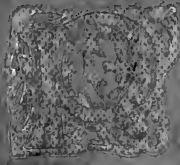


BT

741

.H8

copy 2



Psyche:



A Study of the



Soul



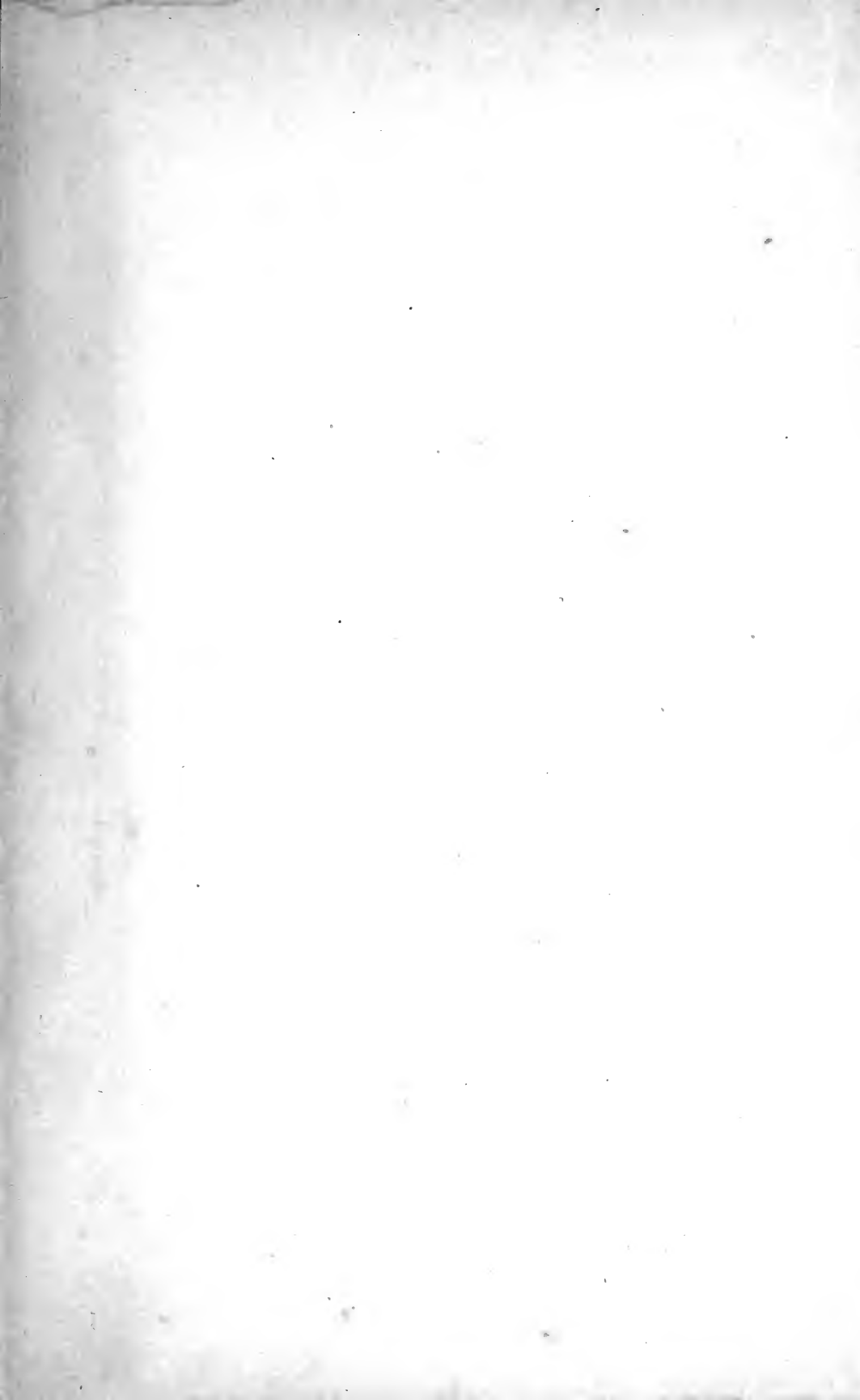
W. R. Huntington



Class BT741

Book .H8

copy 2





PSYCHE: A STUDY OF THE SOUL.

DR. HUNTINGTON'S BRIEFS.

12mo, paper, 25 cents ; cloth, 50 cents each.

1. A Short History of the Book of Common Prayer.
2. Popular Misconceptions of the Episcopal Church.
3. The Spiritual House : A First Lesson in Architecture.
4. Psyche : A Study of the Soul.
5. Four Key-words of Religion. (In Preparation.)
6. Heart, Head and Hand in Confirmation. (In Preparation.)

THOMAS WHITTAKER

PUBLISHER

2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE, NEW YORK

PSYCHE

A STUDY OF THE SOUL

BY

WILLIAM REED HUNTINGTON D.D.

RECTOR OF GRACE CHURCH NEW YORK

NEW YORK
THOMAS WHITTAKER
2 AND 3 BIBLE HOUSE
1899

copy 2

BT741
.H8
COPY 2

COPYRIGHT, 1899
By THOMAS WHITTAKER

By Exchange
Army and Navy Club
JANUARY 16 1934

HUBLEY PRINTING CO. L.T'D
TYPESETTERS AND ELECTROTYPERS
YORK, PENN'A

Recd. AHB 13735

CONTENTS.

The Soul.

PAGE

I.

THE MYSTERY OF HER ORIGIN 7

II.

THE METHODS OF HER DISCIPLINE 23

III.

THE ENEMIES OF HER PEACE 41

IV.

THE SORROWS OF HER PILGRIMAGE 57

V.

THE SPLENDOR OF HER DESTINY 71



THE CURE OF SOULS 85



I.

THE MYSTERY OF HER ORIGIN.



THE SOUL.

I.

THE MYSTERY OF HER ORIGIN.

WHEN Edwin, King of Northumbria, under the influence of Paulinus, his queen's chaplain, was considering whether he would or would not relinquish the old paganism in which he had been brought up and embrace the religion of Christ, he called a council of his lords to discuss the matter. One after another the courtiers gave their opinions, some for, some against. Finally there stood up a noble whose name has not come down to us, but whose spoken sentence will last as long as the history of England continues to be read, so powerfully does its imaginative quality appeal to what is deepest in us.

“Man's life, O King,” he said, “is like unto a little sparrow which, whilst your majesty is feasting by the fire in your banqueting-hall with your royal retinue, flies in at one window and out at another. For the short time that the little creature remaineth in the house we see it,

and then it is well sheltered from the wind and weather, but presently it passeth from cold to cold, and whence it came and whither it goes, we are altogether ignorant. Thus we can give some account of our soul during its abode in the body, whilst housed and harbored therein ; but where it was before and how it fareth after, is to us altogether unknown. If, therefore, Paulinus, in his preaching will certainly inform us herein, he deserveth, in my opinion, to be entertained."

Half of what this Northumbrian nobleman expected of him Paulinus, preacher and theologian, was able to perform, but with respect to the other half he must have felt himself practically powerless. For although for us Christian believers, the window out of which the sparrow flies fronts upon the sunshine, and we can follow, for a little way, at least, the bird's journey into light, on the side where entrance was affected all things lie in shadow still, and no matter how eagerly we peer out into the darkness, vision there is none.

I have undertaken to speak to you at these Wednesday-noon services during Lent, about the Soul, the Mystery of her Origin, the Methods of her Discipline, the Enemies of her Peace, the Sorrows of her Pilgrimage and the Splendor of her Destiny.

When I consider the far reach of these descriptive titles, the length and breadth of the vast

area they cover, I wonder at my own venturesomeness in endeavoring such a task. I can but hope that the intense interest of the subject itself may, in some small measure, make up for what is sure to prove the insufficiency of my dealings with it.

God and the Soul,—these are the two focal points which determine the whole orbit of religion. Cardinal Newman in his *History of his Religious Opinions* tells us, that although there was a time, in his early life, when he questioned and doubted about many things, there were two points with respect to which he never wavered, the reality of God and the reality of his own existence. Clearly there can be no religion worthy of the name that does not presuppose, and not only presuppose but somehow link together these two, the Soul and the Author of the Soul. You observe that I am using the word “Soul” in the very largest and most comprehensive sense which it is possible to attach to it. I am using it in the sense in which David uses it when he cries, “Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name.” In starting out upon the consideration of a subject it is all important that a speaker and his hearers should have a common understanding as to the meaning of the principal words that are to be employed.

I venture, therefore, to emphasize my purpose of invariably using the word “soul” in the inclu-

sive sense which makes it cover all in man which is not distinctly and evidently outward and material; all that we miss, to put it negatively, all that we take note of as being absent, as having departed, when we look a dead man in the face.

It is the more necessary to insist upon this largeness of definition because we so frequently hear "the soul" spoken of as if it were simply a fractional portion of our inner being, one pigeon-hole in a complicated secretary, one apartment in a many-roomed house, one alcove in a great library full of such places of studious retreat. The notion seems to be that this particular pigeon-hole, apartment, alcove has been set apart for the reception of things serious and solemn; and that all interests other than serious and solemn ones are elsewhere housed and provided for.

But why in the world should we thus dwarf and stint and cramp the Soul by the meagreness of our definition?

Christ says, "fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Evidently he would have us infer that the destruction of the body, precious as the body may be as the instrument or organ of its tenant, would leave the soul intact. Our own observation teaches us that the loss of a limb has no effect whatever upon the reach of a man's reasoning-powers, upon the strength of his will, or upon the warmth of his affections.

When an arm is amputated no fragment of the soul goes with it. The man may suffer the most terrible mutilations but, if he survives them, he is the same still as respects intelligence and character. Nothing has been lopped from the soul, the inner man remains of full stature as before. Why should it be otherwise with the soul were the entire body, and not one single portion of it to be reft away? The soul, under such circumstances might not be able to express itself, perhaps not able to be conscious of itself, until newly-housed in such body as it should please God to give; but there is no reason to suppose that it would permanently lose any possession, power, faculty, appetite, sense or desire that was native and natural to it. It would still be, what it was before, the soul.

I am not forgetful, even though for my present purpose I am obliged to slur it, I am not forgetful of the important distinction which St. Paul draws between soul and spirit. According to his analysis of human nature, man is three-fold rather than twofold; body, soul and spirit, rather than simply body and soul. There is great value in this triple classification because it enables us to sort the non-material part of us according to grade and comparative value, assigning to spirit so much as is nearest to those ranges of being which lie above us, and to soul so much as is nearest to those ranges of being

which lie below us. God is a Spirit, we do not speak of Him as a Soul; on the other hand, the animals have souls, not deathless souls, but souls.

With this restricted use of the word soul as indicating so much of our being as is non-material, while yet confessedly inferior to a certain better and loftier component known as spirit, we shall, in this study and meditation of ours, have nothing to do. St. Paul, for a certain definite purpose of his own, found the tripartite division desirable and helpful; for us and our needs the dual division (body and soul) which we find sanctioned in the Psalms and in the Gospels will suffice. We will let it be understood between us that we are using soul in the sense of David's "all that is within man," and as comprehending and including all that St. Paul meant when he spoke of soul and spirit.

And only consider, for a moment, how much that same "all" covers and signifies. Every perception, every sensation, every thought, every feeling, every movement of the will, every longing, every desire, every ache or pain, every hunger, every thirst, every love or hatred, every anger or joy, every shudder of dread, every motion of pity, every sentiment of worship, every thrill of admiration, every glow of sympathy, enters into the inventory of the soul. Some of these experiences that I have mentioned have probably been associated in your thoughts

with the body rather than with the soul. "Surely," you say, "such things as hunger and thirst are bodily desires. What have they to do with the soul?" They have everything to do with the soul, I answer. The body, as such, cannot hunger or thirst, nor can it feel pain. The dead body, the organism from which the soul has taken flight does not suffer. It was the tenant who felt the pain, not the house in which the tenant dwelt. The promise that there shall be no more pain does not mean that the souls of the righteous, the souls of those who shall be accounted worthy to attain that world, are to be incapable of feeling pain, it means rather that the conditions which cause souls to feel pain will have been removed. The possibility of feeling joy would seem to carry with it and to involve the possibility of feeling pain. We have not a High Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, who has forgotten, that is to say, what grief and pain and sorrow mean, yet has He entered now where sorrow, grief and pain are not.

Setting aside, therefore, as unworthy, that petty notion which would make of the soul a sort of pious adjunct of the rest of man's faculties, let us go on to consider the mystery of the soul's origin. Doing so we shall find that no matter how long or how laboriously we ponder the subject, it is impossible to get beyond the statement preserved to us in the second chapter

of the Book of Genesis, "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." This statement leaves many questions unanswered which we should rejoice to see answered, but there is one point which it indisputably asserts and that is the divine origin of the soul. Man becomes "a living soul" because of the inbreathing of the Spirit of God. Whatever else may be shrouded in darkness this much is clear.

Some bold thinkers go so far as to deny that the soul ever had a beginning. They hold that under one form or another it has existed from all eternity, even as to all eternity it will exist, incarnated now under this guise, now under that, but still continuing through all this succession of changes one and the same soul. Others, believers in the preëxistence of the soul, are content with less exorbitant claims. Instead of going back into the eternities, they pause when they have reached the beginnings of life upon this planet. That was our true birthday they allege. In the first soul all souls that ever have been or that ever will be were involved, and from it they have been, are being, and are to be evolved.

Directly counter to this view of the matter runs the doctrine of creationism as it is called, according to which souls are called into being by the direct fiat of the Almighty, each century of

human history counting as many distinct creative acts of God as there have been souls born into its life.

It is impossible even swiftly to summarize the arguments that are urged by the maintainers of these various theories or beliefs. Much that is plausible may be said in behalf of any one of them.

The doctrine of the soul's preëxistence underlies, as we all know, some of the most ancient and wide-spread of the religious systems of the East. So profound a thinker and so devout a Christian as William Wordsworth would appear to have held it, at any rate for a season. One of the very greatest of the Fathers of the Church openly maintained and taught it. Certainly there are features not a few in the dawning of a child's intelligence to suggest that the soul is recalling and recovering rather than forming for the first time its acquaintance with the world in the midst of which it finds itself. We may not be able to say as confidently as the poet to whom I just now made reference has said it :

"The soul that riseth with us our life's star
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar,"

but when we look into the eyes of a smiling child who has not yet learned to talk and note the friendly look of recognition, which seems to

say "My soul salutes thy soul, though I cannot speak the thought that is in me;" we sometimes feel disinclined flatly to deny, even though we may not be quite ready confidently to assert the belief that the soul brings with it into this world a certain more or less ample equipment of experience gained elsewhere.

On the other hand, it cannot be pretended that this notion of a preëxistent life of the soul, finds any support worth the calling such from the sacred Scriptures. Our Lord Jesus Christ, whilst asserting His own preëxistence in the strongest and clearest terms, nowhere so much as hints or suggests that it was a preëxistence shared with us. When they sought, as in the case of the man born blind, they did seek to force him to commit himself on the subject. He refused to gratify their curiosity. Here was a man born blind. Why was it? Had he sinned in some previous state of existence, and brought this calamity upon himself by way of punishment? Was he working out a penalty incurred by wrongdoing in some incarnation antedating the one in which he then found himself? "Lord," they asked, "Who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Christ put them off with the enigmatical reply, "Neither hath this man sinned nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

Following this reticence of Christ with respect

to the soul's origination and transmission, the Church has steadfastly and scrupulously refrained through all the Christian ages from laying down the law upon the subject. By the Church, I mean the Holy Church Universal, the Church throughout the world.

Local Churches, provincial Churches may have dogmatized upon the point, but never the whole body of the faithful. There is nothing about it in the great Creeds, which have come down to us from the primitive times and which we accept as summing up the essentials of the doctrine of Christ. God is there presented to us as "the maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible."

Among things invisible we must surely count the soul, and, if we do so, we acknowledge God as the Maker of the Soul. But by what method He brings or has brought the soul into being we are not told. To neither one of the two leading philosophies of the subject ("Traducianism" and "Creationism") does the Church stand committed. The record reads, in Scriptures which the Church accepts, that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life."

This assurance that there is in man, however humble his beginnings may have been, and however seriously those beginnings may have been blighted by his own transgressions, a certain

whiff, if no more, of the breath of the Eternal, this assurance ought to be, for all purposes of encouragement and stimulus, enough.

Traditional theology says that man fell and is being gradually lifted up again. Natural science declares that it can find no evidence of the falling but does find very much evidence of the lifting process; very well then there is one part of the path where (pending the clearing up of the rest of it) the two may walk together and be agreed, let us be thankful that it is the more important part.

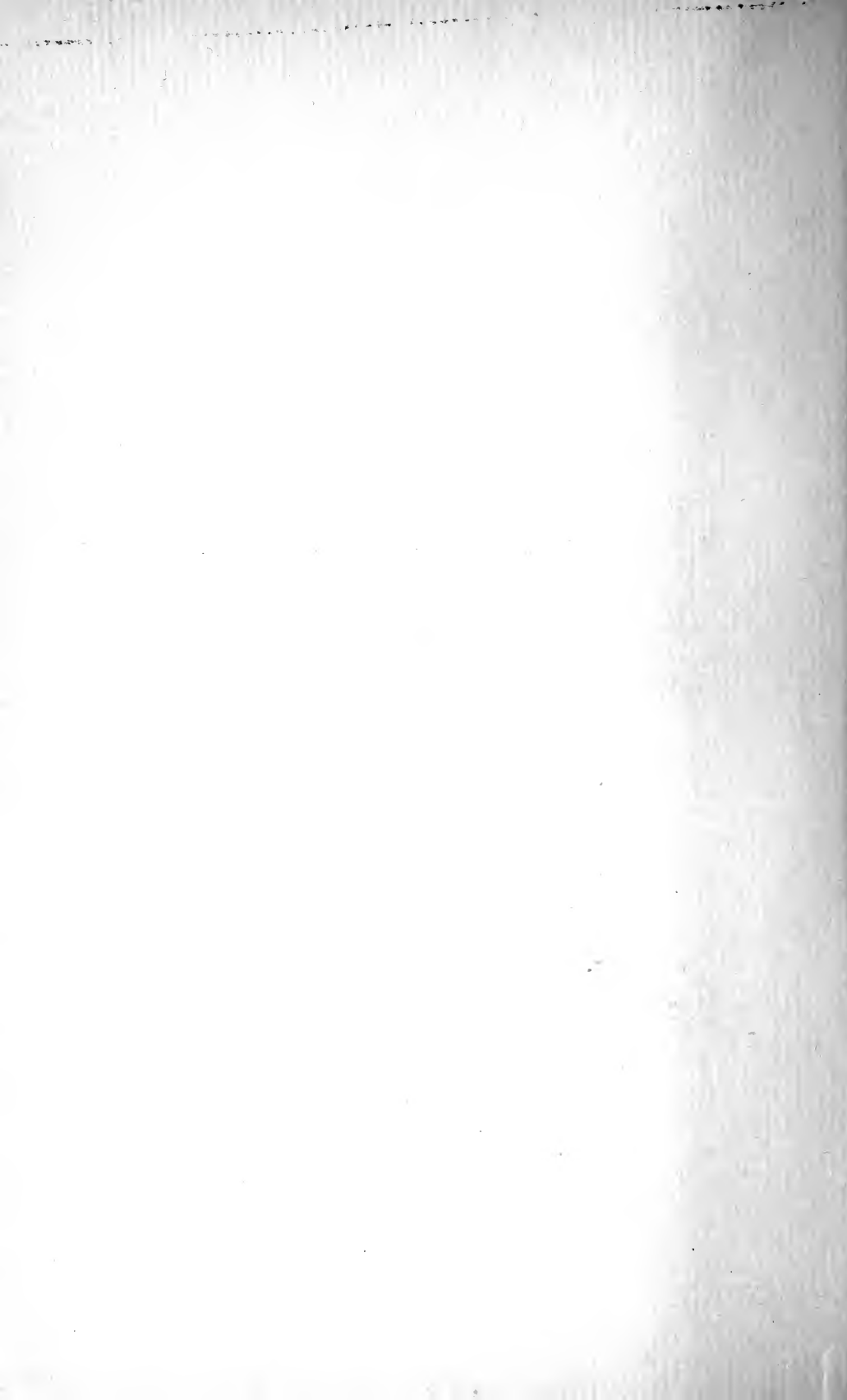
You may say to me, "But why call attention to subjects which are confessedly shrouded in darkness. With so many questions that are free from all ambiguity and uncertainty awaiting treatment, why approach so difficult and far-away a theme as the mystery of the origin of the Soul?"

Well I have no excuse but this, and I confess that it appears to me a valid one; that it is good for people, now and then, to enter into the shadow of great mysteries and to be made realize that, notwithstanding all our boast of electric lighting and X-rays, there are still some things left in human life that are not so easily seen through after all. The Temple of the Most High God at Jerusalem was held not to have been fully consecrated, until "the cloud filled the house of the Lord." Then spake Solomon,

“The Lord said that He would dwell in the thick darkness.”

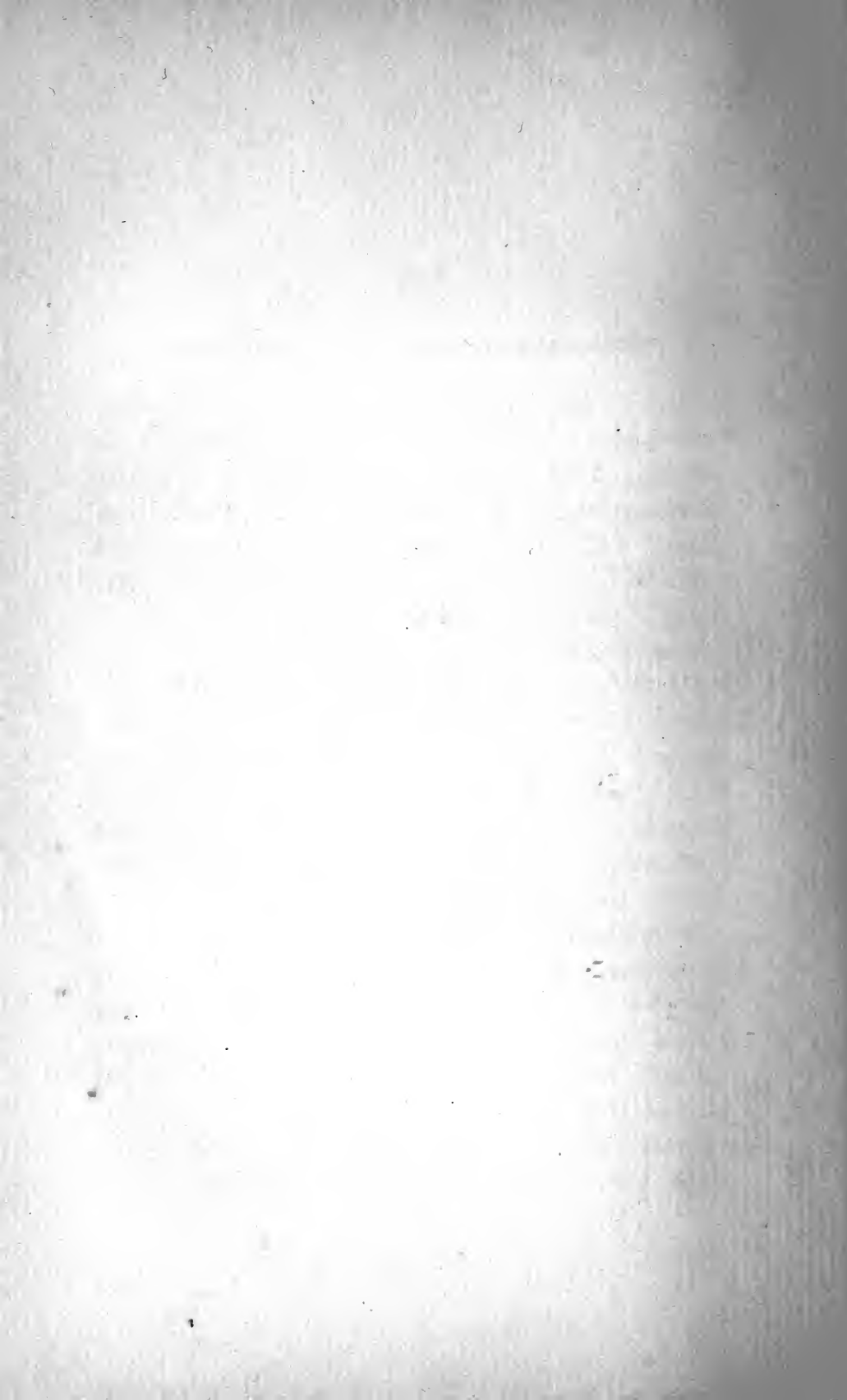
Mystery has its uses and a religion from which all sense of mystery has been banished is a poor and thin affair. There is no need of our envying the man whose delight in mountain scenery is measured by the degree of his acquaintance with the altitudes and the temperatures; and to whose mind the beating of the sea against the rocks summons up only such reflections as the tables of the nautical almanac suggest and warrant. The true pupil and child of Nature is he to whom, most of all, Nature’s mysteriousness appeals. It is more of awe we need if we would deeply learn.

I have occasion to come into this Church at many hours of the day and often when the building is unoccupied, and I have become very familiar with its varying moods. I like it best when there is least of glare and most of shadow, least of that sort of light which makes all things plain, and most of that sort which makes some things dim and sombre. And so, perhaps, after all it will have done us no harm this morning to have pondered together the “mystery” of the origin of the soul.



II.

THE METHODS OF HER DISCIPLINE.



II.

THE METHODS OF HER DISCIPLINE.

THE discipline or training of the soul is a matter which chiefly concerns Him to whom all souls belong. I have promised to speak to you this morning about the methods of the soul's discipline. Let us not suffer ourselves for one moment to forget who it is that disciplines the soul, for his are the methods we are to study. There are methods which we follow in the endeavors we make to discipline ourselves; there are methods which others, our fellow men, follow in their attempt to subject us to such discipline as in their judgment, we require. Upon neither of these is it my purpose to enlarge. What methods does God adopt in his discipline of the soul? That is the question in hand.

You and I are worth more to God than we are to any one else. That follows from His having thought us out and made us. No interest surpasses an owner's interest. When a soul is, as we say, lost, pray who is the loser? There can be but one answer. The loser of a thing is invariably the one who owned and still owns the thing lost. Loss does not work forfeiture. Who

was it that went after the one lost sheep? Was it not the sheep's owner? Who was it that swept the house diligently until her lost piece of money was recovered? Was it not the woman to whom the coin belonged? Who was it that went out to meet the lost son, when he was yet a great way off? Was it not the man who alone of all men had the right to say of him, "This my son, was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found"? Yes, the soul belongs to God, belongs to Him because He is the author and fashioner of the soul. The methods of the soul's discipline, therefore, are God's methods.

Let us ponder them. And first consider the material with which God has to deal in disciplining the soul. The effects which an artificer brings to pass can only be fairly judged when we take into account the medium in which he works, through which he endeavors to express his thoughts. It would be unreasonable to complain of a sculptor because of his failing to secure by the blows of his chisel the same results which a painter attains by the touch of his brush. The one man, we say, does more justice to form, and the other more justice to color. Perfection would require that justice should be done both to form and to color, but the conditions make this impossible. In the very act of selecting his medium the artist confesses his limitations. When God determined that out of the dust of the ground

He would make man, He predetermined that the man so to be made should be neither angel nor archangel, seraph nor cherub, but just what dust and breath of God commingled in due proportions ought to produce, namely, man ;—and so it was that man became a living soul, ready and waiting to be disciplined or trained by the same power that had called him into existence. Let us be careful also what we understand by “discipline.” Discipline may be taken in a larger or in a narrower sense. Sometimes we speak of discipline as if it were one and the same thing with punishment, and the adjectives which we associate with discipline are apt to be such adjectives as “stern,” “severe,” “rigid.” But discipline, rightly understood, has a much larger and more generous definition than this. Discipline, in its best and fullest sense, is teaching, education, training. Severity is only incidental to discipline ; it is by no means of the essence of the thing. Recall that beautiful passage in the Apocryphal Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, in which Wisdom is personified. “She goeth about,” says the author, “seeking such as are worthy of her, showeth herself favorably unto them in the ways, and meeteth them in every thought. For the very true beginning of her is the desire of discipline and the care of discipline is love ; and love is the keeping of her laws, and the giving heed unto her laws is the assurance of incorruption, and in-

corruption maketh us near to God." Here "discipline" is evidently meant to be understood in the sense of training, education, and that is the sense in which we shall understand it to-day. What are the methods which God uses in the training or education of the soul?

He has three books, I answer, on which He depends in this anxious and delicate process; they are his Picture-book, his Story-book and his Dream-book. What we call Nature is God's Picture-book. By it He is enabled to reach man's soul through the eye. There are a great many conflicting notions abroad as to what constitutes "natural religion" so-called. I submit that the best account of natural religion is that which makes it to mean such fractional portion of full and complete religion as outward Nature, God's picture-book as I have called it, suggests. The picture-book unsupplemented by anything more is, of course, sadly insufficient; nay, worse than that, grossly misleading; nevertheless, in its place and time, it has an inestimable value. Certain of the primary religious convictions which make man the worshipping, temple-building creature he is, owe their awakening;—I do not say their existence, for they exist in persons born blind, but owe their awakening to the ministry of Nature. Think how constantly Nature is appealed to in the Psalter as if it were a great treasure-house of the raw material of religion. Wonder

and admiration and awe lie at the very roots of worship, and there can be no question that the soul is schooled in these emotions by what the eye beholds in its outlook upon God's universe. In the little baby stretching out its tiny arms toward some bright object near or far, star or toy, we discern the rudiments of worship, the soul reaching up and out toward the best it sees. Gradually, to be sure, the soul learns the positive, comparative and superlative degrees; and manhood relegates to a very insignificant place in its regard the thing which was childhood's best; but the principle is unchanged, since for the soul to concentrate all her affections and desires in reaching out after the best is worship, and the whole aim of revelation is to effect a substitution of the true image for the false, to transfer adoration from the pictures in the picture-book to Him who meant the picture-book simply to be one of His instruments or media in the discipline of the soul.

All along through the Old Testament we find a sharp line of demarcation drawn between those who idolize Nature and those who stoutly refuse to do so, but nowhere is there any disposition to treat Nature with contempt. Nature in the Psalms is everywhere the minister of reverence and holy fear,—“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 or the Son of Man that Thou visitest him?"—that is the tone of psalmist after psalmist. There is, you notice, no disposition whatsoever betrayed, to deify the powers of Nature, as the heathen round about Israel were continually doing, but there is manifested an intense interest in Nature herself as a witness to the greatness and the majesty of Nature's Lord.

Or take such a Psalm as the one hundred and fourth, with its panoramic view of Nature as a whole,—what a marvelous composition it is, and how completely theistic from first to last! It begins by picturing God as clothed with "majesty and honor" and then goes on to describe in detail what we may call the embroidery of this royal robe. Figure follows figure in swift succession. We are shown cloud-chariots swept along on the winds of the wind, we see the ocean with its innumerable tenantry, we see the springs of water trickling down the mountain sides, the wild beasts prowling about, and the fowls of the air flying to and from their nests;—but everywhere, whatever may be going on, we are reminded that God is there, the animating power back of the whole scene; The cedars of Libanus are "trees of the Lord," the lions roaring after their prey "do seek their meat from God."

"O Lord," exclaims this greatest of the ancient naturalists; awe-struck by what he sees, "O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in wisdom hast

Thou made them all, the Earth is full of thy riches.”

But the appeal to the Picture-book of Nature is not confined to the Old Testament. God's disciplinary employment of the things of the outer world in his training of the soul is as manifest in the Gospels as in the Psalms even though in the later scriptures it takes on a different form. Our Lord Jesus Christ is continually referring us to Nature for illustrations of the spiritual truth He is endeavoring to enforce. Would He convince us that the life is more than meat? it is “Consider the ravens.” Would He convince us that the body is more than raiment, it is “Consider the lilies.” The tree sprung from the mustard-seed with its branches full of birds, the field of wheat and tares, the vine trellised about the window of the upper-room,—these are all of them familiar instances of Christ's appeal to Nature, as a fellow witness with himself to the great truths which it behooves the soul of man to know. We make a grave mistake when we let any alarmist cry frighten us away from the proper and legitimate helps which Nature has it in her power to give us in our search for God. If we start out resolved to look no further than Nature in that search, we shall indeed come to grief, and very serious grief; but if we turn to Nature only for such ministry as she has been empowered to render, knowing all the while that

it is a ministry partial and imperfect, we shall get nothing but good from her discipline. If she teach us nothing else than to love beauty and to reverence the principle of law she will have laid us under no slender obligation, for the love of beauty is the key to worship, and reverence for the principle of law is the stepping-stone to righteousness and true holiness. So much for the Picture-book, What now of the Story-book?

By the Story-book I mean the record and chronicle of what has happened on the surface of this earth of ours since life, and more especially human life began to run its course here. Of by far the greater number of the events that have happened the memory has perished utterly; but the tradition of some of them survives. These surviving memories taken together constitute what we know as history, the history of the past; and one of God's methods of disciplining the soul is the bringing to bear on her life these powers of the past, these still active energies of what a poet has called "buried time."

Consider attentively, for a moment, your own life, recall your soul's experience thus far, and judge for yourself as to the extent to which what has been told you about the past has influenced and moulded you. Think of the tremendous power that usage and habit and custom have exercised over you. The whole configuration of life, as you view it to-day, is utterly different from

what it would have been had no standards of conduct, no precedents, no examples existed to guide you to right choices.

But the moment you begin taking account of such things as usage and habit and custom and example and precedent, that moment you touch history. Save for the record, the chronicle, the tradition, these inheritances of a vanished past never would have come down to you; you would have had to start fresh and unequipped, slowly and painfully discovering for yourself a few, (for it could have been only a few) of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which the existence of history in the world has made available for you at once. We have seen how keenly the Psalmist appreciated the value of what we agreed to call the picture-book, let us now see what a very high estimate he set upon the story-book.

Take, for instance, that long psalm *Attendite popule*, appointed in the Prayer Book Psalter for the fifteenth evening of the month,—What is the engrossing subject of its many verses? It is wholly and only Jehovah's goodness to his people through all the long reaches of the past. "I propose," the psalmist declares, "to report such things as the fathers have told. They ought not be hidden from the children of the generations to come." He accounts it, he says, his plain duty to show the honor of the Lord "his mighty and wonderful works that He has done." Accord-

ingly, starting from Jacob, he proceeds to narrate in a most vivid and exhilarating fashion, the great things that were done for the Hebrew people during their passage from the land of bondage to the land of promise. He reminds them of the marvellous things God did for their fathers in the land of Egypt; in the field of Zoan; He divided the sea, He led them with a light of fire, He clave the hard rocks and gave them drink thereof, He commanded the clouds above, He opened the doors of heaven, He rained down manna upon them for to eat; and gave them food from heaven;—and so he goes on until the story culminates in the choice of David and the building of the temple.

What a splendid incentive to patriotism in such a psalm as that? How the hearts of the listening young people of that day must have throbbed and leaped within them as they hung upon the lips of the minstrel singing the story of that marvellous rescue and still more marvellous pilgrimage. He sang as he did, he told them, in order that their posterity might know these things, and the children which were yet unborn, to the intent that when they came up they might show their children the same; that they might put their trust in God and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.

That was what history meant to the Israelites. It was not merely a memory, it was a stimulating

memory. It was not a mere dry record of facts, it was an inspiration and a song. Because God had done great things for their fathers they believed that He could and would do great things for them. Nay, they went further and held that God was actually bound by the most sacred of all ties, the obligation of a solemn promise, to stand by them. Their appeal was virtually that which we perpetuate in the Litany. "O God, we have heard with our ears and our fathers have declared unto us, the noble works that Thou didst in their days and in the old time before them"; a reminder upon which follows, as logically as a conclusion from a premise, the urgent petitionary cry,—“O Lord, arise, help us and deliver us, for thine honor.” He can scarcely be an honorable God, so the implication runs, if He disowns or shuts his eyes upon so memorable a past.

If the history of God's dealings with a single race could exercise over that race such controlling sway, it would seem as if we Christians ought to be able to draw from our further reaching past, stimulus and instruction more abundant still. Their story-book, fascinating as it was, could not compare with ours. They could look back through the generations to no greater deliverer than Moses; we look back to the incarnate Son of God, and in the act of looking back to Him we look across all the momentous results that have followed upon His coming. The chap-

ters of their book dealt mostly with wars and migrations and captivities, ours include such mystic events as a Nativity and a Baptism, a Temptation in a Wilderness and a Transfiguration on a Mount, an Agony in a Garden and a Passion on a Cross, a precious Death and Burial, a mighty Resurrection and a glorious Ascension,—these and all that has followed upon these. Surely we must fain acknowledge that history has its place among the methods of the soul's discipline.

I spoke of a third book as being instrumental in God's hands to this same end,—his Dream Book. Over and above the pictures of Nature and the lessons of History, we are bound to take account of that gift of inner and spiritual vision known as prophecy. The picture-book, Nature, is the book of the present, it lies open all the time before our eyes; the story-book, History, is the book of the past, its records cover the generations that have gone; the dream-book, Prophecy, is the book of the future. From time to time God has sent into the world the messengers whom we know as seers. To them it has been given to see further into things than for the rest of us is possible; not only so but there has been granted also a prevision of the future. They have dreamed dreams and seen visions and because of their visions and their dreams their brother men have been kept from losing heart, have plucked up

courage and been brave to live. Man must have hope if he is to keep on struggling. And these prophets have been the ministers of hope.

The prophet is like the man who paces to and fro on the forward deck of a ship keeping a sharp lookout. On his ability and his fidelity the safety of the whole ship's company depends. He must have an eye keen to pierce the mist, an ear quick to catch the sound of breakers. Yes, we need the prophet and because we need him God sends him.

There have been many, many prophets since the world began. The names of some of them have been preserved to us but the names of the most of them are forgotten. Of the prophets referred to in Holy Scriptures, both Hebrew and Christian, only a few are, as we say, personally known to us; as to the rest all we know is that they lived and prophesied. Nor are we to suppose that the ministry of prophecy has been confined to the Hebrew race, though it has been so much more profusely lavished on that race than on any other. Enoch, seventh from Adam, prophesied, we are told, and that was long before there was any Hebrew race in existence. Moreover, if we are to accept the sign of the prophet Jonah we may well believe that other heathen peoples, besides the Ninevites, received from Him who inspires prophecy intimations of judgment to come. Balaam, great prophet that

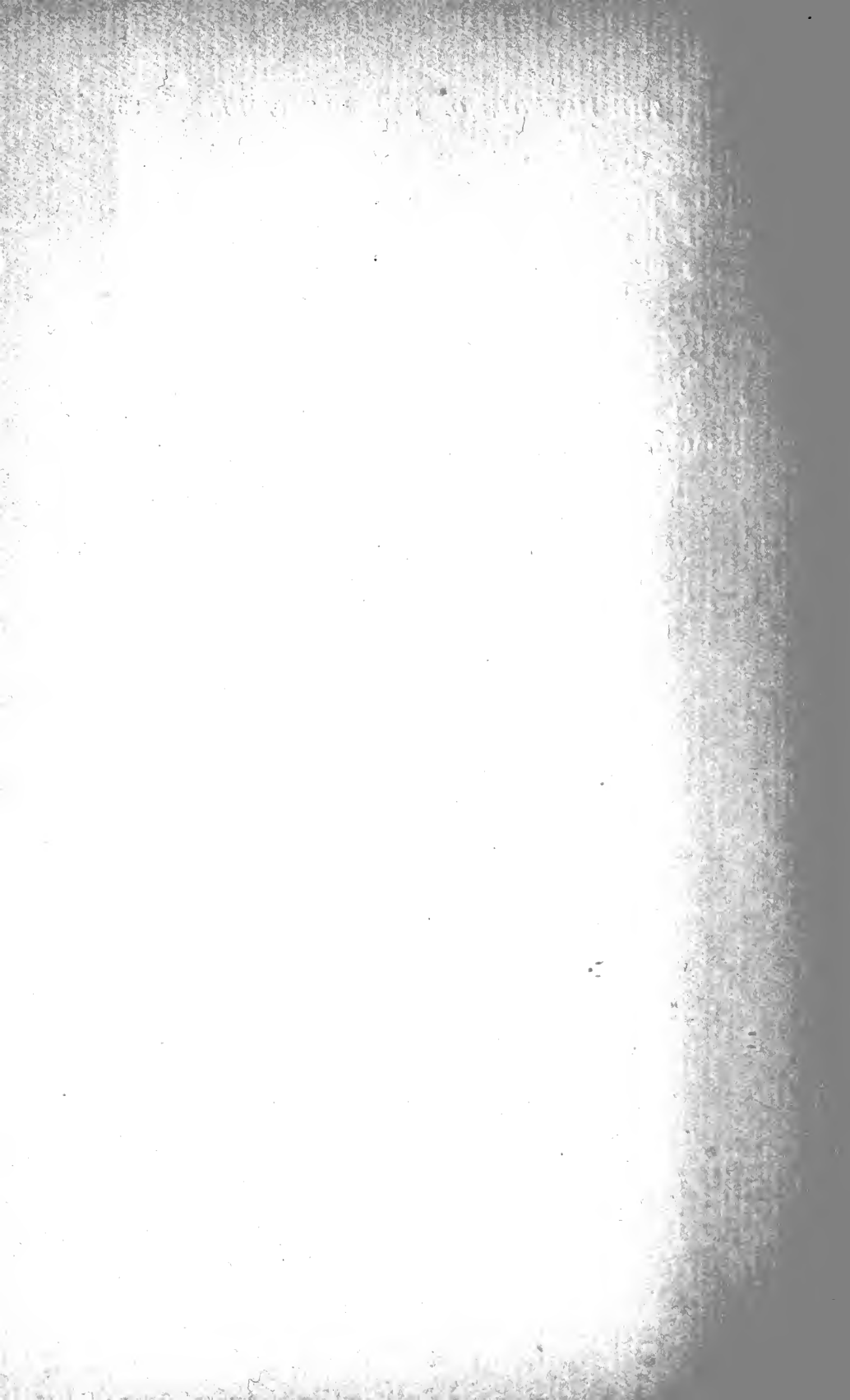
we have to acknowledge him, was no Hebrew, yet he foresaw Christ and His Kingdom.

Yes, even though we must needs acknowledge that the lessons of Nature and the lessons of history have been made more widely and more generally useful in the education of man than the lessons of prophecy, we must still admit that prophecy holds a most important place, and that no full account can be given of the methods God uses in his discipline of the soul if prophecy is overlooked.

The God we Christians worship is the God "which was, which is, and which is to come," and what else should we expect of Him in his training of us than that He should make past, present and future all three of them tributary to his purpose of perfecting the soul.

Doubtless you will have noticed that throughout what I have been saying no attention whatever has been given to disturbing and conflicting forces in this matter of God's discipline of man. The assumption has been all along that the School was a Normal School in which all things were rightly ordered and the whole plan duly carried out. This has not been because of any forgetfulness of the part that temptations and sin play in the earthly experience of the soul, but simply with a view to that gain in clearness which comes of dealing with one subject at a time. How evil and sorrow cut across the path

of smooth advance, how they break in upon the divine plan and mar its symmetry we shall discover in due time. Meanwhile remember these three classics of the soul, the Picture-book, the Story-book, and the Dream-book. Well and thoroughly to have learned the lessons they can teach, will win enrollment for you, in that fourth and greatest book of all God's Book of Remembrance.



III.

THE ENEMIES OF HER PEACE.

III.

THE ENEMIES OF HER PEACE.

THE enemies of the soul's peace are three,—pride, anger and desire. One of these hostile forces delivers a front attack, the other two are continually plotting stealthy approaches on either flank. If we would thoroughly understand the strategic situation, and carry on our part of the fight intelligently we must keep these cardinal points from which danger threatens continually in sight. Chance may seem to be the arbiter of victory, but it is not really so. In the long run it is vigilance that conquers. Let us then make a study of our allied adversaries, pride, anger and desire, considering how and why it is that they should so menace our peace.

You say that what surprises you about this reconnoissance of the enemy's position is not that it discloses three points of attack, but rather that it should disclose so few as three.

You have been accustomed to think of the enemies of the soul's peace as far more numerous than that. "My name," said the quick-witted Spirit who ventured to adjure Jesus not to torment him, "My name is Legion; for we are

many," and even so you have been accustomed to think of the soul's enemies as being many rather than few. Doubtless such is the fact, but when we have multitudes to deal with there is a certain advantage in classifying the material which goes to make them up, ranking and grading their contents for convenience in reckoning, and I am convinced that before we shall have done, this morning, with pride, anger and desire, it will have become clear to us that this analysis of the forces hostile to our peace is a sufficiently searching one. An army, we must remember, may be made up of many divisions, may have its regiments and battalions and companies, and yet be all the while one army. And so with these attacking forces that war against the soul, our counting them only three in no way diminishes the multifariousness of the evil for which they stand, the sin they represent.

Take pride as our first instance. Pride is no sooner mentioned in the Litany, you remember, than two affiliated sins follow close upon its heels,—vainglory and hypocrisy. These are the congeners and blood-relatives of pride, and there is no reason in the world why we should set them off by themselves as separate and independent entities.

Pride is a disturber of the soul's peace because it introduces into our inner life an element of falsehood; and peace and falsehood are two

things that cannot live together. "Peace through the truth" is a wise maxim, no other kind of peace has promise of permanence.

The falsehood in pride lies just here. We form an estimate of ourselves and our intrinsic worth, our own positive merit and deserving, our own talent or ability, which estimate, when tested impartially by a competent judge, is seen to be a wholly erroneous one, erroneous because exaggerated; and yet so self-deceived are we that this imagined measure of ourselves and of the credit due us, is accepted in the court-room of our own consciousness, and, what is worse, acted upon in the open spaces of our outer life as if it were absolutely correct. Occasionally, more often in some lives than in others, circumstances force upon a man a momentary insight into things as they really are; he sees by flash-light the true interior situation, and then, as we say, his pride is "wounded." A blessed sort of injury that. How grateful we ought to be for such disclosures. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." What we call vanity is simply pride busying itself with little things;—clothes, bric-a-brac, upholstery, good looks, accomplishments. Vain people are sometimes lovable in spite of their vanity, for the simple reason that having allowed their pride to spend itself upon trifles, they still retain back of their vanity a certain reserve fund of unselfishness which makes them still worth

loving, whereas, one who is all pride away back to the very centre of his being, has squeezed out of his nature whatever there was there that deserved to be loved. And when you get back to where the heart should be there is none.

But what, under this showing, becomes, you ask me, of that well-known virtue "proper pride," and what becomes of that admirable quality a "just pride"? These, I answer, are careless expressions, pardonable enough when used colloquially, but incapable of standing the fire of criticism for a moment. If pride be what we have agreed to consider it an exaggerated conceit of one's own value or importance, how can it ever be "proper," or how can it possibly be "just?" For "proper pride" read self-respect, which is a very different matter, and for "just pride" read a fair, well-warranted satisfaction, and we shall be nearer the mark. The very fact that people when they are justifying pride, or trying to justify it, speak of a "pardonable pride" betrays a lurking misgiving that pride is something which under any and all circumstances calls for forgiveness. Yes, pride is a sin, and the prolific parent of sins, and if we would find peace at the last we may as well begin by downing pride at the first.

But how shall we go to work to down pride? It is easy enough to say that the remedy for pride lies in the practice of humility—but that

does not help us very much. We cannot take virtue by doses. The physician of the soul who can think of nothing better than to prescribe as a cure for a particular vice a pill or potion of the contrary virtue is unworthy of his calling. The merest apprentice in spiritual therapeutics ought to know better than that. Pride is one of those painless ailments which are all the more dangerous because unrecognized and unacknowledged by the patient. The great point, in such instances, is to get the man's eyes open to the fact that he needs treatment, for unless he can be persuaded actively to coöperate in his own case, things are all up with him. The only instrumentality that can bring about in man or woman the final excision of pride, is the presentation in some unmistakable way of a personality which by force of contrast shames self into a sense of its own utter worthlessness and insignificance. Paul told his Corinthians a home truth, which must have done them a world of good, when he said of some of them who had been particularly vainglorious that "they measuring themselves by themselves and comparing themselves among themselves" had been the opposite of wise. But if it be provincial for people to confine themselves to a small circle of comparison, as these people had been doing at Corinth, how much worse than provincial must it be still further to narrow down the circle until

it holds only one's self and that other self who always sits confronting one's first self in the mystic mirror of the consciousness. That wholesome shaming process which I have spoken of as the only cure for pride takes its most effective beginning when the soul can be persuaded to open her eyes upon the Lamb of God, the alone sinless Christ.

Nowhere in the Gospels does Simon Peter appear to so great advantage as when, falling down at Jesus' knees, there on the sand-beach of the lake, he cries out in startled contrition "Depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord." There had suddenly swum into the field of that disciple's vision the image of what spiritual perfection really meant. He seemed to see the absolute goodness incarnated there before his eyes, and, for the moment, the whole fabric of his pride shrivelled and vanished like dry leaves in the flame. Between that faultless One and himself he could discern nothing in common, and though the thought of separation pierced him with anguish, separation, he said to himself, it must be.

The self-centred man is in the same false position with the self-centred earth of the old astronomy. "It is obvious," they used to say, "that the sun goes around the earth, for we see it set in the West and rise the next morning in the East." This seemed conclusive and it was

not an easy thing to shake mankind out of so plausible a belief. But Christ accomplishes a greater marvel still when He persuades a soul that itself is not the centre it has fondly supposed itself to be, and that humble dependence not proud independence is the law for man.

Another enemy of the soul's peace is anger, which like pride counts in its retinue many attendant sins. There is to be sure one form of anger that is blameless. The anger aroused at the sight of cruelty or injustice or any unlawful use of power, especially if we are sure that no element of self-interest enters into the case, such anger is not only not a blameworthy, it is a positively praiseworthy state of feeling. To be too cowardly or too lethargic to be able to feel righteous indignation is no credit to man or woman. "Be ye angry," is an apostolic commandment, which, the proviso, "and sin not," by no means, repeals. Anger in this sense is what an old English theologian calls it, "one of the sinews of the soul."

But anger as commonly understood, commonly felt and commonly exhibited is quite another affair. Anger is the feeling which takes possession of us when things do not go as we wish them to go, when we are thwarted and opposed, when we are ridiculed or belittled, when we are cheated of credit which we think belongs to us, or charged with motives which we are conscious of never having entertained, then it is that anger, for the

moment, fevers the reason and by fevering the reason imperils the steadiness of the will. Human nature is, perhaps, best represented under the similitude of a realm or kingdom, at the heart and centre of which, stands a throne. The monarch, the occupant of this throne is the will. So long as the will holds its proper sovereignty and governs prudently with all its power the whole realm is in peace. But once dethrone the will and anarchy is upon you in the twinkling of an eye. Reason is the prime-minister who helps the king to rule as he ought. "By me," says the Wisdom of the Proverbs (which is but a synonym for the reason) by me kings rule and princes decree justice. By me princes rule and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." Whatever, therefore, perverts reason, even for ever so brief a time, imperils the throne and threatens anarchy. Now, this is precisely what anger does. For the moment, it perverts reason. The old moralists used to call anger a short madness. That is a strong way of stating it, but it is scarcely too strong. Shakespeare likens it to intoxication. The two definitions agree in locating the mischief which anger does. They both of them charge anger with impairing the integrity of the reason. The angry man is notoriously the unreasonable man, that is the very thing we say of him, "he will not listen to reason."

What now shall we say as to the antidote?

We discovered a cure for pride. Is there a cure for anger? Yes, and it is to be found in the very same way in which we found the other remedy, that is to say, by looking Christward. Simon Peter, the impetuous, was our teacher in the former instance, let us turn to him again, let him teach us now; for there can be no higher authority on hasty temper than he. This is what he says, "Christ also suffered for us," leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps: "who did no sin neither was pride found in his mouth; who, when He was reviled reviled not again, when He suffered He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." Committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously,—yes, that is it; that is the key to the conquest of anger. St. Paul has the same thought though he words it differently. "He that judgeth me is the Lord." What we want to do in the struggle with anger is to gain time, for if we can only gain time the day is saved. This device of appealing the case instantly to a higher tribunal covers the ground completely. Of course the resort is one that is only open to Christians, for it is only they who believe in the reality of a heavenly tribunal and the certainty of a judgment to come. But I am speaking to Christian believers. It is scarcely to be expected that any others will stray into a church of a week day in Lent,—I am speaking to Christian

believers, and I have a right to expect that the appeal to Christ's example and to his apostles' teaching will weigh with them. That example was gentleness. That precept is forbearance. In many cases in which we permit ourselves to get angry we are in the wrong, and instead of being under an obligation to forgive are really in sore need of being forgiven. And even in those cases where we are technically in the right of the quarrel, or the misunderstanding, our answer to God's question "Dost thou well to be angry?" is a very lame one.

Except in the character of disinterested spectators we never do well to be angry. "No man," says the legal maxim, "can be a judge in his own cause." In every controversy, therefore, where our own selfhood comes in to mix the issue, the only safety is to stand by Paul's ground that vengeance belongeth unto God, and that for the Christian the law of retaliation has been left far behind. Let the brute keep up the eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth morality. The children of God have been called up on to higher ground; they have caught their Master's word "forgive"; "if their enemy hungers they feed him," if he thirsts they "give him drink." I do not allege that this is the Christian practice, for to say so would be an empty boast. I do say that it is the Christian doctrine and the only Christian doctrine. Diversities of interpretation there are

in the Church many and grave, but upon this point there is unanimity perfect and entire.

There is one other enemy of the soul's peace; namely, desire. This is by far the most loud-mouthed of the three attacking armies, for desire is nothing if not clamorous. We cannot repudiate desire and turn our backs on it altogether, condemning it out and out, for desire is human. Nothing that forms part of the original equipment of human nature, the starting capital of man can be in itself bad, and so far as we can see, utterly to kill desire would mean the permanent maiming and mutilation of the soul. It is unfallen, not fallen man, who is represented in the primitive paradise as discerning in the fruit of the tree of knowledge something to be "desired." Desire, therefore, cannot, according to the Biblical theology, be pronounced intrinsically and necessarily evil. To quit our military figure and to go back to our parable of the realm, the kingdom, the throne room, what we have really to be anxious about is the relation of desire to the regal power in us, the will. Desire is, from its very nature, so persistent, so persuasive, so importunate, that it is continually tending to acquire, not merely influence with the will, which would be all right enough, not merely legitimate influence, but that leading and prevalent influence which belongs to reason and to reason only.

We have seen that pride deceives the will, and

that anger fevers the will, let us be frank and confess that desire too often cajoles and over-persuades the will, in the face of better advice from the will's true counsellor the conscience, for conscience is but another name for reason acting in the moral and spiritual field.

But again, you ask me what of the remedy? How are we to curb desire? How are we to get the upper hand of "these rebellious wishes"?

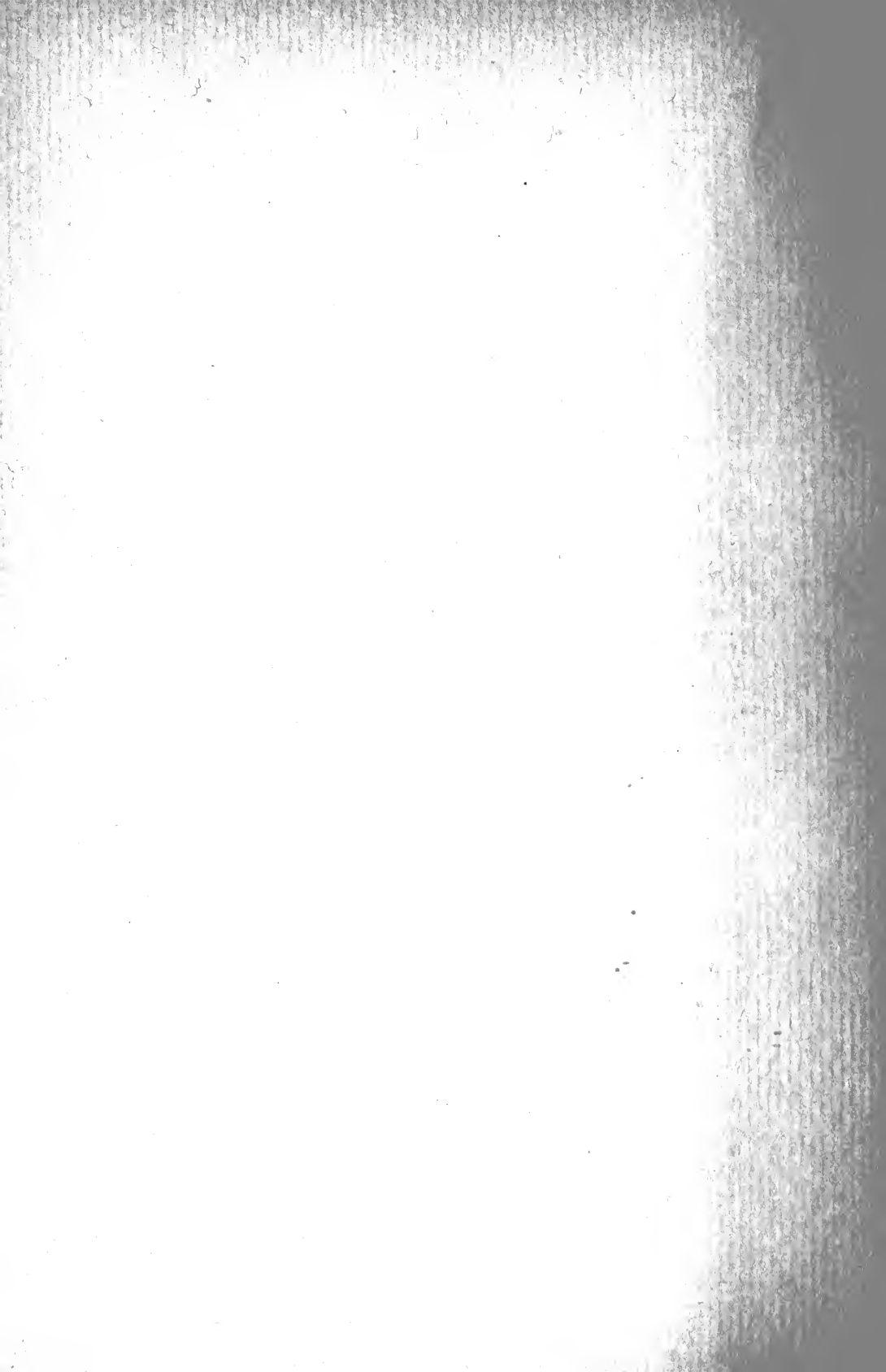
There would seem to be only one way, and that is to cultivate such profound reverence for the will of God as such, that the simple knowledge that any desire of the heart is tempting and alluring us to overpass the boundary of what is righteous, the limit of what is holy, suffices to give us pause. St. Paul in what he says to the Ephesians, classifies desire under two heads, "the desires of the flesh and of the mind" is his phrase. The Church, in her baptismal office, summarizes the matter a little differently; she speaks of covetous desires after the vain pomp and glory of the world, and of the sinful desires of the flesh. It does not so very much matter how we analyze and classify, upon the main point we are all agreed. We all know that desire is a tremendously potent influence in the daily life of the soul, and that there can be no such thing as "peace within" until we learn the secret of saying to those proud waves, "Be still." The ascetic theologians have their theory of the matter. Writers

like Thomas à Kempis seem to think that it is both possible and praiseworthy actually to kill out, to excise, to annihilate the heart's desires. I cannot believe that it is God's wish that we should so deal with the heart which He has planted in us. I do not find in the New Testament any teaching which indicates that desire is to be conquered to the point of extermination. I do find much which tells me that an overmastering desire for things which it has not pleased God to give us, whether in the line of enjoyment, or influence, or possession, is utterly and hopelessly at variance with the soul's peace.

Let us try to look at our lives soberly and seriously from God's point of view, try to discern, as accurately as may be, the law of proportion which applies to them, try to discover just what it is that He is expecting of us in the way of activity and just what it is that He is expecting of us in the way of repression and self-effacement. The lines of configuration are not the same for all lives, they run as variously as the lines in one's hand and the palmistry by which we determine their signification is prayer. Ask God to show you personally, individually, what his plan for you is like, and then out of an honest heart you can breathe the further supplication that He will enable you not only to desire that which He doth promise but also to love that which He doth command.

IV.

THE SORROWS OF HER PILGRIMAGE.



IV.

THE SORROWS OF HER PILGRIMAGE.

THERE are three standard and classical figures of speech under which, in all generations, men have been accustomed to depict life,—the school, the battle and the journey.

The soul, that is to say, may be imagined as pupil, as combatant or as traveller. Under two of these heads, the disciplinary and the militant, we have already studied the soul. There remains the third, and I have promised that to-day in our dealings with the soul we should consider the sorrows of her pilgrimage. The subject, so worded, has, it must be confessed, a sentimental sound, but we will try to steer clear of sentimentalism.

Nothing is more matter-of-fact than sorrow, when it is the real thing. With mimic and imagined sorrows we have no special call to deal. It is they that make the sentimentalist's stock in trade. The people who easily shed tears over the heroes and heroines of written or acted tragedy, while remaining utterly unmoved by the troubles and trials of the flesh and blood sufferers who have a direct claim upon their sym-

pathies, have always been and will always be fair game for the satirist. Their tears are about as genuine, mean about as much, as the spangled waterfall, at the back of the stage, down which the hero has cast himself. This is a trumped-up and second-hand sorrowfulness which does not count.

To-day we are to consider only such sorrows as are real, and even these we must take care to approach in a sane and healthy temper. No possible good could come of our merely gloating over them as morbid phenomena of human life. Why probe wounds if one has no intention of pouring in the wine and oil of comfort? Why fret and worry the pilgrims with endless talk about the dust and heat, if you have no good tidings of the twelve palm trees by the well or of the great rock shadowing a weary land? For bad Samaritans and blind guides there is no demand.

There is one sort of sorrow which all religious minds must acknowledge to be wholesome, St. Paul calls it "godly," the sorrow for sin. Some think that this is the only kind of sorrow intended in the beatitude "Blessed are they that mourn," but this is an extreme opinion. If it were true, as some maintain, that any feeling of sorrow other than such sorrow as is caused by the thought of our own misdoings ought to be accounted unworthy of a Christian, how could we

possibly explain that anguished cry of the sinless One, "O, my Father, let this cup pass from Me"? And yet I think we may very properly acknowledge that no sort of sorrow so well befits the human soul as does the sorrow for sin. Never is man in wiser or in better mood than when he finds himself ready and eager to say from his heart, "I will confess my wickedness and be sorry for my sin." It matters not that this sort of sorrow is out of fashion. A great many good things are always out of fashion for the time being. We observe, however, that they have a way of coming back into fashion after a while. The very people who discarded them gradually come to see that they had a certain value peculiar to themselves and they are brought back. Many influences are at work just now that have it for their effect to minimize the sinfulness of sin. Our enlarged acquaintance with the universe and its innumerable worlds by quickening our sense of the insignificance of man makes it more easy for us to belittle the moral value of whatever so slight and inconsiderable a creature may do or leave undone. The machinery of Nature also inclines to fatalism minds that can see no further than the wheel-work. "We are but tiny portions of the huge frame," they say to themselves. "We are the merest victims of cause and effect; the bondmen and bondwomen of a despotic force hidden out of our sight, somewhere

back of our lives. Who has any right to blame us for doing what clearly, our natures being such as they are, we cannot help doing?" And so it has come about that there seems to be much less of that sort of sorrow prevalent which people used to call sorrow for sin. It is thought of, when thought of at all, as people think of those infantile diseases, all liability to which mature men and women have outgrown.

And yet there are found here and there, still surviving, and by no means the least attractive of their kind, souls with whom sorrow for sin seems to be a very real thing. They affirm, when in a confiding mood, that a certain vision of spiritual perfectness, an ideal of what the soul ought to be and might be, haunts all their waking hours, and they declare that their failure to reach this lofty standard, strive as they may, is to them a source of continual sorrow.

They do not deny that the argument of the fatalist has an exceedingly plausible look, they do not profess to be able to dispose satisfactorily of all the difficulties that it raises. They only know that, in spite of everything, the voice of conscience succeeds in making itself heard, and that, do what they will, the sense of ill-desert, the conviction of sin, the longing for peace with God, the desire for an effective word of absolution abide.

But this is only one of what the psalmist elo-

quently calls the multitude of sorrows. Pain and sickness bring sorrow. A pathetic attempt is on foot to explain these things away by attributing them to the imagination, but with the vast majority of sufferers such fine-spun reasoning avails nothing, they insist on continuing to believe as the bulk of men have ever believed from the beginning that pain and sickness are very real things indeed, actual burdens grievous to be borne; an evil that calls loudly for redress.

The great typical and exemplary sufferers of Holy Scripture, Job, Jeremiah, St. Paul, never try to comfort themselves with the thought that the blows and bruises under which they stagger are imagined. "I will speak in the anguish of my spirit," cries one of these men, "I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."

"My strength and my hope," exclaims another of them, "is perished from the Lord: remembering my affliction and my misery, the wormwood and the gall." "In afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings,"—such is the language of a third.

Men who talk in this way are not seeking to persuade us that pain is a figment of the imagination; on the contrary, they are all full of the thought that the experience through which they have had to pass has been a fearful, a terrible, a heart-rending thing. Whether God's hand has

been behind it or the adversary's malice they may not be able to determine; the one thing they feel perfectly sure of is that they have suffered.

There are other sorrows besides those caused by bodily pain and anguish. Reverses of fortune bring sorrow. A man just past middle life sees the results of the patient labor of all his best years swept away as by a flood; a woman learns, of a sudden, that through some bad investment or some flagrant breach of trust the modest competency upon which she has been relying for the support of her old age has been swallowed up as in a quick-sand. These things break the courage of the bravest. It is such sights that sadden the heart of Ecclesiastes, and make him the cynic that he is, chanting his bitter refrain of the "evil done under the sun."

Again, thwarted ambitions bring sorrow. Men are carried along by the mysterious sorcery of illusion, fancying for a good half of the pilgrimage, that some wonderfully fortunate thing is in store for them just around the next corner, when all of a sudden they wake to the fact that their hope is a blighted hope. It is the other man who has secured the coveted office, the other man who has achieved the reputation. "The many fail, the one succeeds,"—a mournful maxim, a statement which we should be glad to reverse if we might, but unhappily the truth, the hard, disagreeable, repellant, inevitable fact.

Again, there are inherited memories that are full of sorrow, transmitted burdens of the past, which some have to accept as their companions from the beginning of the pilgrimage to the end of it. "Many an inherited sorrow," says a great prose writer of our day. "Many an inherited sorrow that has maimed a life has been breathed into no human ear." Yes,—how true that is. We see the maimed life; we note the halting achievement; and we wonder why so much talent, nay, so much genius, perhaps, should have so slight a yield to show, when all the while the real secret of our disappointment at our friend's poor showing ought really to be looked for in a previous generation. The man started with a burden from which he has never been able to shake himself free. The soul, it may be, was a brave enough soul, as souls go, but the handicap of depressing, disheartening memories was too heavy, and so what ought to have been best lapsed into second-best. We are disappointed,—but what is our disappointment compared with his?

Again, there is the sorrow of personal bereavement and domestic loss. So engrossing and exacting is this form of sorrow that we almost feel as if the very word sorrow had been misapplied when we hear it used to signify any other form of distress. When it is said of any one, without further explanation that he or she is "in sorrow," we invariably draw the inference that the sorrow

has been occasioned by death. And yet of the "five sorrowful mysteries" which the devotional writers reckon up, death counts as only one. There is a worse grief than that of watching the departure out of this life of those we love, and that is their departure out of the way of truth, the way of righteousness, the way of peace. Less hard for Jesus was the sight of Lazarus dead than the sight of Judas coming to greet Him with a kiss, or the sight of Peter protesting in the servant's hall "I do not know the man."

It is time that we turn to consider the remedy for sorrow. There are some who maintain that any such enquiry is superfluous. Sorrow, they insist, ought not to be temporized with, for a moment, but simply and stoutly prohibited. Why should Christians sorrow? Sin, the only thing that properly calls for sorrow, they have cast behind them, and to sorrow for anything else is rank treason against Christ our King, who said to his disciples "Rejoice and be exceeding glad;" as well as contemptuous towards the Apostle who exhorts "In everything give thanks." Undoubtedly there is a certain amount of truth in this extreme position. For the soul to allow herself to be overmastered by sorrow and permanently possessed of it, is assuredly unchristian. And yet we cannot forget that the same voice which said "Rejoice and be exceeding glad," said also "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto

death," and that the same apostle who was so eager that the true believers should in everything give thanks, confessed to having felt deeply cast down when "left at Athens alone."

The simple fact is that it is unnatural to smother sorrow on the instant it is born, and it is unchristian so to nurse and tend it that it becomes the lifelong companion of our pilgrimage. A crowned sorrow and a petted sorrow are two very different things. The first duty of sorrow is to find its way to some mount of transfiguration that it may be ennobled there. Sorrow's next duty is to come back again to the plain where the halt and the maimed, the sick, the deaf, the blind and the devil-possessed are living, to see what can be done by sympathy and by effort to lessen the world's great aggregate of woe.

The only sure and permanent remedy for sorrow, whether in its acute or its chronic form, whether manifested as sudden and sharp anguish or as rooted melancholy, the only remedy for sorrow is to become firmly persuaded of the love of God. All other alleged specifics for the cure of this malady of the soul are mere nostrums. With superficial natures they may work what look like miraculous results. But of wounds that have no scars it is tolerably safe to conclude that they were not very deep to start with.

Once persuaded of the love of God, and so firmly persuaded that nothing can shake our

faith, sorrow and suffering are accepted—not indeed without much wonder and amazement on our part that such things should be, but with that sort of acquiescence and patient tolerance which we exercise toward any puzzle or enigma which we know is to be, in due time, explained. Nature abounds in phenomena that give the student of her mysteries pause. In many points it is evident that God has been educating man by a process of illusion, and that, the amiable poet to the contrary notwithstanding, “things are not what they seem.” There is very much in the scheme of Nature, as at present understood, which looks to be self-contradictory. It is a mistake to suppose that to the eye of the scientific observer all things in the heavens above and in the earth beneath are perfectly harmonized and balanced. There are some puzzles left even for the astronomer and the chemist; conceptions quite as irreconcilable by mortal wit as the goodness of God and the sorrows of men. But the man of science does not despair of finally discovering the real harmony which, as he is convinced, lies back of the apparent discords which thus far he has been enabled to compose. Neither, then, ought the soul to despair of finding that reconciliation between the love of God and those facts of human life which seem to make dead against belief in there being any love of God at all.

I hope I make this point clear, for, really, it

is a most important one, and ought to be very helpful to any perplexed mind that earnestly desires to hold on to faith in the goodness and loving-kindness of the Power which rules the universe. What I am urging is briefly this, that if the superiority of the divine intellect to the human intellect makes many of the Creator's methods seem to the mind of man self-contradictory which are not really so; it is only what we ought to expect if when we pass from the region of *thought* to the region of *feeling*, we discover that there also are contradictions which it baffles the heart's best efforts to understand.

God in heaven must be just as much our superior in loving power as He is in thinking power. If then some of his ways of thinking are too difficult for us to attain unto, why should not some of the methods of his love, also seem, upon the surface, to be utterly and hopelessly at variance with the methods which our human, and, because human, less powerful hearts would prefer?

We are no more competent judges of what it is possible for God to feel, than we are competent judges of what it is possible for God to think. The best we can hope for in our study of Nature is that we may get glimpses of his *truth*, and so also the best we can hope for in our scrutiny of his dealings with the children of men is that we may get glimpses of his *love*. What makes the

preciousness of the religion which passes under the name of "the Gospel" is just this, that it does give us glimpses of the love of God such as are nowhere else to be had. It is not pretended, certainly not pretended by intelligent believers, that in the school of Christ, all difficulties are cleared up, all mysteries dispelled,—no, our claim is a much more modest one than that. The School, we say, is a good one because it teaches so effectively the great lesson of patience. The pupils are not promised that they shall know everything at once. "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter," is the school motto, and the school badge is the cross. Thus taught and thus equipped the soul can meet her sorrows bravely. Bereavement cannot quench her hope, pain cannot paralyze her faith; melancholy cannot blacken her sky. She has learned that love is stronger than death. She is persuaded that the lifetime of a planet is not too long for the working out of a theodicy.

She trusts Christ when He says to her :

" the end of sorrow
Shall be near My throne."

V.

THE SPLENDOR OF HER DESTINY.

V.

THE SPLENDOR OF HER DESTINY.

WE are to ponder, this morning, the destiny of the soul.

Her origin we have already considered, also her schooling, her warfare and her pilgrimage; there remains the question of her final outcome. To what does all this manifold and multiform experience lead up? What will she do, what will she be "in the end thereof"?

I beg you not to take destiny in the sense of doom or fate, for that is not at all what was in my mind when I fastened upon the phrase which has given title to our meditation.

I pray you, for our present purpose, to think of destiny simply as that which God in his wise providence has destined, arranged beforehand, planned in advance for man. St. Paul in one of his most precious and comforting sentences speaks of the things which God has prepared for those who love Him. A devotional writer of the early Church caught up the expression, and made it the preface to a prayer that can never perish. "O God, who hast prepared for those who love Thee, such good things as pass man's understand-

ing; Pour into our hearts such love toward Thee that we loving Thee above all things may obtain thy promises." This thought of a certain blessed preparation made for the future good estate of man, a happy harbor even now waiting to welcome into its quiet shelter the storm-beaten ship, a home already built and furnished, ample and stately, a dwelling-place of delight, this is the thought I should like to amplify and unfold. Upon the negative side of the matter I see no need of dwelling. There is a negative side. Whenever any gracious hand holds out a gift, it is within one's power to refuse it. The giver cannot force us to become recipients against our will. Foolish we may be in our exercise of the rejecting power, churlish, short-sighted, imprudent to the very verge of madness,—still the fact remains that we do have the prerogative of contrary choice. The Gadarenes set a higher value on their swine than on the Christ of God; a single step carries one across the line which makes the hither boundary of that far country where God is not.

But why should we confuse the losses which our own self-will brings upon us with the positive gains which it is God's will that we secure? Why speak of perdition as if it were his work of Whom it is written that He willeth not that any should perish? What God does really will is our sanctification not our destruction, our upbuilding

not our undoing. So then, suppose we understand by "the soul's destiny" that which God plans and purposes for the soul; in other words the best thing that can happen, not the worst. With the question of the loss of the soul we are not now concerned, nor yet with the question Are there few that be saved? but only with the question, What is possible for the soul? What is open to the soul? To what may the soul aspire and attain?

With a view to finding an answer to this question, suppose we open and look into each one of the three books, of which I was speaking, the other day, as being the three great manuals in use in the school of God, Nature, History and Prophecy, or, as I called them, the Picture-book, the Story-book, and the Dream-book.

First of all What has Nature to suggest upon the subject? Nature suggests better things in store for the soul in the far future by showing us the many ranges and grades through which life upon this planet has already had to pass before what we now see around us could be reached. The time was when no life of any sort existed here. The earth, a huge molten globe, rolled around in its orbit, untenanted because untenanted. After the planet's crust had so far cooled as to show the sea and the dry land, God began planting the seeds of life. The secret of that process has never been discovered. Guesses

and conjectures we have in plenty but of certain knowledge nothing. The only point which stands out clearly is the point of which the author of the first chapter of Genesis makes so much, namely, the gradualness of the Creator's method. First, we have life of a low type in full possession, then, there supervenes life of a higher type, then, life of a type higher still, and at last, after a long, long, waiting,—man. Mixed up with this whole business there are, of course, questions innumerable which have furnished and which will long continue to furnish material for hot debate. Upon these controverted points I have no intention of dwelling, for there is no slightest need of our doing so. I simply emphasize the fact now universally acknowledged to be the fact, that life upon the globe has thus far been an affair of grades and levels, and that man is here late-born, many of the types that anticipated his type having disappeared and many others being now in process of disappearing. What would seem to be the natural inference from all this? The natural inference would seem to be, especially when we take into account the comparative shortness of the time during which man has been in possession, the natural inference, I say, would seem to be that man himself is only tenant at will and that in turn he also will be evicted in order to make room for another and a stronger. That is as far as Nature leads

us on that line, but she has other lines. Take the organs of sense as they are called, those marvelous instruments or media by dint of which the intelligence, whether in brute or man, gets itself into connection with the outer world, the universe of sight and sound, these also seem to suggest possible future creations more marvelous still. If such amazing organs as the eye and the ear could gradually be built up from small beginnings why should there not be developed in future ages, and for a higher order of beings, senses as much beyond those which we possess in range and accuracy as ours are beyond those of insects? Here again, Nature brings us up to a certain point, suggests conclusions not flattering to our vanity, and then leaves us. Were we shut up to her prophecies and to hers alone, we should expect nothing better for man in the future than extinction, with this questionable bit of encouragement thrown in by way of consolation, that the race which is to succeed and to replace ours will, in all probability, be every way stronger and better equipped than we were, of larger capacity, keener perceptions, more vigorous grasp, in fact, to all intents and purposes a new order of beings.

But when we turn from Nature to History, from God's picture-book to His story-book we get an entirely fresh view of the matter, for now we find that there has been given to man a

power of renewal, a capacity for boundless improvement, a gift of movement, onward and upward the like of which the brute creation is utterly unable to show. Not only has man succeeded in supplementing the deficiencies of his senses by mechanical inventions like the microscope and the telescope, those wonderful contrivances for extending the power of sight in two opposite directions,—not only so, but he is also found to have received, at a certain definite point in the past which we call the Christian Era, a mysterious spiritual impulse, the effects of which have already been wonderful beyond all account, and promise to eventuate in results more wonderful still. The mournful inference, therefore, which we drew from our glance at the natural history of the past; namely, that man would probably disappear altogether, just as the creations that held possession here before he came had disappeared, this sad conclusion no longer binds us. Man is found to have what no one of them could lay claim to, namely, a power of growth from within, a gift of rising from level to level, without in any measure losing the characteristics that make him man.

This inspiring thought of the undeveloped possibilities of the human soul, is what lights up the New Testament with a glory not of earth. St. John exults in it. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," he cries, and then with a wise reti-

cence he adds, "it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we see Him as He is." What a refreshing contrast this to the style of certain modern writers who profess to know so much more about the details of our future existence than God's revelation of His purpose tells. Why should we be so nervously anxious to be informed about particulars? St. John was willing to wait, why should not we be willing to wait? There is another and a fuller revelation coming by and by, he says, the hidden Christ is to appear again, we are to see Him, not in dim shadow, not under mystic symbol, not parable-fashion and in enigma, but *as He is*. Then will our destiny also appear, with a distinctness not now possible, —for the seeing Him as He is will, we are assured, make us resemble Him.

The same thought in a somewhat different form took a powerful hold upon the intellect and imagination of St. Paul.

He puts Christ, you remember, and Adam in contrast, as representing two entirely different levels of existence. In Adam all die, that is Nature; in Christ shall all be made alive, that is the higher life which is brought in to save us from Nature. "The first man Adam became a living soul, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit." "As is the earthy such are they also that are earthy, and as is the heavenly such are

they also that are heavenly." At bottom, the two apostles are, you see, completely in accord. "We shall be like Him," says St. John. "We shall also bear the image of the heavenly," says St. Paul. The two utterances are but different expressions of the one thought, that in Christ humanity has been lifted up to a higher table-land to which by its own unaided effort it never could have climbed, and that a destiny is in store for the soul the splendor of which can only be imagined by those who discern in the Son of Mary the lineaments of the Son of God. We have summoned two apostles to the witness-stand, let us call a third. Hear also what St. Peter saith. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, according as His divine power hath given us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . . whereby are given us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of His divine nature."

Here we have three New Testament writers all bearing testimony to the same point; namely, the grandeur of the as yet unrealized possibilities of the human soul, St. John telling us that we shall be like Christ for we shall see Him as He is; St. Paul predicting a certain marvelous change, to be effected in the twinkling of an eye, when this mortal puts on immortality; St. Peter daring to use such strong language as I just now

quoted with reference to the lifting up of human nature until it becomes partaker of the divine. Thus history and prophecy, the story-book and the dream-book combine to throw into Nature's outline-pictures a fulness of color and of meaning, lacking which they would be dismal and discouraging indeed. Nature does, it is true, predict progress, but progress of that strenuous sort which brushes old things aside to make room for new with a look of absolute indifference. What cares she for man, when he has played his little part any more than she cared for the gigantic reptiles that peopled the earth before man arrived? She let them go without a pang when man came, now let man go since his purpose has been served. "Clear the stage, ye fire and heat, ye frost and cold, ye seas and floods, clear the stage, burn out or drown out all mankind, that a new act of the long drama may begin." This is the sharp mandate which we seem to hear issuing from Nature's lips; but, meanwhile, Christ's followers resting upon the lessons of history and the intimations of prophecy are bold to keep on saying to one another in a tone of quiet confidence,—“Nevertheless,—nevertheless, we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.”

And this suggests, what ought always in such inquiries as this of ours to be remembered, that

it is no part of the soul's destiny that she should be saved alone. The salvation which Christ promises is a "common salvation." We are they who look not for celestial hermitages, but for a heavenly city. Nothing in all the dream book of prophecy is so magnificent as the promise of the Jerusalem which is above.

Beauty is to be its characteristic. Men's cities, the best of them, all leave much to be desired. Each has its own strong point, one is admirable in this regard, another admirable in that; but not one of them is there that is altogether admirable. Cain was the first city-builder, and his mark smirches every city that has been builded since his day. Just on the edge of the old Jerusalem lay Gehenna, the valley of Hinnom, the receptacle of all that was deadly and putrescent, the home of carcasses and filth, the very type and synonym of Hell. No great city exists to-day that has not its valley of Hinnom, its purlieus of blackness and death. We make brave attempts to screen it all with our fine architecture, we lay out our parks and our drives and say, "Behold is it not beautiful!" but we know perfectly well how futile is the endeavor to obliterate the dominant ugliness which curses our best efforts at city-building. Better things are destined for that soul in us which so passionately hungers and thirsts after beauty than these poor attempts. God, the great architect, is building a city of his

own for man, and when it is done we shall know what real beauty means.

“Jerusalem high tower thy glorious walls,
Would God I were in thee.”

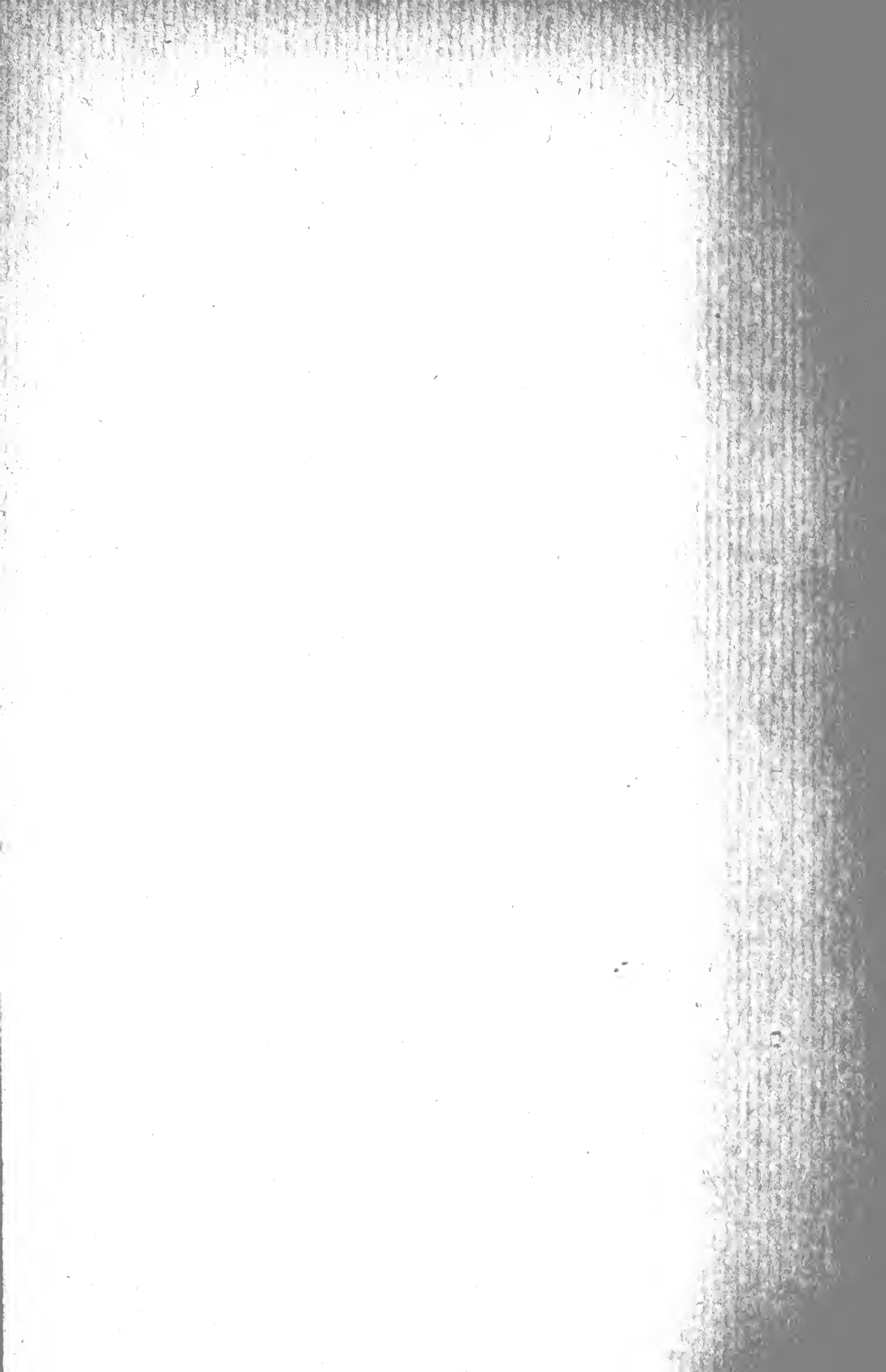
That is the Church's homesick song. Do not think of it as the utterance of a sentimental longing devoid of all promise of satisfaction, think of it rather as a desire prompted by the intimations of prophecy and destined to be met, in God's good time, by a gratification richer and deeper than we have ever dared to dream.

We need not distress ourselves as to the locality of the eternal city. He who can so marvelously plan, may be trusted to use good judgment in the choice of a site. I was reading not long ago a book the author of which took great comfort in the belief that heaven, the heaven of the Bible, and the present home of the ascended Christ was in the star Alcyone, one of the group popularly known as the Pleiades. He had worked it all out, and was apparently almost as clear in his mind upon the point as if it had been a question of the latitude and longitude of London. I cannot think that speculations of this sort are of any real value. They interest me no more than do the somewhat similar endeavors to cipher out the date of the millenium.

What I want to know about the city is something,—I am content that it should not be very

much,—something about the general look of it, and something about the sort of life that is lived within its walls. This it has pleased God to tell me through lips that I can trust. That the city is fair I know ; that the city is free I know ; that the city is holy I know ; that the city is eternal I know. What lack I yet ? Surely nothing unless it be spirit and courage to hold this beginning of my confidence steadfast unto the end, yes and my vision clear of the sort of city most to be desired, for it is not after all a sociological paradise scientifically mapped and administered by experts that the soul covets for her destiny but the real heaven of God, our Fatherland indeed.

THE CURE OF SOULS.



THE CURE OF SOULS.

THE Christian religion has its philosophical side on which it fronts the intellect, and it has also what we may call its sympathetic side on which it fronts the affections.

Looked at on its philosophical side Christ's religion is a disclosure of certain distinct and definite truths. These truths admit of being stated, of being put into affirmative sentences, grammatical propositions, they can be taught and learned, and taken in their wholeness they make up what we know as the Catholic Creed. Just at present there is a strong disposition in some quarters to blur and slur this aspect of Christ's religion, but it cannot be blurred or slurred for long. Christianity has always professed to be a religion with a message, and the Church must cease to be the Church if forced into the confession that she has nothing to tell. That the appeal of religion to the intellect may be too heavily emphasized, that the importance of correct thinking in connection with things spiritual may be cruelly and even absurdly exaggerated is of course true. Strong-minded men find in the play of brain-power the same sort of excitation that athletes have in feats of bodily strength; they

“drink delight of battle,” with their peers; and it is no wonder that in days when more men of strong mind went into the ministry than went elsewhere, religion should far too often have come to be reckoned a form of thought only; a message to the mind and to the mind alone; a thing to be argued for and defended, illustrated, systematized and explained.

But the Christian ministry has been set here in the world to do something more than teach. Man hungers for the bread of knowledge but he thirsts for the wine of love, and that is but a mutilated sacrament which gives him the one and withholds from him the other. Religion has its sympathetic area, its realm of the affections, its domain of what is personal as contrasted with what is impersonal and abstract, and it is here that we come upon the “cure of souls.” According to the Christian conception of the thing, a minister is one who has had a group or cluster of persons,—of conscious, thinking, feeling, purposeful and responsible persons authoritatively committed to his charge for a distinct and definite purpose, namely, that as persons, each one differing from every other one, and yet shares all in a certain common possession which we know as human nature, they may spiritually be helped and bettered, watched over and fed. It was in making provision to this end that our Lord Jesus Christ more especially disclosed His heavenly am-

bassadorship, gave proof of the divineness of His mission. He taught truth even as the philosophers before Him had taught it, but He did also what no philosopher has ever essayed before or since, He ordained a "Ministry," He chose men and sent them forth with power, yes, power to heal, power to help, power to console. Much increment accrues to the thought of ministers as teachers the moment we apprehend this further thought of them as men charged with that higher prerogative, sympathy.

Few people realize what a large place the principle of cure or care holds in the world's life. Things as well as persons, tend to deterioration unless they are looked after. If a man builds a house he must take care of it or it will crumble; if he plants a garden he must take care of it or it will run to weeds, the young of all animals have to be cared for a little while or they perish; and the higher the grade of animal the longer and more anxious will be the period of care. Even so it is with the souls of men, they call for care, watchful, assiduous, patient, loving care. We were put into this world to help each other. God's law for nature may be the survival of the fittest through the struggle for life, but His law for man, as promulgated through His Son, is that they who are strong shall bear the infirmities of the weak." Of this principle, the minister is the appointed representative. He stands for the

truth that men owe one another care or cure, and only in so far as he in his own person, exemplifies the Good Shepherd's watchfulness over the flock does he deserve his title. There is no harm in thinking that one reason why the chosen people were suffered in God's providence to become a pastoral people rather than any other kind of a people was that this conception of tenderness as blended with carefulness might become ingrained into their whole habit of thought, thus making such a Psalm as the Twenty-third possible and such a chapter as the Tenth chapter of St. John intelligible.

We trace the apostolic succession of the good Shepherds all the way down from Abraham to Him who alone completely and perpetually embodies the conception. Men they were, full of generous devotion to the well-being of their flocks and with that sense of responsibility, which is the measure of character, never absent from them. Leaders they were, not drovers; "shepherd-kings," but never shepherd-tyrants. Jacob was such a one, conscientious in the keeping of the flock, "In the day the drouth consumed me," he declares, "and the frost by night." Moses the great, he also was a shepherd during one of the reaches of his long career. He was leading the flock of Jethro on the slope of Horeb when the call to go after the lost sheep in Egypt reached him. David as a boy kept the sheep at

Bethlehem, and when the lion and the bear came prowling about the fold he slew them. Thus, gradually, was evolved the type to which the mission of the Son of God was destined to give an everlasting significance. And now that He has come, the great Shepherd of all souls, and has set upon earth His sheep-fold, men are having their eyes open to understand how the whole human race is potentially His flock. What then really are those who are called and who call themselves ministers, priests, clergymen? Simply His under-shepherds, that is all. When the title is searched, when the tokens tarred upon the fleeces are investigated, we find that all the sheep belong to but one owner, the Eternal Father, that they are shepherds but by one shepherd, the Eternal Son, and that they who help Him are but His servants, servants entrusted with authority, to be sure, servants who have a right to be respected, not drudges, not menials, but still in a true sense men acting under commission, the custodians, not the originators of power, representatives, not principals, men sent by one higher than themselves charged with an errand and a task. These distinctions are significant ones. I do not think it is possible to overstate the dignity of the office of the Christian minister. I do think it is possible grievously to misstate it.

The real dignity of the office lies in the fact that it is designed to be symbolical of the work

of Christ Himself. "Feed my sheep," He says to Peter, just as he is on the point of taking a last leave of Him;—"Feed my sheep." It is not a general instruction to Simon Peter to take up the calling of a shepherd, it is a definite and particular command to attend to his, Christ's sheep. The minister's function is, therefore, a representative function, and like every representative he is bound never to lose out of sight or out of mind the thing he represents. He must never, so to speak, set up for himself. Cannot the origin of all or of almost all of the grievances which, here or there, at one time or another, have been alleged against the Christian ministry, be traced to a forgetfulness of this cardinal truth? How comes it that we have in our language such a sinister word as "priest-craft"? If a priest be a reputable person his craft ought not to be a disreputable craft. Whence again, such unpleasantly suggestive phrases as "sacerdotal assumption," "prelatical tyranny," "hierarchical pride," and the like? It is easy enough to attribute the coining of such words to pure spite, but while that would account for their getting into circulation it would not account for their staying in circulation. A far more probable account of their genesis and of their prevalence is that they stand for and describe certain very real and objectionable misrepresentations of what the ministry was designed by Christ to be.

Theirs is an entirely false conception of the dignity of the Christian ministry who would have us suppose that that dignity can be enhanced by high-sounding titles or by the loud assertion of spiritual prerogative. The dignity of the ministry consists in the fact that it is a service rendered to the sons of men in the Name and by the authority of the Son of God. When we think of it, the origin of most of what the world recognizes as distinction is traceable to service rendered. In monarchical countries, titles are transmitted by heredity just as estates are, but if you follow the title back to the day when it was conferred, you find that in the first instance it was earned by service. At a given crisis in the kingdom's history, on some battlefield, at some council board, a man made himself specially useful to the king and was ennobled. Yes, depend upon it, "I serve" is the proudest of all the armorial ensigns, and the one that best expresses what is most central to the religion of Jesus Christ.

To the shepherd of the sheep who has in him the true conception of what his calling imports any flock that may in the providence of God be assigned to him is his "beautiful flock," beautiful for the simple reason that it is a flock, and that, in a sense, it is his. A group of people, a little company of men, women and children, an actual family of human souls, to care for, to look

after, to counsel, to pray for, to extricate from their troubles, to guide in their perplexities, to console in their sorrows, to strengthen in faith, to cheer with hope and to incite to charity,—what could possibly be more attractive to the mind's eye than this? what better deserve that supreme epithet beautiful?

How strange it is that more young men of high spirit and able mind are not drawn toward a calling which can be so described! After all, nothing interests like people. Pope's declaration that "the proper study of mankind is man," has become trite just because it is so true. We rail, and very properly, at what is known as "gossip," but the one excusable thing about gossip is the humanness of it. That curiosity about people should surpass curiosity about things is inevitable. People are, really ever so much more important than things, and to be more interested in people than in things is not only not blameworthy, it is creditable. It is the animus of gossip that degrades it, not the fact that it has the sayings and doings of our neighbors for its subject-matter. People, I say, are interesting just because they are people, and the charm of the ministry is that it puts a man into the most sacred of all possible relations to people. Others may serve them in a hundred ways, may amuse them, may instruct them, may kindle their interest in this or that art or science or adventure, but his is the

high function, the golden privilege of showing them which way heaven lies, and helping to start them on the journey. What could be more worthy of any man's best effort than such a task? What form of life work promises anything one-half so good? The question of the desirability of different flocks, so often mooted, sinks into utter insignificance when set alongside of the high privilege of having any flock at all. Every parish is a "good parish," which offers to an earnest man the opportunity of doing good.

Doubtless that minister sustains the ideal relation to his people who knows, personally, intimately knows every single one of them. A beautiful flock, indeed, is that which is so known. But who is sufficient for these things? Possibly the village minister, and therein lies the great compensating advantage of his position, humble in the sight of men, it may be, but really enviable in the eye of any one who appreciates what the thorough cure of souls involves and demands.

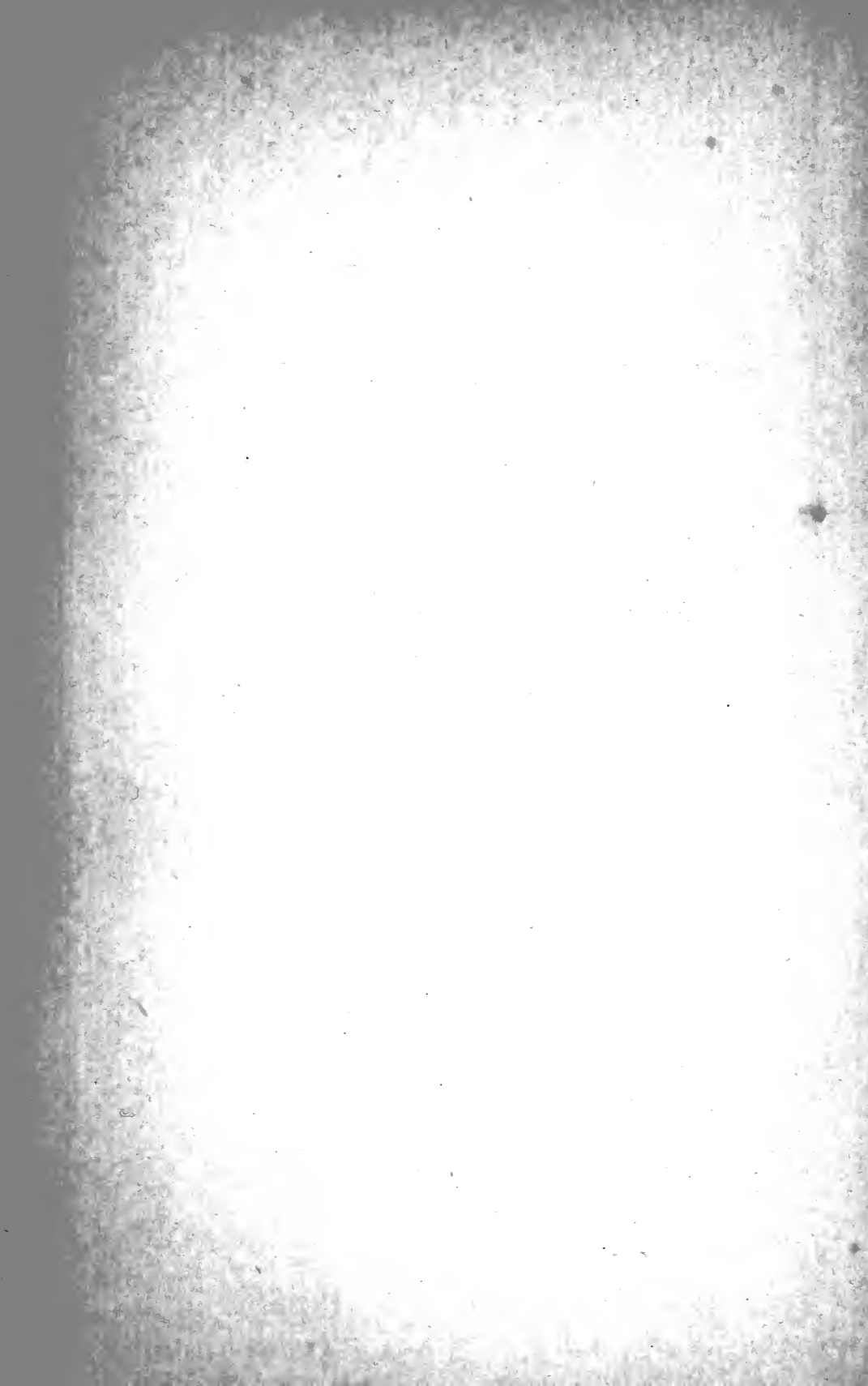
Many years ago it was my privilege to carry a note of introduction to an English clergyman who had been settled for a long, long time in a quiet little village in Somersetshire. I call it a village,—really it was scarcely more than a hamlet. It did not look to be more than half the size of one of the less considerable of our county farming-towns. Yet there I found the most cultivated and altogether most charming man whom

I had met in Europe, an intellectual thoroughbred, a scholar to his finger-tips.¹ With my crude and boyish notions of what constituted greatness, I knew not what to make of such a choice. More years passed; and taking up the morning paper, one day, I found among the items of foreign news the announcement that my friend of the little South-of-England rural parish had been suddenly lifted out of his obscurity, and by the prime minister's appointment made guardian of the great cathedral which stands in "London's central roar." And yet, when Dean Church died, they buried him, at his own request, not where he had a right, in virtue of his office and his fame, to lie, in the crypt with Wellington and Nelson; but in the soil of the modest little Somersetshire village, where for eighteen years he had known the happiness which comes of the thorough as contrasted with the superficial cure of souls. His beautiful flock, when he came to look back over the whole stretch of his life's past, was not that which he had seen gathered weekly under the huge dome of St. Paul's—for that he had only looked upon; it was rather those few sheep in what some had accounted a wilderness, but which had been to his mind only the more beautiful in that they had been not merely collectively beheld, but actually and severally known and loved.

¹The late Very Rev. R. W. Church, D. D.

Such is the pastoral office, the cure of souls, a benign and gracious thing, as we must needs acknowledge, whether it be looked at from the minister's or from the people's side.

How privileged the man who has it for his whole endeavor to make goodness look to his fellow men more fair, God's service more inviting, heaven's coast-line more distinct, death's countenance less grim.



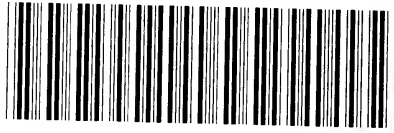
Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 650 086 9

