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Wordsworth

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Given to me,

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the book

which started me on  
a study of  
Wordsworth.

William Knight,

1876.

*Montpelier Feb. 21*

# VOICES OF NATURE

TO

HER FOSTER-CHILD, THE SOUL OF MAN:

A SERIES OF ANALOGIES  
BETWEEN THE NATURAL AND THE SPIRITUAL WORLDS.

BY

GEORGE B. CHEEVER, D.D.

AUTHOR OF

'WANDERINGS OF A PILGRIM IN THE SHADOW OF MONT BLANC,'  
'LECTURES ON THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, AND ON THE LIFE AND TIMES OF BUNYAN,' ETC.

PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM COLLINS,  
NORTH MONTROSE STREET, GLASGOW,  
AND PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

(1852)

~~Word~~  
~~PR 85~~  
~~C 51~~  
A. 581908

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GLASGOW:  
WILLIAM COLLINS & CO., PRINTERS.

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## P R E F A C E.

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MR. DE QUINCEY has somewhere said, in one of his compositions, with great beauty of expression, that Analogies are *Aerial Pontoons*. The phrase is one of admirable vividness and depth of meaning. By material objects, or rather by suspension at one end *from* such objects, analogies are bridges to spiritual truths; by *things* they swing the mind forward to thoughts and ideas, and sometimes to discoveries high above the point of starting. From the world that now is, we pass over upon them to the world that is to come; through Faith they even become the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

In this view we have endeavoured to trace, in the forms and processes of Nature, some of the analogies between the natural and the spiritual worlds. Beautifully has MR. COLERIDGE affirmed, while declaring that his studies have been profitable and availing to him, only so far as he has endeavoured to use all his other knowledge as a glass, enabling him to receive more light, in a wider field of vision, from the Word of God; beautifully and truly has he said, concerning the Book of Nature, likewise a revelation from God, that not only in its obvious sense and literal interpretation, it declares the being and attributes of the Almighty Father, which none but the *fool in heart* ever dared gainsay; but that it has been the music of gentle and

pious minds in all ages, it is the poetry of all human nature, to read it likewise in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world. The field is inexhaustible; we have only advanced a few steps; but those few we have endeavoured to take, as seeing Him who is Invisible, and recognising, in the fullest degree, his particular and paternal providence. May the blessing of the God of Nature and of Grace attend the lessons of the volume.

NEW YORK, *September*, 1852.

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PART I.

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INTERPRETATION OF NATURE.

## PART I.

# INTERPRETATION OF NATURE.

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### CHAPTER I.

The true philosophy of Nature: Religious influence of Nature: Real language and meaning of Nature: Discipline of Mind necessary to understand it: Tintern Abbey: Natural influences mistaken for Piety.

THE true philosophy of nature is a religious philosophy, that is, a philosophy binding us to God. Nature rightly studied, *must* disclose the Creator, but the sights which we see are according to the spirit that we bring to the investigation. Standing within a cathedral, and looking through its stained and figured windows *toward* the light, we behold the forms and colours *by* the light. Standing outside, and gazing at the same windows, we see nothing but a blurred and indistinct enamelling. Thus the soul, standing within the great Cathedral of God's material world, and looking through it upward to the light, beholds the meaning of its forms and colours; but standing without, and studying nature in detail, not with reference to the light pouring through it from God, but for itself alone, there is nothing better seen than the mere material enamelling. The meaning of a transparency can be seen only by looking *at* the light, or in the *direction* of the light, which is shining through it; not by looking upon it from without, in an external or reflected light.

Nature is a transparent, figured veil: God shines behind it. By and by the veil will be raised, and the philosophy of nature will give place to the beholding of the Alpha and Omega, the

Beginning and the End, the First and the Last, no more seen as through a glass darkly, but face to face. The glass darkly is a discipline for the infancy of our being, before we can bear the light. There is to be a world where there shall be no temple, (or rather, there is such a world, and we are training for it,) because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it; and no stained glass to look through, nor any need of sun or moon to shine, because the glory of God itself lightens that world, and the Lamb is the light thereof. But at present, as we must approach God spiritually, only through a Mediator, so we can see his light only through the transparencies around us, or by the earnest of the Spirit within us, revealing him in his word. At present, day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth forth knowledge, and with Day and Night we hold communion; we listen, while they tell us of our God, for every day is a new conversation, and every night a new revelation from Him.

Now, if Nature be made on purpose to commune with man concerning God, to teach him the Divine majesty and glory, and as it were to look the being and attributes of the Creator into his soul, or to call into activity and life that idea of God, which in the very build of the human constitution is already there, there must be a mighty power of disclosure in nature, and a depth and richness of intelligence rendered inert and useless through the insensibility of man. What a dire necessity would such blindness be, if it were fatal, not voluntary! There must be an unfathomable wealth of instruction, a world of glorious significance, upon which the eye of the mind, in such insensibility, is closed. How vast and precious an influence would these scenes and elements exert in building up our being, if we were properly alive to them! There would be "transferred into the internal economy of ideas and sentiment something of a character and a colour correspondent to the beauty, vicissitude, and grandeur, which continually press upon the senses." And this internal economy of ideas and sentiment, of which John Foster so beautifully speaks, would not be intellectual merely, but full of the sense of God and heaven. There would be the home feeling of a father's house, the tracing of a father's hand, the sense of a father's presence, the enjoyment of every natural blessing by a father's kind arrangements. When God himself

is in the soul, diffusing there the spirit of his love, how every created particle of matter, and variety of form, shines in his light!

This universe shall pass away—a frame  
 Glorious! because the shadow of thy night,  
 A step, or link, for intercourse with Thee!  
 Ah! if the time must come, in which my feet  
 No more shall stray where Meditation leads,  
 By flowing stream, through wood, or craggy wild,  
 Loved haunts like these, the unimprisoned mind  
 May yet have scope to range among her own,  
 Her thoughts, her images, her high desires.  
 If the dear faculty of sight should fail,  
 Still it may be allowed me to remember  
 What visionary powers of eye and soul  
 In youth were mine; when stationed on the top  
 Of some huge hill, expectant, I beheld  
 The sun rise up, from distant climes returned  
 Darkness to chase, and sleep, and bring the day  
 His bounteous gift! or saw him towards the deep  
 Sink, with a retinue of flaming clouds  
 Attended; then my spirit was entranced  
 With joy exalted to beatitude;  
 The measure of my soul was filled with bliss  
 And holiest love; as earth, sea, air, with light,  
 With pomp, with glory, with magnificence!

WORDSWORTH.

There are scenes in nature that compel even careless minds to pause with something like a feeling of religious adoration in the soul. We look at Niagara, and we think of God; his attributes, his infinite power, his eternity, his incomprehensibility, and the unfathomableness of divine truth. And indeed it is like coming upon the verge of those abysses in theology and morals, and in the attributes of God, down which you gaze and gaze, till the soul becomes dizzy in the effort, and almost insane in the impossibility of comprehension. You can go no further, you can see no deeper, but the truth pours on, shrouded in foam and clouds of mystery. You are lost, if you attempt to advance. You may long ever so earnestly to see the depths, but impassable barriers are there. You look over the verge, if at any



point this is possible, but you can never see where the torrent strikes, nor how deep; for the storm, the fury, the whirlwind of conflicting elements, the spray beaten into powder, and tossed in clouds of foam, prevent you. But the cataract pours on, and the thunder roars. You do not deny the existence of the cataract, nor the sublimity of it, because you cannot see to the bottom of it, but you gaze, and wonder, and adore.

Such a scene is analogous to the mysteries of the Divine Nature, and such a scene brings a religious mind very near to God, and impresses it with a deep and solemn awe, which, though different from the excitement of imagination merely, is in perfect harmony with all the delightful emotions produced by scenes of loveliness, and impels the soul to the exercise of prayer and praise. The vague delight of the mere poetie sensibility is quite another thing. There, an elevation may be reached by the mind where it is apparently very near to heaven: a kind of table-land among the mountains, an interval between material forms and spiritual realities, where it seems to worship something, yet it knows not what, and may glide off, according to its own character, into bare, indefinable, mystical pantheism, or pass to a real and devout communion with the living God. And in some respects the two movements may look alike, though not only unlike, but antagonistical.

There is a mysticism, a mystery, and an indefiniteness, that may arise from the fall of a vast body of truth into language, or into the mind, and from the commotion of great thoughts struggling for expression; just as the cataract of Niagara is attended with clouds of eternal foam and spray, through which you cannot see the bottom, and out of which, and over which, when the sun is shining, the rainbows glitter and dance. There is also a mysticism, a confusion, a transcendentalism, elaborate and artificial, produced not by the presence, concussion, or struggle of truth, but by the absence of it, and the counterfeit of falsehood. There is nothing else but the cloud, the halo, and the painted rainbow, but no cataract of Truth. Just so, there may be the semblance of religious reverence and worship, in a soul much absorbed in imaginative contemplations of nature, without any approximation to that piety of the affections, that worship of the heart, inspired by the Spirit, and described in the Word of Jehovah.

The phrases of devotion may be used and the language of religious rapture, but, resting in any thing short of God, the apparently worshipping mind is in mere reverie or utter bewilderment, and all the seeming religion of nature is but the trance or delirium of its own fancy. In such a trance, the mind may walk close upon the verge of the spiritual world, as a sleep-walker on the edge of a precipice, yet not enter it, nor converse with its realities. Thoughts may be uttered, which show that nature has lifted the mind above nature indeed, yet not to God; which look *like* the breathings of a true piety, but yet are unsubstantial fancies. A man may seem to strike fire, by striking his own eyes; but the flashes will set fire to nothing, and are in themselves nothing. Such are all the lights of pretended religious inspirations, that come not from the Divine Spirit and Word, but proceed merely from the concussions of self and nature. And as Coleridge has remarked of the *imitation* of the fire of imagination itself, so it may be said of the substitution of any semblance, instead of the earnest religion of the Gospel; a deceptive counterfeit of the superficial form and colours may be elaborated, but the marble peach feels cold and heavy, and only children put it to their mouths.

At the creation, man alone became a living soul, and God is not said to have breathed into any thing else, in that sense, the breath of life. It is a wild dream of the imagination, as incapable of scientific investigation as it is of proof, that because the influence of nature is so powerful, so elevating, so suggestive, and at times so mysterious, therefore there must be such a thing as a soul or thinking principle in nature, apart from God, with which the human soul communes. Here is a bridge, across which a careless irreligious mind might easily pass, from the natural effect of the creation, into the gloomy gulf of atheism, or the wilderness of a pantheistic unbelief.

There is no meaning in nature, but that which God gives, that which God teaches. The forms of nature are indeed beautiful in themselves, yet are they no more than as the silvery wick, along which the burning oil throws its light into the atmosphere, or as the strings, from which the hand of the musician draws forth melody. Both intellectually and spiritually, as exciting the mind, and leading it to God, the powerful influence of nature has been experienced by multitudes, advancing as far

as the heart advances, stopping where the heart stops. Intent and devout observers do really find in nature, according to the language of Foster, "a scene marked all over with mystical figures, the points and traces, as it were, of the frequentation and agency of superior spirits. They find it sometimes concentrating their faculties to curious and minute inspection, sometimes dilating them to the expansion of vast and magnificent forms; sometimes beguiling them out of all precise recognition of material realities, whether small or great, into visionary musings; and habitually and in all ways conveying into the mind trains and masses of ideas, of an order not to be acquired in the schools, and exerting a modifying and assimilating influence on the whole mental economy."

Now our acquaintance with this philosophy and influence of nature must depend upon our knowledge of ourselves and God; for we have these three terms of knowledge: nature, ourselves, and God; and ourselves being but a part of nature, we can know nothing truly of the system of nature, but as we know God; nothing better or more truly, than as the inhabitants of Plato's Cave. Habits of meditation on the depths of our own being, and the attributes of God, to whom we are related, are requisite for those, who would read aright the lines and lessons of creation. The effulgence of sunset, in an evening of extraordinary splendour and beauty, may seem something, if it would stay, sufficient, by a power of its own, by the inherent abiding of some soul-like element, to detain and occupy the mind; but as an unconnected spectacle, unrelated to something infinitely higher and more glorious, even its divine, intelligent Architect and Cause, its power would speedily cease. We see in it, not so much what is, as what can be, and what God is, of whose light inaccessible and full of glory, this transcendent vision is but the permeable curtain, adapted to the possibility of man's gaze. Moreover,

The silent spectacle, the gleam,  
The shadow, and the peace supreme,

are but a language, to move the soul, if it is not prepared for such influences, to a transport, a love, and an enjoyment as participant of heaven in its spirit, as these glorious, effulgent forms and colours are typical or representative of heaven in its beauty

and glory. Therefore, truly has the poet, and in a right heavenly faith, in the admiration of this scene, exclaimed,

Thine is the tranquil hour, purpleal Eve!  
 But long as godlike wish or hope divine  
 Informs my spirit, ne'er can I believe  
 That this magnificence is wholly thine!  
From worlds not quickened by the Sun  
A portion of the gift is won;  
 An intermingling of Heaven's pomp is spread  
 On ground which British shepherds tread!

WORDSWORTH.

Now when from such meditations on the Divine Being and the place of his abode, and upon the wonderful and fearful structure and responsibilities of our own being, and upon the things unseen and eternal, we come to the investigation of nature, we hear a thousand harmonies, to which otherwise the ear had been insensible, we behold a thousand depths of significance, which otherwise the mind had passed carelessly by. Habituated to voyages of faith, every spiritual sense is quickened; we return to the objects of the land with the distant vision of the sea; we may gradually attain, from heaven and earth, to something of prophetic strain,

“And from the solitude  
 Of the vast ocean bring a watchful heart,  
 And an eye practised like a blind man's touch,”

commencing with presences and meanings, of which a careless mind knows nothing.

Without such discipline of faith in things unseen and eternal; without such sense of God, and meditation on worlds not quickened by the sun; without such thought upon realities, which men can but think upon, while angels see; without such remembrance of our immortality and personal responsibility to God, our birth, indeed, is but a sleep and a forgetting; and though heaven lies about us from infancy to manhood, yet the low intercepting clouds hang heavily and damp around the soul; a blank, opaque humour, a drear, dark cataract, passes over the eye. Nothing

but what the touch can handle, is seen through the vision; an oppressive vapour of materialism settles upon thought,

“And custom lies upon us with a weight  
Heavy as frost, and deep almost as life.”

Every day we go further from the East, further from the Cherubim, further from the guiding Shechinah, further from the light of Paradise, and the types of heaven. Deeper in the vales of earth we go, and earlier falls the sunset, and the splendour of the celestial vision is diminishing, and the light and reality of the supernatural are forgotten or hidden in the natural.

“At length the man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.”

There may be worshippers of nature, who are not worshippers of God; but there is no true natural religion, without a devout heart towards God, a heart renewed by grace. Nor are the influences of nature such as can ever supply the work of grace, or approximate to it. The poet Wordsworth expresses the wish to have his days bound each to each by natural piety, an unaffected love of nature such as when the child's heart first leaped up at sight of the rainbow. And pleasant would this be, preserved, as in Wordsworth's own soul, even into old age. But if that were all, though the stream of such piety might be sweetly serene and poetical, yet it could never be truly religious; it might leave the heart wholly unchanged, never rising above nature, and in nothing participant of God. For no man cometh to the Father by nature only, nor except through Christ; and he who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, in all genuine piety, is the Master of all this world of loveliness, these forms of sublimity and beauty, which in nature address themselves to the mind through the senses.

In the exquisite poem on Tintern Abbey, we are presented with one of the loftiest and most serenely beautiful descriptions of the physical and intellectual effect of nature on the character, without any definite reference to the Author of Nature. The Poet speaks of the sensations in heart and mind produced by natural forms of beauty, and passing as elements of existence

into his being. He describes another gift of aspect more sublime:

That blessed mood,  
 In which the burthen of the mystery,  
 In which the heavy and the weary weight  
 Of all this unintelligible world,  
 Is lightened; that serene and blessed mood,  
 In which the affections gently lead us on,  
 Until the breath of this corporeal frame,  
 And even the motion of our human blood  
 Almost suspended, we are laid asleep  
 In body, and become a living soul:  
 While with an eye made quiet by the power  
 Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,  
 We see into the life of things.

Passing over the emotions of youth, when the sounding cataract haunted him like a passion, and the deep and gloomy woods, mountains, and rocks, with their colours and forms, were the food of an appetite, and entering upon another and later period of life, the poet gives the mood of his riper and deeper experience of the elevating, chastening, and subduing power of nature.

And I have felt  
 A presence that disturbs me with the joy  
 Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime  
 Of something far more deeply interfused,  
 Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,  
 And the round ocean, and the living air,  
 And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:  
 A motion and a spirit, that impels  
 All thinking things, all objects of all thought,  
 And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still  
 A lover of the meadows, and the woods,  
 And mountains; and of all that we behold  
 From this green earth; of all the mighty world  
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create,  
 And what perceive; well pleased to recognise  
 In nature and the language of the sense,  
 The anchor of my purest thoughts, the muse,  
 The guide, the guardian of my heart and soul  
 Of all my mortal being.

This is a record of the natural experience of every sensitive and poetical mind. But quietly indeed must the world have gone with a man, in whom this serene religion of poetry continues an undisturbed empire. A calm and philosophic temperament like Wordsworth's, with the passions lulled to sleep, or occasions of disturbance cut off by a mountain solitude, and sweet thoughts only nursed in leafy retreats, may abide in such experience, and continue the accordant language:

Knowing that nature never did betray  
 The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,  
 Through all the years of this our life to lead  
 From joy to joy; for she can so inform  
 The mind that is within us, so impress  
 With quietness and beauty, and so feed  
 With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,  
 Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,  
 Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all  
 The dreary intercourse of daily life,  
 Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb  
 Our cheerful faith that all which we behold  
 Is full of blessings.

But if this be mistaken for religion, it is a disastrous mistake indeed. If there be no other nor higher element than that which these experiences develop, a worshipper of nature, even with such feelings, would remain for ever in the porch of the great temple, nor ever enter the inmost sanctuary. How different is the language of the soul, when coloured by the religious affections, when nature is viewed through a heart filled with the inspiration of love to God, and in communion with him. Nature becomes not less beautiful, but God is more clearly seen. The intellectual and poetical atmosphere is not disesteemed or neglected, but is not dwelt in exclusively or alone; the element of spiritual devotion, of prayer, praise, and heavenly love, mingles with it, diffuses a warmer glow and sweeter tints, through which the lines of the works of God disclose something of the Divine face of their author, and produce not only a deeper power of joy and a harmony of soul, as natural as the serene and quiet beauty of an Autumn noon, in which we seem to see into the life of things, but a still more blessed mood, as on the verge of

the unseen and eternal, participating of *the Earnest of the Spirit*, and approximating to the life of heaven.

The more the principle of the law breaks forth in nature, Mr. Coleridge has remarked, "the more does the *husk* drop off, and the phenomena themselves become more spiritual." But it can only be, *where* the principle of law, and *because* the principle of law, in a well constituted and believing mind, leads directly to the lawgiver; otherwise, the discovery and declaration of law itself becomes but a more transcendental materialism. The eye and ear must be quickened and guided by that inward love, that heavenly sympathy in the soul, which is the secret of true and living knowledge, and then "the heavens and the earth shall declare, not only the power of their Maker, but the glory and the presence of their God, even as he appeared to the great prophet during the vision of the mount, in the skirts of his divinity."<sup>1</sup>

"At last the scene shall change," exclaims the heavenly minded Henry Martyn, towards the close of his life in Persia, "and I shall find myself in a world, where all is love! We have a city, whose builder and maker is God. The least of *His* works it is refreshing to look at. A dried leaf or a straw makes me feel myself in good company." He was drawing near to that world, where he would see God, no more through the leaves or light of nature, so dear to him as speaking of God, but in vision and enjoyment incomprehensible here, without cloud, without veil, and according to the wondrous announcement in God's Word, face to face. And how sadly, yet serenely beautiful are the last recorded aspirations in his diary, penned amidst the sleepless fever of his mortal frame!

"I sat in the orchard, and thought, with sweet comfort and peace, of my God; in solitude, my company, my friend, and comforter. Oh! when shall time give place to eternity! When shall appear that new heaven and new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness! There, there shall in no wise enter in any thing that defileth: none of that wickedness, which has made men worse than wild beasts; none of those corruptions which add still more to the miseries of mortality, shall be seen or heard of any more!"

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*.



HERE he might lie on fern or withered heath,  
While from the singing lark, that sings unseen  
The minstrelsy that solitude loves best,  
And from the sun, and from the breezy air  
Sweet influences trembled o'er his frame:  
And he, with many feelings, many thoughts,  
Made up a meditative joy, and found  
Religious meanings in the forms of nature!  
And so, his senses gradually rapt  
In a half sleep, he dreams of better worlds,  
And dreaming hears thee still, O singing lark!  
That singest like an angel in the clouds.

COLERIDGE.—*Fears in Solitude.*

It was the season sweet, of budding leaves,  
Of days advancing towards their utmost length,  
And small birds singing to their happy mates.  
Wild is the music of the autumnal wind  
Among the faded woods; but these blithe notes  
Strike the *deserted* to the heart; I speak  
Of what I know, and what we feel within.

WORDSWORTH'S *Mountain Churchyard.*

Yet, the light of Love  
Not failing, perseverance from their steps  
Departing not, they shall at length obtain  
The glorious habit by which sense is made  
Subservient still to moral purposes,  
Auxiliar to divine.

*Despondency Corrected.*

And if the solemn nightingale be mute,  
And the soft woodlark here did never chaunt  
Her vespers, Nature fails not to provide  
Impulse and utterance. The whispering air  
Sends inspiration from the shadowy heights  
And blind recesses of the caverned rocks;  
The little rills and waters numberless,  
Inaudible by daylight, blend their notes  
With the loud streams; and at the quiet hour,  
When issue forth the first pale stars, there breathes  
A voice of spiritual presence to the souls,  
A voiceful presence o'er the listening soul.

*The Excursion.*

## CHAPTER II.

Beauty, Constancy, and Repetition of the Analogies between the Natural and Spiritual Life: Practical purposes of these Lessons: The Universe as the Shadow of God's Light: A faith in that which is above Nature requisite to view Nature aright.

How many, how beautiful, how constant are the analogies drawn between the processes of nature and the goings on of spiritual life! The relation of the seasons to one another, and to the object and end of the whole year, is full of instruction as the symbol of spiritual reality, and the suggestion of spiritual thought. The relation of seed-time to harvest, and of harvest to seed-time, the spring as the parent of the autumn, and the autumn as the child of spring, are frequently and solemnly dwelt upon. And the perpetual recurrence of these seasons, the familiar sight and knowledge of these relations, never make the lesson trite; on the contrary, there is a beauty and solemnity in it, which no frequency of return can diminish, a power of freshness, and a depth of power, in the appeal to our immortality, which no familiarity can wear out. O listen, Man! It is the language of the serenest, most gradual, fixed, and quiet processes of nature, with an appeal as much deeper than that of the cataract, as the still, small voice was more penetrating to the soul of Elijah than the noise of the rushing, rending whirlwind.

But why do I speak of the frequency and familiarity of the lesson? Is it so, that the processes of nature *are* so very familiar and so often witnessed, so perpetually observed that they *can* become trite and disregarded? Why! the years in a man's lifetime number them all. Few men ever see more than fifty summers' suns, fifty winters' snows and tempests. Few men ever behold more than fifty times, in passing through this world of nature, the indescribably beautiful and solemn imagery of

spring and autumn, the goings on of seed-time, and the ripening and gathering of harvest. Of the multitudes pent up in cities, how few there are that ever behold these scenes at all; that ever know any thing of nature, save the cares, the passions, the anxieties, the depravities and conflicts of *human* nature! How few there are that ever even see the sun rise and set! How still fewer that ever watch the opening of spring, or the passage of spring into summer, or of summer into autumn, or of autumn into winter! What *study* of these scenes it requires to gain a familiarity with them! The mere passage of life, from year to year, no more of necessity opens up to a man's soul the loveliness of nature, or gives him knowledge and command of the imagery and teachings of nature, or makes him familiar even with the commonest *sights* of nature, than to be whirled round the earth in a rail-car would make a man acquainted with the landscapes, climates, and geography of our globe.

Now if a man could have leisurely and serenely watched, with the eye of a painter, the imagination of a poet, and the heart of a Christian, the varied seasons of the year, spring, summer, autumn, winter, fifty times in succession, what is that to the inexhaustible magnificence and beauty each year poured out anew! What is that to the infinite variety and freshness of night and day, morning and evening, cloud and sky, sea and land, mountain and dale, sunshine and rain, brooks and banks, running streams and mighty rivers, plain and valley, springing herbage, and opening and falling flowers; trees budding, blossoming, clustering with fruits and foliage; a wilderness of leaves changing with the months, in hues that speak to the soul in their evanescent yet perpetual beauty; a wilderness of plants, that from the seed, or from the root of man's planting, or of nature's wild, unsought, unstudied abundance and abandonment, first break the earth and open to the sunlight in the green blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear; growing, changing, from shape to shape, from colour to colour, from the freshness of spring to the ripeness of autumn! All this combined with the renewal, diversity, and gaiety of animal life, in forms and habits almost as countless as the leaves, fruits, and flowers; all in one grand, mighty, ever-changing panorama under the cope of heaven, in every season entirely new, and yet the same! What, to the knowledge of all this, or for an adequate command of such knowledge, or for the

exhausting, or even the enumerating of its lessons, or the full understanding of the teachings of nature by the soul, would be fifty times beholding of it!

Oh no! Our human lifetime is not enough to make nature familiar to us, not enough to take the charm of novelty and wonder, even childlike wonder, from any of God's works. Enough to lay up God's sermons in the soul, enough to learn the syllables of wisdom from the lilies of the field as they grow, but not enough to make one lesson trite or wearisome. Before the solemnity, the richness and the beauty of the lesson can possibly become familiar, or lose its power, we pass away from it, into that advanced world of which it is the prelude and the warning. Before we can fully realize the greatness of the prediction, we are borne past it into the reality. After passing through this world of nature, these forms of teaching and instructive loveliness, one would think a happy soul might wish to come back and survey them again from the serenity of a higher, yet nearer post of observation, in a holier existence, with a heart entirely in unison with God, entirely free from human care and passion, in angelic leisure to drink in the spirit of love, harmony, and happiness, and to understand the lessons, both sweet and sad, and the influences, both warning and animating, which God has given to nature in a fallen world.

But they are linked now with nature for practical purposes. They are not given for our amusement or enjoyment merely, but for our education and instruction; ours is a disciplinary world, and the lessons of nature are a part of God's own discipline with us. The poets have often used the forms and materials of nature merely as rich fuel to feed the fires of an intellectual imagination; but the diviner lessons they have disregarded. It is as if a Hottentot should take a richly bound and ornamented copy of the Gospels, and fasten the gold clasps and illuminated pages as ornaments to his person, but throw the writing away. Not thus to be used, did God write the book of nature for us, nor for our earthly life, but for our immortality. In the recesses of a thick wood it seems as if nature were meditating upon man, or for him, as deeply as man upon nature. In the sacred stillness of a summer's noon, or in the forest by moonlight, there is an almost audible breathing of nature, and the momentary droppings of the buds, or of the falling leaves, or of the unevaporated dew-

drops, are as pauses in the mood of thought; and the mind realizes the feeling described by John Foster, "That there is through all nature some mysterious element like soul, which comes, with a deep significance, to mingle itself with the conscious being of the intent and devout observer." Indeed, there are times when the trees themselves, in a still and quiet landscape of secluded beauty, seem conscious beings, capable of sensitive enjoyment, if not of thought. And ever, over all nature, there is the air of our own immortality, a sympathy with our immortal being; and from all the dominion of nature, yea, from the figured picturesque walls of this transitory tabernacle, through which, generation after generation, we are passing to the world of spirits, from the *flammanitia mœnia mundi*, from Time and space itself outward, is reverberated back the inward utterance of a never-ending life. The poet Dana has enshrined this utterance in a form of language for the hymn of nature, which constitutes one of the grandest passages in English poetry.

O listen, man!

A voice within us speaks that startling word,  
 Man! thou shalt never die! Celestial voices  
 Hymn it unto our souls; according harps  
 By angel fingers touched, when the mild stars  
 Of morning sang together, sound forth still  
 The song of our great immortality.  
 Thick clusterings orbs, and this our fair domain,  
 The tall dark mountains and the deep-toned seas,  
 Join in this solemn universal song.  
 O listen, ye, our spirits! drink it in  
 From all this air! 'Tis in the gentle moonlight;  
 'Tis floating midst Day's setting glories; Night,  
 Wrapt in her sable robe, with silent step,  
 Comes to our bed, and breathes it in our ears.  
 Night and the Dawn, bright Day and thoughtful Eve:  
 All time, all bounds, the limitless expanse,  
 As one vast mystic instrument, are touched  
 By an unseen living hand, and conscious chords  
 Quiver with joy in this great jubilee.  
 — The dying hear it, and as sounds of earth  
 Grow dull and distant, wake their passing souls  
 To mingle in this heavenly harmony.

A heavenly harmony indeed it is, yet not unmingled with some sadder strains. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, and all the universe is waiting in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God, in their immortality of life and blessedness. Sin in the human world has had a consequence and an avowal in the natural; our own earthly habitation is not all as it came in original loveliness and goodness from the hand of God; but God himself has altered it for our discipline, and has put some chords into the natural Harp of Immortality, that were not there when the angels of God first heard it, and shouted in responsive halleluias of rapturous gratitude and praise.

Yet then or now, Nature is a book of God for our instruction. And what are all the forms of nature, animate or inanimate, but a series of diagrams, which God has given us for the beginning of our education, for the development, working, and discipline of our thoughts in the learning of His. For His eternal power and divine nature, the ideas and things invisible, of Him the invisible God, are clearly demonstrated, clearly seen, by the things made and visible. The material and temporal itself is the *shadow* of the spiritual and eternal; the created is the shadow of the uncreated, or rather *produces* a shadow of the uncreated light. The whole of creation, in this world and in all worlds, can be but as a series of glorious steps, fit for angels themselves to use, as symbolized in Jacob's dream; a ladder from earth to heaven, by which, not in dreams only, but in sober waking certainty, we may hold communion with heavenly realities; may do this sacredly in Nature, if in the Word and by the Spirit we have learned through Christ, the Maker and Governor of Nature, a living communion with the Father of our spirits. Whatever we do with Nature, *without* this spiritual and heavenly light and guidance, is but an atheistic idolatry or amusement, a railroad construction of profit and loss, from one grain of sand to another, in this ant-hill of our humanity. For it is *the light of life*, in which alone we can rightly observe nature, and read her lessons; and that light of life, the author and giver of it himself has said, is enjoyed, is known, is realised, only by those who follow Christ; all others are in darkness. "He that followeth me shall *not* walk in darkness, but shall have *the light of life*."

A divine expression is this, *that light of life*. If it had been found in Plato instead of John, the world's philosophers would have written whole commentaries upon it; and Plato himself would have been almost deified as the revealer of light. But philosophy must come to God for it, and to his Spirit. And this expression, *the light of life*, is to be taken in connection and comparison with that in the Old Testament, *With thee is the fountain of life; in thy light, we shall see light*. The light that we see is as the shadow of God's light; the light that we *feel*, inward, spiritual, lifegiving, is from the fountain of God's life. When we get it there, when it streams into our souls from God's fountain, the forms and fixtures of nature may be as the atmosphere through which it is transmitted, or as the orbs, from which, as from a central sun, it is reflected. Nor is it the less living because reflected; not less the light of life, because between it and us the shadows of things without intelligent life fall upon the soul. God is light; and all the shadows of the universe shall warm and gladden the heart, where God's light falls.

Now again we recall another sweet passage from the Book of Grace, by the light of which we are patiently to study the Book of Nature. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart*. What land is that, which is sown with this seed? What fields are those susceptible of such planting, and such a harvest? It is better to turn up furrows there, and gather the sheaves there, than if you had mountains of gold-mingled rock, and machines to crush them, and rivers at your will to wash the grains of gold into tanks waiting at your harbours. Light is sown for the righteous. It is sown of God, but man must co-operate in the tillage. It is sown in nature, but only the righteous are at the Harvest Home; only *they* are the reapers. It is sown just like all other seed, in weakness, to be raised in power. The land and the fields are all the processes and forms of nature, all this created world, ourselves, God's discipline with us, God's providences upon, over, and around us; in all things light is sown; in all things the gems of light are hidden for discovery, for cherishing, for growth, for a future and glorious harvest. God's word itself is hidden in the heart, to break forth into glory, to constitute now, while beneath the furrow, as it were, the life of God in the soul of man, the life hidden with Christ in God, and to constitute, when all these



preparatory and growing processes are finished, the suddenly revealed harvest of eternal light and blessedness in Christ, according to the rule that *when he who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory.*

In Nature and in Grace light is sown. It does not blaze forth at once, but for a time is beneath the furrow, out of sight in the bosom of the soil; sometimes there must be patient waiting for it, and much waiting upon God in prayer. If there be any thing for which we have to wait upon him, it is *light*, and when we get *that* from him, as his gift, whether we get it through the medium of nature or his word, we get it by his spirit, and not by our intellect alone; and it is the light of *life*, and not of the understanding merely. It is a gift worth waiting for patiently, worth labouring after exceedingly in prayer. But nature will not teach a prayerless mind, nor become the inspiration of religion, nor the light of life, where faith in that which is above nature is weak or wanting.

I have seen

A curious child, who dwelt upon a tract  
Of inland-ground, applying to his ear  
The convolutions of a smooth-lipped shell;  
To which in silence hushed, his very soul  
Listened intently; and his countenance soon  
Brightened with joy; for murmurings from within  
Were heard, sonorous cadences! whereby  
To his belief, the monitor expressed  
Mysterious union with its native sea.  
Even such a shell the universe itself  
Is to the ear of Faith.

*The Excursion.*

Faith there must be, or even the sound of the spiritual lessons will be absent; there may be the shell, but it will converse of no mysterious sea; there is no religion in nature, if the author of nature be excluded from the soul; there must be a ministry *above* nature to interpret to the soul the altar of nature and teach it how to present a sacrifice in the great temple. Thus, how beautiful, side by side with Wordsworth's descriptions of the inspirations of nature, is that Sonnet translated by him from Michael Angelo:

The prayers I make will then be sweet indeed  
 If thou the Spirit give, by which I pray :  
 My unassisted heart is barren clay,  
 Which of its native self can nothing feed.  
 Of good and pious works Thou art the seed,  
 Which quickens only where Thou sayest it may.  
 Unless Thou show to us Thine own true way,  
 No man can find it. Father! Thou must lead.  
 Do Thou, then, breathe those thoughts into my mind  
 By which such virtue may in me be bred,  
 That in Thy holy footsteps I may tread.  
 The fetters of my tongue do Thou unbind,  
 That I may have the power to sing of Thee,  
 And sound thy praises everlastingly!

In this connection, as to the heavenly lessons to be drawn from the contemplation and study of nature, we may apply religiously, within the domain of truths revealed in God's Word, but foreshadowed in nature, what Coleridge applies philosophically. "The first range of hills that encircles the scanty vale of human life is the horizon for the majority of its inhabitants. On *its* ridges the common sun is born and departs. From *them* the stars rise, and touching *them* they vanish. By the many, even this range, the natural limit and bulwark of the vale, is but imperfectly known. Its higher ascents are too often hidden by mists and clouds from uncultivated swamps, which few have courage or curiosity to penetrate. The multitude below these vapours appear, now as the dark haunts of terrific agents, on which none may intrude with impunity, and now all *a-glow*, with colours not their own, they are gazed at as the splendid palaces of happiness and power. But in all ages there have been a few, who, measuring and sounding the rivers of the vale at the feet of their furthest inaccessible falls, have learned that the sources must be far higher and far inward; a few, who even in the level streams have detected elements, which neither the vale itself, nor the surrounding mountains, contained, or could supply."<sup>1</sup>

The prevailing habits of association in the mind will greatly modify the manner in which a man communes with nature. Not only the temper of the affections, but the daily objects and sphere of habitual thought exercise a mighty influence. The

<sup>1</sup> Biographia Literaria.

air of the mind, not of the seasons, is the real atmosphere through which the scenes of the natural world, the dawning and the twilight, the sunrise and the sunset, the trees and the stars, are viewed. The mind reduplicates itself.<sup>1</sup> One man sees the loveliness abroad, another sees it not; they both behold a world veiled by their own habits of thought and feeling. In this sense, the eye looks through the mind, not the mind through the eye. The sense of vision puts on the spectacles of character, and looks through several mental lenses, and the creation is seen, not as *it* is, but as the *man* is. *Early* communion with nature, from childhood on into life, is therefore the truest, the most genuine; and such communion, together with the habit of tracing analogies, will enrich the mind's associative stores, and give to the law of association a nobleness of sweep, a paradisiacal power, and a gorgeousness of train like a Roman triumph. And of God in nature, as well as in his Word, it may be said, They that seek me *early* shall find me.

Let me add to these thoughts a proof, in the personal experience of a great mind, how strong and lasting are the associations, whatever they may be, which link the soul to the natural scenes and objects that have been watched with an early and heartfelt interest: "Sweet nature!" says John Foster, "I have conversed with her with inexpressible luxury; I have almost worshipped her. A flower, a tree, a bird, a fly, has been enough to kindle a delightful train of ideas and emotions, and sometimes to elevate the mind to sublime conceptions. When the autumn stole on, I observed it with the most vigilant attention, and felt a pensive regret to see *those* forms of beauty which tell that *all* the beauty is soon going to depart. One autumnal flower, the white convolvulus, excited very great interest, by recalling the season I spent at Chichester, where I happened to be very attentive to this flower, and once or twice, if you recollect, endeavoured to draw it with the pencil. I have at this moment the most lively image of my doing this, and of the delight I used to feel in looking at this beautiful flower in the hedges of those paths and fields, with which both you and I are so well acquainted."

<sup>1</sup> Dana's Poem on the Soul.

How beautiful this dome of sky,  
And the vast hills in fluctuation fixed  
At thy command, how awful! Shall the soul,  
Human and rational, report of Thee  
Even less than these? Be mute who will, who can,  
Yet I will praise Thee with impassioned voice.  
My lips, that may forget Thee in the crowd,  
Cannot forget Thee here, where Thou hast built  
For thine own glory, in the wilderness!

WORDSWORTH.

FORTH from his dark and lonely hiding-place,  
Portentous sight! the owlet Atheism,  
Sailing on obscene wings athwart the noon,  
Drops his blue-fringed lids, and holds them close,  
And hooting at the glorious sun in Heaven,  
Cries out, Where is it?

COLERIDGE'S *Fears in Solitude*.

It cannot be denied, without wilful blindness, that the so-called system of nature (that is, materialism, with the utter rejection of moral responsibility, of a present Providence, and of both present and future retribution) may influence the characters and actions of individuals, and even of communities, to a degree that almost does away the distinction between men and devils, and will make the page of the future historian resemble the narration of a madman's dreams.

*Satyrae's Letters*—COLERIDGE.

I can never think that man a Christian who has blotted out of his scheme the very powers by which only the great functions of Christianity can be sustained; neither can I think that any man, though he may make himself a marvellously clever disputant, ever could tower upwards into a very great philosopher, unless he should begin or should end with Christianity. . . . But Kant had no instincts of creation or restoration within his Apollyon mind; for he had no love, no faith, no self-distrust, no humility, no childlike docility; all which qualities belonged essentially to Coleridge's mind, and waited only for manhood and for sorrow to bring them forward. . . . Though a great man may, by a rare possibility, be an infidel, yet an intellect of the highest order must build upon Christianity. A very clever architect may choose to show his power by building with insufficient materials, but the supreme architect must require the very best; because the perfection of the forms cannot be shown but in the perfection of the matter.

DE QUINCY.

## CHAPTER III.

The Letter and the Spirit: Processes of Pantheism and Atheism:  
Symphony of Nature prelude to the great Religious Anthem.

IN the teachings of Nature there is a distinction, as in those of Scripture, between the letter and the Spirit; and while the Spirit giveth life, the letter, if you stop there, and rest in it, killeth. Materialism, Atheism, Pantheism, have all been found in conjunction with much apparent study of nature. Just so, a man may be an eminent philologist, and yet run through whole pages of eloquence and poetry in a dead language, understanding the words but heedless of the thought, unable to appreciate it. The forms of speech in the New Testament in Greek, may be the subject of profound investigation and knowledge, where all belief, consciousness, and living experience of the meaning of the text are excluded from the soul. Just so it may be with the study of the forms of nature. There may be neither glimpse of God, nor any vision or faith of spiritual realities.

A man that looks at glass,  
May on it stay his eye,  
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,  
And so the heavens espy.

His windows may be covered with cobwebs and dirt so thick, that he can see nothing through them, and he may never throw them open to let in the fresh air and uninterrupted light. A great many minds, that have windows made for use, see little else but the cobwebs and the sashes.

As to the darkening process in Nature, there is little or no difference in the end between Atheism and Pantheism. The

two things might seem to be the extreme opposites and antagonisms of one another; but the truth of the existence and attributes of God is equally distant from both. The *none* and the *all* lead here to the same fool's paradise. The fool that hath said in his heart, *No God!* is the corporal of one platoon, one regiment, one wing of the body of under-fools. The fool that hath said in his intellect, *All God!* is the recruiting sergeant of the other. The *a* privative and the *pan* collective, amount to the same thing; although the blasphemy of the *a* is more condensed and explicit, less reputable, and therefore less dangerous; while the Atheism of the *pan* is rarefied, transcendental, supportive of balloons, wearing sometimes a reverential nature-worshipping form of mystic piety; *mist-piety*, we would rather say, shrouding you with a kind of wet, that penetrates to the very bones, if long enough continued, while a strong, drenching rain would have done its work upon the skin and clothes, and left a possibility of drying in the next sunshine.

The *pan* is the drunkenness and pride of the intellect, *All God, no creatures!* The *a* has been less in reputation, as savouring rather of the coarseness of the appetites, a pettifogger for the animal passions; *All creatures, no God!* The *pan* has had some of its supporters among the philosophers and poets, and is in general too subtle and refined for a pot-house religion; the *a*, the *no God*, is an easier, more tangible, more intelligible creed. "But as to religion," said John Howe, "it is all one whether we make nothing to be God, or every thing; whether we allow of no God to worship, or leave none to worship him."

It is the fool who thus blinks at nature, but the folly begins in the heart, and is native only there; the intellect by itself never was so debased. "Religion," as Coleridge has profoundly remarked, "as both the corner-stone and the key-stone of morality, must have a *moral* origin; so far at least, that the evidence of its doctrines could not, like the truths of abstract science, be wholly independent of the will. It were therefore to be expected that fundamental truths would be such as MIGHT be denied, though only by the *fool*, and even by the fool from the madness of the *heart* alone."<sup>1</sup>

But how can there be such a thing as an Atheist? What is that process, by which, if there be such a thing, the soul of man

Biographia Literaria, vol. I, page 124.

can have come to the conclusion that there is no such reality as soul in the universe, and no such Being as God? A process more singular than that by which human flesh is converted into stone, more anomalous than the change of all animated existences into fossils. If a man were to deny the evidence of his own father, though protected and educated by him for years, though conversing with him every day of his own life, or if he were to assert that what seems to be a man communing with him, is nothing in the world but the fabric composing his dress, the stuff denominated clothes; this would be no greater insanity or impudence of intellect, than the denial of a God, or the assertion, by what is termed Pantheism, that there is no other God than the forms and dress of Nature, and that this universe is but an accidental clothes-horse. In all the operations of Nature God manifests himself as really to our senses, by as direct material evidence, as we ever ourselves can use, in the manifestation of ourselves to one another by sight and conversation. Whence then came that overwhelming, startling, supernatural intelligence to the soul of the Atheist, that there is no God? From what part of Nature, in himself or in the world around him, came the amazing announcement? "Tell," says John Foster, "of the mysterious voices which have spoken to you from the deeps of the creation, falsifying the expressions marked on its face. Tell of the new ideas, which, like meteors passing over the solitary wanderer, gave you the first glimpses of truth, while benighted in the common belief of the Divine existence."

The process by which a man becomes divested of that belief, conducts him to the highest climax of that character marked in Scripture by the name FOOL. It is the most utter and infinite debasement of the human reason, though it should even come upon him in the form of an angel taking him, and in the sensation of being taken, to the summit of a high mountain, there to be shown all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. But if he *knows* that there is no God, if this be not a conjecture, a wild, melancholy wish, or a shadow from the wings of Satan darkening the soul as he flies with it, "the wonder then turns," remarks John Foster, in one of the most striking passages in his Essays, "on the great process by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that *can* know that there is no God. What ages and what lights are requisite for THIS attainment! This



intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent, unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity by which even *he* would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that he perceives to exist, that cause may be a God. If he does not know every thing that has been done in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things, that is, precludes another Deity, by being one himself, he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist. But he must know that he does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the temerity with which he firmly avows his rejection, and acts accordingly."

*Having no hope, and without God in the world.* Such is the description of practical Atheism in the Word of God. And what a melancholy, dreary, desolate announcement! WITHOUT GOD, IN THE WORLD! The conception of an intelligent being in such a state is even more terrible, than the thought of a world without a God. The latter is an impossibility; but if it were not, the condition of intelligent beings in a world without a God would be, indeed, infinitely to be preferred to that of an intelligent accountable being without God in the world. Hence it is that the *fool* hath said *in his heart*, No God! It is a *wish*, a mere corrupt, depraved wish, and not an *opinion*. It is the *smoke* of the bottomless pit, not the flame, nor the logic. *Hath said in his heart*, not in his intellect; for the intellect and the conscience never can say that. If there were a world without a God, there could be no help for it, and the inhabitants of such a world could never have even the *conception* of a God. But to be without God in the world is a voluntary depravity, a chosen diabolism of existence, an enthronement of self instead of God, as the present worshipped Deity, even while the intellect and conscience are fully aware of the being of a God.

These groans and flickerings of unbelief can no more cast an element of darkness, or a cloud, or a shadow, between us and the Divine light, which God causes to be poured as a flood over all nature, than the croaking raven as he flies hooting over a corn-field, can darken the sun. These things are but night-mares, contortions, grimaces, like the babblings and mumblings of an idiot. As movements of the mind, they are but the diseased workings of a darkened and poisoned understanding, in which the habit of alienation from God produces results like the dread creations of *delirium tremens* in the nervous system of a drunkard. Dogs, wolves, snakes, and hissing demons appear, where there is nothing but the clear, sweet air, the bright sunlight, and the musical voices of nature, speaking of God. Nevertheless, there is now and then an attempt, in some of the popular literature of the day, to give currency to the Atheistic and Pantheistic element. And mingled with fine thought and poetic imagery, where is the opening mind that may not be fatally injured by its influence? There may be qualities in admired literary essays, like the sentiments of those chance-started friends, of whom Coleridge speaks,

False, and fair-foliaged as the Manchineel,  
 And tempting me to slumber in their shade  
 E'en mid the storm; then breathing subtlest damps,  
 Mixed their own venom with the rain from Heaven,  
 And I woke poisoned.

The droppings from such branches, whether in poetry or prose, turn into viper-thoughts that coil around the mind, and leave their poison in it, before it is aware of their meaning. It is sometimes intimated that the unbelieving dreams of Pantheism, being unintelligible to most of youthful mind, are harmless; but they would be less harmless, if they were clearer, if expressed with a more startling and blaspheming boldness. It would be as if putting forth your hand to pluck what seemed a violet in a bank of flowers, you grasped a cold slimy toad, or adder. A gentle boy or girl, on a Maying expedition, would be terrified almost to death with such an encounter; and an innocent believing mind, if you presented the realities of an irreligious philosophy in their native hideousness, would start back with like horror.

Would that by the side of every young and dreaming soul there might be a Guardian Ithuriel, with his sacred spear, to touch the reptile, "*squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,*" and develop the form from whence come those insinuating whispers. Avaunt, thou lying shape, with wings coloured as from Paradise, but faded in the atmosphere of Hell:

Who in this month of showers,  
Of dark brown gardens, and of peeping flowers,  
Mak'st devils' yule, with worse than wintry song,  
The blossoms, buds, and timorous leaves among.

A man whose heart is not in communion with God can no more read the higher lessons of Nature, than a man by the roadside can tell what message is flitting through the air, by gazing on the parallel wires of a telegraph. He must put himself in connection with the communicating mind. There is, indeed, a softening, gentle, meditative mood, to which the sights and sounds of Nature win the thoughtful mind; and oh, how grateful, how healing, how redeeming, from fretfulness and care, how preparatory for better things, are the sweet natural influences of a morning or evening landscape even on our mortal frame! It is a power prelude to the great harmony, and awakening attention; many analogies will be suggested, many thoughts excited, many fancies and feelings stirred. But the grand meaning, the utterance of Deity, the inward sense of his eternal power and Godhead, the perception of the Omnipresent, yet personal Intelligence, the sight and sense of all that God unquestionably means his creatures to behold in nature! the soul must be awake, indeed, for that, alive to God for that, and then how blessed!

Is there any thing so desirable as such communion? Is there any power of genius, any faculty of intellect, any art or creative grandeur of imagination, to be compared with that? The man who can really, not with mere sentimentalism, but in living union of the mind and heart, converse with God through nature, possesses, in material forms around him, a source of power and happiness inexhaustible and like the life of angels. We suppose the difference between the highest and the lowest orders of angelic intelligences themselves is simply this, that the first are capable of a nearer view of God, endowed with a more glorious power

of understanding and of sensibility in regard to the infinite, unfathomable, incomprehensible glory of his attributes; and in proportion to the greatness of their sensibilities, and the grandeur of their conceptions, is the ardour and fire of their devotion. So the highest life and glory of man is to be alive unto God; and when this grandeur of sensibility to Him, and this power of communion with Him, is carried, as the habit of the soul, into the forms of Nature, then the walls of our world are as the gates of Heaven. Earth is no more a prison, but a province of freedom, loveliness, and light, as one of the mansions of our Father's House, where we may walk with God, and prepare to be translated. How near we are to Him, in every part of His creation, when alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord!

One Spirit, His,

Who wore the platted crown with bleeding brows,  
 Rules universal nature. Not a flower,  
 But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,  
 Of his unrivalled pencil. He inspires  
 Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,  
 And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,  
 In grains as countless as the sea-side sands,  
 The forms with which he sprinkles all the earth.  
 Happy, who walks with Him! whom what he finds  
 Of flavour or of scent in fruit or flower,  
 Or what he views of beautiful, or grand  
 In nature, from the broad majestic oak,  
 To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,  
 Prompts with remembrance of a present God.

*Cowper's Task.*

Now in contrast with the glory and blessedness of this sublime and intelligent communion with God in Nature, what shall be said of the moral and mental imprisonment and insensibility, which sees nothing in Nature but lovely forms and colours; the yellow primrose by the river's brink, and nothing more; or merely a reduplication of man himself and his fancies, as a love-sick Narcissus before a mirror? Or what shall be said of that more degraded moral and mental idiocy, which can worship the

forms of Nature as themselves the God, and man himself a part of the pantisocracy, as a leaf upon the tree, as a wave upon the ocean? What can be so brutish as by intellectual effort to confound the instrument and conveyancer of thought, with the soul from which it issued? If a man should stand beside a printing-press, and seriously teach you that the press itself was part of your own brain, and that all its revolutions and heavings were but the ebb and flow of your consciousness, you would deem him a fit subject for a lunatic asylum. A man shall utter the same phrensies concerning God and the Created Universe, which as a press unfolds His thoughts to created mind, and straightway the man shall be himself semi-deified by fools, as a transcendental poet and philosopher. There are no depths of madness in this line into which men have not descended.

In that beautiful Poem on the music of the Eolian Harp, the poet Coleridge traces the transition, by which an imaginative mind, floating in indolent and passive mood upon the clouds of random phantasies, might pass into that phrensy; and then with great beauty, and by an appeal to his own experience, reproves it. He is sitting with his beloved wife, in their lovely cottage at Clevedon, where the myrtles blossomed in the open air, and the white-flowered jasmins twined across the porch, and the tallest rose peeped in at the chamber window. They could hear the faint murmur of the sea, evening and morning, and at silent noon. The little landscape round was green and woody.

How exquisite the scents,  
Snatch'd from yon bean-field! and the world so hush'd!  
The stilly murmur of the distant sea  
Tells us of silence.

There was a simple Lute, placed lengthwise in the clasping casement. The desultory breathings of the air, now low and sweet, now loud and rising, made music as natural and lovely as the scene; and now and then

Such a soft floating witchery of sound,  
As twilight Elfin's make, when they at eve,  
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-land,  
Where melodies round honey-dropping flowers,  
Footless and wild, like birds of Paradise,

Nor pause, nor perch, hovering on untamed wing!  
 O the one life within us and abroad,  
 Which meets all motion, and becomes its soul,  
 A light in sound, a sound-like power in light,  
 Rhythm in all thought; and joyance every where!  
 Methinks it should have been impossible  
 Not to love all things in a world so filled;  
 When the breeze warbles, and the mute, still air  
 Is Music slumbering on her instrument.

And thus, wild and various as the strains breathed through the lute by the random breathings of the wind, are the idle flitting phantasies across the indolent brain of the poet, reclining on the mid-way slope of the green hill at noon, and with half-closed eyes watching the sunbeams on the sea.

And what if all of animated nature  
 Be but organic harps diversely framed,  
 That tremble into thought, as o'er them sweeps,  
 Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,  
 At once the soul of each, and God of all!

Oh yes! here is the very devil's bridge, by which the thoughtful mind, not guarded nor enlightened in the understanding by a living Faith in the heart, may pass from poetry into pantheism. But a believing Friend without, and a sense of sin within, arrest these fancies.

And thy more serious eye, a mild reproof  
 Darts, O beloved woman! nor such thoughts,  
 Dim and unhallowed, dost thou not reject,  
 And biddest me walk humbly with my God,  
 Meek daughter in the family of Christ!  
 Well hast thou said, and holily dispraised  
 These shapenings of the unregenerate mind,  
 Bubbles, that glitter as they rise and break  
 On vain Philosophy's aye-babbling spring:  
 For never guiltless may I speak of Him,  
 The Incomprehensible! save when with awe  
 I praise him, and with Faith that inly feels;  
 Who with his saving mercies healed me,  
 A sinful and most miserable man!

The bats of pantheism and philosophic unbelief can have no clinging place in a soul sensible of sin and fleeing to a Saviour. The spiritual revelation that discloses guilt, dissipates also the dancing marsh-lights that assume the colouring of truth and heaven. The darkness and deception being in the darkened mind, and not in the telescope through which we see God, the film must be removed from the mental eye; for otherwise, though reason and religion are their own evidence, yet the mind discerns the truth in neither. Hence the direction given towards the Saviour, and the application requisite to Him, that He may give thee light, may prepare thee for the heavenly vision. "The natural sun is in this respect a symbol of the spiritual. Ere he is fully arisen, and while his glories are still under veil, he calls up the breeze to chase away the usurping vapours of the night season, and thus converts the air itself into the minister of its own purification; not surely in proof or elucidation of the light from heaven, but to prevent its interception. For religion passes out of the ken of reason only where the eye of reason has reached its own horizon; and then faith is but its continuation: even as the day softens away into the sweet twilight, and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness. It is night, sacred night! the upraised eye views only the starry heaven, which manifests itself alone; and the outward beholding is fixed on the sparks twinkling in the awful depth, though suns of other worlds, only to preserve the soul steady and collected in its pure act of inward adoration to the great I AM, and to the filial Word, that re-affirmeth it from eternity to eternity, whose choral echo is the universe."<sup>1</sup>

The great mind that gave utterance to these sentences, learned this wisdom from a deep spiritual experience, after passing through a vast circle of intellectual and speculative delusions. De Quincy has related of Coleridge as affirming in conversation an experience which Coleridge himself once appended, if we remember right, in a foot note to the very poem referred to. "On my first introduction to Coleridge," remarks De Quincy, "he reverted with strong compunction to a sentiment which he had expressed in earlier days upon prayer. In one of his youthful poems, speaking of God, he had said:

<sup>1</sup> *Biographia Literaria.*

Of whose all-seeing eye  
Aught to demand were impotence of mind.

This sentiment he now so utterly condemned, that on the contrary he told me, as his own peculiar opinion, that the act of praying was the very highest energy of which the human heart was capable; praying, that is, with the total concentration of the faculties; and the great mass of worldly men and absolutely learned men he pronounced incapable of prayer."



THOU who art Life and Light, I see thee spread  
Thy glories through these regions of the dead,  
I hear thee call the sleeper. Up! Behold  
The earth unveiled to thee, the heavens unrolled!  
On thy transformed soul celestial light  
Bursts; and the earth, transfigured, on thy sight  
Breaks a new sphere! Ay, stand in glad amaze,  
While all its figures opening on thy gaze,  
Unfold new meanings. Thou shalt understand  
Its mystic hierograph, thy God's own hand.

Ah! man shall read aright when he shall part  
With human schemes, and in the new-born heart  
Feel coursing new-born life; when from above  
Shall flow throughout his soul, joy, light, and love,  
And he shall follow up these streams, and find  
In ONE the source of nature, grace, and mind.  
There, he in God, and God in him, his soul  
Shall look abroad, and *feel* the world a *whole*.  
From nature up to nature's God no more  
Grove out his way through parts, nor place before  
The Former, the things formed. Man yet shall learn  
The outward by the inward to discern,  
The inward by the Spirit.

R. H. DANA.

SCIENCE is the rival of imagination, and by teaching that these stars are suns, has given a new interest to the anticipations of eternity, which can supply such inexhaustible materials of intelligence and wonder. Yet these stars seem to confess that there must be still sublimer regions for the reception of spirits, refined beyond the intercourse of all material lights; and even leave us to imagine that the whole material universe itself is only a place where beings are appointed to originate, and to be educated through successive scenes, till, passing over its utmost bounds to the immensity beyond, they there at length find themselves in the immediate presence of the Divinity.

JOHN FOSTER.

## CHAPTER IV.

Arrangement of the Works of Nature for Man's Education and Discipline: Spiritual Intuitions and Impulses in the Constitution of the Human Mind; Human Intuition compared with Animal Instinct: Influence and Effect of Procrastination.

IN the book of Ecclesiastes a very peculiar passage comes to view, which we are inclined to refer to the sacred lessons which God has written or illustrated for us in the natural world. "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time; also, he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh, from the beginning to the end." No man can behold the face of nature in the lovely month in which I am now writing, and not feel the force and beauty of the opening expression in this passage. God hath indeed made every thing beautiful in his time. In its proper season, and in its relations with man and the system of creation, Winter is beautiful, the Spring is beautiful, Summer is beautiful, and the Autumn is beautiful; and every circling month, be it participant of the qualities of November or of June, is beautiful in its time.

Moreover, God has connected moral lessons with all the changes of the seasons, all the laws that regulate our globe, all the fixtures, phenomena, and scenery of our earthly abode. The world is God's cradle and nursery for a race of intelligent beings. He has made all its arrangements with reference to the development of our faculties, and the education of our minds and hearts. There is a counterpart in our moral being and destiny to the system of nature, by which we are surrounded. Nature looks into the heart, as into a mirror, and finds a reflection there; and the heart, as a self-conscious mirror, receives the reflection of

nature into its depths, and reveals those spiritual lines, which, without the reflecting heart, are never visible to sense.

The system of nature is so arranged, that we may draw analogies and instructive lessons from it, or suggestions, in regard even to our eternal destiny; while in the study of God's works, by which we are surrounded, we have some of the noblest and most perfect means, both of moral and mental discipline. Thus God hath set the world in our hearts; in our own moral frame and destiny we have the purposes for which the world was framed, and the meanings which it was intended to sustain and illustrate; and which, as connected with our responsibilities and destinies for eternity, are so vast, so boundless, and the phenomena and laws of the physical globe are at the same time in themselves so wonderful and infinitely varied, that indeed on both accounts, on account both of the letter and the spirit, the frame-work and the lesson, it is impossible for any man to find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. Whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever; it hath a glorious, everlasting meaning; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it; and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.

We have perhaps in this announcement the great reason why the forms of nature, her grand and varied aspects of sublimity and beauty, the sunrise and the sunset, the sky by day, and this glorious light around us, night and the stars, the fountains, brooks, and rivers, the forests and the flowers, the cloud-capped mountain, the verdant plain, and the sublime and solemn ocean; why all these phenomena and forms, whether in storm or calm, exert so powerful an influence over the sensitive mind, and are to all our race objects of contemplation so full of interest and delight. It is not merely because the sense or requirement of sublimity and beauty in our intellectual constitution finds the elements of nourishment and satisfaction in these objects; but because we are moral beings, because this world, these forms, this natural life and light were intended to promote and sustain our education for God and a higher spiritual existence, and because God has made every thing, if rightly viewed, full of a divine, celestial meaning. Here, too, is the great ground of obligation for the study of God's works, the study of them in a spiritual and religious light, the observance and application of

their religious meanings, and not merely for artificial and economic purposes.

The soul of man His face designed to see,  
 Who gave these wonders to be seen by man,  
 Has here a previous scene of objects great,  
 On which to dwell; to stretch to that expanse  
 Of thought, to rise to that exalted height  
 Of admiration, to contract that awe,  
 And give her whole capacities that strength,  
 Which best may qualify for final joy.  
 The more our spirits are enlarged on earth,  
 The deeper draught they shall receive of Heaven.

YOUNG.

This being the object and design of Nature, her forms are invested with a deeper meaning than can be seen at a glance, and God has certainly given to Nature a power over the mind, which, though in many respects plain and intelligible, is sometimes, and in some things quite inscrutable. "I want to extract and absorb into my soul," remarked John Foster on one occasion, "the sublime mysticism that pervades all nature, but I cannot. I look on all the vast scene as I should on a column sculptured with ancient hieroglyphics, saying, there is significance there, but despairing to read. At every time, it is as if I met a ghost of solemn, mysterious, and indefinable aspect, but while I attempt to arrest it, to ask it the veiled secrets of the world, it vanishes." This makes us recur to the passage of Scripture before quoted, that no man can find out the work that God maketh, from the beginning to the end.

We are to remember that the same Being made the world, who by himself carries on and executes the plan of its redemption. Can there, then, be the least doubt, that in the pre-arrangement of that plan, the world itself, which was to be its theatre, was created and arranged as it is, with special reference to the accomplishment of the purpose for which it was spoken into existence? All the laws and changes of this habitable globe are but as the loom, into which God puts the web of his providence, to be unrolled. The stuff is immortality. Redemption takes it up, gives it form and colouring for eternity; and when the work is done, the loom itself, grand, and costly, and glorious

as its frame may seem to us, will be laid aside, as having subserved its mighty end; will give place to some manifestation of the Divine Wisdom, some shadowing forth of the Divine attributes, through material agencies, still more transcendently sublime. None will regret the wreck, or rubbish, or burning of one world, passing into the glory of another.

In the grand generalizations of Humboldt there are some admirable disclosures of the nature of the connection between the physical phenomena of sublimity and beauty, and their exciting effect upon the soul. The following passage from the *Cosmos* goes far towards the spiritual light going and returning between God's two revelations of the Scriptures and the worlds. "In the uniform plain, bounded only by the distant horizon, where the lowly heather, the cistus, or waving grasses deck the soil; on the ocean shore, where the waves, softly rippling over the beach, leave a track, green with the weeds of the sea; every where the mind is penetrated by the same sense of the grandeur and vast expanse of nature, revealing to the soul, by a mysterious inspiration, the existence of laws that regulate the forces of the universe. Mere communion with nature, mere contact with the free air, exercise a soothing, yet strengthening influence on the wearied spirit, calm the storm of passion, and soften the heart when shaken by sorrow to its inmost depths. Every where, in every region of the globe, in every stage of intellectual culture, the same sources of enjoyment are alike vouchsafed to man. The earnest and solemn thoughts awakened by a communion with nature intuitively arise from a presentiment of the order and harmony pervading the whole universe, and from the contrast we draw between the narrow limits of our own existence and the image of infinity revealed on every side, whether we look upward to the starry vault of heaven, or scan the far-stretching plain before us, or seek to trace the dim horizon across the vast expanse of ocean."

But this is not all. There are particular lessons, and the habit of discovering analogies is inestimable. It may be so formed, gradually, as to arm the vision of the soul towards nature with a moral telescopic power. Thus nature may be read habitually as a revelation, and all the while an unobserved process of simplicity and refinement in the mind and heart may be going on, as the result of uninterrupted communion with so

many lovely scenes in God's beautiful world. An interesting reflection occurs in Foster's memoranda of intervals of thought. "*Looking at these objects is reading;*" said he to himself, while beholding various rural scenes, meadows, sheep, the river, and the landscape; "is not this *more* than reading descriptions of these things?" He had been regretting how little he had read respecting some things that can be seen. The truth is, both the reading and the looking are important; but even the looking should be reading, or the reading can be of little account as to practical knowledge and reflection.

Now when Humboldt speaks of the earnest and solemn thoughts that *intuitively* arise from a presentiment within us, connected with the image of infinity around us, he refers to an innate power of discovery and appreciation of great spiritual truths, that, as it were, lie slumbering in our own souls, till external realities furnish awakening occasions and excitements. There is a correspondence between the instinctive and intuitive discernment and knowledges of the soul, and the frame and goings on of the world, in which it is confined for a season as in a school-house. What we see, carries us beyond what is seen by an intuitive necessity in our own being. And the intuitive faculties of the mind, as they are sometimes seen judging of nature, reading what the forms of nature mean, or rising to what they indicate, are most surprising; nay, they excite our solemn reverence and awe, and make us think of David's exclamation, "*I am fearfully and wonderfully made!*"

SIN clouds the mind's clear vision; man, not earth,  
Around the self-starv'd Soul has spread a dearth,  
The earth is full of life: the living Hand  
Touched it with life; and all its forms expand  
With principles of being made to suit  
Man's varied powers, and raise him from the brute.  
And shall the earth of higher ends be full?  
Earth, which thou tread'st; and thy poor mind be dull?  
Thou talk of life, with half thy soul asleep?  
Thou living dead man, let thy spirits leap  
Forth to the day; and let the fresh air blow  
Through thy soul's shut up mansion. Would'st thou know  
Something of what is life? Shake off this death!  
Have thy soul feel the universal breath  
With which all nature's quick; and learn to be  
Sharer in all that thou dost touch or see.  
Break from thy body's grasp, thy spirit's trance;  
Give thy soul air, thy faculties expanse,  
Knock off the shackles which thy spirit bind  
To dust and sense, and set at large thy mind!  
Then move in sympathy with God's great whole,  
And be like man at first, A LIVING SOUL!

DANA. *'Thoughts on the Soul.'*



It is because man useth so amiss  
Her dearest blessings, Nature seemeth sad;  
Else why should she, in such fresh hour as this,  
Not lift the veil, in revelation glad,  
From her fair face? It is that man is mad!  
Then chide me not, clear Star, that I repine,  
When nature grieves; nor deem this heart is bad.  
Thou lookest towards earth; but yet the heavens are thine,  
While I to earth am bound. When will the heavens be mine?

If man would but his finer nature learn,  
And not in life fantastic lose the sense  
Of simple things; could nature's features stern  
Teach him be thoughtful, then, with soul intense,  
I should not yearn for God to take me hence,  
But bear my lot, albeit in spirit bowed,  
Remembering humbly why it is, and whence:  
But when I see cold man of reason proud,  
My solitude is sad, I'm lonely in the crowd.

DANA'S '*Daybreak.*'

## CHAPTER V.

Powers of Intuition in the soul: Effect of neglecting them: Degree of Perfection to which they may be developed: Destructive instincts of Kant: Direction of the spiritual instinct: Ruinous result of disobedience to it.

THERE is a native power of *spiritual* judgment in man, if he had been habituated to exercise it, before which the universe might be almost as full of light as the pages of Divine Revelation. On one occasion, our Blessed Lord, in reasoning with the Jews, puts their ability to judge and decide concerning spiritual things on the same level with their ability to judge, from the appearances in the sky, the nature of the weather. It is a most striking appeal, which is thus made: "When ye see a cloud rise out of the West, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the South wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites! Ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth, but how is it that ye do not discern this time? YEA, AND WHY EVEN OF YOURSELVES, JUDGE YE NOT WHAT IS RIGHT?"

This is a great and important argument; full of meaning more than meets the eye; appealing to the mysterious depths of our own nature, depths out of which we not only judge, but shall be judged, and in which God hath not only set a counterpart of the world that now is, but an image of that which is to come.

The world of nature is as a series of signals to a prisoner, signals arranged for his deliverance; for the soul of man is in a dungeon, until a communion is established with God, and a man becomes "the Lord's freeman." In order to rescue the prisoner,

the deliverer must first gain his attention, must make him consider the meaning of the signs and sounds around him. He hears a familiar harp-melody, like King Richard sleeping in his prison, and awakened by the minstrelsy of his faithful follower. The Spirit breathes upon the Word, or some providence of solemn power awakes him, and he begins to listen to his God. Nature herself speaks, now no longer unheeded. Now he watches and interprets. Now what vast, infinite, glorious meanings, what grand awakening lessons shine and speak around him!

“Enough of science and of art!  
 Close up these barren leaves,  
 Come forth, and bring with you a heart,  
 That watches and receives.”

The poet and the painter see a world of their own in nature. They see what is reflected in the depths of their own being, what is wakened into life in an intelligent sensibility by the presentation of nature, or formed by the power of a creative imagination. A great English landscape painter is said to have been engaged on one of his works, while a lady of rank and taste, looking on, remarked, “But, Mr. Turner, I do not see in nature all that you describe there.” “Ah, Madam,” answered the painter, “do you not wish you could?”

This inward and intuitive sight is indeed a great possession. And there is vast power in that which is instinctive and spontaneous. The greatest proof of genius is perhaps its spontaneous, irrepressible, natural activity. It is rather intuitive impulse than conscious power. A soul richly endowed, is alive to all elements of beauty, to all the things that God has made to act upon the mind, and they produce their full effect upon a sensitive nature, and set the life of genius in motion, even as the wind breathes upon an Eolian Harp, as the sun quickens the leaves, the trees, the flowers. It is an enviable thing to be so constituted; such a mind enjoys creation; such a mind works spontaneously, not because its path of action or of feeling, or its object of attainment, or its work in hand, has been pronounced by critical philosophy in accordance with the nature of the beautiful; but because it is the instinctive impulse and spontaneous activity of the individual mind, seeking to give expression, realization, to its

original imaginings and impressions. But this excessively susceptible constitution of mind is given to few; and of those who do partake of the power of genius, the greater part have debased it, dimmed its clearness, destroyed its purity and simplicity, blunted its susceptibility, and put out its light.

And how universally do men strive, by the putrid joys of sense and passion, to keep themselves ever from the knowledge of the fineness of the sensibilities which God has given them! This mind, which might behold a world of glory in created things, and look through them as through a transparent veil to things infinitely *more* glorious, signified or contained within the covering, is as dull and heavy as a piece of anthracite coal. Who made it so? Alas, habits of sense and sin have done this. If from childhood the soul had been educated for God, in habits accordant with its spiritual nature, it would be full of life, love, and sensibility, in harmony with all lovely things in the natural world, beholding the spiritual world through the natural, alive to all excitement from natural and intellectual beauty, and as ready to its duty as a child to its play. What a dreadful destruction of the mind's nicer sensibilities results from a sensual life! What a decline, decay, and paralysis of its intuitive powers, so that the very existence of such a thing as spiritual intuition, in reference to a spiritual world, may be questioned, if not denied!

A man may be frightfully successful in such a process of destruction if long enough continued, upon his own nature. "Who can read without indignation of Kant," remarks De Quincy, "that at his own table, in social sincerity and confidential talk, let him say what he would in his books, he exulted in the prospect of absolute and ultimate annihilation; that he planted his glory in the grave, and was ambitious of rotting for ever! The king of Prussia, though a personal friend of Kant's, found himself obliged to level his State thunders at some of his doctrines, and terrified him in his advance; else I am persuaded that Kant would have formally delivered Atheism from the Professor's chair, and would have enthroned the horrid ghoulish creed, which privately he professed, in the University of Königsberg. It required the artillery of a great king to make him pause. The fact is, that as the stomach has been known by means of its natural secretion, to attack not only whatsoever alien body

is introduced within it, but also (as John Hunter first showed) sometimes to attack itself and its own organic structure; so, and with the same preternatural extension of instinct, did Kant carry forward his destroying functions, until he turned them upon his own hopes, and the pledges of his own superiority to the dog, the ape, the worm."

This is exceedingly striking and illustrative. But according to the argument and train of thought we are now pursuing, it was not Kant's *instinct* thus working for destruction, and labouring downwards to the brute, but his *habit* of *materialism* and *Atheism*, working *against* instinct, and at length overcoming it, and deadening it in a paralytic silence. De Quincy in this passage uses the word *instinct* for a personal and peculiar perversion and *depravity* of instinct, contrary to the immortal and heaven-created instinct of mankind.

It is impossible to say what would be, what might *not* be, the power of spiritual discernment in man, if it were carefully cultivated from the beginning. For it is a power sometimes exercised even in the midst of the ruin and obtuseness produced by depravity, and in spite of the supreme prevalence of a selfish will. Poetical minds have recognized this power, and described it as exercised within the ruins of our nature, in striking, though highly figurative language. They tell us,

That in a season of calm weather,  
 Though inland far we be,  
 Our souls have sight of that immortal sea  
 Which brought us hither;  
 Can in a moment travel thither,  
 And see the children sport upon the shore,  
 And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore!

Yes! we do hear them! They roll, and dash, and roar, sublime in their infinity, and we cannot *but* hear them; it is difficult to believe that there is ever a period in which the human soul is utterly unconscious in regard to the sounds from the eternal world. If it be regenerate, eternal truths are the scenery and the atmosphere, amidst which it lives and breathes; and it loves to recognise a near, dear, and powerful relationship as to an eternal home. It "walks thoughtful on the solemn, silent shore of that vast ocean it must sail so soon!"

But if men be unregenerate, then, from the existence of the same great realities, and their indestructible relationship to them, they cannot remain unconscious of what is before them. A dreadful sound is in their ears. Human nature itself, in the agitation of its constituent elements, is restless and audible. The great IDEAS of God, Spirit, Immortality, Eternity, Duty, Responsibility, Retribution, wrestle together. Warning voices rise from the unfathomed spiritual depths of the soul, instinctive shudderings shake its spiritual frame, and moanings may be heard, like the low wail of the elements before the rushing storm. And when the last hour comes, and the being is to be left for ever to the dreadful elemental war,

"In that dread moment, how the frantic soul  
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement,  
And shrieking, cries for help!"

Not only from this constitution of our immortal nature, formed for spiritual realities, and not for temporal shadows, for an eternal spiritual abode, and not a mere tent in the desert, pitched to-day, and struck to-morrow for the passage; not only from this immortal constitution, linking us to things to come, and forewarning us of them; but from the manner in which this subject is spoken of in the Word of God, we have reason to believe that there is a *native*, instinctive, spiritual intelligence in man, in reference to the eternal world, answering to the power of instinct in animals; an organization *like* that of the animal instinct, though incomparably superior to it, combining the intuition both of the material and immortal parts of our nature; a perpetual appeal to conscience and pressure upon it, from intuitive convictions, to which, as well as to conscience, the appeal from God in his Word, and from external nature, addresses itself. In the development of body and soul together, this intuitive power is developed, and is susceptible of cultivation to an amazing degree of perfection and of certainty.

An instance of this kind of instinct in animals is given in the wonderful power and certainty of the migratory impulse in birds, and their obedience to it, and God refers his own neglectful people to its development, for a lesson. "Yea," says the Prophet Jeremiah, "the stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed

times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord. They have rejected the Word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them?" There is a spiritual instinct working in man with just as unerring certainty as that which guides the turtle, the crane, and the swallow on their pathless way to climes and seasons at the distance of near half the globe; but man disobeys it, and disregards the revelation which appeals to it, and which was given for its cultivation and its guidance. Of course, the longer it is neglected and disobeyed, the less perceptible and the weaker it becomes. Still, it never goes out of existence; there always remains the consciousness of immortality, the instinctive feeling of the necessity of preparing for the future world, and an instinctive warning and prediction of evil to come, if there be not this preparation.

The direction in which this instinct impels the soul, is always towards God, and to the exercise of prayer; and men experience it and disobey it, countless millions of times in their habitual existence; experience it and disobey it, almost unconsciously. If they yielded to the instinctive warning impulse and obeyed it, under guidance of God's Word, it would become a power of discernment and of knowledge in reference to the spiritual world, infinitely more wonderful in precision and far-reaching insight, even prophetic insight, than the instinct of animals in regard to the sphere of their existence in this world.

The instinct of animals is always the same, admitting of neither cultivation nor increase. If a blackbird could live long enough to have migrated a thousand seasons, it would have a power of instinct no keener in discernment, no more intense in impulse, the thousandth year than the first. So the beavers for a thousand generations would build their dams exactly as the first beaver built them; and the bees, if they could live a thousand years, would construct their cells unvaryingly the thousandth year as they did the first, and would gain nothing from experience, and add nothing to the power of instinct.

But with man it is different. Every act of obedience to *his* spiritual instincts strengthens their power. If he always obeyed their impulses under guidance of the Word of God, there is no saying to what amazing knowledge of the future world, instinctively, he might arrive. He might almost pierce the veil that

separates between himself and spiritual realities, and behold them and commune with them, as if the barrier that disconnects, or rather dissevers him, from the invisible world, were broken down. He would attain to such a knowledge of spiritual things, as would appear incredible to a worldly mind, and supernatural to a Christian.

But the instinct which would be thus quickened and expanded almost into the vision of inspiration by habits of obedience to it in communion with God, and under the light of his Word, grows weaker and weaker by being disobeyed, till it almost dies out, and leaves the soul in perfect darkness. Sensibility dies with it, and stupor and blindness united form the characteristic of the soul. The man becomes so hardened, that it is difficult to believe that such a mass of insensibility is really destined to the judgment; so hardened, that the spectator almost questions concerning his immortality.

And yet, even in such hardened natures, there is sometimes a sudden waking into life of the spiritual instinct, not to be accounted for on the principles of our common physiology. Sometimes, just as a dying lamp leaps up fitfully before it expires, this spiritual instinct in man, so long neglected and beaten down beneath sin and passion and evil habits of every kind, rises into a flame, that throws a strong and fearful light upon the world into which the man is speedily to enter. We have known authenticated cases of men predicting their own death, and at the same time declaring that they were given over to hopeless perdition.

And may it not be that the singular intimations which men sometimes have of the nearness of death are the results of this mysterious, hidden, spiritual instinct, roused into great activity and acuteness by the nearness of the eternal world, and feeling that nearness, when there is, to sense, no perceptible evidence of it? We say God sends such intimations often in mercy, and no doubt he does; but often they may spring from the very nature of man's immortal being, so fearfully and wonderfully made, which may predict to him sometimes his near entrance into eternity, with as unerring an impulse, as that with which the instinct of the birds predicts the time for their migration.

We have compared the spiritual instinct which is inwrought in man's constitution in regard to the spiritual world, warning



and impelling him to prepare for that world, with the instinctive impulses of the birds and beasts. In the animal creation, the instinct is evidently blind, unreasoning, and mechanical. It is not voluntary, but irresistible; they cannot help it, and they must obey it. Birds imprisoned have manifested, when the season of emigration came round, the same uneasiness and desire to remove, that they would have done in the midst of the wild flock in freedom. Beavers, even when tamed from infancy, will build dams in any pool of water, or even ditch, to which it may be possible for them to resort. We should probably find the same thing true of the impulses of instinct throughout the entire animal creation. The will has little or nothing to do with them, nor can they, as in man, be warped, or blinded, or destroyed by voluntary resistance.

But suppose it were otherwise. Suppose that in these cases the impulse of instinct looking to the future, and inwrought into the frame as a provision for the future, could be evaded, and should be turned aside, neglected, or perverted, for the sake of indulging in impulses of passion for the present. Suppose, for example, that the blackbird, when the mysterious inworking law begins to be felt, warning it to take wing for a warmer clime, should be enticed by the delights of some pleasant nest, or lovely, warm seclusion, or unexpected supply of present wants from day to day, into a habit of procrastination in reference to that migratory movement, towards which the impulse of instinct presses it. Suppose that habit of procrastination to be continued, until the season for the activity of this wondrous power of instinct is over, until the impulse which was roused up for the particular season and purpose of migration, ceases for that autumn to be felt. Then the consequence would be, that the bird would no longer have any guardian or guide in reference to the coming winter, would no longer be able to provide against the future, even if it could be supposed to know any thing about the future. It would no longer think of migration, and in the first wintry storm would perish. This would be something like the result of man's folly, guilt, and madness.

There is no such possibility in the case of the birds, but their instinct constrains them, involuntarily. I have wondered at the certainty and power of this impression, and at the social energy with which it works, in observing sometimes in the country the

gathering blackbirds in our forests previous to their annual departure for the South. The woods in a particular spot, were filled with greater multitudes of these songsters than one might have supposed could have been found in all the forests of the country for fifty miles round. The leafless trees were black with them, chattering like the noise of running brooks, and, as it were, holding counsels before the journey.

But how remarkable the unerring instinct that brings them together for this purpose, points out the quarter of the heavens and the straight line in it, along which they are to wing their pathless flight, and makes the social impulse of thousands as infallible and unflinching, as seasonable and energetic as if it were the impulse of one. There is neither mistake, nor delay, nor confusion, nor contradiction, nor any thing like human incredulity or unwillingness in the working of their migratory impulse. Men are both unwilling to migrate from their native earth, and to make any preparation for such passage; unwilling to enter eternity, and unbelieving in regard to it. They shrink back from the preparation requisite, and though immortal, they would, if they could, stay upon this earth, buried in its cares and banished from heaven for ever. The instincts of their spiritual nature are both debased and disregarded. Not so with the fowls of heaven. They are true to the nature with which the wisdom of God has framed them, and they follow the unknown path, whither the mysterious impression of instinct urges their removal.

We have supposed this habit of human procrastination to exist in the birds, and it would be followed by their destruction. But if to this supposition we add that of a conflict between the present preferences of the blackbird from day to day, and the calls and pressures of the power of instinct, so that day after day there should be a sense of wrong, and the feeling, every evening, that to-morrow there should be a setting out upon the journey, and an end of the delay; then there would not only be the madness that there is in man's conduct, but there would also be the accusations of conscience, the uneasiness, the upbraidings, the forebodings of the whole being, which, as long as the season for the active exercises of the instinctive impulse lasted, would be daily renewed, and daily would lay a cloud and torment of anguish on the existence even of a bird, until the period of the

activity of instinct had passed; when the bird, regardless of the future, would ignorantly and insensibly pass to its destruction in the winter's cold.

Now it is certain that there is a spiritual instinct in man, an intuition of his spiritual being, impelling him to provide for his future existence, warning him against the neglect of such preparation, so that the sense of his immortality and accountability broods over him like the day, and is a presence which is not to be put by. But this instinct in man is not mechanical, nor compulsory, nor irresistible, whether he choose or no, but demands and awaits the action of his will. It is combined with reason, and therefore, though right reason confirms its impulses as true, a man may, at the allurements of passion, reason against them.

It is combined also, and in most cases is overlaid and suffocated, with present desires, affections, impulses of transitory interest and pleasure. A man gives way to what is temporary and transitory, and submits to its dominion, but puts by the eternal. Thoughtless of the future world, for which conscience, instinct, and the Word of God bid him prepare, he yields to the impulses of present inclination, but resists the promptings of the spiritual instinct. The consequence is, that while the impulses of passion increase, till the present gratification becomes supreme, and passion irresistibly despotic, the impulse of instinct, and the light of intuition diminish, till, at length, in many souls, the light and sense of immortality die away, and the man goes to destruction, blindfold and insensible.

But the suppression of this spiritual intuition, as it cannot destroy our connection with the spiritual world, so neither can it alter the laws of our spiritual constitution. Prevented from acting with reference to a personal salvation, through faith in the realities of the eternal world as presented in God's Word, those laws break out in other directions, producing anomalies and superstitions. It sometimes seems, amidst men's neglect of the eternal world, as if both spiritual providences and beings were pressing upon us, to attract our notice, gain our attention, and give us warning; just as messengers to some dignitary in the centre of a crowded court, might seek in vain to get the man's ear, absorbed as he is in present business or gaiety, in order to communicate some message of the greatest importance. These

spiritual tendencies of our being, thus suppressed and defrauded of their right activity, may be laid hold upon for evil purposes, both by men and by wicked spirits.

Hence possibly have originated the supernatural tricks and pretensions, the mysteries and jugglings of magic, clairvoyance, and assumed intercourse with the spiritual world. Phenomena like those of mesmerism may perhaps be accounted for in the same way. The human mind, with its spiritual knowledge, intuitions and impulses, works admirably well with the eternal world, as presented in the Word of God, acknowledged and kept in full view. Otherwise it is like an injured and condemned steam-engine, in which the steam, instead of going into the proper cylinder, and working in the appointed way, hisses and splutters, and escapes through side crevices, to the scalding or injury of the bystanders. Just so, these spiritual intuitions and impulses of our being go off in every absurd direction, when not kept under guidance of God's Word; the force is expended in every way except the right, and perhaps in tricks of jugglery and superstition. There are none so superstitious, none so credulous, none so completely the sport of nonsense and of Satan, as those who have cast off the Word of God; none so hampered and tricked by lies from the invisible world, as those who disbelieve the realities of that world, as revealed in the Scriptures.

Let it be remembered that if the soul, under such unbelief and consequently in the rejection of Christ the Saviour, passes into the world of spirits, although the *power* of those faculties, which men have perverted and wasted here, will be resumed, yet the *perversion* will remain eternal. The wicked will be filled with his own ways, and even if left to his own self, with no other agencies or insurances of torment than his own mind and distorted sensibilities, must be miserable for ever.

Linked with the Immortal, Immortality  
Begins e'en here. For what is Time to thee,  
To whose cleared sight the night is turned to day,  
And that but changing life miscalled decay!

Is it not glorious then, from thine own heart  
To pour a stream of life? to make a part  
With thine eternal spirit, things that rot,  
That, looked on for a moment, are forgot,  
But to thine opening vision pass to take  
New forms of life, and in new beauties wake!

To thee the falling leaf but fades to bear  
Its hues and odours to some fresher air;  
Some passing sound floats by to yonder sphere  
That softly answers to thy listening ear.  
In one eternal round they go and come,  
And where they travel there hast thou a home  
For thy far-reaching thoughts. O Power Divine!  
Has this poor worm a spirit so like thine?  
Unwrap its folds, and clear its wings to go!  
Would I could quit earth, sin, and care, and woe!  
Nay, rather let me use the world aright;  
Thus make me ready for mine upward flight.

*Thoughts on the Soul.* DANA.

INSTEAD of the temple of science having been reared, it were more proper to say that the temple of nature had been evolved. The archetype of science is the universe; and it is in the disclosure of its successive parts, that science advances from step to step; not properly raising by any new architecture of its own, but rather unveiling by degrees an architecture as old as the creation. The labourers in philosophy create nothing, but only bring out into exhibition that which was before created. And there is a resulting harmony in their labours, however widely apart from each other they may have been prosecuted, not because they have adjusted one part to another, but because the adjustment has been already made to their hands. There comes forth, it is true, of their labours, a most magnificent harmony, yet not a harmony which they have made, but a pre-existent harmony which they have only made visible.

CHALMERS.

## CHAPTER VI.

Nature as a System of Types, and an Education by Types and Analogies: The secret of the *Mysticism* of Nature: Grandeur of the Science of Geography, as presented in the Manner of Arnold Guyot: The Abuses of Natural Science: The true and Heavenly Spirit and Object of Science.

It was a very beautiful remark of Lord Bacon, that "With regard to the sciences that contemplate Nature, the sacred philosopher declares it to be the glory of God to conceal a thing, but of the king to search it out; just as if the Divine Spirit were wont to be pleased with the innocent and gentle sport of children, who hide themselves that they may be found; and had chosen the human soul as a playmate, out of his indulgence and goodness towards man."

And it is the exercise of seeking and finding God and his glory beneath the veil suspended on the frame of universal nature, that strengthens, enlarges, and elevates the soul, and fits it, if grace be there, for the presence and enjoyment of God, when the veil is removed, and the soul in the spiritual world sees no more as through a glass darkly, but face to face. The forms of nature seem to have been designed to discipline man's mind, rather than to teach man knowledge; to educate, and not to inform the soul, is the great object for which the mind is placed within the physical senses, and surrounded by the physical world. The forms of nature are drawn around us, not so much to fill us with knowledge, or let light into the mind, as to make us evolve it ourselves in the exercise of our own powers; they are but as the mulberry-leaf to the silk worm which feeds upon it, indeed, but only to spin forth its beautiful fabric from itself.

This beautiful creation, with all its glorious, lovely, and interesting forms, is rather to be regarded as a slate, a blackboard

which God has placed before us, in order that we might draw upon it those demonstrations in regard to himself, which in the very nature of our minds he has made inevitable, than as a revelation to teach or read out those demonstrations. Nature is the great *diagram* presented to us, and the soul rejoices to meet it, and in its study to work out and evolve the demonstration. This is God's gracious method in educating us. If he had engraved the argument upon his works in letters, it had not been half so useful for us; there is all the difference that there is between the education of a boy in geometry by writing down the demonstration beneath the diagram, and merely setting him to read it, and on the other hand giving him the bare diagram, and making him evolve the demonstration from his own mind.

The world also is full of types; it is an education by types and analogies. Great mountains, vast oceans, the sky and the stormy wind, are types of the Infinite. The reigning constitutional ideas in the soul of man are counterparted, as it were, in the forms of nature. The constitution of our globe has been arranged for their development. As the Old Testament was a dispensation of types, foreshadowing the New and preparing for it, so this material globe and the orbed heavens round about it, are a dispensation of types foreshadowing the eternal world, and preparing for it. Nature is ever looking onward to the future, and directing our care thither. The globe itself was arranged both with reference to the development and education of the individual soul, and also with reference to the position and progressive civilization, dominion, and power of races and of nations.

The interpretation of nature depends upon the discovery and study of the laws of nature. Our planet is a mass, not so much of matter, as of principles and laws. We open a watch of fine workmanship, and are struck with the skill, the art, the ingenuity. It is nothing in comparison with the laws and elementary principles, could we see *those* at work, which constitute the matter of the watch itself what it is. So it is in every thing. As we meditate upon the laws, and by the discoveries of science are enabled more and more minutely to trace them, they manifest themselves so intricate, permeating, and omnipresent, that we almost lose sight of material nature and behold a transfiguration; as if body should withdraw from the form of a man, and leave



nothing but spirit in its place, beneath the same outlines. Our globe itself, when we begin to see something of the wondrous operation of living law in all nature, seems a spiritual body, for it is all compact, not of particles or elementary substances, but of principles and powers, working, transforming, changing, renovating, perpetually crossing, circling, and apparently inter-tangled, yet, as the different combinations of harmony in a piece of music, all running on, in perfect unity, to the same close.

Now it is impossible to say how much of the "mysticism" of nature, the mysterious power of nature over the sensitive soul, may be owing to the working of these invisible laws. We have to live long in communion with nature, and in habits of attentive observation and patient analysis, before we can begin to understand nature. Generation after generation may do something, and our grand work is in the discovery of law, both past and present. We learn very little by external form and colour, merely, although it is by these mainly that the influences of nature are expressed.

In nature as in human character, the elements that most plainly appear are not always the sign of those that are working within; the colour of all substances is only the rays that are reflected, not those that are absorbed. As we cannot tell the character of a man, till we have become thoroughly acquainted with him, as there may have been mysterious expressions upon his countenance, to which nothing but the history of his life and the knowledge of his habits will give the key; so there may be influences and expressions in nature unaccountable till her secret laws are more fully known. But the existence of these laws renders nature a visible Shechinah, a constant manifestation of the Deity. From the centre to the circumference these laws are in activity, pervading, animating, and making all things significant, as the laws of the Spirit of Life.

From the upheaving and formation of primordial mountain ranges, to the masses of soil hundreds of feet deep upon the surface, impregnated with invisible seeds, that if ever turned up to the light, though after the progress of ages, may rise in new forests of vegetation, what is there from the greatest to the least, that is not the action and expression of law? We trace it in the balancing of the clouds, the currents of the atmosphere,

the production and distribution of vapour and rain; the conjunction, intermixture, and separation of the elements of activity and power in the air; the presence and operation of heat, light, electricity, magnetism; the conversion of earth, air, and water into vegetable and animal life, the operations of instinct in birds and animals, the action and re-action of all forces and things in the universe.

Hence the grandeur of the science of geography, as an inquiry into the physiology of our globe, an endeavour, in the words of Guyot, "to seize those incessant mutual actions of the different portions of physical nature upon each other, of inorganic nature upon organized beings, upon man in particular, and upon the successive development of human societies; studying the reciprocal action of all those forces, the perpetual play of which constitutes what might be called the life of the globe. . . . If, taking life in its most simple aspect, we define it as a *mutual exchange of relations*, we cannot refuse this name to those lively actions and re-actions, to that perpetual play of the forces of matter, of which we are every day the witnesses. . . . It is life; the thousand voices of nature which make themselves heard around us, and which in so many ways betray that incessant and prodigious activity, proclaim it so loudly, that we cannot shut our ears to their language."

"We must elevate ourselves to the moral world," the same writer continues, in a strain which we rejoice to see commanding the attention of philosophers, "to understand the physical world; the physical world has no meaning, except by and for the moral world. It is in fact the universal law of all that exists in finite nature, not to have, in itself, either the reason or the entire aim of its own existence. Every being exists, not only for itself, but forms necessarily a portion of a great whole, of which the plan and the idea go infinitely beyond it, and in which it is destined to play a part. Thus inorganic nature exists, not only for itself, but to serve as a basis for the life of the plant and the animal; and in their service it performs functions of a kind greatly superior to those assigned to it by the laws which are purely physical and chemical. In the same manner, all nature, our globe, admirable as is its arrangement, is not the final end of creation; but it is the condition of the existence of man. It answers as an instrument by which his education is accomplished,

and performs in his service functions more exalted and noble than its own nature, and for which it was made. The superior being thus solicits, so to speak, the creation of the inferior being, and associates it to his own functions; and it is correct to say that inorganic nature is made for organised nature, and the whole globe for man, as both are made for God, the origin and end of all things."

"For him who can embrace with a glance the great harmonies of nature and of history, there is here the most admirable plan to study; there are the past and future destinies of the nations to decipher, traced in ineffaceable characters by the finger of Him who governs the world. Admirable order of the Supreme Intelligence and Goodness, which has arranged all for the great purpose of the education of man, and the realization of the plans of Mercy for his sake."

In a higher strain still, in reference to Law, as an effluence from God, pervading all nature, and binding the natural universe in harmony, as Moral Law does the moral universe, that great prophet and seer of nature, S. T. Coleridge, wrote near fifty years ago, as follows:

"The necessary tendency of all natural philosophy is from nature to intelligence; and this, and no other, is the true ground and occasion of the instinctive striving to introduce theory into our views of natural phenomena. The highest perfection of natural philosophy would consist in the perfect spiritualization of all the laws of nature into laws of intuition and intellect. The phenomena (*the material*) must wholly disappear, and the laws alone (*the formal*) must remain. Hence it comes that in nature itself, the more the principle of law breaks forth, the more does the *husk* drop off, the phenomena themselves become more spiritual, and at length cease altogether in our consciousness."

"The optical phenomena are but a geometry, the lines of which are drawn by light, and the materiality of this light itself has already become matter of doubt. In the appearances of magnetism all trace of matter is lost, and of the phenomena of gravitation, which not a few among the most illustrious Newtonians have declared no otherwise comprehensible, than as an immediate spiritual influence; there remains nothing but its law, the execution of which, on a vast scale, is the mechanism of the heavenly motions. The theory of natural philosophy would

then be completed; when all nature was demonstrated to be identical in essence with that, which, in its highest known power, exists in man as an intelligence and self-consciousness; when the heavens and the earth shall declare not only the power of their Maker, but the glory and the presence of their God, even as he appeared to the great prophet during the vision of the Mount in the skirts of his Divinity.”<sup>1</sup>

But here again the corrective and heavenly magnetism of a truly religious faith is needed, the belief and experimental knowledge of a personal God by the teaching of the Word and the Spirit; or that disastrous result may take place, to which we have already referred, of identifying the Law and the Lawgiver, “reducing the Creator to a mere *Anima Mundi*; a scheme,” says the same great writer in a powerful passage at the conclusion of his *Aids to Reflection*, “that has no advantage over *Spinosism* but its inconsistency, which does indeed make it suit a certain order of intellect, who, like the *Pleuronectæ*, or *Flat Fish* in *Ichthyology*, that have both eyes on the same side, never see but half of a subject at one time, and forgetting the one before they get to the other, are sure not to detect any inconsistency between them.”

An increasing unwillingness to contemplate the Supreme Being in his personal attributes, and thence a distaste to all the peculiar doctrines of the Christian Faith, the Trinity, the Incarnation, the Redemption, has been the consequence, Mr. Coleridge declares, of thus confounding God and Nature. He speaks of those who, with himself, (this having been for a brief period his own state,) under this unhealthful influence, have been so estranged from the Heavenly *Father*, the *living* God, as even to shrink from the personal pronouns as applied to the Deity! And he says that he knows and yearly meets with many, in whom a false and sickly *Taste* co-operates with the prevailing *Fashion*; many who find the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, far too *real*, too substantial; who feel it more in harmony with their indefinite sensations,

“To worship NATURE in the hill and valley  
Not knowing what they love.”

We have already alluded to Coleridge’s description of this devil’s bridge to Pantheism and Atheism, in his own poetry.

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge’s *Biographia Literaria*.

We will only add his description of a state of things which it is to be feared has been growing in some quarters to the present time, or finding an offset in the other extreme of error, the enshrining and idolizing of God in sacraments and wafers. "Among a numerous and increasing class of the higher and middle ranks, there is an inward withdrawing from the life and personal being of God, a turning of the thoughts exclusively to the so-called physical attributes, to the Omnipresence in the counterfeit form of Ubiquity, to the Immensity, the Infinity, the Immutability, the attributes of space, with a notion of Power as their substratum: a *Fate*, in short, not a Moral Creator and Governor! Let intelligence be imagined, and wherein does the conception of God differ essentially from that of gravitation (conceived as the cause of gravity) in the understanding of those, who represent the Deity not only as a necessary but as a *necessitated* being? those for whom Justice is but a scheme of general laws, and Holiness, and the divine hatred of sin, yea, and Sin itself, are words without meaning, or mere accommodations to a rude and barbarous race!"<sup>1</sup>

Hence, too, the enthronement of Power and Expediency as the law of public and private morality; hence the throttling of Conscience by human law, and throwing it under the Car of the State; as if God had made of organized society a great Juggernaut, before the wheels of which the most acceptable sacrifice to the Deity is the immolation of a personal conviction of right and wrong! But these monstrosities and exerescences, whether of philosophy or morality, can never change the deep eternal consciousness of the difference between holiness and sin, justice and injustice, good and evil. Wherever they gain a temporary lodging-place, such doctrines are like the work of those insects that bore in to the substance of healthy plants (the rose-tree itself thus becomes their nursery) and deposit their eggs; or under the bark of trees, or on the leaves, where a poisonous secretion festers the plant, and thus raises a bulb, beneath which the grub feeds and grows to perfection. Sometimes, however, they are like those intrusive *Ichneumon* flies, that deposit their eggs in the nests of other insects, where, as soon as the grubs are animated, they eat up every thing around them. Just so may the notions of expediency, instead of the eternal ideas and principles of right and wrong, consume all that is good, all the forms, and even the

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge's Aids to Reflection.

germs and possibilities, of real excellence in the character. Moreover, the system sets up a standard both of public and private morality, contrary to the Word of God, and gives birth to modes of reasoning, if reasoning it can be called, incompatible with the very subject of morality, subversive of its nature, incongruous with its essence, applicable only to interest; "a parcel of trashy sophistry in morals, the authors of which would not have employed themselves more irrationally, in submitting the works of Raphael or Titian to canons of criticism deduced from the sense of smell."

Most true it is, that those who will not raise themselves above nature, sink below it. Those who will not view it and use it in the light of another world, for the purposes disclosed from that world, and according to the Revelation of the God of nature and of grace in his word, are blinded by it. It becomes a dungeon, whose walls inclose the soul as in a living sepulchre, shutting it up from God and against him, instead of a bright and sacred veil through which to see him. Most true it is, that the understanding, or experimental faculty of our being, unirradiated by the reason and the Spirit, and not walking and working in the light of God, "has no appropriate object but the material world in relation to our worldly interests. The far-sighted prudence of man, and the more narrow, but at the same time far less fallible cunning of the fox, are both no other than a nobler substitute for salt, in order that the hog may not putrefy before its destined hour."<sup>1</sup>

But not to such abuses shall nature, or the studies of nature, or the enthusiasm of natural science, long be perverted. Another eye is in the field, that of a regenerated humanity, armed with the telescope of faith, and the wonder-working microscope of a profound humility. Another spirit is alive, and science is beginning to be alive with it. In the eloquent words of Guyot, "All is life for him who is alive; all is death for him that is dead. All is spirit for him who is spirit; all is matter for him who is nothing but matter. It is with the whole life and the whole intellect that we should study the work of Him, who is Life and Intellect itself."

"This work of the Supreme Intelligence, can it be otherwise than intelligent? The work of him who is all Life and all

<sup>1</sup> Coleridge. Note to the Aids to Reflection.

Love, must it not be living, and full of love? How should we not find in our earth itself the realization of an intelligent thought, of a thought of love to man, who is the end and aim of all creation, and the bright consummate plan of this admirable organization?

“Yes! certainly it is so. Faith so teaches, inspiring us with this sentiment, vague still, yet profound. Science so teaches, by a patient and long continued study, reserving this sublime view as the sweetest reward for our labour. Faith enlightened and expounded by science, the union of faith and science, is living, harmonious knowledge, is perfected faith, for it has become VISION.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Arnold Guyot, Comparative Physical Geography, Section 12.

PART II.

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VOICES OF THE SPRING.





It is the first mild day of March:  
Each minute sweeter than before,  
The Red-breast sings from the tall Larch  
That stands beside our door.  
There is a blessing in the air,  
Which seems a sense of joy to yield  
To the bare trees, and mountains bare,  
And grain in the green field.

WORDSWORTH.

ALL abiding and spiritual knowledge, infused into a grateful and affectionate fellow-Christian, is as the child of the mind that infuses it. The delight which he gives he receives; and in that bright and liberal hour, the gladdened preacher can scarce gather the ripe produce of to-day, without discovering and looking forward to the green fruits and embryos, the heritage and reversionary wealth of the days to come, till he bursts forth in prayer and thanksgiving. The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few. Join with me, reader, in the fervent prayer, that we may seek within us, what we can never find elsewhere, that we may *find* within us what no words can *put* there, that one only true religion, which elevateth knowledge into Being, which is at once the Science of Being, and the Being and the Life of all genuine Science.

COLERIDGE. *Appendix to the Statesman's Manual.*

AMID the quiet of this green recess,  
But to a higher mark than song can reach,  
Rose this pure eloquence; and when the stream  
Which overflowed the soul was passed away,  
A consciousness remained that it had left,  
Deposited upon the silent shore  
Of memory, images and precious thoughts,  
That shall not die, and cannot be destroyed.

WORDSWORTH.

AN instinctive taste teaches men to build their churches in flat countries with spire-steeple, which, as they cannot be referred to any other object, point as with silent finger to the sky and stars, and sometimes when they reflect the brazen light of a rich though rainy sunset, appear like a pyramid of flame burning heavenward.

*Satyrane's Letters*—COLERIDGE.

How suddenly that straight and glittering shaft  
Shot thwart the earth! In crown of living fire  
Up comes the day! As if they conscious quaff  
The sunny flood, hill, forest, city spire,  
Laugh in the wakening light. Go, vain desire!  
The dusky lights are gone; go thou thy way!  
And pining discontent, like them, expire!  
Be called my chamber PEACE, when ends the day,  
And let me with the dawn, like Pilgrim, sing and pray.

DANA'S DAYBREAK.

## PART II.

# VOICES OF THE SPRING.

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### CHAPTER VII.

Voices of the Spring: Beginning of the Moral Teaching of Nature: Mightiness of the Change from Winter to Spring: The Time of Seeds, and the Texts taken from it: Responsibilities arising from the Light of Nature.

IT is the first mild day of March, each minute sweeter than before! Such is the carol of an English Poet, descriptive of the opening of Spring, in an Island where the season steals upon the senses with a serenity and beauty, that in our New England climate are much later and slower in their development, though perhaps not less lovely when they come. The salutation of *our* native Poets breaks forth like an Anthem of the tempest: "The stormy March is come at last!" Nevertheless, with us also there are years when this cold and blustering month opens with a day and an air of such delightful warmth and promise, and the prophecy is carried into successive weeks with such blossoming fulness and fragrance, and such an evasion of wonted sleet and chilliness, that if the Indian Summer had made a lodgment in the bosom of the Spring, it could hardly be more charming. Thus the Spring is invested with an influence so sweet and soothing, so sacred, so almost introductory to a holier life, that in the quiet of the country a sensitive mind may find the spirit of this season more allied to the renewal of the soul by Divine Grace, and better fitted for the nourishment of

heavenly purposes, than that of any other cluster of months in the year. In a Living Calendar, a Calendar computed from the beginning or reviving of natural life and beauty, it is indeed the opening of the year, which it is strange should ever have been permitted to take its New Year's date in January.

It is life and love that mark the Spring, and weave its ruling characteristics. How exquisitely beautiful is the imagery descriptive of all this in the Field Songs of Inspiration!

"My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.

"For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone.

"The flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

"The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines, with the tender grape, give a good smell. Arise my love, my fair one, and come away."

Love now, a universal birth,  
 From heart to heart is stealing,  
 From earth to man, from man to earth;  
 It is the hour of feeling;  
 One moment now may give us more  
 Than fifty years of reason;  
 Our minds shall drink at every pore  
 The spirit of the season.

Some silent laws our hearts will make,  
 Which they shall long obey  
 We for the year to come may take  
 Our temper from to-day.  
 And from the blessed power that rolls  
 About, below, above,  
 We'll frame the measure of our souls;  
 They shall be tuned to love.

WORDSWORTH.

The moral teachings of all Nature may be regarded as beginning with the Spring. The touch of vernal light, and the kisses of the south wind, wake the earth and its living energies from their winter's slumber. There has been no death, and yet there

is a mighty resurrection into life. It is a gradual awakening from sleep, so gradual, that without a watchful effort in the mind, the whole process may pass, and no new admiration as of a new exercise of Almighty Power, be produced in the soul of the observer. This mighty impression of Creative energy is the first out-shining lesson of the Spring, but it shines increasingly, not suddenly, nor all at once. Such indeed is Nature's custom in all her lessons. What an awakening from death! What resurrection into life! Like most of those teachings, which appeal to the deepest beliefs of our being, they come with the still small voice, so gradually, so quietly, so gently stealing on the soul, like the passing of the dawn into the sunrise, that gross and careless natures seldom take note of them, and never experience the full sense of their power and meaning. There is often a poetic sense of their passing beauty, where there is no excitement, invigoration, or expansion of the mind, by their vast and glorious suggestions. The various seasons are like an Anthem, which few souls are musical enough to appreciate as a whole, though many may be touched by separate parts, from strain to strain successively. In the Anthem of Nature the changes pass into one another so imperceptibly, that what would be as the sound of many waters, if it came suddenly and without gradual preparation, is diminished and softened, is as the sound of a waterfall buried in a deep valley among old trees, and heard at a distance.

The change from mid-winter to the depth of Spring requires an abstracting effort of the mind to realize; for we are occupied with each day's gliding advancement, and we watch the indications of change, and the stealing steps of its progress, almost with impatience. The idea of the bursting bud, enlivens the forest before the sap has begun its journey in the branches, and the opening leaf is present to the mind beyond the bud, and the first May flowers are anticipated, and the green grass carries us into visions of Summer. So although sometimes we gather the red ivy-plums on a tuft of mossy green, above the melting snow, and bring home, now and then, a flower from the woods before the river opens, yet the great contrast has to be imagined, not seen. And therefore, when the fulness of time and change has come, the grandeur and glory of the process are forgotten.

In Italy, when the hoar-frosts are melted by the rising sun, the face of the world sometimes changes more in one day, or rather shows the picture of a change, than with us from February to May. To such an incident the poet Dante alludes, in the opening of the 24th Canto of his first vision:

In the year's early nonage, when the sun  
Tempers his tresses in Aquarius' urn,  
And now towards equal day the nights recede,  
When as the rime upon the earth puts on  
Her dazzling sister's image, (but not long  
Her milder sway endures;) then rises up  
The village hind, whom fails his wintery store,  
And looking out beholds the plains around  
All whitened; whence impatiently he smites  
His thighs, and to his hut returning in,  
There paces to and fro, wailing his lot,  
As a discomfited and helpless man.  
Then comes he forth again, and feels new hope  
Spring in his bosom, finding e'en thus soon  
The world hath changed his countenance; grasps his crook,  
And forth to pasture drives his little flock.

Such change a snow-storm in June might produce, and back again from white-bearded Winter to green and rosy Summer; but such suddenness is happily never known in God's gentle arrangement of our changing seasons, and therefore the greatness of the change is too little noted. Yet what *could* be greater? What prodigies can power Divine perform, exclaims the Poet Cowper:

More grand than it produces year by year,  
And all in sight of inattentive man?  
Familiar with the effect, we slight the cause,  
And in the constancy of nature's course,  
The regular return of genial months,  
And renovation of a faded world,  
See nought to wonder at.

Yet, what an exercise of Divine Power, what a new manifestation of creative power, every time that the winter of our

world gives place to Spring! Nature throws off her grave-clothes, and comes forth radiant in light and life. If the change were at any time so sudden, as when, at the voice of the Redeemer, Lazarus came forth, it would be overwhelming. The clothing of an army of dead bones with human flesh would not be more astonishing; the creation of a world could scarcely be more startling. It is only because the process is so gradual, that the impression is ever any thing less than that of a miracle.

Should God again  
As once in Gibeon, interrupt the race  
Of the undeviating and punctual sun,  
How would the world admire! but speaks it less  
An agency divine, to make him know  
His moment when to sink and when to rise,  
Age after age, than to arrest his course?  
All we behold is miracle; but, seen  
So only, all is miracle in vain."

What is a miracle? asks Dr. Young, in one of the profound pages of the *Night Thoughts*. A reproach upon mankind, a satire, that censures, even while it satisfies. For the common course of Nature proclaims to common sense a Deity, and miracles are sent to startle the sense from insensibility, to wake a sleeping world, and prove and manifest the Deity, not by any stronger arguments, but more recent ones.

"Say which imports more plenitude of power,  
Or nature's laws to fix or to repeal?  
To make a sun, or stop his mid career?  
To countermand his orders, and send back  
The flaming courier to the frightened east,  
Warmed and astonished at his evening ray,  
Or bid the moon, as with her journey tired,  
In Aijalon's soft flowery vale repose?  
Great things are these, still greater to create."

Through all the train of miracles from Adam to the present hour, there is nothing more amazing, duly weighed, than the unmiraculous survey of Heaven at night, when the brute sees



nought but spangles, and the fool no more, but the enlightened reason sees a present God.

“ Who sees him not  
 Nature’s controller, author, guide, and end?  
 Who turns his eye on nature’s midnight face,  
 But must inquire, what hand behind the scene,  
 What arm almighty put these wheeling globes  
 In motion, and wound up the vast machine?  
 Who rounded in his palm these spacious orbs?  
 Who bowled them flaming through the dark profound,  
 Numerous as glittering drops of morning dew,  
 Or sparks from populous cities in a blaze,  
 And set the bosom of old Night on fire ?”

Now it is the business of faith and love, as well as the province of genius, to restore to the processes of nature this impress and character of the miraculous, which custom hath stolen away. The veil may be raised, and the inspiration which looks beyond it, may be renewed, and common familiar scenes may be watched with a childlike and delighted wonder. The changes of the seasons are incomparably grand and beautiful to an eye thus gazing upon them. A passage in one of Foster’s letters to a friend shows the powerful impression of the opening Spring upon a mind of vivid sensibility, intently observant. “ The whole welcome visitation of blossoms, sweet verdure, cuckoos, and nightingales, is come down upon the earth, and made it all a new world within the last month. All the beauties of the scene have been displayed to me this afternoon in an extended rural walk, in which I anxiously endeavoured to seize all the magic images, and fix them in my mind, for a perpetual paradise of fancy to have recourse to, perhaps after I lose the power of receiving any more images by the eye. I could not help being amazed at the power which could thus, by means that none can understand, and in the space of a few weeks, or even days, pour such a deluge of charms over the creation. We should cultivate as much as possible the habit of being led by every thing we contemplate to the Great First Cause.”

It is in the stealing steps of spring that our quiet, silent, abiding lessons, the deep, ever recurring morals of our natural

world begin, not in thunder-tones, but in noiseless, irresistible processes. Here, first, is the foundation of the year's life; out of what is committed now, gently, or with careful labour, to the earth's bosom, come the earth's character, life, dress, habits, for the circling dance of months and seasons. The time of seeds, looking forward to results, is the time of weightiest, most instructive thought, most solemn warning.

Text after text has the Divine inspiring Spirit condescended to draw out of this part of the book of nature, re-writing it in the book of grace. Hence, from this arrangement of natural law, from these relations of cause and effect, ministered and manifested in the changes and products of our mortal abode, in the woods, flowers, and fruits of our pilgrimage, come all those strains of such prophetic knowledge, those proceeds of time and eternity, that by the force of repetition and demonstration in nature, as well as by the constitution of our moral being, pass from announcement into instinct, and are armed with intuitive and irresistible power. *He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

We may suppose that God has established that particular order of nature which we observe in our world, partly for the setting of the types of immortality. Eternal and spiritual lessons are to be taught from temporal, material, and natural analogies; and so God hath set one thing over against another; and if that which is natural comes first, it is only, or mainly, with reference to that which is immortal. Thus it is that the reasons and meanings of the works of God, and the arrangements of nature, are so infinite and grand, that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end. *He hath made every thing beautiful in his time; also he hath set the world in their heart,* and its lessons are heart-full. Having provided such arrangements in the order of nature that its laws can be made the moulds or vehicles of celestial truths, God is willing to make his own appeal in us to sense itself, for the illustration and victory of our faith. Sun, moon, and stars, the seasons and their changes, the day and the night, the grain of corn and its wondrous transformations, are as the illuminated margin of God's spiritual teachings to our souls.

Seed-time and harvest cannot come and go as seasons, and their laws cannot be familiarly known to us from year to year, without impressing on the mind a sense of opportunity and responsibility. The great lesson of a moral probation is borne upon the seasons of the year, is hidden in the very processes of nature, even as the seed itself is deposited in the earth, to germinate and be developed. These are stated ministries, knocking at the door of our hearts; forms of light and suggestion, visiting every man that is born into the world.

These things intimate how *much* light men may be sinning against, even if there were nothing *but* the light of nature shining. For, we are surrounded by ten thousand hints and influences appealing to our very senses, and poured upon our mortal frame to draw us near to God, and remind us of our immortality, and train us up for heaven. And these elements and influences *would* have great power over us, if we were not insensible, dead in trespasses and sins, voluntarily estranged from God, and under the influence of that carnal mind, which, instead of rejoicing in his light, and gratefully hailing the possibility of beholding him through his works, as through a glorious transparency, would shut out the sight as an unwelcome vision. If we could behold and compute, as angelic beings may do, all the *forms* of light, and the vast *amount* of light, in regard to heavenly things, coming to us from merely natural laws, scenes, and phenomena, we should be astounded at the guilt disclosed in that view alone. It would affect us in some measure as the application of the written law of God by the Holy Spirit affects the conscience. When the commandment came, says the apostle, sin revived, and I died.

In like manner, if the commandment came in mere nature, if the soul were quickened to see and feel *that* light, and to hear those voices which day uttereth to day, and night to night, the same guilt and condemnation would be discovered. We should find that *every* day, in every situation, we had been rejecting and disobeying a present God, a God revealing himself in power and glory to our very senses.

And thus it is that to a guilty soul, when conviction comes, the whole universe seems written over with hieroglyphics of guilt and judgment. The sunshine and the air reprove the soul, the stars look down in condemnation, all forms of light and

loveliness are witnesses against man's sin. The elements and processes of nature around him, in conjunction with the sacred intuitions within him, declare his immortality, and arraign him before his Creator for the violation of natural laws.

A man may possibly not be awakened out of this natural insensibility, nor have this darkness of the mind broken through, so long as the walls of his earthly tabernacle and the glorious frame of nature are round about him. He may *die* in darkness, though surrounded by such light. But we are compelled to suppose that when a guilty man passes thus into the more immediate presence of his Maker, all this neglected light will burst upon his soul; the knowledge of it, the sense of it, and the condemnation of it, will be clear and irresistible. Every soul will thus, at some time or another, *see light in God's light*; for when the soul has been drawn near to God, it will see how every thing reflected his glory; how the invisible things of the Creator were visible through the creation; how great and beautiful that light was, and how, in the midst of it, in insensibility to it, the soul was walking, *by preference*, in its own darkness.

Happy are they who are already sensible of the darkness, and desire to rise out of it! Happy they, who look forward to the coming time of light, and rejoice in the anticipation of it, longing for the day of His appearing. One of the finest poems of Henry Vaughan was composed in that anticipation of the judgment, when the types of Immortality and wrought veils of imagery in nature will be laid aside for the reality, when the night that reigns here will give place to an eternal day. Let us look to it, that we be up and dressed before the morning, lest that day come upon us as a thief.

#### THE DAWNING.

Ah! What time wilt thou come? when shall that cry,  
 The Bridegroom's coming! fill the sky?  
 Shall it in the evening run,  
 When our words and works are done?  
 Or will thine all-surprising light  
 Break at midnight,  
 When either sleep, or some dark pleasure,  
 Possesseth madmen without measure?  
 Or shall these early fragrant hours  
 Unlock thy bowers,

And with their blush of light descry  
 Thy locks crowned with eternity?  
 Indeed, it is the only time,  
 That with thy glory does best chime.  
 All now are stirring; every field  
     Full hymns doth yield.  
 The whole creation shakes off night,  
 And for thy shadow looks the light.  
 Stars now vanish without number,  
 Sleepy planets set and slumber,  
 The pury clouds disband and scatter,  
 All expect some sudden matter.  
 Not one beam triumphs, but, from far,  
     That morning star.  
 O, at what time soever thou,  
 Unknown to us, the heavens wilt bow,  
 And with thine angels in the van,  
 Descend to judge poor careless man,  
 Grant I may not like puddle lie  
 In a corrupt security.  
 Where, if a traveller water crave,  
 He finds it dead and in a grave;  
 But as this restless, vocal spring,  
 All day and night doth run and sing,  
 And though here born, yet is acquainted  
 Elsewhere, and flowing keeps untainted,  
 So let me all my busy age  
 In thy free services engage.  
 And though while here of force I must  
 Have commerce sometimes with poor dust,  
 And in my flesh, though vile and low,  
 As this doth in her channel flow,  
 Yet let my course, my aim, my love,  
 And chief acquaintance be above.  
 So when that day and hour shall run  
 In which thyself wilt be the Sun,  
 Thou'lt find me dressed and on my way,  
 Watching the Break of thy Great Day!

HENRY VAUGHAN.

BEFORE your sight  
Mounts on the breeze the butterfly, and soars,  
Small creature as she is, from earth's bright flowers,  
Into the dewy clouds! The soul ascends  
Towards her native firmament of heaven,  
When the fresh eagle, in the month of May,  
Upborne at evening on replenished wing,  
The shaded valley leaves, and leaves the dark  
Empurpled hills, conspicuously renewing  
A proud communication with the sun,  
Low sunk beneath the horizon.

WORDSWORTH.

WHAT is the world itself? thy world? A grave.  
Where is the dust that has not been alive?  
The spade, the plough, disturb our ancestors;  
From human mould we reap our daily bread.  
The globe around earth's hollow surface shakes,  
And is the cieling of her sleeping sons.

YOUNG.

Tis but a night, a long and moonless night,  
We make the grave our bed, and then are gone.  
Thus, at the shut of even, the weary bird  
Leaves the wide air, and in some lonely brake  
Cowers down, and dozes till the dawn of day,  
Then claps his well-fledged wings, and bears away.

BLAIR'S *Grave*.

BUT some one will say, How are the dead raised? and with what body do they come? Thou fool! That which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body which shall be; but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or of some other kind. But God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body.

*1st Corinthians, xv, 35-38.*

## CHAPTER VIII.

### Analogies from Nature to the Resurrection.

THE doctrine of the resurrection of the dead is purely a doctrine of Divine Revelation. Nevertheless, there is a foreshadowing of it in the processes of nature itself, so that it may be regarded also as a natural revelation in types and analogies, which only waited for the Word of God to receive their full interpretation and confirmation. All nature is but as the beginning or ground-work of God's revelations; a woof on which the bright and glorious figures of Divine Revelation are wrought, as flowers, landscapes, and historical tablets on a piece of tapestry. The only service of the texture and course of the natural world is to receive these superadded glories, to have them inwrought, (these grand and infinite truths, unattainable by intuitive intelligence,) inwrought and supported upon the very vestments of mortality, even as the sentences of God's word were threaded in the robes of the High Priest, and displayed as frontlets and fringes of his garments. The frame of Nature, yea, the universe itself, is but as a loom for the weaving and unrolling of truth revealing God; and when it shall have answered its present purpose, then it shall be laid aside, just as a loom is taken to pieces, when nothing more is to be done with it. Yea, O Lord God, said the inspired Psalmist, this earth of which thou hast of old laid the foundations, and these heavens which are the work of thy hands, shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end. It exalts the importance of the material universe, and gives it a grandeur even beyond its own



immeasurable wealth of the Divine intelligence revealed in its principles and laws for our study, when we regard it thus as God's loom, the frame-work, for higher designs and a more infinite glory.

In our globe there is reason to believe that the changes of the seasons, and the processes of seed time and harvest, were ordered and arranged on purpose to serve as indications and illustrations, of moral causes and consequences, opportunities and responsibilities, and as stepping stones for faith in regard to the great truths revealed in the Gospel.

Hence the perpetual appeals to these natural types and analogies. In disclosing and proving the doctrine of the resurrection, the inspired apostle goes directly to God's works, with an intimation that the lesson there taught for faith is so clear and palpable, that the reproach of a fool belongs to him, who, with such peculiar and significant manifestations of God's power to his very senses, doubts and questions, when the rising of the body from the dead is presented to his mind in the light of revelation. Thou fool! that which *thou* sowest is not quickened, except it *die*. Thou stumblest at the resurrection from the *dead*, not seeing that death itself is but a process *for* the resurrection. And so the apostle carries on the analogy, interweaving it step by step, process by process, with his argument, and rising higher and higher with the theme, till it ends in the Halleluia of immortality, Death is swallowed up in victory! Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!

But before we pursue more closely the particular argument of the apostle, let us begin a step further back, and consider the weight and power of the analogy from the change between the Winter and the Spring in our world, to the change between the death of the body and a new life in glory. We take the change from mid-winter to the depth of Spring, from the perfection of one season to the perfection of another, for that is the only way of fairly comprehending the analogy; and so regarded, what an awaking from death, what a resurrection into life, is presented to our senses! Abstract from the change itself all the intermediate *processes* of change, which, seen so constantly by us in their gradual approach, hide from us the *greatness* of the change, and thus only you can be prepared fitly to consider the power of the

analogy. For, if all the steps in the process of the resurrection were as open to our view as are the steps in the process from Winter to Spring and Summer, it would no longer be *faith* that is required of us. And if all the intermediate processes from Winter to Summer were as completely hidden, as the darkness of the grave and the curtain of futurity hide what is going on *there*; if Summer burst out of the midst of Winter as a living glorious body bursts out of the grave, then would the process which we now call that of nature, look as supernatural and incredible to us as the process which now is that of revelation.

Consider, if you should be standing on some elevation amidst the reign of perfect and absolute ice, death, and desolation in a winter's landscape, what would be your feelings, what the overwhelming awe and transport of surprise, if instantly, without any foretokening or preparatory steps or signs, the whole scene should break forth into the glowing life, verdure, and beauty of Summer. If you should witness that gloomy snow-covered ravine, now overhung with immoveable crags of ice, or bristling with naked trunks, suddenly changed into a musical, gurgling brook, embosomed in banks of fresh flowers and verdure! Those skeletons of trees, through which the winter wind sighs drearily, instantly covered with green foliage, whispering in the gentle breeze, and vocal with the melody of happy birds, singing for very excess of ecstacy! If you should see those barren, desolate, and icy fields suddenly springing with fresh herbage, breathing the fragrance of a million wild flowers, greeting the eye with green delicious meadows, and the slopes of luxuriant pastures, and refreshing dells of shrubbery, and copses of woodland, cool and shady in the summer's sun! It would be as if you saw the arm of Omnipotence made bare, as if you heard the voice of God, as if you saw the very lightning of his countenance!

The spring time is the time of seeds; and when a few weeks have glided away, the face of the earth is changed, and our very senses behold a resurrection. From the certainty of the connection between the sowing and the harvest, between the *kind* of sowing and the *kind* of harvest, between the poverty and scantiness of the sowing, and the richness and abundance of the harvest, between the weakness and corruption of the seed, and the power of the harvest, what lessons of instruction, admonition,

and animating hope and triumph has the God of grace and nature presented to our minds!

If any man, questioning and doubtful ask: How are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come? go to thine own cornfield, thou foolish interrogating speculator, and see what answer God makes thee through thine own sense and experience. Thou canst not commit a measure of barley to the rood of land thou tillest, but thine own faith in the processes of nature contradicts and reproves thy want of faith in the processes of grace. Dost thou ever dream that the same corn which thou sowest comes again into the light and air? Is it not a death, that thou committest unto, and dost thou not know that that which *thou* sowest is not quickened, except it die, and that thou sowest not that which shall be, but that which shall be changed, shall pass into other forms of life, shall pass through death itself into new life and abundance?

Dost thou ever question the future life of the grain because of present death and rottenness? But who giveth to thy grain its future life? is it thou, thy seed, or God? And cannot thy God as easily give a body to thy sleeping dust, as a harvest to thy rotting grain? Thou sowest thy grain, but thou canst not reproduce it; thou canst not take one step with it, but just to commit it to the ground; thou must leave all the rest with God, and art compelled to wait on God for its re-appearance. Well! thou man of doubt, God himself sows thy body, and he himself will re-produce it.

Or if we ourselves are to be regarded also as the husbandmen of the grave-yard, as the sowers of the human grain, because we carry dust to dust, ashes to ashes, because we clothe the body in its shroud, and build the coffin round it, and follow it in the funeral, and see it let down into the grave, and shovel the earth upon it, there also we have to leave all the rest with God; we can take not one step further. And can we do any thing more than this, when we put the seed of the year's life into the ground? Is not *that* a funeral also? Nevertheless, because of our entire confidence of seeing it again more glorious and abundant, we do not think of the funeral, but of the harvest; and the time of seeds is a time of hope and happiness. But do we not have to rely entirely upon God! If we had to put *all* the seed now existing in the world *at once* into the earth, it would not

trouble us, so great is this confidence; we feel sure that God will raise it again. And what greater confidence, what greater faith, does it require to believe that God will raise the dead? In both cases we have to rely entirely on God; it is only he who can accomplish the result.

We can no more produce a solitary rain-storm, or a quiet fall of dew to moisten the earth, and cause the seed in its bosom to germinate, than we can conduct, or even imagine, one of the processes that may be necessary to prepare the body for the last great exercise of Divine power upon it, in raising it incorruptible and full of glory. Yet this conscious ignorance and want of power in ourselves does not prevent us from relying upon God, in the confidence of a future harvest; and if we can trust God for the resurrection of our grain, we can also for the resurrection of our bodies. It is as easy for him to raise this mortal body and clothe it afresh in glory, as it is to multiply the seed sown, and make each dying kernel the parent of a multitudinous life.

Therefore, the resurrection of the just shall be the harvest of eternity, of which, in regard to the bodies of the just, death and the grave are but the spring-time, the sowing-time, the time of disappearance for a season, the time of kindly, hopeful burial for the seeds of hope. A Christian burial, of the land or of the sea, is not so much a funeral, a ceremonial of death, as it is a preparation for life; not so much a consequence of our *mortality*, as it is of our *immortality*; not so truly the subject for a dirge, as for a halleluia anthem. The processes of planting in the Spring are not so much a proof of *Winter*, as that the Winter is over and gone. And so the planting of these bodies, in the likeness of Christ's death, is a result of his divine mercy, and a confident assurance of his divine power, who hath abolished death and brought life and immortality to light.

Yes! this is our victory over thee, O Death, through thine Almighty Conqueror Jesus Christ! Thou art but our Lord's ministering usher for his followers to eternal life!

They are not thine,  
But only in thy keeping for a season,  
Till the great promised day of restitution.  
The illustrious Deliverer of mankind,  
The Son of God, thee foiled, Him in thy power  
Thou couldst not hold; self-vigorous he rose,

And shaking off thy fetters, soon retook  
 Those spoils his voluntary yielding lent;  
 Sure pledge of our releasement from thy thrall!  
 Twice twenty days he sojourned here on earth,  
 And showed himself alive to chosen witnesses  
 By proofs so strong, that the most slow-assenting  
 Had not a scruple left. This having done  
 He mounted up to heaven. Methinks I see him  
 Climb the aerial heights, and glide along  
 Athwart the severing clouds; but the faint eye,  
 Flung backwards in the chase, soon drops its hold,  
 Disabled quite, and jaded with pursuing.  
 Heaven's portals wide expand to let him in,  
 Nor are his friends shut out; as some great Prince,  
 Not for himself alone procures admission,  
 But for his train. It was his royal will  
 That where he is there should his followers be.  
 Death only lies between. A gloomy path!  
 Made yet more gloomy by our coward fears,  
 But not untrod, or tedious.

Now thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory, through  
 our Lord Jesus Christ. And thanks for the gift of that faith,  
 which accepts the victory, and knows it through the grave's de-  
 cay, although the universal earth be but one mighty burial-place.

The time draws on,  
 When not a single spot of burial earth,  
 Whether on land, or in the spacious sea,  
 But must give back its long committed dust  
 Inviolate: and faithfully shall then  
 Make up the full account, not the least atom  
 Embezzled or mislaid, of the whole tale,  
 Each soul shall have a body ready furnished,  
 And each shall have his own. Hence ye profane!  
 Ask not how this can be? Sure the same power  
 Who reared the piece at first, and took it down,  
 Can re-assemble the loose scattered parts,  
 And put them as they were. Almighty God  
 Has done much more; nor is his aim impaired  
 Through length of days; and what he can, he will.  
 His faithfulness stands bound to see it done.      BLAIR.

And a Christian grave-yard is a holy spot. Why should it be a gloomy mansion? Nay, the graves of the just are blessed, for death is not the victor there, but life; death is but the minister of life. A Christian grave-yard is a cradle, where, in the quiet motions of the globe, Jesus rocks his sleeping children. By and by he will wake them from their slumber, and in the arms of angels they shall be translated to the skies. *Them also that sleep with Jesus* will he bring with him. And many bodies of the Saints, *which slept*, arose. How beautiful, how serenely confident, is this language! How it takes its terror from the grave to consider it as a place of quiet slumber in the Lord! Them also which sleep in Jesus. As sentinels keep their night watch around the tent, so through this night of slumber in the tabernacle of the grave, God's angels may keep their watch, may have their appointed ministry.

The *kind* of resurrection to be experienced by the body depends on what a man sows for the life and character of the *soul*. Whether a man shall have part in the first resurrection, whether he will be one of Paul's hearers in the fifteenth chapter of his Epistle to the Corinthians, whether he will ever lift up that halleluia anthem over the death of the body, in the prospect of its glorious resurrection in the likeness of the Lord, is to be determined by the seed which he puts into his spiritual being. The use made of the seed-time of the soul, for things and seasons temporal, determines the harvest both of soul and body, both for time and eternity. What an infinite solemnity in the truth! What an exceeding and eternal weight of responsibility in the knowledge of it, and in all our movements in regard to it! Who that comes into existence, and has this law of his being once made known to him, ever can divest himself, for one moment, of this vast accountability, this charge of the character and destiny of soul and body for eternity? Can it be questioned that every habit which we form, of body or of spirit, is connected with our resurrection dress?

The habits of time will appear as the dress of eternity. He that raised up the Lord Jesus from the dead, shall also quicken your mortal bodies, *by His Spirit that dwelleth within you*. The habit of the Spirit is the habit of life, and death itself cannot interrupt it, if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you. By that same Spirit these bodies are to be

quickened, raised, transfigured; and with reference to these bodies especially it is, that the last Adam is said to be a quickening Spirit, and mortality is swallowed up of life. Even now, the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts is the beginning of this process; it produces even now an instinctive prediction of the resurrection. The whole earnest expectation of the creature, which waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, is sustained and strengthened by this sacred intuition. The hope in Christ takes up that as one of its elements, and does not leave us to the promise merely, but the day itself dawneth and the day-star ariseth in our hearts; and though as yet we see as through a glass darkly, yet we recognise the star,

*felt* / *highly* "And feel through all this fleshy dress  
Some shoots of everlastingness."

The glorious process begins with "Christ in you the hope of glory;" thus the principle of life is deposited, enshrined, as a flame in a globe, which is to be itself transfigured as one sphere of flame; and so the law of the Spirit of life in Christ works on, till it has permeated all things, and subdued all things to itself. Death cannot stop it, but only removes the process a step beyond our sight; and so, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the Spirit is life, because of righteousness. This corruptible puts on incorruption, and this mortal puts on immortality, by the power of that divine, indwelling, quickening Spirit. The translation and transfiguration of Enoch and Elijah may have been nothing more than millions of living saints shall experience in the twinkling of an eye, in the resurrection-morning. And the same change, which will then take place in a moment with the living body, may be going on through ages with the sleeping dust.

Just so it is in death. But thou  
Shalt in thy mother's bosom sleep,  
Nor till the wakeful morning know,  
How all night long they come and go,  
Who by the grave their heavenly watches keep.

Now from which quarter of the horizon shall we come into a grave-yard? There is the side of winter and death, and the side of spring, summer, and life. We must enter by the

Southern exposure, where the sun lies soft and warm upon the verdure, and lovely is that walk for meditation, in the light of the sunshine of faith in the soul. There may be days, when, though a snowy shroud seems to cover the graves on one side, there is a robe of fresh living green on the other. Look thou upon the grave in the direction of the quickening light, and read the vivid promise of the ray divine, and rejoice in it. This is that lesson so sweetly taught by the Poet Wordsworth, in that very beautiful, though simple, unpretending picture in the fifth book of the Excursion.

In changeful April, when, as he is wont,  
 Winter has re-assumed a short-lived sway,  
 And whitened all the surface of the fields,  
 If, from the sullen region of the North,  
 Towards the circuit of this holy ground,  
 Your walk conducts you, ere the vigorous sun,  
 High climbing, hath attained his noon-tide height,  
 These mounds, transversely lying side by side  
 From east to west before you, will appear  
 A dreary plain of unillumined snow,  
 With more than wintry cheerlessness and gloom  
 Saddening the heart. Go forward, and look back;  
 On the same circuit of this church-yard ground  
 Look, from the quarter whence the Lord of light,  
 Of life, of love, and gladness, doth dispense  
 His beams; which, unexcluded in their fall,  
 Upon the southern side of every grave  
 Have gently exercised a melting power;  
 Then will a vernal prospect greet your eye,  
 All fresh and beautiful, and green, and bright,  
 Hopeful and cheerful: vanished is the snow,  
 Vanished or hidden; and the whole domain,  
 To some, too lightly minded, might appear  
 A meadow-carpet for the dancing hours.  
 This contrast not unsuitable to life  
 Is to that other state more apposite,  
 Death, and its two-fold aspect; wintry one,  
 Cold, sullen, blank, from hope and joy shut out;  
 The other which the ray divine hath touched,  
 Replete with vivid promise, bright as spring.



We have been viewing our beautiful world as one of hieroglyphical predictions, both in the changes of its scenery and the working of its laws and elements of reproduction and decay. For the interpretation of this grand natural language we look into our own being, as well as into the Word of God, remembering that he hath set the world in our hearts. In this view, how full of profound meaning is the following suggestive and comprehensive passage from Coleridge, worthy to be made the text of another "Analogy of religion natural and revealed." It is contained in the first volume of the *Biographia Literaria*.

"They, and they only, can acquire the philosophic imagination, the sacred power of self-intuition, who, within themselves, can interpret and understand the symbol, that the wings of the air-sylph are forming within the skin of the caterpillar; those who feel in their own spirits the same instinct which impels the chrysalis of the horned fly to leave room in its involucrum for antennæ yet to come. They know and feel that the *potential* works *in* them, even as the *actual* works *on* them! In short, all the organs of sense are framed for a corresponding world of sense; and we have it. All the organs of spirit are framed for a corresponding world of spirit; though the latter organs are not developed alike in all. But they exist in all, and their first appearance discloses itself in the moral being."

And faith itself is in the moral being first, not in the intellectual. There, where the intuitive prediction first discloses itself, the germ of faith also takes root. There is a reflection of the world to come in the depths of our moral being, as the stars in heaven and the trees upon the banks are reflected in the bosom of a quiet lake. This is part of the evidence on which our faith is founded, for faith receives the *evidence* of things not seen, and is never supposition, or assumption, or blind confidence. The *evidence* is never such, nor was meant to be such, as to overpower the possibility or doubt, and if a man will keep the eye of the soul shut, he may doubt of every thing. The *evidence* of the great truths of our religious faith is such as to permit of faith being a voluntary exercise, a moral virtue, dependent, after all the overwhelming array of argument, on a right condition of the heart. Hence the great writer just quoted has said, that the grounds for the belief of God and a future state "could not be intellectually more evident without becoming morally less

effective; without counteracting its own end by sacrificing the *life* of faith to the cold mechanism of a worthless, because compulsory, assent."

This remark is exceedingly profound and important. The *evidence* of faith may be as demonstrative where the heart is right, as that of mathematics to the understanding; but the *life* of faith is not in the clearness of the proof, nor the comprehensiveness of the reason that embraces it, but in the congenial affections that spring to meet it, in the intuitive unerring spiritual yearnings that predict it, and in the earnest of the Spirit, which is the consequence and seal of our adoption as the sons of God.

Without or star or angel for their guide,  
Who worship God, shall find him. Humble Love,  
And not proud Reason, keeps the door of heaven.  
Love finds admission, where proud Science fails.  
Man's science is the culture of his heart,  
And not to lose his plummet in the depths  
Of nature, or the mere profound of God.

YOUNG'S *Night Thoughts*.

How much I regret to see so generally abandoned to the weeds of vanity, that fertile and vigorous space of life, in which might be planted the oaks and fruit-trees of enlightened principle and virtuous habit, which, growing up, would yield to old age an enjoyment, a glory, and a shade.

JOHN FOSTER.

AND when I grieve, O rather let it be  
That I, whom Nature taught to sit with her,  
On her proud mountains, by her rolling sea,  
Who, when the winds are up, with mighty stir  
Of woods and waters, feel the quickening spur  
To my strong spirit, who, as my own child,  
Do love the flower, and in the ragged burr  
A beauty see, that I this mother mild  
Should leave, and go with care and passions fierce and wild.

DANA'S *Daybreak*.

You do well to improve your opportunity; to speak in the rural phrase, this is your sowing time, and the sheaves that you look for never can be yours, unless you make that use of it. The colour of our whole life is generally such as the three or four first years in which we are our own masters make it. Then it is that we may be said to shape our own destiny, and to treasure up for ourselves a series of future successes or disappointments. Had I employed my time as wisely as you, in a situation very similar to yours, I had never been a poet perhaps; but I might by this time have acquired a character of more importance in society, and a situation in which my friends would have been better pleased to see me. But three years misspent in an Attorney's office were, almost of course, followed by several more equally misspent in the Temple, and the consequence has been, as the Italian epitaph says, "*Sto qui.*"

COWPER'S *Letters.*

## CHAPTER IX.

Voices of the Spring continued: Spiritual Agriculture laborious: The Fallow Ground, and the breaking of it up, in preparation for Sowing: The Process of Subsoiling in the Mind and Heart: The connection between Working and Praying: Consequences of the Skimming System.

THE Poets and Prophets of the Old Testament drew much of their imagery and illustration of spiritual things from rural occupations. So did our Blessed Lord and His Disciples. From this, as well as from their announcement of everlasting principles, their perpetual dealing with such principles, and their introduction of the human soul into the presence-chamber of eternal realities, resulted the universality, simplicity, and homely power of their compositions. God was pleased to put His Word in this shape.

Now there are two spring directions in the Prophets, bringing together the work of sowing and praying, and illustrating the dependence of each of these duties upon the other, and the relation of both for success to the state of the moral soil, and the labour necessary to be performed upon it; directions from different husbandmen, but almost in the same words, yet with some variety of addition and details; two in particular, so pointed and full of meaning, that we must bring them together from Hosea and Jeremiah. "Break up your fallow-ground," says the first and earlier Prophet (earlier by about a hundred years), "for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." This command comes down in the midst of a perfect shower of rural images; and it connects, in a remarkable manner, the ploughing, and all that kind of work upon the heart

and mind, indicated in that part of husbandry, with the work of seeking God, the work of effectually praying.

“Break up your fallow-ground,” says the second and more majestic of these Prophets, but not more pointed, ‘*and sow not among thorns.*’ Break up your fallow-ground, or all your sowing will be in vain. Here the process turns upon the *sowing*; in the other case upon the *seeking*; in both cases it is necessary for success. It is *time* to seek the Lord; but it is *useless* to seek him, indeed there is no true seeking of him, unless therewith you go to work upon your own soil, your own heart, and break up the fallow-ground.

It is time to sow; but it is useless to sow, unless first you dig and plough, and break up the hard soil, and the thorns with it. The work of praying itself is a kind of sowing; it is a sowing with God’s promises; and to this work especially both these Prophets refer, announcing directly, in answer to the question, How shall we gain God’s blessing? a work to be done on our part, along *with* prayer, if we would render prayer effectual. The intimate and essential connection between praying and working is no where in the Word of God more strikingly exhibited than in these passages.

In some of Paul’s recorded experiences, as well as admonitions, the illustrations of the same kind of truth are most instructive and impressive, and we may add, most encouraging. “By the grace of God I am what I am; and His grace bestowed on me was not in vain, but I laboured more abundantly than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.” So likewise in his Epistle to the Colossians, “Whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily.” Paul besought the grace of God, with amazing earnestness and importunity, yea, with great conflict in prayer, and at the same time laboured mightily in the direction of that grace; not only for it, but by it. Paul was a working, as well as a praying Christian; and he must have taken his type of piety, in the union of these, not only from his Lord’s example, but partly from just such instructive hints as these in the Prophets of the Old Testament.

A man *must* work. If any will not work, said Paul, neither shall he eat. It is so in spiritual things, as well as temporal. And if any will not work, neither can he pray, for working is

essential to praying; and the right union and combination of these two things would form the perfect and conquering Christian. A Christian must not only work *in* prayer, but he must work in order that he *may* pray. If a man would have spiritual blessings, he must put himself in the way of them, in the way of receiving them; if not, he is likely to lose them. A familiar instance is presented in the case of Thomas, at the resurrection of our Lord. For some inexplicable reason, he absented himself from the prayer-meeting of the disciples, the evening of the third day. It may have been his unbelief, which too often is permitted to cut the nerves of prayer, and to render almost the sight of a fellow-Christian distasteful. Perhaps he was wandering by himself, and brooding over the dark prospect, which after the few sweet years they had enjoyed of intercourse with their beloved Master, now gloomed before them. But there were duties for Thomas to perform in connection with his fellows, in the neglect of which he lost, much longer than they did, the light of Christ's presence; he continued without it, when the other disciples had found it, and rejoiced in it. He wandered on in darkness and unbelief for a succession of despairing days, that must have seemed to him like years, in storm and tempest, driven by the wind and tossed, because he was not with the disciples, at their gathering (though he probably knew of it) when the Lord himself came into their meeting.

So it not unfrequently happens. A man who would have blessings, must use the occasions of those blessings, he must seize the spring-time. And a man who would have Christ to sympathize with him, must himself sympathize with others. It is nothing but pride and selfishness that ever make men unsocial in their piety, whether it be of tears or joy.

But they who sow in tears at the season of Spring shall reap in joy; only first there must come that breaking up of the fallow-ground presented in the prophets. This breaking up, set forth as so essential to successful prayer, and to the right kind of sowing, intimates many things under the one bold image employed. The soil must be turned upside down, and thoroughly beaten to pieces. It must be so thoroughly furrowed and broken, that the thorns themselves shall die, and turn into manure.

This is no small task, even in things that stand related to this

life only. When any one class of duties has been neglected, or the preparation necessary for any employment in life has long been deferred, an amount of passive resistance accumulates, which at the very outset it is difficult to overcome. There is a repugnance and a habit of indolence, and an inaptitude, both of inclination and of custom. By courses of truth and duty neglected, erroneous impressions, prejudices, and evil habits, become confirmed; the thorns tower into the size and strength of oaks; and the soil so occupied is harder to be broken up than the most rocky fallow-ground to be disintegrated. Ignorance itself, from being merely passive at first, assumes a character of obstinate, stolid opposition.

Add to this the growth of inevitable evil habits, (for where good seed does not grow, thorns and tares *will*) and whether it be a man's mind or heart that has long lain fallow, or both together, the work of breaking up becomes exceedingly arduous, and sometimes desperate. And neither mind nor heart, neither intellectual nor moral habits or natures, can long lie neglected, without a powerful mutual influence. And if either be broken up, the other is started. Any powerful revolution or deep change in mental pursuits and opinions, would have great effect on the moral state, could not take place indeed, without carrying the moral along with it.

A great mental awakening is a moral excitement, and still more powerfully a great moral excitement awakens, strengthens, renovates the mind. If it be in the right direction, it is sometimes not merely the new creation of a man's moral sensibilities, but his whole mental constitution and habits are formed, renewed, vivified. An over-mastering, inspiring impulse heavenward, has trained many a man to a noble stature and strength of intellect, who otherwise would have lived and died, intellectually as well as morally, much like the clod that covers him.

In regard to men's training for a future endless life, and their habits in reference to heavenly realities, a great spiritual discipline is recognised, or designated, under this image of breaking up the fallow ground. Before men's natures are fitted to receive and germinate the seeds of an unchanging holiness and happiness, the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, must make thorough work within them. The ploughshare of the Law and the Gospel must be driven through the soul. What old theological



writers were fond of calling the *Law-work* must have a thorough operation, and the heart in that way must become fully prepared for the fruits of a Gospel piety. Blessed is that soul which is thus thoroughly ploughed up. Whatever plant of righteousness may yet get root there, it will be of no dwarfish or transitory growth.

This operation of breaking up the fallow ground may have to be renewed more than once in a man's spiritual life-time. Nay, were it done as often as the Spring of the year comes round, abundant and glorious would be the spiritual harvest, if the breaking up were followed by the right sowing. In reality there ought to be no fallow ground in a man's heart, and no places left for the growth of nettles; every neglected patch of ground makes hard work for the future, whenever the attempt is made to bring it under a Christian cultivation. This ploughing in the heart, when it has long been left unsubdued, is of the hardest kind of work in spiritual agriculture. When it has been neglected, the roots of evil habits and earthly affections, tough and strong, entangle and detain you, and the soil itself becomes like clods of iron. Of a truth it is hard work to plough in such a soil.

All the operations of the divine life are very different things in practice from what they are in theory. It is just as it is in agriculture. A man to be a practical farmer must be a working man. It is one thing to have romantic ideas of green glades, and longings after a quiet farm in the country, and to be turning over books of landscape-gardening, and studying the chemistry of soils and manures, and quite another thing to go into the fields and ditch, and dig, and plough, and harrow. It is one thing to manage a farm by proxy, and have all your work done by others, and quite another thing to take hold with the oxen, and clear up wild lands, and break the fallow ground, and plant corn and potatoes with your own hands.

Now, although the managing of a farm can be done by proxy, if a man has wealth enough, yet there is no such possibility in the Christian life. Here you have to keep your own vineyard, and to work your own farm. A man cannot dig in his own heart with hired labourers; he can do nothing there at second-hand. The digging and the ditching, the ploughing and harrowing, he must do himself. If it could be done by others, there

is many a Christian merchant who would pay a thousand dollars a year salary to any man who would farm his heart for him, and get the work done, while he could be all the while accumulating money. There are many persons, both poor and rich, who would give all that they are worth, if they could get some trusty agent to farm out their hearts for them, with the assurance of keeping them in good order and fruitful.

But this cannot be done. Neither the best knowledge of the theory of religion, nor the closest study of other men's piety, will do any thing without our own sturdy, steady, hard, diligent labour. You cannot break up your fallow ground by reading 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul,' nor run the Christian race merely by reading the 'Pilgrim's Progress;' nor could you do this, even if you had both Doddridge and Bunyan to preach to you and to pray for you, unless you preached to yourself, and prayed for yourself, and laboured with yourself, and ploughed up your own heart.

Break up your fallow ground, says Jeremiah, and *sow* not among thorns, for if you do, the thorns are sure to choke your seed, and make it unfruitful. Break up your fallow ground, for if you leave it unbroken, it is sure to be covered with thorns and weeds, so that there is no possibility of the good seed taking root among them.

Are there any of my readers ignorant of the meaning of fallow ground? Many, if they knew the state of their own hearts, would know by that the meaning of fallow ground in agriculture. Sometimes it signifies, and most generally, ground uncultivated, uninclosed for tillage and fruit, waste and left to itself, and to just what may happen to spring up, which is an apt emblem of the condition of many a soul. Sometimes it means ground which has been ploughed once, but slightly, in order to a second more thorough ploughing previous to sowing. And this again is an apt emblem of the condition of many a soul, where the first ploughing has been begun, but the second is utterly neglected, and the plough is left in the furrow, and neither ploughing nor sowing any longer really goes on. It is a sad, and well nigh desperate condition when this is the case, for this was partly the meaning of the Saviour when he said: No man having put his hand to the plough and looking back, turning away, leaving his work undone, is fit for the kingdom of God.

No man's soul, thus neglected, or carelessly and but half ploughed, is fit even for the seed of the kingdom of heaven.

And here we may see, in such a condition, the reason why prayer, if offered by such a person, being essentially heartless, must be wholly ineffectual. It is just like faith without works, dead. And if God sees thou art not breaking up the fallow ground, yet still art praying to him for his Spirit, why should thy prayers, in such a case, be answered? There *is* no true praying ever, where the fallow ground is not broken up; but even if there were, of what use would it be for the rain to descend upon such a soil? Therefore are these two things put together: "Break up your fallow ground, for it is time to seek the Lord;" "Break up your fallow ground and sow not among thorns;" intimating clearly that you cannot seek the Lord with success, until you do break up your fallow ground and sow the seed of righteousness in a soil thus prepared. The fallow ground, until it be thus prepared, is as hard, almost, as a nether millstone, and all grown over with thorns and nettles.

If ever the rain of God's Spirit should descend upon such a soil, it would all run off unavailing from the surface, carrying even the seed with it, or it would be absorbed by the growth of nettles. Precisely this effect has been sometimes witnessed in a superficial excitement of religious emotion, where the heart soil has not been broken up, so that the seed of divine truth could be put beneath the furrows. The spring-rain that was meant to make it germinate, has washed it all away.

Let us suppose that a farmer, in great imaginary reliance upon God, should, without any ploughing or harrowing, go and scatter seed all over a hard-baked, barren field, filled with thistles, and then leaving his plough and his oxen idle in their places, should betake himself to God's promises of answer to prayer, and with the Bible in his hand, should sit down in the house or by the way-side, begging of God that he would grant a great shower of rain! Would that be a true reliance upon God! Would that be a kind of prayer likely to prevail with God? The showers might come, might come upon that whole region; but *little* good would they do that man's field, and they could not be supposed to be sent in answer to that man's prayers. His prayers are a mere excuse for his indolence; they are a mockery of God

Furthermore, what is called fallow ground sometimes means that which has been once slightly ploughed, in preparation for another ploughing before sowing. This ploughing must be thorough, and we may need what is called a sub-soil plough in order to break up and pulverize that which lies under the surface. The hard sterile earth is thereby thoroughly disintegrated, and is also exposed to the meliorating influences of the atmosphere, thus furnishing increased supplies of nourishment and moisture in dry seasons for the roots of plants. In our minds and hearts we need this kind of ploughing, and when it is generally and faithfully performed, we may be sure there will be no more complaining of spiritual droughts or desolations.

The vegetative powers and processes of the earth, and of seeds and plants, are a deep mystery; but the analogies between seeds and truths, between the germinating processes in matter and mind, in vegetable life and the soul's being, are obvious and striking. Principles, germs, the beginnings and the seeds of things; what powers, what laws, what prophecies they comprehend! what cares, what duties, what watchful appropriate corresponding discipline they both suppose and render necessary! The secrecy, the darkness, the impenetrable obscurity of nature, in the beginnings of life, the openness, the freedom, the visibility of nature in its development, are themes for profound meditation. The seed must germinate, and the roots exist, beneath the surface; and the same motions by which the spreading and down-shooting threads of the tangled roots seek nourishment for the plant, establish it firmly in the soil. But the stalk shoots upward, and the bud opens, and the flower blossoms, and the fruit ripens, in the light, the air, beneath the eye of all that hath vision on the earth and in heaven.

The radicle descends, and the plume rises; the invariable law, the unerring vegetable instinct of these motions, has a counterpart in the germination and growth of all truth and principle in the mind and heart. There are two directions, downwards, upwards; within, without; meditative, active; introspective, expansive. The germ contains the prophecy, marks the future; an absolute certainty, of which circumstances are but the cradle. What a fact for thought, for profoundest meditation, when we behold, in a seed so small, that it shall almost elude the sight, yet, placed in the focus of a powerful microscope, the whole

future tree visible; the trunk, and the branches, a plain indisputable reality, a prophecy inevitable in the fulfilment.

And so it is with thought, emotion, life, the principles of character. There too, in every germ there is a prophecy, a future tree. Circumstances are but the cradle, or the sheath, or the soil; for even thought is not spontaneous, but requires deep discipline.

There's no such thing as chance;  
 And what to us seems merest accident,  
 Springs from the deepest source of destiny.  
 This various human being's thoughts and deeds,  
 Are not like ocean billows, blindly moved.  
 The inner world, his microcosmos, is  
 The deep shaft, out of which they spring eternally.  
 They grow by certain laws, like the tree's fruit;  
 No juggling chance can metamorphose them.  
 Have I the human *kernel* first examined?  
 Then I know too, the future will and action.

SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*.

The kernel breaks and develops by circumstances, out of which it selects its nourishment. The future will and action are developed also by circumstances; developed, not created, nor entirely governed, but in their measure governing, determining, yea, *making* circumstances, as well as seizing occasions. So the being grows firmly on.

In the meditative notice of these goings on of nature, in the watchful examination of things necessary for a happy and successful agriculture, a thoughtful mind, dwelling on the higher realities, typified by natural forms, sees suddenly and forcibly presented the importance of the science of self-culture and self-discipline. One of Lord Bacon's pregnant aphorisms contains a volume of wisdom in this science. "For if you will have a tree bear more fruit than it hath used to do, it is not any thing you can do to the boughs, but it is in the stirring of the earth, and putting new mould about the roots, that must work it." The stirring of the earth is our present appropriate lesson; what can be done the better to prepare the mind for seed, and to quicken and strengthen the descending radicle. The earth needs to be

stirred deeply, not superficially, if a grand and noble growth is ever expected: though indeed the work of applying new mould has also its accompanying, appropriate, immediate place from the outset, and the mould itself must be stirred in. All suggestive and strong excitement of the intellect is good; and whatever turns the mind powerfully in upon itself, and throws the soul upon an invisible God and a world of spiritual reality, found as a realized world, by self-experiment, by the conflict of the soul under the working of the Spirit, and the witness of the Spirit in the working of the soul, begets originality and power.

Such a work, and such divine results, come not at second-hand; every thing of true power must be in-working, experimental, self-experienced. And the labour of the mind is requisite for the soundness of the heart. Yea, exclaims the same great poet, whose prediction from the human kernel we have just quoted:

Yea, he *deserves* to find himself deceived  
 Who seeks a *heart* in the unthinking man.  
 Like shadows on a stream, the forms of life  
 Impress their characters on the smooth forehead.  
 Nought sinks into the bosom's silent depth:  
 Quick sensibility of pain and pleasure  
 Moves the light fluids lightly; but no soul  
 Warmeth the inner frame.

A fever sometimes renovates the physical system: so may even an undue intellectual excitement, if it prove not fatal, leave the mind stronger than before. A predilection for some author or system, amounting for the time almost to mental aberration, may in the end prove salutary to the character; provided always that the extreme be thoroughly recovered from, and that the fever fall not into a slow quotidian or septennial ague.

Nevertheless, here again the nature of an individuality is to be respected; for not precisely the same treatment may prove the best for different constitutions and tendencies. The fire refines gold, but destroys steel; the same furnace that will but remove the dross in the one case, in the other takes away a particular virtue, and would blunt the cutting edge of the sharpest razor. Moreover, in the same patch of ground, respect must be had to what must be eradicated, as well as to the growth of

what must be planted. Fallow ground is not barren of weeds; but may be very rich and flowering with them. And there may be such self-deception, that these infesting growths of native evil may be cherished and chosen as the forms of good. "Ancient and rooted prejudices," remarks Bishop Berkeley, "do often pass into principles; and those propositions which once obtain the force and credit of a principle, are not only themselves, but likewise whatever is deducible from them, thought privileged from all examination. And there is no absurdity, which by this means the mind of man may not be prepared to swallow."<sup>1</sup> There is greater work for self-discipline in the conquering and removing of such tenants of the mental soil, than ever the settler of a new region could undergo in the clearing of wild lands and the uprooting of stumps.

In the spiritual, as well as the rural world of discipline, the subsoil ploughing is effectual and thorough. In the mind and heart there is never any danger of going too deep; the planting of the soul is to be the very interpenetration of its whole being with the power of truth. It is a baptism, a transfiguration, a new creation of the whole, as well as a growth from it. The truth becomes its life, its habit, a part and possession of its nature. The instinctive search of plants for nourishment, the busy, joyous activity and reach of the roots in generous and softened soils, is but a type of the earnestness and profoundness with which the truth runs through the well-disciplined and softened mind, and takes possession of it. This is especially the case with the realities of the spiritual world into which the soul enters, as in its destined, native, spontaneous alliance, its elemental relationship and home.

We are here tracing an eminently practical analogy. Few persons, not practically versed in agriculture, have any idea of the great depth to which the roots of plants, even from small seeds, will descend in favourable situations. The fibrils of a wheat kernel have been found more than thirty inches below the surface; those of red clover, Indian corn, and the Swedish turnip, five feet, and of sainfoin and lucerne, from twenty to thirty feet! And long after they have become invisible to the naked eye, they can be detected by the microscope, pushing themselves into the heart of the earth for nourishment. It is the constant effort

<sup>1</sup> Principles of Human Knowledge, section 124.

of the good gardener to facilitate this wonderful operation of nature, and so he digs and trenches the soil to the depth of two or three feet, and finds himself repaid by a most luxuriant vegetation.

After the same manner the roots of the seed of the Divine Word, where the soil is turned up deep, and made tender and moist, hide themselves away, far beyond sight, in the depths of the sanctified soul, till they get so rooted, that all the powers of earth and hell cannot pluck them up; neither can any drought wither them, but in light from heaven above, they grow like a great tree planted by the river-side, always bearing fruit in its season. That is the effect of sub-soil ploughing in the soul, God's eye follows the microscopic roots, and his Spirit goes with them, and ministers nourishment and power. There is a gentle and free circulation of air around them, and it is absorbed by the earth, and treasured up for the growing plant. Moreover, this subsoiling secures a thorough draining of the soil, in cases where the land happens to be wet and marshy, as is sometimes the case with the neglected soul.

There is, in opposition to all this, a careless, surface kind of ploughing in husbandry, very aptly called the *skimming* system, and this skimming system, instead of the subsoiling, is, alas, most generally, that which prevails in spiritual things, in the husbandry of the soul. The consequence of this careless surface-ploughing of the land is just this; the pressure of the soil, and the treading of the team and driver form at the bottom of the furrow a hard crust, which is with difficulty penetrated by the delicate fibres at the ends of the roots. Sometimes this substratum is naturally so hard, or becomes such, that it receives the expressive name of an *iron pan*. In the habits of the mind, in the hardness and indifferences of perverted sensibilities, and in cherished obstinacies of prejudice or opinion, how often is just such a substratum of character formed and perpetuated!

Has it never happened to us to observe just such hard-soiled Christians, with the whole character destitute of heavenly tenderness and spirituality, and the heart and conscience very much hardened and insensible? This is the effect of careless surface ploughing in the Spring, sub-soiling being neglected. The skimming system always produces such characters; there is that iron-pan at the bottom. Out of that grow hard speeches, severe and



ensorious judgments, a bitter, fault-finding spirit, stupidity of heart, a tough conscience, self-delusion, a sectarian disposition, formalism, neglect of prayer, and all kinds of spiritual weeds, instead of the gentleness, prayerfulness, humility, and love of the Gospel.

This hard bed, untouched, may be the ruin of a man's spiritual nature. It is a fallow-ground lying under the surface, and unless it be broken up, the tender roots of the word, and the gentle influences of the Spirit, cannot get hold upon the soil. If seed be sown in such a condition, and spring up, it speedily withers away, our Saviour tells us, because there is no deepness of earth. Let it be broken up, let there be a thorough sub-soiling, and there will be growth in grace, a fruitful harvest, and all the graces of the Spirit in the soul. But without this labour, this thorough heavenly preparation and discipline, the soul may be fatally deceived, and may continue in just the condition so solemnly depicted, by the apostle, in contrast with a gracious state: "For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned."

Now if it be true that in the kingdom of grace all our barrenness and all our *want* of grace, and all the fruitlessness of our prayers and efforts, come from not having the fallow-ground broken up in the Spring, and from the skimming system, and from sowing among thorns, we have a great work to do. We have been too exclusively *seedsmen*, and not *soilsmen*; for a very easy and indolent thing it may be to select and scatter the seed, while a very difficult and self-denying thing it is to break up and prepare the soil.

This may be the very secret of the poverty and lowness of the piety in many a well ranked, numerous Church of the Lord JESUS. The fallow-ground not being broken up, nor sub-soiled, and consequently there being no deepness of earth, the seed of the word, though it may seem to spring up to a profession, is swiftly overtopped and choked, strangled and withered, by the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the anxious pursuit of other things.

And just so it is with faint, half-determined, superficial seekers.

God loves an earnest violence of strife, an importunity of pressure into the kingdom of Heaven; and the thing itself requires it. But there is a wide difference between striving earnestly, and leisurely seeking. The superficial seeker seldom, if ever, gets lower than that iron-pan, of which we have spoken; never, except he gives his whole soul to the work, and breaks up, deeply and thoroughly, this fallow-ground. If he will do this, he will soon find salvation. But let him not expect that a process which takes time is to be finished at a blow, nor that a fruit intended as the possession of life everlasting, is to spring up in a night, like Jonah's gourd. Paul maintained the spiritual conflict and importunity through his whole life; and it was because the fallow-ground had been so thoroughly broken up at the outset. And it is worthy of note that Paul's description of his own Christian experience is in almost the very same language which our Saviour used, when describing a pilgrim thoroughly in earnest at the first setting out. The agonizing earnestness to enter in is kept up, even till the welcome shout of glory, **ENTER YE IN TO THE JOY OF YOUR LORD!**

LINKED with the Immortal, Immortality  
Begins e'en here. For what is time to thee,  
To whose cleared sight the night is turned to day,  
And that but changing life miscalled decay?

Is it not glorious then, from thine own heart  
To pour a stream of life? to make a part  
With thine eternal spirit, things that rot,  
That, looked on for a moment, are forgot,  
But to thine opening vision pass to take  
New forms of life, and in new beauties wake!

To thee the falling leaf but fades to bear  
Its hues and odours to some fresher air;  
Some passing sound floats by to yonder sphere,  
That softly answers to thy listening ear.  
In one eternal round they go and come,  
And where they travel there thou hast a home  
For thy far-reaching thoughts. O Power Divine!  
Has this poor worm a spirit so like thine?  
Upwrap its folds, and clear its wings to go!  
Would I could quit earth, sin, and care, and woe!  
Nay, rather let me use the world aright,  
Thus make me ready for mine upward flight.

R. H. DANA.

EVERY thing is education; the trains of thought you are indulging this hour; the society in which you will spend the evening; the conversations, walks, and incidents of to-morrow. And so it ought to be. We may thank the world for its infinite means of impression and excitement, which keep our faculties awake and in action, while it is *our* important office to preside over that action, and guide it to some divine result.

JOHN FOSTER.

THE contemplation of a spiritual world, which, *without* the addition of a misgiving conscience, is enough to shake some natures to their foundation, is smoothly got over by others, who shall float over the black billows in their little boat of No-Distrust as unconcernedly as over a summer sea.

CHARLES LAMB.

## CHAPTER X.

Voices of the Spring continued: The Probation-Acre: The inextricable Entanglement of Responsibility in Human Life: Interminable reach of Moral influence: Return of Evils to their Owners: Congregation of Congenial Spirits in the Eternal World.

THE Spring time has opened, and all human and material agencies are busy, with a restless and never-ending activity. Life and death are busy, death beginning life, and life springing out of death; and the germs, whether of good or evil, are no sooner committed to the bosom of the soil, be it physical or immortal, than they begin to work out what is in them. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. The Spring time is this season of dying into life. Here and there the seed may fall, and merely go into the soil as compost, and so abide alone; but the rule is that of an indestructible germinating power both in man and nature.

This is our plot of ground, our time-acre, which, according as we cultivate it here, is to prove our vast reversionary inheritance in eternity. Of what nature, we ourselves must determine, as being the husbandmen; for we are all agriculturists, we are all landowners, we are all sowers. And our farms lying contiguous, we are all subject to reciprocal influences. No man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself; it is quite impossible. If I sow my field with white weed, then the next season, my neighbour's field is sure to suffer for it. Thus we are not only sowers for ourselves, but for others. Neighbours sow for neighbours, friends for friends, enemies for enemies, parents for children, children for parents, servants for their masters, masters for

their servants; and the different classes, professions, and grades in life affect one another. The involvement or entanglement of responsibility is indissoluble and inextricable. It began with Adam and Eve, Cain and Seth, Enoch and Enos, and can never stop, but runs on multiplying. The hand of 'Tubal-Cain is in the building of the ark, and Noah's husbandry prepares the graves for the nephews of Moses in the wilderness. Who can trace the vast, interminable, innumerable ramifications of influence and example, of second causes and consequences, of remote side-agencies with direct and illimitable results?

The airs that breathe over our own homesteads, gardens, farms, carry upon downy wings the germs of what we have sown for ourselves into the germinant domains of others. And the winds that blow across our neighbours' grounds bear into our own enclosures, and drop unseen, a reciprocal measure of others' living and characteristic agencies. The elements evaporated from the farm-yards and forests a thousand miles off, may come down with the rain upon the slopes of our native mountains. Nay, visible or invisible, across the ocean they may come. In this mighty moral connection that makes our world one world, and the human family one, what a man plants in Europe may tell in America, though he never dreamed of it, and what we plant in America may be found growing from the seed in Europe, before we are aware of it. And all things throw their branches and their fruits into eternity.

If we cannot get out of this chain of causes and consequences, of influences given and received, then it becomes us to act carefully and wisely in it. We may have sifters and winnowers for our seed, if we will, and the word of God itself is as a great filterer, through which every stream of influence may be purified. If a person would know how it acts, directly and reflectively, let him read the 119th Psalm. A man in such a world as this is as one walking or working in the galleries of a mine, in hourly danger from explosions; he needs something like Sir Humphrey Davy's Safety Lamp amidst the pressure of perilous influences around him. Then he can walk securely. If not, he endangers not only himself but others. The very flame of a man's natural life is as an open blaze in the fire-damp; and the man himself is responsible for carrying the flame of mere nature, without the guards of grace, into such elements. If the consequences were

seen and felt instantly, no man would dare do it, though they are not the less known for being at present invisible.

How often a winged word is dropped without a purpose, yet goes down into an immortal soul, and will be found a thousand times reduplicated in eternity! How often a careless listener has received a life-long impression from a still more careless speaker! Words are dropped, and forgotten, and seen no more; even as a farmer scatters seed not only from his hand, but unknowingly from the basket, and goes his way, and sleeps and wakes; seen, no more than the seeds are seen when the earth has covered them, or than the forms of the uttered syllables are seen upon the air that is stirred by them. Yet they may be everlasting. And the seed that the very fowls of the air seem to steal from the farmer's wheat-field, they may sow somewhere else. A bird upon the wing may carry a seed that shall add a new species to the vegetable family of a continent; and just so, a word, a thought, from a flying soul, may have results immeasurable, eternal. You may not be able to follow them now, but they may follow *you*, hereafter; nor to trace them now, but you may reap the harvest hereafter.

Think not because things do not spring up now, to sight, they are therefore necessarily gone, or dying, or inactive. Impressions may be piled upon impressions, and whole beds of seeds on seeds, and layers of leaves mingled with them. Then afterwards you know not what the stirring of the soil may produce, nor at what period. For as sometimes it may happen that when you cut down a growth of oaks, there will spring up a forest of young pines, or when you burn over an inclosure of birch woods, you may see afterwards a wilderness of maple in its place, so you know not what forests of germs may lie in the heart-soil of man's nature and affections. There may be seeds of things unseen, inactive, and unknown, for the present, merely because another growth has prevented them, and keeps them down. And even if all should be changed into fossils, who knows what influence they may have upon the life of future generations? How many coal-fires may be kindled, how many steam-engines driven, by the discovered mineral beds of past opinions. Nearly half the world, even now, are living by or upon the fossil vices of past generations. Old errors are dug up, and brought into use again. The wheat buried three thousand years ago in Egyptian tombs

may sprout in European gardens, and the fashions and luxuries of a sepulchred world may be reproduced in American drawing-rooms. Indeed, if the pitch of Sodom and Gomorrah, both physical and moral, could be disinterred, it would become merchandize. And so it is with opinion.

The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done, it is that which shall be done. The moral habits of a man's life may be reproduced out of the jewels buried with his mummy.

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord; they rest from their labours, and their works follow them." Their good once done, its work ever after is spontaneous, kindly, and refreshing. But not in the future world alone do their works thus follow them; for in this world they live also, and from this world new harvests following on, will be reported in that, from every generation.

And is there not a reverse curse, for those of an opposite character, whose influence, alike immortal, by thought, word, and deed, runs on in like manner, in the reproduction of successive harvests of evil? What shall be said of the authors of licentious but fascinating books, immortal by the combination of their genius with the flame of depraved passion, the fires of which it both feeds upon and kindles anew, with fresh intensity? Into how many generations of minds may the seed thus sown go down, reproductive in every generation? *Their* works follow *them*, but *they* never rest from their labours. Those retributive agencies that act for the bottomless pit, as the scavengers of the universe, shoot their successive loads of the evil so accumulated and fostered, into hell, at the door of every owner's mansion, and without mistake. The evils let loose in human society are sure to come back to their masters. "Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment, and some they follow after." Those that are open beforehand are not ordinarily of such germinant and reproductive power, because in their very glare and gangrene here they carry a repulsive warning. But those that do not appear till hidden consequences appear, till insidious influences, and seeds silently dropped, and opinions insinuated, and habits fostered, are all ripe and ready for the harvest, are of incalculable, interminable fertility and power. They follow after perhaps to the end of time, in a funeral array



of souls. They are as the stream from a perpetual volcano, falling, with everlasting fire and roar, over mountain precipices into the deep.

Will a man meet his old acquaintances in the eternal world? Yea, and new ones also; all that the creations of his mind, his heart, his words, his example, have attached to his own spirit, whether in one generation or another. Time and space are annihilated by moral influence, and a man walks eternally with the beings congenial to himself, or whom he has drawn to himself by the immutable attraction of powerful elements of character. All that thus know him draw after him to one abode. An innumerable and solemn array, more terrible than the imagery of any of Dante's friezes of fiery woe, sculptured in words, is disclosed winding in the galleries of those congregations of the dead. There is a time wherein one man ruleth over another to his own hurt; and so I saw the wicked buried. The ruler never rests from his ruling, and the ruled rule others after them, and all pass to successive thrones of fire.

Our moral influence, except God interpose to prevent it, must be eternal; and if evil, it is more to our own hurt than the hurt of others. It comes back upon us in successive and perpetual waves, each crested higher than the one before; till as from the waste of a boundless ocean, the vast surf breaks upon the beach with the wail of a righteous, natural retribution. God only can interpose; and if He does interpose, still the influence is eternal, though blissfully changed in its nature, yet eternal in duration. God interposes when man's prayer is heard; when a man looks into the stream and fountain of his being, and cries out to God to change its elements. Who shall replace this fountain law of sin and death with the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus? All the power of men and angels united could not do it. God's grace must come in, and then, the tide is turned, and from the company of that innumerable array drawing on to the congregation of the dead eternally, he joins the innumerable company of angels, and the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are registered in heaven.

There is a moral warning in the germs of thought; that after a time they pass into inevitable results, in character and destiny. Thought merely dreamlike, speculative, and fanciful when first indulged, may draw the will along with it, and become at length

a choice and necessity of self-will. There is a masterly scene, or rather soliloquy, in Schiller's Tragedy of Wallenstein, where a great mind finds that it has passed the Rubicon from the side of dreaming and dallying with a dread temptation, to the tremendous necessity of enacting it. A decision of the character has been made, has been all the while advancing; a point reached where unless a supernatural force, out of the character, and beyond it, turns it back, the necessity of self-preservation seems to impel it onward. When the mind discovers this position, this reality, and suddenly confronts the consequence, and yet experiences the drawing on to doom, how fearful is the struggle, how ineffectual the agony! Is it possible? Is it so? Can it be that I *can* no longer what I *would*? No longer can draw back at my liking, having thus far come by choice? Must I *do* the deed, because I *thought* of it? Because I just fed this heart here with a dream, never my serious meaning, never resolved, must it resolve *me* into the dread fulfilment? But who can tell where dreaming, wishful hesitation passes into choice?

Must it be so, because

I did not scowl temptation from my presence,  
 Dallied with thoughts of possible fulfilment,  
 Commenced no movement, left all time uncertain,  
 And only kept the road, the access open?  
 I but amused myself with thinking of it.  
 The free-will tempted me: the power to do,  
 Or not to do it. Was it criminal  
 To make the Fancy minister to Hope,  
 To fill the air with pretty *toys* of air,  
 And clutch fantastic sceptres moving towards me?  
 Was not the will kept free? Beheld I not  
 The road of duty close beside me; but  
 One little step, and once more I was in it?  
 Where am I? Whither have I been transported?  
 No road, no track behind me, but a wall  
 Impenetrable, insurmountable,  
 Rises obedient to the spells I muttered,  
 And meant not! Mine own doings tower behind me!  
 A punishable man I seem; the guilt,  
 Try what I will, I cannot roll off from me!

The road of Duty close beside me still, and only a little step, to be again upon it! What tremendous self-deception, always exercised, in all who ever pass from the King's Highway into By-Path meadow! Only for a season, only a little experiment, only a little self-indulgence, the heart whispers to the conscience; and the great road of Duty still near, and no impossibility as yet of regaining it! But ah! before you are aware, the consequences are upon you, and the wall impenetrable, insurmountable, rises behind you, and without an interposition for which, perhaps, you will not ask, perhaps will not even wish, you cannot return, and must go forward!

Stern is the on-look of necessity!  
 Not without shudder may a human hand  
 Grasp the mysterious urn of Destiny.  
 My deed was mine, remaining in my bosom:  
 Once suffered to escape from its safe corner  
 Within the heart, its nursery and birth-place,  
 Sent forth into the Foreign, it belongs  
 For ever to those sly malicious powers  
 Whom never art of man conciliated.

SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*.

I CAN truly affirm of myself, that my studies have been profitable and availing to me, only so far as I have endeavoured to use all my other knowledge as a glass, enabling me to receive more light, in a wider field of vision, from the Word of God. If you have accompanied me thus far, thoughtful reader, let it not weary you if I digress for a few moments to another book, likewise a revelation of God, the great book of his servant Nature. That in its obvious sense and literal interpretation, it declares the being and attributes of the Almighty Father, none but *the fool in heart* has ever dared gainsay. But it has been the music of gentle and pious minds in all ages, it is the poetry of all human nature, to read it likewise in a figurative sense, and to find therein correspondencies and symbols of the spiritual world.

COLERIDGE. *Appendix to the Statesman's Manual.*

IN energetic minds truth soon changes, by domestication, into power; and from directing in the discrimination and appraisal of the product, becomes influence in the production. To admire on principle is the only way to imitate without loss of originality.

COLERIDGE. *Biog. Literaria.*

MEANWHILE, the process of education is going on, even though unobserved, and tending fast towards the ultimate fixed form of character. Character grows with a force that operates every moment; it were as easy to check the growth of a forest. You find that to counteract any one of its determined tendencies, is a task of hard and recurring labour. Even its slightest propensity, when opposed, seems inspirited with the energy of the whole.

JOHN FOSTER.

## CHAPTER XI.

The Periods of Suggestion, Susceptibility, Germination, and Growth:  
Importance of making the most of these periods, each in their season.

IN the possession of youth, with all its opportunities and capacities, as the seed period of life, a responsibility is laid upon us, and a power put into our hands, of the preciousness of which there is rarely any realization, till the advantages are beyond our recall. There can be little doubt that most persons settle the question even of their eternal destiny, while young. It is the time of roots and seeds, the time of foundations, the time of fountains and of laws, the time of principles and prophecies, that are to be developed and fulfilled, in the man and in the angel, good or bad. It is the time of quick and vivid sensibility to all impressions from abroad, whether of good or evil; the imitative time of our being, and the reproducing time of examples; the time of intense feeling, and of energy and impulse in following the heart, and carrying out its purposes.

A good thing inwrought while the being is in this impressible and plastic state, wrought amid the intensity of youthful enthusiasm, is as an element of nature. Is it safe to be careless of such a period? Shall a man let the metal cool, before he puts it to its intended shape? Must not the figure of the die be stamped upon the metal, or the form of the mould be given to it, while it is plastic with heat? The same image and super-scription may indeed be attempted later; but it will be scarcely legible, or it can be accomplished only by an amount of force not likely to be brought to bear upon it. Such is the difference

between the impressible period, the susceptible period of early life, and the confirmed and comparatively immoveable period of manhood.

It is a law of the seed-period, that whatever the soul receives deep into itself during that season, shall grow up and be developed as a part of itself, and shall form the character at the period of harvest. One season cannot be changed for another, the summer for the spring, nor the autumn for the summer. If the seed-period be neglected or abused, and then afterwards at the period of harvest, or what ought to have been that period, the man attempts the recurrence of the seed-period, it will be a failure; the seed will not germinate, but rots, or if it strives to germinate, it dies without fruit, without becoming a fixture in the character.

Almost every thing that falls into the ground, but just goes to the nourishment and strengthening of that which had got its fixture and its growth before; or if the seed scattered seem to take root on its own account, it never rises to any thing better than a thin, feeble, stunted underbrush around the trunks and beneath the shadow of the old great trees. After those fixtures come to a certain height and age, they tyrannize over every thing else in the character. We go on, indeed, sowing seed all the way through life; and each successive period of life is in most impressive reality a period of probation and of seeds for the next period; because what we were and what we did yesterday is continually coming out in consequences to-day. But the one grand seed-period of our being, the period of the oaks that build the ships, in which our fortunes are embarked for eternity, the period of all the commanding fixtures and features of character, is never repeated, and is ordinarily early in life.

That early seed-period, as well as the germinating and growing period that follows, is imaginative, romantic, full of rich powers and tendencies. Nettles will grow to the size of a forest, if you sow those; rich fruits and magnificent trees will grow, if you plant those. Whatever you set out, starts on its career with energy. The germinating, springing power in our immortal nature is, in one sense, omnipotent; it *will* be exercised, if not for good, then for evil, and no created agency can restrain it. It works for eternity, and at a rate of intensity with which

perhaps only an immortal nature *could* work. The roots of our earliest habits twine themselves all about our immortality, and the trunk of character, strengthened by such roots, is immovable, and the branches spread themselves out, a mighty shade of foliage.

Whatever, during the period of susceptibility and growing power, is implanted, takes strong hold, and if it be evil, becomes so omnipotent, that God only can cut it away; and if good, it is quite as hard to be eradicated, when once firmly set; but if set by grace, it grows on, even against the tendencies of a depraved nature. So prodigiously, intensely energetic, is the impressible period and growing power of our being. While it lasts, almost any thing can be done with it; but by-and-bye, the susceptible and growing power is past, at least as to new things, because almost every *principle* of being has been in turn tried, and the soul has become fully engaged with what it has settled down upon, and the power of the being works portentously in the increase of that, but takes hold of nothing new.

Our Blessed Lord took young men for his Apostles. He could make any thing out of them then, and the wine of the new dispensation was to be put into new bottles. It was the suggestive period, the power period, in the foundation of character. In that period he kept them with himself. His teachings went down into their souls, and took the entire and exclusive possession, not merely by the law of grace, and of a Divine Inspiration, but by the laws of their own constitution, under so early and heavenly a development.

It depends upon what men meet with and entertain at such a period, whether they shall become apostles of good or evil in our fallen world. Ordinarily whatever comes first, in a seductive shape, is received with open heart, and gets possession. If it be good, it is an impregnable citadel, manned in the soul for God and duty. If it be evil, it is the strong man armed, and who shall cast it out?

"I learned more from his conversation," says Southey, speaking of a friend in early life, "than any other man ever taught me, *because the rain fell when the young plant was just germinating, and wanted it most.*" At such a time, whatever falls in the shape of rain, the young plant drinks it in, as do the thirsty ridges. If the rain were mingled with a metallic poison, it



would not be absorbed less eagerly, but disastrous would be the results.

When we speak of the *suggestive* period, we mean not the period in which the mind itself makes, puts forth, or proposes suggestions, but the period in which suggestions are enthusiastically, romantically, eagerly entertained, and become the source of other suggestions. We use the expression, *a suggestive book*. It means a book that for a thoughtful mind touches a great many springs of thought and feeling, pronounces the "*Open Sesame*" before a great many doors in the gem-enclosing caverns of the soul; a book that sets the mind upon tracks of investigation, and calls up shadows of prophetic revelation before it, making it earnestly imaginative; a book that like a flash of lightning in a dark summer's night, reveals for the moment a whole horizon.

Such a book ordinarily affects a young mind and an old one in a very different manner. In a young mind, it meets the growing, germinating power, the enthusiastic, imaginative, impulsive tendency, and carries the mind onward to results. In an old mind it stops at the threshold where you have laid it; it enters not into the activity of the being. Old men may make suggestions, but cannot so easily receive them. If, during *their* suggestive period, they received and acted upon good, rich, noble, powerful suggestions, under which, by the Divine blessing, magnificent habits of life and character were formed, then, when their own susceptibility to new impressions of thought and feeling is declining, and their germinating period is passed, they will still be able to communicate power to electrify others; there is a hidden fountain-power stored up. Their sowing time in the hearts and minds of others shall never be gone, if their own receiving time and growing time *from* others was rightly improved. A man may, like the Apostle John, continue to touch the keys of revelation when he is old. Dr. Payson, when dropping his mantle of mortality, could throw the mantle of his piety, and the flame of his rejoicing soul upon the watchers around him, even after he had ceased to receive any new suggestions or excitements from the things of earth, or the discipline of heaven.

With some persons the suggestive period may continue longer than with others, just as the growing and developing period is various with different individuals. But it is a limited period

with all; that is, there is a period of receptivity and growth, looking to a period of bestowment and results, of harvest and of fruits. The period of receptivity and growth stops, for the most part, where the period of harvest and of fruits is expected to begin, or ought to begin. Just so, there is the period of increase and of receptivity in the human life, and then the period of decline and of spending. The energies of this mortal frame are first gathered and compacted, then thrown off in preparation for the grave. First in our being is the period of Genesis, then Law, then Prophecy, then Fulfilment and Revelation of eternal results. Out of the nature of the law which we have made our own, working in us, whether good or evil, in the period of receptivity, germination and growth, springs the prediction of the future, never mistaken, never annulled.

The suggestive period is the period in which the character is formed: all that is done to it is usually done then. All that appears in it is usually the fruit of principles entertained and chosen then, and is developed as part of the being, and forms the character at the period of harvest. All developments, all transactions, are only results of what took place, what was done, what was deposited in the suggestive and forming period. Radical changes are rarely made after that first period. Take the character as you find it after that period, and you are pretty sure that you have the character through life, and in all likelihood for ever. You have it mainly through life, in many features, even if the great change of piety, the change by the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit, should intervene: for still it is found to be a fact that the main habits of the character have so stiffened in the mould, have become so rigid and difficult of accommodation, that the new soul put into it for heaven is much constrained by it, and hardly makes its way through the whole form to change that. There will be an entirely new character by-and-bye, but here in this world many of the habits of the new man will be modified by the habits of the old man, which continue to produce their disturbances, and rock the whole being, just as the ground-swell of a tempest continues in the sea after the storm is over, and the wind has changed and subsided.

Ordinarily, take any man's character after the suggestive period, and draw the portrait then, and you have it for ever.

There are not likely to be any new elements in it, nor any great change in the combination or expression of those already there. What seem sometimes to be new elements are but the hidden seeds germinating, the invisible principles coming out and asserting their supremacy. A change of circumstances seems sometimes to produce a change of character, whereas it is only the development of what was there before; just as when a growth of birch or maple displaces a forest of pines burned over, it is not a new creation, but the seeds were there before, or the germs, waiting to be developed. So it often is with the development of character. But in general, before the suggestive period is over, all the tendencies and growths of a man's character will have begun to show themselves, and the change afterwards is of degree, not of kind; of strength in old impulses, and not the adoption of new ones.

It is very much with character as it is in sketching the face and the frame. Take a young face, and you do not by any means know, you are not at all sure, that it will be a likeness by-and-bye, or that even one feature or expression will be found remaining. There may be so entire a change, both in the face and character, and in the face mainly *because* in the character, that the portrait of a few years further on shall not have one trait in common with the portrait further back. But take an old face, and you have it to the end; there is no more change. Thus it is easier to paint an aged face than a young one, because the features are settled and unchangeable, sculptured, as it were, into marked and perceptible moulds and grooves of character and expression. Just so it is with the soul. The older each human being grows, the more likely it is that the character of the soul now is that which it will wear for ever, and that if the likeness be taken now, it will be found to be a true likeness at the day of death.

Who then would be willing to have the great Portrait Painter for Eternity take his character as it now is, and hang it up in his gallery for ever? He, the Supreme, new-creating Artist, must set the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus at work in the whole being, and then He shall draw the character, and it shall be that of God's own holiness. When he has done his work upon me, the Christian may say, he may take the picture, and may show it to whomsoever he pleaseth; for if I am a new

creature in Christ Jesus, then my portrait is that of a child of God; and when the Saviour has done with it, it will be that of a being without fault before the throne of God. He must change me into His image, from glory to glory, before the portrait can be fit to be hung up in Heaven's gallery; and He must give me a new name, before my name can be written in His Book of Life, for I am a miserable sinner. But when that is done, then the glory of Christ himself will be seen in the revelation and reflection of his own likeness; it shall be gazed at, and wondered at, in myriads of redeemed beings, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe; when unto principalities and powers, for ever and ever, shall be made known through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God.

THE point can be no more of right and duty,  
Only of power, and of the opportunity.  
That opportunity, lo! it comes yonder,  
Approaching with swift steeds; then with a spring  
Throw thyself up into the chariot seat,  
Seize with firm hands the reins, ere thine opponent  
Anticipate thee, and himself make conquest  
Of the now empty seat. The moment comes;  
It is already here, when thou must write  
The absolute total of thy life's vast sum.

SCHILLER'S *Wallenstein*.

No great and estimable improvement will spring unsolicited or flourish uncultivated; and as we perceive that the world, and life, and time, *will* mould us, whether we will or not, if left to their influence, it is supremely worth our care that we be not fatally and irretrievably spoiled.

JOHN FOSTER.

WE see men are more curious what they put into a new vessel than into a vessel seasoned, and what they would lay about a young plant, than about a plant corroborate; so as the weakest terms and times of all things, use to have the best applications and helps. And will you hearken to the Hebrew Rabbins? Your *young* men shall see *visions*, and your *old* men shall dream *dreams*: say they, Youth is the worthier age, for that visions are nearer apparitions of God than dreams. And let it be noted that . . . the ancient wisdom of the best times did always make a just complaint, that STATES WERE TOO BUSY WITH THEIR LAWS, AND TOO NEGLIGENT IN POINT OF EDUCATION.

LORD BACON.—*Adv. of Learning.*

WHAT then remains? To seek  
Those helps, for his occasion's ever near,  
Who lacks not will to use them; vows renewed  
On the first motion of a holy thought.  
Vigils of contemplation, praise and prayer;  
A stream which from the fountain of the heart  
Issuing however feebly, no where flows  
Without access of unexpected strength.

EXCURSION.

## CHAPTER XII.

The beginning of Character: Infancy and Childhood: Parental Teaching by Character and Example: Instinctive Discernment of Character by Children: Responsibility for the influence of our character and habits upon others: How it is to be unerringly traced.

“I REMEMBER,” says John Foster, “when once, many years ago, musing in reflective indolence, observing the vigorous vegetation of some shrubs and plants in spring, I wished that the powers of the mind too could not help growing in the same spontaneous manner. But this vain wish instantly gave place to the recollected, sober conviction, that there is a simple and practicable process, which would as certainly be followed by the high improvements of reason, as the vegetable luxury follows the genial warmth and showers of spring.”

Well! the powers of the mind *cannot* help growing, they *do* grow, inevitably. They grow, and the *habits* of the *mind* with them, spontaneously for evil, if neglected, if they are not kept under careful, affectionate training, that they may grow prayerfully and laboriously for good.

Foster adds, “How fertile in every thing wise and useful would be that life, the early part of which should be the sole reservoir to supply opinions and virtues to all the rest.” But it *is* a reservoir, and in every man’s life must be; not always and inevitably the *sole* reservoir, but often *sadly* such; often left empty of good, often filled with evil. And then how fertile in every thing foolish and worthless must be such a life, out of such a fountain! For the beginning is most generally the prophecy of the end, and what a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

There is not a principle in the universe more just and inexorable than this. It commends itself to the inmost conscience of mankind, which universally proclaims the justice and the certainty of retributive consequences on spontaneous and chosen courses. The nature itself of things is not more certain than the consequences of our voluntary character and actions. What is already passed is not more fixed, than the certainty that what is future will grow out of what has already passed or is now passing. Responsibility is inevitable, omnipresent, and eternal. It is also connected, mutual, and reciprocal for ourselves and for others, inasmuch as we are inseparable from an indissoluble and eternal train. We are acted *upon* and we *act* upon others, continually, and we shall do so for ever.

The moment an immortal being is born, its character begins to be formed. The light falls upon its frame; the air of heaven and of human existence breathes over it; it receives care and nourishment from others; it sees human beings. Speedily it receives moral impressions and influences. The forms, faces, manners, words of others begin to act upon it; and as they *are* so they *act*. Character acts. A man cannot stand before a child, and get its notice, but an *aura* or emanation of the man's nature, if I may so speak, acts upon the child. The child catches the expression even of the invisible soul, and observes the subtlest marks and breathings of character. These things fall upon the opening blossom of immortality as silently, softly, surely, as the light, the air, and the invisible dew surround and fall upon the petals of a daisy that has just opened by the way-side. And the influence in the one case is as constant and certain as in the other.

The character of the child *begins* to be formed by the ministrations of others. The moment it is born, it is as a piece of new soil, in which men begin to sow for the harvest. The evil and the good are both thrown in. Men begin their work of sowing with little children, mothers with infants. The child is thrown of God upon the responsibility of others. What does it know? What can it do? The all-wise and merciful Creator only knows when the period of moral agency begins, the period of moral volition, and of course of moral accountability. He only knows the degree in which it is exercised. But begin when it may, the child's first moral impressions are the work of others, and the responsibility is that of others.



Now, if all these earliest moral ministrations were holy, if angels had the training of infants, if all the fixtures and influences of our world in these first years were holy, we know not when, nor how soon, the evil of the race would appear, that always *does* appear; we know not how long it might be kept dormant. A perfectly holy education would do much for such a being on the trial of its character, but could not do every thing. It could do nothing effectually without God's grace, but it would certainly have God's grace accompanying it. We may be perfectly sure that if parents from the outset performed their whole duty, God would, at a very early time, answer prayer, and perform His whole promise. But the experiment has never once been made, and never will be, of a holy education. And the little immortal being soon makes its first excursion out of Eden, soon by actual transgression plucks, in its turn, the first fruit of the forbidden tree. It certainly stays not longer in a freedom from such transgression than Adam did in Paradise. And no man's memory can ever reach back to a conscience void of offence, a time when there was no consciousness of sin. The most conspicuous unbroken thread running through all our past existence is that of the consciousness of sin. If there be such an *imagination* as the memory of a time when we were not sinners, it is but a poet's dream. We can remember a time when we were *comparatively* innocent, and the comparison of himself with a sweet unconscious child has sometimes made a hardened criminal weep, to think what he himself once was.

Happy those early days when I  
 Shined in my angel-infancy,  
 Before I understood this place  
 Appointed for my trial race,  
 Or taught my soul to fancy aught  
 But a white celestial thought;  
 When yet I had not walked above  
 A mile or two from my first love,  
 And looking back at that short space,  
 Could see a glimpse of his bright face,  
 When on some gilded cloud or flower  
 My gazing soul would dwell an hour,  
 And in those weaker glories spy  
 Some shadows of eternity.

HENRY VAUGHAN.

There is no actual remembrance of such a period, but only a vague and wishful imagination of it. The idea is beautiful, but wanting in fact. What follows is experience, is actual, undeniable knowledge of sin; sin begun, how early, no man can tell, but before which, previous to which, no man's memory leads him:

Before I taught my tongue to wound  
 My conscience with a sinful sound,  
 Or had the black art to dispense  
 A several sin to every sense.

The responsibility of a child's first sinful dispositions is shared by others. According to the character and example of those around it, those into whose arms it is thrown, those who nurse and teach it, those who exercise protection and authority over it, will be its own character and example. According to the seed sown, will be the harvest springing up. If the character and example of parents and others, with the influences and teachings dispensed and sown, be irreligious, can the child be other than irreligious? What the child habitually sees, it will catch and imitate. Character and example teach powerfully, before language is either uttered or understood. Before the child has learned its A B C, or the name of God, it has begun to learn and imitate the character of its parents, and the language of the heart. If they themselves are the children of God, endeavouring in love, in faith, in prayer, in hope, to commit their little one to Him, and train it up for Him, then they are sowing seed for a harvest of blessedness and glory. But if they themselves are neglectful of God and eternity, and living only for this world, they are teaching their child, even before it can understand or lisp a syllable, the language and the life of irreligion. They are sowing the seeds of sin and misery. They are bringing up their child in their own likeness, for their own life, and their own destiny. Theirs is the work, theirs the responsibility of educating an immortal soul, not for heaven, but for hell.

For, even if there were no positive teaching on the subject, the instruction given by their own negation of piety, their own neglect of it, and destitution of it, would be positive teaching, positive seed. The child is committed to them from its infancy,

and the least that can be expected, even if they exert no positive influence whatever, is that their own character will be daguerreotyped, as it were, upon the child's soul. And for this they are responsible. Whatever elements are imparted from their own character to the being and character of the child, they are responsible, they being the owners.

They are the owners and the *authors* of their own character, and therefore responsible for all the effect of that character upon every human being. They are just as much responsible, as the author of a book is responsible for the tendency, influence, and actual legitimate effect of every opinion and sentiment. The author of a bad book does not sow evil seed more certainly than the owner of a bad character, by the influence and example of that character with whomsoever it may come in contact. The evil in any particular case may not have been *intended*, but if it takes place, even though the man may as yet be perfectly unconscious of it, and ignorant of the evil he is working, yet he is perfectly responsible for it, he is the author of it. Coleridge used to say, *Quantum sumus, scimus*; what we *are*, we know; intuition, character, experience, constitute our real absolute knowledge. But it may be added, *Quantum sumus, agimus*; what we are, we *act*; character acts, even without the intention of acting, and in directions and at distances, never at first imagined.

It acts mediately, as well as immediately. If a stone be thrown into a lake, you cannot tell where the wave will first strike, but it will strike somewhere, and wherever it strikes, you that threw the pebble, threw the wave. The master of the bad character is the owner of the evil. The evil may have spread, till it is growing up in China, while the man himself may be in England or America; but it is all the same as if he were there on the spot to see and know its progress. It as surely comes back to *him*, as lies come home to roost.

The author of a licentious poem may not have directly *intended* evil, in every particular case, may not have intended evil at all, but only gave vent, for his own gratification, to his own abandoned tastes, to the depraved impulses of his own character; and *that* is the way in which, perhaps, the greater part of the evil in this world is accomplished; but he is the responsible author of all the evil produced, or that shall be produced in

every particular case, upon every other character, by his book. And just so it is with the authorship and ownership of mere character by itself.

I have said *mere* character; but character is every thing; character is the most powerful thing in the world. No being can measure the power of character upon a child's soul, in those around it. The child's *discernment* of character is wonderful, and for all the influence of character the owner is responsible. If the child could be supposed under a law, by which the first bad face, the index of a vicious character, encountered by it, should be irremediably and indelibly stamped as an image and a power upon the mind, although the encounter on the part of the bad man might be purely accidental, yet the responsibility of the evil, and the influences and results of the evil, would be his. He had no right to *be* a bad man. He had no business with the *keeping* of a bad face, made by a bad heart, in God's universe; and he cannot carry either bad heart or bad face about with him, without being responsible for all the impressions received from it, and all the influences exerted by it. The reach and power of this principle are tremendous.

And just so with the parent. An irreligious parent will make an irreligious child; you can expect nothing better, nothing else. And just so with all the beings who ever encounter the child, in such way as to exert the slightest conceivable influence upon its character, either designed, or undesigned, growing out of their *own* character.

They all are to meet again those influences, and to answer for them. They are to answer for their consequences. Perhaps they are to meet them in the shape of crimes; at any rate they are to meet them, and are accountable for them. They have put in that seed into an immortal nature, for an eternal harvest; they shall reap the harvest, be it good or ill. And so it is all the way through life, in all the influence that men ever exert on one another, and all the effect they produce; in any and every way, on each other's opinions, character, and conduct. They shall reap all that harvest in the eternal world.

We once heard a preacher of the Gospel remarking that when he was a very little child, he was accustomed to go out to work with his older brother on his father's farm, and that he remembered one day when they planted a great many apple-seeds;

for although he was too small even to know clearly what it meant, what it was he was doing, yet he could grasp a handful of the seed, and he could drop them into the places arranged for them. The years rolled by, the boy grew up and went into the world, he was converted, and became a minister of the Gospel. He went back to the home of his childhood. The apple-seeds that he had planted almost in infancy had grown into a fruitful orchard, and he could stand in autumn beneath the flourishing trees, and eat the ripe, golden fruit of his own planting. It was a very unimportant fact in itself, but impressively suggestive.

For this simple process and progress of things in nature is what takes place in this world, both for good and evil, in ten thousand thousand instances, not only in moral and spiritual things, but in daily, worldly experience, in fruit gathered, of seed sown. It is *continually* taking place. Almost all that men experience, is but the consequence of what they have sown, the return from the fields they have cultivated. We stand beneath the shadow of the trees we have planted, and we eat their fruit, be it good or evil.

But if so in this world, how much more in the eternal world! Men's part in the formation of the character of others can be fully known *only* in the eternal world. It will be known perfectly there, as well as the part *others* have had in the formation of *their* character. God unerringly distributes responsibility and judgment. The beginnings of habit in their character are subtle and insidious. They may come from ten thousand sources, they may come from one. God knows how to appropriate to each author his share in the composition.

Take an immoral person, and go back from manhood to infancy, unfolding the layers of his character as you go, and there is a distinct responsibility for each step of growth, and God traces it. That habit of swearing, lying, drinking, that involves or marks the child or man, had its definite source and steps of increase, the responsibility of which God appropriates, first to the teacher of the habit, second to the receiver and cherisher; first to the person setting the example, or alluring to the practice of evil, and second to the person following the example, and practising the evil. You may sometimes see the little hardened miniature veteran in vice, with *all* those habits. God knows the first oath the boy heard, and the first person

from whom he heard it, and the second, and the third, and the precise effect of each instance on the soul, and the precise degree of conscience, of volition, of knowledge, with which the example was imitated, and the habit formed or not resisted. And for each God will hold a reckoning, and to each person God will distribute the harvest; to the sower and the receiver; to the sower in other's natures, and the receiver into his own. And thus, as it is said of the good seed, that those who sow and those who reap shall rejoice together; so of the evil seed, those who sow and those who reap shall lament together: for all are sowers and all are reapers, and we are solemnly warned not to be partakers of other men's sins. Of the harvest which evil men reap, doubtless the most terrible part, in some respects, will be that of the evil which they have sown in other men's natures, and especially in the characters of children.

At first, the child is mainly the *receiver* of seed; but as soon as by the voluntary action of the moral being upon the seed sown, in receiving it, and cherishing it, and letting it germinate and grow, and so taking it up into the life, the character begins to be formed, in principle and habit, then the receiving child becomes in his turn the sower and the teacher, by the same power of character and example. And so the process goes on, both evil and good passing from nature to nature, the responsibility and accountability always mutual, the consequences and the harvest mutual for ever.

Nor can this responsibility be thrown off by delegating it to others. Those to whose charge an accountable soul is committed are bound to see and know what teachings they in their turn commit it to; they are bound to exclude the evil and secure the good. If they leave the soul in the power of hands or hearts that will teach it evil, it is as if they themselves had *sown* the evil, and the harvest will come back to *them*. The custom with some persons of delegating the care of children at the seed-time and fountain of their character, almost entirely to servants, is most pernicious; or rather it would be so, if in multitudes of cases the imitation of the character of servants were not less injurious than that of the character and vices of their masters. Between both, how fearful an education, in the exclusion of all good, and the perpetual presence of examples and influences of evil, is in many cases impressed upon the child. A Christian

minister to the lower classes in England, on being once reproached with the rudeness of his congregation, answered yes; it was very much such a congregation as Christ often preached to: and besides, said he, I am doing an incomparably greater work in preaching to the servants, than if I had the masters to preach to, *for the servants have the care of all the children!*

But in all such cases, to whomsoever the charge is delegated, God will lay the responsibility exactly where it belongs. God lays a most solemn and affecting responsibility upon parents, to be good themselves for the sake of their children; to be such themselves, that if their children should copy their whole character, it may be well with them for ever. But how can this be, if they do not themselves practise a life of piety, if they have not themselves entered on a religious course, a life of prayer?

Light and truth, with grace divine, are the influences that must go into the hearts of children, as water to the roots of plants. And parents are the guardians who ought, in all cases, to minister these influences; they ought to be *capable* of this holy ministry; they ought to be daily and sedulously engaged in it.

Sometimes in their life my readers may have watched the growth of household flowers. They may have seen one of them neglected for two or three days, so that it drooped and faded like a dying bird. The long leaves were all trailing, pale, and withered. Then the water was renewed upon it, and the earth was stirred about the roots, and it was brought to an open window in a sunny exposure, and the soft sweet light was poured upon it, and the fresh air breathed clear over it, and it revived. Is the life of plants a more sensitive and delicate thing than that of souls? Does it need more care? Alas, are there not to be found even refined and gentle mothers, who tend the flowering shrubs in their windows with more punctual, patient, fostering daily care, than they bestow upon those household plants that are blossoming for immortality? The hearts of children are susceptible to all moral influence, to a degree of which the most delicate sensitive plant ever known is no adequate emblem. They are susceptible of heavenly cultivation, of a reviving, fostering, renewing care, under which, by God's grace, they shall bloom for Him who made them. But without that care, they do not, merely like plants, droop, wither, and die; infinitely

worse than that, they become hardened and vigorous in the life of sin; they grow for this world, and for evil, with a portentous rapidity and energy of development.

Oh, then, let it be solemnly considered what a retribution may wait upon neglect; what consequences of evil may be set in motion, to come back inevitably upon the soul, from mere habits of frivolity, from the light, careless, occasional, or habitual neglect of small, but daily recurring duties; duties to others, duties to children, duties of act, word, character, example. It is one of the most tremendous announcements among the mighty principles in the Book of Revelation, the Book of Light, over all man's duty and destiny, that *to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin*. No man can stand erect before that tribunal. A man *must* have a Saviour, were there nothing that can be charged against him, but only the smallest of his sins of omission. How can he meet them? How can he compute or meet their consequences?

Let him beware of them. They do not reveal themselves one by one, with an iron tongue upon the conscience; much less when they become habitual. They steal by on noiseless wings; they are the stealthiest of our evil habits; therefore, they may be the most pernicious. They *are* the most pernicious. Taking the neglect of prayer into the catalogue, it is men's sins of omission, not those of commission, that carry them to hell. The perfection and absolute end of the *commission* is never reached but through the *omission*. A Saviour stands between every man's committed guilt and his ruin; but beyond the omission, the neglect, of repentance, faith, prayer, there is no Saviour; the man winds back upon the *commission*, and he and his sins, and the consequences, dwell together for ever.

The sins of omission do not, at once, reveal themselves as crimes, to startle the soul, and set it on its guard against them. Therefore so much the greater need of care and prayer.

Who sows the serpent's teeth, let him not hope  
 To reap a joyous harvest. Every crime  
 Has, in the moment of its perpetration,  
 Its own avenging angel, dark misgiving,  
 An ominous sinking at the inmost heart.

SCHILLER.



But the habit of omitted duty may not be attended, step by step, with that misgiving, that ominous warning, that sinking at the heart. And yet it may have secured the perdition of its victim more certainly, more inevitably, than crime itself. There is no safety but in prayer.

How many of these minds are there, to whom scarcely any good can be done! They have no excitability. You are attempting to kindle a fire of stones. You must leave them as you find them, in permanent mediocrity. You waste your time if you do not employ it on materials which you can actually modify, while such can be found.

JOHN FOSTER.

By nature's law, what may be, may be now.  
There's no prerogative in human hours.  
In human hearts what bolder thoughts can rise  
Than man's presumption on to-morrow's dawn?  
Where is to-morrow? In another world.  
For numbers this is certain; the reverse  
Is sure to none; and yet on this Perhaps,  
This Peradventure, infamous for lies,  
As on a rock of adamant we build  
Our mountain hopes, and spin eternal schemes.

*Night Thoughts, 1.*

IF I had sought mine own commendation, it had been a much fitter course for me to have done as gardeners use to do, by taking their seeds and slips, and rearing them first into plants, and so uttering them in pots, when they are in flower, and in their best state. But because my purpose was rather to excite other men's wits than to magnify mine own, I was desirous to prevent the uncertainty of my own life and times, by uttering rather seeds than plants; nay, and further, as the proverb is, by sowing with the basket rather than with the hand.

LORD BACON. *Letter to Dr. Playfere.*

ABSURD presumption! Thou who never knew'st  
A serious thought, shalt thou dare dream of joy?  
No man e'er found a happy life by chance,  
Or yawned it into being with a wish,  
Or with the snout of grovelling appetite  
E'er smelt it out, and grubbed it from the dirt.  
An art it is, and must be learned  
With unremitting effort, or be lost.  
The clouds may drop down titles and estates,  
And leave us perfect blockheads in our bliss.  
Wealth may seek *us*, but wisdom must be *sought*,  
Sought before all; but how unlike all else  
We seek on earth! 'tis never sought in vain.

*Night Thoughts, 8.*

## CHAPTER XIII.

Lessons from the abundance of Unproductive Seed: Duty of sowing at all seasons, in all opportunities, because of the Uncertainty in what Opportunity lies the blessing: What one week's neglect, or one Sabbath's waste, may do: The providential Allotment, and the Spiritual Second Sight.

A WONDERFUL and solemn lesson of nature, is to be found in the quantity of rotting seed, unbled. Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. With what exquisite beauty and profoundness of meaning did the Saviour of the world apply that illustration to the necessity and the glory of his own death! It has also a grand and sacred meaning for ourselves; for we must all die to self, if we would live for grace and glory; we must die to self, if we would rise again for others. We must die to sin, if we would live in holiness. We must die in and with Christ, if we would rise with him in life eternal. Sorrow and self-death in Christ are the spring and root of life and glory. In this death, the principle of life remains, and passes into new forms of blessedness; but without this death, the old corn abideth alone, and rots and dies absolutely, no life springing from it. Just as a grain of seed, in germinating, dies to itself, but passes into other life and fruit; but if it do not germinate and die into life, it abideth alone, and is lost.

But the lesson we wish now to insist upon, is the lavishness of Nature with her seed, and yet out of how small a portion of the seed sown, the harvest may grow. Out of fifty seeds, forty-nine may possibly abide alone, and the fiftieth only may die into life. This thought seems to have led the poet Tennyson to pause in his imagination that the final destiny of all souls must

be good, and to tremble at the shadow of eternal evil. So careful of the type, Nature seems, so careless of the single life,

“That I, considering every where  
Her secret meaning in her deeds,  
And finding that of fifty seeds  
She often brings but one to bear,  
Must falter, where I firmly trod.”

But in this matter we tread firmly, only when we walk by Divine Revelation, only when in God's light we see light. Not by dreams or wishes can we determine the destiny of souls; but one thing we do know: Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish; and He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.

The lesson from the *profusion* of seeds, while yet the abundant harvest comes from comparatively *few* seeds, is that of a bountiful lavishness in sowing. Nature teaches us, whatever else we withhold, not to withhold necessary truths, in which are contained all the possibilities of life, but to scatter such seed broadcast, unmeasured, there being no danger of a wasteful excess. Even that which does not spring up, may go into the soil as elementary richness, so preparing the soil, that the next seed sown may spring up and ripen. But we must sow freely, abundantly, because the greater the sowing, the greater the harvest. That is what God teaches in Nature and in His Word: He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully. And blessed are ye, that sow beside all waters. A text which Mr. Coleridge very appropriately prefixed to one of his ‘Lay Sermons,’ full of profound and suggestive wisdom; to which he might have added that other from the Book of Ecclesiastes, In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand, for thou knowest not which shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good. The combination of certainty and uncertainty binds us, properly considered, to a wide and lavish labour of sowing, in season and out of season, at all opportunities, beside all waters.

Now by a man following these injunctions in Nature and the Divine Word, in the hopeful, cheerful, persevering spirit implied

and inculcated, what an immense amount of good may in the end be accomplished! Go soberly and quietly forth to each day's duty, not relying upon frames and feelings, or waiting for them, but waiting upon God; and see at length what will come of it. *Whatsoever* good thing thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, waiting not upon consequences, but upon God; He will take care of the consequences for thee, if thou dispose rightly of the germs. By a man stedfastly and perseveringly sowing the seeds of a holy conversation, a holy example, a holy life, an immense amount of influence may be exerted, and is exerted, continually, even for the highest object of effort revealed to mortal knowledge, or granted to mortal instrumentality or thought, even for the salvation, eternally, of other souls. In general it may be said that a man working steadily, perseveringly, scripturally, for the conversion and salvation of *any* one soul, may accomplish it. In reliance upon God, this form of assertion, as a general rule, is not presumptuous. God hath put thus much in various ways, and by various promises, into the power of men. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. He may not attain his end in this particular week or day, or month or year; but he will be successful, if he be persevering and faithful.

We can conceive of a man as intensely decisive for good as for evil, in his work upon his fellow men; a man the direct opposite of that instance related by Foster in his celebrated work on Decision of Character, the instance of a man, who, in prospect of a deadly revenge, pursued his enemy round the globe, from place to place, through all his attempted concealments, till he came up with him and destroyed him. In like manner a man might be supposed with the same decision and intensity of purpose to seek the salvation of another, following him, if need be, round the globe. Suppose him thus to attach himself to an individual, with an affectionate and deep earnestness that could not be resisted, accompanying all his efforts with equally earnest and persevering prayer; and where is the soul that under such a process of love and intercession might not be supposed to yield?

In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, because thou knowest not which effort shall prosper. We suppose that the period here referred to, is more

particularly the seed-time of life; and that the efforts here inculcated are required to be continual, because of our utter ignorance at what time in the course of those efforts God may deign to bless our labours. He may bless any particular portion of them, or he may make the whole necessary, and the whole effectual. We have reason to conclude and to know, if he appoints us a course of efforts and of opportunities, that the entire number is important and essential.

We are not to regulate our sowing by the wind or the weather, in the soul or the circumstances; for he that regardeth the wind shall not sow, and he that regardeth the clouds will not reap. Looking to those things, and to natural appearances merely, a man might be discouraged from *ever* sowing for God at all; but we are to be *continually* sowing, and sowing in hope, morning and evening; because, although God has a definite time of blessing what is sown, we know not whether it will be what is sown in the morning or the evening that will be particularly blessed and prospered, or whether the whole is not equally essential, and equally to be made instrumental in accomplishing God's purposes. And of all the heap of seed sown, morning after morning, evening after evening, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, there is one seed, or group of seeds and influences, which the Omniscient eye sees is to be successful.

The whole amount of seed sown may cover a period of *time*, of which the *successful* seed touches upon, or occupies, where it takes root, not the hundredth or the thousandth part; and yet it is *all* to us equally important, because we know not at what juncture our neglect might be fatal, at what point of time our faithfulness in co-operation with God is essential to the result.

And just so the whole amount of seed sown may comprise a *quantity*, of which not the thousandth part may seem to us to be the *efficacious* seed, or to take root in the soul, and yet it is *all* to us equally important, because we know not which of all the instructions committed to our care, to cast into the soul, shall germinate to life eternal. We know not which of all the opportunities given us to use for God, shall be the one appointed for God's blessing. If the time of sowing given us were just a hundred days, it would not do for us to miss one of those days, for we might, if we neglected that, lose the blessing of the

whole; that particular day of our neglect might be the very day on which, if we had continued our work, the Divine power would have rested. We are to work both for our own and others' salvation, with fear and trembling, with ceaseless assiduity, because it is God that worketh in us, and if we work not, God's working in us and by us stops.

If the direct opportunities given to a man of sowing were a thousand opportunities, and he knew that five only of those opportunities were to be signaled by God's blessing, while all the rest might seem to him lost or unavailing, he could not, without the most tremendous hazard, neglect one of those opportunities, or one in a while, amounting in the whole to five; for that one might be *the* one, and those five might be *the* five. If God should give the man a soul to take charge of for five years, and should say to him that in one of the weeks of those years should be folded up the germinating seed, on which, if he would be faithful to his trust, should depend the eternal salvation of that soul, but he should not know which week it should be, nor whether it should be the seed sown in the morning or the evening of his careful nurture, that should be prospered by God's blessing; with what intense anxiety would he watch the progress of the time and the discipline. And with what anxiety of self-watchfulness would he maintain his work, knowing that all the weeks in which the blessing does not come, may still have a most important bearing on the week in which it *shall* come, and that all is depending on that proposition, *if you are faithful*. Not till he found by the result, the week of blessing, would his anxiety be relieved; not till he could feel that God had really given his word a place, in the soul, and his grace a conquering and regenerating influence unto life everlasting; not till then would the man feel that he could at all diminish his watchfulness, or relax his efforts.

Now it is really so with us, in regard to all our responsibilities for eternity, both for ourselves and others. We are in this very uncertainty, yet under this direct responsibility. We have good seed given us to sow, both for ourselves and others; and seed of some kind we are sowing continually, by our instructions, our habits, our conversation, our influence, our example. Of the seed and the opportunities given us for life eternal, God says to us, Be diligent, and make the most of them. He that winneth



souls is wise. He that converteth a sinner from the error of his ways, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. But all your opportunities are alike precious so far as this, that you know not any which you can safely omit. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both alike shall be good. If it is the morning seed that is to have the blessing, the preceding work of all thine evenings may be necessary for it; and if it is the seed sown at evening which Divine grace shall choose, the toil of all the foregoing mornings of prayer and of effort may be just as necessary as the seed.

This combined uncertainty and responsibility illustrate, in an eminent degree, the situation of parents in regard to their children. Let us suppose that God should say to a parent, should commission an angel to say, from God, in regard to an opening flower of immortality, This child I commit to you, to nurture for God and heaven. I give into your power all the influences, instructions, seeds, principles, examples, prayers, that can be included in the period of five years; and if you are faithful to your charge, then within the instructions and prayers of one of the weeks of those years, there shall be found infolded the blessing of peace and life eternal for your child.

Suppose it were an affectionate Christian mother thus addressed; would she feel that under this responsibility she could afford one week of neglect? one week of carelessness, one week without prayer? If she *should* do that, if she should neglect her charge one week, if, leaving the throne of grace, and the Bible, and the care of immortality, she should hurry through the round of gay and fashionable amusements, the theatre, the opera, the ball-room, the card-party, and should set for one week the example of an all-absorbing worldliness, an example set by many parents in all the weeks through all the years of their existence; if she should do this for one week of the time allotted to the experiment, and then again should be brought to her senses, brought to bitter repentance, to God, to prayer, with what misery and anxiety would she think upon that week! Perhaps in that week she may have lost the offered gift of her

child's salvation! With what harrowing anguish and uncertainty, would a tender conscience and a heart of quickened sensibility brood over it; for that week might be like the day in the destiny of Jerusalem, signalised by the tears of the Redeemer; the day of an unknown, despised, and wasted visitation of Heaven's mercy.

The mother may have sacrificed, by her own neglect, that week, the salvation of her own child. If the period of the whole appointed five years drew near to its close, and there were no appearance of a blessing, then she would feel a most insupportable dread, deepening into conviction, that this was the case. And not till she should see the child that was thus committed to her nurture, and to the care and power of her Christian example, beginning in sincere repentance to turn to God, and giving some evidence of the presence of God's grace, would she feel the burden, yea the agony, of that misspent wasted week, beginning to be lightened from her soul.

It is impossible to exaggerate the solemnity of our position and responsibilities as sowers, in our own souls and in the souls of others, of seed for eternity; sowers now, but reapers then, and owners of the harvest; for whether it be good or evil, it is ours. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. Let it also be remembered that simply as *receivers* of seed, we are *sowers* of the same. We form our habits for eternal life or eternal death, by the reception given in our hearts to the seeds and influences sent to us from God, and falling on us from our fellow-beings. They that hear the warnings and invitations of God's mercy in Christ, are sowing the seeds of life or death, of endless weal or woe, by the manner in which they treat those admonitory invitations.

And can any of my readers safely hazard the loss of any of the influences or the opportunities remaining to us? May not our own salvation depend upon our improving all the opportunities yet under our control, beginning with the present hour? Even if we could be assured of five years more of life, how know we but that the manner in which we treat the opportunities offered, and the influences exerted upon us, this very week, this very day, may determine our destiny? Are there *any* of the means of mercy

provided, that we can safely waste, seeing that their number is limited, is determined, if in no other way, yet by the length of our own life, of which we are utterly uncertain?

If a man had five bushels of grain in a time of famine, and in that quantity only one bushel of seed which would germinate, and on the proper sowing of which would depend his whole harvest, and supply of food till another seed-time, with what anxiety would he sow it all! If a man had five seeds of a fruit necessary for the cure of a fatal malady, periodically prevailing, in only one of which, and he did not know *what* one, lay the germinating principle for the production of the medicinal fruit, with what care would he plant and cultivate each seed! In the loss of any one, he might justly fear the loss of *the* one, which alone can be of any avail to him.

Now apply this to the case of our immortal interests, and the opportunities given us for securing them; opportunities as constant as our days, but yet also enclosed and marked, both for greater security and as a sign of their importance, in germs wrapped round by seven days. Apply it not merely to conjunctures and days of determining importance in the business of earth; but to our sowing and germinating days for heaven. Suppose, for example, that we could have all the Sabbaths of one year given to us, or assured to us; fifty-two Sabbaths made certain, in one of which we were given to know, but to know not exactly *what* one, would be contained, *if rightly improved*, our assurance of eternal blessedness.

Where is the man in the exercise of right reason, and with any adequate sense of eternal realities, that would be mad enough deliberately to waste one? Would we not feel it to be worse than insanity, where our eternal destiny is depending, to throw away *one* such period of mercy out of a certain number containing *only* one; to hazard the loss of one such Sabbath out of fifty-two, where *all* may be necessary for securing the *only* available and all important *one*? It would be madness infinite, unspeakable, since the waste of *only* one might comprise the loss of *all*, might be the waste of *the* one, to which belonged, by way of eminence, the eternal destiny of the soul.

Now just such an apportionment, just such an allotment, may be often going on in regard to the fate of individuals. Every year multitudes reach their *last* year; every Sabbath multitudes

reach their last Sabbath. Every year, with multitudes, if the whole arrangement in their case were known, at the year's opening, there would be seen the angel of destiny marking their decisive days. God, for infinitely wise purposes, has concealed from us the knowledge of those critical points and days beforehand, though at the same time he has given us to know, and has provided that we might feel, with an overwhelming certainty and solemnity, the truth concerning our future destiny, and the mighty fact that its eternal character and determination *may* depend upon the choice made, and the character sustained, in any one day of our existence.

Supposing a man had reached his last day, in the possession of a character with its elementary fixtures and habits opposed to God's will, and expulsive of the spirit of holiness and heaven, the determination of that character and its consequences *for eternity* would be in the power of that last day, would rest upon the goings on of that last day. In that last day there *might*, possibly, still be sown the germ of an eternal blessedness, the germ of faith, repentance, love, hope, prayer, the germ of a character totally reversing all the past years of his existence.

Into that last day there *might* be thrown a power, that should arrest and turn back the whole current of habit, the cataract of nature, even there, where it was just bending, as in the smooth and glassy swiftness and condensed power of the curve of a waterfall over the brink of a precipice, just bending for the plunge into unquenchable fire. There *might* be grace, there *might* be the wonder of a gracious heavenward choice and impulse. There *is* one last day's opportunity, invitation, possibility.

And if spiritual spectators could be conceived looking on, and watching and waiting to see, as the hours of that day run by, what are the movements of the man's mind, himself all unconscious that he had come to the last day, the determining day, the day that by his own motions was to set the seal of eternity and unchangeableness upon his character and destiny; what a transaction of inexpressible interest and solemnity! What a post of observation, and a watch more intensely anxious and thrilling than ever took place beside the fitful pulse and fleeting breath of the dying, yet possibly reviving! How would each hour, as a citadel of hope, be evacuated, as the tide of feeling,

choice, decision, character, poured on unchanged; each motion watched, each fluctuation, each possibility, and every possibility fainter and fainter to the last!

The supposed spiritual spectators may be sadly certain, even *before* the last; but men in general do not *know* the last, till all is over. Sometimes men have strong presentiments, projections of the present into the future, and warnings even like the asserted *second sight*.

“There exist moments in the life of man,  
 When he is nearer the great Soul of the World,  
 Than is man’s custom, and possesses freely  
 The power of questioning his destiny;  
 And such a moment ’twas, when in the night,  
 Before the action in the plains of Lutzen,  
 Leaning against a tree, thoughts crowding thoughts,  
 I looked out far upon the ominous plain,  
 My whole life, past and future, in this moment,  
 Before my mind’s eye glided in procession,  
 And to the destiny of the next morning  
 The spirit, filled with anxious presentiment,  
 Did knit the most removed futurity.  
 Then said I to myself, So many  
 Dost thou command. They follow all thy star,  
 And, as on some great Number, set their All  
 Upon thy single head, and only man  
 The vessel of thy fortune.”

This most impressive, prophetic etching by a great poet, is sometimes true of single governing tides, or germinated decisions in a man’s life and character, bearing on, and fore-shadowing his whole eternal destiny, while yet he knows it not. Do we ever know, beforehand, in regard to any thing, the last time? There are sometimes impressions, as if an invisible arm from the spiritual world were pressing us, as if an unseen pen were doing the work of an engraver on our hearts; but the visible hand-writing is never seen, *thy last opportunity, thy last time!* So it is with all our mercies; they are present, they are past; they wing their way back to heaven, bearing with them their report of our

character, according as we have received and dismissed them; and we never know, till it is done, when the last report is given in.

Soon our whole term for wisdom is expired,  
And EVERLASTING FOOL is writ in FIRE,  
Or REAL WISDOM wafts us to the SKIES!

YOUNG.

In legitimacy of conclusion, strong and unexceptionable is the argument from Universality of Belief, for the continuance of our personal being after death. The Bull-calf *butts* with smooth and unarmed brow. Throughout animated Nature, of each characteristic organ and faculty there exists a pre-assurance and instinctive and practical anticipation; and no pre-assurance common to a whole species does in any instance prove delusive. All other prophecies of Nature have their exact fulfilment; in every other ingrafted Word of Promise Nature is found true to her word; and is it in her noblest creature that she tells her first lie? The merest naturalist, to whom no light of Revelation had been vouchsafed, might ask the question.

COLERIDGE. *Aids to Reflection.*

ARE we struck with admiration at beholding the cope of heaven imaged in a dew drop? The least of the animalcula, to which that drop would be an ocean, contains in itself an infinite problem, of which God Omnipresent is the only solution. The slave of custom is roused by the rare and accidental alone; but the axioms of the unthinking are to the philosopher the deepest problems, as being the nearest to the mysterious *Root*, and partaking at once of its darkness and its pregnancy.

COLERIDGE. *Lay Sermons.*

FROM dearth to plenty, and from death to life,  
Is Nature's progress, when she lectures man  
In heavenly truth; evincing, as she makes  
The grand transition, that there lives and works  
A soul in all things, and that soul is God.  
The beauties of the wilderness are His  
That make so gay the solitary place,  
Where no eye sees them. And the fairer forms,  
That cultivation glories in, are His.  
He sets the bright procession on its way,  
And marshals all the order of the year;  
He marks the bounds, which Winter may not pass,  
And blunts his pointed fury; in its case,  
Russet and rude, folds up the tender germ,  
Uninjured, with inimitable art;  
And ere one flowery season fades and dies,  
Designs the blooming wonders of the next.

COWPER'S *Task*.



## CHAPTER XIV.

Depth of meaning in the word Type: Faith must take the Impressions:  
The Processes of Spring as Typifying the Resurrection of the Just:  
The Rising of all things, by God's Requisition of that which is Past.

THERE is a meaning in the word TYPE, as applied to the tracing of analogies between Nature and the world of Spiritual Realities, far more profound than is ordinarily apprehended. It is a word for Faith to ponder upon and use. Types are *things* by which *thoughts* may be printed. The types are set, but the thoughts cannot be read, till the sheet of fair white paper is laid upon them and printed. The types are set, according to the meaning of the author; but it is the printed sheet alone that contains their impression, holds their meaning, and spreads it to the light, to the soul, to the world of thoughtful intelligence. Thus it may be said that Faith spreads the sheet that receives the impression, the meaning, of God's types in Nature; and then they are read, how plain, how universal, how radiant with Truth Divine!

All the processes of Nature are as God's stereotype plates, renewed incessantly, varied continually, possessing an inherent life; self-setting types, self-casting plates, by impermeating law, the Law of the Spirit of Life, acting in all Nature. It is the Spirit of Divine Intelligence, the Spirit of Living Wisdom, Creative Wisdom, speaking to Faith, in forms of life, silent, it may be, to the ear, yet voiceful to the soul, and full of meaning. From thoughtful types thus arranged by Law in the earth's being, Faith takes the impressions, prints the pages, binds up the volume, reads it, loves it, as God's own revelation.

Thus are set the Types of Resurrection in the processes of Spring. It is not mere ingenious Fancy appending that grand meaning to Nature as an after thought; it is God himself, who hath thus set one thing over against another, and given us in Nature a mirror that reflects the firmament of Spiritual Truth. The well-known epitaph on himself, written by Dr. Franklin for his own grave-stone, many years previous to his death, was a curiously beautiful figure, drawn partly and purposely from things connected with the occupation of his life; but, beautiful as it is, the Scripture doctrine of the Resurrection is not in it, nor, in fact, any intimation of the resurrection of the body at all; but only a new and fairer life for the soul, the immortal work, divested of its earthly covering.

The Body  
of  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,  
Printer;  
(Like the Cover of an Old Book,  
Its Contents torn out,  
And stripped of its Lettering and Gilding;)
   
Lies here, food for worms.  
Yet THE WORK ITSELF shall not be lost:  
For it will (as he believed.) appear once more  
In a new  
And more beautiful Edition,  
Corrected and Amended  
by  
THE AUTHOR.

The Grecian Plato might have written this, had he too been a printer, or even a bookbinder. But the Types of Nature God hath set up to print a deeper meaning from than immortality merely. The idea of a new and more beautiful edition, corrected and amended by the Author, sets one solemnly to thinking; for the corrections and emendations in the work itself must all be made by revealed and well-known processes *here*; which, if they be not passed through and perfected in our Divine Redeemer, then must the work be lost indeed *there*, its true value never known but *by* its loss.

But the processes of Spring, the impressions being fully taken by Faith, not only shadow forth a future life, but send us to our Redeemer as its assurance and its fountain. A village graveyard shows upon a neat and simple tomb-stone an affecting record of sweet virtues, by which the memory of the just is blessed, and then leaves the awakened mind to ponder upon these words engraven deep upon the marble: THAT WHICH THOU SOWEST IS NOT QUICKENED EXCEPT IT DIE. In a country graveyard in England a stone may be seen bearing this question from Job on the top of it, IF A MAN DIE, SHALL HE LIVE AGAIN? and underneath, simply the answer by our blessed Lord, I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. Not the resurrection merely, but the resurrection and the life; and it as prophetic of the two together, that Nature sets her types, in the processes of vegetable life for Faith's affirmations.

The seed dies, to rise again. The dying is itself not absolute death, but a process of passing and reviving life. In all seeds cast into the ground, it is only where life is uninterruptedly possessed and continued, that there is a rising again. If there is absolute death, a bare rotting, in which the principle of life stops, nothing springs from it, nothing is ever seen or known of it again, as life. Therefore in the revivifying processes of Spring only the Resurrection of the Just is shadowed forth, is typified in Nature, and can be printed from its forms; only the resurrection of him, whosoever he be, that liveth and believeth in Jesus. There is really no Resurrection in Nature, save only where Death is a dying into Life, the principle and power of Life never having been for one instant interrupted. If that principle dies, the seed abideth alone, and there is no resurrection. So then, it is only the resurrection of believers in Christ. of those in whom the life is hid with Christ in God, and holds on, permanent, perpetual; it is only *their* resurrection that is typified in Nature.

Accordingly, that is the only resurrection dwelt upon in the fifteenth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians, with illustrations drawn by the Divine Inspiring Spirit *from* Nature. That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die, and that death itself takes place only because there is continued life; and so if there be not continued life in Christ, there can be no heavenly quickening, since it is only in Christ that any can be

made alive. Nature herself thus teaches, when she predicts a resurrection, not only that it *will* be, but how and how only it *can* be, that is, by continued life. For the resurrection which Nature *does* predict, is a resurrection into new life and beauty, not into shame and everlasting contempt. The Types of the Resurrection of the wicked, God hath not set in Nature, except as tares which in the harvest are to be gathered up and burned. There is indeed in nature bad seed as well as good seed, and there are weeds and poisonous plants as well as life-sustaining grain. But the consideration of this belongs rather to the harvest. It is not indeed excluded from the Types of Spring, but on the whole the teaching of the Spring is that of a glorious Resurrection in Christ; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life: and the hints in regard to an evil resurrection, (they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation) bear about the same proportion to the other in the Book of Nature, that they do in the Book of Grace. There are passages in regard to both, but whole chapters on the Resurrection of the Just.

The Types of Nature, rightly interpreted, tell us how only a Resurrection unto Life is possible; but the impression must be received, the page printed, by Faith. Nature directs us to the source of life, tells us that life, not death, must be our principle of being; a life, of which death is not the interruption, but merely the passage to a new form, and the rising into new glory. The Faith that takes from the types of Nature their significant sheet, finds, by Revelation, that uninterrupted life only in Christ.

Just so with the typical fore-signs of the trees, as well as of the seeds; *they* bloom again in verdure, and are clustered with new fruitage, after the apparent Winter of death; but it is only because the vital sap lay hidden in the roots, and had retreated thither for continued life, no form of death being shadowed in that process. Faith prints *that* impression likewise, and many a solemn thought is suggested by it; and turning the analogy to our eternal destiny, with and by the letter and the spirit of the revealed word, Faith tells us, as Nature's own foreshadowing, that we too must be rooted and grounded in Christ.

Just so it is with typical transformations of the insect world. The multitudinous and beautiful processes of Nature are a Book, of which these wondrous transformations might be called the engravings. Here, also, Faith takes the impression, and tells us

that as from the worm and chrysalis to the butterfly, there is no death, but only a change into brighter, more ethereal, and joyous life, so for our joyous resurrection it is also requisite that there be a power and principle, a law and spirit of Life, uninterrupted, unbroken, everlasting, of which Death is but the sleeping change, a sleep that there may *be* a change, a sleep in Jesus, *because* there is a *life* in Jesus, because, indeed, *that* was the life of life here in this mortal existence.

There is also a more general Type in the processes of spring, to which it may be well to advert, before considering the Types of Summer; and that is the indestructibility of all things that are destined for a resurrection, and the certainty of their re-appearance. The vast and irrepressible energy of vegetative life, from secrecy and darkness, is profoundly instructive. In the moral world there is not only this principle, that that which hath already been is to be, but there is the recorded announcement, that GOD REQUIRETH THAT WHICH IS PAST. That is a great sentence; nothing can remain in the tomb, under that; whatever thing is buried, at whatever depth, will some time burst its cerements. Out of the infinite deep of the past, God calleth it up. It may have been shrouded beneath the involutions of a past eternity; but, sunk in whatever sepulchre of the abyss, it is to be raised again. It is all one as if it were but yesterday. Its resurrection may be ever so fearful to the soul; yet the united wishes, efforts, and prayers of all the inhabitants of the globe could not prevent it; could not keep one fact, or thought, or transaction of the past, down in the prison of the past, not to come up again. This very fact, that it hath already been, is the security that it is to be.

The Lord of the Resurrection saith, in one place in the Gospel, that nothing was ever kept secret, but that it *should* come abroad. An extraordinary emphasis, and security of openness, is in the very *intention* of secrecy; that intention has a greater germinating power, than the determination before-hand of the widest notoriety. No man ever put a secret in its coffin, or shot it down, with whatever leaden weights, to whatever depths in the sea of darkness, but there was, in this very moment, the greatest of all possible certainties that it should come forth. This very thing, this quality of secrecy now, or in the past, is the very insurance of publicity; this label, *private*, this seal *secret*, constitutes

the certainty of being made known. A man who thinks his deeds are done in darkness, in putting into them that very quality of secrecy, and upon them that very admonition of darkness, that injunction of reserve, is marking them for the light. Just so, the bare fact that a thing hath already *been*, is enough to render it sure for being *again*. To be of the past, is to be of the future. Say of a thing that hath any moral meaning or connection, It has been, or, It is, and you say, It shall be.

For God requireth that which is past. All things are to come up again; they are to come up for judgment. Ten thousand thousand things, thoughts, and myriads of transactions, have passed *without* judgment, without pause; passed indifferently, passed carelessly, passed as the beasts pass. They may have fled as an arrow cuts the air, and leaves no trace; but they have gone with innumerable connections, associations, reflections of meaning from and upon, and intricate moral developments and dependencies. They may have passed without note, without arrest, without judgment. But they are all to come up, for God shall make them manifest. They are neither lost, nor mistaken, nor disregarded, nor forgotten. They may have been as the flashes of lightning in their swiftness, and no more copy or catalogue of them kept by man, than of the number and forms of the sun-beams or the dew-drops. But they may have been deeper in their meaning, broader in their development, and more important in their consequences, than any flash of lightning ever was or shall be. And as they have been, again they are to be. There is nothing gone out of God's universe, nothing exempt from the law of resurrection and re-examination. A wandering thought, a wild, winged word may be as important for arrest and investigation, in some moral aspect, as a rolling world.

Nor are they to come up merely for judgment; they are to come up again also for life. In a solemn sense they are to be lived over again. They are to come up as seed comes up in harvest; and in the eternal world they may again be sown for renewed consequences. They are to come up as elements of character. Men have been, through all the past, and are now, every where putting into the furrows of their being, hiding beneath the soil, and covering with invigorating mould, the germs of what they are to be, to do, or to suffer, hereafter.

They are germs of indestructible activity and power. They are habits and elements whose roots strike here, but whose life and fruits are to fill eternity. Men write their future in their present, not only because God keeps the record of their past, and requireth it, and will judge it, but because God hath made their present time their spring-time; and present character, character between the cradle and the grave, determines the eternal character. So all things are to come up, as elements of joy or grief, peace or strife, bliss or misery, comfort or disappointment. Thoughts, things, words, feelings, experiences, knowledges, forms of discipline, losses, adversities, trials, blessings, enjoyments, opportunities, privileges, neglects, omissions, prayers, efforts, struggles, failures, successes: all things are to come up; in themselves for judgment, in the consequences for existence, for experience, for the life of life, or the life of death, for life *in* life, or life *in* death, for ever! For God requireth it. He *sees* that which is present, but he *requireth* that which is past. He hath set our iniquities before him, our secret sins in the light of his countenance.

PART III.

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VOICES OF THE SUMMER.





THE silent night has passed into the prime  
Of day, to thoughtful souls a solemn time:  
For man has wakened from his nightly death  
And shut up sense, to morning's life and breath.  
He sees go out in heaven the stars that kept  
Their glorious watch, while he unconscious slept,  
Feels God was round him, while he knew it not,  
Is awed, then meets the world, and God's forgot.  
So may not I forget Thee, Holy Power!  
Be ever to me as at this calm hour.

R. H. DANA.

It is an assured truth, and a conclusion of experience, that a little or superficial knowledge of philosophy may incline the mind of man to atheism, but a farther proceeding therein doth bring the mind back again to religion; for in the entrance of philosophy, when the second causes, which are next unto the senses, do offer themselves to the mind of man, if it dwell and stay there, it may induce some oblivion of the highest cause; but when a man passeth on farther, and seeth the dependance of causes, and the works of Providence, then, according to the allegory of the poets, he will easily believe that the highest link of nature's chain must needs be tied to the foot of Jupiter's chair.

LORD BACON. *Adv. of Learning.*

THESE things are not strange, they are familiar, and that makes them to be overlooked. Things which rarely happen strike, whereas, frequency lessens the admiration of things, though in themselves ever so admirable. Hence, a common man, who is not used to think and make reflections, would probably be more convinced of the being of a God by one single sentence heard once in his life from the sky, than by all the experience he has had of this visual language, contrived with such exquisite skill, so constantly addressed to his eyes, and so plainly declaring the nearness, wisdom, and providence of Him with whom we have to do.

BISHOP BERKELEY.

THE primal act of faith is enunciated in the word GOD: a faith not derived from experience, but its ground and source, and without which, the fleeting *chaos of facts* would no more form experience, than the dust of the grave can of itself make a living man. The imperative and oracular form of the inspired Scripture, is the form of reason itself in all things purely rational and moral. Hence it follows that what is *expressed* in the inspired writings, is *implied* in all absolute science. The latter whispers, what the former utters as with the voice of a trumpet. AS SURE AS GOD LIVETH, is the pledge and assurance of every positive truth that is asserted by the reason.

COLERIDGE, *Lay Sermons.*

PART III

VOICES OF THE SUMMER.

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CHAPTER XV.

Characteristics of the Summer Season; Compass of a Summer Landscape: Science is simply the Observance of God at work: The secret of all Naturalism and Atheism in the world: The field of grass and lilies as a teacher of God's love.

THE grand and prevailing characteristics of SUMMER are loveliness and enjoyment. It is the time of flowers, leaves, light, warmth, clear air, dews, rains, showers, rich and glorious sun-risings and sunsettings, morning and evening twilight, sparkling fountains, green fields, singing birds, and running waters. All things are full of beauty and of life, and all things utter the sweet voice of inspiration itself, that God is love. The season is so spontaneous and exuberant in adornment and delight, that you could not cut out a section any where from any landscape, under any sky, which would not, in reference to the Divine Goodness, open to you a volume, where Meditation, in Cowper's expressive words, might think down hours to moments.

More than fifteen chequered years have passed away, since I wrote, after a joyous stroll in green pastures, and beside still waters, a page in my Summer's journal, which reproduces now, with a vivid sense of the extreme beauty of the picture, as it there flashed upon me, the details of the simple landscape. Were I again upon the spot, precisely the same elements of beauty would surround me, but with added grace and richness; for Nature, in such a scene, left to herself, grows lovelier from

year to year. I sketched some of the various qualities out of which in such a little nook of scenery, nay, in one straight-forward gaze upon it, from my standing point to the horizon, there could arise a combination of such indescribable loveliness.

The rain last night, I remarked, has purified the atmosphere, and the unusual coolness of the weather invigorates all nature. The day unites the beauty of Summer and Autumn. It has the leafiness of June, with the clearness of October. Every thing praises God, but how insensible are most men, even to the beauty of nature in itself, to say nothing of its lessons of the Deity. The simplest objects I have met with are full of loveliness. See what a picture in that small space of green meadow, dotted with two or three noble trees. How many points of beauty there are! First, the carpet of grass, of such peculiar freshness, smoothness, and depth of green. Second, the deep shadows of the trees, lying on the verdure, and contrasted with the sunshine, together with the motions in the same, and the chequered light, that dances with the stirring of the leaves as the wind moves the branches. Third, the smooth, straight, clean, and perfectly round trunks of the oaks and elms that rise side by side from the centre of the shadowed spots of green grass, and are seen in relief against the meadow. Fourth, the graceful commencement of the branches of the trees, where they spring from the trunk, and the beauty of their sprays and verdure, as seen against the grassy rising undulations of the landscape. Fifth, the loveliness of the waving tops of the trees, one rich mass of foliage bending in the elm with such graceful arches and festoons, and in the maple so close, shapely, and well defined in the outline. Sixth, the picture of these tree-tops, as seen against the clear blue sky, which is shining through the leaves and branches. Seventh, the splendour of the sailing clouds, the sparkling purity of the surrounding atmosphere, and the animation with which every thing dances and smiles in the breeze and sunshine. There are all these distinct features of beauty in this little simple spot before me. Though so small in extent, and so simple in its materials, the eye would never weary with gazing on it. Every part of its loveliness praises God.

But the impression made upon the mind by such a scene from without, depends greatly, not only on the point of light in which you regard it, but also on the state of the mind within.

The rill is tuneless to his ear, who feels  
 No harmony within; the south wind steals  
 As silent as unseen among the leaves:  
 Who *has no inward beauty, none perceives,*  
 Though all around is beautiful. Nay, more,  
 In nature's calmest hour he hears the roar  
 Of winds and flinging waves, puts out the light,  
 When high and angry passions meet in sight;  
 And, his own spirit into tumult hurled,  
 He makes a turmoil of a quiet world;  
 The fiends of his own bosom people air  
 With kindred fiends, that hunt him to despair!      DANA.

Such a heart will make Winter out of Summer every where. and can see God no where. The feelings are the medium of vision, and likewise of opinion and belief. Coleridge some where says that the chameleon darkens in the shadow of the person who stoops to examine its colour; and so does Nature change and darken, even in the unquiet shadow of the thinking and observing soul, if it cannot see light in God's light.

Again, if the phases of human life be mingled in the landscape, the mind may attach itself to some point there, perhaps of repugnance with the benevolence of the scene, and a train of thoughts shall be started, leading to contemplations, beneath which, if there were no relief from them in brighter realities, earth would always be shrouded in gloom.

We take another record from the journal of Summer hours, and find it illustrating such experience. Leaning against the trunk of a tree in the frequented park by the sea-side, and meditating on the busy scene before me, I was struck with the thought of its two contrasted faces. How happy they all look, the busy, moving spectators! The children trundling their hoops, school-girls playing and laughing, nurses with infants breathing the fresh air, young men and maidens walking and discoursing, the trees budding, the green grass springing, the warm west wind fanning one's temples, the waves quietly gurgling, the sea-craft, large and small, tacking and gliding in the Bay! What a lovely scene! But then its intelligent materials, what are they? If you hear at such a moment, a group of revellers, or gazers, from the midst of which a voice breaks forth, in very admiration of the scene, or of the sea view that constitutes part of it, with

an oath, in which the name of the Creator of all this enchantment is thrown from the lips in reckless, impious profaneness, how painful the revulsion, from the disclosure of love without, to hate within, from the sweetness of Nature, that would lead the heart to God, to such depravity in *human* nature, that can defy him. Immortal beings, at enmity against God! And the enjoyment even of such a scene, by such beings, considered with reference to the manner in which it is enjoyed, and the probable destiny of the laughers in the midst of it, is a piece of madness; its indulgence being like the laugh of insanity, and all their happiness a fearful mockery, somewhat as if a criminal should be found amusing himself with backgammon the hour before his execution!

And yet the voice of Nature calls us up to God. In his House we walk, and all its grand frame speaks to us; its azure walls open off around us into an infinitude of meaning, if only we have learned "the outward by the inward to discern, the inward by the Spirit." The veil must be taken away from the soul; for there is none over nature, and then man sees his Maker almost in open vision.

"In sympathy with God, his sympathies  
 Spread through the earth, and run into the skies;  
 Full, yet receiving; giving out, yet full;  
 Thoughtful in action; quiet, yet not dull,  
 He stands 'twixt God and earth. A genial light  
 Dawns in his soul, and while he casts his sight  
 Abroad, behold the Sun! As on its track  
 It mounts high up the heavens, its fires give back  
 Only the effluence of that inward fire,  
 The reflex of the soul, and God its Sire.  
 ΤΗΟΥ, who art Life and Light, I see thee spread  
 Thy glories through the regions of the dead;  
 I hear thee call the sleeper. Up! behold  
 The earth unveiled to thee, the heavens unrolled!  
 On thy transformed soul celestial light  
 Bursts, and the earth, transfigured, on thy sight  
 Breaks, a new sphere! Ay, stand in glad amaze,  
 While all its figures, opening on thy gaze,  
 Unfold new meanings. Thou shalt understand,  
 In mystic hieroglyph, thy God's own hand."

DANA.

In this spirit, when we trace the seasons in their round, every month is a fresh revelation, every day a new page in the letter from the Almighty Father to his children. The soul that would be filled with beauty, must be filled with God; then, every thing that hath ever sprung from his creating hand, bears the visible impress of his glory. Then too the realms of flying years and rolling worlds take a new sublimity of interest from the intimacy of the filial relationship, My Father made them all!

Let any man go forth into the air on a quiet morning in June, and enjoy the beauty of the landscape, and reflect how much of the Omnipotence, the Omniscience, and the Infinite Goodness of God he witnesses. In this small compass he beholds these attributes for the most part, it is true, microscopically; and yet, even with microscopic, instead of telescopic vision, he witnesses an infinitude. The telescopic vision itself may be to us, in comparison with the extent of God's works, but microscopic; and in whatever direction we look off from the surface of our globe into the surrounding atmosphere, we look off into infinitude; for where could we go, where can our thought go, or in what direction could we follow our thought, and come to the end of space? Or how can we even imagine a point where space is not, or where God is not? We may imagine ourselves travelling across the whole universe, beginning at one side, and coming to the other; but when we have done this, we still look forth into infinitude. Standing on the battlements of the outermost world ever reached by telescopic vision, or computed by the astronomer, we still are just as much surrounded by the unknown and the infinite, as when with the naked eye we look abroad into the air from the door of our own dwelling. The infinitude of space and the Eternity and Omnipresence of God are alike overwhelming.

Equally overwhelming to the human mind, is the infinitude into which we look, when, instead of looking abroad into the air, we look down upon the earth on which we are standing. We may take but just enough of the landscape to plant our feet upon and confine ourselves to that, and out of that, and through that, the mind goes off again into infinitude. The mind is lost and overwhelmed in the demonstration of the infinite divisibility of matter. The smallest clod of earth that a man picks up beneath his feet, is enough to stagger and confound him. He



cannot reconcile apparent impossibilities, with demonstrated realities.

He who perhaps, in the vanity of his mind, has reasoned against the revealed mode of the Divine existence as three in one, because he himself cannot comprehend it, is involved in a mystery equally incomprehensible, by any of the least things that ever God made; a bit of straw or a grain of sand shall overthrow him. He shall stand on the borders of insanity in his vain attempts to solve the mystery of matter, or to reconcile the demonstration of the infinite divisibility of so big a piece of earth, as he can take between his thumb and finger, with his own feeling of the impossibility of such a reality. And yet the blind fool who cannot judge, nor fathom, nor comprehend, either the essence or the model existence of a single grain of sand, or falling flower-leaf before him, undertakes to judge and assert concerning the essence of God, and the mode of the Divine existence!

Within this small compass of surrounding landscape on a day in June, beneath the veil of external loveliness, what innumerable and irresistible agencies are going on! There is here an epitome of all the sciences. How many connections and varieties of cause and effect, which we call scientific laws or principles, are at work, with all their interesting processes, under the direction and agency of God, to produce this combination of beauty and sublimity presented to the eye within the limits of a summer landscape! In how many ways, the least of which is matter of admiration to the highest intelligence, the mind of Deity is employed, in that limited space, which the eye of man may take in within the measurement of a quarter of an inch of painting, on the window of the organ of vision.

In *whatever* way God works, it is wonderful; it is the manifestation of infinite wisdom and infinite power; no creature could do the same in any, the smallest process. As it is God only who creates, it is God only who works. It is he who weaves the fibres of the roots of all the spreading trees, whose shade is so green and grateful, and connects them with the soil, and carries on the process by which the elementary properties of the soil necessary for their growth pass into their life and substance. And it is he who so arranges the beams of the sun and the influences of the air, that every blade of grass, and every leaf of

foliage shall receive, as it breaks from the bud or the earth, its requisite hue; the air and the light, with their component elements, are so many invisible pencils in his hands, by the delicate, imperceptible touches of which, daily, hourly, he produces every varying shade of greenness. And it is he, who so prepares the loom of the elements, that they shall weave for every flower of the garden or the field its particular vesture of form, colour, and fragrance, giving to the lilies of the valley a dress so beautiful, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. It is he who clothes the flower and the grass, by an exercise of wisdom and power, such as no created intelligence could command, and such as none can imitate.

It is only the Creator who *can* combine and wield the elements of what is called nature; man cannot do it; and unless God kept working in the midst of the universe in which man is placed, there would be the silence, inertness, and stillness of death, whatever scientific combinations man might think he had discovered. Whatever scientific discoveries man makes, they are merely revelations to him of the way in which God works. Science is God the Creator at work, and the knowledge of science is just the slow, gradual, and partial tracing of the footsteps and the finger of Omnipotence; and so, if God ceased to work, if he withheld or suspended the exercise of his power and wisdom, all science would fall into dead chaos, and man could trace in the universe neither law, nor principle, nor fact, and neither man nor angel could find or apply a power in nature, or reason or act on what is now called the known relation of cause and effect. This relation, which is merely the way in which God works, and the tracing of some of the successive steps of his operations, minds atheistically inclined have put in the place of God, as if it were a quality of matter, or an arrangement and power of matter, apart from God, and have made it their reliance in the universe, and the object of their worship, and the fuel of their pride, instead of God. They could know nothing, could do nothing, were not God working.

The greatest philosopher cannot make one blade of grass grow, nor understand *how* it grows. A *child* can light a candle, or can take a match and apply it to a bundle of hay, and there shall be flame; and a child, so far forth, is as much of a philosopher, as Newton, observing the connection of cause and effect

in God's universe, and reasoning and acting accordingly. But neither the child nor Newton could do any thing unless God were working; neither could light a candle, if God let go, so to speak, that arrangement of the elements, or withdrew that living agency which produces flame; if God did not continue that active power between element and element, the tracing of which, in its operation, is the ground of all science, and the pursuit of the footsteps, the agency, the finger, the presence of God. For not only we, the intelligent and thinking creatures of this globe, live and move and have our being in God, but all things do the same; and the frame of this globe could not hang together if God left it to itself, or withdrew himself from it. For nothing can act of itself, and in the very organization and pulsations of the air by which the voice of one man is conveyed to the ear of another, as well as in the connection between body and spirit, by which we hear and understand. God must be present and active. What action can be more simple than that of lighting a fire in the grate when all things are placed in readiness? You strike a match and apply it, and the thing is done. Nothing is so common, so familiar. And yet, if we had never *seen* it done, nor ever seen flame, nor seen, nor known the power of fire, it would seem to us a miracle.

And now let science work. Let it be demonstrated to us how many agencies there are and must be in that one activity, that one expression of life in God's universe, what combination of elements must take place, what various crossing links of cause and effect must move like chains of lightning, in the process of that fire. Is the mystery cleared up? Have we found the secret of the universe? Can we either see the Power, or make it take form, or prove its absence? Have we done any thing more than merely traced one or two of the steps in which God works, and so made it more wonderful? Or have we thought we were pouring light upon the matter, and removing all ground of wonder, when we were just multiplying the development of processes, each one of which demonstrates our own ignorance, and even in showing us how many things we may discover, just discovers how many things we know nothing about? Or on the other hand, have we, in analyzing those processes, conceived that we have, so to speak, exorcised God, quite blown up the idea of his presence and activity? Yea,

verily, this is the wisdom of some of this world's philosophers.

When the Lord of the creation invites us to come and see how God hath clothed the grass of the field, they can demonstrate to us by an analysis of the component parts of the soil, and a separation of the rays of light, and by showing us how flint is formed upon the coating of reeds, and how these things have taken place precisely in the same way ever since the world began, that God hath nothing at all to do with all this! The more they can see of the separate steps of God, the more they can prove to us, on the whole, that there is no God.

Can there be any thing more perverse, more unnatural, more blinding and confounding, in the way of pretended reasoning, than such atheism? The Fool hath said in his heart: No God. But is the *naturalism* any better, which, while it professes to acknowledge or admit a god afar off, denies a present acting, superintending God? *Without God in the world*, is the characteristic drawn by divine inspiration, of the soul of human wickedness. Without grace, we love to live without God, and would be glad to live without God for ever. We have formed the *habit* of living without him, and it is painful to us to have him come near; and in consequence of this habit, it is difficult to realize his presence in any way whatever, difficult to begin and form the habit of communion with him, difficult to think of him in any other way than through the dread, darkening medium of our sins and his violated law, difficult to think of him in any way in which we *love* to think of him.

This, truly, is the secret of all the naturalism and atheism in the world, ENMITY. If men loved God, how would they delight to behold him in his works, how would they hail him in his providence, how would they love to meet him in every revelation of his character and will! But without this love, and under the gloom of an angry conscience in the continuance of sin, they know no better how to meet him in providence, than in nature, nor in his Word, than in his works. There is the same hiding of God under the veil of second causes in providence, as in the goings on of the natural world. In the events of life, careless men do not see God, do not feel their dependence on him, do not make their arrangements for him, do not love to recognize his hand. And it is in truth a great triumph of grace

over sin for a *Christian* so to do. For this is an essential part of a daily walking with God, to feel that he is near, to see his hand in events, not merely to acknowledge him in prayer. It is a sweet life, this life of faith, a child's life, a life every part of which is a preparation for heaven. Perhaps an essential discipline of fitness for the *heavenly* world is the habit of seeing God through second causes in *this* world. If we can see and love God here *by faith*, we shall see him and love him hereafter, in some way to us at present inconceivable, answering to *sense*. And if we can see him now, and rejoice in him, and trust him, in his works and his providence, we have nothing to be afraid of.

We sometimes shrink back almost with terror at the thought of suddenly confronting God, or of suddenly passing from the world to which we are accustomed, into a world which is totally unknown. Now the very ways God has taken in this world for the revealing of himself to us here, and even his discipline of us by the very influence of his works in creation, show us that we have nothing to fear. We go forth and stand amidst a sweet landscape like that Judean scene, in which our Blessed Lord uttered his sermon of such marvellous simplicity and beauty, on the birds, the grass, and the lilies, and how sweet, yet how clear, is the manifestation of God's presence! How beautifully, how lovingly, God has revealed himself in nature! And a man may ask, will the world to come, into which I am to be received, be any more strange to my spiritual being, than this world is to my mortal frame? Will there not, beyond all doubt, be the same sweet, natural, perfect adaptation between the forms and realities of that world, and my spiritual faculties, that there is between this world, and my earthly tabernacle? No doubt there will; but the *great* relief and quiet of the soul, its deliverance from alarm and terror, is in the fact that Christ is there, and according to his own declaration has gone there, to prepare a place for us. *I go to prepare a place for you.* There is great meaning in that passage. That house, which is from heaven, is prepared for those who believe in Christ, by his *going*; is prepared through the power of his own resurrection, ascension, and entrance into heaven in a glorified body, which is the type of that wherein all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus are to be clothed. The same blissful adaptation that there is between that glorious spiritual body of the Redeemer and the

splendours of the spiritual world, by which he is surrounded and adored, there will be between the organization of the *saints* and those same splendours. Heaven will be as truly and naturally the *home* of the saints in the likeness of the Lord Jesus, as it is of the Lord Jesus himself.

There is great glory and comfort in those passages which speak of the appearing of the Lord Jesus, as the *signal* for the *assumption* by the saints of their perfect resemblance to him in his likeness. It doth not now appear what we shall be; but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as He is. And when He who is our life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in glory. Now, if we find it difficult to realize and believe these assurances, let us consider that God's power is adequate to the production of whatever glorious change in us he chooses, and that his care and love, as our Father, are an infinite security that he will certainly accomplish for us, in the matter of our heavenly vesture and habitation, all that is requisite for his glory and our good. If God so clothe the grass, and if he so clothes our perishable bodies, how much more gloriously, with inconceivable radiance and bliss will he clothe the soul!

“Not for that we would be unclothed.” Paul himself shrank from the thought of being turned out of this mortal tenement, a naked soul! an idea which even heathen philosophers and mythologists, guided only by their own instinctive dread, have made so full of gloom and desolation; and justly so, having no knowledge of Christ. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. And he who clothes the lilies with their lovely dress, taking the seed at first rotting in the earth in Spring, and carrying the germ of life up by his power into the light of day, and there causing the rays of the sun, and all the influences of the elements, to weave for them Summer array, with which the imperaled golden robes of Solomon in his greatest grandeur were not to be compared in glory; he who clothes the lilies with such loveliness, will much more take care of the germ laid with our mortal frame in the earth, will raise it into the light and air of heaven, and there will swallow up mortality of life, giving to every believer in the Lord an array, perhaps incomparably more glorious than even the vesture of the angels.

FINE sensibilities are like woodbines: delightful luxuries of beauty to twine round a solid, upright stem of understanding; but very poor things, if, unsustained by strength, they are left to creep along the ground.

JOHN FOSTER.

MAN is of dust, ethereal hopes are his,  
Which, when they should sustain themselves aloft,  
Want due consistence; like a pillar of smoke,  
That with majestic energy from earth  
Rises; but having reached the thinner air,  
Melts, and dissolves, and is no longer seen.

WORDSWORTH.

How precious a thing is youthful energy! if only it could be preserved entirely *englobed*, as it were, within the bosom of the young adventurer, till he can come and offer it forth a sacred emanation in yonder temple of truth and virtue. But, alas! all along as he goes towards it, he advances through an avenue, formed by a long line of tempters and demons on each side, all prompt to touch him with their conductors, and draw the divine electric element with which he is charged away.

JOHN FOSTER.

AND, surely, if the purpose be in good earnest not to write at leisure that which men may read at leisure, but really to instruct and suborn action and active life, these Georgics of the Mind, concerning the husbandry and tillage thereof, are no less worthy than the heroical descriptions of virtue, duty, and felicity. Wherefore the main and primitive division of moral knowledge seemeth to be into the Exemplar or Platform of Good, and the Regiment or Culture of the Mind; the one describing the nature of Good, the other prescribing rules how to subdue, apply, and accommodate the will of man thereunto.

LORD BACON. *Adv. of Learning.*



## CHAPTER XVI.

Reduplication of Character; Return of Action into the strength of principles: Restrictions on the law of seeds and of reproduction in morals: The seed-time of sensibility and passion: Necessity of living roots for the permanence of good habits.

THE analogy between the verdant fulness, exuberance, and activities of Summer, and the active development of our intelligent and moral being, is exceedingly impressive. Seeds are not only an illustration of the germs of character, but character likewise returns upon itself. If the Earth were one vast forest from the progress of a Banian Tree, this mighty spectacle would be but a faint image of the manner in which the branches of character return into the parent soil, and take new root there, and spring up into new trees, that again shoot back their branches for new roots, thence to rise into new trunks and foliage, till the man becomes his own wilderness, and wanders every where beneath the shadow of his own being:

“A pillar'd shade, and echoing walks between!”

So character reduplicates itself. First, the principles form the actions and the habits, then the actions and the habits themselves form new principles. Every action becomes in its turn a germ, a seed, a governing power of other action. Thus, in *to-day* for ever walks *to-morrow*; *to-day* is the promise, and to a vast extent the regent, of *to-morrow*; for not only as a man thinks and acts *to-day* is he likely to think and act *to-morrow*, but he sets causes at work *to-day* that *must operate to-morrow*,

and he drops germs of feeling and of habit into the furrows of life to-day, which will be developed to-morrow. Thus character, by action, forms character, reproduces it, and gathers strength, and is renewed; and thus intercourse with others, from being at first the simple development of seeds, principles, germs, laws, *within*, reacts still more powerfully from *without*, and gives new laws, and works new forms, and communicates new life and energy to opinion, emotion, and habit.

Just here it is, that one of the most extraordinary analogies is to be traced between the goings on of life in developing and developed plants, and the opening and concentrating activities of our own immortal being, our tendencies consolidating into habits. We are told, as the result of deepest scrutiny into the mysteries of life and character in plants, that the changes of sap, by which they acquire their peculiar and distinctive qualities, take place chiefly in the leaves; and also that the effect is to the greatest extent produced by the combined agency of light and air. Until the leaves are formed, the sap seems to rise and fall in the tree, according to the state of the weather, as the temperature of the surrounding atmosphere may affect it. But as soon as the plant has expanded its leaves, the sap flows regularly towards *them*, and is so firmly held by them, or changed and concentrated in returning from them, that the plant ceases to bleed when incisions are made.<sup>1</sup>

How very striking and solemn are the analogy and the lesson from this, in regard to the active habits of the soul, and the intercourse of our being in society. *That* fastens our principles, steadies *them*, either for good or evil, even if they have been unsteady or undecided before. For as a man acts, so is he, though he may have been so vacillating in his thoughts, that he could hardly tell whether they had assumed any definite and settled form or colour. But action and social intercourse soon settle them, of whatever nature they may be. And, after a certain time, the Sap in us, the vital quality and character, is determined by our actions, manners, words, which are, indeed, our leaves, and the laws of life and character are held and governed *by* them, instead of governing them.

It is during the transmission of the sap through the leaves that what remains in the plant, what constitutes its growing and

<sup>1</sup> 'Sacred Philosophy of the Seasons.' DUNCAN.

consolidated substance, receives its peculiar existence, colour, odour, and taste. A process of perspiration through the leaves goes on, by which the superfluous, watery particles of the sap are thrown off, while that which goes to the food, substance, and habit of the plant, is secreted and retained. It has been found, by actual experiment, that a single sprig of mint, weighing only twenty-seven grains, gained in seventy-seven days, fifteen grains in weight. In that time it had imbibed 2,558 grains of water, and consequently had thrown off 2,543 grains. The 15 grains of increased weight in the growing substance of the plant, were the results of this arrangement, and of the other vegetative processes.

There is in human life, and in the growth of the mind, a similar law and arrangement, by which our habits of action, and our intercourse with others, react upon our inward being, producing a permanent increased weight and colouring of character, of one kind or another. And as in vegetables and plants the sap undergoes, in the buds and leaves, that change which is necessary, that it may return into the plant with a new fitness and power for its growth and development, so in our conversation, manners, actions, which represent the buds and the leaves of our social development, our principles have a trial, and return upon us with change or confirmation, as the case may be. Thus our active life not only demonstrates, but determines our inward; it so confirms and holds the character, that an incision in the main body does not bleed it.

Then again there is the influence of light upon the vegetative process. The *root* requires and seeks the darkness. Down beneath the surface, in secrecy and mystery, it carries on its magnetic secretions; but the plant itself, to which for its life and growth those secretions are conveyed, seeks the light, and must have it. All vegetating substances push towards it; they are pale, colourless, tasteless, sickly, without it; so that vegetation owes to the light all that constitutes the worth of its forms and substances; its taste, smell, colour, its adaptedness for fire as fuel. And here again, how striking the analogy! It is light, heavenly light, that forms all the distinctive worth of character. Whatever the original faculties may draw to themselves from earth, or possess by intuitions without it, those native knowledges can pass into *charities*, into life, only by heavenly light. All the

distinctions of moral qualities we see in reality only by that; only in God's light do we see truly even earthly light. And when the true life is hid with Christ in God, the fruits develop themselves, and the processes of life go on, only beneath the constant light of Truth Divine in God's own Word.

The law of seeds in morals is guarded by two restraints as to the time and manner of its action, both of which demand the most careful attention in a man's spiritual husbandry. First, there is the Divine appointment as to life; no one knows, in his own case, its precise limits, nor how much time is comprehended in his sowing period. Second, there is the constitution of the human mind, which also is under a precise allotment, as to the period of development and growth. In both these directions there may be a hindrance and an impossibility, as to the continuance of processes preparatory to a harvest, which should be anxiously regarded.

If a man say, To-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant; by-and-by I will do the work, which God and my own conscience require me to do *now*; that word *by-and-by* may involve the impossibility of doing it, and the edict of the end may have gone forth, before that procrastinating word was uttered. God may say, Thou fool! The field thou hast received to cultivate must be given up this night to God for the judgment. Or, the nature of your own constitution may involve a hindrance amounting to the impossibility. The principles of your own constitution may say, Thou fool! It is too late. Nothing more will now grow. You have passed the possibility of a harvest. That melancholy dirge, The harvest is passed, the summer is ended, and we are not saved, has its greatest reality in principles, and not in events or times merely.

Hence the appeals in the Word of God, based upon the importance of the present moment, have always a peculiar solemnity, apart from the fact of the utter uncertainty of life. There is a consideration of immeasurable moment, a demand of mighty weight for a present right decision, in the very working of our being, in the power of habit, in the manner in which, by every decision that we make, every answer given to each successive appeal, and every disposal of the influence pressing upon us, we are doing something towards unalterable fixtures in the elements of an eternal character.

Our fallen being has two motions, like the globe; one upon its own axis, the other in its orbit. While intent solely on present enjoyment, absorbed in the plans of to-day, and careless of the future, man whirls with his carnal mind upon the axis of self, regardless of that swift, stupendous, controlling motion in the orbit, which is sweeping him from God. Most men are as thoughtless of that motion, as if it did not exist; many men deny it, and continue insensible of it, till death stops the revolutions of this mortal sphere, this earthly axis, and transfers the whole consciousness and sensibility of the soul to the sweep of the orbit, which continues precisely as when the earthly career was ended, eternally away from God! *very bad illustra*

The constitution of our nature, in reference to the development, growth, and immutable fixtures of character, is fearfully and wonderfully made. There is a ductile period, when change is easy, and a fixed period when change is impossible. There is a period of sensibility, and there is also a period of its decay. There is a time, during which the sensibilities of our nature are developed, becoming quicker and stronger, more delicate, refined, and perfect. There is a time in which they open to all the elements that surround them, like flowers to all the influences of the sun and air, drinking in those influences, and powerfully affected by them. But this period of tender sensibilities looks to a period of active character, for the formation of which the sensibilities are given, and the requisite excitements provided for them, after which, they pass from the form of mere sensibilities into habits and fixtures of feeling and of action. This evident law of our constitution is delineated with solemn power by Bishop Butler. Character is made up, first of passive, afterwards of active emotions. If our just and benevolent emotions are disregarded, if they are mere sensibilities, and do not pass into active habits, are not cherished and obeyed, they die away, die out; a greater and greater degree of stimulus is required to move them.

This is illustrated strikingly in the case of novel readers. Let an individual mind be long given up to that employment, let a young lady, for example, make the perusal of romances a main element of her education, and though at first she may have begun with tender sensibilities and many tears at all the distresses depicted in every page, yet this discipline will end in the establishment

and possession of a selfish and insensible heart. Amidst the real woes of society that person who so freely shed tears at imaginary woes, and for a time did almost nothing else, will walk unmoved; and all the sensibilities of such a mind, except its purely selfish sensibilities will be blunted and ineffectual just in proportion as its sensibilities towards good, its emotions of benevolence, have been disobeyed, and not carried into active habits. The good is neglected and decays; the evil is cultivated and increases. The good sensibilities neglected, require more and more of influence to move them; the evil, passing into active passions, require less. Both, in proportion to the diligence with which they are cultivated, require less to move them, but more to satisfy them.

This is the case both with the fires of sinful and of holy emotions kindled and indulged in our natures. Our appetites, if we let them become ungovernable, all become strong and sinful passions, and then, while any thing will excite them, nothing will satisfy them. A drop of ardent spirits will kindle into rage the fire that burns in the veins of a man given over to intemperance, but all the vats of a distillery will not satisfy nor quench it; it grows continually stronger, and demands more and more. So it is with all our passions, which, the more we obey and yield to them, the stronger they grow; and the stronger they grow, the more easily they are excited, but the more impossible to be restrained. And precisely so it is with the blessed desire of a regenerated soul after holiness. The stronger *that* grows, the more easily it is excited, but the less easily satisfied until indeed God himself satisfies it with his own likeness and infinite fulness in heaven.

If a passion be awakened and formed, it requires to be fed, it craves excitement, and runs on, of itself, into power. But there is no natural passion in our fallen natures towards God and the spiritual world. The passion itself is to be created. There are sensibilities to be wrought upon, and these are what God lays hold of, first of all, to rescue and renew the soul; but to create the habit and power of a passion, there must be action; otherwise, the sensibilities themselves diminish. If they yield not to the influences of Providence and grace brought to bear upon them, they decay; the active power and sensibility of the soul being turned into an opposite channel, and into the formation of an opposite character.

Every ineffectual appeal made to the sensibilities upon religious things, every appeal not followed by active effort, leaves the sensibilities in that direction less susceptible. Or rather, if we prefer this view, the habit is formed of disregarding them, of disregarding the appeals made to them. This habit becomes so powerful, that the difficulty is perhaps not so much to move the heart, as to break up that habit of disregarding its remonstrances, or of deferring the moment of obedience to them. In truth, it makes but little difference which theory we adopt; but little difference whether the sensibilities be diminished, or the power of resistance and procrastination increased. Either way is fatal. If the sensibilities diminish, a greater power will be requisite to reach what is left; and if the power of resistance be increased, as it certainly is by the *habit* of resistance, then a greater influence will be requisite to overcome that power. If a man have a task to accomplish, which requires all his strength, it makes but little difference whether he waste a portion of his strength, or increase the difficulty of the task. If you have a fountain which you are to fill with water, it makes but little difference as to the hopelessness of accomplishing your work, whether your supply of water is cut off, or a sluice-way is made at the bottom of the fountain, by which all that you pour in runs away.

From all these considerations, we gather the infinite importance of the time given us for the formation of a holy character, the appropriate and critical nature of such a period, and the impossibility of exchanging it for another period. It is first our seed-time, then our growing time; the time of tenderness, of lively sensibility, of susceptibility to impressions from affecting scenes, thoughts, truths, arguments. As this period passes away, the susceptibility of the soul diminishes. It is so with the characteristic sensibility of genius; it is so with all the sensibilities of our mortal frame. There are rare instances, in which the natural early freshness and impressibility of character holds on to a very long and late period; and this constitutes in a great measure what we call genius, which is the exquisiteness and tenderness of early sensibility combined with the maturity of active power; so that indeed a definition of genius has been given by a great writer in accordance with this principle, thus: "To carry the feelings of childhood into the powers of manhood, to

combine the child's sense of wonder and novelty with appearances which every day, for perhaps forty years, has rendered familiar, with sun and moon and stars throughout the year, and man and woman, this is the character and privilege of genius."

But can we suppose that this was ever done, or ever could or can be done, in reference to the spiritual sensibilities of the soul, by a man all the while in the neglect of those sensibilities? A sense of God and eternity, a perception and sense of sin and holiness, a tenderness of conscience, and a susceptibility of being moved by heavenly appeals, or a power of discerning the glory, and feeling the value of heavenly things, cannot be maintained, cannot be preserved, by a soul in the habitual neglect and disregard of those things. The hardening of the religious sensibilities in the period when they might have been the means of salvation, and the searing of the conscience as with a hot iron, so that no feeling can be expected, and scarcely is possible, is a part of the penalty which men have to pay for their continued habits of religious procrastination.

Now this seed period and the growing period in human character are strikingly analogous to the same periods in the processes of nature. If they be improved, the elements of blessedness are found in the character, and they ripen to a harvest. If they be neglected, the season never recurs, and the possibility of harvest is destroyed by the non-existence of germinating seed. A harvest was in the power of the sower, with plenty of the most heavenly seed and influences; but the seed he has thrown away, and the influences he has wasted. If this were done in nature, all life would stop, and the earth would be as a dismantled and deserted habitation. In the seasons of the natural world, the spring-time is the seed time; then the earth is in the right state, then the elements are arranged accordingly, then there are the processes of the early rain, and the gradually increasing warmth of the air and the soil, and all co-incident, requisite circumstances and influences.

The seed, that is put into the ground *then*, ripens for the harvest. But if the reciprocal, relative, active influences of the earth upon the seed, and the seed upon the earth, are interrupted or withheld, or deferred to a later period, there can be no harvest; all things must be taken in their season.

If the earth could be conceived or imagined under the reality



of a sensitive intelligence, self-reflective, self-determining, like man, and should say, in regard to the good seed scattered by the husbandman, I cannot now give that attention to the seed which it requires, I am, just now, all absorbed in the production of metallic ores, and I have besides an immense and promising crop of thorns and nettles which I must nourish, but by-and-by I shall be at leisure to receive the seed, and then it shall fructify; the earth would act as a sinner, act as a procrastinating young man, absorbed in life's gaieties, and neglecting the period of life's lasting elements. If the earth should say this, then there could be no harvest. The *time* of harvest shall come, and the husbandman shall rightfully demand a return for the seed sown, but there shall be no return. When the time of return has come, the earth may say of the seed so long neglected and lost in its bosom, *Now*, I will have it germinate and grow, now I can attend to it. But nature forbids; that all-important process of germination and growth cannot now go on. For even if it could be commenced, after such wilful delay and waste of influences, still, before the process requisite for a harvest could advance a quarter part on its way to completion, the Winter would have set in, and all of growth and life for that period would be annihilated. And as to the cherished productions on which the earth has been expending its strength, when it should have been nourishing the seed for the husbandman, its thorns and nettles, they are good for nothing but to be burned, and not good even for that, except for destruction.

Accordingly, it is under this very figure that the Apostle sets forth the case of a soul neglectful and wasteful of the seed of God's Word. For the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; **WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED.** He shall say to the reapers, Gather ye the wheat into my barn, but the tares ye shall burn with fire unquenchable. So shall it be in the end of the world, when the elements of character here chosen, and sown, and nourished to perfection, come to be assorted for their final everlasting ownership and abode. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. He that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption. He that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the

Spirit reap life everlasting. If ye sow to yourselves in righteousness, ye shall reap in mercy; but if ye sow wickedness, ye shall reap iniquity, ye shall eat the fruit of lies. They have sown the wind; they shall reap the whirlwind. Their seed hath no stalk, and the bud shall yield no meal.

All things that are planted, and are to be preserved, must have roots; and into those roots the life retreats in safety for the winter. But if the seed-time, and summer, and harvest, are neglected, and the roots not formed, then nothing can live through the season of death that is approaching. So the soul must have its roots in Christ; for the winter is coming, when all that the soul can do will be just to retreat to Christ, just to take refuge in him, just, as it were, to lie buried with him for the resurrection. Without this, if there be not this rooting and grounding of the soul in Christ, then all the products of our nature partake of DEATH; they are, as a great and admired writer once said of his own experience before he had found Christ, before he had been planted in Christ, "as the rattling twigs and sprays in winter, into which a sap was yet to be propelled from some root to which I had not penetrated, if they were to afford my soul either food or shelter." That root is Christ; and in him the character must be formed, and from him its elements must be taken, if it would survive the trial and the period of death, and bloom with fruit to life eternal.

The period of youthful and early sensibility is of an incalculable preciousness and importance. No other time, even if men were sure of it, and sure that it could be improved, is worth half so much as that: Remember *now* thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. The decay of the youthful sensibilities is here referred to, as well as of the physical energies. It is not unusual to hear from the young a plea for deferring the day of a man's piety, on the ground that just *now* the pleasures of *this* life are so attractive, and the heart so set upon them, and all the impulses so fitted for them, that for the present *they* must be permitted to occupy the mind; but when that thirst after life's gaieties is somewhat quenched by enjoyment, then there will be time enough for piety, and a disposition towards it.

But meanwhile, what becomes of the power and direction of

habit? Where are you in your orbit? How will you be able to change the character produced by continued self-indulgence and procrastination against conscience and God? To say nothing of the great hazard you run, while thus seeking pleasure, of being cut off in the midst of it, precisely the reason thus alleged by a young person for as yet neglecting the subject of religion, is the reason given by the Holy Spirit for attending to it; because that state of the being, when the youthful sensibilities and impulses are becoming dimmed and blunted, so that the pleasures of life lose *their* attractiveness, is precisely that state of indifference, in which the claims of religion lose *theirs*; a state in which there will be less disposition than ever to turn the heart to its Creator, and in which an *effort* of return will be required, so mighty, that there is no probability that it will ever be made.

Besides, while you are going on in your present enjoyments and plans of life, neglectful of God, of prayer, of religious duty, and of a preparation for death and heaven, you are providing materials of evil against a future day; you are giving to the enemy of your soul the means and advantage against you, of erecting barricades that will keep you still in that quarter of the City of Destruction which you have chosen for your present abode, and which, the longer you delay, will be the more difficult and terrible to pass. You are all the while running up a score of guilt. Wherefore God saith to thee, in a strain of grand and solemn irony, Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.

“How dangerous,” says John Foster, “to defer those momentous reformatations which conscience is solemnly preaching to the heart! If they are neglected, the difficulty and indisposition are increasing every month. The mind is receding degree after degree, from the warm and hopeful zone, till at last it will enter the arctic circle, and become fixed in relentless and eternal ice.” Ah! thou youth of an immortal destiny, beware of thine orbit! How stands thy soul’s astronomy towards God and the heavenly world!

We cannot recall the past, or renew the early seed-time of the soul, and therefore the retrospect of youth is often sad, even to

the Christian in later life, whose hope of a renewed immortal youth in heaven is strong in the Redeemer. Foster says, in a strain of melancholy beauty, that it is like visiting the grave of a friend, whom we had injured, and are precluded by his death from the possibility of making him an atonement. But we may secure ourselves, by the grace of Christ, against a repetition of the evil and the injury. That mind must be hardened indeed, that can return to the pursuits of life from such visits, and still strike down one after another of the remaining opportunities of lasting happiness, or treat them with insult or neglect. Yet thus do multitudes repeat the story of the Sybil in their own experience, and the last books are the costliest and most difficult to gain. And multitudes pass away with nothing but the avenging memories of lost opportunities to follow them; angels of mercy, struck down here, to rise in the judgment against their murderers!

Fearful is even one instance of the rejection of the offer of life eternal. How long can it be persisted in, without an interminably fatal result? If men will go on, over and over again, putting from them the cup of immortality, in every way ministering to the disease of sin, and retaining its leprosy in the soul, refusing the aid of the Great Physician, the elements of an everlasting character are all the while forming. If men will exclude the gracious influences of the Divine Spirit, and prefer their alienation from the life of God, no wonder if God at length retires from them, and leaves the completion of the sinful creature for eternity to the hands of the Master Workman, Death!

THAT which we find in ourselves is the substance and the life of *all* our knowledge. Without this latent presence of the I AM, all modes of existence in the external world would flit before us as coloured shadows, with no greater depth, root, or fixture, than the image of a rock hath in a gliding stream, or the rainbow on a fast-sailing rain-storm. The human mind is the compass in which the laws and actuations of all outward essences are revealed as the dips and declinations.

COLERIDGE. *The Friend.*

'Tis not in Folly, not to scorn a Fool,  
And scarce in human wisdom to do more:  
All Promise is poor dilatory Man,  
And that through every stage.

YOUNG.

TRUE natural philosophy is comprised in the study of the science and language of symbols. The power delegated to nature is all in every part; and by a symbol I mean, not a metaphor or allegory, or any other figures of speech or form of fancy, but an actual and essential part of that, the whole of which it represents. Thus our Lord speaks symbolically when he says that the eye is the light of the body. The genuine naturalist is a dramatic poet in his own line; and such as our myriad-minded Shakspeare is, compared with the Racines and Metastasios, such, and by a similar process of self-transformation, would the man be, compared with the doctors of the mechanic school, who should construct his physiology on the heaven-descended KNOW THYSELF.

COLERIDGE. *The Friend.*

## CHAPTER XVII.

Voices of the Summer continued: The power of habit: The difference between habit and impulse: Difference in Character while habit is forming, and when it is formed: Both the good man and the wicked satisfied from himself, by the nature of habit: Our responsibility for all our habits, of opinion, of feeling, and action.

If we enquire what is the grand impression produced by this joyous season, between what part of human life and character it bears the most striking analogy, we shall find it in the power of habit, and the heedlessness with which the process of the formation of habits is carried on. The summer of our life is the period in which moral causes are ripening and preparing for the harvest, the period in which the seeds and principles set at work, work on unto perfection. It is also the period in which an abounding richness of foliage, depth, and beauty of colours, freshness and power of life, turn away the thoughts from every thing like decay, and conceal the rapid progress of the Season from report and consciousness. Not even here and there are there grey hairs upon Ephraim, and it seems as if the glory and fulness of this tide of life could never cease. We sport like the butterflies around us; we throw ourselves as upon the summer clouds, and indolently sail away with them.

All nature is busily at work in the Summer, nothing stands still, every process goes on with an intense uninterrupted energy, but the *work* is not so visible; it is all covered with light and leaves, streams babbling, birds singing, the quiet quadrupeds feeding, every thing is enjoyment, nothing seems work. So in the summer of our life there is such a leafy, prosperous period, that the vast energy with which habit is working on, and character preparing for the harvest, and causes are ripening for

eternal consequences, is not at all noticed. Habit is ever passing into nature, as the bark of the trees this season is part of the wood the next. Impulses pass into habits, and become consolidated nature, even as the sap in the plant, touched by the light and air, in its circulation through the leaves, returns with those mysterious influences, to give to the plant its lasting and peculiar growth and character. And the whole process is so gradual, so natural, that it requires a forcibly observant mind to guard and watch it.

Hence the danger and the power of stealthy repetitions, no matter how trifling each by itself may seem. The repetition makes them strong, and at length irresistible. It is truly said of Power, that time consecrates it,

And what is grey with age becomes religion.  
Be in possession, and thou hast the right,  
And sacred will the many guard it for thee.

It is the many repetitions that guard the first impulse to evil and obey it. They crown it, and work for it, as the hive labourers work for the Queen Bee. Most men are overcome and destroyed, not by great temptations, but small ones, coming gradually, when the conscience is off its watch, or asleep; just as the Lilliputians are described by the Satirist as having tied every separate hair of Gulliver's head, while slumbering, to such a multitude of wooden pins driven into the ground, that when he waked he was wholly in their power, and could neither rise nor move. So the temptations of custom, and society, and worldliness, take hold upon us, and draw us by a thousand tough and stringy roots. A great temptation, though suddenly presented, puts you on the watch in alarm; the sentinel fires his gun, and runs within the camp, shouting treason! Then all the powers of resistance, and even the very *pride* of resistance, are aroused. "I brave each combatant," the watchful soul is ready to say, by grace divine, that comes as a towering, swearing, boasting Goliath; or one well known,

Whom I can look on, fixing eye to eye,  
Who, full himself of courage, kindles courage  
In me too. 'Tis a foe invisible,  
The which I fear, a fearful enemy.



Not that, which full of life, instinct with power,  
 Makes known its present being; that is not  
 The true, the perilously formidable.  
 O no! it is the common, the quite common,  
 The thing of an eternal yesterday,  
 What ever was, and evermore returns;  
 Sterling to-morrow, for to-day was sterling!  
 For of the wholly common is man made;  
 And Custom is his nurse.

SCHILLER.

The duties of our being are two-fold, the cultivation of good, and the restraint or eradication of evil. In both these directions we are creatures of habit, for habit comes in both to aid our better efforts, and confirm the bad. In either direction habit makes a man strong, makes him at length inexorable and immoveable in evil, or immutable in good. Habit may not alone *make* character, but it makes it *immortal*. Habit, at length, gives to character the mark of eternity, and it does this, because at every step the will accompanies it, the determination of the will resolves it, the seal of the will is upon it, and every moment man is a voluntary being, whether making progress in evil or in good. The more immutable he becomes in habit, the more voluntary he is; the greater is the weight of the free voluntary choice and determination by which he is pressed down, and pressed onward, in his present career. The more absolute, supreme, and strong his will is in that direction, the more perfectly it is his own choice. And thus the more impossible it becomes for him to change, it is simply because he is then more voluntary than ever, a greater intensity of will than ever being in exercise. All the preceding acts of the will are strengthened by the present, and the present combines within itself the intensity and accumulation of all the preceding.

Any thing, however trifling in itself, may become habit, by bare repetition, by the most unreflecting iteration; and thus, by a process of separate instances, in each of which there was at first hardly enough of will or of thought to redeem it from the mere mechanics of our frame; or to make it an intelligent, conscious operation, the thing may grow to be so powerful, that the mightiest and most watchful repeated efforts of the will shall be

requisite to break it up. Habit is the child of impulse. There is in human life the period of impulse, when habit is nothing, and there is the period of habit, when impulse is nothing. Young persons are creatures of impulse, old persons are creatures of habit. Almost every thing is impulse with a little child, and nothing can be called habit; almost every thing is habit in the second childhood of old age, and there is very little that can be called impulse. Impulse is habit in formation; habit is impulse fixed. When habit is once formed, impulse is powerless against it; indeed, all impulse falls into it. It is like a deep, swift, resistless river, into which an opposing mountain current may pour with the most tremendous momentary shock and agitation, but with no effect whatever, save to increase the volume, rapidity, and fury of the tide, which is instantly turned downward to the sea.

Now the question whether or not impulse shall pass into habit, depends upon the repetition and continuity of the same or similar impressions. It is difficult to say exactly when it begins, to lose the character of impulse, and to put on that of habit; it may be with the very first repetition. A mere impulse, if not renewed, or if succeeded by other opposite or distracting impulses, may be utterly forgotten, and may pass quite out of the character, as not being one of its elements; though for the manner of its treatment while it stayed, the creature is accountable, and in that way it *marked* the character, even in passing through it. But ordinarily our impulses are not single. Our *passions* are continual, and they grow by what we let them feed upon. Our *affections* fasten on *their* objects, and the impulse of the *senses* returns every day, soliciting indulgence. If, therefore, a careless tempted youth begins an unlawful gratification, he may be sure the temptation to it will return. And after he has given way to it a certain number of times, the impulse, each time strengthened, passes into habit, and when the habit is once formed, he is in all probability lost.

For what man can ever rely upon a natural strength to break from it, or where, in a thousand cases, does one instance occur, of a man undertaking to stop it, before he has reached the verge of the cataract? He sleeps like an Indian in the bottom of his boat, gliding swiftly on, and not till the toss of the rapids awakens him, to make him know that salvation is impossible, does he even

discover his danger. Not till a vicious habit has eaten up the elements of goodness in the character, and consumed its virtuous energies, does it let itself be known in the aspect and reality of retribution, and then, generally, the lesson comes too late. Yet at first the warning of a whisper, followed by a resolution as light and easy as the stroke of a paddle in the water, might have been enough to conquer the evil, and redeem the soul.

How often, how painfully, how fearfully, have we seen this verge of an impossible return overpassed, and this fatal necessity of destruction developed, in the formation of the habit of intemperance, from beginnings so small, that the slightest effort would have checked the movement! Nay, the habit may have been formed, the impulse itself may have been begotten, out of what was absolutely at first repulsive and distasteful. But an artificial habit, conquering a first disgust, seems ever to be stronger than all others. Conquest is held with a fiercer, more avaricious intensity, than an original possession.

Yet at the beginning, any thing opposed, any intervention, almost any exercise of will, would have sufficed to stop the whole sin, and shut off the eternal misery. But even a few weeks of progress may carry you beyond the possibility of a return. At the beginning of the mountain stream, you could, with your two hands, stop the rill, or turn it in another direction; but let it steal on a few miles down into the open country, and a thousand other rills will have joined it, and the stream, which at first a child at play could have spanned with his little hands, the tallest man cannot cross, and by-and-by it pours a deep strong river into the ocean. Such is natural impulse. You do not need to cherish it, you need but let it go, and it will become continuous, it will pass into habit, it will form a despotism that nothing can control. And such is the history of most men, for time and eternity.

On the other hand, our benevolent impulses, our impulses of piety, our impulses towards God and heaven, are *not* continual, not natural. An impulse *that way*, needs cultivating, cherishing, and repeating, as a matter of duty. If it be cherished and obeyed, the heavenly impulse also may become a habit. A man may become habitually benevolent, prayerful and heavenly-minded, even against his nature, so that in spite of all opposition, the element of benevolence and prayerfulness, from the very

force of habit, may become an indestructible omnipotent element of his character. It may be the hand of the Almighty upon him, and the force of an indissoluble chain of influence, drawing him up to heaven.

For God has put the influences of his Word, Providence, and Grace all *against* our evil impulses and habits, all in *favour* of our good impulses and habits. He forbids and checks the evil, but commands and fosters the good. His discipline is so directed and applied, that a man shall work out his own salvation, while it is God that worketh in him, both to will and to do, in forming a character for eternal happiness and glory. He shall anxiously fight against his impulses of evil; he shall, with severe toil, restrain and conquer them; and the vigilance against evil, and the hatred of it, shall pass into a habit, shall constitute a spontaneous, triumphant element of soul. He shall also, with fervent prayer and practice, cherish the impulses of good, given him from heaven, and the good shall be as the resident Deity of his nature, the eternal habit of his being, active, despotic, and supreme.

Thus, God is educating our habits in such a manner, if we will submit ourselves to his guidance, that the good man shall be satisfied from himself, shall find heaven within him; in such manner, that when the education shall once have been finished, and the soul presented without fault before the throne of God, the habit of holiness shall be, by Divine Grace, so omnipotent, the habit of communion with God of such irrepealable and immutable necessity, that the being might be safely sent on errands of ten thousand years' duration, among worlds of antagonistic influence and example, worlds of open atheism, if such there could be, and yet possess, the while, an inward heaven of deep untroubled joy, and return as angelic, as pure, as radiant, as blissful, as when it first began to wing its way, on God's behests, for the regions of misery and darkness.

On the other hand, Satan is educating men's habits, wherever he can get the formation of them into his own power, in such a manner, as to make the wicked man lost within himself, the possessor of a hell within himself, and the slave of his own self-chosen, self-cherished, evil passions, under such entire and hopeless tyranny, that the very bosom of heaven, if it could be thrown there, would be found, for him, the very deepest hell.

As the child and heir of heaven works out his own salvation, so, and much more, the child of hell works out his own perdition. The thing begins, oftentimes, in this life, and as righteousness tendeth to life, so he that pursueth evil, pursueth it to his own death.

Sometimes the wicked eat here, in this world, of the fruit of their own doings. They receive in themselves that recompence of their error which is meet. This is the case, both physically and mentally. The habits of intemperance, of self-indulgence, of the violation of what are called the laws of nature, both of the body and the mind, are followed, after a certain period, with hopeless and incurable misery. In the case of particular vices, there is open demonstration; but there may be injuries inflicted on the mind, unseen as yet, because not followed with visible consequences, where nevertheless the demonstration is just as actual, and will be more fully and eternally revealed, when the bodily organization, with all its developments, shall have passed away. The laws of our spiritual being can be violated with no more impunity, than those of nature; nay, they assert their power, and execute their retribution, when the system of nature is laid aside for ever.

But *before* that final demonstration, the truth breaks forth; volcanic prophecies appear, foretelling the last conflagration, if the fire be not put out. Men of intemperate minds experience plenty of warnings, as to the conclusion to which their passions are hurrying them; a conclusion as fixed as fate, when habit passes with its owner beyond the world of grace, into a world where destiny is determined by character, and character is the sum and expression of all preceding habit. Our passions, even in this world, if we give way to them, are all turned into diseases that prey upon ourselves, making the recesses of our being like sepulchral caves, inhabited by legions of evil spirits. It would be almost as impossible to live in a community of such explosive fire-works with any comfort, as in the infernal world itself. Our globe would be like a revolving mad-house, and indeed such examples of the despotism of passion are often, by the mistaken mercy of juries, pronounced insane. It is only the insanity of evil habit asserting its omnipotence.

Nor could Bedlam itself furnish more terrible instances of madness, than the extremes of passion in our rational world.

Men have been known so miserly, by reason of covetousness, as to deny themselves the comforts of humanity and the common decencies of life, and, after all, have committed suicide through fear of want, in the midst of incredible riches. What an almost incredible picture of madness and misery in both worlds!

“First starved in this, then damned in that to come!”

And such is the slavery of ungoverned passion; men are jaded and driven by it like rail-road hacks,

“Hard travelled from the cradle to the grave.”

There is scarce one passion in the human heart, under the power of which, men, giving themselves up to its despotism, have not become insane. Our passions, once turned away from God, and become uncontrollable, sweep on, and hiss and roar like a forest conflagration; they toss and rage like the waves of an ocean, and the mind itself becomes an empire of chaos, and of wild self-torture. What is there in this world that can approximate towards constituting an adequate type or representation of such a state? Suppose a man standing at the entrance into some vast building, filled with powerful machinery; or suppose him looking down through a trap-door into the midst of the strife, the din, the fury, of the congregated, complicated, rushing wheels, impelled by the force of central engines. Let him conceive this machinery, all introverted, in action diametrically opposite to the right, all conflicting with itself; pistons, cranks, beams, and cylinders, crashing down, and mighty wheels, iron-spiked and cogged, and with tremendous revolutions interlocked and whirled against one another. Could he gain in this way any idea of the almost inconceivable chaos of a mind with its energies at war upon itself, and all its passions grappling in fierce opposing conflict? Ah no! for the sight and sound of the conflicting crash of such machinery would be but momentary; destruction would ensue, and nothing would be heard amidst the dead resulting stillness, but the dropping of the fragments of the transitory war.

But the life and energies of the soul are immortal, indestructible, even in its madness; and if you could suppose that by

some mysterious, indwelling power of perpetually renewed existence in material agencies, after each thundering crash of the machinery upon itself, the pistons, cranks, wheels, cylinders, and engines, all clamped, complicated, and spiked as before, should begin afresh their gigantic, antagonistic revolutions, with inextricable intricacy and increasing power; you might have, in this continued entanglement and roar of battle and chaos, some little symbol of the everlasting antagonism in the passions of a soul against God and one another; no sleep, no peace, no quiet, no possibility of enjoyment, but an eternal, all-renewing, all-increasing, elemental war!

For all this, the being, whoever shall have the madness and misery of entering upon such immortal strife, shall be himself responsible, for against all this God perpetually warns the soul; and into all this enters, against God's warning and command, the nature of a self-determining will, and the element of choice, so that the life of a perpetual voluntariness inspires it. It is all the result of self-indulgence, the consequence of habit; for our habits are *voluntary* things, and *there* is the guilt of them, and *there* is the point of our responsibility. Nor can they be *less* voluntary, when they have grown to an immutable and desperate perfection, than they were in the very infancy of their first weak, trembling, hesitating beginnings. Habit is indeed a second nature, but it is not an involuntary nature. Our will always goes with our affections, and is present and consentaneous with every faculty of our conscious existence. It may be unnoticed, but it always acts. The motions of the will, accompanying all the impulses, all the ebb and flow, all the current of our being, may be so swift and ceaseless, as to be altogether imperceptible; just as a wheel may go round with such immeasurable rapidity, that the motion cannot be seen, but the wheel appears as a solid stone, though every revolution is accomplished in a given measure of time; and just so, every motion of the will is discernible by the eye of Omniscience, and the most habitual and apparently involuntary movements of our being are all voluntary.

We are responsible therefore, at first setting out, for our impulses. Some men might be disposed to deny this, if impulses are to be regarded as natural. But their naturalness can make no difference as to their responsibility, *if they are voluntary*. A man may have an evil nature, out of which nature evil

impulses are perpetually springing; but certainly, the extreme naturalness of such impulses does not and cannot diminish a man's responsibility for them. The Saviour of the world speaks of Satan in the character of an inevitable, immutable, irreclaimable liar; "when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it." But this *lying* nature does not render an *intelligent* nature irresponsible for its lying impulses. So in regard to every thing. We *are* responsible for our impulses. We may watch over them, we may check them, we may resist and restrain them, according to God's Word and our own conscience. We are bound so to do, and if we do not, there is very great guilt.

And ordinarily, except a mind be marvellously well-regulated under the grace of God, there is a very great neglect of this watchfulness as to impulses, whether they intervene disconnectedly, or are the beginning of habits. Yet the mind is bound to be its own sentinel, and to interrogate them. If a man perceives or experiences an impulse to evil, he is bound to stop it, to deny it, to go to God with it, to pray against it, to mourn over it. Suppose it be a mere *negative* impulse, an impulse, for example, to the continued neglect of prayer, or to the *omission*, now and then, of that grand duty of life which ought to be a *daily* fixture, as immutable as the sun. A man is responsible for his treatment of *every recurrence* of such a temptation, and for that dread *habit* of prayerlessness, which the repeated yieldings of his soul to indolent and neglectful impulses have bound around him like a garment. Just so, an avaricious man has rendered himself such by repeated impulses; impulses not watched nor striven against nor counteracted by better impulses, but permitted to go on, and habitually obeyed, till avarice, instead of being a mere impulse, has become the master passion of the soul. So with all other impulses passing into passions. And the impulses to the neglect of known duty are perhaps more disastrous and fatal than those to the commission of open crime.

In the same way we are responsible for our feelings. We can check them, control them, bring them to God, pray over them, do with them what we will, by coming to our Almighty Helper and Deliverer. But feelings indulged pass into habits. Habits are but feelings permitted and cherished, till they are fixed elements of character.



In like manner we are responsible for our opinions. Our views of truth, or the errors we have adopted, have not become parts of our character without our own volition. The steps are gradual, often imperceptible. Character is a magnet that draws opinion to itself, and afterwards opinion so formed and chosen rules the character, confirms the habits, and directs the soul through life.

We are responsible also for our habits of association. Much depends for character on the circle of our daily thoughts, studies, friends, employments, and the range of the mind amidst the objects of its natural complacencies. A man whose habitual associations are elevated, noble, comprehensive, possesses both a security of character, and a storehouse of enjoyment, invaluable and inexhaustible.

Of what grand, guardian power, and happy influence, are a few good books, made the constant companions of the mind! How important for its protection against the vagueness and desultoriness of newspaper impressions, and for fixedness, precision, energy, and simplicity of style, that its circle of intimate intellectual associates, be minds of noble thought, sublime aspirations, classic and refined expression! It is an illustrative and impressive fact, that Milton, even in the work of his 'Paradise Lost,' was wont to prepare himself for composition, sometimes by the perusal of the Grecian poets, but constantly by his study of his Hebrew Bible; a severity and elevated power of habitual discipline, that sustained the native grandeur of his genius, nor ever permitted it to be drawn down by mean or low associations.

Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath  
 That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,  
 Nightly I visit, nor sometimes forget  
 Those other two, equalled with me in fate,  
 (So were I equalled with them in renown!)  
 Blind Thamyras, and blind Mæonides:  
 And Tiresias and Phincas, prophets old,  
 Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move  
 Harmonious numbers.

Happy is the mind thus carefully, richly, harmoniously fed

and disciplined. A man, as a thinking being, has great resources of enjoyment thus within himself, and opportunities of delightful and exciting conversation, in a few beloved books around him.

Yet all this is of no avail without religious principle, and a thousand instances have proved the inefficiency of all things below Divine Grace to secure the soul. It may seem subjected to the noblest tendencies, endowed with the loftiest dispositions, and accustomed to the most refined and elevated tastes; yet, let a suitable temptation come, and unless the anchor of the soul be cast within the veil, the assaults of the Adversary will be successful, the ship will swing from her moorings, and no power on earth can hold back the most cultivated mind from ruin.

Neither without Divine Grace can any reliance be placed on the greatest decision of character, or the best resolutions for the future. Indeed, good resolutions are ordinarily only like the joints in a cane-plant, producing no change, but followed by precisely the same development of character as that which preceded them. If the character be already good, then at each interval they do at least strengthen the next growth; if the character is bad, they generally accomplish no alteration, but the same growth goes on as before in spite of them. Not till grace comes is there any radical change.

THOU hast said in thy heart, I am, and there is none besides me! Prurient, bustling, and revolutionary, this French wisdom has never more than grazed the surfaces of knowledge. It has dearly purchased a few brilliant inventions at the loss of all communion with life and the spirit of nature. As the process, such the result! A heartless frivolity, alternating with a sentimentality as heartless; an ignorant contempt of antiquity; a neglect of moral self-discipline; a deadening of the religious sense, even in the less reflecting forms of natural piety; a scornful reprobation of all consolations and secret refreshings from above; and as the *Caput Mortuum* of human nature evaporated, a French nature of rapacity, levity, ferocity, and presumption.

COLERIDGE. *Appendix to the Statesman's Manual.*

It is a most amazing thing that young people never consider they shall grow old. I would, to young women especially, renew the monition of anticipation every hour of the day. I wish we could make all the cryers, watchmen, ballad-singers, and even parrots, repeat to them continually, You will be an old woman, you will, you will!

JOHN FOSTER.

SWEET Spring indeed is there,  
In spite of many a rough untoward blast,  
Hopeful, and promising with buds and flowers.  
But where is glowing Summer's long rich day  
That *ought* to follow, faithfully expressed?  
And mellow Autumn charged with bounteous fruit?  
Ah! while the better part is missed, the worse  
In man's Autumnal season is set forth,  
With a resemblance not to be denied;  
The season ended, and the greenness gone;  
The sheaves not gathered; bowers that hear no more  
The voice of gladness, less and less supply  
Of outward sunshine and internal warmth;  
And with this change, sharp air and falling leaves,  
Foretelling total Winter, blank and cold.

WORDSWORTH'S *Excursion*.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Voices of the Summer Continued: Seasons of Visitation: Character of Roger Sherman, and the Lesson for Young Men: The neglect of opportunities in the sowing for a harvest of evils: The proper periods to be regarded: Roots rather than slips to be rested on.

THE processes of Summer, in connection with the progress of human life, remind us of one of Lord Bacon's profound and *germinant* aphorisms. "For it is in knowledge," says he, "as it is in plants; if you mean to use the plant, it is no matter for the roots; but if you mean to remove it to grow, then it is more assured to rest upon roots than slips. So the delivery of knowledge, as it is now used, is as of fair trees without the roots; good for the carpenter, but not for the planter. But if you will have sciences grow, it is less matter for the shaft or body of the tree, so you look well to the taking up of the roots."

*Good for the carpenter, but not for the planter!* There is a volume of meaning in that aphorism. How many books there are, of which this may be said, and how many educational and disciplinary processes there are, fitted rather for the use than the development, of minds that need to be trained. Principles and knowledges need to be *rooted* in young minds, and set a-growing, not planed, squared, and fashioned, as for the use of young carpenters. The ground-work of education and discipline is planting and training; you must rest upon roots in this work, for you can have no such assurance of growth by slips. And if this be true even in regard to sciences, in which always there is much for the mere carpenter, bundles of facts for present use, the cords of forest wood cut down for burning or building; how

much truer and more important in regard to moral and religious principles and habits, that need to be set and fast rooted, in order to endure and grow. When once rooted, they are not only an inseparable part of the being, but a parental part. They are reproductive; they clothe the summer with a bright, green, refreshing foliage, and they fill the autumn with a rich abundant harvest.

It is then of infinite importance that the roots be seen to; that our knowledges, principles, courses of active and habitual life, *have* roots, and that they be not things of a mere expediency, things without life, or taken up and applied to transitory use, even as a man would take a polished piece of dead dry mahogany to make a box withal, but never to set in his garden. Things for cultivation must be things in growth, and in the period of growth must be attended to.

Why, asks John Foster, in a monitory appeal to a young person, "Why do you look with pleasure on the scene of coming life? Does the pleasure spring from a sentiment less noble than the hope of securing, as you go on, those inestimable attainments, which will not decay with declining life, and may consequently set age and time and dissolution at defiance? You gladly now see life before you, but there is a moment which you are destined to meet, when you will have passed across it, and will find yourself at the further edge. Are you perfectly certain, that at that moment you will be in possession of something that will enable you not to care that life is gone? If you should *not*, what then?"

The thoughtful mind is here brought to a verge, where all the responsibilities of life rise up before it, and the consequences of our present choices come to a point. The possible negative grows out of the interval between *now* and *then*, out of the manner in which the seed-time runs into the summer, and the summer into the autumn. We have dwelt upon the period of seeds; the susceptible and suggestive period; and the germinating and growing period in the formation of character. There is also a *spending* period, which, in the order of nature and Divine wisdom, should come last; and if not, if God's arrangements be disregarded, and that time be taken for indulgence, which God has given for discipline and trial, eternity, if not the present life, must be full of misery.

One period cannot be changed for another. The harvest cannot come in the Spring-time, and the Spring-time cannot come in the harvest. If the seed-time be neglected in its season, and then attempted after harvest, or at what should have been the harvest, there is nothing but ruin; there is a harvest indeed, for there always will be that, a harvest of evil if not of good; but it is in such a case the harvest of consequences of early heedlessness, neglect, perversion, and waste. A terrible granary will thus be filled; the consequence of neglecting what God has appointed for the seed-time, until the period when God expects the harvest, and will call the soul to its account.

Almost all the evils experienced, even in this world, are the consequence of the neglect of proper seed-periods, offered, and put in one's power. These, and all opportunities, are times of gracious visitation, concerning which our Blessed Lord says, O that thou hadst known, even thou, in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace! And again, they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation. What a man does in the season of visitation, that also will come to him in the season of consequences. Every thing sent from him, or put in motion by him, will find its way back to its owner. He is perpetually sending forth his ventures, and from every one there must be a return, for nothing can be lost. A man has warnings in plenty; nor is there any situation which he is ever in future to occupy, nor any responsibility that ever in future is to come upon him, for which he has not, in its proper season, his gracious day of visitation given him that he might prepare. The foolish virgins, as well as the wise, had their season of *preparative* visitation, that they might get all things in readiness for the *final* season of visitation, and so be ready to go in with their Lord, to the marriage and the feast.

All times of early opportunities, or opportunities to lay the trains of future good, are seasons of visitation. Sometimes they are wasted, sometimes they are wisely used; and the consequences, in character and result, for time and eternity, are widely different. Roger Sherman, one of the greatest men of America, was early apprenticed to a shoemaker, and continued to pursue that occupation for some time after he was twenty-one years of age. It was his season of visitation, and how did he employ it?

I refer to this, because it affords an illustration of opportunities and their results, according to the use made of them both for time and for eternity, and because we often set down to the score of God's bare providence and sovereignty, what we should set down to a man's own choice, and improvement or abuse of his opportunities. It is recorded that the young Sherman was accustomed to sit at his work with a book before him, devoting to study every moment that his eyes could be spared from the occupation in which he was engaged. His father died when he was but nineteen years of age, and from that time the principal charge of the family devolved upon him; the care of his mother, and the education of many brothers and sisters. Before he was twenty-one, he made a public profession of religion. All the foundations of his character and success in life, and his glory in Christ through eternity, were laid while he was working at the trade of a shoemaker.

His habits of study, of attention, of accuracy, as well as of prayer and faith, conscientiousness and unbending integrity, were formed there, and afterwards both carried him, and he them, into the study and practice of the law, all his seasons of visitations and of harvest in life growing out of the improvement of previous seasons, till he rose to be a judge in the Supreme Court of Connecticut. He was afterwards appointed in the United States Congress on the Committee to prepare the Declaration of Independence, and again was chosen a delegate to the Convention for the formation of the Constitution.

During the Revolutionary War, he was placed on a committee of Congress to examine certain army accounts, among which was a contract for the supply of shoes. He informed the committee that the public had been defrauded, and that the charges were exorbitant, which he proved by specifying the cost of the leather and other materials, and of the workmanship. When they expressed their great surprise at his rapid and accurate knowledge, he informed them that he had been by trade a shoemaker, and knew himself the value of every article.

So it is that our early life, in its consequences, perpetually comes up in our later life; and just in the same way, though far more exactly, and with an unlimited release of consequences and license of retribution, our whole of life in this world is to come up in the eternal world. All Mr. Sherman's excellencies and



success were owing to his knowing and improving the times of his visitation. And so it is, while one young man makes the most of all his opportunities, and elects the grace of God to walk by, and so finds that the grace of God and salvation, now and for ever, elect him, another disregards those opportunities, or makes the least of them, and so finds that disappointment, unhappiness, and the consequences of evil habits elect him. He seems to be the prey of misfortune, but it is just the inevitable consequence of his own evil choices, and his neglect of the opportunities of good. Misfortune is his prey, instead of he being the prey of misfortune; for in opposition to God's mercy and grace, and in the neglect of his days of visitation, he has made himself miserable, when he might have been happy; irreligious, when he might have been religious. He has, as it were, snatched the garment of sin and misery from the hands of both character and circumstance, and wrapped it round his being as a robe of fire, when he might have been clad in the robe of a Redeemer's Righteousness, and made a partaker of Christ's own joy.

A man must be upon the watch, and the more earnestly and anxiously, the greater the value of the interests at stake. In regard to tangible advantages promised in this world, and prizes of great and known value held out here, men generally are willing to watch. If a young man were told that at a given period in his college course, or in the pursuit of his business, or during his apprenticeship to it, whatever that might be, whether of a shoemaker like Sherman, or a printer like Franklin, there would be a critical conjuncture, marked by certain things which he would certainly know, at which conjuncture, if he would fulfil certain conditions, easy and excellent to be fulfilled, but requiring moral steadfastness, he should be made sure of the possession of an immense fortune, with a security against any moral injury thereby, we may be sure he would be anxious. He would watch to meet that period, and that combination of circumstances, and to be ready for it. He would consider himself inexcusably mad if he neglected it.

Every man who neglects opportunities will reap evils, in the period, whenever it comes, (and it must come sooner or later,) when those opportunities, wisely and faithfully improved, should have produced a golden, glorious harvest. The loss of them is not the only evil that he who wastes them incurs, but there are

always positive evils coming in their place, and positive evils sown by their waste. The *wasting* is a *sowing*. A man who neglects the opportunities of his period of education, be it at school or at college, can never retrieve them; but not only so, while he is neglecting them, adverse powers are working. Even while men sleep, if they did nothing *worse* than that, the Enemy will be sowing tares.

But the neglect of young men, who waste their opportunities of good discipline and learning, is never merely that of sleep; it is a positive waking life of active evil, the formation of positive evil habits, the sowing of positive evil seed. Indeed, there is scarcely any habit more positively pernicious than the habit of indolence and heedlessness in regard to opportunities of good. It will cling to a man through life, and will prevent him from the enjoyment of a thousand triumphs and successes, and cut him off from a thousand avenues of good, and leave him a bankrupt in happiness. He is a lost man, the man of indolence and heedlessness in regard to opportunities.

I HAVE seen a print after Correggio, in which three female figures are ministering to a man, who sits fast bound to the root of a tree. Sensuality is soothing him, Evil Habit is nailing him to a branch, and Repugnance at the same instant of time is applying a snake to his side. In his face is feeble delight, the recollection of past, rather than perception of present pleasures, languid enjoyment of evil with utter imbecility to good, a Sybaritic effeminacy, a submission to bondage, the springs of the will gone down like a broken clock, the sin and the suffering so instantaneous, or the latter forerunning the former, remorse preceding action; all this represented in one point of time! When I saw this, I admired the wonderful skill of the painter. But when I went away, I wept, because I thought of my own condition.

CHARLES LAMB'S *Elia*.

THERE is no hope that it should ever change. The waters have gone over me. But out of the black depths could I be heard, I would cry out to all those who have but set a foot in the perilous flood. Could the youth, to whom the flavour of his first wine is delicious as the opening scenes of life, or the entering upon some newly-discovered paradise, look into my desolation, and be made to understand what a dreary thing it is when a man shall feel himself going down a precipice with open eyes and a passive will; to see his destruction, and have no power to stop it, and yet to feel it all the way emanating from himself; to perceive all goodness emptied out of him, and yet not to be able to forget a time when it was otherwise; to bear about the piteous spectacle of his own self-ruins; could he feel the BODY of the DEATH, out of which I cry hourly with feebler and feebler outcry to be delivered; it were enough to make him dash the sparkling beverage to the earth, in all the pride of its mantling temptation.

CHARLES LAMB.

## CHAPTER XIX.

Voices of the Summer continued: Evil Habit and Remorse: The fearful consequences of making the germinating and growing period, the spending period: Habits of youthful piety the insurance of a happy old age.

THE springs of the will gone down like a broken clock! How affecting, how desolate, how dreadful the condition of the mind presented in this image! And yet, in reality, that is but half the picture; for, on the other side, the will is still strong in a perpetual and terrible bondage to Evil Habit, the permitted Spring and Summer growth of life, into every step of which, with its clanking and remorseful chains, the will enters, though, perhaps, with a languid and listless, yet indomitable energy. That is the fearful result in our being, if the habit of the will be not, in all the germination and abounding growth of Spring and Summer, set from the roots upward, consentaneous with good principles.

The idea of Remorse preceding action, where Evil Habit has become confirmed, is deeper and more dreadful still. Nevertheless, it is probably true, even in the very first beginning of an evil habit. The very first act of sinful self-indulgence is preceded, as well as followed, by Remorse. The very remonstrances of Conscience, if Conscience be not heeded, are attended by Remorse, although at first the eagerness of anticipated pleasure prevents the soul from any startling sensibility to the bite of the recoiling snake (*remordeo*), striking back even while the will is yet pushing forward. But at length the Remorse becomes not only the attendant on the sinful habit, but itself the preceding, prevailing, strongest habit; not, however, expulsive of the other, but linked with it, both as forerunner and companion.

Oh, then, that men could be taught to begin with self-restraint, self-denial, self-rebuke, in the foundation-period of human character! For one period cannot be changed for another. Nothing can take the place of the forming, germinating, growing period. It cannot, because, *whatever* takes its place, *that* will be the formation of the character. If bare neglect takes its place, *that* will form the character, and form it fatally and fearfully. But where there is neglect, there is more. The spending period is entered on, even before the sowing period is past, and out of this there can proceed nothing but misery. It is out of the power of language to tell the intensity of evil that ensues, if you put the spending period, or the period of results, in place of the suggestive or the seed period. Nothing can be possible, but entire, absolute ruin.

And yet, alas! this is the bitter, disastrous, awful experiment, which many young persons are making with their own being, their own endowments and opportunities. They do not wait till their passions are fully formed, before they begin to exasperate and indulge them. Sometimes they attain to a *precocity* in self-indulgence, even before they have reached the ability of enjoyment; before they have attained the capacity essential to a commanding and noble nature, the restraint, right discipline, husbanding, and use of which, will form a blissful nature, an everlasting, inexhaustible capital of enjoyment and of happiness. But the abuse of that development is perdition; it makes even the child the father of the man's ruin.

There are many persons who begin the spending period almost *before* the germinating period; just as if, having seed given you to sow a field for your future subsistence, you should *eat* the seed for present indulgence. What *could* come of such a course as that, but speedy ruin? In the history of the sufferings, the trials, and the virtues of the Pilgrim Fathers of New England, there is an account given of a company of miserable, unprincipled, spendthrift vagabonds, who desired to live without labour. In the seed time and growing time of the Pilgrim year, too indolent and reckless to cultivate the ground themselves, these worthless adventurers were wicked enough, in the time of great scarcity of food, to steal and eat the ears of green and growing corn, on the ripening and harvest of which the Pilgrims were depending, not only for their winter's food, but for the seed of the next

Springtime. Very much such a course as this are those young men pursuing, who are stealing from God, from society, and from themselves, green and crude, before it has ripened, the product of the passionate activity of their own being.

Multitudes, having passions given them for restraint from evil and for application to good, and for activity in the pursuit of pure happiness, and having seed sown, suggestions poured in, and influences lavished from God, for discipline and growth, for nurture and wise training towards a period of useful and blissful development, live upon their passions, exasperate and then exhaust them. They take their sowing time for spending time; they eat their corn green; they consume for self and forbidden gratification, the seed that God has given for lasting happiness; they consume for hell the seed that God has given for heaven. But they who do this, while they seem to be spending, are really sowing. The seed in the waste of which they destroy the possibility of any good harvest, springs up for evil. They are sowing sin and misery; sowing the wind, to reap the whirlwind. Their happiness must certainly be wrecked here, and wrecked hereafter. Every mad indulgence of passion, and every wicked neglect of the sowing of good seed, is the putting deep into the soul the seeds of a future tempest of remorse and havoc.

The folly, the guilt, the misery of such conduct, is indescribable. What would we think of the measure of cutting down a beautiful productive tree, in order to get at the fruit? What would we think of the recklessness or idiocy of a band of foresters, who should fell the tall and stately maple trees, in order to get fuel for boiling their maple juice into sugar? Yet this is what, in respect of their habits, and moral discipline and course of life, multitudes are doing, not for themselves only, but with others. How many children are taken without education, and put to employments that absolutely preclude them from the possibility of a right and happy development!

Think of the iniquity of setting children at the age perhaps even of six years, to the tasks of men, of mature life, of laborious, manufacturing, but dwarfing industry, or of absolute immorality and fraud! Think of the iniquity of employing children that cannot themselves read, to spend their Sabbath, in crying and vending immoral publications! Who can consider, without shuddering, the responsibility of those employers, those teachers,

who are just preparing the youthful minds thrown in their power, for nothing but evil! Who can adequately imagine the tremendous account they will have to render, the dreadful penalty they will have to bear, whose work on earth, a part of the very fixtures of their establishment, was the desecration of God's day of mercy to mankind, and the training of young souls especially to precocious guilt, hardness, and ruin? Is there any penalty too dreadful for the covetous demons that will thus make merchandise of souls?

Men thus ruin their *own* opportunities and possibilities of life and happiness, by reckless self-indulgence and precocious habits of evil, not dreaming at the time what it is they are doing, what fires of hell they are lighting. A man's selfishness is always a man's destruction. A man's courses of expediency, the things whereby he may imagine he is taking the surest way to wealth and prosperity, if they are pursued regardless of God, and across the lines of warning and of duty in God's Word, are the courses which ensure his ruin. The passions and capacities of our nature are foundations of power, happiness, and glory; but if we turn them into occasions and sources of self-indulgence, the structure itself falls, and buries every thing in its overwhelming desolation.

These things are most impressive warnings, that men see to it what habits they are forming, what use they are making of the period, in which the prophetic lines of their future being and destiny are ordinarily written, never to be changed or obliterated. What men are, contains the unerring prediction of what they will be; and from the courses they are now pursuing, their eternal course may be marked with perfect certainty. Only one cause to human beings is uncertain, only one element of doubt enters into the calculation; and the doubtfulness of that is diminished just in proportion to the evil that is known in men's present courses and habits. The element that men cannot bring into their calculation is God's; the interposing Divine Spirit is the only agency that ever can or will so subdue a man's evil habits and change his courses, as to make those lines of prophecy point towards heaven, which before pointed down to hell. Hence with entire truth, Mr. Cecil once said, The *way* of every man is declarative of the *end* of that man. None but God can ever make a change before the end; and the probability or



prospect that God will do it, is destroyed in proportion to every day's self-indulgence in evil, in proportion to every new link added to the chain of iniquitous and procrastinating habit.

Young men without religious principle to restrain and guide them, are very apt to enter upon their spending time, and to form *spending habits*, in that unutterably precious period, which ought to be devoted to a virtuous discipline. They pursue this course, without the least consideration what it is they are doing, what certainties of future misery they are burying beneath the soil, what harvests of fire they are securing. Allured by the present pleasure, they do not think of the consequences. There is treasure to be desired, and oil, says one of the proverbs, in the dwelling of the wise, *but a foolish man spendeth it up*. This spending it up constitutes the very employment of many persons, even in the time allotted for accumulation. Consequently, instead of there being a treasure to be desired, and the oil of life in their dwelling, they are accumulating a treasure of evil here and of wrath hereafter. They are spending up the treasure and the oil, which God has given them, instead of *saving* it up for future use and enjoyment, when the period of accumulation is over, and that of expense begins. When that time comes, having vainly lavished their treasure and their oil, and come to poverty, they are like those foolish virgins of the parable, who cried in vain to others, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out. Character, to be used for eternity, must be formed in time, and in *good* time; and so, to be used for happiness in life, good habits must be *early* formed, and they will be a treasure to be desired in the house of the wise, and an oil of life in their dwelling.

Youthful excesses and evil habits, it has been solemnly and truly said, are drafts on manhood and old age, to be honoured by old age, if the man reaches that period, which is not likely, or by mature manhood instead of old age, if he does not. This is the case also with early *neglects* as well as immoral *habits*. They are the ground-work of lasting evil. And the habits of evil formed in the indulgence and gratification of youthful indolence, appetite, and passion, are drafts, which presented at manhood, take all its strength and capital away, and make it bankrupt, make life a burden and a beggary; presented at old age, they make it an age of weakness, pain, and misery. Satan

often begins to pay his wages to his servants even in this life; perhaps he always does; when he is sure that he has them so completely in his power, that their discovery of the nature of his wages will be of no avail to rescue, or to save them.

On the other hand, good habits in early life, habits of true religion, of industry, of self-restraint, of moral purity, of reverence, kindness, decision, punctuality, and avoidance of evil example, are a treasure put out at compound interest, and an inexhaustible oil of prosperity and happiness. They are the sure foundation of success in this life, and of life eternal. Habits of youthful piety, an early walk with God, are drafts on God, for the support of manhood and old age, and God will honour those drafts when a man can no longer help himself. Yea, when all the springs of life are broken, and all activity and impulse are departed, God will make the soul, that early followed him, rich and strong.

Habits of prayer are great riches. God's name is on those drafts, Christ's name is there; and they are sure, they are a safe investment. Habits of youthful piety are the insurance of an annuity payable on the part of God, in the time of helplessness and poverty. If that time comes, God will be in this world the strength and defender of the soul, as well as its portion for ever. But the blessed habits of piety early formed and vigorously maintained, the habits of faith, of prayer, of industry, of temperance, of knowledge and of love, are in the very nature and order of things, a security against evil. They have the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come. I have been young and now am old, said the Psalmist. Yet have I never seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.

Let those with whom habit is now assuming its power, look to its elements, and beware of its slavery. One sin persisted in will keep the soul out of heaven. And sinful habits are the grave-clothes of souls, with which they are bound about by the great embalmer Satan, and buried in hell. We wish that that tremendous aphorism of Coleridge, than which there is nothing more true and solemn in our language, could be kept flaming before the eyes of youthful persons at every entrance into temptation; we wish that it might be sounded in the conscience at every call from a besetting sin: "Centries, or centre-pieces of

wood, are put by builders under an arch of stone, while it is in the process of construction, till the key-stone is put in. Just such is the use that Satan makes of pleasures to construct evil habits upon; the pleasure lasts perhaps until the habit is fully formed, but that done, the structure may stand eternal; the pleasures are sent for firewood, and the hell begins in this life."

The materials a man gathers in his memory for the judgment are solemn, but the elements out of which he weaves his habits are still more so. Memory is for the past, habit is for the future; memory surveys the past, and conscience acts accordingly, but habit determines the future. What a man is, when he is taken away, that will he be for ever. So then, though the prospect in youth, looking only to the possibility of an advanced age, is, indeed, important, looking to eternity, it becomes infinitely so.

"Habits," says that great and powerful writer, from whom I have quoted in the opening of this chapter, "are growing very fast; some of them may not be good; but they still grow, while we speculate on them, and will soon close, like the ices from the opposite shores in the Arctic Seas, except dashed by the interruption of a mighty force. Is the spectator unconcerned, while they are closing around him? Or is he descanting wisely on the *laws* of habit, till he becomes its victim? The mind is a traitor to itself; it will not wait while we are seeking wise principles, nor return when we have found them."

No! its own habits *become* its principles. However wisely it may be seeking and speculating, it is itself already, and all the while, forming an inveterate and immutable character. A man seems to be travelling, as he paces the deck of a ship in the ocean; but it is the *ship* that is carrying *him*, and he goes not one step further or faster for his own exertions or by his own motions, than the vessel, to which he has committed the very power of advancement, and by which he is borne along. Thus has every man two motions through life, his future purposes and his present character; but if his future purposes do not form his present character (as a supreme regard to the unseen and eternal *does*), then his present character forms and absorbs his future purposes, and as fast as he overtakes them, just makes them but parts of his present self. The soul that is speculating is also acting. The rudder is behind the ship, not

before it; the determination of what a man is to be, springs from what he is. The ship cannot sail to a distant port without helm or compass, there to receive, for the first time, those guiding articles of navigation; she must have them already, in order to reach that port. With the same rudder and compass with which a man has sailed through life, with those, and none other, does he launch upon the ocean of eternity.

I sit with all the windows and the doors wide open, and am regaled with the scent of every flower, in a garden as full of flowers as I have known how to make it. We keep no bees, but if I had lived in a hive, I should hardly hear more of their music. All the bees in the neighbourhood resort to a bed of mignonette, opposite the window, and pay me for the honey they get out of it, by a hum, which though rather monotonous, is as agreeable to my ear as the whistling of my linnets. All the sounds that nature utters are delightful.

Every thing I see in the fields is to me an object; and I can look at the same rivulet, or at a handsome tree, every day of my life, with new pleasure. This indeed is partly the effect of a natural taste for rural beauty, and partly the effect of habit; for I never in all my life have let slip the opportunity of breathing fresh air, and conversing with nature.

COWPER'S *Letters*.

AND because the breath of flowers is far sweeter in the air, where it comes and goes like the warbling of music, than in the hand, therefore nothing is more fit for that delight, than to know what be the flowers and plants that do best perfume the air. Roses, damask and red, are fast flowers of their smells; so that you may walk by a whole row of them, and find nothing of their sweetness; yea, though it be in a morning's dew. That which above all others yields the sweetest smell in the air is the violet, especially the white double violet, which comes twice a year. Next to that the musk-rose, then the flower of the vines, then sweet-brier, then wall-flowers, then pinks and gilliflowers, especially the matted pink and clove gilliflower, then the flowers of the lime tree, then the honeysuckles, so they be somewhat afar off. Of bean-flowers I speak not, because they are field flowers; but those which perfume the air most delightfully, not passed by as the rest, but being trodden upon and crushed, are three, that is, burnet, wild thyme, and water mints; therefore you are to set whole alleys of them, to have the pleasure when you walk or tread.

LORD BACON'S *Essays on Gardens.*

## CHAPTER XX.

Voices of the Summer, continued: Flowers, with their Loveliness and Lessons: The Process of Ingrafting: Analogy between this Process and that of Regeneration by the Word of God: The Discipline of Severity in Nature and Providence, and its Uses.

SUMMER is the season of Flowers, though the autumn possesses her harvest of them, quite as fragrant and delightful. There is, perhaps, no grand or solemn analogy that answers to them, or was ever intended by them, except it be their quickly fading beauty and decay; a sad and fit memorial of man's transitory glory, for like the flower of the grass, so he perisheth. But there is in them a dear pervading moral of gentleness and love. They sweetly speak the goodness and loveliness of the Creator. They are thrown every where, in rich, unstinted, kindly, rejoicing profusion; and that itself is a lesson to man. Their very nomenclature, not in science, but in the language of the peasantry and of childhood, all over the world, is attractive to the heart, and full of instruction. They are emblems of the sweetest thoughts and feelings, of kind words, bright animating smiles, affectionate greetings, the hearty welcome, sympathizing tears, self-forgetting pity, truth, goodness, humility, contentment, peace, meekness, and confiding love. Those lines of Wordsworth are beautiful, (only that the charities themselves are primal duties also,) where he says,

The primal duties shine aloft like stars;  
The charities that soothe, and heal, and bless,  
Are scattered at the feet of man, like flowers.

All nature is possessor of their beauty. Where are they not, in whatsoever climate, in whatsoever desert? The snow-drop of the vales amidst the lingering snows of winter, the wild-rose of the Alps, the violets that skirt the glaciers, and the solitary desert-blossoms, that may cheer and re-animate the drooping faith and courage of some pilgrim, ready to die, bear witness, all, to the inexhaustible provision of delight for man. Sometimes in the thickest profusion they inlay the wildest green slopes of almost inaccessible mountains, sparkling as with conscious animation and enjoyment, where the traveller gazes on them with wonder, gratitude, and love. They are not ornaments merely, but interwoven and constituent parts of the sweet array of our mortal habitation, designed by the wisdom and love of our Creator.

Not a flower

But shows some touch, in freckle, freak, or stain,  
Of His unrivalled pencil. He inspires  
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues.

A true poetic spirit, above all, under guidance and inspiration of Divine grace, can draw the profoundest instruction and the most precious discipline from a garden of flowers, nay, from a single cherished blossoming plant in prison, or a primrose in a garret window. Bunyan well knew this, and so did George Herbert, and the other poet of like Christian temper, George Wither. The Poet in prison, and beneath the scorn of the brave puffing world, could say of his beloved Art, musing on his former happy experience of Nature:

By the murmur of a spring,  
Or the least bough's rustelling,  
By a Daisy, whose leaves spread,  
Shut when Titan goes to bed,  
On a shady bush or tree,  
She could more infuse in me,  
Than all Nature's beauties can,  
In some other wiser man.  
By her help I also now  
Make this churlish place allow  
Something that may sweeten gladness,  
In the very gall of sadness.



The dull loneliness, the black shade  
 That those hanging vaults have made,  
 The strange music of the waves  
 Beating on these hollow caves,  
 This black den which rocks emboss,  
 Overgrown with eldest moss,  
 These rude portals that give light  
 More to terror than delight,  
 This my chamber of neglect  
 Walled about with disrespect,  
 From all these, and this dull air,  
 A fit object for despair,  
 She hath taught me by her might  
 To draw comfort and delight.

By a still higher Power of inspiration, than flowers, or nature, or poetry could assume within the soul, the same Poet was taught to turn the art of association into a minister of comfort in the midst of grief. It was one of the noblest strains ever sung in prison.

By my late hopes, that now are crossed  
 Consider those that firmer be,  
 And make the freedom I have lost  
 A means that may remember Thee:  
     Had Christ not thy Redeemer been,  
     What horrid thrall thou hadst been in?

These iron chains, these bolts of steel,  
 Which other poor offenders grind,  
 The wants and cares which they do feel,  
 May bring some greater thing to mind:  
     For by their grief thou shalt do well  
     To think upon the pains of hell.

Or when through me thou seest a man  
 Condemned unto a mortal death,  
 How sad he looks, how pale, how wan,  
 Drawing with fear his panting breath,  
     Think, if in *that* such grief thou see,  
     How sad will *Go ye cursed* be!

Again, when he that feared to die,  
 Past hope doth see his pardon brought,  
 Read out the joy that's in his eye,  
 And then convey it to thy thought:  
 There think, betwixt thy heart and thee  
 How sweet will *Come ye blessed be!*

WITHER.

In the summer season, all the processes of gardening, both useful and ornamental, are full of interest and pleasure, and many of them abound with instruction. The care of flowers, so delightful in itself, is full of sweet lessons, if the heart be open to receive them. The study of their organization, their colour, their fragrance, and of the wonderful provisions and arrangements of Divine skill manifested in every form and function of their frail and exquisite existence, presents as profound and important a development, as even the starry worlds reveal, of the infinite fulness and omnipresent activity of Him who filleth all in all. Their tendence was the special work of Eden, and even now, a Christian working in a garden, among the flowers, in the fulness of the feeling, My Father made them all, may be happier than ever Adam and Eve were in Paradise. But we must pass to our intended tracing of the higher and more obvious analogies in the months of Summer.

In this season of growth and beauty, as well as in the spring, there is a curious and interesting process between art and nature, in which both are so combined as to form a lively image of the manner in which man is permitted to co-operate with God, and God directs and animates the free will and agency of man, in the work of REGENERATION. That comprehensive declaration, *Ye are God's husbandry*, follows the announcement, *We are labourers together with God*: both we and ye are such, not merely in working upon others, but in and upon ourselves, under and by the all-controlling impulse and power of God's working.

The process to which we refer is that of GRAFTING; a work in which the plant to be transformed is absolutely and helplessly dependent, as the very outset, for the least beginning of the movement, on a wisdom and power higher than the vegetative instinct and life of nature, and entirely apart from it: dependent also on a will and determination above it, the will and good

pleasure of the husbandman. He does not more absolutely first conceive, then by himself, and without any previous or concurring motion in nature, set at work the process, than God, by his separate and sovereign wisdom and will, conceives and sets at work upon man, and without any first conception or desire, or concurring motion in him, the mighty process of a spiritual regeneration. No man, in a mere natural state, would ever imagine that process, or desire it, or make any prevenient motion towards it. The "natural man" would no more do this, than the native crab-tree would conceive the plan of being grafted with the apple, or the wild mountain-ash the design of assuming the properties and fruit of the pear. Neither *could* the natural man take any step towards such a transformation, if God did not first work, any more than the natural mountain-ash could take any step towards becoming a pear-tree, if *man* did not first work.

The transforming work of man in and upon the grafted tree is then, in more respects than one, a lively illustration of the regenerating work of God in and upon the whole being and nature of man. We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath foreordained, that we should walk therein. God begins the work, in and of himself, without man's will, and before it, but upon it; then continues and completes it in and with man. Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures. For every good and every perfect gift is *from above*, and *cometh down* from the Father of lights. And in this merciful and mighty process of regeneration, man could no more be, at first, a co-worker with God, than the crab-tree, growing wild in the wilderness, could be a co-worker with man, who must first intend and prepare the seion from a fruitful apple-tree, and then come towards the crab-tree with it in his hand, to graft it, with all its vigorous life, and valuable properties, in and upon the motionless unconscious stock. God must begin with *man*, and work in and upon *him*, as man must begin with the *tree*, and work in and upon *that*. If God did not begin, and work on, there would neither be beginning nor working; no more than, if man did not begin and work on, in the process of nature, the crab-tree from the wilderness would move towards the apple-tree of the orchard, or begin to take upon itself the qualities of the

cultivated fruit. It is preventient mercy and grace that are here represented, without which there would no more ever be a possibility or an instance of the work of regeneration, than without the preventient art and hand of man there would ever be possibility or instance of the insertion of a live cutting from one tree into the living stock of another.

So much for the exquisitely beautiful representation of God's free sovereign mercy and grace, and the impressive illustration of our complete helplessness without his interposition, and our entire dependence on his self-moving and freely working Spirit in us and upon us. If the illustrative analogy in the process of grafting went no farther than *that*, it would still be admirably instructive. But it goes much farther, and is more various and profound.

The command consequent on the determined exercise of this preventient grace, indicates instantly the ability, duty, and necessity, of a co-working impulse and activity. It is addressed not to a mere passive nature, as the hand of the husbandman approximates the scion of a fruit-tree to the wild unconscious stock in which it shall be carefully inserted, but to a conscious *will*, in an *intelligent* nature, which must act as much as the grace acts, and in accordance with it.

AND RECEIVE WITH MEEKNESS THE INGRAFTED WORD, WHICH IS ABLE TO SAVE YOUR SOULS. The beauty and instructiveness of this reference in the work of grace to the process carried on by the gardener, exceed description. *Receive with meekness.* It is not without a severe wound in the plant to be transformed, that the change can even be commenced. The transfiguration determined, and to be carried forward, is from a fruitless, worthless nature, to a precious, life-giving fruitfulness and beauty. But the *knife* must be used, and the wild stock must be prepared, with a necessary *severity*, for the reception or insertion of the new life and gracious growing principle. How beautiful is this illustration, when we trace it in the processes by which the tree is to be converted!

The proper time for grafting is when the sap of the trees is in brisk motion; which, in the case of trees that annually shed their foliage, happens a few weeks before they put forth their leaves; but evergreens may be grafted, and the process of budding may also be accomplished, during the summer as well as the

spring. The stocks are to be so lopped, and the scions so prepared to match them, that the inner barks of both shall, as exactly as possible, without being started or bruised, correspond; the bark and the young and tender wood by both being brought into perfect and permanent contact. The object is simply to secure and facilitate the flow of the sap from the stocks through the scions. Passing from the roots to the bud and the leaf, the sap there undergoes, in the light and air, its peculiar life-giving change, its conversion into juices fitted for the nourishment and growth of the plant, and thence, from the sun and the air, it returns into the substance of the plant.

When, therefore, you present the branch of a fruit-bearing tree to the stock of such a tree as you intend to convert into the same fruit-bearing character, in such a manner that the sap will flow from the old stock to the buds and leaves of the new scion, which you have ingrafted, we may say that you have ensured the conversion of the tree, because it is from circulation and change in those buds and leaves, that the sap takes its permanent character, and returns to form the substance of the stock. The graft retaining its living principle, and the necessary circulation of the sap from the roots to the branches being continued, the buds of the inserted branch will be expanded into leaves, and by the law of vegetative growth, those leaves will perform their peculiar important secretions, just as in the fruit-bearing tree, from which the scion was taken. The result will be the growth of a new tree, with the same fruit as that borne by the parent tree of the scion. The operation being carefully performed, an intimate union takes place between the graft and the stock, and the flow of the sap through the capillary vessels from the root to the leaves, and thence again its circulation through the inner bark into the substance of the plant, becomes uninterrupted. And whether the mode of grafting be that which is called *whip grafting*, or *saddle grafting*, the principles and procedure are the same. Every leaf being a feeder of the plant, as well as every rootlet, the new tree must not be too freely pruned, and the places of incision must be carefully bound round and guarded.

Now in the light of this minute illustration, that expression, *Receive with meekness the engrafted word*, shines vividly. The humility with which the natural man, chosen as the subject of Divine Grace, is to bear the engrafting severity, in whatever

form it be found necessary, is shadowed forth in the quiet, uresisting meekness, with which the tree bears the knife of the gardener, when its branches are lopped off, or its side wounded. Just so, the engrafted word cannot be set, without a painful process. Self is wounded to the heart. The sword of the Spirit searches the soul in profound and distressing demonstration and conviction of sin. But when *that* takes place, it is proof that the Hand of the Great Husbandman is there. If you would have him set the engrafted word, receive it with meekness. Bear his rebukes, submit to his chastisement, yield yourself to his disposal, and say, as the patient tree seems to say, beneath the hand of the Grafter, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?

There are some grafts that must be made under ground, that is, nearly in the root of the stock, in order to form a strong, thrifty, and durable tree. And we are told that whenever the grafted part of a tree has long been buried at some distance below the surface of the soil, the scion itself throws out new roots, which acquire in time so much vigour and strength, that those of the primitive stock gradually become decomposed, and serve for the nourishment of the future tree. This re-rooting, as it is termed, is of great advantage to trees occupying a soil not well adapted to their longevity or vigour.<sup>1</sup> An impressive analogical suggestion here strikes the mind at once, in the complete change that at length takes place from the old tree to the new, roots and all included, so that the transfiguration is as a new creation. And such a change, and such a re-rooting in Christ, is always accomplished by the engrafted word in the soul of the believer, making the man a new creature in Christ Jesus.

Thus it is the ingrafted word, which is *able to save the soul*. It saves it by renewing it. That which is put into it from Heaven changes it at length, from first to last, into the nature of the heavenly graft. The ingrafted word becomes the Alpha and Omega in the new plant. It draws all its native energies into itself, quickens, changes, sanctifies them, produces and presents them, in the buds and leaves of holy purposes and action, to the Sun of Righteousness and the air of Heaven, till at length the tree bends down its thrifty branches, laden with delicious fruit. The illustration of the passage thus becomes perfect; and this interesting process of grafting, thus traced and

<sup>1</sup> Browne's Trees of America, 291.

applied in detail, illustrates another passage, the Word of our Saviour, *Sanctify them by thy truth; thy Word is truth*; showing, not darkly, how the conversion of the soul by the ingrafted word is effected, when received in faith, with meekness.

The passages of God's Word thus illustrated from the processes of Nature, are full of encouragement and comfort, in conveying the assurance that if any man will place himself fully and submissively under the power of God's Word, it shall save him. It shall draw him to God, it shall sanctify him, it shall take the sap of his unregenerate nature, and change it into a nature participant of Christ's. It shall certainly do this, if the heart will but place itself believingly under God's ingrafting operations. To do it believingly, is to do it co-workingly, actively; and the first exercise of this co-working willingness is in prayer; for then and thus the native sap runs towards the sacred graft, and makes an effort in combination with its leadings and its elements, under the power and law of grace, until there is realized in the whole plant, supreme, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. When the heart of man and the word of God are brought in contact, and sincere prayer ensues, and accompanies the union, then the new life begins, the converting life; and in the continuance of prayer, which is as the medium by which the sap runs and returns, the life is continued, the conversion is continued, and passed into sanctification; a process which goes on with the children of God, till every faculty and power of their being is subjected to and imbued with the spirit of Christ; till from root to branches, and from branches to root, the tree is a tree of his righteousness; till all the pulses of the soul beat not only in unison with his life, but impelled by it; till old things are done away, and all things are become new; till that is accomplished, without which nothing availeth any thing, the NEW CREATURESHIP in Christ Jesus.

But the ingrafted word is to be *received*, not with a passive meekness merely. It is not in the intelligent creature, a mere passive operation, as it is in the natural wild vegetable stock. There is an active co-operation between God and man here indicated; just according to that more familiar assertion of it by Paul, *Work out your own salvation, for it is God that worketh in you*. Just so, if God works, man must work; and if man will not work, God's working stops. Unless it be received with an

active meekness, His ingrafted word, that might have grown, and converted the whole tree, dies. To get the full illustration of this, we must suppose the wilful crab stock to be not merely passive, when the fruitful graft is brought to it by the gardener, but endued with a power of self-determining perverseness to say, "You may cut me, and apply your graft to the cutting, but not one particle of my sap shall ever go beyond my own wood, or shall ever enter into the vessels of the graft which you have applied to my substance." And if endued with such a power, and putting it in exercise, the consequence would be, inevitably, that the crab-tree would remain a crab-tree, and the fruit-bearing graft, for want of co-operation on the part of the crab-tree, unsustained by the sap, on which its own virtue should have been exercised, would die; it could not grow, unless received with active energy by the crab-tree.

Just so with the relation between the ingrafted word and the heart and mind of man, or between God's working and man's co-working with God. Unless the heart willingly receive and entertain God's presentation of the ingrafted word, sending the energies of its own will to be sanctified by it, that so, by God's grace, the whole heart may be changed, the whole being renewed and converted, nothing will be done. The natural man will remain as it was, and the engrafted word, instead of growing in it and upon it, and so converting it, will drop off by itself, having accomplished nothing. How many such hopeful presentations of the Divine Word utterly fail, in every generation!

Now as the operation of grafting cannot be performed without cutting, and wounding, and binding up, so neither can any man come into the kingdom of God without tribulation. The very essence of the thing implies self-denial, self-sacrifice, a gradual self-conquest, by God's grace, proceeding from a faint beginning, by the working of the Divine ingrafted Word, to a complete self-annihilation, or rather self-absorbedness in Christ. And are not all our virtues, that possess any lasting life and power in them, and even our true intellectual possessions and principles, gained and trained in the same way? Is it not a rising out of self, and above our wild stock nature, into the assumption of a higher Nature, presented for our reception, our adoption? Yea, a man's own propensities are the very ladder on which he must tread, and over which he must climb, in order to rise to any



thing great and glorious. And how this is to be done without pain, let any moral Esculapius present himself and tell, if there be such a wonder-working physician. No mere intellectual virtue is good for any thing without a moral root; but natively it has no such root, and must get it by grafting; it is a wild olive-tree otherwise. And when the root is gained, let it be remembered in all humility, yea, let the sane mind ever remember, 'Thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. There is no redemption from a condition worse than madness, but in Christ. And what a point of intense interest it is, when the heavenly graft is brought by the hand of the Gardener to the native stock, what a question of infinite interest, whether the will closes with the gift, whether the sentient being perceives the critical nature of the hour, and accepts the gracious process; a process apparently severe, but of sovereign and infinite mercy!

There is the same general analogy in regard to all the afflictive providences of God. May they not always be regarded as simply a preparation for the ingrafting of some particular truth or grace upon the soul? Here the ingrafting analogy runs into the equally beautiful and more universal one of pruning. I am the TRUE VINE, and my Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. When the Stock is cut, when the branch is lopped off, an affliction of the soul is signified, in which the way is prepared for God's grace to work, setting new principles, or reviving the life of the old.

God sometimes throws his providences like a *lasso* over a man that is plunging wildly to destruction, and thus brings him down and subdues him, preparatory to his training and discipline by grace and truth. And the lopping and ingrafting process may have to be renewed not unfrequently in the man's Christian career. Very beautiful is the lesson that Cecil records, when he tells us of his walk in a garden, during a season of painful dejection and gloom on account of a severe trial he was enduring, and his meeting the gardener cutting a pomegranate tree so deeply and severely, that Cecil thought he must have killed the very life out of it; but the gardener told him that the tree had borne no fruit for a long time, and that this deep, and as it might seem hazardous cutting, was necessary, not indeed

for its life, but its fruit-bearing life. He was thus treating it, that its branches might be covered with pomegranates. The lesson went to Cecil's heart, as well indeed it might.

Now it is just God's custom to cause general truths to be applied by particular emergencies. Although they may have been very plainly announced and reiterated in God's Word, yet in many instances it is only by the soul being thrown into particular emergencies, that they are realized and understood. Sometimes it is only thus that they are first announced. God causes events to develop his purposes; and some of his richest promises are pressed, as it were, out of the wine-press of his indignation. He often throws his people into deep and thorny trials, and then his own Spirit speaks out through their experience; so that the most consoling and encouraging truths are wrung from the bitterness of wounded spirits. The wine comes from crushed grapes, the fragrance from bruised herbs and flowers.

The land that is burned over in this season may be the earliest and the richest in its springing vegetation the next. The very ashes of the nettles prepare the soil for useful culture. Indeed, we have sometimes been wandering in a region where, in the early spring, we have had a sudden and instructive demonstration of this truth, and have set it down for the sake of the moral analogy. The grass was green and of a vivid freshness, where the ground had been burned over; but a little beyond, scarce a blade could be seen peeping from the withered, matted, dull covering of last year's weeds. It was an emblem of the uses of adversity, when God, for gracious purposes, sets the fire.

For He who knew what human hearts would prove,  
 How slow to learn the dictates of his love,  
 That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,  
 A life of ease would make them harder still,  
 In pity to the souls his grace designed  
 To rescue from the ruins of mankind,  
 Called for a cloud to darken all their years,  
 And said, Go spend them in the vale of tears!  
 O balmy gales of soul-reviving air!  
 O salutary streams, that murmur there!  
 These, glowing from the Fount of Grace above,  
 Those, breathed from lips of everlasting love.

COWPER.

Sometimes in the case of his own children, it is, indeed, *all* their years that God thus darkens, even as in the instance of Cowper himself; but if that sweet Poet's letter to an afflicted lady in France be taken as the fruit of his own experience (and he never wrote any thing that was not) then he himself had discovered that almost uninterrupted trials may be appointed for good. He could write, out of such experience,

That ills of every shape and every name  
Transformed to blessings, miss their cruel aim,  
And every moment's calm that soothes the breast  
Is given in earnest of eternal rest.

Sometimes the truth of the poetical apophthegm that *Heaven doth with us as we with torches do; not light them for themselves;* is demonstrated in vicarious suffering of the one for the many, even where all are equally, as to desert, the proper subjects of trial. God's providences sometimes set men at work apparently for themselves, in great perplexity and affliction, when really they are working wondrously for others. Deep down in the mines of sorrow, or toiling through passages of danger and darkness, where they seem to be labouring in despair as for bare life, they uncover hid treasures for generations to come; they strike out great diamonds of light, to be hung up shining on the path of God's people, or to be set in the signet-ring of his revealed love and mercy, sparkling, when the Redeemer lifts the finger of his Grace, like the towers of the Celestial City. So it was with the experience of Moses; so with that of Job; so with that of David, so of Paul, so of Luther. Thus, with divine glory and grace, God brings good out of evil, and even makes the sins that he hates in his own children, the means of producing, when combined with their chastisement, brighter virtues and graces in others!

NATURE is often hidden, sometimes overcome, seldom extinguished. Force maketh nature more violent in the return; doctrine and discourse maketh nature less importune; but custom only doth alter and subdue nature. But let not a man trust his victory over his nature too far; for nature will lie buried a great time, and yet revive upon the occasion, or temptation; like as it was with Æsop's damsel, turned from a cat to a woman, who sat very demurely at the board's end till a mouse ran before her. In studies, whatever a man commandeth upon himself, let him set hours for it; but whatsoever is agreeable to his nature, let him take no care for any set times; for his thoughts will fly to it of themselves, so as the spaces of other business or studies will suffice. A man's nature runs either to herbs or weeds; therefore let him seasonably water the one, and destroy the other.

LORD BACON. *Essay on Men's Nature.*

Now look that well attempre be thy bridell;  
And for the best aye suffer to the tide,  
Or ellis all our labour is on idell;  
He hasteth well, that wisely can abide.  
Be diligent and true, and aye well hide.  
Be lustie, free; persever in servise,  
And all is well if thou work in this wise.

But he that parted is in every place,  
Is no where whole, as writing clerkes wise.  
What wonder is, if such one have no grace?  
Eke wost thou how it fareth of some servise?  
As plant a tree or herb in sundrie wise,  
And on the morrow pull it up as blive,  
No wonder is, though it may never thrive.

CHAUCER.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Voices of the Summer, continued: The Season of Activity and Growth; of dew, light, heat, electricity, clouds, showers: Gradualism and toil in the process; concentration and immutability in the results: The final Triumph of Holy Principle and Habit.

THE summer is the season of growth and consolidation. So indeed is the spring, at least in the latter part of its progress; and in both seasons the same images may be used, and are used, to illustrate the laws and habits of growth, both in the mind and heart. The growth is little by little, imperceptible while looking at the plant, and to be measured only at intervals; but there is no regression; there is constant accretion and consolidation of character, good or bad. The husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain; all the time between these periods must be that of growth and patience. Paul may plant, and Apollos water, but it is God who giveth the increase. Native intellectual progress may seem to be of man, as well as the planting and the watering; but all spiritual life and progress are from God. There is a summer in our spiritual existence only because He works, and blesses our working. And as in nature, first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, so in the kingdom of grace, so in the growth of a child of God towards perfection. The trees of righteousness, that are of God's planting, are of gradual growth, as well as the trees of a forest. Day by day, in an appointed circle of years, the sun must shine upon them, and the rain must fall.

The summer is also the season of the greatest abundance and

activity of all principles, causes, and operations of Nature necessary for the increase, which God giveth in the natural as well as the spiritual kingdom. The summer is the season of DEW. How sweetly, silently, softly, imperceptibly, its precious influences fall! In what purity and beauty, while every blade, leaf, and flower drinks its fill, bathed in the all-surrounding but invisible suffusion of refreshing moisture, do the crystal drops gather form and brightness for the morning light, impearling the lowliest grass, and every branch and blossom. Then, when the sun rises, how indescribably refreshing is the loveliness and splendour of the dewy landscape!

What process in nature can be more exquisitely beautiful than this; more salutary in its results, more illustrative of the goodness and grace of our Heavenly Father? Accordingly, it is this process which is chosen as the sweetest and most perfect image of the gift of God's refreshing word from Heaven, and of its reviving, life-giving power to the soul: My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew; as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. It is in the warm still night, it is when the sky is clear, it is when the wind is sleeping beneath the sparkling stars, in serenity, in repose, in silence, that the dew abundantly distils its moisture; and so, in the calm, attentive, quiet hour, when the glare of the noon of life passes into the evening, and the throbbing pulses of the world are still, God's precious word settles into the soul. How many things solemnly impressive come to the mind at night, come in silence, and beneath the stars! Beautifully is the Dew classed among "the precious things of Heaven," in Joseph's blessing; and God himself says, "I will be as the Dew unto Israel; he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon." When God descends as the Dew, it is His truth and His Spirit on the nation and the soul, and every thing holy and precious grows and prospers.

In Oriental climes these allusions were still more impressively beautiful even than in our own. To the life and beauty of a Judean or Egyptian landscape an abundant supply of dew was absolutely necessary; if it were withheld, beneath the fervour of a summer sun every thing would wither and die. The dew in those climates falls so rapidly and abundantly, that it may be collected in a shallow vessel, like water from a shower of rain;

and the want of rain in the day-time is thus gently and constantly supplied by the bounty of the night; were it otherwise the most distressing droughts must be the consequence. Hence the intensity of that curse of David, Ye mountains of Gilboa! Let there be no dew, neither rain upon you, nor fields of offerings! And hence may be conceived the tremendous character of the predicted years of famine in Israel, in the time of Elijah, "There shall be neither dew nor rain."

"Therefore the heaven over you is stayed from dew, and the earth is stayed from her fruit," God says, describing the retributive consequences of the continued sins of his people. But again, when God will renew his mercy, and fulfil his promises, he says, "The seed shall be prosperous; the vine shall give her fruit, and the ground shall give her increase, and the heavens shall give their dew." As the dew upon an Oriental landscape, reviving its life and freshness, blessing the earth with fertility and luxuriance, deepening the greenness of the verdure, and the perfume and beauty of the flower, so the combination of Grace and Truth in God's Divine Word, preached from the heart that he has taught and visited, revives a Christian congregation, or in solitary and prayerful communion with the Sacred volume, refreshes and enlivens the soul. And how striking is the application of the same figure to the influence of God's Church in the world, sacred, reviving, renewing. "The remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people as the dew from the Lord, as the showers upon the grass." Like the sweet prediction of the coming and kingdom of the Redeemer, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass, and as showers that water the earth," these images possess the soul with freshness and beauty; the very reading of them is as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

The Summer is the season of greatest light and heat, which in combination and interchange with the showers, perpetually renew the earth's exuberant dress of budding, blossoming, flowering fragrance and loveliness. The Summer is the season of the play of the lightning, when, between the vegetable world and the atmosphere, the circulation of electricity establishes another powerful agency of growth. The Summer is the season of cloud-landscapes, gorgeous and glorious, with all the grateful and refreshing changes of sunshine and shade, and cloud-terraces



of purple radiance let down from heaven to earth in the morning and evening twilight.

In all this habitude of summer growth and glory, we see just the type of what takes place in a soul, in which God is employing his gracious divine agencies to develop and renew its faculties and powers. Sometimes there is in individual souls a concentration of Summer splendour and loveliness, in all the qualities of grace springing from and demonstrating the power and glory of the life hid with Christ in God. Sometimes there is such a concentration in the Church. At particular periods every thing flourishes in all the luxuriance of summer verdure and flowers. There may be a summer season in our souls, in which all the sensibilities open with unusual delicacy of perception and sensitiveness to the light from heaven; in which our minds and hearts drink in the abundant influences of grace and truth and providence, falling like rain, the dew, and the sunshine. It is the time in which, between our roots, buds, leaves, and the atmosphere, the play of heaven's electric life goes on intensely; it is the time of fervid and luxuriant growth, and of rapidly concentrating and established habit towards heaven.

In all this, the law is that of gradual growth, and the principle is that of God giving the increase. We have but to commit our way to Him, and He will bring it to pass. A thousand exterior arrangements may be requisite, but whatever providences are needed, shall be at hand. He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young; the crooked places shall be made straight, and the rough places plain.

Through all the apparent chaos of what may seem human contingencies, God's will in the discipline of individual character is consummated on principles as sure as the succession of day and night, by laws more lasting than any arrangements of the material universe. The law by which the tides of the ocean follow the changes and motion of the moon, is not so stable as the principles on which God evolves and fixes character and destiny, in perfect accordanee with the most entire and unimpeded free agency. The law that keeps the sun in its orbit is not more sure in its operation than the principles by which holy habits bind the soul to God.

No miracle is needed to fulfil the purposes of grace, but they ripen fast, unfolding every hour, with as quiet and simple an evolution as that of the leaves of a rose-bud unfolding into full blossom to the day. God carries on his purposes, even in spiritual things, not, so far as we can see, by any miraculous interference with established agencies, but by what we regard as natural processes, though they are no more natural to God than miracles themselves are, when he chooses them. God says that the righteous shall hold on his way; and he that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger. The purpose in this declaration, or the prediction, considered as involving one of God's purposes, will be carried to its fulfilment by what we call the nature of things. It owes its infallible certainty of accomplishment to the fact that it is grounded in a determination of God respecting the complete salvation of his saints; but that determination or decree of final perseverance is to be carried out not by arbitrary miracle or force, but as a necessary result of the inevitable development of character, when once Divine grace has set the process in motion; attended by the Divine Providence as a course of occasions for its action, and of discipline suited to its advancement. The perfection both of the righteous and the wicked in their different directions, that is, the consummation of *character* in both, and to a great degree doubtless of *retribution*, is but an illustration of that power of habit, which is one of the grand laws of our spiritual being. The good man shall be satisfied from himself, and the wicked man will be a hell to himself, and shall be filled with the fruit of his own doings; and it will all be found to be on what we call natural principles.

One of the most manifest and universal among the laws of nature, or the principles on which God evidently arranges things, or carries on developments in the natural world, is that of gradualism and toil in the process, concentration and immutability in the results. The growth of a tree, a forest, a field of grain, a meadow of grass, are plain illustrations. A forest of noble trees is one of God's works requiring the adaptation and operation of principles busy with incessant industry for perhaps hundreds of years. And so for the ripening of a single ear of grain, the sun must shine every day, every hour, and the dews must fall, and the clouds be gathered, and the rains descend, and day and night succeed each other, with all attending

influences ; a combination of untiring, industrious, powerful processes, powerful yet gradual, invisible and often noiseless, yet ceaseless, unintermitted, gradually, gently carrying nature to perfection. And when the perfection is reached, the product stands concentrated and steady for its uses.

Just so it is in the moral world, so in the world of character, so in the world of habits, causes, consequences, and results. Almost all things are gradual, because all are coming, with constant warning, to a great decision. Things roll on with this quiet gradualism, this change by unintermitted increase, in the right or the wrong direction, to an unalterable result; the immutability of the result being known beforehand; being a law as well known, indeed, as the gradualism of the sunrise or the stealthiness of the twilight.

Now what growth is in the natural world, habit is in the moral. There is the same certainty in its laws, the same slowness and often imperceptibleness in its advance, the same immutability in its results. The causes remaining in operation, there is the same certainty of perfection, and the point of perfection once reached, there is no more change. A grain of wheat, if the process of growth be not interrupted or destroyed, will come to an ear, and, when it is ready for the harvest, you cannot change the wheat into a thistle or a sunflower. An acorn, if things go on uninterruptedly, will, under the care and toil of natural processes for many years, come to an oak; and you cannot change the oak into a hickory, or a butternut, or a pine. You might have planted a peach-stone, or an apple-seed, instead of an acorn, and then, when the processes were finished, you would have had a peach-tree or an apple-tree instead of an oak. You had your choice, as to what form the product, under these invariable processes, should take; but once finished, there can be no change.

No more can there be when the products of *habit* are finished. The thing once done, the point of perfection reached, the point where all the processes ever intended to be applied have accomplished their work, there can be no more change, in *kind*, for ever. The season of these processes we call, in moral things, probation; the result is as immutable as that of seed time and harvest in natural things. When the processes are done, there can be no more change. A good man, when all the processes are

finished, can never become a bad man, and a bad man, when all the processes are finished, can never become a good man. You shall never gather grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles, nor shall ever a grape-vine be changed into a thistle, nor a thistle into a grape-vine. And there is something in the hardihood with which nature holds her own, for ever forbidding the possibility of any such change, because no example of it ever has been witnessed, or ever can take place, so that even the imagination of it is an absurdity, there is something in the absolute immutability of nature in this respect, that teaches, and we may suppose was intended to teach, a solemn lesson as to the eternal world. The world of processes and probations being finished, and character once completely formed, in one of its two moulds, there can be no change for ever.

Such is the certainty and immutability of habit, the certainty of its laws and processes, the immutability of its results. I say, again, it is a thing as natural and certain in the moral world, as the law of growth unto perfection and immutability in the natural world. And God makes use of it, and regards its laws, in the accomplishment of his purposes, so that the designs of his grace may be said to have their accomplishment by the nature of things, as well as by a Divine Sovereignty, not less than the simplest processes of the natural world. A sweet flower, a rose, a lily, a violet, is not more absolutely a production of nature, under God's Divine arrangements, than a good man; and a poisonous plant, a pestiferous *Upas*, is not more absolutely a production of nature than a bad man. In the product, man, it is a voluntary nature; in the case of goodness, yielding to, and co-operating with, the power and sovereignty of Divine Grace; in the case of wickedness, resisting the same heavenly influence, yielding to temptation, and co-operating with evil. But in both cases, it is a natural process, completed, sealed, and rendered immutable in an immortal being, by the ceasing of probation, and the power of habit.

And hence the tremendous solemnity of the injunction by the inspired Apostle, Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his good pleasure. It is God, and no created power, no human help or agency; so that, if he cease working, you drop, you are done with. And when he has done working, the thing

is finished, according as you have been working with him or against him for heaven or hell. Therefore, as whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever, so, when God has done working, whatsoever *man* doeth, it shall be for ever. Whatsoever God shall be found to have made of man, when the time of man's probation is finished, shall stand to all eternity. And whatsoever man shall be found to have made of himself, when the time appointed of God for the ceasing of the processes of grace has come, shall stand to all eternity. Such is the power of habit, such are the regulations and conditions of Divine Grace.

Now this power and irreversible certainty of habit is a great, glorious, and joyous principle, when its action is established on the side of right. While it is the most supremely evil principle on the side of evil, it is the most triumphant and blessed principle on the side of good. In this the children of God rejoice, and well they may; for it is the seal, on the human side, of the Saint's final perseverance; the seal on the Divine side, being this, *The Lord knoweth them that are his*. On the Divine side, which God only can read, and perhaps the beings in bliss, God marks, impresses, makes visible, the seal of the Divine purposes, the note of his sovereign and distinguishing mercy and love. On the human side, the side seen by mortal vision, known and read of all men, comes out the power of heavenly habit, the result of the seal and grace of God striking through and working in the natural will, made to co-operate with it; the visible rule and signet-proof of it, being the heavenly motto, *Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity*.

Under this law, habit is the product of Divine Grace, and seals the soul immutably for God and heaven. Stronger and stronger is the rule, and so the righteous shall hold on his way. They go from strength to strength, till every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. There they shall rest in security, no more danger, no more doubt, no more conflict, because, no more sin. Grace triumphant, guilt removed, indwelling evil eradicated, nothing in habit left but good, and the law of a purified and heavenly nature, as well as the law of God's promise and covenant in Christ, securing an eternity and immutability of holiness. The song of triumph begun on earth enters into, and becomes one with the Halleluiahs of heaven.

“The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me

free from the law of sin and of death." That is habit under grace, the law of heaven begun on earth, the law of grace on earth made perfect and immutable in heaven. What an infinite, illustrious, ecstatic triumph! A triumph in Christ, over sin, hell, death, Satan, doubt, danger, and whatsoever possibility of evil can be named, either in this world, or in that which is to come! All the clouds swept eternally away, all the difficulties, uncertainties, and fears of the race annihilated, a regeneration and determination of the will secured, omnipotent, incorruptible, irreversible, in rapturous obedience and love to God; an impossibility established of ever changing into evil, a divine nature inwrought, permanent, predominant, unmingled, in the participation of God's own holiness, in the likeness, ravishing and perfect, of Jesus, for ever!

No wonder, beholding such a consummation, that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth. Dr. Payson, in one of his happy moods of ecstatic love to Christ, and gratitude for his goodness, described himself as having the feeling, if he could once shout out the adorable name of his Redeemer, so that all the universe could hear it, that he should be willing to sink into annihilation. Something such a shout there must be in heaven when a soul, redeemed from sin and hell, enters into that inheritance of the saints in light, that certainty and eternal immutability of holiness and bliss. All heaven must ring from one end to the other with such a triumph.

It is a triumph as at the finishing of a work of great labour and peril, a work which at one time hung in doubt and darkness, a work of time, toil, and incalculable costliness. In this world there is a period of doubt, vicissitude, and weakness. Sometimes the tide apparently sets towards heaven, sometimes towards hell. The soul is seen in the dark night, struggling in the storm, buffeting the tempest; and a voice is often heard. All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me! And who but God knows the issue? The seed may be sown, and may appear to be germinating; the green blade may appear, but may be blasted; and seed, and blade, and all hope of harvest may perish. As it is in the fluctuations of hope and fear, doubt, anxiety, and longing in waiting for the fruits of the earth, so it is to human ignorance in watching the career of grace. It may prove grace, and it may not. If it be grace, stronger and stronger is the rule, and neither

drought nor frost shall overcome it. But it may prove tares, and though good seed may have been sown, yet the thorns may spring up and choke it, the fowls of the air may destroy it, the cares, riches, and pleasures of life may prevent it. There is a time of distressing doubt. It may be a hope that maketh not ashamed, it may be a hope that will perish like the spider's web, when tried in the presence of God.

But there is a time when the husbandman feels confident. Up to a certain point he trembles for the weather. A few weeks' drought may destroy the possibility of a harvest. A night's heavy, untimely frost may cut it off; a severe storm may produce irreparable injury. But there is a period after which there is little danger. The husbandman thanks God that the fruits of the year are so far ripened, and in their strength, that no ordinary change can cause any disaster. God sees such a period in the work of grace; a period in which, even on natural principles, it has gone too far into the immutability of habit ever to be turned back, ever to meet with any disastrous change. Man can never, this side the grave, see such a period; and the occasional and dreadful falls from grace, even in those who seemed to have almost got home, admonish him of his danger; and he hears the deep solemn warning, as in muttered thunder, *Lest I also be a castaway*. Man may be doubtful, *must* be doubtful, and this very doubtfulness and anxiety are one great means of bringing the harvest home. This very uncertainty and trembling, this watching as at the gates of hell, this wrestling in prayer out of distressing solicitude even to the last, is all good for the ripening of the harvest. The strife of perplexity, these streams of tears, these loads of cares, are as good as the richest nourishment to a field of grain. They are as good as the deep trenches around the fruit trees; or the fire and the smoke, to keep off the palmer worm and the caterpillar.

Besides, the promise is given to just such anxious and tearful agriculture. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy; he that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him. Lo, though God may be confident, man cannot. Yet man may rejoice that stronger and stronger is the rule. Man may rejoice in the increase of the power of heavenly habit, binding him to God, and making it more and more apparent that God's hand is upon

him, and God's Spirit with him, so that God will keep him even to the end.

But God must be looked to supremely, and with a single eye; even God that giveth the increase; otherwise though there may be what is called virtue, or virtuous habit, in particulars, it shall be no better than a more subtle and unsearchable hypocrisy, or a fair formalism. A man by practice and perseverance might have all the virtues in detail, or nearly all, but holy principle in none; and this must be looked to, lest while he is relying on the power of habit, his good things prove *mere habit*, not rooted in principle, not a heavenly nature. There is no safeguard against this, except the grace of God, and a mind steadfastly relying on him. And to this effect the impressive warning of Lord Bacon in regard to *good ends* may be applied for our purpose. It is to be found in that admirable mine of profound thought and apt illustration, his work on the Advancement of Learning.

“For if these two things be supposed, that a man set before him good and honest ends, and again that he be resolute, constant, and true unto them, it will follow that he shall mould himself into all virtue at once. And this is indeed like the work of nature; whereas the other course is like work of the hand: for as when a carver makes an image, he shapes only that part whereupon he worketh (as if he be upon the face, that part which shall be the body is but a rude stone, still, till such time as he comes to it); but contrariwise, when nature makes a flower or living creation, she formeth rudiments of all the parts at one time; so in obtaining virtue by *habit*, while a man practiseth temperance, he doth not profit much to fortitude, nor the like; but when he dedicateth and applieth himself to good *ends*, look, what virtue soever the pursuit and passage towards those ends doth commend unto him, he is invested of a precedent disposition to conform himself thereunto.”

This precedent disposition is the ground of principle, and the assurance of triumph; this is the hand of God upon the soul, the Spirit of God within it. This will gather to a man all good, this will repel all evil; this will invest a man with strength from all circumstances, for all emergencies; this will conquer all without, and make him conqueror over all within.

Yes! the path of the just is as the shining light, shining more



and more, brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day. It is imperfect now, and often stormy and cloudy, but through the storm and the sunshine the path runs on. The beings toiling in it are not such beings in appearance as you would think destined to thrones of glory; but they look rather like weather-beaten mariners, poor, way-worn pilgrims, with garments worn and dusty; but they are to be all presented without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, before the throne of God in his likeness. They are to be all kings and priests. They are all to shine as the stars. Light, knowledge, sanctification, all things in the Christian life; all in the progress to glory, are gradual and partial now, entire and perfect hereafter. Now we know in part; then shall we know even as we are known; now we see as through a glass darkly, but then face to face.

The process of growth and sanctification is going on now, mainly as a discipline of redemption from sin, deliverance from the carcase of the old man, purification from indwelling corruption; so that at present, there is more positive experience of sin and of the conflict with it, than of holiness and grace in triumph. Yet the work is going on through all fluctuations, through providences afflictive often, and seemingly adverse, through temptations and the trial of faith working experience; and experience is gradually building up a hope that maketh not ashamed, and more and more the love of God is shed abroad, and all the affections gathered up to heaven.

The dross may be continually rising to the surface now, and a great part of God's very discipline with us is to bring it out. When you put a lump of gold into the crucible, there is no dross visible *upon* it, but there may be a great deal *in* it. A skilful goldsmith will tell you at once, on exposing it to some of his tests, that there is much alloy in it. You put it into the crucible to bring out that alloy, and the consequence is that the dross speedily becomes more manifest than any thing else; which indeed is the consequence of the very process of purification; and so God often detects and brings out the indwelling evils of his jewels; and the consequence of such discipline for a season is just this, that to themselves the children of God seem to be nothing but dross, for dross and not pure gold is the most marked feature, and they seem to be doing any thing but growing in grace. And yet this is one of the very processes of growth. Mortification,

self-abasement, and humiliation now, leading to glory hereafter; a toilsome and a craggy way now, and sometimes winding through places like the valley of the Shadow of Death, but nevertheless rising, and on the whole growing brighter and brighter towards the perfect day. The dross indeed is rising to the surface now, but by-and-by there shall be a clear, pure, beautiful reflection of the image of the Great Refiner.



PART IV.

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VOICES OF THE AUTUMN.



MEN'S thoughts are much according to their inclination; their discourse and their speeches according to their learning and infused opinions; but their deeds are after as they have been accustomed; therefore there is no trusting to the force of Nature, nor to the bravery of words, except it be corroborate by custom. Therefore since custom is the principal magistrate of man's life, let men by all means endeavour to obtain good customs.

LORD BACON'S *Essays*

'Tis past! no more the SUMMER blooms!

Ascending in the rear,

Behold congenial AUTUMN comes,

The SABBATH of the year!

What time thy holy whispers breathe,

The pensive evening shade beneath,

And twilight consecrates the floods;

While nature strips her garment gay,

And wears the vesture of decay,

O let me wander through the sounding woods.

LOGAN.

Ah, well known streams! Ah, wonted groves,  
Still pictured in my mind!  
O sacred scene of youthful loves,  
Whose image lives behind!  
While sad I ponder on the past,  
The joys that must no longer last,  
The wild flower strewn on summer's bier,  
The dying music of the grove,  
And the last elegies of love,  
Dissolve the soul, and draw the tender tear.

Yet not unwelcome waves the wood,  
That hides one in its gloom,  
While lost in melancholy mood,  
I muse upon the tomb.  
Their chequered leaves the branches shed,  
Whirling in eddies o'er my head,  
They sadly sigh that winter's near;  
The warning voice I hear behind,  
That shakes the wood without a wind,  
And solemn sounds the death-bell of the year.

LOGAN.

## PART IV.

# VOICES OF THE AUTUMN.

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### CHAPTER XXII.

Voices of the Autumn: Joyous and Solemn Characteristics of the Season: The Lessons of the Trees: The Scriptural Expression, Trees of Righteousness: The great Autumnal Question.

THE Sabbath of the year! It is certainly a beautiful designation; and the whole Autumnal season, with its mixture of tenderness and melancholy in the fall of the leaf and the preparation for Winter, is not improperly thus characterized. The Indian Summer of America, coming in the midst of Autumn, is more like a Sabbath of Nature, than any other interval of months or seasons. Solemnity and repose, thoughtfulness and silent worship, characterize the air and the landscape. It is difficult to resist, and impossible not to notice, the sober, meditative, pensive impression. All the impulses of Nature are prophetic of the dying year.

And yet, the Autumn, with its richness and abundance, its troops of reapers, its merry huskings, and its harvest homes, is a glad, grateful, joyous season. Old nations have celebrated it as such. It is full of joy and happiness in the Word of God, and the old Hebrews connected any thing but melancholy associations with it. Indeed their feasts of Harvest and of Tabernacles were occasions of exultant delightfulness, of the sunniest and heartiest kind. For eight days together they dwelt together in shady tents, erected with green boughs along the streets of the Holy City, and on the roofs of the houses, in commemoration and imitation of their dwellings when they wandered



from Egypt. As the feast of Tabernacles was likewise a festival of gratitude after the vintage, and the gathering in of the fruits, they carried about the productions of the choicest trees, with branches of palm, willow, pomegranate, and other verdurous and thick-foliaged boughs. The whole season passed away with songs and music in unmingled cheerfulness. Jerusalem, during its continuance, wore the appearance of one vast thickly clustered luxuriant bower, in the evening widely and splendidly illuminated.

A New England Thanksgiving Festival is such an Autumn season of delight, with the warmth and heartiness of home gatherings, to make up for the luxuriance and sweetness of an Oriental clime. Gratitude to God for his ceaseless bounty is the prevailing and abounding lesson in the morals of the Autumn, but the season has likewise deep and solemn analogies peculiar to itself. God's covenant of mercy in the unalterable fixtures of the seasons, is full of heavenly lessons in every part.

WHILE THE EARTH REMAINETH, SEED-TIME AND HARVEST, AND COLD AND HEAT, AND SUMMER AND WINTER, AND DAY AND NIGHT, SHALL NOT CEASE. Seed-time and harvest are of all the Seasons the deepest, most direct, most profoundly thoughtful and suggestive in their instructions and their warnings. There is solemn meaning and warning in a seed; though it be out of sight, and dead beneath the ground, it speaketh. And every growth from seeds, the fruits, the trees, the harvests good or bad, all are laden with the lessons of character and consequences.

In an autumnal landscape, indeed in every landscape, all the seasons through, but especially when the Frost has commenced its silent ministry, and the leaves are changing, but have not fallen, the trees are the object of most commanding interest. The moral uses and lessons of a great forest are many and deep. In the Word of God itself there are few comparisons more instructive and beautiful than those between the leaves of nature and the life of man; or, in a different relation, those between a growing tree and a growing Christian. The plants of Divine Grace are sometimes called 'Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. In the first Psalm this same presentation of a righteous man stands like a graceful tree before an ornamented gateway to an Oriental garden. Blessed

is the man, whose delight is in the Law of the Lord. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper. In the seventeenth chapter of Jeremiah this comparison is drawn out with still greater minuteness. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord; and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green, and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.

In those Egyptian deserts on the banks of the Nile, where the interminable sands have encroached upon the bottom-soil, even to the very margin of the river, over which, in some places, they curl and hang like a snow-drift, the traveller may behold an exquisite realization of this image, perhaps indeed may see the very living picture that the Prophet and Poet may have had in his own mind. He may see trees apparently growing out of the hot, glistening, scorching sand-banks, in which half their trunks are already buried, but all verdant at the top with thick luxuriant foliage, where not even the spiky shrubs of the wilderness can grow beneath. It is because they are so deeply rooted now, where they sprang at first, in the nourishing soil of the bed of the river, and no upper external changes of sand, or heat, or drought, can affect them, short of a complete submerging by a deluge of the desert. Such is the delightful image of a Christian, whose trust is in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. Such is the perpetual and joyful verdure and fruitfulness of a soul that is rooted and grounded in the love of Christ.

Let us trace some of the analogies of nature suggested in these beautiful passages, and brought forcibly to mind in the autumnal season of the year. There were analogies and lessons in Oriental landscapes, which we miss in nature at the North; but there are also many lessons from a Northern landscape and circle of the seasons, not so easily suggested at the South. The brilliant changes and variety of colours in the leaves, and the annual withering and falling of the foliage in the autumn, which have given to this season with us the expressive and beautiful designation of *THE FALL*, could have been hardly familiar to an Oriental Poet.

When the sacred writer says, Her leaf shall be green even in drought, he means *always* green, through *all* the seasons, ever in the same grateful, refreshing, simple, and modest colouring. And this is one of the first points that may be noted in the character of a righteous man, that it is made of what are called *fast colours*. There is the hue of principle, and it does not change. There is neither glare nor glitter, nor intrusive show, but a simple quiet green, all the year round. It is a colour that holds on through all changes, and pleases the mind under all circumstances. The leaves remain upon the tree, and the colour remains upon the leaves. It is an EVERGREEN, that is thus presented as the picture of a righteous man.

Now in our Northern climates, where the great masses of our woods and forests are of trees that annually shed and renew their foliage, the season of autumn interrupts this analogy of permanence, and presents us some other analogies of contrast. As our autumn is advancing, the leaves are borne upon the wind, in showers, falling, falling, falling, dry and withered to the ground. It is melancholy to see the glories of the season departing, so that the bare skeletons of trees stand out, which but a few days ago were so thick with foliage, that not the bark of a single branch was visible. What a change upon the landscape! The frost performs its silent ministry by night, and then the sun, the mighty Chemist and Painter, takes up his pencil, and, lo! what magic transformations appear at his touch! The forest is all glittering in purple, scarlet, and gold.

But the process that decorates the leaves with such gay varieties of colour, such transitory, ornamental transfigurations, loosens and kills them. Then comes the morose North wind, or the warm South, after this pictorial work is finished, and strips the trees of their momentary, dying splendour, perhaps in a single day. This, I say, is a process that might suggest some interesting moral analogies in regard to character by way of contrast; some points in which the Trees of Righteousness are to be known as such by the very reverse of this law of change, gaiety, and death.

The leaves upon *those* trees are of unalterable principle and life. Their colour is of divine truth, their life from the Divine Spirit, and they neither change, nor fade, nor die. It is not external painting, but inward growth, that produces and sustains

their beauty. The work of painting the character in any other colours than those that will grow out of it, those that can be set in it, and made to belong to it, perennial, and graceful, is often the work of death, always of art and injury. Foreign accomplishments and ornaments in education are sought for, when native ones are dying out. The variety and glitter of a fashionable education, the rage for French, the squalls of operatic music, the change, crowd, and superficial show of studies, too often indicate a process like that which goes on with the leaves in autumn, preparing them for decay, rather than that which, in the quiet Spring and Summer, clothes all nature in the sweet delicious green, so simple, so modest, so lasting and grateful to the eye. It is the work of frost and death, not of fire and life.

The woods indeed are splendid, when they have been reddening in the October sun. A beautiful sight it is, for a little time, but sweet nature almost plays the harlequin, when she puts her long cherished, lovely foliage under the finishing touches of the Frost. It is only because the sight is so transitory, that it is so splendid and attractive, for it would not continue to please, if it lasted.

And here we remark the exercise of Divine Wisdom and Goodness in the permanent colour which he has chosen for the array of nature, to suit the organization of our mortal frame. With what care and loving-kindness has God tempered the seasons to our being, and mingled the hues of the world just so as best to educate and soothe our senses, and discipline the mind, the imagination, and the heart, through the medium of the senses! What a difference there would have been in our moral and intellectual character, if instead of green being the habitual colouring of nature, the landscape had been dressed every day, and all the year round, all the warm months, in the gay variety of the woods in autumn! The human imagination itself, instead of being the faculty that could be developed in the grandeur and sublimity of a mind like Milton's, might have become but a whimsical display of fancies, a wheel for artificial fire-works.

This transitory brilliancy of nature is truly beautiful for a season; nevertheless, the autumnal beauty of the trees is like the hectic fever in the cheek of a consumptive; it is the certain foretokening of death in the foliage, and it gives notice that the principle of life in the whole tree has begun its retreat to the

roots, in preparation for winter. What would become of the tree, if its life had not the roots to retire to, embosomed in the parent earth, and safe there from the destruction of winter and death? There is a most instructive analogy in this process. For as the trees that cover our earth with such freshness and beauty of foliage must have their roots deep buried, out of sight, drawing refreshment from the earth, to make the fruits and foliage visible and rich, and must have in those roots a retreat and shelter for the sap, when frost and desolation reign over all nature, so must the Trees of Righteousness have *their* roots, their refuge, their secure place of immutable, indestructible life.

In this respect the autumnal season is an emblem of the verge of death, an emblem of the close of life, an emblem of the withering of our strength and beauty in old age; and every Fall asks of us the question, Have you a hiding-place and refuge in HIM, who is the Resurrection and the Life? When we lose our verdure, when our leaves fall off, when our interest in this world ceases, and perhaps, through the decay of our faculties, we lose all that makes us interesting to others, are our roots planted in another and a better existence? Are they hid in Christ, rooted and grounded in his life, and can our life retreat to him, and rest secure in him through the winter of the grave, till the glory of the Resurrection?

How secure, how blissful, how triumphant, if this be the case! If our life be indeed hid with Christ in God, then the Autumn of our being is to us merely the precursor of a harvest of eternal blessedness. But if not, if we have no root, retreat, and hiding-place in Christ, then how melancholy and mournful, and prophetic of misery, is the falling of our leaves, the silver of our grey hairs, and the slow revolving of the wheel at the cistern! Our root must be in Christ. Then shall we flourish in perpetual beauty, as the Trees of Righteousness, which he has planted. Our life must be in Christ. Then, though our earthly verdure dies, though our leaves fall off, though the body must lie down in the grave, and be mingled with the dust as it was, yet all this is but the sign of transplantation to the Paradise of life. Though the earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, yet have we a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

But again, the object of God, and the discipline requisite for

the accomplishment of his purposes, are to be looked at. The trees that he plants are the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. Such trees are living trees, growing trees, fruit-bearing trees. That they may live, flourish, and bear fruit, the dead branches must be removed, and the luxuriant ones guarded, pruned, and carefully attended to. In a wild, magnificent forest, Nature needs no such care, and exercises none. Nature is careless of her dead, amidst the abundance of life; and amidst her luxuriance of beauty, takes no notice of deformities. Dead branches remain till they rot to the shoulder. Sometimes they may be seen protruding, bare and withered, half way up the body of a noble tree, marring its beauty. Such things cannot be suffered in God's Trees of Righteousness.

In the forest we may see whole trees dead, without a solitary leaf upon them, nothing but dead and mossy branches, yet still standing in the presence of other trees, as upright, and apparently as firm as they. Could there be a more affecting picture of dead formalism and insensibility, instead of living piety? There may be a bold profession, a correct creed, a dry and faultless orthodoxy, as clearly defined and adhered to as the outlines of the branches on a dead tree. And cloths of gold may be hung upon the branches, glittering like priests' vestments, but there are no leaves to be stirred by the wind, no blossoms, no fruit. Such is dead ritualism, stiff, rigid, immoveable, lifeless. There are no heavenly affections for the Spirit of God to breathe upon, and even while the breeze is stirring the whole forest, making the leaves to dance gladly in the light, and making music with their multitudinous whisperings and motions, those leafless trees will not be moved at all.

The affections turning heavenward, the sensibilities alive towards God, the emotions ready to be played upon by the Spirit, moving at the least breeze from heaven; these are the foliage of the Trees of Righteousness. They reflect the light, they glitter in the sun, they are watered by the dews, refreshed by the rain, enlivened by the atmosphere. A Tree of Righteousness is thus not only a tree of life, by its life-giving fruits, and its cool, green, refreshing foliage, but by all the processes of life going on in healthful energy between its own organization and all the elements. All the elements minister to its life and growth, and all the elements are in turn enriched and enlivened by it.

Look how the woods conduct the clouds, precipitate the rain, preserve the country from drought, keep the soil moist and cool through the heats of summer, enrich it by the annual contribution of their relinquished verdure, preserve and protect it on the mountains and the hill-sides from being worn and washed away; all these services are but symbols of the ways in which God blesses and preserves the world by what he calls his Trees of Righteousness, the planting of the Lord that he might be glorified. It is in this way, and in this way only, that in this world, and in the view of the universe, he *can* be glorified; and if not thus glorified *here*, then so far from being in the category, or answering to the description of trees of righteousness, his creatures are rather to be found in that catalogue of timber for the burning, mentioned by Paul, and Judé, and Peter, trees without fruit, trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots, and whose end is to be burned. The only use that can be made of them is to burn them.

The glories of an Autumnal Forest may be witnessed to the full without fruit-trees; possibly there may be no sprinkling of such in the whole landscape, the vast scene may be composed of gigantic trees, the growth of many hundred years, fulfilling Nature's purposes, but offering no fruit for man. But the chosen symbols of a perpetual righteousness and goodness are fruit-trees; they are, spiritually, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified; they are presented as fruitful Olive Trees, planted in the courts of the Lord, to flourish in the house of our God for ever. The analogy begun in our earthly life, passes into an eternal life; and this earth is but a nursery, a place of simple planting and taking root, out of which the whole fruit-bearing forest shall be transported to bloom for ever in the Paradise above. Oftentimes it can merely be said, God has planted his trees, but their *growth*, beauty, and glory as trees of righteousness, will be seen and known only in that heavenly Paradise. They are but planted here, to be developed there. But the glory of God shall be accomplished in them whether permitted here to grow to the full stature of a tree, or transplanted there, when here the green blade has but just broken from the ground. The grand thing is to be of his planting. If that be the case, and they stay long enough in this earthly domain of God, there will be fruit.

Their growth is a growth in Christ Jesus, their foliage is his foliage, their life his life, their fruit his fruit. In all things he is revealed, in the riches of infinite wisdom, mercy, and love.

But here again, the contemplation of a Forest in Autumn with its stately and innumerable trees, is to a thoughtful mind full of solemnity and awe, if one remembers the great declaration of our Saviour: Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up. In the play of human life, its fulness, its richness, its multitudinous variety, of which a vast waving Forest is so impressive an emblem, how small a portion there may be that gives any sign of having come from God, or of being on the way of a joyful return to him! In how many instances there is not only the mere life of nature, with a lack of fruit, and no sign of God's planting, but a busy, apparent production of fruit under God's own denouncement of emptiness; under the indictment as of old. *Israel is an empty vine; he bringeth forth fruit unto himself!* The Autumnal analogy brings up the great question of judgment, fruit or no fruit for God? This is the point of our Saviour's solemn parable, and determines our whole character and destiny.

A certain man had a fig-tree planted in a vineyard, and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Was it a tree of righteousness? Who could tell, any farther than it told itself, by its not bearing fruit. If it did not, and would not bear fruit, it was not of God's planting. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? Three years is a long time for a tree to be professing the character of a Tree of Righteousness, and yet bearing no fruit. It is almost a demonstration of not being a tree of God's planting. Nevertheless, he answering, said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it, and if it bear fruit well; and if not, then after that, thou shalt cut it down. Oh now, what anxiety about the next year! Now the dresser of the vineyard will set himself at work, with all God's gracious discipline, to see if he cannot save that tree from the axe and the fire; to see if there may not yet be fruit, when the time of fruit once more comes round; to see if, after all, that tree may not yet be proved a tree of God's own



planting, fruitful for God's glory. But if not, then the demonstration is perfect against it.

How solemn is the presentation of this grand Autumnal question, Is there fruit? The seasons roll their round, the processes of life go joyously and beautifully forward, but still the great Autumnal judgment question comes, Is there fruit? If God finds fruit, what a shout of welcome to the Harvest Home! But if not, and the Autumn has really come, there is an inexpressibly mournful wail recorded in Holy Scripture, of the sorrow and hopelessness of such a case. The harvest is passed, the Summer is ended, and we are not saved!

Now it is just in reference to such a possible conclusion, and the action necessary upon it, that *the axe is laid at the root of the trees*. In the very offer and condition of the Gospel, it is there. In the very coming of Christ, and nature of probation, it is there. There it lays at the root of the trees, ready to be used, ready for the hand of the woodman; neither can any thing prevent the experience of its destructive mission, but fruit; for every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire. Yes, the tree is known by its fruit; the plant that God hath planted, and the tree by which he is glorified, is known by its fruit. And the tree also whose destiny is the axe and the fire, is known simply by this, No fruit. There may be all the apparent qualities of a tree, and only that one quality wanting; it may be green and promising and fair to look upon, but if there be no fruit, then the axe must be lifted, it must be cut down, and after that, it is good for nothing but to be burned; after that there is no disposition possible for it, but the fire.

This then is the great Autumnal question, Fruit, or no fruit? A man's Summer profession is nothing without this, but if there be truly fruit for God, then the profession also is part of such heavenly fruit, and every thing in its season is for God and his glory. This is the question by which our heart-searching Lord will try us, and therefore it ought to be the question by which habitually and faithfully we are trying ourselves. It is a close question, a question both for heart and life.

What evidence do I give that I am Christ's? Are the affections of my heart given up to him? Am I submissive to his will? Have I an eye single to his glory? Do I hate my own

sins and mourn over them? Do I daily engage in the heavenly conflict against my own indwelling corruptions? Do I confess and deplore them before God, and do I earnestly endeavour by His grace to conquer them? Am I watchful unto prayer? And does my daily deportment, conduct, conversation, bear witness to the sincerity, the truth, the genuineness of these inward, secret, invisible struggles against sin, and hard followings after God? Are the graces of the Spirit visible in and through the fruits of the Spirit? Do I possess and manifest the spirit and temper of Jesus? Am I humble, meek, gentle, kind, forbearing, forgiving, merciful, benevolent? Or am I proud, discontented, self-indulgent, self-seeking, forgetful of others' welfare and happiness, impatient, anxious, distrustful of my God and Saviour? Do I seek my own, or the things that are Jesus Christ's. Is his love in me the root of my being, my heart, my life, my actions, or is it self and self-love that is at the bottom of all? Am I united to Him, as the branches are united to the vine, or am I an empty vine bringing forth fruit unto myself?

Such questions as these are humbling, searching, trying, but infinitely important to be applied by men daily. And if they send us weeping and mourning to the foot of the cross, if they bring us daily to Christ, beneath the burden of our sins, in the deep consciousness of our utter unworthiness and ruin, without his constant grace and forgiveness, that will be something, that indeed will be much; it will be easting our roots into the soil of the River of Life, and it will be infinitely better than a state of insensibility and fruitlessness and false security. The Lord Jesus will bless the humble, contrite heart; and many a soul that went burdened through life under a deep sense of unfruitfulness and unprofitableness, shall be found at last to be a Tree of Righteousness in the Paradise of Life, to the glory of God for ever.

But let it not be forgotten by my readers, that a grand and spreading tree is the growth of many years; and if there is hope or determination that such shall be the emblem of our character, no time is to be lost. There must be early foresight in the prevention of evils; there must be seasonable and intensely earnest care in the setting of good causes, tendencies, and forms of discipline. Lord Bacon, in one of his beautiful illustrations, reminds us of the fable: "As it goeth of the Basilisk, that if he

saw you first, you die for it; but if *you* see *him* first, *he* dieth: so is it with deceits and evil arts, which, if *they* be first *espied*, lose their life; but if they prevent, they endanger." Nothing but the early grace of God can effectually and thoroughly prevent these prevenient dangers and temptations. When they get their eye upon a young heart first, it is a basilisk eye; but Divine Truth and Grace preoccupant, keeping the watchful eye on them, the danger may be safely past. Oh! for a warning voice in regard to unseen evils, couching near, and waiting on the path of the young and unwary. When they strike, deeply the poison goes, and yet the heedless soul passes on, unconscious of having been wounded. No care, no caution, can be too great.

And as to the qualities of goodness and greatness, it were well if the very boards of one's cradle could be planed out of the stuff desirable for future character. If a man is ever to be one of God's great instruments of good to his race, the preparation must be made in laying the very foundations of his nature. It is too late to seek to form new men for the occasion, when the crisis has come, and the habits are already those of a mere ordinary manhood. A man's discipline must commence and go forward with the other causes which God is making to operate for the world's changes, for it cannot be produced in a night. No man can go to sleep a common man, to awake a hero or a deep Christian, on the morning of a political or ecclesiastical revolution. Napoleon's character was forming with the silent progress of all the causes which prepared the French Revolution. And Luther's character, by as much greater than Napoleon's, as Michael the Archangel's was greater than Satan's, was cut as with the point of a diamond, and wrought into its unchangeable, steadfast, reliable qualities, in the lonely spiritual discipline and conflicts of the cloisters at Erfurth. What is true of men is also true of nations. The yoke must be borne in the youth, and good and strong qualities set then, if character and power would awe the world in manhood.

If as a flower doth spread and die,  
Thou wouldst extend me to some good,  
Before I were, by Frost's extremity,  
                                Nipt in the bud;  
The sweetness and the praise were thine:  
But the extension and the room,  
Which in thy garland I should fill were mine,  
                                At thy great doom.

For as thou dost impart thy grace,  
The greater shall our glory be,  
The measure of our joys is in this place,  
                                The stuff with thee.

Let me not languish then, and spend  
A life as barren to thy praise,  
As is the dust, to which that life doth tend,  
                                But with delays.

All things are busy: only  
Neither bring honey with the bees,  
Nor flowers to make that, nor the husbandry  
                                To water these.

I am no link of thy great chain,  
But all my company is as a weed;  
Lord, place me in thy concert; give *one* strain  
                                To my poor weed.

GEORGE HERBERT.

If to mint and to remember names delight thee, still  
arrange and classify, and prove and pull to pieces, and peep  
into Death to look for Life, as Monkeys put their heads  
behind a looking-glass. Yet consider, in the first Sabbath  
which thou imposest on the busy discursion of thought, that  
all this is *at best* little more than a technical memory: that like  
can only be known by like: that, as Truth is the correlative  
of Being, so is the act of Being the great organ of Truth:  
that in natural, no less than moral science, *quantum sumus*  
*scimus*.

COLERIDGE.

THOU that hast given so much to me,  
Give one thing more, a grateful heart,  
See how thy beggar works on thee,  
By Art.

He makes thy gifts occasion more,  
And says, If he in this be crost,  
All thou hast given him heretofore  
Is lost.

Wherefore I cry, and cry again;  
And in no quiet canst thou be,  
Till I a thankful heart obtain  
Of Thee.

Not thankful when it pleaseth *me*,  
As if thy blessings had spare days;  
But such a heart whose pulse may be  
Thy praise.  
GEORGE HERBERT.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Voices of the Autumn, continued: The Tares considered, and some of the reasons for their permitted growth: The possibility of a Harvest of glory and blessedness, only in Christ: The Autumn as the explanation of all things.

IN Autumn and the Harvest, weeds and tares ripen, as well as the golden grain and wholesome fruits, that are the riches of the husbandman. There is a great mystery in this, as to moral good and evil, that God should let them ripen together; nevertheless, it is the will and sentence of Divine Wisdom: *Let both grow together until the Harvest.* Until the Harvest, and no longer, shall this strange spectacle be seen; and we possess, in the profoundly solemn and beautiful parable of the good seed and the tares, as recorded especially in Matthew's gospel, a plain and forcible representation of the origin, the growth, and the retribution of evil, under the government of God. There are also plainly set down for us some of the reasons why God permits such an order of things as sin mingled with righteousness; such a spectacle as that of sinful men confounded, for a season, successfully and prosperously, with good men, to the great apparent harm of goodness and of justice.

It is to be marked distinctly, that in the Harvest parable, the origin of evil is thrown off from God; it is not represented as a part of his system or plan, either direct or incidental. It is not said that God on the whole chose that the tares should be planted, but *it is plainly said, An enemy hath done this.* It is plainly argued that God could not and would not have sowed any but good seed. The tares are the work of an Enemy of God and man, and our Blessed Lord plainly tells us *what enemy: The Enemy that sowed them is the Devil.*

Now it may possibly be said that this is but removing the difficulty a step back. Be it so. You remove it to a place and an agency out of Heaven, out of Earth, and out of God. That is *something*; nay indeed, as to the satisfaction of the mind in knowing that God is in no way the Author of sin, it is *every thing*. And we care not to go farther in this investigation than Christ himself leads. It is distinctly declared that sin in this world is in no sense God's work, but man's and the devil's.

Next, we have the *growth of evil together with* that of good. And here it is to be marked distinctly, that some of the reasons for this, which is admitted as the permissive arrangement of God, as a thing tolerated of him for wise purposes, are also given. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up, these pernicious tares, the work of the enemy? But he said, Nay, lest, while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. Let all things come to their perfection, both the evil and the good, and then will be the time to make the separation. It is distinctly stated that the wicked are tolerated, and are permitted to go on growing, only because, if not, the righteous must be *prevented* from growing. And the perfection of one righteous man is of greater consequence by far than the restraint of the vicious. God has his heart set upon the production of goodness, of holiness, in man, and he will accomplish it. Good men are the trees of righteousness; which he has planted after the image of his dear Son, and it is his will that they should have time and space to grow and come to perfection, and if for this purpose it is necessary to let the wicked also remain and grow, they *shall* grow until the harvest.

So that every wicked man may be told, and told truly, It is only for the sake of the good man by your side, that you, sir, are permitted to go about in your wickedness to taint the air of this world with the breath of a creature under the dominion of the enemy of God and man. It was only for the good men in and out of Sodom, that the beasts and devils in Sodom, under human shape, were permitted to go about at large, like roaring lions, so long as they did. The wicked man may be the man clothed in purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day, and the good man may be a miserable, outcast Lazarus, sick, despised, and groaning, amidst the dogs at the rich man's

gate. But, in such a case, the wicked rich man owes his tolerance out of hell to the good poor man. It is because there is a Lazarus at his gate, that his gate and his palace do not fall; and one of the great uses to which God puts him, while this toleration goes on, (for God will have nothing wasted, not even the tares, while they are growing,) is to help forward a discipline necessary for the perfection of the poor dying saint at his gate. For so are the wicked in this world oftentimes among God's sharpest tools for the polishing and cutting of his jewels for his palace above. And so in very truth the world is held together, is kept in its orbit, is spread out as God's field, and the wicked are permitted to grow in it, because the righteous are growing.

A world is under God's curse because of its guilt, and yet it is kept from the falling and sufferance of that curse because God will yet, in spite of evil, bring some good out of it; because he will cause the wrath of man and Satan to praise him, and will restrain the remainder of wrath. A world of guilt is spared, even in its rebellion, because God has determined to save all in it who are willing to be saved. It is kept from the final burning, because God will not have the righteous that are to be gathered out of it, burned in it, or prevented from salvation. Yea, it is kept from present purification, kept from being now purified by the means of burning, because to purify it thus would be to destroy it, and God has determined to accomplish the salvation of all in it who will come to Christ. It shall therefore hold on in its orbit, it shall be held in its orbit by the power of Christ's dying love, till the object of that love has been accomplished, in the salvation of all whom the Father has given to the Son.

All that the Father hath given me, said our Blessed Lord, shall come to me, and he that cometh unto me shall in no wise be cast out. And no matter how long time it takes, for one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day. Those whom the Father hath given to Christ are sprinkled and extended over all generations to the day of doom; and if it takes 365,000 years for all these to come to Christ, the world, though full of sin, shall be held on in its orbit, not yet flaming with the fires of the last day, till all the wheat is ripened and ready to be gathered into God's barn.



This all proceeds out of God's wisdom and love; it is all of his sovereign mercy, and glorious, wise, and blessed purposes. And by these great declarations of Christ, God's patience and long-suffering with sin and sinners are explained, for he is not willing that any should perish. The names of all who will ever come to Christ are in his Book of Life, and not one shall be blotted out or missing. And not only so, but the times of their natural and spiritual life, the period of their abode on earth, and the times of their conversion are there. If there be one solitary name set down in that book, as of a grain of wheat not to be sown and ripened till the last day of the last year of the 365,000 years, the world shall stay for that man, shall be stayed from judgment and destruction, to gather in that man. And the date of the last day, we have reason to believe, is the date of the ripening of God's last grain, in the last ear of the last sheaf of wheat, in the field of this world, for his garner of glory.

Now this explains a great many things otherwise quite inexplicable in the administration of this world; a great many things in the sufferance of evil unpunished, and of evil men growing like green bay-trees. How many persons have asked, in every generation, Where is the promise of his coming? The scoffers and the ungodly have asked it in ridicule and unbelief, and will continue to ask it, and perhaps with bolder confidence, and more blasphemous mockery, the older the world grows. And the righteous have asked it in anguish and doubt, and sometimes in impatience, Lord, how long? Lord, how long? And we might almost conceive of angels in heaven asking it, in astonishment at God's forbearance, as age after age rolls away, and the wickedness of earth still cries up to heaven as of old. For it may well be the amazement of the universe that a world so guilty is suffered to roll on in its iniquity, a world in rebellion, yet not cast down to hell.

And it must be known that this is only because of God's forbearance, on the ground of the sufferings and death of Christ for the salvation of as many as will be saved, and because God has given as many as will come to Christ, and they shall be saved, and for their sakes the judgment of the world tarries. So that the delay of the promise of God's coming is not because the Lord is slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but because he is long-suffering to us now, not willing

that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance; not because the judgment of the wicked now of a long time *lingereth*, and their damnation slumbereth, but because it is all the while *hastening*, through all these ages of God's long-suffering, and when it comes will come as a thief in the night, and the more terrible for its delay; because the wicked are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished.

When all that are to come to Christ have done coming, and all that shall refuse to come have done refusing, which will be only when the last name in the Book of Life is checked, as fulfilled by Divine Grace, then, like as with the wicked in the old world, the same day that Noah entered into the ark, the flood came and destroyed them all, and like as in the days of Lot, the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all, even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed; even thus, when the last man renewed by grace goes into the ark of safety in Christ's love, and is ripened for glory, then the last fires shall kindle on the globe, and the judgment shall be revealed as a clap of thunder in a clear day.

We say it is a question that the angels might ask, How long? to see a world like this roll on in its rebellion, its ingratitude, and grandeur, apparently unrebuked of God. Would you not think so, if as an angelic being, you stood upon the battlements of heaven, and could, like a shooting star, glide down to such a world as this from the holiness of heaven, and see, and hear, and gauge its wickedness? One would think that the very first thing the angels would begin upon in heaven, as they return from this world to that, must be their expression of amazement, and their assertion that of all things in the universe, the most mysterious and astonishing is, that God can suffer such a world as this to remain unpunished. If we could suppose an angelic party returning from some distant survey of God's empire, through spaces over which it has taken them thousands of years to sweep, coming unexpectedly upon this world in its sinfulness, without any knowledge of God's plan of redemption in Christ, they would almost be tempted to think that God must be ignorant of its existence. What can it be, they would ask, that keeps the penalty of God's law from falling on a world like this! How can it be that such a world should have a place in God's

universe out of hell! What mystery of mysteries is this? Let us search it out, for here is something past all comprehension.

And *let* them search, and *let* them study, and *let* them gaze and ponder. Can they find any thing in God's law, any thing in the nature of sin, any thing in God's administration, the fall of the rebel angels included, to explain this wonder of a guilty world unpunished? Every way that they look, does not every known principle of things, every intuition and revelation of righteousness and justice, every known attribute of God, all past experience, all the smoke of the bottomless pit, all the interests of the universe, every induction by reasoning, shut them up to the conclusion that God must punish such a world of sin? Does not every promise and guarantee, in God's law, government, and character, demand it? Can it be consistent that one set of sinful beings should be punished, and the other left at large? Is God a respecter of persons? Are the angels that sinned to be shut up in their prison of darkness and despair, while this world of iniquity goes on free and unpunished in its rebellion? It never can be. There must be some explanation of all this. But all possibility of explanation is with God himself, and with him only in the person of his Son.

Now, therefore, let the plan of Redemption be revealed, let the Book of the New Testament be opened, the Book of the Incarnation and Crucifixion of the Son of God, the Lord of Life and Glory. Let the mystery of the Cross in God's love, and the Covenant of God with the Redeemer, be made known, that for the sake of his sufferings and death he should see of the travail of his soul in the salvation of sinners and be satisfied, and should have power over all flesh, to give eternal life to as many as the Father should give him; let it be seen how, for the accomplishment of this purpose, a guilty world is sustained and spared from age to age in a probationary position, and how the justice and compassion of God together hold back the penalty of God's law from falling upon it, that the offer of pardon and of life eternal through Christ may still be made to its guilty inhabitants; and let it be seen how God will gather the fruits of that mighty propitiation into heaven for his eternal glory; and then, and not till then, will there be found some explanation of God's apparent tolerance of sin.

We see here how grand and vast is the reach of each truth of

revelation, as connected on the one side with man's accountability, immortality, and guilt, and on the other with the operation of the divine attributes, and the revelation of the divine character. A man cannot strike on one of these truths, and pursue it, but it proves a chariot of fire, to carry him careering amidst other blazing truths, all rolling to the throne of God in glory. A man cannot touch upon this theme of guilt and justice, but it carries him straight to the cross of Christ, and if it did not carry him thither, it must sweep him into the gulf of atheism and despair. But if the heart come to the Word aright, then with what speed and power does every truth it takes hold upon, shoot the soul, as on the wings of a starry messenger of flame, into the very bosom of the Atonement.

For this very purpose he maketh his angels spirits, his messengers a flame of fire. It seems as though every truth were a living being, having God's commission, that if any man will in sincerity take fast hold upon it, ready to follow it out, throwing himself trustingly into its arms, in order that it may carry him just where it can, it shall straightway spread its wings of flame, and fly with him to the Saviour; it shall land him at the foot of the cross, at the central manifestation of all truth for created intelligences. And it *does* this. Not one truth of theology can we pursue with a sincere and earnest mind, but it brings us to the Cross, for its illustration, its explanation, and its life-giving power.

And again, we see that it does this, not mystically, not transcendently, under a veil of philosophy or speculation, nor by concealed paths, which we cannot trace; not in a way of indefinite, or incomprehensible arrangements or influences, of which we know nothing positive; but by definite, clear, flaming revelations; not as if Christ's work towards God for us were a mysterious something in relation to God, we know not what, but an explicit, prominent, most plain reality, even Christ's sufferings and death, as the great, fundamental, propitiatory transaction, that holds up God's curse from this world, and holds up this world as yet unscathed with eternal justice *beneath* God's curse. And so it will continue justly on the same ground to do, justice as it were against justice, justice in the death of Christ preventing justice in the death of the sinner; God meanwhile calling upon men to come out from under that suspended curse, and

applying the remedy of Divine Grace for their salvation, and drawing them away from ruin, by the influence of that same Incarnate Love, working on and living in the soul, by the power of which, as a suffering, Dying Love, the curse of everlasting justice was justly held back from falling.

Is there any thing mysterious, or unintelligible, or inconceivable, or indefinite here! Is this *objective* atonement, this work of Christ for us, in reference to God and his government, on the ground of which alone the power of an atonement *subjectively*, in us, can have any possibility, is this a mere something, we cannot tell what, which we are at liberty to speculate about or deny, as if it were of minor importance? Why! the truth that God was in Christ, is not a more manifest flaming truth, than *the way in which God in Christ becomes our salvation*, even the way of the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ upon the Cross: "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins through the forbearance of God: even his righteousness, *That he might be just*, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. For he hath made him, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There is no indefiniteness here; this is no something, we cannot tell what; but these passages are of words, picked, packed, and unmistakable, declaring as the foundation of all things else, what God in Christ hath done for us, objectively, in relation to God and his government; manifesting, by a propitiatory sacrifice, his righteousness in the pardon of the sinner, that God might, on the ground of that propitiatory sacrifice, demonstrative of his righteousness, justly treat the sinner in a way of mercy, that otherwise would be unjust, unrighteous. We are thus reconciled to God by the death of his Son, in order that, being reconciled, we may be saved by his life.

The objective atonement *for* us is first made and revealed in the death of Christ as a propitiatory sacrifice, demonstrating God's hatred of sin, and his eternal justice, that there might be a relief from the otherwise inexorable necessity of executing that justice upon us as God's enemies; that God might be just, even in *not executing* justice, even in holding back the penalty of his law; in order to make room for the possibility and reality of the subjective atonement in us, the life of Christ saving us, the

Spirit of Christ renewing us, setting us free from sin, and transforming us into his likeness. For the *wages* of sin, what is due to it, what it is bound to have, is death; its inevitable, just desert and payment, which God must have paid, as mere sheer justice to every sinner, had not Christ died: but the *gift* of God, made possible through that death, is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; first, through the propitiation of his death *for* us, rendering it possible, and God at the same time just; second, through his life *in* us, on the ground of his death *for* us, rendering it *real*, and making us the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Now we see this mighty inscription over the Cross of Christ, and over every manifestation of it, every approach to it in the types and prophecies, every preparation for it, in the wisdom of divine providence and grace; this inscription, **THAT GOD MIGHT BE JUST.** Over the garden of Gethsemane, and the incomprehensible transactions there; over the agonising, supplicating Christ, sweating great drops of blood in his agony, and over the dying Christ, bearing our sins in his own body on the tree, **THAT GOD MIGHT BE JUST!** For, until that manifestation was made, and understood, the wonder and the insolvable riddle of the universe must be, not that the wicked are punished, but that the wicked are tolerated.

The eternal punishment of sin is so far from being a stumbling-stock to infinitely good and loving beings, that the very reverse of this, the wicked *not* being punished everlastingly, would be the destruction of all faith in God and his goodness. They that fly on wings of intelligence as broad as the sun; they that come and go before the throne of God, with the light falling on their faces, their forms, their wings, their motions, in that eternal temple, where the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb are the light thereof; they who have the light of life within them as the vital element of their existence, and the light of life around them, as the atmosphere in which they breathe and float as in a sea of glory; they of archangelic mind and vision, see, in the punishment of sin, for ever, an immutable necessity of God's Love and Justice; as inevitable a result of His attributes, and so of the nature of things, as that God cannot lie, as that God is Love, is Truth, is Righteousness.

But here in this world, this mole-hill of humanity, a few

burrowing beings, struggling in the darkness of their depravity, set up, as the worst entanglement of their difficulties, or the object of attack and denunciation by their blindfolded reason, or even the butt of their ridicule among their fellow-moles, not the *escaping* of divine justice, but the *enduring* of it! They make this very fact in God's universe, by which his glory is spotless, and his goodness as clear as the light, the occasion of their own unbelief and darkness, the occasion of convulsive efforts of their darkened reason to repel the Truth.

It cannot be so long. These are the tares, breathing forth a blasting influence, even over the wheat. But God will bind them in bundles to be burned, and then shall the wicked realize, in their own eternal experience, what, when warned of it beforehand, they declared beforehand that they would *not* believe, except upon experience, the literality of God's assertions in regard to the incorrigibly impenitent, as suffering the vengeance of eternal fire. But O, that man is mad, who is willing to risk that experience! You would have no doubt of his madness, if he should throw himself into the crater of Vesuvius, saying he did not believe the fire would burn him, and was determined to disprove, by his own experience, the common delusion concerning volcanic fire. But how much greater madness for a man to march into the bosom of those fires of hell of which God hath mercifully warned him! and of which, in the conviction of sin, he has already beforehand sufficient evidence, of the nature of experience, to answer even the demands of infidelity itself.

If he has it not, he *might* have it, for this is a mode of experience to which God invites his intelligent creatures, nay which he makes obligatory upon all, and which, by his word, his providences, his grace, he is affording every one of us, nay has rendered irresistible, irrepressible, and inevitable *in* every one of us, if we will but listen to the voice of conscience. So that whoever goes down to perdition is without excuse, even if allowed to put in the plea that he could not believe in a hell without experience; for in the experience of sin he already *has* experience of the grand element of hell; and if he will consider how it works, if he will examine his own character and the character of others under its influence, he will see and feel that it is a fire, which, if it be not put out, will light the flames of hell, and make the experience of hell a reality even in heaven.

And who *can* put it out but Jesus Christ? Or *what* can put it out, but divine grace in and through Christ? Therefore, the invitation and command from God, enforced by our own experience, is that we flee to Christ from the wrath to come, that we put our case into his hands, that we earnestly supplicate his mercy and grace to put out these fires of sin, against dying in which he warns us, and tells us that we *shall* die in our sins, unless we do believe in him.

The Autumn, therefore, is the great winding up of the affairs of this world, and the Harvest shall be the explanation of all things. It will be such an explanation, partly in the perfect revelation of character, and the manifestation of the nature of sin; the sight of what God is, in his infinite holiness, and the sight of the beauty and glory of holiness itself, and the contrasted sight of what man is in his sinfulness, with some adequate knowledge of the "exceeding sinfulness of sin," will clear up nearly all difficulties. The fruits of the Autumn are a final cause and explanation of all the mysteries and changes of the preceding seasons; and the souls of the saved in glory, in the perfection of their holiness when gathered by the angels in the Harvest, and presented without fault before the throne of God, will be a vision and reality of blessedness in Christ Jesus, abundantly sufficient to explain all the discipline of God in their behalf, all the work of the Godhead, all the administration of Divine Providence, all the revolutions and mysteries of all ages and seasons. The Autumn of the World's existence will thus be a revelation of glory at present quite unimaginable and incomprehensible.



I HAZARD this assurance, that, let what will come of the terms, yet without the *truths* conveyed in those terms, there can be no self-knowledge; and without THIS, no knowledge of any kind. For the fragmentary recollections and recognitions of empiricism usurping the name of experience can amount to *opinion* only, and that alone is knowledge, which is at once real and systematic, or in one word, *organic*. Let monk and pietist pervert the precept into sickly, brooding, and morbid introversions of consciousness; *you* have learned that even under the wisest regulations, THINKING can go but *half* way toward this knowledge. To know the *whole* truth, we must likewise ACT: and he alone acts, who *makes*; and this can no man do, estranged from Nature. Learn to know thyself in Nature, that thou mayest understand Nature in thyself.

COLERIDGE'S *Letters*.

BUT turn thou to the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. In that alone is life, and the Life is the light of men. What then but *apparitions* can remain to a Philosophy which strikes death through all things visible and invisible; satisfies itself then only, when it can explain those abstractions of the outward senses (which by an unconscious irony it names indifferently facts and phenomena), *mechanically*, that is, by the Laws of Death; and brands with the name of mysticism every solution grounded in Life, or the powers and intuitions of Life?

COLERIDGE. *Appendix to the Statesman's Manual.*

Now! It is gone! Our brief hours travel post,  
Each with its thought or deed, its *why* or *how*:  
But know, Each parting hour gives up a ghost,  
To dwell within thee, an Eternal Now!

*Inscription.*

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Voices of the Autumn continued: Evil Grows and Ripens, as well as Good: The mere Negative Character Grows, as well as the Positive; The Autumn Reveals it, whether Tares or Wheat: Importance of the Previous trial of Habits.

RIGHTLY considered, the facts of the origin of evil, and the existence of the wicked, are not more mysterious than the facts of God's forbearance, and his holding up the curse and penalty of the Law from falling. *This* is a stupendous mystery, explained only in the sufferings and death of Christ, and capable of explanation in no other way. The mystery of the universe was not how God could punish sin eternally, but how he could consistently refrain from so punishing it, in any case. On the ground of the sufferings and death of Christ, he lets the world go on unpunished, undestroyed, in its career of guilt, that those who will, may have opportunity to believe and become righteous, and that all the righteous may be gathered in and saved; that the wicked may have space for repentance, and that all whom the Father hath given to the Son may come to Him. Under such a system of mercy, there results inevitably the *growth* and *development* of evil, as well as that of good, and together with it. Let both *grow*, and *grow together*.

Growth is predicated equally of both: and it is only in the *process* of growth, that we find out, certainly, the *characteristics* of both. It is to be remarked that it was not till the blade *sprang up, and brought forth fruit*, that the *tares* appeared in their real character. The tares then are distinguished, among other things, by their *not* bringing forth fruit. They may be

merely *negatively* wicked, but if by a certain time they do not bring forth the fruit that good seed produces, it is proof positive that they are tares. This is our Lord's appointed test of character, *By their fruits ye shall know them*. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? A good tree bringeth forth good fruit, and a corrupt tree corrupt fruit. And a tree is good, only when it accomplishes the appropriate end and purpose of its being. God expects grapes of his vines, and if he does not receive them, he justly complains of a fraud and a wrong towards their owner. Wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes? So, the fact of there being no fruit is enough to prove, of the produce of the field, that it is tares. Whatever goodly appearance it may have, however much, for a time, it may look like the real grain, yet if, when the time of fruit comes, and you draw nigh to the harvest, there is no grain, it is tares.

Just so, you cannot tell, in this world, among a multitude of souls, for a long time, which are going to be tares, and which not; for although the time for fruit has come, and has always come, with accountable souls, yet the time in which there may possibly be the development of fruit, the assumption of the new fruit-bearing character of the disciple of Christ, and the consecration of the being to him, that possible time has not passed, until the period of probation has passed. If, when the time has come that there should be fruit, there are mere tares and no fruit, then, if they should be cut down then, they would be tares for ever; although, if spared, the time of fruit and the production of fruit may come, and then they are no longer tares, but wheat. But from the time when fruit is expected, this negative character of not producing fruit was to be enough to prove a character of positive evil, if it be not changed; it is always enough to establish the fact that they are *tares*, if you have the fact that they are *not* wheat.

Here, then, we have one great, important fact, from which, as we shall see, there proceed vast, eternal consequences, and trains of practical truth and warning, of amazing solemnity and power. But there is also a great variety among the tares. And here, we come upon a fulness of beauty, and depth of meaning, and minuteness of application in this parable of our Lord, which otherwise can be but poorly understood and faintly illustrated.

We must take account of these tares. There was a plant in Judea, in appearance not unlike the corn or wheat, having at first the same kind of stalk, and the same greenness, but bringing forth no fruit, or at least none good. There was a particular species of weed known in Canaan, says another instructive record, which is not unlike wheat, but, being put into the ground, degenerated and assumed another nature and form. The seed sown by the Devil, which is sure, when it grows up, to grow perverted and corrupt, is just as good for his purposes, just as sure to accomplish his designs, as that which, from the beginning, might be known as utterly and incurably evil. Indeed, it is by the corruption of the truth, and the mixture of a lie, that the god of this world more surely deceives men's souls, and strengthens his empire.

But we have a still more minute and instructive elucidation. Among the hurtful weeds in the oriental grain-fields, another annalist describes what we call, in English, *darnel*, what the Arabians called *zizania*, which is the very term used by Matthew in the parable of the tares. "It bringeth forth leaves like those of wheat or barley, yet rougher, with a long ear, made up of many little ones, every particular whereof containeth two or three grains, lesser than those of wheat; scarcely any chaffy husk to cover them with; by reason whereof they are easily shaken about, and scattered abroad. They grow in fields among wheat and barley. They spring and flourish with the corn, and in August the seed is ripe." This darnel is well known to the people of Aleppo. If the seeds remain mixed with the good grain, and are ground with the meal, they render a man drunk by eating the bread. And this is but a symbol of what would take place if God should let the vile remain mingled with the good, unpunished. The universe, eating such bread, would be drunken.

Nevertheless, the reapers, or the husbandmen, do not separate this plant from the wheat, while the wheat is growing, but they let both grow together until the harvest. After the process of threshing they are said to separate them; but in the parable a still more thorough and perfect course is pursued, for they are gathered from among the wheat, and separated by the hand, and then gathered into bundles. Their seeds, if any remain by accident,

are finally separating by winnowing; which is of course a process preparatory to the gathering of the wheat into the garner; but the tares of all kinds, and the injurious plants, are gathered into heaps of stubble, to be consumed by fire, the whole worthless variety having the same destination.

Here, then, my readers will see that in our world of probation, that is, in God's Autumnal grain-field, there are various kinds of tares, of evil beings and evil things. There are men, whose character seems merely negative in regard to God and religious goodness, distinguished mainly, in the eye of man, by no fruit. There are also the known and acknowledged positives of evil, the positively wicked, shedding the influences of evil all around them, dropping off the seeds of evil in every direction, sometimes without any concealment, without even so much as husks to cover the evil, and keep it from being shaken out, as fast as it ripens, by every wind that blows, and from growing again as fast as it falls. There are men of openly avowed evil principles, teaching them, diffusing them, and men of a consistent evil example. There are tares of a perverted intelligence, diffusing error even among the wheat, and many following their pernicious example, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of. There are those whose character answers most perfectly to the description of the oriental darnel, whose principles and influences make the soul drunken with sin, especially where there are sown the seeds of the lying opinion that the wicked shall never be utterly consumed, but shall be saved notwithstanding his wickedness. The souls that eat of the meal ground out of such seed become intoxicated and die.

The Prophet Isaiah describes such tares with an accuracy and severity, that determines the portrait for all generations: Their lips have spoken lies, their tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor pleadeth for truth; they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief and bring forth iniquity. They hatch cockatrice eggs, and weave the spider's web; he that eateth of their eggs dieth, and that which is crushed breaketh out into a viper. Was there ever a more vivid or tremendous picture drawn of the nature and power of an irreligious example and erroneous teaching! Of such tares, men that look at them aright have no doubt that they are ripening for the fire. It is only the tares that seem merely negative, concerning

which there is ever any question with a right-minded man as to the final result, the doom.

But here again the parable is resolute, immutable, inexorable. When the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then appeared, then were manifested the tares also. The fact of there being no wheat-fruit is enough for condemnation. That which simply does not bring forth good fruit is an example, terrible, pernicious, soul-destroying. If men bring forth no fruit for God, then they are tares in God's field, and are just ripening for the *doom* of tares. They were not planted by the Lord of the harvest, the Owner of the field, although they are permitted to grow; but an enemy hath done this, and their character is the work of that enemy. But every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, said our Blessed Lord, shall be rooted up. He shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity. Things merely good for nothing are offensive in places where there might and ought to be fruits growing. Evil men occupy God's ground, to the exclusion of God's fruit. Hence Paul says that the earth, which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God; but that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

There is a most solemn, and even terrible correspondence between this language of the Holy Spirit by Paul, and of our Blessed Lord in the parable of the tares and the wheat. That which is simply good for nothing, under God's government, hath this property of a curse; it is offensive and accursed, simply because it is worthless. It is not good even for fuel; it is not good to make a respectable fire out of. Indeed the only use for a fire itself is to burn up that worthless and pernicious stuff; the only reason why a fire should be kindled at all in God's universe, is to purify the universe of the wicked, and so of sin. Hence God says, A fire is kindled in mine anger, which shall burn to the lowest hell. And what is the *vine-tree* more than any tree, or any dead branch which is among the trees of the forest, that *that* should be spared? If it do not bring forth fruit, what is the use of it? What can be done with it, but to burn it? Shall wood be taken thereof, to do any work? or will

men take even a pin of it to hang any vessel thereon? Behold it is cast into the fire for fuel, and the fire devoureth it. Is it meet for any work? And so our Blessed Lord says of the same thing, If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a dead vine-branch, and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. They are good for nothing else.

And let it be marked here, especially, for it is a very prominent and solemn point in this instructive analogy, this negative character *grows*, as well as the positive. It is not a thing that just merely stands still, and makes no progress. It grows just as really and surely as the positive. And the more growth there is, the more extensive and positive is the denial of God's right in the soil and the products, the greater the disappointment of the just demand and expectations of God, and the greater the robbery of God. The more growth there is, and the larger space occupied by it, the more God is defrauded, and the negative example is positively sin. To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

But let it be marked again, that character in this way is fully developed, and that this is a great point for the manifestation and vindication of God's righteousness, for the showing of the glory of his attributes in the upshot of all things, in the final judgment and doom of the righteous and the wicked. For this it is said, Let both grow together, until the harvest. Not *merely* for the sake of God's forbearance on the ground of the sufferings and death of Christ, that the righteous may be perfected and saved, are the wicked left unmolested or undestroyed, and the curses of the law kept from falling; not *merely* that the fruit for God's garner may not be destroyed, but gathered in, the fruit which the Father has given to the Son, as the purchase of his sufferings and death; not for this *merely* are the tares permitted to exist, not pulled up; but also that *they* may grow, that they may come to perfection, and show their fruit and whole developed nature, in order that God may manifestly be justified in the sight of all the universe, for the manner in which he deals with them in the day of doom.

So they are left to *grow*; let both grow. And beyond doubt there is in this world a perpetual progress of character. God must interpose violently to prevent this principle in the nature of things, to prevent this law of a moral being from being



accomplished. Every thing, both good and evil, hastens to its perfection. In depravity there is no standing still, no amelioration, no change, as to the pith of the character and destiny, but a constant, ceaseless approximation, amidst all apparent forms and changes, to the one final result. There is everlasting growth. Evil cannot stop, any more than good can stop. A depraved being goes on to the perfection of his character by just as sure a law, and with just as certain a progress, as a good being to the perfection of his. It cannot be otherwise.

There may be, indeed, amidst all this, various external and moral reformations, just as there are various changes in the form and colouring of a plant, in the foliage and the blossoms, and in the husks that rise to protect the ripening fruit; but the fruit is one and the same, the result of the working of an inalienable law and nature, amidst all apparent changes. Some men seem to put off some of their vices, seem to grow good citizens; they have sown their wild oats, as the saying is, and become sober, prudent, industrious. And you might suppose that the ripening of character in enmity against God had stopped. But it is not so. If that be all, it is ever going on. Except the Lord Jesus be received into the heart, to rule there, the habits are becoming more fixed in their direction of alienation from God, in the absence of all regard to him and his will and glory. So long as the tares remain tares, there is always growth of *them*, as of the wheat.

Supposing the produce of the field to be tares, it will grow as tares, under all good appearances and changes. There may be the most favourable weather for the growth of the wheat. All kindly influences may descend upon the field; there may be all needed concurrences of rain and sunshine, of warmth and coolness, of night and day, of heat by day and dew by night, of the early and latter rain in its season; but the tares under all this discipline will grow as tares, *though* the tares under all this discipline may grow in beauty. The good seed is growing for eternal life, for the harvest of God in glory; the tares are growing for eternal death, growing to be bound in bundles and burned.

It is a strange thing that they should grow together; so the parable represents it. For the tares injure the wheat, and occupy a great space in the field to the diminution of the harvest. And this has always been a source almost of complaint against

God, even on the part of the righteous; so much so, that they have stumbled at the prosperity of the wicked, notwithstanding the many warnings to the contrary in God's Word. Be not thou afraid when such an one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; but look to the future; for a man that is in honour and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish. And in Ecclesiastes, If thou seest the oppression of the poor, and violent perverting of judgment and justice in a province, marvel not at the matter; for he that is higher than the highest regardeth it. Remember the harvest and the law of growth, both for the evil and the good. Remember that God hath appointed a day of reparation and of retribution.

But the prophet Jeremiah goes so far as to reason with God in regard to this matter: O Lord, righteous art thou, when I plead with thee; yet let me reason the case with thee concerning thy judgments. Wherefore doth the way of the wicked prosper? Wherefore are they all happy that deal very treacherously? Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root; they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit. But afterwards he himself answers that they are reserved to the day of judgment to be punished. It shall not always be so as in this world, but there is a day of separation and of harvest. In this world, for a time, it is a season of the comparative hiding of God's glory as a just God and a righteous, and these attributes of God's righteousness and justice must be taken, as it were, on faith.

And therefore it is that they are so repeatedly asserted in God's Word. We have sometimes thought that it seemed singular that so plain and unquestionable a thing as God's righteousness should be so much insisted on in God's Word, seeming as it were, to imply the possibility of some doubt in the matter. Whereas, it is just because, this being a world in which sin is not punished as it ought to be, a world in which the curse of God's law is withheld from being executed, on account of the sufferings and death of Christ, and therefore a world in which the wicked, contrary to all justice, seem to be prospered of God, it is necessary continually to reveal these attributes of holiness and justice in God, as immutable and perpetual. For the permission of evil men, successful in their wickedness, is astounding; it is a grievous injury to the efforts, and a bar against the success of good men in their goodness.

The effect is forcibly set forth by the prophet Jeremiah. The bellows, he says, are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire, the founder melteth in vain, for the wicked are not plucked away. The dross of society, permitted thus to remain and flourish, spoils the social progress, even under the best instrumentalities, because they are not separated, the vile from the good. But this is a part of God's administration under the atonement, in order that character should be thoroughly tried and developed, with its tendency and power; that of the evil, to do evil, and prevent good; that of the good, to do good, and be purified and perfected.

Thus far our Autumnal lesson in Christ's parable is that of character. The retribution, it is true, is to grow out of character, and therefore the lesson of our Autumn involves that of retribution; but the announcement of what God will do with the tares, we do not this moment consider. We limit ourselves to two points, first the great resemblance there may be for a time between the tares and the wheat, between bad men and good, and consequently the incorrectness of the judgment which those persons must form who look upon the appearance merely, and judge from that what God will do, and what he will not. There is no right rule but God's Word, and no true standard of piety but that. You may possibly reckon men, judging according to what you see of them, to be very amiable and inoffensive, and very far from having a character that will condemn them to everlasting burnings, when God, by what *he* sees and knows of them, reckons right the reverse.

Let us suppose that when it was discovered that there were tares in the field, a bystander should have said to the husbandman, Well, what great harm are they doing? Would he not have answered, It is my field, which I have sown with good seed, and these tares ought to have been wheat, and they injure my harvest, and defraud me of my right. Just so, this world of ours is God's field, and all the products of it should be God's wheat, and if not, it is a robbery of God. The question is sometimes asked, in regard to persons of alleged amiableness and goodness of character: Do you suppose that God will punish everlastingly such an amiable, kind, upright person, just merely because he cannot adopt your dogmas about faith and regeneration, just merely because he does not believe in what you call a change of heart? No, by no means, we answer, but because at

heart your supposed amiable being towards man is God's enemy. You are to look at the character of that person in regard to God. Is he living *for* God? Has he ever performed a single act in all his life, out of *regard* to God? Nay, has not the whole of his amiable life been lived with supreme and sole reference to the creature, instead of the Creator?

Does he pay his debts towards God? Has he not taken God's money, and spent it all upon himself? How do you yourself look upon a person who has the character of a very fervent Christian, but who does not pay his debts to his fellow-creatures, and is regardless of all the obligations of gratitude and kind returns to those who have befriended him? Suppose you knew of a distressed family, to whose kindness in former years your supposed distinguished Christian owed all his prosperity and success, and that while the whole world were admiring his character as a Christian, you yourself knew that he refused to aid that distressed family, and would not even acknowledge his obligations to them. Would you regard the man as any other than a hypocrite? Would you not pronounce all his pretensions to piety a lie? How then will you look upon the man regarded as so amiable and upright towards his fellow-man, who never dreams of acknowledging his obligations, or paying his debts, to God; the man who thinks himself perhaps, by his moral virtues, to be very near heaven, and whom you, on account of those virtues would assign a title there, but who has no love to Christ, no regard to his death, no grief for his many sins against God, no Christian humility, no spirit of prayer, nothing, in fine, of any of those qualities described in God's word as the marks of true piety?

In the revelations of the Autumn it becomes known perfectly, unconcealably, what has been put into the ground, what has been growing, what productive causes the powers of Art and Nature have set in motion. It is only in those revelations that things can be fully determined, the tares known to be tares, and the wheat, wheat. Mere habitudes assumed cannot be relied upon. Habit, unless there be principle at the root of it, as the life of it, does not alter nature, nor subdue it, but only adds to it, and exercises it. It is often a *second* nature, when it is by no means a *changed* nature; and it may be a second and a third, and yet not a *subdued* nature. For there is no end to the

habits that may be taken upon the original nature, and almost without the consciousness of the wearer, nay, *quite* without his consciousness that they are habits at all; just as a celebrated man of genius was said to be in the habit, in his fits of abstraction, amidst the absorbing pursuit of his favourite science, of putting on shirt after shirt, instead of a change of raiment, when he would prepare himself for society, till the man would find himself going about, a bundle of five or six shirts, larger by so many additions, but not changed. So do a man's habits increase, and he perhaps all the while calls them and considers them his virtues, while the body and the soul swathed within them remain the same, and not the heart nor root of a single heavenly motive, or the power of a heavenly nature, ever penetrated through them, or was present in them.

Habits are therefore very deceptive as well as powerful things, and need to be carefully and profoundly scrutinized; else the very form of good may carry a man unalterably to the reality of evil. There is no more hopeless case than an unaltered nature; ungracious, concealed under what a man conceives to be good habits, congratulating himself on their assumption. Lord Bacon would have us consider the false appearances imposed upon us by every man's own individual nature and custom "in that feigned supposition that Plato maketh of the cave." But what Lord Bacon would have us do in regard to science and opinion, it were well to do in regard to moral nature and habit. For "although our persons live in the view of heaven, yet our spirits are included in the caves of our own complexions and customs, which minister unto us infinite errors and vain opinions, if they be not recalled to examination."

Well did the Psalmist exclaim, Who can understand his errors! And wisely did he pray, Cleanse thou me from secret faults! There is nothing but true and deep heavenly principle, central, heaven-descended, that can prepare a man for the Autumn, and stand the Harvest test. God looks through all the *excuvie* of the moral being into the heart; through all the swathings of custom; manner, acquisition, habit, into that which exists, unchanged, within. There may be a thousand different coatings of paint upon the globe of glass; yet there is one eye that sees the centre just as easily as if every covering were removed. God sees whether a man's habits arise from principle, or mere

selfish expediency; whether they be mere spontaneous sensibility, unmingled with a supreme regard to him; whether a man put them on, looking to the Great Example set for us in the Divine Humanity of our Blessed Lord; whether a man wore them, not at second hand, as another man's cast-off clothes, or imitated fashions, but received them direct from the heavenly wardrobe of original grace; whether he wore them and acted in them, not to please man, but God; whether, in fine, he endeavoured in all things to live according to that noble line of Milton,

“As ever in his Great Taskmaster's eye.”

A habit that has the root of principle will hold on, under all changes of custom and expediency; like those sea-plants, that have their roots so deep down in the ocean, that no change of waves, or agitation of tempests at the top, where the leaf lies, ever disturbs them. A habit that has the root of principle, is like those *endogenous* trees, that increase from within, always growing from the centre and the root; they are the most precious and delicious fruit-trees. A habit that has the root of heavenly principle is the growth of grace, unchanged in all circumstances; it has its life hid, with Christ in God; its roots are in Christ, and to him it is a lovely sight to see it growing.

Such habits are sustained only by prayer; indeed, secret, fervent, persevering prayer is one of those habits. Such habits are like deep springs, running up through various formations. They take up mere fitful impulses, and carry them along, instead of being carried by them, or grounded in them, or owing their vigour to a mere accidental strength. They are at the farthest remove from mere occasional sallies of force, just as the hottest springs are said to be at the greatest distance from volcanoes. But habits that are not fed by grace and sustained by prayer, must fall off and die, sooner or later, even though they have the form of godliness. However beautiful they might be in appearance, yet, if a man could see through them, and know by what *nature* they stand, he would mourn over them. He might, while deceived, begin to admire them, but in a moment, according to that sweet expression of the Poet Herbert, they bid the rash gazer wipe his eye, for

“Their root is ever in the grave,  
And they must die.”

And to conclude the warning in the quaint, but significant closing of that beautiful Autumnal Poem, a stanza so well illustrative of the glory of immutable and heavenly principle,

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,  
Like seasoned timber, never gives;  
But though the whole world turn to coal,  
Then chiefly lives."

VENGEANCE will sit above our faults; but till  
    She there doth sit,  
We see her not, nor them. Thus blind, yet still  
We lead her way; and thus, whilst we do ill,  
    We suffer it.

Unhappy he, whom youth makes not beware  
    Of doing ill:  
Enough we labour under age and care;  
In number th' errors of the last place are  
    The greatest still.

Yet we, that should the ill we now begin  
    As soon repent,  
(Strange thing!) perceive not; our faults are not seen,  
But past us; neither felt, but only in  
    The punishment.

But we know ourselves least; mere outward shows  
    Our minds so store,  
That our souls, no more than our eyes, disclose  
But form and colour. Only he who knows  
    Himself, knows more.

DONNE



THE elements of necessity and free will are reconciled in the higher power of an omnipresent Providence, that predestinates the whole in the moral freedom of the integral parts. Of this the Bible never suffers us to lose sight. The root is never detached from the ground. It is God every where; and all creatures conform to his decrees; the righteous by performance of the Law, the disobedient by the sufferance of the Penalty.

COLERIDGE. *The Statesman's Manual.*

I PRESUPPOSE a humble and docile state of mind, and above all, the practice of prayer, as the necessary condition of such a state, and the best, if not the only means, of becoming sincere to our own hearts. Those inward means of grace [are to be used,] without which the language of the Scriptures, in the most faithful translation, and in the purest and plainest English, must nevertheless continue to be a dead language: a sun-dial by moonlight.

*Appendix to Statesman's Manual.*

## CHAPTER XXV.

Voices of the Autumn, continued: The circle of Divine Providence: Grace and Providence, Spiritual and Natural Law: Man's position in regard to them: Consequences of transgressing them: Safety and happiness in Faith.

THE full completed circle of the Seasons is a wondrous cycle of God's Divine Providence. The very compulsion of our reason forces us to regard it as an Omnipresent Providence; there is no other possible logical conclusion. It is only Faith, the moral feeling, a confiding trust, that we need to make the logical conclusion a happy breathing of the heart. Into this Faith, the very inmost convictions of our nature, and the universal beliefs of the human race, are ever pressing us. The universal and particular providence of God is perhaps a more positive element of natural belief than even Immortality itself. The same language may be used in regard to it, that Mr. Coleridge has used, in his *Aids to Reflection*, concerning the native belief of Immortality.

"I dare not," he says, "decry the religious instincts of Humanity as a baseless dream. The misallotment of worldly goods and fortunes was indeed one principal occasion, exciting well disposed and spiritually awakened natures, by reflections and reasonings to mature the presentiment of Immortality into full consciousness, into a principle of action, and a well-spring of strength and consolation. Yet am I persuaded that as the belief of all mankind, of all tribes and nations and languages, in all ages and in all states of social union, it must be referred to far deeper grounds, common to man as man; and that its fibres are to be traced to the *Tap-root* of Humanity."

That *Tap-root* connects Humanity with God; and for that reason, the idea, and almost consciousness, of Divine Providence, keeps company with that of Immortality. The arrangements and incidents of the seasons are a part of the great Anthem, in which Nature, as well as the Word, sings the song of Providence. IT IS GOD EVERY WHERE; AND ALL CREATURES CONFORM TO HIS DECREES; THE RIGHTEOUS BY PERFORMANCE OF THE LAW, THE DISOBEDIENT BY THE SUFFERANCE OF THE PENALTY.

The revelation of God in his Word as the God of Providence, is every where grand and solemn. It is grand beyond expression to behold God, as a Sovereign God, ordering all things after the counsels of his own will, to work the purposes of his own good pleasure, and to this end, even while leaving his creatures to the exercise of their own freedom as voluntary intelligent agents, yet overruling even the free will of his enemies for the accomplishment of his own will, out of evil itself ever bringing forth good, and causing even the sin and wrath in the hearts of the wicked to praise him. It is the mighty, incomprehensible, and supreme prerogative of Jehovah alone to do this, and in the exercise of this prerogative all beings and things are made to do his bidding; the believing and the loving by obedience and love, the unbelieving and rebellious by the sufferance of the penalty.

But, Oh! what a difference it makes to the creature, whether the will of the great Creator be performed out of a loving, obedient, trusting, and praising heart, thus fixed by the very beatings and breathings of the heart, in the heart of heaven, in heaven's essential holiness and blessedness, wherever in all God's universe be the position in time and space; or whether it be *accomplished* rather than *performed*, by an unwilling, rebellious, distrustful, unloving, suffering heart, compelled, in the endurance of the penalty of God's violated law, to perform the last and only thing that remains, whereby God can be glorified; and thus, by the very elements of a transgressing soul, by the very breathings and beatings of a heart of sin and hate and suffering, buried in the heart of hell, wherever in all God's universe be the position in time and space occupied.

For time, space, and circumstance, neither in this world nor in the eternal world, are any thing in comparison with character. Even in this world, as we may learn from the Hallelujah

Anthem of the believing and the just, in the eighth chapter of the Epistle of Paul to the Romans, character in Christ overleaps all things, triumphs over all, makes servitors of blessing out of all, and like God's own prerogative, of which indeed a believing loving heart is the divinest instrument, brings good out of evil, by the providential law that all things shall work for good to them who love God, and makes tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, sword, peril, death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present and things to come, height, depth, and every other creature, subservient to happiness and glory.

Now all this is the result of the harmony of man's heart, through divine grace with God's divine will and providence. But where the contrary takes place, where the will is self-willed and in rebellion against God, as we are informed by his Divine Word it ever is, in all hearts not regenerated by his Spirit, (which thing indeed we know also by terrible experience,) there again the character of essential evil, so formed, overleaps all things, is as an intense fire that turns all things into fuel for itself, triumphs over all, brings a curse out of all, turns even provident good into evil, makes the whole host and array of God's own blessings, in all the ministrations and discipline of this mortal life, to result in guilt and retribution, and brings to itself evil out of good, even in accomplishing for God, by the endurance of the penalty, the higher law of bringing good out of evil! All this, in introverted self-misery, even while God's will is accomplished by the result, and a provision is made for the happiness of the good, in the majesty of God's throne preserved unclouded, and the great principles of righteousness established for the universe. In the heart of heaven a character of rebellion would make to itself a hell, and neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, could keep a character, so constituted, from the depths of perdition.

Now God, as the God of providence, is also the God of grace; he is the God of grace, in order that his providence may be the blessedness of his creatures, and he is the God of providence, in order that his grace may be put in their power, may be made available by them, may be applied to them, may be used by them for eternal life. For the accomplishment of the purposes

of his grace all his providential laws in this world are constituted and carried into operation. All arrangements are made for this result, with reference to the plan of redemption. Neither the world itself would be kept in its orbit, nor the trouble taken to put the bit into the mouth of the wicked, were it not that it is a world in which Christ has died for the salvation of sinners, and in which the whole sweep of divine discipline and power is towards the Redeemer's glory in that consummation. Whatever seems now inscrutable will have the solution of its mystery there. All the vast and almost confounding lines and cycles of events, eras, and experiments, apparently contradictory and entangled, the mighty railroads of Divine Providence that seem crossing and conflicting, and of which we hear the roar and crash among the nations, have one and the same purpose and end. Their common *terminus* is on the shore of the eternal sea of God's glory in Christ Jesus.

The laws of the creation itself, and of physical human life in connection with those laws, are all subservient to him and his glory in redemption, by whom and for whom are all things, and by whom all things consist. All that ever takes place in the world has its appointed place in this train; all of man's behaviour, and all of God's disciplinary and illustrative judgments; all the encounters of error and truth, of righteousness and evil, of the friends and the enemies of God; all the mad conflicts of opinion and of war among the nations, and all the despotisms with which ever the world has been cursed, with all the social experiments, failures, and insanities of mankind, have been appointed or are overruled for one and the same result.

Now then it is of infinite importance for man to know, acknowledge, and respect his own position in reference to the laws of creation and of providence, and to be held in that position, and prepared to make a right use of it, by the law of grace. Man's position is between the laws of the creation under him, and the laws of providence and grace above him. I say the laws of the creation under him; that is, God has given into his hands the agencies of the material world, and enables him to discover what are called the laws of the creation, that by the right use of them, and the application of his powers and faculties in connection with them, he may advance the glory of God, and accomplish his own highest happiness. Thou madest him

to have dominion over the work of thy hands, and hast put all things under his feet. That man may rightly occupy this position, and fulfil this agency, God has clearly written out in his Word the higher spiritual laws to which man is accountable, and the principles of God's spiritual government of providence and grace, besides engraving them in the very soul of man, that man may live by and according to them. For it is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by whatsoever proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord shall man live, according to God's Word, and not by physical law merely.

Now if man will only obey his own position and God's will; if he will live as God clearly indicates and commands he *should live*; if he will use what is beneath him with reference to what is above him; if he will manage what he has to work upon and with, by the guidance of what he is to work *for*, with an habitual reference to God's Word, and to all the spiritual principles and laws revealed there; he shall not only himself be in harmony with God, but the physical and spiritual worlds shall in and through him and his agency be revealed in their own beautiful harmony with one another and with man. If man will walk as a child of heavenly light, neither he nor the world he inhabits shall abide in darkness. If man will walk upon this world by the sun, moon, and stars shining in this firmament of light and duty in God's Word, he shall walk in happiness to celestial glory. He shall have all things beneath him here, in this world, working for good, and all elements, principles, and places there in the next world waiting for him to do him good, waiting for him to receive him into mansions of blessedness. This is secured to him by God's covenant in Christ, by the power of the blood of Christ, by the sufferings and death of Christ, by the love of God in Christ, glorifying the believer for Christ's sake, nay, and permitting also, the whole creation of God, now under bondage because of sin, to look forward to the manifestation of the sons of God, as the period of deliverance and glory.

If man will thus walk with God, no disaster shall occur, by conflict with the laws of creation, for his injury. "For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. At destruction and famine, thou shalt laugh; neither shalt thou be afraid of destruction

when it cometh." True it is, in regard to all natural as well as moral agencies, when a man's ways please the Lord; he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. Neither explosion, nor conflagration, nor the warring of nations, nor the wreck of worlds, can harm him. For even if these things do take place around him, and though they should seem to overwhelm him in the midst of them, yet the care, the love, the providence, and power of God are round about him and within him, a perpetual glory and salvation; just as the beatifying atmosphere of omnipotent and infinite love was round about the three believers in the fiery furnace, so that, though they were in the midst of the intensest flames, in the heart of a glowing oven, with sevenfold fires, yet not a hair of their heads was injured, neither had the smell of fire passed upon their garments. Ah, yes! "Acquaint thyself with God, and be at peace; thereby good shall come unto thee. Receive the law from his mouth, and lay up his words in thine heart. For then shalt thou have thy delight in the Almighty, and shalt lift up thy face unto God. Thou shalt make thy prayer unto him, and he shall hear thee, and thou shalt pay thy vows. Thou shalt also decree a thing, and it shall be established unto thee; and the light shall shine upon thy ways."

Now these are some of the providential laws of God. Both with their promises and their threatenings, they all grow out of eternal spiritual principles, and are for man's guidance, as he walks amidst the laws of creation, to preserve him from evil and establish him in good. The system of providence that begins in this world continues in the next world, and is the result of a system of grace and of retribution, which will be carried to perfection. The principles of God's providential laws, which he has laid down in his Word, and the precepts which he has written there, are just as fixed and certain as the natural laws of the creation; nay, they are more so, for they grow out of the holy character of God, and cannot be changed; whereas, the laws of the creation might be changed at God's pleasure, and God remain the same; but the principles of God's providential government are immutable. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away."

Now then it is clear, that for man's safe conduct even in this life it is as essential for him to know and obey God's providential

laws, as it is the natural laws of life and of the creation. God's providence is around him and over him; it watches when he obeys and disobeys. Providential reward for obedience may not meet him instantly; a part of his blessedness at the hand of God may be in that very discipline, by which the promised blessedness is delayed for a season. And just so, providential chastisement and retribution for disobedience may not meet him instantly, but it is sure to come. It may run on ahead to wait for him at some unexpected cross-road in life; it may spring up like an adder in his path. He may seem to be going on securely, when causes, set in motion twenty, thirty, forty years ago, are just about to open their battery of vengeance upon him. Retributive providences seem sometimes like sleeping blood-hounds, the bark of one rouses all; at the halloo for one discovered sin, the whole pack rushes in.

As to delay, take the instances of Esau and of Jacob. Forty years elapsed before the retribution for selling his birthright began to be developed upon the elder brother; and forty years more before the younger brother, who had fraudulently obtained it, received back, in the bitterness of his soul at the loss of Joseph, by the fraud of his own sons, a part of the chastisement of his own fraud towards his own father! So the world goes on.

And if the providential retribution does not come in this life, so much the greater is the certainty that it will come in another. Plato himself said to the wicked: The spiritual laws which you have violated in this world, are preparing to give you a terrible reception in another world. It is the violation of these spiritual laws, by men living in unbelief, irreligion, atheism; and sin, which produces all the cross-working and conflict of natural and social law in our world, and the misery thence resulting; all the confusion and evil under which the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And yet these are but symptoms, precursors, prophets; the grand result is to come. These things are but the showings and symptoms of the evil, while yet the disease is curable, and the time for the retaliation of the violated spiritual laws has not yet arrived. God has not yet given permission to them to strike back. He still holds in the leash spiritual laws and tendencies from advancing to their final result, but lets natural laws work on as prophets in some sense, as well as servants of the spiritual.



Now, notwithstanding all this, we may find thousands who talk much in times of danger, calamity, pestilence, and darkness, as well as at other times, of the necessity of finding out and obeying natural laws, who yet either do not believe in spiritual laws, or pay no attention to them. They may reason of spiritual, correspondences and powers, but the laws and principles which God has laid down to govern intelligent beings through their whole continuance, and to prepare them for happiness in another world, they no more study, or regard, or attempt to obey, than if there were neither a God nor a spiritual world in existence. Can men expect to prosper thus? Can the world go on to a millennium of natural or spiritual perfectibility thus? Is it not infinitely absurd to imagine any possible ameliorations of human society in this way, or any permanence of the Divine blessing?

The violation or disregard of one set of God's laws, the spiritual, is at least as bad as the transgression of the other, the natural. We may hear much concerning the necessity of understanding and obeying the laws of electricity, steam, mechanics, and mechanical powers, and of the regulation of our movements and machinery in conformity with the laws of the creation. But will that avail any thing for intelligent beings, who are under other and higher laws, which they utterly disregard, while attempting to bring the powers of nature under their own control, for their own purposes? Of what use would be all our progress in understanding and perfecting the steam-engine, if we neglected or despised the laws of the explosive gases, or if we looked only to the rapid motion of our wheels, and disregarded the safety-valves, and despised the gauges and sentinels of the power which we have generated? We well know that there are still higher laws of philosophy, connected with a more comprehensive action, than merely that of our steam upon our machinery, and we have to consult those also, and be guided by them. We would like it, if we could, to make a boiler as small as a tea-kettle do the work of a 500-horse power, or to carry our vast machinery merely by heating to a white heat a globe of water, which we might carry in our waistcoat pocket; but we have other laws and relations of mechanical forces to consider, and if we disregard *them*, we pay the penalty of our heedlessness or obstinacy by destruction.

Now the natural laws are things which men may use; the spiritual laws are things by which they must be guided. If they neglect, or despise, or deny the spiritual, then, whatever use they make of the natural, there will be disaster, explosion, ruin. Yet there are multitudes who direct their attention to the natural, and at the same time despise the spiritual. There are multitudes who let their narrow study of the natural, and their little beginnings of an acquaintance with creation, so intoxicate them with idolism and unbelief, that the spiritual world, with all its realities, goes for nothing with them. But they are preparing for an encounter with the laws of those realities, which will tear them asunder as a whirlwind.

If the vengeance of natural law defied, and the recoil of natural causes assaulted, be so instant, and so regardless of circumstances in the natural world, then, certainly, the *higher spiritual laws*, with reference to which all these frames, moulds, agencies and activities of creation were made and are sustained, will not remain inert when *they* are violated. A recoil is preparing, the more terrible for its long delay.

If a man rushes in the face of a loaded cannon, then, the moment it is fired, the shot cuts him in two. If a man should get within the cylinder of a steam-engine to warm himself, the moment the machinery is in motion, it will crush him to atoms. If a man attempts to make one boiler perform the work of two, or heats his iron to a red heat without water, the recoil of violated law lifts his whole building and machinery into the air, and scatters it to pieces. Natural law stops for nothing. Why should spiritual law be a mere bugbear, when natural law is a reality? The whole Universe tells us, by the existence of the Lord God Almighty as a providential God and Governor, that *spiritual law* is the REALITY; and of the force and severity with which it will act, when violated, the energy and swiftness with which natural law strikes the offender dead, are but shadows. Nevertheless, the shadow is deep, the lesson explicit, the meaning tremendous. And it cannot be doubted that these experiences of the instant and tremendous penalties of natural law, when violated, were meant as a faint expression of what spiritual law will do.

The Autumn of our being is just the winding up of all law, and its pouring into another unseen, untried cycle. Providential

law is as a spiral, along which, and up which, we are travelling into a world, where spiritual law will have its execution, as directly, as finally, as providential and natural law has its execution here. Providential and natural law is a discipline for us, our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ; our teacher, introducing us to spiritual wisdom, and to God, the Fountain, the Inspirer, and the Executor of all Law. The lessons of providential and natural law throw us directly upon God, and powerfully teach us the importance and blessedness of a daily recognition of the Divine Providence in all things. They are happy and secure, and they alone, who have learned to say, *If the Lord will*.

There is a pert mechanical philosophy, that puts nature in the place of God, and seems quite ready to dream of the possibility of making even human life secure, by the perfect understanding and control of natural law. Philosophy shall be a Life Insurance office, and Science shall be made a Salamander Safe. The world shall be water-proof and fire-proof; and men shall see so thoroughly into all things, and be able to trace so perfectly the causes of all things, that nothing shall any more be accepted as of God's immediate interposition, that being an old superstitious fable of ignorance; but God shall be reasoned and discovered out of his own creation, so that, except by absolute miracle, no providential intervention shall be possible. The partial study of mechanical laws, with a sprinkling of pantheistic indifferentism to religion, and a conceit of much knowledge, is exceedingly favourable to the production of such a state of mind. But God's providence as well as his work demonstrate the exceeding madness and impiety of cherishing it. Continually does God show us that we never can get beyond that ultimate boundary of all causes, beings, and things, *If the Lord will*.

No! Suppose you had more than the wisdom of Solomon, and could understand all the secrets of the deep, in Heaven and Hades; suppose you could command all the agencies of nature, as well as understand her laws; suppose that instead of valves or steam-gauges for sentinels, you could station an invisible, all-penetrating, intelligent being at every joint and crisis of your machinery, to keep guard for you, are you any more removed out of the providence of God for that? Have you got beyond the necessity of saying, *If the Lord will*, by that? Your very life is as explosive and vanishing as the steam itself; and the more

secure you seem to be, the more you are in danger! The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty? While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; the kingdom is departed from thee. And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field; they shall make thee to eat grass like oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will. And the same hour the voice of judgment was fulfilled.

Until thou know that the Most High ruleth! until thou know and acknowledge his divine providence. Of the course of that providence, God has explicitly declared that it shall all work for happiness and good to the man who keeps his law, but against the man who does otherwise. The blessings of God's providence are *covenanted* blessings to those who trust in him. God has said that they shall be provided for. In their basket and in their store they shall be blessed; and whether the basket be full or empty, the blessing is equally sure; the providence is a good one, whether its shape be that of trial or of mercy; it is equally a providence of love, a part of God's covenant of love; so that sorrow and poverty itself, to those who put their trust in him, is better, when God sends it, than thousands of gold and silver. Whatever God sends is best for those who trust God.

But if thou say in thine heart, the Lord God is a Gallio, caring for none of these things, then all these things, whatever they be, are against thee. And all thy plans, and the execution of them, are against thee, whether they seem prosperous or adverse, and are all preparing for the great, final, inevitable explosion. If thou have not learned to say, *If the Lord will*, then none of thy plans are for God, but all are against him, and whatever is against *him* is against *thyself*. His will shall be accomplished; but if it be accomplished by thee only in the endurance of the righteous penalty of disobedience, it were better for thee if thou hadst never been born.

Here, then, are two lives opening before us; nor can there be a moment's hesitation on the question, which life had better be chosen? *If the Lord will*, or, *If I will*? What are we ready to

say to God? *Mine* or *thine*? This is the very touch-stone of character, and the turning point of happiness or misery. Both the providence and the Word of God, tenderly invite us, and solemnly admonish us to say, *If the Lord will*. God instructs, disciplines, persuades us, to make *that* the habit of our existence. Amidst all the cares and uncertainties of life, if that be our watchword, we are happy. If we have learned to say, *If the Lord will*, it is because we have also learned to say, *Thy will be done*; and when a man has learned *that*, heaven is begun within him already, and his are all the blessings of the covenant. It is the very first child's accent in the Lord's Prayer, without which we cannot get one step in any of our petitions. We have not learned how to pray, if we have not learned to say, *If the Lord will*.

But if we can say that, we have also learned another watchword of the Christian life, *The Lord will provide*. Providence means, according to the etymology of the word, *foreseeing*. God is a God of providence, that is, of foresight. But it is a pagan mind and a heathen theology that stops there; as it was the language of a people not knowing God, that taught this etymology. But our Christian English tongue goes much farther. God's providence means not merely his foresight, but his loving care; his providing for us in all things, as our heavenly Father; his loving arrangements for the supply of all our wants.

It is this kind and loving providence, under which the creatures of his power and mercy, as the children of his grace, are invited to come and repose. If we do this, then we are safe and happy. All things are ours, and we may go and come secure in the care and love of our heavenly Father, and fearing no evil, till from on high he call us home. But without this loving faith, we are not ready to step across the threshold of our own door; we are not ready to sit securely by our own fire-side; we are not ready to lie down in peace upon our nightly slumbers.

PART V.

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VOICES OF THE WINTER.



Now stretch your eye off shore, o'er waters made  
To cleanse the air, and bear the world's great trade,  
To rise and wet the mountains near the sun,  
Then back into themselves in rivers run,  
Fulfilling mighty uses, far and wide,  
Through earth, in air, or here, as ocean-tide.

Ho! how the giant heaves himself, and strains  
And flings to break his strong and viewless chains;  
Foams in his wrath; and at his prison doors,  
Hark! hear him! how he beats, and tugs, and roars,  
As if he would break forth again, and sweep  
Each living thing within his lowest deep.

Type of the Infinite! I look away  
Over thy billows, and I cannot stay  
My thought upon a resting-place, or make  
A shore beyond my vision, where they break;  
But on my spirit stretches, till 'tis pain  
To think; then rests, and then puts forth again.  
Thou hold'st me by a spell; and on thy beach  
I feel all soul; and thoughts unmeasured reach  
Far back beyond all date.

The dread command  
Came, and thou swept'st to death the breathing land;  
And then once more unto the silent heaven  
Thy lone and melancholy voice was given.

R. H. DANA.



AND though the land is thronged again, O Sea!  
Strange sadness touches all that goes with thee.  
The small bird's plaining note, the wild, sharp call,  
Share thine own spirit; it is sadness all!  
How dark and stern upon thy waves looks down  
Yonder tall cliff; he with the iron crown!  
And see! those sable Pines along the steep,  
Are come to join thy requiem, gloomy deep!  
Like stoled monks, they stand and chant the dirge  
Over the dead, with thy low beating surge.

These are earth's uses. God has framed the whole,  
Not mainly for the body, but the soul,  
That it might dawn on beauty, and might grow  
Noble in thought, from Nature's noble show;  
Might gather from the bowers a humble mind,  
And on earth's ever-varying surface find  
Something to win to kind and freshening change,  
And give the powers a wide and healthful range;  
To furnish man sweet company where'er  
He travels on: a something to call dear  
And more his own, because it makes a part  
With that fair world that dwells within the heart.

R. H. DANA.

## PART V.

# VOICES OF THE WINTER.

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### CHAPTER XXVI.

Voices of Winter and the Sea: The Wonders of the Snow-storm: The Moral and Disciplining Uses of Winter: God's Way in the Sea and in Storms: The Benefits and Blessings of a state of Trial.

**A** SNOW-STORM is in some respects one of the most beautiful scenes in nature, and at the same time, in its mightiest strength and severity, one of the sublimest and most awful. All the phenomena of frost and ice are magnificent with beauty and grandeur, and the prevalence of Winter in our globe, the recurrence of its scenes and doings, and the vast and sublime fixtures founded by it on the earth, and raised in shining mountains and glittering pinnacles to heaven, have an intimate connection with our moral sentiments. They were designed to do their part in the education of our race, so that some of the most important constitutional faculties and ideas of the mind could not without them have come to a complete development. They exert a powerful influence over the imagination, ministering to its riches and aggrandizement; over the heart also, and the judgment, over the sensitive and executive emotions and habits of an individual being, and in the distribution, formation, and discipline of society. Both the earth, and man upon it, would have been a very different and a far inferior habitation and race, if Winter, with its desolate and stormy reign, had not constituted one of our four seasons. It was, therefore, a part of God's covenant of mercy with our race, that as long as the earth remaineth, not

only seed-time and harvest, and day and night, and heat and summer, but also cold and winter, should never cease.

Some of the most wonderful exhibitions of the wisdom, power, and goodness of Almighty God are to be traced in a simple snow-storm. Who does not love to see the snow come down? Perhaps the storm begins at night, having long been brooding and threatening. At first it is a timid sprinkling, but soon increasing fast, the thick snow-flakes fall in earnest. All night the storm prevails, but meanwhile as still and calm, as when a white winding sheet is laid over the body of a departed soul. In the morning how completely the world is changed! The hamlets, trees, fields, and the whole earth, are all covered with a wide expanse of snow, and the driving air is still one thick career of fleecy flakes, incessantly falling, and silently deepening over the earth, in a soft protecting mantle, fold upon fold, drift upon drift, till the tops of the highest fences are covered, the roads are filled up, and all the accustomed paths and landmarks disappear. How exquisite the beauty of the elemental play of white descending flakes in the sportive air, now coming down with a steadfast earnest regularity, and now whirled about, crosswise, in seeming chaos; now deposited in light fantastic curling drifts hanging to the eaves, and now in deep banks, ridges, and billows.

It is a scene of exquisite beauty. But we wish to consider the skill and care, divine and infinite, exercised in all these changes, to weave the folds of this wide-spreading storm, prepared with processes untraceable, and to lay the garment softly down out of the treasures of the frost, investing the bleak exposed earth in robes of warmth, softer than the costliest furs, and yet of such materials, that the tissue of the garment, when the time of its winter uses has gone, shall pass insensibly into other elements, shall be absorbed with kindly nourishment and life into the earth's bosom. It is a most wonderful thing to look at the process of frosty crystallization, by which, in so soft, gentle, and gradual a manner, and yet with such complete effectiveness, and on so vast a scale, with so sudden and astounding a change over the face of nature, this work is accomplished. Every snow-flake is composed of various regular crystals, accurately and exquisitely shaped, so invisibly minute as never to be traced except by the vision of the microscope, with which we may see how their

airy wings are balanced, with crystals laid on crystals delicately interlinked, and lighter than gossamer. In these lovely crystal-line structures there may be seen drawn out in mathematic lines and exact curves, with art incomprehensibly minute, stars, hexagons, transparent branching plates, forms needle-shaped, pyramidal, prismatic, foliage clustered and branching like arrows, or in glittering lines of delicate interlacing network, fashioned in many hundred various shapes, impalpable to the unarmed sense, and almost as ethereal as light itself. With such amazing infinitude of care and art is this winter vesture of our northern world prepared, and so prepared, that the bright, fleecy, grateful, sheltering cloud comes down upon the earth's bosom even as a bird sinks with downy warmth upon her nest. It falls like a dream over the frosty earth, as gently as the evening dew upon summer flowers.

What a manifestation of the glory of a present God in all this! The smallest dusty flakes in every fall of snow are formed with the exactest skill and wisdom, by the same hand that weighed out the mountains, poured forth the seas, hung the firmament with its radiant spheres, rolled every globe upon its own axis, and flung them whirling through unfathomed space. Creative power divine, and a skill that mocks imagination's utmost stretch, are here displayed in infinite minuteness. Truly, not the loud thunder of the cataract, nor the roar of ocean, nor the rush of mightiest avalanches, nor the heights sublime of vast majestic mountains, can more overwhelmingly impress the soul with a sense of the incomprehensible, unwearied, ever active Omnipresence of the Mind of God! An Atheist is baffled by a snow-flake, by a rain-drop, by a shooting ray of light; and so too is the man who can deny the omnipresent and particular providence of God.

O what beauty and power, when the veil of our ignorance of God's works is somewhat removed, do we feel in those confrontings and questionings presented in Holy Scripture to the confounded mind, that has been darkening counsel by words without knowledge. "By what way is the light parted, which scattereth the east wind upon the earth? Who hath divided a watercourse for the overflowing of waters, or a way for the lightning of thunder, to cause it to rain on the earth where no man is, to satisfy the desolate and waste ground, and to cause the bud of the

tender herb to spring forth? Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew? Out of whose womb came the ice, and the hoary frost of heaven, who hath gendered it? The waters are hid as with a stone, and the face of the deep is frozen. Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow? or hast thou seen the treasures of the hail, which I have reserved against the time of trouble, against the day of battle and war? By the breath of God frost is given, and the breadth of the waters is straitened. For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise to the small rain, and the great rain of his strength. He maketh the cloud a garment, and scattereth his bright cloud. And it is turned about by his counsels, that they may do whatever he commandeth them upon the face of the world in the earth. He causeth it to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy.

So much for the wondrous present wisdom and providence of God in what we may call the construction of the snow-storm, and its adaptation for the shelter, warmth, and kindly nourishment of earth, when all the activities of vegetable life have returned into her bosom. Now let us take a wider flight, and observe in more advanced steps, by complicated causes, in a scope as comprehensive as the globe, and as varied as its communities and races, the providence of God for mercy. And it is to be remarked that winter, and the snow, which is its universal exponent, is in truth one of the most efficient causes of civilization, and of the advancement of mankind, not only in the arts and comforts of life, and in power over the elements, but in mental and even moral development and progress. It is out of privation, difficulty, and disadvantage, that the good, both temporal and spiritual, of our race, grows; our progress is gained only by the stimulus of want, the compulsion of necessity. If there had been a genial summer clime the world round, or only the alternation of Spring, Summer, and Autumn, mankind would have remained in a state of comparative indolence and barbarism; we should have been little better than cultivated animals. The arts and sciences that are requisite for the construction of substantial and comfortable dwellings, and for the enjoyment of warmth and luxury within them, would have remained comparatively unknown.

And it would be surprising, if any man should look into the

matter, to find how large a proportion of our knowledge, and our attainments in almost every direction, have been called into being by the necessities, or suggested and discovered by the elemental providences and laws of winter. The amount of industry, energy, perseverance, hardihood, forced upon us, the great and precious virtues of the same class into which we are inducted and compelled by the intervention of this season, and in the exercise of which, till they become a second nature, we should not otherwise have been trained, are so many and so important, that without them we should have been an inferior race. The winter of our year is absolutely necessary to the nobleness of our manhood. What qualities of forecast, of endurance, of patience, of labour, of invention, are called into exercise, nay, almost created by it!

To such an extent is this true, that we may suppose, without extravagance, that if the vessel that brought the Pilgrim Fathers to these shores in bleak and icy December, had sailed in the blooming Summer season of the year, the very character of those noble colonists would have been not a little changed, and the effect would have been felt in the character and fate of the whole resulting empire. The qualities of hardy endurance, patience, and self-denial are not those which we cultivate willingly, or impose gratuitously upon ourselves. If God do not do it for us, by his discipline and grace, it never will be done. "Hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?" The treasures of the snow are not those which we prefer, or which we should ever have chosen of our own accord, however necessary they may be for us. And the effect of this chosen discipline of God is as marked on nations as it is on individuals.

If we look round the world, we see how almost all the true and permanent greatness of States and nations lies within the circle of the wintry zone. We find that those nations and races of the earth that have been nurtured in an indulgent Summer clime and spontaneous abundance of nature all the year round, have had to borrow, or are now first receiving all their possessions of science, refinement, high knowledge, and moral and religious culture from the North. The apparent death of Winter is the very bosom of the greatness of our life. In commerce, in the arts, in moral, economical, political, and social advancement we owe the greater part of our progress, and the whole

world owes it, to the necessities impelling us, and the habitudes formed within us and upon us, by the various influences, immediate and secondary, of this vigorous season.

It would be a most interesting speculation to trace the progress of the Mercantile Spirit, and the mighty growth of commerce, and of complicated, reflected, and interwoven forms of knowledge and of civilization, springing from the wants of one climate and the superabundance of another; and also to show how the very dress of the earth has been enriched and adorned, its productions multiplied, its capabilities called forth, its treasures discovered and wrought, and thus the higher education and discipline of man provided for. It is easy to see that the "ingenuity of men stimulated by necessity, produces the most surprising changes, and promotes in an astonishing degree the means of human subsistence and enjoyment. It is not merely that the varied riches of other lands are imported, but an essential alteration is effected in the actual produce of the soil."

And it has been truly remarked, that the plenty and variety of material comforts thus at length resulting, is the companion and the mark of advantages and improvements in social life, of progress in art and science, of activity of thought, of energy of purpose, and of ascendancy of character. And character so formed and disciplined is, when renewed by Divine Grace, permanent, and is prepared, in the midst of comfort and abundance, not to sink down in mere luxurious self-indulgence and enjoyment, but to go forth with a benevolent, renewing, transforming power over the whole world. So these hardy influences and temperate virtues are *carried* to climes where they would not have been *reared*; and inestimable productions of character are transplanted and interchanged, as well as the natural productions of the globe. Of all these results, the intervention of Winter in our world may be regarded as the parent, and all these incalculable benefits to our race are drawn out of the treasures of the Snow.

Furthermore, the *domestic* character of mankind is enriched and elevated in the same way. The inhabitants of southern climes know comparatively little of the depth, the serenity, the permanence, the intensity, the beauty of the domestic character. It is a very obvious remark that our domestic enjoyments are increased in Winter, when families draw around the fireside, and

commune much in social affection and converse, and spend the long winter evenings in mutual enjoyment and improvement. But the lasting influence of this season in the establishment of a domestic nature of a nobler and higher kind than could otherwise have been developed, is not so directly noticeable. So again the virtues and graces of compassion, charity to the needy, sympathy with the poor and suffering, liberality in the supply of their wants, and in general a *habit* of benevolence and not its impulses merely, are the natural growth of the same disciplinary circumstances. Sudden and large generosity may be more frequent in a hot climate, or may be fitfully practised, but benevolence permanent, habitual, by principle and rule, as well as impulse, is the child rather of Winter, and of a rigorous discipline of mind and heart, such as the hardy compulsion of Winter produces.

Now all these things are the providential and disciplinary arrangement of God in the constitution of our globe for the education of its inhabitants. And it is a most wonderful thing to examine, in this view, the Divine providential administration by which, under so peculiar, complicated, and vast a discipline, races and nations, as well as individuals, are prepared for God's purposes, the progress of society is secured and hastened, and mankind, as a race, are advanced in morality and intelligence. The determination beforehand, and the interposition continually of God in every generation, are as visible in all this, as his creative power and wisdom clothing the globe with verdure, and ordaining the day and the night. And in connection with this it is instructive to consider the wonderful manner in which it would seem that God provided for the nature and development of this present state of discipline ages ago, before our world had its present organic arrangement, and while it was subject to changes of seasons, and laws of production, totally different from those under which Adam and his race were constituted. Is it not a matter of astonishment, and of profound adoration in view of God's far reaching plans and purposes, and of the means by which he brings them about, to observe the vast inexhaustible beds of coal lying in the range of Winter round our globe, by means of which the rage of Winter is now defied, and warmth and comfort, with increased enjoyment and refinement, abound in the very regions of the frost, and grow out of "the treasures of the snow." It is wonderful to consider the existence of vast



beds of coal, produced at first by a climate of tropical heat, in the growth of huge luxuriant wildernesses of trees, and matted fields of colossal ferns and grasses, ages before the creation of man; which wildernesses submerged in some undiscoverable way, and by unsearchable processes converted into solid coal through the lapse of ages, should form the means by which future human generations, under a climate that should pass into the regions of Winter, could control the elements, resist the cold, and out of the very treasures of the snow carry to the highest point of cultivation the faculties of human nature, and the arts and sciences of civilized life!

But the Winter is a season of storms; and these too, have their moral designs and influences, noted as such in God's own word. He speaks of the whirlwind and the storm as coming betimes for correction, as well as mercy. But the law of storms unquestionably is that of providential good, just as truly as the law of fair weather. And many a sweet and instructive moral might we gather from the lessons of storms, besides our observance of the manner in which God produces, controls, and uses them. As he hath his way in the whirlwind and the storm, so he hath in all our trials, which are the storms and tempests of our mortal pilgrimage, and in which, or under which, or through the means of which, the character justly and carefully disciplined, grows more in grace, and ripens faster for glory, than in serene and shining weather.

Thy way, O God, is in the sea, and thy paths are in the great waters! There, amidst darkness, mystery, and thunder, thou carriest on thy purposes, and thy footsteps are not known. But in thy sanctuary, by thy Word, and at thy Mercy Seat in Christ Jesus, thou teachest us to trust thee in the storm, and to rest in the day of trouble. There and there only, in Christ Jesus, we find the Law of Storms, the key to the understanding of God's apparently frowning providences. A wintry tempest and a raging sea are emblems of the seeming terrors of those providences, sometimes; and yet at all times it is true that the path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day. And in the manner of God's control over the ocean we have a most impressive symbol of his gracious power and care in the arrangement of all his stormy providential discipline.

His own chosen way of mercy may be in the sea, and his path in the great waters; so that those who follow him, and walk the most closely with him, may have to pass through the depths of the seas, and all God's waves and billows may seem to be going over them. They may encounter providences, that roll upon them like the great deep. God's way of greatest glory to himself, and greatest joy to his people, is sometimes there. And God holds all such providences in his hand as he does the ocean; and when it seems as if they must completely overwhelm the soul, then God can cause them to be borne as easily as the trees bear a rain storm, and to glide off as harmlessly as a dew-drop rolls from the leaf of a wild rose in the wilderness. God can hold them around the soul as he held the flames of the fiery furnace around the bodies of the three young Hebrews. It is the ease with which God does this, and his glory in it, that are some of the things meant, when it is said that God's way is in the sea, and his path in the great waters. The sea, and God's grand control of it, are a majestic type of his infinitely glorious providence: a manifestation of his power and glory, the like of which cannot be found upon our globe. There is nothing in creation more wondrous than the wonders of the deep. They are inexhaustible, vast, magnificent, and carry the mind to the extreme both of sublimity and beauty. The power of the waves is wonderful. If God should let the ocean loose, if he did not guard and restrain its ungovernable fury, flinging its waves as continuous, yet flexible mountain ridges, the solid continent could not stand against them. They would tear the very earth asunder like a riving wedge.

Then how wonderful the motion and play of the ocean currents, sweeping round the globe, local and continuous, visible and invisible, regular and intermitted. The invisible but perpetual movement and connection, in the processes of evaporation and condensation, from the ocean to the air, from the air to the earth, from the surface of the earth to the channels of the rivers, and from the rivers to the sea, and thence back again through the clouds, and round again to the ocean, is equally wonderful. What vast amazing operations between the sea, the earth, and the heavens, as in a mighty frame-work of machinery, carried on with as much regularity and certainty as when the threads of a piece of cloth are first spun from the wool, then fastened to

the loom, and woven on in a smooth continuous texture. The motion of the globe upon its axis is not more regular and uninterrupted, than this intercommunication of the elements, this perpetual web of life rolling round between earth, air, and sea.

But perhaps the most wonderful and impressive of all the manifestations of the Divine Providential wisdom and power in the ocean is the regular motion of the tides under the influence of the heavenly bodies. It is overwhelming to think of the exactness with which an orb in the heavens, millions upon millions of miles distant, shall measure and command the course of the ocean on our globe; shall set in motion, with infinite ease, safety, and regularity, an element so vast, so ponderous, so unwieldy, so irresistible; shall draw it round the globe as quietly as you may wind a thread of silk, or a velvet ribbon on a wooden cylinder. This point of wonder is presented in the Word of God. "Knowest thou the ordinances of heaven, or canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth? Canst thou bind the sweet influences of Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Hast thou entered into the springs of the sea, or hast thou walked in the search of the depth? Who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke forth, when I made the cloud the garment thereof, and brake up for it my decreed place, and set bars and doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?"

It is indeed a wondrous exercise of Almighty Power, a wondrous arrangement of Omniscient Wisdom. "And will ye not tremble at my presence, saith the Lord, which have placed the sand for the bound of the sea by a perpetual decree, that it cannot pass it, and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it." We have this feeling of Divine power, this impression of the attribute of Omnipotence, if we simply stand upon the beach, or gaze from the top of an overhanging cliff upon the sea in its commotion. But the well known arrangement and law of the tides is a more wondrous manifestation. It is overwhelming, to consider the immeasurable mass of ocean, and to think of so tremendous a body of water rolled round the globe with such unvarying security and exactness, stopping always just at the appointed line, and retreating within precise

imits, and at an exactly defined rate of progress. A release from this confined restraint, or one hour's overpassing of it, would drown a world. A few feet of increase in the ocean wave that pursues its tidal circuit round the globe, would desolate cities and provinces innumerable. Nothing more would be needed for a second deluge, than to heighten this mysterious power, that takes up the ocean, as a child might draw a kitten, so that the periodical tidal wave should merge whole continents.

But with what immutable and safe control God has marked its limits! You shall observe a shrub or a flower on a bank of verdure that covers a sea cliff, or hangs down in some hollow; nay, you shall mark a pebble on the beach, you shall lay a shred of gossamer upon it; and this vast, ungovernable, unwieldy, tempestuous element shall know how to draw a line of moisture by its beating spray at the very edge, or on the very point of your demarcation, and then draw off its forces, not having passed one inch or hand's breadth across the appointed margin. And all this exact restraint and measurement in the motion of the sea, by that mysterious power shot beyond unfathomable depths of space, from orbs rolling in ether! a power itself how prodigious, how irresistible, yet how invisible, how gentle, how with minutest exactness measured and exerted!

So God hath his way in the sea, and his path in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known. Just with the same security and regularity move on all the complications of his providence, just so completely under his control, at his bidding, and for the accomplishment of his purposes, are all events set in motion in our world, all arrangements ordered, all tides of circumstance and influence. It is determined just how high they shall rise, just what provinces they shall cover, just what lines they shall reach, beyond what measurement they shall not go, and within what limits they shall retire. Every movement among the nations, every revolution in the empires of the world, every change in the phases of human destiny, all plans and all accomplishments are exactly limited of God. The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of Glory thundereth; the Lord is upon many waters. All things are in his hands, and he securely keeps the soul of every creature that trusts in his mercy. Surely in the floods of great waters, they shall not

come nigh unto him. They may rise, and rage, and threaten to overflow his habitation and carry him away; but in God he is safe; nothing hurtful can reach him. Therefore the Psalmist says: God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains may be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Not the petals of a single flower blooming by the sea side, or hanging over the cliff, shall be touched by the spray, but just as God pleases and permits. The winds may howl and rave, as in the most terrific hurricane: and yet,

“ Without God’s high behest,  
They shall not in the mountain pine  
Disturb a sparrow’s nest.”

The Poet Cowper, in one of his interesting letters, has illustrated this view of a particular Divine Providence by the use of an incident drawn from one of Captain Cook’s voyages in some of the high southern latitudes. In a dark tempestuous night, a flash of lightning discovered to that celebrated navigator a vessel, glancing almost like the lightning, close by his side, and which, but for the lightning, he must have ran foul of, and perhaps both vessels been whelmed in the raging deep. Both this imminent danger, remarks Cowper, and the transient flashing light that revealed it, were designed to convey to him this wholesome instruction, that a particular providence attended him, and that he was not only preserved from evils of which he had no notice, but from many more, of which he had no information whatever, nor even the least suspicion. What an image indeed of unseen dangers on the voyage of life, what a spectre of unknown things that may happen without the least warning, was that black hulk terrifically whirling by on the hurricane in that tempestuous midnight sea! Only the lightning to reveal it, and revealed only just in bare season to prevent a most fearful and fatal collision! How unlikely must it have been deemed beforehand, that those two ships, when they left their respective ports, would ever come even within hailing distance of each other! How exceedingly improbable that two such ships should

dash against each other, in the midst of the vast Pacific Ocean, or that, steering contrary courses, from parts of the world so immensely distant from each other, they should yet move so exactly in a line, as to clash, fill, and go to the bottom, in a sea, where all the ships in the whole world might be so dispersed, as that not one should see another! And yet this very thing must have happened, had it not been for that remarkable providential interference which the great navigator has recorded.

The sea is his, and he made it; the storms that rage over it are his, and he directs and controls them; and like all the arrangements in the kingdom of Nature, "he causeth them to come, whether for correction, or for his land, or for mercy." The summer's array of blessings, its gentle dews, its balmy breezes, and its peaceful undulating tides, are not more directly the exponents or the effects of the Divine benevolence, than winter with its sweeping storms, its icy mountains, and its polar seas. All things are a discipline from God, of various use and application, in circumstances so contrasted, that the very same dispensation may be of chastisement in one region or community, and of mercy and prosperity in another; and yet of mercy alike in all places and circumstances, if men will so receive it. That is the intent of every dispensation; if men's submissive faith will answer to it; that which is within gives its real character to that which is without.

"Soul! fearful is thy power, which thus transforms  
 All things into thy likeness; héaves in storms  
 The strong, proud sea, or lays it down to rest,  
 Like the hushed infant on its mother's breast;  
 Which gives each outward circumstance its hue,  
 And shapes the acts and thoughts of men anew,  
 Till they in turn or love or hate impart,  
 As love or hate holds rule within the heart." DANA.

God sends nothing for evil, but all things for correction or for mercy. Trials are the greatest of blessings, *if rightly used*; both trials and mercies change character, or assume it, according to the manner in which they are received.

Correction, the earth's refreshment, and direct mercy; this is the threefold division in the disciplinary providential arrangements of our world. Sometimes all these uses come together;

we suppose, indeed, that they always do, only one part is more visible than another. The very same storm that produces disaster and ruin in one direction, brings prosperity in another. When there is sorrow on the sea, there is benefit and blessing upon the land, and from the very same instrumentalities. And in the direction in which we are now considering the treasures of God's discipline with our race, we remember a most affecting account of a snow-storm, in which a husband and wife, the parents of a family of some seven little ones in a lonely cottage, perished upon the mountains, and in such circumstances that the helpless children were remaining a number of days almost buried alive, and their dreadful calamity all unknown to the neighbouring hamlet. But when it was discovered, together with the heroism of the eldest child, to whose wonderful firmness and presence of mind the preservation of all the rest was owing, the case awakened such an impulse and principle of active benevolence, even throughout the nation, that the whole family were provided for, permanently and nobly, and an effect of moral goodness in countless directions grew out of the treasures of the snow, incomparably counterbalancing any of the evils, or apparent forms of evil, or complications of distress produced by the storm that brought them.

It would be so, even if the moral good were limited to this world, as all merely physical comfort and blessing *is* limited. But it runs on for ever. If God brings great things out of the treasures of the snow and the changes of the sea, by his providential discipline ordering all things for our abode in this world, he brings still greater things out of the right endurance and use of trials, for the world to come. A man is a nobler man for the discipline of hardship, any where; a Christian is a better Christian, and hath a greater inheritance of happiness for ever, by the discipline of trial now. Trials now are the germs of inestimable blessings, the seed-corn of precious harvests, that, instead of being rejected, should be carefully disposed, planted, watered. But most generally men regard the things of trial, that God lays upon them, as burdens rather than treasures; afflictions merely, rather than the seeds of joy and glory. The very providences that may be absolutely essential to men's welfare, are often counted rather as things to be as hastily as possible got rid of, than patiently endured, and wisely and carefully

improved. A writer on the History of Creation, and the providential arrangements of God in Nature, tells us that farmers have destroyed moles, because the hillocks they are in the habit of making break the level surface of the ground; but they have found worms increase so much, when the moles were exterminated, as to wish they had not molested them. The blue jay was destroyed in America for eating the peas; but the *pea-grub*, which it used to feed on, became more destructive. Just so it is oftentimes with the trials that God lays upon men; they are instrumental in the removal or destruction of evils, which, if the trials had not been sent, or should be indiscreetly taken away, would grow intolerable and ruinous. Our greatest tempests of trial may be our greatest blessings.

It is said that migrating birds, that commonly in their vast journeyings keep very high in the air, require a wind that blows *against* them in order to make progress and keep their elevation, for it assists in raising them. So the soul of the Christian, winging its way through this world to a better, is aided rather than impeded in its spiritual migration, by the contrary winds of trial. Those storms that seemed against us, do only, when encountered in the right direction, assist to raise us, and keep us steadily soaring towards heaven.

THE END.



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