

into the sibyl cave of destiny and receive no answer but on echo. . . . No pillar of cloud by day and no pillar of fire by night guide the pilgrim. To such length has the spirit of enquiry carried him. . . . Perhaps at no era of his life was he more decisively the servant of goodness the servant of God, than even now when doubting God's existence. "One circumstance I note," says he, "after all the nameless woe that inquiry, which for me what it is not always, genuine love of truth, had wrought me, I nevertheless still loved truth and would abate no jot of my allegiance to her. "Truth," I cried, "though the heavens crush me for following her. No falsehood, though a whole celestial Lubberland were the price of apostacy." In conduct it was the same, had a divine messenger from the clouds, or miraculous handwriting on the wall, convincingly proclaimed to me, *this thou shalt do*, with what passionate readiness, as I often thought, would I have done it, had it been leaping into the infernal fire. . . . Thus was the infinite nature of duty still dimly present to me; living without God in the world of God's light I was not utterly bereft. If my as yet sealed eyes, with their unspeakable longing could nowhere see him, nevertheless in my heart he was present, and his heaven-written law still stood legible and sacred there." At the close of the chapter he says: "The everlasting no had said: behold thou art fatherless, outcast, and the universe is mine (the devil's)! to which my whole *me* now made answer: I am not thine, but free and forever hate thee. It is from this hour I incline to date my spiritual new birth; perhaps I directly thereupon began to be a man."

Thus does Carlyle give us a most graphic picture of his spiritual state. Victory over these spiritual dragons, he tells us, he gained for the first time whilst walking alone in the the Leith Walk, but the final

victory was gained four years later, in the year 1826. Here is his own language: "Internally too, there were far higher things going on; a grand and ever joyful victory getting itself achieved at last; the final chaining down, trampling him, 'for good,' home into their caves forever of all my spiritual dragons, which had wrought me such mal, and for a decade past had made my life bitter. This year, 1826, saw the end of all that with such a falling on my part as may be fancied. I found it to be essentially what Methodist people call their 'conversion,' the deliverance of their souls from the devil and the pit; precisely enough that in new form, and there burnt accordingly a sacred flame of joy in me, silent in my inmost being, as of one henceforth superior to fate, able to look down on its stupid injuries with contempt, pardon and almost with a kind of thanks and pity. This 'holy joy,' of which I kept silence, lasted in me for several years in blessed counterpoise to sufferings and discouragements enough; nor has it proved what I can call fallacious at any time since."

If this is not clear conversion or a "new birth," where are we to look for such? And, be it remembered and laid to heart, that this clear, spiritual "new birth" took place in one who gave assent to no known creed or dogma whatever. He was simply an honest man, passionately in love with truth and righteousness, fighting his way to God amidst doubt, difficulty, and sometimes even despair. Yet God met him and gave him such a revelation of himself, his fatherhood, his divine loving care, that Carlyle became thereafter a *new man*, and one of the mightiest the world has ever seen.

Froude declares, and rightly we think, that Carlyle's moral force and love for righteousness and truth are what really made him great. He preached righteousness and denounced falsehood and all iniquity with a vehemence and a courage seldom seen anywhere, even in the pulpit.