

the pictures of Athens have been pronounced by competent judges, equal in excellence to the Venus de Medicis, the Apollo Belvedere, or the Dying Gladiator.

We go back to ancient Greece not only for the beginnings of our intellectual culture, but for our ideas of personal liberty and individual rights. The government of Athens was a democracy, under which the free inhabitants were voters. No people ever had a more passionate love of liberty than the ancient Greeks.

"The popular legislator or the successful soldier might dare to encroach upon their liberties in the moment when the nation was intoxicated and dazzled with their genius, their prowess and success; but a sudden revulsion of popular feeling, and an explosion of popular indignation would overturn the one and ostracism expel the other. Thus while inconstancy and turbulence and faction seem to have been inseparable from the democratic spirit, the Athenians were certainly constant in their love of liberty, faithful in their affections for their country, and invariable in their sympathy for that genius which shed glory upon their native land. . . . In their private life the Athenians were courteous, generous and humane. Whilst bold and free in the expression of their opinions, they paid the greatest attention to rules of politeness, and were nicely delicate in points of decorum. They had a natural sense of what was becoming and appropriate, and an innate aversion to all extravagance. A graceful demeanor and a quiet dignity were distinguishing traits of Athenian character. They were temperate and frugal in their habits, and little addicted to ostentation and display. . . . All their sumptuousness and magnificence were reserved for and lavished on their public edifices and monuments of art, which made Athens the pride of Greece and the wonder of the world. Intellectually, the Athenians were remarkable for their quickness of apprehension, their nice and delicate perception, their intuitional power and their versatile genius" (Cocker's "Christianity and Greek Philosophy," p. 46).

Such was the character of the people of Athens—as described by a candid Christian scholar—a people that the clergy are accustomed to represent as destitute of all the elements of true greatness.

I may add, we go back to the same heathen land and pre-Christian times, for characters from whom the most zealous Christian cannot withhold a hearty admiration—men in whom "greatness of mind seems but second to greatness of virtue," who are referred to to-day, after Christianity has had centuries in which to show its powers in the development of character, as models of moral excellence. The disinterestedness of Timoleon, the stern justice and exalted purity of Aristides, the patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit of Leonidas and his immortal Three Hundred, the fortitude and moral courage of Socrates have never been surpassed in any Christian land, and will ever challenge the admiration of mankind. The models of Greece were pagans, and they are the models of the civilized world to-day.