

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
 But trust Him for His grace ;
 Behind a frowning providence
 He hides a smiling face.
 His purposes will ripen fast,
 Unfolding every hour ;
 The bud may have a bitter taste,
 But sweet will be the flower.

— GOODLOW.

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

By G. D. BAYNE, B.A.

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It is part of every man's business to watch the signs of the times. No man is prepared for the duty of the age who has not, in some measure, apprehended the spirit of the age. It is to the advantage of every man who would be useful in his day and generation, to keep his hand upon the pulse of his own times. It is not necessary to approve of men's views and feelings in order to do them good ; it is necessary, however, to reach their plane, in point of sympathy at least ; to appreciate the force of the things which influence them, and to enter, as far as possible, into their sphere of thought and feeling.

We are invariably misled by partial views of things, by *ex parte* evidence, by hasty generalizations, by the contracted outlook of selfishness, and, while it may be impracticable fully to eliminate these disturbing causes from our thinking and acting, it is still possible to reduce their influence. We are not yet made perfect. We are not omniscient. It is safe to assume that man is not omniscient—the hierarchy of science notwithstanding. Neither is he likely to be for some time to come. While admitting this disability, it is still the duty and the privilege of every man to judge and to act from as wide a range of evidence as he can gather and to enlarge the sphere of his vision as far as in him lies. The design of this paper is to answer two questions :

I. *What is the spirit of our age ?* It may be, and has been, variously characterized, but it seems to me that, in the last analysis, there are four great currents of influence in human society to-day, which give character to the times in which we live.

(1.) The spirit of the age is *utilitarian and practical*. The questions which rise to all lips are, "How will it pay," "What is it good for !" To perceive the full truth of this remark it is necessary only to compare science as understood by the ancients and science as we understand it. Science in ancient times was speculative, theoretical and *aristocratic*. Socrates was almost the only man in antiquity who seems to have been free from