

Christian had an anodyne for every grief, whether in the privacy of his inner consciousness, or in the relations of domestic, social, or political life. The thought that every event is by the will of the Deity, the sense of communion with the Man-God, the conviction that our earthly span is but a fragment of a higher, greater life, dulled the edge of pain, and robbed even death of its sting. The martyr as he stepped into the arena, the cleric as he trod the thorny paths of the apostolate, the hermit as he braved the wilderness, each was comforted by the vision of God beyond the bourne.

The scales of blindness had fallen from the eyes of men; they beheld and revelled in the great, consoling, all-embracing truths of Christianity. No philosophy of the ancient schools could equal the wisdom they learned from Christ.

Magnificent was the change of human life when the Babe of Bethlehem was born. And this benign influence has been at work in the world down through the ages, by the medium of the Catholic Church, founded by the Saviour to continue His mission. Her policy has gone hand in hand with her teaching, ever striving to banish sadness. In the early ages of civilization her struggle was a hard one. After the fall of the Roman Empire, might and right were, for the most part, synonymous terms throughout Europe. The feudal lord ranged his retainers, and felt no scruple in seizing as lawful plunder, the property of anyone with whom he was on unfriendly terms. The great keeps, the narrow, winding streets, the beetling battlements of ancient cities are mute testimony to the fact that in those days the warlike instincts of the human race were given full rein. Against all this the church waged an unrelenting and successful combat, by preaching, edict and censure. To her must be credited the "Truce of God," the orders of chivalry, the emancipation of the serf, the abolition of barbarous customs, the recognition of the universal brotherhood of man. But this was not all. She formed guilds to advance the temporal and spiritual interests of the merchant, the trader, the mechanic, each of which had its fixed days of celebration and rejoicing. She appointed the Festivals of the Saints upon which the people abstained from toil. She devised the Mystery Plays to instruct and amuse them, performed on stages which could be moved on wheels about the streets. She perfected harmonious cadences, and blazed a trail through the enchanted realms of music. Her sculptors idealized the art of Praxiteles, in the statues of the saints; and who can gaze on the paintings of Fra Angelico, Raphael, Michel-