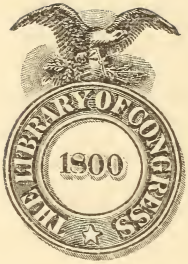

The Methodist Pulpit

The Religious Instinct of Man

F. M. Bristol

The Religious Instinct of Man

By

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I.

THE RELIGIOUS INSTINCT OF MAN.

"*Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat religious.*"—Acts xvii, 22. (Marginal reading.)

PAUL'S appearance in Athens was one of the most significant events connected with the first efforts to evangelize the pagan world. This apostle of Christianity came to preach where the voice of Demosthenes had thrilled the listening multitudes; to hold up a moral standard where Aristotle had taught his ethics; to discourse on world-origin where Hesiod's Theogony was familiar; to speak of immortality where Plato had "reasoned well," and where Socrates had died a martyr to his glorious hope.

As he walked the streets of the world's most classical and elegant city he was scholar enough, and man enough, to appreciate all that human culture had done for the Greeks, and all that the Greeks had done for the world's intellectual develop-

ment. But what thought was uppermost in his mind on that ever-memorable day? What most profoundly impressed him? What stirred his blood with most exquisite thrill of emotion? Was it the art which made the city beautiful? Was it meditation on the glorious past, on the philosophy and song and eloquence and arms "that made the old time splendid?" No. We are told that "his spirit was stirred in him as he beheld the city full of idols," full of the symbols of religions. When he was invited to address the people and explain his new doctrine, he began his great discourse, not with the discourteous and boorish words, "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious," but with the gentlemanly and conciliatory statement, "Ye men of Athens, in all things I perceive that ye are somewhat religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship I found also an altar with this inscription: To the unknown God." That altar was the best that human reason could construct. Upon it was inscribed the condensed wisdom of thirty great and original philosophies, the deduction of ten centuries of thought and speculation, the result of the long and brilliant history of Greek intellectualism—"To the unknown God."

In that altar and in that inscription Paul found the evidences of the Athenians' religiousness. He considered them "somewhat religious," not because their city was full of idols, but because there, surrounded with thirty thousand idols, he found an altar which had no idolatrous significance; an altar which stood for a great people's age-long inquiry, for a nation's dream and aspiration, for their search after the true God. That altar had a religious meaning. It said: There is still some divineness smoldering in this Greek humanity; there are still aspirings, gropings, inarticulate but deathless questionings for the Infinite. Under all the dust and ashes of their vain and obsolete philosophies and idolatries slumber still the inextinguishable embers of a divinely-enkindled religiousness which may yet send up and send forth a flame of fire and a flood of light.

It was here that Paul the Hebrew, Paul the Christian, found common ground with the Athenians: "Ye are somewhat religious." He does not say, "Ye are somewhat philosophical and rational," or "Ye are somewhat pious or holy, or righteous," but simply, "Ye are somewhat religious." You have religious aspirations; you are trying to solve the problem of destiny; you are questioning the awful mysteries; you admit that thirty thousand

idols can not satisfy. This altar and this inscription tell the story; it is enough; we here stand on common ground; we belong to one universal God-seeking humanity. A truce to all our bigotries, all our pride of opinion; we are brothers in the search of truth.

It has been said that man's differentiating characteristic in the animal kingdom consists of his being a talking animal, a reasoning animal, a tool-making animal, a fire-building animal, a clothes-wearing animal, a food-cooking animal, or a laughing animal; but Burke more philosophically characterizes him as a "religious animal." We can not study the institutions of any people, however high or low in what we call the scale of civilization, without finding among them something equivalent to the Athenians' altar to the unknown God. In their literature, among their forms and objects of worship, expressed by some song or prayer (or significant silences more expressive and pathetic than any wail or chant), somewhere, if we honestly search for it, we shall find with every people as Paul found with the Greeks an altar, or the equivalent of an altar, to the Unknown God, and the indisputable evidence that they are, even with all their idolatries or skepticisms, "somewhat religious."

The same is true of every age in the history of peoples and races. In the canyons and on the plateaus of New Mexico, where, long before the Spanish conquerors arrived, and centuries before Anglo-Saxon history began, the Pueblo Indians worshiped; in India, where in ages remote the most contemplative people of our world-history thought on the problems of existence, where the first philosophies found a cradle and the first religions found a nursery; in China, where social institutions were established before Romulus laid the foundations of Rome, and where arts and letters flourished before Homer sang his "Iliad" to the Greeks; in mysterious Egypt, whose science and learning were a proverb before Moses saw the splendor of the Pharaohs; in Assyria, entombed for ages with the profoundest secrets of her greatness, hidden from human exploration, but now becoming the most fascinating study of archæology; in classic Greece and Imperial Rome; in Britain and Germany and Scandinavia of the barbarous time; in every age, among every people, the broad-minded Paul might have found reasons for saying as he said to the Athenians, "I perceive that ye are somewhat religious."

Paul did not confound the Athenians' idolatry with their religion. It is quite significant that the

leaders of the world's great faiths repudiate idolatry to-day. At the World's Parliament of Religions the representatives of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Parseeism took pains to argue that what we call their idols are to them but symbols. It is a most encouraging sign when a correct distinction is made between symbolism and idolatry, and when the leaders of thought in idolatrous nations are trying to rescue their most ancient symbolism from the degradation of idolatry into which it has fallen. By this, these same leaders of thought in India, China, and Japan may prepare the way for the people's emancipation from those idolatries which are destructive of religion. Christianity, through its missionaries and teachers, is pushing these old nations and peoples back to the first principles, back to those old aspirations which stirred the heart of primitive man and created the first forms and symbols of religion; and in this way, among others, they are preparing them to see the one true God, and to accept the true spiritual worship.

Surrounding this altar to the Unknown God were thousands of idols showing the decline of religion, and yet at the same time revealing the tendency of humanity to substitute the form for the power, the ceremony for the spirit. It is impossible

for man to invent a true spiritual religion, and it is difficult for man to keep a spiritual religion even after God has invented one for him.

It is almost impossible for man to rise beyond the tyranny of the senses, to set his thought and affections on things above. We too willingly permit our ears and eyes to become our masters instead of our servants. The substantial more than the ideal, the physical more than the spiritual, the temporal more than the eternal, seem to attract us, engross us, fashion us, and command us. Here is doubtless the philosophy of the world's unspiritual idolatries —poor, unsatisfying substitutes for religion. This accounts for all human retrogressions—the despotism of the senses.

"No man hath seen God at any time," "God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." But man has insisted on making God visible to the physical eye, and he has invented forms for Him; but in these forms he has lost, not found, God. Whenever a people come to look at the things which are seen they begin to decline. The growth of a race is confined to the age of awe, mystery, inquiry; to the age in which it looks at the things which are not seen. This is the age of hope and ambition, of faith and endeavor.

Out of this looking at or toward the things not seen have come the songs, the philosophies, the laws, arts, and character of a race. These, after all, are but the aspirings of a people; not what they have been, so much as what they endeavored to become. History tells us what men have tried to do. You have not found the deepest philosophy of a people's civilization until you have learned, not what they have become, but, what they have tried to be, hoped to be, aspired to. Every important people of antiquity began to decline as soon as they had achieved a great physical or material triumph on which they set their affections and pride. From that hour they began to look into the past instead of into the future; to look upon the seen rather than the unseen; to be satisfied with the temporal, and no longer to be attracted and inspired by the eternal. "Is not this great Babylon which I have built?" Such a boast indicates the decline of power, the loss of aspiration. Egypt began to decline from the day she finished her Great Pyramid. There were no first-class poets in Athens seventy-five years after the Parthenon was built. When Rome became Marble, no Virgils, Ovids, or Horaces walked her streets. The Temple marks the climax of Hebrew glory. Looking at things which are seen is the end of development

because the end of imagination and effort. There is something very significant in the death of languages, such as the Greek, Latin, Hebrew. It is remarkable that the language of Homer and Plato, or the language of Virgil and Tully, or the language of David and Isaiah, should ever become a dead language. But when language becomes most nearly perfect, thought declines. Words take the place of ideas. The use of words, the tricks and elegancies of language, rhetoric, and art, are substituted for thought, reason, philosophy, and poetry. Finally, lacking the life of new ideas, new feelings, inquiries, and hopes, language itself dies. The very soul of language departs; the breath of life, which is ever renewing itself in perpetual regeneration, goes out. The people cease to speak it. The language becomes the language of the past, the language of a life which has been mighty and wondrous, but no longer is. The spiritual death of language is the death of literature. To become satisfied with the language we speak, with the literature we read or produce, with the music we compose, with the art we create, is to lose the power of invention, the creative genius, the spirit of life and growth. Mystery is inevitably a property of the spiritual and the Divine, and can not be wholly and adequately symbolized.

In a study of the world's great systems of faith we shall find there was in each of them originally a great thought, a mighty question pouring itself out toward the infinite, an effort to solve the awful and pathetic mystery of things. When we find our way through all the forms and symbolisms in which man has tried to give expression to his hopes and fears, his awe and faith, his sense of the supernatural, we find still there in the heart of universal man an altar to the Unknown God. "O that I knew where I might find Him!" is the eternal cry of the soul. It comes like a mighty voice sobbing up out of the breaking heart of the ancient time: "O that I knew where I might find Him!" All history echoes and re-echoes it. The tombs of buried greatness, the ruins of storied civilizations, the fragments of the mighty lore of the past, still remind us of this sigh of human intellect, this moan of the human heart: "O that I knew where I might find Him!" And when we study these tombs, these temples, these shrines and altars of peoples gone, we find clinging to them the fears and doubts, the faiths and hopes, the longings and aspirations which no human power has ever been able to allay or satisfy. Give man credit for his efforts to solve these awful mysteries.

Admire the intellectuality that has even invented religions to help unburden the human heart; reverence the noble souls that have tried to penetrate the darkness and let in the light; yet how pitiful man's failure to find the Unknown God! These awe-inspiring ruins by the Nile are but fragments of old Egypt's prayers. This crumbling Parthenon shrined the holiest religious conceptions of the Greeks. The beautiful dust of Nineveh and Babylon is pathetic still with the inquiry of haughty and powerful races. Mighty ashes, the ashes of nations magnificent in story, strew thick

> "The great world's altar-stairs
> That slope through darkness up to God,"

and it would seem that every nation at some time

> "Sprang to *its* feet,
> Stood erect, caught at God's skirts, and prayed."

Prayed, but perished at last unsatisfied; perished without finding God; perished with its dying eyes turned toward the Unknown; perished, leaving amid the ruins of its greatness an altar to the Unknown God, and a monument of reason's failure to find out God. Unwittingly the Greeks had raised a memorial of their own intellectual failure, a monument to the limitations of philosophy. As profound a

reasoner as ever gave his brain to mighty thoughts and honest philosophy was driven, in the very despair of reason, science, and philosophy, to put the Socratic argument which demands and proves the necessity for a supernatural manifestation and revelation of God to the world: "Can man by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?" All the old religions of the world answered, "No." All the speculations and philosophies of the learned ages answer, "No." Crumbled altars, deserted shrines, vanished cities, ruined empires answer, "No." The history of every ancient State, the records of every civilization, the literature of every language, the monuments of every race answer, "No." That altar of Athens "To the Unknown God" answers, "No."

We do not claim that Deity as a logical deduction had not been found. Perhaps every first-order intellect has found God a necessity in the philosophy of things. It has been claimed by great thinkers that the idea of God is intuitive, and, like the belief in immortality, it "cleaves to the human constitution," as Emerson would say. It may be seriously doubted whether dogmatic, affirmative Atheism is possible in the experience of any normal mind. The Bible does not make a single argument to prove the

existence of God. There is not a work on Physics that tries to prove the existence of light or of electricity. If it is the mission of science simply to explain the nature and laws of light, so it is the mission of revelation to explain the nature and the laws of God, not to demonstrate His existence. If at noonday one were to say, "There is no light," it would be proof of a loss of sight, not of the extinction of the light. That cry, "No light," is sad evidence of personal defect; not of a lack in nature, but of a lack in the man. "The foolish one hath said in his heart, There is no God." Is not the fault with the heart? It may be there are honest skeptics in the world, men who speak honestly when they say they find no necessity for a God. So, too, is the blind man honest when he declares there is no light, and the deaf man is honest when he says there is no music. Again, the idea of God is repugnant to certain minds, and because they desire Him not, they would deny Him, and have Him banished from our thought. But if there are individuals who do not desire God or believe in Him, so are there individuals whose organs are so deranged that they have no desire for food, and will not receive it, or whose nervous system is so diseased that sweetest music gives them pain, or whose eyes are so affected

that the light is torture to them. But will the generality of men repudiate food, and school themselves to dislike music, and shut their eyes to the sweet light, because a few unhealthy, abnormally-constituted individuals have no desire for them? We are to be guided, not by the exceptions, but by the rule, and the rule is that the idea of God belongs to man's original mental furnishing. As a rule, fishes have eyes, but some fishes are without them except in very rudimentary form, as are found in the darkness of the Mammoth Cave. As a rule, men have the power of speech, but some men are mutes. As a rule, men believe there is a God. If now and then a skeptic appear, should he be able to convince the world that skepticism is the rational attitude of mind? Should all the fishes become blind, all men become mutes, all believers become skeptics? It can not be doubted that science and a study of Nature have confirmed man in his belief in the existence of God, and to the intuitive idea is now allied the philosophical and scientific deduction of intelligent First Cause.

But here we quickly find the limitations of human reason and human philosophy. All that science can do is to fill us with awe and wonder, and leave us just where the mysteries left the ancient thinkers,

but possibly still more deeply impressed than were they with the fact that, with all our speculations, investigations, experiments, wisdom, and learning, we have not comprehended the universe nor any single planet, star, sun, or minutest atom of it. How much less have we comprehended God! Every advance in astronomical science; every new world found; every increase of telescopic power that enables us to peer still farther and farther out into the star-strewn illimitableness of space, shows us a vaster and still vaster universe, and therefore proves the existence of a more and more wonderful God. The subtle, mysterious forces playing about us, and which science is bridling and harnessing for magnificent utilities; life, life, the principle and the power of life, manifesting itself in multiform variety and beauty,—all, all come to the inquiring mind to enlarge its ideas of power, of creative, controlling, governing power. "Omnipotence" is but a word to the ear of the ignorant. "Omniscience" has no meaning to the mind that has no mighty grasp of things. These are but empty sounds to the soul that has never stretched its brow toward the stars, or baptized its imagination in the waves of heaven, or tried to comprehend the length and depth and breadth and height of this vast, unfathomed

universe. How small and contemptible must be our idea of God when our idea of power is so narrow and superficial! Nature becomes a demonstration of God to the thoughtful and inquiring mind. There is an argument in the sweet whispers of the flowers, and an argument in the thunder of the storm; there is an argument in the golden music of the harvest, and an argument in the shout of the ocean waves; there is an argument in the sweep of the eagle's wing, and an argument in the flight of the seasons, year by year; there is an argument in every beam of light, and an argument in the stars and constellations of heaven: "God is, and we have come to speak of Him." And from the dizzy heights where first the genius of a Galileo or a Newton trod, the student's wondering eye may be greeted with scenes more splendid than ever fell upon the enraptured vision of Egypt's or Chaldea's sages; and with a loftier inspiration than ever woke the harp of Israel, the student of astronomy may sing: "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge." In the ruder years of the olden time the poet with the fine listening ear of rapturous thought and fancy believed that "the morning stars sang together," and this high

strain of Job inspired another with the sweetly quaint conceit of "the music of the spheres," and taught the myriad-minded Shakespeare that—

> "There 's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings."

What is the meaning of the music of the spheres? What is the song of the stars? Addison takes up the theme, and tells us that the stars are

> "Forever singing as they shine,
> The hand that made us is divine."

Well may Young have said:

> "The undevout astronomer is mad."

There never was an undevout astronomer. No man ever looked through the telescope without becoming awed into a grander faith and a more spiritual devotion. The Hebrew poet, without the aid of telescope, but his "eye in a fine frenzy rolling," looking into the azure depths of the sky that bent in splendor over the Bethlehem hills, was so charmed, so awed, so exalted as to cry, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" How much more seriously,

then, may the student of the stars to-day ask this question, and be led to ask, not only "What is man?" but also, What is life? What is spirit? What is omnipotence? What is omniscience? What is God?

But it will not be claimed that a mere logical conclusion, even a scientific demonstration which satisfies the intellect, will satisfy the religious nature of man. "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God;" not for an abstraction, not for a mere logical deduction as a philosophical or scientific necessity, but for "the living God." "My heart and my flesh [life] crieth out for the living God."

Here, then, is the need that argues for a revelation of God to man. And the Gospel coming to humanity assumes two great facts,—the existence of God, and the religious instinct of man which demands God. All men are "somewhat religious." All men need God; the soul of man thirsts for God. In their vague notions of the supernatural, men have tried to incarnate the Divine in wood, stone, tree, beast, river, or sun. It may not be unreasonable to suppose that this very tendency of man's thought to embody Divinity, to give Him form and substan-

tial manifestation, shows the need of a Divine incarnation; it may have been through the ages a prophecy and an expectation that God would some day manifest Himself, take on form, assume a mortal nature. Be that as it may, "God was manifest in the flesh." "The Word which was with God, and was God, was made flesh, and dwelt among us full of grace and truth." From His lips came the words of light and revelation: "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also, and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." These wonderful words touch the tenderest chord of the human soul, awaken the most pathetic and the most sublime longing of the world's heart. Philip cried, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us;" "It will satisfy us." It was the old cry. Philip voiced the universal feeling of humanity. No man ever more truly spoke for all men, all nations, all ages. He was not a philosopher, but he spoke for the most thoughtful philosophers that had ever reasoned on the origin and destiny of things. He was not a poet, but he had been stirred by the sentiment which had ever been, and ever will be, the most inexhaustible fountain of poetic thought. He was not a religionist, but he had unconsciously given expression to the desire which had created religions and made

the ceremonies of worship possible. He was not a mystic, but he had caught the germinal idea from which all historic mysticisms had developed. He was not a visionary or a dreamer, but there suddenly swept before his mind the thought which had made the dreams of prophets splendid and the visions of the old-time seers sublime. Great, wonderful outburst of the heart's deepest, most honest, most universal, most eternal feeling!—"Show us the Father, and we shall be satisfied." Then, then was it that the revelation came and the glorious truth flashed forth: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." God is no longer the unknown and the unknowable; "clouds and darkness" are no longer around about Him. The mighty prayer of the human heart has been answered: "Thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth." The light is come; God hath visited his people. Behold your God! When Paul stood among the Athenians he was the apostle of the true God. He came to them with this wondrous truth, with this great light, and in one of the most sublime moments of this world's history he cried to those who had raised an altar to the "Unknown God:" "Whom therefore ye worship in ignorance, Him declare I unto you." He declared Him as Creator, "God that made the

world and all things therein." He declared Him as the Author of life and being: "He giveth to all life and breath and all things." He declared Him as spiritual and personal: "We ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone graven by art and man's device." He declared Him as knowable and approachable, and "that they should seek the Lord if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us; for in Him we live and move and have our being." He declared Him as Father; "for we are all His offspring."

So to every nation, somewhat religious by nature, comes the evangel of the living, manifest God, who is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself. To every heart, somewhat religious by its very aspiration, hopes, fears, and inquiries, comes the Christ, saying: "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me." "If ye know me, ye know the Father, and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him." "If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him." God, who dwelt in the thick darkness; God, unknown and unknowable to human eye or human reason; God, afar off, inhabiting eternity,—is

brought nigh in Him who is "the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person."

Here is the revelation of God in humanity. Jesus Christ as the Son of God, incarnating the Divine, is but our Elder Brother, the First of the sons of God. "To as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." May not all men, then, become the sons of God? And if sons, in their own measure may they not incarnate the Divine? Did not Jesus Christ, the Son of God, become the Son of man, to make it possible for every son of man to become a son of God? And did not that perfect Son of man incarnate the Divine to show that God perfectly reveals Himself in a perfect humanity? It may not be too extravagant to hope that every man of faith is to become a God-man, a man "filled with all the fullness of God." Is it not the world's hope that, under the ministry of Divine grace, all the sons of God shall go on to that perfection?

When man realizes in experience that the kingdom of God is within him; not only that God, the Spirit, is with him, but in him, and the Divine has become in his own soul "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life;" when God hath shined in his heart, not as a ray of light from without, but as

the indwelling Sun of righteousness, filling and flooding his nature with the light of truth and love and life,—then is he a God-permeated being; then does he, according to his own spiritual capacity, incarnate and reveal God. O man redeemed, believer in the risen, immortal, Divine Christ, thou art now the temple of the living God. Look for Him, behold Him, dwelling not in temples made with hands; not in the clouds and darkness of mystery and silence; not upon the throne of the distant and unapproachable heavens,—but dwelling in the heart and life of man; dwelling in human love and faith; dwelling in the world's most noble character; dwelling in humanity's eternal hope.

The progressive revelation and manifestation of God to the world is predicated on the spiritual growth of man. This progress will continue "till we all come unto the perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." It is not only the prayer of Paul, but it is the purpose of Jesus Christ, it is the end of the operation of the Holy Spirit, it is the mission of the Gospel to you, "That ye might be filled with all the fullness of God." The perfection of humanity, of which Christ is the promise and the ideal, will be the complete

and perfect manifestation and revelation of God in man. Not to the unknown, but to the known God, to the Spirit-God, to the Everlasting Father, will there be an altar in every heart; and it will not be necessary for any man to say to his neighbor, "Know the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least even unto the greatest."

II.

CHRISTIANITY AND THE ANGLO-SAXONS

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."—1 Peter ii, 9, 10.

The Anglo-Saxon race, so called, may be regarded as the most conspicuous example of a people who have been taken in the rough state of barbarism and fashioned to greatness and superiority by the influences of Christianity. When the Gospel came in contact with the Romans they were in their decline from a high state of pagan civilization, and the Romance nations generally were the offshoots of a once highly cultivated people; they were not savages, nor were they even barbarians when Christianity laid its molding, regenerating hand upon them. The Greeks to whom Paul preached the

Gospel were the degenerates of a once splendid and nobly intellectual people. When the missionaries went into Africa, they preached to worn-out peoples, to Ethiopians and Egyptians whose glory and greatness belonged to the past with the Pyramids. In these modern times, also, the people of the storied East, the races of India and China in particular, are a people whose arts and letters and political histories antedate even the Roman and Grecian civilizations; they are heathen, but not savage or even barbarian. Hence, it can not be said that Christianity took any of these peoples in the rough, in their natural, undeveloped, uncivilized state to fashion them to its standards of greatness. Christianity at best can have only refashioned them. But that may be a more difficult work than originally to form a people. The potter who takes the unformed and plastic clay to mold to an ideal of his own has an easier task than he who would attempt to gather up the fragments of a broken vase and of them make a new vessel of graceful design. Degenerate peoples, effete civilizations, can not be transformed into the same beauty, strength, and greatness that a people may be formed into who are taken in their original, uncorrupted, wild vigor. Christianity found the Greeks, the Latins, the Egyptians, the

Chinese, and the East Indians in a condition to which in each case a certain type of civilization had brought them, or in which it had left them; but it found the Anglo-Saxons in the original ethical and intellectual clay. Or, to change the figure, when the apostles and missionaries went to the former peoples with the Gospel they cast the seed of truth into exhausted soils, into hearts and minds which had been sown for centuries with all sorts of seed—ethical, political, philosophical, literary, and æsthetic. Harvest after harvest had been produced by that soil until it had become weak, superficial, and well-nigh sterile. But when the seed of Gospel truth fell into that Anglo-Saxon mind it found a deep, rich, original soil—fertile, vigorous, and inexhaustible. Hence the student of the philosophy of history will look upon our Anglo-Saxon civilization as the noblest result of Christianity's influence upon the development, manners, character, and destiny of a people. This is the finest fruit, the richest harvest, that has sprung from the living and life-giving power of the Gospel.

It is not for us to discuss, much less to settle, the moot question as to whether the Anglo-Saxons are or ever were properly named Anglo-Saxons. In deciding the nicer points of name and origin

the student may call the people of whom we speak Anglo-Saxons, Anglo-Normans, Saxon-Normans, or English. No one is confused or uncertain, however, in determining the meaning of the expressions: Anglo-Saxons, Anglo-Saxon history, Anglo-Saxon civilization. We are interested, moreover, not simply in the remote and nebulous history of this people as we trace it back to Gothic barbarism, back to that nomadic wildness, prior to all letters, arts, and institutions, but we look upon it in its development in Civilization in all its rich, manifold, and multiplex efflorescence. We study it not only to find its deep ethnical roots, but rather to find its spreading branches and its most highly-developed fruit in ethical character, in mission and in world-influence. If the Saxons, in common with the Germans, Dutch, Swedes, Danes, and Norwegians, sprang from the Gothic or Teutonic root, and if they mingled with the Britons, Angles, Kelts, and Normans, they were also destined to mingle with the Dutch, Germans, Swedes, and Scandinavians and also with the Romance peoples, and, finally, in this Americanism they were to become the converging center of all races. Whether humanity was originally of one blood or not, it seems inevitable that mankind is to become one blood. But nowhere

is this so clearly manifest as in the United States, where all nationalities are contributing to this new American life and nationality. As we see it to-day, the ends of the earth are meeting, centralizing, not in Germany, not in Russia, not in India, not in China, not even in England, but in America. And the dominant characteristic of this people is not Romance, it is not Italian or Spanish or French; nor is it Keltic, Scottish, Welsh, or Irish; nor is it Greek or Russian; but it is manifestly and pre-eminently Anglo-Saxon. With all the contributions which other races have made to this Americanism, we remain in our most characteristic mental and moral traits Anglo-Saxon. We may admit that the Anglo-Saxon is to-day a composite character, but with the old Gothic elements predominant. We speak a language which in its present flexibility and copiousness proves our indebtedness to the Greek, Latin, French, and Spanish peoples; but it is the Anglo-Saxon which absorbs all these; conquers, subdues, and assimilates them, while it preserves its own spirit, character, and sovereignty. This is manifest more particularly in the speech of the people. If science makes use of Greek and Latin, if the learning of Law resorts to the Latin, and if the scholarship of theology borrows largely from

the Greek, the people in their home life and in their dealings, industries, occupations, and religion draw from the original stream of English undefiled. The words that are in most common use are the words of Chaucer, Wyclif, Alfred the Great, and Ethelbert—words found as pearls of imperishable strength and beauty twelve and fifteen hundred years up the stream of Anglo-Saxon thought and expression. What common and yet what enduring, meaningful words are these: Man, woman, child; home, love, wedding; birth, life, death; world, sleep, food; earth, plow, scythe; horse, cow, dog, cat; father, mother, brother, sister, wife, daughter, son, hearth-stone; land, law, right, truth; sword, war, hammer, work, shovel; water, bread; day, week, month, year; grass, wheat, tree; cradle, bed, grave, heaven, God, welcome, good-bye, farewell, God-speed! These are all Anglo-Saxon words, and these words will remain in the vocabulary of this people forever. About these words and the ideas they stand for gather all the moral forces, all the domestic, economic, social, and religious problems, all the enterprises, aspirations, hopes, and affections of a people. Whatever foreign words may come as tributaries into this great English stream, the force, clearness, music of the Anglo-Saxon will remain;

this great, moving, controlling genius of the language will not be diminished. This is the language of the future. Science shall utter its greatest truths in this language, already the most copious and flexible because the most richly derivatic, and at the same time the most virile in its original Anglo-Saxon genius. Literature will find its most adequate, comprehensive, and forceful vehicle in this language, which has already furnished expression to the vigor of Chaucer, the elegance of Spenser, the sublimity of Milton, the transcendent splendors of Shakespeare, and the most forceful, majestic, and impressive translation of the Bible in the world. The language of liberty, too, shall be the language of Alfred and Wyclif, Hampden and Cromwell, Chatham and Burke, Jefferson and Washington, Webster and Clay, Gladstone, Bright, and Lincoln. God prepared a language for the prophets in that warm, figurative, devout Hebrew. When it had done its work it ceased to be spoken by progressive humanity. God prepared a language for the expression of culture, æstheticism, and philosophic speculation in that beautiful and musical Greek. When it had done its work it ceased to be a spoken language; progressive humanity outgrew it. God prepared a language for the mysticism, the occult

science, and the religious aspirings of the Egyptians; but when that language had served its limited purpose it was buried beneath the sands of time. God prepared a language for a civilization of force, law, militarism, and empire in the flexible, copious, and subtle Latin; but when human thought and aspiration had outgrown its limitations men ceased to speak it, and it was left on the dusty shelf of the study or confined to the curriculum of the academy. In looking for a language which shall express the thought of the twentieth century in all its richness, complexity, variety, and power; in its poetic feeling, its scientific knowledge, its moral conviction, its political freedom, its humanitarian benevolence, and its religious faith; in looking for a language that shall embody and vibrate with the spirit of the age, and voice the faith, hope, ambition, freedom, brotherhood, spirituality, conscience, and prophetic genius of the world's most progressive century, what language is comparable with the Anglo-Saxon, the English language spoken by our people? Has not God prepared that language, and is He not still preparing it in all its vigor, fullness, majesty, and adaptability to be the language of the brotherhood of nations, the federation of the world, the Kingdom of Christ on earth? This title of

"Anglo-Saxon" is no longer limited to Englishmen proper; it belongs to the Canadian, Nova Scotian, Australian, and American. The name "English" is local and national, while the name "Anglo-Saxon" is general. If, as Freeman contends, the name "English" once included the name "Anglo-Saxon," now the name "Anglo-Saxon" includes the name "English," as it includes the name "Canadian" or "Australian" or "American." Anglo-Saxons is the name now given to "the brotherhood of the speakers of the English tongue all over the world."

In considering the characteristics and mission of the Anglo-Saxons, it is not necessary to recall the traditions of the prehistoric ages. We leave to poetry and romance the deeds of Arthur and the legends of the Round-table. The study of comparative religions may dwell upon the rites of the old Britons, and the awe-inspiring ceremonies of the Druids. Of the rude, long-haired, skin-clad men of painted faces who after battle drank the blood of their enemies, scalped their opponents, made drinking vessels of the skulls of their most courageous and redoubtable foes, we read with awe when we consider that from such men, from men like Odin, came the Saxons. When we learn that the progenitors of the English-speaking peoples of

this age were warlike, ferocious, plunderers and marauders; that they were cruel, fearless, wild, and drunken; that in their religious ceremonies human sacrifices were not infrequent, and their prisoners of war were often put to death by thousands to propitiate their deities; and when we remember that such men, such barbarians and savages, held in their wild, throbbing veins the promise and potency of all this modern English-speaking life we are amazed at the power of the Religion which has lifted them out of their savagery, tamed them, educated them, refined and polished them, and made them masters of the learning of the world, masters of the commerce of the world, masters of the conscience of the world, and masters of the political and moral destiny of the world.

If there is any race on the earth to-day to which the Apostle Peter's language may be addressed, it must be the Anglo-Saxon race. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light, which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God."

The Anglo-Saxons were not a people in Peter's

day, but have since not only become a people, but they have become "the people of God" by the ministry of the Christian religion, by the converting power of the Cross, by the regeneration of the Holy Spirit, and by the fashioning, uplifting, and guiding influences of Divine Providence. Of all the proofs of Christianity's power to civilize a people, with which the wildness of barbarism has been made to rejoice and blossom, the Anglo-Saxon is

"The bright consummate flower."

There are certain inborn and inbred characteristics of the Anglo-Saxons that enabled them to appreciate many of the most vital doctrines of Christianity. With all their vices of cruelty, drunkenness, and warlike ferocity, they were a brave people, and a people of domestic fidelity. Home was to them a holy institution. They emphasized justice and truth. They honored woman. In their best mental condition they worshiped no idol; Deity was to them a Spirit. Though He was awful and terrible, yet they called Him "God"—the Good. We have no better name for Deity to-day than that noble old Anglo-Saxon name, "God;" it is second only to the name which Jesus gave to Him when He taught men to call Him "Our Father." When Christianity

came into England its very admission into Kent was secured by the Anglo-Saxon's honor for woman. Bertha, the queen of Ethelbert, requested that the Roman missionaries be permitted to preach the Gospel in Kent. Ethelbert with his English chivalry could not refuse his Bertha's request. So the missionary came and the Cross conquered. What did the Anglo-Saxon see in Christianity to attract him? He saw the truth of its doctrine of the spirituality of God; it was not an idolatry. He saw the glory of Christ's heroism, His fearlessness in death, the sublimity of His triumph over the grave. He saw how Christ honored woman, and how the Gospel surrounded her with love and reverence. He saw how Christianity sanctified the home; made the hearthstone the holiest place on earth; hallowed the marriage relation, and exalted the family as an heavenly institution. He saw that the Gospel inculcated justice, honesty, and chastity. He saw that life and immortality were brought to light in the Gospel. This was enough to convert him. Were there many mysteries in Christianity which he could not dispel? Were there commands and demands in it which seemed to him too exacting? Did he scowl his old Anglo-Saxon scowl when he read the Gospel of charity and love, of forgiveness and non-resist-

ance? Did his ferocious, warlike spirit protest against loving his enemy and turning the other cheek, and resisting not evil? Did he read with a skeptical shrug of his broad shoulders and a proud toss of his flaxen head that "the sword shall be beaten into the plowshare?" Did he clear his throat with a thirsty guttural growl when he heard that no drunkard shall inherit the Kingdom of God? Well, he had faults enough, weaknesses and wickednesses enough for Christianity to condemn; but in spite of its high standards of gentleness, forgiveness, temperance, chastity, self-denial, humility, and meekness, the Anglo-Saxon saw in it the power of God for his salvation. He accepted it. Christianity began its work on this virile, original race some twelve or thirteen centuries ago. The evolution of Anglo-Saxon character, power, and influence under the training of Christianity has been one of the miracles of history. Looking at the faults of that people to-day, taking into account all their weaknesses, all their sins, must we not still marvel at what the Anglo-Saxon has become? Weigh him to-day in the balance against our ideal, against what he some day must become, or against Christ's standard of perfection, and he is found wanting; but contrast him with what he was when Christianity first laid

its transforming hand upon him, and behold! what hath God wrought! Weigh him in the balance against any type of ancient manhood, and how superior he is! Weigh him in the balance against any non-Christian type of manhood in the world to-day —who is his equal? Weigh him in the balance against any other type of modern Christian manhood—who is his superior? And yet Christianity found him a barbarian, if not a savage, and evoked from that very incarnation of barbarism the intellectual and moral powers that rule the world to-day. It has been claimed that the best qualities, the persistent elements of the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Egyptians, and the Romans, of all the representative ancient peoples, may be found in the modern Anglo-Saxon. Who has come nearer to Homer than Milton? Who has more nearly re-embodied the genius of Sophocles and Æschylus than Shakespeare? Who has more triumphantly superseded Aristotle than Bacon? Who has more successfully rivaled Cicero in eloquence than Chatham or Webster? Who has more splendidly eclipsed the glory of a Phocion, a Cincinnatus, or a Cato than Washington? Who has more nearly measured up to the genius of a Themistocles, an Alexander, or a Cæsar than Cromwell, Marlborough, Wellington, Nelson, or

Grant? Who of all the original minds of antiquity were the equals in inventive genius of Franklin, Fulton, Stephenson, Morse, Howe, Whitney, and Edison? Who of all the lawmakers of history were the equals of the signers of the Declaration of Independence and the framers of the Constitution of the United States?

The Greeks were the most subtle metaphysical thinkers of history; the Anglo-Saxons are the most practical thinkers of history. The Greeks were philosophical; the Anglo-Saxons are scientific. The Greeks were speculative; the Anglo-Saxons are creative. Again, the Hebrews and Indian sages were dreamers; the Anglo-Saxons are doers. Those dreamers dealt with ideals; these doers deal with realities. The Romans thought on law; the Anglo-Saxons think on liberty. The Romans planned for empire; the Anglo-Saxons plan for equality. The Romans legislated for the glory of the throne; the Anglo-Saxons legislate for the good of the people. Roman civilization rested on force; Anglo-Saxon civilization is founded on right.

What a glory has attended this evolution of Anglo-Saxon civilization! Take that original hardihood, that physical strength, that rugged, brave, adventurous spirit, that love of justice, that honor for

woman, that domestic fidelity, that reverence for the hearthstone, that love of home, that aversion to idolatry; take that welcoming attitude toward the Gospel and that eager acceptance of the Word of God; then come on up the splendid and ever-brightening highway of Anglo-Saxon progress! What stalwart souls! what heroes! what men of initiative and of action! What events! what epochs! what history! A panorama of greatness and glory spreads before the astonished eye of contemplation. St. Augustine is welcomed by Ethelbert to preach the Gospel in England. Alfred lays the foundation of the English constitution on the principles of the Word of God. The Norman Conquest comes with its modifying influence on the manners, arts, and letters of the English without disturbing the basic religious integrity of their constitution. The decisive battle of Hastings is fought. The Barons meet King John at Runnymede, and with the love of right and freedom born of Christianity they secure the Magna Charta. Wyclif gives the people an English Bible. Caxton introduces printing. Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer in martyr fires light up the conscience of all England. Letters revive; the book begins its mission. Bacon thinks and Shakespeare sings. The King James' Version of the Bible ap-

pears. A revolution shakes the kingdom. Cromwell and Hampden and Milton come. Such battles for religious and political freedom are fought as Marston Moor, Naseby, Worcester, and Dunbar. The Pilgrims turn to the New World. The Puritan strides into history. New England is settled. The common school is founded. The Declaration of Independence is signed. The American Revolution is fought. Adams, Franklin, Jefferson, and Washington appear with their compatriots. This Republic is founded. Napoleon is overthrown at Waterloo. Slavery is swept from British soil. Out of the Jovian brain of Invention come the steam engine, the locomotive, the telegraph, the steamship, the cotton gin, the reaper, the telephone, and the electric light. The great churches of Protestant Christianity rise and shine, their light having come and the glory of God having risen upon them. A thousand colleges like burning stars light up the darkness. The press is free. Speech is free. Conscience is free. The last slave is free. Cuba is free. America is free. The United States is a world-power. International arbitration is effected. The brotherhood of nations is proclaimed. The world hails the dawning of universal peace. What men! what events! what history! Can any other race boast of such

a glory as crowns the thousand years and more of Anglo-Saxon progress?

Nay, let us not boast. It has taken Christianity thirteen centuries to make the Anglo-Saxons what they are. But admitting all their faults and sins, ask the question: "Could any other religion have made them what they are? Could their original religion, or the old Druidical superstitions have made them what they are? Could the religion of Odin have made them what they are? Could Buddhism have made them what they are? Could Confucianism or Mohammedanism have made them what they are? Could Atheism have made them what they are?"

It seems to us that after a training of thirteen centuries the warlike spirit of the Anglo-Saxon should have been subdued; but he is to-day the greatest fighter on the land, and his battleships in triumph strut the seas. It seems to us that by this time the drunken Anglo-Saxon should have been sobered and emancipated from the tyranny and appetite of drink. It seems to us a shame that Anglo-Saxons should have taught the Chinese the use of opium. It seems remarkable that crime should still be possible in lands where the Gospel has been preached for more than a thousand years. But on

second thought we know enough to know that Christianity is not responsible for the sins which it condemns. When the Anglo-Saxon sells rum and opium, when the Anglo-Saxon oppresses people, when the Anglo-Saxon keeps slaves, when the Anglo-Saxon commits crime, he does it in defiance of, not in obedience to, Christianity. It is not the Christianity of England or the Christianity of America that supports and defends and legally protects traffic in sin; it is the old, original unregenerate Anglo-Saxon that still thirsts for blood and would drink it from the skull of his victim. Moreover, Christianity works like leaven hidden in the meal; it is the leaven of truth, the leaven of love, the leaven of brotherhood, the leaven of righteousness. It takes time for the universal mind to become thoroughly leavened. The people are saved and transformed, man by man, mind by mind, conscience by conscience, will by will. This is a slow process. Until all men are saved, transformed, converted, and filled with the power of a new life, there will be sin and wrong in the world. In the ratio of men's regeneration will sin disappear. It is disappearing. The world is becoming regenerate. When Christianity found them the Anglo-Saxons were notorious drunkards, robbers, gluttons, and murderers. To-

day with all their faults they are the most highly intellectual and moral people of the world. Trace the moral development of this race. What a moral advance was the age of Elizabeth on the age of Alfred the Great! What an advance was the age of William III on the age of Charles II! What an advance was the age of Victoria on the age of the Georges! Society is not becoming effete. The Anglo-Saxon is not losing his moral sense and poise. He has the future. He grows better and greater. Few civilizations of history, worthy to be called such, have lasted a thousand years. There is a self-preserving savor in this Anglo-Saxon salt. It is Christian still, and was never more so. Every other civilized race has in time become degenerate. There is no sign of Anglo-Saxon degeneracy. In all the long history of this vigorous race there can not be found a single positive and long continued retrograde movement. Anglo-Saxon morals and Anglo-Saxon character have been improving century by century. And no race of antiquity, not excepting the Jews, ever stood on so exalted a moral plain as that which has been reached and which is now held by the English-speaking peoples of the world. Never before was the standard of manly honor so high; never was woman so profoundly and universally

reverenced; never was such care taken in the mental and moral training of children; never was education so widely diffused; never was there so little poverty and ignorance: never was there less intemperance, less superstition, less bigotry, less inhumanity; never were the poor and unfortunate so mercifully and tenderly cared for; never was labor so dignified, so well rewarded, and so prosperous; never was government less tyrannical and despotic, so humane and democratic; never was religion more practical, the Bible more authoritative, Christ more manifestly King of kings and Lord of lords. Anglo-Saxon civilization is Christian.

The surest antidote for pessimism is a look backward. The social, political, economic, moral, and religious conditions of the past teach us what a progress has been made in a single century. Look backward to the religious indifference of the eighteenth century, to the days of almost universal infidelity among wits and men of letters; look backward to the social conditions of a hundred years ago in any part of the English-speaking world, and what a contrast appears to the higher-minded, more serious, philanthropic, universally enlightened, and Scripturally righteous social spirit and life of this twentieth century!

Look backward but fifty years in the history of this country, to the time when statesmen were gamblers, drunkards, slaveholders, and duelists, and the conviction grows that our commercial, industrial, literary, scientific, and political progress has been no more remarkable than our moral progress.

To-day the English-speaking peoples are foremost in the enjoyment of law-protected liberty. They are leading the world toward the universal Christian democracy. Anglo-Saxon Christianity is the only truly Catholic Christianity. This is the Christianity that stands for universal education, for an untrammeled science, for equality before the law, for the sovereignty of the people, for the brotherhood of man. The Anglo-Saxon is to-day more nearly akin to every race of the earth than any other man. More races have poured their blood into his veins than into any other. He has a mission, therefore, to every people. All races are looking to him for light—political, scientific, and religious light. The Anglo-Saxons were the great missionaries of the nineteenth century. They will be the great missionaries of this twentieth century. Has not God raised them up and made them a mighty people, that by them liberty may be proclaimed to all nations,

the heathen races be evangelized with the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and the world be prepared for the New Heaven and the New Earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness? Is not this the high destiny of the Anglo-Saxon race, "which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God?"

III.

CHRISTMAS AND THE GREATNESS OF CHILDHOOD.

"And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them."—Matt. xviii, 2.

AGAIN, the little child is on the throne of the Christian world. The Christmas time places childhood where the Lord placed it,—at the center of society. All hearts bow to the scepter of that mysterious and beautiful power which commands with a caress and rules with tears and laughter. The boys and the girls own the universe to-day, and run it. But that means, only, that simplicity, sincerity, faith, hope, love, imagination, anticipation, and prophecy are at the heart of the world, once more insisting upon making this world good and happy by preserving its eternal youth. It was when the disciples were talking about greatness, about the ability to stand at the center and focus the attention of the world, to sit on the throne of power and influence and rule the Kingdom and win the honors, that Jesus set a little child in their midst, to rebuke their igno-

rance and humble their presumption. Here is the leader and commander. Here is the inspiration of histories. Here is the true dreamer, prophet, and seer. Here is the conqueror. What is the power of your Alexanders, Cæsars, Napoleons, to the power of a little child? This child is the embodiment of the forces that govern society, that make and unmake governments, that shape the destinies of States. It is not greed, selfishness, pride of opinion, thirst for power, worldly ambition, that finally, and by Christ's authority, get to the front and to the center of the world, to become its greatness, its sovereignty. But it is simplicity, sincerity, faith, conscience, humility, hope, affection, purity, aspiration, and prophetic anticipation—the impulses, intuitions, virtues, and emotions of the child-heart.

The most charming portrait that remains of Richard Owen, the great naturalist, represents him with his arm thrown about a little child, and his strong, full-browed head leaning against the curly head of the little girl. Many of the photographs of Mr. Gladstone were taken with a little child by his side or in his arms. There is not a more touching and interesting picture of Napoleon than that familiar one which represents him seated on a sofa with a little child asleep on his lap. And the most

beautiful pen-portrait of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is that in which He takes the little children up in His arms, puts His hands upon them, and blesses them; or that in which He calls a little child unto Him, and sets him in the midst of His disciples, to teach them who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

The Divine Teacher would lead the world back to that simplicity, reverence, and faith which are characteristic of the child-life. Feeling, sentiment, impulse, spontaneity, ingenuousness, — these are childish. Yes, but nothing is more manly or more womanly in the kingdom of heaven, in the highest, purest, and most perfect social organism. The best men and women can not forget that they were once boys and girls; and some of their happiest dreams in after years are of those

> "Sweet childish days, that were as long
> As twenty days are now."

There has come to many a soul in the hour of weariness, of unsuccessful endeavor, of disappointed hope, of baffled ambition, the thought so sadly expressed by Elizabeth Akers Allen in the familiar lines:

> "Backward, flow backward, O tide of the years!
> I am so weary of toil and of tears,—
> Toil without recompense, tears all in vain!
> Take them, and give me my childhood again!"

But why wish to go backward? May we not, truly, carry the feelings of childhood with us through all the years of our earthly pilgrimage, if we make any real progress and succeed in bringing our lives to any satisfaction? The man who has left his childhood in the past, and dismissed it from his life and nature, has lost the power of highest development whether intellectual or moral. He has lost the power of hope, imagination, prophecy, the power to dream, to anticipate, and to behold the unseen; and, hence, he has lost the inspiration and power to aspire. He has been fascinated with the glittering eyes of the temporal, like a bird charmed by the serpent's gaze, only to be crushed in its jaws, and never to soar into the blue of the eternal. Do not lose your childhood's heart.

As we contemplate the bright face of this childhood, every great creative feeling seems to be playing in its eyes and quivering on its lips and shining from its white, smooth, and unscarred brow. The feelings or emotions that bring happiness are all there, embodied in that sweet girl, that lovely boy, to-day. They are looking like seers, through the dark nights, right into the glorious Christmas morning. Here is the most perfect and beautiful picture of the power of prophecy, the joy

of anticipation, the sleepless supremacy and sovereignty of hope, we can ever look upon. And here is found the best and sweetest philosophy of human happiness and of human power to develop the true greatness of life and character. We derive our sweetest pleasures from our anticipations. Realization itself is rarely satisfying. The present is too narrow to meet the demands of the intellectual and moral nature. Attainment means less than aspiration. We are never satisfied with the past. Memory does not make us happy. But the future brings the recompense. That ministers to the imagination, and imagination makes up a large part of the world's thought-life. That, too, is the creative power of the mind; that gives us our poetry and music and art; nay, more, to the imagination we are indebted for our discoveries and inventions and the most practical benefits. We dream our sciences before we prove them. Our faiths and hopes reach into the future, and they are greater than all our reasonings; they are more creative, more reliable, more inspirational than all our logic. These are the forces in men which move the world. And there is, after all, nothing more rational than humanity's faiths and hopes. Its reasonings have never been as rational as its intuitions, of which are born its hopes and

faiths. Humanity's impulses and emotions are, as a rule, saner than humanity's philosophies. What man believes and hopes amounts to more than what he knows. He knows, and can know, so little! As a rule, what man believes and hopes is worth more to him than what he knows. When you drive man into the limits of his absolute knowledge, you pen him up in a very narrow life, a very small world; you put your eagle in a cage instead of into the sky; you put your ship in the dry dock instead of out upon the sea. Faith, hope, imagination, emotion, have sea-room and sky-room; they have the range and sweep of the universe. But a very little, infinitesimal part of this world belongs to knowledge, to science.

Childhood is credulous and imaginative, full of faith and full of hope. But the credulity of childhood is more rational than the skepticism of manhood, and the fancy of youth is more creative and inspirational than the logic of age. A human being will grow and a nation of people will develop while the imagination is fresh and active; when that dies, Parthenons crumble, Homers and Sapphos, Dantes and Shakespeares, Raphaels and Lorraines vanish. A civilization lives as long as it has the power to believe and imagine and hope. The true history of a

nation is the history of its aspiration. Can there be a living aspiration in the heart of a man or of a nation where faith, imagination, and anticipation lie dead? The heart of a civilization is the heart of a child, when that civilization is at its best. The spirit, therefore, of these ante-Christmas days is the spirit which brings the world to all its greatness; it is the spirit of anticipation, of hope, of peering into the future with sparkling eyes and glowing cheeks; the spirit of great dreaming, of imagination, of visions, of prophecy.

This Christ-blessed childhood in our midst is thinking on the morrow, not on the yesterday; and what are its thoughts of that morrow? Altogether optimistic. The most rational and philosophical and Christian characteristics of this childhood thought and feeling is its splendid optimism. This little child is thinking by day and dreaming by night of what the Christmas day will bring, and what the Christmas day will carry. And this child, this epitome of true greatness, this epitome of all that is best in human nature, derives as much happiness from anticipating the happiness of others as from dreaming of its own coming joys and the gifts that will minister to those joys. These little, sly whisperings into mamma's ear when papa is reading, and

these little gigglings into papa's ear when mamma is busy sewing, are the sweetest, most poetical expressions of the joy that comes to the heart that anticipates making others happy, that can be imagined. I have seen boys and girls dance with glee to think how happy some one else is to be made by their Christmas gifts. O blessed, blessed be that childhood heart which joys to think of others' joy, which bounds and dances with the thought, not only of what Christmas will bring to it from others, but also of what the Christmas will carry from it to others! Your little girl will dream happier dreams, by day and night, of the joy some poor little girl will have on Christmas in the present your child will send her, than she can dream of the joy your own gifts will bring her on that blessed morning. That boy's eyes are growing big and lustrous with wonder and anticipation, but get at his deepest heart-thought, and you will find that what he intends to do for some other boy, perhaps some poor boy, is giving him greater happiness than what he hopes you will do for him when the sweet morning dawns.

This lesson must get into our hearts, and it must remain there. This element of the everlasting life, this spirit of eternal youth, of immortal growth, of perennial hope, of joyful anticipation, is the spirit

of true greatness. Men are made strong and great by what they hope, believe, love, anticipate, imagine, and aspire to. On what you hope the morrow will bring to you, and on what you anticipate the morrow will carry to others from you, must depend your power for moral growth, for holy influence, for abiding happiness. What we hope to become, and what we hope to do, is the inspiration of our lives. The gifts which the future has to bestow upon us—gifts of God and of angels and of men, gifts of truth and love and light—are our encouragement to-day; and we, too, with childhood's believing, hoping heart, may look through many dark nights to some sure, great, luminous morning when the gifts will come. Limited as our powers may be to-day, we are looking forward to the time when we shall be able to bring greater gifts to God and men, when we shall have more of the spirit and power of the Christ-child and the Christ-man to confer blessings upon the world. Has not God bent His listening ear to our whisperings when in our most unselfish prayers we have asked for power to do more good, power to become greater in influence? What a picture of life in its unfolding possibilities,—Childhood, dreaming of youth with all its strength and power; Youth, dreaming of manhood with all its opportunity and

greatness; Manhood, dreaming of old age with all its honor and recompense of glory; Old Age, dreaming of heaven and of eternal youth! We come into this world with the dream of life, we leave it with the dream of immortality. Existence shall be an eternal, blessed childhood; an existence of faith and hope and love; an existence of opening, unfolding life; an existence with an everlasting future. Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven? He who has caught the spirit of eternal hope; the spirit of eternal reverence, faith, and prophecy; the spirit of immortal youth. Who is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

"Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them."

IV.

THE BLESSINGS OF SOLITUDE.

"He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters; he restoreth my soul."—Psa. xxiii, 2, 3.

Solitude is one of the soul's most unfailing restoratives. Commendable in many respects as this strenuous American life may be, is it not possible for us to pay too much for our wealth and rapid progress? Is there not danger of overtaxing those nervous energies which will be quite as necessary in holding as they have been in gaining the heights of prosperity? An army may dash into battle with an impetuosity which it will not be able to maintain, and thus even in the long struggle defeat itself. What profit to us will be all our social prestige, our commercial daring, our industrial supremacy, and our national world-power, when our vitality and nervous energy become exhausted and the brain-fag sets in?

We may live too fast; we may strain our individual, social, and national powers to an excessive and fatal tension.

In the spiritual life of man—yes, and in the mental life, the professional life, the business life—there is often need that we lie down in green pastures, walk beside the still waters, and there find the necessary soul restorative, David's secret of spiritual rest.

That grand old poet understood the philosophy of getting the most out of life. Nor did he experience the fatigue of such a strenuous life as ours. That poet, soldier, and king never forgot the free, wholesome, and restful shepherd-life of his boyhood, when he led the flocks of Jesse into green pastures and beside the still waters. Many a day he doubtless longed to quit the royal courts of Jerusalem for the "green fields and babbling brooks" of Bethlehem. The sweet and holy ministrations of solitude have yet to be learned and appreciated. The imagination and emotions, the judgment and reason, the faith-power and the will-power, find stimulus and nourishment in that quiet, retrospective, introspective, and prospective aloneness which gives the soul a chance to become acquainted with itself.

There is nothing more inimical to highest cul-

ture and spirituality than perpetual "society." We have no argument to make against society. That is a necessary and inevitable institution. Our contention is against the social restlessness, the demands which engross and enslave the life. We are not advocating the cloister, the stupidity and ennui of the hermitage, but simply an occasional, if not a frequent, soul-bath in the cleansing, invigorating silences and inactivities, a quiet walk beside the still waters of solitude. It is a blessing for the soul to pass into a quiet calm now and then, where no ripple is seen on the waters, where scarcely a zephyr is felt, or even the flutter of a sail. The poet experienced the nervous strain of life when he sang, and sang for you and me as for himself:

"Calm soul of things! O make it mine
To feel, amid the city's jar,
That there abides a peace of thine
Man did not make, and can not mar.

The will to neither strive nor cry;
The power to feel with others give!
Calm, calm me more! nor let me die
Before I have begun to live."

Jesus, the "Calm Soul of Things," said to this hurrying, worrying humanity, "Peace I leave with you, my peace give I unto you." The psalmist found that in God's philosophy of life there was a place

and time for restful leisure. "The Lord is my Shepherd. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters." American society needs more calm, more quiet, regenerating breathing-spells. Its very purity, rejuvenation, and vitality require this, as trees do that rest in winter to recuperate for new blossoms and new fruit when spring and summer shall return. Society may become exhausting and enervating,—physically, mentally, and morally. And that is fatal to a healthy, vigorous home life and national life. It is remarkably true that there was never so much "society" in Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, or Paris as in its most thoughtless and corrupt age, when it stood on the brink of political anarchy and ruin. The culture and civilization of a people are found in their quiet solitude, rather than in their social whirl and whir. To what degree are the people thoughtful, meditative, given to study, self-discipline, and control? This is the important question. To ask, How constantly are the people given to public excitement, amusement, parade, to dress, show and gossip? is to ask, How much of the animal survives? Herbert Spencer would say, it is to ask, How much of the ape remains in their composition? This is not an objection to society and social intercourse, but a protest

against those social imperatives and tyrannies which leave men and women no time for solitude and its higher spiritual blessings. Mr. Ruskin has said, "An artist should be fit for the best society, and *keep out of it.*" Why the artist and not the lawyer, the author, the merchant, the teacher, the housewife? We can not go to this extreme with all,—hardly with the artists, poets, or geniuses of any sort. This, however, is an extravagant, Ruskinesque way of saying, Do not let "society" be your master; do not be a slave to it; if you are, you can be nothing else.

We find the ideal man, Jesus, preparing for His life-work by retiring to the solitude of the wilderness, there to be tempted and tested. The Spirit led Him into the solitudes. Even by the Son of God and King of saints there were important questions to be settled, severe battles to be fought, high and holy masteries to be gained, before the great, characteristic achievement of His life mission could be wrought. Some people do not withdraw from the crowd long enough to become well acquainted with themselves. There are thoughts, convictions, and purposes here in the soul that demand a hearing. Possibilities are here, knocking at the door of their imprisonment and claiming their opportunities. Sit

down and talk with yourself awhile; lie down in the green pastures of meditation, and listen to the inner voices of your better self. Yes, and that quiet of the solitude may be disturbed as you learn there are battles for you to fight, silent battles; battles with the smokeless powder and noiseless guns; but battles of duty and of destiny. One is honest with himself when alone walking beside the still waters of sober judgment. He dares then boldly to say to himself: "I know you. No masks! Come, now, own up. Stop your pretense. Begin a better life. Break that chain. Shake yourself from the dust. Stretch yourself for your great duty. No cowardice! No skepticism! No nonsense! Make a man of yourself, and that, quickly."

It is said Von Moltke won his greatest victories in his tent. Grant and Lincoln accomplished their most important work in solitude, often while "society" was fast asleep, wearied out with the last ball. So there come to poets their brightest thoughts, to philosophers their most logical conclusions, to generals their most victorious plans, to inventors their most useful discoveries, to reformers their weightiest arguments and holiest inspirations, beside the still waters and in the green pastures of solitude. Arnold is not the only student of men and affairs

who has had occasion to observe, "How many minds —almost all the great ones—were formed in secrecy and solitude!" God called Moses into history from the solitudes of the desert where he "kept the flock of Jethro." Gideon received his divine commission as he threshed the wheat by the wine-press, where no sound was heard but the rhythmic beating of the flail. Elisha is following the plow when the mantle of Elijah, the prophetic call, comes upon him. David was herding the sheep of Jesse over in the pastures of Bethlehem when the order came for him to hasten to the battlefield, face the giant of Gath, and save his country. Shakespeare saunters into great London and to the throne of the world's literary empire from the obscure village of Stratford-upon-Avon. Lincoln comes up from the silence and lonesomeness of the frontier wilderness to liberate a race and save the American Union. Jesus walks in from sequestered and despised Nazareth to confound the doctors of Jerusalem. Out of the calm quietude of the simplest peasant life He comes to save and rule the world. How few of the great in song or art or war or statesmanship or philanthropy or eloquence have been contributed by "society," by the world's spirit of pleasure!

Out of the ranks of the rising generation must come the great men and women of the future. But if our young people give themselves incessantly to "society," permit "society" to claim all their time, brains, heart, nerve, and blood, there will be little hope for the future greatness of our boasted Americanism. Nay, if our young men are determined even to find time for nothing but business and the noise and strife of trade, then there is coming into history an age destitute of heroism and intellectuality, destitute of genius and moral power, destitute of the elements that make nations great and civilizations splendid. There must be time for the higher business of the mind and heart; time for great books, and great pictures; time for study and worship. It is a fact almost startling in its significance that our young men seem to be losing the ambition for education and the taste for study. Large as are the graduating classes of our high schools, seminaries, and colleges, the ratio of lady to gentlemen graduates is constantly increasing. In many instances the young women are in the majority, and at one high school Commencement is was noticeable that only one member of the large graduating class was a man; the only young man in that city, evidently,

who had brains enough to seek and obtain a high-school education. But, they say, the young men have to work, and they early turn to business pursuits. That means that the intellectualities are left to the women, while the men are giving themselves up soul and mind and body to the materialities. If this be true, and if this shall continue to be the tendency, there will certainly come a revolution in the character of our literature, intellectualism, and very civilization, and woman will be the thinker, writer, artist, philosopher, and scholar of the future. This is our only hope, if men in their love of gold shall lose their thirst for knowledge.

We hardly realize what a power for intellectuality, and even morality, Nature may exercise over the human soul. The more highly developed man is in mind and heart, the greater teacher Nature becomes to him. We are apt to think Nature does its great work upon what we call the "children of Nature," the savage tribes of the earth. But we can not imagine that the mountain ever said as much to the savage as Mont Blanc said to Coleridge, or that the sea ever spoke to the barbarian as it spoke to Byron, or that the trees ever grew as eloquent to the Indians as to Bryant, or that the flowers of the field ever carried to the rude Aztecs, who lived in perpetual

gardens, what they carried to the soul of Wordsworth by the pleasant lakes of England:

> "There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
> The earth, and every common sight,
> To me did seem
> Appareled in celestial light."

It is a beautiful, a sublime picture to the imagination, that Matthew paints in the simple words, "That day went Jesus *out of the house,* and sat by the *seaside.*" At another time, "He went up into a *mountain,* and when the evening was come He was there *alone.*" And again, "He was in the *wilderness.*" Even when His disciples were with Him He led them, not along the dusty road, but through the ripening corn, and at times His weary feet were hidden by the lilies of the field, which had lessons and sweet parables in them to tell of the kingdom of God. But the picture of Jesus *alone* in the *mountain,* or seated by the *sea,* is perhaps the most beautiful and suggestive. God seemed to say to Him and to all:

> "Come forth into the light of things,
> Let Nature be your teacher."

Our thoughts of God and life, of the world we struggle in and the world we dream of and look for, do not come to us along these hard streets where

the wheels rumble and the crowds surge. Nor do they come even in the quiet retreat of the office or the home, but rather where we walk by pleasant streams, tread on flowers, pat the great trees, watch the grain wave golden and opulent, and stand on the mountains and look out across the stretch of Nature's calm and passionless magnificence,

"With all its grand orchestral silences."

O, then what thoughts of God, and of what we would be, and of what we may yet become! There is no book like it; no pen like it; no voice, no eloquence, no great throb of thought like it, excepting the inspired Word. One may imagine the noble feeling that inspired the poet Thomson to sing:

"Nature!
Enrich me with the knowledge of thy works.
Snatch me to heaven."

I pity that infidelity which has no eye for the inspired beauty of the flowers; which walks beneath the great trees as they clap their hands, but never thinks of the God whom they praise; which looks upon the grandeur of the ocean, and climbs the mighty hills, but is never inspired to worship the infinite Creator. Would we were as noble, pure, devout, religious as Nature would have us be—Nature, the gentle and generous motherhood of God!

For there, there with Nature's strong tenderness and tender strength we have been restored and in much peace and assurance have

"Smiled to think God's goodness flowed around our incompleteness,
Round our restlessness His rest."

It may be found that much of the meanness and wickedness of great cities is due more to the absence of the beauties and glories of Nature than merely to the crowding together of the people. The dearth of flowers and trees and singing birds, of green pastures and still waters, makes cities vicious. Why did Emerson say, "I always seem to suffer some loss of faith on entering cities?" Doubtless it was because art had there superseded Nature, and there is not the same genuineness to art that there is to Nature. They say Socrates never cared to go beyond the bounds of Athens; that accounts for his sour temper. Had he and Xanthippe gone more frequently into the country, there would have been less gossip and scandal about their domestic infelicities. Dante felt that he was an exile if out of the streets of Florence; that accounts for his melancholy; that 's why he wanted to write about Hell. Milton loved old London, and his greatest poem was "Paradise Lost."

One of the blessings of solitude comes to us

through a patient and loving study of literature. We must find time for the poets, leisure to commune with these truest, most sympathetic interpreters of life. Did Jesus, when alone in the mount or the wilderness, or by the sea, commune with David and Job, Solomon, Moses and Isaiah, the great thinkers, singers, philosophers and seers of Israel? How familiar He was with the thought and language of that inspired literature! His memory knew all the pleasant paths that led through the green pastures and beside the still waters of sacred song and prophecy. We must find time to commune, not only with Longfellow and Tennyson, with Keats and Browning, with Milton and Shakespeare, but also with those sacred singers, with those vision-gifted sons of God who beheld the glories of the worlds to be, and sang of the new heaven and the new earth, the kingdom of God among men. Is it not our privilege to cultivate their music and harmony of thought, their cadence and rhythm of feeling, their melody and majesty of imagination?

Should we not carry this idea of quietude into the study of the great poets and prophets? What can be more incongruous than studying Shakespeare in a theater? When I take up "Hamlet," "Lear," or "Macbeth," permit me to lie down in the green

pastures and walk beside the still waters of solitude, and there study these masterful delineations of character, and find Shakespeare's philosophy of conduct and life. In the theater the appeal is to the senses, while the show and tinselry, the acting and the actor, come between the student and the soul of the poet. There one must take the thought at second-hand, drink the draught of poetry from the tin cup or golden chalice of another man's interpretation, instead of drinking from the living fountain. Let Shakespeare interpret himself to your mind. Experience the joy of finding his golden thoughts and pearls of fancy for yourself, as the miner who digs into the mountain, or the pearl-diver who plunges into the sea. How much less satisfaction comes from buying a trout of the fishmonger than from angling for it and catching it in the forest brook, where the darkened pool of still waters, shaded by the overhanging branches, invites the speckled beauties to a hiding-place! One can not be satisfied by a simple description of the flower, or by an imitation in tissue paper, cloth, or wax. One would see it where it grows, pluck it with his own hand, and inhale its sweet, fresh fragrance. So would we do with the thoughts and fancies, the wit and wisdom of the poet. Alone with Shakespeare! Alone with

Dante! Browning in a club! How absurd! Who does not feel that solitude is essential to a sincere study and deep understanding of his song? The infinite fuss, pretense, and impertinence of many a club! A club for a shad-bake, not for Browning. Alone with Browning! Alone with Browning, or forever a stranger to him, and he forever a stranger to you.

Have I been anticipated? Why not alone with Isaiah? alone with Psalmist and Psalm? alone with Job? alone with St. John and the Patmos vision? alone with Jesus, alone at His feet? Better by far is this than all the preaching in the world. All great preaching can but lead you there, and leave you there. Never should preaching take the place of a personal study of the inspired thought of inspired men. Never should church-going be substituted for the quiet hour of Bible-searching which brings the soul into rapt communion with the great spirits who have seen God face to face, and brought from the holy mount the heavenly message of law and love. Here in the Word find your ideals; ideals which exist in no other book, and are found in no other history. Society presents but few ideals to aspiring souls. "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." There is no idealism, no aspiration,

no spiritual-mindedness in that; no looking into other and higher worlds; no visions of God and hereafters. O for a calm, quiet communion with those great men who

"Remind us
We can make our lives sublime!"

Alone with the Bible! Take the Good Book with you as you lie down in the green pastures and walk beside the still waters.

We read in the biographies of Jesus that on several occasions He went out into a *mountain* to *pray*. Mark says, "In the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." It has been well said that "solitude is the audience-chamber of God." One thing is very noticeable in the life of Jesus: it can hardly be said that He ever offered a public prayer. He taught His disciples how to pray, but on that occasion, it is said, "He was praying in a certain place." His disciples had found Him engaged in secret prayer. At the close of His ministry He gathered the little band of disciples around Him, and offered that wonderful prayer which has been recorded by John. This is perhaps as nearly a *public* prayer as Jesus ever offered. Our Savior would teach the necessity of secret prayer; and by His own

act of withdrawing Himself even from His disciples, and seeking the desert or the mountain for prayer, He taught at least the appropriateness of solitude for communion with God. Did the Psalmist find a place for prayer in the green pastures and beside the still waters? Did the Lord restore his soul by that quiet communion in the sweet solitude? Montgomery calls prayer,

> "The upward glancing of the eye,
> When none but God is near."

Who that has ever prayed does not know that the deepest prayer, the prayer that a crushed and broken heart sobs heavenward, can not be uttered where it will fall on other than God's ears? The prayer of penitence, the soul's cry to God out of its darkness and sin, the prayer for forgiveness and for the Divine patience and mercy, does not come forth in its tearful sincerity until the soul is alone with God. While we believe, as Victor Hugo said, that "certain *thoughts* are prayers, and that there are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the *soul* is *on its knees,*" yet there are times when soul and body lie prostrate against the throne of the Divine Kindness, to be comforted "as one whom his mother comforteth." And though upon the street, on the mart, in the office or sanctuary, or at the fam-

ily altar, the heart may pour to Heaven its prayer, there are also times when you would talk with God *alone,* out in the green pastures and beside the still waters, not even an *angel* listening, as there were times in childhood when you would talk to mother alone, and to no one but mother. If we look into the lives of the great men of prayer we shall find them offering their most heartfelt petitions in *solitude.* Whether it be Jacob at Bethel or Peniel, Moses on Sinai, Elijah on Carmel, or Jesus in the desert, what answers of blessing, light, and power come to him who there prays in solitude! Washington seeks the solitude of the wood that winter day at Valley Forge, and there in secret the father of our country prays to the Father of all, and he that hears in secret rewards openly. Lincoln is accidentally found in his room on his knees in tears, praying for our armies to the God of battles. How the secret prayers of Jesus prepared Him for great works! He came from the solitude of the mount to hush the storm. He came from the solitary place of prayer to heal the leper and teach the people. He came from the loneliness of the mountain where He had prayed all night, when there went virtue out of Him, to heal the people of all manner of diseases. He came from that distant, secluded spot, where He

prayed, in Gethsemane, to taste death for every man. O, to what heights of heroism may the manhood rise in secret prayer; to what noble, Godlike purposes of self-sacrifice! What power may fall upon the soul, and what a fitness for great deeds and useful living may come to a man in the place of secret prayer, where, in the calm and awful solitude, God is! Alone with God, Elijah heard the still, small voice, and the silence had a greater message than the thunder. Alone with God, Samuel heard the call of his high destiny. Alone with God, Moses beheld the burning bush and heard the voice divine. There are truths, deep, saving, comforting truths; there are calls, commands, and inspirations coming to us out of the sublime silences, which are too great and meaningful for words and language; their voice is not heard. In these silences the Spirit breathes upon the waiting, weary heart the restful and assuring thought, "Be still, and know that I am God."

"The Infinite always is silent,
  It is only the finite speaks;
Our words are the idle wave-caps
  On the deep that never breaks,—
We question with wand of science,
  Explain, decide, and discuss,
But only in meditation,
  The mystery speaks to us."

From the solitudes the soul, restored, renewed, baptized with heavenly energies, comes forth with new hope, new faith, new courage, having found the finest philosophy of the everlasting and ever-blessed life in the green pastures and beside the still waters, alone with God.

"Oft am I weary, reading, listening,
But all I wish and long for is in Thee,
Then silent be all teachers, hushed be all creation at the sight of Thee:
Speak Thou to me alone."

V.

THE MINISTRY OF AFFLICTION.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—2 Cor. iv, 17.

A STORM may help to make an oak, and a conflict help to make a saint. Moral vigor is largely the product of discipline. Sorrow has a helpful ministry. Affliction brings its gifts to character, and misfortune often holds a hidden but a heavenly benediction. All refining processes are severe. Transformations which enhance the value and the beauty of things are wrought by force. The flame purifies the gold. The sapphire's glow and splendor come from the heart of the precious stone, only on the wheel of the lapidary. The shapeless marble assumes a grace, only beneath the sculptor's chisel-stroke. Every piece of steel or iron that is to form a part of the useful machine must pass through the forge, writhe upon the anvil, and throb and quiver beneath the relentless hammer that fashions it for its place. The

very soil becomes bountiful with flowers and fruits and golden corn under the rough ministry of plow and harrow. As in the lower world of force and matter, so in the higher world of intellect and morals, everything is brought to its greatest beauty and usefulness by severe, persistent processes of discipline. All goodness and grace of character, if not all happiness, though assisted by Divine grace, must grow out of toil, study, conflict, sacrifice, suffering. When we see, therefore, that work, drill, struggle, burden-bearing, and sorrow have a sacred use, and can not be evil, we come to accept and use them as the sculptor his chisels, the smith his hammers, the farmer his plows, the builder his tools, the worker upon the tapestry his mingled threads of every hue,—they help to make up our life and our manhood.

"Affliction" is a general term, including all forms of discipline,—the trials, temptations, conflicts, and sorrows incident to Christian experience in this world. "Affliction" meant, to the apostles, persecutions, stripes, imprisonment, deprivations, insult, banishment, and even death. It may not mean all this to you and me. Some will insist that the heroic age has passed away, and there can be no heroic age without heroes. That would certainly be like the play of "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out. Again, it

will be said, if there were as complete a consecration, as stern a righteousness, as quick a conscience in our Christianty as there were in Paul's, there would be quite as good an opportunity for the exercise of heroism now as ever there was. It takes great souls to make great sacrifices. Only a true hero will assert a conviction to his own injury, ostracism, and death.

But it must be considered that the world has changed since Paul's day. Christianity has been giving men and society a more liberal and humane spirit. As a consequence, one is no longer in danger of his life for holding or expressing any conviction he may cherish. Affliction, then, may not mean persecution for conscience' sake, yet it may have as significant a meaning. It may stand for poverty, for ill-paid toil, for hard battling with evil habit and base appetite, for the loss of fortune, or the greater loss of health, or the greatest loss of friends and loved ones. "Affliction" is a word that has a meaning to every heart; it is interpreted in every man's daily life, in his prayers and tears.

But with the promise given that "all things shall work together for good to them that love God," the Christian, who is seeking by his daily life to imitate Jesus Christ, to bless his fellow-men, and to glorify God, can not, with consistency, look upon any evil

that may overtake him as unmixed with good. And if he look at it aright, from the standpoint of faith and Christian philosophy, no *evil* can overtake him. Everything becomes a means in his behalf, a means to his salvation, sanctification, perfection, and final happiness. Every affliction, whatever form it may assume, is to the good man a means of grace; it works for him, not against him, and it is a means, not an end. As it is a means, it is but temporal, while the end which it achieves is eternal. So Paul calls it "our light affliction, which is but for a moment." And the affliction of a moment stands contrasted with the glory which is eternal: The cross temporal, the crown eternal; the struggle temporal, the victory eternal; the discipline temporal, the character eternal; earth and life temporal, heaven and immortality eternal!

All affliction is to the good man disciplinary, and will come to an end. It will end in good, in glory. "Though weeping endureth for a night, joy cometh in the morning." Is it poverty that afflicts? is it the unkindness of the world that afflicts? is it a disappointment of hopes that afflicts? is it temptation that afflicts? Whatever it be, it will not continue forever; its work will end; its purpose will be accomplished, and it will pass away. The cloud forms,

drops its rain, and passes away, for the sun to shine and flowers to bloom. The storm gathers, purifies the air, and passes away, for the fragrant and healthful calm to settle like a benediction on the land. Affliction comes, administers its discipline, and passes away, for the peace, joy, and glory to appear. Consider, then, the temporal nature of affliction in contrast with the eternal nature of the good which affliction is sent to accomplish. The fires of the furnace long since went out from which came the refined gold that will shine for a thousand years as a jewel or a crown. The Apollo Belvedere stands today a miracle of beauty, two thousand years after the chisel perished which gave it its immortal grace. Cologne's great spires pierce the sky, and will for centuries to come; but the scaffolding beneath which they grew, and the tools which piled the marble toward the clouds, will vanish in a day. So affliction is but for the moment; it passes away, but leaves an eternal blessing; it may vanish more quickly than furnace fire, or sculptor's chisel, or builder's scaffolding; but the work it has done for the soul, or the work God has done by it, will be more lasting than jewels of gold or statues and temples of stone.

The apostle here speaks, not only of the affliction of a moment in contrast with eternal glory, but of

our "*light* affliction," and brings into contrast with this "an eternal *weight* of glory." He weighs life's trials and sorrows, its so-called evils and losses, against the good which they bring to us and leave with us. The affliction is placed in one scale of the balance, the glory in the other; that is "light," this is an "eternal weight." In his letter to the Romans he puts the great contrast in this language: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." Here, then, is to be found the true philosophy of life. Here we discover an answer to the question, "Is life worth living?" Shutting our eyes to the final outcome of things, confining our thought and hope, imagination and faith, to things which are seen and temporal, we may come to doubt whether there be any good in the world, and whether existence be indeed a boon. But while, with Paul, "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," we discover that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The attainment of this glory makes existence sublime; the possibility of it makes life worth the living. The goal gives dignity to the race; the victory gives greatness to the struggle.

Glory may grow out of affliction. Every trial, every sorrow, every cross, has for the righteous soul a compensating element of good. And there are blessings which can come to us in no other way than through the toils, conflicts, self-denials, and even bereavements, which make up life's affliction. It was only in the fiery furnace that the Hebrew youth could see "the Form of the Fourth." That Form, brighter than the flame, made the furnace more glorious than a regal palace. Only in the den of wild beasts, or in the prison, does Daniel or Peter find the angelic messengers powerful to shut the lion's mouth, or strong to break the chain of captivity and open the iron door. Only amid the frowning hills of Bethel, when his weary head was on the pillow of stone, could Jacob see the ladder reaching to the opening skies, thronged with radiant angels. Only from desolate, seagirt, rocky Patmos could John catch glimpses of the gates of pearl which swing open to the Paradise of God. When hunted like a partridge on the mountain, when driven to the gloomy cave in his extremity, when surrounded by foes who were driving him to battle, or when smitten by the chastisement of Providence, David's soul quivered with strongest emotion, and woke the mighty harp of Israel to its sublimest themes. John

Henry Newman wrote "Lead, Kindly Light," when his spirit was depressed with loneliness and home-sickness while on a dreary voyage; and Tennyson's greatest poem, "In Memoriam," comes to us baptized with the tears of his greatest sorrow in the loss of Hallam. Bunyan's great dream doubtless came to him in Bedford jail, and Dante's "Divine Comedy" was sung in exile. Goldsmith wrote his finest lines to keep away hunger and the sheriff. And it may be doubted whether "starry-minded Milton" had ever finished his magnificent epic had he not gone blind. In the darkness may come our finest inspirations and our noblest thoughts. We may dream our happiest dream in the dungeon. From the stony pillar we may behold the gleaming ladder against the sky, and from Patmos's crags which bruise our feet, sweet Paradise may bless our sight. The truest prayer or song that ever came out of the heart, the prayer or song that has added beauty to the life and nobility to the soul, has been evoked by sorrow, like fragrance crushed from roses or the incense touched with fire.

Our sorrows give us such a glimpse of human friendship that they seem to form but the cloudy background for Kindness to paint its genial features on, and work thereon its bow of hope and promise.

One can almost afford to be ill for the kind inquiries that are made of him, and the good wishes that are sent. I do not believe in waiting until people are dying or dead before saying good things about their virtues. But many a person never loved humanity worthily until, in his bereavement, he found how kind and generous and sympathetic his neighbors were. When death threw its sable wing over the home, and the people said such gentle things about the dead, and such hopeful things, it was n't so dark, a ray of kindly light broke in, and the afflicted will carry with them the memory of that kindness and sympathy as long as they carry the memory of their grief. The child, frightened by the thunder and the blackness of the gathering storm, runs to mother; her smile and song assure and quiet him, and he will remember mother's face and voice as long as he remembers the storm, yet would he be willing to hear the thunder again for a chance to hear that mother sing. There is compensation somewhere that gives value to every trial. The seamen of Galilee would be willing to have the storm rage again if they could hear Jesus say, "Peace, be still." The three weary apostles would gladly climb the mount again in the night to witness a Transfiguration; and the man restored to sight would almost be willing to go blind

again to have the great Physician open his eyes, and to feel the thrill of that life-giving touch. So there are men and women who would be willing again to pass through any affliction which they have experienced for the good which they are wise enough to see has come to them through it in the past. David said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." The time comes in the experience of the good man when he can look back and recognize the beneficial character of what he may once have called his bad luck, his misfortune, a calamity, a disaster, life's affliction, and God's chastening. Many a man never knew the value of Divine grace, nor appreciated his religion, until he passed through trials and temptations. You do not have to ask about the stanchness of a ship that has sailed through a hundred storms. You do not have to test the temper of a sword that has fought a hundred battles. You do not have to examine the soundness of the walls that have stood a hundred cannonadings and baffled a hundred fierce assaults. And the religion which comes to man's help in every affliction, which comforts him in sorrow, encourages him in his trial, helps him bear his burden, conquer his temptations, subdue his passions, and dispel his doubts and fears, needs no defense of logic or eloquence; its very helpfulness is its defense,

and in that is the proof of its divinity. So if affliction gives us a better knowledge of human kindness, and a clearer, more positive proof of God's providence, and of the Divine nature of the Gospel, it works out for us a good against which gold would weigh as nothing in the balance.

Then, many will confess that they did not actually know themselves until they had been brought to the test by some backset or some conflict. I have known men and women, possessing a fear of death which they could not shake off, to be brought to the very portals of the unseen world, and finally restored with the old fear *gone*. Their faith was stronger, their hope was brighter than they knew; and ever after, the brightest spot in all the past was that long and severe illness which demonstrated the genuineness of their religious experience. Afflictions of another sort, reverses of fortune, loss of wealth, the death of friends, and, still more trying, the ill-treatment of their fellow-men, calumny and misrepresentation, have come upon persons with a force which they never supposed they had strength and grace enough to bear. But they found themselves battling manfully against their adverse circumstances, with a patience, courage, faith, and hope of which they never before knew themselves to be

possessed. They did not lose their temper and become bitter, but remained sweet, dignified, and manly. They grew mild, gentle, and considerate; not resentful and unforgiving. Until affliction comes, we may not, as Longfellow says,

> "Know how sublime a thing it is
> To suffer and be strong."

There is a fine thought, quaintly expressed by one of the earlier poets, in the words:

> "He who hath never warred with misery,
> Nor ever tugged with fortune and distress,
> Hath had no occasion, nor no field to try
> The strength and forces of his worthiness."

The world does not see of what fine, genuine stuff a man is made until he is brought to some severe trial that makes his virtues and his nobility shine out. I have known men to lose their all in a single calamity, a great fire; in one night a fortune went up in smoke, or in some financial panic the accumulations of a lifetime have been swept away; but they were just as sweet-tempered in their poverty as they had been in their wealth, and men said of such or such a man: "Why, he is the very same man. How nobly he stands it; how strong and well-poised he is! There is a man of character; there is a Christian whose religion is a practical reality." Then, having

passed through the ordeal without a murmur, such men will forever be thankful for the experience and discipline of it, as Job must have been. There is only one thing greater than not losing your poise when you lose your fortune; that is, not losing it when you gain a fortune. How refreshing to hear some old acquaintance say of a man, "He is just as sensible as when he was poor; just as kind, sympathetic, obliging!" He realizes that wealth has not added any new quality to the clay. But it does not *afflict* a man to grow rich. To grow rich with simplicity may, however, be as virtuous as to become poor with dignity.

But there are still greater and more abiding blessings wrought out for us by affliction. It makes and develops character. From this thorny vine burst flowers of beauty and fragrance. On this rough and gnarled tree grow the most delicious fruits. Every grace that adorns character is developed therefrom. Paul says, "We glory in tribulation; for tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope," essential elements of a strong and righteous character. Again, he declares that God chastens us for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holiness and yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. Highest character reflects

the Divine character, partakes of "the Divine holiness." Peter teaches this same truth when he says, "The God of all grace who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you." That means perfection, power, and poise of character. Jesus Himself was "made perfect through suffering." Stability, firmness of moral character, are brought about by trial and burden-bearing and the resisting of temptation. The gentleness, sympathy, charity, self-sacrificing disposition, so characteristic of Jesus, belong to a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief. And only the man who has been tempted in all points like as we are, can be touched with the feeling of our infirmity. Affliction mellows the heart and opens it toward humanity, makes us more gentle, more charitable, more forgiving, more patient with other men's failings. Many a man has been nobler from the very hour in which a darling child took sick and died; he has been more chaste in his language, more tender in his feelings, more manly in his business transactions, more benevolent and prayerful. Until then he has been absorbed with the world. He permitted politics, society, business, pleasure, indifference to religion, to harden his heart. He came to have no

feeling, no sympathy for the sorrowing and struggling world about him. He became self-centered, narrow, uncharitable. But death came to the home, and a sweet spirit vanished like a visiting angel from the little family circle; and the man's hard heart was broken. The stern, indifferent, cynical spirit became tender, sympathetic, and kindly. I heard a strong man once say that he paid no particular attention to other people's children until he had lost one of his own; after that, he felt like taking in his arms every little boy or girl he met. Sorrow had found his heart. It has happened that from the hour in which sickness or death, or some great accident or some reverse of fortune, came to a man's family, he has been more vigorous, determined, and successful in fighting old habits and appetites, and in resisting the lifelong temptations. So the truth does not seem to be overdrawn when the poet says:

> "Affliction is the wholesome soil of virtue,
> Where patience, honor, sweet humanity,
> Calm fortitude, take root and strongly flourish."

Paul speaks of "the glory which shall be revealed in us." A true interpretation of the Word of God brings us to the belief that the Gospel is here to fashion human character; that the greatest triumph of grace is the regeneration of the conscience, will,

affections, and aspirations of the soul. And the teaching is, that man's highest destiny is reached by that development of the spiritual nature, by that acquirement of the moral beauty and power which carry in themselves all the conditions, all the resources, all the germs and potencies of an endless happiness, all the sweet, divine meanings of immortality and heaven. The glory which is wrought out for us of "eternal weight" is that which is wrought in us. And the eternal weight of glory wrought out for us by the trials and sufferings (which sooner or later we all shall know), while it belongs to character, belongs to the future. Nothing goes over into eternity but that which belongs to mind and spirit, to the manhood or womanhood of us; and that the "eternal weight" of glory, spoken of in the text, has reference to future blessedness is shown in the language of the apostle Peter: "Now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations, that the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

This is the Christian philosophy of life. It is but a preparation for a higher, grander life. Mortal must put on immortality. As we have borne the

image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. But this higher life, this blessed immortality, this image of the heavenly, must be wrought out for us by the discipline of the world through which we are passing. The Patmos dreamer, in happy and inspired vision, saw a multitude which no man could number, standing before the throne, clothed in white robes, with palms in their hands, and they sang the song of redemption. "These are they who have come out of great *tribulation,* and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. *Therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Then, then, the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" shall be theirs. But this is a vision to us, a prophecy, a promise. We see the glory from afar. We stand on the great and high mountain of blest anticipation. It is now only as a golden dream; soon the morning will break with all its

splendors, and we shall see face to face. Face to face with the Paradise of God; face to face with angels and archangels; face to face with those who sweetly walked with us awhile, but now in forms celestial walk with God; face to face with the King in his beauty! Welcome the toil and sacrifice; welcome the reverses and bereavements; welcome the "light afflictions" which make for the "eternal weight of glory!" In the light of this blessed hope we sing:

> "'T is sorrow builds the shining ladder up,
> Whose golden rounds are our calamities,
> Whereon our firm feet planting, nearer God
> The spirit climbs, and hath its eyes unsealed."

VI.

THE ANGELS' EASTER GREETING.

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay."—Matt. xxviii, 6.

We seem once more to hear the prophet's voice rousing the world to the glory of a new hope, to the assurance of a new life: "Awake, awake! put on thy strength, O Zion: put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem!" We are surrounded with emblems of this mighty thought and glorious fact of resurrection. Spring breaking the bonds of winter; a golden morn dawning from the gloomy night; flowers blooming from the snow; jubilant song bursting from sleep's silences; Christ rising from the grave; life, eternal life, springing out of death! To-day, earth and heaven, Magdalene and angel, stand face to face. Upon Mary's face are the shadows of a great woe, the tears of hopeless love, the agony of despair. The angel's face is radiant with the light of a wondrous truth, a blessed promise, a glorious hope. Nothing can be more beautiful

than an inspired face, a face aglow with the inner light of an illumined soul. We count it a privilege and pleasure to look upon the countenances of great men. We should like to have seen them when they had their greatest thoughts, their holiest dreams, their brightest visions,—the face of Moses when he came from the Mount of God; the face of Joshua when he commanded the sun to stay his chariot; the face of David when he struck the harp of Israel into immortal music; the face of Paul when he wrote, "O death, where is thy sting;" the face of John as he stood on the great and high mountain and saw the Holy City; but, above all, the face of that mighty angel who had taken the place of the Roman guard, rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulcher of Jesus Christ the Son of God, and, sitting there, clad in habiliments of celestial splendor, cried to the sorrowing woman and to a dying world: "He is risen! He is risen!" When the angel spoke these wonderful words, "his countenance was like the lightning." And did not Mary's face catch the light celestial as the truth dawned in her broken heart? Has not humanity's face become radiant as the angels' with the joy and hope of resurrection and eternal life?

God's angels are greeting us this happy morn,—

the angel of music, the angel of beauty, the angel of revelation, the angel of faith: "Fear not; come, see the place where the Lord lay." Let the Church be God's strong and beautiful angel to-day; sitting at the door of an empty sepulcher, like the heavenly messenger of old, her countenance is like the lightning, and her raiment white as the snow. The light of a glorious hope is on her brow, a flame of holy joy and ecstasy kindles her eye, her robes glisten with unearthly brightness, and from her inspired lips come the words that glow and thoughts that burn: "He is risen! He is risen!" Like an angel of light in the darkness of death's sad mystery, the Christian Church comes with its blessed gospel of Jesus and the resurrection.

It was morning. The golden east was lifting up her gates; the hills stood glorified; the vines and olive-trees and palms were glistening with their baptism of Orient dews. Nature was jubilant; the sky smiled with a wondrous and benignant radiance; the air was fragrant with the incense of the fields; the birds were on the wing, heralding the day, and all the sweet and holy land of God was waking to the brightest morn that ever dawned upon the world.

It was morning. The Holy City was rousing itself from a troubled sleep. A sigh of wonder came

up from the heart of a nation. Every face wore a question. Every conscience trembled. Every eye bore a startled look. Awe settled upon the people, and though they knew not why they felt it, but feel it they did, that something wonderful, awful in its grandeur of meaning, was about to happen. The veil was lifting from the most impressive picture ever wrought by the providence and power of God upon the imperishable canvas of history. The picture of a conquered tomb, a risen Lord, a redeemed humanity!

It was morning. Three forms, boldly silhouetted against that bright background of the dawn, like saints which masters old surrounded with a golden halo, moved toward the garden of the tombs, bearing in their hands sweet spices and precious ointments to anoint the dead. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome seek the newly-made sepulcher of Joseph of Arimathea, where they have entombed Jesus, their Lord.

The thought of those holy women was: "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" It took strong men to roll that great stone to the door of the tomb. The chief priests had said to Pilate, "Command that the sepulcher be made sure." Pilate replied, "Ye have a watch; go your

way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the sepulcher sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch." They had seen it all, those poor, helpless women. They had noticed what strength it had taken to roll that great stone against the door; they had seen that seal of authority which had been placed upon it, and which no man dared to break; they thought of that watch, the powerful, brutal guard, able to resist any person who might come to tamper with that seal. "Who," they say among themselves, "who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulcher?" God had answered that question, for "when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away." No mortal hand had been laid on the strong arm of the appointed guard; no mortal hand had broken that Roman seal; no mortal hand had rolled away that great stone from the door of the sepulcher. A supernatural power, a supernatural authority, had opened the tomb and called the dead to life. The astonished women entered the tomb to face, not an armed and accoutered Roman guard, but angels from heaven, with countenances like the lightning, and with garments white and glistering like the snow. And as the women were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, the radiant angel spoke: "Fear not ye; for I know that

ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay." *It was morning, morning forever!*

When the devout women who came with spices and sweet odors to the tomb heard the angel's startling and glorious words, they dropped their precious burden at the open door, and the sweet perfume filled the air and rose to heaven as emblematic of the joy and praise of hearts made glad with a new promise and a new hope. But to-day, the fair, pure hands of the world's devout and holy womanhood come laden with earth's most beautiful flowers, and cast them before the empty tomb and at the feet of the angel Church which repeats the sweet story of the Resurrection in every land and nation this glorious Easter morning. From the open door of a vanquished tomb ascend the gratitude and thanksgivings of the nations, the voice of praise, and the spirit of joyful worship.

What a change has come to the meanings of life and death, that humanity can now look into a tomb with joy! This has ever been the place of mystery and fear, of sorrow and despair. Here love turns to agony, and memory to an infinite pain. Here laughter becomes tears, and music only melancholy sighs. Here hope's lamp is dashed to fragments, life's stars

of joy sink behind the clouds of doom. Here the heart breaks. O, how dread, how fearful is the tomb! Men have passed it with averted gaze. They have spoken of it in sad whisperings. But to-day the angel speaks, as in the olden time he spake to the trembling women, saying: "Fear not; come, see the place where the Lord lay." The terror has gone, the gloom has vanished, the grave has lost its dreadfulness, the power of death has been broken, "The Lord is risen."

This Easter morning is glorious with its history, and radiant with its prophecy. It comes to human life once more with the Gospel of Jesus and the Resurrection. It throws its light into the wondrous future, revealing the onward, upward, eternal sweep of this existence: worlds opening into worlds, years into eternities, earth into heaven. O the possibilities, O the power of an endless life!

When the angel bids the holy women, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," he would have them look into the emptiness of the sepulcher, and know that One who had been there was not only greater than the temple, but even greater than the tomb. "He is not here; He is risen." This is no deception; the guards have not taken your Lord away. This is no hallucination, no dream, no trick

of imagination; it is real. "Come, see the place." The angel might have said: "This is a physical reality. I am not talking to you in the language of mysticism and transcendentalism. I do not speak to you in figures of rhetoric; this is not a mere spiritual resurrection; this is a physical resurrection. 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay.' He is not here. His body is not here. I am not speaking to you metaphysically. I do not mean simply that Christ is risen in your hearts, in your faith, in your hope, in your life, and that his resurrection is merely a subjective ideality; it is an objective reality. I ask you not to look into your hearts, into your own consciousness, into your own feelings; but, 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay.' Just as truly as that His death, His crucifixion, was an objective reality, so truly is His resurrection. Just as truly as His entombment was an objective reality His disentombment is an objective reality. 'He is risen.' 'Come, see the place [not where the Lord lies, but] where the Lord lay.' 'He is not here.'"

May we this Easter morning grasp the significance of the *emptiness* of the grave where the Lord lay! Was it not part of that holy ministry of our Lord to teach men the meaning of what we call, death? "He tasted death for every man." Not only

in expiation of the sins of the whole world, but to show man the final, ultimate harmlessness of death. He would take away its sting, its fear, dread, terror. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." He slept in the tomb to show us how harmless it is, how brief and temporary its power and its thralldom, how certain its conquest. Having seen the place where the Lord lay, the place where you and I will some day sleep, we have looked into—yes, and in a sense we have penetrated—the mystery of death. Dark as is the gloom that gathers there, there are shinings beyond, *mighty mornings bursting through the long, sad night.*

Christ is not here; humanity is not here; life, sweet, beautiful life, is not here. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and from this empty tomb let all the horizons lift! Lift up your heads, O ye gates! A larger life, a greater world, opens before all hope and faith and aspiration.

The Christ by his resurrection gives to life and all its aims and purposes a vaster meaning. He sets man to calculating on the eternities, to reckoning with the endlessness of being. It will not do to look upon the grave as the end of life and the close of being. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." "He is not here." This is not the end. Life has

passed through the grave; life is greater than death. Man is mightier than the tomb. Come, and see the power of an endless life. Death can not destroy it; the grave can not imprison it. Come and see the emptiness of the tomb and realize the abundance of the life of the Son of God who has said, "I am come that ye might have life, and that ye might have it more abundantly;" life more mighty than death, life greater in its power than the grave, life endless, supreme, divine!

Startling as was the angel's revelation, it was soon confirmed by even a greater than an angel. Marvelous as was the evidence of the empty tomb into which the holy women looked with awe and wonder, that evidence was to be strengthened and made unquestionable by the living, speaking evidence of Him who was mightier than the tomb and stronger than death. The angel bade the women go and tell the disciples that Jesus had risen. They ran with the glorious message and met, not an angel, but the risen Lord Himself, who greeted them with that assuring salutation, "All hail!" and they came and held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him. To-day the world lies prostrate at the feet of Jesus; for round the earth there speeds with the light of Easter morning Christ's blessed and eternal "All hail!"

In that is our hope. The Conqueror of the grave hails the dying world this morning. Let the sick and dying hear it; let the sad and broken-hearted hear it; let the sleeping heroes whose dust has consecrated our land to freedom hear it; let all who are in their graves hear it!—"All hail! All hail!" Let the flowers breathe it forth in fragrance; let the sweet bells of Easter chime it round the world; let the organ peal it forth in mighty waves of hallowed harmony: "All hail! All hail!"

When the Son of God came from the tomb He conquered two powers: He conquered death, and He conquered the human heart. He who brings the grave into subjection, brings the heart of man into captivity. The truth of the resurrection of Christ has a beautiful, powerful fascination. All men are touched by its mystery and significance. It has a meaning for every heart. Go where you may, you find graves, death, bereavement. There is something in this universal sorrow, universal affection, universal longing, which welcomes the blessed truth of the resurrection. This Gospel of the risen Christ moves on through hearts and homes and nations and ages, like a mighty river making deserts blossom with gladness, and filling the earth with the prophecy and hope of a new life. Eliminate that

one magnificent fact, "He is risen," and you end the power of Jesus Christ forever in this world. If mankind can be made to believe that Jesus did not come forth a Conqueror of Death and the Grave, they will in sadness, if not in bitterness, repudiate the authority—yes, even the virtue and honesty, if not the sanity—of Jesus Christ. But while men believe that what the angel said was true; while men believe that what these honest evangelists wrote is true; while men believe that what the best brain and best heart of the ages have accepted is true; while men believe that the doctrine which has given to modern life its hope and beauty and greatness is true,—so long will they yield to the authority of Jesus Christ, and so long will Jesus Christ push His moral conquests and maintain His throne of power in this world. "Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This is our creed,—the creed that is saving the race; the creed that is dispelling the darkness; the creed that is binding up the broken-hearted; the creed that is changing the world's mourning into dancing, putting off its sackcloth, and girding it with gladness: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus

Christ his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. The third day he rose from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."

Wonderful cradle, wonderful tomb! Yonder the angels, with hallelujahs, sweep along the hills; but here they linger with mute lips and muffled harps. There the King is born; but here the King lies dead. There the world's Hope appears; here the world's Hope is buried. The wise men pour forth the gold and frankincense and myrrh at the cradle. The holy women bring sweet spices to the tomb. From that cradle-side the shepherds go to herald the wondrous birth; from this tomb-side disciples will hasten to publish a more wondrous resurrection. The triumph of Jesus Christ is to be achieved in this tomb. Here He is to prove His power, His authority, His Divineness. Though the sick have been healed by His touch; though the sea and storm have obeyed His command; though devils have fled from His presence and trembled at His word; though the dead have heard His voice and come forth,—yet there remains

to be achieved that supreme miracle of His Divine authority and power, His own resurrection from the dead. Miracle upon miracle He has wrought, precious stones upon precious stones He has laid in building the monument of His greatness and immortal glory among men, and now His own escape from the tomb, His own resurrection from the dead, is to be the keystone in the arch of His triumph, through which, as a King, He shall ride forth to the spiritual conquest of the nations of the earth.

This doctrine of the resurrection is vital in the scheme of redemption; it is the necessary climax of Christ's teaching. Without it the whole Gospel fabric must crumble into ruin. As without the *fact* of the resurrection, the birth and teachings and death of Jesus Christ would have had no authoritative, no historic significance and no redemptive efficacy, so without the *doctrine* of that resurrection, theology and preaching can have no power over the consciences and convictions of men. Therefore, we teach and preach the truth of the resurrection; for the word has been given: "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

But more, Christ hath by His own resurrection

pledged the resurrection of humanity, and, "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." When we follow the angel to the tomb of Christ and see the place where He lay, we follow that angel to every tomb, to every believer's tomb, every hero's tomb, every loved one's tomb. Nay, that risen Savior permits every disciple to look into his own tomb with a smile of fearlessness and triumph.

"The dead shall be raised." The earth and sea shall give up their dead. All that are in their graves shall come forth. But many still hesitate to accept this great truth by making too small and ignoble an estimate of the power of God. Jesus said to certain persons who were disposed to deny the possibility of the resurrection, "Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God." When we think of human power, how feeble a thing it is; when we see man's weakness and helplessness in the presence of death, we are apt to reason that whatever man can not do, is impossible, and we measure all possibility by human power. The limitations of human power are made the limitations of the possible. So when we stand in the presence of death, and see the kindly and skillful physician baffled, the highest science baffled, the affection of motherhood and the pleading

tears of childhood baffled, some are so swept away by their emotions, so controlled by their feelings, that they do not stop for cool, calm reasoning, but say, "Death can not be conquered; the grave can not be made to give up its precious treasure; the restoration of life to the dead is impossible." In all these statements we find that some broken-hearted ones do not stop calmly and logically to think. They do not make a clear and reasonable distinction between what is possible to human power, and what is possible to Divine power. No intelligent being could intelligently worship a God who could not raise the dead. We may say with all reverence, and yet with sincerity, that we could not bow the knees to a Being who has not the power, when He shall choose, to animate with a new and a celestial life the precious dust we laid away in the tomb. The power that made that dust once live in sunny beauty can make it live again, and with a beauty that shall never fade—angelic and immortal. Nor shall our hope be clouded by mysteries and problems which doubt and unbelief may try to gather about the grave and about this great promise of God. They of old, not satisfied with the blessed assurance of the resurrection of the dead, sought to reason their way through all

the problems of the future life, and became perplexed with the question, "How are the dead raised up, and with what bodies do they come?" Still do many bewildered minds permit this question to shut out the light and to plunge them in the darkness of doubt. It is enough, poor, fearful heart, it is enough to know of this dear, departed life, of this spirit flown from earth to heaven, that in the resurrection "God giveth it a body that pleaseth Him." Such a body He originally gave it, and we were satisfied. It was a lovely body to our eyes; it is lovely in memory to-day. And that body, which it shall please God to give that redeemed spirit in the morning of the resurrection, will satisfy our eyes and heart. It will be a celestial body, not, as it was, a terrestrial body. "There are celestial bodies and bodies terrestrial; but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another." That resurrection body will be a spiritual body. "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." It will be a heavenly body. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

In that day the redeemed and glorified saints of earth, robed in the beauty of their immortality,

may lead shining angels on wings of light to behold this world's triumph over death, and cry with joy: "Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Come, see the place where humanity lay. He is not here. He is risen. They are not here. They are risen with their Lord."

VII.

THE KNIGHTS OF THE CROSS ON OLIVET.

"After the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God."—Mark xvi, 19.

We are met in the grand old faith that gave valor to Tancred and Cœur-de-Leon, eloquence to St. Bernard and Peter of Amiens, and the noble spirit of self-sacrifice to Paul and to the martyrs. We count it all honor to belong to that brotherhood whose standard is the cross and whose ideal is the Christ. To go no farther back, eight hundred years ago there sprang up, from every country of Europe, legions of brave men, toilers in the fields, mechanics of the shops, students of the schools, priests of the cloisters, soldiers of the camps, paupers, princes and kings, to march to the rescue of the Holy Land from the power of the profane and barbarous Mohammedan. Their sacrifices and sufferings, their courage and devotion, the purity of their personal morals,

and the heroic splendor of their deeds, lighted up the pages of history and romance with glory, and won for them an undying fame.

To say that many a crusader was a fanatic is not to disparage the nobler qualities of those men, nor is it to deny that they were animated with lofty motives and inspired with a sacred devotion to the right, as they were given to see the right. It may be doubted whether a mean-souled man can ever become a fanatic. Indeed, every great fanatic of history has possessed great qualities of mind and heart, great vigor of conviction, great powers of persuasion, great intensity of personality. A weak, groveling, stupid, vacillating mind never made a great fanatic like Peter the Hermit or Richard the Lion-hearted. We shall therefore find that there is a way to study the old crusaders, an honest, legitimate, and philosophical way to study them, so as to see heroes in them, the cleanest, bravest, loftiest-minded heroes of history. Get at the great, deep, inner purpose of their souls, and it is all heroic and grand. Look at them superficially, glance at their methods, their manners, their customs, and they will often seem dwarfed and morally deformed, narrow-minded and fierce, splendid barbarians. But rightly understood, philosophically studied, they become to

our thought and admiration as manly a brotherhood of men as fame ever crowned with immortality.

There was every reason for the people of their age to hold them in admiration, to laud their virtues and to sing their deeds. They stood for the best and strongest and most conscientious manhood of the time. They were the living personifications of the highest virtues that were then taught and comprehended. With all their faults, they were the vanguards and heralds of a more rational, humane, and righteous civilization. From their ranks rose the first knights. The virtues of their characters, the greatness of their deeds, the sublimity of their faith, have inspired the emulation of the ages and given to knighthood a glory which any man may be proud to wear.

Men who are pledged to the protection of the distressed, to the defense of womanhood and virtue, to the maintenance of right against the encroachments of power, to the preservation of Christianity, to the glorification of the Cross, and to the purification of their own characters and lives from every stain of impurity and dishonor, may well be counted among the true defenders of the faith once delivered to the saints, and the Divinely-ordained allies of the Church and benefactors of the race.

In the faith of the knights of the glorious past, the knight of this twentieth century still confesses that he believes in Jesus Christ and believes that "the third day He rose from the dead: He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty."

Once more in reverential imagination we stand on Olivet. Once more we come as Knights of the Cross and as true Templars to celebrate the triumph of the Captain of our salvation, and to learn the lesson which His glorious ascension has to teach. That Christ-life, from its lowly birth in the manger at Bethlehem to the great white throne of heaven, was not only redemptive, but also educational. It is the ideal toward the perfection and beauty of which this common life of ours will eternally aspire. Jesus is a prophecy of the perfect humanity. We follow His steps to the destinies, to the immortalities. The prophet sang, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth salvation!" When He of whom the prophet spake came to His glorious ministry, the very hills invited Him to their solitude, and the mountains, in their calm majesty and rugged strength, became the appropriate scenes of His life's most wonderful experiences and achievements. Hattin, Her-

mon, Calvary, and Olivet,—what glory must forever settle on those hallowed heights! Hattin, the "Mount of Beatitudes," where the Divine Teacher spoke the new-life philosophy which was destined to revolutionize character and society; Hermon, "Mount of Transfiguration," where came to human eyes the full revelation of the Christ-nature and glory, and the opening of upper worlds in prophecy and promise to earthly hope; Calvary, "Mount of Crucifixion," where, in the sublime act of an infinite self-sacrifice, the Son of God secured a world's redemption; and Olivet, "Mount of Ascension," where those blessed feet last touched the earth; where light supernal in golden cloud swept down; where angels stood, and sons of men, with wonder gazing into heaven; whence rose our Lord, with immortality transformed, and radiant in habiliments celestial, to triumph over death and nature, and sit upon the throne of God.

The Ascension was the necessary climax of that Divine life on earth; it was the triumph of the God-man, of a humanity imbued with and incarnating Divinity. To highest human life the Sermon on the Mount might have been called the climax. The highest reach in the existence of a Homer is the "Iliad;" of a Moses, the "Decalogue;" of a Con-

fucius, "The Analects;" of a Goethe, "Faust;" of a Dante, "The Divine Comedy;" of a Shakespeare, "Hamlet;" of any one man, his greatest intellectual achievement, his noblest expression of thought and truth. But Jesus does not come to the climax of His power and greatness in the utterance of the "Beatitudes" or the enunciation of the Golden Rule. His work is more than intellectual, more than literary, more than artistic, more than ethical. He has a power deeper than words, more creative and re-creative than precepts.

In His transfiguration He reveals a glory which penetrates all His humanness, and sets forth in its glistering silences a higher truth, a more subtle and spiritual revelation of the Infinite, than any language can convey. On the Mount of Beatitudes, Jesus is the Prophet, the Teacher, and they who listen wonder at the gracious words that fall from His lips. But on the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus is the Son of God, and they who behold Him, worship. Here the voice comes from the golden cloud which makes His word authoritative: "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him." This may appear to some of us as the summit of greatness, and it is to those who think a life has risen to its highest power and achievement when the

world acknowledges its authority. Plato's name came to stand for philosophy, Cæsar's for empire, Raphael's for art. Each becomes authoritative in his realm. Is Jesus simply monarch in the realm of ethics? Is He simply a genius? Is His authority limited to any one sphere of thought and life? Is His power merely the power of originality, the power of a new suggestion, a new idea? No; Jesus comes, not only with a new *standard* of greatness, but with a new *greatness;* not simply with a new precept, but with a new personality. In the greatness of His personality and in the personality of His greatness, He transcends all the historic ideals.

The highest order of power comes to the world, not out of a man's wise and eloquent utterances; not out of his brightest self-revelations, in displays of genius or in manifestations of authoritative influence; but rather out of his self-sacrifices, out of his willingness and ability to suffer that a world's suffering may be alleviated. There may be something eternally just in the world's disposition to lift the hero to the highest seat of fame. The knight stands higher than the monk. The most imposing monuments are not raised to the honor of poets, philosophers, artists, and inventors, but rather to heroes, patriots, and martyrs. To give or to risk the life for

humanity,—in that lies the highest power to bless and save.

When this Nazarene, this sweet-tongued Prophet, stood on Calvary, with all the purpose and willingness of self-sacrifice in Him, He rose above men, out of the realm of mere humanity, into the higher Sonship of God. Mount by mount He had risen, from power to power, from duty to duty, from glory to glory, until He stood alone, supreme, with a name above every name. Yonder on the Mount of Beatitudes, Jesus may welcome Socrates, Buddha, Zoroaster, and Confucius as fellow-teachers of universal truths, co-leaders of the world's thought. On the Mount of Transfiguration, Moses and Elijah, who had stood in the down-shining glories of heaven, the one on Sinai, the other on Carmel, are seen holding converse with Jesus, and they appear with Him in glory as His own face shines with celestial light. But on Calvary, Jesus stands alone. There He rises to the self-sacrifice that gives Him power to save. The Cross lifts that name above every name, and gives to Jesus a power above every power. In His infinite wisdom He could say as He could see, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Not by the wonder of His miracles; not by the transcendent beauty of His life;

not by the awe-inspiring manifestations of His Divine glory; not by the revelations of His wisdom, the charm, the universality, and illuminating power of His word and truth, but by His Cross, is He drawing the world unto Himself.

If, in studying the history of the past nineteen centuries, we would understand the deepest philosophy of it, we shall find it in the Christian religion, and among the many elements of power, of civilizing power, to be found in Christianity, we must see that, before all others and above all others, the Cross is the central, dominant, all-conquering element of power in the Gospel system. Paul understood this when he exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!" The old crusaders and the knights of old understood this when on their banners they emblazoned the immortal legend, "In Hoc Signo Vinces."

Did not the Son of God, then, reach the sublime climax of His earthly life on Calvary? Had there been no more to that existence; had it ended there; had the tomb defied His authority and held Him in its cold and cruel thralldom, Jesus Christ would not be known to us this day as a saving, conquering, world-enlightening Power. His Cross, the symbol

of your faith, would not be on your banners, nor would it be leading the nations upward and onward to the higher life. Historians might have recorded Christ's boast only sneeringly to prove that He who prophesied His own resurrection was but an enthusiast, if not an impostor. They might have dwelt with supercilious condescension upon His amiable character and gentle life, and have dropped a tear over His grave as over the grave of a Socrates or a Buddha, and then have dismissed His divine claims with a smile of pity. But His resurrection from the grave gave a final heavenly sanction to His word and work, and made His death mean more than simple death. That resurrection gave to the death of Jesus Christ a sacrificial and a redemptive significance. It belonged to God's world-saving plan. It fulfilled prophecy. It demonstrated the supernatural power of His life and the Divinity of His mission. Into the world's gloom and darkness it brought the light of immortality, and above the opened tomb dawned the opening heaven.

For forty days Jesus walked with men after His resurrection. That short space of time seems but the halting of the chariot of Him who, rising from the tomb, was on His triumphant way to the skies and to the throne. He tarries as if the human

heart were longing but to gaze upon Him in the greatness of His resurrection strength. He walks again along the shores of the pleasant sea, and treads once more the fields and hills, and talks with those He loves a few more sweet and hallowed days. Then He stands upon Olivet. More gracious still are his heavenly words; His face grows bright with an unwonted beauty; His garments glisten again as on the Mount of Transfiguration; the very air throbs as though angelic wings are beating it; a cloud of light comes like a golden chariot; and, as it touches the hill, He lifts up His hands and blesses them, "And it came to pass while He blessed them He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And the cloud received Him out of their sight." Mark adds, "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." Wonderful scene! Translated while stretching forth His hands in blessing. Translated as the triumphant climax of His redemptive mission. Translated that, having risen from the grave, He might nevermore see death. Translated that He might sit upon the throne of His glory, the King of kings and Lord of lords forever. Translated that He might teach dying men of immortality, and lead the way to worlds celestial and to the company of angels and archangels. Translated to teach

men that the way of exaltation is by self-sacrifice. Translated to make us understand and know that there is a resurrection power promised to all who find their way to truth and duty and self-sacrifice. Translated to give humanity the hope that an ascension awaits every soul that stretches forth its hands to bless.

Is not this Christ-life a glorious prophecy? Does it not foretell the coming of a Christlike humanity? Does it not reveal the possibilities of this common manhood? "Follow me," is the inspiring command of our Leader and Lord. Our feet may tread the same beautiful summits which the Son of God has glorified. As teachers of the heavenly truth we, too, may climb the Mount of Beatitudes and speak the word of light and hope. Where character shines forth in all the purity and beauty of the spirit which was in Christ, there is the Mount of our Transfiguration. Where glows the mind with chaste and hallowed thought, where burns the heart with pure affection, where the spirit is wrapped in the flame of devotion, and where the seraphic fire of hopeful aspiration kindles and illuminates the soul, there is man transfigured. Where the Christ is reflected in character, there is man glorified, there becomes he a light in the world.

But has not the Son of God led the way to sublimer heights than these? Is not Calvary higher than the Mount of Beatitudes or the Mount of Transfiguration? Where Christ leads, humanity will follow; follow to the cross; follow to that exalted heroism which becomes a saving power to the world. What power, more signally than all others, has broken the shackles, liberated the bound, lifted up the fallen, overthrown oppression, defended the weak, carried liberty to the captive, and sent light into every dark place of the world? The power of self-sacrifice, the power of the Cross, the power of Calvary. The men who have laid down their lives to protect the virtue of womanhood, the sanctity of home, the freedom and glory of their country; the men who have died for liberty and justice, for national honor and for human progress, have followed the Christ to Calvary, and mingled their blood with His to redeem a world. There is a Gethsemane in every great life, a Calvary for every brother of the Nazarene, a Cross for every Son of God.

And who shall follow Jesus Christ to the Mount of Ascension but he who has followed Him up into the Mount of Beatitudes to hear His truth and utter it; up into the Mount of Transfiguration to see His glory and reflect it in his own character; and up into

the Mount of Self-sacrifice, into Calvary, to behold His death and to catch the spirit of it, the spirit of a world-helping, world-saving heroism? Yes, there is an Olivet of Ascension in every Christlike life. For him who has spoken the enlightening truth, the word of hope and kindness and love, and has by the spotlessness and integrity of his character been a light to the world, and has by his devotion to others, his self-abnegation and sacrifices, conferred benefits and life upon humanity,—for him there is a glorious immortality, there is a heavenly ascension. Of him the Christ has said, "He shall sit with me in my throne." And may it be that there are heights beyond, — other Beatitudes, other Transfigurations, other Calvaries, other Olivets? Do we climb mountain by mountain to the destinies? Is this forever and forever the way toward the infinite, the immortal, the divine?

There is a path of moral ascension marked out for the nations and for the race by the footprints of the Son of God. There is a power in the Gospel lifting us to a higher plane, exalting humanity to a more complete and perfect life. We have tried to show that the way to the Mount of Ascension was by the Mount of Beatitudes, the Mount of Transfiguration and Mount Calvary, or by truth, character,

and sacrifice. So are the nations to rise to the higher life, ascend to liberty, equality, peace, brotherhood, happiness, by the power of truth, the power of character, and the power of self-sacrificing love as manifest in Jesus Christ. The Cross has come to symbolize this threefold power. It is the sign and emblem of Christianity. As nations have followed that Cross they have ascended to a higher civilization, and in that Cross we find the philosophy of all our modern progress. Not by force, but by truth; not by genius, but by character; not by the sword of ambition, but by the Cross of self-sacrifice, have peoples been conquered and civilizations transformed. The nations of widest influence and greatest power to-day are the nations to whom the Cross has the profoundest significance, the Sermon on the Mount the most Divine authority, and the character of Jesus Christ the greatest charm and inspiration as their ideal. "By this sign conquer." By this sign have we thus far conquered; conquered ignorance, error, bigotry, superstition, oppression, and every form of human wrong. The victories which the Cross has achieved are prophetic of a still more glorious future; for the future belongs to truth, to character, to heroism; hence to an enlightened, enfranchised, enthroned humanity. The "kingdom of heaven" opens its gates

on Olivet. There the terrestrial and the celestial meet. There the world takes on its immortality. There the everlasting gates are lifted up. There life receives its recompense, virtue its reward, manhood its crown.

The ascension of Christ is the prophecy of the ascension of humanity. As true knights of the Cross we celebrate with faith and adoration the historic ascension of our common Lord. With hope and gratitude we celebrate the promised ascension of our redeemed humanity. While we with angels join to sing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in," with joy we hear that Voice Divine of our ascended Lord, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

VIII.

THE POETS ON IMMORTALITY.

"This mortal must put on immortality."—1 Cor. xv, 53.

THERE comes a time in every life when full upon the soul dawns the pleasing, awful thought—"Eternity." By the laws of nature, the mind of childhood and of youth is fascinated with the present. Life's springtime takes on the colors and the brightness of the season of flowers and green fields, of babbling brooks and singing birds, when the soul trips barefooted through the dewy grasses, and barebrowed through the sunshine and the rain of life's joys and hopes and promises. Life's summer-time has barely reached its golden glory, and man has but called upon his energies for their utmost endeavors, when the shadows begin to lengthen, and the days to shorten, and the face to wear the seriousness of the great question, "What shall the harvest be?" When the noble ship puts to sea, the mind of the voyager

is taken up with a contemplation of his environment. The ship, itself a miracle of mechanism, a marvel of invention and construction, excites his wonder and admiration and engrosses his thought. The ocean, strange, novel, beautiful in its calm, magnificent in its commotion; the rising and setting suns; the nightly marshaling of the stars; the moon, throwing its lane of beams athwart the sea; rolling clouds, gathering storms, breaking tempest, skyward-mounting billows; then sunshine, breaking through the blackness; calm, succeeding tumult; all is strange, exciting, awe-inspiring, full of mirth and fear, full of laughter and prayer,—and through it all the good ship plunges on and on, tirelessly, persistently, on and on. But soon the voyager begins to count the days. The novelty is gone. His thoughts now turn to the other shore. His conversation dwells upon the possibilities and probabilities of the time the ship will take in reaching port. He thinks and talks of the country for which he is destined, of anticipated pleasures in meeting friends or holding converse with great minds, whose thoughts he has already learned to love in science or song, in music or story.

How like this life of ours! So full of wonder and mystery; so strange, exciting, problematical; so beautiful, fascinating, new! What wonder that

the half of it is spent in happy, laughing thoughtlessness; in simply becoming familiar with the bark and the sea; in getting our lungs full of life's pure air, our eyes full of its stars, and our souls full of its beauty and poetry, its thunder and shout, its majesty and charm! But the time comes when we find ourselves thinking into the future. We begin to count the years, to calculate the probabilities. The insurance companies demand a greater premium for insuring our lives, and they figure out before our eyes the probable number of years we have to live. Then we begin to think of our destination, of the other shore, of the new world; nay, of the old world; of the old, old, eternal world. And we fall to thinking of friends and kindred there. As we call them up to fond memory, one by one, we are surprised to find how many there are. Then the good and the great, the loving and the chivalrous, the heroic and the saintly,—behold, they increase, grow to "a great multitude which no man can number!" Who that has passed the meridian of life does not think seriously about eternity? Who has not opened his mind to the sublime thought of immortality?

There is something very significant about this idea of immortality. It blossoms in every breast; it shines, starlike, in every soul. Men can not drive

it from their minds; they can not lie it or ridicule it from the mind, until they have driven and lied and ridiculed all other noble thoughts from the mind. The frost of unbelief that blasts that flower will wither and kill every other sweet and tender, fragrant and beautiful idea that blooms in the garden of the soul. The skepticism or the materialism that would quench that sweet and radiant star would extinguish every ray of soul-illuminating hope. Immortality! greatest thought that man can think! As old as life and birth; as precious as memory and love; as universal as tears and death; as pure as marriage; as sweet as motherhood; as great as the heart of man; as tender as the soul of woman; as true as the justice of God!

Again, it is significant that the noblest thinkers of every race and people have surrendered their minds to a contemplation of this theme in all its phases of mystery and fascination, its elevating influence, its comforting and hope-inspiring power. The child of Nature; man in his primitive simplicity, uncorrupted by what we call society, worldliness, civilization; the old Norse, the Indian, and the African, where he has not become degenerate; all the virile, original races of men, have seemed to possess an innate idea of immortality. And man at his in-

tellectual best, mind in its highest development, has not only cherished the glorious hope of immortality, but has been ready and able to give a reason for that hope. Turn to the Greeks when intellect reaches the perfection of subtlety and power, and you find their mightiest minds—their Plato, their Socrates, their Aristotle—reasoning well on immortality. Turn to the Romans in their best estate of philosophic acumen, in the golden age of their eloquence,—then their Cato, Tully, and Seneca accept and champion the truth of immortality. Turn to those subtle, astute, penetrative thinkers of old India, and behold them weave their finest silken threads of dialectic wisdom into the beautiful demonstrations of immortality. Turn to the Egyptians, in their intellectual ascendency, when stupendous monuments and magnificent temples spring up beneath their artistic hands, when the world's commerce crowds their historic Nile, and when science is created and flourishes at the command and by the fostering care of their consummate genius,—then, all their literature, all their magnificent art, all their laws and institutions, no less than all the symbols of their religion, are charged and filled and aglow with this truth of immortality. Turn to that wonderful people who have given law to the ages; to that people who talked with

God, and became the custodians of the oracles of heaven; to that people whose mighty mind was the first to grasp and the first to set forth in clear thought the oneness of Divinity,—turn to that chosen race which could boast such superlative thinkers as Moses, Job, David, Solomon, Isaiah, and Paul, and you trace in the history of their thinking the steady growth of this idea from its original, innate intimations, on to the full glory of the most confident faith and most positive and sublime declarations that ever inspired the human mind with hope.

This has been the faith of the best minds at their highest pitch of intellectualism. And we find these most consummate reasoners of the races and the ages arguing, not to find their own way out of darkness and despair to the light and hope, but rather to lead or lift weaker minds to the sublime prospect. They have been the surefooted guides to the heights of truth. They have given to others the reasons for the hope that was in them, and they have encouraged timid and faltering minds to hold fast their faith, and press on to the summits of full vision, where truth's splendors penetrate all mysteries and dispel every shadow and veil of doubt and fear.

There come times when strong minds must plead the cause of justice, virtue, law, liberty, and right-

eousness, lest the people in their thoughtlessness lose faith in the fundamental principles of character and of social order. But it were as reasonable to expect a thoughtful, great-minded man to find it necessary to reason himself into a belief in the truth and reality of nature, of law, of mind itself, as to find it necessary to reason himself into a belief in the reality of immortal life. Surely, one who doubts his immortality may well begin to ask: "What is the matter with my mind that it can not believe what the greatest minds have believed? What is the matter with my reasoning powers that they hesitate to follow the clear-eyed, sure-footed thinkers of the ages, up to the sublime heights of their hope and faith?" If, standing before a masterpiece of a Raphael, or reading the noblest lines of a Milton or Shakespeare, or listening to the most inspiring and magnificent composition of a Mendelssohn or Wagner, I do not comprehend, enjoy, or appreciate it, I am forced to ask, "What is the matter with me? what is the matter with my mind?" And if I have not even the good sense to ask that of myself, then surely others will ask it of me.

One may train his mind to doubt any truth. He may train his mind to doubt the reality of matter;

he may train his mind to doubt the reality of spirit; he may train his mind to doubt the reality of both matter and spirit; he may train his mind to doubt his own mother's virtue, to doubt the honor of man, the existence of justice, the genuineness of love. He may school himself to disbelieve in law and order, in government, society, and humanity. His mind may become an anarchy, and he may dethrone his own reason. So men may train their minds to doubt God, doubt Christ, doubt the Bible, doubt immortality, and even doubt the doubtfulness of their own doubt,—this is agnosticism. But surely mind has a higher function than this; mind has a nobler mission than this; mind was created for greater thinking than this!

It is significant that not only the great exponents of rational inquiry, the deep, penetrative, logical minds of the world's history, have entertained the pleasing hope of immortality and have been able to base that hope on a sure foundation of reason, but that the greatest interpreters of human feeling, as well, the poets, have cherished this "fond desire." Yes, singing out of the depths of the world's great heart, giving voice to affections, memories, aspirations, longings, hopes more subtle than philosophy,

more assuring than arguments, more rational than reason, more logical than logic, the poets have felt the reality of the immortal life. The heart's feeling at its best, at its purest, at its most exalted and refined estate, cherishes this truth of the eternal years. And until Love lies dead, and Memory has become deaf to all the sweet voices of the past; until Hope has lost its vision of happiness, and Aspiration lies with palsied wings in the dust of despair; until all that makes the soul of man or woman beautiful, noble, angelic, and godlike has perished in the heart, that heavenly flame, that divine star of immortal longing, can never be extinguished. Why have these great souls of song, whether old Homer, or the Vedic Singers, or the Hebrew Bards, or the "honey-tongued Shakespeare" and "starry-minded Milton," the sweet-voiced Tennyson and deep-toned Browning,—why have they in all their full-throated music of the human heart assumed that man is immortal? Because they were poets; because, had they not assumed and believed this, they could not have been poets; because, in singing the best feelings of the soul, they could not leave out of their song that sweetest, purest, and most triumphant note; because they could not interpret the heart of man without it.

Whittier understood this. The soul's feelings were revelations of immortality to him:

> "The solemn joy that soul-communion feels
> Immortal life reveals;
> And human love, its prophecy and sign,
> Interprets love divine."

We may say to any great thinker, any poet, any deep, genuine soul, any loved and vanished one:

> "Come, then, in thought, if that alone may be,
> O friend! and bring with thee
> Thy calm assurance of transcendent spheres,
> And the eternal years."

And now, if my own heart stagger at any blow of sorrow, bend broken over any sweet and soul-forsaken dust, lift up its eye in vain to see a light beyond the gloom, must I not ask, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? why art thou disquieted within me?" Why shall I not listen to the singers God has sent, great souls of hope and brotherhood and love—souls that can weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that do rejoice? Shall I not follow them, follow them out of the darkness of my grief into the light of a glorious hope? Have I lost faith in all great minds and all great thinking? Have I lost touch with all great hearts and all great feelings?

Am I deaf to the music that is about me, blind to the light above me, dead to the God and Fatherhood and Love enfolding me? "Hope thou in God," who hath brought life and immortality to light in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Listen, listen to the singers God hath sent to sound the note to which all love and hallowed memory, all faith and hope, accord; the golden keynote of life's holy meaning—man's immortality.

It is when holding communion with the Spirit of inspired song that the troubled, doubting, restless soul finds quietness and assurance to sing with Read:

"No more, no more
The worldly shore
Upbraids me with its loud uproar!
With dreamful eyes,
My spirit lies
Under the walls of Paradise."

The surest and safest teachers are the poets. Their song comes from every fiber of their being. Not from brain alone, or heart, but from the whole man, like the mighty river into which a thousand mountain springs pour their rich, clear treasures. The fountains of reason, feeling, imagination, memory, hope, faith, conscience, affection, will,—all send forth their rivulets to swell the river of the poet's song. And this song is truth; truth in its beauty,

rhythm, cadence; truth living and divine; truth appealing to all there is in man and all there is of man, because coming from all there is of man, the singer, the seer. That which appeals to feeling must have feeling for its inspiration. That which moves a conscience to accept it must have moved a conscience to utter it. That which convinces the reason must have gone forth at reason's high command. That which kindles hope must have caught its fire and flame from Hope's divine and heavenly glow. Hence is it that poetry has greatest power to teach truth. It appeals not to a single part of the man alone, to a single phase of mind or mood of thought, but to the whole man. And only when the whole man sees the truth, feels the truth, and accepts the truth, does truth become his light and life, the dominating force of his being. Where truth is so presented that it appeals to only part of the man, it fails to find its throne in him. It appeals only to his judgment, or his feeling, or his imagination, or his conscience, whereas it should affect his reason and feeling and imagination and conscience and will, every mental and moral power and mood. This is why we get so many half truths and quarter truths in philosophy, science, and history. These are all partial, exclusive, limited. Each has its channel, groove, or rut. It has

naught to do with anything outside its own narrow province, and is very jealous of its prerogatives. That is why philosophical teaching, scientific teaching, and historical teaching are so narrow and often bigoted, prejudiced, and unreliable. There is no such narrowness and bigotry in poetry; it has all truths to teach, and all there is of all truths. It has the liberty of the universe. It shall teach the truth of history, philosophy, science; the truth of nature, man, and God; the truth of all worlds, all changes, all the divisions of duration; the truth of life and death and immortality; of hell and earth and heaven; of the yesterdays, the to-days, the forevers.

The poets, always and everywhere, have a hearing, find a listening ear; nay, a listening fancy, a listening conscience, a listening soul, a listening manhood and womanhood. The poet wins, commands, and holds attention because, as Emerson says, "All men are poets at heart." But are not all men poets at brain as well as at heart? Poetry has been called "the record of the best and happiest moments of the happiest and best minds." And when Professor Jones, of Glasgow University, who has written so wisely on Browning as a philosophical and religious teacher, says, "A poetic fact, one may almost say, is any fact at its best," that would make

poetry the best kind of philosophy, science, history, ethics, or theology. Why, is not poetry the best articulation of humanity's creed on all things? Yes, any fact at its best is the poetic fact. The poets are the seers, the souls that see facts; facts at their best; full-orbed, complete facts; facts ablaze in all their splendid intensities with the light that lighteth men to wisdom and to God. Is not this the reason why God chose so many poets to write His Word, the reason why so large a portion of the Bible is poetry? The grandest utterances on Nature to be found in the Sacred Book are poetical; the ethical precepts which jewel these pages as the stars jewel the sky are nearly all in the form of poetry. The prophecies foretelling the Savior and the glory of His reign burst forth in stately measure. The celebration of the most significant events in the history of God's people is ever in the high and elegant and rhythmical strains that may be sung. The language of the seers, when aflame with the glory of their heavenly visions, is poetical. The angels of God, in earth or in heaven, are all poets when they speak to men or lift their seraphic voices in praises unto God. We find, in studying the world's great literatures, that the poets are rarely, if ever, atheistic. The musicians, and the artists too, have clear vision to

apprehend God. They are not infidel or materialistic. They know that the realities and the true ideals of existence are spiritual. These kindred souls, the composers, artists, and poets, are true to what is highest and best in the world, and to what is best and highest in humanity.

Perhaps the noblest mission given to poetry is the solution of the mystery of life and death, the song of immortality. Poetry, not science, not philosophy, lifts the mask of seeming, and shows man the sweet and radiant face of the divine verities, penetrates the mists and shadows to find the everlasting sunshinings, God's eternal high noon.

Not only do the poets believe in immortality, but it is their holy mission to sing it into the world's hope and faith; to chant it ever in the cathedral of the world's great heart; to set the air of all God's universe vibrating with its healing and inspiring harmony. Shelley himself tells us that "Poets are mirrors of the gigantic shadows which futurity casts upon the present." In their souls we see the reflections of eternity, in their song the shadowed prophecy of the future life. Every great, full-throated singer, like Keats, has "immortal longings" in him, aspirations which only an eternity can ever satisfy. He sees more in man than science beholds in his

mere animalism; he sees that man is more than the bubble on the ocean of circumstance; he sees more in him than statecraft sees, only a cog in the wheel of society, a stone or brick in the wall of State. He sees in man a heavenly element, a divine likeness, an immortal possibility of spiritual and intellectual being. His song is awakened by man's greatness, by the complexity and mystery of his nature, by the wealth of his faculties, by the hopes that lift his soul's face skyward and Godward, by the faith that reaches through clouds and darkness into the "excellent glory," and grasps the very throne of eternity.

These great thoughts of man, the true and lofty appreciation and estimate of man's noble origin and high destiny, give wing to the poet's imagination, a mighty rhythm to his speech, a heaven-wide sweep and triumph to his song. It is this that inspired the psalmist to say of death, "It is as a sleep;" it is this that gives Shelley his thought:

> "How wonderful is death,
> Death and his brother sleep!"

It is this that moves Bryant to sing:

> "Sustained and soothed
> By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
> Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch,
> About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams!"

It is this that enables Tennyson to look upon the face of the departed and say:

> "God's finger touched him, and he slept."

Oliver Wendell Holmes felt the spell of this belief in man's high destiny when he expressed his delight in the lines of Isaac Watts:

> "Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
> Stand dressed in living green."

Browning believes that all reality is eternal, that man and his God live forever; and they live forever because they are realities, while all else is unreality, and must vanish. The circumstances which make up the daily life and by which God fashions us to His will and plan are only temporary:

> "All that is at all
> Lasts ever, past recall;
> Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure;
> What entered into thee,
> That was, is, and shall be;
> Time's wheel runs back or stops: potter and clay endure.'

David does not confound the body and the spirit. He sees the sublime completeness of man,—this dual entity, this garment or temple which we call the flesh, and this being, this immaterial, indivisible, indestructible Godlike element which we call the spirit. To his thought, death is but an escape from

the shackle, from the net, from the prison-house. "It is soon cut off, and we fly away." This was also Solomon's idea of man in the presence of death: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." This look into the larger life, this power to penetrate the cloud and mystery, and find light beyond, made Browning an optimist, gave him a sweet and abiding satisfaction with life. He flings his splendid song out on the air, a challenge to all doubt, pessimism, and unbelief, an answer to the cowardly question, "Is life worth the living?" He sings his experience, his faith, and hope, to be an inspiration to the believer, a rebuke to the croaker and the doubter:

"Have you found your life distasteful?
My life did and does smack sweet.
Was your youth of pleasure wasteful?
Mine I saved and hold complete.
Do your joys with age diminish?
When mine fail me I 'll complain.
Must in death your daylight finish?
My sun sets to rise again."

This great hope that the sun will rise again turns earth and life into beauty and joy, and he sings:

"I find earth not gray, but rosy;
Heaven not grim, but fair of hue.
Do I stoop? I pluck a posy.
Do I stand and stare? All 's blue!"

How that beautiful soul with whom Browning walked the pleasant paths of life and song caught with him the high, great meaning of existence! No loftier strain did he send forth than that which Elizabeth Barrett Browning gave to the world's ear and heart:

"Hearken! Hearken!
God speaketh in thy soul,
Saying, O thou that movest
With feeble steps across this earth of mine
To break beside the fount thy golden bowl,
And spill its purple wine,
Look up to heaven and see how like a scroll
My right hand hath thy immortality
In an eternal grasping."

It was this great woman's soul, this sister mind of Shakespeare, whose fine and sensitive ear caught

"The murmur of the outer infinite."

Other worlds, a larger life beyond, grand futures opening into grander futures still, the poets see and hear and feel. Victor Hugo gave expression to the feeling that animates the poet's breast: "The nearer I approach the end, the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies which invite me."

Heine, even with his modernized Judaism, his almost-skepticism, showed his heart-thought to the

world when he calmly and sincerely said: "I see clearly the wonder of the past. A veil is spread over the future; but it is a rose-colored one, and through it gleam golden columns and glittering gems, and sweet strains are heard." Ah! the poets have had their Patmos dreams, and with the vision-gifted John have stood on the great and high mountain, and seen the Holy City that lieth four-square, which the angel measured with the golden reed. No such epoch-making poem as "In Memoriam" could have sprung golden-winged from the soul of a poet, like an angel from its sapphire throne, but for this value placed on the soul of man and this faith in his eternal life and heavenly destiny. That poem, doubtless, saved many an intellectual youth of England and America from infidelity and fatalism, and taught him the sweet reasonableness of the Christian faith.

All the great thoughts that ever stirred the heart of Tennyson on this sublime theme of the future life seem condensed into the song which came one white morning to be his own experience:

"Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar
When I put out to sea.

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar."

Queen Victoria, one day in 1883, wrote in her private journal these words: "Saw the great Alfred T. in dearest Albert's room for nearly an hour. He talked of the many friends he had lost, and what it would be if he did not feel and know that there was another world where there would be no partings; and then he spoke with horror of the unbelievers and philosophers who would make you believe there was no other world, no immortality, who tried to explain all away in a miserable manner. We agreed that, were such a thing possible, God, who is love, would be far more cruel than any human being." Ah! Tennyson, thou reasonest well. But is not Milton's mighty verse burdened with the holy thought? Do not Coleridge and Byron, Words-

worth and Shelley, Longfellow and Whittier, with these, all sing forth

> "This pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?"

Do they not all, in numbers their own, strike from the harp of the eternal harmonies this triumphant strain: "Thou wilt guide me with thy counsel and afterward receive me to glory."

The poets are true to Christ, true to nature, true to humanity. Let us get to thinking with them; with them, in holy thought and hope, mount up on wings as eagles. Let us look through the clouds which they have pierced with their song, and bathe our hearts and brains in the light of other worlds, and know the inspiration to noble living which comes from the belief that the Christ is risen, and, in His resurrection, pledges the dying world that "this mortal must put on immortality."

The religious instinct of man
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