

He appears humble, but his humility is his pride, and his whole attitude reveals a degrading form of self-consciousness which passes into sublimated selfishness. In *St. Agnes' Eve* we are shown the most beautiful side of the mystic life. It is the picture of a thoroughly devout soul longing for the hour when it shall be wedded to the Heavenly Bridegroom, and shall enter on "the one deep Sabbath of Eternity." *Sir Gallahad* is another of the same kind—a youthful virgin soul going forth in quest of the Holy Grail, with the purest of motives. But although both pictures contain not one repulsive feature there is an evident lack of completeness.

One is tempted to exclaim, as he studies them, "How beautiful, but oh, how selfish!" And when Tennyson again touched and amplified this subject of *Sir Gallahad* and the Holy Grail in "*The Idylls of the King*," he leaves no room for doubt as to the lesson he means to teach. How did the quest end? Was it gain or loss? Loss assuredly, for some only thought they saw the mystic fire, others, of whom *Sir Gallahad* was one, had the vision, but it was afar off, and he, as a result of the spirit of "other-worldliness," chose to "pass into the silent life of the cloister, leaving human wrongs to right themselves." Mysticism, then, is but a delusive fire, and he who follows it is ecclesiastically mad. It is a failure, a perverted and wholly mistaken idea of life. *Sir Gallahad* may be "crowned elsewhere," but he has failed of his duty here. Those who should have remained with the king in faithful performance of labour, impelled by this spirit, set out in chase of wandering fires, and left the realm to crumble into ruin. Plainly the example we are taught to follow is that of the king who looked upon himself as "a hind to whom a space of land is given to plow, who may not wander from the allotted field before his work be done."

But if the excess of spirituality that leads to abandonment of the world is wrong, the other extreme, materialism, is worse. The latter is vividly portrayed in "*The Vision of Sin*." It tells the fate of a man who has spent his life in licen-