why, but he has asked me the questions." With greater callousness than his, I ventured to suggest a way in which, without putting himself to so great labor, he could at least satisfy his inquirer with due politeness.

So friendly and willing to be helpful to strangers, so simple and trustful in his nature, I often wondered whether he was not taken advantage of by people who presumed upon his kindness or who sought to use him for their own ends.

But if he was thus kind and sympathetic to strangers, what was he to his friends? One dares not speak of the family relations in which his life was happily and securely rooted in mutual helpfulness, confidence, and affection. To those of us who were his friends, the loss is great and irreparable. Sensitive, extraordinarily sensitive, I knew him when contumely was raining upon his head, but I never heard from him one resentful or vindictive word. But he told me with great sorrow only a little less than a year ago, that when his son died in military service, there was only one clergyman in the city of Chicago who wrote him a letter of sympathy, and that was a Jewish rabbi.

These and many other traits of character which, for lack of time, cannot now be described or even mentioned, were united by that religious spirit which was so impressive. That this was not appreciated is sad, but it is not surprising. I fancy that for the failure, his method is in part responsible. It was his way to take a current tendency and follow it relentlessly to its logical conclusion, and then seek to estimate its consequences for the life of the spirit. People supposed that when he was doing this, he was stating his own final conclusion. But with him there was no finality. There were but stages in the pilgrim's progress. He never could have belonged to the cult of the "arrived." The music to which his life was set was the Pilgrim's Chorus.

He said once that it was his habit in the lecture-room to reveal his inmost doubt, in the pulpit to reveal his inmost faith. Indeed, I sometimes wonder whether his own thinking reckoned so fully as it should have done with his own religious life. No man was firmer than he in championing the rights of thought in religion. But I sometimes wonder whether his own thinking took sufficient account of the meaning of his own religious life.

He had the virtues of his ancestry—mountain pioneers. He was passionately devoted to liberty. He had the simplicity, the frankness, the friendliness of the mountaineer. He had the loathing for shams and for their loathsome parents, falsehood and cowardice. These things may have come in part from his pioneer ancestors. But he had a deeper heredity in the spirit which, in all ages, entering into human souls, makes them friends of God and prophets. He was a pilgrim of the eternal, dwelling in tents like the great souls who have preceded him, ever seeking for the city which hath foundations.

GEORGE BURMAN FOSTER

BY JAMES HAYDEN TUFTS

Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy

It is sometimes possible to separate a man's work as thinker and writer and teacher from his more intimate and personal life. But in the case of Professor Foster this would be extremely difficult. His peculiar power and widespread influence were due largely to the intimate interaction between the world of thought and the life of feeling, between the pursuit of truth and the pressure of humanity's needs. The study of religion was for him the most practical of all tasks.

Born among the West Virginia hills, the son of a farmer, he spent the years until the age of sixteen largely out-of-doors working on the rocky hill farm or hunting the mountains over for ginseng root. The abiding influence of this early environment is suggested by the dedication of his second book, which recalls "the West Virginia hills which stand like sentinels around my childhood's home," and adds the motto *Montani semper liberi*. He was not in later years a lover of the fields and woods, but had rather, as his wife used to tell him a "cathedral mind," but it seems not fanciful to think that this early life among the hills not only strengthened his body for its severe tasks of later years but also made its contribution to elevation of soul and love of freedom.

A passion for books which would get him up long before daybreak to read by the light of the open fire as he lay upon a rug, and which was scarcely comprehensible, even to his open-minded father, showed itself very early and at sixteen he was "given his time" by his father to go away from home for study. His gift for effective speaking enabled him to support himself through fitting school, college, and seminary by preaching.

He brought to the University a twofold training: on the one hand, his work as preacher, both during his years of study and later for five

years at Saratoga, was well adapted to give him knowledge of religious needs and to deepen his naturally kindly and sympathetic spirit; on the other, his year in Germany and three years as teacher of philosophy at McMaster University disclosed new horizons, and introduced him to methods of critical inquiry. The first training was valuable for his chair in theology, the second was important for this but indispensable for his later field of the philosophy of religion. As the work in this latter department was jointly planned Professor George S. Goodspeed would have treated chiefly the history of religion and Professor Foster the philosophy of religion. The death of Professor Goodspeed threw the burden of both these tasks upon Professor Foster. Instruction in the history of religion although at first undertaken with some reluctance, came to be increasingly fascinating as it brought him into contact with a larger range of concrete religious experience. But his training and paramount interests were in the philosophical and psychological problems of religion and in the bearing of these upon the actual religious life of today and tomorrow.

His most substantial publications were his two books: *The Finality of the Christian Religion*, 1905, based on courses of lectures given at the Harvard Summer School of Theology, and *The Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*, 1909, based on a lecture delivered before the Philosophic Union of the University of California, "dashed off at white heat in about thirty days as a sort of 'by-product.'" Articles were contributed from time to time to the *American Journal of Theology* and other periodicals. The Dudleian Lecture on "Revealed Religion" delivered at Harvard last year is expected to appear in print shortly. An invitation to deliver the Nathaniel William Taylor lectures at the Yale School of Religion had been accepted and "The God-idea" had been tentatively considered for the subject. Lectures on Nietzsche given at the University in the summer of 1917 were written out, but the second volume of his chief work which was begun shortly after the publication of the second edition of his first volume, had never been completed. It is a somewhat interesting fact that with Professor Foster as with many others the occasion which called forth his most conspicuous work was not his regular teaching but an invitation to lecture at another institution. Of his larger book it may well be said that it attracted attention and exerted influence altogether out of proportion to the extent of its circulation. Finally, the meditation on *The Function of Death in Human Experience* published in 1915 in the University of Chicago Sermons is classic in its simplicity of expression and profound in its thought.

Professor Foster's focus of interest and great contribution were not in the field of Philosophy of Religion conceived as a separate general discipline, nor in the specific problems of Christian Theology and Religion which his training as a preacher and his earlier chair in the University naturally tended to make of compelling importance. Rather he aimed to bring to each of these fields the method and data of the other. He aimed to view Christianity in the light of the history of thought and the psychology of experience; he aimed to bring to the general study of religion the personal experience of his own life struggle and of the to him ever fascinating and supremely important personality of the Founder of Christianity. He studied therefore (1) religion as a type of experience, (2) the views of the world and of man which religion implies, and then (3) more definitely the question whether Christianity can be regarded as the ultimate religion—a question which involved in turn the question "What is Christianity?"

The field so conceived was vast. In each of its divisions it had as he viewed it a destructive and a constructive phase. The dead hand of authority which would prevent any scientific inquiry at all must first be removed. Man must be free to use scientific methods or any methods which would lead to truth. Further, the composite structures built in past ages out of religious experiences, crude metaphysics and tribal or imperial law, must be shattered—unless they could be left standing on the definite basis of being regarded simply as great monuments of a past which must not interfere with the needs of building a home for the human spirit of today and tomorrow.

Yet all this work of dissolving authority and setting us free from the past was but preliminary. The constructive phase, of which unfortunately we have only the beginnings in completely worked-out form, was to him the more important as it was of course the more difficult of execution. His philosophical basis he found, not in the idealism which had earlier held sway in Germany and was, when he began to work, predominant in British and American thinking. Nor did he adopt as a whole the method and point of view of the pragmatic movement although he regarded the conception of evolution as crucial in his problem, and says in his preface to the second edition of the *Finality* that this movement presented a new situation which would compel a rewriting of his manuscript for the projected second volume. He turned rather to a philosophy which seeks the essence of religion in the willing and feeling side of experience; which finds escape from naturalism by distinguishing sharply between facts and values; which emphasizes personality as a

spontaneous and creative factor not explained by either mechanism or history; and which finds the possibility of religion in the "eternal values," which, while they "cannot be given and received passively" but must be "created and conquered by the sweat of our brows as we till life's thorny fields," are yet "unattainable by us men of ourselves," and through fountains of creative personalities "stream forth from eternity into the human world."

Students of the philosophy of religion will recognize the quarries from which Professor Foster brought materials for his own structure. But no one can question that this was in a very genuine and vital sense his own. There is a relentless pursuit, a sustained passion, a sweep of thought, which come not to the eclectic chooser, but to him only who has fused all his materials from whatever source gathered in the heat of long and severe intellectual toil.

The key to Professor Foster's contribution and to his power as thinker, teacher, and writer, is found when we inquire "how are we to test either past or future philosophies of religion?" Can we employ a method of deductions from pure reason or of observations by an impartial spectator? Either of these methods would assume that intellectual tests were adequate, yet humanity has always shrunk from trusting implicitly to the intellectual "knowledge about" as an adequate substitute for "acquaintance with" when a practical problem of a supreme value of experience as well as of the meaning of the world is at stake. Professor Foster was convinced that the intellectual has in fact filled too large, or rather, too exclusive a place in the criteria of religion. Religion was for him in part an attitude of personal companionship. This meant that one could understand it only if one were the type of person who made himself capable of companionship with the morally ideal person. In part religion is a matter of the reality which now is, but in part it is also a matter of the reality which is yet in the making and to which the inquirer must make his own contribution. If we ask what is the "essence" of religion or of Christianity we learn that, in Professor Foster's words, "determination of essence is *construction* of essence, since the task is personally conditioned. That is, it is not simply a datum to be received, but a reality to be created ever anew. . . . The task is not simply scientific, but moral, and thus belongs to man's larger vocation of forming an ethical personality through pain and struggle, perplexity and sorrow."

"Not simply scientific but moral"—the common man may not have formulated his reasons thus, but he has felt that the religious life is

not merely a theory but a belief, a venture. He has been greatly moved by men who have not merely inquired but have themselves thrown their all into the struggle, who have risked not merely external disapproval or pecuniary loss but their own souls. The reason why Professor Foster gripped not only students but men at large was probably not so much because of greater metaphysical acuteness, wider historical research, or even more relentless and single-minded pursuit of truth than some others evidenced, but rather because his views were born in the travail of great personal struggles for freedom, assurance, and personal fulfillment of life. Many who reach the same intellectual conclusions with less of struggle pay the penalty for their own smoother course by leaving their readers and hearers cold. The souls which win their victories of the spirit through passion have a more convincing philosophy. Says the preface to *The Finality of the Christian Religion*:

The Book is a mirror of the development of the author's own experience; a development, moreover, which has not yet come to a close; a fact which is also mirrored in the book. He believes that a multitude of thoughtful men and women are passing through an experience similar to his own; and that a greater multitude will travel, with bleeding feet, the same *via dolorosa* tomorrow and the day after . . . to all such the author offers himself as fellow-pilgrim, not without some hope that they may be a little less lonely for his comradeship, a little less bewildered for his guidance, and a little less sorrowful and discouraged for his own joy and hope.

Side by side with this principal interest in the great problem of religion was growing in his later years a broad sympathy with problems of democracy which was finding expression in contributions to the daily press or in sermon and debate. Foster saw that the issues of the war would not be settled with the end of the military campaign. He believed that industrial democracy as well as political democracy must be in the end not only the just, but the stable, basis for society, however slow the process may be through which the readjustment should be made. Nor was this democratic conviction a matter separate from his philosophy of religion. His confidence in the possibility of human nature was for him a part of his general view that the religious possibilities and the moral possibilities of men are not limited to the few. "Human nature's creative power in the world of goodness" he wrote in his *Function of Religion in Man's Struggle for Existence*, "is not limited to the Great Man and the Great Man's influence, but, though graded, is immanent and constant in the race."

The struggle in which he beat his music out was real, and many did not catch the greater swell of harmony but heard only the clashing

chords. He did not regard the issues as merely personal. "I should be a traitor to every poor, half-paid teacher in the backwoods if I did not give free expression to my convictions" he exclaimed at one time. But he found his way; he stood for his convictions with absolutely unflinching courage; he met misunderstanding and opposition unflinchingly; more he met even severer tests of successive bereavements, and kept gentleness, sweetness, and serenity of spirit. His was a soul that had overcome the world.

In his meditation upon Death Professor Foster has himself framed the test by which he would be judged:

What of ourselves do we leave behind us for other men, when we must go hence? Is that which we have given to men, is that which we shall leave to men, worth our living for? Are men stronger, truer, freer, because we have lived? Is there a human soul in the world to whom we have been a necessity? Is there someone who has found in us a revelation of God, who has had a vision of the life of God, of the love of God, in and through us? If so, we have known happiness upon the earth, we have fulfilled our calling in life, and death cannot bear witness against us.