

hold the Sun of Righteousness! The sick and self-condemned soul craves to be cured by the healing touch of the All-holy Saviour. In fact the most sublime and beautiful trait of God's holiness is its intrinsic and unavoidable virtue to save the fallen, and fascinate them, as it were, out of their accustomed courses of evil. The vilest heart, should it but try to conceive Him, nay only to approach Him with humility, is sanctified. It may be difficult to hold and maintain this sanctity for any length of time, but nothing is more certain than that even in the midst of our worst transgressions, the intimate affinity between the frail human soul and its perfect Prototype remains unbroken. The blessed purity of our Father's nature charms us by the power of spiritual instincts which can never be extinguished by any amount of evil-doing.

The abstract conception of purity is of course the opposite pole of conscious sinfulness. Holiness and unholiness can not exist together. The infinitely pure God as an Ultimate Idea, can not, in the limited view of human morality, be accessible to the impure heart of man. Divinity and humanity repel each other. God is by the limitation of nature removed out of the circuit of human attainment and hope. The mighty conflagration of His eternal purity would consume our offending manhood, did we dare approach the Altar of the Holy of holies. Between heaven and earth the infinite gulf yawns unbridged. So argues the sad moralist, and the sadder theologian. But our untaught human nature is perhaps more hopeful, and better provided for. If God was as abstract, impersonal, and one-sided as our theories of morals and religion, he might dwell in selfish seclusion from the world, amidst the blazing glory of His own nature; if He had been possessed of that loveless ascetic holiness in which some unnatural minds seem to take delight, humanity might contemplate Him with despair, and the world lie in degradation for ever. But what is the reality of the case? He is not righteous who remains content with what is commonly called virtue, and does not try to win other souls which lie in vice. He is righteous who scruples not to mix with unrighteous men, but delights in their company, not that his

own righteousness may be compromised, but that their unrighteousness may be removed by the contact. He is truly righteous who consents even to suffer and to be persecuted in the hands of sinful and desperate men, that their persecution may lay bare the true beauty of suffering, loving, unselfish righteousness, and awaken the latent sorrow and tenderness of their nature. How many hard-hearted evil-doers have thus been shamed out of their vice and impenitence! If so much can be said of the righteousness of man, what language shall describe the depths of that attribute in God? All the alienation of which we complain lies with us and not with him. We fear to approach Him even when we know He calls us, and then say that communion with Him is impossible. We prefer our own disgrace to the glory which we are aware may be obtained in His presence. But bad as we are, we still cannot help being captivated when His loving, sanctifying holiness is laid by some devout man before our unrighteous souls, and we are constrained to believe, in spite of ourselves, that the hope of salvation is still left to us. The God of holiness is accessible to the grasp of the faintest soul, according to its capacity, and the vilest sinner need not despair to catch an occasional glimpse of the glories of heaven. The God of holiness is not an austere, unforgiving, hateful God, but a merciful Father, ever conscious of our weakness and always ready to remedy it, and allow us a share of the bounties and blessedness of His perfect nature. The God of holiness is never distant, but always with us and within us, even when we transgress, giving us good aspirations and renewed encouragement in the performance of the arduous duties of life, ever watchful of His children's salvation. In the dazzling disc of the sun, in the mild magnificence of the moon, and in the stainless azure of the etherial sky, the God of holiness shines evermore. In the pure breath of the morning air, in the gentle fragrance of the opening bud, in the diamond drops of the falling dew, in all the smiling grandeur and sacred beauties of nature, the loving God of holiness reigns evermore. In all the purity and touching holiness of human example, in all the struggles, sacrifices and triumphs of the suffering