THE SEA OF FAITH

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For there is a true church wherever one hand meets another helpfully, and that is the only holy or Mother Church which ever was or ever shall be. RUSKIN.

Learning has its dangers, but their cure is not in ignorance. Forward, not backward, into greater life; forward, not backward, into greater knowledge, not into less;—there, there only, lies the safety of the man or of the world.
PHILLIPS BROOKS.

The absolute religion which belongs to man's nature, and is gradually unfolded thence, like the high achievements of art, science, literature, and politics, is only distinctly conceived of in an advanced stage of man's growth; to make its idea a fact is the highest triumph of the human race. THEODORE PARKER.

I believe that to-day is better than yesterday, and that to-morrow will be better than to-day.
GEORGE F. HOAR.

Man is the higher sense of our planet; the star which connects it with the upper world; the eye which it turns towards Heaven.

NOVALIS.

Opinions alter, manners change, creeds rise and fall, but the moral law is written on the tablets of eternity. For every false word or unrighteous deed, for cruelty and oppression, for lust or vanity, the price has to be paid at last, not always by the chief offenders, but paid by some one. Justice and truth alone endure and live. Injustice and falsehood may be long-lived, but dooms-day comes at last to them.

J. A. FROUDE.

. . . The ultimate faith, which never wavers within me, that through the sunshine or through storm, our nature is being trained to a perfection, of insight and character, beyond our present power to conceive.

MARTINEAU.

Education is the bread of the soul.

MAZZINI.

Where inquiry is denied at the door, doubt gets in at the window. BENJ. JOWETT.

Thus we are men and we know not how; there is something in us that can be without us and will be after us; though it is strange that it has no history what it was before us, nor cannot tell how it entered us.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

That the State and not the Church (in the common and corrupt sense of the term) is the perfect form in which Christianity is to be developed agrees entirely with my notions.

DR. THOMAS ARNOLD OF RUGBY.

Truth never is, is always becoming.

SCHILLER.

Truth is never learned in any department of industry, by arguing, but by working and observing; and when you have got hold of one truth for certain, ten others will grow out of it.— The assertion of truth is to be always gentle. RUSKIN.

THE SEA OF FAITH

"The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's
shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world."

THESE lines from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach" are artistic as poetry but are not accurate as a recital of facts. They were evidently written by the poet while in a mood of reaction. There never was such a uniformity in human belief as the verses indicate. The beautiful word-picture is only a poetic dream. Perplexed by the daring flights of mod-

ern thought, ill at ease with the materialism of his times, the poet created an unhistoric, imaginary past. In another poem he speaks of the time

"Before this strange disease of modern life,
With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
Its heads o'ertaxed, its palsied hearts, was rife."

These lines are also the utterance of world-weariness. They are not genuine. However, all of us are liable to such moods. In the on-rush of modern activities, in the strain, uncertainty, impatience and confusion of our epoch, we often are tempted to turn our faces backward and toy with the delusion that there was once a time of universal harmony. Thus the non-conformist may become a reactionary conformist. Fortunately for the cause of progress, such reversionary spells are generally short-lived. They are emotional rather than intellectual. It is not uncommon

for the reason to be dethroned by the emotions, and then the result is painful. Sometimes the very leaders in reform become faint and weary and utterly fail. Occasionally even a most aggressive spirit,—of whom we might say, "One blast upon his bugle horn were worth a thousand men,"—falls into the rear or joins the opposing forces. Then the dismayed followers mourn "The Lost Leader."

Not so, however, with Matthew Arnold. Like all men, he was composite. His intellectual bias reverted to Hellenic culture, with which his literary expression is garnished; his sense for beauty attracted him to venerated forms and imposing ceremonies; his sense for reverence was charmed by stately architecture and "the dim religious light" of cathedrals; his refined taste revolted from the lean, unadorned simplicity of worship in the churches

which have rejected formal ritual. All that was consecrated by the hand of time, hallowed by the usage of generations, especially when touched with art, appealed to him. This side of his character was built upon temperament. It is the mirror of his early associations and literary culture. His conception of life was delicate.

The real Arnold was greater than the esthetic Arnold. His thought was wonderfully stimulating. Few writers of the last century have contributed more to the growing religious liberalism of our day. When the Arnold of the nineteenth century spoke, his words became battle cries. He pleaded for freedom, enlightenment, truth and high living. His disciplined mind rejected a literal interpretation of the ancient creeds; he knew that the spirit of vital Christianity is not confined to the formulas in which the historic doctrines are

swathed. He saw that a reform must come; that the old order must change and yield place to the new. He fancied that Christian unity, for which he longed, might be had, not, indeed, by a reversion to obsolete beliefs, to archaic statements of dogma, but by an absorption of the advanced intelligence and religious thought of his times, into the older forms. A breath of new life must be blown into them. They must be re-interpreted in spirit, if not changed in letter. Enlightened men can no longer be "suckled in a creed outworn." Hence his constant plea for an inward change, a relaxing of rigid dogma, a generous hospitality, an abatement of ecclesiastical pretensions, a spiritual reconciliation. R. H. Hutton, one of his contemporaries, says of Arnold:— "No one has explained more powerfully and poetically its (his generation's) spiritual weakness, its craving for a

passion that it cannot feel; its admiration for a self-mastery that it cannot achieve; its desire for a creed it fails to accept; its sympathy for a faith it will not share; its aspirations for a peace it does not know."

His plea had a hearing; and it was of moving power among the many agencies which are slowly blending the jarring sects into an ethical fellowship. Many cannot accept his remedy as final; it seems to them only partial. It has led to some strange inconsistencies; to some intellectual and moral tragedies. If there be any one thing with which one should never palter in a double sense, it is the spirit of truth. Unhappy he whose intellect has outgrown his creed, and yet who by fatal compromises plays with the soul's most sacred interests, and is snared by words and forms. Arnold's position is an example of the constant welfare of "the

wild, living mind of man" with ancient forces which lie in the path of religious progress. It gives us a hint of the royal sway of inveterate custom and powerful association. If men of high intellectual endowment are so held by the dead hand of the past, we can see why the inert mass of men so slowly shift from their traditions; why institutions persist which have long been, at least partially, dislocated from modern thought. In the main this is because human beings are naturally conservative. Well that they are. Sudden changes are unhealthy. Popular religion is so closely intertwined with conventional moral sanctions that convulsive advances soon are turned into a retreat. Progress must be based upon education, and all educational processes are slow.

WE must remember also that the highest education is only partial. Hence we often see, among men of fine intelligence in some specialized knowledge, a remarkable credulity in other matters. Faraday, an original investigator of scientific truths, belonged to the strange sect of Sandemanians, and said that "he kept his science and religion in separate pockets." Alfred Russel Wallace, an eminent scientist, is a believer in spiritualistic manifestations. Yet both have taught intellectual honesty and have striven to be intellectually honest. Instances of a recoil to the ancient forms of churchly life occasionally are seen among minds of very high order.

John Henry Newman, an engaging personality of the last century, passed back into the Mother Church. His thought, however elevated, was not in

harmony with the spirit of his day. He said of himself:—"From the age of fifteen, dogma has been the fundamental principle of my religion. I know no other religion. I cannot enter into the idea of any other sort of religion." A mind thus saturated with dogma naturally found its sanction in an ecclesiastical system which rests on an expression of faith stratified in unchanging creeds.

The late Ferdinand Brunetière, one of the lights of recent French literature, followed Newman's example. He was moved by a profound sense of solidarity which finds its sanction in a cosmopolitan church; a reverence for "a principle of restraint in human nature found in the total experience of the race and embodied in tradition."

However, these reversions are not numerous. The trend,—the intellectual trend at least,—is the other way.

Many changes in church relations, which lead into the older communions, are social. In countries which have an established church the greater number of scientists and the literary classes are without its pale, or give to it merely a formal adherence. Like Naaman of old, they offer neither burnt offerings nor sacrifices unto other gods, but bow down themselves in the house of Rimmon. Temporary waves of reaction, retreats into obscurantism, will naturally occur. The path of progress is indirect; it has many curves; but, nevertheless, progress is certain. The stream never flows back to its source.

THERE is fortunately a growing tendency to a sympathetic view of conventional religion among the thinkers to whom it makes but a slight intellectual appeal. The religious instinct is now considered by the most skeptical

scientist as at least a profoundly interesting phenomenon, to be studied as a part of the evolution of human thought. Those who have brought themselves out of the old ways have abandoned sneers when speaking of the popular faith. There is an increasing hospitality to any form of institution that is addressed to human needs. This is a welcome change from the hoarse discords of the eighteenth century. The spirit of Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, John Stuart Mill, John Richard Green, William K. Clifford, Renan, Lecky, Emerson, and almost all the German rationalists, was very different from that of Voltaire, Diderot, Gibbon, Hume, and the other Deists of their age. Historical research, calm criticism, hospitable judgments, sympathetic study, have taken the place of sarcasm.

We must never overlook the impor-

tance of the historic continuity which links together the events of successive generations. Every created thing has its origin. All existing institutions have their roots in the past. Wordsworth says:—

"There is
One great society alone on earth,
The noble living and the noble dead."

Comte says:—"Humanity is composed of more dead than living."

Our modern life is full of survivals. There is not an invention, or any social status, which does not have its roots in unknown antiquity. We have the accumulated fund of experience which antecedent generations have gathered for us. Names and forms change, but the deposit of antiquity is here; modified, enlarged, enriched, impressed with the touch which each passing age has given. All is articulated with the hoary past.

So with historic creeds. Dr. Bushnell called them "Formulated Christian Experience." They were the rallying point of the primitive church; the core around which the splendid structure grew. They have had their great uses. If they and the forms which have come down through the ages still minister to millions of our fellow men, whose minds do not yet respond to what seems to many the larger faith, the fact shows that they have a use. "Obsolete" or "decadent" they may seem to the minority who have been lifted into a zone of free thought; not so to the believing multitude. Happily the literal emphasis on the creeds grows fainter among great bodies of people who nominally accept them. They are interpreted differently by different minds; for nothing is more divergent than what we call faith.

In C. J. Woodbury's "Talks with

Ralph Waldo Emerson," the following anecdote is reported:—

"As he rose to go, we saw from the little door of the Hermitage (a structure in Williamstown, Mass.) the spire of the chapel in the gathering dark.

" 'How many faiths are there in this village?' he (Emerson) asked, as he descended the steps.

"Before I could reply, trying to call to mind the number of churches, I heard his quiet voice again:—

" 'Three thousand five hundred people: three thousand five hundred faiths in the village of Williamstown. Let yours not come from tradition. Life is awry at best. The effort should be evermore to widen the circle, so as to admit ventilation. Seek first spirit and second spirit, and third and evermore spirit.' "

This is true. Faith and assent are very different things. The very prin-

ciple of individualism prevents the permanent unity of thought. So far as any expression of faith reaches subtle human instincts, there will be a general acceptance, while such instincts are active. The tap-root of religion is one thing; its efflorescence another. It is only the universal religion, the everlasting, immutable truths, welling up from the sacred reserves of humanity, "mixed with all our mystic frame," that is changeless. Says Kipling:—

"My brother kneels (so saith Kabir)
To stone and brass in heathen-wise;
But in my brother's voice I hear
My own unanswered agonies.
His God is as his Fates assign;
His prayer is all the world's and mine."

If we acept, as all religions do, the theory of a theistic government of the world, the present condition of things is just as much the result of divine agency as an original creative act.

Whatever terms we may use in trying to define the undefinable, once acknowledge that the nature of things is moral, then the divine power is traced through all the maze of history. If there be a divinity, it is everywhere; immanent in all existences; in every act and thought. Once banish it from any crevice of the universe or any created thing, and there would be at least a partial atheism. There can be no excretum which is not penetrated by it. It is at all times operative.

Aboriginal man, a planetary product, of the earth, earthy, was not cast as a derelict on this mundane life, and left without a gleam of light to guide him through its awful mysteries, frightful temptations, physical agonies, immeasurable vicissitudes. While it always can be truly said of him,—

"A breath thou art,
Servile to all the skyey influences,"

his inner eye has been fed by heavenly light; he has breathed an ideal air. If he has wallowed in the fetid morass of sin, he now knows that his true life is one of righteousness.

How long he has been on this planet, no one knows; how long he will remain on it, no one knows. Is he only in his infancy; or is he ripening to decay; are ages of progress unfolding before him, in which he is to advance from knowledge to knowledge, and to be illumined by more and more of the divine, or will he vanish in the not remote future, by some cataclysm, amid "the wrecks of matter and the crush of worlds?" He has eaten of the tree of knowledge; he has, at least in his civilized condition, outgrown many of his primitive superstitions, much of his elemental ferocity. He has moved on to a larger, richer, life. He has begun to know himself; to approach a real self-consciousness.

In every step of this advance he has drawn more and more from the inward fountain of divinity. Always imperfect, still the victim of dark passions and primitive tendencies, he has "followed the gleam" and has striven "to rise upward, working out the beast, and let the ape and tiger die." We realize how incomplete the transformation has been; with what leaden steps progress has advanced; how powerful even now are the forces of reaction; how much remains to be done; yet, with all drawbacks, splendid has been the moral growth of mankind, even if the summit is never to be attained.

LEARNED writers have often discussed the perfectibility of man; that is, can he attain to an absolute morality? In a world of unceasing change, of ever-working processes, where the inexorable fiat, "Thou shalt

change," seems to be written on the frontlet of every organism,—the answer to this problem is beyond human faculties. The pageant of our solar system will disappear in time. All things will follow the inviolable law of re-creation. Moral growth is a part of cosmic law. If anything could be absolutely perfect, or immune from physical laws, there would be no place for growth or improvement; there would simply be a field for the exercise of perfected results. In other words, there would be an end to progress, a realization of the ultimate.

However, it is faith in the improvable element in mankind that has led to social progress. When Horace Mann, —to whose impulse the present common-school system of the United States is due more than to any other one agency,—was asked, "How is it that you have power to do such great things

for your country, at such great sacrifice, when you are so misunderstood and misinterpreted?"—he answered,—"I am sustained by my deep conviction of the improvability of the human race,—the infinite improvability." This sublime confidence is the touchstone of all well-directed reforms.

EVERY step of progress has cast upon mankind a deeper responsibility. Like a child growing into manhood, he has put away childish things. We do not have the same standard of morals for children and grown people. It is more exacting, as innocence is supplanted by responsibility. While everyone recognizes this fact, which rests upon the known imperfections of childhood and the workings of the principle of growth,—the race has often taken a different view of itself. Poets

have dreamed of a past Golden Age of perfection. This is a mirage. There was an age of irresponsibility before the child-man awoke to moral consciousness. Of course this was an age of innocence. No creature can be held to moral responsibility who is not capable of it. Neither was there ever an age of felicity, when men lived in a community of brotherhood, each loving his neighbor as himself. Any interpretation of history which teaches such illusions is mistaken.

Simplicity, moral innocence, do not mean perfection or happiness. The childhood of man, or of the race, has its charms; it is naturally free from anticipated care and wearisome labor; it lives in the present; its satisfactions are easily obtained; but real enjoyment comes with maturer powers, increased intelligence, the performance of duties

and the assumption of responsibilities which are a part of the deeper meaning of life.

Into this stage of development mankind has grown. We know nothing of primal and ultimate things. We may trace the physical structure of an organism to its secret lair in unicellular tissue, and ask it its meaning; but lo! it dies, and makes no sign. We may have splendid visions of the "ALL-HAIL Hereafter," and mirror to our hopes a paradisiacal existence "beyond the veil," but no outward witness furnishes evidence. We may draw analogies from the phenomena of nature; but they all answer, "We too are perishable, we are subject to all-pervading law, and, like you, we pass into the imperceptible, 'out of space, out of time.'"

Shall man, then, abandon his age-long hope of immortality? No, he

looks into his own heart, and becomes a witness to himself. His intuitions are his prophecy. He is the only being who has moral consciousness; who has learned the distinction of right and wrong; who has developed social ethics; who can avail himself of social heredity; who can commune with the Infinite on the wings of prayer; and who can feel in his soul, that this turbid, incomplete life, with all its possibilities of moral dignity or abysmal wickedness, is not "the be-all and the end-all here." Man recoils upon himself and by learning how awful goodness is, is assured that, as goodness is immortal, a self-conscious being can never die. More and more is mankind falling back upon self-consciousness, looking into the soul of the race for proof of the immense possibilities of life, and the deathlessness of a personality which is a partaker of the divinity in which the universe is en-

sphered. Slowly we are realizing a higher conception of life, a sense of man's magnificent moral endowment; nobler ethical types; a deeper recognition of "the divinity that shapes our ends." Surely there are many omens of the coming of a better order.

THUS is the world ever moving on to a larger faith; thus it always has moved. Every successive form of faith is more comprehensive than that which it succeeded. The Greek and Roman mythologies, childish as they seem to us, but for many ages accepted by intellectual and powerful nations, and susceptible of arousing deep religious devotion,—were a larger and better faith than the fetichism, which in some form was the religion of men for very many years.

These mythologies were on the plane of national intelligence; at the time of

their origin they shared in the highest thought then realized. Systems of philosophy were gradually grouped around them; creeds were developed, to question which became blasphemy. The sharpest intellects were the questioners. Grecian art gilded the fabulous deities with a radiance of almost supernal beauty. Devotion refined grossness into idealism. Time and habit stereotyped the popular mythologies into a part of the established order of things and knitted them to tribal history. Worship became more and more elaborate, as the myths grew into the national heart. Crude and gross as the cult was, its roots shot up from the soil of natural religion. Some of the growths were wholesome; some poisonous. Slowly new relations of religious thought to life came into being. Under the soft Ionian skies the gods whom the people worshipped became more and

more sensuous. They ceased to be symbolic of the highest ideals of the Greek race. For many years the state upheld the popular superstitions. When they were unmasked and found to be a lie, they perished, as all falsehood perishes in due time.

The Roman character was rugged and practical. The ancestral religion was closely associated with home-life. It reflected the extraordinary administrative power of the nation. Beginning at the hearthstone, it expanded into the government of the Empire. At first simple, it was gradually infected with the sensual superstitions washed up from the Orient. It borrowed from the Greek religion its intoxicating dregs, but not its beautiful idealism. It was a tolerant faith; it absorbed foreign gods and goddesses, as the Roman Empire threw its mighty arms around the known world. The

Latin religion was a cult of rites, formulas, omens, charms and magic. Slowly the nation outgrew them and was made ready for a higher form of faith.

CHRISTIANITY did not fall out of the skies unheralded, as an unrelated incident, for which Greek and Roman life was entirely unprepared. It came as the resultant of a myriad of forces. It was an enlargement of antecedent faiths, grafted upon them like a green mistletoe bough upon a hoary tree.

ALL changes in faith are known to follow in the wake of a growth of general intelligence. The brilliant civilization of the Greek republics, the most attractive the world has known; the august Roman Empire, a marvel of administrative ability, having grown

into a larger conception of knowledge, became weary of the childish mythologies of their early days. "The glory that was Greece, the grandeur that was Rome" had felt for many years the challenge to sounder canons of morals. In the fullness of time, something must come to lift society out of "this muddy vesture of decay" in which it was mired. The vivifying, regenerating power was found in Christianity. The new faith was drawn from the fountain of the Hebrew religion; from its passionate theism, which had been developed out of the crude conception of a tribal god, —reflecting in its primitive aspects, the ferocity and limitations of a semi-barbarous race,—into the sublime conception of Universal Fatherhood as taught by Jesus.

How much the world owes to the Hebrews; and yet what other race ever cast away such pearls of spiritual lead-

ership. What an irony that Jesus and St. Paul, those supreme leaders of spirituality, should have been rejected by the race into which they were born. Later on, centuries after, Spinoza, "the God-intoxicated man," as Novalis called him, whose thought penetrated into the deepest recesses of philosophy and which has profoundly influenced subsequent generations, was also disowned by his people.

Is it possible that the grand anthologies, magnificent poetry, incomparable dramas, passionate prayers, and immortal literature of the Old Testament are only the broken arc of a greater literary expression of the Hebrew people, written in the days of their awful moral enthusiasm, which has disappeared in its wholeness? What a loss to the world that we know so little of Hillel and Gamaliel, whose teachings must have been of great ethical value,

as we see their elements distilled in the words of Jesus and St. Paul. By and by the patient Jew may come to his own, when the world will recognize its spiritual debt to him, and when he has ceased to stone his prophets.

It is needless to say that Christianity, even when saturated with the mythical elements drawn from the ancient Mediterranean religions, was an immensely larger and purer religion than the mythologies that preceded it. It had a nobler morality; it taught forgiveness of injuries and human brotherhood; the sense of sinfulness; an insistence upon personal righteousness; it had for its central figure the Christ of the Gospels; it introduced into the world a new humanism; its essence was liberal; its spirit progressive and synthetic. Some of its early fathers held unworthy opinions of women; but as it became a world-religion it adopted a higher

standard for their treatment and made them the equal of men. As it contained so many possibilities of progress, it was accepted by the most virile nations of the world.

It was transformed unfortunately into a state religion when adopted by the Roman Empire and almost lost its primitive simplicity; assumed some pagan aspects, to eliminate which has been a slow and painful process. Yet, even then, and in all its successive modifications, it probably presented as high a type of faith as contemporaneous societies could absorb. The general thought of man is of concrete things. Probably if modal Christianity had not been impressed with elements of antecedent thought and rites, it would not have been adopted by the European nations. It was a wonderful advance when the wild rough tribes of Northern Europe were withdrawn from the wor-

ship of a pantheon of crude deities, often reeking with slaughter, always blackened with earthiness, into the acceptance of one God and one intercessor, who was presented by the missionaries of the early Church, coming from the Mediterranean states, as the one sinless type of human excellence, the divine incarnated in man.

As the pale Olympian deities fled into impalpable shadows; as their temples were converted into Christian shrines; as nymphs, sprites, satyrs, fauns, dryads and naiads no longer peopled the groves and shores of the Southland with their airy presences; —so, in the Northland, Thor, Odin, Woden and Frida, became names alone. Christian missionaries, penetrating the glooming forests of Germany and Scandinavia, carried the alphabet hand in hand with the cross. The mysterious "Runes," which were supposed to pos-

sess magical qualities, so that they could excite love or hatred, stop a sailing vessel or a flying arrow, or even raise the dead, were left on "scarpèd cliff or quarried stone"; frail memorials of the infantile intellectual stirrings of a rude folk. The High Song of the Eddas was hushed before the canticles of the Bible. The Christian hope of immortality gave to Norse life a new value; decease from old age or sickness was no longer "Straw death." The reconciling cross supplanted the tree Ygdrasil, the topmost bough of which was called "Lerad, the peace giver." Odin's favorite warriors, with their Berserker rage, which was supposed to endow them with strength to perform unheard-of feats of valor, although naked, weaponless and sore-beset, retreated before the unarmed knights of the rising faith. Odin, the wild huntsman, with his rout of those condemned to

hunt forever through the realms of air, became a mythical hero. Thor's magic hammer, which had the wonderful property of always returning to his hand, however far he might throw it, disappeared into fairy-literature, like the wand of Mercury.

Surely whatever superstitions of the ante-Christian religions lingered in the new faith were harmless, when compared with the coarse idolatries which it expelled. The spiritual advance both in Northern and Southern Europe was of incalculable value.

THE ages when the Sea of Faith is claimed to have been full would now be impossible. There were not wanting men of spiritual vision; or those who absorbed the narrow scholarship of the day; those of consecrated, beautiful lives, "men of light and leading." They were ages of war, repres-

sion, cruelty, of vain scholarship, of pedantic learning, which was the property of the few, while the masses were ignorant. It was a formative period in history. But the bright girdle of faith, which the poet imagines, so far as it ever existed in fact, was only too often a coil which strangled free thought, opposed scientific research, crushed liberalism, and held society in a vice, from which it was not extricated until after many years of suffering and bloodshed. The dead hand of ecclesiasticism was but slowly relaxed, and indeed has not yet been wholly released, and is still a powerful agency for reaction.

THE thirteenth century has been considered the high-water mark of the so-called Ages of Faith. It was indeed a wonderful era. Its history is most interesting. It was a splendid prophecy of the Europe of to-day.

The century was prolific in "the airy tongues that syllable men's names." It was an age of startling contrasts. Its legacy in thought, poetry, art, philosophy, literature, is immense. In the thirteenth century lived the great-souled Dante, whose inspired vision of eternal verities is pictured in poems of surpassing genius; in it were written those noble hymns, *Dies irae, dies illa* and *Stabat Mater dolorosa,* whose rhythmical cadence, swelling through "the long drawn aisle and fretted vault" throbs with the very soul of the Middle Ages. This century is also memorable as the era of cathedral building, when ecclesiastical architecture reached its proudest expression; when those wonderful Gothic edifices "rose to upper air," temples of reconciliation, constructed with consummate skill, appealing to the profoundest depths of man's

sense of awe; survivals of the days when art was consecrated to religion.

Most deeply do these vast cathedrals touch the imagination, even of the broadest thinker. Emerson says of them,—"The Gothic cathedrals were built when the builder and the priests and the people were overpowered by their faith. Love and fear laid every stone." It was a visit to the cathedral at Chartres that lifted the poet Lowell into one of his most inspiring poems.

"In that Old World so strangely beautiful
To us the disinherited of Eld,—
A day at Chartres, with no soul beside
To roil with pedant prate my joy serene
And make the minster shy of confidence.

. . . . .

Looking up suddenly, I found mine eyes
Confronted with the minster's vast repose.
Silent and gray as forest-leagured cliff
Left inland by the ocean's slow retreat,

. . . . .

It rose before me, patiently remote
From the great tides of life it breasted once,
Hearing the noise of men as in a dream.

. . . . .

History and legend meeting with a kiss
Across this bound-mark where their realms confine;

. . . . .

I entered, reverent of whatever shrine
Guards piety and solace for my kind
Or gives the soul a moment's truce of God
And shared decorous in the ancient rite
My sterner fathers held idolatrous.

. . . . .

'Tis irrecoverable, that ancient faith
Homely and wholesome, suited to the time,
With rod or candy for child-minded men.

. . . . .

Science was Faith once; Faith were science now,
Would she but lay her bow and arrows by
And arm her with the weapons of the time.
Nothing that keeps thought out is safe from thought.

. . . . .

And Truth defensive hath lost hold on God.

. . . . .

The Cross, bold type of shame to homage turned,
Of an unfinished life that sways the world,
Shall tower as sovereign emblem over all."

. . . . .

Wordsworth, perhaps of poets the most impressionable to the charm of antiquity, gave to his imagination free flight in some of his ecclesiastical sonnets. A visitor from the New World, wandering through venerable shrines in the Mother Land, feels their very spirit in his noble words. The hush of dead ages falls upon the senses from their wings. He speaks of King's College Chapel as

———this immense
and glorious work of fine intelligence,

. . . . .

Where light and shade repose, where music dwells
Lingering—and wandering on as loath to die;
Like thoughts whose very sweetness yieldeth proof
That they were born for immortality.

Even in a higher strain is his rhapsody on Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's, London:—

"They dreamt not of a perishable home
Who thus could build. Be mine, in hours of fear
Or groveling thought, to seek a refuge here;
Or through the aisles of Westminster to roam;
Where bubbles burst, and folly's dancing foam
Melts, if it cross the threshold; where the wreath
Of awe-struck wisdom droops; or let my path
Lead to that younger Pile, whose sky-like dome
Hath typified by reach of daring art
Infinity's embrace; whose guardian crest,
The silent Cross, among the stars shall spread
As now, when She hath also seen her breast
Filled with mementos, satiate with its part
Of grateful England's overflowing Dead."

And then we have the oft-quoted lines of Emerson:

"The hand that rounded Peter's dome
And groined the aisles of Christian Rome

Wrought in a sad sincerity;
Himself from God he could not free;
He builded better than he knew;
The conscious stone to beauty grew."

Our present university life had its formal beginning in this era. Education went hand in hand with art and religion. It was the age when organized charities began to succeed to individual alms-giving. Perhaps the sweetest flower of the century was that mediæval brother whom all men love, St. Francis of Assisi, whose self-sacrifice and humanity articulated formal religion with "the trivial round, the common task" of the daily life of the poor and lowly. The philosophy of the century found its voice in the works of Thomas Aquinas, a thinker of tremendous power, whose thought is still stamped upon his church.

A rich spiritual gift to later generations came from this era in "The Imita-

tion of Christ," by Thomas à Kempis. Much of the thought of this precious book, especially the dark and ignoble view of human life and the monstrous conception that the race is under the curse of God, the world has abandoned. Yet this voice from the cloister, although teaching saintliness rather than manliness, has profoundly moved many a sorrowing heart. George Eliot said of this monkish book:—"This voice out of the middle ages was the direct communication of a human soul's belief and experience. . . . It was written down by a hand that waited for the heart's promptings; it is the chronicle of a solitary hidden anguish, struggle, trust and triumph,—not written on velvet cushions to teach endurance to those who are treading with bleeding feet on the stones. And so it remains to all time a lasting record of human needs and human consolation."

All this in retrospect is very beautiful. From one point of view, an enchanted atmosphere broods over this age. One might imagine that an era which flowered into such rich blossoms must have been one of tranquillity, order, justice, purity and high living. But such it was not. Far from it. It was by no means an age of as high moral standards as those of our time. It abounded in civil wars, wickedness, poverty, misery, and degraded social life; although the moral status of preceding centuries was undoubtedly worse. Moreover, in spite of the apparently omnipotent authority of the church in matters of faith, which, in alliance with the state, regarded heresy as the most heinous of crimes, and punished it with terrible severity, the age was rife in skepticism. These awful contrasts are compatible. In a measure, they exist in every age. John Milton's "Paradise Lost" was

written in the degenerate times of Charles II. Spinoza, one of the most Christ-like of men, lived in an age of intolerance and persecution. Jeremy Taylor, the author of "Holy Living, Holy Dying," a masterpiece of our English tongue, and Richard Baxter, whose "Saints' Everlasting Rest" has been a healing balm to many sorrowing souls, had suffered persecution and had felt the bitterness of their century of civil war, before their immortal works were born from their soul-life. The voice of the prophet, even of one crying in the wilderness, claims its hearing and gets it often when the noisy world seems to be deaf to its appeal. In the end, the race sits at the feet of its holy ones. Society slowly realizes its spiritual needs. It turns from the sly craft of the politician, the fleeting glory of the conquering warrior, to the inspired teacher, whose lips have been touched

by a coal from the altar-fire; whose appeal was to the conscience and highest instincts of the race, "By these things men live."

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century was a vast liberating force. It was brought about by many agencies, had long been foreshadowed and was inevitable in some form. In many respects it was a democratic movement; it was largely the rise of the laity against spiritual despotism. Unfortunately it was accomplished, as almost all reformatory movements are, by violence; in its train were confusion and excesses.

The Reformation made for a greater synthesis, although in its origin it was a disintegrating force. It was healthful to the older church, as it caused a partial inward reform, as well as an outward one.

Professor Harnack says of Martin

Luther:—"He liberated the natural life and the natural order of things." Indeed, we may say of him, as has been said of St. Paul,—"He challenged men to a new habit of thought."

The Protestantism of Luther and Calvin, although an immense advance from the mediæval faith, was in itself dogmatic. The world was not ready for the progressive thought of our day. Protestantism was differentiated into numerous sects, but all were based upon rigorous creeds, whether allied to the state or not, and were unscientific in thought. They presented a view of the Scriptures and the relation of religion to life, which few men of learning, who are emancipated from literalism, would accept in our day. It was as a spiritual movement, not as a final statement of religious truth, that it has been of such priceless benefit to man. In spite of its inadequacy, and of all the dis-

sensions and conflicts which it engendered, Milton was right in calling the Reformation "bright and blissful." It was a forerunner to a marvelous growth of intelligence, and a partial emancipation of the race from an outgrown ecclesiasticism. It was the germ of modern democracy. The momentum of the movement has never ceased. The intrepid men who were its leaders little dreamed what a new force they had injected into the world.

Literalists as they were, they would have shrunk from the unseen consequences of their revolt from the church of their fathers. They charged the bolt, but could not direct its flight. They were working for ecclesiastical liberty; they were torch-bearers to a new conception of all religious truth.

Protestantism, however, as a system, never has made such a sustained and permanent appeal to the emotions as

Catholicism made in the days of its greatest vigor, and, indeed, makes now to many races. While it is true that the Reformation was a democratic movement, it must be remembered that the mediæval church had been in its spirit and largely in its administration intensely democratic; that is, when compared with feudalism and the monarchical systems which represented government in the middle ages. Protestantism necesarily refracts into many rays and has never been focalized into one cohesive force.

There has always been a distinct human edge on the Catholic Church. It has understood human nature. When it was allied with the highest thought of any era, it has appealed to the totality of man's character. Its energies have been magnificently directed. The natural man is endowed with a mystic vision and is submissive to a directed

order: and in these properties the church has been rich. The sacramental system of the church has been its strong bulwark; reaching into every stage of life, throwing a solemnity around almost every human relation.

When great masses of men were estranged from an institution so deeply invested with historic sanction and so closely allied to the life of the individual, the causes must have been irresistible. Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Knox and Melanchthon had for a giant adversary the most wonderfully compacted organization the world has ever known, built upon the reverence of the ages, understanding the primal forces underlying the conduct of men and women, armed with weapons which had been "as the air invulnerable" against all previous assaults.

MANY precious souls are disturbed by the inevitable collapse of traditional faith. Their severance from inherited doctrine is painful. It has ever been so. Any dislocation from the ancient ways is uncomfortable. Yet such is the working of the law of progress. It is hard to be wrenched from a conception of religion and life which has come down through the ages. We must remember, however, that the truth-seeker is not necessarily an iconoclast. He utilizes the material which the transmitted intelligence of mankind supplies to him, conserves and adds to what is true in it. If he is in advance of his time, he must wait for future generations to give him a hearing. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." In the alembic of time, all things are tested; that alone survives which is

worth survival; and nothing will survive that is not true.

Again and again, society has adopted new standards of morals; always in the end for the better. Ethical principles almost universally recognized in our day were unknown or unrecognized by lofty moralists of the past. Our view of war is not that of some of the writers of the Old Testament. Human slavery was legitimate in all the ancient civilizations. The inestimable worth of the individual, the sanctity of human rights, the remedial nature of penalties for violations of the legal code, the equality of man and of the sexes, the beneficent principles of international law, the freedom of conscience, the right to unfettered inquiry, and many other enlightened sentiments now embodied in the written law of all civilized lands, were but dimly apprehended in ancient and even mediæval civilizations.

The fading of any system of thought has always been disquieting to conservatives of any age. Nevertheless, system after system has faded. Sometimes the verbal setting has lingered; sometimes even that has disappeared "in the dark backward and abysm of time." There is, however, one supreme consolation; nothing that is true and worthy of survival has ever been entirely lost. The Moral Order takes care that no such catastrophe happens. To admit that truth can be destroyed is to impeach the Divine Power that controls all human events; for all truth is divine. A clarifying process is always acting in human thought. The ancient creeds of the church are now subjected to that process. The human mind will move away from that part of them which cannot stand the test of reverent inquiry.

The departure will not be a surrender to any brutal onslaught. The new coming thought will carry gentle peace in its right hand. The world will not be bereft of divine sanctions; the everlasting oracles will not be silenced. The church will be relieved of an incubus of myth, which will slowly melt before the "increasing purpose," which will harmonize religion and science. Far-off its coming has shone. The impending change will not come entirely by argument. Religion is not susceptible to the usual argumentative methods. With most believers, Christian faith is not a matter of intellectual convictions alone. Prof. Shailer Matthews, in his work, "The Church and the Changing Order," says most truly:—"Religion has to do with powers and instincts that are not acquired, but are elemental to all men. Religious instincts are as ele-

mental as the lust for blood. They are not something learned, and so added to life."

Pascal says with profound wisdom: —"The human reason alone is an unsatisfactory instrument and if truth is to take up its abode in us, it will not be by the gate of mere argument." In other words, a genuine religious faith is the response of the heart as well as of the intellect.

This religious instinct is undying. It is of the essence of man's moral sense. It is co-eval with humanity. Every age has attempted to explain the mystery of things in its own way. Man, through all ages, has heard the voice of the wind and thunder; has bowed before the tempest; has watched the re-current seasons; has felt the pathos of life, as countless generations have crumbled before disease and death. The tragic side of life has impressed

all men. Yet there never has been a moral vacuum since man's ethical sense began to assert itself. Countless generations have heard the imperious voice of the Moral Law. Deep within every human soul has flickered or blazed the light of conscience, since associated life began. How to explain life's tragedies, how to reconcile evil and suffering with a beneficent moral order, has been the eternal riddle. In days of old, in the far-off Syrian land, the richly endowed author of the wonderful book of Job attempted his explanation. Philosophers, poets, preachers, dreamers, moralists, scientists, have tried to

"Follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought,"

in the attempt at reconciliation. But elemental tragedies remain; their physical aspect is the same from generation to generation. Science has never lifted

the veil in which their meaning is hidden. It is only on their moral side that men have been able to interpret them. Our deepest convictions do not come from argument.

It is as a moral being that man knows that the universe is true, rational, righteous, beneficent. Even through blinding tears, or when stretched upon "the rack of this tough world," every man sooner or later

> "Hears at times a sentinel,
> Who moves about from place to place,
> And whispers to the worlds of space
> In the deep night, that all is well."

Traditional creeds must thaw, as man looks upon his earthly environment with larger and larger vision. Yet the race will progress from faith to faith. No finite mind can ever grasp the totality of things. Every increment of knowledge, quarried from the arcana of na-

ture's mysteries, will purify the faith of mankind.

WE are often told that some one church is the depository of the finality of truth; that all other things may change, but the creed never. That is claimed to be ultimate. No matter what changes may come in the thought of man, however much it may be broadened; whatever new knowledge may be won of the origins of Christianity, of the syncretic process by which, in its early days, it absorbed much from the decadent paganism which it superseded,—the statements of doctrine impressed upon the church in semi-barbarous days are immutable. Such has been and is the view of extreme sacerdotalism. From it have come the natural corollaries;—an infallible, universal church; a divinely appointed priesthood; a paternal regula-

tion of the lives of believers; an alliance of church and state in which the latter is subordinated to the former; the control of secular education. During the so-called Ages of Faith this was the lofty assumption of the mediæval church. It has never been abandoned, although modified in emphasis by increasing intelligence and the rise of democracy.

Such a claim was inspiring while the world needed paternal control; when the conception of physical law was naive; when political authority was vested in absolute royalty; when the masses of people were uneducated; when our present industrial order was only in its germ; when nation hated nation; when man's chief calling was rude agriculture or savage warfare. To deny that the mediæval church was of enormous benefit to human society in the days of confusion, chaos, con-

flict, and poverty, out of which modern civilization was developed, would be to belie history. The church in the Middle Ages was the core of the spiritual life of Europe. Its power was at times in the hands of men who abused it; its record is stained with wrong. Its assumption of infallibility led to persecution. It grasped after temporal authority; it aimed at universality; and it failed. Its very claim to immutability made it a clog to the intellectual advancement of the race. The vigorous and progressive nations of Europe, at the cost of infinite blood and of enormous conflict, wrested themselves from its fellowship. It was maimed of its political power. It unwillingly retreated, where it belonged, into the realm of spiritual authority. It remains a wonderfully compact and splendidly administered organization, and still responds to a great human need.

It appeals to many of the elemental forces of humanity, especially among the Latin and Celtic races. It has had within its communion very many of nobly spiritual lives which have been rich in piety and sanctity. Yet the throbbings of the new intellectual thought of the world are felt in its aged bosom. In spite of rigid dogmas and claims of infallibility, it must of necessity pass through a great transformation. Whether there will be another cleavage, like that of the Protestant Reformation, or whether old alignments will be nominally preserved and the disintegration be one of thought rather than of form, it is too early to say. The new view of life will penetrate the heart of the ancient church; it must become further and further detached from progressive thought, or it must adjust itself to the larger faith. The change must come gradually. Its ap-

peal to elemental instincts is still too real for any sudden transformation. Hundreds of years were required to develop the intellectual status which led to the Protestant Reformation. So it may be with the coming reformation. Like all other systems, and every church, the Catholic Church must be opened into an enlarged conception of religious truth. The ancient church is still a majestic fabric, and in its fold nestle, more than in any form of Protestantism, the primitive Christian doctrines. It is a tremendous force to be reckoned with in religious life. Should it suddenly disintegrate, ethical anarchy would follow temporarily among many millions of people. Its roots run too deeply into the past to be suddenly cut, without immense loss to those now under its guidance.

The church universal must share in this larger faith. Within its fold

should be its sanctuary. Even if all the historic elements were drained from it, it should remain to satisfy man's unappeasable needs. So long as the word duty has any meaning, the church should have a meaning. If it becames faithless, petrified, irresponsive to the deepest cravings of the human soul, it will be superseded by some other spiritual agency. Nothing can destroy the church but the church itself. While its direct appeal is to the individual, it must also reflect the collective conscience. It must recognize in man something more than an economic machine. It must feed the soul. It must be co-related with the advanced thought of the times, as it was to art in the days when art produced its noblest fruitage.

Not suddenly will the creeds be liberated from their mythical cerements. Ceremony, ritual, mystery, magic, still make their subtle appeal to millions of

worshippers,—and will do so for generations to come.

THERE has always been a predisposition to belief in what are called miracles. Yet the acceptance of the miraculous is dropping out in the happenings and marvels of our modern life. The faith of the average layman is still associated with the mythical elements of conventional belief. It will require many years of growing intelligence to complete the task of dissociation. It is a much easier problem for the mind to accept a few miracles, which antedate scientific methods and the rigorous canons of juridical inquiry, than to attach a miraculous quality to any of the wonders of our day. Thus the belief in the occurrence of miracles retreats further and further to events in the remote past. Traditions of miracles are associated with the beginnings

of all religions. But after all, what does belief in a miracle mean, more than a perception of a divine element working in objective nature? This is the final analysis of the term, whether it be amplified to a belief in a temporary suspension of a natural law, or the working of a law hitherto unknown.

THE word "revelation" has been limited to too narrow a meaning. Are not every discovery and invention a revelation? Is not every man who enlarges the empire of human knowledge a revealer of truth? Every saintly life reveals man's spiritual possibilities. Why should the church reject the inestimable gifts which science offers to it? Why should it not give its aid in urging man's search to larger issues? A vision of the divine has never been hidden from any race. Revelation has always poured its streaming light into the

human brain and conscience. Every religion which the world has known has had its part of divine truth. The Koran says:—"There is no country where God has not sent a prophet."

Benefactors of the race have often recognized that their works came from a higher power than themselves; in other words, that they were revealers. Confucius said he was "a transmitter, not a maker." When a friend said to Morse, the inventor of the electric telegraph,—"You must be proud, Professor, of your wonderful discoveries" —he answered modestly: "I am not proud, because I feel that they were not made by me, but through me." The botanist Linnæus caused to be inscribed over his lecture-room the motto, "Innocue vivito; Numen adest (live innocently; God is here); and said he always endeavored to trace "his science to its Author."

Many a humble man has "wist not that the skin of his face shone," like that of Moses of old, when others were sharing

"That best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered acts
Of kindness and of love."

"He who does a good act is instantly ennobled,"—said an Oriental seer. If goodness sanctifies, it also beautifies. Whenever any noble impulse ripens in a man's soul into action, at once others may see, as Tennyson said of his friend Hallam, in his great threnody, "the god within him light his face."

MOREOVER, it should never be forgotten that the definition of "revelation" as "experience" is correct. Any creed or statement of faith is only a vehicle to convey such experience to the apprehension of others. Every such

formula has a relative sense alone. The intellectual expression of an experience must always be inadequate. The inner vision cannot be completely unfolded. The verbal setting of any report of an historical experience, however elaborate, is related to the intelligence of the era in which it occurred. It is scarcely possible that two eras will understand the intellectual expression in the same way. There is no calculus with which to measure the shifting outlook on life and the moral concepts of successive generations. Our methods of expression are material; our thought is immaterial. Thomas Davidson says:—"The material has no common measure with the immaterial." Hence the creed of any church must constantly be remoulded, at least in its interpretation, to meet new points of view. In an archaic form it merely adumbrates latter-day thought.

A FINAL creed should be one that contains all spiritual truth. This is an impossibility from the very nature of things. The human mind cannot conceive of finality.

Let us take, for instance, the idea of God, which is the *crux* of all sound religious thought. The evolution of the belief in one Supreme God illustrates the constant expansion of faith. Primitive folk had no conception of the unity, the oneness of forces, to which idea education has brought us. To their rude intelligence the world around them was one of innumerable, detached, unrelated, independent objects and powers. Gradually the "untutored mind" began to "see God in clouds and hear him in the wind"; and these separate powers, such as the sun, moon, stars, woods, mountains, rain, lightning, fire, light and darkness, became person-

ified as gods or goddesses, or the abode of tutelar deities. The polytheistic idea, which when transfigured by poetry and art responded to the intuitive religious cravings of mankind, pointed the way to a sounder conception of divine power. It lasted for many generations. Its vestiges are even now in some statements of faith. In the form of dualism and pluralism, it still lurks in works of modern philosophy. It has been hard for the race to emancipate itself from the idea of a multiplicity of spiritual forces acting through many personalities.

By a gradual enlargement of human thought came the conception of unity. How irreligious, how skeptical it must have seemed to the faithful when the pantheon of ancestral deities retreated into unreality before the progressive thought of one Universal God. But every intelligent person now sees what

an immense advance of pure faith came from the merging of the pantheon into monotheism. Not only does the monotheistic idea appeal to a deeper religious sentiment: it also harmonizes with the advance of rational knowledge. The mind of man was slowly forming a concept of the unity of physical forces; it came to know that the same power that determines the form of the globule of water or of the snow-flake, moulds the vast bodies that swim in sidereal space; that the fall of the apple, the incidence of the rain-drop, are regulated by the same power that determines the axial rotation of the earth, the orderly whirl of planets around the suns, the crystallization of minerals, the rhythm and periodicity to which all organisms are subject; that lightning, electricity, heat and light are only manifestations of one power acting everywhere under majestic law.

Not by any flash of insight, or special revelation, has mankind grasped a conception of unity. It came by a slow advance in knowledge; by the patient investigations of many minds; it was frequently the work of men who were stigmatized as the unbelievers of their day; and who, sad to say, were often subjected to social ostracism and even to persecution from those who erroneously thought the innovators were destroying religion. But the human mind gradually absorbed the ever-gathering increment of knowledge; social life was adjusted to it; and religion has been an immense gainer.

So will be future blendings of thought. The movement will be towards simplicity; a simplicity that will be brought about through great diversity; a simplicity which will be the outcome of free thought. Liberty will succeed to the bondage of the letter.

Yet liberty is one of the costliest of privileges. The poet Lowell speaks of "storm engendering liberty." Every man who has stood in the foreground of progress has realized the truth of the saying of the Chief Captain to St. Paul:—"With a great sum obtained I this freedom." Freedom is worth its price.

ONE reason for the persistence of myth is the greater permanency of the cult or ritual in which the myth has its setting in worship. Our modern society abounds in customs, the origin of which runs back into forgotten antiquity. Among primitive folk such customs had a meaning; we observe them as an inheritance from the past. The buttons on the back and side of coats carry us back to the times when the sword and scabbard were a part of every gentleman's costume. The brace-

let worn on the wrist of a fashionable lady reminds but few of the gentle sex that such an ornament was once a badge of captivity or slavery. Instances of the survival of ancient social customs might be cited indefinitely. The most persistent survivals, however, are in religious rites. In modifying these, society has been most conservative. They are endeared to worshippers by centuries of usage; are hallowed by the memories of forefathers; upon them rests the benediction of the ages. New meanings may be read into creeds; "Modernism" may creep into doctrines; but rites and ceremonies outlast intellectual changes. The ritual has an historical authenticity and appeals to the senses; the subtle meaning of a creed requires an intellectual process. So it is taken on what is called faith. We know that the celebration of Easter and what is called Christmas antedates

Christianity. They are ancient nature-festivals. The Rogation, or blessing of the harvest in France, has come down from the days of Druidical worship.

It is only when looked at from without, or read literally, that creeds seem unchanging. The content of any doctrine which has relation to morals must change from time to time; for moral standards are always changing. We know that many of the ancient cults had little or no relation to morals. But any creed that attempts to interpret the Christ Spirit must be moulded upon the latter-day standards of morality, or it becomes a mere intellectual juggle. More and more is religion becoming associated with morals. Every real revival of pure religious faith is a striving towards an imperative sanction for a higher morality. The great message which Christ brought to the world was a call to the higher life. His kingdom

will not come on earth until the spirit of his teachings has been wrought into the fiber of a regenerated society. He imposed no intellectual burdens upon the world; his appeal was to the soul; he taught no creed. He called upon men to live this life as a part of the Eternal Life; to make the kingdom of this earth the kingdom of God. His was the living faith on which moralized life must be based,—not a philosophical system. His revelation was an unfolding of his personality to individuals, and, through them, to all mankind.

IT is only the individual who can be free; an institution is always in bondage. It rests upon a mechanism and demands conformity to it. It looks backward. Thus an institution is necessarily conservative. A political party formed to meet some urgent issue will often survive, in name at least, after

the issue has been settled. Yet, as every question is a part of a greater question, such parties generally are useful in preserving the continuity of political action.

THE principle of the conservation of energy applies to religion as well as to physical forces. Nature wastes nothing. Every atom of matter is ceaselessly utilized in myriad forms. Neither will the most precious of all the assets of the race,—its spiritual life,—ever suffer waste. It is the one thing which is immune from decay or rust, and which is as inexhaustible as immortal. The race is always more and more enriched by glorious visions of the Moral Order. Philanthropy has supplanted asceticism. The possession of wealth is now impressed with a trust that it shall be sanctified for human uses. The miser, gloating over his hid-

den hoard, has disappeared from fiction, and largely from practical life. Man, having faith in his fellow man, keeps his gains in active circulation and so feeds the fountains of industry. Saintly men and women no longer retreat to caves or the wilderness, to escape from an unregenerate society, but try to lift "the heavy and the weary weight of all this unintelligible world" from suffering humanity. Avarice, greed, selfishness, egoism are gradually transmuted into altruism. A Hague Convention is a harbinger of the growing detestation of war. A new sense of righteousness, a higher collective conscience, is developing in our social order. "For no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself." We are beginning to share in Shelley's vision of

"The love whose smile kindles the Universe,
The beauty in which all things live and move."

All these happy auguries are based upon faith in nobler and nobler ideals. At their apex rests the consciousness that man lives in a divine universe. Prof. William James says:—"The notion of God guarantees an ideal order that shall be permanently preserved. . . . This need of an eternal moral order is one of the deepest needs of our race." Not the tribal God of the Hebrews, not the national deities of the Greek and Roman mythologies, not the pitiless judge of Calvin, but the universal, immanent, paternal God, in whom all things live and move and have their being, is the God that enlightened men must worship.

While all human phrases interpreting the divine must always be inadequate, many of our day have found a reconciling comfort in the beautiful poem by William Herbert Carruth, entitled "Each in His Own Tongue."

A fire, a mist, and a planet,
  A crystal and a cell,
A jelly fish and a saurian
  And a cave where the cave men dwell.
Then a sense of law and beauty
  And a face turned from the clod;
Some call it evolution,
  Others call it God.

A mist on the far horizon,
  The tender, infinite sky,
The rich, ripe tints of the cornfields
  And the wild geese sailing by;
And all over lowland and upland
  The charm of the golden rod;
Some of us call it Autumn,
  Others call it God.

Like waves on a crescent sea beach,
  When the moon is new and thin,
Into our souls great yearnings come,
  Welling and surging in;
Come from that mystic ocean,
  Whose rim no foot hath trod,
Some of us call it longing,
  Others call it God.

A picket frozen on duty,
  A mother starved for her brood,
Socrates drinking the hemlock,
  And Jesus on the rood;
And thousands who, humble and nameless,
  The straight, hard pathway plod;
Some call it consecration,
  And others call it God.

WHERE shall the repository of ideals be found in the future? Is it to be in the church, the state, or in institutions of learning? There must be a repository for them somewhere. The church can hold them if it be true to the Spirit of Christ. The opportunity is before it. To embrace the opportunity is to avert a crisis.

The repository of ideals will be in that force which has the most faith:—a faith that looks to the future, and not to the past; that quickens all that is highest and best in the race. Ever true

is the great saying:—"For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

LET no one believe that we are not now living in an age of faith, indeed, of the greatest faith ever known among men. Our social life, our industrial order, our humanism, our most sacred spiritual consciousness, are built upon faith. Without faith they could not exist. Never did men have greater confidence in each other and in the future of the race. Never was there a deeper sense of brotherhood. We are far from an ideal status. There are giant wrongs, tremendous social evils; nevertheless, our faith in man and God is immensely greater than that of the middle ages.

An ever larger number in the Christian civilizations can no longer find shelter behind a dogmatic creed or an

infallible church. They do not believe that there are in the universe any unrelated facts. The divine order of the world is one of progressive revelation; it is not fully interpreted in its ineffable beauty by any or all of the world's religions. The redemption of humanity from sin and its inevitable results is not to be attained by one scheme of salvation. However attractive the power of historical communion and churchly life may be, they are not the only forces that lead onward and upward. Neither is the honest, reverent skepticism which denies the narrow tenets of cryptic creeds an injury to the race. Dr. Martineau says,—"The deepest form of skepticism is seen in the mind which is in haste to believe; which resolves by some violent spring to make an end of darkness, whether the light attained be God's or not."

At no time in the history of the

world has so much of divine light been seen as to-day. If there be a decrease of certitude as to theological problems, there is nevertheless less dread of death. We live in a brighter atmosphere than any of our forbears. We have been led by the scientific spirit to a larger charity in our judgments of other men. If we reject external authority, which is not authentic, the internal authority is followed to a greater degree than in antecedent ages. The thought of the world is lifting itself to a higher expression of religious truth. No age ever has been free,—our own is not,—from the paralyzing effect of doubt; but much of ours is the sympathetic doubt that opens the door to the greater affirmation.

The bed-rock basis of our modern life is faith. Dr. O. W. Holmes says: —"It is faith in something, and enthusiasm for something, that makes life

worth living." All intelligent men realize the force of this statement. It is our faith that makes our age great and glorious,—an abounding, inclusive, magnificent faith.

We are learning the faith of intellectual honesty; to accept the universe; to recognize the inviolability and mercifulness of law. We know that whatever is permanent in Christian truth will last. The beautiful character of Jesus of Nazareth is emerging from the legendary mists in which it has been veiled, and was never more potent in the world than it is to-day; not the Christ of man-made creeds; but the human Christ,—divine because he was human, a brother and friend of all mankind. The German thinker Lessing said,—"The Christian religion has been tried for seventeen centuries and the religion of Christ remains to be tried."

Let us hope that the world is about to try the religion of Christ.

As our American Republic is founded upon the faith that man is the source of all political authority, and will live or perish according as the free men of our country exercise their power for good or for evil, here above all places, should the religion of Christ be tried.

WE know that there is in religion an indestructible element whose external forms will frequently change. We know not what ultimate forms this religious sentiment may assume. We should never confound its transient expression with its eternal essence. We will, however, say with Pascal,—"The first of all Christian truths is that truth should be loved above all."

"RELIGION is not an intellectual or even an ecclesiastical thing, but a far-off and remote vision of the soul," as A. C. Benson says in his delightful book, "From a College Window." All of us can have a glimpse of this far-off and remote vision of the soul. The wider, deeper, greater, more reverent faith of our day ought to give us a closer view.

"What, after all, is religion but the intense and instinctive feeling that none of us is a whole, but only a part of a part?" asks Emil Reich.

In that profound history of the life of a soul, Amiel's Diary, he says:—"Religion is not a method. It is a life,—a higher and a supernatural life, mystical in its roots and practical in its fruits; a communion with God, a calm and deep enthusiasm, a love which radi-

ates, a force which acts, a happiness which overflows."

Is it possible that any one creed can compress this mighty force, which we call religion, into an unchanging form?

We will hope that all religious systems, however diverse they may seem now, are making for an ultimate ethical harmony, and are leading the race towards a beautiful reconciliation.

"There, where one center reconciles all things,
The world's profound heart beats."

Another excellent definition of the religious instinct may be borrowed from Tolstoi, who says:

"Without a religious foundation there can be no true unsimulated morality, as without a root there can be no true plant. And so, I say, religion is the conception by man of his relation to the infinite universe and to its source.

And morality is the ever-present guide of life proceeding only from this relation."

In this spacious use of the term "religion," no one who has read a page of Tolstoi needs be told that he does not mean the Greek Orthodox Church, or any other of the forms in which men have so long attempted to express religion, but, alas! only too often with the result to imprison it. If we read aright the thoughts of this inspired Slav,—whose life and teachings are a tremendous protest against political compromise and moral servitude,—no one could be more aloof from all semi-paganized forms of Christianity than he. It is the religion of Jesus, not that of any humble or proud church which has borrowed its sacred name, that Tolstoi would teach by life and word.

Ubi Cæsar, ibi Roma (where the Emperor is, there is Rome), was a

maxim of Roman jurisprudence. So we may say, wherever there has been a man there also has been a religion.

To deny the powerful influence of the religious instinct in moulding the past life of the race is to challenge the universal verdict of history. The question now is whether among any considerable part of civilized humanity this instinct is becoming atrophied or arrested; whether religion is to perform the powerful part in future history that it has in the past; whether mankind will "obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime." In other words, is the race outgrowing the need of organized religion? Is religion to be gradually extruded from its once imperial seat "in the throne-room of the soul?"

That there is much indifference to organized religious life no one can deny. Religious journals, denominational conferences, even the secular

press, are constantly referring to the fact. Let us for the moment limit our observations to New England, where the villages have been devitalized by the marked drift of population to the cities, and where the cities have felt the powerful shock of alien immigration. Here, the home of the early Puritan, with all the glorious yet somber traditions of strenuous asceticism and a passionate devotion to the Hebraic element in the Scriptures, the indifference is in some places quite noticeable. The intensity of the religious life of the early Puritan has effervesced in many of his descendants into a sluggish torpor or icy impassiveness. The old-time "revival," with its two phases, one appealing to man's noblest promptings, the other to hyper-neurotic emotion, has not been generally effective in creating sustained enthusiasm in late years. The few attempts that have been made

to re-animate the revival spirit and to galvanize into life methods that once were universally adopted to recruit church membership, have been rather feebly supported and have soon evaporated. The history of old-time American revivals has now passed into the laboratory of psychologists, to be studied as the student of history analyzes the psychological phenomena of the Children's Crusade. Yet, with all their crudeness and excesses, they were, as moral tonics, a mighty power for good, and quickened many a callous heart into a new vision of spirituality.

There is no organized rejection of church doctrine or ceremony. It is yet too early to know whether the present inertia means more than a transitional phase of thought or whether it be more than one of those rhythmic movements of the human mind, which seem to come in cycles. If this indifference is irre-

ducible into set terms and numbers, it yet bodes great danger to the imminent future of the church organizations, and, if not arrested, will have a paralyzing effect on the stated religious life of the next generation.

Various and many are the causes assigned. One of the most familiar is that we are living in an age of "mammon worship" and of crass materialism, when avarice, greedy, swinish, is poisoning the spiritual life of the race. This is measurably true, but it is an old complaint. More than half a century ago Wordsworth wrote:—

"The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

There never yet was an age of distinct altruism. There never will be until man and society are perfected; until, in the words of Herbert Spencer,

we have "the ideal man existing in the ideal social state." The protest against materialism and avarice has been raised by moralists ever since mankind began to have even a faint concept of social obligation.

Then we are told that our age is pleasure-loving, given to "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life"; that club life, golf links, cheap transportation, the bicycle, the automobile, athletic sports,—in short all those pleasures that formerly were the privilege of the rich, but which now are open to people of moderate means,—play an immoderate part in life, tend to secularize Sunday, and allure men from celestial things to earthiness. True; but man was always a pleasure-seeking animal. Most of the popular games have come down to us from ancient times and are survivals of

the universal element in humanity which craves sport, especially when competitive.

THE most pessimistic complainant must admit some consoling facts. Never was there so much organized philanthropy; never so many institutions to relieve human suffering; never so prodigal giving by the wealthy to educational and charitable causes; never was public health so well protected by sanitary laws; never were the opportunities for gracious culture opened so abundantly to the poor boy or girl who will welcome them; never was the criminal code so humane; never was there such provision for the prudent investment of the savings of the thrifty poor. Moreover, to view things in a larger aspect, never was the civic conscience of the world of nations so sensitive. Every act of aggression by a strong against

a weaker nation must be answered at the forum of the international conscience. The world has indeed moved, with a great growth of righteousness, from the time when Lord Bacon, who in a large measure represented the liberalism of his day, justified the waging of war by Christian upon infidel nations.

Unhappily there are immense plague spots, terrible evils, in modern civilization. Nations are still too "jealous in honor," too "sudden and quick in quarrel"; it is still too easy to evoke a spurious patriotism and to induce people to put on "a swashing and a martial outside"; the faces of the poor are still too often ground by the rich; and a sinister shadow is cast over the dial of the future by the hoarse contentions of labor and capital. But at the basis of civilization there is a great fund of conscience, a profound sense of jus-

tice, always springing to the surface when the crisis touches it, and an ever-increasing consciousness of human brotherhood.

Whether these ameliorating elements are the outgrowth of the spirit of Christianity, working itself out in the state; or whether they come from a groping toward a transfigured ethical sense, derived from evolutionary forces inherent in man's moral consciousness; or whether they are the resultant of the concurrent interaction of these two and other forces, is a matter for individual judgment.

There is also a gratifying softening of theological rancor, a better appreciation of the several sects by each other. The fangs of bigotry are gradually becoming rudimentary. A change of church relations does not now necessarily make one a "renegade." The once opprobrious word "infidel"

seems to have been supplanted by the euphemistic term "agnostic." An occasional "heresy" trial, never taken very seriously by the secular journals, creating only a languid interest in the members of the denomination affected, and usually ending in the voluntary withdrawal of the alleged offender from such denomination, seems to be the only survival, and that innocuous, of the Inquisition.

Can it be that we are drifting into the condition of the religious thought of the Romans just before the introduction of Christianity, as pictured by Gibbon? "The various modes of worship which had prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the people as equally true, by the philosophers as equally false, and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mental indulgence, but even religious concord."

BUT what of that tremendous force acting on the time-spirit which we call science? The civilized world for two generations has been dizzied by the new revelations given by the great scientists and writers on evolution, on the relations of man to the universe. The critical spirit is only one phase of the general scientific spirit. The state could not avoid absorbing into its educational systems, and crystallizing into more or less of its legislation, some of the results of modern science. Upon individuals, at least upon the intellectual life of individuals, science has had a profound influence. What would a modern public library be unless provided with the works of the great teachers of science? Some rude concept of the doctrine of evolution has percolated through all the strata of society. But has the attitude of the

Church toward the revelations of science always been just and dignified? The process seems to have been,—at first to deny, then to deride, then to accept in some evasive or modified form, then to claim that they were nothing new and to try to assimilate the truths so accepted into some forced and unnatural harmony with obsolete modes of thought.

With all these influences, some nebulous, some intensely concrete, working upon the minds of people, is not a reconstruction of parts of the popular theology inevitable? The results of original research have come to stay. When two or three more generations of men have been trained from youth upward on the intellectual food which science furnishes, what will be the effect on the Church? It would now seem an almost incredible assumption to imagine a social status when the

State is more Christian than the Church; but is there not danger of such a result? We even hear a good deal about the "passing of the Bible"; and college professors are making almost pathetic appeals to their students to study it, if for no other purpose than for its incomparable wealth of poetry, imagery, and philosophy; and this, too, in New England, where the Bible, in its most literal sense, was the corner-stone of the early State.

Science will be at a disadvantage when the Church begins the work of re-adjustment. Science never can be stationary. Its accredited results are always open to modification; it is always on the march. Can science ever appeal to man's spiritual sense as religion has? Can it furnish those ideals—call some of them illusions, if you will—which have fed his soul-hunger? Can it put man in a state where he would find rest for

his soul? Religion deals with that in man which is a part of the necessities of his moral existence. Science does not. It addresses the intellect; religion, "the eternal man."

"To give veracity to art and charm mankind, as an appeal to moral order always does." Emerson is right: the force which appeals to moral order, whether it be the Church or the State, or the school, will in the end prevail; for there always must be some power, to use Dr. Martineau's impressive words, to aid man to "cherish and vindicate the deep and simple pieties on which the sanctity of life depends."

One thing is sure. The religious instinct will not die. It will find expression somewhere. Shall it be in the Church or in the State, or the university, or in some other force, as yet undeveloped?

RELIGION is cradled in emotion —is then intellectualized into theology; is next formulated in ideas. Many of the ideas survive in forms which intelligent thought will reject. They have outgrown their early clothes. Scientific truths have passed through the same stage, from raw beginnings to the laboratory of the college. It makes little difference how the religious germ fructified; whether it grew out of ancestor worship; or whether it was the creation of fear or admiration. If it were true, as Feuerbach asserts, that "the beginning, middle and end of religion is man,"—it remains the same mysterious, mighty force. Did we know that the idea of Deity is simply the projection of himself by man into a creative being; or that it was an intellectual intuition, imaging physical wonders;—were the idea of an immortal

soul begotten by dreams;—the race accepted the magnificent concepts, and religion is. Speculative inquiries after origins have their intense interest. But man still hungers for the living word of the eternal oracle. We must need speak of God in metaphors; such is the limitation of human speech. The Emmanuel, the God with us, is the supreme consciousness of our race.

The eternal quest for knowledge will go on. Intellectual activity will feel its ever-increasing momentum. Men will always peer into the boundless unknown. Industrial life, with its peaceful victories, will soften predatory instincts, and will become more and more moralized. The ancient rule, "and have is have, however men do catch," must be sanctified into the Golden Rule. The most finely developed ethical sense will bring religion and our spiritual instincts into every practical concern; and

church and society will closely "look into the blots and stains of right." All the gains of the race will be ministering angels to the higher morality; its everlasting servants.

By no parade of theological controversies, but by the unfolding of its innate healthful religiousness, will mankind be swept into greater truths. The sons of God will never be aberrant from His companionship. The race will use its mighty power to look before and after.

"What is a man,
If his chief good, and market of his time,
Be but to sleep and feed? A beast, no more.
Sure, He, that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and god-like reason
To fust in us unused."

THE great mistake of theology has been the effort to stereotype transient forms of belief and to oppose ra-

tional changes. But the old-time scientists erred in the same way. The dynamic power of truth bursts all these ligatures. Out of one ruined system is born another, and a better. Sub-conscious potencies are always at work. All presentations of truth are fragmentary. It is the highest organisms that respond most slowly to the pressure of developing agencies. Religion is the highest form yet known to us of spiritual values. While it has been of inexpressible worth to the race in teaching acceptance to inevitable conditions, its most beautiful power is not as an anodyne. Its dynamic force, as an incentive to high behavior and noble conduct, is its greatest contribution. Through the ever-flowing tides of life it will move on in its glorious mission. An increase of knowledge will not erode but will clarify it. The religious instinct must aid in keeping science from fall-

ing into an abyss of materialism and imprisoning the noblest instincts of the race in the eyeless night of faithlessness to the Moral Order.

If great changes are impending in the outward expression of the religious sense, in which

> "—the antique and well-noted face
> Of plain old form is much disfigured,"

they should bring no discouragement to those who strive to be genuinely religious. The devotional spirit of mankind can never be cheated by catchwords for any long period of time. In spite of all superficial indifference, religion is not falling into decrepitude. Religion and faith

> "Like the dyer's land,
> Subdued to what it works in,"

will assume more and more lovely colors.

NO one need fear that the world will become irreligious, although unquestionably many religious institutions have before them great and inevitable changes. "If my bark sink, 'tis to another sea." More and more, will the divine world become flesh. "Like a finer light in light," a holy radiance will flash from time to time through consecrated souls. Jesus said:—"He who hath seen me, hath seen the Father." His utterance has a larger meaning than the exact words. He who hath seen a good man or woman hath so far seen the Father; he whose life most closely conforms to the omnipotent moral law shows the Father. If all lives were noble and "turned upon the pole of truth," then would be realized the prayer of Jesus:—"Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done." Then the law of self-sacrifice and personal right-

eousness which he taught would be blended in every social and moral force, "in widest commonalty spread."

Faith in the unseen and unknown is the solace of the race; the vision of the mind is greater than that of the eye. The nobler faith will be with those who open all the windows of their soul to the light streaming from the inexhaustible source of truth that floods the world. Those will have that "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

RELIGION, it should always be remembered, is not in itself something to be acquired as a finality. It is a means towards moral excellence; towards the development of the soul. It aids man to project himself into the infinite. It should be a "part of our life's unalterable good." It should teach a manly obedience to unconquer-

able forces which environ human life. Its residual value is in conduct. Carlyle says:—"It remains a blessed fact, so cunningly has Nature ordered it, that whatsoever man ought to obey, he cannot but obey." Recognize this fact and obedience becomes freedom. Not in wild defiance, not in servile submission to ancient error, not in wrapping our finest powers in the cerements of the ghostly past, but in the broadest possible outlook upon all spiritual truths, does religion have its true relation to life. Through its portals man passes from the boundary of experience into "that still garden of the souls" toward which all life tends.

THE poet Arnold did well in using the fine phrase "The Sea of Faith." Faith is as the sea, undulating, yet rhythmical; bold, yet elusive; open, yet secret; shining now with pris-

matic colors, then somber and fleckless; now shimmering with delicate cloud-tints, then brilliant with sun-red hues; now gentle and again lashed into the wild fury of the tempest; now tremulously flowing in secret recesses, kissing the shore-line with gentle caresses, then grinding rocky continents or strewing the shore with the wreckage of its wild fury.

Faith admits of all these contrasts; from its slumber in the darkling recesses of the soul to its blazing heat when aroused in its awful fervor.

"Nothing worthy proving can be proven,
Nor yet disproven; wherefore thou be wise.
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms of Faith;
She reels not in the storm of warring words,
She brightens at the clash of Yes and No,
She sees the best that glimmers through the worst,
She feels the seen is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer through the winter bud,

She tastes the fruit before the blossom falls,
She hears the lark within the songless egg,
She finds the fountain where they wailed "Mirage."