

Taking the Persæ and Prometheus of Æschylus, we find, not so much cold speculation respecting the state of the dead as a consciousness of the existence and power, and even presence of disembodied spirits. The gleaming thunderbolts fly; the rocks are rent; Prometheus, with sublime fortitude, endures the Divine vengeance. We seem to hear the melancholy, sympathetic cry of agitated spirits as they glide along through the wild and lurid atmosphere. In Virgil's matchless description of the under-world, the secrets of the future are disclosed, and Heaven and Hell lie, at least, in striking adumbration. To Cicero's famous "Dream of Scipio" the highest praise has been rightly accorded. In this work we have the startling announcement that that which is here called *life* is in reality *death*. Scipio, as his soul burns, longs to mount up and be at rest. This feeling reached its climax when the shade uttered the memorable words: Let virtue by her own charms attract you to true glory.

So much for some of the deliverances of our fellow-men, respecting a subject in which we all must take the deepest interest. We have been profoundly impressed with the definite yet mournful language by which they describe the dream-like character of life, and the rapid passage of man into the great Hereafter. There were many, then, in ancient times that were like children crying for the light, and groping in darkness, often rendered still more dense by fruitless searchings. There were many, too, who, forgetful of the clay, lived much in spirit, to whom glowing visions of a grand work and destiny came with power. There were many who were consciously moved by the Divinity within them. These last often possessed ideas determinate and convincing, ideas which thwart every effort to reduce them to syllogistic forms. Like stars they shine in the firmament of the mind, beauteous as the work of God, but too ethereal and vast to come within the compass of expression. It is "even as the unfathomed and deep-sounding ocean rests underneath the billows which chase each other across its surface, and die in ripples on the shore." For confirmation of this read what Pythagoras thought. He felt and affirmed the indestructive personality of the human soul, and made its *moral state* the ground of its existence. Read the Phædo of Plato and hear the warblings of immortality. It is not so much what Socrates said, beautiful as it is, as what he *felt*. Make what you will of the arguments for the immortality of the soul, the essence and the power of the matter dwelt within him. Was it not in the plenitude of this conviction that he uttered the memorable prayer: "O thou great author of nature, well-beloved, grant that I may be beautiful in the inner man! and may that which I have without be in harmony with that which I have within! and may I consider the wise man rich!"

Socrates was able to rise above the flux and decay of earthly things. He grasped by faith the unseen and unchanging. We gaze with wonder on the setting of that beauteous spirit as it passed through the golden gates of Hesperus. The very garments of the speaker seem glorified as he discourses of the Home that lies beyond. Within him was a God-caused conviction which loosed his tongue and gave him the power of wondrous discourse. His was a deep, piercing, spiritual insight. And yet, like the valves of some mighty engine, what he said only indicated the restless, burning, throbbing, victorious force within. Socrates passing away, warbling of immortality, may be compared to the lark, whose first notes are heard through the mists of early morning, but soon sings in the firmament a full tide of song as his plumage sparkles in the first rays of the orient sun.

Wonderful it is that some held with a firm grasp the hope of a life to come. They felt that beyond the dark terminus there must be a home in which there would be rest for tired feet and feverish brains, a Paradise where all the powers of the soul would find full expansion. And so through the centuries the voice of God has been heard in men's souls. Mankind was never without some light. For the fulness to the light may have been Socrates' demon. God has given man the power to judge of the *quality* of an action. See the wisdom and love manifested in this. God did not mock the human race. He kindled fires in his temples that are to burn perpetually. His witness lives forever in the human soul.

Some one has said that "art depends for its highest development upon those feelings which are awakened and sustained by nothing short of the hopes and fears born of the mysterious, limitless, beautiful, terrible future. And thus we account for the highest and divinest notes of the poets, as well as for the glowing and heavenly discourse of philosophers. As man is swept onward to the ultimate destinies of existence, he turns his eyes to Heaven for light and guidance. Only in their relations to futurity are men's deeds and thoughts explicable. Otherwise every thing rests in deep eclipse. Life gathers all its significance from some great scene yet to be acted. Thus what we call earthly things stand out in the clear light of the great purpose of God. Hence

"Build thee more noble mansions, O my soul,
As the swift seasons roll:
Leave thy low-vaulted past;
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,
Thy thoughts encompass in a dome more vast,
Till thou at length art free,
Leaving thy outgrown shell
By Life's unrestful sea."