

power of an inward impulse. On the other hand, we do sometimes meet with a vigor in speech and in song both vital and immediate, which reveals a feeling the most strenuous, spontaneous and abiding. We find it in the passage from which we have taken the text: a song that breaks from a full heart, leaping with lyric motion in the loftiest and most unartificial freedom of style: "Sing unto the Lord all the earth! show forth from day to day his salvation. Declare his glory among the heathen; his marvelous works among all nations. For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised. Glory and honor are in his presence; strength and gladness are in his place."

A song like this throws light on the whole Hebrew economy of precept and worship. By some it has been regarded as an austere, repellent system, severe in temper and shadowed by an ever-watchful and recompensing God, guarded by a law vast and terrific in its sanctions; a burdensome bondage in which the swing of perfect liberty was unknown. But Hebrew worship was largely festal. Praise was prominent. In this it surpassed all other religions before or since the time of David. The Psalms, it is true, breathe a penitential spirit and voice the feelings of a contrite heart, but, pre-eminently, they are jubilant and grateful in their temper. Their inspiring joy shoots up from a vigorous root. That joy had its throne in the temple and in the sanctuary; in the rude, humble tent where rested the sacred ark, as well as in the palace of the king. In the midst of powerful and envious empires the national unity of God's people preserved them; a unity inspired alone by their strong, radical, religious life. Nothing else would have enabled them to withstand the adverse circumstances of their condition.

Now we all need enthusiasm and vigor in our work. It is, however, a rare thing to find these as an abiding, continuous experience. Youth, of course, has freshness and freedom. Its ardent hopefulness colors everything, just as we find when, looking at distant objects

through a lens not perfectly achromatic, we see them fringed with prismatic tints—a rainbow brilliancy which does not belong to the objects themselves. There are objects in life that lose their illusive and enchanting brightness when viewed in the sober inspection of maturer age.

Health, too, has its influence in imparting enthusiasm. On a bright and bracing day we walk the street with resounding foot. The sunlit skies and the crisp air help to quicken and enliven our spirits. Contact with a friend we love warms our soul with new emotion, and pours the elixir of life into languid veins. A great thought, or the perusal of a delightful book, may stir our intellect to fresh activity. A new key to the mystery of life is given us by momentary contact with an illuminated mind.

But society is complex. Cares are multiplied and minute in this our hurrying and exacting life. By no voluntary act of ours can we maintain this tension, any more than we can stretch a wire a hundred yards without a sag. With added years and with narrowing friendships we see less of pleasure ahead to anticipate. We come to feel the need of something to alleviate the weariness of life. Just here is seen a reason for the universal impulse to seek for artificial stimulus. It is not a love for the drug or dram itself, so much as a craving for something to lighten the load that presses on the spirit—a burden which is most sensibly felt as society grows more and more artificial. It is in just such communities that suicide is most common.

Can we as Christian disciples find in our religion that ennobling and enlivening element which was found in the Hebrew? If not, ours is narrower and more limited than the Hebrew. Yes, we do find strength and gladness here. We do find, not a transient glow, an occasional enthusiasm, but an abiding joy, as we come under the power of the religion of Christ. Do you ask, How this is to be maintained?

1. We find it in the entire relief from