

them; since it is repugnant that they should subsist by themselves.

But, if we attentively consider the constant regularity, order, and concatenation of natural things, the surprising magnificence, beauty, and perfection of the larger, and the exquisite contrivance of the smaller parts of creation, together with the exact harmony and correspondence of the whole, but above all the never-enough-admired laws of pain and pleasure, and the instincts or natural inclinations, appetites and passions of animals;—I say if we consider all these things, and at the same time attend to the meaning and import of the attributed One, Eternal, Infinitely Wise, Good, and Perfect, we shall clearly perceive that they belong to the aforesaid Spirit, "who works all in all" and "by whom all things consist."

148. It seems to be a general pretense of the unthinking herd that they cannot *see* God. Could we but see Him, say they, as we see a man, we should believe that He is, and believing obey His commands. But, alas, we need only open our eyes to see the Sovereign Lord of all things, with a *more* full and clear view than we do any one of our fellow-creatures. Not that I imagine we see God by a direct and immediate view. But I shall explain my meaning.

A human spirit or person is not perceived by sense, as not being an idea. When, therefore, we see the color, size, figure, and motions of a man, we perceive only certain sensations or ideas excited in our own minds; and these being exhibited to our view in sundry distinct collections, serve to mark out unto us the existence of finite and created spirits like ourselves. Hence, it is plain we do not see a man, if by *man* is meant that which lives, moves, perceives, and thinks as we do: but only such a certain collection of ideas as directs us to think there is a distinct principle of thought and motion, like to ourselves, accompanying and represented by it.

And after the same manner we see God; all the difference is that, whereas some one finite and narrow assemblage of ideas

human mind, whithersoever we direct our eyes, we do at all times and in all places perceive manifest tokens of the Divinity; everything we see, hear, feel, or anywise perceive by sense, being a sign or effect of the power of God; as is our perception of those very motions which are produced by men.

I. HOW THE WONDER AND MAJESTY OF GOD IS DECLARED BY THE CHOIR OF NATURE

149. It is, therefore, plain that nothing can be more evident to any one that is capable of the least reflection than the existence of God, or a Spirit who is intimately present to our minds, producing in them all that variety of ideas or sensations which continually affect us, on whom we have an absolute and entire dependence, in short, "in whom we live, and move, and have our being."

That the discovery of this great truth, which lies so near and obvious to the mind, should be attained to by the reason of so very few, is a sad instance of the stupidity and inattention of men, who, though they are surrounded with such clear manifestations of the Deity, are yet so little affected by them that they seem, as it were, blinded with excess of light.

100. PRAGMATISM *

William James (1842–1910)

A. WHAT PRAGMATISM MEANS

The pragmatic method is primarily a method of settling philosophical disputes that otherwise might be interminable. Is the world one or many?—fated or free?—material or spiritual?—here are notions either of which may or may not hold good of the world; and disputes over such notions are unending. The prag-

* *Pragmatism* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907), pp. 45–80 in part. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

matic method in such cases is to try to interpret each notion by tracing its respective practical consequences. What difference would it practically make to any one if this notion rather than that notion were true? If no practical difference whatever can be traced, then the alternatives mean practically the same thing, and all dispute is idle. Whenever a dispute is serious, we ought to be able to show some practical difference that must follow from one side or the other's being right.

A glance at the history of the idea will show you still better what pragmatism means. The term is derived from the same Greek word *pragma*, meaning *action*, from which our words *practice* and *practical* come. It was first introduced into philosophy by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878. In an article entitled, "How to Make Our Ideas Clear," in the *Popular Science Monthly* for January of that year, Mr. Peirce, after pointing out that our beliefs are really rules for action, said that, to develop a thought's meaning, we need only determine what conduct it is fitted to produce: that conduct is for us its sole significance. And the tangible fact at the root of all our thought-distinctions, however subtle, is that there is no one of them so fine as to consist in anything but a possible difference of practice. To attain perfect clearness in our thoughts of an object, then, we need only consider what conceivable effects of a practical kind the object may involve—what sensations we are to expect from it, and what reactions we must prepare. Our conception of these effects, whether immediate or remote, is then for us the whole of our conception of the object, so far as that conception has positive significance at all.

If you follow the pragmatic method, you cannot look on any such word as "Matter," "Reason," "Absolute," as closing your quest. You must bring out of each word its practical cash-value, set it at work within the stream of your experience. It appears less as a solution, then, than as a program for more work, and more particularly as an indication of the ways in which existing realities may be *changed*.

Theories thus become instruments, not answers to enigmas in which we rest. We don't lie back upon them, we move forward, and, on occasion, make nature over again by their aid.

Pragmatism unstiffens all our theories, limbers them up, and sets each one at work.

B. THE PRAGMATIC THEORY OF TRUTH

So much for the pragmatic method. Meanwhile the word *pragmatism* has come to be used in a still wider sense, as meaning also a certain *theory of truth*. Dewey has given us his pragmatic account of what truth everywhere signifies. Everywhere, he says, "truth" in our ideas and beliefs means the same thing that it means in science. It means, he says, nothing but this, *that ideas (which themselves are but parts of our experience) become true just in so far as they help us to get into satisfactory relation with other parts of our experience, to summarize them and get about among them by conceptual short-cuts instead of following the interminable succession of particular phenomena. Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labor; is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true instrumentally. This is the "instrumental" view of truth taught so successfully by Dewey.*

Dewey, and his allies, in reaching this general conception of all truth, have only followed the example of geologists, biologists, and philologists. In the establishment of these other sciences, the successful stroke was always to take some simple process actually observable in operation—as denudation by weather, say, or variation from parental type, or change of dialect by incorporation of new words and pronunciations—and then to generalize it, making it apply to all times, and produce great results by summing its effects through the ages.

The observable process which Dewey particularly singled out for generalization is the familiar one by which any individual settles into *new opinions*. The process here is always the same. The individual has a stock of old opinions already, but he meets a new experience that puts them to a strain. Somebody contradicts them; or, in a reflective moment, he discovers that they contradict each other; or he hears of facts with which they are incompatible; or desires arise in him which they cease to satisfy.

The result is an inward trouble to which his mind till then had been a stranger, and from which he seeks to escape by modifying his previous mass of opinions. He saves as much of it as he can, for in this matter of belief we are all extreme conservatives. So he tries to change first this opinion, and then that (for they resist change very variously), until at last some new idea comes up which he can graft upon the ancient stock with a minimum of disturbance of the latter, some idea that mediates between the stock and the new experience, and runs them into one another most felicitously and expediently.

A new opinion counts as "true" just in proportion as it gratifies the individual's desire to assimilate the novel in his experience to his beliefs in stock. It must both lean on old truth and grasp new fact. Its success in doing this is a matter for the individual's appreciation. When old truth grows, then, by new truth's addition, it is for subjective reasons. We are in the process and obey the reasons.

The new idea makes itself true, gets itself classed as true, by the way it works. The pragmatist talks about truths in the plural, about their utility and satisfactoriness, about the success with which they "work." He clings to facts and concreteness, observes truth at its work in particular cases, and generalizes. Truth, for him, becomes a class-name for all sorts of definite working-values in experience. An idea is "true" so long as to believe it is profitable to our lives. Truth is *one species of good*. *The true is the name of whatever proves itself to be good in the way of belief, and good, too, for definite, assignable reasons.*

Pragmatism is a mediator and reconciler. She has no prejudices whatever, no obstructive dogmas. She is completely genial. She will entertain any hypothesis, she will consider any evidence. It follows that in the religious field she is at a great advantage. She widens the field for search for God. She will count mystical experiences if they have practical consequences. Her only test of probable truth is what works best in the way of leading us, what fits every part of life best and combines with the collectivity of experience's demands, nothing being omitted. What other kind of truth could there be, for her, than all this agreement with concrete reality?

Such then would be the scope of pragmatism: first, a method; and, second, a genetic theory of what is meant by truth.

101. CREATION THE GOAL OF LIFE *

Henri Bergson (1859-1941)

A JOY, THE SIGN AND REWARD OF CREATION

Philosophers who have speculated on the meaning of life and on the destiny of man have failed to take sufficient notice of an indication which nature itself has given us. Nature warns us by a clear sign that our destination is attained. That sign is joy. I mean joy, not pleasure. Pleasure is only a contrivance devised by nature to obtain for the creature the preservation of its life; it does not indicate the direction in which life is thrusting. But joy always announces that life has succeeded, gained ground, conquered. All great joy has a triumphant note.

Now, if we take this indication into account and follow this new line of facts, we find that wherever there is joy, there is creation; the richer the creation, the deeper the joy. The mother beholding her child is joyous, because she is conscious of having created it, physically and morally. The merchant developing his business, the manufacturer seeing his industry prosper, are joyous,—is it because money is gained and notoriety acquired? No doubt, riches and social position count for much, but it is pleasures rather than joy that they bring; true joy, here, is the feeling of having started an enterprise which goes, of having brought something to life.

Take exceptional joys—the joy of the artist who has realized his thought, the joy of the thinker who has made a discovery or an invention. You may hear it said that these men work for glory and get their highest joy from the admiration they win. Profound error! We cling to praise and honors in the exact degree in which we are not sure of having succeeded. There

* *Mind-Energy* (trans. by H. Wildon Carr; New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1920), pp. 29-35. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.