

practically,—with which Homer deals. It is like instituting a comparison between Dante and Milton; between the fervent mediæval Catholic, and the equally fervent seventeenth century Socinian; between Francis of Assisi and John Wesley.

In Virgil, moreover,—and this is more to our present purpose—we find a clearer, nobler, more perfect utterance of that soul language which forms the chief interest of these papers than, perhaps, in any other “heathen”; certainly than in Homer. Newman, who, more than any other of his age, and speech, had learned that universal tongue “by heart,” speaks—as Professor Sellar quotes of Virgil’s “single words and phrases, his pathetic half lines, giving utterance as the voice of Nature, herself, to that pain and weariness, yet hope of better things, which is the experience of her children in every age.” The allusion, here, though Professor Sellar does not make it, is so evidently to St. Paul’s words as to make quotation almost supererogatory. Almost, not quite, seeing that such scriptural allusions are, alas! becoming, daily, more obscure, less easily, less quickly recognized. This, then, what Newman had in mind; and in form familiar to him “like a peal of village bells, heard long ago,” as he has said. “For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for . . . the redemption of our body.” [Rom. viii, 22, 23.]

“The great epic of Virgil,” says Professor Minto, in dealing with the Age of Augustus, “the national epic of the Roman people, glorifies the Divine Providence which founded Rome in the beginning. . . . The divinity which protects Rome is the Lord of heaven and earth and all that is therein. There is no God or Lord like unto Him. Blessed are the Romans who have this Lord for their God.” Virgil, in other words, was one of those of whom St. Paul speaks as seeking after God “if haply they might find Him.” (Acts xvii, 27); of whom St. Peter, in his sermon to Cornelius, says that “in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him. (Acts x, 35). Briefly, a Saint of Paganism, one of those “souls in prison” to whom the Lord of Life, after His crucifixion went and preached. (I. Peter iii, 19.) Small wonder that Dante chose him for his guide in that strange journey to the under world.