

which the little children are too young to understand; which no one can understand until he has met, face to face, the duties and obligations of life, and knows something of the ways of thought and of the divers lines which it may take, and has been taught what it is to suffer.

Manhood, womanhood, is needed for all this—manhood, womanhood, with their earnestness in action, their depth of aspiration, their inextinguishable thirst, their iron crown of pain and grief. The gold, the frankincense, the myrrh—these are signs also unto us, as we study our own perplexing lives, and this is the application which I request you to make. Let us put ourselves in the place of the Magi. It is natural and right to do so, for they represent the Gentile world, and we are Gentiles. They were our spiritual ancestors, who stood for us, our sponsors in that far-off day. What gifts they offered, they offered for us also. Let us make it all real to ourselves. Let us see what we have to give to Christ to-day. Let us by faith behold the scenes of the Nativity and of the Epiphany, as if 2,000 years had not passed, and as if Mary had just brought forth her first-born Son, and now held Him up before us, her arms around Him, her deep eyes looking far, far away, and light supernatural glowing on the forms of the Ever Virgin and her only Child.

Gold may be taken as representing our substance, our goods, our material wealth, be it more or less. But it stands for more: for talents, powers, for ability, for whatever may be turned to account in the Lord's service. Gold is the mainspring of the world's commerce, of business, of trade, the price of the labor of man. All work, all material, have their worth in gold. This first oblation represents the offering of that which is outward in us, of that which can be detached, of that which we can give away. Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." What then must be the blessedness of those who can enjoy the luxury of giving? One of the three laid gold at the feet of the Infant Christ, and the rich man of Arimathea received the greatest of all honors, in being permitted to take the sacred body of Christ, and to lay it in His own tomb. And they who can give of their gold at the Holy Shrine are still, as ever, blessed in that deed. But in some measure also we all can make that first offering: the oblation of our substance. Give the Christ, the Holy Child, not only of thy goods, but of thy time, thy skill, thy experience, thy craft, whatever thou hast, the humblest gift shall not go unrewarded, so it be given in faith.

Next in order comes the frankincense, of what is it the symbol? It is a substance which once kindled sends up sweet clouds towards the sky—it is the symbol of religious thought directing itself longingly towards God.

As the gold stands for what is outward in our life, so the frankincense typifies what is inward in us. Another side of humanity is