

Now, the effect upon us of this relation towards Christ, the result and outcome of our religion as concerns ourselves, is our perfection. "Be ye holy for I am holy," is from the first God's message to us. "Be ye perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect," is the summons of Christ to His followers. The apostolic vision of the issue of our religious life is that "we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ"; (Eph. IV: 13), and again, "We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1 John III: 2.) That is a vision more splendid, more definite, and more firmly assured than any hope or inspiration that ever came along the line of culture even to the soul of Plato.

Religion, then, makes for our perfection; and that is the aim, also, of culture. Let us note, however, that there is a great difference in the methods employed, and, therefore, in the results achieved by them.

Culture seeks to make the most of self, simply for the sake of self and by reliance on the powers of self. It is a matter of effort on my own part how far I am to attain perfection through culture. According to this view I can train my powers of body and mind; I can build up my being by the discharge of self-appointed tasks, developing every faculty by its appropriate exercise. I can seek to know the best that has been said on the things that most concern me, and can put myself in connection with the most helpful influences that come to me from my fellow-men. I can use even adverse circumstances for my own improvement, as Ben Hur employed his hard

labour in the Roman galley to develop the physical strength that served him later in a time of need. I can nourish kind and generous feelings, candour, fairness, charity, with a growing refinement of taste and a growing tolerance and sympathy towards my fellow-men. I can set my affections upon worthy objects, causing any wrong desire or tendency to wither and die for want of nourishment, and strengthening my love of what is true and beautiful and good. All that is best in literature and science and art may minister to my edification, my upbuilding, so that with ever-growing significance I can say, "My mind to me a kingdom is." This is the method of culture; and in all this I am trying to make the most of myself, free to drink of every stream, and to eat of every fruit that gives promise of building me up unto perfection.

Religion, also, seeks to make the most of self, yet not by the efforts of self, but by the surrender of self to God. The perfection of our powers is not to be achieved by our own labours, because there is that in us which tends to warp us from the truth, to cloud our fairest vision of purity, to disable us from realizing our own desires and aspirations after goodness, so that he whose aim is highest and whose vision of the ideal life is clearest, feels most constrained to say, "The good that I would I do not; the evil that I would not that I do."

The advocates of culture assume that we are able, though it be with strain and conflict, to fulfil the purpose and to attain the goal of our perfection. But in religion the spirit, without waiting to prove its inability by failure, surrenders itself to God. The spirit is in personal relations with God; that