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**Rev. George A. Gordon, D. D.**

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REVELATION AND THE IDEAL.  
RELIGION AND MIRACLE.  
THROUGH MAN TO GOD.  
ULTIMATE CONCEPTIONS OF FAITH.  
THE NEW EPOCH FOR FAITH.  
THE WITNESS TO IMMORTALITY IN LITER-  
ATURE, PHILOSOPHY, AND LIFE.  
THE CHRIST OF TO-DAY.  
IMMORTALITY AND THE NEW THEODICY.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

REVELATION AND THE IDEAL



# REVELATION AND THE IDEAL

BY

GEORGE A. GORDON

MINISTER OF THE OLD SOUTH CHURCH  
BOSTON



BOSTON AND NEW YORK  
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY  
The Riverside Press Cambridge

1913

THE NEW YORK  
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*Published October 1913*

NEW YORK  
1913

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO THOSE  
WHO BELIEVE THAT THE IDEAL  
IS THE SHADOW OF GOD  
IN THE MIND OF MAN

THE  
MIND  
OF  
MAN

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## PREFACE

FOR many years I cherished the audacious dream of writing a book on the philosophy of Revelation. More than ten years of study and reflection ended in the conviction that the task I had set myself demanded for its accomplishment the undivided devotion of a long life. The task had to be abandoned; I was compelled to allow the dream to fade. Something, however, had been gained; what could not be discussed in the form of a treatise might be presented in a series of visions close to life and warm with serious concern for the high moral possibilities of man. Such is the origin of this book; it is the second choice of its author, not the first.

I have long felt that the secret of Revelation is in the keeping of the Ideal. The ideal is the East where, in each new generation, the Eternal light breaks in upon our human world. In plain words, I am convinced that the greater introductions of God to the mind of man are through man's greater ideals. Moral idealism and Revelation are but the concave and the convex of the same figure. The Divine thought is sunk in the depths of the human soul; it lives and operates

there under the immediate pressure of the Divine Presence ; the swift and vivid forms of imagination in the course of the ages catch and reflect something of that indwelling and mighty plan.

The profoundest questions in the entire sphere of religious interest are these : Does the Eternal God speak to man ? If so, how ? I should like to believe that I had not altogether failed in my endeavor to answer these great questions.

GEORGE A. GORDON.

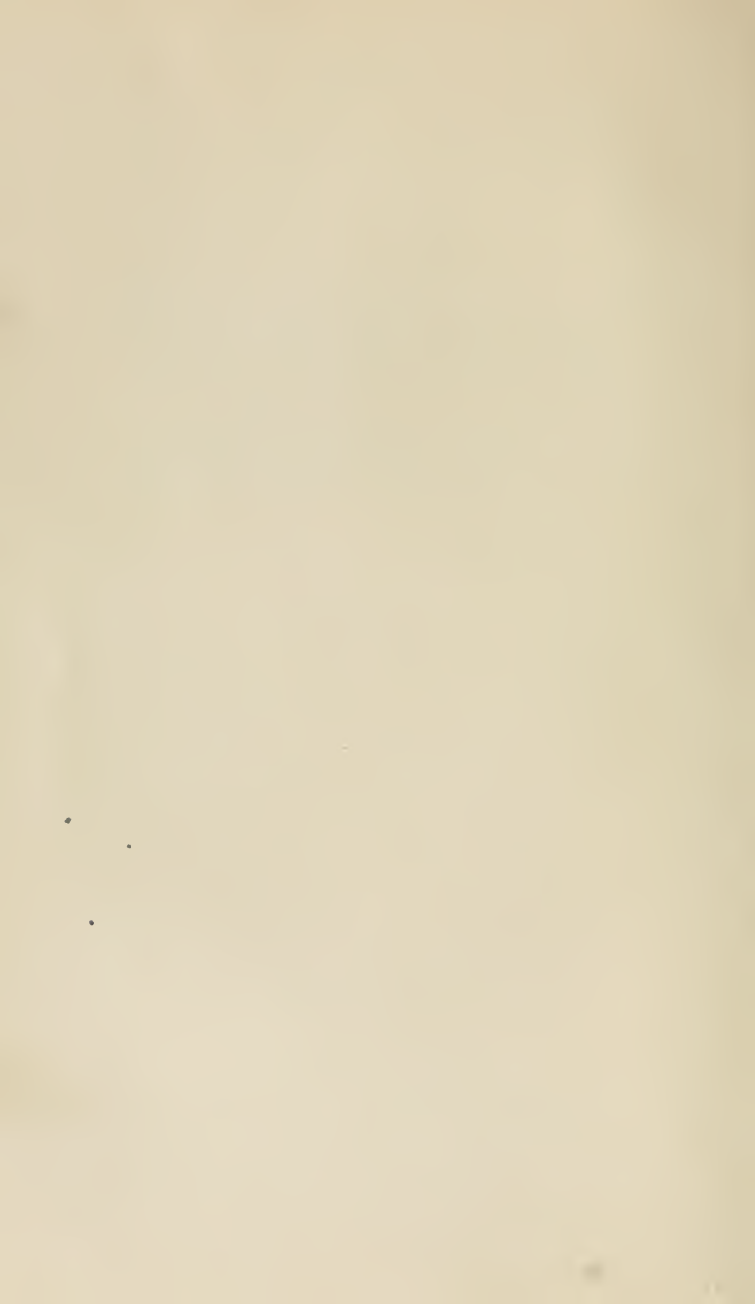
OLD SOUTH PARSONAGE,  
BOSTON, MASS.,  
June 3, 1913.

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REVELATION AND THE IDEAL



# REVELATION AND THE IDEAL

## I

### WHAT IS REVELATION?

“The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

2 Cor. iv, 6.

THE greatest religious debate in the nineteenth century, I am inclined to think, was that between Dean Mansel and Frederick Denison Maurice. Mansel contended that God in his utmost being could not be revealed; that only certain notions about Him of a provisional character could be given; that all our thoughts of Him were relative to our intellectual weakness; that the Infinite was solely for the Infinite; that for man there could be nothing but temporal images of the Eternal Goodness. After this manner Dean Mansel wrote in his book, “The Limits of Religious Thought.” With great learning, much acuteness, and the sincerest purpose to do good, Mansel built a prison in which he shut in forever our entire race, a prison so tremendous that God Himself could not enter; only his shadow might creep in through its crevices to hallow the inevitable gloom. Mansel was met by Maurice in his great

book, "What is Revelation?" In this volume there is more insight into the ways of the Divine Mind in dealing with the human spirit than in any other in the English tongue; and still the greatest thing in it is the question, What is Revelation?

We must wait a long time for a universally satisfactory answer to that question. There must first be an adequate history of the greater religions of the world in the light and hope of which uncounted millions have lived and died. There must come, in the second place, a sympathetic and understanding mind upon this history. In the third place, there must be new and profounder insight into that sublime dialogue between God and the soul that constitutes the heart of the highest religious experience. Eagle intellects are here needed in long succession, able from their own elevation and wide circuit to survey the earth and scan the heavens, able to see the divine sphere in which our human world lives and moves, and strong enough to carry the great vision down into the centres of man's thought and being. The day of the Lord is coming when the watchman upon the walls of Zion shall see eye to eye. The final glory of the human intellect will be in just appreciation of the supreme treasure of the human heart, its victorious insight into the meetings of God with men and



their exchanges in thought and love. Then the great promise will be fulfilled: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God thy glory."

The word "revelation" carries its meaning in a metaphor, as indeed all words do that bear a spiritual import. It means that the veil has been removed as from the face of a person. When Moses came from communion with God, his face shone so that the people were afraid to look upon him. When he put the veil over his face, he was concealed; when he took off the veil, he was revealed. In this way the glory of the Lord is veiled; it is veiled by human ignorance or perversity. When that veil of ignorance or perversity is removed, the glory of the Lord is revealed. Thus we read as in the text of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; the face of Christ is not veiled like that of Moses because human ignorance and perversity are replaced by insight and love. It is all so simple and personal. A great leader with a veil upon his face represents the universe in concealment and mystery; the Lord with the veil taken away represents the universe in the full light of day clear and sure. The veil is not of God's manufacture; it is created by human ignorance and perversity; it is the

screen by which man shuts from his vision the world of reality, the world of God.

We may apply the word "revelation" to nature when nature is understood. Nature embodies the will of God; and wherever the veil of human ignorance is lifted from the face of nature, there the glory of the Lord is revealed. In the science of nature there has been a manifest approach to the order of the Divine Mind. When Copernicus revealed the true position of the earth and the planets to the sun, he tore away a tremendous veil from the face of the solar order; when Newton unified all the worlds in space by the force of gravity, he removed another veil; when Darwin traced the origin of species and the descent of man on his physical side, he took away yet another veil; when the physicist of to-day is breaking up atoms into ions and electrons and reducing the elements of matter to force, when he is finding a path through material things to the dim borderland haunted by spirits, he is stripping from the countenance of the cosmos the dark covering that has for ages made her an enigma and a horror. Let science take her way, let her remove veil after veil of human ignorance, let her push her path toward the great apocalypse of the God who lives in the order of his cosmos. We see at once how just is the application of the word "revelation" to this sphere of progress and

how wide is its scope. Whether he knows it or not, the scientist depends, for all his powers and all his inspirations, upon the Eternal Spirit; in lifting the veil of ignorance from the face of nature, he is God's prophet; he stands as a great servant in the great process of revelation.

It is, however, in the sphere of human life that we find the deep eternal meaning of revelation. What God does for us here is the great, the infinite thing. In regard to the cosmos, His path is in the great waters and his footsteps are not known. When He enters human life, consumes the streams of selfishness and fills their black and deserted channels with the river of God which is full of water; when He lifts from the heart the veil of its ignorance and sin, gives it an original vision of his goodness, a sense of life's worth in the presence of its task, and an endless inspiration for high endeavor and hope; when in such a soul God's character becomes a call for a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness and an assurance to this end, then revelation stands forth as the sublimest word in human speech. Then it means the invasion of our being, through our best thoughts and deeds, of the Eternal God.

In our life and behind it is our Maker. How can He tell us his name, how can He win us to the vision of his character and his purpose for

man? Only as He succeeds in removing the dense veil of ignorance and sin. Our ignorance of our own being, the being of our brother, the moral order of society in which we live, the moral structure of the history out of which we have come, the moral universe in which we are contained like the ocean in its bed, and to whose powers we are responsive and accountable, — our ignorance covers the whole face of our human world and conceals from us the God who lives within it and beyond it. To the servant of the man of God the mountain was bare, untenanted, undefended, at the mercy of the embattled enemy; to the man of God himself the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire and his prayer was that his vision might become that of his servant. Thus it is with human life. To the menial soul it is solitary and desolate, open to attack on all sides, subject to invasion from woe and death, without defense and under sentence of doom; to the prophetic mind God is in all the tides of our existence and He waits to put forth his greater might through the beholding intellect and understanding heart.

1. We do well to consider Jesus as the great Revealer. The meaning of life lies in human personality. Human beings are centres of thought and love and character; they are centres of rational and accountable experience; they are in

their inmost depth centres of conscience and will. The meaning of the universe is the personality of God ; He is the universal, all-pervading consciousness ; He is the omnipresent Spirit. Whoever would tell us of the soul of God and the soul of man must himself be a soul. Jesus the supreme human soul gives us the sovereign vision of God ; Jesus the perfect man reveals to us the actual and the ideal in all men. The glory of God, his love shines in the face of Christ ; the ideal for the world of men shines there ; therefore, He is revelation in its highest character.

2. Jesus is the great Revealer because He sets God's original order in light. The constitution of our human world is the original fact ; revelation is secondary. God's order in human life is the ultimate reality ; Jesus as Revealer sets this reality in the sunlight of his teaching and his spirit where it can be seen of all men. It is like one waiting for the full disclosure of some great mountain, a Kinchingunga, for example. Day after day, it may be, the eager traveler waits ; now the clouds lift and again they settle down, here a crag, there an outline, and farther on a peak, and once more the view is incomplete ; but the hour at length arrives, perhaps at sunset, when the clouds are all rolled away, and against the warm splendor and infinite peace of evening the great mountain stands out in entire, untrou-

bled, and unshadowed revelation. It is now revealed; it has existed from of old; under the cloud and without the cloud it is the same; it has forms, features, a character, and a reality of its own; the lifting of the veil, the revelation, only shows it as it has always been. So with our human world; men are by creation in an order of sonhood to God and of brotherhood one to another. This vast spiritual structure is hidden by the thick and persistent clouds of animal instinct and interest. Often one would not dream that in men there was a divine reality under that terrible cloud. But the day of the Lord comes to those who wait. Then the clouds lift and break and roll away; and the mountain of the Lord, his work from the beginning when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy, stands forth indubitable, resplendent, divine.

3. Jesus is the great Revealer because He shows us that man's spirit and man's spirit in obedience to the will of God are two different orders of life. Man's moral world is one thing; that world aware of itself and obedient to the heavenly vision is another. The order, the plan of man's world, embedded in man's nature, is God's original, independent creation; here revelation cannot add or alter or take away. The new creation comes from God by the will of man, and



here revelation becomes the fountain of new life. This new creation is no longer the mere design of the cathedral ; it is the building rising in accordance with the design. Repentance, revolt from the domination of brute instincts, the sense of the spiritual order in the soul, the clear consciousness that man cannot live by bread alone, that he needs the word of God for his humanity's food, and the force of this revealing word in his will, are the notes of this new creation. When the lost son came to himself, when his vision of his father and his father's home set once again his original human nature in its true light, then he began his return, then he arose and came to his father. He began at once the new creation in accord with his nature as a human being, and the new vision of himself was a creative power.

4. Jesus is the great Revealer because in Him we gain some insight into the ways by which the Eternal Mind has in all ages invaded, illumined, sustained, and inspired the mind of man. Even now men sing as of old : —

“How precious are thy thoughts unto me, O God!  
How great is the sum of them,  
If I should count them they are more in number than  
the sand :  
When I awake I am still with thee.”

Somehow men have been convinced that their thoughts at their best have carried in them, as

clouds carry the sunlight, the thoughts of God. A wayfarer lights upon a certain place, tarries there all night because the sun was set, takes one of the stones of the place, puts it under his head for a pillow, and lays himself down in that place to sleep. And he dreams of a ladder set on the earth and reaching unto heaven and of the passage from the mind of God to his spirit of the divine purpose of his existence. He awakes to find that place a Bethel, a house of God, and the earth where he is a sojourner the gate of heaven. Somehow this dream has repeated itself in unbroken succession in the minds of men, till our human world has come to mean Bethel, till immensity has become the sanctuary of the Most High. This dream of an ancient pilgrim and fugitive has fulfilled itself in our Lord's vision of the open heaven, in his consciousness that the universe is his Father's house.

5. Jesus is the great Revealer because He enables men to distinguish between their own thoughts, pure and simple, and their thoughts with God's thoughts in them. The Sermon on the Mount is such a showing; the builder upon sand and the builder upon rock illustrate the distinction. In the light of this distinction, we read the great past; when we listen to these words of a nameless Psalmist, we know that we are listening to the word of God:—



“The Lord is merciful and gracious,  
Slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness.  
He hath not dealt with us after our sins  
Nor rewarded us after our iniquities ;  
For as the heavens are high above the earth  
So great is his loving kindness toward them that fear  
him.

As far as the east is from the west  
So far hath he removed our transgressions from us.  
Like as a father pitieth his children  
So the Lord pitieth them that fear him.  
For he knoweth our frame ;  
He remembereth that we are dust.”

Somehow we know that through these thoughts of the prophet we attain unto the thoughts of our God: “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Somehow religious men have felt that the poet Daniel was uttering a principle of universal application when he said : —

“ Unless above himself he can  
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man.”

When we consider the sand on the beach, the tempest on the great deep, the flower by the way-side, the mountain in the background, the lights and shadows upon it, the noonday sun shining upon it, and the winding silver stream that binds it to the sea ; when we recognize a father or mother, when we look into the soul of a beloved

friend, in each and all of these instances, we know that by our thought we have passed beyond our thought into reality, cosmic and human, other than our own. When we think of God and lift our mind to Him in prayer, we know that by our thought we have transcended our thought and rest in the thought and presence of God.

This is the simple and fundamental principle of our being. We are everywhere in contact with reality other than our own reality; we pass to that reality through our thoughts and in so doing transcend our thoughts. We seek education, that is we seek escape from our own crude mind into the mature mind of our race; we complete our poor individual existence in the life of home, trade, society, our nation, mankind; and in the same way we seek to perfect our being in God. We may be inland seas, but we are inland seas with straits that open into the oceans that beat round the world, with tides that take our life out into the greater life of our kind and that return upon us in the fullness and thunder of their strength; we may be inland seas, but we are open to the Infinite and in our substance, in the mist and cloud of our soul, we rise to God and from Him we receive continual visitation.

6. Jesus is the great Revealer because He leads the soul in a vast process of spiritual experience. Christian experience is Christian rev-

elation ; it is vision, love, obedience, life, light, and joy. Christian experience is a new type of existence superimposed upon the sensuous and animal existence. It is a type of being expressed in a great moral movement ; while it involves comfort, peace, joy, and hope, its heart is set upon excellence ; the vision of excellence, the pursuit of it, and the expectation of ever closer approach to it sets the religious soul on fire. All great religion is a cry after worth of existence ; possibilities of worth rise before the religious soul in enchanting loveliness and grandeur ; to compass worth, moral worth of being, is the inmost passion of the religious spirit. Augustine speaks here, as he so often does, for our deepest desire : " Too late have I loved thee, O thou Eternal beauty." Nothing but rectitude and its divine comfort will do in this sphere, nothing but a life in the passionate vision of ideal worth, nothing but the expectation, ardent and unquenchable, of at length attaining this goal. This is the living, singing soul of religion ; all else is but the plumage of the bird.

This sense of the beginnings of a worthwhile existence and the hope of greater worth refer themselves to the Infinite soul as inspiration. The religious life in the Old Testament and in the New is always in the vision of God. He is discovered in and through the new experience which He

has called into existence. God is the immediate and infinite other of the man of God: and they two went on together. The cry of the Psalmist is: "My soul is athirst for God." God's loving kindness is better than life. The living reality of God is given in religious experience; the perfection of God becomes the object of adoration and unappeasable desire. This sense of the personal soul in fellowship with the soul of God has its consummation in the consciousness of our Lord: "I and my father are one; O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee. This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ."

Here we have the type for all Christian experience. It first accentuates the human personality; it does this through the sense of moral worthlessness and misery, through the further moods of penitence and hope, through the resolution that holds the will in the gales of passion like a sheet anchor, through the new moral consciousness and the notes of struggle, victory, and prophetic power in it. The great accentuation of the human soul is in and through a genuine religious experience. It is the tumult of the sea that sets the fog-bell going; it is the tumult in the religious soul that makes it aware of its own reality and wild melodious cry.

In and through this same experience the reality and the worth of God are given. He is no longer merely in the heights or in the depths; He is nigh, even in the spiritual life that He has called into existence. His presence is near; it is accentuated through the human conscience and heart; it rises into distinct, awful, infinitely adorable, trustworthy personality. Our sin is against Him; our worthlessness is in his presence; we are men of unclean lips and we dwell among a people of unclean lips and our eyes have seen God, the Lord of Hosts. Our penitence carries in it his personality; He dwells with those who are of a contrite heart. His eternal perfection sets the goal of all our love and struggle and hope; "Ye shall be perfect even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Here indeed we see in a mirror darkly, but the image is the image of God, and for our hope we have the beatific vision, the stage of development when we shall see face to face. As the earth and the sun stand revealed and indubitable in the great light of to-day as apart and yet together, each real and yet in a continuous fellowship, so in the illumination of the soul God and man appear as true, neither merged in the other, neither the shadow of the other, each substantial and distinct, and yet both in unbroken and ineffable communion. Metaphors multiply as one tries to

express the new and tremendous emphasis that religious experience gives to the reality of the soul and the reality and personality, that is, the moral intelligence and self-communicating power of God. The ocean at peace knows not the structure of its bed anywhere ; and while no stress could move it over the entire range of its hold on the earth, yet, when the tempest has been upon it, and it has been going in all its wild power for many days, it might become conscious of the order of the shores round which it sweeps and here and there gain intimations of its deep and awful foundations ; at the same time it might dream of the play upon it of heavenly powers, the occasional and the everlasting, and guess of the universal presence in which it was living its free, majestic life. So the soul unmoved by religious awe and hope can never know the structure of its own being ; and while no stir or tumult within it can possibly reveal it entirely to itself, while it is too vast for complete self-comprehension, yet, when the pressure of God's inspirations upon it have been long-continued and mighty, it surely comes to a sense of its tremendous moral being ; then it cries, "It is He that hath made us and not we ourselves" ; then, too, it looks up to find an order of being answering to its own, immeasurable, infinite, out of which have come its whole character and hope ; then in



the tides and storms of the human spirit the presence and the power of God are known.

The sense of God working in the souls of men, and waiting to invade their life through their ideals and their loyalty, is the basis of all revelation. Here comes the prophet sharing the consciousness of God's presence in the world and lifting it through his special endowment and grace to transcendent vision and power. A Beethoven is a mystery in music, a Shakespeare in poetry, a Newton in science, a Raphael or a Michael Angelo in painting, a Plato or an Aristotle in philosophy. When common men are set in the presence of these masters, they appear like foothills in comparison with the supreme summits of some sovereign mountain range. In the same way the genius, for the consciousness of God's presence in our human world, of an Isaiah, a Jeremiah, a Psalmist of the first order, a John or a Paul, is transcendent. It is a gift so far beyond the possession of ordinary men as to seem something miraculous. It is the special endowment for the special function of the prophet. It is an amazing gift, and the issue of its use is an amazing benefaction to mankind. We ordinary men should know little of the cosmos but for the illustrious line of specially endowed men of science; we should never have dreamed of the possibilities of expression in music, painting, building, sculpture,

and poetry but for the great apostolic succession of genius in this line ; nor should we ever have risen to the universal outlook but for the high service of men of genius in the sphere of thought. In the same way we are under an immeasurable debt to the monumental minds in religion. They have seen what others could not see ; they have imparted their vision to the multitude of humble men. The succession of the prophets is the highest in history ; through the service of these men the fact of God's presence in his world has been discovered, taken up into a consciousness of awe and joy, carried through the whole sphere of human interests as illumination and transfiguration and made over into the heritage of the race. Revelation rests upon the fact of a speaking God ; it goes forward in the sense of the prophet as the oracle of God to men ; it has never been described with more fidelity to truth or with greater majesty than in these words : " God having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets, by divers portions and in divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken unto us in his Son." The word that became vision and character in the prophet at length became flesh in Jesus Christ and dwelt among men full of grace and truth. The greatest religious experience of mankind involves the sovereign consciousness of God ; when this consciousness is rendered in the greatest words,



it becomes our Bible ; when it is rendered in the supreme Teacher, Servant, and Sufferer, it becomes our Saviour.

In Jesus our Lord we have the great living answer to the question, What is revelation? It is his vision of the Eternal Father, his vision of the divine order of our human world in Sonhood to God and in brotherhood man to man ; his vision attested by his life and in turn pervading that life with ineffable light. The manger in Bethlehem is still the East radiant with unutterable promise to our poor world ; Christmas commemorates the beginning of the divine apocalypse ; the day-spring from on high has greeted us and more and more it has become the day-star in the world's heart ; on them that sit in darkness and the shadow of death a great light has shined. Now we dare believe that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all ; that here in his supreme Son we have the light of the world, and that whosoever followeth Him shall not walk in darkness but shall have the light of life.

## II

### WHAT IS THE IDEAL?

“Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus.”

Phil. iii, 12.

HERE we see the great apostle in eager and joyous pursuit of the goal and prize of his existence as a Christian man. He has become aware that Christ's thought for him is the true end of his being; that thought is an infinite thought; it is too vast for him to comprehend. He is not discouraged on that account; he is rather exhilarated; he prepares himself for a great pursuit, an endless quest; he flies in the glowing path of his retreating ideal as an eagle might in the fires of the setting and vanishing sun.

In these days, much more than in former times, we speak of the ideals of mankind. Among serious and vivid thinkers this mode of speech has become universal. It is a mode of speech impressive, significant, and altogether legitimate. Still it involves a good deal of vagueness; and therefore my object now is to introduce, if I may, clearness and sureness in the current use, among Christian people, of the ideal.

I begin with the question, What is an ideal? This is, in the strict use of words, a simple question, and not at all difficult to answer. An ideal is a mental picture or image of something that one would like to do or to become, to possess or to enjoy. A mental picture or image clearly held and steadily pursued is in the simplest sense of the term an ideal. A hunter beating about for game, a mechanic looking for a job, a young lawyer dreaming of some great case, a young physician beholding in imagination his office crowded with patients, a farmer on the way to the market with the produce of his farm and thinking of the bargains that he may make, the young lover building his paradise, the young mother picturing the future glory of the infant in her arms, the daring moralist forecasting a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness; each is an illustration of the ideal. Whoever entertains a mental picture or image of anything that he would like to do or to become, to possess or to enjoy, is, in the original and unqualified meaning of the word, an idealist. Such a compound of meanings having been packed into the term, there is clearly a call for analysis and distinction.

We think of science as an expression of the ideal; it seeks to attain complete knowledge of the cosmos in relation to man. The image of that

possibility lights up the scientific way and governs it. Ten thousand seekers after scientific truth are impelled by this vision; they express their vision in more and more amazing results. In the same way philosophy aims at the yet grander end of finding the meaning of the universe and our human life in it. Here again an image guides the endeavor of the world. So, too, we judge that art is concerned with the ideal; it is one monumental expression of the ideal. We are sure that the men who wrote the Psalms had a vision, that the great poet who wrote the Book of Job had a vision. These men steadily pursued their vision and tried to embody it in noble words. We are sure that the poet Sophocles and the historian Thucydides had a vision; that they steadily pursued it and tried to express it, the one in his drama, the other in his history. We are sure that this holds true of all the fine arts. They all are preceded by an ideal and by that ideal they are governed. Great music is an expression of the ideal; the harmony is sung in the soul before it is expressed in musical notation. The Moses and the David of Michael Angelo first appeared in the sculptor's mind; the heroic figures in marble answered the call of the inspired imagination. Raphael's great paintings and Titian's and Da Vinci's try to catch and embody the vision of beauty. It is perfectly obvious that the whole

circle of art is an utterance, — a monumental utterance of the ideal life of the race.

But we must not stop here. These expressions of the ideal are but the far-shining summits of this mountain of the Lord; we need to know its base on the great breast of our common humanity. Therefore, I remark that the total life of mankind is initiated and governed by ideal forces; that nowhere in man is there any pursuit, any achievement, any experience, any desire or expectation, apart from the presence and might of the ideal.

Consider, for example, the great warriors of the race. Alexander when he invaded Asia followed with steadfast and invincible step a grand mental image; Hannibal when he crossed the Alps and swept down into Italy followed a magnificent dream; Cæsar when he waged his warfare with Gaul carried out the campaign in his brain, fought out in the actual battle-field the image of victory in his imperial imagination; Napoleon when he invaded Russia was one of the most audacious, if also one of the most unfortunate, of idealists. Wellington when he planned his Waterloo campaign, and Grant when he drew up his scheme for the investment of Vicksburg, were working out a mental picture. The march of every army since the morning of time has been initiated by a mental picture wise or foolish, noble or cruel.

We are still far away from the whole truth about the ideal. The business of the world follows the day-dreams of the race. The light of intelligence is guiding the industry of mankind. Business is like the ship plunging forward in the night, with a great light set in her prow or a search-light playing from the captain's bridge illuminating the wild path over which she is steaming. There is no business done anywhere except in response to images, persistent and compelling, in the minds of business men.

We must advance a step beyond this. The fact is, all action, good and bad, just and unjust, virtuous and vicious, is initiated and governed by mental pictures. Take, for example, the desire for food. A man is hungry; his hunger is reported in the mind, it is figured in the imagination, and that imagination presses upon him and upon his active powers till the hunger is satisfied. Similarly a man's desire for wealth or power or knowledge is thrown up in the intelligence, figured in the imagination; there it remains urging him onward, controlling his activity in the line of wealth, power, knowledge. Upon the level where we now stand the drunkard is an idealist. He is in the rage of recurrent desire; that recurrent desire gets into the mind, throws up its image there, and keeps it there till relief comes. The same reasoning holds in the case of the sensualist and



the wicked person of every description. The desire that begins in the physical nature is impotent till it gets into the mind, till it figures itself in blazing colors there, till it becomes so inflamed and powerful as to dominate action. The bad spirit in the Persian faith, the Satan of the epic of Job, the devil of the New Testament, the Fiend of "Paradise Lost," the Mephistopheles of "Faust," the Lucifer of the "Divine Comedy," is in each instance a transcendent baleful idealist. In each case the heart is the centre of supreme malignity; that malign passion figures itself in a vast imagination, controls it to the exclusion of all images of good, and turns the mighty personality into an unmitigated promoter of evil, disaster, and death.

We enter the region of affection to note the operation of the same law. The great cry for friendship, the intense and magnificent passion of love, the solitudes and prayers that guard the sanctity of home, gain admission to the imagination and live as reflected there. These high reflections of enduring and noble wants become compelling motives in the life of normal human beings. Man is never a creature of mere appetite, of mere desire, of mere affection; these are always reported in the intellect; they are flung up as banners in the imagination; and these images are the great guiding lights and governing forces

in the life of mankind. Everywhere on all planes of existence, upon all subjects, in all directions, the life of man is, in the strictest sense of the word, ideal. Images, pictures, guide all departments of existence, — science, philosophy, art, business, family life, friendship, and the ordinary animal wants of men. Jesus we describe as an idealist, that is, the will of God stands in ineffable splendor in his imagination and there takes the sovereignty of his being. Judas is an idealist; the image of those thirty pieces of silver, sordid and revolting, lives in his imagination and there drives him to treason and death. I repeat, therefore, that the total life of man is, in the strictest use of the term, initiated and governed by the ideal.

It has become clear, by this time, that it is not enough for a man to be an idealist; he must become a moral idealist; the emphasis must be not only on the noun but also on the adjective. And here again our feet stand upon the order of our nature. Here is the organic framework of our race; we are a race in relation, member to member, man to man. That system of relations is the structure, the organism of our humanity. There are lovers all the world over; there are husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, friends in the great relation of friendship, masters and servants in the fellowship of trade,



citizens in the mutualism of the state, men in the vast communion of humanity. These great organic relations in which human beings stand to one another, and all their derivatives, throw their meaning upon the screen of the imagination.

Consider what all this means. When you ask, where does moral obligation begin, what is its origin and basis, what shall be the answer? Much confusion reigns here where fundamental clearness is of the most vital moment. Here is the great fact of a race in organic, indispensable relations; here are lovers, members of families, friends, masters and servants, citizens, men and their kind. These relations we did not make; they are made for us and we are pressed into them by an overmastering authority. Out of these relations come ideals; these ideals are the meanings of the relations in which we stand to one another reflected in imagination. In these relations we are called upon to behave thus and so; then ideals become our obligations in the organic structure of our human existence. You look at the horizon after the sun has gone down; you see out of that horizon the great planets swimming up into full splendor; they are the light and beauty of the evening, and if you have work on hand out of doors they will guide you to your task. The human relation is the horizon line, the ideal is the great blazing planet, its light and

beauty call to the workman and glorify his task. These ideals, thus rising like stars out of the relations of man with man, assemble in the vast sky of the educated imagination; there they rain down upon our actual world their meaning and their beauty; in the presence of their splendor we confess them as our obligations; these are our divine, inescapable debts to our kind; and when these forms of imagination have entered the conscience and are indorsed there as our obligations, they call us as by the authority of God Himself to obedience and service.

This, then, is our second conclusion, that all the relations in which human beings stand one to another contain a moral meaning; when this moral meaning gets into the imagination and there unfurls its red banner, and when men live in recognition of its beauty and sovereignty, the ideal life inseparable from men has risen to the moral idealism inseparable from the existence of true men.

This, however, is not the end of our analysis. The moral ideal itself needs to be qualified; it needs to be lifted into the Christian ideal. Paul was an idealist when he was a child, as every child is, sometimes good and at other times bad; that is, all his appetites, desires, affections, even from infancy, were reported and figured in his intelligence, and became there the guiding forces of

his childhood. When he was a child he thought as a child. The time came when he could not remain a mere idealist; he rose to a moral idealist. He wanted to become a righteous man in all the relations of his existence, and this profound and passionate longing gained access to his imagination and thus became his sovereign ruler. There came a time when his conception of righteousness appeared to be wholly inadequate, when his power to realize even that inadequate conception of the upright life broke down. He was then a moral idealist in despair and his cry has rung through the ages: "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Later the day arrived when he read the organic order of humanity in the light of Jesus Christ, when his will rose an inspired will in the presence of a new and an immeasurable task. Again his shout of victory has been one of the great inspirations of militant souls from that day to this: "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Then followed the life that was like the circuit of the sun from east to west, now sweeping on through cloudless hours and again blazing its way through tempests, and at the close of the day still continuing its glorious and endless career.

Here we must try for a few moments to turn this exposition to vital account. We must ask

what service the Christian ideal does for the man who sincerely holds it. What did Paul get from his devotion to the Christian ideal?

1. First, his ideal gave him a sense of the infinite meaning of life. Plato says that the ideal philosopher has an aspiration after truth in its wholeness and integrity, he seeks for the vision of all time and all existence. And when you read that, you say, What a sheer absurdity for any human being to think of comprehending truth in its absoluteness anywhere; what a preposterous thing to hold up as the goal of achievement to any mortal the vision of all time and all existence! Yes, but that Platonic ideal gives significance to the whole intellectual life of the race, its pursuit of truth and its striving for the vision of God. That infinite, and in the present moment, impossible ideal sheds not only a meaning through the intellectual toil of mankind, but also gives a spirit of dignity to every genuine thinker and every genuine truth-seeker. Immanuel Kant says that the conscience calls for absolute moral perfection; it issues what he calls the "categorical imperative." Again, how completely absurd it seems to demand of any man, anywhere, even the best, conformity to a standard of absolute excellence! And yet that ideal of the conscience has sobered a whole century, and the more that it is dwelt upon and entertained the more it soberes the world and gives

a kind of sublimity to the struggle of serious men and women after an exalted life. In line with all this and transcending it, our Lord says: "Ye shall be perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect." Here is an ideal infinite in extent and of infinite worth. And if we are to call for its realization to-day, there could not be put into words a more absurd statement than that sublime sentence found in the Sermon on the Mount. Yet the holding up of an ideal before the world, infinite in extent and infinite in worth, gives that significance to our human struggle which has been the strength and the glory of all the ages of heroic men and women.

Paul, therefore, gained the sense of the majesty of his personal life in the presence of the infinite ideal which his Master held before him, and all his travels, all his sufferings, his whole brief sojourn in time became part of an endless career, an unclosed opportunity, an infinite task in the freedom of the city of God.

2. Then, too, Paul's ideal kept his life in movement. Recall Tennyson's "Brook." Is there a more beautiful poem in existence than the song of the brook that runs to join the brimming river? "For men may come, and men may go, but I go on forever." And the sea is beyond the brimming river. Is there anything in nature more suggestive of our life when it is true than the gush of

water out of the heart of the rock on the mountain-side, its playful, joyful, vigorous rush down the mountain-side, its struggle with all sorts of obstacles, till it becomes a river, and sweeps on and forever on to the sea that is its goal. It is this moral ongoing that gives worth to our life, the sense that we are bound for the Eternal, and childhood, youth, manhood, and old age are but the different phases of the river that seeks the infinite sea.

3. Again, Paul's ideal provided for the continuous purification of his mind. Our conceptions of ourselves are poor things, and when we hold ourselves to the mere estimates of to-day, we hold ourselves cheap, we insult our humanity. Wordsworth reminds us that we are greater than we know ; and herein is the glory of our being. Our nature stretches in all directions, sinks into the abysses, rises into the heights ; and so we need the expanding conception, the purified ideal. You see a child trying to understand its nature as its mother does, as its father does, trying to climb up to the mature thought of its existence out of its childish thought ; you see a student struggling with his subject, trying to abandon his own poor conception of it and to struggle up into the conception held by the accomplished teacher and thinker ; and in the same way you see the disciple Paul in the presence of his



Master, trying to understand himself, sure that he has not yet understood himself as Christ understands him and resolving to pursue that flying goal forever.

Is there anything finer than this daily life in the presence of a sovereign Master who knows what we do not, who understands the meaning of our life as we do not understand it, receiving from him every year vaster and sounder thoughts and turning upon the fact of human existence a purer and a more trustworthy mind?

4. Finally, Paul was a man of hope because of his Christian ideal. He believed that when God sets before a man an ideal, He defines for him his task as a moral being and assures him of the conditions without which the task cannot be done. The Greek Plato believed in the immortality of the soul as surely as any man ever believed in it, and he believed in consequence of his vision of the endless errand of the human mind in the search for truth. Kant, one of the great masters of modern wisdom, believed in immortality with a great and serious belief because he saw that an endless opportunity is indispensable for an infinite task. Jesus, when he set his ideal for his disciples, "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect," provided for the realization of that ideal endless life in the eternal world. In each instance, the ideal brought

hope; in the case of our Lord the ideal filled the serious and serving brotherhood of believers with a hope that turned night into day.

In the light of the ideal, our God is seen to be the God of hope. Our moral ideals, our Christian ideals are the imperfect images of his design in our being, his purpose concerning our life. God gets his deep-laid and mighty moral plan into the mind through the glowing forms of the imagination; in the splendid pictures and gorgeous banners of the moral idealist, He gives intimations of his infinite purpose and loving kindness for our race; in the vast and blazing scenery of the Christian imagination working upon Christian duty, He brings to an apocalypse his redeeming decree, his endless saving grace. As God has set in the infinite spaces the stars in all their pure and wild beauty as the visible and multitudinous tokens of his power, so He has set in the heaven of the human imagination the moral ideals of mankind, in all their stern and terrible loveliness, as the enduring and burning witnesses of his character of infinite honor and love. When you see these moral ideals working in childhood, gleaming now and then through the mists of animal want and childish interest, when you note them in youth coming to a tremendous disclosure of their power, flaming forth their indignation at sensuality and brutality of every kind and brand-



ing the young soul with the moral order of the world; when you observe them in mature men and women, looking with grief and disdain upon their slackness, their sordidness, their desertion of their high calling and urging them with the terrible intensity of moral light and fire to return to their duty as men; when you behold them in old age creating an infinite silence, filling the gloom of evening with illumination and peace, opening the gates and swinging back the everlasting doors that the weary and the heavy-laden may enter the eternal rest, "put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." Here you may behold the open heavens; here you may look into the supernatural and divine; here you may watch something more glorious than sunrise, the dawn of the great and terrible day of the Lord, the advent of the Kingdom of Christ, the coming of the Holy Ghost.

### III

#### THE UNIVERSAL IDEAL

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light.”

Ex. XIII, 21.

NOTHING could be more evanescent than cloud and fire; the one vanishes and the other burns itself out. Both are types of the perishable in life, in literature, in history, in faith, in being. God was in them, and so these pillars of cloud and of fire became symbols of the presence of the eternal in the most fleeting forms of our world. In the twofold significance of the words of the text, in the adequate and inadequate use of it as a type, we shall find ourselves in the presence of some of the most fundamental antagonisms of existence. For, after all, there are but two absolutely contrasted and eternally incompatible views of the universe, human life, and history; all the controversies between rival sects of believers are almost petty, are certainly incidental, compared with the great and solemn battle which all believers wage with all unbelievers. What were the small differences which the early Christians had among themselves compared with the mighty difference which existed between

paganism and Christianity. Great even as the rent was between the Catholic Church and the Reformers, wide as was the chasm between Leo and Luther, between Erasmus and the monks, between Loyola and John Calvin, even this tremendous breach is as nothing when measured against the fixed gulf that forever separates the atheist and the believer. Orthodoxies and heterodoxies are only on the surface, are, indeed, only contemptible unless they concern the ultimate meanings of man, his history and his universe.

This explains the catholicity of the greater leaders of the Church in every age. They have been men of positive convictions within their several communions; they have been, in many cases, men whose opinions were wrought into fine detail; but along with this tendency, they have cultivated the habit of carrying the hostilities of faith and life into their fundamental forms. They have felt that the differences between true believers are as nothing compared to those which exist between believers and unbelievers. How good it is, in the study of the military annals of the world, to get into the deeps of history, to stand on the plain of Marathon, on the fields of Arbela, Zama, Châlons, Waterloo, and Gettysburg, and see in the clashing squadrons the battle of opposing civilizations, to see the great captains implicating all times in their

grand devices, to hear in the thunder of their warfare a significance for all peoples. How great is one's privilege when one can get down into the depths of life, into the really profound things in our intellectual and spiritual history, into the centres of the ultimate and infinite antagonisms, witness the movements upon that field, and hear the cannonade that concerns humanity and that implicates the universe. This is the privilege offered by the text. It takes one into the presence of the ultimate and infinite antagonisms of faith and life.

1. There is first the radical and eternal hostility between belief in God and the denial of his existence. Here is a war either to surrender of one of the parties to the other, or to annihilation. Such faith and such denial must fight until one or the other shall conquer. They cannot have separate and mutual possessions; they cannot form treaties of non-interference; they cannot live in peace; they cannot let each other alone. The denial of God must strive to cover the universe with its awful shadow; the faith that God lives must evermore struggle to put the universe under its light.

Look now how both these contrasted views may use the symbolism of the text. What better description of atheism could there be than that the universe is only vapor and fire. There is the

endless change of tides, of days, of seasons, of worlds, the flow of the cosmic stream from the original fiery vapor in which it had its rise, through wonderful spheres of order and brilliance, through forms of life infinite in variety and exquisite in detail down and out into the sea of indistinguishableness and nothingness. Look at that pillar of cloud by day, look at that pillar of fire by night, and see, in the substance that disappears, and in that which burns itself out, the symbols of your universe. The word "perishable" is written upon its forehead, the doom of change, decay, disappearance, and death rests upon all things. Nature, with her movement of tides, her procession of seasons, her solid earth and her heaving seas, her waxing and waning moons, and her rising and setting suns, her wondrous constellations, and all her countless worlds of light, is but a show, a pageant, a soap-bubble where collapse is certain and swift, and so complete as to leave nothing behind it. History is but the human parallel to this outward vanity. The rise of families, the growth of tribes, the organization of nations, the development of civilizations, the emergence of ideals, domestic, national, and human, the coming of the great religions, the advent of Christianity, the greatest of them, and all the bright promises with which it has starred man's firmament, the whole move-

ment of mankind is without a guide and without a goal. It is simply cloud and fire. It may be dull or bright, it may be beautiful or humble ; it must be unsubstantial and vain.

Is it not deeply significant that Scotland, the country of great believers, has given to the world in Hume the greatest of unbelievers ; that the people who have furnished so many poets of faith have given in James Thomson's "The City of Dreadful Night" the greatest poem of despair in our English tongue? It must convince us that what I am saying is not impossible, or remote, but most real and near to us all. There are souls who labor with

"The sense that every struggle brings defeat  
 Because Fate holds no prize to crown success;  
 That all the oracles are dumb or cheat  
 Because they have no secret to express;  
 That none can pierce the vast black veil uncertain  
 Because there is no light beyond the curtain —  
 That all is vanity and nothingness."

All that comes from seeing only the perishable in the universe, from beholding only the cloud and fire.

But the pillars of cloud and fire are not everything ; they are only the temporal forms through which God looks. God is in the pageant of nature, and while it passes, He does not pass. God is in the drama of history, and although all the actors die on the stage of time, the Eternal still

abides. We grant at once that nature is but a cosmic stream, a stream that may at any moment run dry; we concede that history cannot be forever upon this planet, that it must end; but we hold that the fountain of nature is the Eternal, and that the source and end of human life is from everlasting to everlasting. Atheism has many sources, many palliations in the case of the oppressed; but its chief source is the want of insight. One man sees nothing but the show, the passing and perishable in nature and in humanity; another man sees the Eternal in everything. Atheism is to be cured, not so much by logical refutation — although that is good — as by opening the eyes of the blind. Christ gave men the disinterested mind, and the pure heart; then came the vision of God. God is as near to mankind as Jesus was to his two disciples on their walk to Emmaus. He was with them, entered into their sorrow and despair, made their dead hopes live and burn again, and so intensified his presence in their life that at last their eyes were opened and they knew Him. So near is God to men. He is in the cloud and fire of their life, in their doubt, sorrow, and despair, in their whole human fellowship; He is in their thought, He is speaking to them, and some day his presence will be so manifest in their experience that they must discover Him. Meanwhile



we must remember that belief and unbelief are largely matters of insight or the want of it. Israelites and Egyptians both saw the pillars of cloud and of fire; but while the Egyptians saw nothing but the vapor and the fire, the Israelites knew that God was in them. Both believers and unbelievers see the pageant of nature and the drama of history; but while the unbeliever sees nothing but perishable forms and generations marching to death, the believer beholds the Eternal God. And he measures his insight against his brother's denial; he sustains his antagonism to atheism by the clearness, assurance, and joy of his vision of the Infinite.

2. Another antagonism, only second in importance to that which I have been presenting, concerns the higher possibility of human life. One of the fiercest and most persistent of creeds is that selfishness is the law of human life, that appetite is the supreme force in the human heart, that the cloudy comfort and the fiery pleasure are everything, that the march into personal gain by day and the passionate indulgence by night are the only ultimate objects of desire. If there is anything in human life other than vapor and fire, if there is any presence in the pillars of cloud and flame, it is not that of God, but that of the Devil. There is something worse even than immorality, and that is no morality. There are



so many who never think of honor. There are so many more who, when they do think of higher things, run away from life. Whenever they think of amendment they think of reading a pious book, or attending church once on Sunday, or perhaps of even venturing to a prayer meeting. They do not grasp the fact that God is seeking expression through the discipline of their appetites, the chastity of their passions, the order of their homes, their behavior in business, their fidelity and public spirit as citizens, their humanity as men. They do not seem to know what morality is, what religion is. They are simply fire and vapor ; with possibly the addition of the Devil.

Here is the line of our second grand antagonism. Human life is vapor and fire, a mere passing show, a mere material force. It is all that ; but it is infinitely more. It has in it the presence of God, and the purpose of the cloud is to utter through its benign shade the infinite Pity, the purpose of the fire is to disclose through its flame God's bright and everlasting Love. The pillars were divine leaders to poor Israel, and divine leaders, revealers of God and guides from God, men must be to their fellow-men. Appetites men have, but they are not all appetite ; passions they have, but they are not all passion ; strugglers for life they are, but not only strugglers for life ;

kindred with the animals they are, but kindred also with something higher. There is the longing for beauty ; there is the hunger for righteousness; there is the aptitude for succoring the distressed ; there is the hope of a better life ; there is the sense of an eternal moral order uttering itself through the conscience of the individual and the constitution of society ; there is the sublime capacity for God and for becoming his revealers, his leaders and servants to our fellow-men. If man is a simple materialism, morality is impossible ; if he is only a cloud and a fire, to look in him for love and honor is an absurdity.

You see here how interpretation either vindicates the highest life for man or fiercely denies its possibility. We cannot be upon both sides of this conflict. We cannot believe that man is a mere materialism, and fight the good fight for righteousness, fight for the revelation of God to our fellow-men. If we are to do this, it must be because we see the soul within the body, and God within the soul. Insight is the origin of faith in God ; insight is the inspiration of all high endeavor.

3. Here we come upon a third antagonism of our time : that between the merely earthly life and the immortal. Everything depends, in this question of immortality, upon what we see in human life. We shall take sides for or against

the endless life according as we see little or much in man. Over no single belief in the whole body of our faith is there more agitation than over this. Is it possible to convert the imagination of future life, the vague fancy, the delightful dream into an honest conviction, into a reasonable hope, into a sincere and powerful expectation? There are many people in our time serious and high-minded, ready for all good works, who are full of hesitation here. While the realm beyond death never exercised a deeper or nobler interest over the human mind than it does to-day, the number who are without any influential hope is very great. The explanation of this incapacity for active faith in the endless life does not seem to me to lie in the currency of scientific notions. For the profoundest science has been able so far to throw no light upon the relation of brain and mind, or upon the ultimate mystery of life and death. The explanation of this inability to believe in the hereafter seems to me to lie in the fact that attention is too much fixed upon the perishable side of life. We see in man, for the most part, only the cloud and the fire; we see the one vanishing and the other burning itself out. We note only the changeful, the evanescent in our existence, and therefore we do not see any ground for perpetuated life. We further see, altogether too exclusively, the weakness, the wickedness and

the worthlessness of our fellow-men; and we say inwardly that these masses of mankind are ugly as a fog-bank, and vain as a dying fire. Yet again the mortal side of life seems so obvious, it is on the surface, and for those who look only on the surface, there is nothing that speaks of immortality. Thus an exclusive concern with the perishable in man, an exclusive sense of the moral worthlessness of men, and a failure to look hard at life, to go below its surface, are to my mind the chief causes of unbelief upon this grave theme. Perhaps I should add also the feeling of surprise that belief in the soul's immortality should be difficult. If the Israelites had thought only of the transient nature of the cloud and fire, if they had thought only of their poor and dead materialism, if they had been content to look only on the surface, if they had been surprised and overwhelmed over the concealment of God, they could never have experienced his guidance and protection. Go inward through the perishable in man, look into the heart of the cloud, into the centre of the fire, and you will find a living soul. You will find a being with a scheme of the universe, crude enough, indeed, yet wonderful; with a sense of the divine order over him, under him, and roundabout him, with a sense of accountability to that order for thought, speech, and behavior; you will find a being with a ca-

capacity for communion with the Eternal, with an aptitude for the life from God, a being with persistent thoughts, enduring purposes and deathless love; a being with a life that has already survived a thousand shocks, and that is the worthy heir of the endless years. Find the immaterial in the material, the imperishable in the perishable, that which has been constant amid the fleeting; find God in the cloud and in the fire, and immortality will seem the only reasonable faith.

It is a great thing to believe in God with all one's heart. It is a great thing to rise to the grasp of the Christian creed at any point. It calls for the deepest sincerity and earnestness. Humanity, intelligent humanity, is not treated to its faith, as the mother bird treats its helpless brood in the nest, finding the worm and putting it into their open mouths. There are no ready-made clothes for the soul, and no food for the heart of the inactive. The mature bird finds its food either on the wing or by digging; and the human mind must toil, must both dig and soar, if it is to come into the great possession of a rational and living Christian faith.

It is a vast help to faith to remember that permanence is the great note of human greatness. Even in human productions we look for the eternal through the temporal. The picture

that always keeps its charm, the song that is sung by all the generations, the building that even when it has become a ruin maintains its sway over the imagination, the books that are the abiding teachers of mankind, the characters that interest all ages and all peoples — these are the productions, these are the men that we call great. The value of a character, a book, an age is to be determined by the mass of the Eternal that there is in it. God's presence made that vagrant cloud and that uncertain fire enduring as this earth, and God's presence determines the worth and lastingness of all things, all productions, and all beings. When we discover that only the works, the thoughts, the characters, and the spirit that transcend time are really worth anything, that only these are the truly great things in human history, we are all the stronger in our stand for the immovable things of the Christian faith.

One of the finest views in Switzerland is obtained from the summit of the Bernina Pass. It is seven thousand six hundred feet high, and from this elevation the entire valley of the Engadine is visible, with the peaks of a hundred mountains ranging from eight thousand to thirteen thousand feet in height. Then in another direction the glorious view extends into Italy, the prospect melting upon the far horizons into an



enchantment of beauty. But to me, as I stood upon this pass, the most impressive sight was not the deep blue of the cloudless sky, nor the sublime summits that rose in stainless white and dazzling brightness into its pure depths, nor the far prospect of combined beauty and grandeur; but the two quiet lakes that stood so near together, separated only by about a hundred feet. So near are they at the first, so far apart are they at the last; for the waters of the one end in the Adriatic and those of the other end in the Black Sea! And all this difference at the end is because of the seemingly slight difference at the beginning. The watershed is between them, and because of that decisive elevation, they can never join, they must forever flow farther and farther apart. That points the great question of life. Where do you begin? On which side of the watershed of being do you live? You may be very near each other at the first, you and your believing friend. He believes in God, and you do not; he believes in disclosing God through this poor earthly life, and you do not; he believes that the spirit of man lives forever, and you do not; and this vastness of your inherent difference is hidden by the fact that in your business, in your neighborhood, in many of your tasks and interests you are so near. You are on one side of this great watershed and he is on the other.

These two lakes that seem so near, at the first, are at last as wide apart as east and west. So great are the antagonisms, so wide are the contrasts, so far away from one another at the end, are the believer and the unbeliever, the devotee of righteousness and the apostle of pleasure, the communicant in the Kingdom of the Eternal and the fugitive among the shadows of time, the worshiper of the living God in Christ, and the disciple of cloud and fire.



## IV

### THE SENSE OF THE IDEAL PRESENCE

“If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

Ps. cxxxix, 9-10.

WHEN we look at a piece of noble tapestry, we see at once how much it owes to the figure in it, to its color, its character, its distinction; and in the same way when we examine a specimen of great literature, we perceive at a glance how much the wisdom and the sentiment of that literature are indebted to the imagery in it. We all agree with Edmund Burke, in his contention that a fine sentence should be composed of three parts, a striking truth, a corresponding sentiment, both rendered doubly striking by a beautiful figure; and we recall at once this orator's exemplification of his canon, when, in the heated political campaign in Bristol, his comrade fell dead at his side, and that immortal figure sprang from Burke's lips, “What shadows we are and what shadows we pursue.” In a series of figures bearing upon the evanescence of pleasure, Burke's great contemporary, Robert Burns, has enriched our tongue for all time: —

“Pleasures are like poppies spread,  
You seize the flower, its bloom is shed ;  
Or, like the snow-fall in the river,  
A moment white, then melts forever ;  
Or, like the borealis race,  
That flit ere you can point their place ;  
Or, like the rainbow’s lovely form,  
Evanishing amid the storm.”

Great literature, of course, consists in golden wisdom, in noble sentiment, in high and true manner ; yet the imagery in great literature is a source of wonder and delight ; it is besides a lightening force in the service of wisdom and of sentiment. Carlyle, wise and strong, is particularly serviceable here by the number of beautiful images that he has added to our speech. When he speaks of Harriet Martineau’s soul “as clean as river sand” ; when he writes of his wife that “she was the rainbow to my poor dripping day” ; when he describes his aged mother sinking in death, “as the last pale sickle of the moon, sinking in dark seas” ; when he remarks on the lines that John Sterling wrote him, four days before he died, that “they were written in star fire and in immortal tears,” he is adding to the volume of the precious speech of mankind. Once more this great writer resting in the evening by the Solway sees in the “North an Aurora — footlights of this great theatre of a universe where you and I are players for an hour.”

We cannot forget that noble image of Wordsworth — he is not rich in images — when he speaks of the “ Eye that hath kept watch o’er man’s mortality ”; nor must we pass Goethe’s great figure in “ Faust,” where the “ Time Spirit ” sings : —

“ At the whirring loom of time unawed  
I work the living mantle of God.”

We speak of Bacon as a scientific man. Science has gone utterly beyond him in its vision, in its achievement, and in its method; he lives by his wisdom, by his sentiment, by his manner; and part of the charm and wonder of his manner is his richness in imagery. Who can forget the first sentence in his “ Essay on Death,” — “ Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark ”; or one of his great sentences in his “ Essay on Truth,” — “ Certainly it is heaven upon earth to have a man’s mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth.”

What shall we say of Shakespeare’s addition to our life here? Let me remind you of one or two of his shining and surpassing contributions: “ They that stand high have many blasts to shake them, and if they fall they dash themselves in pieces.” “ After life’s fitful fever, he sleeps well ! ”

“ Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove ;  
O, no ! it is an ever-fixèd mark,

That looks on tempests, and is never shaken ;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken."

And then that figure which gives us the glory of the philanthropist, the glory of the friend of man, "A tomb of orphans' tears." I know of no exercise more enriching for the young in their study of great literature than to fasten its wisdom and its high passion in their memory through these glorious images.

When we turn to religion we find the same thing. Figurative speech in religion at its worst is enigmatic, confusing, disappointing ; at its best it is an apocalypse of the Eternal through the temporal ; besides it is freedom and delight. Think for a moment of the imagery in the teaching of Jesus : the hen and her brood, the leaven, the mustard seed, the pearl of great price, the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son, the vine and the branches, the sower going forth to sow, the sun shining upon the evil and the good, the rain falling on the just and the unjust. The teaching of Jesus has its wisdom and passion inlaid with images significant, beautiful, burdened with tender humanity. Consider the imagery of the great prophets : "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be like wool." What a history lies behind that metaphor. You find the

dye in Plato, but you do not find that which takes the dye out. Or, again, "the sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light and thy God, thy glory." The splendor of the sensuous world is here used to proclaim the coming time when it shall be done away, when the Eternal that now looks through it, as God looked through the pillars of cloud and of fire, will some day come in its own strength and flood the moral universe with its illumination and peace.

There is the imagery in the Psalms: "Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof. Let all the trees of the field clap their hands." "Thou makest the outgoings of the morning and the evening to rejoice"; as if God lifted up his face in the sunrise and glowed with the fires of his love in the sunset. Consider, too, this image in the text, to which, after so much delay, I have come, "The wings of the morning." Think of this Psalmist as standing on some Judæan hill, looking eastward over the Judæan wilderness, over the Jordan, beyond the hills of Moab, out on the illimitable desert; as he stands there he sees the sun coming up, a great bird, with head of fire, breast of fire, feet of fire, and wings all purple and gold; out of the Infinite he sees this mystic bird speeding on its way with broader

and stronger and more glorious wings ; its fiery head bends with the progress of the hours toward the south ; later its great eyes look toward the west ; at length down in the splendor of the far sea it sinks into the unseen. What imagery ! Is there anything in all literature so original, so bold, so sublime ?

We now ask what is the burden of meaning, the content of thought borne by this great image ? There is an experience in God ; there is a personal faith issuing from the experience ; there is an interpretation of human life in the light of the experience and the faith. Give me your attention for a few moments to each of these three significant ideas concealed in the glorious speech of this Psalmist.

1. First of all, look at the experience. This man discovers that his life is in God. He has a life with a hundred needs ; it seems to him as if his nature were a hundred fiery tongues calling for service ; a hundred helpers are meeting that hundred-tongued need within his soul. These helpers are not final ; they are provisional, dependent, temporary like himself ; through their service he seeks the Eternal Helper. He has needs that no man can meet — the need of honor, the need of a deeper and purer heart, the need of a happier spirit, the need of courage, hope, peace, thanksgiving, praise. Thus God wells up

in his soul through a vast range of unsatisfied needs ; needs that are more and more met out of the Infinite.

Close by the need he finds the sense of obligation. He is under bonds to many ; he is under bonds to them in the name of the Eternal. These obligations do not exhaust his conscience ; he is in duty bound to God. God speaks to him and he answers ; in his conscience he finds God. Next door to duty is the sense of privilege ; a multitude of human beings contribute to that sense of privilege every day ; but again, they are provisional contributors and through them the Eternal Contributor speaks. Beyond human mediation of the Divine there is the grace, the favor, the beauty of the Lord his God that falls upon him immediately from the Infinite face. These are the inmost realities of this Psalmist's soul ; need met in God ; the bond that unites him to the conscience of God ; the sense of privilege fed out of the Infinite heart. These are the central certainties of this man's spirit ; he finds that they are with him wherever he goes ; at home, abroad, in the city, in the country, in the crowd, alone, north, south, east, west, everywhere the same great forces work within him ; his God is with him everywhere ; his being is in the eternal mystery of the Divine Being.

In so far as one is religious to-day, he reaps a



similar experience; if one has any religion at all it is of this nature. The soul has found a need greater than man can meet; a need met in part by men who themselves are the servants of the greater Man, a need transcendent and met only by the transcendent God. Further, man finds himself under obligation to himself, to his higher nature; he finds himself in duty bound to his family, to his city, to his country, to his kind, and beyond all to his God. Still further, he finds it good to live; the fountains of happiness are in his heart, fed by a thousand springs, and the springs go deep till they strike the waters of the Eternal. There is where religion begins; it is an experience in God.

Religion in our time is becoming aware of its strength, of its essential reality, of its independence of any given theology or any given philosophy of religion; it is traveling like God in the greatness of its might. It is as if this old planet of ours were self-conscious! What would it care about the science of geology or the science of astronomy; on it goes, and it knows it goes in the fellowship of the Infinite. That is religion, the great interest of man, personal religion set free from particular schemes of theology, from particular schemes of philosophy; not set free from ideas, but inwrought with ideas, going in its own strength, independent, everlasting, fed from the



heart of the Eternal! I beseech you to take that as your conception of religion; it is the conception of religion that prevails in the Hebrew Scriptures, in the Christian Scriptures, revived and set free in our time by a thousand great souls.

2. We come now to the faith that is born of this experience. What do we mean by the faith that issues from life? Let us note the path over which we have come. This man had a personal experience that he was alive in God by his need and his need met; by his conscience, and his conscience set at rest; by the sense of privilege in life. That experience he generalized. God is in him, God is in the universe. It is a process like Newton's when he saw the single apple fall; forthwith he beheld a law that held valid for the entire universe. It was a movement of mind like that of Jesus when he saw the dead sparrow; the providence of God is over all. This man thus generalized from his own life: that life could not be where God is not; the universe itself and all in it could not be where God is not. That is what we mean by a faith. The great basis of all true faith is a personal experience in God. The religious man discovers his own life in God; then he generalizes that experience into a universal presence. That is faith, the God who is within beheld as objective, omnipresent, over all and blessed forever.

I beg you for one moment to look at the relation of science and philosophy to faith. Science is led by the idea of the intelligibleness of the cosmos. It believes that everything in outward nature can be understood and brought under the forms of human knowledge ; it believes that nature can be seen through and through, absolutely comprehended. That is the ideal of science. The ideal of philosophy is that the totality of the universe, nature and man together, are intelligible. If we had power enough and time enough we could see through all mysteries, all darkness, all difficulties ; the unknown would vanish in the known. These are the ideals that keep science and philosophy alive, — the intelligibility of this universe in which we live, the faith that it is built on reason, that its structure is in the understanding, that it is moulded through and through upon the principles that answer to the intellect of man.

What now is the position of faith ? It puts in the place of an ideal the Divine Person ; the cosmos is intelligible because God made it ; the universe is intelligible because God is in it, and because finally God is It. Take as illustration this earth of ours. It is as if the land were an intellect and knew itself and knew everything in it ; it is as if the sea were an understanding and were conscious of itself and of all that filled its depth ; it is as if infinite space were an intellect,

comprehending itself and comprehending all the contents of space. This faith declares that the universe in its last reality is the mind of God, self-comprehending, comprehending all things; justifying, therefore, the ideals of science and the ideals of philosophy; thus the great faith precedes and gives vitality and authentication to the great science and the great philosophy.

Here you will see how profound religion keeps the integrity of the human spirit in the presence of the Infinite Spirit. Why is it that we are not overwhelmed by the Eternal God, who is omnipresent, omniscient, filling all and all? Why is it that pantheism has no standing or part in Hebraism, no part or standing in Christianity? Because God does not wipe out the soul, because he lifts up and greatens the spirit of man. The personality of man is emphasized, authenticated, lifted into grandeur and beauty by the power of religion. The man who knows that he is a sinner, that he has been forgiven, that a new habit of righteousness has come to him, by the grace of God, indeed, but also through tears and trouble, and who is living a life of strenuous obedience to the Divine Will cannot consent to be described as a bubble on the stream of time, a wave on the crest of being, a mere ring of smoke in the air; he is a reality whom God has purified, whom God has enriched, whom God has greatened, whom

God has lifted up, whom God has addressed as "Thou," calling upon him to answer the Eternal Thou.

The palace of crystal when the sun rises upon it and floods it with the light of noon is not annihilated; it is made resplendent and all its contents are glorified by the illumination flowing in upon it. When our God is a moral God, when the moral Deity floods the personality with his light and infinity, he does not wipe it out; he makes it transparent, he fills it with splendor; he clothes it with a mightier reality and majesty.

3. And finally, there is the interpretation of all human life in the light of this experience, in the light of this faith. If you want a man to interpret human life, be sure that he comes with a great soul; with a great soul that has universalized itself in a great faith for mankind. Man is the measure of his faith; the greater man the greater faith; the Divine Man the divine faith. Christianity comes out of the soul of Jesus Christ; without his life in God his gospel for the world could not be; his interpretation of human existence could not be. If you would see the meaning of the infinitely great and the infinitely small, build your glass with the mightier lens; if you would behold the dignity of man, the meaning of man's life at each stage of its movement, read it through the vision of the greatest souls.

There are three divisions in human life. There is the morning with sunrise for its symbol ; there is life's prime set forth in the noon ; there is evening with its sunset in the sea. What is the source of the charm and wonder in childhood, set forth by the freshness, the fragrance of the morning, by the beauty and promise of daybreak, by the silent miracle of color in the east, by the uplift of ineffable glory in the gates of day ? Is it not that God is in the instincts of childhood, in the structure of its nature, in the simplicity and clinging affections of its dear heart, in the blue of its eyes, the fire of its awakening spirit, in the whole mystic prophecy of its life ? We do well when we interpret the childhood of the world into the Godhood of the universe.

The second division of our existence is soon upon us, when the sun is no longer in the east, but high in the heavens ; when the notes of his career are strength, scope, sweep, conquest. What do these notes signify but man in his great prime ? Look at a great human being in the prime of existence, and what are his notes ? Strength, scope, sweep, conquest. What do these mean ? They mean moral strength, moral scope, moral sweep, moral conquest. And what do these mean ? That God in his splendor and power reigns in the strong man's life.

The third division of our existence is now upon

us ; the sun is sinking in the sea ; the red clouds of evening are gathering round it, and in the pathos and beauty of the end we read the meaning of the deepest mystery of our human life. The good life comes at length to the end of the day ; in its decline there is beauty ; in its wreck there is fire ; as it sinks and seems to be engulfed in the abysses of darkness up through its weakness, in the place where it shone but a moment ago, there comes the sudden surprise of the utmost splendor and tenderness of our God. The awe of birth is in the advent of God ; when in deeper awe we stand in the presence of our dead we are again face to face with God. All life lies within the compass of God's life ; our morning, our noon, and our evening, our birth, our prime, our end are within the circle of his heart.

Sunset here means sunrise elsewhere ; evening here means morning in other lands. Death is our name for birth into the heavenly world, the end in gloom the beginning in the vaster and brighter light. I like to believe that the soul goes as the sun goes, leaving the world dark because it goes, but itself essential light and fire, making for itself a luminous pathway in the new and mightier service upon which it has entered. While the sun survives, the last day can never come ; till then every sunset must be a sunrise. While the soul lives in God and God in the soul, the final scene

can never arrive; till then every evening must be the obverse of a new and richer morning. Our world is a vanishing world, but it appears and vanishes in response to the infinite good will of God. He is builder, dissolver, rebuilder.

“Not of adamant and gold  
Built he heaven stark and cold;  
No, but a nest of bending reeds,  
Flowering grass and scented weeds;  
Or like a traveler’s fleeing tent,  
Or bow above the tempest bent;  
Built of tears and sacred flames,  
And Virtue reaching to its aims;  
Built of furtherance and pursuing,  
Not of spent deeds, but of doing.  
Silent rushes the swift Lord  
Through ruined systems still restored,  
Broadsowing, bleak and void to bless.  
Plants with worlds the wilderness;  
Waters with tears of ancient sorrow  
Apples of Eden ripe to-morrow.  
House and tenant go to ground,  
Lost in God, in Godhead found.”



## V

### THE UNESCAPABLE IDEAL

“ Even the night shall be light about me.”

Ps. cxxxix, 11.

THE universe comes to us under two great forms ; it comes under the form of day and under the form of night. It is natural that we should greatly prefer the day. Our physical existence is dependent upon the heat and the light of the sun ; and our vocations all lie in the sunshine. Our world circles the sun and the sun seems to belong to us, and day means health, opportunity, joy, hope. Symbolically, too, the day is great. “ God is light and in him is no darkness at all.” He is the Father of Lights. Our Lord Jesus said of Himself, “ I am the Light of the World,” and He called upon his disciples to let their light so shine before men that others, seeing their good works, should glorify their Father who is in heaven.

We have come to identify this Light with the light of our day ; at least we have come to find a symbol of that light in the light of day. Perhaps the most beautiful comparison that Jesus ever made was in speaking of the magnanimity of



God, "He makes his sun to rise upon the evil and the good." "Truly the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun." The most magnificent comparison in ancient literature is found, I think, in the sixth book of the "Republic" of Plato, where the sun is described as the centre of the visible universe, creating all life, sustaining all life, feeding the eye so that it leaps into vision, beautifying all, transfiguring all; analogous to that is God in the form of the good, the heart of the universe, creating all intelligence, feeding all intelligence, shedding beauty, power, growth, and hope into all intelligent and intelligible worlds.

All this makes day great, and when we turn to darkness we think of it with a kind of dread. Night is the symbol of wildness and death. "Men fear death as children fear to go in the dark," says Bacon. Criminals creep about in the city and country during the night. Beasts of prey do their work in the night. Milton sings of his grief in his blindness in a symbolic way:—

"Seasons return; but not to me returns  
Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,  
Or sight of vernal bloom or summer's rose,  
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;  
But cloud instead, and ever-during dark  
Surrounds me; from the cheerful ways of men  
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair  
Presented with a universal blank."

All our prepossessions, therefore, are in favor of the day, and this for physical reasons and for symbolic reasons; the day is beautiful, and who would say a word against it in its bounty, its loveliness, and its essential ministry to man?

There is, however, something to be said for the other form in which the universe comes to us, the night. It may be that we shall realize with the Psalmist that even the night shall be light about us. Let us see. There can be no question that night is an amazing surprise. If we were living in the first day of time and had never seen night, we should expect when the sun set that everything would go to wreck, that there would be nothing beyond. Think of a soap-bubble floating through the air and a pygmy sitting inside blinded by the glare of its beauty and unable to see beyond. Do you not imagine that that pygmy would think the collapse of the bubble would leave nothing in existence?

Suppose that a bird in process of being hatched should be able to think. What a fearful panic its little heart would be thrown into when the shell began to break! There is really nothing beyond; the reality is all inside; and yet the bubble breaks into day and the broken shell sets the bird free. When the sun goes down and the world seems blotted out, look what comes: evening star after evening star, shining group after

shining group, constellation after constellation, galaxy after galaxy, until an infinite universe is revealed. What an amazing surprise! We thought there was nothing beyond this little "garish day," and we find that our little bit of day is as the egg in which the bird is living to our world, as the soap-bubble with our fancied pygmy inside to the great sun-illuminated spaces. The amazing surprise is night; the stupendousness of the reality of the physical universe.

Take night as a symbol. You have your pleasure, and you say, "What should I do if this pleasure should come to an end? There is nothing beyond for me but pain." And you go into that world of pain and what do you find? Wisdom. You have your human treasure, and you say, "What should I do if I should lose that dear father or mother or friend or child? I know my heart would be wrung and there would be nothing beyond." And yet, in that world of sorrow, you find purity of heart, awe, exaltation, trust.

Here is your ease, here is the protection of your life in your early home. You look out upon the brutal world with its appeals to lust and the strong animal in you. You wonder if you should be able to stand like a man if you were thrown out there; — would you not be degraded, would you not lose all the fine things that have come to you through the protection of your life in your

safe environment? Necessity comes with her lash, you are driven out, and what do you find? New manhood, new character, new hatred of vice, new love of righteousness, a world of whose existence you did not dream. You remember what the poet Burns says about misfortune: —

“ And, even should misfortunes come,  
 I here who sit hae met wi’ some,  
 An’ s’ thankfu’ for them yet,  
 They gie the wit of age to youth ;  
 They let us ken ourself ;  
 They make us see the naked truth,  
 The real guid and ill :  
 Tho’ losses and crosses  
 Be lessons right severe,  
 There’s wit there, ye’ll get there,  
 Ye’ll find nae other where.”

Think of the surprise of the vast shining worlds that wait for us in the darkness of our discipline.

Why should it not be so with death? We identify life with light and death — what is death? It is darkness and night. May there not be here awaiting us the supreme surprise? When our poor, garish existence breaks away, may it not be that the soul shall find itself face to face with immeasurable ranges of glory? That is the last surprise, and this thought has been put in one of the most beautiful sonnets in the English language: —

“ Mysterious Night! when our first parent knew  
 Thee, from report divine, and heard thy name,

Did he not tremble for this lovely frame, —  
This glorious canopy of light and blue ?  
Yet, 'neath a curtain of translucent dew,  
Bathed in the rays of the great setting flame,  
Hesperus, with the host of heaven came,  
And lo ! creation widened in man's view.  
Who could have thought such darkness lay concealed  
Within thy beams, O Sun ! or who could find  
Whilst fly and leaf and insect stood revealed,  
That to such countless orbs thou mad'st us blind !  
Why do we then shun death with anxious strife ?  
If light can thus deceive, wherefore not life ? ”

The surprise of night is the surprise that God gives us when he shakes us out of pleasure into pain, out of ease into hardship, out of good fortune into misfortune, out of the protected existence into the tried and vexed, out of life into death. Then comes the infinite surprise.

Again, night is a vast discipline in intellectual power, not only for the scientific intellect, not only for the poetic mind, but also for all human beings who have a spark of intelligence in them. The night with its stars has brooded the mind of the world from time immemorial, and expanded imagination, feeling, instinct, and divining wonder. You go to sea now and then ; I am sure you love to go on deck when the sun is down and the night is clear and the stars are out. There you are on your ship, sailing the great ocean ; there is the planet on whose ocean you sail, itself a ship on its own voyage through space ; and there

are the other shining worlds, in clusters, in fleets, all sailing on their great courses. It is impossible to take in a scene like that without expansion and elevation of the intellect, without the greatening of human intelligence. This influence of night upon thought has been going on through all the centuries of time.

The French philosopher Bergson in his most important book begins by calling attention to the practical character of the human intellect. He says it is given to provide for the body, to guide the body, to preserve it, to make a home for it, to fulfill primarily the uses of the body. He expresses in this thought in a striking way a remark that has been current among intelligent people for a long time; but he fails to observe, I think, that this is only the first stage of the intellect. True, we have to look out for our bodies, provide food, clothing, shelter, live in families and again provide for our families, enter vocations that have an economic and practical bearing; so the great world goes on. Our intellect is practical in the narrowest and clearest sense to begin with, but if you stop there you do not get the essential intellect of man at all.

What is the ideal of science? To understand the whole cosmos: what bearing has that upon bread and butter? What is the ideal of art? To build anew through creative imagination, by the



help of color and sound and form, the beauty of the universe. Again, is that practical? Is it not a value in itself? Is it not what the Greeks call freedom? What is the ideal of philosophy? To know the truth, through and through. What are the ideals of religion? The knowledge of God, of a soul that is to live forever, of a righteous life, of a kingdom of God in time: and what freedom and scope, what measureless ranges of being these ideals call into existence! These interests make the intellect as free as the wings and the flight of a bird. "God hath put eternity in man's heart," says one of the writers in the Old Testament; Hegel used to say, that man is the child of the Infinite, and your hand-to-mouth philosophers can never adequately set out the glory of the intellectual toil of mankind. It is a poor thing to represent the intellect as a petty farmer, going to his hencoop in the morning for an egg for breakfast. At best that is only one side; mere day, with its glare, its roar of activity, its sounding hammers of practicality give us only an aspect. Night with its infinite splendors gives us the greatness of man and the greatness of his interests as a rational being.

Finally, night is a discipline in trust. This universe, revealed by night, is so vast that no man is able to master it and no man is wise enough to find his way home through all those uncharted

seas ; he must be guided, he must trust. He looks again and sees everything in perfect order through obedience to law ; worlds upon worlds wheeled along the grooves of eternal harmony by the Infinite indwelling will, — and he comes back and asks himself, “ If I think my wisest, if I love my purest, if I act my bravest and my best, will not that same Universal Spirit wheel me along the grooves of divine harmony and bring me safely at last to my goal ? ” “ Oh, night, and storm, and darkness, ye are wondrous strong ! ” “ Ye stars which are the poetry of heaven ” ; so sings the poet ; the wildness, the beauty and the infinity of it all excite within us the longing to trust the good God. Trust the Infinite Will, plant your strength on that and rest your weary life there. For a rational being who loves life and who would not like to part with it, the highest reason, the best wisdom, the supreme piety is to trust God and see it all. Is not that what Browning says ?

“ Grow old along with me !  
The best is yet to be.

. . . . .  
Youth shows but half ; trust God : see  
all, nor be afraid ! ”

Do your best and trust God to bring you  
home.



## VI

### GREATNESS MEASURED BY THE IDEAL

“For thou hast made him but little lower than God and crownest him with glory and honor.”

Ps. viii, 5.

PROBABLY a greater number of the greatest thoughts of mankind were never compressed in fewer words than in this truly wonderful psalm. Kant's two wonders are here: the starry heavens above and the moral law within; Kant's two wonders are here, and infinitely more. The world of nature is here in all its amazing splendor and wild, living beauty. The world of God is here, sublime, tender, mysterious, incomprehensible. In between the world of nature and the world of God is set the world of man. Upon each of these worlds, brief though the psalm is, we find a sample of the greatest thoughts that have occupied the mind of man.

It is primarily with the world of man that we are concerned now, and probably in the extant records of our race there is no more daring confession than that contained in these words: “Thou hast made him but little lower than God and crownest him with glory and honor.” In this psalm there are two tests of greatness. The first

test is physical magnitude, in space, in time, in material might. The second test of greatness is intellectual and moral grandeur. According to the first test of greatness man falls and all faith with him, all human hope, and the whole world of precious human things. According to the second test man rises, and the cosmos falls and with it all atheism, all inhumanity, all despair, all sorrow. Consider, then, seriously with me for a few moments these two tests of greatness.

1. The first is the test of magnitude. This is presented in the psalm in three forms, with the utmost impressiveness and indeed with tremendous power. There is the universe in space; look at it when the night is clear through the wonder of the Syrian atmosphere; look at it when the night is clear through our own untroubled atmosphere with the naked eye, and what a scene of wild, endless beauty it presents; look at it through the astronomer's glass and bring upon your soul a yet greater amazement at those countless blazing worlds and galaxies of worlds. Then turn and ask, what is man? A speck of dust to a sun, a firefly to the star Sirius, a glowworm to the constellation of Orion. The organism, so minute as to require the strongest microscope to be seen, has a greater physical magnitude, measured against the totality of the solar system than man measured against the universe in space; so

infinitesimal is man. Look at the universe in time ; all these blazing worlds in space have a history ; they began somewhere, at some time. Slowly through countless æons they evolved and took shape and went from one stage of glory to another. Reflect that all these worlds roll in time ; they all tell of time as inconceivably great. What is man here ? The tick of your watch measured against a million years is inexpressibly longer and more impressive than man's life of three-score years and ten measured against the whole breath of astronomic time ; so brief is man's day. Consider the might, the physical might of the universe in space and in time ; consider the power which gives balance to all these countless worlds, which keeps them in perfect order, in continuous movement, that lifts them from stage to stage of their glorious career. Think of the power that reveals itself at particular points, as in the tempest, as in the wild sea, as in the hurricane. What is man here ? The frailest leaf conceivable ! What is his puny power measured against all that ? It is not even the fly to the lion, the insect to the mastodon : it is a mere nothing in the presence of measureless physical might.

If physical magnitude is the only test of greatness, man and man's world become insignificant incidents in the evolution of the magnitudes of the universe in space and time ; man and his

world are here inconceivably petty and vain; a mere mote in the sunbeam, a grain of sand to the globe.

2. Turn now to the other test, the test of intellectual and moral grandeur. There is, first of all, thought; space does not possess this mighty attribute; it knows not its character nor its contents. Man's mind travels through the wilderness of shining worlds, measuring and weighing, reckoning the distances, computing relations, predicting conjunctions; it goes the master of ever greater fields of the universe in space and time. Which is the greater: the mighty, shining cosmos that knows not itself, or the intellect of man that entertains an ideal of the complete comprehension of the cosmos, and in following that ideal masters more and more of the contents of space and time every decade and every century. Which is the greater: the thoughtless cosmos or the wizard thinker and commander — man? There is no comparison here. The human intellect is in a class by itself; the universe in space and in time falls at man's feet as a servant in the presence of a king.

In the second place, look at love, the love that brings together stainless and chivalrous youth; the love that founds a genuine human home; the love that creates fatherhood and motherhood; the love that shapes the soul of a friend, that makes

a patriot, that produces a servant, a devotee of mankind, that gives us the royal, loving, trustful son of God in surrender to the Infinite Will, saying, "Thy will be done." Here is a feeling whose worth cannot be measured by physical magnitudes; here is something utterly distinct and separate from such magnitudes; it is in a category by itself; your physical universe is unnumbered leagues beneath the starry feet of love.

There is in the third place, character. A great character, resulting from the continuous vision of the truth, the continuous love of the truth and the continuous service of the truth;—a great, solemn, enduring, disinterested, steadfast character is the greatest thing we know. Look at the Lord Jesus. What is the universe in space and in time and in physical might measured against his spiritual intelligence, against his heart, against his character. The two values are simply incomparable; the cosmos belongs in one category, the Lord Jesus belongs in another infinitely higher. He is the typical, the representative man whose intellect is in servitude to the truth, whose heart goes in a great tide after honor, whose will is the everlasting bondsman of the right. The humanity whose type is the Lord Jesus rises and takes its sovereignty over all the magnitudes of the material universe, in the name of its intellect

and moral grandeur, in the name of the intellectual and moral grandeur of God.

Two things I beg you to observe here. Man's ideal expresses man's nature, proclaims and anticipates man's sovereignty over things however vast. Man's primary distinctions are these: a thinker in the interest of the truth, a lover steadfast in the interest of the kingdom of honor, a servant joyous and faithful in the city of God. These distinctions of man's nature are reflected in man's ideal; that ideal I repeat brings into impressive clearness man's sovereign value. If he loses the vision of the truth and the love of it and the desire and purpose to serve it, he becomes a thing, a mere creature; he may as well be a fish in the sea of which the psalmist speaks, or a fowl of the air, or a beast in the field; he is not a proper human being. Man's proper manhood is in his ideal of truth, love, and service.

Will you observe that what is ideal in man is eternal reality in God? "O Lord, our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth." Why? Because his mind is truth, his heart is love, his will is eternal right. God's attributes appeal irresistibly to the soul — his intelligence to man's intelligence, his moral grandeur to man's conscience. He has made man a little lower than God; he calls to the ideal humanity of man by the whole splendor of his real Godhead.



The rank of God, as the head of the universe, depends upon his infinite being, infinite in power and worth. In God quantity of being and excellence unite to constitute his supreme and ineffable existence. For all created things and beings rank is determined not by quantity but by quality, not by bulk but by intelligence, not by the flesh but by the spirit.

What are the highest values to God in this universe of his? That question goes to the heart of all faith and all life. The greatness of this wonderful psalm from which the text is taken is in its answer to the question, What does God place next Himself in value? Not the heavens, not the sun, the moon and the stars; but the intellect and soul of man. Man is for God in this boundless and amazing universe the sovereign value. In God's esteem man stands only a little lower than God.

What does the true man, great in possessions, place next to himself? His home in the country or city, his wealth, the agents of his power or pleasure, or his child? That frail child stands close against his heart; immeasurably below that child rank all his possessions.

Here is the glory of our Christian faith. "Our Father, who art in heaven"; that is the fundamental assumption; that is the bedrock on which Jesus builds his kingdom. God's per-

spective of values is the perspective of the Infinite Father. The mother, with the infant in her arms, looking out upon the boundless starlit universe, awestruck by the sense of its wildness and vastness, yet feeling that her child is infinitely more precious than the countless cosmic splendors upon which she is gazing, is the human parable of God's heart. The Sistine Madonna pictures the soul of the Gospel. There is the Divine Child, divinely beautiful, but frail, inexpressibly frail. There is the mother, holding her child with a sense of her infinite treasure, with the sense, too, of the terrible forces that may tear that child from her arms. The mother's sense of the worth, the unutterable worth of her child is again the human parable of God's attitude toward man. As the Madonna feels toward the Divine Child, so Jesus felt toward mankind; as Jesus felt toward mankind, so God feels; he ranks next himself not the universe of things, but the little world of man. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." The estimates of God, interpreted by the estimates of the human heart, interpreted by the estimates of the heart of our Lord Jesus; this, I repeat, is the inmost sanctuary of our faith.

"Above the heavens"; these are the great words of faith. The Eternal Mind is above all; the



beings made in the image of the Eternal are also above the heavens, above all things in space and time, as a value to God, above the whole material universe. When heart and flesh fail, it is not because we are crushed, the higher by the lower, the rational by the irrational, the spiritual by mere brute matter; when we fail and die it is by the order of the Eternal good will. Our bereavement is in the plan of God for us; our sorrow is his austere kindness; our death is the call of the Infinite Mind to the finite mind to enter into closer communion with him. Things, events, changes, experiences, dissolutions are but the agents of the Mind whose glory is above the heavens. Across the wild dance and mad whirl of this time-world we catch the flying song of faith and we send its sure triumphant notes back over the boundless domain of apparent hostility to man: "If God is for us who is against us?" We believe that the sovereign things in the universe are God's mind, God's heart, God's character; we believe that the sovereign values in time are not physical magnitudes and powers, but truth, love, and good will expressed in service. Above the heavens is the glory of God; above the heavens, in life and in death, is the value of man.

## VII

### THE MYSTIC AND HIS IDEAL

“And Enoch walked with God.”

Gen. v, 24.

YOU recall that supremely beautiful incident in the Gospel according to Luke, the walk to Emmaus. Two disciples of the crucified Jesus left Jerusalem for the village of Emmaus. They were overcome with sorrow over the loss of their Master. Their lives, their people, their world seemed to them wrapt in hopeless gloom. Sad at heart and yet able to speak their sorrow to one another they journeyed onward. As they went, a mysterious stranger joined them; he drew from them a full confession of the cause of their grief; he showed them how foolish that grief was. He captivated them with the majesty and tenderness of his spirit, and at the journey's end while their hearts burned under his power he went in to abide with them. In the breaking of bread that followed he was revealed to them and after this revelation the cloud of mystery again concealed him.

This is the New Testament parallel to the story in the text. The New Testament story is

richer, more tender, more intense and human than that in the text; it is closer to our sympathies, with a more potent appeal to imagination. Still the best commentary on the meaning of the words, "Enoch walked with God," is found in the journey of those disciples from Jerusalem to Emmaus in the unconscious but enfolding presence of the Risen Lord.

It is, indeed, possible that we read Christian meanings into these primitive words, "Enoch walked with God." It may be that we should picture a child's idea of God and a child's idea of man's fellowship with God. It may be that for this primitive soul God was simply another and greater man; God's soul was in a body as Enoch's soul was in a body; each saw the other, each heard the other, each took the other by the hand, and on his way through the years Enoch took his daily walk with God.

Since we cannot settle the question of how much of our own best thought we can surely find in primitive words, it is safest to take them in the way of parable. We may read into old words more than they originally contained; we may find in them much less than was in them at the beginning. The danger of under-estimation is quite as great as that of over-estimation, and under-estimation is a mean mistake. If we take the words of the text in the way of parable, we

shall see in them a path of revelation over which have come many of the mightiest spirits and also a multitude of lowly souls.

The mystic is one who sees all things in God. Sensuous vision beholds all things in space, infinite space. The homes of men are there, the cities of men, the trade of men by land and sea; all living things are in space. Our pendant world is in space; the sun and the planets are there and the countless host of stars; everything that can be seen or heard or felt has its place in this mystery of all-containing space.

In the Eternal Spirit, all things, all events, all beings have their place. The material universe is one aspect of the Infinite Spirit; the world of intelligence is another aspect. The soul of man looks inward and beholds the subtle, elusive, mysterious, pervasive, all-containing God, as the eye looks outward and sees the universal wonder of space. For the mystic the universe, cosmic and human, is the perpetual apocalypse of God. The universe lives and moves and has its being in God. He is in immediate and continuous presentation to the mystical soul; He is the ideal truth, beauty, goodness, and blessedness of all worlds; He is the king immortal and invisible whom the eye of the soul may habitually behold. His presence in human existence is the source of all our standards of right, of all our measures of love,

of all our experiences of power, of all our hopes of complete moral being. Again He is like space, infinite space. He provides room in his own life for all; He is the elusive and yet essential condition of all finite life; we breathe and continue to live, we cease to breathe the blessed air and we die. By the inspirations of the Almighty we exist and become self-conscious souls and men of understanding heart. The mystic looks and finds God the container of all; the mystic lives and behold God is the life of his life; the mystic is radiant with joy and behold God is the eternal fountain of his blessedness; the mystic faces the future undismayed and in serene confidence, and again God is the ground of his hope.

1. With the process of the suns so many intermediaries by way of aids to the spirit appear between the soul and God that we need to be led by the mystic to the open, face to face, unmediated and habitual vision of the Eternal Goodness. The mystic is the child-seer among the prophets. Every normal child looks upon nature in its original character before science has said this of it, before art has said that of it, before religion has given it a new name. There the child stands looking upon nature not through scientific, artistic, or religious notions, but through its own eyes of wonder and awe. There is the unbiased mind looking upon the naked majesty and

beauty of the world. So the mystic looks upon God. All sacred books, all sacred persons, all sacred institutions, all creeds and rituals are for the moment turned aside. Nothing intervenes between the mystical soul and the ever-present, all-searching, mysterious, all-blessed God. The Eternal Spirit and the spirit in man, each aware of the other's presence, each in dialogue with the other, — there is the aboriginal beginning of all revelation.

The mystic conducts us to this beginning as one might turn the vision of a multitude to the east at sunrise. There the wonder begins; there the wonder is repeated every day; there is no point at which the sun breaks into the world other than the east; there is no point at which God comes into the life of men other than through the soul in the vision of Him. All our records of sunrise are of yesterdays; they are of the glory that was, of the light that is gone. Good it may be to read these records, they may purify present vision, enlarge and enrich the power of seeing, but they are secondary and not primary; we seek the sunrise and not the records of sunrise. All our sacred books are of the God who was, of the splendor that appeared to other souls, of the tender mercy that made other lives bearable and beautiful. They are precious, they cleanse and enlarge the eye of the spirit;



they set our needs and our privileges in the atmosphere of the noblest humanity ; but they are instrumental and not final, they are the telescope and not the star. We seek not the report of God in the speech of men, but God Himself, the living God. We must behold for ourselves the Eternal Wonder and live in the awe and hope of his discovered and glorious Presence.

2. The mystic is one who shows us that light is for life ; God is light, but the light is in the high service of the moral being of man. This Old Testament mystic refused to believe that he was a mere creature of sense and time, that the purpose of his existence was to eat and drink and to-morrow to die. His spirit rose within him to the recognition of God as the Alpha and Omega of all being and the indispensable grace and power in his life. The being of God was the clearest, the surest, and at the same time the most influential possession of his intelligence. The thought of God spread through his whole existence like light revealing all, transfiguring all ; like some rare perfume adding new richness to all ; like music filling his soul with heavenly melody ; like the beauty of the world ; like a vast and unreturning tide of love. The primacy of God in the thought of this man meant the constant approach of his soul toward the beauty of the Lord our God.

Is there nothing for us in this solemn assertion of the awful primacy of God? It is said elsewhere in Scripture of a certain type of man, "God is not in all his thoughts!" What sort of man will oblivion of God produce?

Here is a son, and his father is not in all his thoughts; his mother is not in all his feelings; he is oblivious of the fact that he has a father or that he has a mother. How will the great filial relation fare in that boy's life? Another man is a servant; the fact that he is a servant is never in his thoughts; that he is employed and paid by some one to work for him is never in his thoughts. What kind of a workman will that man make? Another still is an employer in whose thoughts there are no images of the men whom he hires, who work his will, and who carry out his plans. What sort of an employer of human beings will that man make? Yonder is a friend who thinks much of the joy, the fascination, the passion of friendship, but who thinks nothing of the great world of obligation that comes out of the heart of friendship. There is an American citizen in whose thought the country never is, in whose feeling it never casts an image, whose past is of no consequence to him, for whose present he has no regard, for whose future he has no care. What kind of a citizen will that man make? By your side is



a man who never thinks that he is a man, who lives in oblivion of humanity. I ask again, what kind of character will *oblivion* of the great organic relations of society produce? The answer must be a worthless son, a worthless servant, a brutal employer, a wretched friend, a miserable citizen, a contemptible man.

Consider how this oblivion of God works, oblivion of Him in whom we "live and move and have our being," upon whom we are dependent for every breath that we draw. What sort of a character is he in whose mind that sovereign relation has no image of its sovereignty? Give me the son whose mind and heart are forever enriched with the image of his parent; give me the servant whose conscience holds the contract that he has made with his master; give me the employer whose conscience holds the contract that he has made with those whom he has employed; give me the friend who enjoys friendship and yet feels its awe and power; give me the citizen who is a citizen *not* merely in imagination and feeling, but also in and through the moral nature that he wears; give me the man who rejoices in his humanity; give me the soul that believes in God, in whose nature God is first. There is a human being under the sovereignty of the Highest; there is one whose vision of God is the supreme practical influence in his existence;

there is the man among men who at the same time is a man of God.

3. The mystic is one whose chief joy is in God. The purest delight in life and the most abundant for the mystical soul is the delight in the Eternal Lover of men. For all those who have seen the King in his beauty the vision has become the chief joy of existence. They all sing with Faber : —

“ The thought of God, the thought of Thee,  
Who liest in my heart,  
And yet beyond imagined space  
Outstretched and present art, —  
The thought of Thee above, below,  
Around me and within,  
Is more to me than health and wealth  
Or love of kith or kin.”

The high capacity for delight in the God and Father of Jesus is in every soul. We read the universal latent capacity in great realization in the life of the Lord. Jesus' life was the busiest and the most crowded of any life on record, and yet in and through the stream of multitudinous care and activity there went the swift and constant and glorious presence of his Father. If there is anything in the farewell discourse of Jesus to his disciples, then the lover of God becomes the host of God, for Jesus says that those who love the Father come to entertain the Father. We confess this truth in our prayer when we do

pray ; when we stop mere mumbling, when we lift ourselves out of conventions, when our whole nature rises to speak to God ; we know then that communion with God means joy and that it is the very heart of existence. When we are driven to God by some great temptation, by some heavy burden, by some stern sorrow, by some awful fear, then we know how true it is that a man can speak with God as he speaks with his friends and feel the passage as of lightning back and forth between the mind of the Infinite and his own soul. Then again we are in the cleft of the rock and see his goodness sweep by ; once more He is our pillar of fire by night and our pillar of cloud by day, and the joy of the Lord is our strength.

It is at this point that we discover the mournful poverty of our religious experience. How seldom we think of our heavenly Father and how seldom as joy. How infrequently we lift our thought to the Eternal and sun ourselves in his supreme compassion ! How infrequent our effort to live by his wisdom translated into our own thought, to go in the strength of his passionate and infinite love operating through our hearts, and to rest in the great power of his will. How infrequent ! The poor dweller, dull and heavy, in Zermatt, thinks he knows all about his little village set in among those incomparable mountains.

What a surprise he would get if he could look at his little world from the summit of the Matterhorn; he would hardly know it as the same world. We walk the earth deadened under custom; we think we know all about ourselves, all about our neighbors, all about the world of men and the ways of men. If we were only taken up into the elevations of God, then we should confess that we never knew ourselves, that we never knew our brothers, that we never knew anything great about our human world; then we should see the piled up and everlasting sublimities of our nature, the towering, austere image of God in the souls of men; we should see and we should rejoice.

4. The mystic is strong through the approbation of God; his heart is full of the peace that God gives to those who do their work in his sight. The love of approbation finds its true goal in God. When the miserable politician listens for the praise of the brutal and the ignorant, we say that mood is base. When we see Washington listening for the approval of the wisest and the best of his own time, listening for the approval of the wisest and best in all ages of American national existence, we see how indispensable to a great and good servant is the love of approbation. The praise of a wise and noble father is sweet; the praise of a just

and discerning mother is a joy; the praise of a conscientious teacher is a new happiness; the praise of those for whom we honestly and worthily work is a great delight! The good will and approbation of our neighbors is a fountain of satisfaction, and fame when it comes to any one, is invigorating as the symbol of the approving judgment, the kindly feeling, and the grateful heart of mankind.

This ladder of approbation set on the earth, set down by the very cradle, reaches to heaven. When He, before whom all thoughts are open and from whom no secrets are hid, when He, seeing the ideal of our life, and the movement of our life, bears witness with our souls that, notwithstanding all failures and all weaknesses and all defects, we are well-pleasing in his sight, we gain the sovereign satisfaction, the sovereign strength of mortal life.

I often think there is no strength in us till our consciences repeat the approving notes of the Eternal Conscience. We have to stand up against so much, we have to contradict our friends, we have to make our way through the world by the narrow path that God appoints, and we cannot do it unless the poor feeble conscience within hears the "Well done" and repeats the approbation of the great God on high.

The reason why men have flung their lives

away in the service of the great causes of the world is here; they had witness borne them that in the ideal and movement of their life they were well-pleasing to God. You cannot abolish the man through whom has gone the approving conscience of the Most High.

Thus it was that the old mystic made no account of death. We may not be able to say what death meant to him, but we are sure from the story that it was of small account, a mere incident in his career. He was sure of God, he was in steady and happy communion with God; in the ideal and direction of his life he had ringing in his heart the music of God's approval; and in consequence of these things death was but a shadow; he sailed through it as easily as the ship steams through a belt of fog.

I remember well the last walk that I took in my native land before I sailed for the Western world more than forty years ago. It was on one of the longest and brightest days in June. I had said good-bye to dear friends and my solitary path for ten miles lay through peaceful and fruitful farms and over the ridge of a mountain whose shapely summit had looked down upon the coming and going of immemorial generations of men. Then followed a long stretch of moor, barren, dismal, whose heather would in three months bloom again and fade like the hopes in the hearts



of poor human beings. As I struck the moor, the sun was setting. The lonely way lay in the great transfiguring radiance. It became a path of beauty and infinite tender suggestion ; a heavenly meaning seemed to beat in the boundless glow ; a sense of companionship, not understood then, settled in the heart, delight took the place of loneliness, and the journey that thus lay in the path of the setting sun I could not wish to end.

More than forty years have come and gone since then. Farewells have been spoken to many friends for the last time on earth. The journey has been through much of the beauty of the world, and still the way has been over hill and moor, crag and torrent. The pilgrimage has often seemed a type of the lonely and sorrowful migration of man from the shadows of morning to the gloom of the evening. The happiest experiences have not deafened me to the still sad music of humanity ; the evanescence of all things earthly has been a constant refrain in my spirit. Despair and utter heart-break would long ago have undone my days if nothing heavenly had been found to glorify and comfort and protect the precious burden of human love. "The light that never was on sea or land" enfolds the way of every pilgrim. He is traveling in the glow that falls upon time from the Eternal ; his path is in the transfiguring presence of the Infinite Love ; he has

but to ponder the meaning of the delight that has come to him, the strength that has been given him, the thankfulness, the peace and the hope that have entered his spirit, to know that he is walking with God.

“Who would stop, or fear to advance,  
Though home or shelter he had none,  
With such a sky to lead him on?”



## VIII

### THE IDEALIST AS PIONEER

“Now the Lord said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.”

Gen. xii, 1.

OUR first impression on reading these words is that here we have to do with an extraordinary man. We have come upon one of the turning-points in the fortunes of mankind. Here is a character of great originality. Here is one who is to found a new nation, who is to inaugurate a new era in human civilization, who is to write the first chapter in a new volume of human history, one whose influence and genius are to penetrate to the final chapter in that volume.

Our second impression on reading these words is that there is something of universal application in them, something in them suited to the life of every man; for sooner or later every generation arrives at the hour in which it finds these words ringing in its ear, “Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.”

Examples are abundant and near at hand. There is the son of privilege who must give

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account of himself to the public conscience; the member of a large family harassed with poverty who while only a boy must go forth to earn his own living; the child of a devout home who has been trained in the most careful way, defended against temptation, shielded from all evil, who now that he has become a man must do battle for himself against the world and stand or fall by the might of his own arm. Nearer still to our subject is the person whose ancestry has been a deteriorating ancestry. The hour arrives when this man feels that if the descent of his line is to be discontinued, he must become an Abram and renounce his past. For one reason or another, therefore, all serious persons on arriving at manhood are met with the austere imperative, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." To millions of our fellow-citizens that imperative came; they are here because they were moved by a divine intimation and a vast hope; their first great type in the Old Testament is this fascinating man Abraham.

Abraham was a mighty idealist; he was an illustrious pioneer among idealists; and in order that we may gain some sense of his value in the evolution of revelation I shall ask and try to answer several definite questions.

1. What do we mean by an idealist? We use

the word continually and not always with a clear and sure sense of its significance. Let us try to attach to our use of it a fixed and intelligible meaning. In a general way we may say that the idealist is one who is dissatisfied with the world as it is, and who has a vision of a better world that may be. He is one who has drawn an indictment, an enlightened and wise indictment, against the world as it stands, and who has framed a wise, enlightened programme for the world as it should be. He is one who is sick at heart over the falsehood, the iniquity and the inhumanity in the world as it is, and who lives in a great and splendid vision of a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. All men are idealists who are dissatisfied with the world as it is, and who have a definite picture of what they would like the world to be. All men are wise idealists who from honest and adequate insight are dissatisfied with the world as it is, who from honest and adequate insight discern what the world ought to be.

Two examples will, I hope, add clearness to this general statement. Till the middle of the last century British opinion about Oliver Cromwell was generally expressed in these rather uncomplimentary terms, "regicide," "hypocrite," "universal villain." Abuse almost unlimited had been heaped upon Cromwell for two centuries.

That was the opinion of the world when Carlyle began to write. He was dissatisfied with that world of opinion upon that subject; he protested against it; he dug up those speeches and those letters; he pondered them, poured out his soul in the study of them, and finally brought out a book containing a vision of Oliver Cromwell, as liberator, as governor in the interests of the people, as the greatest statesman and ruler that England ever had — one of the heroes of the world! Here is an example of the idealist: dissatisfaction grounded upon knowledge, vision of what the world of opinion should be on that particular subject.

The greatest monument of idealism in the ancient world is the "Republic" of Plato. This monumental book is rich in thought, splendid in imagination, glorious in style; it teems with various wisdom; its heart beats with great hopes. What are the two essential characteristics of that wonderful book? They are the great thinker's indictment against the Greek world of his time and his vision of what that Greek world might become. An idealist, then, is one who is dissatisfied with the world as it stands, and who entertains a vision of the better future.

2. The second question is, What do we mean by a "Pioneer Idealist"? One who is the first, or among the first, to feel dissatisfaction with the treatment which some great human interest has

hitherto received and who entertains for that particular human interest a great hope. Stephen is the first Christian martyr, he is the pioneer Christian martyr. He was the first to protest against that old world of the Jew that had crushed Jesus out of existence. He was the first to give his life for the new world which he wished to put in the place of the old. There is the pioneer missionary, Paul, who went everywhere throughout the Roman Empire, protesting against the empire as it was, with a programme for the empire as it should be; he was the first, and he was a pioneer because he was first. There are the pioneer reformers, Wyclif in England, Savonarola in Florence, Huss in Bohemia, Knox in Scotland; each of these men is an idealist because a protestant against the reigning conditions of the time, because carrying a definite programme to these various peoples; each is a pioneer because first in that service. There is the pioneer philanthropist, — Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Lovejoy, and Henry Ward Beecher were such; and greatest of them all, that incomparable woman genius of America, Harriet Beecher Stowe. These were idealists because they uttered a protest against the country as it was, because they had a definite programme for the country; and they were pioneers because they were in the vanguard of a mighty army.

Early in the last century a scholar came to Andover Seminary whose name was Moses Stuart. He has been called the father of Biblical learning in this country. Why was he so called? Because he felt the meagreness and the miserableness of Biblical scholarship reigning in the America of his time; because he protested against it and because he entertained a vision of better things to come; and he was pioneer because he was first, or among the first. Robinson sustained the same relation to the Presbyterians, Hackett to the Baptists, Ezra Abbot, the greatest scholar of them all, to the Unitarians.

A new form of this pioneer idealism has lately sprung up in the world. Scholars in Germany, in Great Britain, and among ourselves are dissatisfied with the vague, indefinite, inaccurate knowledge of Christendom concerning the Bible. They have formed an idea of the Bible as the product of different times, as coming up out of certain circumstances and conditions and written by certain men, and they wish to see the Bible as it rose up out of the life of a great race, and present that process and result to the world. These men are idealists, and they are pioneer idealists, because they are the first in a great movement.

The dwellers in the valleys look to the tops of the highest mountains for the earliest tokens



of sunrise. In the valley of Zermatt, long before the light of the morning sun can be elsewhere seen, it may be noted in the fiery glow that touches and colors the Matterhorn. The same is true of the revelation that comes by the path of the ideal. The loftiest soul first catches the fire of God's presence; the nature that towers above the lowlands first receives the glowing vision; the human being who in himself lifts the race to unwonted heights takes in splendor the protest and programme from the Infinite Love and cheers the multitude of humbler spirits in the valleys of existence with glorious assurances of the coming day.

3. Our third question concerns the significance of this man, Abraham. First of all this man is significant to Israelites,—he is their common ancestor. I know many say that he never existed,—with me that skepticism does not count. Many say that God does not exist; that unbelief does not touch the divine reality. Abraham is the headwaters, so to speak, of the river of Hebrew existence. He is significant to Mohammedans as the earliest prophet of their faith, as Mohammed is the latest. He is significant to Christians as the first forerunner of Jesus; “Abraham saw my day and was glad.” He is significant to all who have conducted great migrations, among them the Pilgrims and the Puritans who came to this



country ; they, too, went out not knowing whither they went. He is significant to college men, making a great start ; to young men going into business, moving out of the quiet harbor upon a serious career ; to lovers about to found their new home ; to all beginners in all lines of life. He is significant because he is a great beginner and because he began in the power of an idea. He began, and he began in the might of a great conception !

We must further consider the balance of forces in this man's composition. We must believe that he was a genuine conservative. He knew that other men had preceded him, as sincere and honest as he. He knew that these men had discovered something through their lives. He knew that there lay behind him an accumulation of good which it behooved him not to neglect and not to underestimate, and, therefore, like a true conservative, he took with him all that he considered worthy in the past. He took with him his sense of kindred, his sense of the value of home, his sense of love, his consciousness of God. He took a vast bequest out of the confused but noble past into his soul, and, with that treasure from the past, he turned his face toward the future.

This is a lesson which we need emphatically to remember. The world is new in so many aspects ;

men are standing tiptoe with expectation every morning, putting the ear to the ground every evening to catch the sound of coming feet. At such a time it behooves us to look backward, to remember that behind us there is an immeasurable history of discovery, of accumulated wisdom, accumulated good ; it is our duty to remember that a special ancestry is behind every one of us, with much good in it that should be conserved ; that there are traditions about home and business and national life that should be carried forward ; that there are whole worlds of high insight, sound sentiment, great character and splendid achievement, all lying in the past, which we need to know and which we need to possess and take with us into the promised land of our personal future.

I often think as I pass the Public Library in Boston's beautiful square of the vast treasures contained within those four noble walls. Think of the high thought, the profound and serious feeling, the great lives that have been lived and the great achievements that have been wrought recorded there. The Public Library is the monument of the past. It is mainly a massive token of the obligation of the living to the dead. It is mainly a eulogy upon the intelligence, the feeling, the character, and the achievement of the generations that have gone. Think of the great

books there along any line of interest ; they come from the past. How vast, how beautiful, how affluent, how majestic, how rewarding to the studious mind is that past. Is there any one more foolish than he who turns his back upon all this in the frenzy of self-sufficiency? You see the great breaker that comes with its white crest rolling in upon the beach. How fine it is ! It is the vanguard of the incoming tide, but wherein lies the explanation of its career? It is in the momentum of the sea behind it. It would not come, it would not rise, it would not break, it would not creep up the beach, if it were not for the roll and swell of the mighty sea behind it ; and our farthest reach to-day is chiefly because of the swell of the humanity that is behind us.

This true conservative was also a true radical. He faced toward the future. He was the holder of a growing ideal ; not like the fixed gas-jet, but like the light that was to grow into a great star. He was the holder of a growing mind, a deepening heart, a greatening character. He was on his way to something greater than he had ever seen or been. All that went before was helping him to go beyond himself.

We are not here merely to repeat what has gone before, to say over again the same old story that has been said from the beginning. We are here to understand the accumulated vision of the

world more deeply, more clearly, more vitally ; for this is what we mean by originality. Intellectual originality, originality of mind, means to understand the old subject more deeply, more adequately, to see further into it, because almost all subjects have been discussed in one way or another, but every subject waits for a profounder and a more adequate discussion. In the more adequate insight and comprehension there is room for the play of the best kind of originality. There is, too, originality of feeling. There are some people that are on the outside of everything. They are on the outside of their friends ; they are on the outside of the subjects in which they deal ; they are outside people. There are others that search the world with their heart, just as the sea comes in and every spongy substance along the beach is filled with its great searching tide. That is originality of feeling, the power that wins admission for us into the soul of the world. There is originality of character ; it lies in the power to make things take a new turn, to inaugurate great changes. Such a man was Washington. He was not original in mind, he was not original in feeling, but he was original in character.

We may have new insights all the way home. I do not know anything better to hope for than that. It is like the coming of a beautiful bird to

one on a lonely walk, alighting on a tree just ahead, and singing its joyous song. These new insights we should expect all the way, and a greater power to enter into the feelings and the soul of man. The difference between the man of genius and the ordinary person is here perhaps as much as anywhere. You think of the man who wrote the Book of Job. He was an individual, yet he comprehended the sorrow of a whole race. His heart beat with the heartache of the whole world of his time. When you read Shakespeare, you feel that here is a man who understands you as you never understood yourself. He enters your feelings, he sounds your heart, he knows your existence.

The negative aspect of the genuine radical is only the first step. He must ponder the great words, "*Get thee out,*" but we must not stop there. We must listen to the whole august imperative; "*Get thee out of thy country; and from thy kindred, and thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee.*" Break with evil at once; break with your whole past in so far as it has been wicked; break with its falsehood, its injustice, its inhumanity, its shame; break with the inadequate, but do so in the name of the ideal future. Your work is only begun in renunciation; it must go on to the vaster vision, the profounder and purer passion, the greater and love-

lier character, the richer and surer social good. The perpetual renunciation of the incomplete; the perpetual pilgrimage toward the ideal future; here is the inmost history of every truly religious soul. Ur of the Chaldees we must leave every morning; toward the land of Promise we must travel while the light of the day lasts; and in the evening, however far we may have come, we must pitch our tent knowing well that we must move again at daybreak.

You recall the words of the beloved disciple who looked upon the past with unspeakable gratitude, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the Sons of God, and such we are." Was he satisfied with that glorious retrospect? No. He turned toward the future and sang, "It doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall be made manifest, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

When Paul came to the end of his career, he looked back and said like a man, "I have fought the beautiful fight, I have kept the faith, I have run the race." Was he satisfied with this career which God had made possible for him, a career of great achievement, with the victory won in the race, in the faith, and in the fight? No. He looked forward: "Henceforth, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness."

Let us go forth, one and all, with our constellation of ideals over our heads. Let them rain down their sweet influences upon us, sweeter than the influences of the Pleiades. Let us look backward in veneration, remembering how vast and majestic the past is ; but let our pilgrimage be onward ; let our goal be the city of God.



## IX

### THE MILITANT IDEALIST

“ And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me.”

Gen. xxxii, 26.

SOMEHOW there has come into our time a new sense of the value of man. He has become a new object of concern, a chief field of study, a larger inspiration to hope. As we consider man different aspects of his greatness appeal to us. Now it is the elevation of his soul rising as it does from the levels of the animal order ; again, it is his distinction in knowledge, in art, in achievement ; still again, it is his proud position as the consummate expression of the life on this planet, — his strength, his courage, his defiance ; once more, it is his loneliness as he stands against the far-distant, dumb eternal background ; and last and highest of all, it is the aspect of his nature brought before us in the text, his appeal to the Infinite, his power over God. It is as when we see for the first time the towering obelisk of the great Matterhorn. At one moment we think of the sheer and splendid height to which the old earth is thus lifted ; at another, we see the distinction in form and shape of the everlasting

rock ; at still another, we note the disdain, the defiance, the terrible strength ; in yet another mood, we mark the loneliness of the solemn shaft as it rises into the unconcerned and receding sky ; and again, we catch sight of the supreme marvel, the power of the mountain over the vast world above it. It brings down upon itself mist, cloud, storm ; it renews its torn robe of white out of the sublimities of heaven ; it fixes upon its summit the intensest light and heat of the great sun. By night and by day, in calm and in storm, it is in command of the infinite world above it. This is its greatest distinction ; and it is this feature that reminds us of man's supreme characteristic, his power over the eternal, his prevailing might with God.

How exquisite is the familiar story in which the words of the text stand. Jacob was on his way to meet the brother whom he had wronged. He disposed of his family for their safety as best he could. He had found richness and sweetness in life since he fled from his outraged brother ; and this wealth of love and happiness was under the menace of death ; he was sinful, defenseless, undone. " And Jacob was left alone ; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day. And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh ; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained as

he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for thou hast striven with God and with men and hast prevailed." Let us advance by easy steps into the heart of the great intimation of God here enshrined.

1. Here we have one of the earliest intimations of the essential humanness of God. He was a man with whom Jacob wrestled, a man whose nature was mysterious, transcendent. He could not gain from the great wrestler his name. There was something about him hidden and incomprehensible. There was in his nature a divine secret. There was between the two wrestlers an infinite contrast, yet question and answer played freely between them; each understood the other; each was essentially akin to the other; each had a firm and determined hold upon the other. The contrast between them was in range of being; the identity between them was in the nature of their being. Both were thinkers, both were lovers, both were doers, servants of ideal ends; and as they faced each other, soul answered to soul, the finite to the Infinite.

This is the first step into the meaning of the story. We trace here the working of the faith

that man is made in the image of God, that he is made a little lower than God. This faith is here as it were inverted. God appears in the image of man. God is essentially human, carrying this humanness in an infinite range of being. The instinct of all high faith is here at work, Man must construe the Infinite Mystery in some way and by some principle. Shall it be through nature, with the worshipers of the sun? Shall it be through the ranges of animal life, like the Assyrian and Egyptian? Shall we depart from our own nature in seeking access to the nature of the Eternal? Shall we seek for the last and best character of the universe in its lower creations or in its higher? Shall we return to man the thinker, the lover, the doer, the servant of ideal ends, the citizen in time of an ideal world, and through his nature seek the nature of God?

How shall we best think of the Infinite Mystery that holds us in its strong embrace? Here is the solid earth on which we stand; here is the encasing air that we breathe; here are the winds that smite us from the unsunned spaces; here is the fierce light of day, the splendor of the stellar universe by night, the majesty of darkness; here is this infinite whole, benign and terrible, holding us in its iron and dumb grasp.

How shall we think of it? Resolve the cosmic pageant into mind, smite it with the wand of the

thinker, and behold how it melts into will, into intelligent will, into good will, into the will of the Highest. Pierce through color, sound, form to the heart of the encompassing mystery, and look with awestruck heart upon the Eternal. The benignity of the universe is his smile; the relentless severity is his austere kindness; the sun that warms you, the planet that feeds you, and the blessed air that you breathe are but the tokens of his presence; the laws of life, the bitter and the sweet, love and joy, love and death, are but his encompassing arms. Look the great mystery in the face. You are alone with it; it and you are the universe, and how shall you think of it? A man, an Infinite Soul, the Eternal Lover is with you in the wild solitude, and his everlasting arms are girding you. We think God in the image of man, because he has made man in the image of God. "I believe it! 'T is thou, God, that givest, 't is I who receive. In the first is the last, in thy will is my power to believe. All's one gift: thou canst grant it, moreover, as prompt to my prayer as I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air. From thy will stream the worlds, life and nature, thy dread sabaoth. 'T is the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh that I seek in the Godhead! I seek and find it. O Saul, it shall be a face like my face that receives thee; a man like to me thou shalt love, and be loved

by, forever: a hand like this hand shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand."

2. Long before Browning wrote his "Saul," the words of the text introduced to the world the conception of God perfected in Jesus Christ. The heart of this Hebrew story is the power of the weak nature over the strong. This is the amazing intimation, that a sinful man in his distress gains a victory over the sinless One in his might and joy. This mere intimation is taken up into the life of Jesus and becomes its chief distinction. The sublimest thing in the soul of Jesus is his surrender, immediate, habitual, inevitable, to the appeal of distress. Need of every kind moved Him. When He saw the mind of his people, empty of true and controlling ideas, He was moved with compassion. They appeared to Him as sheep without a shepherd, untended, undefended, living in a panic of fear. When the multitudes waited upon his ministry, He could not send them away to their distant homes unfed. When after a long and toilsome day men brought their sick to Him, He broke through the loving protest of his disciples that He should think of Himself, and while the sun was setting laid his healing hand upon pain. The weak, the resourceless, the distressed life of his people everywhere had power over Him. In the borders of Tyre and

Sidon He entered into a house and would have no man know it; but He could not be hid. A woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of Him, came and fell down at his feet. She was a Syrophœnician by race. She besought Him that He would cast the demon out of her daughter. And He, overwhelmed by the appeals of his own race, resting that He may return to the tremendous task among men, said to her, "Let the children first be fed; for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs." But the mother answered, "Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs." And He said unto her, "For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter." This poor mother appealed to the moral majesty of Jesus, and He could not withhold the answer to her prayer. Her need, her woe commanded his fullness and joy.

When Paul came to reflect upon the career of Jesus, his thought broke into these great words: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty might become rich." And again, dwelling upon Jesus and his continuous surrender to human need, and trying to account for this divine grace, Paul breaks into a philosophic poem. The Christ in Jesus was eternal in God, an equal there. But



there the Christ would not stay; He emptied Himself, He would become man, He would become obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross. He heard the prayer of the world groaning and travailing in pain until now. He could not hear that prayer and leave it unanswered. He came to men, He became partner in their woe, and He placed his divine strength at the service of their utmost need. That is Paul's philosophic lyric. And he does not end it here. He shows God's estimate of this sublime surrender of Jesus to the weakness of the world: "Wherefore, also, God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." There is the climax of the wonderful lyric. The surrender of power to the service of weakness is the worth before which earth and heaven and hell bow in honor; the surrender of power to the appeal of human woe is the sovereign distinction of Jesus; and this surrender of Jesus was possible because the almighty love of the Father was in him, because the sublime distinction of Jesus in time is the eternal distinction of God. For this is the momentous importance of Jesus for men; they may read through his char-

acter the character of the Infinite ; they may conclude that as Jesus was during those few immortal years in Palestine, so God was and is and forever will be — the Eternal over whom essential human need must prevail.

3. We have come where we can now see why it is that essential human need has power over God. It is the eternal nobility of God that puts Him in the power of weak men. We come to Him through man at his best ; we come to Him through Jesus ; we adore Him because his nature is eternal compassion, because He cannot listen to the prayer of weakness and woe unmoved ; because in the long courses of history and on the fiery paths of personal discipline He is bringing, in his own mysterious way, into the world's heart his moral power, his moral security, his ineffable love.

We touch here the border of the black tragedy of man's mistake about God. Look into the sacrificial systems of the world in Ammon, in Moab, in Mexico, in Peru, in India, in Greece, and in Israel. Look at the mother throwing her child into the Ganges ; witness the slaughter of human victims on Mexican and Peruvian altars ; watch as men and women send their children through the fire to Moloch ; consider the beauty of Greece sacrificed in her temples ; and consider again the story of Jephtha and his daughter, the first Hebrew and his son. Look this practice of human sac-

rifice in the face and see what it means ; consider the sacrifice of animal life to God instead of human beings, and ask for its motive. Whether human or animal or floral, this system of sacrifice, among any people and among all peoples, is the most tragic thing in the religious history of the world. That system is founded upon this truth, that God may be moved by man ; it is also founded upon the appalling mistake that God is movable, not because He is infinitely noble, but because He is dark and cruel and bloodthirsty. Placate God with blood ; move Him by a rich display of horrors ; pamper Him with the magnificence of your bribes, and you may win Him to your side. O friends, here is the superlative blasphemy against the Most High. Here is the historic embodiment of the tragic mistake concerning God. Here is the woeful result to which we come when we read the heart of the Eternal through the brutal human conqueror, or through the irresponsible king, or through the unregenerate man anywhere. Brutal man has made God in his own image ; upon that conception of God the sacrificial systems of the world, one and all, are built.

From the fatal mistake into which the priest has led the worshiper in all nations, we are delivered by the prophet. We cannot tell what we here owe to the prophets of Israel — Amos, Hosea, Habakkuk, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the nameless

prophet of the Exile ; they read the character of God through the idea of infinite honor, and they called the experience of men and families and nations at its best as the solemn witness that their vision of God was true. In the Book of Exodus this prophetic conception of God becomes the foundation of Israel's hope. The children of Israel are in sore bondage. The tale of bricks is doubled. The lash of the taskmaster is more and more terrible ; the life of the bondman is more and more intolerable. Still, there is no eye to pity anywhere ; there is no hand to bring salvation. The people in their sorrow can only groan and appeal to the dumb heavens. But the heavens are not dumb. The Eternal Justice sees and hears ; He it is who appears in the burning bush to the Midian shepherd ; He it is who overcomes the selfishness of that shepherd, commissions him to be the deliverer of those bondmen, sends him to his task, sustains him at it, and enables him to become the redeemer of his brethren. That is the conception of God upon which Israel was founded ; from which Israel's great faith and great literature came. God in the majesty of his compassion is in the power of men, when in their weakness and suffering they appeal to Him. That is the great idea of God which Jesus takes up into his life and which comes from his heart as " Our Father, who art in heaven." God is in the power

of men, not because He is the subject of any kind or manner of unworthy appeal, but because of his intrinsic and eternal nobility. He will not be unmoved when the weak are driven to the wall, when the strong become oppressors, when the righteous are forsaken. That is the world's highest faith; and of the truth of that faith the career of Jesus is the supreme witness.

4. Here we note in our human world the shadow of God. That is the cry of your child in pain; you rush to its relief. The weakness of your child is before you in your waking hours and in your dreams. That weakness commands your devotion as a mother, that weakness commands your strength as a father. The world is ruled from its cradles. Round the nurseries of the world are grouped its farms, factories, mines, its vast systems of exchange, its myriad forms of productive toil. From the weakness of childhood comes the chief appeal that sets in motion and that keeps in motion the stupendous industry of civilized man. The perpetual surrender of the strong mother to her weak child, the perpetual heroism of the devoted father in answer to the call of the helpless life in his home, is the shadow of the Eternal Father in the true parenthood of the race.

When lovers meet, when they solemnly covenant each with the other, when they accept the

sacrament of marriage and take each other "for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health," to love and to cherish till death do them part, they seldom think of more than one side of their privilege. They think of the new fountain of love in their hearts, the joyous possession which each holds in the love of the other, the inspiring days that have forever banished the old hours of dullness and deadness, the world as it rolls transfigured in the light that now enfolds it. It is impossible for them not to rejoice in this way; and their joy adds to the noble happiness of all who see them. But there is another and a diviner side to human love. The supreme privilege of all love worthy of the name is in hearing the prayer of deep need, in immediate responsiveness to the call for service, in eager and glad surrender to the appeal of weakness. To be strong for each other's weaknesses, to be immediate in answer to the call for help, to be inevitably moved by the opportunity supplied by a soul in distress, — that is the divine privilege of marriage. The best issue of the noblest home is not the memory of a husband or a wife who never left a wish ungratified, — that is the egotistic memory of a fool; — but the consciousness of having won through the companionship and anxious discipline of family life a constant alertness to the need of others, an immediate re-

sponsiveness in the presence of distress, a habitual inevitable surrender of power to lift up and ennoble the weaker soul.

When we see a rich and powerful friend standing by a weaker friend in distress, like Moabitish Ruth cleaving to Naomi; when we witness a mighty patriot like Abraham Lincoln consecrating to the service of his afflicted nation the wealth of his manhood; when we consider the shining army of teachers in our schools in all the hamlets and cities of our country, turning eyes of wonder and lives of devotion upon our children; when we look upon our missionaries in the black regions of our own land and in other lands serving in the strength of a rich and tender love; when we note anywhere the resourceful lover of men in the work of rescue, moved by the appeal of sin, and standing by to give help, like a great ship standing by some ill-fated and foundering vessel, there we note the image of the Eternal Lover, there we behold the shadow of God.

This discontent of love with its own security and strength is the best thing in the highest human life. The old blasphemy, that part of the bliss of heaven would consist in looking down upon the torments of hell and enjoying the contrast, is absolutely impossible to man at his highest. When Dr. Griffin says that Christ shall be to his own dear people a covert from "the hail



that shall eternally lash the howling millions of the damned," he sets the Christian soul within a security that becomes a prison, that becomes an inferno. Love may be defeated; that is conceivable. That it should rest from its labors, sit serenely in the seats of the just, congratulate itself on its own security in God and its immunity from further sacrifice, while other human beings live a life loveless and full of woe, is absolutely inconceivable. We have come a great way from many of the views of the fathers; we have come this distance under the guidance of God's Holy Spirit; we have come to see that the Christian lover of men must be the ceaseless servant of men; that Christianity means love, that love means power, that noble power by its very nature stands in perpetual surrender to the appeal of sin and shame. When this mood deepens and widens in any community, there we find the true apocalypse of God. This is his nature. He is forever bowing the heavens to enter anew the life of man in his distress. Our God, the God and Father of Jesus Christ, is in eternal surrender to the sorrow and hope of our human world.

5. Here, too, in our story we find the defensive principle in this highest conception of God. Man's need has power over the infinitely rich and tender God. Man's prayer finds this affluent and mighty Presence in gracious surrender. But

the prayer must be not only through thought and feeling ; it must be also and always through action. It must be a prayer expressed finally in the struggle of the will in the strenuous endeavor of life. This prevailing prayer must be a moral wrestle with God. God has ordained that the supreme good of man, a just and kind soul, shall be an achievement. A muscular body is never an endowment, it is always an achievement. The capacity is bestowed, the actual athletic condition is attained. Knowledge can never be a gift ; it must always be an acquisition ; a trained intellect cannot be imparted ; it must be won. By the same law character is governed. We bring from God the capacity for it ; we live in a world where the highest offers itself to us, where the lowest makes its seductive appeal. We must choose between good essential and good apparent ; we must first see good essential as an ideal and then we must struggle to give it complete dominion over life.

The supreme good, a just and kind soul, for most men is only a bare and blazing ideal. It is a bare, unattained ideal because men wait for it to impart itself, to remake them out of its distant heaven, to relieve them of all struggle, and to take them into its own perfect worth and peace. The ideal will do no such thing. It will guide, but we must follow ; it will show the way, but

we must walk in that way. It is the divine image sent to awaken the intellect, win the heart, and move the will to action. It is the divine image, but it can become the divine fact only by steadfast and unconquerable endeavor. While we wait, it hangs high in the air ; while we delay, it comes no nearer to our weakness and discontent ; while we fail to work out our own salvation, it remains afar. To-day it is afar because we have made vision and feeling do the work of will, because we have expected to receive when it was our duty to achieve, because we have thought that God would impart salvation when we should have believed that He would enable us to attain it. As well believe that by a dream we may circumnavigate the globe as that by a vision or a sentiment we may compass the supreme good. Not to dreams does the soil yield her fruits or the earth her riches, but to the wise will in the strong hand ; not to dreams do the wonders of science come or the beautiful worlds of art, but to the illuminated will working by intellect and patient toil ; not by the path of dreams does ideal justice and kindness enter the personal soul, but by the path of strong crying and tears ; not to the dreamer of God's word, but to the doer thereof does the wilderness of human society blossom as the rose. Inaction is poverty, ignorance, moral woe, hopeless despair.

We must figure the universe always as the Divine Presence. We must resolve all but personal souls like ourselves into the Infinite Soul. We must think of God as inconceivably rich in his bounty and as with us in our night and distress, that He may bless us. We must think of trial, disappointment, discontent, pain — all the things that threaten to baffle and overwhelm us — as the girding arms of the Eternal Love ; we must accept these as a challenge to the great contest with God ; we must hold Him fast and wrestle with Him till the day break and the shadows flee away ; we must appeal to Him by the whole moving might of our need. We must utter our prayer through wills in action, through the tension and struggle of our entire being ; then we shall receive in the solemn fiery dawn of some great calm morning the surrender of the Eternal Wrestler : Thou hast prevailed with God ; take thy new name ; live forever in the blessedness of thy triumphant wrestle with the Infinite Love.

## X

### THE IDEALIST IN THE DREAMER

“And Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it to his brethren : and they hated him yet the more.”

Gen. xxxvii, 5.

THE story of Joseph is one of the richest, one of the tenderest, one of the most beautiful in the literature of the world. It cannot be retold ; one must read it for one's self. It is recorded, as you are aware, in the last part of the Book of Genesis, beginning with the thirty-seventh chapter. Familiar with it since boyhood, I have read it recently again and again, and I have been impressed as never before with its inimitable human quality, its fidelity to life, its insight into the governing passions in the heart of man, its recognition of the evil and the good in existence, and its issue in a noble reconciliation and peace. Here is the confused drama of human life, with its conflict of ends and interests ; its pride, jealousy, cruelty, and restraining fear ; its reverses whereby power passes from the tyrant to the victim ; its discipline of pain ; its magnanimity, forgiveness, and victorious love. May such be the issue of all the discord of our poor world, such its final triumph over evil.

The Greeks made a sharp distinction between the vision and the dream, between seeing when one is awake and seeing when one is asleep. The dream they called the vision of a shadow, the beholding of something insubstantial and vain; such an experience is a delusion: the real vision, the experience when one is awake is beholding something true, something that is part of the substantial world. We have inherited from the Greeks this contrast: we set in contrast the vision by day and the dream by night; we say the experience when one is awake is real, the experience in sleep is unreal. We contrast them as the substantial and the insubstantial and vain.

It is not to be supposed that the Hebrews thought that a man could drive as good a bargain when he was asleep as when he was awake; that is not at present a characteristic of the race, and probably it never has been. If any Hebrew wanted to do business, he would want to do it when he was awake; if he employed an agent to do business for him, he would not wish that agent to act in a dream. On the lower levels of life the same contrast reigned in Hebrew thought, as in Greek, and as in our modern way of thinking: on the higher levels of life this people held that the dream was a form of revelation, an intimation of spiritual truth, often of very great significance. There is that sublime passage in Job: —

In thoughts from the visions of the night, when  
deep sleep falleth upon men,

Fear came upon me, and trembling, which made  
all my bones to shake.

Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of  
my flesh stood up:

. . . There was silence, and I heard a voice, saying,  
"Shall mortal man be more just than God! Shall  
a man be more pure than his Maker?"

Thus through a dream the eternal justice and  
purity were delivered to the world. When Jo-  
seph and Mary and the infant Jesus were in Beth-  
lehem, being warned of God in a dream, Joseph  
took his family into Egypt; being warned of God  
in a dream, he left Egypt for Palestine; and  
again being warned of God in a dream, he turned  
toward Nazareth, where Jesus grew to manhood.  
The place of the dream in the economy of reve-  
lation is an extraordinary one. This aspect of the  
thought of the people of Israel is deserving of  
the most careful and sympathetic treatment. For  
them the dream was one great organ for the de-  
liverance of divine wisdom.

Here we have this Hebrew dreamer, Joseph.  
Let me recall to you his two chief dreams. First,  
he is in the field reaping, a farmer boy with his  
brethren. He and they are binding sheaves and  
his sheaf stood upright, and the sheaves of his  
brethren came and did obeisance to his sheaf.  
The dream was rightly understood by his breth-



ren ; it was the dream of future preëminence. His second dream was still more extravagant. He dreamed that the sun and the moon and the eleven stars did obeisance unto him. Again his brethren and his father perfectly understood the dream, and were not pleased with it. It was a dream of future preëminence. Let these dreams introduce our subject which I am to discuss under this old type. I wish to speak of the dream in three forms ; first, the dream pure and simple ; second, the dream as play, as make-believe, chiefly in the life of children ; and third, and mainly, the dream as reverie, in which we have a prophecy of the future.

First, then, the dream pure and simple. Its chief value for our purpose is as a revelation of the moral character of the dreamer. We are told to-day that a dream is mainly a revelation of a state of indigestion, and that is often true. A man's dreams without doubt often tell of a disturbed body ; the greater part of them, perhaps, have no other significance than that ; they are a commentary on the state of the dreamer's body, his nervous system, the condition of his brain, as affected by the condition of his digestive organs. One dream in twenty will have a different significance ; it will reflect to him his own character when the will is quiescent, when he cannot hide things from himself ; for we are all the while

trying to disguise our real selves from ourselves, and the greatest imposture that we practice in life is imposture upon ourselves. We almost persuade ourselves that we are saints and heroes. Did you ever dream that you were going into battle? Did you discover that you were a brave man then? I never did. You never did. And when you awoke, did you not feel a blush upon your face as red as sunrise, to think you were such a coward? When a rowboat is offshore, and a man who should hold the tiller falls asleep, the boat swings landward or seaward according to the tide; it has no life of its own. In sleep the will is quiescent, the helmsman of the mind, that holds the mind true against its desires and against the deep current of character often, that steers it on to a goal other than that which it wants; when this helmsman of the soul is asleep, then you discover the real man, the wide and wild tides that toss him hither and thither.

Did you ever hear a child pray in its sleep? Nothing could be more impressive than the few broken words of prayer that one will sometimes hear coming from the heart of a sleeping child, revealing the utter sincerity and trust within. Did you ever stand by the bedside of a noble friend in delirium, and hear him talk out the deepest things in his life, lay bare his whole being to your gaze? Did you ever feel so near to

God as when you listened to his prayer — “ Our Father, who art in heaven ” — “ though he slay me, yet will I trust in him ”? Broken words put together without connection, and yet all telling of the reality and the sanctity of your friend’s heart. For many months before Dr. Bushnell died, he was part of the time in delirium, and his family have recorded the awe with which they heard his words, and looked upon the springs of his inmost soul. It seemed to them that they were looking upon the emotions, the impulses, the movement of the spirit of God ; so great may be the majesty of a dream as a revelation of the moral character of the dreamer.

The classical example of the dream as a revelation of bad character is Lady Macbeth in the scene where she is trying to wash the spots from her hand. She can conceal by day her part in the murder of Duncan ; she cannot hide it when she is asleep. There she appears, the most impressive person in the whole tragedy, washing her hands, finding the spots that she cannot rub clean, “ Out, out, damned spot ” ; there she is telling everybody in her dream what she has done, revealing her inmost soul. Our Lord said there is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed, and a glance down into the depths of the human soul at the law which operates the soul, which turns everything inside outside, makes us cry with the

psalmist, "We are fearfully and wonderfully made." The dream may well serve to us as a revelation of the way that the tide is setting; the helmsman is asleep; is the boat going landward or seaward?

We pass now to the second part of our subject, the dream as play, as make-believe. What is its significance here? One of the deepest, and one into which the educators of our day are looking with a sense of the charm and the profound meaning of child-life at play. There has been a wide induction made in our time of the rich and varied forms of play; much thought has been given to them by philosophic educators, with the result that a vast amount of new knowledge has been gained in the psychology of children.

The difference between the play of a boy and the play of a girl is a revelation of the generic difference of their nature. The boy, with his battleships, his soldiers, his generals, gathering round him the symbols of the manhood of the world, is revealing his nature as a little man. The girl, with her dolls, with her refined human interests, gathering round her the symbols of the womanhood of the world, is revealing thereby the fact that she is a little woman. There is thus an apocalypse through play of the utmost moment.

Upon this vast section of our subject I can only touch. Play is, indeed, beautiful! The play

of a child is close to the beginning, the deep beginning of our human life. It is greatly significant of the nature of the soul that has just arrived from God. It is a revelation of the part that this soul has been predestined to take in the history of the world. I hope that other examples will occur to you of the beauty and the wonder of that make-believe world of childhood, and the depth of meaning that it reveals. I should be sorry for myself and for you if we should miss that out of which came one of the finest poems in the English language; Wordsworth's "Ode on Immortality." We join the poet when he gives thanks, —

". . . for those first affections,  
 Those shadowy recollections,  
 Which, be they what they may,  
 Are yet the fountain light of all our day,  
 Are yet a master light of all our seeing;  
 Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make  
 Our noisy years seem moments in the being  
 Of the eternal Silence : truths that wake,  
 To perish never ;  
 Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,  
 Nor Man nor Boy,  
 Nor all that is at enmity with joy,  
 Can utterly abolish or destroy.  
 Hence in a season of calm weather  
 Though inland far we be,  
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
 Which brought us hither;  
 Can in a moment travel thither,  
 And see the children sport upon the shore,  
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore."

We come now to the last part of our subject, the dream as reverie, as a forecast of the future. Note here the strength of desire. Every desire, when it is strong, tries to get possession of the imagination and fling up its banner there; it tries to keep that banner in the imagination till satisfaction has been found. The hungry man pictures food; the thirsty man flings up into the imagination an image of drink; the poor man paints there a picture of wealth; the friendless man, some sweet, hallowing, comforting society; the ambitious man, power. Every desire, when it is strong, paints itself in the imagination, holds the picture there, and seeks gratification by the whole power of the mind. When the desire is strong and base, when it gets control of the mind, the mind is thereby dishonored; there we have the beginning of a career of shame. When the desire is strong and noble, when it gains control of the mind, the mind is thereby exalted and there is the beginning of a life of honor. The reverie has thus a twofold significance; it is creative of character, good or bad, and it is a forecast of the future.

Note here the dream of preëminence as a forecast of the future. Recall the dreams of Joseph, of the sheaves, and the sun and the moon and the stars; both are pictures of preëminence in the future. Is it legitimate for a boy or a youth



to indulge in a day-dream, in which he paints his future preëminence over acquaintances, over the members of his family, over the men of his time? Under certain circumstances it surely is legitimate. This Hebrew dreamer made his dream just by his willingness to work for it and to suffer for it.

Recall his history. After his dream he was thrown into a pit; from that pit he was taken and sold as a slave to the Midianites; by them he was sold as a slave to the chief guard of Pharaoh, in Egypt. Did he abandon his dream? Not he; he lived for it, he worked for it, he suffered for it, he put justice into it, and when he was serving and advancing in Potiphar's house, there came the diabolical charge, of which he was innocent, which sent him to the dungeon. Did he despair then? Not he; he suffered yet more for his dream, he toiled for it, he lived for it, and rose again. When he interpreted the dream of the chief butler and saw him go back to power in Pharaoh's house, Joseph begged him when it was well with him to remember his friend and interpreter still in prison and there unjustly; and when the chief butler forgot him altogether the Hebrew dreamer did not despair. He held to his dream, he toiled for it, he suffered for it on to the end. When he was brought into Pharaoh's house, and interpreted the dream to the king, of



the seven fat kine, and the seven lean kine, the seven full ears, and the seven lean ears, as the seven years of plenty and the seven years of famine that were to be upon the land, what happened then? He was made the chief man in Egypt, and still toiled and lived that his dream might come true. This man put justice and kindness into his dream of future preëminence and made the dream great.

Read again Browning's great poem, "A Grammarian's Funeral"; see the scholar's dream of preëminence and then note the mighty effort which he was ready to make, the nameless suffering which he was willing to endure in order to make his dream come true, and then tell me if you do not think his preëminence, when it arrived, was deserved. Look at the dreams of the real dreamers, the poets, musicians, master workmen everywhere; mark the years of preparation, the years of apprenticeship, the years of suffering before their dream begins to come true. Consider the physician, who is dreaming of becoming a great member of his profession; there are ten years of study before he can begin; there are ten years more before he can rank among the highest. The dream of preëminence, when you toil for it and suffer for it, is just.

This man put humanity into his dream of

preëminence by becoming in his preëminence the servant of all who needed his service. This is a beautiful part of Joseph's story. He toiled during those seven years of plenty, stored Egypt with corn that the populations on the Nile might survive and that the adjacent countries, suffering from the famine when it should come, might live and not die. When a man determines, as Abraham Lincoln did, "If I ever get into power, I will hit that institution of slavery hard," he combines in one a dream of personal exaltation and social service.

There is nothing that wise men like to see better than boys in their homes, young men in the secondary schools, and in college dreaming of the future, dreaming that they are to be orators, preachers, educators, physicians, poets, musicians, journalists, any one of a hundred other things, and sure that they are to be princes in their calling. Nothing is more wholesome than this dream if these dreamers are willing to work for it, if they mean by it power to serve the world. Such dreams will bring God into their lives; such dreams will keep them pure and noble till they attain. We may well thank God for the dreams of youth, for the young men that see visions; they may swell with egoism now and then, but if they put good service and high self-sacrifice into their dreams, God is there. Burns

sings for the million in the lines in which he reveals his young soul, —

“E'en then, a wish (I mind its pow'r),  
A wish that to my latest hour  
Shall strongly heave my breast,  
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake  
Some usefu' plan or book could make,  
Or sing a sang at least.”

He toiled, he suffered, that he might sing; finally he did sing more than one song, a group of songs that are like the music of the spheres. His dream, his forecast of his own future in the light of what he did, and the way in which he did it, is noble and beautiful.

Sometimes the dream of an individual is the dream for his race; it cannot be wholly fulfilled in him; it takes all time in which to realize that dream. Such a dream the father of Joseph had, when he went out a wanderer, and was overtaken by night in a solitary place, and lay down there to sleep with a stone for his pillow. The dream was of a ladder running from earth to heaven and complete exchange of being between man's life and God's. That dream is one great forecast and prophecy of the religious life of mankind. A greater member of that race, the greatest, the divinest, representing mankind at its best, stood in Nazareth and said that He was that ladder, the realization of that ancient dream. Since

then men have gone on repeating this dream, toiling, suffering, praying, living and dying, that the world of God and the world of man might blend in one eternal song.

“ We are the music-makers  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
    Wandering by lone sea-breakers,  
    And sitting by desolate streams;  
World-losers and world-forsakers,  
    On whom the pale moon gleams;  
Yet we are the movers and shakers  
    Of the world forever, it seems.

“ With wonderful deathless ditties  
We build up the world’s great cities,  
    And out of a fabulous story  
    We fashion an empire’s glory:  
One man with a dream, at pleasure,  
    Shall go forth and conquer a crown;  
And three with a new song’s measure  
    Can trample a kingdom down.

“ We, in the ages lying  
    In the buried past of the earth,  
Built Nineveh with our sighing,  
    And Babel itself in our mirth;  
And o’erthrew them with prophesying  
    To the old of the new world’s worth;  
For each age is a dream that is dying,  
    Or one that is coming to birth.”

## XI

### THE DELIVERER AND HIS IDEAL

“God called to him out of the midst of the bush.”

Ex. III, 4.

THERE is usually a key to the life of the great man, some experience that lets one into the secret of his career, some principle from which that career flows like the stream from its source. If one would understand the career of Martin Luther, one must hear him singing on the Santa Scala, “The just shall live by faith.” In the way of promise the whole career of Martin Luther is there. If one would understand the career of the great Stoic, Epictetus, one must hear him ask, “Who made thee a slave, Cæsar or thyself?” There is the prophetic beginning of that glorious struggle in physical bondage for spiritual freedom.

By British and American scholars fifty years ago the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, was regarded as an enigma, as nearly an incomprehensible mystery. Kant is still difficult, winding, and intricate, hard to comprehend; but there are two keys to him that make his career fundamentally clear and immensely interesting, — one intellectual, the other moral. He had been read-

ing the writings of the Scottish philosopher, David Hume, who said that the senses are the sources of all our knowledge. Here Kant asks his first great question, how this sensuous experience comes to be the ordered mind of a rational being. That question is the key to Kant on the intellectual side. On the moral side this philosopher said there were two things that impressed him with ever-increasing wonder and awe, the starry heavens above and the moral law within ; the one taught him his insignificance as an atom in an infinite material universe, the other taught him his transcendence as a morally accountable being. Here is the key to Kant, the moralist and the man.

The story of the burning bush contains the key to the career of Moses. That career is long, difficult, obscure, uncertain at many points ; scholars disagree about it ; perhaps it will always remain impossible to get at the truth of it as a whole ; it was lived so long ago and the record of it is somewhat confused. Yet the great experience embodied in the vision of the bush that burned and was not consumed lets one into the secret of the significance to all after ages of this monumental man. Till this vision came to him Moses was a local character ; till then he counted for little in the history of his people, and for nothing in the history of the world.

Looking backward from the moment of this vision, we recall the chief events of his life. We note the tender beauty of his birth. His father and mother were slaves and the mother, seeing that he was a goodly child, (what mother ever thought her child other than goodly?) hid him three months from the hand of the destroyer; and when she could hide him no longer, she made an ark for him and set him afloat among the flags of the river Nile. There is the romance of the discovery of this concealed child among the flags of the river by Pharaoh's daughter and the further romance of his adoption into the household of Pharaoh.

Later another and a finer note is struck. When Moses grew to manhood he went out to see his brethren and to look upon their burdens. Here is the beginning of greatness; went out from the palace of the Pharaohs to see his brethren and to look upon their woe. He did not fare well in this venture; he got into a quarrel with an Egyptian, who died by his hand. Then came the flight into the Midian wilderness and his occupation there as a shepherd. There we mark the security of his life, the comfort of it, the content of it, the chance for profound and happy brooding upon the nature of the Infinite, upon the mysteries of human existence, the charging of his imagination with all the great thoughts that would naturally arise,



in such a scene, in the mind of a great man. We observe, too, that he has time to discover the best in the thoughts of the accessible races of his age. We further note a happy domestic life; he had the creative comfort of a good home. This is the whole story of the career of Moses, briefly told, up to the time when this great experience occurred. You notice that it is mostly personal, that it is extremely local, of little consequence to his own people, and of none whatever to the life of the world.

When the great idea came, it took him and turned him from a local character into a world character. That is what the great idea always does when it seizes a man; it takes him and in ever-widening circles makes him significant; if he is a great nature, it makes him significant for the entire contemporary world; if he is great enough, it lends him significance for all time.

The great idea did not get complete control of this man's life all at once. It bade him go back to Egypt and become the deliverer of his people, but he did not altogether like that commission; he questioned the divine voice that was speaking to him. "They will ask who sent me; what shall I say?" "I, the divine, personal life of the universe, sent you." "They will ask for a sign. They are creatures of sense and of time; these great abstractions will not weigh with them." "Take

your shepherd's crook, it will become a serpent to the oppressor." "But I am not eloquent." "Who made the organs of speech? I will be with your utterance, I will give you eloquence, I will send with you your brother, who is not always sensible, but you will be wisdom to him and good sense, and he will be eloquence to you." "O Lord, I do not want to go!" There is the chief difficulty. Looking into this reluctance to accept the commission from the great idea, we discover modesty; the great man is always full of mis-giving, he does not know his own size. Till this hour this man's life had cast no shadow; he had no means of measuring himself and he felt totally unfit to do what the vision commissioned him to do. There was something noble in his reluctance to serve; there was also something ignoble.

There was in Moses what there is in every man, a natural shirk. He wanted to go on dreaming and brooding in an irresponsible way out there in the Midian wilderness; he did not want to face great tasks. Is not the man typical here of our own time? The vision comes to men through Jesus to-day, saying, "You are a son of God. There is the great idea for you; it commissions you to live in the spirit and serve your generation by a great life." The reply is apt to be, "We are not good enough for that; we are unfit for

any such commission ; it is too sublime ; we are creatures of a day and our dwellings are in the dust." Again the noble element is here, the sense of weakness, of limitation, of incapacity, the consciousness of serious disqualification for the high calling of Christ. But along with this noble modesty there is ignoble feeling, there is laziness, there is cowardice, there is the shirk who wants to crawl through the world just as easily and as comfortably as he can. Analyze your soul ; do honor to all that is good in you ; search out and hold before your eyes the base thing that is keeping you from the acceptance of the great commission.

The great idea, when it came to this man and was accepted, utilized the whole past experience of his life. According to the record, Moses was well advanced in years before this vision came to him, before the idea took possession of him ; when it came, it turned the entire contents of his previous life to its own account. He was a scholar, he was a thinker, he understood men, he knew the Egyptians, he knew the Hebrews, he knew their environments ; all this knowledge, all this experience, all this capacity, and all this power the great idea marshaled and pressed into its own service.

Here again this Hebrew is typical. Cromwell was forty-four years old when he became signifi-

cant to his nation ; but all those forty-four years of manly living, wise work, and pious musing were pressed into the service of his idea ; he had been called to become the deliverer and the defender of the people of England. Washington was forty-three years old when he took command of the American army under the old Cambridge elm ; but the entire career of Washington fitted him to be the servant of the great idea when it arrived. Abraham Lincoln was forty-nine years of age before he became a national figure, in his famous debate with Stephen Douglas ; but when once he became the tribune of the people, their great representative, all those forty-nine years and their contents fell into line and he was the leader of a grand army of gift and power. General Grant was forty-two when he stood forth as the lieutenant-general of the Federal forces in the great war for the preservation of the Union ; but again, he was a graduate of West Point, he had been in the Mexican War, he knew how to handle men, he knew how to fight, he was a trained soldier, and his whole past came into play when the great idea took possession of him. Nothing is wasted in human life when once a great idea takes hold of it. View the records of your sin, your shame, your folly, your weakness, your heartbreak, your despair, your atheism, and your inhumanity ; they are all taken and

converted into powder and shot in the hands of the sovereign, commanding ideal.

What did this vision mean? What was it at heart? It was first of all the vision of God as the deliverer of men. This man had doubtless brooded deeply on the Eternal; he had been moved in wonder and joy as his mind was absorbed and carried upward into the presence of the Infinite; but it had not occurred to him that God, in the infinitude of his life, in the eternity of his being, could be concerned with the good and the evil, the right and the wrong, the injustice, the iniquity, and the woe of the world.

If you think this strange, let me give you an instance. The strongest and the loftiest theist in the ancient world outside of our Biblical records is the Greek, Aristotle. There is something amazing in the way in which he carries up the finite world, which he explores with a thoroughness and mastery so great, to the Eternal Thinker as the beginning and the persistent cause of it all. But even this sincere and mighty theist contends that God has nothing to do with the moral life of the world; its justice or its injustice is of no consequence to him. There is the great defect in Aristotle's vision of God; the concerns of the Eternal Being do not comprehend the profoundest concerns of man. So Moses thought before his enlightenment; when he saw that God was

concerned with right and wrong, truth and falsehood, the oppressed and the oppressor, and with all the woe in the world, — his 'God became the living God.

Something like this must happen to all genuine believers. Take the Scottish Chalmers. In his early life he was carried away by the vision of the almightiness of God; he lived as in a dream; his days were a rapture as he went about in the glory and peace of that thought. When he became minister of the Tron Church in Glasgow, with thousands of suffering, sinning, tragic human beings roundabout his church; when he went among them to look at them, to understand them; when they became his concern, he no longer thought of God in the old way. He attained to a vision of the God, one of whose infinite concerns is with the sin and the woe of human hearts. We have no God till we come to this; our God means nothing till He is in earnest; we cannot honor Him till we know that He likes some things and that He does not like other things, till we know that He is on the side of the downtrodden and the oppressed. When we can say that our God is on the side of humanity, that He is there in behalf of truth and righteousness, kindness and mercy, then our God is great. Then we can sing with men of old that the stars in their courses fight for the righteous cause.



This vision had still another meaning. Moses saw his people in a new light. He had always known of their sufferings and laid them to heart; but when he saw that against the Infinite stood up the shadow of their woe, then that same shadow fell upon his own soul with deeper gloom. That which concerned God he felt must concern him. As he looked at his own wife and thought of her as the mother of his children, he would think of the wives of other men, the mothers of their children. As he saw his own children, he would think of the children of his race in bondage: he read the meaning of their calamity through the calamity that would be his were his home set in that cruel world. This is the way in which men think to-day, when they are alive; they read the fatherhood of the world through their own father; the motherhood of the race through their own mother; the childhood of the world through their own children; they take that portion of humanity which is dear to them and then ask themselves what would life be worth if their possession were under menace, outrage, and shame. They do this because they have faith in a God to whom iniquity is a horror and to whom righteousness is dear. This man got his initial impulse for a genuine sympathy with suffering from his faith in a righteous and compassionate God. If you look through the annals of the humanist who is not a



man of faith, the philanthropist who has no belief in a universe sympathetic toward man, who is able to draw no support out of the invisible for his best affections, how thin, how shallow, how impotent you find him to be. God help the race whose servants see no support in the universe for their work! Joy be to the race whose great leaders believe that God is with them, who sing with Luther, —

“A mighty fortress is our God,  
A bulwark failing never ;  
Our helper he amid the flood  
O'er mortal ills prevailing.”

It is the universe as background that gives the final significance to the sympathies of the wise and the good.

Something more calls for a word of emphasis. When Moses got his new vision of God, — his new vision of his suffering race, — he was ready, after a little struggle, to present himself as the servant and prophet of the Divine Deliverer. He could not take upon himself the woe of shutting out God from the race by refusing to be the servant of the Invisible. To this all disobedience to the heavenly vision comes. If Moses had refused, if all those called to represent a delivering God to that people had refused, Israel would have died in bondage. Think of it! We who are here now, if we are faithful to the great

idea when it comes to us, let God into the world; we open a sluiceway for the eternal waters to rush in; if we are unfaithful to the great idea that would commission us, we dam the divine river back into the heart of God. When God calls for men to introduce Him to his world, those who obey let God in; those who disobey, do their best to shut God out. I do not know any aspect of human life so tremendous as this; there is nothing quite so overwhelming as the thought that if I refuse to follow the great idea, I to that extent keep God out of his world; and if I follow with all my heart, for all my years, and for all I am worth, to that extent I let God in as the light and deliverance and consolation of the world.

Great men are part of the supreme consolation of the world. To live with them is one of the rare privileges of mortal existence. The monumental minds to whom one must look up, in whose shadow one may rest, whose greatness one may feel upon one's spirit in a flood of light and peace, in whose high companionship one may make his pilgrimage through time, — what comfort, what security and delight are here. There are the sovereign intellects in every domain of human interest, the kings in philosophy, in science, in art, in poetry, and in religion. How great they are, and how they exalt and hallow the lives of

common men. Here we think of men of action, men whose vision has become an achieving force in social and national life. Many races have had such men, and these peoples have found in them permanent and indeed inexhaustible satisfaction. Think what Pericles was to the Athenians; he was their pride, their Olympian man, their crown! Think what Charles the Great was to the Franks; there was another mighty name shining upon the centuries of human struggle and hope! Think what William the Silent was to the Dutch,—their great man, their joy, the source of their national strength in time of peril, their chief glory. At length, Englishmen, in spite of their blindness, in spite of their conventionality, are coming to rejoice in their greatest man, Oliver Cromwell; during the next thousand years they will grow more and more into the comfort and renown of that imperial spirit. We have our Washington. Every time that I pass his superb statue in the Boston Public Garden, and look upon that splendid horse and that majestic figure, that finely poised head, and those great pure eyes looking out into the west in the glow of evening, I think not only of Washington's happiness, elected as he is to a service immeasurable; I think also of the joy and the strength, the honor and the inspiration of all Americans in the possession of this leader and commander of the people.

Such a leader and commander was Moses to the people of Israel through thirteen hundred years of life; he was to them the shadow of a great rock in a weary land; he was a mind that lifted them from earth to heaven, a great, patient, serene spirit enduring in the wilderness of time, as seeing Him who is invisible, and at the end walking to his death in fellowship with the God who appeared to him in the burning bush, whom he had served and with whom he passed into the eternal silence and rest.

## XII

### THE IDEALIST UNDER FOUR ASPECTS

“And the Lord came, and stood, and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel. Then Samuel said, Speak, for thy servant heareth.”

1 Sam. iii, 10.

FOUR distinct epochs in the life of Samuel are implied in these words. There was the time when his heart was untroubled by any appreciable call, the time when the call that came was mistaken, the time when it was understood, and the time in which it repeated itself, in the clear consciousness of the servant of God, as the burden and song of his soul. The call unheard, the call heard but mistaken, the call heard and understood, the call received in one continuous and increasing voice;—these are the four great epochs in this man's life. They constitute the four great divisions and surprises of every truly religious soul. There is in every life the period of silence. There are no convictions, there are no responses, for the reason that there is no speaking universe for that life. Then follows the period in which voices ring out in the twilight and the awakened spirit rushes on into mistaken interpretations. But for the true man the process does not stop here. The great hour comes in which the voice of God is

heard in an understanding heart. And in the case of the normal Christian life, to this succeeds the continuous and ever-increasing revelation.

1. There is first of all the period of silence. God is doubtless in the silent life, but before his voice is heard, man is not man. Life does not really count for human until we know that God is speaking to us. There may be growth in it, there may be many good things in it, there may be a great preparatory movement of soul, but it is a sort of prenatal existence.

This is the period when there is no open vision, when other men do our thinking for us, when we have no convictions of our own, when we are still in our spiritual minority, subject to tutors and guardians, in bondage to an authority whose reasonableness we do not see. This is the period in which the disciples follow Christ and yet have no vision of his Gospel, no insight into his purpose, no clear consciousness of their relation to Him. He speaks, but they do not hear; He unfolds his wonderful teaching in sermon and in parable, but they do not understand; He works his divine acts of healing and deliverance, but the significance of these they do not take in. This is the period when Moses is a solitary shepherd in the Midian wilderness, when Isaiah is an unawakened worshiper in the Temple, when Jeremiah has not yet felt God's call tremble through his frail being,

when Saul of Tarsus is still a Pharisee, when Luther is a faithful monk. It is the time when whatever religion there may be in the nature is wholly inherited, traditional, circumstantial. You see the keeper take from the cage a lion's cub. He fondles it as he would some domestic pet. You cannot think, as you look upon the harmless and helpless creature, of the terrible nature latent in it. It is almost impossible to imagine, as it clings to you and seeks shelter and comfort by pressing closer to you, that a lion's heart is beating within. The truth is it is not yet a lion; its whole great nature is unborn; it is simply the possible monarch of the forest and king of beasts. There is a corresponding stage in every human life. The boy is not the man, the youth is not the man. The religious nature, fed from without, cared for by others, having its thinking done for it, its creed framed, its convictions moulded, its purpose determined, its activity directed by a happy environment, has not yet come to its humanity. It is the lion's cub; it is not the lion.

This period is inevitable and therefore can be no disgrace. It is simply immaturity. "When I was a child," so the apostle says, "I thought as a child, I felt as a child, I understood as a child." He could not help himself; and all the more do we see the importance of the sweet and radiant environment for the immature spirit. Be sure



that you support the silent God in the life of your child. The idea of God may not yet have dawned; there may be no whisper of his power in the young soul, no consciousness may have arrived of his being, no thoughts may have grouped themselves round his name, but let us be sure that God is working in that silent life. Let the environment be full of faith and love, let it be pervaded by the sense of the sanctity of human life, let the forces of reverence and pity play through it like airs from heaven, let the whole power of home, education, recreation, companionship, and social pleasure be such as to support the awful Presence that in the unconscious soul is seeking to shape a character in the image of Christ. The environment should be a sort of incubator. The bird is in the egg only as a possibility; it must be hatched and brought forth. When it has become a bird, it is in a fair way to take care of itself. The child, the boy, the youth is but the possible man. The incubating environment is indispensable for the living and winged product. When one thinks of the waste of possibility in the soul life of every generation, the psychological mortality among children greater far and sadder than physical death, the widespread and terrible failure to work with God in the silence and darkness of the immature spirit, one sees the wisdom and venerates the piety that

took the child Samuel and placed him in the Temple. There amid great memories and great hopes, there among exalted ideals and hallowing associations, there in an environment with the unbelief and the brutality of the world reduced to their lowest forms, and with the forces that play upon the noble instincts as the sun plays upon the seed-plot in the spring, lifted to their best, let the prophetic child in whom the silent God is fashioning a great soul be always placed.

2. The second period is the period of mistake. How faithfully and touchingly this stage of spiritual existence is described in the chapter from which the text is taken. Three times the Divine Voice spoke to the young prophet, and three times it was misunderstood. The disturbing speech was supposed to come from the old priest. The words were distinctly heard, the response was swiftly made, but the bewildered soul went to Eli instead of to God. Here there is progress, but it is pathetic progress. The spirit is awake, it hears the mysterious call; but no sooner is it awake, no sooner does it hear than it begins to make mistakes. It is as if, in the case of the bee constructing its cell, the builder in instinct had died, and the architect in reason had not arrived. There is something profoundly touching in this failure to understand the highest in life, in this repeated, persistent, misguided reduction of the

Supreme to the merely human. All our failures may be summed up in this. We interpret the great voices downward, we fail to lift our visitations to their eternal source. The day-spring from on high visits men ; and they look for the fountain of light and gladness, not in the prophetic heavens, but in the dull earth. In the wonder of childhood, in the strength and fire of youth, in the increasing burden and privilege of manhood and womanhood, in the sense of mystery that old age brings with it, in the days memorable for their brightness or for their heaviness, in the experiences that hold great joys and in those that enshrine great sorrows, in the entire warp and woof of existence, in its ideals, longings, achievements, disappointments, expectations, bewilderments, sufferings, hopes, and despairs, the voice of God forever rings. And the pathetic thing is that we hear the voice and know not whose it is, that we take the call of the Highest to human weakness for interpretation, that we mistake the speech of God for the summons of the poor priest. Thus love and grief, recollection and anticipation are degraded ; thus home and trade and social order, all fellowships and all brotherhoods are brought low ; thus the sublime mysteries of life and death become common and mean. It is like the apostles on the day of Pentecost. There they are, their entire nature flooded

with new experiences; there they stand, their whole being possessed by a new passion. And there are the mockers who refer the sublime phenomenon to the effect of new wine. Pentecost is repeated over and over again, not only in the life of the Church, but on a vastly wider scale in the nature of man. The subjects of this divine visitation are themselves by turns the mockers who refer the heavenly inspiration to earthly sources, who confound the power of the Holy Ghost with the delirium wrought by appetite. Where men are clear of this sin, they still mistake the call of the Lord for the summons of the priest.

How do men treat the emergence of the moral ideal in the soul? How do they construe its sublime appeal? Do they lift it up to God or drag it down to personal peculiarity? Do they treat it as the only real and indestructible possession of the soul, or do they admire it for a while, and then, finding that it clashes with the world, set it down as an illusion? There is the soul of youth in the streets of our city running with the voice of the Highest ringing through it, from God to the priest. There is one terrible form of the great mistake—the dishonor, the degradation of the ideal. How about the sense of sin? “Remorse,” as some one has said, “is an implicit creed.” Conviction in the court of con-

science as a wrongdoer is a word, a call from God. How is that inward wound treated? Do the young prophets of our time try to forget it in evil company, through systematic self-indulgence, by stifling the conscience, by unresting vagrancy of thought? In the lives of these souls there is, as it were, a morgue with its dead bodies waiting to be owned and buried. The morgue is in a garden, and these young prophets play with their backs to the dreadful thing, look forth with delight upon the trees and the flowers, and listen with joy to the song of the birds. But the house of death is there, and no self-induced oblivion can make it disappear. It is the call of God to confess the sin and to be forgiven, to own the dreadful corpse and to bury it out of sight. How many refuse to do this. Here is another form of the tremendous mistake. The sense of sin is the keenest pain, and instead of going to God with it, men carry it to the poor earthly friend.

There are other forms of this same fundamental error. There is the form that is so apt to come in with the awakened power of thought. The young philosopher is so apt to dispense with the Lord, he is so often tempted to reduce all the high voices in his nature to the voice of the priest. Religion, sentiment, disinterested love, unselfish friendship, duty, social fellowship, and

all the institutions which have risen as the servants of these things, the young thinker is tempted to explain without the intervention of the Absolute Wisdom and Goodness. For God he substitutes the priest. The universe is construed without reference to the Highest, and whatever mysteries seem to remain are to be carried to the poor slumbering Elis who fill all the corners of history, and who are especially potent when the lights are gone out. This is the form of the immemorial mistake into which the young thinker falls. He does not see the nature of the thing with which he is dealing, he does not discern the divine notes in the voice that he hears. He is awake, he is thinking, but he is in complete bewilderment. He has left the peace of authority, he has not yet won the peace of personal vision.

The form of the mistake that has blackened Christian history is the sinking of God in human feeling, instead of the purification of human feeling through God. Think of the hatreds, the fires, the persecutions that have flamed out of zeal for God degraded, carried down into the passions for interpretations. Who can read the long and dreadful annals of persecution without compassion for humanity! It has taken its religion, its highest, and turned it into a scourge of inexpressible fury upon millions of the race.



What a blunder it has been, the attempt to control by force the opinions of men, to burn those whom it has been impossible to convert. The only reason that I can see for the story of the sacrifice of Isaac in our Bible is this: it is God's warning against man's immemorial mistake. The call was for the sacrifice of the boy, the call was from God, but the bewildered father took the call for interpretation first of all to Moloch and not to Jehovah. That story is a monumental instance crying out against man's monumental weakness.

3. We must date our full manhood from the hour in which we have known that God is speaking to us. This is the third epoch in life. When the conscience becomes king, the man is born; and conscience means the knowledge that one has of one's self in the presence of God. Until the moral nature burns and smokes, and rolls forth its thunders and flashes its terrible lightnings; until the soul becomes a Mount Sinai, receiving, recording, and delivering the eternal law of God, the man is not born.

Nowhere is this seen more clearly than in the early songs of Tennyson. There is little in them, because the moral nature of the poet is not awake. The great poet is yet to come, because the full man is yet to come. In all those early years there is much loveliness, wonderful sensitiveness



to the beauty of nature and art, the power to revel in the charming fields of fancy. But the voice that afterwards shook the nation is not in them. "The Vision of Sin" breaks the silence. "The Two Voices" tell of the mistake and the brave endeavor to escape from it, the terrible sorrow in which doubt struggles into faith, and out of which "In Memoriam" comes, reveal a new man. The poet is fully here when the man is here, and the man is here when the conscience is here.

Think of the environment as it speaks for God. Here is the prophecy of youth itself, girt with peril as by the fires of hell. Here is the home with all its sanctity and happiness under the menace of brutality. Here is the nation with its great history, its great consciousness of opportunity, its sublime destiny, and ten thousand evils preying upon its heart. Here is the human race set in the sunrise of a vast hope, with the day of the Lord before it for achievement, and fellowship, and black clouds gathering from the four winds of heaven to quench the light and send all things to utter wreck. Think of a young man in the dawn of Christianity, or in the apostolic age, or in the Reformation, or in the years of the American Revolution and the Civil War, and beholding the individual relation to righteousness sweeping into world-wide significance, and still taking no share in the sublime struggle

and hope. The case is impossible. The young men who see the reality of righteousness for the individual soul and who behold its universal scope cannot rest. They are men who have come to their manhood. For them the good of their own souls is the good of all souls, the good of the Infinite Soul. Their sword has been bathed in heaven, all man's genuine battles are God's battles.

Those who see no visions of struggling right and audacious and impudent iniquity; those whose hearts do not occasionally swell with purpose and passion as they look upon the opportunity of life and its abuse, whose god is ease, or the narcotics of pleasure, who never take the field for the cause of humanity, are themselves not men. Not until with the Arab they can say, "Paradise lies in the shadow of our swords," will they be able to date the beginning of their manhood.

4. The last great epoch remains for a passing word, the continuous and increasing revelation. What a crisis in the life of Samuel it was when he found that God was veritably speaking to him. It was the aboriginal fountain of his character as a man. It was his first great introduction to a man's supreme privilege, but it was only the first. It had in it a peculiar wonder and awe, it wrought more manifest changes in his spirit and in his whole thought of the world than other

subsequent visitations, but it was only the beginning of one continuous and ever-increasing revelation to his soul. We do well to linger upon the august beginning, but we must not stop there. In the discharge of lowly duty, in the resistance of temptation, in the growing capacity and in the greatening service, the voice of the Lord continued to be heard. A new opportunity arose for Samuel when he became Judge of Israel; a great sorrow came when the people wanted a king; a great hope when the leader appeared in the prophetic Saul, a profound disappointment when Saul betrayed the magnificent promise of his reign; a brighter future yet when the old man of God was sent to anoint David; and a more terrible experience still awaited him when summoned to repeat upon his own sons the sentence of doom that he had spoken over Eli's sons; and sublimest of all when he heard for the last time on earth, in the deepening twilight of death, the divine call. These great experiences of the prophet are the successive ascensions of his soul into a vaster faith, into a loftier character.

In the normal Christian life revelation is like the day. The gates of morning once flung wide open, nothing can really stop the progress of the light. It fills the whole world, fills it more and more, piles up with every successive hour the evidences of its triumph, and back through the

bars of evening comes the flush of a transcendent consummation. Paul saw Stephen die, and he was never the same man after that experience. He met the great light on his way to Damascus and it changed him forever. He retraced as a preacher all the lines along which he had gone as persecutor, and through each new baptism of suffering and achievement he came forth a larger and richer man. He faced in the Temple itself as a Christian the old sect of the Pharisees to which he once gave his utmost devotion; he stood before Cæsar as the apostle of Christ, and on his way thither he endured the severest trials. His career was full of great events, and through each as it came a new and larger word from God was spoken to his heart. And when he went out beyond the city walls to surrender life itself for his Master, he went with the voice of God ringing through his soul as it had never done in preceding days. Great words from God led on to greater, a lengthened chain of climaxes, like some mountain range culminated in the supreme consummation.

We go over the same path, we meet with the same sort of trials, we are guided and inspired by the same Ineffable Speaker. The beginning of the Christian life is great, but it is only the beginning. Some new word waits for us in all the experiences that make up life. The serious student comes again and yet again upon some

book that creates an epoch in his intellectual life. It should be the same with the spirit. The temptation of to-day, the duty of to-day, the opportunity of to-day, the sorrow of to-day, the joy of to-day should be met with the expectation that it will leave us other than it found us—nobler, simpler, stronger, nearer the heart of God. This expectation, this experience, makes the circle of happenings amid which we go a spiral leading to new insight and assured advance. It is the St. Gotthard Tunnel; we seem to come out of the same mountain and at the very place where we went in. And in a sense we do, but each time the emergence is at a higher point, and thus the circles that seem a play in the dark lead at last to the light on the supreme heights. This is the spiral of life. We go in at the old temptation, the old duty, the old monotonous task, and we come out to look upon the same things. But each circle is upon higher levels; we go the old round at a new elevation, and we are brought at length to the summit of manhood, and the full day of the divine revelation.

It is meet and right to give thanks over the silent God who works everywhere in the unconscious life of immaturity. It is our privilege to rejoice in the speaking God who stands and repeats Himself, over all the mistake and rush and fury of youth. We shall take home the comfort

of the thought that it is the speaking God that makes man's mistake so sad; that it is the speaking God who is still in all the misguided stir, in all the misdirected activity, in all the fruitless conclusions of young souls. Behind the awakening, back of the storm of thought and passion is the patient God repeating the divine call. Yet more shall we praise God when He brings the soul to recognize his presence, to hear Him speaking in the conscience and in the entire solemn order of existence, making the moral nature flame again with the sense of his law and dating the advent of the fall of man. But above all shall we give thanks that God's work goes on forever, that it takes us out of our sins, out of our weakness, out of our hidden selfishness, out of our half-consecrations, and exalts us in the passion of a new vision, a new surrender, and a new love. The dove that Noah sent out of the ark found an inhospitable world and soon came back. Sent forth again, it returned again, but this time with the evidence of change and the token of hope. Sent forth yet once more, it went on its new way in the new world forever. That unreturning dove is the symbol of that to which God will bring us at last. How we return again and again when God sends us forth to our old luxuries, our old indulgences, our old narrownesses, our old sins. How we return to our



meagre thoughts about God, our mean plans for his kingdom, our poor outlooks, and our barren rest. How full of these dreadful retrogrades our lives are. How few of our sins, our follies, our weaknesses, we have ever finally abandoned. We are like the poor vagrant who after serving each new sentence turns up in court to be sentenced again for the same old crime. Shall these miserable, heartbreaking retrogrades into our past and worst selves never cease? Yes. God brings his faithful messenger to the eventful morning and forth he flies, leaving forever behind him the dead and bad past. The epoch in which these dismal retrogrades come to an end, in which the soul escapes from itself, in which it makes a new and momentous beginning, in which it dates a forth-going, unreturning flight over God's world and in God's might, is the epoch that awaits the steadfast will.



## XIII

### THE IDEALIST FALLEN

"And it was so that when he had turned his back to go from Samuel, God gave him another heart."

1 Sam. x, 9.

ON the way from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, the little village is pointed out where tradition says that Saul was born, and where he grew to manhood. Three thousand years have come and gone since Saul wandered over those Judæan hills. All trace of his existence has vanished. The places that knew him, know him no more forever. But the same sun that Saul beheld still travels daily over those hills and looks benignly down upon them. The solemn moon and the sweet stars that Saul saw still shine upon those hills, and they seem to wear in their bright faces some image of the first king of the people, deeper in the imagination and closer to the heart of mankind than any other people in all history. Saul, therefore, comes out of the earth beneath and from the high places above us, as we travel through that wondrous land.

1. The first point of universal interest in the career of Saul is the light which his life throws upon the character of the community in which he

lived. His career shows that the character of that community was essentially democratic. Its highest offices were open to young men of extraordinary power, from the humblest families in the land. Saul was a member of a humble family ; he came of one of the least of the tribes of Israel ; but he was a man of extraordinary personality, of extraordinary talent, and on this account the highest place, the office of king, was accessible to him. This was true of his illustrious successor. The greatest political genius of the race of Israel was David, and he came from the sheepfolds to the throne ; another proof of the statement that the highest places were open to youth of genius from the humblest ranks of society. The great office of prophet teaches the same thing. The office of prophet was only second to the office of king, if, indeed, it was not superior in point of influence over the people ; and this office was accessible to every prophetic genius in the land, from the highest family to the humblest. This law in the life of Israel goes far to explain the transcendent development of the people through five hundred years of incomparable history.

What is our greatest hope for the perpetuity of the American Republic ? It lies in the fact that the highest offices in the land are accessible to the humblest youth of extraordinary talent

and genius. What is the everlasting significance of the presidency of Abraham Lincoln? That one, born where he was, with his wonderful but hidden genius, was discovered by the United States and made their ruler. No nation can fail in whose life that insight abides. So long as the highest station and the widest opportunity are open to the best minds in each generation, the Republic will last and prosper. When a college, a state, or a church becomes inaccessible to the best intellect ; when it refuses to be recast by the highest minds, its doom is sealed.

Let a church exclude from its ministry the finest spirits ; let it fall into the hands of men commonplace in mind, commonplace in character, and it takes no great insight to discern the sure decadence of that church. A great American educator in speaking of Scottish universities pointed to their accessibility to the elect youth of the land as one of their chief characteristics. The same remark holds of the church in that country. A farmer's boy, in the county of Aberdeen, became the chief Biblical scholar of his generation, and with hardly a break or jar changed the entire church from the older view of the Bible to the modern. From the homes of farmers, miners, mechanics, and policemen, from the humblest families all over that land come in each generation many of the leading scholars and men

of power. That nation, that church, that institution is founded on a reasonable hope of permanence and prosperity which is open to elect minds from the four winds of heaven.

2. The second point of universal significance in the career of Saul is the fact that his high calling wrought within him a great moral change. He had been communing with a prophet. This prophet had called him in the name of the people to be the people's king, and as Saul left the prophet, with a vision of his duty and of his privilege, his whole nature underwent a change ; he broke forth in prophecy ; his spirit rose to insight and song. Here is an event of universal moment. The way to bring forth the grandeur of our human nature is not to fiddle with trifles or fool with mere pleasures ; to bring forth all that is truly great in man, we must fill the mind with the vision of the duty that is a privilege and the privilege that is a duty.

Daniel Webster describes with deep emotion the noble manner in which his father told him, then a boy of fifteen, that he was about to send him to college. Webster says he could never forget the spot in the road where his father surprised and overwhelmed him with the good news, and when the vision of an educated manhood with all its privileges and responsibilities took possession of him, he burst into tears ; his nature

began to put forth new power. How often a mother first comes to know the heart of her boy when she invites him to sit in the chair made vacant by his dead father, when she asks her son to help her to take care of the younger children. She sees again the mind under the vision of a duty that is a solemn privilege and of a privilege that is a holy duty. The Greeks had a myth about the statue of Memnon, the great and beautiful statue that stood on the banks of the Nile; they said that when the first beams of the rising sun touched it, the statue broke into music and song. Our human nature, when it is touched by insight, by the revealing light of a great ideal, becomes conscious of new power; when it is struck by the sense of duty and by the sense of privilege, it awakes to new ranges of being; it becomes a prophetic nature.

The noble beginning of Saul's life as described in the great words, "God gave him another heart," was not a possession forever; it was the promise of a possession forever. It was not something that had come to stay, no matter what might happen or how he might behave. It was something that had come to work with might for him if he should regard it with the utmost care. When you look at an apple orchard in the spring, and see every bough on every tree covered with blossoms, you behold promise, exquisite and

abundant promise, but no more. Months intervene between that beautiful promise and the harvest-time, and much may happen. These intervening months are uncertain; when the orchard is fairest with promise, you cannot allow yourself to forget the conditional future. So it is with our life. When some new vision works in the understanding, when new and noble impulses stir within the heart, when a high and serious purpose lives in the will, the cause of youth is not won, its happiness is not secure. We can only say the beginning is fair, it is a prophetic beginning. We cannot go beyond that. The point of interest in Saul's career, as that career is indicated in the text, is precisely here — he began well, the beginning was rich with prophecy.

3. This brings me to the third aspect of universal moment in the career of Saul. His life was a tragedy; it was a tragedy with many noble elements in it, with great fountains of tenderness, great depths of pathos, great elevations of soul; still it was a tragedy. There are to my mind five forms of tragic experience, and in order to place Saul's life as it should be placed, I must say a word or two on each of these five forms.

The first form of tragedy is mistake. The Greeks thought that this was the essence of all tragedy. The greatest tragic artist of the ancient world was Sophocles, and he has put mistake at



the heart of his greatest tragedies ; perhaps we should say that the tragic event is regarded as mistake from the human point of view, and as fate from the objective and universal point of view. Take that tremendous tragedy, "Œdipus the King." The nameless horror of it comes out of a fundamental and terrible mistake. Œdipus mistook the man whom he met and with whom he quarreled ; he did not know that he was fighting his father ; he did not know that he had killed his father. The whole majesty and preternatural gloom of that great tragedy is developed out of the heart of mistake. The seven extant tragedies of Sophocles, in one form or another, have mistake as an aspect of tragic motive ; they are very great in their power ; they are close to life to-day ; they hold the mind of the reader, even in an English translation, as no other tragedies do, except those of Shakespeare.

This form of tragedy is recognized in the New Testament. Paul said, "I did it ignorantly in unbelief." The tragedy in his early life was the tragedy of mistake. Our Lord, in his last prayer, said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." We see here into the heart of that awful tragedy ; that, too, came of mistake. Poor souls, they were nailing to the cross one whom they took to be the supreme malefactor and he was the King of the race. They did not know it.



Still again our Lord said, addressing those who had rejected his divine wisdom: "If thou hadst known in this day even those things that belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thy sight."

Do not say that mistakes mean little. Think of the horror that may come out of them. The other day, by mistake, a switch was left open and a flying express was wrecked; it was wrecked by a tremendous mistake. The tragedy of mistake is repeated every day, with results that range from the trivial to the tragic. Through mistake the race rolls forward in sorrow with the years.

The second form of tragedy is that of premature death, a form of tragedy transfigured in some of the sweetest affections and dearest hopes that visit the human heart. The death of children is tragic; all the love that came with them bereaved, all the high hopes reversed in a moment. The death of youth about to go into life, equipped by fine education, by high character for great service, is tragic; glorious youth struck down in a moment. The premature death of men of supreme genius belongs under this form of tragedy. Raphael dies at thirty-six; what might he not have done if he had lived, as Michael Angelo did, to eighty and over; Keats dies at twenty-six; Shelley dies at thirty; Robert Burns at thirty-seven. They call up a host of the greatest spirits who

died in youth. It is a form of the tragedy of the world that is perhaps the hardest to understand.

A third form of the tragic condition is outward calamity. This is given with unequaled power in the prologue to the Book of Job, where a prosperous and a godly man, with a family of happy children, is smitten in a moment and his fair world goes to utter wreck. You see this man sitting down, in dialogue with his own soul, in the universal and awful desolation. That form of tragedy is current all the world over; the tragic element is in the reversal of circumstances. Children born in luxury are cast out into homes of poverty; boys and girls trained to spend and not to earn are sent forth in opening manhood and womanhood to fight the world unprepared; hardest of all, old age bereft of all —

“Old age and want,  
O ill-matched pair!”

The fourth form of tragedy is found in the sub-human life. There are many people that never come to a realization of their humanity; they never seem to rise into the experiences distinctive of their race; and this failure to rise into the life proper to human beings has two forms. The first is stupidity. Persons of this class are fairly good, but they are too stupid to think, to look before and after, or even to pine for what is not. Their life is sub-human because their intelligence

is unawakened. They are like the fish that never come to the surface and never look up into the great world above the deep in which they live. Do you not know people of that description? They exist in multitudes all over this broad and enlightened land of ours ; they are asleep in the whole upper register of their being.

The second form of this sub-human life is greed, unfathomed greed, devouring and desolating avarice. You recall the story of the seven lean kine that came up out of the Nile. First there were the seven well-favored kine that came up and fed on the flags on the bank of the river ; then there followed seven lean, hungry kine, and these devoured the others. That story sets before us multitudes all over the world ; they are one vast, howling appetite ; one great ravening maw ; their greed is elemental and monumental. They are not men ; they resemble some monstrous beast and its insatiable appetite. Is it not tragic to think of the submerged humanity in business, in social life, in politics, and along all the ways of pleasure? Some kind soul, reckless of grammar, asked a friend concerning a certain person, "Is he alive yet?" The inevitable answer came, "Not yet."

The fifth form of tragedy is the fall of the Idealist. Mistake, premature death, outward calamity, and the sub-human life lead up to the

tragedy in the career of the man who had his glorious outfit of ideality, his splendid love for it, his consecration to its service in the dew of his youth and the beauty of his manhood, and who after all falls away, denies the ideal, blasphemes it, and goes down at last in darkness and death. That is Saul. Saul when he went out from Samuel looked like the sun coming up in the morning, cloudless, wearing his glory about his consecrated head; the last time we see Saul is the night before his final battle on the great plain of Esdraelion, at the foot of the mountains of Gilboa. The passage in the Bible descriptive of that night is one of the most impressive and powerful in the literature of the world. You see this magnificent man, whose nature has become distorted, who has become jealous, cruel, insane, confronted with a vast crisis in the national life, with his enemies embattled there against him; he is conscious that his army is demoralized and unfit to meet the army of the enemy on the morrow; he returns to the morning of his life, when he spoke with the prophet and communed with him on the house-top in the spring of the day, and went away in royal strength and hope. He remembers that there is a poor witch at Endor spared from the general persecution, and in the darkness of the night he makes his way to consult, through this poor impostor, the soul of the dead Samuel. The

whole thing is so squalid, so wretched, so irrational, so degrading to a king. He staggers out of the witch's home to the field of battle in the morning. The sole redeeming feature of the last sad scene is the way in which Saul died: he died with his harness on his back; he died like a man, fighting for the liberty and stability of his country; he died with his beloved son, Jonathan. And there they lay dead together; the glorious idealist, broken, in defeat and his death a symbol of the degeneration of his life. Shakespeare tells the tragic tale in his great words:—

“ Full many a glorious morning have I seen  
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,  
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,  
Gliding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;  
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride  
With ugly rack on his celestial face,  
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,  
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.”

This is the way that Saul went, “Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.”

How can we avert this contempt of the beauty of life and the living God? By fundamental seriousness of character, by loving devotion to our cause, by fidelity to every duty, great and small; by continually renewing our strength out of the great ideals in the community. You do not need to go to church, says your friend. If you have a vision, if you have a love for it, if you have

a consecrated manhood to maintain in this awful world, you need to go to church, you need to read your Bible, you need to pray, you need to seek God. If you are wise you will be ready for every word of power that comes to you from every point of the compass, from every lofty human soul! You and I are unsafe unless we are hungry for help every day; help from the hills; help from the Highest; help from our brothers at our side; help from history; help from the kingdom of love. The greatest assurance of all is every day to wrestle with the Highest and to cry out with one of old, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me!" When our arms are round the God of love, and we are girded by his, when our nature is gathering protection out of the Eternal, we may be sure that we shall not fail; that while our lives may fall under other forms of tragedy, they will embody the denial of the ideal never.

## XIV

### THE IDEALIST AS TEACHER

“In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple.

“Above it stood the seraphim : each one had six wings ; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly.

“And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of his glory.

“And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

“Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips : for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.”

Is. vi, 1-5.

THERE are two ways in which we may read the recorded thought of the great minds of the past. We may read the entire record, linger upon it in detail, go over it many times, brood it patiently and lovingly, until the whole body of thought enshrined in that record rises before us as our precious possession forever. When time and strength allow, that is the ideal way to read the record of monumental minds. And I must here add that if one would secure for himself the highest kind of intellectual training, he must select one such mind and read it as I have said it should be read, until the reader becomes possessor of his master. Time and strength, however, do not allow this in many cases ; therefore, we have



another way of reading the great minds, and that is by selection of their representative utterances, selection of that part of the record which contains in a summary way the total thought for which they stood. As great minds are forever increasing in number, even for scholars, for men whose whole time is devoted to this vocation, it becomes necessary to work upon this principle of wise selection. If you cannot read the whole of Tennyson, read some representative part, — “In Memoriam,” for example, and the profound and tender experience out of which the poem came; then you will know, if not the whole of Tennyson, yet the stronger and the deeper side of the great poet. If you can read but little of Carlyle, read the three great chapters in “Sartor Resartus,” “The Everlasting No,” “The Point of Indifference,” and “The Everlasting Yea.” These three chapters contain the whole of Carlyle’s message to the world, his gospel of work and his vision of the meaning of the universe. Few to-day care to read all the writings of Augustine; let one read the opening pages of “The City of God”; the vision there is very great, greater than anything else in the book; there is, too, “The Confessions of Augustine,” one of the most precious documents in the world, bringing down from that fifth century of our era the best in one of the greatest souls that ever lived. If you cannot read

all that Paul the Apostle wrote, go with him on his journey to Damascus; stand by him as he receives his vision of the risen Lord; watch the transformation which that vision wrought in his character and career; read those great things in his writings that bear upon this experience. Read all Isaiah if you can, the thirty-nine chapters, which, with a few exceptions, modern scholars attribute to him; read them all if you can; you will find them all characterized by Robert Burns in his great line, "rapt Isaiah's wild seraphic fire." If you cannot read all that this prophet has written, take this sixth chapter containing his vision of God. In compressed form you will find there his total philosophy of human life, the outline of his view of man and man's universe. It is to this vision and its relation to all time, especially to our time, that I invite your attention. There are four questions concerning this vision which I will state and try to answer.

1. Where was Isaiah when this vision came to him? He was in the Temple; as we should say, in church, in the institution of religion. Here we make a great discovery. All places on this earth have not the same value for the human soul. Some places have immense power to provoke certain trains of thought; certain trains of thought return upon certain places to glorify

them. You go into that great mausoleum in Paris, where the mightiest soldier of the French race rests, where the French people have built their sense of national victory and national tragedy into monumental form; you descend into the crypt of St. Paul's Cathedral, and you look upon the resting-place of Nelson, that mightiest lord of the sea, and the resting-place of Wellington, that greatest commander of the English race; you go to that other mausoleum on the banks of the Hudson, where rest the mortal remains of the great citizen-soldier that led the armies to victory in the war for the Union; in each of these places you do not feel obliged to compel thought; you are at once in the power of certain thoughts and your heart swells with feelings that you cannot resist. The place inspires the thought; the place fills the heart with unwonted feeling. The grogshop, the gambling-den, the low theatre do not lead to the divine vision of the universe; these places have no value for the soul. The psalmist said, "Till I went into the sanctuary"; that place had a power over his spirit possessed by no other. We lay it down as a principle that certain places inspire kindred trains of thought, kindred ideas return to glorify certain places.

What is the glory of the church: its ceremonial, its ritual? No, its vision of God. There was power enough in this vision which came to Isaiah

in the Jewish Temple to hallow that temple for a thousand years. What do you think the churches of this country need most to-day, more ritual, more ceremonial? Nay; but a profounder and more potent vision of the living God. If these churches were places of intense, original, and vital vision, do you not think they would stand in the mind of our fellow-citizens everywhere as venerable, exalted, beautiful, divine?

2. Our second question is, How did this vision come? It came when Isaiah was at church; how did it come? By the whole strength of his life. He inherited his faith; he inherited great traditions, great ideas, a great history. He had received a distinctive education as an Israelitish boy; he had experiences of a definite type as an Israelitish youth; love for his country, a sense of the troubled and distracted condition of it in his own time, a sense of prophetic forces working within it, a sense of impending calamity wrought together in his soul. With this inheritance and this education and this confused, troubled, and tremendous experience he went to the Temple; like a flash from heaven inheritance, education, and experience came forth in this august vision of God; it came up out of life; it was the crystallization of his entire being.

All this goes on in our world to-day; sometimes it is in sorrow. You read that saying of

Job as he stands in the utter wreck of his life, in the utter desolation that has come upon him, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." That vision of God, to be blessed in sorrow, to be trusted to the uttermost, is simply the clarifying, the bringing into unity and glory of his whole past existence. Sometimes this vision comes to a man in his sin, as in the parable of the lost son. He came to himself. There is a history of bitter shame and woe behind that experience; he came to himself, and when he came to himself he said, "I will arise and go to my father." All that was best in his past life flashed into clearness and rose into decision that moment; the decision and the vision came from his own soul. Sometimes the vision comes in thinking of a profession, as one of the apostles says, "Woe is me, if I preach not the Gospel." You cannot understand the woe, the sense of necessity, that lay upon Paul unless you think of him as loving righteousness from the cradle, as going like a hurricane in search of righteousness all through his youth, as being fascinated with the Gospel first of all because it brought to him an assurance that he might find the righteous life. It is this history that explains the sense of necessity that lay on him to go and preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth. You have been at sea and have been overtaken by fog;

day after day the gloom hung round you and you wondered whether the sun would ever shine upon your course again. All at once the wind shifted to the northwest, and almost before you could announce the fact to your fellow-passenger, the air was clear and the sun was out in its strength. We go into sacred places with our whole past; a new something is added which dissipates the confusion, which banishes the trouble, which puts a clear course before us and a transfigured universe round us.

3. This vision came in the Temple out of Isaiah's soul. What did it mean? That is our third great question. Where it came is a significant commentary on the value of places for a man's soul; how it came is a significant comment on the value of inheritance, education, and experience; what it meant leads us to the very heart of the matter. What did this vision mean? It meant the vision of God as the moral judge of the world, living in the world as a judicial process, as a judicial spirit; it meant at the same time the vision of God as infinitely above the work, as the eternal, moral reserve of the universe.

God is first of all the judicial spirit, the judicial deity searching our entire world. God is in the conscience of every man; He is in the heart of every man; He is in the will of every

man ; He is in the character and inmost soul of every man as approving or as protesting against the life there. "Where no eye can see, he beholds ; where no ear can hear, he hears." He is the Soul in the souls of all men, comprehending all, searching all, judging all, recording all, holding all to an eternal accountability ; like the force of gravity which lives in all the planets, in all the suns, in all the constellations, which is in the whole body of the material universe, so the most worthy Judge Eternal lives in the ideals, in the conscience, in the heart, in the will, in the character, in the being of mankind. The immanent God ; that is the first half of Isaiah's message ; the indwelling Judge infallible, the process of judgment and the Spirit of judgment in the life of the world. That is one half of Isaiah's message to mankind ; a marvelous, a tremendous message ; he speaks not of a judgment day at the end of the world, but of the Soul of judgment in the soul of the race.

The other aspect of Isaiah's vision is of the God who is above the world ; here the vision is of the transcendent deity, the infinite moral reserve of the universe, the Incomprehensible, the Ineffable. How shall we represent this to ourselves ? Here is the air that we breathe every day and upon which we live ; it searches us through and through ; it is in our brain, in our blood, in



our bone, in our tissue; it is moving within us, a spirit of life; yet it is an infinite reserve. The respiratory organs of the whole race could never exhaust this infinite benignity that is roundabout us, this excess, this reserve of life. That is God. God in the soul of the world, all eye, all ear, all judicial integrity, Infallible Watcher and Rewarder of men. Beyond that there is the infinite excess of deity, the boundless moral reserve, the eternal transcendent God. This is the message of Isaiah in its completeness. Do you wonder that his race called him great, that all men in all generations have called him great? He is great who first saw God filling the vast concave of human life, who saw beyond the power of humanity to contain God, the eternal excess of integrity and benignity. The Greek philosopher, Aristotle, made one of the profoundest remarks in all history upon this double aspect of the divine being; in dwelling upon it we are dwelling upon the central thought of the last hundred years of the deepest minds in Europe and in America. This Greek philosopher says that God is in the world as a general is in his army, through the discipline which he has put into his army; again He is apart from the world as the general is apart from the army. You here see immanence and transcendence each completing the other; the two great ideas of God belong together; God is

in the world and He is an infinite excess beyond the world ; God is near to us ; “ Closer is he than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet ” ; the heart of our heart, the soul of our soul, the life of our life, with whom we are in dialogue every day ; God is the Transcendent, the Eternal, the Ineffable. How near, and how far ! His hand is in our hand, his face is turned toward our face ; yet his glory is beyond finite thought.

4. Our fourth question is, For what end was this vision given ? Perhaps we may recall the course of thought through the simplicity of these four questions. Where ? How ? What ? For what ? The last question is, as I have said, for what ? For the renewal of personal and national character ; that was the end of the vision. This end had two immediate results upon the prophet and upon his people. The first was despair ; utter prostration and woe in the presence of the glorious ideal hung up before him in his vision of God. “ Woe is me,” he said, “ woe is me, for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” Here is one of the greater experiences of the sublime souls of our race. The first vision of the ideal brings despair ; the vision is crushing, it is an avalanche of woe. Paul cries, “ O wretched man that I am ” ; the publican in the Temple

whispers, "God be merciful to me a sinner"; Peter cannot bear the sense of the sinless One, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." The initial experiences of every deep-hearted Christian are far from unmixed joy; they are clouded, they are touched with bitter grief; his heart is often filled with woe. That Eternal Ideal seems such an impossible Master; we can never be what that glory exacts and commands us to be. Think of the number of our fellow-men who go down here, who are morally broken-hearted; they lost all confidence, they could no longer look up. Look at them as they go through the world, each one sighing, "Woe is me, for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Eternal Ideal."

There is another aspect to the mystery; the end for which the vision came has a further influence upon the prophet beautifully told in his own great words. One of the seraphim heard this wail of woe from the prophet's heart, this cry of despair as he fell in the presence of the Eternal Ideal; as the minister and servant of the Ideal, this seraph took a coal from off the altar and touched the prophet's lips. The touch of fire is the symbol of the touch of the Ideal; as fire purifies, so the simple vision of the Ideal

brings at last purity and hope. An apostle in Patmos had a vision of an angel standing in the sun, a moral being in the heart of moral fire, a man perpetuated and purified by the ideal in which he stood.

The experience of despair is deep and true, but it is not the entire history of the prophetic soul. Keep your eyes aloft; keep your mind open. Dare to look upon the Eternal Ideal; through despairing love, devotion, penitence, tears, it will sweep its holy fire in upon you and surround you till at last you shall be that spiritual splendor in the heart of infinite spiritual splendor. Christ in you the hope of glory; God over all blessed forever; the pledge of humanity's redemption, the eternal call of the Highest; this is our faith.

## XV

### THE IDEALIST REJECTED

“ Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people.”

JER. IX, 1.

JEREMIAH is the most pathetic and the most beautiful figure in the entire company of the Hebrew prophets. His fundamental character seems to have been an extreme and exquisite sensitiveness combined with the utmost conscientiousness issuing in the sternest fidelity to duty. Four great feelings appear to have coursed through his life from the beginning to the end. The first was his feeling of the unapproachable glory, the transcendent loveliness and impossibility of the moral ideal. He seemed in its presence a child called to do the work of a man. The ideal was beautiful, it was adorable, but it seemed to him impossible. His second feeling was of the enormous and unspeakable iniquity of his time. His people were drunk with iniquity. They were devoted to wrongdoing. They ran toward an evil goal like flooded water-courses. His third feeling was the sense that he was foreordained to failure as a prophet of the Lord. The prophets who would speak pleasant words to a people devoted

to wrongdoing would become popular and powerful. Such a people would not listen to his honest, searching, terrible words, and he had no other words to utter to his time. Therefore, he felt that his prophetic career was a foreordained and pitiful vanity. His fourth feeling was that in consequence of this tragic condition of his time his life was dedicated to suffering. He was despised and rejected of men ; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. The suffering was to be lifelong and to enter into his inmost soul. His life was to end in a violent death at the hands of his misguided and cruel countrymen, whom he had tried in vain to rescue from their doom.

These four feelings open the way into the soul of this wonderful man : his sense of the moral ideal ; his perception of the wickedness of his time ; his consciousness of his foredoomed failure ; his certainty of the life of suffering and death from violence that awaited him. These tremendous feelings pervaded his entire career ; they pervade his whole work ; they go far to account for the richness of it, the nobility, the beauty, and the infinite tenderness of it. Here and now we are concerned with him as the type of the idealist in defeat ; as the idealist in defeat I have two questions to ask and to answer concerning him.

1. The first question is this: To what extent was Jeremiah defeated? How far did his defeat go? It is clear that it was a social defeat, a political defeat, a contemporary defeat. His vision of God was true; his vision of human life was deep; this vision was embodied in a genuine character, and was presented to his time with extraordinary eloquence, with piercing insight, and passionate sincerity; yet he found it difficult to get the ear of his countrymen; and when he got their attention, he could not govern the courses of their thoughts, he could not control their passions, he could not shape their character, he could not command the national destiny. He was a social, a political, a contemporary failure, and his attitude in failure is one of the finest things in the history of the world.

The significance of this prophet for us is here. There is a place in every life where the history of Jeremiah is repeated. Here is a parent striving to make over the wisdom of his career to his children; he is trying to govern the thoughts, the feelings, the characters, the destinies of his boys and girls by his true vision embodied in a true character. Here the most successful parent that ever lived is sometimes conscious of defeat; he is set back; he comes often at the last to a sad sense of failure.

Look at the great teacher whose object is to



sway the intellectual life, and through the intellectual life to conform the character of his pupils to his vision of life's best ideal. Again, the mightiest teacher finds that there are limits beyond which he cannot push his dominion. His sceptre is a limited sceptre, his dominion is a limited dominion ; there are powers and possibilities and courses of passion in his pupils that are beyond his control.

Consider the reformer who is trying to put moral ideals into business ; he is held up on every hand. He tries to put conscience into politics ; he is driven back every day. Here is the philanthropist working to redeem from misery his fellow-men, and his power goes only a little way. Look at the missionary of the cross in foreign lands, with his programme as bright as the sun and his field the world ; —and how far is he able to make his vision go ?

What is the outcome in most cases from this social, political, and human defeat in the lives of good people ? Parents come to feel that there is no use trying to control the minds of their children ; the children will not take their advice. Teachers are apt to lose their enthusiasm and come to deal with ideas as if ideas were not living and the very voice of God. Reformers in business, reformers in politics, philanthropists, and even religious teachers break down and give

up the impossible task. What a procession they make, those discouraged and despairing parents who have abandoned their high endeavor; those teachers who have become machines instead of souls; those reformers who have abandoned reform; those preachers of the Gospel, at home and abroad, who no longer believe in the power of truth! This is a part of the tragedy of the world. And here comes Jeremiah in the wide and barren misery of his defeat to bear witness against our cowardly surrender. There he stood in defeat, in suffering, in shame, in rejection, on to the violent end of his life, bearing a still more tremendous testimony to the truth which God had given him to proclaim. Do you remember what the poet Burns said to a young friend?

“For care and trouble set your thought,  
Ev’n when your end’s attained:  
And a’ your views may come to nought,  
Where ev’ry nerve is strained.”

Every human being either has faced, or is facing, or will face just this condition. How are we to behave in the presence of this limitation, this partial defeat? Shall we abandon our task, or stand firm? How did Christ behave? When the day went to wreck and He was swallowed up in darkness and blackness, did He abandon his cause? More and more definite, more and more tremendous, more and more absolute became his

testimony to the kingdom which the world rejected.

2. Our second question concerns the limitations to this defeat in the case of Jeremiah, the limitations to the defeat in our own highest endeavor. In the case of this prophet these limitations were two ; one concerned the personal life of the man, and the other the value of that life for the future. The defeat did not touch his personal character. There he stood with his vision running like the fire of God in his blood and in complete control of his being. That is something over which to give thanks. There is a victory that is great. He kept his faith ; here is another victory. He saw the welter of the world's evil life ; he saw that God was over all and blessed forever. The fearful vision of sin did not in any way overpower the glorious vision of the eternal God. That awful vision did not reach to the experience of the man's soul as a religious being. He had his hours of subjection to the darkness of the world ; he had his hours of gloom, his hours of bitterness, his hours of tears and sorrow ; he had other hours, hours of triumphant fellowship with God. His career was like some wild night when the wind is blowing a gale, when the tempest is on the deep, and yet the light of the beautiful stars is in all the terrible storm. So the fortune of this man in tempest, in

gloom, carried in it light from beyond the stars ; his spiritual triumph was done into a character and done into a book that have become part of the moral possession of mankind. We can imagine, too, that even his death in violence was like a sunset at the end of a stormy and tumultuous day ; that when he had gone he left the world in beauty and in tears.

From the personal point of view there was this divine limitation upon Jeremiah's defeat. May we not put a similar limitation upon our defeat ? Is it not a great thing for a man to keep his soul pure, even if he is unable to do all that he longs to do for the kingdom of love in the contemporary world ? Is it not a great thing for a man to keep the truth sovereign over the courses of his own life ? I think so. And no outward force can deny that sceptre of power to your hand or take it from you. We may keep our faith ; it is a great thing to keep a great faith ; that is, to have eyes for the great world, its mighty populations, their sordidness, their selfishness, their brutality, their wickedness, the woe, the tragedy of human history, and at the same time to be able to see God in all and above all. Whoever keeps faith with his highest ideals puts a vast limitation upon his defeat as a servant of the kingdom. May we not sometimes sing of our inward life as Whittier sang of his, and that in

the face of the gloom, the discouragement, the weakness, and the failure in our work for God?

“Yet, O Lord, through all a sense  
Of thy tender providence  
Stays my failing heart on Thee,  
And confirms the feeble knee;  
And at times, my worn feet press  
Spaces of cool quietness,  
Lilied whiteness shone upon  
Not by light of moon or sun,  
Hours there be of inmost calm,  
Broken but by grateful psalm,  
When I love Thee more than fear Thee,  
And thy blessed Christ seems near me.”

The second limitation to this prophet's defeat is the historic one. Jeremiah owes much of his power in all these six-and-twenty centuries since he lived to the fact that he was a faithful man in contemporary defeat. His has been a hand upon the heart-strings of the reformer and the sufferer from that day to this; the epic of his words and the greater epic of his life have, as I have said, passed into the saving power of the kingdom of love. It needs to be said again that the contemporary defeat of the man, in his vast worth, in his stern and tender fidelity, has been the chief source of his power over all subsequent times.

Why is it that our hearts are moved to such unwonted depth in the presence of the cross of Christ and the tragedy of his existence? Because in the blackness and utterness of his defeat He

stood absolutely true to the highest thought and the highest sentiment and the highest God. Through the worth of the Lord the defeat of the Lord in his own time has reached the heart of mankind as nothing in all history has done ; the defeat of the all-worthy has called out the great symphonies from the human soul and turned the requiem for the repose of Christ's spirit into the march, the victorious march of almighty love.

Is there nothing for you in this, O mother, O father, grieved that your words do not go deeper into the hearts of your boys and girls? Be thou faithful unto death, and when you are in your grave those words that hitherto have been unheeded will pass into the souls of your children as they never could while you lived. O teacher, almost broken-hearted and in despair over your want of power to do what you would for those committed to your care, go on in the light of stern and beautiful fidelity to your ideals, and long after these scholars have graduated from your responsibility and the clods of the valley are sweet about you, your testimony to the Eternal will be with them in night. Those of you who are trying to make business more just and merciful, who are working to make politics cleaner and more honorable, who are seeking to rescue men from sin and shame and horror, who are preaching the gospel of the blessed God

at home and abroad, remember that the witness of a good man's life to the Eternal is glorified in his death; "and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." Jesus here speaks for Himself; He speaks at the same time for idealists in all time.

When Lincoln spoke those shining words at Gettysburg, when he uttered that greatest of all his public utterances, his oracle, the burden of the Lord, the Second Inaugural, much as the whole loyal North listened and revered, what immeasurable increase of power those words received when they came sighing in all the winds that swept over his untimely grave. Be not weary in well doing, for in due season ye shall reap if ye faint not.

There is a passage in Sir Walter Scott's "Waverley" that I have not seen for five-and-thirty years, but which has remained with me to this day. Scott is speaking of the sunset over the bay, west of his hero's outlook. "The sun's broad disc was on a level with the ocean, and the clouds through which he had traveled the livelong day were assembled about him like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch." The ugly day seemed to crowd and crush the sun in the west. When the sun had gone, what was left? The world transfigured in his evening glow. I think of the world as trans-



figured in the death of Jesus Christ ; every dead hero lends a new tint and a new fire to that universal transfiguration. That deep and abiding transfiguration through death is one great assurance that the defeat of the idealist is merely a single defeat ; the campaign is on between the right and the wrong ; the temporary losses of the right issue in new and vaster fighting power ; and at last the idealist sends forth his truth to victory.

## XVI

### THE IDEALIST IN CAPTIVITY

“ Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, I was among the captives by the river Chebar, that the heavens were opened and I saw visions of God.”

Ezekiel 1, 1.

HERE we have a picture of the chief misery and the central glory of human existence in this world. The misery is our servile lot and the mean things in it that we must do ; the glory lies in the significance that we may discover in our environment and in our poor, narrow, and often repulsive task. This prophet was a captive ; he was a captive among captives ; he had his dwelling by the river Chebar in Babylon ; he was an alien in an unfriendly land ; yet the heavens were opened over him and his fellow-captives. In the open heavens he beheld visions of God ; he put these visions into his own heart and into the hearts of his fellow-captives, thus filling their lives with the presence of ideal meanings, giving them fresh light upon their existence, new courage, new confidence, and vaster hope. In the strength of the open heavens and the visions of God he was able to annul the evil of his own existence and that in the lives of his fellow-countrymen.

Our human world is a vast compound of opposites. Look at the life of man. He is compounded of flesh and spirit, self-interest and love, fondness for pleasure and the solemn sense of duty; the free mind and the servile body; the passion for time and the hunger for the Eternal. The conflicting elements in his being are reflected as in a parable in the great contrasts of nature in whose presence he lives. Nature is never one thing and one thing only. It is compounded of day and night, glory and gloom; the tide at the flood and the tide at the ebb; the fertile land and the desert; the firm-set continent and the wild sea beating in upon all its shores; the great globe itself and the impalpable and terrible immensities through which it travels. In these contrasts of nature we find, as I have said, a parable of the opposites of which our existence is composed. Nowhere have we pure spirit, pure power, pure freedom, pure joy; the spirit dwells in flesh; the power is fenced in with frailty, the freedom is under limitation, the joy is sadly mixed with pain. We are prophets by the river Chebar, in an alien and unfriendly land. Our life is in captivity, and the whole call of the Gospel is for us to transfigure our captivity with great meanings, with high purposes; to live in it under an open heaven and in the strength and solace of visions of God.

1. In the first place let me say it is universally admitted that genius works in this manner. What is the reason for the increasing significance of the poet Burns for human beings in every land and clime? What is the reason for his increasing hold upon the millions that are second to none in their importance to the vitality, the character, and the progress of the world? Not in his irregular life is to be found the reason; not in the frailties that stained his humanity; not even in the pathos of his career, his brief career. The reason is to be found, first of all, in those three-and-twenty years in which he kept unstained the whiteness of his soul. The second source of the fascination lies not in the frailties, but in the glorious humanity that beat in him with a divine pulse. The third reason for his extending empire is in his insight into the captivities of this great world of ours. He saw the dignity of toil, the nobility of work, the possibility of honor, the reality of love, and with his insight and sympathy he brought to light the significance in the lives of the poor, the unfortunate, the oppressed, the lonely, and the sorrowing. There is the last and the finest source of power. He was able to represent not the whole but a large and fine section of the meaning of suffering and toiling human beings.

Why is it that Bunyan has become a classic?

He was far from being the most learned man of his time. Profounder minds there were than his; his theology has been outgrown; the Christian Church has left it behind. That theology stands there in the seventeenth century simply as a milestone in the long journey of the evolution of the kingdom of God. And yet Bunyan fascinates the world to-day; Bunyan is an English classic, and will remain a classic as long as the English language is spoken. What is the chief source of Bunyan's power? He regarded Bedford jail as only a section of the general captivity of his fellow-men, and in Bedford jail, in his own captivity, he found freedom. He dreamed his dream of a world-bondage and a world-freedom, and beat his dream into the music of classic English speech and sent it forth to make men aware of their captivity and to give them at the same time the freedom that comes from the vision of the Christian God.

What is the final and supreme source of the fascination which Milton wields over all heroic men and women? It lies in what his character represents of insight and moral grandeur. Remember that he abandoned poetry for civil service; that for twenty years he stood at his task, an obscure but mighty public servant; that he wore himself into blindness in that service; that at the end of these twenty years he found that

the commonwealth for which he had given his manhood was in wreck; that he himself was a social outcast, desolate with darkness and with danger compassed round; with evil tongues warring against him every day. Then it was that Milton turned in his captivity to the inward life; he began once more to sing, in the gloom of the evening of his days, and he sang "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Regained," and "Samson Agonistes"; he took the constellation of his verse and set it in all its undying splendor in the deep midnight of his evil time. And because that verse represents his insight and his character in captivity he wields and will ever wield a royal influence over all heroic souls who speak the English tongue. Are you completely aware that in John Milton, in his insight, in the freedom that he won in his captivity, in his prophetic character and triumph, you have one of the chief glories of our English race?

2. Let me remark, in the second place, that along this path have come all the greater things in our faith as Christian men. Our life of captivity in time has been read by a great succession of sublime spirits; they have found in it divine meanings; these divine meanings discovered by them in their suffering and in their bondage have become the faith of our race and the greatest faith in the world. Look for a moment into this

fact. Who are the men who made our Christian theism, who laid the foundations of our belief in one God ruling the universe, moral in his being, whose spirit is a judicial process in the life of mankind, convicting men of their sins, punishing them as they go, and forever moving a redemptive tide in the world's life? The great prophets of Israel, — Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Habakkuk, and the nameless but mighty prophet of the Exile. These men read the terrible life of their time: its injustice, its robbery, its corruption, its inhumanity; these men, who felt the captivity of the world in which they lived, turned their eyes upon it and found it to be the bed over which moved in tides and billows the great sweetening, saving being of the Infinite God.

What is the central glory of Christ's life? What was his lot? He was born in Bethlehem, in a stable, laid in a manger because there was no room for Him in the inn. He grew to manhood in little Nazareth, a village in the northern part of Palestine, in a despised province of the Roman Empire; his outlook was confined to fields and flowers and birds on the wing and the hen and her brood in the village streets; He spent his days in lowly duties, drawing water for his mother at the well since named after her, working at the trade of a carpenter with Joseph; his lot was limited, forlorn; He was unrecognized,



uncomprehended for thirty years of his existence. The only great thing that He saw was the sun sweeping from east to west, the great sky as it unfolded its splendor to Him at night. When He came to his public ministry, He had not where to lay his head. The first Preacher of the Gospel was poor and homeless. His disciples were ignorant men who persistently misunderstood Him at every stage of his onward march; his times were ignorant, his age was ignorant. Was there ever captivity profounder or more tragic? Death as a criminal came to close the drama of his career! Yet through it all He shot the vision of life's worth because of God's presence with men. From that career down through the captivity of the ages has come this same vision of life's majesty and glory.

You admit all this; you confess at once the achievements of genius in every sphere of life. Still you are unsatisfied, and ask what are men and women without genius, without extraordinary character and opportunity, to do? We are all caught, and we know that we are, in the limitation and grinding captivity of mortal life. Where is the path that will lead such as we are to insight, freedom, and triumph?

3. Let me say, in the third place, that the way is plain for our feet, for the feet of every one. We must learn to think. God gave us minds.

We are rational beings. One function of thought is to lift a man out of the limited sphere in which he lives into the clear upper air. The eagle can outsoar the gun of the sportsman ; when the sea-fowl gets tired of the boiling deep, it can take to the freedom of the skies. " Hitch your wagon to a star," said Emerson, the star that looms through the mists of the evening like an untended watchfire on the hillside ; it will carry you to the zenith.

What is the meaning of all this ? Take the supreme minds in history ; what are they for ? You can read ; can you not make the acquaintance of some sublime spirit, know its thought through and through, join that mind in a great companionship, greaten your own vision and gain for a moment at least your freedom in the ascension of your soul under such safe conduct ? This is one of the glories of our time, that men who can read, who wish to employ a part of their leisure seriously, may be admitted into fellowship with some spirit who has found his freedom in exalted thought and who views life, not from the pit in which the particular duty is set, but from the mountain-top to which the spirit may rise. I urge the younger people who hear me to cleave to the friendship of such minds ; they will become to you wings in many an hour of sordid and burdened being and carry you into vision and freedom.

The second function of thought is to look down to the riches beneath. Remember that the Indian had the same America that the white man has ; the coal mine was under his feet, the iron, the silver and gold ; he trod over the oil well and never dreamed of the wealth under his feet. In its constitution you have the same life that Isaiah had, that Ezekiel had, that Paul had, that the man of genius anywhere has. Your life may look like a Kimberley, barren, repulsive on the outside : remember that it may be a Kimberley beneath, with a vast diamond deposit at its heart. Think, probe, reflect ; do not say that life is poor till you have gone to the heart of it and seen what is hidden there by God's hand as the prize of your living.

The next step onward is to learn to love. The being who does not love must be hopeless ; in such a life there is no motive to live. There is no adequate reward in living for the loveless heart ; add love to life and then see how radiant it becomes. Take, for example, a mother with a half-dozen children about her. Take away her love, and then try to think of a greater bondage. Those six children beseeching her from morning to night for help, calling upon her to wait upon their wants, to care for them, turn existence into slavery from dawn to nightfall. Take from the mother her dower of love, and you leave her a lot

of unmitigated captivity. Charge her nature with love, and her lot becomes a part of heaven ; to wait, to watch, to serve, to protect, to teach, inspire, and fill those lives with meaning and hope makes the mother's life a singing life. The key to the meaning and the marvel of her lot is in her love.

Have we no causes? Is there nothing that we care for? We pity the martyrs and the confessors, the apostles who one and all went down to death. We read the history of our own Civil War and we pity the gallant regiments that went through fire and smoke out beyond to meet God. Let us weep not for them, but for ourselves if we have found nothing in this world to live for, and die for, if need be. The great glory possible in our captivity is to love the right things and stand by them in the sense of privilege and joy.

There is still another step to be taken in the way toward freedom. The mere thinker is apt to become a dreamer and a pessimist ; his thoughts are golden, but the world under them does not change ; it abides as stubborn, ugly clay ; and thus he is tempted to think that all his thoughts are vain. Do you not know many such souls? They speak of their ideals and at the same time look out with eyes of inexpressible sorrow upon the world that becomes no better under the light of their thought. As the mere

thinker is inadequate, so is the mere lover ; he becomes the sentimentalist. This crisis forces upon us the question, What is it that gives reality to thought, that takes it out of the category of fiction ? What is it that gives splendor to emotion and that denudes it of the shame of mere sentiment ? It is the honorable, the conscientious deed that embodies as a creative force the thought and the love, that puts a new face on this poor world, that changes our captivity step by step into freedom, that creates a new fellowship between souls while the limitation lasts ; that generates character, that brings us into league with God, whose reality is attested in his ceaseless improvement of his works ; that sets us in covenant with the great divine Christ, whose chief word is this, " My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." If we employ our mind aright, we shall gain a vision from God ; if we employ our human heart aright, we shall love the vision with a passionate love ; and if we are honest men, we shall be able to put the vision and the love into our work and as creative forces in the service of the kingdom of the ideal, the kingdom of God, we shall win our freedom in our captivity.

The river Chebar is with you and with me. It is in your home ; it is in your business ; it is in your nation. Its channel is ever near us as it

flows through the life of our time. The bondage is here ; we all know that. Is that all ? Sorrow, limitation, frailty, meanness, death, — are these the whole story ? Surely not. It was never meant that we should take our captivity apart from the open heaven and the vision of God. Take vision and captivity together ; what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. A dewdrop without the sun is nothing but a dull, heavy, sorrowful tear ; a dewdrop with the sun in it is a jewel and a joy. Your life and mine apart from God are unendurable. I do not wonder that so many men commit suicide ; if godless men were not so often cowards, they would thus seek relief in vaster numbers. The godless life is the hopeless life, the round as of a treadmill ; the heart turns to dust as it toils like an eyeless Samson at its servile task. Remember that Chebar is not the only river ; there is a river the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. There is a captivity in which the song is heard, “ God is in the midst of her ; she shall not be moved ; God shall help her and that right early.”

## XVII

### THE IDEAL IN YOUTH AND AGE

“Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions.”  
Joel II, 28.

It would seem that vision is the original form of mind and the ultimate form. Before you can judge or conclude about anything, you must first see it. Here are two eagles, two race-horses, two athletes; before you can judge, compare, and conclude about them, you must first see them. Here are two poems, two essays, two speeches; before you can say anything true about them, you must see into the heart of their meaning. The aboriginal form of intellect, the sunrise of intelligence, is vision. So, too, the ultimate form would seem to be vision. When you have taken to pieces in your thought a picture, a poem, a symphony, a statue, a beautiful temple, any work of art, and studied each part in detail, you do not leave it there; you put the work of art together again; and as your first contact with it was a vision of the whole, your last contact with it, greatly enriched, indeed, by the preceding analysis, is a vision of the whole.

Sir Isaac Newton beholds the falling apple; instantly there comes into his mind the vision of



the stellar universe in balance through the two great laws of attraction and repulsion. Then follow years of laborious thought, intense analytic toil; after this comes Newton's final attitude toward the physical universe; his first vision stands attested and enriched in his last. The same fact appears in the minds of the great philosophers of the race. Look at a thinker like Spinoza, Kant, Berkeley; in each case there came to the philosopher the vision of the meaning of his world; it came as a whole; it came as a rare insight and as a flash. Then followed the years of toil, the elaboration in detail, the verification in the analytic process; and after this the resurgence of the original vision larger and richer and more authentic.

The same thing is true in religion; our first contact with God is vision; then, if we are capable of it, the world of learning, the world of reflection, and the world of experimentation follows; still we look forward in this life and in the future life to the restored and mightier vision of God. Thus it would seem that vision is the first and the last form of human intelligence.

What is the meaning of vision? Is it a mere fancy? No. It means insight into the heart of some great aspect of human life. Napoleon is confronted by Austerlitz, dark as Erebus the first day; then he sees his opportunity. Alexander

Hamilton was made Secretary of the Treasury in the administration of Washington; the finances of the country were dead; Hamilton saw his opportunity; "he touched the dead corpse of the public credit and it sprang upon its feet." Plato looks into the soul of his master, sees the meaning of his master's life, and embodies his version in the "Apology" and "Phædo." The Apostle John broods the life of Jesus till the vision embodied in the Fourth Gospel takes possession of him. Lincoln sees slavery and its woe and resolves, if ever he is able, to smite that iniquity hard. The lost son, in our Lord's parable, looks about him on swine, husks, the far country, ruin; he comes to himself, sees into the meaning of the mournful condition in which he finds himself, and says, "I will arise and go to my father." Vision is insight into the meaning of life; the greater the vision the greater the apprehension of the significance of human living; the divine vision of Jesus is the divine insight into the meaning and glory of our human existence.

Visions are of two kinds, as you perceive by the text. There is the vision that issues from experience; the testimony of the courses of life is here gathered up into a great, sure intuition. There is the vision that anticipates life, the insight that is the prophet of the high possibilities of existence; one is the dream of age, the other

is the vision of youth. There is the dream that comes out of the total life that men have lived, like the star that rises astern of the ship on which you are sailing. There is the vision that antedates experience, like the star that looms on the far horizon whither you are sailing. Let me say a word upon each of these two visions, the vision that comes out of experience, the vision that anticipates and is the prophet of experience.

1. First, then, the vision that sums up the testimony of the life that has been lived, the work that has been done, the suffering that has been endured. It is mighty, it is inevitable as the voice of God. There is John Stuart Mill, one of the most interesting of the eminent men of the nineteenth century. He began with no faith, with no religion, with no sympathy with any man's religion, because his atheistic father had crushed his nature into that neutral form. How did he end? With more than pale theism, with the conviction that the reality of God was a high and serious probability, with the mood of utmost reverence toward Jesus Christ, with the feeling that future existence is open to hope, and that if it is good for us to live again after death that boon will probably be granted. Here is the solemn vision issuing from the wide, various, noble experience of that extraordinary man. Consider Browning,

dying in Florence at the age of seventy-seven, and London on fire reading his last book fresh from the press. What was Browning's report of himself as he went his way into the unseen?

“One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
 Never doubted clouds would break,  
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
 Sleep to wake.

“No, at noonday in the bustle of man's work-time  
 Greet the unseen with a cheer!  
 Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,  
 ‘Strive and thrive!’ cry, ‘Speed, — fight on, fare ever  
 There as here!’”

You have seen the sun, harassed by clouds all through the afternoon, swing beyond them and transfigure the whole west, and, as it seemed, pause for a moment and take a last look of splendid triumph at the world before descending; so Browning's great dream came. Do you see what I mean by the dream of age? It is experience, gathering itself up into a great faith and delivering its might to the world.

2. Turn now to the vision of youth, the insight that precedes life, that is the herald and prophet of life's possibilities. We see at once how significant this vision must be. Before the Parthenon can be built, there is the vision in the artist's

brain ; before the " Divine Comedy " or " Lear " or " Macbeth " or " Hamlet " can come into existence, there must be a vision in the mind of the poet. So in all work of reform. The Protestant Reformation came out of Luther's vision of the freedom of the Christian man in God. Thus it is in the political life of the world. The American Revolution came out of a vision — the vision of independent nationality.

This leads us to clearness when we turn to life. There is Jesus and his temptation. What kept Him pure in that temptation, in that conflict of the higher and lower within Him? His vision of the divine meaning of his life ; He was the Son of God. What kept Paul clean and pure and growing, exposed as he was to all the iniquities of the Roman Empire through which he traveled? The heavenly vision, to which he was not disobedient. And many a youth, descending into many a dark place, is saved because he carries in his mind the vision embodied in these words, " When sinners entice thee, consent thou not." The glory of youth lies in the vision that anticipates life. Look at it in the highly intellectual youth of this country ; they survey the whole field of mind ; they see what has been done, what remains to be done. Instantly there rises up before them a world of vision to be done into life, education, science, politics, society ; this

vision concerns the whole intellectual condition of their age.

There are the young men with moral vision, who see what each man ought to become and to do ; what collective society should become and do. Here is the sunrise in the vision of youth out of which the whole splendid moral day is to come. A young man without vision is incomplete ; if he has no glowing picture in his imagination of what he personally should be, of what he would like to see his fellow-citizens become ; if his mind is not illumined with burning forms into which he longs to see society rise, he is not normal ; there has been no sunrise in his soul, there is as yet in him no promise of a great intellectual and moral day.

3. Look, in the third place, at the way in which these two visions work together, the dream of the old man and the vision of the young. You recall Bacon's maxim, "Young men for action, old men for counsel." In Aristotle you find the same sentiment ; power inheres in the younger, wisdom in the older generation. In Homer you find the same thing, in the two personalities of Achilles and Odysseus. Odysseus said to the invincible Achilles, "You are far mightier than I with the spear, but I am greater than you in knowledge." Consider the very structure of our life in parenthood and childhood ; look at the schools, the colleges, and the universities of the



world ; in each case the younger generation and the older are in vital fellowship ; each is gainer through the help of the other. The same thing is true of business. Wherever business is successful, wherever it is well organized, it includes the younger and the older. In the professions of medicine, letters, law, the combination of the two appears ; there is the young man with his vision, there is the old man with his dream.

The worst thing that can happen to youth in the fire of its ideal is to be met by the cynicism of age. How often that happens ! Cynical, unbelieving, serpentine, gloomy old men appear in every generation and try to darken the sunrise in the soul of youth. There is another side to the calamity ; there is dissolute and mocking youth in the presence of the dream of a great manhood or a great womanhood in the last of life. What is the best thing to which we may attain ? The vision of youth, imparting color and glow, renewing the faded splendor in the dream of old age, the dream of old age authenticating the vision of youth, as if the sunrise and sunset each looked at the other ; the prophecy and the fulfillment of the day, the anticipation and the achievement of the soul.

Youth is under great obligations to age ; it should therefore fire with its own peculiar idealism the spent vitality of those who have borne



the heat and burden of the day. How the old are cheered, how happy they become when they see the young generation a generation of prophets; when they see young men not sensualists, not bent on drinking to the dregs the cup of selfish and sordid pleasure, but a great battalion of sons of the morning!

Age is under great obligations to youth. Let age turn to the young men, not with the emptiness of a blackguard existence, not with a career that has nothing to say but that life comes only to dust and ashes at last; let age turn to youth and say, "I have found God, I have found duty, I have found work, I have found my soul, and all the visions of my early years have been authenticated, enriched, glorified in the issues of my human experience in God's world and under God's guidance." You recall that beautiful record in the Old Testament, the record of the friendship of the two prophets, Elijah and Elisha? The great old prophet, his life lived, his work done, touches the young prophet whose career is all before him. Out of the chariot of fire, out of his ascending life, Elijah gives back as the issue of his existence the dream that had transfigured Palestine. Instantly the young prophet answers, "My father! my father! The chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!" He took Elijah's dream to enrich and attest his own vision.

Why is it that the world so loves Tennyson's lyric, "Crossing the Bar"? If it had been written when he was a man of twenty or thirty it could not have meant what it means to us. We read "In Memoriam": that is the vision of the young poet as he looks upon the black face of death. He is eighty-three years old, and the dream of his age authenticates the vision of his youth. The trembling, tentative faith of early manhood has become a great, sure, splendid conviction. That is the inmost significance of the incomparable lyric; the light upon the young face has become the fire in the old heart: —

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

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

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

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

## XVIII

### THE IDEAL IN HISTORY

“ And thou shalt hear a word from behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.”

Is. xxx, 21.

WE live in a speaking universe, in a many-voiced world. There is the great voice from within. Now it is a call from the depths and again it is an answer from the heights. In this inward voice there are the clear mountain notes and the muffled valley sounds. There is the trumpet of conscience as from Mount Sinai, the high note of privilege as from the Mount of Transfiguration, of wisdom as from the Mount of Beatitudes, of love as from Calvary, of inspired anticipation as of the ascension song from Olivet; and there is the horror of defeat as from Ajalon, the cry of sorrow as from the valley of weeping, the sound of the struggle between doubt and faith as from the valley of the shadow of death, the wail of despair as from the abysses of Gehenna. All these mountain notes and all these notes from the valley go to swell the power of the vast voice from within. It is a voice whose compass extends from the “De Profundis” to the

“Gloria in Excelsis,” from the lowest note of despair to the sublimest cry of joy.

There is the voice from beyond the soul, and from above. This is the voice that Jesus heard at his baptism and which said, “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” It was the voice of the Infinite delight in the Divine youth. The voice from above spoke to the disciples in the words, “Go ye into all the world and make disciples of all the nations.” It was the voice of absolute authority. The same voice came to Paul in his commission, “Behold I send thee forth far hence to the nations.” In the moments when our nature is clear and high, the voice from above still is heard as the voice of joy; when we stand in the crises of life, it renews itself as the voice of authority; when we wait to have our work defined, the task set before us, it falls upon us in its ancient simplicity and power. That voice from above! Think of its richness and range. Joy, authority, benignity, loving kindness, and tender mercy are its notes. It is the pure melody of heaven, the sweet and awful music of the Infinite Love played down into human life.

There is the voice from before us, the appeal of the future. Jesus heard this voice when for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame; it was the voice

of the sublimest heroism. Moses heard it from the pillar of fire that went before him and his people by night; it was the voice of a splendid hope. The Hebrew race heard it in their Messianic expectation; their faces were turned toward the future. From the beginning mankind has heard it, and thus the future has ever been the supreme allurements. Childhood catches its whisper, youth is controlled by its great notes, manhood listens to it in spite of unbelief, and old age hears in it the welcome of the better world. Humanity stands facing the coming time. This mood, this attitude is in response to the voice from before man. We fear as we enter the cloud because of the divineness there; we follow our leader even when he is invisible as the sunflower faces toward the sun that is set; and this inevitable forward look is the human response to the divine call.

There is the voice or word from behind. And this is the voice or word to which we are to listen to-day: the text is surely pertinent. "Thou shalt hear a word from behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it."

1. The many-voiced world, the word from within and from without, give us first of all the eternal speaker. When we hear a word, we inquire from whom it comes. When the notes of a great voice find us, we ask for the person

whose voice it is. There is no speech without a speaker; words come only from persons; the final word comes from the final Person, the supreme voice is the Voice of God. The word that we hear to-day from behind us, carries us, first of all, back of itself to the Divine Mind.

Behind us, then, is the Infinite Wisdom; the word of God carries us to the intelligence of God. Ten thousand mysteries surround our little lives; but to the Divine Mind they are open secrets. Only a few of the world's precious things can we remember; but the Infinite Memory conserves all. He has put the world's tears in his bottle; precious in his sight is the whole process of history. The rain that the cistern cannot catch is not lost; it falls into the great conserving earth. What the race forgets, God remembers; what falls beyond it, drops into his being; what it leaves behind He carries forward. A friend visits a friend in the decline of life, and presents a picture to him of the long vanished boyhood or youth. The forgotten face is again strangely before him. Good men forget the good that they have done; the good work of the honest souls is soon forgotten. No memory is sufficient for the precious things of the world, or even of a single life; but God's remembrance never faileth. His heart is full of the faces that men have forgotten; and some day these shining images of precious

life will be presented to us, and we shall rejoice again in worlds that we had lost and even forgotten.

The voice of God fixes thought upon the humanity of God. This is one of the wonderful things lying in the idiom of faith. Look through the Old Testament; look through the New; observe how full the Bible is of this mode of speech. The voice of God to Adam, to Noah, to Abraham, to Moses, to Joshua, to Samuel, to Isaiah, to all the prophets, to all the psalmists, to all the apostles; the whole Bible rings with the voice of God. What does this mean? It means the implicit faith in the humanity of God. It means that the voice great with wisdom, broadened with precious memories, and yet more, thrilling with the deepest and tenderest love, is the best sign of the appeal which God makes to man.

We should miss an inexpressible comfort if we should fail to note the infinite tenderness that comes to us in this mode of speaking about God. When Saul hears the voice of David in the wilderness, he can no longer cherish his awful passion against him. "Is this thy voice, my son David?" he cried. And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. Recall the great voices that you have heard. Were they not great because of their expressiveness in the service of honor, of tenderness, of sympathy, of love? Voices are great or small,



rich or poor, full of music or torn with discord, according as they express or fail to express the humanity of man. It is the heart that makes the voice. The instrument may be the finest possible, but if there is not a large and true human heart behind it, that voice cannot be great, it cannot thrill and inspire. What would one not give to hear again the sound of the voices that are still, and that made the world of childhood a perpetual symphony. The voices of home are great because they are voices of love. The "Village Blacksmith" goes to church, he hears his daughter singing in the village choir, and

"It sounds to him like her mother's voice  
Singing in Paradise."

The best voices of the living, the voices that are burdened with tenderness, make us think of the voices that pour forth the old strain of love in another sphere; they make us think of the great voices of our race, and the humanity of man. When we hear the voice of God, we simply catch the notes of the Infinite Tenderness, we turn toward the utterance of the Eternal Humanity.

Let us thank God to-day that He is a speaking God. Let us rejoice that the word from behind is the word of God, that the voice is the voice burdened with the Ineffable Love. We begin with God; all voices merge in the voice of God; He

is within us and our experience rings with his call; He is above us. The authority that overwhelms us by its gracious reasonableness and its everlasting righteousness is from Him. He was, He is, and He is to come. He has beset us behind and before, and He has laid his hand upon us. The directions from which the great voices of the world come, all run back into the eternal utterance. Yet as the breeze that travels over the cool expanse of the sea or the hot sand of the desert or the perfumed spaces of the land in each case takes character from that across which it comes, so the voice of God, coming now from the pure sphere above us, now from the hot world within us, and again over the vast and sweet-scented future, and yet again over the silent stretches of the past, carries in it distinct meaning and inspiration. To-day the word comes from behind; it sweeps the entire breadth of a century.

2. Why should we heed the voice of the past? Because it is burdened with the wisdom of experience. In the nineteenth century the human race has undergone an immense, perhaps an unparalleled, experience. The conquest over nature is certainly without a parallel. All the sciences have been renewed and rendered immeasurably more significant. By means of travel and intercommunication the ends of the earth have been

brought to our doors. The circumnavigation of the globe, which a few hundred years ago required a Magellan to accomplish, is now one of the commonplaces of travel. For production, distribution, transportation, human convenience, and comfort, nature has been pressed into a service hitherto unimagined. In the conquest of nature during the nineteenth century the race has traveled with something like the velocity of light. We look back to-day over a century of material progress as the light that strikes the spires of the churches this morning might look back to the unmeasured distances over which it has swept. That physical achievement is one vast experience.

Another is the revolution that has taken place in our view of the length of human history. We have monuments of flourishing civilization reaching back eighty centuries. And from a host of facts and careful studies of facts, the belief has gained that human beings have been upon this planet from an exceedingly remote past. This has given a new sense of human history, and out of this new passion for the past, along all the great lines of intellectual interest, there have come about vast changes in belief. That experience has been followed by another. Criticism has been applied as never before to the world's highest faith. Never since Christianity entered the world has its truth been so questioned. The opportunity for doubt

and denial, for question and attack, has been unrestricted. Men have been free to believe or not as they pleased; they have been free to say the worst and to do the worst against all faith. They have been allowed to make out of the endeavor to destroy all religion a new religion. Nothing like this has ever before happened, at least on so wide a scale. In this century Christianity has followed Jesus into the wilderness. There like Him it has met the great adversary. As in his case, so in the case of the Gospel, the place has been a solitude; during the conflict the angels have been invisible, and God Himself has seemed to hide his face. The great duel between doubt and faith has thus gone on, and the issue has rested with the stronger fighter. The ship that in other centuries kept close inshore, that when a storm arose made for port, in this century put out to sea, gave old Neptune a free hand, defied all his tempests, and rode in unconquerable majesty his fiercest waves, in the interest of a mission to humanity.

Economic, social, political revolutions of untold moment there have been; still these three are the main experiences of the race during the last hundred years. There is the material conquest, telling us what nature was meant to do for man; telling us what nature cannot do for him. There is the new sense of human history, and the new

consciousness of humanity to which it invites the individual person. There is the criticism of faith which in its freest and fiercest forms has issued in the profounder conviction of the indestructible reality of the religious instinct, and the supreme distinction of the Gospel of Christ. The voice from behind is the voice of a material conqueror, of a new humanity, of a faith surer of its truth because rooted in the nature of man. The voice of a century, of a century about to die, calls for yet greater conquest over nature, summons to a still profounder sense of the pathos and hope of humanity's vocation, appeals in tones that would seem to be irresistible in behalf of the Kingdom that cannot be shaken.

The appeal, besides its power over reason and conscience, touches and fires the imagination. The two characteristics which mightily move the imagination are magnitude and life. Mere magnitude will not do, for it may be dead; life alone will not suffice, because it may be petty. But when vastness and vitality are found together, and found in their supreme degree, there is the unrivaled appeal to the imagination. This appeal comes to us to-day. Take it in the single instance of the new sense of history. Our century falls away into all the centuries. Think of the millions of millions of human beings that have lived on this earth; think of the vastness of historic humanity; and when

one reflects that every individual in this countless multitude had a career of joy and suffering to run, to rise up out of the feebleness of infancy, and surrounded by grim environments to give battle for existence, to devise in hope, to struggle in expectation, press on through disappointment or fall under despair ; to link itself with other lives that inspire it with visions of greater good, to encounter new hostilities in the enmity of family against family, and tribe against tribe, to perish in the earliest of these collisions and die like the worm in the morning under the heel of the first heedless wayfarer, or to vanquish all social foes only to sink at last under the wheels of the order of the Universe, one feels that the vastness of humanity is the vastness of life, pathetic and tragic beyond expression, yet evermore overhung with rainbow lines and hopes.

History is our pageant to-day. The front ranks are formed of the little children new to earth and sky ; behind them come the bright faces of youth, followed by those in middle life ; and the first section of the grand parade is closed by the weary feet and the patient countenances of age. A gap follows and the spectator now beholds the coming and going of civilizations and races. The New World of the West thunders by, the Britain from which it so largely came presses close behind, modern and mediæval Europe bring up



the rear. Carthage with her trades, Rome with her legions and legislatures, Greece with her hundred forms of genius and activity prolong the splendid line. Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, with the incomparable Hebrew race appearing at various points of the pageant, and giving immortal distinction to the entire procession, carry the vision to the limits of history. Eighty centuries have filed past and now the spectator looks afar off over the seemingly endless expanses of the prehistoric ages, and in windings that seem like the turnings and perplexities of all the rivers in one, in ever compacter and vaster masses, shadowed by the clouds of dust that roll up from their incessant and multitudinous tread, in the awful silence of the dim distance, and in the infinite pathos of their struggling and unappeased humanity, the procession sweeps ever backward and on into the unimaginable morning of time. This is the mighty, moving pageant of the race upon which we are called upon to look to-day; and over this unmeasured expanse we hear the word from behind.

3. What does that word say? "This is the way, walk ye in it." There is a resting-place, a home for the human spirit. You may call it success, power, character, inward peace, reconciliation with the universe, rest in the Eternal Presence. There is a goal for the heart of man,



a place of refuge, a region of content and joy. Wisely or ignorantly all but the incorrigible few are seeking that sphere of high content. This is the tragedy of life that men seek essential satisfaction in impossible places. Sin is not sought because it is sin, but because of the pleasure of it. No drunkard covets a wrecked manhood, no sensualist seeks the contempt of the world and the petrification of his heart, no digger for gold wishes to part with his humanity, no selfish person, no indifferentist to the common welfare tries to make himself odious to his fellow-men. Each sinner looks only at the pleasure set before him, each sinner is deluded into the belief that the path of selfishness is the path to the rich and happy life. These multitudinous pleasure-seekers present the same spectacle that a fleet of sail-boats would present headed down Niagara River from the lake out of which the river flows. They sail on under the blue sky, over the great river, before the strong wind. They sail on to some haven of peace. The boats are brilliant with color; they are alive with delight; they are passionate with high anticipation. They know nothing about the increasing current of the river, they know nothing of the terrible earnestness of its movement farther on, they are ignorant of the awful abyss that boils and thunders in the distance. On they go seeking joy in the path of

horror, and life in the region of death. That is the race as pleasure-seeker; that is our generation on the excursion of selfishness; that is your life and mine on the current of unsanctified desire.

The word from behind is simply the experience of the race put to our service. Its warning is plain. Never yet did falsehood issue in profit, or treachery in inward peace, or selfishness in the sense of high achievement, or inhumanity in the consciousness of good. Never yet did the intemperate, the immoral, the dishonest, the indifferent life rest in joy. Never yet did ingratitude to God and to man bless the soul. Never did the loveless heart prove other than its own curse. The spirit that harbors evil thoughts makes for itself a nest of vipers. All time proves that. The life that puts slight or hurt upon other lives, that breathes forth an atmosphere of disdain and scorn is like the volcanic mountain; it blasts the life about it; it has its recompense in the burning and thundering pandemonium of its own heart. The pleasure that is sought in anything that means injury or contempt for another is suicidal. It finds itself, like the scorpion in the fable, girt by a ring of fire, and thereupon drives its fang into its own brain. Nothing is more impressive or grand than this judgment of history upon inhumanity. Turn and hear the word from

behind ; you hear the voice of the mighty angel standing upon the land and upon the sea, commanding the entire world, and declaring that the whole testimony of time is against the godless life.

“ This is the way, walk ye in it.” The way is the way of justice and mercy and trust in the just and merciful God. The way is the way of great-hearted service, of thankful love, of patient kindness, of reverence in the presence of life, of chastity of soul, of unfailing sympathy, of enduring devotion, of everlasting hopefulness and faith. Jesus is the way. He went about doing good ; He said it is more blessed to give than to receive. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life for the world. He went to perfection by the path of suffering ; He went home to God by the way of the cross. He is the way and the truth and the life. All history, all time, the whole majesty of the word from behind, attests the everlasting validity of the saying that the way of the cross is the way of light.

## XIX

### THE IDEAL AS THE MEANING OF LIFE

“ And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.”  
John 1, 14.

WE come to the greater meanings of life with pathetic slowness. After the sun has gone, we see for the first time thrown back upon the evening sky the glorious heart of the light that has been with us all the day. Is it not strange that only after sunset are we able to say how great and wonderful is the heart of light? Is it not pathetic that only after the unfailing and perfect lover has left the home are we able to see the infinite beauty of a mother's soul? We cannot recall the day when we did not take pride in a father's strength. He was our hero; he could do everything. As we recall our feeling toward him, we can readily sympathize with the poor bewildered Negro who was unable to distinguish between the Almighty and Abraham Lincoln. Moses was to his people in the place of God. So is the great and noble father to his happy and admiring children. And yet we never knew what fatherhood meant till the great bereavement came, till we could think it over, see its struggle, note

its silent suffering, dwell upon its heroism, and enter into its soul of tenderness and strength. We can best measure the great tree when it has fallen ; we can seldom take in the magnitude of noble fatherhood till we stand beside its grave. The same is true of friendship. Love our friends as we may, we are unable to do justice to them till death has purified our vision. David doubtless thought that he knew his friend Jonathan ; but not till he learned that his friend lay dead on the battle-field of Gilboa did he awake to the glory of his soul. Then came the great lamentation : —

“ Jonathan is slain upon thy high places,  
I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan:  
Very pleasant hast thou been to me;  
Thy love too was wonderful,  
Passing the love of women.  
How are the mighty fallen  
And the weapons of war perished.”

This is the truth about Jesus Christ. We do not find the adequate meaning of his life in the confession of devout Jews like Simeon, in the wonder of the shepherds, in the homage of the wise men from the East, or in the song of the angel which the faith of that time heard. These are beautiful dramatic incidents, but they do not go to the soul of our Lord. The disciples themselves were slow of heart to believe. The walk to Emmaus is symbolic of the mind and mood

of all the disciples. They were children of sense and time; they were overwhelmed by untoward events, scattered in the storm of death like sheep without a shepherd. They had walked with Jesus, they had heard Him speak, their hearts had burned under his message, and they had felt the greatness of fellowship with Him. Yet were they slow to gain genuine insight into the essential meaning of his career. Only after He had vanished from their sight, and time, circumstance, opportunity, task, and crisis had forced the majesty of his teaching and character upon them did they awaken to the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The first three Gospels have behind them a history of maturing judgment and deepening insight. They record one great achievement of the apostolic age, — the maturing, the greatening appreciation of Jesus.

This is true of the Fourth Gospel. It was the last to be written. The Church has believed that it was written by the Apostle John; we believe that it was written by him or by another of equal depth of being. He had lost his Master while he was yet a young man. Into his receptive and retentive nature had gone the message of Jesus, his wonderful ministry, and the image of his soul. This unwritten Gospel, this unexpressed life of Jesus in the mind and heart of John is his treasure. He has gone over it a thousand times. The

words of his Master he finds unforgettable; they have become an easy, an inevitable, an immortal memory. They are like a strain of music forever in the mind and forever exalting. His imagination is a vast hall hung with scenes from the life of Jesus. The wedding at Cana of Galilee is there in colors intense and beautiful as life. Jesus speaking with the woman at the well, in searching dialogue with Nicodemus, witnessing to Himself before the Jews, opening the eyes of the man born blind, presenting his vocation under the parable of the good shepherd, at the grave of Lazarus, uttering his great prayer for the world, pouring forth the divine comfort of his farewell discourse to his disciples are a few of the pictures in the imagination of John. The last supper is there; and how poor would seem even the wonderful work of Da Vinci could it be hung in the imagination of John and viewed in the light that falls from the original scene. In this spacious and splendid hall the beloved disciple lives. Among these pictures drawn by the hand of Jesus Himself, colored out of the heart and conscience of Christ, and softened with the still, sad, expectant atmosphere of a needy humanity, this seer among the apostles spends his days.

Words and pictures are not all. The Soul of his Master comes more and more into the vision of John. He thinks of the great beatitude:



“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” Part of that promise has been fulfilled in his experience ; with pure devotion, with great and enduring love he has waited upon the manifestation of his Master’s Soul, in word, in deed, and in suffering. And now there is dawning upon him, like some divine morning, the consciousness of the Soul of Jesus. He sees it, as the old leader saw God in the cleft of the rock, and the sense of its goodness becomes the psalm of his existence. He longs for length of days, he prays for strength to record this vision of Jesus that has been born out of the heart of his discipleship. He selects certain scenes from the fullness of his Lord’s life, he selects certain discourses, he selects a given line of events, and through these it is his purpose to pour upon the world the vision of Jesus which God has given to him.

The great question that finally confronts John is this : What is the meaning of the life of Jesus ? He can find no explanation for it in time or in sense. It dates from God ; it witnesses for God ; it returns to God. It carries one backward to the Eternal as noon to morning ; it points forward to the Eternal as noon to evening. Jesus is unique in his life, in his mission, in his place in history. His is the ideal soul ; his is the ideal career. What does it all mean ? It means that in Him the Word was made flesh ; it means

that his origin is in God, that his peculiar excellence is through union with God, that his grace and truth are the expressions of God.

The incarnation is the meaning of the life of Jesus. It stands clear of all miracle. It is the truth to which this apostle is led by reflection ; it is the only conclusion to which he can come in view of the facts, the transcendent facts of his Master's career. There is no theory about Jesus that will do except that which finds, in his advent, the advent of the Soul of God. There is no philosophy of the career of Jesus that can account for the facts, or that can satisfy those who see the Soul of Jesus, but that which discovers his origin, his history, and his home in God. Like an inverted rainbow was the Soul of the Lord, coming down out of heaven, returning into heaven, and revealing in its whole sacred curve the beauty of the Eternal Light, the glory of the Infinite Father.

This is, however, only the great primary truth of the Gospel. In putting this divine interpretation upon the life of Jesus, John puts in a secondary sense, indeed, and yet in a true sense, the same interpretation upon the life of man. He says of John the Baptist: There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He, too, came from God ; he, too, had his task assigned him by the Highest. He came to bear

witness to the light that enlighteneth every man. Still there is a unique distinction in the life of Jesus. His distinction lies in the fact that He alone is able to show the world adequately, authoritatively, finally, where man begins, what he carries in him, and where he ends. The east and the west are marked by the planets. They all rise in the east, they all set in the west. They describe the path of the sun, they come where it comes, they go where it goes. Still the sun is the great revealer of the order of the solar movement; the sun is the great herald of the path that the planets take. We read the course of the planets in the light of the fiery course of the sun. East and west, as the beginning and the end of the planets, take on immeasurable meaning, because in them the outgoings of the morning and the evening rejoice. In the presence of the supreme Soul of Jesus we discover the origin and the end of our own souls. In the wake of the fiery circuit of his life we find the pale circuit of our own lives. What is called the incarnation is, first the meaning, the philosophy of the life of Jesus; then it is the meaning, the philosophy of the life of mankind.

1. In the light of the childhood of Jesus we read the childhood of the race. It is impossible to reduce the life of the Child Jesus to the mere influence of inheritance and environment. There

is nothing in his human ancestry great enough to account for Him ; there is nothing in his surroundings in Nazareth, even when his mother and his mother's Bible are added to them to explain the intelligence and character of this young life. We must go to God for the explanation. Those intuitions that fill his spirit with light, those dreams in which He lives that are brighter than the day, those feelings of supernatural beauty and tenderness which are the surprise of the world did not originate under the sun ; that sublime capacity by which this young Soul seeks to be about his Father's business dates from the Eternal. God wrought for Him and wondrously through his human ancestry, and through that environment, with its fields of beauty, its birds and its flowers, its hills and seas ; with its spiritual possessions, its history of power and of hope. None the less distinct and awful in beauty is the soul that is the pure gift of God, that shines through inheritance and environment, that transcends them, that even in boyhood climbs into high communion with the Infinite. We greet the sun to-day as the successor and descendant of other days ; we greet the sun as shining through the atmosphere of the earth. Jesus comes as the Child of Mary, as the Son of Man ; he comes through the tenderness, the pathos, and all the conditions of limitation and growth belonging to our humanity.

And yet the sun in its essential life is independent of the conditions of our world; and in the same way the Soul of Jesus is independent and transcendent. While He is truly the Son of Man, He is at the same time truly the Son of God.

In this light we read the meaning of the universal childhood. We refuse to reduce the life of any child of man to the mere play of inheritance and environment. There is something new, something original in the endowment of every child. Here are twenty children under the age of six months. They all look alike to you; but to the twenty mothers each child has a unique and infinite charm. That unique and infinite charm is the eye through which the soul of the child looks. It began to be in the mystery of generation, it comes to itself through inheritance and environment; still it is a soul working in human form, a spirit with the plan of its being hidden in itself, a creation of God, and in his image, of high capacities, a messenger from the Eternal. There are few normal human beings who can look upon the soul of a beautiful child without the feeling that it comes from God. The infinite pity for distress, the dear and generous love for everything that lives, and above all the sense of goodness and the perfect trust in it that work in the heart of a beautiful child open into the eternity behind it. Only God could have

made such a being. It is significant that Emerson could not doubt the divine meaning of life or its permanence when he stood by the grave of his beautiful boy : —

“What is excellent as God lives is permanent.  
House and tenant go to ground,  
Lost in God, in Godhood found.”

2. We construe the meaning of youth in the presence of the divine youth of Jesus. There is nothing in history equal to that heaven of ideals with which Jesus returned from his temptation. The moral world of man was there, the moral universe was there, the conscience of God was there in the splendor of the midnight Syrian sky. In the strength of this new heaven and new earth in his own soul, Jesus went forth to bring to pass in the soul of mankind a new heaven and a new earth. The Gospel is the idealism of Jesus ; it is the sunrise of God in his humanity ; it is the flush, and later the pure white light of the Eternal upon his youth. There is endless significance in the fact that in the youth of Jesus his Gospel was born. His divine childhood had risen into the mightier witness of divine youth.

Nothing is more precious to mankind than the visitation of God in the ideals of youth. Normal youth, especially after temptation has been met and overcome, advances to the task of life under an order of ideals brighter than the Pleiades,



grander than Orion. The fires of honor, justice, truth, chivalry, love, burn up the morning sky of youth. The revolt at injustice and inhumanity is native to youth. The demand for reform is the universal demand of youth. The demand is made in the name of the vision, the dream, the ideal presence in the heart of youth. The great wave of idealization that comes with love is nothing but the fresh advent of God in the soul. Take Burns's songs to Highland Mary. How perfect in sentiment they are, how utterly pure in humanity. How the lover of this most human poet delights to see him in the secure and awful power of his newly risen ideal.

How shall we regard this idealism of youth? We cannot ask a deeper or a more decisive question than that. The whole moral victory or failure of existence lies here. We may sin against our ideals and yet not surrender them. We may do despite to them and yet weep our way back into their honor and power. But there is one thing that we cannot do. We cannot live in contempt of the ideal and yet believe in God. We cannot blaspheme the divine vision of existence given in the ideal and yet believe in the Gospel of Christ. We cannot repudiate, laugh at, scorn our highest thoughts, our supreme imaginations, and yet hold to the philosophy of life given in the incarnation. The way of Jesus the divine



youth is given in the ideals of youth. Disregard these ideals, pour contempt upon them, extinguish them, and you cut all possible connection between your existence and the existence of Jesus. Again you see his parable. He is in the heaven of his ideal vision and strength and you are in the hell of your destitution of the ideal and between you and Him is the gulf that you have fixed.

Revere the morning in your manhood and womanhood; revere the tide of love that rises within you from the eternal deep; revere that awful shadow of Himself that God throws across your inward existence; revere the mysterious movement within you in which God works mightily in passion and in conscience carrying them into imperious moods, and in which He employs the imagination to frame pictures and hang out symbols of the highest in your nature. Let no man despise thy youth. It is the key to heaven. It is the path into the best life of the world; it is the way into the discipline of Christ; it is one of the greater tokens that life begins in God.

3. We see Jesus under the heat and burden of the day. He does not grow weary in well-doing. The contradiction of the world, its immemorial custom of sordidness and shame cannot shake his confidence in the meaning of his life or disturb his faith in the truth of his Gospel.

In all the records of his career there exists not even the shadow of the fear that He may be mistaken about Himself and his message. Here again is the advent of God within Him; here again his existence is supermundane; here again the Eternal God is his refuge. In his service his heart is forever open to his Father; He is in the power of an unceasing and prevailing prayer.

When we pass from youth to manhood and womanhood, we lose something, but we may gain more. The light-heartedness, the audacious courage, the endless energy, the world rolling in the sunrise of perpetual romance — these fade away. And peculiar burdens come. The sense of limitation comes. We wear again the chains of Paul. The contradiction in our own nature, the contradiction in the world, is against us. Again the wind is contrary. The routine of life, its monotonousness, saps enthusiasm and tells hard upon hope. Again we are in the apostolic ship with the storm bearing on us for many days. The world loses somewhat its interest in us. It does not expect so much from us as it once did; and we miss the bracing power of this high expectation. The power of love, although unyielding, and indeed invincible, is still sorely taxed. Business reverses, failing strength, sinking spirits, increasing sorrows tell hard upon the soul of existence. And yet over against all this God waits upon manhood and

womanhood under the heat and burden of the day to surprise them with grace and truth.

The path here is the path of prayer. When you feel that something is going, make sure that something better is coming. Open your whole nature to God; cry mightily unto Him. Live in the mood of appeal to the Eternal Tenderness. Then the process of the suns will be but the mellowing of your humanity, the discipline of life will be but the wheel that brings into view the lustre of the soul. For this does come to the faithful spirit—the sense of a deepening humanity, the consciousness of increasing sensibility to the greatness and the pathos of existence, a wider and more generous sympathy, a nobler happiness in the number and eminence of the servants of God, a keener eye for the advent of God in children and in youth, and a profounder joy in this apostolical succession in the grace and power of the Most High; a surer willingness to serve and to wait, a less fugitive delight in opportunity without regard to recompense, a larger capacity to share in the ideal aims, enthusiasms, achievements, loves, and hopes of the race, and a vaster peace in the thought that through the intervention of the Infinite Compassion we may have a humble place among the saints in glory everlasting. If we keep God with us through prayer the reverses of life cannot crush us. We shall

see God in the life of the race more clearly; we shall believe in the coming of the kingdom of God more firmly; and when we can no more hold our shields between the souls and the causes that we love and the enemy, the Lord will be their shield, the Lord will cover their head in the day of battle.

4. One thing Jesus did not face. He did not face old age. The love of life that grows with the years and the certainty of death make a strange experience. Youth dies easily, because it is chivalrous. Manhood dies harder, because it is so deeply involved with responsibility. Old age dies hardest of all, because it does not want to die. We waste no words over the divine ease with which Jesus at thirty-three gave his soul back to God. Could He have done it with the same ease had He met death in the love of life born of many happy years, and in the increasing infirmity of age?

That question Jesus has answered through the beloved disciple. Length of days were granted him. It was his privilege to see the world rolling into the light of Christ's interpretation of its existence. It was his lot to be the last of that wondrous company to go. He lived long, lived in the love and veneration of the whole Church, lived in a service that was to himself an unspeakable delight and that was to his age a supreme

inspiration. He went about the world "with his divine regard" for men and followed by their love and honor. How did he die? Fearing pain as every mortal must, and yet in utter peace. He was going to his Master, to lean harder upon his strength, to rest on his love with a deeper zest. John believed that he was going from the less to the greater, from the shadow to the reality, from the life under sore limitation to the life of a son in his Father's house; and therefore he grew in hope and in peace as the end drew near.

We must construe the last of life as we do the first of life. We must bring it all into the presence of the one standard human existence. We cannot grow in peace with the years if to us eternity is a blank. If death means the surrender of all for nothing, we cannot think of it as other than the supreme horror. But if we believe in God, in the eternal world, in the Lord Jesus; if we believe that the human soul comes from God, is here visited of God and supported by Him; if we believe that just men are made perfect in the service and fellowship beyond time, we shall think that the best is yet to be, that the great beatitude of existence is awaiting us behind the terrible shadow. Under the bust of Maurice in Westminster Abbey the words are inscribed: "There was a man sent from God whose name

was John." No other account could be given of that great soul; no other account can be given of any soul. We live and move and have our being in God. The endowment of childhood, the ideals of youth, the character of manhood and womanhood, and old age leaning on its staff are significant of God. The mystery of birth, wonder, knowledge, love, power, death, is the mystery of God. You cannot take the glory out of the cloud that lies in the path of the retreating sun; you cannot take God out of the substance of human existence. Our reasonable thoughts, our high interest, our pure sympathies, our enduring love, and our true service are but the expression of his life in our life. Whether we live or die, we live or die unto Him, we live or die in Him.

We make too much of death. We do not dwell enough on the soul and its ongoing might. As one sails the beautiful Mediterranean round whose shores so much that is greatest in human history took place, whose winds and waves bear in them sacred and glorious memories, whose coast-lines and the mountain ranges behind them represent so many of the splendid years of our race, one shrinks from leaving it. Then, too, the sea itself contracts toward the west, the shores draw together, and there in the way of the ongoing mariner are the straits so narrow, so apparently impassable, so like the end. As one



advances, the illusion vanishes. The straits are narrow and yet they are wide enough for the mightiest ship; the straits are narrow and full of gloom, but they are not the end. On past the great rock at the entrance, on through the six-and-thirty miles of contracted life, onward in solemn haste and high confidence your ship goes and out into a greater sea, the glow of light and lines of fire on the whole distant horizon are the call of love from afar and the tender welcome home.

Such is our life on this sea of time. Its winds and waves and tides and shores are rich in the treasures of human love. Who does not love this sea set in the framework of the worthiest and happiest that man has done, that man may know? Who does not rejoice in it at its widest and greatest? Who does not watch with pain the inevitable lessening? Who does not sometimes fear lest he may have left behind all greater things, sailed by creative might, and all the thrones of genius and goodness and power? Who as the years come and go does not become conscious of a shrinkage of being, and that there in his path is death narrow, wild, the abode of utter gloom? Is it not the end, and in it shall we not lose forever this enchanting human world? Not so. In that narrow passage there is room enough for the greatest soul to go. Let it go in solemn



confidence and serene hope. Beyond is the infinite, and out into that infinite the soul shall sail to see again the abiding values and splendors of the heart, to note on the tides that draw it onward the welcome of the eternal love and the gracious light that cannot fail.

## XX

### THE MORAL IDEAL IN CHRIST

“We make it our aim, whether at home or absent, to be well-pleasing unto him.”

2 Cor. v, 9.

“To endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life,” is said by John Stuart Mill to be about the best that men can do. It would not be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, continues Mill, than “to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life.” These words occur in Mill’s famous remarks about Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth. It is strangely impressive to find this noble, but essentially skeptical, British thinker in the nineteenth century in complete agreement with the apostle to the nations in the first century. The British philosopher says that about the best we can do is to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life, and the apostle says we make it our aim to be found well-pleasing unto him. Two things here call for attention: the end and the aim of the Christian life.

1. There is the end. All endeavor at the reasonable control of life implies an end. There are

some forms of life without conscious end that are nevertheless good. Some people pursue goodness as naturally as a star shines, as a bird sings, as a flower blooms. There are people with music in their nature and it breaks out like mirth, like sunshine through the cloud. There are people so radiantly endowed that to them goodness is play, perpetual delight; as Wordsworth says, —

“Glad hearts, without reproach or blot,  
Who do thy will and know it not.”

Nevertheless even here there is an end; not, indeed, in the conscious will, but in the instincts. The lapwing that spends the severe winter months by the Nile, that, when spring comes, flies northward to the British Isles, may not fly in the conscious light of a goal, but the goal is in every beat of its wings, in every pulse of its heart; and so those spirits that are moving from one moral climate to another, from one moral condition to a higher, even if they do not move in the conscious light of an end are yet guided by an end in the moral instincts of their being.

The reasonable control of life;—that is the greatest task to which a human being is called, and it implies an end. Every locomotive that leaves the city has a terminal in view; every ship that clears our harbor has a port in sight; all target practice, whether by land or sea, by army

or by navy, implies a target, and whoever endeavors to control his existence in this world endeavors in the light of an end.

Further, the end is a vast revisional power. The artist's end, the beauty that he beholds revises every piece of work that he does, it revises his nature as an artist ; the end which the scientist serves revises his work, it revises his method and his intelligence as a scientist ; the end pursued by the business man calls for revision, it calls for the elimination of poor plans, of mistaken notions, of short-sightedness, it calls for perpetual revision. When we come to Christian character, the end here exalts the intellect, purifies and ennobles the heart, greatens in volume and in power the moral will. A people without ends would be a people without standards. What do you desire this country to become? What do you think should be the result of a liberal education? What is your conception of mature human beings? What do you mean by citizenship? What pleasures should be avoided, what pursued? What are the legitimate sources of enjoyment and the illegitimate? We cannot answer these questions unless we have ends, because all our convictions come out of ends. There are no standards when we have no ultimate governing ends; we are blind to the great interests of our people unless we can read their meaning in the light of

great ends. Anything will go as art, anything will go as good citizenship, as good business, as good thinking, as good religion, as good science if we are unable to bring it into the presence of an end and search it and examine it there. A nation without ends is a dismal mob of half-savage human beings ; a civilized people is a people with great ends in the light of which they judge their character and their achievement, in the light of which they are full of vigor and hope.

The Christian end is not an abstract end ; it is personal. The end is not properly described as truth ; it is truth in life, truth in a personal soul. The end is not goodness, but goodness in a rational being ; not beauty, but the harmony of the world singing itself in a conscious, living, loving human spirit. The personality of the end or ideal means an immense gain. Look at a mother, a high-minded, broad-minded, noble-souled mother ; think of her among her children and the moralization which they receive from her unconsciously. In the first place she is to them moral illumination ; then the path of virtue is a path of delight ; the whole influence of the end through her is to engage and to fill the soul with a sense of the beauty of the world, the beauty of the world as the beauty of the Lord our God. Take a great teacher and his influence ; take, for example, Luther ; look at his fun, his power to

sing, listen to him as he plays his violin, join in his great-hearted frolic; hear him render a great song; put yourself under the immense range and vitality of his interests; you are captivated by the man. Listen now to the prophet of God speaking through all these things, and you see what power the abstract ideal gains when it shines in the power of a great human being.

Jesus is the sublimest conscience in the history of the world; that conscience is set in with the tenderest and richest humanity, and both are pervaded by the most engaging and commanding spirit. To be found well-pleasing in his sight is a great task, but it is a possible task because of the fascination of his divine personality, because the ideal in his sympathies, his compassions, his tenderesses, his graces, his loves, is able to raise men from moral death. What the idealism of Plato could not do, what the heroism of the Stoic could not do, Jesus by his ideal working through his sympathies did for the poorest creatures in the Roman Empire; He lifted out of the slums, out of the depths a multitude of wretched souls and turned them into soldiers of the Ideal, lovers of God, victors in the fight for righteousness, such as no age or nation had ever seen. Our end is personal; it is to be found well-pleasing in the presence of Him who is the Truth and the Goodness and the Beauty of our human world.

2. A few words must here follow about the aim of the Christian life. In nature ends realize themselves. The seed grows without effort to the perfect flower; the tree advances without aim from the acorn to the magnificent oak; the eagle in the egg comes to the eagle on the wing without conscious purpose: the harmless cub, that you might easily mistake for the pup of a Newfoundland dog, grows naturally into the king of the forest; the infant in its mother's arms becomes the mature man by the force of law. On the plane of nature the end realizes itself; there is no need of conscious aim; the end is the one great master.

When you come to the sphere of character it is different. In the rational and spiritual life of man, the aim must supplement the end. Your ideal is knowledge; it is a glorious end. Can you ever hope to approach it without effort? Your ideal is success in business; will that ever come without toil? You desire eminence as a lawyer, as a physician, as a man of letters. Will that end ever be realized without well-directed endeavor? Thus when you come to character, to the control of your life in the light and by the might of an end, the end is impotent unless the aim corresponds to the end. Here we come upon one of the saddest things in human life, — the sub-human existence, the aimless life, aimless because it has



never found an end. There are so many human beings that go like the seaweed on the tide, out and in, out and in, tossed hither, carried thither. They are like the shuttle without the thread in it, flying to and fro and achieving nothing. The aimless life is a sub-human life ; it is thrown from instinct to instinct, from object of desire to object of desire, as an unmoored boat is tossed from wave to wave, backwards and forwards to no purpose, in utter weariness, in pitiless sport and pain.

Millions of our fellow-men are living that sub-human life, endless and aimless. Another class, higher up and at the same time lower down, and found chiefly in the churches of Christ throughout the world, is composed of those who have forgotten the supreme end of life. You remember that story in the "Odyssey" about the lotus-eaters ; you remember Odysseus took his men to see them and when his men had eaten the lotus-flower it took away all desire for their return. They forgot the boat, they forgot the sea, they forgot Ithaca, they forgot home ; they became men with a forgotten goal, an abandoned ideal. This is one of the deepest tragedies in the spiritual life of our land ; multitudes have forgotten the Christian end of living ; they have eaten the lotus-flower of suddenly acquired wealth, the lotus-flower of surprising worldly success, the drug

of amusement and pleasure, the narcotic of the beauty of the world, the anæsthetic of deliverance from the old strenuous and troubled life into that of sensuous happiness and pleasant dreams. The churches are crowded, wherever they are, crowded, with people of this description ; they are full of those who have eaten the lotus-flower and who have forgotten the glorious home whither they were bound ; they have lost the desire to exert themselves or in any way serve and suffer and tread with Christ the wine-press and beat out with Him in affliction the spirit that transforms and saves the world.

You hear it from me often, but I say it in all solemnity, that there is not enough Christianity in our churches to harm the weakest kind of a devil anywhere ! A few, a glorious few, there are for whom end and aim are correspondent ; but the number of those who, under the influence of suddenly acquired wealth, suddenly acquired power over the sources of the world's enjoyment, and sudden emancipation from old traditions and conventions, who have forgotten the glorious idealism of the past, who do not answer it with the awe and devotion of their fathers, is a vast and sad multitude.

Some who have not gone so far in the bad way are yet like children sent on an errand, who have almost forgotten what their errand was about, who

stagger toward it, finally tumble up against it, get it and stagger home, and do not really know whether they got it or not! They are like children returning from school and taking the whole afternoon for the return. That is another example of our everyday Christianity. Is this too plain? My answer is that there is no earthly use in preaching if we cannot speak the truth to one another in love.

What should Christianity be? A glorious end, a great aim, and an honest achievement. Many of you remember one of the great events of the scientific world, the transit of Venus across the disk of the sun. You recall that expeditions were sent out by several of the leading governments of the earth, that scientific men from different positions of favor might observe that transcendent phenomenon. Scientific literature is usually dispassionate and one is not ordinarily moved to tears by it; it is not written for that purpose. But there are some scientific descriptions of that event to which I have referred that have in them the awe and the power of a great religious experience. What was the event? There was the mighty sun, clear, steady, glorious. There was the beautiful planet that swung across his disk. There was the great glass of the astronomer; the glorious end, the high aim, and the permanent and precious scientific result. That in symbol is our Christianity.

Our glorious Master, Christ, is our end ; our aim is to be found, whether present or absent, whether in time or eternity, well-pleasing unto Him! We aim at becoming like Him, so exalted in intellect, so purified in heart, made so great, true, and tender in spirit that when we come into the presence of his soul we shall be found agreeable to his will. That is Christianity.

May that ultimate end of our existence loom in our vision to-day with something of its native and ineffable splendor. May it initiate, develop, direct, and consummate the spiritual energies of our soul! May it through our vision support in steadiness, in unbroken continuity, in deathless extension and growth an aim correspondent with its own beauty and benignity. If we could bring this human world to look at the Lord as those astronomers did at the sun, and aim at Him as they aimed at their object, we should speedily have a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, and the roar and the tumult of brothers in conflict, in the bitterness of deadly feud from end to end of our divided and afflicted world, would forever die away.

## XXI

### THE APOSTOLIC IDEAL

“Wherefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.”

Acts xxvi, 19.

THE ends for which all men live are visions. Wherever the satisfaction sought is not immediate, wherever the goal is distant, its image at once takes possession of the imagination and there generates the impulse that sustains the achieving activity. When we say that one man works for wealth, another for station, another for learning, another for righteousness, and still another for baseness, we are not clear and we are not thorough in our description. The simple truth is that they all are striving for ends or goals, and these ends or goals are visions. Cræsus of old and his type in our own time pursue a vision ; the vision is of wealth ; still it is a vision. Scaliger, Bentley, Sir William Hamilton seek knowledge ; it is the vision of learning, rich, wide, deep, exact, and vast in which they toil. Webster and Clay and Calhoun, so distinguished in public service, so justly famous for achievement, were caught by the vision of station. Cæsar, Cromwell, and Napoleon sought power ; they lived and fought in

the vision of empire. So far all men are alike; action is everywhere the issue of vision; Judas and John, in utter contrast as they are in character, are at one here. Both visualize the ends they seek; both live in vision.

Paul stands preëminent among men of vision, because his vision was heavenly and because of his unswerving and passionate pursuit of it to the last breath of life. The character of his vision sets him apart and makes him worthy of consideration; the strength, the continuity, and the poetic passion of his devotion to his ideal lend high distinction to his career. We wish to know about his vision and its value for men to-day.

As we consider this vision of Paul, we shall find in it, I think, a present power, a backward reference, a forward significance; as we look into it, we shall see an immediate experience, a historic reality, a future and universal ideal. Jesus speaks from the unseen; the unseen Jesus who speaks to Saul of Tarsus calls into the vividness of lightning his own life on earth; the unseen Jesus who commissions this new apostle is to be the ideal for him and all men forever.

1. The heavenly vision is first of all a present power, an immediate experience. From the unseen Jesus searched Paul's conscience, sounded the depths of his heart, appealed to his will with reasonable but sovereign power. From the un-

seen Paul was arrested ; in the presence of the living spirit of Jesus a tempest rose in his life. There his past stood forth branded with shame ; there his soul renounced it ; there he received new light upon the character and mission of the Lord ; there he received power to become a new man, to rise up in the fullness of a new, a tremendous and at the same time a joyous experience. Paul's heavenly vision was the vision of the soul of Jesus living in the unseen and mighty ; and it meant an immediate release from error and wickedness, an immediate introduction to right-mindedness, humane feeling, moral power and hope. Paul has made two great discoveries ; he has seen the living soul of the Lord and he has seen as never before his own soul.

Here is the vital point in Christianity. It is not first a historic tradition or a vista of the future on earth and in the eternal. It is first of all an appeal to the conscience. It is nothing till it has begun a revolution in the soul to whom it comes. The past is dead, the future is a vain dream till the spirit in man is spoken to by the Spirit of the Lord. When the captain is far out on the high seas, when he has been driven by long, dark, and terrible days under stress of weather, and all at once the clouds lift and the sun breaks forth at noon, the first thing that the captain does is to find at what point in his



voyage he has arrived. Till that point is determined he can say nothing about the port from which he sailed or the harbor whither he is bound. He must have an immediate location of his ship, an immediate experience of light and certainty. Till the soul is arrested in its error, brought to a pause in its selfishness and indifference ; till its unworthy character is defined and branded before its eyes, and the sense of the majesty of right, the beauty of holiness, the glory of humane service for ideal ends take possession of the heart ; till the appeal from the living Lord in the unseen moves the foundations of being, brings about the great renunciation of all wrong and inhumanity, and the new consecration to the advance of the kingdom of man, the history of Jesus is but a dream and the future reference of his career only poetic fiction. There is no reality in the study of Jesus till He speaks in the present tense, till He is discovered as the moral regenerator and Sovereign of the soul. The zenith is over your head where you stand or sit ; the nadir is under your feet. The supreme question is your present relation to the Lord ; the eternal height is over you now, the eternal depth is under you.

The study of the Lord is not an academic question ; it is not a merely literary or historical study ; it is supremely a concern of life. Nothing

but vanity can come of these studies till we see the living Lord and feel his message working in our conscience. We study the Lord to be measured and to be weighed. If when weighed in his balances we are found wanting, we know what we should do. It is the vital interest and not the sentimental ; it is the conscientious concern and not the æsthetic that is sovereign in our faith. The sun may shine on the mountain-top whither the climber is bound ; it may flood with its light the valley that he has left behind ; but if at the spot where the mountaineer is threading his perilous way the cloud is thick and dark, what comfort is it to him to be assured that the beginning and the end of his path are in splendor ? Where he is he needs light ; where he climbs he needs the guidance of the heavenly help. Where men are they need to be spoken to ; at the task of the hour, in the present temptation and sorrow and wrong the appeal of Christ must be heard. They need to see Him as the light of life ; they need to confess his transforming might. The primary thing in Christianity is the vision of the Soul of the living Lord and the response to the Lord of the soul of the beholder. The immediate experience is supreme. There the Lord stands revealed ; there the disciple answers the call. Soul has found soul, the Soul of Jesus the soul of his servant.

2. Paul's vision leads him to look backward ; his experience under the appeal of Jesus in the unseen issues in fresh insight into the earthly career of the Lord. We greatly err if we fail to see the richness and reality of the historic Jesus behind Paul's vision of the Eternal Christ. One precious saying we owe to this apostle recorded by no other hand : " Remember the words of the Lord Jesus that he himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." Again he opens to the heart the earthly ministry of Jesus when he writes : " For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich yet for your sake he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich." Behind his experience is the sense of that divine life ; its grace and truth have become vivid and great to Paul's soul. He speaks much of the death of Christ, but the death receives all its value from the person who died ; the apostle glories in the resurrection of the Lord, but again the value of the resurrection is its judgment upon the worth of his Master. He is the preacher of a spiritual religion ; but that the religion may not be confused with some beautiful dream he sees it as it lay in the manger in Bethlehem, as it grew with the years in Nazareth, as it came to the full consciousness of itself at the Jordan, as it went about doing good, teaching, preaching, healing, consol-

ing, and saving in the human soul of Jesus. Paul's vision of the invisible Christ sought the career of the historic Jesus and rooted itself there.

The present vital experience is always the open gateway into the past. If we are doing nothing noble ourselves, and if we care nothing for what serious men are doing to-day, it is impossible that any part of the past should appear great to us. Because men and women love now, they turn with eagerness to the glorious lovers in generations gone by; because men and women toil, struggle, hope, fear, rejoice and weep to-day, they wish to know of others greater than themselves who went the same wild mysterious way. Earnestness in the conduct of one's own life is the indispensable condition of any deep and true appreciation of the past. The best book on Wellington has been written by Lord Roberts. Lincoln, we may be sure, got nearer the heart of Washington during those seven terrible years of the Revolution when Lincoln stood at the helm of state those other terrible years of fraternal war.

The really great things of the past are hidden from the frivolous and superficial. The great painting, the great statue, the monumental building, book, or life, cannot reveal its character to the idle spectator. Earnestness, manhood in the

present hour, the spirit that has become the servant of the race, is essential to the existence of insight into the great things that men have done. No man can become a genuine hero-worshiper till he has accepted the difficult task of his own life, till he has settled himself in the steadfast and endless endeavor to be in his obscure corner of the world a true hero.

It is rarely the case that children appreciate noble parents. Their parents seem to them too austere, too fond of worth, not fond enough of good times, too careless of the pleasures of sense, engrossed and lost often in the gloom of great causes. What is the reason for this failure? The reason is that children are children, full of the spirit of play, under the spell of the senses, not yet awake to the meaning of life. Wait a few years, wait till the passion of earnestness has been freed within them, till the burden of responsibility rests upon their shoulders, till great tasks confront them, many difficulties crowd round them, and hopes and fears beat in their blood as they behold their worlds of love under threat and menace. Then they turn to the past with open vision; they see again and perhaps through regret and tears the dead father, the vanished mother, building a home of beauty for them, defending them against the evils of existence, speaking in a hundred ways to all that

was best in them, nourishing body, mind, and soul, educating the full power of the personality, piously and lovingly girding them for the struggle, and by the precept and yet more by the example of wisdom covering their head in the day of battle. The reward of Jesus came to Him in the unseen when Paul and such as he, under the might of a new experience, looked back and saw how divinely the Lord had lived. The reward of the best parents comes to them in the heavenly world when they see their children under the burden and heat of the day turning to the sacred record of hitherto unappreciated goodness with devouring eyes and tender, understanding hearts.

What is true of history in its greatness as a whole, what is true of the best family life of the race, is profoundly true of the life recorded in the Four Gospels. We cannot see its height and depth, nor at all understand its divine regard for men till we have ourselves renounced the devil of selfishness and all his works, till we have set up in our own inmost heart ideals of truth and beauty and goodness, till we have taken vows never to cease in the service of these ideals while life shall last, till we have wrought righteousness and been misunderstood and perhaps hated for our work, till we have suffered as an evildoer when we were doing God's holy and compassionate will. Then the life of the Lord will seem to



us what it has seemed to all true men, the one incomparable and divine life. That life will then come to us like the morning, flooding our being with its light and peace. Bethlehem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan, Judæa, and Jerusalem will be symbols of a history in which all that is highest in you has root. Because you are a conscientious man, serving to-day with a sincere and glad heart in the kingdom of God, you turn to the manger and the cross with eyes able to read something of the meaning of the birth of Jesus, able to see a little way into the infinite consolation in the infinite mystery of existence, the issue of the life eternal through death.

When one enters the St. Gotthard Tunnel he is not at all impressed with the scene that he has left behind. When he comes out from the mountain for the third time and each time higher up, he begins to take in the glory of the world that was always there. Only when the present hour takes us higher in moral consecration, only when we issue from the elevations of earnest and devoted living, only when some immediate experience of God's spirit has set us on the heights, can we see the best things in the life of man and behold the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

3. The third interest in Paul's vision is the universal human ideal that issues from it. After that vision Paul's life was one long, undiscour-



aged, and joyous pursuit of the ideal of character given in it. He saw the Lord Jesus in his perfect humanity ; thereafter he strove with all his might to become like his Master. Nor did he limit the privilege to himself. Sonhood to God through Christ and brotherhood of man to man became the universal privilege, the universal ideal. Christ had become the revelation of God's design in every human soul ; he had become the final meaning of all man's desires and strivings and hopes. The heavenly vision was the vision of man released from all sin, all selfishness, all discord, all woe ; the vision of man redeemed to the life of moral freedom and perfect love. The goal for Paul, the goal for man was to be like the Lord Jesus. You see the great artist at sunset striving to put upon his canvas an image of that mystery of beauty ; such was Paul's heavenly vision. To the end his passion was to put the image of it in his heart and to help others in the same high endeavor.

Here comes in the deadliest doubt of our time. Is it true that ideals influence the course of history, the life of society, the families of men ? Is it possible for the heart to be obedient to the heavenly vision ? No. That I have called our most fatal doubt. It is supported by a superficial parade of physical science. It is said the action of the heart is not affected by theories, the circu-

lation of the blood, the process of nutrition, the act of breathing; the same thing is true of numerous other functions of the body. Even this is over-statement. The functions of the body are promoted by wholesome thought, they are interrupted by morbid thought. While much in our life is at its best when involuntary, as if administered for us by the indwelling Maker, every crisis that arises reveals the universal presence in us of mind, able to support order with wise thought, able to overturn order with unwise thought. The bearing of a sound and pure mind upon the processes of the body is obvious to every serious and noble thinker.

Ideals are a delight; delights when continuous influence life. They make men happier, of better temper, a comfort to themselves, generous and good companions to others. To the extent that ideals give pleasure they must influence life deeply, to the extent that they give nobler pleasure they reform existence. Paul's vision was a conscientious joy; it was a sublime delight and an abiding one. As such it made him a new man.

It is, indeed, clear as sunlight that ideals control the direction of existence. The daring voyage of Columbus, the mighty achievement of Magellan, the triumph of Vasco da Gama, the hardship endured and the conquest won by every explorer set among the follies of thought the denial

of the power of the ideal. All effort is initiated, sustained, and carried to its goal by the vision of an ideal. It was not biological influence but spiritual vision that controlled the course of Paul's life. That vision made him a preacher of Christ instead of a persecutor, a prophet of freedom instead of a forger of chains.

There is an obvious place for the ideal in the constitution of man. There is a multiplicity of forces in human life; a hierarchy must be established among these forces, one interest must be in subordination to another, one function must defer to a higher. A watch is first a multiplicity of parts, then an organization of parts, and finally the expression of a sovereign purpose. Many things, many things working together, many things so working together as to record the progress of the day; that is a watch. A human being is first a multitude of forces; then he is these forces in unity and working together; finally he is these forces so organized and so working that they keep the total man in harmony with his total environment. On the dial of the normal human life there is recorded the progress of the Day of the Lord.

We understand the amenableness of passion to reason. "I thought on my ways, and I turned my feet unto thy testimonies"; "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking

heed thereto according to thy word"; "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path"; "And when he came to himself he said, I will arise and go to my Father." These are a few of the multitude of witnesses to the power of the mind over the courses of desire. The animal becomes dumb when faced and spoken to by the Christian mind. Look at the trainer among wild beasts, watch how they do his will; mightier than he they cower at his feet and acknowledge the supremacy of his mind. Look within at the cage of wild beasts in your own soul; face them with the lash of conscience in your hand; command and beat them into silence. Soon they will know which is master, that they cannot fight the right and prevail against it, that their place and peace are in obedience to your conscientious will.

If it is sometimes true that ideals bring less than they promise, we must bear in mind that they are forever. They teach us that our work as servants of righteousness is not only for this world but also for all worlds. Our ideals give endless perspective to the moral life of man; they teach us that our future is bound up with the eternal years. The insatiable heart is one perpetual prophecy of the magnitude of man; the ideal that flies as it is pursued, that glows with a new, unattained glory with every fresh act of obedience is the second great assurance

that God has made us for ends greater than we know. "My soul is athirst for God, the living God"; there is one note of man's greatness. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be"; there is the other. The heavenly vision is at once the rapture and the despair of the soul; it sees and pursues but cannot overtake the awful gladness. So we pursue the horizon line; we never can touch it, because as we move it moves; but our pursuit is not therefore in vain, for in this way we are led home.

Home to God Paul's vision brought him, home through a world of care, trial, suffering, and service, home to the fulfillment of life's highest hope. Home to God our vision of Christ will bring us, home through the wild and stormy years, home after the toil and the fever of life in time, home when our day's work is done. We have seen his star in the east. We cannot approach and seize that heavenly splendor; but we may follow its light and be led by that light to the Infinite Tenderness and Peace.

## XXII

### THE IDEAL OF THE PATRIOT

"But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."  
Gal. iv, 26.

PAUL sees before him two Jerusalems, one that is above and one that is under; one that is free and one that is in bondage; one that is bound to pass utterly away and one that has the certain assurance of permanence. Best of all, he sees that the Jerusalem that is above, that is free, that is everlasting, is the mother of us all. Nothing could better voice the sentiments of all true Americans to-day than these words of the great-hearted Jew who became a Christian. There are before us to-day two nations: one that is from above and one that is from beneath; one that is free and one that is in the servitude of wickedness; one that we believe is under sentence of doom and one that has the promise of permanence and final ascendancy. But best of all, the nation that is from above, that is free and prophetically victorious, is the mother of us all. We come, then, to the great message of the text, feeling that it is pertinent to the needs of this hour.

1. The first thing in the apostle's words is the vision of an ideal Jerusalem. He was fond of history ; no one in that age had anything like so profound a sense of it. He loved to go back to the migration of the first Hebrew ; to repeat the history of Israel under Moses ; to dwell upon the great work that God had done for his people in the past ; to mark off the history of his nation as in a profound and peculiar sense the history of the revelation of God to man. He knew the annals of Jerusalem by heart. No Jew of his time had read with a deeper thrill of joy of David's capture of the city, of his transformation of it ; no one had surveyed with more patriotic satisfaction what had been glorious in the reigns of subsequent kings, whatever had been mighty in the utterances of the great succession of prophets. The heroic associations and immortal memories that gathered about the actual Jerusalem had more power over his heart than they possessed for any other.

Still, he felt that the history had been poor. There was an aboriginal promise behind it all, within sight of which, in the actual development of the nation, it had never come. There were impulses in the national heart deeper and diviner than any historic expression that they had yet received ; there was a vision in the mind of the great prophetic leaders of Israel that had never



attained anything like embodiment in the life of the people. Therefore, in the interest of what was deepest in history he turned away from it; in behalf of what was noblest in the actual he turned toward the ideal. So far the entire record of his nation had been a failure—a failure to utter in its life the revelation of truth and brotherhood made to it.

This seems to me the inevitable position for the Christian patriot in America to-day. He is more impressed than other men by the actual achievements upon these shores; by the landing of the Pilgrims, by the advance of colonial life; by the Declaration of Independence, the battle for inalienable rights to a victorious issue and the organization of the government; by the swift and wonderful development of the country's resources, the successful struggle to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation, and the settlement of the gigantic moral question of slavery; by the concurrent growth of schools, colleges, and universities; by the deepening and spreading power of Christianity as expressed in a thousand different agencies; and by the great intellects, the great characters, the great servants that have been our guides. The Christian patriot can see a light in the silver stars of the old flag and a depth in its crimson bars visible to no other eyes. He better than all others can estimate

the inspiration that has worked in the consciousness of our people, the moral energy needed to bring us where we are, the suffering involved, and the magnificent careers that, through this tremendous discipline, have been given to the country and the world. There is not a single noble tradition in Old Virginia or in Old Massachusetts that he does not cherish, no great name from Washington to Lincoln that he does not venerate, no battle for righteousness in the whole history that does not set his heart on fire. The Christian patriot sees more to honor and admire in our history than any other man; the whole past is to him deeper, richer, more august, more divinely tender than to any other.

Nevertheless, he is profoundly dissatisfied with what it has been, with what it is to-day. The dream of the Pilgrim burns like an immortal daybreak in the beginning of our history, and the full day has not yet come. The vision embodied in the Declaration of Independence is still an ideal unrealized. The profound and noble ideas that lie at the basis of our political institutions have so far received no such expression as they must have. The deepest and divinest forces in the consciousness of our people have had, as yet, no utterance worthy of them. And, therefore, we turn away from what has been to what shall be; from the actual to the ideal

country ; from the America that is below to the America that is above.

2. The second thing that impresses us in the words of the text is that Paul looks upon the ideal Jerusalem as the real Jerusalem. The city that had been false to the idea upon which it was founded — the idea of the supremacy of the righteous Lord, that had obstructed the purpose of its best rulers, that had stoned the prophets and killed the men of genius and sublime character who had been sent into it ; that Jerusalem, although built upon a rock, composed of stable dwellings and an imposing temple, isolated from attack by ravines to right and left, and surrounded by a great wall ; that Jerusalem was but a dream, a nightmare, a horrid ghost that must vanish. The Jerusalem that had no existence except in the morning thoughts of the first of the Hebrews, in the pious longings of the devout leaders, and in the burning conceptions of the prophets ; that city which had a full home nowhere but in the mind of Christ, which had no local habitation, no temple, and no bulwarks for the national eye, that city Paul affirmed to be the real city. You can think of the contempt with which an unconverted Pharisee or Sadducee of that time would look upon the Christian fanatic matching his imagination against a great historic institution. It would have seemed to him

the sheerest drivel, worthy of nothing but to be drowned with floods of ridicule. But what says the subsequent history? The Jerusalem of the old Jew is gone; the Jerusalem of the apostle has been the great inspiration of the ages, and it is the great reality of to-day. What was called the reality has vanished forever; what was called the imagination abides.

The ideal America is the real America. If you wish to know the everlasting America, look into the minds of its great patriots, into the thoughts of its deepest prophets. Out of the ideal country has come our entire moral strength. Out of the ideal came the origin of the country, and for all our inspirations in all our times of need our mightiest leaders have gone to the same source. When a new home is founded, it is built and ordered in obedience to the vision of love. Children in every true family have behind them the divine dream of parenthood. They are trained, carried forward from infancy, and on into the years of self-help by the energy of a transfigured thought. When they come to manhood and womanhood, their hearts begin to burn, and they discover that the Lord is shaping the ideal in them. Out of the conception of the more perfect all art, all literature, all social order, all political life that is not retrograde, is forever born. Nothing is so real as the ideal; it builds itself

ten thousand times into the actual course of events, and still it is burdened with an infinite reserve. Think of the summers and autumns that have come and gone since civilized man put foot upon these shores. How the whole face of nature has flowered, how the entire earth has come to the abundant harvest for man and beast. How much this great region has done in the way of pageant and in the way of fruitfulness. What a history of beauty and of useful growth it has had. Why is it not spent? Why is it good for a thousand summers and autumns more? Because there is life in it, because that life is fed from the great sun. Not the wonderful expressions in flower and fruit are the reality, but the hidden, unexhausted, and inexhaustible life out of which these pageants and harvests have come. And so the deepest reality lies not in our homes, our societies, our literature, our arts, our government, our history; it lies in the creative source of all these, in the living ideals that are within the human soul, and which are fed from the heart of God. You see a handful of men and women devoted to the education of the colored race in our land. They carry in their prayers and thoughts the reality which shall yet replace the wretched actual that to-day seems so strong. You see a small number of devoted souls determined that slavery shall die; their determination, not the

actual bondage of the slave, is the reality. You look in upon a prayer-meeting at Williams College; there and not in the degradation of heathen man is the everlasting reality. You watch a monk revolt from his works of penance, retreat upon God in Christ for the deliverance of his soul, and return in the thunder of power to proclaim that man shall live not upon rite or priest or institution, but upon immediate communion with the Eternal; and you find in that monk's soul, in his imagination, the reality that has transformed the old world into the new. You go back to a tent-maker from Tarsus, and you see him turning away from the history of his people, turning to the unseen where his Master lived, and gathering from that realm the forces that enabled him to change the face of the world, and to leave upon the Roman Empire marks deeper than were made by the whole succession of the Cæsars. There in the soul of that tent-maker is the divine reality. You behold a speaker upon a hillside, a sufferer upon the cross, a presence of light from beyond death, and there in the mind of Christ you recognize the whole sublime and final reality for mankind. Heaven and earth shall pass away, government after government, but the words of Christ, his living, creative thought for man shall abide, and out of it shall come a new heaven and a new earth.



In the presence of these facts we are justified in holding that the ideal nation is the real nation. We side with the dreams of the Pilgrims, with the visions of the founders of the nation, with the thoughts of its greatest leaders, with the love of those who died for it, with the sorrow and hope of all those who have served it well, with the purpose of God in Christ in its behalf, and we claim that the America that is still unrealized is our true and everlasting country.

3. The third fact in the text to which I wish to call attention are the two great characteristics of the Jerusalem which is above. It is free, and it includes all. It is the city of freedom and catholicity. In both respects it was in absolute contrast to the actual Jerusalem. That city was in bondage; it was the slave of innumerable prejudices and traditions, the victim above all of its own blind and evil heart. It was also the most fiercely exclusive of cities. Bigoted, intolerant, exclusive, and mad; these were the characteristics which it presented in the presence of Paul's Christian dream of a fellowship of perfect freedom and complete catholicity.

How can we live if we do not see the same vision for this country? We see the strife, the division, the organization of capital and labor into opposite camps, and surely we must pray for freedom from this sore and widespread bondage.



We see the prevalence of ignorance of all sorts — ignorance in personal conduct, ignorance of the true life of the home, ignorance of thrift, ignorance of the great moral necessities, personal, domestic, national, human, without obedience to which society cannot hold together; and again we must grieve over this oppression. We behold the existence of the multitude of our fellow-citizens confined mostly to a struggle for physical existence with the most distressing and wide-extending disregard of the whole upper side of life. We are a Pentecostal nation in the number and heterogeneous character of the people in our midst; we are a Pentecostal nation in the greatness of our sins and in the depth of our moral need, in our disregard of the ideal, in our contempt for Christ and our consequent unrest and trouble. Shall we not become a Pentecostal nation in regret and grief for our sins, in the glorious insight into the meaning of Christ for our time and need, in the new experience of salvation in his name? We cannot rest, as Christian citizens, until the profounder emancipation shall come, until the freedom which is our national boast shall mean freedom from eternal division, from a soul-destroying materialism, from contempt of the ideal of Christian brotherhood. Oh, how the great word freedom is abused! Freedom is not the first but the final attainment

of men and nations. It can come only through the will that stands in happy surrender to the Christian intelligence. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." Look into some room in our institutions for the insane, and see some poor man sure that he is a millionaire, that he is a great poet, that he is the greatest force in the life of the country, and at once you grieve over the delusion. But that delusion is not any deeper, nor is it half so debasing as the notion that the man is free who knows hardly anything of the moral order of his existence, and who ignores in conduct the little that he does know. That is the most fundamental and fatal of all delusions. The man who is the victim of drink or lust, or any vile habit, we cannot pronounce free; nor the nation that disregards the moral ideal, that cares nothing for Christ, that soaks itself in the swamps of a godless materialism. For that man or that nation to boast of freedom is a delusion as deep as the sad pretensions of the insane. If the Son shall make you free, then shall ye be free, indeed. The realization of freedom is through the realization of sonship; the America which is above is alone free.

Thank God it is also the mother of us all. General Grant used to say to the Confederates during the war that it was for their interest to be beaten. The few political speeches that he ever

made were to the same effect. He told his old friend and brave lieutenant, General Hancock, and the great body of his fellow-citizens who supported him in the presidential campaign of 1880, that their true success was to be defeated. The speech was brief, but it was full of the great soldier's wisdom and magnanimity. He looked upon battles and he fought them with all his might; but he looked beyond them to the common good in which they issued. The cause that won, the honor that was preserved, and the confidence that was renewed in us as a nation throughout the world belong to all the people. Through the form of victory in one case, through the form of defeat in another, the common good of all was secured. The defeat of bad causes is the supreme hope of those who support them; the triumph of righteousness is never a partisan or sectional victory — it is a victory for humanity.

This leads us to look into the deepest struggle now going on among us. There is the conflict between the Christian interpretation of the nation and the atheistic; between a spiritual view of our great fellowship in industry, in art, in science, in citizenship, in humanity, and a materialistic; between the believer in the ideal and the scoffer at it, between those who include the supreme good of their country in the coming of the kingdom of God and those whose conception of welfare is a

vulgar and vicious selfishness. This is the campaign that lies back of all others, this is the tremendous duel in which all the disciples of Christ are involved, this is the battle that divides the country into two great hostile camps. There are the seekers after God and the essential good of the people; and there are the self-seekers in the vulgar sense, and often in the vicious, and not infrequently in the criminal. The sides are taken and the fight is on. The advance of the cause of righteousness is the thing upon which good men have always set their hearts. All other victories have their value here. If they are real, if they are not imaginary, they are windows through which we can look and behold the fresh defeat given to the cause of inhumanity. If we can say with reference to any recent struggle that the America that is above is the mother of us all, surely we can claim in a profounder sense that the Jerusalem that we seek to establish over all holds for all men and all classes the one infinite good. Think of the depth and tenderness of Paul's figure. Motherhood is the name for the moral order in which we exist, for the spiritual fellowship to which we may rise, for the indwelling plan of God in our humanity and the energy of the Holy Spirit continually breaking in upon our being through that open way. Yes, we owe our existence as men, our capacity to coöperate

one with another, our power to form brotherhoods in trade, in art, in all human enterprises and interests; we owe all the sweeter associations, all the deeper memories and the whole richness and tenderness of life — to the motherhood of God's kingdom in Christ. The whole upper side of our homes, of our brotherhoods, of our citizenship, of our humanity, is the mighty birth of the Jerusalem which is above. And the loneliness of wicked men, their secret cry for another existence, their longing for the days that are gone when existence was pure, the sorrow of those who have lost faith and character and hope, and who yet pine for an infinite good — all these are but the surges of the filial heart, the tidal return of instinct and feeling to the unutterable tenderness and love of the Divine Mother of us all.

For the expression of the contrast between the two Jerusalems which he saw, Paul used a tremendous comparison. The first Hebrew had two sons, one by the bondwoman and one by the free. The actual Jerusalem with all her ignorance and shame is that dishonored slave, bearing children into bondage. The ideal Jerusalem is the free woman, bearing a son who is the divine promise of the ages. That is Paul's burning parallel from history. Nothing less terrible could at all serve the pressing and convulsive passion of his soul. Surely we see its application to our own national

condition. There is an America that resembles that poor slave — an America that bears children into the worst oppressions, an America that would fill the land with ignorance, distrust, infinite greed, and utter anarchy ; an America that would end a headlong and horrible career in self-destruction. That is the America against which we must fight, not only on election day, but upon all days, not only with our ballots, but with our total Christianity. For there is another America that resembles the free woman — an America that gives the son of promise to mankind, an America that, united in herself, exulting in her august mission, inspired in the presence of her vast opportunity, and devoted to the highest good of all within her borders, creates a new epoch in human history and kindles a new hope for the world. The whole power of Christianity, organized and unorganized, stands out against the nation that is from beneath, the nation that is in bondage and that bears children into bondage ; it stands forth in behalf of the nation that is from above, that is free and that is the glorious mother of us all. The Christian Church holds in vision two Americas ; it sees the actual America, its sins, its crimes, its miseries, its profound needs, and the ideal America in all its purity, majesty, and power. It believes that the actual America is an illusion, the invention of our weakness and sin ; and that

the ideal America is the abiding reality, the everlasting truth, God's creation wrought in light and beauty and instinct with undying life. That the one America may pass, and that the other America may more and more take its vacant place; that the nation of incapacity, selfishness and crime may go and the nation founded in faith and in love may come should be one great end of the Church's existence, one great object of its prayers and toils and sufferings, one of the strongest of its many appeals for support to the community in which it is established.



## XXIII

### THE IDEALIST AND THE EPHESIAN BEASTS

“If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.”

1 Cor. xv, 32.

IN this chapter Paul is reasoning in behalf of the immortality of man. His major premise is that the man Jesus survived death and after death made Himself known as a living being to his disciples. His conclusion from this grand premise is that all men because they are men survive death; the survival of the one Perfect Man being the assurance of the survival of the race of which He is the great representative. As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.

The words of the text are an interruption of the main argument. The apostle has been seeking the assurance of immortality in the typical life outside the great current of human experience; he has been resting the universal hope upon a mighty exceptional instance. He now descends into the depths of the tragic conflict of man, his conflict with the wild passions of his heart, in behalf of the Christian ideal of personal and so-

cial worth. The vision of this conflict checks for a moment the march of his reasoning, draws his eyes closer to the struggle of the Christian idealist, compels the apostle to declare, in a metaphor that is a beacon-light flash in the darkness and wildness of the storm, the tremendous issues working in the tragic courses of human contention for high ends. "If after the manner of men I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit me? If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

Here in the main argument and in the episode are two distinct visions of life. There is the vision of the destiny of Jesus, the perfect human life, the vision, too, of the life that completes itself in the fellowship of the Lord. There is the second vision, the vision of life unmade and in the tremendous process of making. These two distinct views of life attach themselves in a different manner to the faith in the hereafter.

For the favored existence immortality is but the extension beyond death of what is present here and now. To the fortunate person to-day immortality often seems an addition to this earthly life rather than something inseparable from its character and meaning. Such persons ripen toward that world as the happiness of this world exhausts itself. In a sweetly sensuous way they are apt to sing with Spenser, —

“Sleepe after toyle, port after stormy seas,  
Peace after warre, death after life, does greatly please.”

The vision of life unmade and in the fiery process of making is another thing. Here we approach God, we approach Christ, we approach hope, not from without but from within. Our God is our light and our salvation on the black field of our battle for righteous manhood; our Christ is within, and the hope of glory lives in the pulse-beats of our fighting heart. As the bright moon rises and rides over the tides of the stormy sea, their calm sovereign, so over “this maddening maze of things” in human life, while “toss’d by storm and flood,” there appears as the supreme ruler of it the splendid image of the infinite worth of man’s soul.

Two distinct types of human experience emerge here to which I beg your attention for a moment: the highly favored type and the tragic type. These two experiences are often included as contrasts in the history of the same person. There is Paul in Arabia. He is there with his new life in an environment of peace; he is there with his Christian ideal in the sunshine of happy solitude, with all the forces of his Christian soul playing freely into the perfect sympathy of the time and the place. Here the great tranquil soul of the apostle was matched with the great tranquil environment. Those three years in Arabia

were an idyllic experience, an idyllic memory forever. They were rich with the maturing love, the deepening insight, the unhindered growth of a great mind and a great character.

If Paul had spoken, at this time, of the future life, he would surely have been influenced by his happy experience. The future world would have seemed the fair and mighty shadow of his life in Arabia. His happy Christian dreams would have reflected themselves in august forms in the mirror of eternity. The hope of future existence would have sprung out of the heart of his happiness; it would have fed itself on God's present care of his servant's favored existence. In harmony within and in harmony with the world beyond him, how could he doubt that in this favoring universe he and his fellow-disciples would forever go on?

Utterly without influence such a hope would have been to men in the welter of the stormy world. They are torn within and at war without; in their experience sin and the sense of righteousness, shame and honor, light and darkness, joy and bitterness are blended in a terrible compound, and the hope that is the complement of the untroubled soul is not for them. Their cry is, "In the dust I write my heart's deep languor and my soul's sad tears." The bright cloudless day may look forward to the serene starlit night; but

what are we to say of the day that has been one of tempest?

In the experience of Paul, Arabia was transformed into Ephesus. He was to fight with the passions in his own fiery heart, he was to contend with the passions of other men; his fight was to be like the struggle of men with beasts in the amphitheatre. If the fight was to be in any sense a victory, it must be a fight with courage and to the end. In such an arena Paul's fighting arm was gaining force, his battling soul was increasing its worth.

Suppose Paul to think of life after death under these conditions. What is his mood now, what is the ground of his hope? His mood is that the fight with evil in himself and in his fellow-men is exhilarating, because worth is won in the fight. Moral worth becomes the object, the great alluring object of his campaign against sin, moral worth for his own spirit, moral worth for all men, the kingdom of moral worth established in the heart of the Roman Empire. For this infinite good he will fight and suffer to the end; for it he will live till the fighting arm is paralyzed in death.

Here let us suppose that he raises the question, Does death end 'all? It cannot be, he answers. That would mean that honor is not of infinite worth, that righteousness is not a universal and endless value, that love is not of eternal

consequence to the Eternal God. It cannot be that death ends all, because if that were true we should have nothing of infinite moment to fight for; all our high passion and contention for moral worth would be vain. In that case the universe would be against us, our kingdom of the ideal would be a kingdom of delusion, our warfare for the city of God would be rewarded with scorn. The stars in their courses would mock our estimates of worth, our causes, our heroism, and our hope. If the universe refuses to support us when we are struggling at our own cost for the highest, we conclude that our struggle is foolishness. Thus out of the heart of the tragedy of existence, up from the battle-fields of souls as they contend in their sorrow with these passions that are like wild beasts in behalf of the moral meaning of existence, comes the great conviction that man is forever. Paul's confidence in the truth of his faith rests upon the insight that without faith in the endless life his moral world would go to wreck. Our mightiest struggle, —

“What is it all, if we all of us end but in being our own  
corpse coffins at last,  
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence, drown'd in the  
deeps of a meaningless Past?  
What but a murmur of gnats in the gloom, or a moment's  
anger of bees in their hive?  
Peace, let it be! for I loved him and love him forever:  
the dead are not dead but alive!”



The Christian hope of life after death ceases to be a mere lovely dream when we discover its relation to the tragedy of human history. Men begin to listen when we tell them that the one thing worth fighting for is moral integrity. All woes, all fierce fortune, all bitter, untimely bereavements, all the contradictions of this confused world, where friends are mistaken for foes, may be accepted with the true soldier's serene courage while we believe that in the great campaign against wrong moral worth is being won, that the kingdom of moral values is establishing itself in the earth. The war for the Union is an illuminating example. It was a tragedy. Neither side was wholly right, nor wholly wrong ; both sides were partially right and wrong. Through the awful conflict souls went home to God purified by death accepted for what they believed to be right ; souls returned to civic life lifted in honor. Lee in defeat and Grant in victory typify a common defeat and a common victory. When the armies of the North and the South are mustered in the fields of the Eternal, the great issue of the tragic process will be seen to be brave men redeemed by the worth they won in the tragedy of their time.

Here we come upon two different ways of estimating the moral life of human beings. There is the test of achievement ; there is the test of



struggle. In which environment is Paul the greater character, in Arabia or fighting with beasts at Ephesus? It is clear that the ideal character will compass in struggle the perfect achievement. Jesus comes up out of the Jordan to hear as it were the voice of God assuring him, "Thou art my beloved Son." There environment is wrought into the harmony of the infinite sympathy and in full accord with that environment is the soul of Jesus. Later we find Jesus led into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil. He is there alone, and again, like his apostle, he was with the wild beasts. Only after his victory was won did the angels come and minister to him. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet was he without sin. The environment was wrought into diabolic antipathy, and yet the soul of the Lord remained in its integrity. Which is the greater Master, Jesus in his integrity in the environment of absolute sympathy or Jesus in his integrity in the environment of uttermost antipathy? In each instance the integrity is perfect, but in the one environment Jesus is supported, while in the other he is assailed; and Jesus righteous under assault is greater than Jesus righteous unassailed. The achievement is heightened out of the heart of the difficulty that has been overcome. Even in Jesus, who alone unites the perfect endeavor and the perfect achievement, we see that

the test of achievement by itself is insufficient ; we must measure achievement against the sympathy or the hostility of the environment in order to attain a just judgment upon character.

Daniel Webster, after his seventh of March speech in 1850, divided the opinion of the North ; especially did he divide the opinion of Massachusetts. Emerson and Whittier, who had hitherto followed him in admiration, revolted in hatred and disgust. Whittier wrote his "Ichabod," and Emerson lost no chance to scale down the dimensions of his former hero, to expose his weaknesses, to assail his character. The method of judgment and warfare is illuminating. Two men of great elevation of spirit and purity of life combine in an attack upon one who was fighting with beasts at Ephesus. Their test of moral greatness was achievement ; they took no note of the environment that made the ideal achievement which they demanded of Webster impossible. Their judgment was essentially unjust ; it has been set aside by another generation of judges.

Emerson and Whittier lived high and serene lives in a sheltered environment. They served their generation as the battleship anchored in the harbor for the training of naval cadets serves compared with the battleship on the high seas in the thunder of war. Whittier and Emerson are much cleaner and finer than Webster ; but are

they on that account morally greater than he? If they had gone where he went, if they had met what he met, suffered what he suffered, and achieved what he achieved, would they have appeared as little broken, as heroic as he?

The saint is usually a product of the sympathetic environment. We are thankful for his achievement, but we must deduct something from it because of favoring circumstances. Whittier repented of "Ichabod"; he substituted, "The Lost Occasion," and elsewhere he adds his sanction to the distinction I am now making: —

"I who hear with secret shame  
Praise that paineth more than blame,  
Rich alone in favors lent,  
Virtuous by accident,  
Doubtful where I fain would rest,  
Frailest where I seem the best,  
Only strong for lack of test."

Take into account noble inheritance, wise and impressive early training, the sheltered and sympathetic environment, and then judge under what obligations the great character stands. We thank God for him, but we do not forget the words of Jesus, "To whom much is given, of him much will be required."

Consider the value of the struggle among the Ephesian beasts. There is the struggle for honor where it is a hindrance to success; for purity where it does not count in the pursuit of the

goal ; for truth where lying is regarded as part of the game ; for elevation of mind where meanness is no handicap ; for unselfishness where brutality is justified ; for pity where pity is mocked ; for Christ where Christ is crucified afresh ; for God where his name is heard only in blasphemy. Measure the distance made where the way is a *via mala*, a *via dolorosa* ; where the path is through treachery, brutality, outrage, and shame. Estimate the day's run of your ship against wind and wave and tide ; take into account the tragic forces in life. Consider the number, intensity, and malignity of the powers that oppose character, and then note the moral grandeur of the struggle even when it is little more than an unavailing protest against the sovereignty of the beast. The battleship Oregon excited the admiration of the world by its splendid voyage round Cape Horn, through the vast Pacific to Manila and back again in time to arrest the flying fleet of Cervera with the thunder of its guns. Consider the ship in which Magellan made the same voyage. How much longer he took, how much less certain his progress, and he went only one way. Yes. But think of his poor boat, his mean equipment, his uncharted course, his starving crew, his untold sufferings, his audacious daring. When achievements are scaled down and up, according as environments are sympathetic or

hostile, the voyage of the Oregon is hardly a circumstance compared with the mighty victorious circumnavigation of the globe by Magellan. He

“was the first that ever burst  
Into that silent sea.”

Take the world as it is, take human beings in this world as they are, and you will find, I think, an infinite value. Conscience is alive even when incompetent; protest against sin goes on when unavailing; struggle to be level with some moral standard exists in the great heart of mankind; regret and longing die out only in the souls of the few. In the thoroughfares of trade, in the grinding toil and poverty of the world, in the tragedies of lust and greed and cruelty and death, in the vast tides of contradiction and woe that sweep over the populations of the earth, you find struggle after one standard or another, endeavor to keep within sight of this ideal and that, prayers often wrought into sobs that existence may not come altogether to dust and ashes. Listen to the “still sad music of humanity”; there is protest in it, struggle, pathos, longing, hope, and often desperate denial of the sovereignty of the beast whose fang is near the centre of life. Think of God as He surveys his world, and how this mood of protest and struggle appears to Him. Is not this one great aspect of the moral world

of man? Is not this one mighty assurance that man, while of the earth earthy, is also the child of Eternity? Can we not hear the great faith coming up from the depths, "as we have borne the image of the earthy we shall also bear the image of the heavenly"? Can we not say of our ideas of the worth of man what Emerson wrote of our chief spiritual possessions? —

"Out from the heart of nature rolled  
The burdens of the Bible old ;  
The litanies of nations came  
With the volcano's tongue of flame ;  
Up from the burning core below, —  
The canticles of love and woe."

Not alone from the saint in his cell and in his rapt devotion, but also from the countless multitudes of lives stained with the mud and battered with the storms of this wild world comes the amazing witness to the worth of the human soul. Indeed, our faith in the hereafter is always surer when it is seen to rest not only upon the testimony of exceptional lives in exceptional circumstances, but also when it is uttered in the vast, confused, and desperate struggle of the multitudes that are caught in the tragedy of the world.

I recall a night spent at the foot of Mount Carmel on the shore of the Mediterranean. At midnight I was awakened by the thunder of the sea upon the sand. It seemed to me as if the whole

two thousand miles of the Mediterranean were breaking in tremendous billows upon the beach. Next morning when I arose the sea was still. As I walked along the shore I noticed the sand white and fine, the pebbles smooth and beautiful. The sand and the pebbles had won their character not alone from that storm, but from countless other storms. Then I understood what the psalmist meant when he cried, "All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." Perhaps he had listened to the mighty forerunners of the storm to which I had listened; perhaps in the sand and the stones, refined and polished under the pounding and grinding of the terrible sea, he beheld an image of the wild tragic tides of the world and their power to create values for eternity even when they seem to overwhelm and crush the souls of men.

This world is not an organism for torture, but for the manufacture of character; for the production of the instincts, capacities, and longings out of which great character comes. The agony is there; it is there in contradiction, heartbreak, blackness of darkness, death; but the issue is the morning, the calm light, the still sea, and the purified heart of man. Who are these and whence came they? These are they that came out of the great tribulation; they were made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light by the



tragic beauty of the world. Widen your vision of this enterprise of the Holy Ghost till you include all peoples, all ages, all types of human experience; till the race of man in historic and prehistoric time is within the compass of your intelligence. The earth will then seem to you God's great gymnasium for the creation of moral capacities and values in the souls of men; and eternity will stand forth as another, similar, grander process working for the same end. Bliss and woe are here; bliss and woe are beyond, the indispensable servants of enlightenment and worth. Open your heart to-day to some of the things that are going on under God's government every moment; pain and sorrow issue in death in one unending process: —

“The souls did from their bodies fly, —  
They fled to bliss or woe;  
And every soul it passed me by,  
Like the whizz of my crossbow.”

This is what you hear, and on a scale too vast for words. What shall we do with it? Turn it into a guide down into the depths; convert it into eyes wherewith we may see and understand something of the dark and terrible process that issues in moral worth, in the capacity for moral worth. This is the world as tragedy; this tragedy creates values in souls for time and for eternity.

In the Apostles' Creed we read of Jesus, “He

descended into hell," *descendit ad inferno*; no words could more fittingly symbolize the comprehensiveness of the Lord's understanding heart. While on the earth He descended into the darkest human lives till He came to the light that is older than darkness. The tragedy in the lives of publicans and harlots was woe to Him, but it was a woe under the sovereignty of his Father. He beheld the rich young ruler who had kept all the commandments from his youth, and He loved him; He said with a profounder accent of sympathy to a penitent woman, "Go into peace." Jesus looked upon a world in wreck, and aside from complaisant hypocrites He turned eyes of pity and hope upon every sort of sinful man and woman. In the depths of sin He saw the suffering and the ineffectual struggle to be free. His soul read the divine in man's world as that world lay in wickedness; He entertained the vision of man's infinite worth to God, as that vision came up from the abysses of abused love and contradicted hope; and that insight drawn from the midnight of the life of our kind He glorifies in the message that He brings straight from his Father; that insight He sanctions by his sublime life; that insight He attests by his victory over death.

## XXIV

### PERSONALITY AND THE IDEAL GRACE

“That as Peter came by, at the least his shadow might overshadow some one of them.

Acts v, 15.

KNOWLEDGE, power, personality ; these are the deepest sources of man's influence over man. Ideas count for much, true ideas ; power — that is, ideas filled with vitality and purpose — counts for more ; personality, the central and often unconscious reality of the spirit, counts most in the influence of noble human beings upon one another. We thank the man who gives us the light of thought, but we are not satisfied with this gift. We are grateful to the leader who puts his character into his teaching and yet we cry out for something more. We rejoice in the teacher and inspirer whose soul, through the whole atmosphere and silence of life, wields a heavenly influence upon our souls. We look at some great planet shining out of the deepening dusk of evening ; we behold there light, power, beauty ; we consider some great prophet of the Christian faith, and we find in him ideas, ideas in action, and beyond them the beauty of a tender and lofty soul.

Such a soul was Peter. We seek in vain either in his teaching or in his character for the source of his best influence. He had rich sympathies; he was endowed with the attractive grace of the humanities; there was within him a soul of honor and of tenderness that moved men and helped them. They longed to be where he was; to forget themselves in the play of his personality; to feel upon them the healing shadow of his soul.

1. Here I think we have the revelation of a law in the life of man, in the character of Christ, in the nature of God; the last and finest thing in the disciple, in the Master, and in our Father in heaven is the ideal grace.

For this ideal grace we look in our heroes. France has recently given a national illustration of this contention. Napoleon has lost the supreme place in the imagination of Frenchmen; a scientist who lived to heal human diseases and mitigate human woes took the warrior's vacant throne. There is intellect in Napoleon, there is power in him; but there is no grace of spirit. We read our national history by this sovereign instinct. Alexander Hamilton was a greater intellect than Abraham Lincoln; Daniel Webster was a mightier intelligence. In both these statesmen there is more light and more might than in Lincoln; but they lack the crowning grace, the ideal spirit. We compare Martin Luther and John

Calvin. Calvin is the greater scholar, the greater thinker ; Luther is something higher than the scholar, something finer than the thinker ; he is a vast, heroic, tender, and loving human being. Plato tells us that this was the final charm of his master. Other men might be compared with Socrates as a speaker, as a teacher ; in many other characteristics parallels to him might be found among his contemporaries and among the men in earlier ages ; but in one respect he was unique ; in his total personality he was absolutely unlike any other Greek that ever lived.

When we look at the record of the mind and character and spirit of Jesus in the Gospels, we recognize this law of gradation of which I am speaking. When we have risen to the level where mind is measured not by the number of its words, nor by the elaboration of its thoughts, but by the originality, the depth and the truth of its insights, we acknowledge at once the supremacy of the mind of Christ. Still we see in Him something higher than intellect ; we note in Him power. He moved his age ; He moved Europe in the age following his own ; He has moved the world ; He is moving it to-day as He has never done in any previous time. But power is not the final analysis of the Master ; character, that is, the idea, vital and true in action, does not wholly account for Him. There is a benignity of soul, a magnanim-

ity of heart, an ideal grace of spirit that is his ultimate influence. It was not on account of his mind that distracted mothers came to Him on behalf of their children ; it was not because of the strength and authority of his character that the wretched and sinful sought Him ; it was because of the integrity and the beauty of his soul. The shadow of his heart is the sanctuary of history.

From the highest in Christ we look upon the highest in our faith about God. He knows all things ; He can do all things ; but omniscience and omnipotence do not express the highest in the Christian idea of God. He is our Father in heaven ; he is the Eternal Lover of men ; He is the perfect soul, the infinite ideal tenderness and compassion. " Like as a father pitieth his children so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. He remembereth that we are dust." So the Old Testament speaks. In the New Testament He is the God of all comfort, the Father of all mercies, the Father of lights from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift, who is without variable-ness or the shadow which is cast by turning ; He is the Father who makes his sun shine on the evil and the good and his rain fall on the just and the unjust ; He is the Father in the great parable who goes out to meet his lost son, who

will not allow the poor boy in the bitterness of shame to complete his confession, who overwhelms him with an unbounded and joyous welcome. The God and Father of Jesus Christ is our God; and in Him the sovereign reality is infinite ideal grace. This is what we mean by the secret place of the Most High, by the Shadow of the Almighty.

2. This quality that is highest in the heroes of the race, that is supreme in our Lord, that is sovereign in God, more than any other admits of universality. Great intellect is confined to a few; transcendent energy cannot become the possession of the many; but truth and beauty of soul are open to all. Nothing is needed for this result but good will, good will under all circumstances, good will from the beginning of existence to its close. The endowment of humanity, kindness, sympathy, generous feeling, divine regard, is the original equipment of all except degenerates. This endowment does not remain in its pure estate unless guarded; it does not grow without care; it is in a multitude of cases swiftly debased by the wicked custom of the world.

One of the tragic things in the world's history is the loss in children of worth and tenderness of heart. The old cunning fox of the social order into which the children come takes them into his school. He equips them with indifference, vanity, smart cruelty of speech, selfishness, hard-



ness of heart, instead of the royal attributes with which their Maker endowed them, — sensitiveness, delicacy, honor, wonderful sympathy. When the social fox gets done with our boys and girls, only the capacity is left for the recovery of the original endowment.

Another aspect of the tragedy of life is seen in the bereavements of youth. Youth and the birth of ideality are terms that mean about the same thing. There is in the soul of every normal young man the image of a knight; there is in the heart of every sound young woman the reflection of ideal grace. Glorious as sunrise are these dawnings of the ideal in the hearts of young men and young women; these young souls thus visited by the day-spring from on high are in the kingdom of God. They have been carried thither on the tides of divine instinct. What may the world not expect from the coming generation thus dowered? Alas! You are looking at the orchard in May; you are enchanted with the beauty of the blossoms; you forget that you behold promise and not fulfillment. Look again after the untimely frost has passed its icy hand over those trees. No harvest can now come from those blasted limbs; you wait in hope and in fear for the experiment of another generation.

So it is with our youth. They neglect the gift of God within them; they expose to the un-

friendly world the tender wealth of their nature ; they take no thought for the preservation of that interior beauty which is the soul of their existence ; and instead of an army of radiant young men and women we see those, who should be victorious soldiers of the ideal, marching in the faded and tattered uniforms of the forlorn regiments that have gone before them on the dusty way to defeat.

The horror of a disease like smallpox is that it not only puts life in peril, but destroys forever the fresh and fair complexion of youth. Nothing can recover that loss ; and this conviction strengthens our determination to fight in every way the terrible plague. Nothing can bring back the May morning of the soul, the tender beauty of early feeling, the freshness of the earnest and unstained heart ; when that is lost, it is lost forever. The sacrifice through frivolousness, worldliness, self-indulgence, careless and unconscientious living, of the bloom of the spirit in youth is a wanton sacrifice ; it should not be. Look at the street-lamp in the summer evening ; look at the ground about it white with dead moths ; look at a thousand other moths heedless of the dead flying fiercely to the same fate. When will youth awake to its greatness ? when will it seek light where the light is not fatal fire ; when will it reverence its higher nature and secure for itself and the world the ideal grace of the soul ?

This mournful sacrifice in no way alters the fact that the grace of the spirit is the universal possibility. When Jesus took possession of the lives of his apostles, even he could not make all of them great men. Peter, James, and John are the only significant names among the twelve; Paul is the only great addition to these three. What of the others? They became exalted human beings and beat the music of the Lord into ten thousand hearts by the honor and the kindness of their spirit. When Christianity takes possession of any community to-day, this is the result. The great broad phenomenon is the universal exaltation of spirit. Men and women have become new in the fineness and worth of their nature. This is the great argument for religion; it is the grace that purifies, exalts, and consecrates to the Highest the life of man. When the genuine revival comes, it manifests its influence in this way; it issues in a nobler type of thinking and feeling, in a higher sense of honor, in a deeper reverence, in a steadier conscientiousness, in a richer and finer soul. God has his special gifts for men of genius as He has for the great mountains; and as the great mountains gather out of heaven upon themselves cloud and storm and send them down in torrent and stream to make and to swell the rivers that carry the grace of the heights through the land, so men of genius gain from the

Infinite insights, inspirations, comforts, and refreshings that go forth to all the world. Again, our Maker bestows the universal gifts, as the broad landscape lies open to the summer sun and the summer shower, as this visitation from above is immediate and universal, so upon the souls of all men everywhere the Eternal Spirit descends in the power that creates the great human capacity for truth and sympathy. To speak the truth and to speak it in love is the vocation of man ; to deal justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with God is within the capacity of every human being ; to survey life with sympathy, to judge men considerately, to act faithfully, to serve gladly, to take one's share in sacrifice cheerfully, to live one's life with earnestness, tenderness, and hope, is the universal possibility. In the great oratorio of the "Messiah," which is the mightier, the solo or the chorus ? The solo is mighty, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God ; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins." The solo is mighty, but how much mightier is the chorus, "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and he shall reign forever and ever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords." As the solo is to the chorus, so is the special gift of genius to the universal

human capacity. The whole human being, the entire community of human beings in the exercise of the universal gift, is the greatest thing in the world.

3. As the grace of the spirit is the widest capacity, so is it the largest need. Great intellect and great authority are instrumental; we need men of genius and men of unique character for the service of the people; the exaltation of the life of the common people is the sovereign end. How great we should be as a nation if justice were universal, if kindness were supreme in every heart within our borders, if high purpose upheld every will, if reverence dwelt in every soul, if sympathy went forth like sunbeams from every life. How many cry out because there exists no justice, no consideration for them; how many are miserable because they are compelled to live in an atmosphere of unkindness; how many are weak because they are surrounded by a multitude of wayward wills that know nothing of moral purpose; how many are cheap because the awe that lofty companions inspire never visits them; how many find their pilgrimage to be in the Valley of Weeping because the sunlight of a great sympathy never greets and cheers them.

The common virtues are sadly uncommon. The race of men would pass, like the planet at sunrise, from night to day, if only men would be

humane to one another. "Man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn." The cry is not for the greatness in intellect or in character that is impossible to all except the few; it is for the exercise of the universal capacity. Give us truth without lies; give us honesty without scorn; give us even-handed justice, generous-hearted kindness; exalt us with reverence; shame us with mercy; delight us with honor; greaten our vitality with sympathy; show us the way of the Lord who went about doing good, to whom it was more blessed to give than to receive, who, although He was rich, for our sakes became poor that we through his poverty might become rich.

When you hear the statement that God became incarnate in Jesus Christ, you listen as to something that concerns theologians and learned men, to something that does not concern you. State the central fact of your faith in all simplicity and then judge. What does the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ mean? It means that the mind of God was sovereign in the mind of Jesus, the heart of God regnant in the heart of Jesus, the spirit of God all-controlling in the soul of the Lord. There is the unique presence and domination of God in Christ; but this unique dominance becomes the universal call and privilege. The kingdom of God is for all; the kingdom of God is within you; the kingdom of God is his control



of man in the totality of his being. "I am the light of the world," the Master says, speaking of Himself; "Ye are the light of the world," the same Master says, speaking to his disciples.

The common physical needs, how simple they are and how great, the need of air and sunshine and food and clothing and home. These are the primary necessities, and how abundant and precious the supply. The infinite air, the boundless sunshine, the seed-time and harvest that do not fail, the clothing, the shelter and the comfort of home, how they carry in their hands the universal response to the universal need. The common spiritual needs, how few they are and how easily they might be provided. The atmosphere of friendship, the sunshine of kindness, the habit of reverence, the word of God from a brother's heart without which man cannot live, the protection of honor, the inspiration of justice, the comfort of a noble compassion; these are notes of the immortal hunger of our nature, and to these necessities every man is so made that he may be a great minister. The violin is one of the simplest of musical instruments and one of the widest in scope; it is a keen disappointment when you look upon a violin with no music in it. It is a bitter disappointment that so many human souls, so many disciples of Christ, have no melody, no solace in them for the universal heart.



One of our number has been suddenly taken from us who was never without this gift and who lived his rarely beautiful life in the constant exercise of it.<sup>1</sup> He was not slothful in business; he was also fervent in spirit. He took up his share of the burden of giving laid down by his honored father, and he bore it with steadfast step and the sense of privilege to the end. He carried in all the instincts and forces of his nature the humanity of business, the obligation of wealth, the spirit of service, the refinements of the Christian heart, and notwithstanding his reserve the genius of friendship, and in spite of his humility, the sense of the Eternal. His death in his prime is a calamity not only to his family but also to this church of his fathers, to the entire community, and to all the causes that good men carry in their heart. To those who knew him even at a distance and but slightly, he embodied signal refinement and evident honor; to those who knew him intimately and who saw him in one after another of the finer and more serious experiences of his life, the image that alone is adequate for the expression of their admiration and love is given in the words spoken of Stephen as he stood before the Council, — they “saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”

He has joined the great company of pure

<sup>1</sup> Wolcott Howe Johnson.

spirits that have gone to God from this church. Our first feeling is of loss and the paralysis that comes with it; our second feeling is that we have not lost them; their character is part of our strength; their presence with us is one of the certainties of our faith and we address them in gratitude and hope, —

Ye, like angels, appear  
Radiant with ardor divine!  
Ye alight in our van; at your voice  
Panic, despair, flee away.  
Ye move through the ranks, recall  
The stragglers, refresh the outworn,  
Praise, reinspire the brave!  
Order, courage, return.  
Eyes rekindling, and prayers,  
Follow your steps as you go.  
Ye fill up the gaps in our files,  
Strengthen the wavering line,  
Stablish, continue our march,  
On, to the bound of the waste,  
On, to the city of God.

## XXV

### THE REDEMPTIVE IDEAL

“And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.”

Matt. ix, 10.

THE perfect religion, according to a great German poet, must blend in its spirit three reverences: there must be reverence for what is above the worshiper, there must be reverence for what is on the moral level of the worshiper, and there must be reverence for what is beneath him. This great insight goes to the very heart of religion, and it is verified abundantly and beautifully by our Christian faith. We look up to the Lord Jesus, to the untraveled heights of his moral greatness; we look up to the God and Father of Jesus, to his infinite compassion, to his eternal love; we look round us upon the men and women occupying the same moral level with ourselves and we revere the great human nature that we wear; we look beneath us into the regions of sin, shame, and woe, and we note there, with awe, the possibility of climbing from the lowest depths to the utmost heights, and in that amazing possibility we behold the presence of God. Christianity unveils to us the heights: it reveals to us the

great tableland where normal men and women live; it uncovers the depths, and in each way it brings us a new and tremendous sense of God.

The redemptive ideal is the last and the most beautiful motive in the Gospel of Jesus. In a true sense we have all gone astray from the right way and we need to be recovered. This ideal of recovery of the lost is set forth by our Lord with the utmost tenderness, the utmost beauty and power, in his three parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the lost son. The sheep is not in the fold, it is in a strange environment, it is exposed to fatal danger, it must be sought till it is found and brought back; the coin is not out of existence, but it is lost to the uses of the household and the house must be swept diligently till that piece of money is found and once more put to the high uses of family life; the son is in the far country away from the true sphere of his being, and the father, with his great passion of fatherly love, must wait and must believe that his fatherly heart and home have power over the filial soul of the lost boy to bring him to himself and to bring him back. There is nothing in the teaching of the world comparable to that. Here is a purpose that admits of no eternal waste in the universe, a programme that sees no impossibilities before it, that seeks to reconcile the impure with the pure, a

humanity damaged in the tragic processes of sin with the perfect character of God.

What an amazing hold the redemptive ideal of Christianity has taken upon the world. What moral hope it has created in the heart of multitudes of men who had long abandoned all expectation of good for themselves. Not only has it created hope among outcasts; it has sustained men face to face with their highest ideals. For what saith the idealist when he is genuine? "Woe is me, for I am undone; I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and mine eyes have seen God the Lord of Hosts." Let any man have that vision and read his life in the light of it, and we shall find that the first note in his experience is despair. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord"; that is the cry of another despairing idealist. It is the shallowness of the world that accounts for the absence in it of the sense of sin; it is man's moral triviality that makes him content with his goodness.

We have in the text a simple, natural and an impressive presentation of the influence of the redemptive ideal of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus gives a banquet and invites publicans and sinners to eat with Him. Let us see if we can discern the influence at work here and the two chief spheres of experience in which it moves. ,

1. We find here the great principle of the possibility of fellowship between the holy and the sinful. Look at that table ; look at the host and his guests. Could there be a greater contrast between men than there is between the soul of the Lord and the souls of those publicans and sinners? Yet there is genuine fellowship between them. For a few great hours they are living in the Lord's thought of them, they are rejoicing in his divine regard for them ; they are oblivious of the insignificance of their careers because of his purpose concerning them. When the festivities are over and they go away, they are still haunted by his thought, pursued by his love, held by his purpose ; they are in fellowship with Him and they can never be again the men they have been.

We find analogies to all this in our own lives. A great and noble father tries to get his boy to live in his fatherly thought and love and purpose for his son. Doubt not that if this is your character as a parent, these thoughts and affections and purposes influence your children more than they dare confess to you, more than they know themselves, and when you have done your work and gone your way, your thought for them will be part of the saving grace of their lives.

Why is it that we honor a great teacher as we do? He teaches grammar, rhetoric, mathe-

matics, science, and philosophy. Is that all? That is the least part of it. He has a great thought concerning the lives in his care, he has a great and noble mind for them and he calls them up into it; and when they look back across the years to his influence over them, they say, "This was what he did for us; he gave us concerning ourselves his outlook upon life, his interpretation of man's being, and man's universe."

What does Christian faith mean for the youngest and the oldest but the act of climbing up into the thought and love and purpose of the Lord toward man? This act brings us to abandon our own poor thought, our barren affection, our feeble purpose; it leads us to take our existence through Christ and in fellowship with Him. It is misery for your boy or girl to be alone; it is death for that boy or girl to contract an evil fellowship; it is redemptive grace to enter fellowship after fellowship that ends in fellowship with the Lord.

2. Observe that this principle of fellowship works through the festive side of life. As a teacher of religion, as a preacher of the Gospel, I have observed with sorrow that while men are ready to come to God for peace when they are troubled, to seek the vision of the spiritual world when the present is going to wreck, to be anxious for consolation when they are smitten with be-



reavement, to cry out for God when existence moves into gloom, they are apt to think they can get on without God in the festive side of life. That is one of the gravest of all human errors. We must bring health, gladness, love, marriage, parenthood, childhood, all the cheerful ways of men, all the mirth, all the festivity, all high achievement, all life's power and glory, into the presence of the Lord to be exalted, chastened, transfigured in his light. It is hardly fair to take the festive side of life for selfish ends, and to come meanly to God for help to bear the other side. Besides, think what we miss in this way. The Gospel is the great transfigurer and perfecter of joy; do not doubt it. It is the great redemptive influence for the brightness of life. Your picture is not complete, though painted by a Raphael or a Rembrandt, till the light glorifies it and gives it spirit. Eating and drinking and talk with one's friends, mirth, and the whole joyous side of existence divorced from the fellowship of Jesus, are infinitely beneath what they may be. All the beauty of the human world is consummated in the beauty of the Lord our God.

One of the great problems of young people who are serious, who count themselves Christians, concerns the question what amusements to accept and what to reject, what to see and what to refuse to see, what books to read and what not to

read. You may read anything, you may see anything in all the world though it were black as hell, if your purpose in so doing can be approved by the Lord Jesus. A true disciple of the Lord will submit to no experience in which he cannot invite as his guest the Master of the Christian world. Do not dream that you are thus invoking the spirit of gloom; you are inviting the Judge of joy, the true Critic of gladness, the Perfecter of the mirth of the world.

I love to think of that banquet given by the Lord, and his guests, those publicans and sinners eating and drinking and talking together, and the spirit of the Lord controlling and transforming the animalism which was the foundation of their being as it is the foundation of ours; that is the salvation man needs; nothing less, nothing other can be complete. I beg you to seek the presence that hallows your success, your wealth, your power, your friendship, your love, your hope; that hallows the gay and beautiful side of life. Let the festive side of life lie in the sunlight of the Lord's sympathy and honor.

3. Fellowship with the Lord is our hope in the tragedy of life. These guests of Jesus knew the tragedy of existence to unwonted depths; they were publicans and sinners; their hearts held dreadful secrets; their memories were scorpions. The festive side of life rested upon tragedy as the

hemisphere of our earth that lies in the sunshine rests upon the hemisphere in midnight gloom. The burden that crushes men to the earth is the burden of dishonored ideals, extinguished hopes, immolated capacities; the memory of the bartered sanctity of early years, the squandered wealth of youth; the consciousness of broken vows and violated law; the sense that one has been an evil influence in other lives, a desecrator of beauty, in league with death, in covenant with hell. The moral tragedy in the hearts of human beings is vast, wild, fearful. Has any one ever sounded this depth of gloom and woe? Has any soul gone there with sympathy vital enough to create hope in this hell of moral despair? Is not our optimism ignorance, our light-heartedness shallowness, our easy programme of reform the shadow of a trivial conscience, our sure millennium the token that we have never looked into the night of human sin and despair? Were not the patristic and mediæval prophets immeasurably deeper and more serious than we? If they did not see the benignity of God, they saw his moral integrity; if they did not see the capacity of every soul to answer at last the appeal of God, they saw man's damaged humanity, the tragedy of his world. We are swift and sure because we are largely unaware of these ultimate realities, and being unaware we are without in-

fluence. Our fine views are like the play of starlight upon polar ice. We are wanting in depth, in seriousness, in sympathy, in greatness of character, in the influence born of the sense of crisis and tragedy.

The Lord Jesus sounded the whole depth of our humanity and rose beyond its highest height. He was a guest at the wedding; He went to the house of death; He was the friend of rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed children; He was the adoration of idealistic youth; He was the friend of manhood and womanhood under the heat and burden of the day; He surrounded Himself by his sympathy with the victims of inheritance, misfortune, perversity, disease, and evil of every kind; He took them all up into his fellowship and began after that manner the sublime epoch of redemption. It has often been noticed that in many directions Socrates points the way of the Lord. We see Him at a banquet, eating and drinking with his pupils, listening to their talk about love with coarseness and buffoonery in it, with much in it offensive to a Christian mind, with much in it that must have been offensive to him; he listened, eating and drinking with the rest of them. Then he speaks of love; he takes that universal passion and lifts it till it becomes absorbed in the vision and passion of the eternal loveliness. We see Him again in the tragic side

of life, as given in the "Phædo." There he is, face to face with death; with the mistake, the cruelty, the inhumanity of the world, calm, clear, serene; he lifts the tragedy of the world, partly by his reasoning, but far more by his spirit, into hope in the presence of God.

This is a genuine prophecy of what our Lord does, not for a few eminent disciples, but for all human beings who wait upon his ministry. He goes down into the depths and preaches hope to every soul. Do you know what that means? Are there no young men here this morning who can remember times when they went into collapse, not because they were not well and strong, not because they did not have friends, not because the world was not inviting and full of opportunity for them, but simply because they could see no ground of moral hope, no basis for hope of sovereignty over the courses of life? When that hope came, was it not the coming of God? There are no halleluiahs choruses great enough to sound forth the tumult of delight in the soul of the man to whom hope of a redeemed manhood, after the image of Christ, has come.

Does Jesus keep us only in his fellowship? No. The ultimate goal of his thought was the Father. You have the sun and the planets revolving round it; the planets are in fellowship with the great solar luminary upon which they

wait. That is not the whole splendid story. The sun is on a vast, indefinable, mysterious pilgrimage through the infinite depths of space; it is moving onward upon some goal unguessed by the profoundest student of the heavens, and all the planets are on the same pilgrimage, carried forever onward upon that same undefined, undreamt-of end. Thus the disciples of Jesus keep Him company; onward and onward still they fare with Him in his pilgrimage to the God and Father of all. To his disciples Jesus said, "Lo I am with you alway"; here in his presence is the redemptive ideal might. Jesus said to the penitent thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise"; here again is the redemptive grace of his presence. His pilgrimage covers time and eternity, this world and all worlds; when we join Him in this pilgrimage we are on the way to the eternal beatitude, we are moving to our home in God.

## XXVI

### THE IDEAL AND THE FACT

“ And while Peter thought on the vision the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee.”

Acts x, 19.

ACCORDING to the Bible the actual world is the field of the ideal. In reference to the Old Testament this faith is set forth in these striking words: “ See that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.” The ideal is to the actual as the design of the architect is to the mass of material to be raised into the great building. In the New Testament we at once recall our Lord’s parable, “ The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened.” The ideal is the spirit that penetrates, exalts, and turns to new utility and beauty the bare material of the actual world. And here, in the text, the vision of Peter is the ideal. The three men seeking him represent the actual, and these two spheres stand to each other as power and opportunity.

In the presence of this great insight and faith our age is often bewildered. It seems sometimes that there is no path from the ideal world to the



actual or back again from the actual world to the ideal. The words of the apostle, "We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out," are often applied to these two spheres of being. They are set apart; they are independent, without communication, like the two divisions in Hades. In one division are assembled the righteous, in the other the wicked; Lazarus is in bliss and Dives is in torment; neither can go to the other because between them there is a great gulf fixed. Thus the ideal often seems the region in which are assembled our deepest insights, our purest desires, our loftiest longings, and our greatest hopes. The actual world is the place where we sin, where we break down, where we suffer, where we are defeated and die; and between these two regions there seems to be an impassable gulf.

This appears to me the profoundest and the most tremendous doubt in the world of men, the utmost blasphemy against life. Compared with this all other skepticism seems superficial. This doubt goes to the heart of everything and is equal to the denial of God, the denial of spirit in the universe, the denial of spirit in man, the denial of all hope here or hereafter.

The doubt of which I have spoken goes on under our eyes. There is Goethe, the greatest of German poets, lyric and dramatic poet in one, a

man of genius, a man of ideal affluence and beauty. The world has taken delight in that side of his character. What about his life? It cannot be told without shame. What is the defense made for it? "Nature in such men must take its way." In that defense you wipe out all moral distinctions, in favor of your hero you abolish the moral world. Here is a business man, charming in his home, tender and beautiful in the whole circle of his domestic relations; there is the ideal side to his character. What is he in trade? A Shylock; look at his face of flint and his eyes of steel; listen to his mockery as the youth of his time stand in his presence and plead for honor in trade. What is his defense? "Business is business." It is to be run on the same principle as the enterprise of the jungle, the sharpest teeth and the strongest claw are the right from which there is no appeal. Consider the politician of a certain type; among his friends he is obliging, he is engaging; hear him speak of his tastes in literature and in art; he appears a cultivated, high-minded gentleman. This is one side. Look at him in the field of politics, doing the dirty work of his party for a generation and growing rich at his job, buying and selling votes, trading in the honor of his country, and coming at last to the conclusion that the Ten Commandments in politics are an iridescent dream. What is the

defense made for him? That political life is a game, that victory is the goal, and every means to that end is fair. Look into religion, and take as our type of the religious rascal in all ages,— Judas; he shares with delight the visions of his Master; he quivers with emotion under his Master's power; he lives with Him in his kingdom, sensitive, responsive; and then he goes and covenants with his Master's enemies to betray Him to them for thirty pieces of silver.

These examples call up a multitude whose lives support the contention that ideals are as impotent in the course of passion as the fisherman's nets are in the path of the incoming tide. That I have called the profoundest, the most tremendous, the deadliest doubt of our time. The ultimate blasphemy of man I take it to be. What have we to say against it?

1. First, that the body is not primary but secondary; the body comes, in its uneasiness, in its distress, through the whole register of its appetite to the mind, reflects its condition in the mind, asks for interpretation of its distress and action thereupon. If the interpretation and action lead to the glutton, to the drunkard, to the sensualist, the body is not to blame, but the interpreter and doer; if the interpretation and action lead to the well-ordered life, the life in honor, in reverence of itself, in reverence of humanity, the body is

not to be praised,— the glory belongs to the mind. It was not a Christian but a student of man's nature who said,—

“ I am the master of my fate,  
I am captain of my soul.”

2. We reply, in the second place, that the body without the consent of the mind never yet did any evil. No man can show you an example where the body, without the consent of the mind, ever ran into excesses of any kind, into gluttony, into intemperance, into licentiousness; the consent of the mind must first be obtained, and the mind is answerable, not the body. “ When sinners entice thee, consent thou not,” is the admonition addressed not to the body but to the mind. The sinner in question may be a perfectly harmless, and indeed a beneficial, propensity, or he may be a fool in the form of a human being; in either case the consent of the mind is essential to the debauch.

3. We answer, in the third place, that there is an immemorial insight into the influence of the mind over the body, deepened and authenticated in a great way by investigations peculiar to our time. All the evils of the body, except those of an organic nature, may be initiated and promoted by an unwise or wicked mind; all the evils of the body, except those of an organic nature, may be greatly mitigated by a wise and a brave mind. The influence of the mind over the

body has shot out with tremendous proportions into the intellect of our time.

4. We reply, in the fourth place, that the good mind or the mind that would be good is supported by the great auxiliary force of the good environment. Who first awoke your love of beauty? The loveliness of the earth and the sky, the great and beautiful words and ways of exalted human beings. Who first awoke your sense of music? The song of the bird, the murmur of the brook, the whisper of the wind among the trees, the anthem of the sea, that magnificent symphony of the sky, the thunderstorm, the glorious chorus of musical genius. Who first awoke your conscience from its slumber? Your heroes who had a vision of human good, who carried that vision of good over the whole domain of the actual and in its name denied passion in themselves and in their fellow-men;—these are they who called forth your conscience and made it alive. Who refined your intelligence, chastened your feeling, invigorated your moral will, called forth and organized all the fighting instincts of your nature in behalf of righteousness? Every good friend you have ever had, every great teacher, every noble book that has come your way, your home, the kingdom of God organized in your community and country. Changed? We are changed one way or another from birth to

death. We come into the world simply possibilities, and we turn out black earth or star-fire according as we consent to the guidance of the evil spirit or the prophet of God. We hurl back, therefore, the deadly doubt which I have mentioned; it is not an air from heaven, it is a blast from hell.

5. Finally, there is the correspondence of the ideal and the actual world presented in the text. Peter's vision is the ideal; the ideal is power; the actual world is opportunity. Peter was a Jew; the Jew was an aristocrat; he had no high use for any one outside of the twelve tribes, and those outside had little use for him. The vision of that sheet, how beautiful was its adjustment to Peter's nature as a Jew; the vision of the four-footed beasts of every description and creeping things and flying fowl. What did it mean? That the heterogeneousness of humanity could be turned into a great brotherhood of souls and laid against the heart of God as its home. That was the vision. And the three men who were waiting were the actual world, the world of opportunity. Peter went with them into the heart of that Gentile world, trembling lest he should defile himself as a Jew and cut himself off from all hope of salvation. When he came into the home of Cornelius and saw what was going on there, he said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons" — what a discovery! The



discovery is chiefly of Peter's midnight state of mind hitherto — "but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness is acceptable to him." Thus Peter's vision ran into the mould of the actual world.

What Peter needed most was enlightenment and breadth. This he got intellectually through the vision; when he carried the vision into action he was truly an enlightened and broadened man and this was the course of his life from that day to the day of his death.

For ourselves, what shall we say? Your ideal is trust in God, and your life is surrounded with perplexities. Be sure your ideal is your power and these perplexities your opportunity. Break through them as a man breaks through a troop and leaps over a wall. Your ideal is your personal honor and you are confronted with terrible temptation; but from the morning of time who ever had such an ideal without being so confronted? Take your ideal and stand by it, resisting unto blood, striving against sin. Your ideal is one of sympathy with your kind; go out into the great world in its agony and bloody sweat and pour your sympathy into its wounds, and you will see how the ideal finds its home in the world as God has made it. The ideal is in truth a prophet of the possibilities of manhood in every emergency of life. A day's work for a day's pay: there is



your ideal and there is your actual, side by side. Goods up to the level of the mutual understanding of the buyer and the seller; there is your ideal in your actual world. The products of the farm, the mine, the factory, and the shop answering to the contract made; again there is your ideal in your actual. Wriggle out of your contract and you are not an honest man; stand by it and you are a triumphant idealist. The world abandoned by the ideal is the world delivered over to Satan and his followers; it is the Devil's world and not man's.

So long as we keep these two spheres, the one as servant and the other as master; so long as we toil at that problem, the universe is on our side. There is only one way out of the labyrinth; follow the clue and you will emerge; refuse to follow the clue and you never can emerge. Life is a labyrinth, and the only way that leads out of it is the shining moral ideal. "Deal justly, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God," — that is one form of the clue; "seek first God's kingdom and righteousness," — that is another form; "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus," who had a sense of his sonhood to God and became the supreme servant of man. That is still another form of the great Christian clue to the labyrinth of life.

On the whole, and in the long run, the actual

world is conformed to the service of the ideal. There is the river Rhone, one of the most fascinating rivers of Europe. It rises in the Rhone Glacier, nearly six thousand feet above the sea-level, forges its way downward, through one difficulty after another ; flows onward with the Bernese Alps on the north and the Lepontine and Pennine Alps on the south ; loses itself for forty-five miles in the great Lake of Geneva, emerges with greater might, sweeps round the southern spur of the Jura Mountains, winds through the famous city of Lyons, and like one who has gained his freedom it rolls on, silent and triumphant to its goal in the Mediterranean.

You may talk of the boulders in the path of the stream, the spurs of the mountains that turn it this way and that, the mighty ranges that crowd and determine its course ; you may speak of its submarine life as it shoots through Lake Lemman ; you may dwell on all its windings and turnings and distresses as much as you please, but these are all incidents. From its source to the sea, over all those five hundred and four miles, the earth is in favor of the river ; it cannot be resisted, it cannot be denied its goal.

That is life. It takes its rise in God ; it has the power of that elevation evermore behind it. It meets temptations, sorrows, difficulties, trials, temporary defeats, submarine tragedies on the

way; but from first to last the world, the universe is in favor of the man who is the servant of the kingdom of God. And this is one of the great meanings of Palm Sunday. Jesus had one day of absolute triumph and that one day was the revelation of the structure of the human soul through all time; the channel was laid bare in the light of that triumphant day in which Christ's Gospel was to run, have free course and be glorified. There are few doubts that cause me much trouble; our doubts are, for the most part, incidental to the finiteness of man. There is, however, one doubt that means death to manhood, — that is the denial to the soul of power to carry into life the honor of the Lord Jesus Christ. That is not a mere doubt; it is a lie born of the brutal experience of the world, and every honest man must stand out against it as its sworn, eternal foe because of the interests of his own humanity and the humanity of his kind.

The vision to-day is matched by the three men waiting at the door to show us the path to service. The vision is the ideal; the ideal is the final resistless power. The actual world is opportunity; in opportunity the actual world waits upon and supplicates the ideal for freedom, exaltation, and peace. The ideal and the actual belong together in sacramental union: "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

## XXVII

### THE POSTPONED IDEAL

“ Until the day dawn.”

Pet. i, 19.

THESE words are poetry, and like all great poetry they carry in them a philosophy of man's life and of the wild, infinite universe in which that life is set. They reveal the attitude of a disciple of the Lord Jesus living in the first half of the second century of our era. He had found something great, something inexpressibly precious. It was his duty to hold that treasure fast and his duty was illumined by a great hope. Everything within him, everything about him, was unsatisfactory; the ideal of life and the world was a postponed ideal.

It is worth while for us to look at this postponed ideal through the mood of this ancient disciple of the Lord, and guided by the exquisite poetry of his words.

1. In the first place, this man was living in the twilight of existence. Gloom overhung his entire world. He was able to make out something about the reality of God, the truth and the power of the Lord Jesus in whom he believed, the spirituality of his own human nature, the moral

dignity of his brethren ; he was able to see a little way into the meaning and the necessity of the stern discipline under which he and his fellow-disciples lived and suffered, believed and hoped. But everything was incomplete, the light was nowhere clear and full ; it was confused, it was dim, it was twilight.

Was he not faithful to the spirit of his time ? Consider that for a moment, in order that we may do justice to him. Jesus is no longer living in the world ; long ago He left it. The tradition of his ministry and power is well rendered here and ill rendered there ; nowhere does it wield absolute sway over the intelligence of this man's time. The apostles of Jesus are all dead and gone ; the tradition of their power, well expressed here, ill expressed there, has lost something of its clearness and serenity ; like all other traditions it has become dim. The fellow-disciples of this man are poor enough, often squalid enough ; in their lives they are frequently hardly to be distinguished from the pagans by whom they are surrounded. Woe lies upon this man's world, slavery is in it, cruelty is in it, outrage of man's rights is in it, lust and shame are in it, violence and murder and the universal experience of all time, — sickness, suffering, bereavement, sorrow, death. Doubtless this man feels that God, too, is in the world, but clouds and darkness are

roundabout Him ; his way is in the great waters and his footsteps are not known.

Does not this recall much in the mood of our own time? We are reconsidering the value of the tradition about Jesus ; we are reconsidering the apostolic tradition ; we are reëxamining the entire history of Christian belief from the morning of the resurrection till now ; we are reconsidering the social order, the structure of human life, individual, domestic, and political. Everywhere we are reading the meaning of existence and the meaning of the universe through the dim light in which we are making our pilgrimage through time. We are full of unrest ; we have a world to explore and understand, we are living and working in the twilight.

2. In the second place, this man was living in the twilight before sunrise, not in the twilight after sunset. There is here an infinite difference. Somehow the light was increasing, not decreasing ; the darkness was departing, not rolling in upon him in ever thicker gloom. More and more he saw Jesus living with power in the lives of individual men ; more and more he saw Jesus' power breaking into the social order of the Roman Empire, influencing its political genius and activity ; more and more he saw the Lord getting into the books of the time, becoming the problem of the mightiest intellects of the day ;

more and more he saw his Master getting into man's work, into his home, into his thoughts, into his entire conception of the universe. So this disciple waited in the twilight before sunrise, anticipating the coming apocalypse of God.

Here again it seems to me this man brings out through his mood the best spirit in our own time. Take, for example, the conditions of labor. We often think as we look into them that the world is growing worse and not better. That, however, is a mistake. Consider the conditions of the sailor to-day and one hundred years ago; go into the fiery dens occupied by the stokers in an ocean steamer thirty years back and into the corresponding places occupied by the stokers in a steamer recently launched. Then you see the difference. When the Oregon, then the ocean greyhound, the fastest and finest ship on the Atlantic, went to the bottom of the sea off Long Island about twenty years since, discipline held everywhere except among the stokers. And one who was on board, who saw the region in which they lived, the horrors amid which they worked, said, "You could expect nothing else: only devils can come out of hell!" In Great Britain, when I was a boy, the engineers, plowing through winter cold and storm, had no shelter in the cab of the engine; now they have it everywhere. When the electric cars began to run in Boston,



every motorman was exposed to the severity of the weather ; social opinion has compelled the protection of the motorman. These are simply hints of a universal achievement. The mechanics of to-day have better homes, more comfortable, more sanitary far than the kings of Europe had three hundred years ago. Does this mean that everything is perfect? Far from it; nothing is perfect, nothing is satisfactory, nothing is as it should be ; but progress is clear, the light is increasing, the darkness is going ; we are in the twilight before daybreak.

Consider the field of knowledge. Look at the science of biology, and what it is doing for the protection of human beings against disease. Think of the science of chemistry, and what that science is doing for the protection of human foods and for the increase of the productive power of the earth. Take the science of physics, and look at the physical universe as given us by that science ; consider the surprise, the wonder that the material universe has become under the magic touch of this science. Rise into the human sphere ; look at the great movement for the social betterment of human beings ; it is proceeding from the influence of the brotherhood of man.

Rise higher, into the Christian religion, and see the new grasp of Jesus' kingdom of man, his kingdom of God ; witness the ten thousand agen-

cies that are being used to apply his spirit and the remedies of his Gospel to the moral conditions of the world. Rise to the highest sphere of all, to that increasing consciousness of the Infinite God coming through man's better understanding of man, — individual, domestic, social, political, racial. Nothing is satisfactory anywhere; every science is in its infancy, every form of service waits for new light and life. We are still like Sir Isaac Newton in his comparison of himself to a child picking up a pebble on the shore with the whole undiscovered region of reality symbolized by the mighty sea. Nothing is perfect, everything is imperfect, but we are gaining, light is coming, darkness is going, evil is less, goodness is more, truth is slowly conquering falsehood, man is advancing in his sovereignty over the brute.

3. In the third place, this disciple of the Lord living in the morning twilight was able to recognize his duty even in the dim light and to address himself to that. He saw his fellow-disciples moving about him; he stood in different relations to his kind; he recognized his obligations; and though his knowledge was incomplete, he was able to honor those obligations and do his duty like a man. Read the meaning of your own life, of your brother's life, of the society and the world in which you live; read the meaning of

the mysterious universe in which our human world is set by the light as it shines in your own time ; it may be dim, it may be confused, it certainly is incomplete, but you can see a little, and the little that you see, in God's name, do !

Man is not only a seer, he is a doer. The seer alone is incompetent ; the seer and the doer must unite if life is to be sane and strong. Take your strength at its poor best and turn it into a deed, make your vocation utter your twilight visions. Omniscience is desirable, but it is attainable in no least part of any subject ; it is desirable, but it is not necessary in order that we should do the duty of the hour and day.

When the civil service examinations began to be held, they were rather awkwardly conducted. On one occasion a candidate for an office, a humble office in the custom-house, was asked if he knew how far distant the sun is from the earth. " No, not exactly," he replied, " but I know that it is far enough away not to interfere with me in the performance of my duties in the custom-house ! " The finest surgeon in the world, the ablest navigator, the wisest statesman, the mightiest prophet, each is conscious all the time of the sorest limits to his knowledge ; but each can act, and act well, and when a man has done his best in the given circumstances of his life, he has satisfied the law of God and man.

The best way to wait for the coming of the perfect day is to work at the tasks that are set for us in the twilight. All the sciences are but twilight apprehensions of truth; the complete intellectual appreciation of the universe is a postponed satisfaction. The vision of the world as it stood in the mind of Jesus is as yet unattained; the comprehension of his Gospel is nowhere closed, nowhere adequate. The political condition of the nation is a welter of justice and injustice, strength and weakness. The higher opportunities are given to the overwhelming majority of human beings only through grinding toil and mean pain. The higher mind of the race is less than we need; that higher mind is inaccessible to the multitude. Social reform is only an infant crying in the night, education covers but a meagre part of man's need, his requisite outfit for life. Man's inhumanity to man is everywhere in evidence. There is an altruism exacted of the egoist by the nature of things; voluntary altruism is the possession of the few; it is as rare as sainthood. The moral conflict of the earnest portion of the community is with the baser moods; like Paul they have fought with beasts at Ephesus, unlike Paul they have so far failed of victory and are still fighting. Contentment with the wages of virtue, serenity in the heart of trouble, rest in the Lord amid the wreck of things seen and

temporal, a mind above the world, and able with the Platonic philosopher to view all time and all existence, to consider the earthly life a small affair detached from the eternal, and to look upon death with high disdain or with welcome; ability to join Paul in his triumphant lyric, "All things work together for good to them that love God," are still in the sphere of the ideal; they are not present but prophetic attainments.

The question returns, How shall we wait for the greater life? Again the answer comes, Wait at your work, wait in the full and happy exercise of your present power. Wait for the perfect day as men in the Far North wait for the polar sunrise. What is the appearance upon which they look? There is a faint flush in the east one morning; soon it fades and is gone. This flush is succeeded by another a little stronger and lasting a little longer. Still another flush comes, richer in tone, rising higher, promising more. Thus it goes on for many weeks before the great day is born that is to flood their whole world with perpetual light.

While this process is going forward, what is the attitude of these brave peoples? They stand to the task of life as it appears in the twilight. They are able to recognize one another; they see their work; they find their homes; they are in a community of human beings; in all this they

have their duty, and this they accept and do with courage and gladness. Their courage and gladness are all the more spontaneous because they are living in the twilight before dawn.

Here in parable we have the world of the ancient disciples of Jesus whose words are our text ; here in symbol is our own world. The light is dim, but it is becoming less dim ; the flush is deeper from decade to decade ; it is rising higher, it is spreading wider, it is prophetic of something greater in the coming time. What shall we do in this intensely interesting but sadly incomplete existence ? Work in the light that we have. We know the order of the world ; we see one another ; we can make out our task. We are able to feel God with a greater sureness and to a greater depth ; we are gaining in closeness to the spirit of the Lord ; we can discern something of the meaning of the noble tragedy in which we live. Here is our treasure ; let us hold it fast till the day dawn, the great, splendid, all-illuminating, cloudless day of the Lord.

## XXVIII

### THE IDEAL EVENING

“ Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening.”  
Ps. civ, 23.

IN these words as in a picture the leading features of man's life in this world are presented. While we look upon this picture it is as if we were beholding the life of man represented upon the canvas of some great master. This is the chief service rendered by the highest works of genius. Human life is in a large way represented in them, and while we give our attention to them the vision of it, sad and yet beautiful, is rising in our hearts. We read the Book of Job and it seems as if we stood where we could behold the sorrow of humanity, the whole terrible and yet divine movement of man's life. We read the great tragedies of Shakespeare, — “ Hamlet,” “ Othello,” “ Lear,” — and we feel as if the entire human race were upon the stage before us. The everlasting charm of Dante's poem lies here. It is a symbol of the ultimate meaning of man's life, the awful world of self-will and woe, the terrible realm of purification and suffering, the blessed sphere of peace and the beatific vision — these ultimate and highest aspects of existence



are exhibited in the mighty song, as in a symbol. While we linger in its great presence, we are looking upon the drama of history, we are beholding the spiritual forces that work through man's life, we are witnessing the profoundest issues of time.

In the text we have a flash from the soul of a great religious genius. "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor until the evening." The history of every true man is there, the history of mankind. It is there in the utmost truthfulness and pathos. The symbol is the day. One day, with its morning, noon, and evening, comprehends the existence of the individual, the existence of the race. The life of a single human being, the life of all human beings, the duration of the planet on which we live, the age of the solar system, the whole breadth of astronomic time, is but a day in the eternal years of God. And upon this wondrous picture to which our existence is reduced, and in which it is so faithfully, pathetically, beautifully presented, we are to look for the lesson of the morning.

1. The first thought from the comparison of human existence to a day is of that in it for which we are not responsible. You cannot have a day without weather. It may be fair or foul, a splendor or a storm from beginning to end, — it may open in a morning without clouds, continue

in brightness, and close in an evening of ineffable loveliness. It may present in itself the greatest contrasts ; it may rain at daybreak, clear up at noon, and go to wreck again before night. Or the storm may howl all day long until near the close ; and then a transcendent burst of glory may transfigure the entire earth and sky. Or it may rain and shine alternately, and all varieties of weather may be crowded into the space of twelve hours ; spring, summer, autumn, and winter may all be there. From the farmer's point of view, all this is mere fortune. Nobody is responsible for the weather. However much a man in bad temper may wish to find fault with those about him, while in his senses he cannot blame any one for bad weather ; nor again can the most inveterate flatterer give to any person credit for the fineness of the day. Here is something that is made for us, that we cannot alter, that we must take as we find it. The weather, good or bad, is an expression of the sovereignty of God, and at the same time it is a symbol of all in life over which man can have no control, and for which he is in no way responsible.

Look at it in the line of good fortune. How many men are vain because of their size, or their shapeliness, or their good looks ; and how they take their amusement out of those who in all these particulars present a contrast to them-

selves, who are inferior in size, in shape, and in appearance. Others feel proud because they happened to be born in one state rather than in another, in this country rather than in that, in the upper classes in society and not in the lower, in particular families with a known and honorable history, and not in families with but little history and that little not very good. How many feel better than their neighbors because of the wealth that has been left them, or the education that has been made possible for them, or the high positions that have happened to come in their way. Others set up a claim to superiority upon their greater gifts. They have gifts for music, and for art generally, for science and philosophy, it may be for the professions and for the public service, which other men do not possess at all, or which they possess in very inferior degrees. Upon that consciousness of superior gifts they cultivate disdain of their fellow-men. It is as if the man with the two talents were to look with contempt upon the man with the one talent; and again, as if the man with the two talents were the subject of the scorn of the man with the five talents. This mood invades the religious life. There were Pharisees in the time of Christ and they have been with the Church in all subsequent times. They feel that they are holier than the average Christain, holier by nature, which may

very well be true. Upon this natural gift for religion and for the better side of existence they base a claim to arrogant superiority over those who have no inheritance of this order.

The reply to this entire mood, wherever manifested, lies in the text, and it is an overwhelming reply. All good fortune, whether in person, in position, in gifts of estate, intelligence, or inherited moral tendency, — all good fortune is mere weather. You have no more to do with the making of it than with a perfect day in June. You have no more right to credit for it than you have for some glorious day in early autumn. It is simply weather, made for you, sent upon you, with which you have nothing to do, and for which you can claim no credit. To be vain over natural gifts is as much out of place as it would be for a Laplander to boast of his starry nights, or an Egyptian of the fineness of his climate. It is a striking illustration of how much God has done for most men, and of how little they have done for themselves, that when they set up claims of superiority it is usually upon the good fortune, the fine weather, that has come to them.

The point that I am making applies equally to the line of bad fortune. Why should a man care for what he is by nature? Why should he be ashamed because he was born poor, because no signal gifts of person, intelligence, or moral

inclination were bestowed upon him, because in his total outfit at the hands of nature he is but an average human being? It is the weather again, and this time the day happens to be only tolerably good. Let him put the responsibility upon the weather-maker; it is none of his.

A man may regret that for his work's sake he was not born with a stronger constitution; he may be sorry for the sake of his family that he does not come of a long-lived race. He may shrink from the disappointments that come to him, and the many trials. He may feel his whole nature recoil from the coming of repeated and terrible bereavements. He may feel that his environment is almost too hard to live in. But let him recognize God's part in it, and his own. Let him see this whole line of bad fortune in its true character. It is none of his doing; he cannot help it. It is weather; a day of tempest, of sleet and snow has been ordained for him. God does not expect him to behave in it as if the day were glorious; he expects only such a record as a storm-tossed, sorely-tried, much-afflicted man can reasonably make. The record passages of the great ocean steamers are all made in fine weather. It is then that they get praise in all the newspapers; it is then that their names become familiar words all the world over. But I have often thought that if the captain with true insight should speak,

he would put down as the supreme record of his ship, not her flying trip in fine weather, but her brave battle in midwinter with tremendous seas from shore to shore, her splendid endurance manifested in storms in which it would seem that nothing could live, her steady, patient, and victorious response to engine and wheel throughout the terrible voyage, her safe and sound emergence into the quiet of the harbor, after a fortnight of utmost distress upon the deep. When the captain thought of his passengers, of his employers, of his wife and children, and of his own life, that seemed to him the record passage. When God shall speak, as He will some day; when He shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," He will not show us what we did in our good fortune, when the sea was like a mill-pond and all the winds of heaven were but ministering spirits to our comfort. In such conditions we receive the praise of men; in such conditions fame comes, and names are carried, perhaps, round the globe. God will show us what we did for Him under tremendous temptation; how we bore ourselves when the sea of trouble was running high; how we looked to Him and obeyed Him in the great waters; how in the face of the tempest, although with long delays, we came to port and anchored at his side at last. This and not that is our record according to the captain of our sal-

vation. The weather, fine or terrible, is of God's appointment; our responsibility is fixed by something else.

2. Thus we come to the second thought of the text, work. The character of the day expresses God's sovereignty and responsibility; the work to be done in it is the note of man's sovereignty and responsibility. Look at that farmer going forth to his work and to his labor until the evening. He has something to do in that field before nightfall. That is his task, that is the task of man. God gives such opportunity as it pleases Him; to man it belongs to improve such opportunity as is given.

Work is the main business in the world, and I believe it is the chief source of happiness, and of noble human character. We can all see that it is the main business. If the human race would survive, it must find the means of subsistence. It is a consuming race; it therefore must be a producing race; and if its productions are in the interest of a full and noble life, one part of them is as honorable as another. The race demands a vast variety of foods, of residences, of dress, of places of abode; it demands in addition to the ministries on the material line, ministries to the sense of beauty, the sense of truth, the sense of right. Accordingly we have the gigantic and bewilderingly diversified economic productions and



distributions, the vast response to the material demand ; we have the wonderful accumulation in the fine arts for the æsthetic demand ; we have further the amazing mass of science and philosophy for the intellectual demand ; and lastly, in answer to the moral need, the moral wisdom of the world, the religion of Christ. Here is the immense and immensely diversified demand, the immense and diversified production to meet the demand. Somewhere in this vast order every life is to find its place. There will be the producers and distributors on the material level ; the same work waits to be done upon all the levels. The civilization that we try to carry forward and enrich is like a house with four stories. First, there is the physical basis of life, the production and distribution that keep the world alive. The second story is reserved for the fine arts ; the third for science and philosophy ; the fourth and last, with its roof of pure glass, a window forever into the Eternal, is for religion.

You have here an answer to the question, What is Christian work ? Is it confined to distributing tracts, going to prayer-meetings, and help given in the running of a church ? Christian work is anything done in behalf of the largest and best conception of life ; it is work done upon any one of the four great levels of human existence. The Christian workman may be employed

on the first, or the second, or the third, or the fourth story of his Father's house. He may be a Christian in business, a Christian in art, a Christian in science and philosophy, or a Christian in the highest and most difficult level, a Christian in religion. As in every house a stairway leads from foundation to roof, and as this is the highway and common meeting-place of all the stories, so the motive of the workman if it is one of honor and love, is the path that connects all the levels of Christian service, it is the force that makes all the workmen brothers.

Here, then, is the scheme into which our life falls. We may work upon whichever level we desire, but the level is not the supremely important thing, it is the work done. The cup of cold water, the service to the poor, the works of humanity and mercy upon which the righteous are welcomed in the great judgment parable of Christ — these are all material works, duty done upon the first story in our Father's house, but how worthy and mighty they are made to appear! The day is God's to appoint, its length and its character; to do something in it, upon some one of the four great levels of existence, and from such a motive as will make it shine with the spirit and love of Christ — that is the obligation, serious and beautiful, of man.

3. After the day, at its close, and as its close,

comes the evening. After the work of life comes the rest that remaineth to the people of God. The beauty of the symbol here we must all feel. After a day of toil the evening is a benediction. The ideals of the day are unconsciously surrendered for those of the night. The strength of purpose and desire out of which those ideals rose, like the very sun itself is spent, and in the vast fields of the weariness that now begins to fall upon the workman the quiet stars appear. Look at the farmer as he goes to his work in the morning. How full of strength and happiness he is. Look at him when the day's work is done returning to his rest. Which is the happier time, the morning or the evening? It is impossible to say because the happiness belongs to contrasted moods. In the opening day it is the happiness of activity; in the closing day it is the happiness of rest. Wherever we look in the natural world, we must say that the peace of the evening in its own place is as beautiful as the rush of the morning.

Such should be our thoughts in the anticipation of the close of life in this world. We need not indulge in the anticipation, if it is painful so to do. But we may be very sure that if the day is vigorously improved, if we strive with our full strength, or with anything like it, for the accomplishment of the duty set before us, we shall not

regret it when we see the sun descending in the west, we shall not be sorry when we feel that at length the evening is come. Our strength will be spent, and our eager passion for life will have abated. Slowly in the fading light the great change will pass over our thoughts and feelings, the ideals proper to youth and to manhood, the auroral fires and forms that woke our passion in the morning and sustained it at noon will give place to other and better things, and our hearts will be visited with visions out of the glory of sunset. The Transfiguration will come of its own sweet accord ; we shall be as happy to sleep as once we were to wake, to be at rest as one day we were to be at work.

Death was never meant to be to man the horror that it so often is. It was meant as an answer to the well-spent and finished life, whether that life is long or short. Man is sent forth unto his work until the evening. He is sent forth to his great moral task in this world ; he is sent forth full of aspirations and power. When the power is gone and the day's work done, the evening comes in the peace and beauty of the Lord. All our anxiety should be until the evening ; when that has come, we should have none. We have toiled the entire day, the opportunity is here ended, and our strength and desire are spent. The release is a boon ; the rest is from God.

“The storm is changed into a calm,  
At his command and will;  
So that the waves which raged before  
Now quiet are and still

“Then are they glad, because at rest,  
And quiet now they be;  
So to the haven he then brings  
Which they desired to see.”

The final suggestion in the text is not of rest, but a prophecy of new activity. The evening and the morning were the first day, and ever since evening has been followed by morning; the period of repose by a new opportunity for achievement. This last suggestion comes to us in the evening telling us of the new day which waits for our renewed power. This succession of days and nights, this marvelous alternation of activity and repose, this dual existence wherein we wake to sleep, and sleep to wake, carries us into the great thought of the endless life. Never since the sun first rose and set upon the world has this succession been broken. Never has there been a day upon which there did not succeed an evening, and never an evening and night upon which there did not rise a new day. Never since human beings appeared upon this planet has there been a man who did not have some opportunity and whose opportunity did not come to an end; never has there been a human life that eventually was not overtaken by death. The day of life and the

evening of death are universal facts. But we must believe that never yet has death come that a new sphere of being was not sighted, that new regions of opportunity did not dawn, that fresh powers of faith and of service were not bestowed. As upon the night rises the new day, so we must believe that upon death rises the fresh and radiant opportunity.

It is this faith that makes life solemn and beautiful. Whatever may be the character of our environment, whether our fortune be good or bad, the weather stormy or serene ; on whichever level God has appointed for us our task ; however soon and with whatever surprises and regrets the evening may drop down upon us, we can take it all bravely and thankfully if only we are sure of restored strength and the new and more glorious to-morrow. The solemn and yet cheerful beauty of evening after a laborious day lies here. The retrospect is on the whole gladdening, the history is on the whole good ; and the prospect is all bright with promise, the future is full of the deepest inspiration. Between this history and this hope the toiler seeks repose ; between this past and this glorious future the servant of God lies down to pleasant dreams.

## XXIX

### THE CHRISTIAN IDEAL AND ENDLESS LIFE

“Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly  
Father is perfect.”

Matt. v, 48.

THE entire body of the teaching of Jesus Christ is in the atmosphere of the endlessness of man's life. Few are the words of Jesus upon this subject, because it is present as an illuminating spirit in all his utterances. We hear Him speak of the universe as his Father's house and of the abodes in that house for all the children of his Father; we note with intensity of interest his words to the penitent thief, “To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise”; we ponder his great answer to the Sadducees, “God is not the God of the dead but of the living, for all live unto him”; but we fail utterly to apprehend the teaching of the Lord if we conclude that these great and precious utterances are all that He has said concerning the destiny of man.

While He spoke his parables of the kingdom of God on the shores of the Sea of Galilee; while He fixed the solemn attention of his disciples on the wise man who built his house upon



the rock, and on the foolish man who built his house upon the sand, as He sat on the Mount of Beatitudes and watched the sweet industry of the birds of heaven and the lilies of the field blooming far and wide ; while He told the multitudes in Judæa the story of the lost son in the gloom of overshadowing hills, the Syrian sunshine was flooding his outward world. In the same way his whole teaching is in the sunshine and glory of the endless life of man. God is our Father in heaven ; we are his family in the earth ; the link between our lives and God cannot be broken ; for weal or for woe we live here and there, for happiness or misery our existence is forever. That happiness is the inseparable concomitant of worth, moral worth ; that misery is the evil issue of a cruel and inhuman soul. In the Syrian sunshine the Master spoke his great words, the sunshine which all felt while no one said anything about it ; in the splendor of man's endless destiny as the child of God, Jesus uttered his whole message. Seldom did He dwell upon it because it was the universal and radiant atmosphere of the entire body of his ideas.

It sometimes happens that words that to our first consideration seem wildly extravagant turn out to be to our profounder thought the sanest and the purest wisdom. We have an example in the text. At first sight what could be more extravagant,

more wildly extravagant than to ask of man the perfection that we find in God? Would it be fair to ask of a child the wise thinking, the mature feeling, the resolute purpose, the continuous and faithful exertion that we rightly ask of a full-grown person? And yet the difference between God and man is infinitely greater than the difference between a man and a child. Would it be just to ask the same responsible citizenship of a weak-minded person that we rightfully ask of a reasonable being? And yet the difference between God and man is infinitely greater than the difference between the strongest and the weakest human mind. Are not the words therefore mockery, "Ye therefore shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"? What do they mean?

They mean that men are apt to live without principle, by vagrant desire, by shifting moods, by various, unfixed, and contradictory interests. This is unworthy, that is not the way that their God lives. He lives on eternal principles; the expressions may vary, but the moving power in his being is always the same and the highest. He makes his sun to shine on the evil and the good; He sends his rain on the just and the unjust. His mood toward the whole world is perpetual, unchanging, eternal magnanimity. Jesus calls men to live not without principle, and not ac-

ording to the evil custom of the world whereby men like those who like them and hate those who hate them. He calls upon them to live on principle, and to find the principle of their living in God; to find an ideal, a governing ideal for their existence, in the character of the Eternal. "Lift your vision to God," He seems to say, "behold how he lives and how he loves, and take your ideal, your obligation, your vocation out of the heart of the Infinite."

In the words of the text Jesus describes our task, our vocation as men. In so doing, He gives to us the surest and the most comforting of all insights concerning the future world. Our task is perfection; that task is conditioned upon time; that we may do our duty we need endless opportunity.

The subject that comes before us here may be variously stated. It may take the form of endless time as the condition of an endless task; it may look toward the vocation of men as the east where we greet the sunrise of faith; it may fix attention upon the Christian ideal of the complete human life and there fill the mind with the divine meaning of our existence. Whichever statement we make carries in it the same thought, whichever path we take comes to the same goal. Our task, our vocation, our ideal is the revelation of our nature as men, our relation to God

and our destiny. The revelation is given to those who mourn, but it is not given through their tears; it is for the tempted, the perplexed, the weary and heavy-laden, the bereaved and broken-hearted, but it is conditioned upon no one of these experiences, nor upon all of them put together. The revelation of man's endless career comes through his vocation as the servant of the ideal.

Let us dwell upon this solitary height for a moment and survey our world through its pure and serene air. When we believe in human immortality because of the cry of the heart in bereavement, we wonder sometimes if that cry finds response in the heart of the Eternal. Our love for our dead makes its plea for endless life and the possibility of reunion. That love is great and its plea is sound and strong, but it is not the soundest and the strongest. When we survey the misfortune of the multitude, the misery of the many, the disappointed wills and the defeated lives, the suffering, the confusion and mystery of human history, the sore and terrible tragedy of the world, and demand a future life in which the unmeaning woe of time shall come to triumphant issues, we make an impressive demand; but there is a demand still more impressive. When we think first, last, and all the time of our duty as men; when we take our existence through our con-

science: when we seek for the meaning of our being in our work; when we see in our work the form of discipline by which we get rid of all unworthiness and put all on worth, advancing with steadfast steps in an order, a rigorous order of earthly utilities upon the goal of greater likeness to the God and Father of Christ; when we read our nature in the light of our solemn task and construe our destiny through our vocation as servants of an infinite ideal, we know that we are standing upon uttermost reality, that our feet are planted upon the final and moral integrity of the universe. Then we are able to say with Browning's Grammarian: —

“Leave now for dogs and apes —  
Man has forever.”

1. Man's vocation thus construed carries with it certain conditions without which it cannot be fulfilled, and these conditions constitute our faith. This faith, it must be noted, is not something superadded or foreign to the work given us to do, but lies in its very heart. You look at a rosebush in the spring and you see the buds swelling on the tips of the rosebush. Where is the beauty? Wait till the bud opens; beauty is in the heart of that rosebud, beauty is part of its being; when you get the one you get the other. The bud will lead to the rose in bloom and then you will see the beauty. There is nothing said about faith in

these words of Jesus ; they simply call attention to our duty, endless, infinite ! But there is faith in its heart, and the faith is there as condition. Suppose you say that the duty of this old world of ours is to be living, beautiful, fruitful ; certain conditions are necessary. There must be a sun to flood it with light, that is one condition ; it must have the power to receive that vital force and to respond to it ; that is, its nature must be akin to the illuminating power. That is the second condition. And the third is, the old world must have time to live, time to grow beautiful, time to mature fruit, time to follow the sun. These three conditions are given in your demand that the earth be living and beautiful and fruitful. And so when you ask a man to do a great duty, you look into the heart of that duty and you find conditions : a God who sets his ideal ; a soul capable of receiving that ideal ; and time in which to serve the ideal and embody it.

Look next at the economy of faith that goes with this task. As much faith as our work demands, no more faith than our work needs ; that is the law of these words of Jesus. When a steamer leaves port for the ocean, she takes the equipment for sailing, and no more. Business equipment is business equipment for success, and no more. The equipment of a government is equipment for efficient and beneficent adminis-

tration, and no more. The equipment of an army is equipment for fighting and victory. The equipment of a man in faith is equipment for his task; as much faith as his task demands, no more faith than his work demands. Therefore, away with the overblown systems of opinion, away with the schemes of omniscience; they are out of place because they are not needed. You are a servant and only such things as belong to a servant belong to you, — a master to set your task, a soul fitted to receive that appointment, and time in which to do your master's will. Faith and the economy of faith are given in the given task.

2. Observe, in the second place, that the greater the task the greater the conditions which it carries with it, and since these conditions are the faith, the greater the faith. If you set your servant to write for you a hundred letters, or to take account of stock, or to cross the continent and to do business for you on the Pacific slope, or to go round the world and visit in the interest of your firm the principal cities of the world; — in each case you set the task, in each case a greater task, and in all justice in each case you allow a greater time.

What is your vocation? Simply that of an animal. The ends of your animal life are soon accomplished; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. The animal in man is, however, only the



beginning. Your house has a foundation, but the foundation is not your house ; the superstructure is your house. You are an animal in the physical basis of your life, but animalism is not you ; upon that animal basis there is erected a spiritual being ; that is, your moral personality. The tree is rooted in the earth, but rooted there to soar and at last to swell in buds and to burst into bloom and to issue in fruit.

If a man conceives his vocation as simply that of an animal, he requires no faith. Animal ends are soon accomplished ; when you have accomplished your work, the universe is done with you. If your work is simply to eat and to drink, then to-morrow you must die ; — you need no faith. Is your vocation simply to think, to know, to make images ; to form good, bad, or indifferent pictures ; to construct good, bad, or indifferent systems of opinion, of the great, mysterious reality that we call the universe ? Then your work is brief and slight ; it is of no permanent concern ; when your work is done, you may go your way, you are absolved.

There is the log in the vortex, whirling round endlessly in the boiling torrent. That is animal life, subject to the laws of the cosmos, living by the poor thoughts of itself injected from beyond, governed from without, lasting as long as the wild laws that play upon it permit. There is the

log that has been thrown by the vortex upon the river's bank. That is the life of the spectator ; he is no part of the current, no part of the boiling abyss ; he is landed, stranded, cast aside. The mere spectator counts for little in this ongoing, tremendously real universe ; his opinions are only of passing moment.

Are you a servant, is service your vocation ? Then you count for more ; you are real ; you are part of reality ; and as your work grows your significance grows. Is it a mile that you are to travel, or a hundred miles, or a thousand miles, or a million miles ? In each case you have a greater work, and in each case a greater condition is attached. Is your journey an endless journey ; then the condition of it is endless time. Great issues require great time. Can you manufacture a violin in a week ? Impossible ; age is essential. Other things being equal, the older the violin the better ; time gives it maturity and sweetness ; time puts quality, supreme excellence into it from the heart of the universe. You can duplicate a minster, but your duplicate will not be the original. That dark tower, weather-beaten, weather-stained, toned by time, glorified by a thousand years of human history, you cannot duplicate. The chicken tumbles out of the shell, and forthwith begins to care for itself ; a child is born helpless, and years must pass before it

can take care of its own life. The great issues require great time ; the more important a thing is, the more and the larger are the conditions that go with it. Is your task simply to climb a ridge? — when your task is done, the universe is done with you ; you may die when you please ! Is it your duty to climb a hill ? The task is greater but still brief, and when it is done you are absolved and may go your way ! Are you under orders to climb a Matterhorn ? That obligation is steep, it is difficult, it is heroic, but it is temporary, and when it is done, you are discharged ! The universe is done with the man whose work is done. Are you under bonds to climb forever the pathway of loving service, the height of obligation, the stairway of the moral universe ? Is it your vocation to climb forever ? Then life forevermore is yours.

3. Man's chief business in this world, let it be said, is with his duty, not with the conditions thereof ; God will take care of them. Herein we touch the source, the spring of our chief difficulty concerning immorality. Men begin to figure out the conditions without the vocation, the faith without the task. They imagine that they can settle how long man is to exist by mere speculation, by the exercise of the intellect alone. It cannot be done. Every spool of thread has two ends, a right and a wrong. You take the wrong

end, and it will ravel and puzzle and torment you all the way through. Take the right end, and the thread will run off to the last ream with perfect smoothness. There are two ends to the problem of life, the right end and the wrong. You try to think, to philosophize your moral personality and all the problems that inhere in it, into perfect clearness ; it cannot be done ; it cannot be done because the significance of your personality is to be a doer, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. That is the right end of the thread ; deal with your duty ; attend to your task.

I cannot tell you how great these words of Jesus seem to me to be ; how profound they appear ; how completely they answer to the deepest in life, to the constitution of the human soul and the constitution of the world. The problems of the soul are not to be settled in the study by those who have leisure to think, and by those alone. Jesus' concern was in the network of human relations that make up the organism of our humanity. We are sons, brothers, fathers, friends, citizens, mechanics, merchants, doctors, significant human beings. We have our work ; through this temporal service we are in duty bound to do what the stars do every night. They look down from the infinite heights with their pure, glorious eyes, through the atmosphere of

our earth, down upon the wayfarer on street and on highway. And we, in this mesh and network of relations that make up the organism of our humanity, working as we are at perishable interests, getting food and clothing and houses, conducting the production and the exchange of the world, — we are to look with starry eyes through all this order of time and sense in the strength of the order of eternal excellence which it is our business more and more to win. Is it not great to throw into the process of being, the great, sanguine process of existence, the meaning of man and to tell man to find there the solution of his problems? Find your work and then you will find your God; find your work and you will find how long you shall last.

Let me recall you to this lost chord in the great harmony of life. Did we not strike that chord by accident, as it seemed, when we were sent out on our first errand of duty with a mother's blessing warm upon our brow? In the first vision of love, when we thought of a home of our own, in the day on which we became parents, in the solemn prophetic hours of life, did we not all unconsciously strike that chord, beat out the music of that grand amen? Duty came from the soul of the universe and entered into ours; then we knew in one great moment that we belonged to God, that our existence was no

mere incident of time. That lost chord is the tragedy of man's life, the lost conscience, the lost sense of a vocation in the service of the ideal. It is hopeless to look for a great faith till that lost vocation in the kingdom of love is found. The animal life needs no faith; the whole circle of its wants is met in space and in time. The mere spectator needs no faith; he is awakened by no heavenly vision shining in the eternal morning, and, therefore, stands in no essential relation to the infinite heart of things.

The living world of man is our organ; over this vast keyboard our fevered fingers wander; in our pain and sorrow we hope to come upon something great. We hope in vain till conscience shall preside at the organ. Then, indeed, we shall find the lost chord, shall find it never again to lose it while the sense of duty commands existence; then, too, we shall take the uncertainties out of the great song; it must be that death's bright angel shall speak in that chord again, it must be that also in heaven we shall hear that grand amen.

Not in the instinct of life for continued life, nor in the great impulse of the intellect after knowledge without limit, nor in the imperious demand of love that those whom it deems worthy to live forever shall be permitted to go on, nor in the cry of the heart for the consummation of

our poor human world in the triumph of the eternal, does Jesus find the deepest basis for his idea of the endless existence of the soul, but in the exaltation which comes through the service of an infinite ideal. The sureness of the endless life is in the conscience of the servant of the eternal ideal. Man's work is never done; man's work is ever just begun; therefore, days and years do not count; therefore, all time is given for his endless and glorious task.

The story of the Risen Lord meets the entire circle of man's nobler instincts, and on this account he is in danger of missing the supreme motive in it. The Risen Lord meets the instinct of life, the craving for knowledge, the cry of love, the sorrow of the soul over the mystery and tragedy of human history and the hunger of the spirit after the eternal worth. These are the colors hidden in the heart of the pure white light of the Easter gospel. We receive the whole inspiration of this great faith as we have the right to receive it; but we must not lose the sense of that which is central in it. The Risen Lord is the assurance that God is the perfect moral being; that He has made man for likeness to Himself; that man's career is to be in the service of an infinite moral ideal; that as a servant of the kingdom of love and worth his destiny is to live forever.



The severest and the sublimest idea of duty is in the Lord's teaching concerning the life everlasting. In the summer we think only of the foliage of the tree abundant, beautiful, a vast and mystic ministry to the eye; in winter when the tree is bare we note the structure of it, the form and symmetry that underlie and make possible that rich dower of beauty. In the teaching of Jesus about the future, there is this twofold aspect; there is the inexpressible consolation of it to the broken heart, and there is the revelation of the august moral order of the soul, set through the service of an infinite moral ideal in the moral order of the universe. It is this second aspect that is the deeper. From the stern demand for the service of an infinite cause there comes the tender joy, the rich delight, the summer bloom and abundance of the heart living in the sense of the endless life. The substructure concealed under this wealth of beautiful affections and hopes is the Christian conscience answering the call of the Lord: "Ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect." The tie between God and man, the present and the future, time and eternity, the living and the dead, is the Christian conscience. For the universe of rational beings God sets, in his own life, the infinite ideal; in the pursuit and service of that ideal is the assurance of endless life; in the

pursuit and service of that ideal hearts draw together and become one there as they drew together and became one here. In the vision and service of the eternal ideal we hold our faith in the endless life and in the reunion of loving hearts beyond the grave. The Easter gospel, the triumph of the Lord over death, is the assurance that our faith is not vain.

A burst of joy let Easter be, but a burst of joy from the heart of duty, the notes of triumph blown from the trumpet that calls anew to the sterner and closer service of an infinite ideal. The song of gladness from the lips of a servant in God's kingdom of love; let that be our Easter. Let us be sure of our Christian ideal, sure of our service, and God will take care of the song of gladness. Soldiers of an infinite ideal are we, soldiers under the command of our Lord, the sovereign idealist; let us be sure as soldiers that our vision is clear, that our hearts are true, that our struggle is brave and our devotion unto death. In this battle-field of time let us do our best by the Eternal Love, knowing well that the Eternal Love will do the best by us.

## XXX

### THE RECORD AND THE IDEAL

“ And the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.”

Phil. iv, 3.

IN a private collection of works of art in the city of Amsterdam, there may be seen one of the rarest of Dutch masterpieces by one of the most gifted of Dutch painters. The picture is the picture of Faust. The world outside is asleep; it is midnight. Faust is in his study, and the great head and the fine face and the doctor's scarlet robe stand out with fascinating distinctness under the glare of the lamp. The room as a whole is dim, but one can see the thousands of books on the shelves lining the walls. One can see book after book on the floor; the desk is covered with them; one book is open, and those great eyes are studying with intense and painful interest the contents of its pages. There the artist has drawn the student among his books, the student in vital relation to his books. What does that relation mean? It is the individual man, consulting the universal man, hoping from that consultation to gain insight into the mystery of human life. How powerfully and how beauti-

fully the masterpiece to which I have referred brings out that relation of the one intellect to the many; — the solitary, single-handed, isolated individual, consulting the genius of his race!

What is a book? Letters, words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters, symbols set in order, with a beginning and a middle and an end? A book is all that and infinitely more. Milton, one of the greatest readers of great books, has told us that a good book is the precious lifeblood of a master spirit. It is, then, the record of life. If we would understand the book, we must have access to the life and bring the light of the life to bear upon the record of it. This brings me to the text, to those beautiful words, as deep as they are beautiful: "The rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life." I think that these words have a message to the student and I would like to indicate briefly part of that message. Technically or untechnically are we not all students? Are we not inquirers, seekers after the truth, learners one from another, confessing the immeasurable scope of truth, and our own immediate poverty of faculty and knowledge, facing the infinite, hoping to add to the effective power of our knowledge by the study, the search, the learning of each day?

I think that mood is characteristic of the true man in college and out of it; it is characteristic

of the true man everywhere. There is the confession of a momentous reality beyond him; there is the consciousness of some insight into it; there is the third consciousness of inadequate knowledge and the desire to add to knowledge every day. This is the attitude of mind, believe me, of the man of the greatest learning as it is of the enthusiastic youth who knows that he has little learning. We are all together in this great and noble fellowship, seekers after truth, seekers after the meaning of life, sitting at the feet of the great, inquirers of the way through the valley, across the wilderness, over the mountains into the glow of the sunset that means our home.

1. Guided by my text my first remark is that primacy belongs not to books, but to life. Take the greatest example of all, the Master of the Christian world. He wrote nothing; He lived about three-and-thirty years in this world; his public ministry was confined to a few years in which He spoke his message to the people of his country and his time. You must mark these three things in this order: first, the mighty life of Jesus, — that is the original thing; then the spoken word of the Lord; and in the third place the record, the evangelical record that we call the Gospel, which came into existence many years after He left the world.

If we are to understand the record we must go

to the speaker of whom it is the record; visualize Him, his time, his place, his audience, and, as it were, hear the word spoken by Him to human souls. Then if we are to understand anything of this word, we must pass beyond it to the life of the Lord; we must get at the quality of his being, the majesty of his mode of living, the tenderness and the sublimity of his soul. That is the order.

The New Testament writings all came into existence in this way. No one ever thought of writing a book. It never entered into the mind of Paul or Peter or John that they were to make books. The great thing was a divine life in that community reproduced, in the first instance, in the lives of the apostles; reproduced, in the second place, in the lives of those whom the apostles had persuaded to become disciples of the Lord. This divine life called forth a record of things done. These apostles of the Lord had new thoughts, new insights, new interpretations of man's life, new interpretations of God, and God's world, and of all things. Thus a record was made of the Acts of the Apostles; thus great souls came to write their thoughts to cheer one another on. This church, that church, and the other church needed to be enlightened, comforted, guided, and inspired, and so these occasional, and as it seemed to their authors

ephemeral, productions came into being; they were all processions out of life, they were all witnesses of the primacy of life.

An illustration from the classical world of Greece may confirm this fact. Socrates, the founder of philosophy in the Western world, wrote nothing; he despised writing; he thought the written word was a poor, defenseless infant. He lived the intellectual and the good life his full seventy years of existence and passed on into the other world leaving nothing written. Then came Plato, who, in the so-called Socratic dialogues, with consummate art, preserved the method, many of the thoughts and the image, the living image of his great master. If you are to understand these works of Plato, you must pass behind them into life. Look at our American literature, consider the "Essays" of Emerson; they cannot be understood apart from the life of a Puritan community. Webster's "Reply to Hayne" means nothing unless you have a vision of the life of the nation at that time, discordant, almost belligerent. The finest words of Lincoln have a national life behind them. Whittier's war-songs are sung first in the heart of the American people of the North. All literature — Greek, German, English, American — refers the student back to life. A book is first of all a witness of the book of life; the primacy belongs to life.



2. In the second place, few men make books, even when you count in all the bad ones ; and when you count them out and reckon only the great ones, how very few make books. All good books help all men who consult them to make life. The Old Testament and the New Testament were produced by a few men, but all through the ages these Scriptures have helped countless multitudes to shape their human existence into greatness and power. Something like this might be said of the literatures that I have just named ; a few Greeks, a few Germans, a few Englishmen, a few Americans produced the books that we call great ; but these books will help us all, and the whole world, when we consult them, to make life. Few even among intellectual men to-day make books, but all intellectual men are enabled by books to shape life into something fine and great. The Pilgrim and the Puritan were made by the Bible. They made a few books that have an antiquarian interest, but by the power of the Book that shaped them they made the life of the state. Cromwell was made by the Bible and Cromwell remade England. You see that life produces the book, that life is beyond the book, that the book is a middle term between life creative and life receptive.

3. This leads me to my final remark that the everlasting record is not in the book, but in the

life. This upsets our calculations. If a man has not written a book that will live, or has not been written into a book that will live, he concludes that it is all up with him as far as posterity goes. Think for a moment of the fallacy here. Books are transient ; books are doomed, every last one of them ; Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, the Bible itself, all are doomed. When time is done they are done. Many of you have been in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, and those of you who have been there cannot forget the effigy of Shakespeare with a scroll in his hand, and those tremendous words upon the scroll, all the more tremendous because you had passed on the way to the Abbey palaces and great monuments, witnesses of arrogant and enduring power. The scroll reads :—

“ The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rack behind.”

There is not a book in existence, not even the Bible, whose life extends beyond time. It is not so with that other book, the book of life. Millions of fathers and mothers die every year, pious, God-fearing, just, tender, true, leaving no record ; as far as visible record goes, they are forgotten in a year except by their children and a few

friends ; but in the book of life, their power is permanent ; as long as the human soul lasts, their power lasts. Take physicians, men of consequence in the community, men working at the very sources of life, healers, friends, counselors, indispensable servants of humanity ; how many of the last generation of them are living records to-day ? Few, few indeed ; their power survives in the book of life and will survive to the remotest generations.

In the nearly thirty years that I have served this church I have seen a whole generation go, men and women ; few of those who were most eminent are now remembered, and these only by a very limited number. What then ? Are they effaced ? No, their record is in the book of life. They put character, truth, honor, faith, worth into life, and while life lasts, they last.

Look for a moment at the text and its beauty : “ The rest of my fellow workers whose names are in the book of life ” ; the whole apostolic age is forgotten as soon as death had claimed its members ; that is not all. These men had toiled for God, had fanned the flame on the altar of human faith and love, had served the best interests of their day and generation, had put their power into the life of Europe, and it is there to-day. When a good man dies and wakes up in the other world conscious that he is a living and

loving soul, with a character shaped in the image of his Master, with worth and power in it; when he turns and looks down upon time and sees that his impression upon life lasts, that what he put into human hearts lasts, that the seeds that he sowed in the furrows of human souls are springing up and bearing fruit, how insignificant will then appear to him mere literary fame! May the good God deliver us from the worst of all humbugs, from supposing that they have an everlasting record whose names are written in print, and that their fortune is to be deplored whose names are found in no book, but whose power is in the blood and in the better life of mankind.

The finest thing about Thomas Carlyle, I think, was his reverence for his peasant mother. The most potent influence exerted over him was by his mother. Young men and young women, finding your way into the world of thought, do not be ashamed to heed the admonition and to confess your obligation to the pious, wise, and good mother! Let me read two or three words from a letter written to Carlyle by his mother when he was at Edinburgh University. She had an anxious eye upon his faith, as every good mother must when she thinks of her boy. Carlyle had replied to his mother that he was reading certain uncanny French writers. This troubled greatly the dear old Scotch soul. He had said that he

believed in God as much as our imperfect faculties allowed ; to this the mother rejoins : " Oh, my dear, dear son, I would pray for a blessing on your learning ; I beg you with all the feeling of an affectionate mother you would study the word of God which He has graciously put into our hands. Oh, that it may powerfully reach our hearts that we may discern it in its true light ! " Then comes this fine sentence : " God made man after his own image ; therefore He behooved to be without any imperfect faculties. Beware, my dear son, of such thoughts ; let them not dwell on your mind. God forbid. " Then comes the postscript, best of all : " Do make religion your great study, Tom ; if you repent it, I will bear the blame forever. " The mother's soul was potent to the end in the soul of her son.

The great thing behind the book and beyond the book is life with God in it ; life is the record of man, life in the living God. Never dream because you do not write a book that your life is thrown away ; when you awake in God's presence in the eternal world and know yourself a loving child of your Heavenly Father, know yourself as one who put heart and conscience into this time-world ; you will then see how immeasurably greater that is as a record than any book that man can write ; life is the record of the ideal for the living God.

These reflections modify many things in our ordinary thoughts concerning revelation. They bring us to see the essential greatness of the Bible. It is great as the witness of the life of God ; it is great as the witness that God has lived in the souls of men ; its chief value is as a symbol of life, God's and man's in God. If we use it wisely, we may commune with those in whom God dwelt. It is preceded by life, it will be succeeded by life, and while it lasts it is wholly as the servant of life. The ideal of the soul is in the God of whom the Bible bears witness ; the ideal record for the ideal of the soul is not in a book, but in a man and the society of men. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."

## XXXI

### THE KINGDOM OF THE IDEAL

“ The Kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

Matt. iv, 17.

THE kingdom of the ideal opens through many doors into the life of man. By the appeal of nature and of parental affection children are led through wonder into the kingdom of the ideal. Into the same world of splendor, youth, in each successive generation, is carried through the door of love. Manhood comes, and again through manhood's vision exalted or sordid the kingdom of the ideal takes possession of the mind. Wealth, power, and pleasure, while they remained unattained, are phases of the desirable, and in a sense they are forms of the ideal ; learning, insight, and character are less attainments than ideals. The men who tell us that they have done with dreams, who assure us that they have turned their backs upon the illusions of youth, have surrendered, although they may not know it, to other forms of the ideal. They may soar where once they groveled, they may grovel where once they soared ; in either case they are pursuing the vision of good. When young they followed the gleam sunward ; now that manhood is here they



follow it swine-ward. Old age, when it revisits early years no less than when it dreams of heaven, is under the spell of the ideal. Imagination filled with the pictured passion of human hearts is the enchanting leader of the race. Because we are poor and want to be rich, mean and desire to be great, weak and long to be strong, sinful and yearn to be pure, without God and cry out for God, children of a day whose foundation is in the dust and crave the glory of going on, we spend our strength in the world of ideals.

1. The kingdom of heaven is first of all the transformation of the ideal world of man, the force that purifies, corrects, and exalts that world. The kingdom of heaven is at once the supreme vision and the supreme reality. It is the image that reflects the highest desire, the loftiest passion of the soul ; it is the reflection in a resplendent imagination of the utmost moral longing of man. It is all this and infinitely more. The kingdom of heaven means that God seeks to conform our confused and vexed existence to his purpose as the architect seeks to lift the shapeless mass of material in the fallen building into the embodiment of his design. Thus, as we look at it from the human side, the kingdom of heaven is the splendid imagination that reflects the utmost moral passion of the heart ; as we survey it from the divine side, the kingdom of heaven is God's

order for man and the society of man seeking entrance through our highest dreams into human life. The pile of stones longs, let us say, to be built into a temple of beauty; the architect with his plan seeks to meet that longing. The soul cries out for the dominion of the Eternal Love; the Eternal Love moves to his dominion over man through the highest visions of man.

The world as it is satisfies no man; the actual condition of men is a source of pain and of protest; human society as it stands is a contradiction of human expectation. Everywhere the actual is condemned by the ideal. Lazarus laid at the gate and desiring to be fed by the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table must feel, righteous soul that he is, that society is full of injustice and inhumanity. Dives, clothed with purple and fine linen and faring sumptuously every day, must feel the want of human sympathy, the awful absence of genuine friendship, the terrible destitution of all high regard and all true love. Neither for the pauper nor for the millionaire is the world a complete, or anything like a complete, satisfaction.

When we take a nearer view we are at first filled with dismay. We look into human homes and find so much selfishness, disrespect, lovelessness, disappointment, and pain; we look into human society and we find so much mean ambition,

hypocrisy, cruelty, and pettiness; we survey the world of trade and find so much suspicion, distrust, and strife. Capitalists are afraid of one another, and yet they combine because of the greater fear which they entertain against labor; workmen distrust one another, and yet combine, and force one another to combine, because of the hard and cruel heart of capital. You consider political life and discover so little true patriotism in it, so much wild ambition and corruption. You turn your observation upon the various professions. You see the quacks that prey upon the sickness and infirmity of mankind; you behold the wretched lawyers that live upon the strife of men; you note the journalists that find their ideal in the base instincts of the mob; you observe the traders in cheap and foul literature; you reflect upon the incompetent and the unworthy guides of the spirit; you sweep all this terrible actual into your mind and you are filled with dismay, and you cry out: "Who shall deliver mankind from the body of this death?"

In your sorrow you begin to dream. You begin to dream of a personal soul whose intelligence is possessed by a vision of the truth, whose heart overflows with deep and pure desire, whose will is commanded by a great and righteous purpose. You think of a home founded wisely, founded reverently, dedicated to high ideals, high

service, full of sanctity and of peace. You think of trade where the employers are just, and where the workmen are honest. You dream of a public service where the men who stand there are patriots, serving with an eye single toward their country's good. You dream again of the professions; you dream of all physicians wise and humane, of all lawyers forces for justice and peace, of all journalists creators of high public opinion, of all writers sources of illumination and inspiration, of all prophets of the human spirit competent and worthy.

Out of your sorrow and your dream together there come two things, — a great belief and a great endeavor. The belief is that the true order of human society exists, and that it never yet has been realized. The endeavor is the uprising of your whole soul in the service of your belief.

In the Gospel the kingdom of God is Jesus' vision of the reign of the divine love in the hearts of men by their free and joyous consent, extending from sea to sea and from the river unto the ends of the earth, from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same; a vision that takes up into itself all the higher dreams and ideals of the best men and the noblest peoples in all ages of human history; it is the consummation of the world's highest belief and endeavor. This teaching of the Lord is profound and yet easy of

apprehension. As God reigns in natural law, in the procession of day and night, in the succession of the seasons, in the ebb and flow of the tides, in the coming and going of the great constellations, in the balance and order of the stellar universe; as God's authority is revealed in the laws that are declared to us by chemistry, physics, and biology, so we believe there should be the reign of God as Infinite Love in the hearts and consciences of men and by their free and joyous consent.

The kingdom of the ideal rests not only in the human mind, but also in the will of God. It is the poetry through which shines the order of God for man. There is an order in the human body that we did not make, that we cannot unmake. We may abuse it, we may outrage it and suffer; or we may recognize it, revere it, obey it, and rejoice; but whether we honor or dishonor, disregard or obey it, that physical order abides as God's will. There is an order for the human intellect. Truth and error are not the same; facts and theories, realities and illusions are not the same. There is a law by which all men think when they do think; in the exercise and under the domination of that law they must think if they think at all. There is such a thing as sane observation, sane experiment, sane reasoning, and sane judgment. There is a logic in the human

intelligence, and in that logic, in that law, in that order God waits. We may honor it and become wise men, we may trifle with it and become fools; in either case the order remains and in it God resides. There is an order in the conscience of man. Right and wrong, fair and foul, just and unjust, base and blessed, moral confusion and moral law are not the same, and no words and no man can make them the same. The order is there; we have nothing to do with the making of it, nor can we unmake it. We may dishonor it, and sink into the *Inferno* of Dante; we may honor it, give it our most loyal love, and rise into Dante's *Paradiso*. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"; as inevitably as the coming of day and night, as inevitably as the retreat and advance of the tides, as sure as the coming and the going of the seasons, as absolutely irreversible as the process of the suns, as inviolable as natural law is the moral order of our human world.

2. The kingdom of heaven is at the same time man's sovereign cause and sovereign spirit. Good causes are essential to the moral being of men. When the welfare of the family, the education of children and youth, the conditions of labor, the sufferings of the poor, the character of the nation become causes engaging a multitude of minds, at once the conscience leaps into flame.

The world without good causes is the world without progress. The richer any community is in good causes the wider the scope of advance. When art and science and religion appear as causes essential to the higher development of human life, when these causes become great forces in the service of men, they put a new face upon society and behind the face they create a new heart.

Our genuine causes are simply the interests of men lifted into the imagination and devotion of wise servants. Our needs are many and urgent; they reflect themselves in the thought of our time; they stir feeling and appeal to action. Thus there issues the world of human service in response to the world of human need. These interests and needs differ in intensity and value; they all are urgent, but some of them are indispensably important. The essential and the incidental stand apart; the great interests without which men cannot be men rise and shine like the stars in some mighty constellation like the blazing worlds that constitute Orion or the Bear. The sovereign interest is that which comprehends all the separate essential needs of human beings as space comprehends all worlds, as the force of gravity keeps all worlds to their appointed place and task.

This cause that comprehends all other essen-



tial causes, that orders all in the passion for perfection, is the kingdom of heaven, the kingdom of God. It is the ideal of perfected society, the vision of humanity adjusted to its environment, reconciled to itself, and under the dominion of the Eternal Love. The essential interests of society are the separate polished stones; as they are brought together and fitted wisely, stone to stone, something new emerges, a building of God, a habitation of the Eternal Spirit.

Here, then, is the vision of our sovereign cause. It is vast as the total need of our race; it is great and beautiful as the perfected life of society. It appeals to the moral imagination as the greater aspects of nature appeal to feeling. There looms our cause in the great mountain ranges looking through mist and cloud and fire. There goes our cause in the waves and tides of the mighty sea; there shines our cause in the multitudinousness and blazing unity of the starry sky; there spreads our cause in the all-comprehending beauty and mystery of space.

The kingdom of heaven is within you; there is the interior spirit answering to the cause. Here it must be said that men get their worth from their causes. Washington's strength and purity, Lincoln's patient tenderness, and Cromwell's greatness came from their respective causes. The whole capacity of the soul for worth

is called forth in this way. Paul says, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father"; Jesus says, "For this cause came I into the world." The cause is the reveillé that sounds the whole compass of the heart, that calls into action its total power. Jesus is the product of his cause; Paul is the issue of his Master's cause which he makes his own. All great characters have been born of great causes. The glorious company of the apostles, the noble army of martyrs, the heroic succession of the prophets, the radiant band of devoted mothers, the splendid procession of great patriots, the clear-eyed and undiscouraged reformers, the deep-hearted, unwearied and unwearable friends of mankind, all have risen up in light and splendor from their causes. The capacity for worth is all that the idle and undevoted soul can possess; the actual worth of the whole world is drawn from the heart of the cause that is served. That men may come to their best, God has given them the kingdom to serve; that they may not fail of their reward, He gives them their utmost worth through their work for Him.

The deepest law of the spirit is that men become like what they love. The horror of perversity is here that men in their wantonness are being conformed to base ends; the tragedy of mistake is clearly seen when it appears that the soul in its mistaken love is approaching in char-

acter the hideous idol that has deceived it; the glory of reasonable love shines in the swift process whereby the lover is assimilated to the loftier character of the beloved; the saving grace in the Christian faith is revealed by the manner in which the love of Christ exalts the whole human being; the divine nature of man is attested by his capacity to love the Eternal Worth; the divine life takes possession of man as he gives himself in love to the Infinite Loveliness. According to Plato the highest good is to become like God as far as that is possible for man; and the possible is made actual through love. The supreme end of existence according to our Lord is to be like God; "ye shall be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect"; and the way to that ineffable goal is through love. All highest thought of man works out its good for man through man's love for the Eternal Loveliness. The state of the heart is the reflection of the heart's object; when the heart reflects Christ, its mood is worth and peace, as the lake is luminous and beautiful in whose depths the star shines.

3. The hope of the kingdom of heaven as cause and as mood is in the will of God. Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. The origin of the kingdom gives us the right to be optimists. Look at the operation of the kingdom of the ideal. Here

is a man who in his life defies the divine order of his being; the will of God continues to hold that order for him; upon sensualist, drunkard, self-seeker, that order is forever pushed further and further; he cannot eject it; it torments him by its divine beauty. Look at that home seeking happiness in wild egoism, in disregard of social man and social justice. Is that home happy? The divine order of home is in its heart; that order searches it, judges it, condemns it, holds it under perpetual punishment. There is trade when every man's hand is against every other man's. Does that condition of the industrial world issue in happiness, in content? There is another order proclaiming that man is needful to man, that man is the brother of man. Wherever you look you find that God's order will not vanish at the bidding of man's selfishness; that man cannot stand absolved in the process of egoism; that he cannot find happiness or the realization of his being in disregard of the divine purpose that lives in him, the veritable, indwelling God.

This order that cannot be overthrown, that pushes on to ever greater authority through the sins and follies of man, gives us hope that it will prevail. You cannot drive God out of human life. You cannot undo his deity; his sovereignty lies deep and permanent in man's being; and He will torment man — individual, domestic, social,

national, racial man — till man lifts his vision to the divine order, till like the Prodigal he says, "I will arise and go to my Father." The deepest thing in this world is not the evil will or the base desire or the inner shame or the confederate wickedness of mankind, but the sovereign will of God in the blood, bone, and tissue, in the intelligence, feeling, conscience, and will of mankind. The expulsion of the Deity from the context of human life is hopeless; the triumph of God through the persuasions of his reign is a legitimate hope.

The vision of the kingdom of the ideal is one of the supreme consolations of mankind. Look backward across the expanse of the weary centuries and behold men from age to age lifting up their hearts in the strength of the ideal. Abraham in the dim morning of history went out not knowing whither he went, seeking the city that "hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Moses, the leader of a multitude of emancipated slaves, attains to the vision of an ideal nation, for forty years serves his people in the might of that vision, in the wildness and loneliness of the wilderness, and at last in the peace of the ideal goes home to God. The illustrious line of the prophets of Israel, living in the heart of the injustice and shame of their time, were sustained by the vision of the kingdom of the

ideal; they painted upon the canvas of the coming years their vast and splendid dream of the King who should rule in righteousness and bring in an age of power and joy to mankind. Plato, sickened by the corruptions of Greek society, writes a book whose richness is one of the chief glories of history, a book that seeks to enshrine the vision of the Eternal Ideal. Paul becomes the heroic and happy servant of an empire that persecuted and that finally rewarded him with a criminal's death in the power of his heavenly vision. John, another Christian apostle, found the consolation of his heart in the loneliness and suffering of his age in the assurance of the Jerusalem that he saw descending out of heaven. The author of the letter to the Hebrews, one of the greatest of compositions, looks through the whole passing history of his people to the kingdom that cannot be shaken and rests his soul there. Augustine, living when Rome was going to wreck under the burden of its corruption, writes his "City of God," consoling his heart in his sorrow with the consciousness of the divine and imperishable. These seers and prophets have been followed by a multitude that no man can number of earnest and aspiring souls. Of all who have lived for the highest and who have toiled that the best might come to pass in human society, we must say, "These all died in faith,

not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." Their pilgrimage was in the consolation of the kingdom of the ideal.

Jesus consummates the desire and the ideal of the ages in his vision of the kingdom of heaven. He beholds a kingdom that has its origin in the will of God, that is supported by the will of God; a kingdom that becomes our sovereign cause opening a way out of selfishness, providing relief and oblivion from wild egoism, calling us to share the glory of the Universal Good; an ideal in whose splendor is gathered the scattered lights of all the earnest centuries, in whose presence we can think our best, achieve our utmost, live at our being's height, and die in heroism and hope.

THE END



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