

among us have created? Why the boldest of us all would hardly dare to mount the heights of their young and honest conceptions. Suppose, for instance, we could see with their eyes the ideals of the historical God of the Universe, as He sees them; that we could, as it were, photograph their impersonations of His being; the humanity they make Him wear; the throne they seat Him upon; the crown they place on His head; the robes they clothe Him with; His heaven, His angels, the Saviour at His side, and the Spirits of the just made perfect in the forms they give them. If we could see all these embodiments of their conceptions we should get a clearer view of the faculty and mission of idealism in the highest realm of spiritual life, as well as in that general progress and well-being of mankind, which we call civilization.

But this creative faculty of the mind does something more than people the past and the future with its impersonations. It fills this living present with its human ideals, which are as dear to us as 'the immediate jewels' of our souls; dearer far than the bare human realities that belong to our actual companionship. How cold and cruel would fall the hand upon our hearts and homes that should drive out of our Eden the beloved ideals that walk with us among its flowers, and even taste with us the forbidden fruit of its tree of knowledge of good and evil! Why, every-day ideals marry and are given in marriage to each other in our midst. The happiest homes on earth are the homes of living ideals; the homes of husbands and wives, parents and children, radiant with the idealism which one gives to the other. There is many a poor woman, pinched and pale with poverty, who can say, and does say, to her half-crippled, homely and fretful husband:

'Although you are nothing to the world,
You are all the world to me.'

The very term we use to designate

the qualities of the highest beings of our faith and worship illustrates this idealism. We speak of the *attributes* of such a being. These are the dispositions, the faculties, the heart and mind which we attribute to one; the qualities *we* believe him to possess, and which make up his character to our honest apprehension. It is one of the happiest faculties of the human mind that we can attribute these qualities, even to those nearest and dearest to us; that, while they walk by our side through life, we can robe their real beings with the soft velvet of our idealism, hiding all the unwelcome discrepancies and unpleasant features of bare fact which we do not *wish* to see. Not one of the Christian graces acts without some faculty of the mind put in exercise. And charity, that crowning virtue of them all—'charity that beareth all things, *believeth* all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things; charity that suffereth long and is kind, and envieth not, and *thinketh* no evil'—this, the greatest of all the graces that brighten and sweeten the life of human society, acts more through this faculty of idealism than through any other power of the mind. What a wretched aggravation of human beings society would be if they lived and moved together in the bare bones of actual fact, unclothed upon by that soft mantle of our idealism, which is woven in the same loom as Charity's best robe, wherewith she covers such a multitude of sins, blots and specks which would otherwise be seen to the hurt of our social happiness!

We have, then, the clearest testimony that God could give in nature, in revelation, and in the history of mankind, that there is no power of the human mind through which He works so manifestly, so irresistibly for the uplifting and salvation of our race as this very faculty of idealism. Not a family or tribe of mankind has ever made one step of progress in civilization except through the exercise of this faculty. Not an individual soul has