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RELIGION IN
LITERATURE
& RELIGION
* IN LIFE *

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RELIGION IN LITERATURE AND
RELIGION IN LIFE



**RELIGION IN
LITERATURE
AND RELIGION
IN LIFE. BEING
TWO PAPERS
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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
54 EAST LAKE DRIVE
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60607
U.S.A.

**THOMAS Y. CROWELL & COMPANY
NEW YORK. ANNO DOMINI MDCCCCI**

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I. RELIGION IN LITERATURE

I. RELIGION IN LITERATURE



It is well, when we talk of literature, to know what we mean by the term. It is often used to mean any kind of clever writing on almost any subject. Men talk of scientific, critical, theological, economic, journalistic literature, of historical and philosophical literature. They ought to say 'writing,' not 'literature,' else the word literature has too universal a meaning. When men speak of French, German, or English literature, they do not include under these titles all that is written in these several nations. They only include writings which possess certain excellent qualities which differentiate them from the rest. The first of these is that the subject should be noble, and the matter weighty with thought and feeling. The second is that the manner should be graceful, temperate, and beautiful; and that the shaping of the subject—that is, the form given to it—should be so composed into a harmony of the parts with the whole, and of the whole with the parts, that it gives to the reader something of the pleasure of an unspoilt growth of nature. If that be so, if the form be good, then the writing will have a certain divine clearness; a pleasant individual note, charged with the character of

the writer; a happy choice of words; an 'ornament' that exactly fits its place, and such surprising turns of thought and expression as suggest flexibility of thought, rapidity of fancy, and self-enjoyment in the writer. In one word, he will have style.

Above all, the imagination must be at work in any writing which deserves the name of literature. Imagination, the 'shaping spirit,' has much to do with the form of which I have spoken, perhaps as much as steady and slow-ordered thought, for it runs and spreads through all such thought as the blood runs through the body. It is the life of literature. But its main power is the power of creation—the power by which man draws nearest to the power of God—the making of a new thing in the world for the pleasure and praise of all the spirits of the universe. It is not the making of a new thing out of nothing, as 'creation' used to be defined; but it is the making out of existing elements, by re-combining them afresh, of a complete and rounded thing which did not exist before. This is what imagination does in literature, sitting alone, like Prometheus, by the sea of human life, and in her hands turning old material into shapes as yet unknown. And she does this moved by the passions; her blood, as she works, thrilling with sorrow or indignation, with love, joy, or pity, with awe or hope, according to her material; but chiefly with that passion of loving and divine joy which always accompanies, in noble excitement and intensity, the act of

creation when accomplished either by God or man.

But the imagination, when it is not diseased, works in accordance with the laws of the universe; and the result is that its creation possesses truth. What it paints, or builds, or carves, or sings, or writes, is true; goes down to the bottom rock of all its varied material in the natural world, and to the mother elements of the heart of man.

Then, out of the whole of this work of the imagination, out of the constant love which the writer has felt for the ideas he has to shape, and for the mould into which he has thrown them; out of the joy with which he has been thrilled while he wrote them into a creation—emerges beauty, the outward form of love and joy. The thing is made, and beautifully made.

The last result is life. Life beats in the book, the poem, the drama, like a tide; its force is always young, and passes from it like a spirit into men, pleasing and kindling them, bearing witness to truth and beauty. Age after age, like a living voice, it loves to inspire and exalt, to console and bless. The thing repels decay: it is as fresh this year as it was when first it spoke to man, it may be, centuries ago.

These are the qualities, some of which at least, in varying degrees of excellence, but in sameness of kind, must belong to all writing worthy of the name of fine literature. The books, reviews, articles, in which none of these appear, may be useful or amusing, but they are not lit-

erature. There are hosts of these, like the stars for multitude, but not for light and fire. They are born, twinkle for a day, and die. The book in which even one of them appears is verging towards literature. It may last a year or two, and then it falls into the waste-paper basket of the universe. Between this fleeting thing, which barely shares in one quality of true literature, and the books in which all the noble qualities of literature breathe and burn there is an ascending series of writings, more and more worthy of the great name of literature, till we come to noble poetry. Except in good poetry, the combination of all these qualities is rarely found. Whatever we may think of other kinds of writing, fine poetry stands at the head of literature. No other kind of writing is to be named along with it, and if I am to discuss religion in literature in an hour's time (when the full treatment of such a subject would need a hundred hours), I will keep myself to religion as it appears during the last eighty years in poetry. A sketch of that, the outlines of which you can fill in as you please, may be made in an hour.

Then as to the term religion, what I shall mean by that in this lecture also needs definition. It cannot mean in this subject the inward spiritual life which man lives with God in the depths of his soul. That is different in every writer of literature, if the writer have it at all; and we are speaking here, under the term religion, of something which belongs to classes of men; a generic, not an individual thing; a set of ideas, held

by many in common, and expressed and represented by the poet. Nor do I take it to mean the congeries of doctrines and ritual adopted by any church or sect or generally by a nation, such as we mean when we speak of the Protestant or the Roman Catholic religion.

I mean by it here that set of ideas, or that one idea, which a great writer, speaking as the mouthpiece of thousands of men, puts forward as the highest aim of life, as the expression of that which he desires to worship in thought and with passion, to which he desires to conform his own life, which he urges on others, and for the promotion of which he and all who think and feel with him bind themselves together into one body. Such a set of ideas, or such a single idea, is expressed in varied forms of writing, and breathes like a spirit through all the literature written by persons who have these ideas; but it is expressed in the closest, the most penetrative, and the most universal way in poetry. Such an idea or set of ideas is not always expressed in poetry in a clear intellectual form, for poetry does not proceed by logical demonstration, but it is a pervasive spirit in the poetry of those who live by these ideas, and they steal with more power, creeping into the study of imagination, into the hearts and lives of men, than they do by any philosophic or argumentative treatment of them in prose.

What, then, does the poetry of the last eighty years tell us about the religion or the religions of the land? How does religion, as defined, ap-

pear in this highest form of literature? Religion, as defined, but sometimes religion as mere theology, played a great part in the new poetry which arose in Scotland and England about 1780. A good deal of the poetry of Burns was due to the impassioned revolt in him of the 'religion of nature' and of the human heart, against the terrible religion of Calvinism. He established the spirit of humanity in poetry. All the outgoings of love were divine, and nothing which was not loving could belong to God, or ought to belong to man. In this warm air of lovingness Burns wrapt the whole universe, from the lowest animal to the highest man, from the devil whom he pitied to God, who, he thought, shared his pity. It was a great revelation, and it has never, since his day, ceased to live in fine literature. It is now part of the religion of all high poets, and is alive, in fire and light, in all literature which is destined to continue and to grow.

This religion in poetry was well fitted to absorb the main and undegraded ideas of the French Revolution—the freedom, equality, and fraternity of man, and the return to a simple life lived close to nature—and it did absorb them. Wordsworth took up this religion, worked it out, and made it the master spirit of his song. Full of the love which Burns had preached; extending that love by the impassioned spirit he gained from France to all mankind; citizen and lover not of one country but of the country of humanity; he shed on the life of the peasant and the

unknown poor the light of heaven and of imagination, and made musical all the natural and simple life of the human heart in sorrow and joy by the glory and tenderness of song. And then he added to nature a human heart, loved it, and said that it loved us. And this, embodied by him, and varied through a hundred forms, has had a power on us which resembles that which the religion of Christ has on the heart and life of man. It has healed and comforted, exalted, impelled, and dignified our love of one another and our love of our country. It has penetrated the religion of church and sect; it has poured into the individual religion of thousands a spirit of beauty and tenderness. It has entered into the life of nature, and we worship God in nature with a new reverence and a new joy.

Then a change took place. The enthusiasm of spirit, the joy in a new life of the imagination, which accompanied this development of pure literature, faded away after 1815. The increase of wealth, the development of the industrial revolution, the materialism of the country, the corruption and luxury which ate into the 'upper classes' of society, overwhelmed the ideal life and the simple religiousness of the poetry of Wordsworth; and the cynicism and self-consideration of Byron expressed only too clearly how little of the religion of love and joy was left in this country. There was a religion, but it was worship of self. The binding power of men was self-interest; the gods of the country were hypocrisy and Mammon and sensual pleasure;

and Byron, who, as a poet, could not altogether belong to this slavish crew, added to his religion of self-worship the mockery, contempt, and slashing of the base gods of his people. Like Elijah on Carmel, he satirized the worshippers of Baalim, and on the whole, though his manner of doing this was bad, he stood for truth and honesty against lies in society, church, and state. To know what Britain was then, and to know the fury with which all high-hearted men regarded its spiritual condition, read the satirical poems of Byron. If he, who was himself a sinner, felt in that way, how did others, nobler of spirit, feel?

Nevertheless, he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, and the materialism of life, the corruption in the state, and the worthless conventionality of religion, accompanied, as it always is, with cruel doctrines and with the image of a God who thinks that injustice is a form of love, went steadily on. Its doom had not yet come. But poetry was not voiceless, and by Shelley's lips the religion which is the masterhood of love was again revealed to the world. Love was, in his thought, the Being of the Universe, the source, the life, the end of all things. All that contradicted love was doomed to perish. This was the root of Shelley's religion, and it is the root of all true religion; the essence of the true idea of God; the thought which rules all the doings of God with man, to which all the thoughts and feelings which bind man to God and God to man must conform; the foundation

of Christianity; the idea which never ceases to protest against the material, selfish, and sensual life; the mighty power which stands, embattled, against those who worship self-interest as the master of human life—and Shelley, in a world which had forgotten self-forgetfulness, called on it as the prophet called on the four winds, and bade it blow over the plains of our country and awake the dead. And he joined with this two other ideas which are its children—the idea of infinite forgiveness of wrong and the idea of the future regeneration of the human race—both of them vital conceptions in the wider religion which has of late taken substance among mankind.

Curious that one called an atheist should do this—and it sheds a lurid light on the theology of that day that churches and sects alike combined to force one, who proclaimed, in all that related to man, the ideas of Jesus Christ, into the realm of atheism. But if priests and presbyters will set up, as they did in Palestine when Jesus was alive, as for centuries they have done, in order to keep their tyranny over the souls and thoughts of men, a god of unforgiveness, a god who dooms his children to everlasting torture, a god who loves, for his own self-glory, only a few out of the millions he hates, what is a man to do? He must say, 'It is a hateful lie,' and take the consequences. Theology has changed since then, but England was not fit for this prophet, and she had sunk so low into a worldly life and an intolerant and lazy imitation of re-

ligion, that she drove him out of her borders in the name of religion.

Look now at this island of ours in and about 1820. No high emotion of any kind, such as lifts a nation above itself, pervaded it: there was no ideal aim before society, little care for the welfare of fellow-citizens among employers or landlords, no forward hope or faith in the bettering of the world. A few desired higher things, but they were fewer even than those eight thousand who had not bowed in Israel the knee to Baal. There was plenty of intellectual discussion, of analysis of human nature by philosophers, but scarcely any new literature, moved by love of human nature, arose at this time, nor was there any new form of imaginative penetration into the passionate aspirations of mankind. What literature of this kind existed was in the writings of men who, like Scott, had lived on from the last generation into this period. Criticism, also, which proved everyone wrong but the critic and his crew, was indeed plentiful, but there was little or no creation, and what there was, was thought to be a revolting birth. When Keats did begin to create, the critics howled, as if they had seen a monster. Scarcely anything is more amusing or more sad in literary history than the critics' reception of Keats, the creator. Beauty rose before them in his poetry, like Aphrodite, and the apes turned from her with a malicious sneer. Then Byron, sick of this world of critical reasoning on premises invented as truths by the philosophers and critics

themselves, sick of his own sensualities, sick of a materialized world, fled to Greece to die for liberty. Shelley was driven to Italy; his name and work were blackened by Edinburgh and London; and the religion of the day screamed at the man who, alone in a loveless world, proclaimed the essentials of Christianity as the foundation of life.

It was no wonder that Keats, gazing on this world barren of passion, hope, and aspiration, where the bones and remnants of the noble ideas which had enkindled the poetic outburst of the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, lay dry and strewn on the desert, like a caravan overwhelmed by thirst, cried, in the sonnet which preceded the poems of 1817—

‘Glory and loveliness have passed away.’

‘How,’ he thought, ‘shall I redeem men from this death and misery which they think life and happiness? With what shall I bind them together again? What religion shall I proclaim?’ And he answered his question by preaching the religion of beauty.

‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty—that is all

We know on earth, and all we need to know.’

‘Then how shall I make men know and feel what beauty is, and awake the worship of her? There is nothing in my country, nor in the present time, to stir the love of beauty in a single soul; there is nothing, except the beauty of the natural world, which moves me. Therefore I go back to

the past. I will paint the loveliness, the passion, the heroism of the Greek world, and of the days of chivalry and romance; and the forest full of elves; Saturn lying among the green senators of the woods; Apollo singing in Delos; Endymion embraced on Latmos; Isabella weeping sore for her slain lover; Madeline flying on St. Agnes' Eve with Porphyro; and all the sights and sounds of eternal Nature in her youth and loveliness.'

And this he gave to us, but the revelation of beauty fell dead on the world to which he spoke. Keats prophesied, but no ear could hear his prophecy. Nor indeed, standing alone, unmixed with mighty moral aims, unaccompanied with the deep interests of mankind, without joining loveliness to its immortal fountain in the duties of man and in the love of God, having no vital roots in the present, only replanted, like cut flowers, from the past, could his prophecy or his religion of beauty kindle the world in which he lived, or engender new poets in that world. This was his own opinion. Both in his letters and in some of his last poems, he spoke of the necessity of getting into inspiring touch, not only with the past, but with the present humanity. 'I have not been human enough,' he thought. 'I need another and a deeper emotion from sympathy with the living.' And had he lived, he would have attained his end, and won even a loftier seat on Parnassus than that he holds. And this experience of Keats' adds another proof to the truth that, in every age, the highest, the imperial

poetry, must find its motive and its passion in the existing thoughts and passions, acts and aspirations of the world in which the poet lives. Poetry about the past, poetry not vitally connected with the present human life, as the nerves are with the muscles, is pleasant, lovely, if a great poet like Keats write it, but if small poets write it, it becomes mere melodious words, with a false semblance of passion in it; and finally ends in thin and ghostly verse, faint and fainter, till it disappears. If, again, a great poet, like Keats, write it, his work is finally taken up into the whole body of song, but then it has no children during the poet's lifetime. Similar conditions of society may in the future produce a similar kind of poetry in the hands of a future master of song, but whenever such poetry is written—only about the beauty and glory of the past—it ends with itself. Its religion of mere beauty breathes and burns and charms—and dies; and the ten years which followed the death of Keats were years in which poetry faded into mere sentimentalism and melody; and literature blossomed into a plenteous crop of the crab-apples of sour and foolish criticism. Criticism sat in the throne of Creation, and the throne must have longed for its rightful lord.

But the Master of Mankind did not let our country continue in this state. A wind of the spirit, bearing with it new ideas and their native emotions, began to blow. Men in the richer classes grew tired of mere material comfort and of only living for wealth they had not earned. They

dimly longed for the ideal, and the things which were not to be had for money. The rage of the oppressed poor deepened; the indignation of the middle class, who made the wealth of the country but had no voice in the use of it by Parliament, rose steadily; till at last a cry was raised, full of passion and hope, and charged with the desire to better the conditions of government and of the people, which almost gave birth to a violent revolution. At the same time, a new theological and religious movement, with a host of new emotions, and divided into two rivers of thought, stirred the hearts of men, and especially towards the improvement of the condition of the poor. The Oxford movement and the Liberal movement in theology were born at the same time as the political movement for reform. A tidal wave of emotion from these three centres flowed over the land, and out of it emerged a crowd of fresh ideas, fresh forms of action, new modes of art and new ideas about art, born not directly of the political and theological stir, but of the stir itself. No contrast could be greater than that between this condition of Great Britain, thrilling with ideal life and feeling, and the condition of ten years before. It was sure to give birth to poets, and Tennyson and Browning were born, as poets, in those years within a year of one another, and began to prophesy. For sixty years they worked for the good and progress of mankind, on different lines and in diverse manners. They preached the religious idea of freedom, of the individual

soul alone with God, of the man realizing and doing his duty to his fellow-man. They preached the religion of love, the love of God and the love of man, and the eternity of love in God. They preached, with Wordsworth, the loss of self in admiration of nature as the visible form of the beauty of God. They maintained, with Keats, the religion of beauty, but they added to it the beauty of noble conduct. They looked forward, with Shelley, to the new birth of man, and bid the world strive for it. They preached, and especially Browning, endless aspiration after un-reached, even unconceived perfection, and mingled with this cry of discontent with anything that earth can give a stern demand to do our duty here on earth, within the limitations which earth imposes. 'Live in, and for, the present,' they cried, 'but never be satisfied with it. Follow the ever-retreating gleam; pursue ideals which can only be realized in immortal life. We are not creatures of a day, not destined to death, but to endless progress.' This was the religion they sang, and it has profoundly influenced mankind. Browning never wavered in it; Tennyson, less individual than his brother, more sensitive to the changes of thought that arose and fell during those sixty years, wavered somewhat with those changes, and expressed his shifting; but at the end he settled into quiet faith.

It is to the poetry which, in other hands than Tennyson's or Browning's, emerged during those changes of thought, that I now turn;

and the poets who were influenced by them have their own interest, and reflect their own world. Before 1850 had arrived, the excitement of the resurrection of emotional and intellectual life in our country, of which the political and theological movements were phases, had cast into the arena of discussion and battle a host of questions, from the existence of God to the sanitation of a village. The passion with which the solution of these questions was sought was remarkable enough, but what was even more remarkable was, that while a vast number of books, each of which boldly claimed to have settled for ever the question to which it had addressed itself, were written and read with eagerness—there was also a general consensus that nothing could be settled, that man could come to no conclusion, that he practically knew nothing about God or himself or the world in which he lived, that the more he strove the blinder he was, and that the best thing he could do was to confess with humility his ignorance and his incapacity. Our world, long before the term agnostic was invented, was agnostic; and the waves of that disturbance are still, with diminished force, breaking on the shore of society. Nevertheless, the discussion never ceased, as if men still believed that they could find, by argument, a solution of which they had no hope. They went round and round their subjects like a horse in a mill, and they ground out nothing, for the most part, but chaff. They analyzed, dissected, vivisected God and humanity and na-

ture; and in these years were born, not only the philosophies which ticket and put into a museum, like fossils, all the passions, thoughts, and acts of men, but also the psychological novel, the novel of analysis, which, at first pleased with the dissection of health, now loves to dabble in disease. In the theological world matters were just as bad. The various parties lost sight of the great truths in which man believes without proof, if he believe at all, and argued incessantly about their views of truth; and the quicker, subtler, and more analytic their intellectual play, the further they got from the great truths. Things beyond the realm of science, beyond phenomena, were to be settled, it was said, by the reasoning understanding—that enormous error under whose tyranny we are suffering so heavily.

The result of all this activity of the understanding, employed only on the surface of things, naturally unable to penetrate below the surface, ever arguing and never arriving, yet absurdly proud of its ability and earning the punishment of pride, was a dreadful weariness among those who retained any imagination, any passion for the unknown, any desire for beauty or the infinite world, for the impalpable, the unprovable; for something to love, to lose one's self in, to pursue for ever and to worship. In fact, the soul gave in, and life became to many a boundless weariness. The soul had not reached then the state of active wrath and rebellion it is at present reaching against the despotism of

the understanding. It lay down helpless, tired out by analytic chatter; was exhausted by the dryness and ugliness of a world from which all things were excluded which could not be clearly judged and arranged by logical argument. And a great deal of that weariness still lasts, still waits, and sometimes whines, in society and literature. When it first arose in this century — it has made its appearance again and again in history — it was manlier than it is now, and it was expressed by two poets with courage, with something of a tragic dignity, and with a conclusion which, for the time being, was practical, of lasting worth to the progress of man. Clough and Arnold were these poets, and they have both written some of the saddest verses in the world; verses steeped in a bewildered weariness of thought, ever inquiring and only touching with blind hands an impassable wall; longing but unable to find either order, or love, or calm in the universe, but always, like some noble Greek caught in the net of inexorable fate, holding to the duties which were yet clear, and resolved to die unsubdued by fear, or meanness, or the world. If we wish to know what the age was to men of a high temper and a love of truth, we should read the two books published in 1849 by Clough and Arnold; and then read — observing how the bewilderment and weariness deepened, and how desperately men struggled to get to some life and light — the poems which Arnold published in 1853. To these poets, save for vague hopes, expressed now and again with

vague passion, there was no religion left but the religion of duty. 'Do what lies before you, and leave the rest in other hands, if there are any; and bear the dry trouble of a life which has lost its stars as well and bravely as you can. If there be a God in whom we shall live in love, if He cares for us, it is well; but if not, we will act honourably to the end of the tragedy, and make the best of it.' This was the temper of the time in noble literature, this the religion; and it was the only gospel which Carlyle and many others who had passed through those weary years, could give to us. It lasts still; it is one of the elements which are at the root of those merely ethical religions of which so many desire our suffrages to-day, religions which, being devoid of the pursuit of the perfection which reaches beyond duty, can never produce, in a world like ours, which has learnt something of the illimitable and felt its passion, the spirit which creates the noblest literature. The ethical religions consecrate finality. Art of every kind, like Christianity, abhors it.

Now, while all this weary discussion had brought poets to the point where Arnold and Clough are found—science had also been at work and had dispersed, in the midst of endless disputes, a host of the old and venerable landmarks of thought and belief. An example or two may show what it did to the ancient religion and therefore to religion in literature. Geology destroyed belief in the orthodox doctrine of creation, in the plenary inspiration of

the Bible, and before long in the separate creation of man, and in the Fall as told in Genesis. Not only did that make a mighty change in theology; it wrought also—by blotting out a number of old authorities, emotional motives, and maps of thought—a great change in literature. Then, Physiology, or a certain type of it, groping among the brain and nerves, found no trace, no proof of what we called the immortal soul. Thought, passions, imagination, worship—many said, were nothing more than changes of matter in the brain. ‘See, I press my fingers, here in a certain place behind the ears, and the soul, the immortal soul, is gone.’ And a heated argument of support and denial sprang up, which yet goes on, concerning a matter which is at the roots of religion. The ideas of God, of our being vitally connected with Him, of moral right, of a spiritual life, of immortality, were not given to us from without by a Being who loved and judged us, but evolved in the growth of man, by man himself. Think of all the literary motives and emotions which perished—for those who believed this—in that cataclysm. Political economy, getting more and more scientific, and talking of laws, based on the single premiss that self-interest was the only guide of life, gave us to understand that all the Christian ministry to the poor was merely sentimental, of no real use. A mass of motives, hitherto largely used in poetry and fiction, vanished for all those who believed in economical laws of this type. Then, the microscope revealed to us

infinite worlds of the infinitely little, peopled by million myriads of living beings: the telescope revealed to us infinite worlds of the infinitely vast; inconceivable distances, inconceivable ages, in which time and space seemed merely names—and between these two enormous universes were we—a mere, despicable speck, a mote which flickered in the infinite; we who thought ourselves the centre of all things, the special care of the Godhead! Then, to make our position still more contemptible, a scientific theory declared that everything we did and thought and loved was merely automatic, caused by things which had occurred at the very beginning of what was called life. Men drew then the conclusion that there was no freewill, no real sin, no real righteousness, no struggle for goodness: we were bound in an iron net. And for those who believed this, whole worlds of literature ceased to exist. Then came the doctrine of the conservation of energy, and then about 1860 came the doctrine of Darwin; and all the supernatural—miracles, creation, the divine essence in man and beyond man—went overboard in the night for those who accepted, as explanations of the whole universe, these two doctrines. It was a terrible upturning.

Historical Criticism then took up the play, and it was not long before it was applied to the Bible, first to the Old and then inevitably to the New Testament. Beneath its scalpel, the great Protestant authority, the practical infal-

libility of our Book, was dissected away. That too wrought a great change on literature. It forced more than half of the writers of fine literature to change their front. Tennyson, as I said, was much affected by these things, but he saved himself by his penetrating intelligence and spiritual imagination from thinking that because these things were true in physical science and in criticism, there was no other world for man than they displayed. As to Browning, he was quite unaffected by all this wonderful discovery. He disliked the whole business. 'It has nothing to do,' he said, 'with my world. These are questions and answers which belong to mere phenomena: and I do not breathe in that world;' and he did not change a single belief, nor alter a single judgment. This then was the state of the world, and we have not got out of it yet. To the weariness which came of incessant arguments and discussion of all intellectual subjects, was now added a state of mind made by the habit of not even looking into things incapable of demonstration; which had no care for beauty, or for the forms of art under which beauty is represented; which tried to ignore the passions; which refused to look at ideals; and which ceased to have pleasure in Art or Nature except as phenomena to be subjected to investigation. What Darwin said of himself—that he had lost all care for poetry—was true of a multitude of persons who filled their lives with nothing but science. They had lost what I mean by the soul—that part of us

which loves beauty, outreaches into the unknown, imagines new forms of loveliness, rejoices in simplicities of feeling, stirs into worship of God, paints the restitution of all things, cares for feeling more than knowledge, for the old as much as the new, and for romance more than investigating.

A great part of society took up this position of science with avidity, and though they tired of it in the end if they lived for anything beyond the outward, yet it has only begun quite lately to weary us very much indeed. The poets felt that weariness before we did. Between 1860 and 1870, a certain number of men were bored to death by this dominance in society of the merely scientific ideas, and flashed into rebellion against it. They did not care two straws whether man was descended from the ape or not. It was nothing to them that all forces were interchangeable, and that the sum of energy was constant. The discoveries of science were sometimes entertaining; matter for flying reading when they desired some relaxation from the press of the infinite things; sometimes irritating. On the whole they were shadows in comparison with the substantial things of the soul. The real world of these poets was elsewhere, far beyond the realm of science. And when their ears were deafened with the conceited cries of science as it claimed to be the master-key of the universe, they determined (in the hope that a few might yet be able to see beauty and to love it) to image their own world,

and to get rid as far as they could of the dry and dreadful noise of argument, the money-making inventions, the dreary quarrels of science and theology, the worry of criticism, the deathful world of the understanding. 'Glory and loveliness have passed away,' they cried with Keats, only, as it was gross materialism of life which produced the cry of Keats, so now it was intellectual materialism which produced the cry of Rossetti and of Morris. I name these two and not Swinburne, whose position towards his time is much more difficult to define. But these two, at a time analogous in many ways to the time of Keats, did the very thing which Keats did. They left behind them, as if they did not exist, the worlds of theology and politics and business and science, all of them engaged in getting on; and fled back, as Keats fled, to find the beauty and romance and emotion they could not find in the present in the stories of the Greeks, and the Arthurian times, and the mediæval romance, and the Norse sagas. There they found what they loved and worshipped — beauty and heroism, simplicity and passion, and a lovely world, undefiled by invention, undisturbed by intellectual analysis, undissected by science. 'To love beauty, that is our religion.' It was the cry of Keats, and, like the cry in the mouth of Keats, it marks the exhaustion of the poetic impulse of 1832. It marks the replacing of a poetry which once had vitally to do with the present by a poetry which despised and loathed the present; and

as such, it was only a literary poetry, as was the poetry of Keats.

Well, I repeat, that, delightful as that poetry is when written by men like Morris, Rossetti, or Keats, and capable of giving a lasting pleasure to the human race, it does not create a school, it does not make creative emotion in a whole people. It is a pleasant backwater, in the full stream of a nation's poetry. Lovely islands, full of trees, fountains of flowers, are formed in it, where men may rest for a time and be happy. But its waters circle round and round upon themselves. They do not flow on, and become a river, or join the main river of song. And in the end they dry up. The religion of beauty, which seeks for its objects of worship only in the past and in a reversion to past loveliness, does not, when mingled with a contempt of the present, create a reproductive literature—a literature with children and grandchildren. It records only a certain mood in a limited society. When we are in that mood we read it with pleasure, but it is no foundation for life. Morris called himself 'the idle singer of an empty day.' It did not satisfy himself. He felt the call of the present on him. The injustice of things awoke his indignation, the sorrow of the world kindled his pity, and he began to live passionately in the present. He became a warlike socialist. But he did not lose his religious idea, 'that in the devotion to beauty was the salvation of society.' But now he changed its place and time. He did not bid us look back to find it. He applied it to present

life and bid us carry it with us into the future. 'I will develop,' he thought, 'the love of beauty in all things in men; and the proper means for that is to induce men to make things out of their own intelligence and for their own use, and out of their own desire for pleasurable emotion in what they do. Therefore, mere machine work, which must necessarily be unintelligent, must be, except for preparatory purposes, put aside. In their own handiwork men rejoice and love. Therefore, also, men must cease to copy the fine work of the past, for all copying is done without love of the work or joy in it. What we have to do to save the world is to lead men to express their own ideas, no matter how roughly, in handiwork; to get them to create, moved by the impulses of their own time and their own soul; to create in any vehicle whatever. This will so develop their imagination, their soul, and so fill their lives with the greatest joy in the world, the joy of making something out of their own being, that, in the end, they will begin, because they love and rejoice in their work, to add beauty to what they do, and finally to make nothing which will not be beautiful. Then the base, ugly, mean elements of life will disappear. Buildings, clothing, towns, books, all the doings and means of life, will give joy to the soul, minister to imagination, awaken aspiration, satisfy and charm the heart. Humanity will feel itself content and divine. Nature will give all her impulses to man, and man will love her better than before. Her beauty will be cared for,

and the care will react on the inner sense of beauty, and develop it further.'

This it was which Morris conceived as the means of saving society, when he found out that to picture the lovely and heroic life of the past was not—as Keats also discovered—enough to kindle society into a new life, or to supply the imagination with sufficient food on which to nourish a new literature.

This idea of his is a real contribution to the religion of humanity, to social religion. It has no force as yet, nor is it possible as yet to realize it over any large surface of society. Great changes will have to take place in the social state before what is really vital and useful in this idea can take form. But some day it will be one of the master thoughts of a religion for life—not, as Morris seemed to think, the only master thought. By itself, the love of beauty and the making of it cannot fulfil the religious wants of man, not even in the practical or possible form in which Morris finally put it. But it will have to become a part of the religious idea and of religious practice. We have too much forgotten that if God be love, He must also be beauty. Indeed, if the capability of conceiving the infinite of righteousness in an infinite Being is that which plainly differentiates us from the brute, the capability of loving beauty, and the desire to make it, as plainly, perhaps even more plainly, differentiate us from the brute. In all other points—in intellect, in conscience, in self-consciousness, in emotions,

and the passions—we can find points of contact, similarities, with the lower animals, but in the matters which range themselves under the terms 'Christianity' and 'Art' there is no resemblance whatsoever, no descent. The love of love and the love of beauty are one—two sides of the same shield—and the high form of the future religion for man to which we look forward will have to include the latter as well as the former. We shall have to worship God, not only as the Father who loves us all, but as the King in his beauty. Morris has started the conception which will lead us to that, though he did not connect it with a god at all; and when we mingle it up with the worship of God the Father as the source of beauty because He is the source of love, we shall complete the idea he left incomplete. Incomplete, however, as he left it, it is becoming more and more a power in all fine literature. It is not an idea which ends: it is a living idea which grows, and it will be interesting to watch its development in the new century as a means to a higher religion and a higher society. At present it cannot find itself, and it rarely appears even in poetry. Morris himself did not put it into poetry, only into romances.

Well, we are left, so far as poetic literature is concerned, as we were after the days of Keats, in a world almost destitute of leading ideas, of ideas which have growth in them. Poetry has no captains who give it a steady direction. No master ideas, such as Tennyson and

Browning had, urge its course towards a clear end, or fill its sails with a steadfast wind. Nor does it represent, as Arnold and Clough did, or as Morris and Rossetti and Swinburne did after them, the main conditions of the age in which we are living. It only represents (with the exception of the work of a few men who are scarcely read) the helpless wavering of a class in society which has no clear ideas as to what it ought to do with its life, and none with regard to its future. It takes up now one subject and now another, and drops them without finishing them. It tries sensuality, and rebellion, and mysticism, and supernaturalism, and imperialism, and spiritual religion, and nature-poetry, and hospitals, and crude coarseness, and crime, and sentimental love, and pessimism, and it composes hosts of little lyrics about nothing. Everything by turns, and nothing long. It amuses itself with difficult metres, and surprising rhymes, and elaborated phrasing, and painting in words, and scientific tricks of versing. It has no great matter, no fine thinking, and no profound passion, and it is the reverse of simple. And the world is becoming tired of it, and longs for the advent of youth, originality, joy, hope, and the resurrection of vital ideas, in poetry. Along with this, and always accompanying this prolific littleness, is a terrible recrudescence of criticism. Every magazine, all the daily papers, every publishing house, is filled with essays and articles and books about poetry, carping, or denouncing,

or satirizing, or praising without knowledge, and in astonishing excess. I cannot tell how often I have lately seen in the papers and in books that a poet, if not superior, then equal to Shakespeare, has appeared on the stage. And all this overwhelming shower-bath of criticism has chilled the world, which wants, nay, hungers, for some warm and living creation. Moreover, we are still, like Arnold, wearied by endless discussions, by the shouting of people who want nothing said which cannot be proved, who replace sentiment by materialism, who will not allow us to love nature except in accordance with science, who, pinning us down to this world only, forbid us to overclimb the flaming walls and go wandering, like gypsies, into the infinites of love and beauty, because we cannot be as certain of such infinities as we are certain that two and two make four. Were these folk to succeed in infecting the whole world with their theories—fine literature would die of disgust, and poetry be drained of its life-blood.

The first thing we want for the sake of a great literature and a great poetry is a noble religion which will bear, by its immaterial truths, our intellect, conscience, emotions, imagination, and spirit beyond this world; and yet, by those very truths, set us into the keenest activity in the world for the bettering of the world; making every work, and, above all, literature, full of a spiritual and a social passion, weighty and dignified by spiritual and social thought. Such

a religion must not contradict any established scientific or historic truth; it must be capable of easily entering into all the honest business of the world as a spirit of life and love; it must be freed from every shred of exclusiveness, so that not one of its doctrines or its rites should shut out any man whatever from union with God; its ideas must be as universal as God Himself, and their application to men as universal; it must claim man as akin to God in a relationship which never can be broken, and is eternal; and it will say to itself, in our hearts, 'God has not given to me the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.' Such a religion is contained in a few large ideas. Universal fatherhood, universal childhood, therefore universal brotherhood. God, thus akin to us, our nearest relation, cannot leave us to evil or death. All sin is, therefore, finally, if slowly, rooted out of us, and we are made at one with Him in eternal life. This is universal forgiveness.

Then, too, immortal love destroys all death in us. Our personality is secured for ever. This is universal immortality.

Our life on earth is made up of two duties, our duty to live in harmony with the character of our Father, our duty to love and live for our brothers.

But beyond these duties ranges the infinite love and righteousness of God. And the last and highest idea of religion in life is the struggle towards infinite perfection.

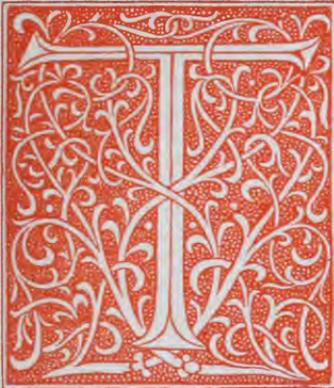
What we want, secondly, along with such a religion, for the sake of a noble literature, and especially for the sake of a lasting school of poetry, is a great social conception, carrying with it strong and enduring emotions, appealing to the universal heart of man and woman — a great social conception of the duties of mankind, of the true aim, end, and foundation of human life; of the future of mankind in a regenerated civilization, with all the hopes and aspirations of this conception like the winds of spring in our hearts; and lastly a clear idea of how man's happiness is to be established. The basis of such a conception is the Brotherhood of Man, and that is made religious when it is founded on belief in the Fatherhood of God. Such a conception is now struggling into light, labouring by a thousand experiments into its practical and ideal form. We call it by many names, and everyone knows in how many and diverse, even contradictory, shapes it appears. Nevertheless, there are a few common thoughts and feelings underneath its varying sects, and these are growing firmer and securer day by day. Steady thought, well-founded feeling, collect around them; and in time the right, noble, lucid shape of the conception will be found. Some day the mastering form which will attract all men, will emerge, as it were of itself, and leap forth all-victorious in wisdom, like Athena from the head of Zeus. That will impassionate the world. The civilization based on self-interest will go down before

it. That civilization is really barbarism. The root of that higher civilization will be self-forgetfulness in love, and that is Christ's religion. When these two come together, when such a social idea is married to a universal religion, of which unlimited Love is lord and king, we shall have the greatest of literatures. Its full realization may be far off. But, even at the present time, it is nearer than when we first believed. One form of that socialist conception, after centuries of travail, was born at the end of last century, and its emotions created a new poetry in our land. Another form of it arose in 1832, and its emotions created again a new poetry. And we are now on the verge of a new and passionate form of it, to be bound up, I trust, with a universal religion. I hope to see it before I die, and then this great country, borne into higher realms of thought and feeling than it can conceive at present, will create out its fresh excitement an original literature and a poetry, as great, it may even be greater, than any it has yet produced.

[1900]

II. RELIGION IN LIFE

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THE term 'Religion' has many meanings, but as used in the title of this discourse, it is taken to mean the outward form which we give in daily life to the inward spiritual life,—to the beliefs, thoughts, feelings, and hopes of our silent communion with God.

But there are a thousand different kinds of daily life and work. In which of these kinds is religion to be described, for its form will differ in each, and in each its duties will be distinctive? And it is in clearly marking out the separate duties, temptations and aims, and the separate ideals of each kind of life when conceived as the worship of God in the service of man, that the practical use of such discourses as this is contained. The religion of a citizen, religion in national life, religion in a business life, religion in the life of an artist, a politician, a physician, a mechanic, would, all of them, be good subjects and well fitted for an hour's discourse. But a subject of this kind needs a book. It is too vague and large for a lecture. It is like saying to a scientific man, 'Lecture, in an hour, on "Energy in the Universe."' However, it may be possible to seclude some definite, some root ideas on this matter.

The first thing to be said is that whatever religious faith, feelings, and hopes we have, we are bound to shape them into form in life, not only at home, but in the work we do in the world. Whatever we feel justly, we ought to shape; whatever we think, to give it clear form; whatever we have inside of us, our duty is to mould it outside of ourselves into clear speech or act, which, if it be loving, will be luminous. 'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.' The true successes of life are contained in that principle. It is a first law. It is, for example, the beginning, middle, and end of education. The knowledge poured into the young nowadays is worth little or nothing unless we also make them gain the habit first of shaping it clearly in their mind, and then of putting it into form in word or act outside of their mind. They must not only receive, they must make. A single lesson given to a child which he is able to reproduce, with a fresh individual touch in it, is better than a hundred lessons which are left to lie formless in his mind. When he shapes the knowledge, however crudely, in his own way, so as to say 'There it is, I see what I thought,' the child or the man possesses something he can use. Moreover, he has gained one step towards activity of mind, and another step towards an artistic, that is a formative, habit of mind; and another step, most important perhaps of all, towards that moral power which derives from striving to a known end, and that moral joy which follows on the consciousness

that we are daily nearer to the end at which we aim. The secret of education and of self-education is to learn to embody our thoughts in words, luminously; to realize our knowledge in experiment; to shape our feelings into action; to represent without us all we are within; and to do this steadily all our life long.

It is the secret also of 'religion in life.' As God shapes His love in the universe, as the Master of Love lived His love into action and speech, so our religion is to be done, not dreamed; lived, not contemplated. We must bring it into the open air, let it go in and out among men, test it in daily life, shape it in our manners, our voice, our decisions, in all our doings. Every effort thus made, and not given up till the shaping is completed, is at once education and aspiration. For the shaping of one religious act is the impulse to, and the foundation of, another and higher act. But if we keep our religious faiths, feelings, and hopes within, unshaped in life, we shall never realize them; least of all in those days of trial or temptation when we need them most; and, in the end, they will die of starvation. The proper food of all inward religion is the forms we give it outwardly.

One of the misfortunes of modern life is the habit, which has grown so much of late years, of keeping our thoughts and feelings within us; vaguely building and unbuilding them in our soul, like clouds; feeding on dreams, and vain of our dreaming. When Carlyle bid us be silent, he did not mean this kind of silence,

and he did not himself keep it. He thought and felt a great deal about himself and the world about him, but he got rid of it by shaping it in anything but silence, and then went on to new matter. In that way he never stagnated as other hopeless persons do. He moved on always, impelled men in new fashions, startled the world into new activities; and did this excellent work by continually violating the silence he was so fond of preaching. Sad as his life was, it had at least, in this incessancy of shaping, the joy of creation—an iron joy to him—but it kept him alive to a great old age, and it gave life to a dull world. But when we plume ourselves on being silent souls, with thoughts too fine for 'common' men, and feelings too delicate to expose to the rough tests of the world, what use are we? What beauty, truth, or religion, can we put into the daily life of man; what personal joy can we have in living?

Many complain that there is 'little enthusiasm left in society, little freshness or youthful ardour. Worldliness has taken these away.' True, it has done something of that work. But the worst part of that work has been done by the multitude of people, who will take no trouble to get their soul into some outward shape, and who spend their days in wondering if they will ever be appreciated, and never doing anything whereby they may be appreciated. Of course, they have no enthusiasm, no ardour. It is only through making something outside

of ourselves, or setting some movement into order in the world, with the purpose of helping our fellow-men and giving them some joy, that enthusiasm stirs in us or others. Ardour is only born when there is an act of shaping. There is the shaping of religious life at home, in business, in society; and this consists chiefly in acts of loving kindness, help and sacrifice; in good manners, chivalry, pity, tenderness, thoughtfulness, in a thousand gracious and gentle acts. Other shaping is in speech, writing, public action, in the producing of art, science, literature, business and labour. It takes its rise in thought. 'Keep the idea to yourself' — the world says, and your own fears support the world's saying. No, get it into form. A great deal of the shaping would be inadequate, even bad. That would be inevitable. But I do not advocate any attempt to throw at once into the arena of the world everything we think and feel. On the contrary, shape it first in quiet thought within, shape it in solitude and silence into writing; get it into clearness for yourself, and then put it forth to the world. But never let it remain as a vague and undefined dream within you; and when you have got it clear, do not then keep it, laid up like the talent in the napkin. Put it to the test. Let the full sunlight shine upon it. Indeed, the moment we have got the thing clear, and care for it, it will itself, like an actual person, hunger and thirst for outward form, desiring to realize itself, so that we, sympathizing with its ardour, cannot rest till

we have given it means to be alive and active in the world of men. Whether we shall fail, or be ridiculed, does not, in the happy heat of the moment, occur to us at all. For the thing we make, the work itself, is our joy, and not what the world says about it; no, not even what we ourselves may think about it. We are out of ourselves, having lost—and a joyful and blessed loss it is—self-consideration; and being out of ourselves, in the rejoicing world of self-forgetfulness, we do not care a straw for the criticism of the world, nor can we be worried by self-criticism.

Nor, indeed, is it likely, if we outshape ourselves in this clear fashion, that the world will be hard on us. On the contrary, it will be grateful. The one thing mankind most desires is action of some kind, something made, something which has movement and life in it; and the more we give men that, and the more varied is what we give, the more their satisfaction and pleasure. The more you shape, the more you will rightly please yourself and the more you will please, also in the right way, the great brotherhood. For a number of men and women are dull and weary. Put some action on their stage, some new thing into form before them. Let them feel life moving before their eyes. Give, and lose yourself in what you give. Vivify the great drama by creating new scenes, embodying fresh thoughts, and the world will be charmed, helped, comprehensive, and grateful. Make, for instance, one act of love, and you will

do more good to men and teach them more of the religion of self-forgetfulness than by a thousand years of lonely thought. We are born to communicate ourselves to our fellow pilgrims, and when we do it lovingly we fulfil the half of religion. Above all, let there be no delay in beginning; no more dreaming. Life runs swiftly, and it may be over before we have done anything for our companions. If we lose to-day, it is likely to be the same story to-morrow; and days are lost lamenting over lost days.

‘Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute;
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it!
Boldness has genius, power, magic in it!
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated;
Begin it, and the work will be completed.’

As to failure, the less we think of it, the better. In thinking of it and in fear of it, men lose the power of action, are afraid to shape their thoughts, and if they do shape them tentatively, have little joy in their work. Their ardour has worn away in fear.

Our work does often seem to fail; and the world cries out, ‘He is defeated; he saved others, himself he cannot save.’ Yet the words in which the crowd proclaimed the failure of Jesus were in reality the proclamation of his true success. His desire was to save others, not to save himself. When the priests went home from Calvary they said, ‘That deceiver is finished with.’ But Jesus, who lost himself in his work, and who

had shaped it by death into its last and divinest form, never for one moment thought that he had failed. 'I have finished the work thou gavest me to do.' 'Consummatum est,' he cried, and the cry was that of sacred triumph.

Moreover, if we do fail, and rightly fail; if our heart and instinct of intellect tell us that the web was ill-woven and the pattern ill-chosen, I do not see that we have any right to complain, but quite the contrary. For the failure tells us that what we have been doing does not fit in with the course of the universe; and an excellent piece of education is that knowledge. It should not set us wailing, but inspire us to find out what does fit in with the universe. After a time we discover that thing; and then a curious, pleasant truth dawns upon us. It is that the work is not only done by us, but does itself in a wonderful way. If the thing we have set going is in accord with the movement of the physical, or intellectual, or moral, or, in the case of religion in life, with the spiritual order of the universe, it grows, independently of our efforts, by its own vitality. We tend it, water it, prune it day by day, clear its way to the light, fix ourselves upon it, pour into it all our character, body, and spirit, and yet we are conscious that our power is not sufficient to bring it to its fullness. Suddenly, to our surprise and joy, the thing breaks into blossom, flowers and bears fruit, develops beyond our expectation, flings its seeds hither and thither, and, instead of one plant, there are twenty.

What has happened? Why, the work, the thing we have created, being in harmony with the life of all things, has grown of itself; or, as I should put it, God, who is this universal life, finding the work we have made in accord with His, has entered into this work of ours, and now His power is in our power, and His creative force in our creation. And we, rejoicing, and losing every shred of vanity because we see God, say to ourselves, with all the surprise of Jacob, 'Surely God was in this work of mine and I knew it not.' That conviction, felt through every kind of noble work, imaginative, moral, intellectual, or spiritual, would be to have religion in life. And, indeed, what vaster end can any human life possess than that the work which is the outward form of our inward thought and emotion should become part of us, part of mankind, part of the universe, part of the will of the righteous Master of all work? Therefore, if we want to get religion into life, or anything whatever in us into life, we are bound to have no contentment, no rest, no dreaming, no delays, till we get thought into shape, feeling into labour, some conviction, some belief, some idea, into form, without us, among the world of men. This is the main principle, and it applies to every sphere of human effort — to the pursuit of science, art, literature, business, policy, law, professions, manual labour, social reform, and religion. So much for the habit whereby we gain power to bring religion into daily life. Now what is the religion

we bring, and how shall we live it in the world? Religion is, first, to have within us the love of God because we believe Him to be perfect Love, and to love in God all that comes from Him—humanity, nature, and the life of both; and the best definition of this love is self-forgetfulness. That was Christ's religion, and he lived it. And it is, secondly, to have righteousness within; and to believe in a God who is the essence and source of Right, and therefore to think rightly, to feel rightly, to act rightly; and to exercise all the faculties of the soul in accord with the righteousness of the divine Being who makes Himself personal to us as a Father. That, too, was Christ's religion; and in this love and this righteousness he lived out his life among men. That is our subject here—not the inward religion of the spirit alone with its Father, that hidden sacred life; but what forms love and righteousness take in human life.

Righteousness, shaped from within to without in the world of men, is justice, and the doing of justice. This is the first need of commonwealths, the first duty of the individual citizen, and the practical religion of both. I do not, of course, mean mere legal justice, which may, only too often, be organized injustice; but such action as answers to the demand made in our soul when, without considering our self-interest, we stand face to face with our highest conception of divine justice. To harmonize, at all risks, our political, civic, professional, business

and labouring life with that, is to bring religion into life. There is enough still left of injustice in the whole body of society to make that effort a tremendous call on every hour of the day. It is not justice, for example, in a State that an overwhelming number of its members should not have equal opportunities of possessing and using the absolute necessities of human life—water, light, air, decent dwellings, proper distribution of wholesome food—and enough leisure to enable them to educate into health their body, their intellect, their soul, their conscience (personal and civic), and their spirit. To work to get this injustice undone is to have religion in life. I have often walked from the slums of Lambeth to the fine houses of Belgravia, and asked myself, not for any absurd equalization of wealth, but why those poor folk should not have, as well as the others, enough of the common needs of human life for a decent life—enough water to wash with, enough air to breathe, enough light to enjoy and labour by, enough of decent housing. That justice lies in the hands of Parliament, municipalities and those who vote for their members. Till it is done injustice rules. I think society, until it is done, is affected with insanity, in every sense of the word. The ‘common sense’ which now delays or refuses to do it is common folly. I have seen lately many of the manufacturing towns, and visited the streets where they nurse up their criminals and their diseased classes in darkness and stench and rotten buildings,

and cram them by sixes in rooms scarcely able to hold one person decently, in courts where fresh air is only tasted in a heavy gale,—and I have wondered at the folly of men and municipalities. Is this civic justice?

We have but to look round us, wherever we live, to find plenty of civic injustice; and the root of it is self-interest. Take another example which affects both England and Scotland. It is a grave injustice to the whole country that a great part of it should be ruined by smoke when the evil is remediable by no great expenditure of money, an expenditure which should be partly borne by the whole country and partly by the manufacturers. For the whole country suffers from keeping hell in the midst of it and by the misery, ill-health, and ruined constitutions of the future fathers and mothers of the manufacturing community. I do not speak of the destruction of all beauty, and the worse destruction of the sentiment of beauty in the soul and of the possibility of knowing what it is—but that is not one of the least of the evils of this curse. And the manufacturers themselves, who blast a whole neighbourhood, defile its waters, and rob the people of beauty, light, air and loveliness, are unjust to their countrymen, and will in the end suffer the natural punishment of their injustice, that is, they will become more unjust. I cannot blame them too severely, because they are supported by an overwhelming social opinion at present; and they do not think of or know clearly what

they are doing. But to be thus thoughtless and thus ignorant is to be gravely in the wrong. They, and all those who in any business are thus thoughtless or selfish, have as yet no adequate conception of their duties as citizens, nor of civic religion in daily life. That is enough to illustrate what I mean. I need not dwell on other injustices — the poisonous trades of the country, the sending to sea of rotten ships, the want of sufficient secondary education, the dreadful need of leisure for the poor worker who is only able to keep daily starvation at bay, the wringing in many cases of the last drop of the blood of labour from men, and the casting of them at the end of sixty years of unrelieved toil, like carted rubbish, into the workhouse, while there are thousands who do no work at all. These are only examples of the many gross injustices which traverse our society, and which, if we care one pin for religion in life, for shaping inward into outward righteousness, we are bound to war against, and, having slain them, to replace them by just things. And there is not one of us who, in our profession, business, and labour, may not do a part of that work of bringing the justice of God into our social system. At the very least, we may ourselves be just in every relation of life, do nothing and say nothing to our fellow-men which we should be ashamed of before that tribunal of high honour which mankind, in the end, will establish, and which will give its solemn judgment on our lives. That would be re-

ligion in life, and there is nothing in the whole world at present of so grave and awful a necessity as the doing of civic justice.

So much for justice as the form of inward righteousness—that is, as righteousness in life. A still higher form into which we may put our religion in life is in doing the things which belong to love; and I say love is the higher form, because it secures justice. If we truly love our fellows, we are sure to do them justice. If, for example, the manufacturers at the potteries cared for their men and women at all, do you think they would poison them with lead in order to avoid some expense and a little trouble? If the landlords who leave the dwellings of the labourers on their estate in the shameless condition of which we have so lately heard, or drive off their estate, by pulling down dwellings, the poor, whose only refuge then is death in the slums of a big town—if they cared for men or women at all, do you think they would do that iniquity? No; if there is pity and love in a man, he does justice to his fellow-men. Love, then, rules justice. It is the greatest; its work is the highest form into which we may shape our religion in life.

Now, in what way can this be put most practically? What is the love of God in life? It is to love the whole of God's character in all we do, not only at home, where a man is worse than a brute if he does not do what is loving, but abroad, in his profession, trade, business, and labour. It is there that we should take the

13th chapter of 1st Corinthians as our rule of life; read it every morning that we may remember it during the day, and every night that we may ask ourselves whether we have done it an injury. I wonder how many of us, when the day is over and we return from our business to our home, could think, without some self-reproach, of these words, 'Love doth not behave itself unseemly; seeketh not her own; is not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in injustice, but rejoiceth in the truth'? and yet, on the effort to fulfil something of that in all our lives, the future relations of capital and labour depend, and the continued greatness, peace and joy of this country.

But God's character is made not only of love and righteousness, but also of other qualities, contained implicitly indeed in righteousness and love, but which we separate for the sake of clear thinking. He is made of truth and pity, long-suffering and forgivingness, joy and peace. These are the things we should shape into life because we love them. To be faithful always to that which we believe to be true; to be faithful to our principles and our conscience when trial comes, or when we are tempted to sacrifice them for place or pelf; to be faithful to our given word; to keep our promises to men when we might win favour by eluding or breaking them; to cling to intellectual as well as to moral truth, even when our whole position depends on our judgment; to so live among men that they may always know where we are; to fly our

flag in the storm as well as in the calm — that is to live religion, to live God's truth, into life. Again, to support, in a world which has grown hard-hearted, the cause of pity; not to be led away by the blind folk who ridicule the outgoings of pity as sentimentality — who are ignorant that the loss of pity is a return to savagery, without the excuse of savagery — not to allow the pursuit of knowledge to deprive you of pity for any suffering whatever, for every violation of pity does more vital harm to a nation and humanity than any increase of knowledge can do good; to take care that the rubs of life do not harden the heart; to keep pity and mercy for those who injure you, and also for those who injure the nation by crime — men who, indeed, must be prevented from doing more mischief, but prevented remedially, not penally — that is to love the character of God, to bring the religion of God's pity into life.

To be long-suffering with the wrong-doer; to give him chance after chance, never wearied by wrong-doing into impatience; to forgive wrong done to ourselves in public and in private affairs with frankness, even with a kind of joy; to go on forgiving and forgiving with unwearied hope. Until seven times? said S. Peter — nay, said Christ, until seventy times seven, that is, with no limit to forgiveness. Thus to do as our Father does, who is kind to the unthankful and the evil, and whose forgiveness is not limited, as certain theologians dare to say in the teeth of the life of Christ — that is to

bring religion into daily life because we love the character of God.

To spread around us joy and happiness and peace; to fill a depressed or exhausted world with the spirit of joy; to make a summer for men in the midst of winter; to uplift the hearts of men in this troubled world; to be a fountain of life, strength, and joy, in the midst of folk who glorify decay; to so live as to bring and publish peace, that glad tidings in the midst of the angers, quarrels, and foolish strife by which we are encompassed; to make peace, and pour it from our lives like rain on a thirsty land — that, too, is to bring the character of God into life, to make religion vital in the world.

It is thus we may shape love by living of God's character out among men. In what other way can we shape love? We can shape it into love of our country. To love one's country is to love its ancient virtues, and hate its ancient wrongs; to mark them out clearly one from another, and live the one and slay the other. It is to pass by with contempt the dark cavern where men worship Mammon; to hold ourselves free from impure living; to seek a simple, quiet, unluxurious, but fair life; to rejoice in distributing, not in hoarding or wasting wealth; to fix our thought and effort on the attainment of righteousness in public life and private homes; to sacrifice personal objects to great public aims; to have the courage to attempt what seems impossible through love of the ideals of truth and beauty, and to prefer to die on the field of work

and self-devotion rather than to live in idleness and luxury.

Moreover, to love one's country, and to shape that part of our religion into life, is to fight against the false theory that the principle of a nation's life is self-interest — when it is self-devotion; and to wage this sacred war in the city and in the country, in our business, on the municipality, as voters and citizens, in our professions, and in our place in Parliament. It is to work for a national condition which will enable all men to have an equal chance of self-development, and minister to the education of all in the things which are true in knowledge, beautiful in art and nature, sound and sane in intelligence, clear in conscience, ideal in the spirit; which in daily life increase gentleness and courtesy, loving-kindness, pity, grace, and good manners. It is above all to educate in every class of citizens that spirit of self-sacrifice, which, accepting in the name of God and duty the burdens, diseases and distresses of the body politic, is never satisfied till it has put an end to them. That, and much more, is to love one's country, and to bring love of it, as a part of religion, into life.

But the shaping of love into life makes a further demand upon us. It is to love mankind. Indeed, the best way to love one's country is to love mankind. The patriotism of humanity, if I may use that phrase, contains the patriotism we give to our country. The higher and wider embraces the lower and the more limited, as

our love of God contains our love of man. Nor is the lower lost in the higher. On the contrary, it is defended by the higher love from its defects and excesses, and its essential differences are developed towards their perfection.

Some say that the phrase, 'the love of mankind,' is vague. But I can define it so that what it is, and how to exercise it, shall be clear.

To love mankind is to love all the ideas on which the progress of the race depends, and to live one's life in their behalf; to devote one's being to them; and to offer on their altar all we are. That is the doctrine of Jesus, and that was his practice. He lived, he died, to bear witness to the lofty truths on which the veritable life of man is established, and by which it moves onward, and shall move for ever.

To love man is to love freedom; freedom for the body, conscience, reason, and soul of man, but freedom always self-limited by the law of love; to prophesy freedom, the sister of obedience, over the world; to stand on its side against oppression; to support its causes, whether civil or religious, in all nations; and to allow no national interests, jealousies, no political expediencies, no personal desires, to prevent our allegiance to its flag. That was part of Christ's love of man. He fought for the freedom of the soul, the reason and the conscience, against the tyranny of force and fraud. And the main purpose of his life was to set free the spirit of man from the oppression of wrong-doing, from the diseases of sorrow and unrest.

To love man is to love the idea of justice, equal handed, for all men, and to live in behalf of it. It is to love truth, the ground of all interchange of thought, and to live for it. It is to love self-surrender, the ground of all action between men, and to live it. It is to have, and live for, the simple humanities themselves — the vital, human elements which are common and beautiful in the race; the charities which bind men together, until full consciousness of them makes us realize our unity. Moreover, to love mankind is to love and fulfil in our daily life those great and solemn ideas which Jesus Christ established for the spirit of man, and destined in the end to be universal in humanity; the idea of the Fatherhood of God, embracing all; the idea of the universal brotherhood of man which follows on our universal childhood to the Father; the idea of the universal duties and rights of that brotherhood; the belief in the universal aim which God has for His children — their perfection in Himself — which, ensuring their progress in Him, will, when accomplished, fill with joy the eternal future of mankind.

The love of these ideas — the great driving wheels by which the chariot of man's progress rolls in soundless thunder on its upward way — and the action which, if they are profoundly loved, must shape itself from them into daily life — is the practical love of Man, and it is as clear as the day what it means. That is no vague, unoutlined dream; the wayfaring man,

though a fool, shall not err therein. To love these ideas is to do them; and the doing of these performs all the duties of Love to Mankind.

Lastly, there is one thing more to say.

It is not enough to put religious thought, feeling, and conviction into shape in life. The shape we give them must be as beautiful as we can make it. It ought to have charm, to be attractive, that we may draw men to the love of the good thing. Moreover, the thing itself—the good, just, and loving thing, having its own divine loveliness—demands that its form should be lovely, that the form should not contradict its essence. It was not enough in S. Paul's mind that we should give, but also that we should do it with simplicity. It was not enough that we should show mercy, but also that we should show it with cheerfulness. That the form of Christian action should be fitting, graceful, full of attraction, was of so great importance to S. Paul, and this he learnt from the ineffable grace of Christ, that the action, however good, was incomplete unless it was beautifully clothed.

To do justice harshly, rudely, is to lose more than half its use. To do a loving thing in an ugly or a rough way, is to make the receiver of it think that it is not loving at all. To give as if we flung our gift at the head of the person to whom we give, is to create anger, and the sense of obligation; not gratitude and affection in the heart of the receiver. To show mercy reluctantly or with careful reservations, is not

to show it so as to bless the giver and the taker. The form does not then fit the essential nature of mercy.

There is a proper, beautiful way in which to shape all goodness and love; and this we should strive to attain, if we would be perfect, if we would bring our religion into life in such a fashion as God shall approve and man desire. And if we do that, the least act, thus touched with immortal beauty, is remembered with affection from generation to generation.

Moreover, doing the right or loving thing with this gracious charm, with fair words and fair ways, is one of the greatest helps we can give to religion in life. Religion then is shown in her beauty to the world, and the world, finding joy in the vision, is allured to follow her. Like pictures or lyrics left by a great artist to mankind, are the beautiful forms of act and speech in which we have cast the tenderness and truth, the justice and mercy, the goodness, joy, and peace of our religion.

Let us then make the workmanship of every religious word and act as lovely and delightful as we can; nor indeed, if we love enough, will that be difficult, for love naturally seeks to make its form beautiful. And let us do this, not for our own sake, but for the sake of man, and not only for man, but most of all for the sake of God, whose essence is eternal Love.

This which I have laid before you, is part of that mighty upward strife towards perfectness which is the religious ground and explanation

of human life, the duty, right, and honour of us all. It is also our greatest joy. It makes us incessant creators, and in creation the deepest delight of mankind is found and secured. Moreover, it urges us towards the infinite, for only in infinity can we find room for expressing the perennial outgoings of Love into Beauty.

We are never satisfied, when once we have begun to shape into outward life the spirit of God within us, that is, the Religion which we have within. We desire to give it lovelier and lovelier form; our longing for the perfect kindling into brighter fire and joy and aspiration; till, as we press forward, doing fairer works and nobler acts, the ideal life of immortal perfection in God opens before us, like a sunlit heaven full of worlds unvisited. And this hope and vision God approves. We hear in the ears of the spirit a voice crying, 'I have yet many things to show you, but ye cannot bear them now;' and as we believe that promise, beyond all that we do extends, far away, all that we shall do; beyond the actual sweeps the vast curve of the ideal, beyond the limited illimitable perfection. In that faith, born of the noble shaping of inward religion into life, we live and die and are born again into that ideal life which is the noble end and eternal rapture of humanity.

Mar-11 1901 (Mr.)

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