

Sidelights from Patmos

SIDELIGHTS FROM PATMOS

BY

GEORGE MATHESON, M.A., D.D., F.R.S.E.

MINISTER OF THE PARISH OF ST. BERNARD'S, EDINBURGH

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Printed by Hazell, Watson & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury, England.

PREFACE

THIS is not a volume of sermons; had it been, I should have tried to be more direct and more concrete. Originally it was a series of separate studies contributed to the pages of the "Expositor." At the suggestion of the Editor I have collected these, added to their number, and brought them out in book form. Any of the chapters can be read apart from the others.

By "Sidelights from Patmos" I mean something equivalent to "flashes of modern suggestion from the ancient Apocalypse." I have called them sidelights to show that I am not giving an exposition of the Book of Revelation, nor of any part of that book. I am rather a recipient than an actor. I receive and photo-

graph certain luminous impressions that come to me occasionally and from separate points. I believe the design of St. John in Patmos was to state the principles which would regulate the good time coming. He wishes to indicate what in any world would be to him the consummation of happiness. He does so, sometimes in sober language, sometimes in allegoric symbols. I have made a few selections, both from the sober language and from the allegoric symbols, with a view of testing the adaptation of the picture to our modern ideas of optimism. The one question I wish to consider in these otherwise disconnected chapters is whether St. John's ideal is still *our* ideal, whether we should still accept his principles as those which should regulate the good time coming.

GEORGE MATHESON.

CONTENTS

PAGE

ST. JOHN'S VIEW OF THE SABBATH REST . . 1
(Rev. i. 10.)

"LIBERTY OF THE TREE OF LIFE" . . . 17
(Rev. ii. 7.)

THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION OF PROVIDENCE . 35
(Rev. iii. 8.)

THE CHRISTIAN PROMISE OF IMMUNITY . . 54
(Rev. iii. 10.)

THE PAINS AND PENALTIES OF HEAVENLY RANK 70
(Rev. iii. 12.)

THE CHRISTIAN PROMISE OF EMPIRE . . . 88
(Rev. iii. 21.)

THE BLENDING OF CONTRASTS IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST 107
(Rev. iv. 3.)

THE UNSEALING OF THE HEART OF HUMANITY 123
(Rev. v. 9, 10.)

THE LAMB ON THE THRONE 140
(Rev. v., vi.)

PAGE

"THE WRATH OF THE LAMB" 156
(Rev. vi. 16.)

THE PLACE OF THE CROSS IN THE WORLD . 171
(Rev. xiii. 8.)

THE *ÉLITE* OF THE HUMAN RACE . . . 187
(Rev. xiv. 4.)

ST. JOHN'S PARADOX CONCERNING THE DEAD . 203
(Rev. xiv. 13.)

THE GOAL OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT . 219
(Rev. xv. 2.)

THE NEW STANDARD OF CRITICISM . . . 236
(Rev. xx. 12.)

RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO PAIN . . 252
(Rev. xxi. 4.)

THE BALANCE OF CHARACTER 268
(Rev. xxi. 16.)

THE ADAPTATION OF THE CITY OF GOD . . 283
(Rev. xxi. 17.)

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF GOD . . . 300
(Rev. xxi. 25.)

THE DIVINE LAW OF SURVIVAL 319
(Rev. xxi. 27.)

THE FINAL STAGE OF CULTURE 337
(Rev. xxii. 2.)

ST. JOHN'S VIEW OF THE SABBATH REST

REVELATION I. 10

"I WAS in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Such is the initial note of the greatest allegorical poem that ever was written. It is hardly the note we should have expected. We should have expected the day itself, rather than its spirit, to have been the subject of the opening chord. A man about to receive a revelation from heaven might be supposed to be looking first of all upon the curtain, to have his eye riveted originally upon the lifting of that veil which was interposed between him and the mystery. We should imagine that his earliest thought would be, What was the nature of that mystery which would be rent into sunbeams when the curtain fell? what would he see when the veil was withdrawn? This

in truth is not his thought at all. His primary question is, not what he will see, but whether he will be fit for the sight. The arduous part of the work to him is not the opening of heaven nor the revelation of heaven; it is the preparation for heaven. He feels that what he needs before all things is the spirit of the sabbath. He feels that the things inside this veil cannot be revealed to the eye. There are few spectacles indeed that *can* be revealed to the eye. I doubt if the most beautiful sights in nature are not indebted for one-half at least of their charm to the voices of the spirit. How many things are beautiful this year that were commonplace last! Why is this? It is no additional painting from the outside; perhaps the tear and wear of time may have diminished the actual glory. But the added charm has come from the spirit of a new day—a day which has lent its association to the once-ignored scene, and invested with imperishable interest what yesterday we passed by on the other side.

The question now is, What, in the view of

St. John, is the spirit of the Lord's day—that spirit which the seer regards as essential and preliminary to any rending of the veil between earth and heaven? Every anniversary day requires its appropriate spirit. Without that spirit, nothing which happens outside will reveal anything to the spectator. The day of a Queen's jubilee requires the spirit of loyalty; without this, no streaming of flags will convey it to the eye, no blast of trumpets will communicate it to the ear. The day which commemorates a victory needs the spirit of patriotism; without this the roll of artillery is all in vain. The day which keeps the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth demands the spirit of poetry; without this the banquet has no significance. The sabbath is, in John's view, also an anniversary. It is the anniversary of creation and resurrection. It too can only be understood by its appropriate spirit. What is the appropriate spirit of this day as it appears to the seer of Patmos? It is a very important question, because, according to him, in finding that spirit you have found the spirit

preparatory to the Apocalypse. Is there any sign of the seer's opinion? It is something in his favour that, unlike his countrymen in general, he lays more weight upon the sabbath spirit than upon the sabbath hour. Has he given us any indication of what he takes that spirit to be? Do we find in this passage any trace of the thought which lay beneath the words, and which led him to connect the visions of his book with the breath of the seventh morning?

I think we do. I believe that, if we join the second clause of the verse to the first, we shall reach a luminous understanding of the idea which dominated the mind of the apostle: "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet." I take the explanatory clause to be the hearing of the trumpet *behind* him. The idea is clearly that of retrospect, looking back. When we hear the sabbath called the day of rest, the question at once arises, What rest? Rest is a relative term; what is rest to you may be hard work to me. I want to know what is

that ideal of rest with which you wish me to associate this day. Now, John's ideal of the sabbath rest is that of a satisfied past. It is the ability to look back and say, "It was all very good." The trumpet behind is the triumph behind. It is the sense of happy memory. It is the conviction that "hitherto the Lord has helped us." It is the heart's hymn of retrospect over the way by which it has been led, and the wreathing of that path with flowers across which perhaps it had been brought with tears.

Now, it seems to me that this view of the sabbath rest is borne out both by the Old Testament and by the New. In the book of Genesis it is described as God's rest from creation; but it is a retrospective rest. It is not the joy of prospect, but the joy of memory. It is the looking back upon the work that has been done, and finding that it has been done well: "God saw everything that He had made, and behold, it was very good." In the New Testament the day has the significance of a triumph. It is the rest of

the soldier who has fought the battle and ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. Yet here again it is a restrospective rest. It is the triumph of a work done. It is the glory of looking back rather than of looking forward. Olivet has vindicated Calvary; that is the burden of the resurrection song. It is a rest that centres round the exclamation "It is finished!" rather than round the vision of a new world begun. Alike in the Old Testament and in the New, alike in its Judaic and in its Christian dress, the sabbath strikes one chord—the chord of memory. The spirit of the Lord's day is the spirit of retrospective rest.

We come next to ask, What is it that renders this the fitting spirit for the Apocalypse? It must have some analogy to that inside the curtain, otherwise it would form no preparation for it. And indeed we shall find that what we want from any revelation is mainly a vision of retrospective rest. On a first view it might seem otherwise. We often think that our chief desire in seeking the rending of the

veil is to get a glimpse of the future. In that we deceive ourselves. No man would be satisfied with such a revelation if he got it to-morrow. We want, not mainly a sight of the future, but a sight of the past. Our eagerness to see the future is in great measure a retrospective eagerness. We have a notion that, if the future were unveiled, the past would be vindicated, that the light of to-morrow would throw itself back upon the shadows of yesterday. The desire of man in this world is not simply to feel that in another world it will be all right with him. He wants to feel that it is all right now. His hope is that in a future life the clouds of this will be, not simply rolled away, but explained. He wants to see that they never needed to be rolled away—that they were always sunbeams in disguise. Nothing less than this will content a human soul.

We cannot, I think, get a better illustration of this than one derived from Bible literature itself—the book of Job. Job receives a richer heritage than all that he has lost. He gets

grander houses, broader fields, costlier equipages. Yet, every reader feels that, if this be all, the book has reached no conclusion, the problem no answer. If a thing has been taken from me unjustly, it does not restore satisfaction to my mind that some one has compensated the loss. Injustice is not explained by being expiated; and what I want is an explanation. I want to know why the blot came, whether it was a blot at all, what purpose it served in the universe. The real conclusion to the book of Job is not its last chapter, but its first; not its epilogue, but its prologue. It is in its opening verses that we get the key to its close. It is *these* which, at the end of the book, bring satisfaction to the mind, for they become then a retrospective light. In them we find the vindication of the long hours of sorrow. In them we read the secret of the seeming injustice. In them we behold the days of chaos glorified. The revelation of the mystery is not the supply of new raiment to make up for the old; it is the manifestation of that purpose which made the removal of

the old raiment a necessity. The rest of the reader is a retrospective rest.

Now, I take this to be the moral of the Apocalypse. It matters not in this connection how you shall interpret it—whether you shall regard its predictions as past, passing, or to come. In any case, the seer finds himself in imagination at the end of the line, looking back. He is standing in thought at the terminus of the present world, and his eye ranges, not into coming worlds, but over the shadowy past. In that gaze he finds rest—sabbath rest, retrospective rest. He sees patches of blue in the places where he used to meet only masses of cloud. And he feels that the latest vision is the true one—that if he had seen correctly at the beginning, the blue would have always been there. That this is the design of the book is, I think, manifest from its very key-note: "Behold, He cometh with clouds." Why mention the end of the book at the beginning? Clearly because, to the mind of the seer, the end was connected with the beginning. The last coming was not a

sudden catastrophe, interfering with the present system of things. It was the *climax* of the present system of things, the point to which they had been leading up. To his eye all the troubles of this book were tributaries—streams of the river which was to make glad the city of God. The very expression "He *cometh*" is suggestive. It withdraws the event from mere futurity. He was coming now—in the very clouds that seemed to obscure Him, in the very mists that appeared to deny Him. He was coming in the chariots of fire, on the wings of the wind, on the waves of sorrow. He was coming by the power of those influences that were meant to retard Him. He was coming by the seeming retrogressions of history, by the alleged failures of life, by the actual falls of man. The song of victory was sung over the place of tears.

This was John's vision. He put himself in the spirit of the Lord's day. He conceived himself to be standing in the seventh morning of creation, and looking back. He heard a trumpet behind him—the voice of the vindi-

cating past, proclaiming that it was all very good; and it was the sabbath of his soul Now, I believe that psychologically St. John is right. I think that to our age, even more than to his, the greatest religious rest in the world is that which comes from the retrospect of history. We are living in the environment of a scientific dogma—the doctrine of evolution. It has threatened to root up the articles of our faith. It has asserted that the argument from design has lost its cogency. It has professed to account for the mechanical order of the universe by the play of blind forces. It has offered to explain the symmetry of nature by the convergence of unintelligent laws. It has assailed a ground of faith which used to be regarded as an Ararat in the flood of waters. In these circumstances men have looked round for a new shelter. They have asked if there is any hiding-place from the storm, or covert from the tempest. The ark has, in the opinion of many, been driven forth from its original landing-place, and compelled to resume its aimless, trackless

way. Is there any suggestion of a second Ararat? Is there any hope of a new anchorage? Is there any possibility that the ship of life may yet be directed to a haven where the first rest shall be restored, and the waters shall cease to trouble?

Now, I say that there is one spot for such rest—the history of life itself. Let us ask for a moment, Is there anything about the history of life which evolution, by its own confession, does not account for? There is. There is an element in history which the doctrine of evolution *admits* it does not explain—the fact of progress. I suppose we may take the late Professor Huxley as an adequate exponent of the doctrine of evolution. In the ninth edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, vol. iii., page 689, Professor Huxley declares that evolution has no necessary connection with progress—that it is equally compatible either with going on, going back, or standing still. This is a most important admission. If progress is not necessarily involved in evolution, then the fact

of progress demands an additional agency. If evolution had a choice of roads, why has it chosen the most difficult one? The machine had the alternative of advancing, retreating, or permanently stopping. Why has it taken the first course? The other two courses were much easier. To make it a retrograde movement, or to refuse to move at all beyond the limits of the first species, would, either of them, have been the simpler, and therefore the more natural, way. But nature has elected to go on, and to go on over a most complicated path. It has chosen the narrow way, the steep way, the upward way, and it has maintained its choice in spite of infinite obstructions and innumerable actual reverses.

Do not misunderstand me. I am not arguing against the doctrine; I am arguing against its exclusive agency. Nature has made a choice—a selection; and it is not a natural selection. It has chosen to go up the hill, with two other alternatives before it. That choice indicates something as special as a special creation. Why do we value the

belief in a special creation? Is it not simply because it implies a purpose, a choice on the part of nature? Here, in the very heart of evolution, there is necessitated the same choice; things go up when they might go down, when they might remain moveless. We take our stand beside the seer of Patmos; we look back. We expect to find the elements of decay, or, at the most, the forms of stagnation. Instead of that, what do we see? The steps of an ascending stair as aspiring as the ladder of Jacob. We hear the sound of a trumpet behind us; the voice of the past is a voice of triumph. Each move is a movement forward; each act is an ascent. The block of dead matter, the crystal, the plant, the animal, the primitive man, the tribal man, the national man, the cosmopolitan man—all these rise before us like the sloping steps of an altar. A hundred influences are present to interrupt their ascent: but they climb pertinaciously to their sabbath, and pause not till they reach the goal. What is that but a deliberately selec-

tive purpose—a revelation of the fact that, when the foundations of the earth were laid, Divine Wisdom was there.

This, then, to us, as to the seer of Patmos, is still the sabbath rest of the soul. He sought his revelation from the past. The joy of the Apocalypse is mainly a retrospective joy. All its songs point back. All its notes of jubilee are over the triumph behind—the triumph that came out of the tragedy. If men cease not day nor night to praise, it is from the vision of yesterday, the vision of the crown through the cross: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain." Some such vision awaits our retrospect too. It is through the cross of struggle that the world has reached the present goal, its upward goal. It is through the midst of the forces making for stagnation or for retardation that this wondrous piece of mechanism has cleared its way, steering ever toward the stars. In the light of such a fact, the mode of its origin seems a small thing. Call it creation, call it evolution, call it emanation, call it what you

will, the fact remains inviolate and inviolable, that it moves along a path of purpose, and selects a course demanding intelligent choice With such a retrospect as that, we may well be in the spirit on the Lord's day.

"LIBERTY OF THE TREE OF LIFE"

Revelation ii. 7

"To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." What is the promise which these words convey? They are popularly thought to refer to a mystical and transcendental state—to a reward which shall be reaped in the world beyond the grave. They are taken to proclaim the existence of a second Paradise, of a new and higher Eden above the clouds and beyond the tomb, where the soul shall be nourished by a bread which the heart of man has not conceived. Now, however true such a doctrine is in itself, I do not think it is the idea of the present passage. I do not think the eyes of the seer of Patmos are here lifted above the present world at all. We have been misled by the phrase, "in the

midst of the paradise of God." We commonly take it to mean "the tree which is in heaven." On the contrary, I understand it to signify "the tree which is spoken of in Genesis ii. 9." That the imagery is *built* on Genesis ii. 9 has, of course, never been disputed; but I propose to read the phrase as itself a quotation mark: "Unto him that overcometh will I give to eat of that tree which in Genesis ii. 9 is said to be in the midst of the paradise of God."

The effect of such a rendering is obvious. It removes the notion that the tree of life is something existing in heaven. When we are merely told that we shall be allowed to eat of that tree which was formerly forbidden to the inhabitants of Eden, we are free to ask, "What was it?" "Where was it?" And it is clear that from this point of view there is no mystery about the answer. The tree of life in the garden of Eden never was in heaven; it was very much indeed upon the earth. It was not only *in* the present world; it was the present world itself in its most outward form. The tree of life was the

opposite of the tree of knowledge. It was the spontaneous play of vital energy—energy, not turned in upon the brain, but turned out upon the world. To have liberty of the tree of life was to have the freedom of eye and ear, of hand and heart, of sense and soul. It was to enjoy life in all its branches, to taste the gladness of being a sentient creature, to feel the mere rapture of living, without counting what life shall bring. And, when the tree is placed in the midst of the garden, it is declared as plainly as words can speak that such liberty is the normal rule. The idea of the writer of Genesis and the idea of the writer of the Apocalypse is one and the same—that there is a physical element which man ought to have and which other things have. The latter author does not scruple to use the phrase, "a *right* to the tree of life" (Rev. xxii. 14). He regards the want of it as something which makes man abnormal. To seek it is no presumption, because it is no novelty. The miracle of man is not what he has, but what he has not; it is his comparative impotence

in that humble field where the humblest are strong. If he is great where other things are lowly, he is lowly where other things are great. In the region of grace he may ask to be *elevated*; in the sphere of nature he desires simply to be reinstated.

Man has, then, according to the Apocalypse, a *right* to the tree of life—to the use of the present world. The ground of that right is the fact that the liberty of the tree has already been conceded in other spheres. That it has been so conceded is manifest. Look at the world of nature. What is its prevailing voice? It is spontaneity—the absence of all appearance of restraint. The very word "nature" is used as the antithesis of restraining grace. Everything is of course limited to its own sphere, but within that sphere it is free; it is allowed to come up to the door of its natural environment. This impression is so strongly suggested by the physical world that it has everywhere found a voice in poetry. It makes the brook say, "I go on for ever." It initiates the proverb, "as free as the wind." It paints the river wander-

ing "at its own sweet will." And, when we pass to the semi-conscious forms of nature, the impression is deepened. The animal world seems permitted to expend more energy than it requires. The bird would do with less song. The dog would do with less barking. The cattle would do with less lowing. Everywhere and always, the unreflective forms of life seem to move within their own channel without let or hindrance, without cherubim or flaming sword. Their restraints are all from without; they have no limitations in the law of their being.

The first limit arises when we come to man; and to man it comes as a surprise. It is in the world of religion that the interruption occurs to human freedom. When the boy goes to church, he hears for the first time the click of the garden gate—that gate which used to be left open to all footsteps. For the first time he finds pleasure represented, not indeed as something forbidden, but as a thing which ought to be restricted. And not the least striking feature is the reason for the restriction. It is

not made on the ground that certain pleasures are innocent and certain others vicious. It is made on the ground that pleasure itself may come into antagonism with God if one has too much of it. A day is set apart from other days, distinguished by its limitation of outward enjoyments—a day when, over fields that were lawful yesterday, there are written the words "No trespassing." And the first sensation of the youth is one of anger. He feels antagonistic to religion. He feels that religion has defrauded him of something which he ought to have. Why should he be denied the freedom which other things enjoy—the freedom of the streams, of the rivers, of the winds? Why should the arrest which is not put to the song of the bird be imposed on the song of a human heart? You tell the youth that the one is a state of nature and the other a state of grace. He will answer, "Then let me live in nature and avoid grace. Let me not sacrifice my freedom. Let me keep aloof from a religious life which promises me only mutilation, and exacts as the price of heaven the surrender of the earth."

Now, it is on this difficulty that the passage in Revelation throws a flash of light. Does it admit that the religion of Christ imposes a limit on human pleasure? Yes; so far the youth has judged rightly. But it declares that Christianity issues its prohibition for exactly the opposite reason from that which the youth supposes—nay, from that which the Church itself often supposes. The common view is that the restrictions are sent because a full amount of earthly liberty is incompatible with the grace of God. It is here said to be incompatible with the *want* of it. It is not because we are religious, but because we are not, that the tree is forbidden. The passage, like that in Genesis, is evidently based upon the simile of a child's diet: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life." The idea is that the child is unfit for sumptuous living; or, to drop the metaphor, man is said to be denied the liberty of the things of nature because he has not become thoroughly natural. He cannot become equal to other things in naturalness until he has reached that which he

supposes to be the enemy of nature—grace. Man is God's youngest child—His delicate child. He possesses a very tender mechanism, which streams do not possess, and which is very easily put out of order—conscience. It is not enough for this mechanism that it should do nothing wrong; the act of indifference, the abstaining from doing right, is equally prejudicial. Conscience becomes blunted by the use of things *outside* of Christ's kingdom, even though not adverse to that kingdom. Until this delicacy is overcome, until the conscience gets the power to go outside without being hurt, there is no choice but to wall in the garden, no alternative but to place the cherubim and the flaming sword on every side of human nature which would open the liberty of the tree of life.

Now, the question is, How is this weakness in the natural constitution of man to be got rid of? Is there any suggestion in the passage before us of the mode in which it is to be rendered robust and fit for freedom? I think there is. Observe the imagery of the

passage. If the disease is represented under the simile of a child in need of spare diet, the cure of the disease is described under the metaphor of a conquering soldier: "he that overcometh." Now, what is the idea involved in conquest? It is the abolition of the distinction between your country and the enemy's country. What is the literal meaning of the English word "overcome"? It is to "come over"—to cross the gulf which divides your land from an opposing land. To conquer or overcome a nation is to make it one with your own, to destroy the middle wall of partition, to obliterate the landmarks on either side, and, if possible, to call the name of the vanquished region by the name of your own conquering land.

Now, this is precisely the thought of the passage before us. The Christian conscience in its incipient stage is hurt by meeting anything outside the kingdom of Christ. The course open is to deny the outsideness. There have been always two extremes in the religious life—the principle of asceticism and the

principle of worldly accommodation. The one advises a withdrawal from the things of earth; the other counsels a little latitude in deference to the weakness of humanity. The gospel of Christ, as understood by this passage, is radically different from either of these. It refuses, on the one hand, to withdraw itself from the world; it repudiates, on the other, the idea of worldly accommodation. What remains? What path is left for a religion which will neither consent to be imprisoned within itself nor yet agree to admit the forms of the world? One path alone is left for it: conquest. It must claim the world as a bit of its own property. It must come over the gulf that divides it from other things. It must annul the separation between the secular and the sacred. It must say with the writer of Revelation himself, in sublime illustration of his own principle, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ."

It will be seen that this gospel of Christ, with all its liberality, leaves room for asceti-

cism—nay, as a preliminary stage, *demands*, asceticism. There is a time in which man is not allowed to eat of the tree. He is kept upon manna until he is ripe for the old corn of the land. The day in which he is permitted to pass over the border is the day in which he overcomes the contrast between Christ and the world—in which he can say, with Paul, "If I am Christ's, all things are mine." The test of his fitness to cross the border is his power to say, to feel this. The liberty which a Christian claims is not claimed by him on the ground that certain objects are innocent and harmless. To a frivolous mind no pleasure is innocent; the want of character simply feeds the frivolity. The Christian claim of liberty rests on the opposite ground—the ground that a mind full of Christ must impart Christ to everything, that a heart imbued with love must see everywhere the object of its love, that a spirit impregnated with the music of God must hear, even in the rolling of a railway train, the rhythm of that music. That is the thought on which

the right to Christian freedom is based, and every worldly pursuit is tested by its conformity to that thought. Let us look from this point of view at one or two branches of the tree of life.

And let us begin with the world of art. When Christianity first came to earth, its votaries despised art. They did so because they thought it heathen, *i.e.* sensuous, and therefore fitted to withdraw men from the study of the soul. And so the first Christians separated themselves from art, and shunned the sight of an image; they felt themselves forbidden to touch this branch of the tree. And so they were—but not through anything in the tree. As Paul would say, they were "straitened in their own affections." Their Christ was not commensurate with the world—did not yet fill all things; and they were right to abstain. But now, suppose a man should come to a different conclusion. Suppose he should arrive at the conviction that art, instead of being sensuous, is the proof that the spirit can shine through the

sense. Suppose he should look upon it as the evidence that the actual forms of life are unable to imprison the spirit of beauty. Imagine, in short, that he came to regard art as itself a protest in favour of a new heaven and a new earth, of a beauty more unblemished and a symmetry more flawless. What would be the effect of such a state of mind? It would clearly be an extension of the boundaries of the religious world. It would confer on the man a right to cross the border, to incorporate the domain of art in the sphere of religion. Instead of being a barrier to Christ, he would come to recognise it as practically a search for Christ. It would be to him an attempt to figure in the mind and to express by the hand an ideal which is suggested by, and yet transcends, the visible. It would be an aspiration towards the resurrection of the body, towards a larger and higher physical development, in which the outward life of man shall approximate more nearly to the standard of the soul.

Let us pass from art to fiction. The

reading of fiction has often been a reproach in the religious world. It has not been on the ground that there are many immoral novels. It has been based on the fact that they *are* novels, and therefore a waste of time. It is asked why, with so many earnest realities around them, men should spend voluntary hours over that which is a dream. How are we to meet this objection? Shall we say that we must have some relaxation from the earnest business of life? That is quite a natural desire. But is it a claim to liberty? If I ask permission to read a novel on the plea that the flesh is weak, I am asking, not a right, but an act of grace; I am claiming, not the charter of a free-born man, but the charity of a beggar. If I am to have a right to this branch of the tree, it must be for a different reason. And there is such a reason forthcoming. There may come to me a time in which a very ideal novel may be to me the most real thing in the world, more real than anything which men call actual. That time shall come when-

ever I recognise Christ to be a reality. The moment I say to myself, "There is a beauty which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor natural mind conceived," I have set up a claim to the Christian reading of that which men call fiction. I have claimed it on the ground, not of the weakness of the flesh, but of the strength of the spirit. I have asserted my right to this branch of the tree. I have done so on the principle that the gospel of Christ has revealed to me the absolute reality of all heroism that transcends the earth. In reading of a high heroism which I have not seen in actual life, I do not feel that I am wasting my time in unreality. On the contrary, I am turning from the unreal to the real, from the imperfect to the perfect, from the prophecy to the fulfilment, from the temporal shadow to the eternal substance. The Christian is by nature a worshipper of things not seen as yet. He is a believer in the existence of a star which lies beyond the range of the telescope. Is it surprising that he should be prepared to welcome the record

of that which is above experience, and accept by the eye of faith an order of human things which the eye of sense as yet cannot discern?

The only remaining instance I shall notice of the relation between Christian life and Christian liberty is the set of actions comprehended under the general word "pleasure." The common view is that when a man becomes a Christian the thing called worldly pleasure is there and then lessened to him in value. The Christian position is exactly the reverse. It is that the possession of Christ for the first time makes pleasure possible. The doctrine of Christianity is that the root of all earthly happiness is self-forgetfulness. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you" are the words in which the law of pleasure is declared. The petition, "Thy will be done" precedes the prayer "Give us this day our daily bread." Nor is it without reason that it does so. It is a matter of the most everyday experience that "he who loveth his life shall lose it."

Fix your mind upon the personal joy which any pleasure shall bring you, dwell on it night and day, cherish it hour by hour, and the result will inevitably be disappointment Pleasure will not stand to be scrutinised; it must come in at the side door. Its most successful moments are its most forgetful moments. It is not the fact of anticipation which disqualifies; it is the anticipation for one's self. Figure in advance the pleasure, not which will come to you, but which will come to another, and the result will be quite different; it will come into your own bosom "pressed down, and shaken, and running over." The Christian has for the first time received the organ of joy, the sense by which pleasure can be known. He has the right to pleasure which comes from the possession of the faculty—the right which the eye has to see, which the ear has to hear, which the heart has to feel. He has got back the liberty of nature because he has himself for the first time become natural—acquired all the organs for physical enjoyment. He has

entered into the pleasure of natural things because he has entered into their spontaneity. He has overcome the tendency to self-consciousness which is the death of happiness. He has ceased to say we shall be "as gods, knowing good and evil." It is the thought of being like gods that expels Paradise from the eyes, that stops the flow of the rivers, that withers the foliage of the trees. The overcoming of my own shadow restores the banished light, and the spontaneity of a sacrificial soul unbars my way to that play of energy which belongs by nature to created things.

THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION OF PROVIDENCE

Revelation iii. 8

"I HAVE set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" are the words in which St. John describes the providential government which man is to look for in the new order. It is not a promise; it is the revelation of a fact already accomplished. Let me remark at the outset how singularly appropriate is the symbol in which the message comes. The words are addressed to Christianity's youth. What youth wants before all other things is an opening. The expression has become almost proverbial. Every young man wants an entrance into life. You will observe, it is an *entrance* that he desires. It is not a door of escape which is sought; it is a door of usefulness. The idea is not that of a

captive, desirous to get out; it is that of a free man, eager to get in—to get utilised for some service. That was the position of Christianity's youth, as of all youth. Its first days were not days of bondage, but of irksome liberty—days when it was simply ignored as a cipher, as a nobody. The original cross which Christianity had to bear was not persecution, but neglect. Its primitive penalty was to be left alone, to be left outside. It saw others enter into the kingdom—the Roman kingdom; it envied them in ceasing to be free. Its pain was its long holiday—the fact that no man had hired it. It longed to have a work to do for the kingdom, to be sharer in the common chain. St. John's misery in Patmos was not the fact that the sea shut him in, but that the sea shut him out. He could have borne the mill bravely if it had not been a tread-mill—a mill that ground nothing for anybody. His hardships were not greater than those of any Roman soldier; but they were less productive. That was their sting, that was their victory. The

sea of Patmos was the symbol of that difficulty which besets all youth—the barrier to an entrance into the real world.

Now, under these apparently gloomy circumstances, observe the extremely scientific character of St John's theory of Divine Providence. He never for a moment evokes the aid of supernatural interference. It is not even to a second advent that he looks for the putting of things right. This would have been after the manner of his countrymen; the Jew hoped all things from the direct interference of God. But St. John's view is that, so far as Christianity is concerned, there is no need of such interference. To his eye, the seeming dead lock is a delusion. To all appearance there is a solid wall blocking the way; but in reality there is a breach in it. If you could only get near enough, St. John says you would find that instead of being continuous it has a break in the middle. The idea suggests the feeling one experiences in sailing up some of our Scottish lochs. We often see before us what seems to be the end

of the journey—the necessary end. In front of us stretches an apparently unbroken line of hills, right in the face of future progress. "The vessel will have to turn," we say. But as we approach the barrier there breaks upon us a wondrous revelation. The solid mass seems to part asunder. In reality it was never united. That which in the distance appeared continuous, reveals a pass between; and, in the very spot which once seemed to present an interposed barrier, there is stretched a channel of communication with regions far away. The vessel is not arrested, is not diverted from its goal. It finds an exit at the very point where it expected to meet a terminus, and the scene of its threatened extremity becomes the place of its emergence.

One could almost imagine that a simile analogous to this was floating before the eyes of the seer of Patmos when he proclaimed to the old world his doctrine of Divine superintendence. Proclaimed as it was to the old world, perhaps the first thing which impresses us about it is its intense modernness. There

is not a trace of anything ancient in the utterance. Brief as the words are, they are wonderfully comprehensive. They are full of demarcation lines. They mark off St. John's theory from all other theories on the subject. It seems to me that they specially distinguish it from three other views which are apt to enter into our computation of the universe—the fatalistic, the unnatural, and the accidental. Let us glance at each of these.

And first, I would observe that St. John's view of Providence is distinct from fatalism. This is brought out, I think, by the designed indefiniteness of the revelation. The door which is opened is not revealed. What is really said is: "There is an opening for you *somewhere—a* door." It is not intended that the Christian should fold his hands in the hope of a coming destiny. The motive of the statement is precisely the reverse. What St. John says is: "You do not know at what particular point or angle your opportunity is coming. You see in advance of you no aperture by which you can make your

entrance into the world. None the less, the aperture is there. It is your distance that prevents you from seeing it. You will never see it till you go near. It is situated somewhere in the very middle of the seemingly continuous wall. Do not be arrested in your march by the sight of that wall. Do not ask a revelation of the aperture in advance. You are not promised to-day your bread for to-morrow. The question for the hour is, not whether you have sight enough to see the aperture in the wall, but whether you have strength enough to approach the aperture without seeing it. You are distressed about your capabilities for to-morrow: have you the capability to *reach* to-morrow? Have you strength to take the intervening steps between you and your barrier? Have you strength for the one day that divides you from it, for the one hour that divides you from it, for the last five minutes that divide you from it? Have you strength to take the one remaining step that intervenes between you and your seeming interruption? Then, in

God's name, let that step be taken. Go up to the obstacle; put out your hand and touch it. And lo! it will recede before your touch. It will reveal in the middle an ivory gate and golden. And the gate will prove to be unlocked, unshut; it will swing back upon its hinges, and you will enter in—will find pasture in the very spot where you thought to be confronted with barren ground."

All this is the extreme opposite of fatalism. Fatalism is the passiveness of the mind in the presence of destiny; *this* is the passiveness of destiny in the presence of the mind. Fatalism says, "There is a door open for me; I need not work;" *this* says, "There is a door open for me; I must work to find what it is." Fatalism is the reverence for an unknown event which is to happen somewhere, somehow; *this* is the reverence for every event of the world. You will see how it must be so. I am to find my door by seeking; for all I know, any spot may be *the* spot. I am bound to walk with uncovered head through the universe. It is to

me as to Abraham in the days of his first journeying. He sought a land of promise, but he had no idea where it was. What did he do under these circumstances? He put up an altar wherever he went. He did not know where the consecrated spot might be; accordingly he consecrated every spot, on the chance of its being the favoured one. In point of fact he proved right; he was in the promised land all the time. But had it been otherwise, it would still have been his only course, as it is yours and mine. We must build our altars, not to an unknown God, but to an unknown place. We must impute to every scene our possible destiny. We must feel the solemnity of a street-crossing, of a chance visit, of an evening party. We must accept our call to commonplace, yea, to *irksome* duty, as a possible call to the ivory gate. We must bow to the unseen issues of the exchange, the counting-house, the workshop. We must remember that every stroke of life's oar is carrying us farther than we dream of, and therefore we must allow

each stroke to alternate with a prayer. All this is the reverse of fatalism.

The second view of the universe to which St. John's message forms a sharp antithesis is what I have called the unnatural, by which I mean the theory which favours an interruption in the ordinary course of nature. The point in which St. John's message diverges from this view lies in the words, "I have set before thee a door which is opened." This is the most direct translation, and it is suggestive. It implies that there is no need of interposition in the working of the machine The course of nature, which here means the course of human history, already holds upon its line of rail the very opening Christianity requires. It is not even implied that originally this door was opened for a Christian purpose. Rather the contrary. The strong point in the passage is not the opening, but the setting—the placing on the line where the opening happened to be. In point of fact, Christianity has been helped by what Mr. Gibbon calls secondary causes, what St. John

calls previously open doors. The one means exactly the same as the other. Both signify that when Christianity came into the world it found already laid a certain line of transport —laid by human hands for secular ends, the product of selfish ambition, and the result of worldly conquest—but none the less the help of a life of whose coming it did not know, and the accelerator of a progress whose nature it did not contemplate.

Let me try to make my meaning clear. I have often been struck with the fact that every period of Christian development has been preceded by a period of gravitation towards a common centre. In other words, the most prosaic study of history will, I think, lead one to the conclusion that each special age of Christian outpouring has had for its forerunner a time of political unity—a time in which the earth has been drawn together as by a belt of contact. Of course no one will dispute that, when the Christian outpouring occurs at such a time, it receives from it a great advantage—an open door. But the

remarkable thing is that it *should* occur at such a time—that *I* should throw the ball just when a common road is made. The striking feature about it, I should say the beautiful feature about it, is that it has all happened quite naturally —in fact, rather carnally. The common road has been made without any reference to Christianity. It has been made for human motives, in obedience to mechanical requirements, with a view often to sordid interests. It has no more connection with its goal, so far as man is concerned, than the selling of Joseph by his brethren had with his future good fortune; yet in the sequel it proves to be an open door. One or two illustrations will make this plain.

The empire of Alexander the Great conquered Judea, and united for a time the two most opposite nations in the world—the Greeks and the Jews. Then came the Romans, and conquered the empire of Alexander—Greeks and Jews alike. And now, the three great nations of the world were one nation—the Roman, the Jew, and the Greek. At that hour

Christ came. It was the fulness of the time for Him. Had He come a hundred years earlier, there would have been no common road. Had He come five centuries later, there would have been no common road. He stood before the tree just when the tree was ripe. Yet it was ripened by earthly suns, tended by human hands, cultivated by worldly motives. If to be natural is to be unprovidential, then a man might look at the spectacle and deny Providence, for it all happened quite naturally.

Again. At the beginning of the fourth century the world was very divided. Six emperors ruled the Roman State — rivals, mutual enemies. One of them conquered all the others. He conquered by purely physical weapons and for purely material gain. He was the only one of the six who had a leaning towards Christianity; but he kept the secret in his heart. There was no reason on the ground of Christianity why he of all the six should have united the world once more. But he did. The handle of the door was turned by earthly fingers. It opened in the ordinary

course of history. None the less, it opened into Christ. The physical conqueror of to-day was to be the avowed Christian of to-morrow He did not know it; humanly speaking, he did not win by it. But when he did win, he became the example, not to a *section* of the community, but to a united empire. The man was Constantine.

Once more. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century Europe was almost dominated by the life of a single man—Charles the Fifth of Germany. His empire was vast in extent, greater still in influence. It comprehended, fully in theory and almost in fact, the greater part of the Continent. It reigned over Austria, the German principalities, the kingdom of Spain, the Italian States, the Netherlands; it had prostrated the power of France; it was in alliance with the policy of England. Never since the days of Constantine had the common road extended so far. Like Constantine's road, it had all been constructed quite naturally. It had been cut by human subtlety, cleared by human ambition, smoothed by

human craft. Yet it was to prove a medium of transmission for a very different force—a power whose motives and workings were intensely spiritual and supremely unworldly. It was on this road that Luther rose. The man came just at the hour. An hour earlier would have been too soon; an hour after would have been too late; the one would have found the road unmade, the other would have found it destroyed. As it was, that ball called The Reformation was thrown just at the right time. It struck the road when it was level, when it was continuous; and when it began to roll it rolled on. There had been set before it an open door. The door had been opened for another purpose. When Abraham looked round he saw a ram behind him. It had not been created for the purpose of sacrifice. It had come into the thicket for its own sake, not for Abraham's sake. It had been in search of its own bread for the day, not of Abraham's nourishment for to-morrow. Yet it became Abraham's door. Even thus naturally did the united German

Empire of the year 1525 become the door of the Lutheran Reformation.

The third view of the universe which the message of St. John controverts is what I have named the accidental—the belief that things happen fortuitously. The antithesis to this opinion appears in the words "no man can shut it." "Man" is here used in contrast to God—the opener of the door; he stands as the symbol for all external opposition. The idea is that no adverse movement from without can shut a door which God has opened. I say "from without." All the writers of the Bible would have held very firmly that a man's adverse will can shut his own door—the door God meant for him. "*I* would, but *ye* would not" is the requiem on Jerusalem. The same thought appears again, I think, in that strange epitaph of the third evangelist: "Judas went to his own place." He means that he chose his own door—not God's door for him. God had opened a door for Judas—the entrance into an apostolic mission; he was elect according to the desire of heaven. But his own will was

towards another aperture. Our authorised version says he "fell by *transgression*"; and the English word singularly suits the fact. He *stepped over the path*; he crossed the street to avoid his opening; he went to his own place.

But, while a man's own will may shut his door, St. John says that another man's will cannot. This is *also* a favourite doctrine of the third evangelist. Nay, he puts it even stronger. With him, every outside attempt to shut God's door helps to open it wider. The finest illustration I know of his bent of mind is the remarkable passage Acts iv. 27: "Of a truth against Thy holy servant Jesus, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, . . . were gathered together, to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." Herod and Pilate, he says, came to shut the door, to close it effectually and for ever. What could close it so effectually as death? They said "Let Him die—this proposer of a new civilisation." At that moment, St. Luke says, they opened the door to its widest. They sent Him the one gift which was to *make* Him, crown

Him. They did the only thing which has made Him the Messiah. If they had proposed to enrol Him among the gods of Palatine they would, without meaning it, have struck an adverse blow; when they sent Him to the cross, they prepared for Him His chariot. "From this time forth shall ye see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." "From this time forth"—from the hour of His humiliation, from the day of His death, from the night of His silence in the tomb. It is a mere matter of history, and would not be denied, even by an atheist, that the glory of Jesus has dated from His sufferings—from the attempt to shut His door. "He emptied Himself," cries St. Paul, "therefore God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name that is above every name." Pilate and Herod meant to bury a body; unconsciously to themselves, they were planting a flower.

I have emphasised this point, not because it is illustrative, but because it is typical. Alike in the Old Testament and in the New

the goal of Divine Providence is the advancement of the kingdom of Christ. If that goal has been achieved, not only in spite of, but by reason of, the things which were meant to interrupt it, it becomes more than an illustration, it is a *vindication*, of St. John's message. Perhaps, too, from another quarter the verdict of modern life will be with St. John. It is the doctrine of scientific evolution that the world has reached its present attitude by reason of all the steps of the past—the waste as well as the fulness, the losses alike with the gains. Whatever height we have attained is the result of all the forces that have gone before. If I stand on a hill higher than the animal, it is because every circumstance of the past has made for that goal—the advances, the retardings, the going back, the standing still; the evening and the morning have alike contributed to make the one day. Such is the doctrine of modern science, even of the most negative science. And what does it amount to? To nothing less than the old aphorism of St. John, that no circumstance

can shut a man's door. There has been a struggle for survival, and thousands have fallen in the fight; but *by* the struggle, not in spite of it, I am what I am. There have been moments of regress; many have turned back, and the ranks have been greatly thinned; but by the thinning of the ranks I am what I am. Through devious roads, through contrary roads, through ways I never should have chosen, through paths I should have rejected beforehand, I have reached my open door. The key which has opened it is not all of gold. Like the image of Nebuchadnezzar's vision, part of it was of gold, part of silver, part of brass, and part of clay. The clay might be called the adversary of the gold; yet the open door on whose threshold I stand to-day has been unlocked equally by every side of the key. I have come into my kingdom as much by the way of the thorns as by the way of the roses; the desert has contributed to make my promised land. That is the doctrine of modern science; that is the message of the seer of Patmos.

THE CHRISTIAN PROMISE OF IMMUNITY

Revelation iii. 10

The Christian promise of immunity is contained in these words: "Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world." The phrase which startles us at the outset is the expression, "My *patience*." What a strange attribute to be claimed for the Divine! We could have understood "My greatness," "My power," "My justice," "My majesty." But patience—that is surely a singular prerogative for a Divine ideal. It was directly in the face of all existing conceptions—Roman, Greek, Jewish. It was the lifting into the heavens of a virtue which had been always deemed too prosaic for the best of earth—a virtue which was regarded as the property of

poor creatures, of the down-trodden, of the slave. In a book which is saturated with a sense of the majesty of God, in a book which lavishes on the Christ every epithet of glory, it seems an anti-climax to claim as the chief jewel of His crown the homely grace of patience.

But is there anything which shows more strongly that St. John had in his view the Christ of history? Is not the distinctive attribute of the Christ of history His patience? The peculiar trial of the Son of Man was waiting; He was straitened until His baptism was accomplished. The world was not ready for Him, though He was ready for the world. The sorest cross He had to bear was the unpreparedness of men. His deepest struggle was the struggle to restrain Himself, to keep Himself from anticipating the slow course of events. It is this consciousness, I think, that breaks forth in the words "I am meek and lowly in heart." He felt that He was capable of quicker things. He perceived within Himself the working of forces which, if He gave them

vent, would lift the world in a moment miles along the way. "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" It is the expression of the belief that He was submitting to a reserve of power, that He was constraining Himself within the limits prescribed by natural law. The special gift of the earthly life of Jesus was the power of patience.

In one sense the force of all temptation springs from a want of patience. It is a familiar experience that if hunger is long protracted, the appetite goes. I believe, if we could suspend the obedience to any temptation for an adequate period, it would follow the law of hunger—would subside. What the drunkard wants is a power of resistance—an ability to hold out; if he could hold out long enough, the appetite for drink would fade and ultimately vanish. What the ill-tempered man wants is time to carry his anger without expressing it. I do not believe in the adage that nursing wrath keeps it warm, if it means that suspending its *action*

keeps it warm. We all utter genuine threats on Monday which we could not possibly carry out on Saturday. We explain it by saying that we have cooled down; and it is true. But the cooling down is not the result of any change of circumstances; it comes simply from the attitude of waiting. The most potent of all powers against the influence of temptation is the power to wait.

But the stress of this passage is after all laid, not on the patience, but on the "word" of the patience. The "word," as I take it, means the cause, the motive of the patience; the "word" is the prompting word. The expression "the word of *my* patience" is antithetical. It implies that patience may have many watchwords, many rallying-cries. The rallying-cry of a movement is its motive, its ground of stimulus. Now, there have been three rallying-cries or watchwords of patience in this world. There are three words which have been made the cause of patience, and not one of them is that of Christ. We shall look at each in turn.

The first of these watchwords is the sense of life's nothingness. Its motto for patience would be, "Not worth while to get hot." No man can deny that such a rallying-cry, if it comes from the heart, and goes to the heart, has a certain amount of power. I believe that if a man could reach an attitude of absolute pessimism, if he could really come to feel that everything in this world was as bad as it could be, he would be free from all temptation. Everything would then be on a level; and temptation requires a mountain. But you will observe, what St. John speaks of is not freedom from temptation; it is keeping from the *hour* of temptation—resisting the hour for the sake of the eternity. So far from advocating the freedom from temptation, he says that temptation "shall come to all the world"—therefore to the Christian also. The difference, in his view, between the man of the world and the Christian, is not that the former shall be tempted and the latter not. On the contrary, temptation is often more blunted to the worldling than to the Christian.

I would say that it is more difficult for a follower of Christ to get free from temptation than it is for a man of the world, for the simple reason that to the follower of Christ life is a more rose-coloured thing. The worldling has great advantages for getting soured with life—in other words, for seeing the colours taken out of it; and that is itself the death of temptation. When a man's tree of life is withered, it is withered all round—for active evil as well as active good. His fate, from an opposite point of view, is something like the fate of the three men in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace—he passes through and receives no hurt.

Now, whatever be the word of Christ's patience, it is not this word. His attitude towards life is not that of pessimism—even less so than that of His apostle, St. Paul. Indeed, looking at the matter from the purely human side, I know of no teacher so optimistic as that Son of Man who had the deepest sense of human sin. He regarded the world as beautiful to look upon. He had a sense

of that impartial mercy which blesses the creature because he *is* a creature—makes its sun to rise on the evil and the good. He was impressed with the infinite influence of the most finite things, of the most seemingly insignificant things. He emphasised the ineradicable effect of giving a cup of cold water to a thirsty man. He perilled the fortunes of His kingdom in a moment of danger on the influence of a look cast upon a deserting disciple, whom He had placed at the head of His band. The word of Christ's patience was certainly not a sense of life's nothingness.

The second word which may describe a source of patience is "exhaustion"—the decline of the vital functions. The rallying-cry for the abandonment of life and its temptations may be the patience which says, "I am tired." The exhaustion of vital energy may come from many things. It may be the fruit of old age; it may spring from what is called fastness—the over-yielding to temptation itself. A dissipated man literally means a man who has ceased to be tempted—ceased to

taste the joy of sins which once allured him. He is one who has been made old before his time, in whom the process of vital exhaustion has been accelerated. A state like this involves the death of temptation. It does so even though the old habits may remain. A man frequents his former haunts from custom long after he has become blind to their beauty. So is it with false beauty as well as true. The dissipated man is the man who has lost the charm of things that once were joys. The objects remain uninjured; the habit remains unbroken; but the energy is exhausted, the temptation is away.

Is *this* the word of Christ's patience? No. Whatever His prompting word may be, it is not "exhaustion." There is a remarkable passage in St. John's own Gospel which strongly bears upon this point. Christ says to the Samaritan, "The water which I will give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." "Springing up to everlasting life" means, springing up for ever. The idea is that of a perpetual flow, of a power

ever recuperative, ever renewing itself. And the charm of the saying is that it is a delightful little bit of autobiography. It is a record of Christ's own experience about Himself. How did He know that His followers were to have a sense of perpetual youth? Because He felt it in Himself. No man could have pictured life as the springing water who had not essentially a young soul. It is the cry of youth, of youth irrepressible and full of glory. It is the voice of a heart that, amid all its sorrows, has never been wasted, worn, wearied—of a spirit which has been conscious of fresh strength at every moment of exhaustion. We must seek elsewhere than in fading vigour for the word of Christ's patience.

There is a third word which may be the source of patience. It may come from bloodlessness, or anæmia; its rallying-cry may be, "I cannot be troubled with the heat of passion." For it must be confessed that there are minds in this world which are too shallow to be violently stirred, either by good or ill. They dwell in a recess of the bay. The

storms of life sweep overhead and leave them quite untouched. I do not say, unharmed. Their incapacity to be moved springs from their want of depth, and it prevents them as much from becoming very good as from becoming very bad. None the less, the position of these men in the world is what the world calls blameless. They are blameless because they are bloodless. They are sheltered by their own inlandness. They are protected by the passiveness of their nature. They fail to take fire because they have not the combustible element. They are incapable of great desire, of strong emotion, of ardent longing, of much laughter or of many tears. They cannot be said to possess their souls in patience. Their patience is, strictly speaking, not a possession ; they do not hold *it;* it holds *them.* It imprisons them. It encloses them from the breath of every current. It girds them round and round with an atmosphere of deadly calm which excludes all contact with the forces and forms of passion

Is this the word of Christ's patience?

Assuredly not. This is the cleansing through bloodlessness; but it is the *blood* of Jesus Christ that cleanses from all sin. Christ's conquest of temptation is not the conquest by impassiveness; it is the conquest by passion—the Lord's passion. Not by bloodlessness, but by the transfusion of new blood, is the victory of the Christian won. If temptation is subdued, it is not by a calming down of the life-forces. It is by the impartation of a fresh force. The old temptation is conquered by getting a new one, a higher one. The things which once were gain are counted loss, not because a part of our nature is dormant, but because there has appeared a more excellent glory, beneath whose sunlight the candle ceases to shine.

For let us now ask, What is that word of Christ's patience which has enabled man to wait? It is a shorter word than any of the three foregoing—nothingness, exhaustion, anæmia; it is love. Love is distinctively the one power in all the universe that makes for patience. It is a remarkable fact that when St. Paul is counting the different jewels of its

crown he lingers longest over its waiting power. One would have thought that in that magnificent hymn which he dedicates to its glory he would have dwelt upon its flights and raptures. Not so. His eye rests upon its patience. He is so attracted by that gem that he can hardly let it go. Nearly every note of this hymn is a note in praise of love's waiting. To him its paramount beauty is that it "never faileth." It "suffereth long"; it "is not easily provoked"; it is greater in its abidingness than even faith or hope; it "beareth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things"; these are the chords that dominate the triumphant anthem, and constitute the charm of its music. It is the same note which appears again in the twelfth chapter of Romans, where he is speaking of the gifts of love. To him there is ever one cry: "Wait, wait, wait!" All love's more brilliant manifestations are passed by on the other side. He calls on the ministering to wait on their ministry, the teachers on their teaching, the exhorters on their exhortation. He bids the prophets "prophesy according to

the proportion of faith"—their waiting-power for the coming good of humanity. He tells the rulers to rule "with diligence"—with that prosaic painstaking whose name is patience. From first to last he has no other song but the patience of love.

And is it not true that love is the most staying power in the universe? Is there anything which so helps a man to endure the hour? We see a youth of burning passions and of loose morals; a pure love comes, and thenceforth he walks above the mire. We feel within our breast the glow of a just anger. A man is seen living in defiance of all goodness. Every voice of the hour cries for vengeance, and every instinct of daily justice exclaims, "Cut him down; why cumbereth he the ground?" Yet, even in our hearts, we do not cut him down. Why? Because there is a voice beyond the hour, an instinct beyond the day; it is love. The hour cries, "Cut him down," because it sees the man of the present; love says, "Spare him," because it sees the man of the future. There is a temptation

which once at least in a lifetime comes to all the world; it is uncharity—the cry of the hour for the sword of retribution. From that temptation which comes to all the world there is provided for all the world a refuge. There is a power which is quite universal, and its name is love. It has the attribute of waiting, because it has the gift of foresight. It sees in advance, and therefore it evades the moment. It does not conquer the sense of wrong, does not wish to conquer it; but it suspends the act, it postpones the stroke, it arrests the descending blow. It craves time for the barren fig-tree, it *makes* time. It puts into the heart a word of patience; it keeps us from the temptation of the hour.

And now, running through all these details, there is one vast principle which comprehends and yet transcends them. For what does this utterance of St. John amount to? Is it not simply this: that in the life of the new *régime* morality shall have its motive in immortality? The waiting on the future is to conquer the temptation of the hour. Many would call this

a decline in religion—a regress to the Egyptian and the Parsee. Robertson of Brighton, in a famous passage, quoted with enthusiasm by many professed agnostics, tells us that, even if there be no future, it is better to be good than to be evil. No ethical creed would ever deny it. But it is not a question of betterness; it is a question of helpfulness. What St. John maintains, what Christianity maintains, is that the sense of an object's value helps us to be good to it. Analyse your moments of benevolence; I think you will find that they are strongest in proportion to the possibilities of to-morrow. Pity is independent of the sense of futurity; it gives because it sees pain. But when it gives it runs away; it is itself a pain. But benevolence is a hope, and it demands hope. If it is not to run away, it must get a glimpse of to-morrow. It must see through the rags the possibility of the seamless robe, through the marred visage the lineaments of a face divine. We do not crown the creature for death, but for life here or elsewhere. If we knew that a child would not pass its

seventh year, we should not begin its education. It is vain to say that humanitarianism is a substitute for immortality. It is immortality that makes humanitarianism. Consciously or unconsciously, with or against the will, it is the far look-out towards the Father's house that prompts us to lift the prodigal from the swine. It is the sounding of the bells across the snow that impels the arms to clear the snow away. The word of Christ's patience is the word of immortality, and the word of immortality helps us to resist the hour.

THE PAINS AND PENALTIES OF HEAVENLY RANK

Revelation iii. 12

The heavenly state—the state of completed humanity—is always declared to be one of gradations; it is a condition which is to have its thrones and principalities and powers. These upper seats receive here their charter. It is a charter of pains and privileges; and as any man may one day become the subject of it, I quote it in full: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God: and I will write upon him My new name."

The first thing which strikes us here is a

note of autobiography. We know from St. Paul's epistles that St. John himself had been regarded as one of the pillars of the Church; probably the name had been directly applied to him. Very likely it was a pain to him that he was looked upon as enjoying a sense of pre-eminence. Doubtless he had long wished men to see that his position was not a monopoly—not a thing which others could not win. The spirit of inspiration expressed itself through the form of his own human consciousness; it always does. If St. Paul, instead of St. John, had been the man of Patmos, the vision would have been equally grand, the truth would have been exactly the same, but the expression would have been radically different. You may play the same tune through a lute and a violin; but, even in the act of playing, no one will mistake the lute for the violin; the music reveals, not only itself, but its environment. So is it with the music of the Divine Spirit. It takes the man as it finds him—breathes through him as it finds him. It clothes itself in the forms

which he knows the best. Even if it tells him the secrets of the future, it does so in the language of the past—his past. It builds his heaven out of his special earth; it speaks through his yesterday, even though that yesterday be humble—through bad grammar, defective knowledge, perhaps imperfect reasoning itself. The revelation *to* the man is also the revelation *of* the man.

We do not wonder, then, that St. John's vision of heavenly dignity should have clothed itself in that garb wherein men had seen his *own* dignity—should have called the occupiers of the upper room, "Pillars of the Church." But having done so, it proceeds to disabuse them of a wrong impression. Many had coveted, many had envied, the position of the pillar-apostles. St. John tells them that from *their* point of view they are in a delusion. He tells them that to be a pillar of the Church is, from the worldly side, not a privilege. He declares that it is the bearing of a weight so intense and so awful as to demand a special training. He says

that no one can be qualified to be a pillar of the General Assembly of the firstborn who has not been tested by the weights of the present world: "Him that *overcometh* will I make a pillar in the temple of My God." The idea is clearly that of danger and responsibility. It is the peril of supporting a building upon beams which themselves need to be supported. It is not a question of getting to heaven. St. John would have admitted thousands into heaven whom he would not have allowed to be pillars. The pillars are the weight-bearers. They are those who, because they are the strongest, require to go below and support the building. It is essential that they should be the strongest; it is essential that their strength should be tested before they are bidden to bear. There can be no arbitrary selection, no capricious favouritism. Those beams alone can support the heavenly building which have served unbroken in the temple of earth.

This principle of selection is a very striking one, and none the less so because we see it

constantly around us. What do we mean by the desire, so often expressed in the hour of sorrow, to lean upon some one who has overcome? We mean that the pillar of our temple must be tested, not by heavenly height, but by earthly weightedness. Why is it that, in a season of bereavement, we would rather seek comfort from the old than from the young? The common answer will be, "Because the old are nearer to the other world than the young." In truth it is exactly the reverse. It is the young who are nearer the other world—or at least, farther away from this. We go to the old, not because they know more of heaven, but because they know more of earth. Youth is always looking toward the stars. It sees not the common plain, it observes not the garish day; it is what Matthew Arnold would call "otherworldly." But age has learned life's reality. It has tasted of the earthly springs—their sweetness and their bitterness; it has known the best and the worst of it. Therefore in the hour of trouble we go to lean there.

We select, not from the hills, but from the valleys. We choose the men and women who are farthest advanced on the earthly road—not because they are so near the goal, but because they have seen so much of the journey. We pass the youthful by, not because we suppose them to be wedded to the fashions of the earth, but for precisely the opposite reason —because they have fixed their eyes upon a state too perfect to be realised below.

St. John transfers this thought to the upper sanctuary. He says that the principle of selection for the pillars of that house shall be the survival of the previously strong. There shall be no choice made on the ground of an arbitrary Divine Will. The idea uppermost is not privilege, but pain. The election to be a pillar of the house not made with hands is determined by preparation in the lower sphere. Is there here another note of autobiography? Is the vision appealing to St. John's memory of a scene on the shores of Galilee—a scene in which he mistook the nature of heavenly rank? Does he remember the day when he

asked to sit at the right hand in God's kingdom—forgetting, what even the psalmist saw, that God's right hand "instructs in terrible things"? Does he remember that the psalmist's statement was the very answer he received: "You know not what you ask; can you drink of My cup?" Does he remember, above all, how the idea of arbitrary election is disclaimed: "To sit at My right hand is not Mine to give, except to those for whom it is prepared of My Father"?

What, then, are these "terrible things" at God's right hand? Why is it that to be a pillar in His temple involves a pain? In answer, let us put to ourselves a supposition. Let us imagine that in the midst of a Sabbath service in one of our large cathedrals a single pillar were suddenly to awake into consciousness: what would its first impressions be? I think it would have two—a great sense of weight, and a still greater sense of responsibility. It would feel the actual pressure to be very heavy; but this, after all, would be the smaller part. The responsibility would be felt to exceed the

actual weight. The weight is shared by other pillars; strictly speaking, the responsibility is not. How could this single pillar tell where exactly the effect of its fall would terminate? Where could it fix the limit of its own catastrophe? How could it know precisely to what extent its own work was necessary to the work of another? By what means could it escape the fear that its own individual fall might drag the others down? Could this imaginary consciousness forget that, in the conception of the great apostle, the complete collapse of the largest cathedral on record came from the fall of a single pillar: "in Adam all died"?

I have dwelt upon this penalty of rank in the heavenly state because I think it a matter of great importance. I believe that the destruction of responsibility would be the destruction of morality; and an immortal life without morality is inferior to annihilation. By "responsibility" I mean exactly what St. John means by the pillar, what St. Paul means by the membership in Christ's body.

It is the point which differentiates the heaven of the Bible from all previous heavens—particularly from the Greek. "Differentiate," indeed, is too weak a word. It would hardly be too much to say that the Christian heaven would be the Greek hell, and the Greek hell the Christian heaven. The Olympus of the Greek is free from care: that of St. John is an increase of care. The Olympus of the Greek is a life of individual licence: that of St. John is an augmentation of the claims of service. The Olympus of the Greek is a shadowless sky, prepared for the indulgence of all sensuous delights: that of St. John is a full awakening to the perception that no man liveth unto himself alone. The Greek's idea of heaven is to *be* happy: that of St. John is to *make* happy.

Passing now from the penalties involved in the state of heavenly rank, I come to consider its privileges. St. John says that there are two respects in which the position of a pillar is desirable. The first is that the man who gets it is thenceforth attached to

the building from the inside: "he shall go no more out." I understand St. John to mean, not that he will never lapse—which nobody ever suspected him of—but that he will never again have any temptation to serve for external motives. What is attachment from the inside? We express it by one little word—love. There may, at the beginning, be an attachment from the outside. Wealth may attract one man into the companionship of another. But if, as a result of the companionship, there should spring up an inner joy of sympathy, the attraction of wealth will cease to be a motive; the man will no more go out. The joy of sympathy—the attachment from the inside—will not only surpass the old outward attraction of the money, but will render it non-existent. It is not simply that, when the inward sympathy appears, there is added a new motive for friendship; the new motive effectually and for ever destroys the old. We see this tested frequently in actual life. A marriage is celebrated on principles of convenience and on principles

of æsthetics—worldly position on the one hand, and physical beauty on the other. Years pass away, and when next the curtain rises there has come a change in the outer environment; the worldly position has vanished, the physical beauty has faded. Yet, strange to say, the bond is much closer than it was at the first. The reason is that it is no longer the same bond. During these years of interval there has sprung up a reciprocity of feeling between the pair. The moment this reciprocity of feeling came, the man and the woman lived inside the house; they were independent of the outer motive. The shock to the external fabric did not really come with the loss of the wealth and the loss of the beauty; it came long before. It began with the birth of love. "When that which is perfect has come, that which is in part is done away." The old ties were not loosed by the accident which befell them; they were loosed by the forming of a new tie. The house of the outer tabernacle was dissolved when the building of God appeared.

Now, I am quite convinced that this is what St. John meant by the phrase "he shall go no more out." He meant to say, "He will be no more influenced by outward rewards; he will cease to be guided by utilitarian motives; he will work no longer for hire." That this is St. John's meaning is clear to me from a parallel passage of his own Gospel: "The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth ever." The difference between being inside and outside the house is with St. John the difference, not between a good man and a bad, but between a servant and a son. The servant does outdoor work. He has no connection with the innermost shrine where the family gather. If he enters that shrine, it is not to abide there, but to carry a message, or take an order, or sweep a room; he does not come to stay. He is paid for his connection with the inner shrine —paid in material coin—and he has more pleasure in going out than in coming in. But if this servant were adopted into the family, you would see a great change. You

would cease to find him loitering about the outer courts, skulking in the pantry, chaffing in the yard. You would cease to see him taking a material reward for mending a carriage wheel. If you offered it, he would be insulted. It would be like suggesting that the carriage was not his own property. He would desire to feel that the carriage *is* his own property, that in mending it he is helping himself. This will be his reward for the time to come—the actual beautifying of that which belongs to him. He will not take payment for it; he will pay to have it done. To him, as to the child in the Sabbath school, the task of yesterday has become the prize of to-day.

This, then, is the first privilege of the man who has become a pillar in the temple of God; his service is remunerated from the inside. I come now to the second of the great privileges involved in such a rank. St. John says that the pillar gets an *expanding* power of service. There are written on him three successive inscriptions; in other words, he passes one by one through the three great

circles—the temple, the city, humanity: "I will write upon him the name of My God, and the name of the city of My God, which is New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from My God; and I will write upon him My new name."

He begins by being a religious man so called—a devotee: "I will write upon him the name of *My God*." By-and-by he makes a discovery. He finds that there is a larger church than the temple—the city. He finds that to be a citizen is a more sacred thing than to be a devotee. But where shall he behold this city? On the earth? No; in the air. What is that New Jerusalem which he sees coming down from heaven? It is any city you like, pictured, not as it is, but as it ought to be. Jerusalem in the air is Jerusalem idealised—seen as God meant it to be. If St. John had been an Englishman, he would have said that his city was London coming down from heaven—London in the air, London as it appeared to the hope of God in the days of the Roman camp when

its future was all before it, London without its masses of misery and its scenes of corruption. The pillar of God's Church must come to realise that he is a pillar of God's State too. Nor must he think that in proceeding from the one to the other he is going out—becoming secular. If he thinks so, he is losing the lesson of his own development. The city is not outside the temple; it is a wing of the place of worship. In our Father's house are many mansions; the temple is one, the city is another. In both I have my table of communion; in each I have my altar of sacrifice. The one, as much as the other, has its ideal in heaven—is seen coming down from God. I have gone deeper in, instead of farther out, when God writes on me this second name.

Has the pillar now reached the goal? No; one stage remains; a third inscription has still to be graven on him. There is a wider church than either the temple or the city; it is the spirit of humanity: "I will write upon him My new name." What is that?

St. John himself tells us elsewhere; it is the gift of the Spirit, "another Comforter whom the Father will send in My name." It is the Spirit of Pentecost, the Spirit that speaks foreign languages, the Spirit that goes down to those who as yet do not understand.

Let us enter within this third compartment of the great cathedral. As I have said, it is wider than either of the others. It is the church of the churchless, the church of the unchurched. It comprehends those who have been put out and those who have never got in. It might almost be called the subterranean crypt of the building; to reach it we must go down. There is a vast mass of human souls beyond the pale of the temple, beyond the walls of the city. The temple has refused to let them in; the city has numbered them not in the census of its population. They are the lepers of society, the pariahs of the body-politic. They are those whom the land of Egypt casts into the Nile River, as things arresting to her development, those whom evolution has sent to the wall as

things unworthy to survive. The Roman never included this compartment in his cathedral. He had no place for those who were incapable of being blended either with the city or with the temple. He had no place for the inarticulate; that a Divine Spirit should teach *them* was to him a new thing. The temple of Janus and the gates of the Seven Hills alike were closed against the broken limbs of the social fabric.

But this ignored department has been made the widest space in the cathedral of God; the stone which the original builders rejected has become the head of the corner. The *final* inscription of the pillar is also the finest. It is *something* to support the temple; it is *more* to support the city; but to bear up the highways and the hedges—it is a glorious thing. No wonder it is called Christ's new name. It is the latest development of Christian charity. It is the opposite of what Milton called the light; it is the "offspring of heaven lastborn." Only now in these later days is its presence becoming clearly visible. We

saw long through a glass darkly; knowledge, prophecies, tongues, had the empire over love. But now love begins to sit down at the right hand of the Father, and man goes forth to seek his dead brother. Nor does it seem to him that, in leaving the temple and the city behind, he is going out from the presence of the sanctuary; for the essence of all religion is the golden wish called prayer, and the fruit of the golden wish is the service of man.

THE CHRISTIAN PROMISE OF EMPIRE

Revelation III. 21

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne." These words bear the stamp of their environment. They were written at a time when the ideal of all men was the possession of a throne. Alike to the Roman and to the Jew the dream of life was the dream of dominion. The son of Israel contemplated his Messiah who should make him ruler over all nations. The son of Rome was eager to complete his almost finished work of universal empire. So far the promise was in harmony with the place and with the hour. But from another point of view it was in striking contrast to both. Who were the men that claimed to be the

recipients of this promise? A band of obscure slaves. To the proud Roman leading his armies to victory, to the proud Jew counting his ancestors by hundreds, there must have been something almost grotesque in the claim. Here was a company of men not yet dignified with the name of humanity—the butt of the satirist, the jest of the poet, the neglect of the historian—spending their days in menial toil, passing their nights in outhouses or top-garrets, leaving their bodies to a pauper's grave. And yet, in the face of the civilised world, these men make the claim to an empire compared to which the dreams of Cæsar grow pale. They aspire to a sceptre higher than the Latin race had ever aimed at—above ædile, prætor, consul, senate, emperor—above every name that is named to constitute authority. To sit on the judgment-throne of God, the throne before which all hearts are open, to have the last word in the criticism of human actions, to give a verdict on the deeds of man, from which in all the universe there can be no appeal—that is the aspiration

of these Christian slaves. Must it not, to the age in which they lived, have appeared the presumption of insanity?

Nor is it only to a Roman age that the claim of this passage seems to suggest the idea of presumption. Must it not appear so at all times, to every man? The throne, as I have said, is a throne of judgment. How can any human soul aspire to such a seat? Is not the state of the Christian one of humility? Does not the amount of the humility increase in proportion as the Christianity grows? Have not the most purely spiritual souls been precisely those most conscious of their sin? Is it not least of all any of these that we can think of as claiming such a distinction? It is in the incipient stages of the Christian life that we find ambition. Peter begins by asking a perpetual seat on the Mount; but he ends with the aspiration to be "clothed with humility." John begins with the desire for a position on the right hand of power; but he ends with the humble hope, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful

and just to forgive us our sins." These are the normal utterances of the Christian heart, the very utterance of the heart of that man who wrote the passage before us. Does it not seem as if he had here been untrue to himself, and had reverted to that old presumptuous standpoint from which in youth he had been dislodged by the influence of the Master's love?

But let us look deeper. I think we shall find that we have altogether mistaken the meaning of the passage, and that the John of the Apocalypse is nowhere more like the John of the Gospel than in his present claim to Christian empire. So far from being influenced by the old feeling of presumption, he is actuated by the direct desire to avoid that feeling. His position is that, instead of being presumption to claim a seat on God's judgment throne, it is presumption that prevents the Church of Laodicea from having a right to claim it. If that Church would adopt more humility, it would be more entitled to a place on the throne. That this is the idea of the

passage will, I think, be quite manifest if we look back to the opening of the message. Addressing the Laodicean Church in verse 17, the seer of Patmos says, "Thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind and naked." What is the state of mind here indicated? It is poverty unconscious of itself. It is the description of a Church which has no elements of strength within it, but which believes itself to be strong just because it has never been tried. Accordingly in verse 18 he says, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich." The Church had an enemy to overcome within her own bosom. That enemy was presumption—the ignorance of her own weakness. How was the enemy to be overcome? By that which revealed the weakness. Nothing could reveal the weakness but exposure to the fire. The glitter of the alloy would melt before the scorching flame of adversity, and then the Church, emerging out of the flame, would be

fitted to be what it had now no right to be—the judge of human actions. Let us try to make this last point clear.

And first, let us consider that, as a matter of fact, every man has seated himself on a throne of judgment. The difference between the Christian and the non-Christian is not the occupation of a throne It is that the occupation of the one is legal, and the occupation of the other usurped. Every man by nature has constituted himself the judge of other men. He has seated himself on a tribunal before which he calls his brethren to appear. As the stream of his contemporaries passes by, the books of the judgment are opened and the sentence of each is written. Some are dismissed with contempt, some with indignation, some with anger, some with indifference, some with repulsion, and some with that patronising commendation which is equivalent to censure. Before the natural man are gathered the representatives of all nations; he has proclaimed himself the judge of quick and dead.

But to all such the seer of Patmos exclaims, "Come down from that throne; you have no right to be there; you have not overcome." He tells them that until they have felt the temptations of their own nature they are in no condition to judge others. Not only have they no right to sentence their equals; they are not qualified even to judge those whom they call the lapsed masses. "What," says one, "do I ever steal? Do I ever, like these violent people, put out my hand to take that which is not mine?" John answers that there are forms of stealing which take nothing, which can rob a man of his reputation by simply keeping silent when a word would save. "But," says another, "have I ever done such an uncultured thing as raise the hand to strike?" John answers, "Did you never strike *with* culture, *by reason of* your culture, through the very refinement which marks you out from the lapsed masses? Are there not wounds which are inseparable from the gloved hand?" All this seems to be implied in the exhortation, "Anoint thine eyes with eye salve, that thou mayest see"—

cure the soreness of your own eyes before you criticise the soreness of others. And when he says, "I would thou wert cold or hot," he seems to take ground more general still. He implies that there is an absence of temptation which comes from sheer lukewarmness. There are those who are never led up into the wilderness, for the simple reason that they are never led up into the Mount. They have a native sluggishness of heart which makes enthusiasm in any cause impossible. They make no allowance for errors arising out of worldly allurement. They themselves are incapable of being allured, either by the day or by the night. They have all the negative qualities ascribed to the Church of Laodicea—qualities which free from great deeds of wrong as much as great deeds of right. The throne of judgment on which they sit is therefore a usurped throne. They have no claim to it. They do not possess the two sides of the question. They have set themselves to legislate in a cause in which they have only heard the pleadings of one advocate. They are

called to condemn temptations, not because they themselves have conquered them, but because they have never felt them. They have not yet "overcome."

Now, the next question is, What would be the effect of what is here called overcoming —of vanquishing the temptation? It would clearly be to transform a throne of judgment into a throne of grace. For, be it observed, the value of overcoming is not the victory, but the struggle. There are two ways in which a man may reach freedom from temptation— by innocence, or by virtue; by never having known, or by having known and vanquished. If mere freedom from temptation were the goal, we ought to be content with the first. What makes the overcoming better than the innocence is the fact that in struggle we learn our weakness, and that in learning our weakness the throne of judgment becomes a throne of mercy. The prophet of Israel is not afraid to apply the principle even to the sinless "servant of God." "He shall see of the travail of his soul; by the knowledge of it

shall My righteous servant justify many." The idea is that the knowledge of his own travail shall make him tender to others. In what sense such words can be understood of Him I shall presently consider. Meantime I note the fact that Paul has not scrupled, in Galatians vi. 6, to name this principle distinctively "the law of Christ." He calls on the spiritual to restore the fallen—not on the ground of their spirituality, but by that memory of human weakness which their own struggle has left behind. He tells them to bear one another's burdens, on the ground that each has had a burden of his own to bear—a burden which either still exists or has left in remembrance the traces of its power. He promises the throne to the spirit of meekness—to those who have washed their robes in blood, and by the sight of their remaining scars are able to pity the wounds of the actual battlefield.

And now the passage takes a remarkable turn. To the inspired ear of the seer of Patmos, the Christ who offers the conditions

of empire is heard declaring that He Himself has reached empire by conforming to these conditions: "even as I also overcame and am set down with My Father on His throne." There is something startling here. There seems at first sight to be no analogy between the case of Christ and the case of ordinary men. Ordinary men are sinners; Christ claims to be without sin. How can it be said that the Son of Man has been taught to be tender by realising through struggle the difficulty of being pure? Is there not to the Christian consciousness something revolting in the very statement, and something impossible in the conception? Undoubtedly there is; but it is neither the statement nor the conception of the passage. For let us consider the principle which John means to unfold. It is that no man is entitled to judge another until he has himself been tried in the fire. But what is the fire? There lies all the question. "It is temptation," you say. Of course it is; but temptation to what? To sin? Not necessarily. There are as many

forms of temptation as there are circumstances of life. Sin is only one form of temptation. I may be tempted without sin. If I come to two cross roads and have a struggle as to which I shall take, that is temptation. Whatever exposes human nature to a crisis of perplexity, whatever presents a conflict of motives to the soul of any man, that is his hour of trial. It may be a solicitation to sin, it may be a solicitation to love, it may be a solicitation to venture; so far as the revelation of human frailty is concerned, the cause is immaterial.

Now, Jesus was tempted; that is one of the cardinal features of the Gospel. He was tempted in such a way as to make Him feel the inherent weakness of humanity; that is one of the cardinal features of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But He was tempted also "without sin." What is the meaning of these words? They are popularly thought to mean that He did not *succumb* to the temptation. I do not think this is their significance. I take them to express the writer's conviction

that the temptation of Jesus had in it no solicitation to sin, that it came in the form of a tendency to choose a short road to the path of goodness—the establishment of His kingdom. It was a wish to realise without death the Messianic expectation of His people. None the less, it was a temptation which involved for Him the most severe struggle. Why should death have seemed to Him the longest road? Clearly because it was something from which He shrank. On the one hand, He seemed to be impelled towards it by the stream of events, which for Him was the will of the Father; on the other, He was repelled from it by an instinct of His own nature. If the purpose of death had been quite clear to Him, there would have been no room for temptation; He could not have hesitated for a moment where he saw without dubiety the Father's will. But, in the absence of perfect certainty, the repulsive aspect of death was allowed to have its sway, and the spirit of the Son of Man was in a strait betwixt two.

But, it may be asked, why was death so

repulsive to Jesus? In this respect He differs from most teachers of the old world. The philosophies of the past had been distinguished by the little hold which death had over them. The Brahman longed for it; the Platonist scorned it; the Stoic despised it. Why should the purest of all the religions have been the most fearful? Why should the faith most full of God have been that which most palpably and most unblushingly shrank from the idea of death?

The answer is plain: just because it *was* the faith most full of God. To the Brahman, to the Platonist, in some sense even to the Stoic, the life of physical nature was a barrier to the life of the soul. To the first it was a delusion; to the second it was an imprisonment; to the third it was an incentive to feelings which ought to be overcome. But to the human soul of the Son of Man the life of physical nature was communion with the Divine Life. What others had called natural was to Him supernatural. The lily of the field, the bird of the air, the sower going

forth to sow, the wind blowing where it listed, the mustard-seed expanding into ample branches, the fig-tree putting forth its leaves to tell that summer is nigh, were to Him, each and all, gleamings of the Life Divine—windows that opened in heaven to give a glimpse of God. Death was a shutting of these windows. To the mind of Jesus the physical world was a stream of the life of God. The sting of death lay, not in itself, but in its idea. Death was to all men a loosing of the thread of nature; to the Son of Man the thread of nature was one of those golden cords which bound the human spirit into communion with the Father. *This* was His temptation—not a temptation to sin, but a temptation to live. He had a love of life which grew, not out of His earthliness, but out of His very spirituality; had He been less full of God, He would have been less averse to die.

I am speaking, of course, of what is called the human soul of Jesus—of that in Him which, the Evangelist says, "grew in wisdom

and knowledge." It is only in this sphere that temptation is ever possible. Temptation always demands limitation, though it need not be a moral limit. We have the testimony of Jesus Himself for the statement that there was a sphere in His earthly nature and a time in His human life from which the knowledge of the future was veiled. Such veiling was essential to His sacrifice—is essential to any sacrifice. The clear foresight of a successful result would in all cases mar the sacrificial element. The sacrifice of Christ is mainly based on His death. It can only be so on the ground that death was to His human nature environed with similar clouds and encompassed with similar difficulties to those which burden the race of man. I say "similar." There are clouds over death which are inseparable from sin. There are those who shrink from death because they think it will bring God nearer. Such a cloud Jesus could never have known. But to shrink from death because it seemed to separate from God, to shrink from death because it appeared to

break the thread of communion—this was a temptation which the purest might know; this was the temptation of the Son of Man.

And it is this temptation which, according to the writer to the Hebrews, gave Jesus the moral claim to the judgment of humanity. John himself, in his Gospel, does not hesitate to declare that Christ's judicial authority rests, not on that in Him which is Divine, but on that which is human: "He hath given Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man." The idea clearly is that His right to judge others rests morally on the fact of His own struggle—the struggle with the thought of death. It is a singular circumstance that His invitation to the labouring and heavy-laden is based by Himself upon His consciousness of human weakness: "I am meek and lowly in heart." He means that on the human side of His nature He has learned by the things He has suffered—learned the frailty of the frame of man. And it is to my mind a circumstance no less remarkable that His assertion of human

power is in exact proportion to His contact with human weakness: "All power is given unto Me in heaven and on earth; go ye therefore and teach all nations." When did Christ utter these words? It was after He had faced the great temptation and vanquished it. Why should all human power be given Him only after the conflict with death? Because "all power" means "all sympathy." In His dealings with man He acknowledges no power but the sympathetic. And what is the root of universal sympathy? Is it not universal experience? If I would have sympathy with all nations, I must know experimentally the weakness with which all nations contend. Jesus emerges from the conflict with death wider in His human capabalities, stronger in His hold on man. He comes forth enriched by His poverty, enlarged by the struggle of His human nature, Judge of quick and dead, because He has come into contact with the spirits in prison. He is able to promise rest to the labouring and the heavy-laden because He has known a kindred labour and felt an

analogous ladenness. He has made the law of the Christian life the law of His own spirit: "I also have overcome, and am set down with My Father on His Throne."

THE BLENDING OF CONTRASTS IN THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

Revelation iv. 3

The blending of contrasts is always a very beautiful thing. It imparts some of the finest touches to poetry. When Longfellow describes the old clock on the stairs ticking monotonously amid all family changes, the charm lies in the conjunction of the constant and the mutable. When St. Luke describes old Simeon holding in his arms the infant Christ, the charm lies in the meeting of the evening and the morning. When St. John speaks in his Gospel of the tomb in the midst of the garden, the poetic interest centres round the fact that in the immediate presence of death there are the seeds of luxuriant life.

In the passage before us we have three pairs of the most striking contrasts. "He

that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardius stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald." The first of these antitheses is the rainbow round the throne. It had been hitherto depicted as spread over the flood; it was God's mercy in the midst of anarchy. In the new *régime* it is to have a new significance. The flood of anarchy is there no longer existent; everything reveals God's power. But the rainbow, which for the old world meant the mercy of God amid His judgment, means for the new the bending of God amid His power. Nay, the figure is more pronounced than even this. The idea of the rainbow round the throne is not really that of God bending from His power. It is rather the idea that the power of God is itself reached by bending, that the empire of Christ has been established on the basis of service, or the stretching of the arms downward. It is no new thought to Christianity. It is the allegorising of a very old thought, common to all the evangelists, specially native to

St. John. It is but the enshrining in poetry of what was originally uttered in sober prose —that the power of Christ was to be the power of His cross: "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

Is it a new thought to *human experience*? No. There is a region in which the allegory of the rainbow and the throne is a perfect allegory—in which power is the direct result of bending; it is the region of the heart. When I say the heart, I do not mean the heart of a man or the heart of an angel. I mean the constitution of love itself, always, everywhere—in man and woman, in angel and archangel, in God the source of all. In the region of love man always witnesses a miracle. In all other regions power means the freedom from a chain. The power of the body is its untrammelledness, its liberation from every weight. The power of the intellect is its unencumberedness, its emancipation from every cloud. But the power of the heart, the power of love, is the opposite of these. It *demands* a weight, it needs a chain,

it involves an encumbrance. Its throne must ever be encircled by a rainbow bending to the flood.

We speak of the heart sometimes as a free and a fetterless thing. At such times we are really describing its absence—certainly the absence of its power. The freedom and the fetterlessness of a heart are its weakness; to make it strong you must weight it. The experience of the heart is the opposite of the bird's experience. The bird is free when it is liberated from its cage; but the heart's power of action only comes when you cage it. If you want to bring out its life you must environ it. The way to take care of it is to *give* it care—to put care within it. We read of the bush that burned and was not consumed. It may be said of the heart that it avoids being consumed by reason of its burning. It is kept alive by its own altar fires. It is never capable of such great strength as when it is bound with the cords of sacrifice. The greatest compliment which could be paid to any man in the region of morality would

be these memorable words: "He saved others; Himself He cannot save." The powerlessness is itself the moral power. The inability to be selfish, the incapacity to take your own good at the expense of another, is the very omnipotence of love. The strength of love must be estimated by its failure to break the sacrificial cord that binds it, by the necessity imposed upon it to hold fast to the place of its cross.

There can be no exception in the case of the Divine. Infinite love is the power to love infinitely. To love infinitely is to be capable of infinite limits, to be under the necessity of bending to the farthest depths. St. Paul says, "The love of God constraineth us." But it is equally true that the love of God constrains *Himself.* Those who talk of the impossibility of setting limits to the Infinite, should remember that an infinite love involves more limits than a finite love. It impels its possessor to stoop deeper, to stretch his arms farther down, to incorporate himself with the path of human tears. It creates a

barrier, not *to* the will, but *in* the will—a barrier which makes it imperative to follow the steps of sorrow, and pause not until it has reached the nethermost world. The power of Divine love is the power of sacrifice; it is the rainbow round the throne.

Such is the first of these pairs of contrasts which this passage brings before us—the power of stooping, the rainbow, and the throne. We come now to the second; it is the rainbow and the emerald. If the first denotes the union of power and bending, the second signifies the absorption of the fleeting in the permanent. The rainbow is the most fugitive of all things; it fades even as we gaze, and vanishes away. But there is one of its colours which has always been taken as an emblem of youth and a symbol of immortality; it is green. On this colour the great allegorist lays hold and enshrines it in a separate form. Out of all the colours, he keeps his eye for the present upon this alone, as if there were no other; he says the rainbow was "like unto an emerald." And what

I understand him to mean is that, while the accidental elements of Christianity will pass away, there is something about it which will not only never pass away, but never become an anachronism—which will keep in latest years the freshness of its morning, and reveal the burning bush even amid the shadows of Nebo.

I believe it will be admitted that this prediction of the allegorist is a very bold thing. To say that this rainbow was to be an emerald rainbow, to prophesy that this form of faith would be an evergreen when so many others had become sear and yellow, was a distinctly brave deed. This in itself would be little. But the prediction has been singularly fulfilled —is still fulfilling. It is not a question of survival; there are faiths which survive older than Christianity; but none of them could be called an emerald rainbow. Brahmanism is alive, Buddhism is alive, Parsism is alive; but they are all living anachronisms. They are like the survivals of last autumn in this year's summer. But at the end of nearly two millenniums Christianity is modern. In the

heart of Western civilisation, in the midst of incessant changes, storms, revolutions, in an atmosphere where the mind of man is in perpetual movement, and everything dominated by the thirst for the new—the religion of Christ not only lives, but is the most vital force of all. For an inhabitant of the Chinese Empire living at the beginning of our era, it would have been no great prophecy to have predicted that the creed of Confucius would last as long as his native land. But for an inhabitant of the Roman Empire, which St. John was—an empire which at that very moment was passing through a series of the most rapid vicissitudes—the prediction of Christianity's permanence is a remarkable thing. We do not wonder at Goethe for presaging it; he had eighteen centuries of experience behind him. But this man was standing on the threshold, in the dawn. He was himself an exile for his faith, and a representative of its precarious fortunes. It was surely a bold stroke to hazard the conviction that it would be one of the world's evergreens.

And not only has this emerald greenness of Christianity been preserved in the heart of political vicissitudes, it has been preserved in the heart of vicissitudes affecting its own form. The environment of the Christian faith has been perpetually changing. It has encountered every phase of fortune. It began in obscurity. It passed into a scene of persecution. Then came a stage of worldly recognition, resulting in worldly accommodation. By-and-by it became itself a political empire, with the nations under its feet. Then came the disintegration, the division, the splitting up of the great mountain into fragments. Next swept over it the ages of doubt. Landmark after landmark was borne away by the waves of unbelief. Tongues ceased, prophecies failed, the claim to theological knowledge vanished away. One would have said that this was the end. But no. At the very moment of seeming effacement the emerald green reappeared, and on the ruins of the former structure rose with our own age the temple of humanitarian love—the temple which

St. Paul views as the finished goal. The history of Christianity has been the history of the permanent in the fleeting. The emerald has often dipped beneath the flood, but it has never been washed away. It has always emerged, always reasserted its presence, always attached itself to the new. Between the nineteenth century and the first there is not a fragment of secular sympathy. The institutions of the past are gone, without hope of resurrection. But the emerald remains; and through the changed sky there floats the old music: "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

I come now to the third of the great contrasts involved in this passage; it is that between the rainbow and the appearance of the throne. "He that sat was like a jasper and a sardius stone"—*i.e.*, like a sardius reflected by a jasper. The jasper is evidently the same transparent stone spoken of in chapter xxi., and described as "clear as crystal"; its property is that of a revealer. The sardius is therefore the real feature in the comparison, and the

contrast is between it and the rainbow. What is that contrast? What is the antithesis between the aspect of the throne and the aspect of the environing rainbow? I take it to be the difference between the one and the many hues. The sardius is of one colour—a flaming red; the rainbow is of seven. The idea seems to be that the throne originally presented the appearance of a single type of majesty, but that the advent of Christ has introduced many types. At first there was but one sphere for greatness—the sphere of the brilliant. But with the coming of the Son of Man there began to break upon the eye a multitude of spheres for possible heroism. There began to dawn the consciousness that man might wrestle with his angel in more places than one, and that through many unrecorded paths should be thenceforth recruited the great army of those who have struggled until the breaking of the day.

Let us try to open up this thought a little. There have been three ideals of perfection in this world; we might call them respectively,

uncoloured perfection, one-coloured perfection, and perfection of many colours. The first is perhaps the earliest ideal, both with the man and the race. The good child is the child which is not naughty—which does no wrong. The purity of a primitive race is its law-abidingness, its purpose that it will not transgress. I have called this the ideal of uncoloured perfection. It it distinctly a negative standard of purity. It is neither the sardius nor the rainbow. It is the absence of all colour. So far as the righteousness of the law is concerned, it is blameless; but the righteousness of the law does not go further than the prohibition of wrong. It says "Thou shalt not"; it cannot say "Thou shalt." It is the perfection of the tied hands, of the closed eyes, of the pulseless heart. It is the virtue which is harmless and undefiled, but not holy; it is without crime, but it is without colour.

By-and-by there comes a second form of perfection; it is that of a single colour. It is the time when the type of virtue consists in following the special spirit of an age. In

the time of St. John the special spirit of the age was the love of a sardius. The ideal of human heroism was found in but one form of valour—that of martial prowess. The thrones that were reached were gained by physical conquest, and the sardius that glittered upon them was a commemoration of that conquest. Alike with the Roman and the Jew, the sardius was the sign of glory; and the throne of heaven itself was figured after the pattern of that which was on earth so dear

When Christ came He added to the sardius a rainbow. He did not destroy the sardius; He did not say that there was no heroism in martial valour. But He said that there were other kinds of valour as well—greater kinds. The sardius is but one hue of His rainbow; there are six besides. Will any one say that this is too poetical an exegesis? Let him remember that it is the exegesis of a poem—a poem of the most exuberant fancy and of the most florid imagery. I do not say St. John took this meaning out of his symbols; I do say that this meaning would

explain his allegory. Let us, then, be poetical, as he was. A symbolism of fancy can only be interpreted *by* fancy. The image of the rainbow, as seen by the human eye, requires for its understanding no historical research, no profound knowledge of Greek, not even a scientific view of nature. It appeals, in its visible aspect, to the poetic sense alone. Viewed in that aspect, men may see in it different meanings. The writer of Genesis saw one; St. John beheld another; it would be no impiety to add a third. If the Bible is the inspiration of God's Spirit, it is folly to think that its deepest meaning must be its original one; as well say that the primitive clocks are the test of clock-making. On the view that God is the inspirer, I should greatly prefer to believe that the full meaning is to be found farthest from its source.

Let us, then, provisionally impute to St John, as a thing he might have felt, the comparison of the sardius with the rainbow. The sardius, as we have said, depicts the heroism of a single sphere. The seven-coloured

rainbow indicates that all spheres may be the scene of heroism. Let us take the three primary colours—red, blue, and yellow. From the standpoint of poetry—St. John's standpoint—they might represent the three voices of the verb "to live"—active, neuter, and passive. Red is the symbol of active struggle; it is the sphere of the sardius itself. Blue is the symbol of life in its calm—life in its commonplaceness and uneventfulness. Yellow is the symbol of passive endurance, of the power to support the weight of falling leaves.

It would be hard to say which of these requires most strength. Perhaps the sardius demands least of the three. The red struggle of life, the struggle which involves the putting forth of active energy, is for that very reason more endurable. All outward exercise withdraws the mind from its own troubles. The two others have no such advantage. The weight of falling leaves is a weight of privation; it is a state that gives no room for action; its victim can only bear. The life of commonplace monotony is, from the

moral side, more arduous still; it is that tarrying of the bridegroom in which all are apt to slumber. The sphere of the yellow and the sphere of the blue have always been equal in danger to the sphere of the red.

But Christianity alone has detected the fact; this is what St. John desires to say. Christianity alone has found for all spheres a possible wreath of heroism. Here for the first time the entire rainbow encircles the throne. The sardius has no longer a monopoly of power; it must share it with the yellow and the blue. To these hitherto neglected spheres the religion of Christ says, "I go to prepare a place for you." It offers a crown to others besides those who labour; it remembers the heavy-laden too. It recognises those who bear and those who simply thirst—the victims of privation and the victims of mere monotony. It tells us that those who can keep alive their love while fighting under these neglected colours are worthy to encircle the throne where the sardius shines.

THE UNSEALING OF THE HEART OF HUMANITY

Revelation v. 9, 10

"And they sing a new song, saying, Worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and didst purchase unto God with thy blood men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests; and they reign upon the earth." The thing which first arrests us in this remarkable song is St. John's view of the natural condition of the heart of man. It is not what we should have expected. We expect him to say it is loveless; he says it needs emancipation. There are three possible states in which the heart of man may be contemplated—as warm, as cold, or as sealed. St. John takes the last view. He looks upon

the impulses of human affection as being by nature neither vehement nor dead, but things under lock and key—imprisoned forces waiting to be released. He describes their condition under the simile of a sealed book. A more happy metaphor for the exhibition of his theory could not, I think, be found. The book is already there, and it is not blank parchment. It is full of handwriting. It contains the impression of characters. It keeps within it rich messages of greeting, deep expressions of sympathy, powerful pleadings of love. But then, it *does* keep all these things within it; they cannot get out; the book is sealed.

Before we go a step further, let me say that I agree with this diagnosis of the human heart. Put the question to yourself, "What do I consider the average state of man's affections to be; are they warm, or are they cold?" You will find yourself constrained to answer, "They are neither; they are repressed." No better answer could be given. The writer to the Hebrews describes the average man as "subject to bondage." The bondage is that

of the heart. The heart is repressed by the competing interests of life. Each man regards his brother with a certain amount of fear. He feels that between him and his brother there is a struggle for survival. He perceives that in this struggle one must rise and the other fall—that there is not room for two in the same place at the same time. If he thought there was room for two, the flood-gates of his heart would be opened. If perfect love casts out fear, it is equally true that perfect fear impedes love. Man is, in his natural state, capable of much more devotion than he actually manifests. He is retarded by the consciousness of clashing interests between his life and the life of his brother; and the impulse which was warm at its source is frozen at the surface. To keep the metaphor of the seer of Patmos, the book is written, but it is sealed.

Now, to the world of St. John's day the problem of ours was more intensely present. There were more barriers to union in his days than in ours. The element which

in the old world separated man from man was the difference of nationality—the "tribe," the "tongue," the "people," the "nation." It is not too much to say that the idea of *humanity* does not belong to the old world; Paul calls it "the mystery which was kept hid." The life of man was divided into a series of national types, each supposed to be the rival of the other. The Greek called outsiders barbarians. The Jew held that all the families of the earth must pass to the presence of God through his own gates. The Chinaman regarded himself as the elect child of Heaven. The Indian looked upon his caste as the family tree of the universe. Even the Roman was essentially provincial. He aimed to unite the world, but it was to make it a Roman world. He sought a union by absorption. The hope which he held out was the hope of becoming, not a free man, but a Roman citizen. Humanity meant the Latin race; the language of humanity was the Latin language. The spirit of the empire was not Pentecostal. It did not endue its apostles

with the power to speak foreign tongues; it aimed to make the foreigners speak the tongue of its apostles. It sought unity, but it was a provincial unity; it was the unity of Rome.

Now, St. John perceived that this individualism, this provincialism, this separation of mankind into groups, was the seal upon the heart of humanity. He perceived that until this seal was broken there was no possibility of a human brotherhood. If that which unites me to my fellow-man is a bond merely national, it is no permanent bond. It is accidental, and therefore slender. I am not entitled to lean my heart upon it, to risk my devotion on it. St. John saw this. He saw that the barrier in the old world to the love of humanity was the fact that there was no *idea* of humanity. The sight of this idea was a very original discovery. It was quite in advance of the age. It was a novelty to his contemporaries—specially to the Roman and the Jew. They thought they had all along been strictly humanitarian—aiming for the union of the world. They did not see that

geographical compression was just as provincial as geographical distribution. St. John did. He saw that so far as the old world was concerned the idea of man had yet to be revealed, and that the absence of this idea was the seal upon the heart. Therefore, instead of calling to men, "Love one another," he cried, "Who shall break the seal?" He felt it was no use to bid men leave the prison when they were bound. He wanted first and foremost to see the impediment broken that restrained the heart. That impediment was nationality. It was not the *geographical limits* of a nation; it was the *idea* of a nation. It was the thought that a boundary to the feet ought to be a boundary to the soul, and that the sympathies of the human spirit should be commensurate only with the extent of the native soil.

And to the eyes of the seer of Patmos there appeared a power whose mission was to lift the seal; it was Christianity, or rather Christ. In answer to the question, "Who shall open the seal?" there stood forth to John's

gaze the form of a man. The walls of the nations went down before him—not only the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, but the barrier between Greek and barbarian, Roman and Teuton, Celt and Semite. A new song is heard in the distance —the song of the coming city of God. Its peculiarity lies in those who sing it. For the first time in history it is a united voice—a voice out of "every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." It is not that there has ceased to be a separate tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation. "Out of" here means "in." It is from out the *diversities* that the song is heard. It is not the voice of a brotherhood which has been purchased by the elimination of distinctions; it is a harmony pulsating through these. It is a declaration of the fact that humanity is deeper than all its varieties. It is a protest against the belief that any difference of environment can ever counterbalance the points of agreement between man and man. It is emphatically a new song—quite foreign to the spirit

of Paganism, not native even to the spirit of Judaism. It is the emergence into the world of a fresh thought—the idea of an equal human nature lying below the accidents of time and space—the brotherhood of soul with soul.

Before going further, let us mark that the direction here indicated has been the one taken by the city of God. Viewed from a purely secular standpoint, the progress of the world has been a progress toward the sinking of nationality. Christian culture has been the foe of the ancient patriotism. Every advance of the centuries has tended towards the growth of a common interest, a sense of humanity in man. Nowhere so much as in our century has Christian culture thus asserted itself. Men are speculating about a common language and a common standard of money; and the speculation is itself the vital symptom. There is a growing demand for federation, for arbitration in the place of war, for international exhibitions of industry, for a united action in the cause of righteousness. So far back as

the days of St. Paul Christianity was declared to involve the spoiling of principalities and powers. At the present moment it is more pronouncedly true. The landmarks of each nation are still preserved for the eye, but they are no longer observed by the heart. A famine in India or China evokes as much benevolence from Britain as would be excited by a scarcity within her own borders. The old world regarded *men*; the new looks at man. The old world contemplated individual advantages; the new is engrossed with universal needs. The old world considered how to promote the survival of the fittest; the new is eager to find a method by which the unfittest also will survive.

There has, then, been an unsealing of the heart of humanity, and one which owes its origin to the agency of the Christian faith. This is not a matter of dogma; it must be the verdict of historical observation, whatever the personal convictions of the observer be. The question now is, What have been the Christian influences which have brought about this

result? Something in Christianity has tended to equalise men in the sight of one another. What is it; or rather—for we are here expounding, not theorising—what is the explanation of this problem given by St. John? Is there anything in the passage before us which points to the view entertained by the seer of Patmos himself? I think there is. I think it will be found that St. John assigns two reasons for the equalising influence of Christianity; the one is a levelling up, the other a levelling down. Let us glance at each of these.

And first. He declares that the Christian faith has had the effect of raising men to a common level, "Thou didst purchase unto God with thy blood, men of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation." The simile is, of course, the buying of a slave. But the point is that the slaves are all bought with an equal price, and the highest price possible —the life of the purchaser. The mere fact of a general emancipation would not, in John's view, have achieved the result. If a different price

had been paid for each man, the inequality would have remained after enfranchisement. But when the same value is put on every man, and that the highest value, the effect is not only levelling, but levelling *up*; it enables us to say, "We are all honourable men."

This is a very rare association of the redemptive work of Christ. It is commonly connected with man's humiliation. Dr. Watts, in his famous hymn, makes its effect the depression of self-consciousness:—

> "When I survey the wondrous cross
> On which the Prince of glory died,
> My richest gain I count but loss,
> And pour contempt on all my pride."

A greater than Dr. Watts says that by the cross of Christ the world is crucified to him and he to the world. And, from the spiritual side, the representation is strictly correct. But St. John has had the boldness to look at another side of the subject—the political side. He says that, viewed in this aspect, the effect of the Cross is not depressing to man's self-consciousness. Let us say, I am a barbarian

and you are a Greek. Naturally you look down upon me. But suppose, now, it were revealed to you and me that, unknown to both of us, we had both been under the dominion of an invisible master, by whom our every action was dictated and our every will restrained. Suppose it were revealed to us that yesterday this unseen chain had been broken, and that we were both free. What would be the effect of this? Clearly to abolish the first distinction between the Greek and the barbarian. This is precisely the case put by the seer of Patmos. The barbarian and the Greek are to receive a common citizenship in the new republic, on the ground that both have been slaves to a higher power than either, and that both are now free. He is not speaking theologically; he is speaking politically; he is investigating the causes of the decline of nationality. Admit the fact on which he bases it, and, whatever your theory of the Atonement may be, the logic of the passage is irresistible, unavoidable. The common redemption has raised man to a common level.

But there is a second reason given by St. John for the abolition of national distinction, and it is of the opposite nature. If, on one side, the effect of Christianity has been a levelling up, on another it has been a levelling down. If men in Christ are made one by their common height, they are also united by their common humility. This view appears in the clause, "Madest them to be unto our God a kingdom and priests"—*i.e.*, a priestly or sacrificial kingdom. The idea clearly is that, in the kingdom of Christ, service becomes incumbent on a man in proportion as he rises. In the kingdoms of the old world it was the contrary. Service was proportionate to degradation in the social scale. National distinctions were regulated by the relative amount of burden-bearing; those who had fewest stood at the top. But in the new *régime* it was to be all the reverse. In the kingdom which the Messiah was to usher into the world, the responsibility of service was to rest with the highest; the greatest was to be the minister to all. The so-called privilege of immunity from work was to be kept for

the dependent classes. Even so far back as the days of the Captivity, the great unknown poet had sung that the Messiah would carry the lambs in His bosom. It was a grand declaration of the fact that in the culture of the new age the lowliest would not be the servants, that the weight would lie upon the wisest, that the men in place and power would be the men in waiting, that the burdens of Church and State would be borne by the dignitaries of each. The first was to be last in the new order of things. The king was to be the servant of his people; the king of many nations was to be the servant of many peoples; the ruler of all nations was to be the servant of all.

So markedly does this thought pervade the New Testament that in the writings of Paul kinghood gets a new name; it is called headship. Instead of styling Christ the King of kings, Paul terms Him "the head of all principalities and powers." Why? Because the head only reigns by reason of its suffering. Why does the head rule the body? Because it bears the burdens of the body. Every pain

of every member is really the head's pain. If it directs the actions of the physical members, it is because it has first received their telegram. The head is king because it is priest, and in proportion as it is priest. Its power is commensurate with its sacrifice. It rules because it bears; the sceptre it wields is the weight it carries. The kingdom of Christ is the meeting of two currents that used to run contrary—the kingdom and the priesthood; the one sought the mountains, and the other the valleys. But now they move together in unity—inseparable, undistinguishable. The king is priest, and the priest is king. It is not two offices, but one; for the cross has become the crown, and the privilege of universal sacrifice is the prerogative of the highest empire.

And remember, this is no longer a mere ideal. It has become, it is becoming every day more and more, a fact of modern life. There is nothing in secular polity which Christ has so affected as the government of nations. He has made monarchies increasingly constitutional—increasingly like the relation of

the head to the members. St. John was uttering no dreamy aspiration for a world beyond the grave. He was in search, nay, in sight, of something which would do for all worlds—the equality of man as man. What he valued in the vision was its effect upon the present system of things—the scene in which we dwell. He looks down the future as a clairvoyant; he sees the priest made king. He beholds the sacrificial lives exalted. They were once disqualified by reason of their burden; it is now their burden that lifts them. Their defects of body, their weakness of health, their struggles with poverty, used to make them objects of no interest; these are now the source of their interest, the cause of their elevation in the scale of human sympathy. "They reign on the *earth*" is the astonished cry of the gazing seer. No wonder he was astonished! Had it been only a home for the weary in the skies, we should have little marvelled. But that this earth should be one of the mansions prepared for the comfortless, that the burden-bearers should

be cheered in the very scene of their former obloquy—it seemed to John, it seems to us, an astounding thing. The unsealing of the heart between man and man has been no easy problem; no power but One was strong enough to open this book. Yet the book has been opened; its leaves are being daily cut; one day we shall read it through. Shall we not join the seer of Patmos in his new song of wonder, and in recognising the uniqueness of that influence which has put life in the Valley of Death?

THE LAMB ON THE THRONE

Revelation v. and vi.

There are two opposite things which cause a literary work to suffer—the unpopularity, or the over-popularity, of its subject. It may deal with themes so high as to be above the common appreciation; or it may be so intimately connected with the interests of life that its phrases have become household words. The Bible belongs to the last of these. Strange as it may sound, it is not too much to say that its literature has suffered from its own popularity. Its words have become so familiar that to the mass of readers they have lost their freshness. We have come to associate the Bible with simplicity, as distinguished from originality. We look upon it as the wisdom of God seen through the foolishness of man, a rich gem in a very mean casket. A greater

delusion is not to be conceived. Lord Byron says that, from being compelled to repeat the odes of Horace at school, he was never able in after life to see their literary beauty. This is still more true of the Bible. We are taught its words before we can understand the half of their meaning. I do not condemn the practice; I think it right. None the less it has the effect of blinding us in after years to the value of the case in which the jewel is enshrined, and preventing us from realising the fact that, even on their human side, the books of the Bible contain more originality of conception than the boldest flights of Shakespeare, or the subtlest immersions of Browning.

There is no better illustration of this than that passage of the Apocalypse which we have made the subject of our present study. We have become so familiar with the expression, "the Lamb on the throne," that we have ceased to see an image of it; or rather, it would be more correct to say, most of us never do see till later life the image which

it implies. Yet, nothing is more certain than that the first impression of these words must have been one of the most startling originality. Throw yourself back into the standpoint of that world to which they were first uttered; you will find that they must have been ringing with paradox. To that old world the idea of a *lamb* on a throne was a contradiction in terms. I do not mean that the ancient earth was a stranger to gentleness. I do not mean that the poets of the olden time would have excluded the softer emotions from the life of their heroes. To combine in one nature the elements of the lion and of the lamb would be as natural for Livy as it was for the writer of the Apocalypse. But the old Pagan world, like the pre-Christian Jewish world, could never say of this element of gentleness, "Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory"; the kingdom, the power, and the glory, were not for *it*. The part of man's nature reserved for them was the self-asserting part. No nation that I know had a lamb as a symbol of its greatness.

The Roman would have understood an eagle on the throne, for his ideal was the soaring of ambition. The Jew would have understood a lion on the throne, for his Messiah was a physical conqueror, and the strength he worshipped was the strength of roaring. But the lamb was ever a victim, the symbol of the vanquished, the sign of the dependent soul. Its place was not the throne, but the altar; it could never be the emblem of dominion.

Think, now, how startling must have been the utterance of the seer of Patmos. Into the heart of the Roman world a new and paradoxical symbol of royalty is suddenly introduced. An object which had always been the emblem of impotence is made the centre of dominion; the lamb is "*in the midst* of the throne." Not only so, but there is more than that. The seer carefully guards us against the delusion that the lamb has obtained the supremacy by changing its nature and becoming a lion. Such transformations are possible. But the seer tells us that the lamb is in the midst of the throne,

not only in its own nature, but in its typical act of sacrifice: "a lamb in the attitude of being slain." That is the real sense of the passage, and it is one of deep significance. It suggests to us that, even in our days, we have a wrong view of Christ's exaltation. What is our view of Christ's exaltation? It is that He has vanquished His cross, ceased to be a servant, and become once more a king. St. John says it is the reverse. It is the cross itself which has been exalted, it is the servant himself who has been ennobled. The point is so striking as to demand a moment's reflection.

No one will deny that at the present hour Christ occupies a different position in the world from that which He held in the first century of our era. He has passed from the foot to the head of the social ladder; He has become the name that is above every name. This will be admitted by all classes—believing and unbelieving. What is the cause of this transformation? Is it that Christianity exerts more physical power over the world

in our days than it did in the days of St. John? Assuredly not. In point of fact it does *not* exert more physical power. There are laws in every Christian land as to the regulation of Christian worship, but no individual man is compelled to worship. Why, then, is it that, in some sense, men of every creed and of no creed bow down before the name of Jesus? It is because the thing which the old world disparaged is the thing which the new world prizes. We are living after the resurrection; but let us never forget that it is the resurrection of the Crucified. The Christ who has risen from the grave is not a Christ who has triumphed over suffering; it is a Christ in whom suffering has triumphed. We worship Christ as a servant, and because He *is* a servant. We reverence Him because we see a perpetuation of those things which His first disciples wished to come to an end. We adore Him because that cross, which to the Jew was a stumbling-block, and to the Greek foolishness, has become to us the power and the wisdom of God. The exaltation of Christ

in modern times is the exaltation precisely of that element which the ancient world suppressed; and the Christ who has ascended to the right hand of the Father is precisely that Christ who was laid in an ignominious grave.

Such is the fact—a sober fact of history, nay, an object of present experience. It was foreseen and stated in advance by the seer of Patmos, at a time when everything pointed in an opposite direction. What was the line of thought in the mind of this man? What was the train of ideas which led him to a conclusion so remote from that reached by his contemporaries? Can we trace the steps of the process by which he arrived at a conviction so intensely out of harmony with the spirit of his own age, so closely in sympathy with the best instincts of ours? Let us try.

And let us begin by asking, What was that kingdom which the seer of Patmos had in his mind when he claimed for Christ the throne of universal dominion. His readers evidently understood him to mean the supremacy of the

Jewish nation. I do not think he had any such notion. The idea of a sacrificial lamb being at the height of empire was a thought foreign to the Jew, foreign even to the Jewish Christian. To the son of Israel the lamb was always an emblem of humiliation, never an instrument of conquest. He would have placed a lamb on the altar, never a lamb on the throne. And, from his own point of view, he was right. If the empire to be conquered be a physical one, it is not a lamb that will do it. Physical unruliness can only be controlled by physical rule. If the forces arrayed against the people of God be outward forces, then the kingdom can only be taken by violence, and the power that shall take it must be the reverse of lamb-like. No man who looked for a physical conquest could for a moment have conceived the simile of a world held in restraint by the power of a sacrificial life.

But suppose now we test the logic of St. John's words by another empire. For there is another empire—a kingdom more unruly than the physical, more lawless, more hard to subdue,

and more difficult to keep; it is the dominion of the human heart. Moreover, when we consult the earliest Christian writings we find that this and not the other, is always the kingdom spoken of. Our Lord says that His kingdom comes not with observation; that out of the *heart* proceed all unruly things and all things to be restrained; that if His kingdom were one of this world, His servants would require to fight—in other words, its forces could not be subdued by a lamb. And when we turn to the first attempt at a Church history —the book of Acts—we are confronted on the very opening page by a passage which clenches the argument. The disciples ask, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They are answered that they shall receive power when the Holy Ghost has come upon them. What is this but, in other words, to say that the kingdom lies in the spirit, that the enemies to be conquered are in the heart, and that the power which would conquer them must pass through the heart? When, therefore, we hear St. John speaking of a

lamb on the throne, and interpret it as a dominion over the heart, it is not fair to say that we are *allegorising* St. John. We are giving his first and original meaning; we are removing his metaphor. John himself is the allegorist. He has clothed an abstract truth in an image; we divest it of the image, and it re-appears again as the old, old story, the first story, the story which Christ told to His disciples when the seed was sown.

The kingdom to be conquered, then, is the heart; we may consider this as settled. The next question is, How is the conquest to be made? Now, at the time when St. John wrote, there had already been three attempts to deal with the problem of the heart. They may be described under the names Stoicism, Buddhism, and Judaism; but they represent tendencies which have appeared from time to time under many names. If I might be allowed to express epigrammatically their separate import, I should say that they aimed respectively to pluck the flower, wither the flower, and stunt the flower. Stoicism pro-

posed to quell the passions of the heart by plucking out the heart altogether; it sought to get rid of temptation by getting rid of feeling. Buddhism proposed to quell the passions of the heart by teaching that the heart itself was a delusion, that every pursuit of human desire ended in the discovery that the object was a shadow. Judaism proposed to quell the passions of the heart by the restraining hand of fear; it proclaimed the presence of a lawgiver; it set up an embankment against the flood; it kept the tree of life by the cherubim and the flaming sword.

Now, to these three methods there is one thing in common—they all achieve their end by *contracting* the object of their search. Their aim is to conquer a certain tract of country; they do conquer it, but they reduce it to ashes in the process. Can any of these systems be said to possess the throne of the heart? Can Stoicism? The heart is burned up in its march to victory; man ceases to be tempted by ceasing to feel. Can Buddh-

ism? The heart is prevented from sinning, not by its conviction that the object is bad, but simply and solely by its despair of reaching it. Can Judaism? The heart is kept from doing evil by the continual presence of a policeman, and the continual fear of that presence; it is only saved by law. Does any of these involve the possession of a throne? To return to the old simile, the flower has indeed been made to suffer a change; but in every case it has been a change by contraction; it has lost its power of harmfulness by losing power all round. The Stoic has plucked it; the Buddhist has withered it; the Jew has stunted it. It is a conquest without a kingdom, a victory without a prize, a triumph that has been only purchased by the mutilation of what was made to be beautiful.

Now, this is not the conquest which any man desires. Even in the physical sphere, what a potentate seeks is an extended, not a contracted possession. In the sphere of the heart it is the same The reason why we

object to lawless passion in the soul is that it contracts the soul. That is the tendency of the disease, and we wish to counteract it. We do not want to cure either by plucking, withering, or stunting the flower; we wish to expand it. We wish to cure lawless passion on the homœopathic principle—by creating passion on the other side. It is more life, and fuller, that we want. We do not desire to arrest temptation simply by plucking out the right eye and cutting off the right hand. We would neutralise them by introducing another eye, by creating another hand. "Walk in the spirit," says Paul, "and you will not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." He means that you will never conquer the lusts of the heart by contraction, by restraint, by prohibition, by the threat of the fires of hell. You want a counter-passion, an opposing attraction, a positive stimulus pushing the other way. The desire of the flesh can only be met by the desire of the spirit—the thing called love. The flower, which is merely contracted by being plucked, or withered, or

stunted, is subdued at last by a process of expansion. It yields to the power of light, and, in yielding, its forces are brought out as they never were before. It reaches its own glory when it surrenders itself to the sun. It finds the secret of its being when it is clothed in a higher element. It blooms in the power by which it has been taken captive.

Now, remember that to St. John light is ever the analogue of love. He applies the two names as synonymous descriptions of God. And why? Because to his mind there was an identity between the process of the redemption of the flower by light and the redemption of the heart by love. We have seen that the light conquers the flower. We have seen that it conquers, not by contracting, but by expanding the flower. But there is one other thing which must be added to this—it conquers by *dying* for the flower; ere it can bring out the bloom, it must itself be slain. For what is the process by which the fire is kindled? It is an act of death on the part of the kindling substance. It is not

merely that when the flower gets above the ground the sunbeam is ready to crown it. That is the very smallest thing which the sunbeam has to do. It is in the ground itself it must first meet the flower. It must come down to the place of its burial. It must descend to the roots of its being. It must seek it in its humiliation, in its undergroundness, in its want of grace and beauty. So far from waiting till it grows, it must itself be the principle of its growth. It must go down to it in the dark and in the cold, must take part in its darkness and its coldness. If it reaps the glory of its resurrection, it is because it shares the ignominy of its grave. It sits upon the throne by reason of its sacrifice.

Such is the thought which St. John sees in light and transfers to love. He sees Christ sitting on the throne of human hearts—King, by the most infallible mode of conquest, and by a conquest that enhances the value of the possession. He asks what is the source of this empire; and the answer is not far. He feels that such devotion could only be got if

it had first been given. He feels that, if the flower of the heart has blossomed toward the day, it must be through the power of the day itself. Christ has kindled the flower by sharing in its burial. His throne is built upon the steps of His sacrifice. He reigns by the attractive power of a love which He has Himself woven into human hearts, and woven by His own pierced hand. He has won universal love by stooping to that lowest round of the ladder where all universal things are. The common want is at the foot, on the ground floor. Every knee has bent to Him because He has taken on Himself the wants of the undermost servant. Had He stooped to anything short of the valley of death, He might have conquered the upper strata; by touching the lowermost, He conquered all. He holds the throne of His dominion in the attitude of a lamb that has been slain.

"THE WRATH OF THE LAMB"

Revelation vi. 16

The wrath here spoken of is not that of the last judgment. That *is* a judgment—a calm, judicial decision of the mind, and therefore, as far as I know, it is never described under the metaphor of wrath. The scene here I take to be that great revolution in the affairs of men which, in the view of the seer, shall come when the kingdom of Christ shall displace the heathen nations. It has the same root as the great Messianic prophecy of the second Psalm, where, after long reticence, the wrath of God at length breaks forth, and asserts against the old *régime* the sovereignty of His Anointed.

It is not the historical bearings, however, but the paradox of the passage, that I am here concerned with. The first thing which

strikes us about the expression is its extreme dramatism. There is nothing so dramatic, in my opinion, as the sight of an emotion contrary to the nature. When a man who has always hid his griefs bursts into tears, when a man like Arnold, who has always veiled his anger, gives way for once to passion, we are impressed with something like a sense of tragedy; it is a bitter day in summer; it is a storm upon a lake. Some such impression, in an intensified degree, rises here. "The wrath of the Lamb": it is a conjunction of the greatest possible contrasts, a meeting of the two points not only the farthest removed in nature, but the farthest removed in human imagination. From a literary point of view, the attention of the reader is arrested by the exhibition of something which seems to alter the natural relation of objects, and to join things together which hitherto had been kept asunder.

Yet, after all, it is the philosophic and not the literary paradox that forms the main interest of this passage. The Lamb is the

type of the sacrificial Divine love. Being Divine, it is infinite. How can there be a limit to infinite love? How can we think of the love of God as interrupted even for a moment by a thing called wrath? Can we any more conceive a limit to the *love* of God than we can conceive a limit to the power of God? If you were told that there was a moment in the life of the Eternal in which He lost consciousness, you would say, "Impossible!" You would feel it to be a contradiction in terms that the Eternal should lose a moment. Is it any less a contradiction that Infinite Love should lose a moment? Is it any less a contradiction to suppose that there should pass over the boundless heart of God the obscuring power of a cloud of wrath, by which the movements of that heart are restrained and bounded?

Now, strange to say, the answer comes, not from the outside, but from the expression itself. "The wrath of the Lamb"—the phrase is as peculiar as it is dramatic. Why does St. John not say, "the wrath of the lion"?

Remember that, in St. John's view, Christ has two aspects—a lamb and a lion. Why does he not simply say that Christ has here put off His lamb-like appearance and put on the appearance of a lion? Because he does not mean that. He is not speaking of the wrath of a lion, and therefore he will not depict it. The state of mind he is describing is the wrath of a lamb—a particular kind of wrath. He is considering a mode of anger which is not an interruption of love, but itself a *phase* of love. The wrath of the Lamb is the wrath of love itself. Instead of being a barrier to the heart, it is one of the wings by which the heart flies. It is no more an interruption to Divine love than the haze is an interruption to the heat of the morning. The wrath clouds the love; the haze clouds the morning; but both the one and the other have grown out of the very thing they obscure. They are manifestations of that which they seem to hide. There is an anger which is incompatible with the absence of love, which could not exist unless

love existed before it. There is a wrath which belongs distinctively to the Lamb, which can only have its home in the sacrificial spirit. That is the wrath which the man of Patmos sees.

Here, then, is the subject which rises before us—the difference between the wrath of the Lamb and the wrath of the lion, between the anger of love and the anger of nature. Now, it seems to me that there are three distinct points of difference between them. And first, I would observe that the wrath of the Lamb, or sacrificial spirit, differs from the wrath of the lion in being purely impersonal. The wrath of the lion says, "I, king of the forest, have received an affront; some one has presumed to do an unkindness to *me*." The wrath of the Lamb says, "An unkind thing has been done." It keeps the "me" out of the question altogether. It looks at the deed in itself. It refuses to consider the sense of personal injury as a main feature of the case. You have a son who has defied your authority, exceeded his allowance, spent his substance

in riotous living. You are incensed at this act of individual disrespect. You resolve to bring him to his senses; you say, "We shall see whether he or I shall be master here." Now, that is quite a legitimate mode of anger, and quite a legitimate ground for it; but it is not the wrath of the Lamb. It is not immoral, but it is *non*-moral. It is neither good nor bad. It is simply an appetite of nature, like any other appetite—like hunger, like thirst, like weariness. It neither makes a man a sinner nor a saint. But it is possible for a father in these circumstances to be filled with indignation on a different ground altogether. It is possible for him to see in his son's delinquency, not an act, but a principle. It is possible for him to feel, not that an insult has been offered to his pride, but that an injury has been done to the universe. It is possible for him to experience, not the sense of a wounded self-love, but an anger from the fact that love itself has been violated. This is the wrath of the Lamb.

Is there any test by which a man can know

whether his wrath is leonine or lamb-like? I think there is one infallible test. If at any time your blood is boiling with indignation over an injury you have received, just put to yourself one question. Would your indignation be the same if you were not a recipient but a spectator? Would you have the same sense of wrong, the same boiling of the blood, if, instead of being offered to *you*, the injury had been done to a poor creature frequenting the lanes and alleys? Are you able at such a moment, by an act of sympathetic imagination, to put yourself in the position of another, and that other one of the lowliest? Are you capable of forgetting all that is implied in that phrase, "He did it to *me*"? Then you have passed the Rubicon that divides the secular from the sacred, that separates the wrath of the lion from the wrath of the Lamb. If I am not mistaken, this is Christ's own test. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto Me." The Son of Man has reached a splendid impersonality in His judgment of the world.

Though Himself at once the greatest and the most wronged of all, He refuses to measure the wrong by His own feeling of pain. He casts Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple. He throws Himself into the position of the meanest, the lowliest. He identifies Himself with the neglected hungry, the untended sick, the unsheltered stranger, the oppressed prisoner. If He says, "Depart from Me," it is no personal wound that stings Him; it is man's disregard of man. This is a wrath that could only have existed where sacrifice had preceded it. It was the indignation of one who had emptied himself into the life of those below. It was the anger of a spirit that had burst the boundaries of its own individual being, and felt its heart throb with the sensation of the common pain.

I pass to a second point of difference between the wrath of love and the wrath of mere nature. And it is this: the wrath of nature must begin by tearing out pity; the wrath of love is a wrath created *by* pity. In the former case, our indignation is stimulated

by hiding the prospective photograph—by shutting our eyes to the possible goodness which the bad man may yet attain. In the latter case, the indignation is stimulated by exactly the opposite process—by bringing out the prospective photograph, and considering what the man might be made to become. Here is a radical difference between the wrath of the lion and the wrath of the Lamb. The one is born from the drying of tears; the other is itself the product of tears. The one is produced by stamping out the old fires; the other is made by fanning them. The one comes from the extinction of endearing memories; the other arises from the increased kindling of these memories—from a sense of lost possibility and a conviction of unutilised power.

The truth is, if I understand the doctrine of the Bible, that the love of God never pauses—not even over the scene of punishment. Remember what the Bible doctrine of punishment is. It is not that God exercises vengeance on the sinner; it is, that the law

exercises vengeance on its own violation Many a father says to his children, "I am leaving the room for awhile. Take care you don't go too near the fire. If you disobey, you may get burnt." Is that a threat? No; it is a warning. Suppose one of these children does disobey, and does get scorched, who is the deepest sufferer? It is the father himself. That is the philosophy of Calvary, and it is a deep philosophy. Why do we call it a mystery that the Divine should share in the penalty of the sin committed by the human? To my mind, if you start from the fatherhood of God, it is the least mysterious of all things; it is a law of nature, a doctrine of the heart. A father's judgment on a refractory child, if he be a good father, is at no time a personal matter, and therefore is at all times to himself a penalty. There is an anger which love alone can feel, which lovelessness cannot feel. As long as this wrath continues, final exclusion has not come. The time of final exclusion is the time when a man ceases to have any interest in the misdeeds of his

brother, when he can say to the delinquent, "Sleep on and take your rest." There are people in this world whose worst word against us would fall harmless on your ear and mine; it would fail to awaken this wrath. And why? Because we have lost all respect, all care for their opinion. They do not make us sore, because there is no love. One spark of love would make us sufferers in their sin, and therefore bring us nearer to the power of forgiving them. The wrath of the Lamb is opposed to laughter, but it is not opposed to tears.

This brings me to a third point of difference between the two kinds of wrath. They express their feeling in a different formula. The wrath of the lion says, "I must have satisfaction"; the wrath of the Lamb says, "Justice must be satisfied." There is all the difference in the world between giving me satisfaction in a quarrel and satisfying my justice in a wrong. In the one case, the party that did the injury must make the reparation; no substitute can stand in his

room. But in the other case, the immediate demand is for the repair of the wrong itself. If possible, it should be borne by the delinquent; if impossible, mind and heart alike demand a substitute. In the moral world, all debts are transferable. The first instinct of moral indignation is, not to avenge, but to repair; vengeance itself is only contemplated as a social reparation. The wrath of the Lamb is always a redemptive wrath. Its first impulse is to buy back what has been enslaved, to restore what has been wrongfully taken, to set at liberty what has been bruised. The wrath of the lion will be satisfied if he hears the delinquent is dead; the wrath of the Lamb pauses not until it learns that the delinquency itself has been wiped away.

And this renders powerfully suggestive that theological epigram which represents Christ as paying the debts of humanity. Nothing in a short compass could more completely describe the facts of the case. When the Son of Man came into this world, He found it impoverished by the unpaid debts man

owed to man. He found that the blind, the deaf, the lunatic, had been left without asylums. He found that the sick had no hospitals—none, at least, existing for the sake of their sickness. He saw that destitute children, weak and delicate children, received no blessing from the world, had no home provided for them. He perceived that there was no refuge for the outcast, no place for repentance in the order of society. He observed, above all, that for no man was there any sin-bearer, that every soul had to carry its own moral burden into the silent land. And the Son of Man's heart boiled over with the indignation of love. He felt, as a matter of course, that He was heir to these debts. They had been accumulating for generations; every age had added to them. No man living could defray them—no combination of men. He alone had the capital, the resources; it was inevitable He should pay. In whatever other ways the sin of the world fell upon Him—and there were many—it fell upon Him here. He became heir to the indignation

the debtors did not feel, to the judgment they did not deliver, to the obligations they did not discharge. His wrath was proportionate to His love—no greater, no less. It was the measure of His heart—the length, breadth, height, and depth of it; and because it was the measure of His heart, it was the measure of His debt to man.

"Upon the wicked He shall rain snares"; so writes one of the Psalmists of Israel in description of the wrath of God. It is, to my mind, one of the most felicitous descriptions in the Bible. For I know of no symbol so suggestive of the wrath of God as the bursting of a rain-cloud. What is the bursting of a rain-cloud? It is the protest against cold—the explosion which comes from the contact with a frigid vapour. Even such is the wrath of God. It is not interrupted warmth; it is warmth resenting the attempt to interrupt it. It is love asserting itself, vindicating itself. It is the heart struggling to master limits not its own, and running over into the enemy's ground. "If a man say, I love God,

and hateth his brother, he is a liar." Who utters these violent words? It is the apostle of love himself—the man of Patmos. The fire of his youth is still there, more intensely there; but it comes from a new source. In Samaria, it was the voice of pride; in Patmos, it is the cry of pity. The burning bush has now God in the midst of it; the wrath of the lion has become the wrath of the Lamb.

THE PLACE OF THE CROSS IN THE WORLD

Revelation xiii. 8

There have been two extreme views of the destiny of this world—optimism and pessimism. The optimist looks upon all things as working for the highest good; the pessimist regards them as tending to the utmost evil. Neither can deny the presence of the sacrifical element in the existing system of things; but they differ as to the position which it holds. The pessimist looks upon the design of life as essentially malignant; everything, in his view, is constructed so as to bring man to a sense of his limitation and his nothingness; the cross is with him the goal. The optimist, on the other hand, regards the goal as individual happiness; but, before reaching the paradise of self-gratification, he holds that man has a

dark avenue to tread, either by way of discipline or by way of penalty; the cross is with him an interlude.

The representatives of these two tendencies are respectively the Brahmanic and the Jewish creeds. To the former, the promise of life to the individual soul is a delusion, and by the crosses of life we learn that delusion. To the latter, the promise of individual happiness is a profound truth; we only want a little present restraint in order to prepare us for a life of unlimited indulgence. The Indian and the Jew, as representing the extreme wing of the Aryan and the Semitic races, have each expressed unqualifiedly their opposite reading of the problem of existence.

Now, the theory of Christianity is radically different from either of these; but the strange thing is that it reaches its difference by uniting the opposite elements of each. It agrees with the distinctive features of both systems. It agrees with the optimist in holding that all things work together for good—absolute good, final good. It agrees with the pessimist in

holding that all things are constructed with the view of teaching the individual life its own impotence. How does it reconcile the statements? By the bold paradox that the highest good is sacrifice, and that the greatest happiness which can come to the individual is simply his despair of finding it in himself. Christianity joins the hands of the Brahman and the Jew. It declares with the Jew that good is the final goal; it affirms with the Brahman that the final goal is the cross. The thing which the Brahman repudiates as evil is the thing which the Christian eulogises as good. The Christian reaches his Messiah on the very road by which the Brahman reaches despair. The hell of the one has become the heaven of the other. Christianity has accepted the pessimist's facts, but it has built upon them the opposite inference. The one says, "I find life not worth living, because it is always crucifying the individual man." The other says, "I find life infinitely precious, because, in the crucifixion of the individual man, emerges his highest joy."

Now, in the passage before us we have a striking statement of this view. "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." St. John imagines himself standing at the beginning of creation. By a bold act of fancy he puts himself in the position of the Divine Artist. He says that at the foundation of the world the first thing seen was not the foundation but the superstructure. When God was laying the first stone, He was not looking at the stone, but at the topmost tower. This, of course, is true of every artist. The thing last in execution is the thing earliest in contemplation; he would never begin his actual work if his inner eye did not first rest on the completed picture. The mystery of John's words does not lie in the fact that God saw the flower before the seed; every planter does the same. But when John goes on to tell us the object which God contemplated as the flower of creation, it is then that we are startled. *What* is here said to be the goal of creation as it appeared in the sight of the Divine Artificer? He is laying a physical basis, which as yet is

very chaotic and imperfect; should we not expect that His inner eye would rest on the completing and perfecting of the physical? On the contrary, it rests on the collapse of the physical altogether, on an act of sacrifice by which the outward form is crucified and the bodily life suspended. The Lamb is said to have been slain from the foundation of the world. It was not the result of an accident; it was not the result of an emergency; it was something involved in the plan of the creation itself, a part of its purpose, a design of its being. Its first stone was laid with a view to the development of the sacrificial life.

Was St. John, then, an optimist, or a pessimist? In the worldly sense of these words he was something different from either, and something which admitted a truth in both. On the one hand, he holds with the worldly optimist that all things do work for the highest good; the universe is to him the product of love. But on the other hand, just because it is the product of love, he could never admit that it is a field for self-gratification. It is

essential to his idea of the world that it should be a *disappointment* to self-gratification. He would have endorsed the whole Indian indictment against life as a medium of individual indulgence. The glory of life to him was just that it did not admit of individual indulgence. He found in it a sphere that, from the beginning to the end of the day, disappointed every selfish hope, wrecked every ship that sailed only for its own cargo. And why so? Because to him the essence of God was love. The highest good of any world must be to be made in the image of its Creator. If God be love, the highest good must be to be made in the image of love. St. John asked himself how that could be done on the Greek principle of self-indulgence, or the Jewish principle of a physical Messiah. He felt that if the end of life were simply to wear purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day, and if life itself were amply suited to such an end, then life was incompatible with love. He felt that to make it compatible with love it must be

restricted from the liberty of a Greek or Hebrew paradise—denuded of much of the purple, stripped of much of the fine linen, reduced in the amount of its sumptuous faring. This world, in short, is to St. John a development, and an upward development; but it is a development of self-sacrifice. The Apocalypse has been called a sensuous book: it is to my mind the least sensuous book in the Bible. It describes the process of the ages as a process of self-surrender. The very joy of the New Jerusalem is said to be a joy which springs from the sacrificial spirit. If they hunger no more, neither thirst any more, it is not because they are surfeited with outward plenty; it is because the Lamb in the midst of the throne has led them, because in the power of self-forgetfulness their own burden has dropped in the sea.

This, then, is the meaning of the passage, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It means that Christ was, all along, the goal of creation, and that all

creation is making for Christ. More particularly, it means that the line of this world's progress has been a development of self-sacrifice. It seems to me that in this last point the writer of the Apocalypse has come nearer to a philosophy of history than all who went before him. If you take any other line of progress, you will fail, in my opinion, to prove that there has been an advance in the march from the old to the new. Shall we take intellect? Do we feel that the amount of mind force is greater in the modern Englishman than it was in the ancient Greek? It would be difficult to feel it, and it would be impossible to prove it: are Plato and Aristotle inferior to the best intellects among us? Shall we take imagination? Are we not becoming impressed with the notion that the increasing age of the world is unfavourable to art? Have we reached the architectural conception which planned the pyramids? Have we outrun the triumphs of Greek sculpture? Have we surpassed the poetry of Homer? Have we sustained the

fame of the mediæval painters? Still less here, I think, can we boast of progress. But, you say, What of invention, mechanical discovery, the application of the forces of nature to the needs of man? Surely here there is a field where our advance cannot be disputed. Yes; I grant it. But have you ever considered how much of this invention is itself due to the spread of the unselfish principle? Why have the great ages of discovery been the ages after Christ? Is it not just because Christ has been before them? Is it not because the spirit of sacrifice has awakened man to the wants of man? The times of self-seeking were not the times of invention. As long as a man had no interest in any country but his own, he made no effort to facilitate the course of travelling. The increased provision for locomotion has been the result of a demand—the demand of man for man. It has come from the breaking of limits—not only of individual, but of national limits. It has sprung from the sense of brotherhood, from the increasing conviction

that it is not good for the man to be alone. It is therefore an effect, and not a cause. It it not a source of progress; it is the result of a progress springing from another source. What that source is, it leaves us still to inquire.

And if we do inquire, I think we shall find that St. John has put his hand upon the one thing in the world which is progressive. It is not intellect. It is not imagination. It is not even invention; that is the result of altruism. It is altruism itself—the inability of the individual to live for his own interest. St. John says creation is moving toward a type—a lamb slain; and it is moving toward that type in a straight line—the line of sacrifice. It is climbing to its goal by successive steps which might be called steps downward—increasing limitations of the self-life. "The Lamb slain from the foundation" means "the Lamb slain *in* the foundation." It is really an assertion of the fact that sacrifice is bound up in the constitution of nature, that the law of sacrifice is the law of nature, and

that progress in the power to sacrifice is progress in the life of nature.

To what extent did St. John see this? He had much less evidence for it than a man has now; that is just what proves his inspiration. He anticipated a truth before it was demonstrated. He was too young for the eye of science; but just by reason of his youth he had the eye of poetry. He looked into the face of nature as the child looks into the fire—to see forms there. He saw in visible nature a series of gospel pictures; everything seemed to live only by losing itself. He saw the waves of the sea of Patmos passing into waves of light; he beheld the waves of light passing into eddies of the sea. It seemed to him that even in that lonely spot God had inscribed upon the walls of nature the image of a cross. By-and-by, before the eyes of the seer there flashed a higher order of creation, and it was clothed in the same garb—the robe of sacrifice. He passed from the pictorial representation of sacrifice in nature to its actual, though in-

voluntary, representation in animal life. The very reference to a slain lamb is a reference to an animal sacrifice. The shedding at the altar of the lower creatures' blood must, to the gentle mind of St. John, have presented the same problem of pain which presses on the modern mind as what is called the survival of the fittest. How did St. John reconcile himself to that spectacle of an involuntary sacrifice of the animal life prescribed by the Old Testament? He said it was a type of Christ. We in modern times smile at the naïve answer. Yet it may be questioned if, from any theistic point of view, a better can be found. If sacrifice be the law of the highest being, it is desirable to reach it. You can only reach anything by a repeated experience of it. The first experience of everything must be unconscious. Life itself is unconscious at the beginning; so, in general, is love. What is Mr. Herbert Spencer's account of the origin of conscience? He says it began with compulsion; one generation did good deeds from fear, and the next did

them from habit. Is it not as reasonable to hold that sacrifice became voluntary from first being experienced *in*voluntarily? The lower forms have been made to yield to lives more fit for the universe, and by their yielding they have made these lives fitter still. They have propagated something—something which to them was a painful necessity, but which to the generation to come was to be a stimulus and a joy. They have transmitted to posterity the battlefield on which they themselves have died, and, in the act of transmitting it, they have transformed the field of battle into a garden of roses.

In man that garden bursts into bloom. How, we need not here inquire. Some say it grew out of the animal; others, with whom I agree, that it required an added force. Be this as it may, all are willing to admit that one side of our nature is allied to the life below. That which has burst into flower is the thing which originally dropped blood. What is it that has produced the change? It is the advent of a power called love. St John in this very

book has the image of a woman rushing with her child into the wilderness to protect it from a dragon. This shows there passed before him the natural sacrifices of the human heart. There is, in my opinion, as much sacrifice of life in man as there is in the animal creation. I believe that the cares of the heart prevent every man from living the full amount of his natural years. What is the difference, then, between the sacrifice of the animal and the sacrifice of the man? It is an inward difference; the obligatory has become the voluntary. What has made it voluntary? It is love, a force to which in the animal world nothing exactly corresponds—a force which adds to the sacrifice, and at the same time helps to bear it. It has increased at once the burden and the lever, the weight and the wing, the suffering and the power of sustenance; it has, for the first time, made the cross a crown.

And yet, merely natural love is far from having reached the goal. It is noble; it is beautiful; but it is not the topmost triumph.

For, what after all is that which it seeks? Simply the survival of that which it deems the fittest—the nearest to itself. In all its natural forms love seeks its own. The mother's love, the brother's love, the husband's love, the son and daughter's love, are each and all the search for something kindred to ourselves. St. John looks out for a vaster type—a love that can come where there is no kindred, no sympathy. He seeks a love that shall strive for the survival of the *un*fittest—the blood of a spotless soul that can wash the sins of the absolutely impure. He seeks such a love as Paul sought in 1 Corinthians xiii., whose every step was a step downwards, a step into hearts foreign to its own—believing against present facts, hoping against existing clouds, bearing against daily disappointments, enduring against labour seemingly thrown away. This is to John the perfect type of altruism—the Lamb that was slain.

It is the progress towards this type that constitutes, to St. John, the philosophy of history. The world, he would say, is made

for Christ, and therefore it is not a perfect world. It is not suited to the satisfaction of man—either his physical or his mental satisfaction. It cribs and narrows his individual life at every corner, because it is made for another life than the individual. It breaks the unity of the family, because it wants man to look farther than the family. It interrupts the peace of the tribe, because it desires man to see beyond the tribe. It destroys the boundaries of the nation, because it would stimulate man to a wider altruism than even the life of the patriot—an altruism which shall seek elements foreign to itself, and find a place in its heart for every country and kindred and people and tongue. "Behold he cometh with clouds" is John's summary of the purpose of creation. The clouds are made to rest upon everything with a local colouring, just that man may gaze upon that which is not local—that every eye may see Him.

THE *ÉLITE* OF THE HUMAN RACE

REVELATION XIV. 4

"THESE are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Such are the words in which St. John describes the hundred and forty-four thousand redeemed souls who stand on Mount Zion. There is a point which I wish to emphasise at the outset. These hundred and forty-four thousand are not, in St. John's view, the *whole* number of the redeemed. They are the *élite* among that number—the select souls, the picked men, the feet which stand upon an eminence—Mount Zion. St. John himself declares as much in this very passage; he calls them "the first-fruits." He is not, in my opinion, thinking of the order of time, but of merit—that ground of precedence to which St. Paul alludes when he says, "Every man shall rise in his own order."

And, you will observe, this is no new thing with the seer of Patmos. The passage before us is a refrain of that other passage, Revelation vii. 13: "Who are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?" The men there described as arrayed in white robes are not the *whole* of the inhabitants of heaven; they are those "in front of the throne." I think the simile which would best convey St. John's idea to a modern mind, would be that of a brilliant assembly in which each is looking through an opera-glass, and asking, "Who are these?" We may think of St. John putting himself in the place of one of these spectators. He turns to different parts of the building. He asks, "Who are these in the side gallery?" He is told, "These are they who have got in, just by a little angle of the truth." He asks, "Who are these at the back?" He is answered, "These are they who got in at the very end of the day." He inquires, "Who are these in the centre?" He is informed, "These are they who had always a foot in

both worlds, and struggled between the two." He puts a final question: "Who are these in the front seats—those who have an immediate view of the throne?" He receives the reply, "These are they who went forward immovable, unchangeable, who from dawn to dark devoted themselves to a life of sacrifice. Theirs was the faith that faltered not, the love that altered not, the purity that paltered not; therefore they have the reserved seats in the general assembly of the firstborn; they are before the throne."

I hold, then, that this is the same class which reappears in the passage before us as "Those who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." It is the *intensity* of sacrifice which is described—the imitation of Christ in all spheres and in all circumstances. St. John says that these consistent and persistent imitators of the Christian sacrifice are those who will occupy the most commanding position—the typical eminence of Mount Zion. I understand this to be what St. John means when he speaks of the first resurrection, what

St. Paul means when he says, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." To both St. Paul and St. John the thought is not that of time, but of merit; first means foremost. The dead in Christ are those who are hid with Christ in God, those who have buried self in love, and obliterated their own personality in a sacrifice of will. Therefore they have come to the front; they have a direct view of the throne; they stand upon Mount Zion.

You will observe, however, that this eminence is a result, not a reward. It is no more a reward than the eminence of a great poet is a reward. His reward is the perfection of his poetry; theirs is the perfecting of their service. They have begun by following the Lamb; their reward is to "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth," incessantly, continually. Here again the parallel is with that other passage in the seventh chapter: "These are they that came out of great tribulation; therefore they serve Him *day and night* in His temple." The serving day and night is the parallel to the following the

Lamb whithersoever He goeth. And the idea in each case is the same: "In the present system of things they have subjected themselves to a temporary crushing of will; therefore, in the completed state their reward will be to have this subjection of will made chronic and habitual—to serve day and night. In the life of this age they have followed the Lamb a few miles from home; their reward in the age to come will be the power to follow Him '*whithersoever He goeth.*'" The popular view is that the sufferings of this life are sent to prepare us for heaven by way of contrast. That is not St. John's opinion. If men are asked *now* to follow the Lamb through a special path, it is that in the future they may follow Him through *all* paths. If the surrender of the will had nothing to do with heaven, it would be folly to practise it on earth. Contrast can never prepare one for any future. If you wished to make your son a geographical explorer, would you train him by keeping all maps out of his way? If you desired him to be a poet, would you prepare

him by hiding his Tennyson? The common theory of compensation is absurd — "We weep now; we shall laugh yet," "We go on foot now; we shall ride yet," "We have vile raiment now; we shall have diamonds yet." And why is it absurd? Because on this principle the weeping and the walking and the vile raiment are so much waste time. So far from preparing for their contraries, they are retarding that preparation. Sorrow unfits for sensuous joy; the longer it lasts, it unfits the more. If heaven be a state of animal happiness, the worst education for it is to follow the Lamb. But if to follow the Lamb be the essence of the life of heaven, if the perfection of the blessed life be the convergence of all paths into this main road, then the steps of tribulation are the steps of the ascent of man. It is by the service of the moment that we ripen for the serving day and night—the following of the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

I return now to the point from which I started. These hundred and forty-four thousand are

not the complete number of the redeemed. They are a special class, the possessors of a particular quality, which places them above their fellows—on Mount Zion. What is that quality? Wherein consists that element of force which has lifted these men to the top of the hill? In what respect are they distinguished from the other heavenly forces? I think St. John himself enables us to answer that question. It seems to me that in his visions of the coming age there is seen the operation of three distinct forces—those which go before, those which produce rest, and those which follow. Each has its representation in the scenes of the great allegory.

The first is represented by the angel of the everlasting gospel flying over the face of heaven. It is the life of the pioneers of progress—of those who go before their fellows towards the promised land. They are the John Baptists of their age—in advance of their day, and therefore much alone. The second class is represented by the souls under the altar in Revelation vi. 9. They are eager

for enterprise, but they are commanded to wait. The obedience to such a command itself requires mental force. They are in the position of many an invalid with whom the spirit is willing, but the flesh weak, and to whom the voice keeps saying, "Thy time is not yet come." The third class is represented by those in the present passage. They are the opposite of the first. They do not lead, but follow. They are not pioneers, but imitators. They do not fly in advance with the solitary angel; they keep on the ground, and come after. These are they whom St. John places on Mount Zion; and it is worth while to notice their peculiarities. There are three things to be observed about them—their mark, their sphere, and their boundary. Let us look at each of these.

First. Their mark is sacrifice—the Lamb. They are distinctively the self-effacing souls of humanity. Perhaps it may occur to us to ask, What is there distinctive in this, from a Christian point of view? Is not sacrifice the condition of all Christian life? Is it not

itself the mark of the Lord Jesus? Yes; but there are two ways in which a man can get it—by nature or by grace. There are some men who are *born* with the sacrificial spirit; there are others who acquire it by suffering. No man can study human experience without being impressed with the fact that there are important differences in the nature of sacrificial power. We see these differences best in the stages of early life. We speak of some boys as being well-bred and polite; they will rise instinctively and offer you a chair. In truth, however, it comes oftener from the birth than the breeding—rather from the spirit of sacrifice than from the cultivation of politeness. Just as there are some who are endowed with an ear for music, there are some who are endowed with a bent for helpfulness. St. Paul says that he was a Christian from the very hour of his birth. He means that from his earliest years the spirit of sacrifice was in him. And what St. Paul says of himself may be said of many. There are Christians

who, like poets, are born, not made. It is the difference between a gift and a grace, between an election and a call. They come into the world with their mission written on their hearts, and when the outward occasion *arrives* they fly to it as a bird to its nest.

So is it with these men on Mount Zion. They are those to whom sacrifice is innate, to whom it comes naturally—as a gift of birth. I think this idea is distinctly brought out in verse 3. We are there told of a song which is sung by the harpers, and there is added this remarkable statement: "No man could learn that song but the hundred and forty and four thousand." What is the meaning of these words? Is it not clearly this: that to learn easily the joy of sacrifice we must be born to it? To those who get it by struggle it comes at first as a pain, not a song. There are some with whom praise is the last thing. The Divine life comes to them as a foreign land, in which there is no water. They feel as if God had prepared for them a table in the *wilderness*—a feast

in which they are not at home. It is a long time before they can say, "My cup runneth over." The religious life has come to them as a duty, a task, a burden. But the men of Mount Zion have not reached the spirit of sacrifice by struggle. They have not reached it at all; it has reached them. It can say to them, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." They have been born to it, not bred to it. It is as much a part of their nature as their love of music. They require to learn music, like others; but the learning of it is a joy. Even so, they get their prescribed duty, like others; but it is almost immediately transfigured—it becomes a privilege, a delight, a song. The half of the lesson is already within them; their sacrifice becomes a joy.

Second. We come now from their mark to their sphere. It is expressed in two words: "They follow." The idea is that their position is not in the van, but in the rear, of the Christian army. So far as appearance goes, they are the farthest behind in the

march. They are the ambulance corps of the forces. They have nothing to do with the fighting, no seeming share in the glory. Their task is to come in where the glory goes out. They have to receive those who have been disabled in the fight, and who are brought, wounded and bleeding, to the rear. Their work is essentially one of repair, of putting right. They receive the box of ointment after it has been broken. They have to gather together its shattered fragments after its fragrance has been dissipated. They have to recruit the weary strength, to stimulate the fainting energy, to bind the bleeding heart. It is a work that does not show. It is not seen by those outside the camp. It brings no honour or glory.

And yet, these are the men of Mount Zion. These are they who stand upon an eminence—are distinguished even among the great. "God shall be thy rearward," are words which have become familiar to every Christian ear. They have their special application in this vision of St. John. It is

in the rear of this celestial army that God supremely dwells; His kingdom is everywhere, but His metropolis is here. Here, in the ambulance corps of humanity, amid the camp-followers of the great army, is the work He loves the best. The last judgment reverses previous judgments. Earth had placed them at the back; heaven puts them in the front. Earth had assigned them the valley; heaven gives them the mountain. Earth had depreciated their powers; heaven says there was a song which they alone could learn.

Third. This brings us to the final peculiarity of these men of the mountain—their boundary. The boundary of the Christian life has always been a subject of the greatest interest. Some have pronounced it narrow, some wide. The truth seems to be that it is varied by the amount of Christianity. The largest boundary is assigned to the men of the mountain; they follow "whithersoever the Lamb goeth." The idea is that to them there is no local boundary at all. Their boundary is not one of space, but of spirit. They are

at liberty to go wherever they can carry, or can find, the spirit of sacrifice. Their test of permission is not locality, but motive. If they came to the communion-table with a worldly mind, they would feel themselves debarred from it; if they came to a place of entertainment with a helpful mind, they would be told to enter. There is, to them, as sharp a separation between God and the world as there is to any other Christian; but it is not a separation in place or in time; it is in the thoughts of the heart. *Their* world is selfishness, wherever it may be found—in the church as in the market-place. Their world is not got rid of by locomotion, but by *e*motion—not by fleet wings, but by self-surrendering wishes. There is no spot which may not be Vanity Fair; there is none which may not be the house of God, the very gate of heaven.

For is not this latter point the express teaching of Christ's historical gospel? What is the life of Jesus but a demonstration of the fact that the Lamb may go everywhere—that the sacrificial cross of Christ may be

raised on any soil? There is no sphere of life known to me which has been left out from the scene of the gospel ministry. From the marriage feast of Cana to the shadows of Calvary, we may say, with the apostle of the Gentiles, that Christ has filled all things. There is not a phase of worldly experience which He has not made the home of sacrifice. The years of childhood have been consecrated by Nazareth. The visions of youth have been glorified by Jordan. The choice of manhood has been vindicated by temptation. Every form of fortune has been wrestled with and blessed—festivity and mourning, the city and the desert, the masses and the individual, the mystical and the commonplace, the life of nations and the life of the fireside, the day of judgment for all men, and the day of a picnic in the wilderness to refresh a famished few. Even the most unlikely phase is not omitted—the scene of intellectual perplexity, "Now is My soul troubled"—a scene which is conquered, not by solution of the problem, but by the cry of self-surrender,

"Father, glorify Thy name." To follow whithersoever He goeth is to follow Him everywhere, for there is no spot where He has not gone. He has reconciled the world unto Himself by showing that the world, and not the flight from it, is the altar of sacrifice.

ST. JOHN'S PARADOX CONCERNING THE DEAD

Revelation xiv. 13

This is one of the most remarkable passages, not only in the Apocalypse, but in the Bible. It breaks a long reticence. The life of the disembodied soul had been hitherto almost ignored. Even the raptures of a Paul had centred mainly round a resurrection morning, when the dead should break their silence and resume their place in the universe. Here the silence has itself become vocal. The attention of the seer centres, not on the resurrection morning, but on that state of the soul which is popularly called disembodied, and, for the first time in Bible literature, the interest of the reader is solicited for those who are at present in the condition we name death.

I understand the passage to mean that at

this particular epoch a change had taken place, not in the state of the departed dead, but in man's conception of that state. "Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow with them." The suggestive word is to me the word "write." It is not that from henceforth the dead are to be more blessed, but that from henceforth we are to *think* of them as more blessed. It is really, as I understand it, "write from henceforth, blessed are the dead." It is the proclaiming of a new revelation on the subject, which is to be incorporated for the future with the sum of human knowledge. The books in which man records his thoughts of the departed are henceforth to attribute to them even in their silence the possession of life and joy.

The idea of the passage, then, clearly is, that the blessedness of the dead proclaimed by Christianity is a new conception. To the Jew, the dead were not blessed. His views about a future life fluctuated; but even in the best

of them he did not reach the notion that it is a happy state to be within the veil. Death was to him a penalty; the state of the dead was the bearing of a penalty. His hope for the departed was that they would come back again. If there were any among them whom at present he deemed privileged, it was those who were allowed to come back on a visit. He figured some of his greatest men as being permitted to return to earth in the form of other lives: John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah, were supposed to have lived again in other forms. The fact that such a return could be deemed a privilege to the good is itself strongly suggestive of the Jewish view as to the state of the dead. The devout Christian believer who has lost a friend in his own fellowship would in the very moment of his anguish refuse to bring him back if he got the choice: I have put the question repeatedly in these circumstances. The devout Jew would have taken a different view of the matter. The change of sentiment can only be accounted for by a change of revelation. Something must

have intervened to alter man's estimate of the condition called death. There must have come to him a moment in which he began to see from a new angle—an angle whose prospect reversed the first impression, and made the gloom glory.

If we turn now to the Hindoo mind, we shall see a totally opposite association of death. To the devotee of ancient India the distinctive motto of life was "blessed are the dead." The most striking proof of this is its doctrine of transmigration. We have seen how in Judaism this doctrine took the form of a privilege to the good; here it is a punishment to the bad. The desire of the Hindoo was that he might never come back. It was coming back that he was afraid of. He, like the Jew, believed in the possibility of the transmigration of souls—but with a difference. The Jew believed that it was possible for the good; the Hindoo held that it could befall only souls that were bad or imperfect. To the latter the reward of virtue was to be freed from earth. The blessedness of the departed good consisted in

the certainty that they would never be compelled to return, that they had finally got rid of the present world, and would have no share in aught beneath the circle of the sun. The Hindoo worshipper could have said with St. John, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

And he could have gone still further in the approving quotation of this passage. Not only would he have held with St. John that the sainted dead are blessed; he would have agreed with him as to the reason of their blessedness, "that they may rest from their labours." The beauty of death to the Hindoo was its quiescence; beyond all things he valued rest. What he disliked about this world was its constant round of action. His own nature was meditative. The passions of the crowd oppressed him. What the Western mind calls reality was to him illusion. The streets, and openings of the gates, the buying and selling, the marrying and giving in marriage, were to him the vain things of the imagination—the phantoms of sense which clogged the wings

of the spirit. He wished to find repose from these. His most pleasing association of death was the hope of such repose. To get back to the bosom of the infinite calm, to be folded in the rest of that windless, waveless sea which he believed to lie beyond this turbulent scene of things—that was the aspiration which moulded his nights and days.

So far, then, there is an agreement between the Hindoo and the Christian conception of the state called death. Both hold that the sainted dead are blessed ; both agree that their blessedness consists in rest. But from this point they part company, and unite no more. For St. John proceeds to make a remarkable addition to the statement—an addition which at first sight seems to contradict it: "their works follow with them." This is the original reading. It does not mean, as our version would suggest, that the works follow the rest, but that they accompany it. It is the dead who are represented as following the Lamb, as in verse four. They are treading in the footsteps of the sacrificial life, and are entering

into rest. But St. John says it is a peculiar kind of rest—a rest which is accompanied by all their energies. Here is something radically different from the Hindoo conception. The blessedness of the dead is declared to lie in a rest which is distinct from quiescence, in a rest which involves work as a part of its being. It is no Nirvana, no dream-consciousness, no state of suspended animation. It is not simply a repose which is followed by an awaking; it is a repose which is itself the ground of an increased vitality. It is a state of which St. John is not afraid to speak in contradictory terms. At one time he says, "they rest from their labours"; at another, "they rest not day nor night." He is not describing two experiences; he is depicting two sides of the one shield. The sleep is with him the waking, the rest is the work, the end of labour is the beginning of service.

Now, this is a paradox, and it is a paradox peculiar to the religion of Christ. The ideal of the Hindoo mind, as we have seen, was quiescence; rest came by excluding action

The ideal of the Jew was action; the works of the law gave no room for rest. Here, the rest and the work are made one experience. It is no longer a matter of alternation. The sabbath does not follow the six stages of labour; it accompanies them, it causes them. What is the root of such a conception? Is there anything in the passage before us which would indicate its origin, which would suggest how it came into St. John's mind? It is St. John's mind that we want to know about. It is easy to philosophise on the matter. But in an expository essay the main question is, not what possible explanation can be given, but what was the solution of the problem entertained by the writer himself. In some cases we fail to find any clue to this, and are forced to content ourselves with conjecture. Have we any better guide here? Is there any indication in the terms of this statement, which can suggest to us that process of thought by which the seer arrived at a conclusion so paradoxical as the union of rest and work?

I think there is. I believe there are four little words which give a key to the whole subject and afford a glimpse into the mind of the author. These words are "yea, saith the Spirit." On a first view they are awkward. One does not see why they should be there. From a rhetorical point of view the verse would read better without them. They introduce a speaker where there is no room for a dialogue, and interrupt a sentence which, from the orator's standpoint, would have best run on. Why is this? Clearly because they are not spoken from the orator's standpoint at all. They are inserted as a note of explanation. They are put in by way of commentary. They are intended to throw light on a saying thoroughly new to that world, and conveying in its first utterance a sense of contradiction. Let us go on to read this comment.

St. John has been declaring that the blessedness of the dead consists in a rest which involves work. He remembers that he is stating something which to the common mind must seem a paradox. He hastens to defend

himself, to show that his view is one of common-sense. He reminds his readers that he is speaking of a peculiar kind of rest—the rest of the spirit. He tells them that the rest of the spirit is the opposite of the rest of the cemetery. The rest of the cemetery is the cessation of being. By nature and by definition it is the inability to work. But the rest of the spirit is the reverse of this; it is that which disentombs the spirit, that which gives it *ability* to work. It comes, not from a diminution, but from an increase of its vitality Before the spirit reaches its rest, it is impeded in its movements; when in absolute unrest it is said to be dead. The nearer it comes to a state of rest, the closer it approaches to a state of activity. Unrest is that which impedes the nature of anything. The unrest of a piece of matter is its movement; the unrest of a spirit is its *want* of movement. To remove the unrest of matter is to make it quiescent; to remove the unrest of spirit is to make it non-quiescent, to waken it into life. Masses of matter are made to

move by collision, by pressure, by friction. But souls have their movement checked by these things. To give them force, they require the elimination of friction, the absence of collision. It is where they are undisturbed that they are most powerful; they work when they rest from their labours.

Let me remark that this peculiar view of the nature of spiritual rest—a view which is distinctively Christian—furnishes, in my opinion, the key to something which otherwise is a mystery. I allude to the fact that in the New Testament the state immediately after death is spoken of in two different ways: sometimes it is described as a sleep; at others as a consciousness of increased vivacity. It is not to be explained as the sentiments of different writers. There would be nothing strange in that. Even inspiration might well permit a difference of opinion on a problem not unveiled. But the remarkable thing is that the different views about death are not enumerated by separate writers. They are given forth by the same speaker

almost at the same time. We find St. Paul in one breath proclaiming that death is a sleep, and in the next declaring that to die is gain, that to depart and be with Christ is far better, that if the house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a more commodious building. We find a greater than St. Paul announcing at one moment the death of a Lazarus under the metaphor of sleep, and at another repudiating the notion that God can reign over unconscious lives: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him." How are we to account for this diversity of statement? Is there any bridge that can unite the two banks of the stream? I know of only one: the Christian conception of spiritual rest. The rest of the spirit is the bridge by which it passes over into action, into newness of life, into vivid power of unimpeded energy, into work proportionate to the declining sense of labour. Let me elucidate this point—not from philosophy, but from Scripture.

The favourite description of the New

Testament for the blessed dead is, "those who sleep in Christ." What does that mean? Why are they said to sleep in Christ? To indicate that they have entered into the same state as Christ. The heavenly state of Christ is described by John himself under the metaphor of a sleep. In one of the comments on his own gospel narrative he says that the only begotten Son "is in the bosom of the Father." It is the symbol of rest, repose. Christ is said to have now entered into the state of heavenly sleep—the restful sabbath of the soul. The metaphor is all the more striking because in this instance it has not been suggested by death at all. Christ has not come to it by the gate of death, but by the gate of ascension. He has come to it, not because it is involved in dying, but because it is involved in heaven. It is not the prerogative of a worn-out body, but of a fresh mind. It is not the climax of exhaustion, but the culmination of glory. It would be reached by the beatified spirit though there were no such thing as

death. All this is implied in the simile that Christ reposes in the bosom of the Father.

But now, still keeping St. John in our mind, let us go a step further. At the very moment when he is conceiving Christ as reposing on the bosom of the Father, Christ is to him the most active force in this universe. Not only so, Christ is by him at that moment conceived as having attained an increased activity by reason of His reclining or reposing attitude. What else is the meaning of these mysterious words which he has reported from the lips of the Master: "greater works than these shall ye do, because I go unto My Father"? He means that the repose of the spirit has given the Son of Man wings, that He is better able to work *for* us and *in* us now than He was in the days of His flesh, that the calm peace of satisfaction has nerved Him further for the travail of the soul, that His rest has become His crown. It is this, and nothing less than this, that breaks forth in St. John's record of the Master's words: "If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice because I

go unto the Father;" "Cling to Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My Father;" "If I go not away, the Comforter cannot come." It is the Son of Man's experience of the universal law that the spirit's power comes only with the spirit's peace, and that the heart which can shed itself most widely is the heart which has found repose.

To sleep in Christ, then, is to sleep as Christ sleeps—not on the bosom of Nirvana, but on the bosom of the Father. It is to lose, not consciousness nor self-consciousness, but the consciousness of self—of limitation, of restriction. It is to become oblivious of the sense of weight and weariness. It is the sense of weight and weariness that here below prevents our works from keeping pace with us. They lag behind. Most of our projects are never begun; all our undertakings are unfinished. It is not rest that kills work; it is unrest. The moment when the hand is most effectual is the moment when the mind has least friction. When our cares are awake, our arm sleeps. Something must come to lull

the cares if the work is to keep pace with the thought. Therefore it is that to St. John the future life is not a miracle, but something which *annuls* a miracle. It is not a supernatural state, but a state which restores the broken law of nature. It is the present life which has interrupted the natural order. Man has an ideal beyond his capacity. He has a work to do which he cannot finish; he leaves it behind him on the wayside. Another life must take it up and carry it through. Another state of being must restore the balance between the demand for outward service and the power to supply it. Here the human soul is restless ere it begins its toil; it has not a fresh start, even in the morning. There must be found an environment for man in which rest shall be itself the starting point, and the movement of the hand shall be accelerated by the unruffled repose of the spirit.

THE GOAL OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

Revelation xv. 2

"And, I saw a sea of glass mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand upon the shore of the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Perhaps the question that occurs to one at the outset, in reading this striking passage, is, What is the relation of the harpers to this glassy sea? The attitude of St. John towards the sea had been an adverse one. The sea had been the instrument of his exile. It had separated him from all that he loved, and specially from the cause that he loved. It had been associated in his mind with everything that was disagreeable; the wild beast, to his vision, rose out of the sea. It

had been numbered, not among the beauties, but among the privations, of nature; it had been linked with hunger, with thirst, with pain, with sorrow, with weariness, with death; and amongst the gains of heaven he had recorded this: "There shall be no more sea." Yet here the sea is painted in other colours—more endearing colours. The object of aversion has become an object of interest. Along its shores stands the conquering host of God; it is here that they come to celebrate their triumph; while over the scene of former misery there float the strains of unbroken praise—the music of the harps of God.

Yet, I think we have mistaken the meaning of the allegorical symbol. I do not believe the praise of the harpers is over the sea, but over the abolition of the sea. We sometimes say, "The sea is as calm as a sheet of glass to-day." In these cases what we admire is not the glass, but the sea. We are contemplating, not the smoothness, but the fact that beneath the smooth surface there is sleeping a power which in a moment could burst its

frail environment, could lash with fury every opposing barrier, could sweep into oblivion the fleets of nations, and fill many lands with wailing. We are admiring the restraint of an element which, if it would, could speak in vociferous tones; and behind our admiration lies the consciousness that some day it may do so. But St. John's picture, as I take it, is quite a different one. He is contemplating, not a calm day on the sea, but a removal of the sea altogether. He means to indicate that in his vision all the water of the ocean was poured out and the cavity filled up with glass. The harpers are praising God because they are henceforth to be shut in—not shut in Patmos, but shut on the opposite shore from Patmos, the shore of the exile's return. These harpers are really saying, "We shall go no more out." Their song is the song of the emigrant who has come home and who has got a guarantee that he will travel no more. That guarantee is the fact that he is locked in from all future unrest; the sea has become glass.

The idea, then, is that of a permanent as

distinguished from a transitory calm—a calm produced by underlying stability. This is represented as the goal of individual development. Man, after his tossings and his troubles, stands upon the shore of a new character, and thanks God for the result. The question now arises, What is the nature of this Christian peace described in such peculiar allegorical language? I say "peculiar"; I had almost said "contradictory." The association of the sea and glass is not uncommon, but it is always an association of opposites. The mingling of glass and fire is a still more antagonistic meeting. Whence these strange combinations? Poetic licence will not account for them; they are not such as poetry would suggest. They must have been suggested by something moral, something in the spiritual nature of the facts. There must, in short, have been present to the eye of St. John a view of Christian peace which represented it as different from other kinds of peace, an element which in some sense united it to its contrary and made it, from the human side,

a paradox. What is this peculiarity? If it is there, we can find it as easily as John could. It is not a matter of local colouring, which might have vanished with the years. It is within, and therefore it can be identified. Let us look within, and see if we can explain the origin of this symbolism. Let us seek light from the human heart itself on these two things—the sea made of glass, and the glass mingled with fire.

And first. It seems a strange thing that when St. John wishes to portray the peace of the spirit he should have made use of the sea at all. Why speak of a sea of glass? Why not simply tell us that men, after their storm, were permitted to walk on land? Because he wants to preserve the cavity. He wants the deep place to be retained out of which the old waters have been emptied. None knew better than he that peace may be bought too dear. We cannot forget the words of his own gospel: "Not as the world gives, give I unto you." He, of all men, saw that there is a peace which the world *does*

give, and that the peace of Christ is just marked by its distinction from this. The promise of peace was not a promise peculiar to Christ. It had been offered by nearly every teacher who had ever professed to guide the steps of man. It had been promised to the devotee on the banks of the Ganges; it had been presented as a goal to the followers of the Stoic philosophy. The originality which Christ claimed was not in the thing bestowed, but in the mode of its bestowal, "Not as the world *gives*." All had offered glass in exchange for storm; but they offered it by a shallowing process. They proposed to purchase calm by narrowing human nature—by diminishing the capacity to feel. Christ proposed to bring calm *without* diminishing the capacity. He offered to breathe peace over the heart without obliterating the characters inscribed upon its depths. He declared that His purpose was not to curtail, but to expand, man's natural powers—to give life more abundantly The waters of trouble would be lifted from the hollow place in which they lay; but the

hollow itself would still remain. The capacity to hold the troubles would not pass away. That was the power of feeling, the power of the heart, the power of love; and no peace would be valuable if it were bought with that.

This is what St. John means by having the glass on the surface of the place once filled by the waters. It is only on the surface that the glass lies. Underneath there are indeed no waters; but the depth which held them remains unfilled. The beast is expelled —the sensuous nature of the soul; but the spot where it dwelt is not allowed to remain vacant; the old love is replaced by a new. The *image* of the beast is expelled—that ideal which survives in the memory after it has passed from the life; but in the home of the former picture there is hung up a *better* portrait. The *number* of the beast is obliterated—the influence of its name; but in its room there is implanted a *new* influence—a sense of the beauty of holiness. The subject is so important and so distinctively a thought of Christianity that it merits a more detailed illustration.

Instead of speaking of goodness in the abstract, let us take a single virtue—patience. The Stoic philosophy and the Gospel of Christ have both inculcated patience—resignation in the hour of trial. But they have proposed to reach it by different methods. If a colour is trying, there are two ways by which you can relieve the eye; you may wash out the colour, or you may blend with it another colour. The former is the method of Stoicism; the latter of Christianity. The Stoic proposes to make men patient by rooting out feeling; the Christian by inspiring a *counter*-feeling. The one would get rid of repining by getting rid of pain; the other would bear the pain for the sake of a prospective or an accompanying pleasure. There is an infinite difference between the sense of dense darkness and the state of born-blindness; the one is a black space before the eye; the other is no space at all. Stoicism is an attempt to get rid of the black space—to blot out the memory of the former day, and make the man as if he had been born blind; it is

an incitement to forget. It is against this that I understand Tennyson to protest in "In Memoriam":—

> "Let love clasp grief, lest both be drowned,
> Let darkness keep her raven gloss,
> Ah! better to be drunk with loss,
> To dance with death, to beat the ground,
> Than that the victor hour should scorn
> The long result of love, and boast,
> 'Behold a man that loved and lost
> And all he was is overworn.'"

Now, this is a *Christian* protest—a protest which could only have been made under the influence of Christian thought. The patience of Christ—that quality which St. John himself so highly valued—is valued by him, not for the sake of the glass, but of the force which lies beneath it. Measured by quantity, the amount of peace reached by a Christian is not more than the amount of peace which might be reached by a Stoic or a Buddhist; it is the *quality* that makes the difference. Have you ever stood in a cemetery on a day of breathless calm? If so, you were at that moment in the presence of two kinds of peace:

there was a peace below, and there was a peace above. Which was the stiller? If you ask me in terms of *quantity*, I cannot say; I can only answer by a new adaptation of Tennyson's line, "I know not which is calmer, no, not I." But if you ask me in terms of *quality*, the case is very different; I have no difficulty in assigning the prize. The silence below has an opposite source from the silence above. The silence below is the silence of death. Max Müller says the reason why the lower animals do not speak is that they have nothing to say. So is it with the silence of this under-world; it is the speechlessness of the deaf-mute. But the silence of the sky is the calm, not of emptiness, but of fulness. It is the calm of balanced forces, of regulated powers, of harmonised energies. It is a peace which comes from an equal division of labour, from a convergence of work, from an absence of competing interest. The surface is glass; but there is depth below.

So much, then, for the first of these poetic figures—the sea and the glass. We come now

to the second—the glass and the fire. This marks, I think, a different association. The putting of glass over the place where the sea once lay indicated that the peace of Christ was the peace, not of a shallow nature, but of a deep character; it symbolised Christ's relation to the world within. The glass mingled with fire refers, I think, not to the inner state of the mind, but to the outer circumstances of the heavenly life. If the glass over the former place of the sea means the peace of profound feeling, the glass mingled with fire means the peace that can subsist in circumstances of outward sacrifice. Fire is the symbol of sacrifice. The seer says in effect that he is unable to contemplate a time when the soul will ever enter into an environment of pure glass—into a world from which have been excluded all the elements which necessitate human effort. The abode of the Greek gods on Olympus would not satisfy him. He wants the glass to be mingled with fire. He desires that the peace shall be one in which the hands will not be folded, in which the heart will not be mute, in

which the cares of love will not be suspended, in which the need to give will not be suppressed. He would repudiate the notion that the cross of Christ is a transitory thing, a thing which is to pass away with the present environment. The cross is to him an eternal badge of Christianity, the distinctive mark of the Lord Jesus, and as inseparable from the Lord Jesus as the mark of the beast is inseparable from the beast. The resurrection of Christ was, to him, not an ascension above the need of sacrifice, but the rising into a life where the power of sacrifice would be unimpeded—where the glass would make it more easy to pass through the fire.

Now, this is not the common view entertained of the Apocalypse. I have heard its ideas of the heavenly state again and again stigmatised as the pictures of a sensuous life—and that, not by negative critics, but by divines otherwise pronouncedly conservative. That it does present the imagery of sensuous comfort is beyond question; but I think it is forgotten that it presents this imagery only

on one side of the road. On another side of the road you will find the opposite imagery. Let us take the seventh chapter as a specimen. Looked at from one angle, it is the portraiture of a sensuous paradise. The redeemed are arrayed in shining garments. They are in front of the Divine throne. God has spread over them a protective tabernacle. They hunger no more; they thirst no more; they sink no more beneath the burden and the heat. They are shepherded like a flock; They are led to living waters; They have all tears wiped from the eyes. It seems a picture of glassy calm.

But look again, and I think you will find that there is another side to the picture. All this calm is the result of a stupendous sacrifice. It is not simply the reward of a sacrifice which was perpetrated in the *earthly* state. The idea of the passage is clear and explicit. It is because the sacrifice continues in the heavenly state that the heavenly state itself is so smooth. In this state the central figure is the Lamb—the symbol of sacrifice corres-

ponding to the fire. It is the Lamb that feeds them, it is the Lamb that leads them, it is the Lamb that gives life to the fountain of waters. If their robes are shining, it is because they have washed them in the Lamb's blood. If they have a front view of the throne, it is because in God's temple they serve day and night. If they dwell in the centre of Divine power, it is because they have surrendered themselves to a life of sacrifice. The glass has come from the fire.

And the principle which lies beneath all this is not difficult to read. It is that which Paul calls emphatically "the law of Christ"—that the personal burden can only be got rid of by taking up an *im*personal one. "Bear ye one another's burdens, for every man shall bear his own burden." It is a declaration of the fact that it is a man's interest to be unselfish, that the load which every spirit bears cannot fall into the sea until the sorrow of others has cast its shadow over him. If the heavenly state is a life personally burdenless, it is because it is a life *im*personally

burdened. Its individual calm is the result of individual surrender. It has conquered pain by homœopathy. Each man has lost his own passion by taking up the Lord's passion; he has walked through the fire and felt no hurt, by reason of a larger pain.

There is one passage of this book which seems to me strikingly to illustrate the sacrificial nature of the heavenly state; and none the less so because it is one of those adduced on the opposite side. I allude to Revelation vi. 10, where the souls under the altar are represented as calling with a loud voice, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" It has been said that this marks a relapse in religious thought—the regress towards a sensuous and vindictive spirit. To my mind, it marks the very root of the modern conception of heaven. What is really the cry of these souls? It is not an emotion of vindictiveness. It is not even a desire for the redress of personal injury. The word "our" is generic. It is not their own

blood they are thinking of; it is the blood of their kind. The voice is a voice of pity. They are contemplating the miseries which their fellow-creatures are suffering in the earthly state. They are in the attitude which modern Britain has often taken over the perpetration of Eastern atrocities. They have resumed in the heavenly life the cross of humanity—the cross of the Son of Man. They have entered into sympathy, nay, into participation, with that which they have surmounted; they live in the conflict of the past.

I think this a grand as well as a bold trait in the delineations of St. John—to have allowed the blessed dead to preserve the possibility of pain. "Enter ye into the joy of your Lord" seems a natural utterance; we expect to find the glass where the waters used to be. But St. John sees beyond this. He sees that if we would enter into Christ's joy, we must first enter into His pain. The glass is here the product of the fire; personal care has fled, because universal care has come. The seer of Patmos has inaugurated the

modern heaven. "I saw a new heaven" are the words in which he himself expresses this conviction. He felt that men were on the borders of a higher conception of blessedness—a conception in which sensuous happiness was no longer the goal of man. He remembered that, according to his own narrative, the peace of Christ came in the midst of the cross. And that became to him the rule for all peace—always, everywhere. It became the law of life universal—in heaven as on earth. Why does he behold the redeemed casting their crowns at the feet of Christ? It is because to his mind the crown is not the basis of joy. It is because in all worlds the basis of joy is Christ Himself—the spirit of sacrifice, the surrender of the individual will. The altar which he builds is the altar of Jacob—the monument to the night of struggle. The stone pillow of Bethel is transformed into a couch of down; but it is because the angel life forgets its *own* pain by descending the ladder of ministration; the glass is reached through the fire.

THE NEW STANDARD OF CRITICISM

Revelation xx. 12

"And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne; and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works." It is in my opinion impossible to understand this passage if we do not consider the state of the seer's mind when he witnessed the vision. Every word seems to me to be strongly antithetical. St. John is suffering from a false judgment; his fellow-Christians are suffering from a false judgment. He sees the Roman world divided into the great and the small. He sees men standing before the throne of that tribunal to receive their respective places. He is not for a moment

under the idea that the world of Christ is distinguished from the world of Cæsar by the possession of a judgment-seat. He knows that Cæsar has a throne, and that men are made great or small by standing before that throne. What he objects to is not the absence, but the ground, of the judgment. Men are given their places without reference to character; they are not judged "according to their *works*." Their position is often determined by arbitrary circumstances—family, name, wealth, influence. To the eye of St. John, gazing on the tribunal of that old world, the balance between the great and the small turns on a physical rather than a moral weight. There is nothing which involves self-introspection—the looking into the records of the past, or, as St. John calls it, "the open books." There is nothing, above all, which can send a man back to his *innermost* self—the state of being which lies even behind his works—that *other* book called the book of life.

Now, in opposition to this view, St. John sees a new order of criticism. He beholds

the multitude of the dead come back, in the places which the old world gave them. He sees them stand before a new throne, before a new tribunal, before a judgment-seat guided by other principles. Guided by these principles, judging by that new standard, this second throne effects wondrous transformations. Many of the first become last, and many of the last become first. Those whom the first throne pronounced great are by the second pronounced small; those whom the first declared small are by the second esteemed great. Tiberius, Caligula, Nero, were at the top of the list in the old society; in the new they are very near the end of it—only saved from being quite at the end by the imputation of insanity. And, in the place of honour which was held by Tiberius and Caligula and Nero, stands many a despised slave, many a deformed outcast—outcast by reason of his deformity, many a poor invalid considered unfit for survival, and whom the old world's chariot had passed, contemptuous, by.

As I have said, the cause of this change

was a change of standard. The old standard was the impression of outward force. The new standard, St. John says, is introspective. It is the record of inward books, and specially of one book the innermost of all—life. I do not think that by this innermost book St. John means to indicate that "Lamb's book of life" of which he has elsewhere spoken and which we have elsewhere considered. That was *Christ's* reading of history; this is the testimony of our own souls, the witness of our spirit with His Spirit. The idea evidently is that in the completed kingdom of God there are influences which must render man more self-critical—influences which must unlock his powers of introspection, and quicken those mortified members which were dead in trespasses and in sin.

Excluding all reference to the book of history, there are three inward books spoken of in the Bible. The writer of the fifty-first Psalm says, "Blot me not out from the book of Thy remembrance"; there is, then, a book of memory. St. Paul says that the Gentiles

have a "law written in their hearts"; there is, then, a book of conscience. Finally, St. John here speaks of a book underlying both of these—the book of life.

Let us look at these three. The thought of the seer evidently is that for each of them death is an expansion. He regards these three books as at present blotted—prevented from giving their testimony by reason of certain physical ink-stains. Death erases the ink-stains and reveals the handwriting below. It confronts a man for the first time with the sight of himself as he is. It does so, not so much by creating new light as by removing past darkness. The idea is that we are at present the victims of obstruction; something is shutting out our legitimate light. We are in actual possession of books which would tell us marvellous things. But they are closed books. There is a physical clasp on them which can only be broken by a physical wrench. Death is that wrench. It breaks the clasp and the books fly open. The page of our inner self is revealed; and in a moment,

in the twinkling of an eye, we read, hear, mark, learn, and inwardly digest.

Take the book of memory. What is the cause of forgetfulness in the present system of things? I hold it to lie always in matter, never in mind. The popular notion is that memory declines with years; I believe the fact to be that memory is *obstructed* with years. It is the difference between failing to see a thing from short-sightedness and failing to see a thing because another object stands in the way. I hold that the memory of old age is in the latter position; it fails, not as a power, but because in a certain direction its view is circumscribed. My reason for thinking so is that the memory of old age does fail only *in a certain direction*; it forgets yesterday, but it remembers youth. It is the near things which it misses; it trips only upon the threshold of the door. But far-away things are clear; the voices of all the birds twitter in the *dawn*. What does that prove? Clearly that, whatever be the defect of memory in age, it is not a defect in the power. If not in the power, it

must be in the environment. Death changes the environment. Even changes of the environment *falling short* of death have rendered the memory preternatural. Men who have been resuscitated from the waves have told how, in the moment of drowning, they have lived their whole past anew, recalled forgotten scenes, performed obliterated deeds, reproduced the buried acts of long ago. The book of memory has been opened by an influence which to the physical organism is absolutely adverse. If the loosing of the silver cord can do so much, what might not the *breaking* of it do?

But the book of memory is by itself *not* a source of judgment; there is, I think, a very common misconception on this point. It is quite safe to affirm that any man who has been able to do a bad deed without a twinge will, other things being equal, be able to *remember* it without a twinge. Surely perception is at least as vivid as memory; if the actual sight of evil has failed to move, the mere remembrance of evil will move still less. Why is it, then, that in the dawning of moral con-

viction men shrink from memory—that even a Newman cries, "Remember not past years"? It is because a second book has been opened —the book of conscience. If the book of memory were opened alone, it would be morally powerless, valueless; its power lies in the volume below. What, then, is the influence which, according to St. John, is to open this underlying volume—this book of conscience? He tells us what it is in the preceding verse quite explicitly: "I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." That which opens the book of conscience is the vision of the great white throne—the sight of an ideal of superhuman purity. Man will know his sin by Christ, not Christ by his sin; nothing but the blaze of the throne can teach him his own night. What has prevented him from seeing his night is the cave of materialism; he has thought of himself as a bit of physical nature, or a piece of mechanism bound to act in a certain way. Judged by such a

throne, it is easy to say "we are all honourable men." But when a rent shall be made in the cave, and the morning light shall strike through, the white will reveal the black. Man will see *in*, the first time he sees out. He will take a measure of himself when he has a standard beyond himself. He will recognise the presence of his own dust and ashes the moment he has looked upon the face of Jesus.

That is distinctly the interpretation which St. John means to be put on his vision. You will observe that in his view the state of judgment is a state of intense individualism. This is implied in the very idea of reading a book—nay, it is involved in the conception of conscience itself. Conscience is the solitary region of the soul. Love demands at least two; conscience is a voice to one. When that book is opened a man must always be alone. The point is well worth our consideration. We have been accustomed to think of this scene as a great assize where the whole world is assembled side by side, where the

individual soul is lost in the contemplation of a vast multitude. That is not my reading of the passage. It is true, the small and great are said to stand before the throne; but it is not said that they stand before each other. The sight is that of a multitude to the eye of the seer and to the eye of the Judge; but not to the eye of the accused. He sees nothing but his own soul. The book which his brother reads is invisible to him; the verdict on his brother is inaudible to him. Seen by the eye of Omnipotence, it is the gathering together in a single space and at one time; but to the *dwellers* in the space and time it is represented in fragments. Each feels himself to be in a space apart; each is conscious of a different time. Every man is the member of an immense crowd; yet every man believes himself alone.

I think this is the idea of Browning's "Easter Day." I used to wonder why he should have represented a human soul as standing before the bar of God in solitude; where were the small and great who were to

assemble round the throne? Browning seems to answer, "They *are* round the throne, but they are not round the criminal." He probably felt, as every reflective man must feel, that the revealed presence of a crowd must spoil the judgment; that introspection is essential to self-criticism; that the book of each heart must be opened and read by itself alone.

We find a similar view in Cardinal Newman's remarkable poem, "The Dream of Gerontius." The first experience of Gerontius after death is a vision of *Christ*. It precedes his sight of heaven, it anticipates his view of the golden streets and pearly gates and crystal fountains. It is an experience of the individual heart. The man sees not his brother; he sees Jesus only. He realises for the first time the awful purity of Christ; it acts on him like the great white throne. St. John says that before this whiteness the earth and the heaven fled away. Even so, before the spotless purity of Jesus, Gerontius flies within upon himself, beholds in a moment of time what manner of man he

was. St. Paul speaks of death as a departing to be with Christ. Did he mean to suggest some such thought? Did he intend to indicate that, before entering into that great congregation called the city of God, the soul has a moment of intense individualism, a moment of personal solitude in which for the first time it sees what it *might* have been? I myself have no doubt that this was St. Paul's view. I believe that he and St. John were speaking of the same thing. Paul is speaking of the silence to each man; John is contemplating the collective silences. To the eye of God Almighty the books are opened simultaneously; the small and the great are seen together in a moment of time. But to each of the small and the great there appears only one book—the volume in the individual hand. There is no object seen but the great white throne; the first hour of departure is an hour with Christ.

I believe that, to the sacred writers, it is this separation of the individual from the mass that makes the time after death the appro-

priate day of judgment. What prevents self-judgment here is in their view just the vision of the multitude, the sight of a crowd of fellow-beings who are living precisely the same as ourselves. Death has a moment of isolation in it; it makes silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. It breaks for an instant the chain of physical continuity that binds me to my brother. It throws me back upon myself; it makes me say "It is I." This reading of yourself in the record is what St. John calls having your name "written in the books." It is a very difficult thing to take a record to yourself. We hear a preacher denouncing a special form of sin. We say, "He is evidently hitting at the man in front." He is hitting at ourselves. We have failed to see our own names written in the book. That is our reproach; that is our loss. It proves conscience to be blunted, individualism to be blunted, introspection to be blunted. Our penalty has been the escape of our pain. To read our own name in the record of the world's badness is a moral gain.

For, this leads me to observe that the opening of the book of conscience involves the opening of what St. John calls "another book"—the book of life. By "another book" he means, as I take it, an opposite kind of book—a book which is not accusing, but commendatory. He means that no man can read his name in the record of conscience except by the light of God—the light which streams from the great white throne. It is not by the *human* that the state of humanity is seen, it is by the superhuman. The perpetual presence of foul air is not only destructive to life, it is destructive to the perception of itself. To make a man perceive it you must lift him into other air—pure air. Why? Because pure air means more life, and more life means more sensitiveness. That is the secret of the moral expansion which St. John ascribes to death; it is the increased sensitiveness which comes from increased vitality. He would not limit the process to the last earthly hour. He declares in his First Epistle that he regards all regeneration as a "passing from death into

life." But, come when and where it will, the effect of the higher life is ever the same; it reveals for the first time the lower. "Sin revived, and I died," says Paul, speaking of the revelation of Christ to his soul. It is a bold, a striking statement. It tells us that he only saw the darkness of to-day when it became his yesterday. It was from the height of his new life that he began to survey the old. It was by the light of heaven that he read the record of earth. It was in the vision of the great white throne that he learned the blackness of his past. The book of life was the preface to the book of conscience. Before the throne of Moses he had said with sincerity, "Touching the righteousness of the law, I am blameless"; before the throne of the Lamb, he cried, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?"

And this is the comfort of all spiritual depression. I cannot read my name in the book except by the light of God. "Nathan said unto David, 'Thou art the man.'" David

himself never dreamed that he was the man; he thought another was the man; he evoked upon that other the vengeance of heaven. The book was patent to him, open to him; but another's name was on the title-page. It is not *my* voice nor *my* light that says "Thou art the man"; it is a higher voice: and when that voice comes, it is a sore and solemn moment. Yet it sends peace, not a sword. It tells me I have passed already from death into life. God alone could have revealed my *distance* from God. Flesh and blood could never have told it; only my Father which is in heaven. It is from the gates of the Divine temple that I behold the storm; it is from the shelter of the ark that I discern the waters of the flood. Only he who has heard the still, small voice can detect the thunder, the earthquake, and the fire; for moral strengthening is the root of moral pain, and the book of conscience is a volume of the book of life.

RELATION OF CHRISTIANITY TO PAIN

Revelation xxi. 4

All ages of the world have had some Utopian ideal—some state which they figured to themselves as the condition of ultimate blessedness. The Greek has his Elysian fields, the Spanish explorer his Eldorado, the Mohammedan his sensuous paradise. It is quite a subordinate matter where they have placed its locality—on earth, in the sun, in the moon. That which makes the difference between one heaven and another is not the where, but the what. Man's paradise is not the *place* to which he is going, but the *state* to which he is going. The moral value of his heaven lies, not in whether he believes it to be up or down, beyond or here; it lies purely in his answer to the question, "What do you consider the goal of happiness?"

In this passage St. John gives us a description of the Utopian condition of human life; and, in relation to other popular faiths, it presents a feature of paradox. Everything that is here said about the soul's joy is negative. The seer throughout this book dwells more on the redress of injuries than on the conferring of benefits. It is true we have the crystal fountain and the clear river, the pearly gates and the trees with luscious fruit. Yet, none of these things can be called distinctively joys of the *soul*. They are not sources of employment, occupation, permanent interest; their very joy depends on the existence of a previous joy. All the statements here made about the ultimate joy of the city of God are negative statements—declarations of the absence of some present encumbrance. That there is to be no temple with its burdensome rites of worship, no sea with its power of separation, no poverty with its ungratified hunger and thirst, no darkness with its disquieting fears, no death, no sorrow, no pain—these are the main elements which mark the privileges of the city of God. Perhaps in no

allegory descriptive of that city has human imagination so restrained itself. The Republic of Plato has revealed its inner mechanism; the paradise of the Koran has exposed its pleasures; John has contented himself with recording the lifting of the chain.

And yet I am convinced that, for a purpose of this sort, the seer of Patmos is in the right. I believe that what is wanted to create perfect happiness in the present world is not a new environment, but the removal of obstructions to the old one. We hear a great deal about the limits of our environment. Yet it is not really in our environment that our limit lies. The powers of our minds are in themselves adequate to more than they ever perform. It is not because our normal powers are weak that we fall beneath our efforts; it is because our normal powers are impeded. The absence of full pleasure in this world is not the result of any defect in the world; it is the result of *interference* with the world. Ask any man why he is not happy. He will tell you, not that his discontent arises from the actual objects

of this universe, but that it comes from some barrier interposed to the reaching of these objects. Blindness, deafness, lameness, bodily defect of every kind, the backward stream of heredity, the clashing of competing interests, the quarrels of friends and enemies, the shortness of individual life—these, and a hundred other privations, are the secret of that pessimism which has so large a share in human nature.

The truth is, however different it is from the common view, St. John has on his side the philosophy of the subject. To be on the *line* of things in this world is what we call happiness; to be diverted from the line, stopped on the line, or driven back on the line, is what we call unhappiness. Unhappiness is always the result of obstacle—diversion from the line of march. Accordingly, St. John takes it for granted that the aim of Christianity is happiness: "there shall be no more pain." This is only in other words to say that the natural order will be followed out. The life of Christ is a sacrificial life—in this world and in all worlds. But, though

sacrificial, it must not be painful. It must move on the *line* of sacrifice, must be unimpeded on that line. Any absence of will would be an arrest to sacrifice. Any sense of disagreeableness would be a retardation of the Christian life. It is a requisite to the progress of that life that a man should enter into joy—the joy of his Lord. He will change his idea of optimism, but he will be an optimist all the same, nay, he will find himself to be in the actual possession of the best possible world —a world which meets all his desires, and which he would not exchange for any other.

But now a question arises. If the goal of Christianity is the elimination of pain, how comes it that, in every branch of the Christian Church, and still more in the regions outside the Church, Christianity and pain are associated? How is it that those who have not entered within the pale have uniformly contemplated the entrance as a curtailment? Why is it that, amongst those already within, the greatest saints have generally been regarded as the men who have borne most marks of suffer-

ing and exhibited most traces of self-denial? The symbol of Christ in the world is a cross. The cross is to the Christian soldier what a medal is to the secular soldier—a mark of honour, an emblem of eminence. Both individuals and communities have courted privation for the sake of Christ. Men have gone into deserts, immolated themselves, lacerated themselves. Women have sacrificed the joys of family and home, have relinquished the leading fashion and the homage paid to beauty, that they might spend their lives in serious thought. Kings have thrown away their crowns that they might sit in sackcloth and ashes. A tendency so widely spread, so variedly spread, must have some root in human nature, some root in the facts of the case. Why is it that Christianity, professedly the ultimate abolisher of pain, should yet throughout the cycles of time have been linked with pain in the thoughts of the human heart?

Now, if we look at the passage before us, I think we shall find at least a suggestion of the answer. The passage in our Authorised

Version reads, "Neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Here, the passing away to previous things is made the reason for the passing away of pain. I think this a superior rendering to that of the Revised Version, which treats the latter clause as a mere redundant repetition. What I understand the seer to say is that pain shall pass away when the *need* of it passes away. At present it is bound up in the constitution of nature, because there are elements in the life of man which make its existence desirable. Pain exists now because it has a function, and a beneficial function. Whenever those elements which make it desirable shall be either removed or transformed, it will lose its function, and therefore will cease to be.

If we accept this reading, we shall find an answer to the paradox within the passage itself. Christ, the ultimate abolisher of pain, has a present use for pain. He has a function for it in the existing order of things. It is not a state which could be tolerated in a perfect organism, but in the present imperfection of

the organism it has advantages to the life of the individual. It cannot pass away until the passing away of that which makes it necessary, that which retards the progress of the human spirit and impedes the development of the race of man.

There is, then, a present good in pain—something which justifies Christianity in being the *custodian* of pain. What is it? I think, in the present system of things, there are two moral benefits of pain. It serves two ends, which, so far as I know, no other phase of our being can fulfil. Let us glance at each of these.

And, first, pain is, so far as I know, the only protest in the human constitution against something which is wrong. It is the one protestant movement in the body-politic of man's organism, the only thing which raises its voice against existing abuses. Pain is a signal—in the moral world the only signal. It indicates danger on the line. Without it the danger would be equally great, but not equally remedial. It is the declaration that our health

is bad, or, at the least, that something is required to perfect our constitution. Hunger is the protest of the physical nature against further abstinence; lassitude is the protest of the mental nature against further work. Always and everywhere pain is the Martin Luther of the organic frame-work; it placards the walls of the city with the announcement that there is something wrong.

There are two states in which man experiences painlessness—at the top, and at the foot, of the hill. In perfect health we have no pain; in perfect disease we have no pain. In the one case our members are so full of vigour that they are unconscious of their own life; in the other they are so mortified that all sensation has ceased. Pain is never the lowest thing; it is always on the middle road between the highest and the lowest. It is that which leads from the one to the other. It is the protest of to-day against yesterday on its way to to-morrow. That is its function; that is its power.

Now, when this function exists in the moral

nature we call it by a particular name—conscience. Conscience is simply the hunger of the moral nature. In itself it indicates convalescence. It reveals the turpitude of a man's state, but it does not *create* it. The revelation implies a higher altitude. Sin cannot reveal sin any more than night can reveal night. Pain is a mirror lit from above. The forms projected on its surface are impure forms, but the light by which we see them is God's light. Of all present things pain is that which has the most optimistic aspect; just because it is a protest, it is a prophecy. It is the function of conscience to tell the mind what it is the function of headache to tell the body—that disease is not a normal thing, and therefore not a permanent thing. As long as disease lasts, physical or mental, it is desirable that pain should last. Disease without pain is disease without protest—hurrying down a steep place into the sea. It is destruction unfelt, and therefore unopposed; it is peace where there is no peace. That is why, in the present state of dilapidation, Christianity has not only

preserved, but polished, the mirror of pain. The first gift of God is the quickening of the Spirit—the wakening into conscious suffering of those members of Christ's body who, from deadness in sin, have been insensible to anguish.

But there is a second function of pain in the present system of things; it is the longest line of human sympathy—the line by which the heart can travel farther than by any other route. There are various lines of sympathy in the present order of the world. Their defect is not that they are inadequate or wanting in intensity. What they want is length of rail; they need to be extended. Kindred, *e.g.*, is a strong bond of sympathy; and, if the membership in Christ's body were realised, it would be a *universal* bond. But by the mass of mankind kindred is limited to special streams of heredity, and sympathy becomes merely the union of a clan. Again, community of taste is a bond of sympathy; but, because tastes are varied, it is for that very reason a source also of division. More than either of these,

a common joy is to higher natures a bond of sympathy; but it is only to *higher* natures. To lower natures it is the reverse; the jealous heart is not drawn to another by seeing him in possession of the same joy. None of these lines go round the circle of humanity; they all fail to bind man as man.

But there is one thing which can, which does —the element of pain. What kindred cannot do, what race cannot do, what identity of taste cannot do, what even common joy cannot do, is achieved in a moment from the lowest ground. The sympathy with pain is the widest sympathy in the world. There is nothing on earth which so equalises men. The pains of nature are more potent in their uniting power than the pleasures of nature. The beauty of the landscape is a sealed book to the unrefined soul; but the ills which flesh is heir to make their appeal to all. In nothing did Christianity more show its wisdom than in attaching itself to the element of pain; in nothing did it so evince its discernment as in stooping to the lowermost. Had the Son of Man, in the

descent of His ladder of humiliation, paused at any height short of the ground, He would not have touched humanity as a whole. The secret of His success, humanly speaking, is His appeal to that experience of pain which lies at the foot of the ladder, and is therefore the ground-floor of humanity. Even Buddha never stooped so low; he told men that their pain was a delusion. Christ started from the reality of pain. He took up the cross of man. He proclaimed His religion to be the bearing of the cross. He called to Himself all that were labouring and heavy-laden; and there answered to His summons the representatives of all mankind.

Pain, then, has a second function in the present system of things. There is something besides disease which prevents it from passing away—the limitation of human sympathy. It is at present the only chain that constitutes the conscious brotherhood of man; destroy this chain, and there is no conscious brotherhood. Whenever the time shall come when this, like the previous function, shall be un-

needed, St. John says pain will disappear. Science declares that in the world of evolution a thing will cease to live when it ceases to have a use. So, says the seer, shall it be with pain. When it has no longer a service to perform, it will die. When the former things have passed away, when the constitution of human nature has been altered, when the recuperative principle of the organism has ceased to experience decay, when the limitations of the heart have yielded to the universal power of love, then will pain lose its function in the world, and with its function it will itself disappear. It will have no more place in a system not diseased; it will have no more room in the perfection of a sympathy whose movements are already impelled by love. When that which is perfect has come, that which is in part shall be done away.

Meantime, I cannot but remark that every step of modern civilisation has been a progress towards the abolition of pain. Although pain is the natural heritage of culture, the history of modern culture has been a history of the

minimising of suffering. We have seen a gradual mitigation of those retarding elements whose extinction the man of Patmos desired. We have begun to "behold no temple" in the ideal city of God—to relax the bonds of discipline that divide one church from another. We have begun to realise that there is "no more sea," through the swift modes of travel and the rapid transmission of messages. We have experienced the illumination of processes which used to be conducted in secret, illustrating the words, "There shall be no night there." We have restrained many forms of death—by the reduction of war, by the increase of sanitation, by the development of medical skill. We have reduced the actual sum of sorrow and sighing —proved by the fact that suicide is no longer a glory. We have minimised bodily suffering by the power of anæsthetics—by chloroform, by morphia, by cocaine; and we are aspiring, not in vain, to do it by mental force. And the secret of all this strength has been Christianity itself—man's interest in the wants of man. The treasures of this wisdom existed

latently from the beginning; the Christian love of man revealed their hiding-place. The spirit of sacrifice has been the true enricher of the city of God; the Lamb is the light thereof.

THE BALANCE OF CHARACTER

Revelation xxi. 16

The secret of all physical beauty is proportion. It is not enough that the feature of a face be perfect in itself; it must be in harmony with the expression. Nathaniel Hawthorne, in "Transformation," is not afraid to give his type of beauty a nose not absolutely straight; he says that otherwise it would detract from the playfulness of the countenance. A city irregularly built is not necessarily a city whose individual buildings are bad. There are some towns where you see a small cottage side by side with a four-storeyed house. The cottage may be perfect in architecture; the house may be perfect in architecture; but the conjunction of the two is unsymmetrical. The eye receives its impression of pleasure in the same way as the ear receives its impression of pleasure—

from the harmony of the parts, from the balance of the different elements.

In describing the city of God, the seer of Patmos fastens on the attribute of *proportion* as the essence of all its beauty: "The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal." Yet in this he is not mainly guided by an artistic impulse. He is writing an allegory of the human soul. He longs to see in the mind of man a balance of character; he regards a balance of character as the goal of all development. He puts into the city what he would like to see in the heart; he makes his city the *symbol* of the heart. It is in passing from the one to the other that St. John's picture begins to suffer. It contradicts the common view. The world's ideal of beauty may be that of a well-proportioned street or a well-proportioned town; but it is not that of a well-proportioned character. The type of heroism we select for admiration and imitation is commonly a one-sided type—a character in which one part of the nature has absorbed the other parts. We are all familiar with the expression, "He leads

an irregular life." We generally apply it to a course of evil, and in this sense it expresses our condemnation. But there are irregularities in the course of goodness as well as of evil. The spiritual city of God, as at present constituted, is a series of irregular buildings; and the most unhealthy symptom of all is that by reason of their irregularity they please the common eye.

What I understand by irregularity in the city of God is the holding of one quality in isolation from other qualities. We cannot do better than take the three qualities given in this verse,—height, length, and breadth; an allegorical passage should be allegorically interpreted. We begin with height. There is a class in the Christian Church who are called mystics. They keep their eye on the mountain, and they are in danger of forgetting the plain. Sometimes they look so high that the length and the breadth are ignored. There is no finer example than the early life of St. John himself. He was always a mystical soul. He was thinking of where he would sit on

the right hand when his work on earth had scarce begun. Yet, this man who was so intent on the upper city of God and the means of beautifying it, had no sympathy with the imperfections of a village in Samaria. Do we not see the same thing in actual life? Many a woman sheds tears over a romance, and is cold to a case of real distress. Many a girl has the vision of being a sick nurse—of seeing an ideal hospital in the air, who yet after trial leaves the real hospital in a fortnight. The reason is plain. The ideal city and the ideal hospital are alike one-sided. They indeed call man to sympathise with sorrow, but it is only with romantic sorrow—sorrow such as knight-errants may feel. The city has no gutters, the hospital no unseemly wounds. It is the vision of isolated height—height without length or breadth.

There is a second class in the religious world who may be said to represent isolated *length.* These are they who walk for ever over the long, narrow plank of duty, never looking up to the stars, never looking round to the highway,

but simply pressing on through the daily task, and making life a monotonous routine. The nearest New Testament type of this is perhaps St. James. He is distinctively the apostle of law. He rarely lifts his head from the practical. John may have his apocalypse, Paul may be taken up to the third heaven, but James treads perpetually the plank of duty. Tradition says he found it rather arduous work. No wonder. Nothing helps the practical like the vision. We never do common things so well as when we have seen something out of the common. We walk best on the plank after we have raised our eyes. Faith helps to justify a man even in the sense of making him just. Work can no more exist comfortably without mysticism, than mysticism can exist profitably without work. The length without the height is as great an irregularity in the spiritual building as is the height without the length. Both must grow together if there is to be a harvest.

There is a third class within the city of God—the men of isolated *breadth*—breadth contemplated to the exclusion of either height or

length. I would take as their representative that young man in the parable who said he would not go, but went. He was not a bad man, but he wanted the reputation of independence. He wished to emphasise the fact that he had leapt over the fences set up by the men of old time. He desired to air the negative elements in his nature, to show that he was beyond leading-strings, to make it plain that, if he followed the course of others, it was not a homage to law, but an act of grace. He was, in short, a man proud beyond all things of his Christian liberty. Now, wherein lies the sting of such a position? In this: that liberty, as such, is not a thing to be proud of at all. It depends entirely on the quality of the thing in which you are free. Is it good to leap a prohibitory fence in order to find a short cut? It may, or it may not be. The question is, why do you wish a short cut? Is it to get a doctor sooner in a case of sickness? Then you are justified in leaping the fence, in braving the prohibition. But to leap the fence merely as a proof that you are not restrained is an

ignoble thing. Freedom for its own sake is not beautiful; it is nearer to bestial. To make it human, it must be the freedom to do good. It must be the liberty of something which is noble—the liberty to proclaim glad tidings, the liberty to unclasp the Bible, the liberty to extend the communion of love. Breadth cannot be a quality standing alone We want to know *what* is broad. Is it broad charity? Is it broad sympathy? Is it broad cloth? Is it broad humour? Tell us the thing to be extended, and we shall tell you how far the extension is desirable. You speak of a broad platform; how *high* is that platform? Breadth without height is an idle thing.

Now, St. John says that the aim of the Divine architecture is to remove these irregularities in the city of God, to equalise the three elements held in isolation. That this is the aim will be manifest if we reflect that human life is so constituted as to give successive play to each of them. Each has its day, and each finds at the end of its day that it is by itself inadequate, unable to give

effect to its ideal. The history of every rounded life exhibits the steps of a process by which we pass in succession from the one to the other. Let us try to trace the order of the spiritual kingdom.

We all begin in the heights. The first world that opens upon us is an ideal world. The city on which the eye of childhood rests is not a city of stone and lime; it is a series of houses not made with hands. In the religious life, as in the secular life, man receives the kingdom as a little child—with his eye on to-morrow. To the individual soul as to the collective Church the first thing seen is the last advent. When the eye first catches the light of Christ it sees without perspective and without shadow. The second coming is already at the door. We stand upon the hill-top and look down upon the world below; and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers. The earth dwindles as we gaze. Its pleasures, its pursuits, its ambitions, sink into insignificance before the sight of the ideal splendour. All the old mountains become valleys. Everything

that we strove for in the past seems a waste of time. There is only one reality—the other world, and the preparation for it. We sympathise neither with length nor with breadth. We call the plank of duty mere morality, as distinct from evangelical religion. We call the exercise of freedom a spirit of worldly conformity, a want of seriousness about Divine things. The light of the future has put out the light of common day.

By-and-bye there comes a check to this soaring ; the bird gets into collision with something which breaks its wing. We go wrong in some way; we experience a fall. Then we turn aside from the sky to the earth, from the height to the length of the city. We begin to travel over that narrow plank of duty which we have so long neglected. And the plank generally becomes to us narrow indeed. We make up our minds that the thing in which we have fallen is the one hindrance to the Christian life, that to conquer *this* temptation is the essence of the Gospel. Perhaps it was the passion of drink to which we yielded ;

then teetotalism becomes the whole duty of man. Perhaps it was the pride of wounded affection which lowered our nature; then pride becomes to us the unpardonable sin. The days in which we tread the plank are not commonly days of charity.

At last there comes to us a cry from Macedonia or some other quarter: "Come over and help us." When we look across, we make a discovery. We find that these people are also moving on a plank, but that *their* plank is different from ours. One voice cries to us: "*Your* case is the opposite of mine. *You* had too much natural passion: *I* had too little; *I* was too cold to be easily influenced by good." Another says: "*You* had an overplus of pride: *I* had always too much humility; *I* was never sanguine enough to be a believer." There breaks upon us the knowledge that in the length as well as the height of the journey we have been one-sided. We find that we need something more than either the sight of the sky or the vision of our own narrow plank—the recognition that others have *also* their

plank: in other words, the breadth of human sympathy. It is here, and here alone that the building reaches proportion, for it is here, and here alone, that the isolation of a quality becomes impossible. Christian breadth is not a negative, it is the most positive of all things. It is distinguished, not by what it rejects, but by what it accepts. It finds a place in the structure for every plank that has ever borne the weight of a human foot, for every thought that has ever sustained a human spirit, for every interest that has ever inspired a human heart. Christian breadth is the close of negation; it is the reconciliation of all things.

The distinctive feature of Christianity from an artistic standpoint is, as Paul says, just this power of gathering together, of presenting in a connected view, those parts of the building which, in other faiths, are exhibited in isolation. Christianity, in truth, is the only religion which professes to save man, without eliminating a part of human nature. No one would deny that other forms of belief have contributed something to the moulding of human character. But

in all of them man has had to pay a price for it—the price of mutilation. They have exalted one phase of our nature at the expense of another ; nay, by the *sacrifice* of another. Even in this natural sense, the religion of Christ may boast that it has given its invitation, "without money and without price."

The Brahman has done something for man ; he has taught him to look beyond the seen and temporal. This, indeed, is his distinctive message. But it is professedly an exclusive message. Brahmanism is the worship of height—height without length or breadth. Everything that relates to length or breadth is crucified. There is no room in the building for plain materials ; it is all towers. There is no place for the common world—the world where men strive and toil. It is a religion of wings, not of hands and feet. Life, as it exists, is ignored. Man occupies the world in order to get out of it. Every other phase of human nature is annihilated for the sake of one—its moments of rapt contemplation. It is a heavy price to pay for being set free.

The Jew has done something for man; he has taught him to walk over the long and narrow plank of duty. This is *his* distinctive message—the keeping of the Law. But here again, it is an exclusive message; it is length without height and without breadth. There is no justification by faith, no sense that a man may give promise by his mere aspirations, even while his actions lag far behind. Everything is measured by the yard, by the line The standard of excellence is the amount of work done, rather than the conviction of the amount of work that is to *be* done. Man's duty is to sweep the streets of the city of God; and so intent is he on cleansing the pathway, that he forgets the actual purity of the sunbeams overhead.

The Greek has done something for man. He has taught him that there is a beauty in the absence of fetters, a sense in which it is good to say, "I don't care." The characteristic of the Greek is breadth—the freedom from restraint. But here, too, the emancipation is bought with a price. It is breadth, but it is

breadth without height. There are two ways in which a man may say, "I don't care." He may cast his cares upon God, and feel that in His hands they are all right, or he may cast them into the waste-basket—become reckless of their existence. The Greek is the latter. He preaches breadth for the *sake* of breadth. He teaches man to leap the fences, simply because they *are* fences. He rids him of his old toil-worn garment; but he takes away along with it the rich treasure which is wrapped in its folds. The death of care becomes the death of earnestness.

Now, in Christ, these three are one—the height, the breadth, and the length. I believe that in Christ this is their order. All are comprehended in one word—love. Love begins in the height. If it had not a height to spring from, it could not descend. Its sacrifice demands an original sense of glory. Then it empties itself of its glory, takes a servant's form. It narrows itself—not immediately to its *own* plank of duty, but to *mine*. With a more than *Greek* abandonment, it passes beyond

itself, leaps the fences of its own personality; it takes up my cares, my burdens, my sorrows. Finally, as a result of that, it is able to tread with speed the length of its *own* plank; its personal yoke becomes easy, its individual burden light. If you begin with the thought of self—even of self-improvement, it is very difficult to pass into the life of another. But, if with Christ you begin by passing into the life of *another*, if with Him you put yourself in sympathy on the narrow plank which *others* have to tread, you will find that your own way is made smooth and gentle. Judaism will be best fulfilled *after* Christianity, for there is no power like love that can help us to keep the Law, and there is nothing which makes us strong like the absolute surrender of ourselves.

THE ADAPTATION OF THE CITY OF GOD

Revelation xxi. 17

"And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of an angel." The first thing which strikes us in this passage is the fact that the wall of God's city is measured. From a Jewish writer, impressed beyond all things with the *magnitude* of God, we should have expected a different symbol. We should have looked for the statement that the height of the wall was immeasurable. The idea which arrests us is not the profusion, but the reserve, of Divine power. And it arrests us all the more because, however unlikely to be contemplated by an Eastern mind, it is true. In all departments of this universe we are confronted by

reserve. Everything has its measure, its limit, the bounds which it may not pass. Such trite maxims as "no rose without its thorn," "no gold without alloy," are expressive of human experience everywhere. The city of God, as we now see it—and we see it in the act of building—presents the appearance of something which, when it shall be completed, will be completed in a particular direction, adapted to a special set of circumstances. It will have finish, not to every eye, but to the eye of him who seeks that particular kind of beauty, and for whom that kind of beauty has been designed and fashioned.

Now, it is a most important question what the measure of a thing is. It is the preliminary question, the question antecedent to every other. If you are asked concerning any object, "Do you consider it a *perfect* invention?" you will have to inquire "For what?" You will have to ask "What is its measure? what is its purpose?" Remember that if a thing has a purpose, it has a limit. To make an object for a special end is to render it unfit

for all contrary ends; its power in one direction means its weakness in another. Accordingly, the very limits of nature—the incipient city of God—suggest that there is a purpose. The train may be made for goods, or it may be made for passengers. Either of these is a purpose, and either of these is a limit. Each of them is the measure of the train. If it falls beneath that measure, it is imperfect; if it rises above that measure, it is equally imperfect. It will reach its perfection in its exact adaptation to the end which its construction had in view.

Now, the universe may be compared to a train. It is a state of forces in movement. To what goal is it moving? What is its destination? Is it made for goods or for passengers? Is it designed to manifest mechanical skill, or is it intended to subserve the wants of the community? The answer to these questions is the determining of its measure.

The answer which St. John gives is very clear and very bold. He says in so many words that the measure of the universe is the

measure of a *man*, that the ground of its construction is a human ground, that the secret of its mechanism is the adaptation to human needs, that the goal of its movement is the realisation of human aspirings. This is very striking language—all the more striking because it is the statement of a view which is habitually laughed at by philosophy. That the universe is fashioned after the pattern of a human model has been a doctrine at which the ages of culture have ever sneered, and the apostles of culture ever scoffed. Theodore Parker says that a buffalo's God would be one of its own species. Matthew Arnold ridicules the popular faith as the worship of "a non-natural and exaggerated man in the next street." Benedict Spinosa empties God of all qualities, lest he should limit His being. The later Judaism itself was the adoration of an unknown God—unapproachable, inaccessible, in Himself unintelligible. "When I consider the heavens, what is man?" is a question which rises spontaneously to the cultured mind. We feel at such moments as if the city of God were something

outside of us, unsympathetic with us. We feel disposed to resent any earthly measurement of it as an impious thing. We feel that to attribute a human purpose to this universe is like putting a blot upon a picture, marring the work of a sculptor. We persuade ourselves that this train ought to be bound for unknown regions, not only beyond the scope, but beyond the ken, of our intellectual faculties, and that it is the mark of an unscientific mind to give its lines the measure of a man.

Is it so? Is it an unscientific conception to suppose that the universe has a spiritual purpose? Is it an idea which is only tolerable in the primitive man, but which the man of science must reject? On the contrary, I do not hesitate to say that, so far as things have yet advanced, the peculiar support of this doctrine lies in science. I say "so far as things have yet advanced." I cannot tell what ultimately may be at the end of the line. But I know that in the meantime the end of the line is man. The system of natural evolution, so far as we know it, has issued

as the last result in the production of a human personality, a living spirit. It matters not here how it came. If it could be proved to have come by the energy of material nature, it would make this case all the stronger; it would show that spirit is the goal of matter. We do not know the nature of these energies which have conspired to make spirit; and we accept our ignorance. But we do know that up to this date, spirit is the latest product; it is the end of the line. It is subsequent to star-life, subsequent to mineral life, subsequent to plant-life, subsequent to animal life. Being so, is it at the present moment unscientific to say that this shall be our measure of the aim of nature? Life is a higher thing than deadness. Conscious life is higher than unconscious. Reflective life—life conscious of its own consciousness—is the highest of all. And this is at the end of the line—the last achievement of the creative or evolving energy. Is it not from this height that we ought to survey nature? Is it unscientific to say that this height is to-day the

measure of nature? Waiving the question of creation altogether, looking, not at the beginning, but at the end, are we not entitled to say provisionally that the latest in *fact* has been the first in view—that the city of God has been built "according to the measure of a man"?

You will observe in passing that man is not only, so far as we know, a terminus; he is a point of junction. To say that he is the goal of nature is not to give a limited measurement to nature. The measure of a man is the largest measure which we can at present conceive. He has been called the microcosm of the universe, to signify that he has in him a little bit of everything. In the symmetry of his body are combined the elements of matter. In the circulation of his blood is seen the play of the unconscious physical forces. In his spontaneous growth we see the life of the plant. In his instincts we behold on a higher plane the nature of the animal. In his mind we have a new product, which yet for the first time reads the old.

Those who sneer at a human purpose of the universe should consider carefully what is implied in "human." A man is not an individual; he is a universal. He is the only creature we know who gathers up the many into the one. Within the radius of his brain meet things which otherwise are uncombined. The forms of innumerable worlds are painted on the retina of his eye. Luminous points of space, whose intermediate distance would take centuries to traverse, are compressed into a single spot of his cerebral organism. The things of the present hour are found united to the objects of dead ages within the compass of that marvellous mechanism which he calls his head. What is the idea of evolution itself but a union within the brain of man between to-day and the remotest yesterday? There is no conception in the universe known to savage or sage which embraces so wide an area as the measure of a man.

I think, therefore, on the intellectual side there is nothing against the statement of

St. John. There is, however, a *moral* objection which may be taken, and one which carries us still deeper into the passage itself. It may be said, it has been said, that when man makes himself the measure of the universe he is actuated by the principle of egotism. It is perhaps really this thought, more than any philosophical superiority, that makes us sneer at the primitive man's belief. We say that when a man formulates such a creed the idea of his own want is already uppermost. He calls upon the universe to minister to him. The sight of nature has shown him simply a mirror of himself. He looks upon the sea, not for the sake of its beauty, but for the sake of what it will bring; it is a means of transport for his gold. He considers the fields, not as the home of the lilies, but as the scene of his coming harvest. He regards a starry night, not as a revelation of the infinite, but as a fortunate occurrence provided for his own nocturnal steps. This is egotism; this is selfism. Is this the frame of mind conducive to the spirit of Christ?

But let us look at the passage again. Is not this the very thing against which St. John guards? There is a mysterious clause in the verse which has puzzled many readers. After stating that the wall of the city has been estimated according to the measure of a man, he adds, "that is, the measure of an angel." How are we to understand this phrase? One thing is clear at the outset. St. John means to say that, though the city is measured by the wants of man, it is not measured by the wants of man as he *is*. The measure which is taken is one of his highest self, of his coming self, of the Christ within him that is to be. It is not the man of to-day for whom the city is prepared. It is the man of to-morrow. It is the developed man, the ultimate man, the final outcome of the human years. If St. John would measure the city by the standard of a son of Adam, he would measure the son of Adam himself by a higher standard than he has ever actually attained. To him the measure of the human is the *ideal* of the human. Our ideal is our water-

mark. The test of us is not what we are, but what we should like to be. The city which is building presses towards the west—the completed day. Its foundations are laid in our deepest need, but not necessarily in our *present* need. Much of what we call comfort may seem to be ignored, passed by on the other side. Praise *waits* for God in the city of Zion. It waits because the city is in advance of us. We cannot appreciate its provision for us. We want as yet something different, something inferior. We shall find the song of praise when we find our highest selves.

The next question is, What, in St. John's view, is our highest self to be? He answers, "It is the nature of an angel." What led him to say that? Was it the memory of those words which he had heard from the very lips of the Master when He described the goal of the blessed dead: "In the resurrection they are as the angels"? It is quite possible The saying was so peculiar and so unlike the Old Testament that it was likely to stick.

The angel in the Old Testament was a greater being than man. To make man equal to the angel was a brave thing. I do not think the beloved disciple would have done it without authority—the authority of Him whose words he recognised as "the truth." Doubtless there was in his ear a refrain of the Master's voice when he declared the height of an angel to be the measure of a man.

But this is after all a verbal point. The real question is, What, in the view of the Scriptures, *is* the nature of an angel? And here there is a concurrence of sentiment between the Old Testament and the New. The angel is in both a messenger, a minister to human need. The idea of angelic ministration runs through the Jewish Scriptures like a thread of gold. It is the only thought which helps to mitigate the sense of the distance of God. In the great gulf fixed between earth and heaven, the ladder of Jacob was the only descending medium; and it was a ladder of angels. It was they who received the charge

of man. It was they who were to encamp round about him in his trouble. It was they who were to bear him in their hands above the friction of the stony way. The angels were the hospital nurses of the Old Testament; they did for man what man would not do for his brother.

But with the dawn of the New Testament, where the idea of service becomes divine, the notes grow more pronounced and more prolonged. I do not know a single passage of this later Bible in which the name of the angel is not associated with humility. The angels of little children are said to have the front view—to behold the face of God. The *power* of an angel is said to be like the power of a woman's veil—self-concealing, self-restraining. The *work* of an angel is said to be the service of a ministering spirit sent forth to succour the heirs of salvation. But the crowning testimony is that which is borne to the *wants* of an angel. It is here that St. John's saying receives its deepest justification. We have spoken of the egotism involved in

the belief that the universe is made for the wants of man. But St. John says the typical man is the angel. What are the wants of an angel? St. Peter, in his First Epistle, has ventured to answer that question. He professes to tell the things which "the angels desire to look into." What are they? When we examine the passage, we find that, in the view of St. Peter, the angels are students of the hospital. Their desire is to penetrate the secret of ministration. They want to look into the nature of those things which were administered as remedies by the prophets to the coming age. They seek a lesson in the earthly modes of healing earthly pain. They are attracted by the spectacle of a little band of human souls who have reached their own altitude of love for man, and who, by reason of their humanity, have greater facilities for help than they. They ask a lesson. They desire to be led through the hospital. They crave a sight of the wards. They inquire the times for giving sustenance. They are eager to know the symptoms of relapse, the

signs of convalescence. They seek, in short, to have imparted to them the secret of that healing power which lay in the remedies prescribed by the great physicians of the race of man.

And now perhaps we can understand for what, in St. John's view, the city of God is building. It is being adapted for the desire of angels—the type of the resurrection man. That desire is not sensuous, it is not even individual; it is impersonal. The paradise of John is undoubtedly adapted for the supply of human want; but it is for a want which only the perfect man can feel—the thirst of love. It is a grand thing, a bold thing, that from this paradise of God the Christian seer should have refused to exclude this one sense of need. He has excluded physical hunger, physical thirst, all weariness. He has shut the door on every pain but one—the pain of an unreciprocated heart. But he has drawn the line there. He has refused to debar from heaven that sense of want, that form of incompleteness, called love. The Buddhist held the source of human

frailty to be the presence of desire ; to St. John desire is a divine thing. He is not afraid to say that the condition of final blessedness is not a state of self-satisfaction. He is not afraid to declare that the fountain of life itself is not self-sufficing, that at the heart of highest being there throbs the desire for communion with another being, that the nature of God is love.

And now perhaps we can understand how it is that, of all things in this world, the heart is the least satisfied—less than the sense of beauty, less than the sense of power. The least satisfied means the most exercised. Do we not say habitually in unsatisfied moments, "I am greatly exercised about it"? The heart of man, because it is the most unfilled, is the most exercised of all things here below. Why is it so? It is because the exercise of a power is its development, and the development of the heart is needed for the world to come. The heart is to be the organ of the future. It is that part of man which, in St. John's view, is allied to the angel—that part of man for which the city of God is preparing. Its perfecting is

precious, its development is destined, its evolution is expected. Therefore here and now is it deeply trained, exercised. It is given moments of perplexity, days of darkness, seasons of strong crying and tears. It is allowed to toss, to flutter, to palpitate with unrest. The eye has no such dissatisfaction with the things of earth; the ear has no such discontent with worldly music. Do we ask why? St. Paul will answer us. He tells us that the eye and the ear are not the things for which the city of God is specially preparing. Doubtless they will have their place in the beauty and the music of the future. But the organ for which the city of God is preparing is the spirit—the name we give to the power of love. Therefore to Paul, to John, to all apostles of love, tribulation is a thing to glory in, because it is the exercise of that power for which the city of God is being builded. The justification of the heart's troubles is the existence of the heart's promise—the fact that to *it* the words were specially spoken: "I go to prepare a place for you."

THE FREEDOM OF THE CITY OF GOD

Revelation xxi. 25

"The gates of it shall not be shut by day, for there shall be no night there;" it is the Magna Charta of Christian liberty. The city here spoken of is not a city in the air. The glory which it unfolds is the glory of the present world. The seer looks forward to a time when the life of the Christian on earth shall be a life of liberty. He says that all liberty is the result of nightlessness—that the reason why any gates are shut by day is just the fact that night is coming on, with its facilities for crime and its protection for the criminal. In other words, the absence of freedom springs, in St. John's view, from the absence of confidence. How easily can one verify this, even in modern times! You go on the continent of Europe.

You are asked for your passports. You are required to have your baggage examined. Your very newspapers are searched with suspicion. It is all very well for men in this tight little island to smile at such precautions. If our gates are open by day, it is because there is no night here, because the fear of the secret assassin is unfelt, because the dread of the lurking incendiary is unknown; we have parted from our bondage because we have parted from our night.

The connection here between increased liberty and increased light is a very remarkable one. The idea is that the Christian's desire for freedom is not the result of a wish to break through the original boundaries. It comes from the fact that the rising light reveals these boundaries to have been wider than he imagined. The thought may be thus illustrated: Man dwelt at first in a garden, in the midst of a dark night. The only light he had was that of a small candle, which illuminated merely a few steps in advance. He was afraid to go beyond these steps. He had been strictly commanded

not to stray outside the limits of the garden. He did not know these limits. He thought them to be very narrow. He feared the gate might be only a few paces distant. Therefore, he refused to go beyond the range of his candle, lest inadvertently he should get outside the boundaries. Suddenly the sun rises, and with the new light there breaks upon him a wondrous revelation of the old thing. He finds that, instead of being at the gate of the garden, the gate is miles away. He finds that he has been imposing on himself a useless barrier, that he has been circumscribing himself to no purpose. The gate is far away. Between it and him there are pastures of unspeakable pleasure, through which he can range at will. The tree of life is there ; the tree of knowledge is there ; the gold of Havilah is there ; the four rivers of paradise are there. He has been shutting himself in by an imaginary gate—and not less effectually because it was imaginary. But the light has opened the gate by revealing its delusion, by showing the wideness of the actual grounds, by disclosing to the eye the breadth of

that travelling space which lies between its place of outlook and the limits of the garden.

Such is the allegory which, I think, floated before the sight of the seer of Patmos when he said, "The gates shall not be shut by day, for there shall be no night there." I greatly prefer this to the common interpretation, which makes the latter clause a parenthesis: "The gates shall not be shut by day. I need not speak of night, for there shall be no night there; if not shut by day, they shall never be shut." There is nothing wrong in the grammar of such a rendering. My objection is that it puts into a corner the most important piece of furniture in the room, treats as a subordinate clause the most striking part of the passage. The main feature of the city is the nightlessness. The liberty is but an effect. The gates of the New Jerusalem are open because the hearts in the New Jerusalem are fearless. There is an absence of restriction because there is an absence of dread. It is not a breaking of old limits; it is not even an addition to old possessions; it is a recogni-

tion of the fact that the original estate was bigger than we deemed, and that the grounds of our first habitation gave more facilities than we had ever used.

There are four directions in which the Christianised earth has been increasingly opening its gates, and in every one of these directions the freedom has been the result of nightlessness. The first of these openings is the growth of that state of mind called charity. Its track has been indicated in modern times by a gradual widening of the field of toleration. Now, I am well aware that this has been attributed, not to the diminution, but to the increase, of night. Mr. Leckie says that all toleration comes from the decline of faith. He must be confounding toleration with indifference. There is an indifference which comes from despair—from a sense that the game is not worth the candle. Toleration is always the fruit of hope. By its very etymology it implies the bearing of something. It is the sustaining of a burden in consideration of a brightness. All toleration which

is not indifference comes, not from declining faith, but from declining fear. What is Christian charity? The common view is that it is the forgiveness we extend to our brother man through a persuasion of his weakness and a sense of the general impotence of human nature. That is a mistake. It would not be very far wrong to say that charity is just the reverse of this. It is the opposite of mercy. Mercy is the coming down to my brother on the ground of his helplessness: charity is the refusal to admit that there is yet *evidence* of my brother's helplessness. Mercy comes after the judgment has been delivered; charity is a plea for the *suspension* of judgment. Mercy results from a despair of the man's capabilities; charity springs from a hope that his capabilities are not yet exhausted. Mercy is the product of the night; charity is the child of real or imaginary vision—the belief that the day is at hand.

Now, the widening of our modern gates to the admission of Christian fellowship is the result, not of mere mercy, but of charity.

It springs from hope, not despair. It is grounded on a larger and not a smaller view of the capacity of man. It is an act of speculation. It takes the risk of a man. It gives him the benefit of the doubt. It refuses to arrest him on suspicion. It insists on regarding him as true till he shall be proved to be false. Christian charity in its modern sense is the adoption of the principal of baptism—that a man is to be viewed from the very beginning as a member of the kingdom of God; that, ere ever he has a character, he is to have God's character imputed to him; that from his earliest infancy he is to be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He is not to stand outside the gates of the kingdom until it is determined whether he is worthy to get in; he is to remain within the kingdom until there shall be found some cause for putting him out, and the cause is not to be accepted on anything less than demonstrable evidence.

Such is the ideal conception of the kingdom of God as it appears in Christianity. It was

involved in Christianity from the very beginning, but its recognition by the world has been slow. It is one of those gates which have only opened when they have been touched by the rosy finger of the morn; the freedom has come from the fearlessness. The second of the openings may be described as that into the thoroughfare of worldly contact, whether of books or of men. The latitude of worldly contact was originally supposed to be in proportion to a man's *distance* from the city of God; in other words, it has been taken for granted that the freedom of outside intercourse lies with those who *are* outside. It is the reverse. The freedom of going to find pasture in the outside is declared by our Lord Himself to belong to those who have entered within the door. There is undoubtedly a place for asceticism in the New Testament, but it is a place reserved for those who are either outside or on the threshold: "If thine eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee." No man is asked to pluck out anything which is not to him a source of sin; and when he does

pluck it out, the gain is not regarded as an unqualified one if it has involved a mutilation of human nature; he has entered into life "halt and maimed."

We may apply this to the principle of promiscuous reading. Is this world a free library? No; its tickets are issued only to those within the city of God. The opposite is the popular view—even the popular religious view. Frances Havergal, in one of her letters, complains that she has lost somewhat of the radiance which characterised her faith a year ago; she attributes it to the reading of Shakespeare. I have more than once been asked the question, "Ought I, a Christian, to read such a book as Renan's 'Life of Jesus'?" The principle underlying the question is a curious one. It assumes that Renan's "Life of Jesus" must increase in its harmfulness in proportion as we penetrate within the precincts of the sacred temple. The opposite is the truth. The proper answer would be, "How far is your description of yourself a real one; what is the precise length and breadth of your Christianity?" It is

safe to say that no man thoroughly saturated with the Christian ideal would experience the slightest danger from Renan's "Life of Jesus." Its danger is to those who have either no ideal at all or a very defective one. The fascination of the writing is common property to all literary minds; but the danger is limited to minds which have not been impregnated with the New Testament portraiture.

And what is true of Renan is true of all works of fiction. It is the aim of every work of fiction, whether it be a novel with a purpose or not, to present an ideal to the mind. It is possible that this ideal may clash with Christianity; if so, it is a dangerous book. But it is dangerous to the non-Christian, or, at most, to the incipient Christian. I would forbid its reading, but I would forbid it only to the uninitiated. I would forbid it to those outside the city, outside the light. The gates of the library are not shut where there is day. The man of the Christian ideal is allowed to study contrary ideals. Whether he can have any pleasure in such a study is another question. I am not

here considering the subject of happiness; I am considering the charter of the city of God. And that charter is explicit in its terms. It declares that the citizen of the New Jerusalem is not even limited by the walls of his own environment. It declares that not only has he power to come out into worldly contact, but that, strictly speaking, he alone has that power. The charter of admission into the kingdom of earth is possession of the kingdom of heaven. Paul says, "He that is spiritual ruleth over all things"; a greater than Paul says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and all other things shall be added unto you." It is only another way of saying that the gates into secular life are the gates of the morning, that the man who dwells on the mountains has alone the right to explore the plain, and that the passport into the present world is assigned to those who have tasted the powers of the world to come.

The third of the great openings which mark the freedom of the city of God is its power to assimilate opinions which at one time were deemed adverse and irreconcilable. As a type

and specimen of this, I shall take Darwinism. Mr. Darwin has latterly obtained a place in the New Jerusalem—has been recognised as a possible member of the kingdom of God. I do not mean that every member of the Christian Church recognises the truth of Darwinism. Personally, I do not. I have not the gift of faith sufficient to enable me to adopt the miracles involved in such a mode of evolution. It would require a greater amount of trust in the possibilities of nature than lies at my command. But while perhaps the majority of the Christian Church share this sentiment, there is no man who would now exclude a Darwinian, as such, from the table of communion. The question is, why? Is it because our confidence in the Christian creed has been shaken? Is it because a gloom has fallen over our vision of former days? Is it, in short, because the night has taught us *despair* that we have opened our gates to a previous foe? If so, this spectacle of modern toleration is one of the most repulsive and one of the most unhealthy which can be presented to the mind of man.

But a moment's reflection will convince us that the change of front on the part of Christianity is the result, not of a diminished, but of an increased sense of God. We have arrived at the conclusion that, if the theory of Darwin errs, it errs not by excess, but by defect. On the question of the identity of species the theologian believes, not less, but more, than Mr. Darwin. Darwin claims an identity of origin for the animal and the man. The theologian has come to recognise that his own science cannot stop there, that he must claim an identity of origin for everything that exists. Darwin seeks the unity of *life* ; the theologian seeks the unity of all things. He is rather Spencerian than Darwinian. Like Spencer, he would find a common origin both for the living and the unliving. Like Spencer, he would place that origin in an act of primal Force ; only, it is not the force of an unknowable agent, but the force of a conscious Will : " the Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters." That is the Christian doctrine of the unity of species. The Spirit moved, and from its movement all things,

however diverse, came—the light, the firmament, the earth, the plant, the animal, the man. All are manifestations of force, one force—the movement of the Divine Spirit. There is nothing in the present universe which was not implicitly included in that impact of the Spirit. All forces slept in it; all types rested in it; all forms were prefigured in it. It has been the common parent alike of the organic and the inorganic. It has constituted the brotherhood of all things. It has linked in one chain the whole family of heaven and earth, and formed the one species from which everything in nature has descended.

I am not here discussing the *scientific* question. I am inquiring why it is that the gates of Christian fellowship have been opened to the Darwinian. I say that the cause of the toleration is not an increase of uncertainty, but an increase of confidence—that the gates have ceased to be shut simply from the fact that there has ceased to be night in the city. I may demur to believe that the man has come out of the ape or from any intermediate link

between the man and the ape. Nevertheless, in my doctrine of God and His Spirit, the community of origin is already conceded, and a principle, not less but *more* drastic than Mr. Darwin's, binds together, not only them, but every other fragment of creation.

The last of the four openings of the city of God into secular life is that which peculiarly distinguishes Christianity from Judaism. It may be called the æsthetic gate—the amalgamation of religion with beauty. To the ancient Jew there was an antagonism between religion and art. Judea was the opposite of Greece. The Greek could adore nothing that was not beautiful; the Jew was suspicious of everything that *was*. He was greatly afraid of art-galleries, of sculpture, of images, of anything that would suggest devotion to the creature. Religion was to him naturally associated with severity, and whatever broke the severity seemed to detract from the religion. Hence arose his extreme sabbatarianism. The day of rest could easily have been turned into a day of pleasure; it became necessary to

circumscribe it more than all the other six. It would be a deplorable thing, he thought, if the hours of leisure should be the means of introducing into worship a love of those secular objects which the heathen idolised. And so, the Jew limited the length of the Sunday road, and forbade the plucking of the ears of corn. He felt that, if the day of rest were to be a day of religion, it was necessary that the rest itself should be made monotonous, disagreeable, a thing to make *restive.* The only way to prevent it from becoming a luxury was to make it the child's penalty of being compelled to sit still.

Now, in Christianity, all this is changed, and was changed from a very early date. Christianity has linked itself with the idea of beauty ; it has blended the Greek and the Jew. It has found a new significance for the day of rest ; it has opened the corn-fields to the steps of the Son of Man. It has unbarred the gates of art. In the true spirit of its central doctrine, it has incarnated its truths in human forms. It has allowed Angelo to paint the " Last Judgment,"

and Raphael to depict the "Child-Christ," and Dürer to portray the "Man of Sorrows." The gate of the Temple called Beautiful had been to the Jew only opened on the chain, and men had approached it with lame feet; Christianity broke the chain, and bade the worshipper enter in.

Now, whence this relaxation of the bond? It will be answered, "Because the Christian is more secular than the Jew." Paradoxical as it may sound, I say it is the reverse; it is because the Christian is *less* secular than the Jew, because he sees a wider field for God. Why have we opened those galleries of artistic imagery of which the Israelite was so afraid? It is not because we wish to give more emphasis to the secular. It is because we deny that art *is* secular. It is not an increasing reverence for the *creature* that has prompted the opening of our art-galleries. It is the recognition of the fact that the genius of the painter is not a creature, but itself a manifestation of the Divine. We feel convinced that the artist who believes himself to have a purely secular profession has

already fallen ; it is because we have restricted the range of the secular that we have opened that gate Beautiful which the Jew insisted on being kept closed. Or, why is it that we have relaxed the rigidness of the Jewish Sabbath? Why do we no longer forbid the disciple to pass an hour of enjoyment in the corn-fields? Is it the increased reverence for the creature? No: it is the *diminished* reverence for him. It is because the creature has been made subject to vanity in the presence of the Creator. It is because God Himself has put on the robes of the corn-field. It is because bird, and flower, and tree, have ceased to be viewed as mere secular manifestations. It is because the so-called hour of pleasure is recognised to be the pleasure of a service, the joy of a worship, the rapture of a prayer. Therefore it is that we have opened the gates of the Sabbath. Not in the interest of a secular system have we unbarred these gates. Not in obedience to an impulse which would banish God from His universe have we opened these doors. Our freedom has come from our extended view of the empire of

our Father; our enlargement has sprung from our enlarged sense of God; the gates of the city have been opened because there is no night there.

THE DIVINE LAW OF SURVIVAL

Revelation xxi. 27

The Divine law of survival is expressed in these words: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination or a lie, but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." It is the earliest historic statement of that great principle which has since become scientific—the principle by which the fittest live; and I wish to consider, step by step, that process of thought which probably directed the mind of the writer.

To live in a book is one of the deepest desires of men. There are few who have not wished to have an influence on earth extending beyond the range of their earthly life. To have something that will survive me, something that will speak of me when I have gone, something that

will give me a power in the world after I have passed away, is an ambition which, in some form or other, has been felt by all. Various have been the forms it has taken. Some have sought it by winning love, some by leaving a mass of money, some by rearing a monument of art, some by bequeathing the creations of music. But even those who would live by art, by sculpture, by music, expect to have their name preserved through the medium of a *book*. It is in no case by our own book that we mainly hope to live. Our ambition is to have our names written in some *other* book, to be quoted as an authority, to be referred to as an illustration. Even to write one's name in a visitors' book has a kind of symbolic pleasure; it suggests the transmission of fame. Even to appear in the fleeting columns of the newspaper gives a glow of satisfaction; it conveys the impression of publicity. But, to have the name written in a real book, a living book, a book that *will* live, to appear in pages that are destined to last for centuries, to obtain honourable mention in a record that will endure as

long as the language of your country—this is a goal of aspiration which any man might be proud to win.

Our ambition, then, is to get our names in a living book, a book that *will* live, or, as it is here called, a "book of life." But where is such a book to be found? How many books are there of living writers which one would venture to pronounce immortal? I have often asked myself, if all the authors of the present day were to stop writing from this moment, how many would be remembered, even by name, in the year 1920? It would be invidious to say. Meantime, we cannot but observe that there is nothing in which the calculations of men have been so falsified as the fate of books. Works which were confidently promised an immortality by their contemporaries have, in a few years, been buried in oblivion; and works which, by their contemporaries were unnoticed and unknown, have filled the world with their fame. Sydney Dobell was pronounced a great dramatist; Alexander Smith was called one of the greatest of poets; yet Sydney Dobell is

altogether, and Alexander Smith almost, forgotten. Thomas à Kempis issued his book in the darkness, and its coming woke no echoes in its time; but the world found it after many days, and posterity gave it a place next to the Bible.

And yet, it would be a great mistake to imagine that there is really anything arbitrary in the survival of one book over another. On the contrary, assuming in each an equal amount of genius, it could be exactly calculated which would be the longest liver. Other things being equal, it may be laid down as a rule, that the surviving book is the sacrificial book. Every book that lasts through a series of centuries is in a sense a "Lamb's book." It has achieved success by sacrifice. It has postponed a temporal to an eternal interest. It has refused to follow the fashions of the hour. It has declined to purchase popularity by pandering to the spirit of a special age. It selects universal types of men, and is content to wait till that which is special has passed away. If Shakespeare had written for his age, he would have

been *famous* in his age. But he preferred to disregard the accidents of humanity, to ignore that which was peculiar to the sixteenth century; and therefore he has found his atmosphere only in a later day. The universal book is a "Lamb's book."

Let us rise now from the metaphor to that which, to St. John, is the great reality. He sees the Son of Man writing a book in the heavens. It is not, however, a book *about* the heavens. There is nothing mystical about it. It is the book of human history. It is the same book with which the historians of earth have been engaged since the world began. It is not a different book from that which Macaulay, and Gibbon, and Hume, and Burton tried; but it is being written from a different standpoint. It is history seen from the *Divine* side—seen as it looks to larger eyes than ours. As we compare the two records—those written from the human side and that inscribed from the Divine, we find that there is an opposite estimate of the value of things; many of the last are first, and many of the first are last.

Above all, we are called to note the fact that the record of the Son of Man is a Lamb's book. It is a survival of sacrificial lives—of lives that in their own day were content to be buried. We are made aware from time to time that the men whom this Divine record pronounces the leaders of our age are precisely those who, by their day and generation, were despised and rejected. These rejected lives take the place of the present visible forces. You ask the schoolboy who were the leaders of the German rising of 1813. He will probably answer "Schwarzenberg, Bagration, Moreau." You open the note-book of the Son of Man, and you do not find one of these names. But in their room there stands the figure of an old monk, a prisoner in the Wartburg, reviled and execrated by his age—Martin Luther. You ask, "Who were the originators of the Georgian era of literature?" The human record answers "Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron." The note-book of the Son of Man has only one figure, and it is none of these. It is a humble parish minister at Lutterworth, spending hours in his

obscure study on a work with which his time had no sympathy—John Wyckliffe, the translator of the English Bible. You ask who liberated the British slave. "The House of Commons," says the human record. The Divine book gives another reading. In the front of the emancipation movement stands the form of a half-blind tent maker of Tarsus, the object of obloquy, and contempt, and scorn, preaching the gospel of the essential equality of all men, and proclaiming in the heart of the Roman world that there is neither bond nor free.

The lives that survive in this book are therefore sacrificial lives; it is on this account that it is called a Lamb's book. In this view there is nothing fanciful. It is not an allegorical interpretation of the passage; it is the discovery of that allegory which the passage actually involves. Even so early as the 139th Psalm the book of life is spoken of in terms which I take to be sacrificial: "Thine eyes did see my substance while it was yet imperfect, and in thy book all my members were written, when as yet there was none of them." The idea seems

to be that the book of life selects its objects from the most obscure circumstances, and puts on record what the world has not even seen. When Paul speaks of humble labourers whose "names are in the book of life," does he not mean to imply the same thing—that the saints shall judge the world, that the sacrificial lives shall rule? "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him" are the words in which, with greatest brevity and with greatest clearness, is enunciated the principle of Divine selection. It is only another form of the old saying, "In the volume of the book it is written of me, 'I delight to do Thy will.'"

From the *positive* statement of the principle the seer next passes to consider it negatively. He has told us that the sacrificial soul shall have the permanent power in history. He goes on to tell us what shall *not* survive. There are two things which are said to be incapable of survival—impurity and untruth. In the first instance it is declared that nothing which is impure shall be allowed to have a permanent influence on the progress of history: "There shall

in no wise enter into it anything that defileth nor which worketh abomination." You will observe, the seer is not speaking of persons, but of things. One might wonder at first sight why he does not from the outset use the masculine form. Why does he not say, "There shall in no wise enter into it any *man* that worketh abomination"? In the case of the second clause, the Revised Version has inserted the personal element, "*he* that worketh a lie." Yet, I have no hesitation in saying that in so doing it has weakened, and not strengthened, the original sense. The writer is speaking primarily and mainly, not of actors, but of the influence of their acts. Indeed, it is a great blessing for the human race that it should be so. Personal salvation would be impossible except on the supposition that a man shall be enrolled in the membership of the kingdom while yet he is in a state of uncleanness. This has always been regarded as the pith and marrow of the evangelical doctrine. It is as philosophical as it is orthodox, and it is as comforting as it is philosophical. The man who would enter the

kingdom of Christ must, according to St. Paul, enter by faith alone. He must not wait until he is pure. He must be content to come with the *intention* of purity, with the desire to be what he is not. He must be allowed to put his foot on the sacred threshold "just as he is, without one plea." He must be accepted for an aspiration. If he would have his name written in the book of life, it must be written there in *advance* of his life. He must be justified before he is sanctified—pronounced fit for the kingdom in the light of days to come. The only hope for him is his permission to survive, his permission to enter within the gates of gold, while yet his own life has not transcended the brass.

The idea of the passage, then, is, not that a man must be spotless before he is made a member of Christ's body, but that within the membership of Christ's body his stains shall die. The passage is not a threat, as we are often apt to consider it. It is a promise, a message of comfort to the weary. For, to the soul oppressed with the struggles of time there

is nothing really more comforting than the announcement that evil shall die. To be told that the scars of the world will not last for ever, that the influence of badness will be counteracted, that the stream of history will not permanently be polluted by the stains of humanity—it is tidings of the best news. It is a message over which every earnest heart must be glad. It is a gospel fitted to cheer the drooping soul, to raise up those that are bowed down. No sincere well-wisher of the race would desire these words to be expunged.

But it remains to ask, Is it so? Do we find as a matter of fact that impurity does not live on the stream of history? We must answer, "Yes." It must often have occurred to us to marvel that heredity has not by this time succeeded in doing more harm to the world. When we consider the large amount of corruption which actually exists on earth, when we look at the channels which earth has provided for its transmission, when we contemplate the accumulated sources through which this transmission is effected, the wonder

is, not that impurity prevails, but that anything else should prevail. We should expect that by this time there would not be a vestige left of humanity, not a rag of that robe of royalty which clothes the ideal of the soul of man. But is it so? On the contrary, we find that the stream of degradation is constantly arrested. We see specimens of humanity mutilated, both physically and morally. We see this mutilation for a time carried forward from father to son; but only for a time. By-and-bye a voice seems to say, "Thus far and no farther." A stop is put to the downward course. Humanity makes a bound backward toward its original type, and the retarding element is either expunged altogether or transmuted into something new. Drunkenness is hereditary, and drunkenness is rampant; but the human *race* have never become drunkards. How are we to explain this? The principle is no recent discovery. So far back as the Book of Exodus the sins of the fathers were said to be visited upon the children "unto the third and fourth generation." There is clearly a limit in these words, a

boundary imposed, beyond which the visitation cannot pass ; and it is confirmed by the history of facts. Can we find any better explanation than the Divine will? Is it not only the foreshadowing and the fulfilment of that great law of Divine survival which is proclaimed in the words of the seer of Patmos: "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that is unclean"?

We come now to the second of those qualities which are to be excluded from the final development of history—untruth: "there shall in no wise enter into it anything which worketh a lie." Why does he not say "telleth a lie?" Why does he keep the impersonal form, as if he were speaking of the working of a machine? It is because he is not thinking of a *spoken* lie. He is thinking of what we call the principle of make-believe. He is contemplating the efforts of men to make the appearance pass for the reality, to give a gloss to circumstances, to cause things to seem what they are not, and not to seem what they are. And he declares that the result of these attempts is ever the same—evanescence. He maintains that nothing

which is unreal can be permanent, that no sham can live, that everything false is, by its very nature, doomed to perish. And here again he has prophesied truly. I do not know of any sphere where the principle of Divine survival is so clearly manifest as in the region of illusions. Even the destruction of impurity is not so rapid. It is often left for a future generation to behold the dissolution of what was base and defiled. But every man, within his own lifetime, within a very small corner of his own lifetime, has been privileged to witness the death of make-believe. We have seen the showy preacher, by the aid of a few stolen experiences, mount into the air for a moment, and then explode in the presence of the angels. We have seen veneer of manner lose its charm and leave but weariness behind. We have seen the semblance of wealth take wings quicker than the reality. We have seen the book, which by puffing and advertisement had caught the public ear, consigned to its native oblivion within a twelvemonth. All this is no accident; it is a law, God's law, that law of

Divine survival by which nothing lives on the stream of history which has won its pre-eminence by "working a lie."

There is a curious passage in the Gospels which seems to suggest that our Lord had the alternative between the reality and the appearance of success: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and He shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" It is indicated that there stretches before Him the possibility of achieving a more rapid triumph than by the course which He had actually set Himself to follow. He saw that His kingdom might have been reared on another basis than sacrifice. His aims were at no time hostile to the physical dominion of Rome; nor, if rightly understood, would the physical dominion of Rome have been hostile to *His* aims. He had all along rejected the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Why should He not seek the co-operation of the Roman legions to establish an empire within the empire—an empire which should have for its watchword the cultivation of peace and

order? Such an arrangement might have consolidated the power of Cæsar; and, if Cæsar approved, who could have resisted? But the resistance to such a scheme lay in the breast of Jesus Himself. It was not an empire of peace and order that He wished to establish. It was more than that; it was a kingdom of sacrifice, a reign of love. To raise a structure on the former basis would only have been to deceive. It would have been to persuade men that that had come which had not come. It would have been to prop up the work by advertisement, to give it a success through something outside of its merits, to bind it to the hearts of men by a garb which was not its own. Jesus knew that such an attachment must perish. He knew that it would be veneered, make-believe, illusive—a product of the time, and therefore temporal. He did not want a temporal possession; He wished to be able to say, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My word shall not pass away." And therefore He chose the sacrificial road—the road to the heart. Desiring an empire of love—the only unfailing

sceptre—He stooped to conquer; for the joy that was set before Him He endured the cross and despised the shame.

For, let us never forget that, in the eye of St. John, Christ is Himself the greatest example of the Divine law of survival. The climax of his poem is reached in that majestic vision in which a lamb that has been slain sits on the throne of the universe. It is not a lamb transformed into a lion. The form is still sacrificial. The thought is that, around the sacrificial image once despised, there have gathered the insignia of royalty. "Thou art worthy to open the book because Thou hast redeemed us by Thy blood" are the words in which the secret of His empire is declared; and the secret of His empire is the secret of all ultimate survival. The Son of Man has been crowned through His cross; the sons of men shall be brought to glory by the same road as their Captain; they shall obtain an immortality through immolation; they shall have their names written in the Lamb's book of life.

THE FINAL STAGE OF CULTURE

Revelation xxii 2

A TREE in the midst of a street is a beautiful thing. Sometimes it is sad as well as beautiful. I remember, in the days of boyhood, in one of the busiest streets of the most commercial of cities, how there stood in the heart of the thoroughfare the stump of an old tree. One could not look at it without a twinge of pain; it was the last rose of summer. It marked the final trace of a kind of life that was passing away. It told that the country was being expelled by the town. It suggested a state of things that was dead, an age of rustic simplicity which a past generation enjoyed, and which had left behind only the skirt of its garment.

But it is a very different matter when the tree has overtaken the city instead of the city

overtaking the tree. Where you *plant* trees in the midst of a street, you have the beauty without the sadness. And why so? Because the rural element has there changed its place. It is no longer the pursued, but the pursuer. It is no longer the spectacle of expiring country life; it is a marriage between the country and the town. It exhibits to the eye the union of things which are commonly thought of in isolation, and presents to the mind the image of a meeting between the old culture and the new.

Such is the impression conveyed by the picture before us. "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." The tree of life is here, as I take it, the generic name for an entire *class* of trees. Each bank of the river is said to be studded with trees of this order or species. The effect is that there rises up in the imagination a picture of the meeting of extremes.

We have a feeling such as we experience in seeing the old man play with the child, or in witnessing in age the spirit of romantic youth. St. John's ideal of the city of God —the final or Christian stage of civilisation— is a paradox. It is something different from all previous ideals. It is a union of extremes. It joins two ends of the string; it unites elements that hitherto had been deemed antagonistic. Let us try to estimate the force of this new conception.

There have been two extreme shades of culture—the garden and the street. The garden is the earlier. It is the child-life of humanity. I have in a previous paper expressed my opinion that the tree of life in the book of Genesis is meant to convey the idea of spontaneous energy. It is life unimpeded, unrestrained, unfettered by the sense of obstacle. It has no fear, no feeling of limit, and therefore no self-consciousness. It is marked by simplicity, or, as we say, rusticity. Because it has no sense of obstacle, it is an age of faith; because it has no fear, it is an age of out-

spokenness. It says what it believes, and it believes what is said. It enters thoroughly into the enjoyment of everything; its joy is its strength. It is more allied than any other period to the life of the plant. Its defect is that it *is* in the garden. It is a purely individual life. It has not awakened to the fact that each man is but the fragment of a vast building. It has not realised the pressure of another life than the personal—the life of the community. It lives by the impulse of the moment; it has not learned that the moment affects the centuries.

At the other remove from the garden, and reached after a series of gradations, is the street. It is the direct opposite. If the former was all spontaneity, this is all convention. If the former was the individual without the community, this is the community without the individual. If the former was the yielding to the impulse of the moment, this is the death of all impulse. We become a part of the community. We cease to have a will of our own. We live by rule—the rule of the street. We do what

others do, and because others do it. Custom becomes our conscience, the deviation from custom our reproach of conscience. The spontaneity of the individual life has given place to the fear of being singular; the city has put out the garden.

Now, in the view of St. John, the ultimate stage of culture—the culture of Christ—differs from either of these; and it differs in the direction, not of contrast, but of amalgamation. It finds in its bosom a place where the discordant elements may unite and rest. The marriage supper of the Lamb, which reconciles so many things, reconciles also the extremes of civilisation—the garden and the street. It gives back the tree of life—the spontaneity of the child's heart, the sense of unrestrained joy. But it plants this tree of life in a new locality—in the midst of the thoroughfare, in the scene of the old conventionalism. How does it cure this conventionalism? By a thing called love. Instead of making me feel that I am a part of the community, it makes me feel that the community is a part of me. Instead of sinking

my individual self in others, it enlarges my individual self to include others. I enter into a fellowship where every one is recognised as more than a brother—as a member of the same body. It becomes possible literally to love my neighbour as myself. There is a worldly conformity which is the result of *un*worldliness. I may see in the streets of the city a phase of thought which I have surmounted, but which was mine yesterday. I put myself in the place of my own yesterday. By the very spontaneity of love, by the very spirit of the garden, I enter into the work of the street, and live in the experience of other lives.

Christian culture, then, in the view of St. John, is a marriage—the union of the garden and the street. Now, every union implies a giving up of something. Each side surrenders an element for the use of the other. Not only is there no exception here, but there is in the passage itself a distinct implication of the special things which each of the parties surrender. We shall consider in the light of St. John's own statement these two things—what the

garden gives to the street, and what the street gives to the garden.

And first, he says that the garden has given to the street *variety*. In the midst of the thoroughfare the tree of life yields a diversity of fruit each month. The garden is naturally more varied in sympathy than the street. In rural life we see human nature in all its forms, unrestrained and luxuriant. In the life of the town these varieties tend to disappear. Men are planed down to a common level, and that which makes the difference between them is more or less suppressed. But in the marriage supper of the Lamb, in the fellowship which comes from being members of Christ's body, John says it will be very different. The tree of life will here flourish in an environment opposite to the home of its nativity. It will flourish in the street by *transforming* the street —by impregnating the life of the town with its own variedness. Henceforth we shall cease to associate the city with uniformity. It will become what the country is—a place of human nature. It will break forth like rustic life into

a multitude of types. It will reveal what the life of the peasantry reveals—the wondrous diversities of the spirit of humanity, the many mouldings of the mind of man, the myriad forms in which the human heart can live and move and have its being.

There is a deep significance in the monthly yielding of the fruit. It suggests that the varieties in the city of God are proved and illustrated by the varieties of type in the character of the twelve Apostles. There is a very remarkable passage in the opening chapter of John's Gospel in which, if I am not mistaken, he has himself given us a clue to the principle on which one apostle's nature was allowed to differ from that of the other. I allude to the words in John i. 16—"of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace." The expression "grace for grace" has puzzled the commentators. I doubt if any phrase would render it exactly into English. But I have no doubt at all that it means and ought to be translated "grace *in contrast* to grace." What he wants to say is this: "Wherever any of us

had a bias of the mind toward a particular direction, Christ gave us a bias in the *opposite* direction. The gift which came to each, came to the side on which he was weak. A man was inspired, not in the point where he was already strong, but in the places where he was defective. Every man of our company had to enter the city by a new gate—the gate over against that by which he first came in. He that entered by the north had to walk toward the south. He that dawned in the east had his setting in the west. He that began on the top of the hill had to end his pilgrimage in the recesses of the valley."

And if this is true to the Greek original, is it not also true to the fact? Take any one of the New Testament leaders. Do we not find that each gets a special gift in the direction exactly opposite to his first endowment? Take John himself. He is by nature a man of fire, of eager haste to realise the goal. What does he become? A man of waiting power, tarrying till the Lord comes; a man who has reached the long-suffering of love, or

as he calls it in the Apocalypse, "the patience of Christ." Take Peter. He is by nature—that is to say, by original grace—the man who sees the crown. His eye, like the eye of the child, rests on the completed triumph, and observes not the cross between. What does he become? Read his first epistle, and what do you see? A man of the cross distinctively, before all things—emphasising the sweet uses of adversity, declaring that the trial of faith is more precious than gold. Or, to name no other, take Paul. He is, by first endowment, the apostle of faith. In the heat of controversy, in the atmosphere of theological strife, he might be in danger of forgetting that faith worketh by love. But with the next month there comes to him a new kind of fruit—the charity for his brother man. It breaks forth in the most glorious of all hymns; it permeates every crevice and corner of his being; it makes him gentler, mellower, every day. The last state of these men is better than their first.

Here, then, is the answer to the first question—What does the garden give to the street?

We come now to the second—What does the street give to the garden? And the answer is, an interest in secular or political life—the healing of the nations. The great defect of the garden is an absence of this interest. We live among the flowers and the thoughts suggested by them, and we forget that outside men toil and spin, work and weep, struggle and die. The leaves of the garden are all right; but they have not found their function. They are for the healing of the nations: but in the garden there are no nations; there are only individuals. The tree of life has too limited a sphere. To give it an adequate sphere you must plant it in a community. You must bring it into the city, into the haunts of men. You must let it be planted beside rivers of water—places of mercantile traffic, places of communication between land and land. Hitherto it has been doing less than its destined work; it has been ministering only to the private troubles of the heart. It will reach the cause of its being when it comes to the healing of the nations.

And, let me ask, is not St. John here again true to the facts? Take any nation that needs healing—needs civilising, as we say. What is that which it requires? Is it not simply the tree of life? Is not its disease just the fact that it has not unimpeded energy, that some part of the vital system is wanting? The excesses of unhealed nations are the result of defects —parts wanting in the framework. It was so even with that Roman world which St. John desired to convert. In some respects it was more civilised than the Christian community; yet there was a branch of the tree of life which it did not possess and without which its development was retarded. But if it were so even in John's day, what shall we say of ours? Civilisation has passed over from the Pagan to the Christian world. The enemies of the cross are no longer the sons of culture. The nations left to us outside of Christ are distinguished by their want of animation. They might be called "*dead* in trespasses and in sin." They are dead—no longer like the Roman world by the absence

of a single branch—but by the want of half their sap. India, with all her gropings after infinitude, has neglected an element at her door—the life of woman. China, with all her boasted antiquity, has not gone back far enough to take up the spontaneity of the child. The Mohammedan nations, with all their claim to possess the Prophet of humanity, have ignored humanity itself—the impulses of the heart. Ours is a far more arduous task than that of the first missionaries. It is no longer mere conversion; it is, along with that, civilisation, culture, the spirit of progress, the rights of man. The tree is defective all round—in root, leaves, and branches; it is "more life, and fuller, that we want."

Where shall we find it for our missionary labours? Remember that, though every nation is defective, they are not defective in the same way. The fruit that meets the want of one will not meet the want of another; that is just the reason why, in the process of healing, the seer beholds "all *manner* of fruits." What is wanted for these nations is a complete life

—a life all round. Each is deprived of some vital centre; the life that shall kindle all must be a universal life. The command to teach all nations is a bold command; it asks the possession of a diversified nature. Buddhism was only victorous over one class of minds; it had but one manner of fruit. The power that would demand a conquest of the world must have fruits for all nations.

And here it is that Christianity finds both its consistency and its strength. For Christianity is the presentation of a complete life —a tree in all its branches. "Ye are complete in Him" is the emphatic utterance in which Paul expresses his sense of Christ's universal adaptation. In Him every want finds its special supply; *that* is the warrant for a universal mission-field. Here the spirit of India will find that which it lacks—the life of womanhood, the feminine qualities of the soul. Here the spirit of China will meet what it has left behind—the freshness of a little child. Here the savage tribes will encounter a new ideal of manly strength—the power of self-

restraint. Here the followers of Mohammed will be stirred by an impulse more potent than the sense of destiny—the throbbings of affection, the instincts of the heart. Here is courage for the over-timid and fear for the over-courageous, a burden for the careless and an absence of care for the burdened, a power that can soften the hard and give hardihood to the soft and effeminate. It is because it is the tree of life—life universal, life all round, life with every manner of fruit at its command, that the religion of Christ is the healer of the nations.

Printed by Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ld., London and Aylesbury.