

can mould ideas to suit their own purposes, since for them the soul stands over against nature as its formative principle. They are not to fit themselves to the external course, but this is to fit itself to them. By most men the stability of the present order is grasped and insisted upon; by men of genius the activity of the self is put foremost. Hence the saying of Emerson, "Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet," for thought, as a powerful solvent, liquifies things, or as a volcanic force rumbling beneath us breaks up the crusted forms of life into new and beautiful formations. The value attaching to man consists in the fact that he is a creative force. Out of the world about him Raffelle will draw the image of beauty, Newton will formulate a universal law, Wordsworth will build an ode, Napoleon will organize an empire, and Edison will flash an electric light.

The revealing of this truth in its philosophic aspect is Kant's chief claim to our gratitude. Previous to his time it was generally believed that the act of knowing the mind is like the photographer's plate on which outer objects imprint themselves. On the contrary, Kant clearly showed that the mind itself makes the picture and the outer world forms the plate on which the mind, like the sun's ray, draws the picture. This picture is good only so far as we put into it the relations of cause, substance, space and time. Knowledge, accordingly, is not a mere copy, as Locke taught, of an external image, but is a synthesis wrought out of isolated sense-perceptions by the constructive act of thought. "What we see is our soul in things." The mind is thus seen to be not passive, but active; not impressive, but expressive.

Likewise the two opposing schools in morals offer conceptions that are alike inadequate. The theory that happiness is the end of life yields an ideal that is felt to be too low for a being endowed with reason and conscience. On the other hand, to make the end of life to be conformity to a law, or duty, is too mechanical. Neither of these phases of morals has included the whole nature of man, though each has laid stress on essential ingredients in the ideal of virtue. A view of morals is now held by some thinkers that seems to reconcile these opposing camps by including whatsoever is true in their theories in a larger ideal that permits the activity of man to have full play. "In will," says Professor Seth, "we find the sought for unity, the focal point of all man's complex being, which gives us the clue to his characteristic life. Man is not a merely sentiment being, nor is he 'pure reason energizing.' He is will—and his life is that activity of will in which both reason and sensibility are, as elements, contained, and by whose most subtle chemistry they are inextricably interfused." Accordingly, man's supreme duty is self-fulfillment, since virtue just as knowledge, is a synthesis wrought out by man's active powers directed by will.

It is singular how clearly the old Greek thinker, Heraclitus, grasped the truth that is put forth in modern science, when he said, "All things are in a constant flux." How universally applicable this law is! We think of the Latin language as rigidly fixed, and hence are not surprised that even Francis Bacon, distrusting the stability of the English language, put his valuable works in that supposed unchanging speech. Yet as every student of Latin knows, that formal language, like all else, was subject to constant change, so much so that Cicero could hardly make out the early records in his own mother tongue.

In studying nature we marvel at her protean forms. Light passes into heat, heat into electricity, electricity into chemical affinity, and chemical affinity into magnetism, and thus the chase for the ultimate force goes on unceasingly. At last we come to see that "nothing endures save energy and the rational order that pervades it."

The spiral line of ascent, Goethe's type of beauty, is found to be the symbol of events in human history. I once saw on Luna Island, which overhangs the falls of Niagara, this striking inscription engraved roughly on a huge rock:

"All is Change  
Eternal Progress  
No Death."

Obedience on our part to this truth is at once the demand of a universal law and the condition of all progress. It seems to me that the clear perception of this principle constitutes the distinctive merit of the Greeks. They did not hesitate, with life as a guide, to strike out upon new lines of development. While among the Egyptians art was condemned to follow certain canons that had been laid down by the priestly class and consequently became rigid and linear, the Greeks, with no canon save truth and beauty, distilled their art from the life about them. Their culture unfolded, like the rose, by forces born from within. Hence it was spontaneous, popular and life-like, because it was a growth and not an imitation. Their philosophy was made up of dialogues, some one has remarked, and they were chary about putting their laws on stone-tablets, so anxious were they to keep life fluid.

Whenever the doctrinaire tries to compress society into an algebraic formula or the dogmatic to put a final interpretation on religion by an inflexible creed, they so far

stultify the very principle that gives value to both society and religion. For the social organism is as varied as the conditions of men from age to age composing it, and the import of religion is as exhaustless as the experience of the soul. When any change occurs as to the form in which truth is embodied, many hands are nervously outstretched to support the tottering ark of God. These good men forget Jean Paul's conviction that truth like the ancient statue of Venus, may be broken into thirty pieces and scattered abroad, but after ages will gather the fragments and rebuild them into the image of beauty and divinity. When shall we come to look upon religion not as a book nor a miracle, nor an institution, however useful and conventional these may be, but as a state of the soul? "Religion," said Amiel, "is not a method. It is a life, a higher and supernatural life, mystical in its roots and practical in its fruits, a communion with God, a calm and deep enthusiasm, a love which radiates, a force which acts, a happiness which overflows."

Jesus hit upon an age that was grounded in reverence for authority almost to the point of fanaticism: The scribes could appeal only to what was written in the law or to the comments, often widely fanciful, based on it. How revolutionary was the manner of Jesus in treating the same questions of duty and destiny. While he wrested from a dead past whatsoever grains of gold it had treasured up, he testified the truth of his words by their perfect accord with the hearts and consciences of those who crowded about him. As a proof of God's concern for them he pointed to His care for the sparrow and to the garment of beauty which he wove for the lilies of the field. Life, life was the all sacred thing with the Divine Man. Traditional morality he set aside, while he enforced the eternal principles of right and holiness which this weight of unmeaning cant had obscured. For him anger was incipient murder; and for him the motive can be as guilty of adultery as the man. It was thus that he hewed to the line of life. "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life." Need we wonder that the two characteristic comments on this teacher were: "They were astonished at his teaching," and, "The common people heard him gladly."

The mob that dragged Paul with his companion Silas before the rulers at Thessalonica expressed with rare insight a leading truth when they cried, "These that have turned the world upside down have come hither." It took a man with no less genius and grasp than Paul to see that the new wine of the gospel was not to be put into old wine skins. In his teaming thought the most exclusive creed became a universal religion.

Many from Huss to Erasmus had felt that the time was fast approaching when insincere penance and rites mumbled in a dead language could no longer smother the spiritual fires that were kindling in Northern Europe, but it required the hardihood of Luther to heed when the hour struck, sounding forth that spiritual Christianity must take the place of the lifeless system whose away was until then unquestioned.

The history of science reveals the same toilsome ascent. Thus in every sphere life is a series of readjustments consciously wrought out under God's guidance in the larger light which is struck out by experience. The measure of truth, like the manna of old, is found to be good for but the one day. Each generation, spider-like, must draw from within its resources from combat as a means for a stronger hold on life. This ceaseless striving on the part of man to find adequate expression for his untested capabilities and longings that "wander through eternity" suggests that perhaps the chief end of nature and experience is to afford limitless activity for the soul of man in reaching its divine stature.

"Our little systems have their day;  
They have their day and cease to be;  
They are but broken lights of thee,  
And thou, O Lord, art more than they."

Richmond College, Va. Texas Standard.

### The Ministry of Sympathy.

There never was such a life. The lonely man of Nazareth found sweet friendship. He was welcome to the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus. Hearts bled when he suffered. Souls were thrilled with strange joy when he triumphed. So has it ever been with his followers. There are hearts whose devotion to you has never wavered. Adversity has bound them closer to you and their joy has ever been to rejoice in your joy. Why murmur, if you have not a hundred tountains where you may drink when you can ever come to the one rock in Lebanon? But the full answer can be found if you refer to Ezekiel's vision of the holy waters rising by the altar of sacrifice, widening and deepening in their beneficent way to the sea. You may not expect humanity, like echoing hills; to give back groan for groan and song for song, but every life of sympathetic service will be enlarged and ennobled while there will be Bethanys in some great hearts wherein to rest.

"Is the heart a well left empty? None but God the void can fill.  
Nothing but a ceaseless fountain can its ceaseless long-  
ing fill.  
Is the heart a living power? Self-entwined its strength  
sinks low.  
It can only live in loving and by serving love will grow."  
The world may be ungrateful. Weak men may betray

you as they did the Master, yet know that true Christian "friendship is a garden watered by self-denials and tears, and flooded with love for all humanity; it bears a wondrous foliage and blossoms with hearts-ease and lotus bloom. Deck but mine undeserving brow from such a paradise, and I will reign where kings have never had a sceptre, liege or thrall."

As the closest relations are formed, the longing for sympathy will grow. Its bestowal will be more generous and its withholding more cruel. In a beautiful, silent city near the great lake, whose waters cool the air of summer, sleeps the body of a minister of Christ. He gave heart treasures to a people who had sworn to love him. Truth fell from his lips, but faithfulness gave offense. For months he suffered, and found but one home where he might go and weep. His self-respect forbade publicity. He suffered in silence, save in this home, where two generous natures offered him love and sympathy. "They bore him on their hearts as one would carry a wounded bird." There, with rainy eyes and quivering lips, he told his grief. He died—the papers said of fever. But others read the secret and whispered, "He died for lack of sympathy." No human skill could save. He died like Jesus, of a broken heart, because the people who had sworn to love him had not kept their vows. It was not an enemy that reproached him or he could have borne it, but it was one with whom he had taken sweet counsel and in whose company he had gone to the house of God. Young men and women of the convention, warn your companions! Tell them that there is a ministry so cruel that it ends in death! Encourage your fellows, and teach to them that there is a ministry so sacred that it issues in life and peace and everlasting bliss; this is the ministry of sympathy. —United Presbyterian.

### In the Desert With God.

In these days of hurry and bustle we find ourselves face to face with a terrible danger; and it is this—no time to be alone with God. The world, in these last days, is running fast; we live in what is called "the age of progress," and "you know we must keep pace with the times." So the world says. But this spirit of the world has not confined itself to the world. It is, alas! to be found among the saints of God. And what next? Surely the question does not need an answer. Can there be any condition more deplorable than the condition of a child of God who has no inclination to be alone with his Father?

This "desert life," as many may call it, is of an importance that cannot be overvalued; and as if with a trumpet we would sound it in the ears of brethren. Let us turn to the pages of God's book; for we can turn nowhere else if we are seeking light on this or any other subject. On scanning its precious pages we find that the men of God—God's mighty men—were those who had been in "the school of God," as it has well been called; and His school was simply this: "In the desert along with Himself." It was there they got their teaching. Far removed from the din and bustle of the haunts of men—distant alike from human eye and ear—there they met alone with God; there they were equipped for the battle. And when the time came that they stood forth in public service for God, their faces were not ashamed—nay, they had faces as lions; they were bold and fearless, yea, and victorious for God, for the battle had been won already in the desert alone with Him.—London Christian.

### The Humility of True Faith.

Our experience may tell us that faith and humility do not always go hand in hand. Faith is sometimes looked upon as a distinction which entitles its possessor to take liberties with God. No doubt our Lord, in His loving condescension, does invite the confidence and affection of those who really take Him at His word; but this invitation can never safely dispense with a sense of our unworthiness, or of the distance that separates the Creator from the creature. We sometimes hear language about our Lord, prayers and hymns addressed to Him, which no doubt proceed from an earnest faith in Him, or, at least, in certain truths about him, but which are conspicuously wanting in reverence. When the centurion made up his mind to approach on behalf of his paralyzed servant, he was so conscious of his unworthiness to venture into such a presence that he applied—so Luke tells us—to the elders of the synagogue to intercede for him: "When he heard of Jesus he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant." When our Lord offered to come and heal the patient, the centurion replied: "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed." True faith is not insensible to the nearness and tenderness of God, but it is also alive to his awful majesty.—Watchman.

Choice and service—these were demanded of the Israelites, these are demanded of you, these only.