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RELIGION AND HAPPINESS.

"I believe in Christianity, but I believe in cheerfulness and happiness also." So we once heard a very eloquent man commencing an eloquent speech, through the whole of which he assumed that to be a thorough-going christian was somehow antagonistic to cheerfulness and happiness in this life. The same assumption meets us in a great proportion of our popular literature. If Dickens had any faith at all it was that half the world are idiots, and that no one who is religious after the orthodox fashion can be other than a fanatic or a hypocrite. Balwer, indeed, is above this cant; but he runs wild into a fantastic transcendentalism. Tennyson himself, in his weaker moods, cants about the faith there is in "honest doubt"—the hollowness of "creeds"—the greatness of Mauricianism—the insincerity of the ordinary type of evangelical christianity. In his beautiful "*Two Voices*" the consolation of true religion is left out of sight, and outward nature is selected as sole teacher and consoler in the hour of darkest doubt. God's voice is not heard except in some faint pantheistic murmurs. This is unquestionably the *fashion* of literature in our day. There are noble exceptions; and even Tennyson and Dickens condescend at times to speak patronizingly of Christ and Christianity. We thank them for their patronage. Christ and Christians are much obliged to them!

That Christianity is sometimes made to look revoltingly austere, we do not deny. This is the fault of blind votaries. In itself it is the only true, beautiful and happy

religion; it is the Key to all the dark problems that appal weak and strong alike; it is the true medicine for all the ills that darken the career of the human race!

The Christian looks abroad in the world and sees moral ruin and inexpressible wretchedness. He sees calamities sweeping as a flood over nations; war, famine, plague; fear of still darker ills making present evil more unbearable. He sees each individual of the race bearing his burden of misery for a time—toiling, struggling, fighting, falling at last into the darkness of oblivion. Are not these stern and awful facts? How should a rational being account for them or meet them?

Some will deny their existence, or try to pare the mountains of misery down an inch or so; but the heart knoweth its own bitterness! The load is heavier than it can bear. The strongest cry one time or another for help, and seek for aid from God, from some god. It is little consolation to point to the sweet flowers that die sooner than myself; or to the bright sunshine which was just as bright before men was created, and which would be as bright were I under the ground. Nature has no mercy; I die even among flowers and sunshine. I suffer though all the birds are singing their songs. Can the charms of the landscape bind a broken heart? Can the beauties of nature heal a wounded spirit. Universal joy is no compensation for individual wretchedness. Does it not aggravate my agony to see that while I am perishing the great world moves on unheeding?

We have yet to see a fair grappling with