

Coleridge's thought and the eclectic spirit of German Romanticism, enabled MacDonald to achieve his synthesized vision.

VIEW OF THE IMAGINATION

Convinced the imagination is essential to apprehending spiritual truth, MacDonald boldly developed a comprehensive theory of its nature and working. In his essay, "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture," printed in *Orts*, MacDonald writes: "... we dare to claim for the true, childlike humble imagination, such an inward oneness with the laws of the universe that it possesses itself an insight into the very nature of things."

He continues to argue that the imagination must be colaborer with the intellect; otherwise thinking is merely analytic and sterile.

In this colaboring, MacDonald concludes, the primary function of the imagination is to give forms to thought. These forms are not original with people, however; they come from nature, which God has made. In fact, God is constantly in the process of creating both nature and people: everything is presently being thought by God. Hence, to think imaginatively is to think God's thoughts after Him.

Further, since God continues to think the forms of nature, He is constantly investing them with meaning. All of them mean humanity well—they are sacramental. People, thinking imaginatively, will come to know some of these meanings when they are morally and spiritually in harmony with God. The quotation above stipulates that the imagination must be "true, childlike," and "humble." What MacDonald means by these qualities,

and how essential he feels them to be, have been discussed throughout this book.

MacDonald's view of the extent to which insightful thinking depends upon God is perhaps made more clear by a poem he wrote, entitled "A Cry":

Lord, hear my discontent: all blank I stand,
 A mirror polished by thy hand;
 Thy sun's beams flash and flame from me—
 I cannot help it: here I stand, there he!
 To one of them I cannot say,
 Go, and on yonder water play;
 Nor one poor ragged daisy can I fashion—
 I do not make the words of this my limping passion!
 If I should say, Now I will think a thought,
 Lo, I must wait, unknowing
 What thought in me is growing,
 Until the thing to birth be brought!
 Nor know I then what next will come
 From out the gulf of silence dumb:
 I am the door the thing will find
 To pass into the general mind!
 I cannot say I think—
 I only stand upon the thought-well's brink:
 From darkness to the sun the water bubbles up—
 I lift it in my cup.
 Thou only thinkest—I am thought;
 Me and my thought thou thinkest. Naught
 Am I but as a fountain spout
 From which thy water wellet out.
 Thou art the only one, the all in all.—
 Yet when my soul on thee doth call
 And thou dost answer out of everywhere,
 I in thy allness have my perfect share.