

G3-22
25216

THOMAS CARLYLE:

A Memorial Discourse

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

SOUTH PLACE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY,

FEBRUARY 13TH, 1881,

BY

MONCURE D. CONWAY, M.A.

LONDON:
SOUTH PLACE CHAPEL, FINSBURY.

Price 2d.

LONDON
FREDERICK G. HICKSON AND CO.,
257, HIGH HOLBORN, W.C.

ANTHEM.

THE cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
 The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
 Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve ;
 And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
 Leave not a rack behind : We are such stuff
 As dreams are made on, and our little life
 Is rounded with a sleep.

 HYMN.

THOUGH wandering in a strange land,
 Though on the waste no altar stand,
 Take comfort thou art not alone
 While Faith hath marked thee for her own.

Would'st thou a temple ? Look above,
 The heavens stretch over all in love :
 A book ? For thine evangile scan
 The wondrous history of man.

The holy band of saints renowned
 Embrace thee, brother-like, around ;
 Their sufferings and their triumphs rise
 In hymns immortal to the skies.

And though no organ-peal be heard,
 In harmony the winds are stirred ;
 And there the morning stars upraise
 Their ancient songs of deathless praise.

AFTER CARLYLE.

READINGS.

FROM "ECCLESIASTICUS."

Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.

God hath wrought great glory by them through his great power from the beginning.

Such as did hear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies :

Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions :

Such as found out musical tunes, and recited verses in writing :

Rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations :

All these were honoured in their generations and were the glory of their times.

There be of them, that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported.

And some there be, which have no memorial. . .

But these were merciful men, whose righteousness hath not been forgotten.

With their seed shall continually remain a good inheritance. . . .

Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.

Their bodies are buried in peace ; but their name liveth for evermore.

The people will tell of their wisdom, and the congregation will show forth their praise.

FROM THE WORKS OF THOMAS CARLYLE.

I.

NOW, when I look back, it was a strange isolation I then lived in. The men and women around me, even speaking with me were but figures; I had practically forgotten that they were alive, that they were not automatic. In the midst of their crowded streets and assemblages, I walked solitary; and (except as it was my own heart, not another's, that I kept devouring) savage also, as is the tiger in his jungle. Some comfort it would have been, could I, like a Faust, have fancied myself tempted and tormented of a Devil; for a Hell, as I imagine, without Life, though only diabolic Life, were more frightful: but in our age of Down-pulling and Disbelief, the very Devil has been pulled down. You cannot so much as believe in a Devil. To me the Universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility; it was one huge, dead, immeasurable Steam-engine, rolling on, in its dead indifference, to grind me limb from limb. Oh, the vast gloomy, solitary Golgotha, and Mill of Death! Why was the Living banished thither, companionless, conscious? Why, if there is no Devil; nay, unless the Devil is your God? . . .

From suicide a certain aftershine of Christianity withheld me. . . .

So had it lasted, as in bitter protracted Death-agony, through long years. The heart within me, unvisited by any heavenly dewdrop, was smouldering in sulphurous, slow-consuming fire. Almost since earliest memory I had shed no tear; or once only when I, murmuring half-audibly, recited Faust's Death song, that wild *Selig der den er im Siegesglanze findet* (Happy whom he finds in Battle's splendour), and thought that of this last friend even I was not forsaken,

that Destiny itself could not doom me not to die. Having no hope, neither had I any definite fear, were it of Man or of Devil ; nay, I often felt as if it might be solacing could the Arch-Devil himself, though in Tartarian terrors, rise to me that I might tell him a little of mind. And yet, strangely enough, I lived in a continual indefinite, pining fear ; tremulous, pusillanimous, apprehensive of I knew not what ; it seemed as if all things in the Heavens above and the Earth beneath would hurt me ; as if the Heavens and the Earth were but boundless jaws of a devouring monster, wherein I, palpitating, waited to be devoured.

Full of such humour, and perhaps the miserablest man in the whole French Capital or Suburbs, was I, one sultry Dog-day, after much perambulation, toiling along the dirty little *Rue Sainte-Thomas de l'Enfer*, among civic rubbish enough, in a close atmosphere, and over pavements hot as Nebuchadnezzar's Furnace, whereby doubtless my spirits were little cheered ; when all at once there rose a Thought in me, and I asked myself, 'What art thou afraid of? Wherefore, like a coward, dost thou for ever pip and whimper, and go cowering and trembling? Despicable biped ! what is the sum-total of the worst that lies before thee? Death? Well, Death ; and say the pangs of Tophet too, and all that the Devil or Man may, will, or can do against thee ! Hast thou not a heart ; can't thou not suffer whatsoever it be ; and, as a Child of Freedom, though outcast, trample Tophet itself under thy feet, while it consumes thee ! Let it come, then ; I will meet it and defy it !' And as I so thought, there rushed like a stream of fire over my whole soul ; and I shook base Fear away from me for ever. I was strong, of unknown strength, a spirit, almost a god. Ever from that time the temper of my misery was changed ; not fear or whining Sorrow was it, but Indignation and grim fire-eyed Defiance.

Thus had the *Everlasting No* pealed authoritatively through all the recesses of my Being, of my Me; and then was it that my whole Me stood up, in native God-created majesty, and with emphasis recorded its protest. Such a Protest, the most important transaction in Life, may that same Indignation and Defiance, in a psychological point of view, be fitly called. The Everlasting No, had said, "Behold, thou art fatherless, outcast, and the Universe is mine (the Devil's);" to which my whole Me now made answer, "I am not thine, but free, and for ever hate thee!"

It is from this hour that I incline to date my spiritual New-Birth, or Baphometric fire-baptism; perhaps I directly there-upon began to be a Man.

II.

Sterling returned to England; took orders,—'ordained deacon at Chichester on Trinity Sunday, in 1834' (he never technically became priest.)

The bereaved young lady has *taken* the vail, then! Even so. "Life is growing all so dark and brutal; must be redeemed into human, if it will continue life. Some pious heroism, to give a human colour to life again, on any terms,"—even on impossible ones!

To such length can transcendental moonshine, cast by some morbidly radiating Coleridge into the chaos of a fermenting life, act magically there and produce divulsions and convulsions and diseased developments. So dark and abstruse, without lamp or authentic finger-post, is the course of pious genius towards the Eternal Kingdoms grown. No fixed highway more; the old spiritual highways and recognized paths to the Eternal, now all torn up and flung in heaps, submerged in unutterable boiling mud-oceans of Hypocrisy and Unbelievability, of brutal living Atheism and damnable dead

putrescent Cant : surely a tragic pilgrimage for all mortals ; Darkness, and the mere shadow of Death, enveloping all things from pole to pole ; and in the raging gulf-currents, offering us will-o'-wisps for loadstars,—intimating that there are no stars, nor ever were, except certain Old-Jew ones which have now gone out. Once more, a tragic pilgrimage for all mortals ; and for the young pious soul, winged with genius, and passionately seeking land, and passionately abhorrent of floating carrion withal, more tragical than for any !—A pilgrimage we must all undertake nevertheless, and make the best of with our respective means. Some arrive ; a glorious few : many must be lost,—go down upon the floating wreck which they took for land. Nay, courage ! These also, so far as there was any heroism in them, have bequeathed their life as a contribution to us, have valiantly laid their bodies in the chasm for us ; of these also there is no ray of heroism *lost*,—and, on the whole, what else of them could or should be 'saved' at any time ? Courage, and ever Forward !

Concerning this attempt of Sterling's to find sanctuary in the old Church, and desperately grasp the hem of her garment in such manner, there will at present be many opinions : and mine must be recorded here in flat reproof of it, in mere pitying condemnation of it, as a rash, false, unwise and unpermitted step. Nay, among the evil lessons of his Time to poor Sterling I cannot but account this the worst ; properly indeed, as we may say, the apotheosis, the solemn apology and consecration, of all the evil lessons that were in it to him. Alas, if we did remember the divine and awful nature of God's Truth, and had not so forgotten it as poor doomed creatures never did before—should we, durst we in our most audacious moments, think of wedding it to the world's Untruth, which is also, like all untruths, the Devil's ? Only in the world's last lethargy can such things be done,

and accounted safe and pious! Fools! "Do you think the Living God is a buzzard idol," sternly asks Milton, that you dare address Him in this manner?—Such darkness, thick sluggish clouds of cowardice and oblivious baseness, have accumulated on us; thickening as if towards the eternal sleep! It is not now known, what never needed proof or statement before, that Religion is not a doubt; that it is a certainty,—or else a mockery and horror. That none or all of the many things we are in doubt about, and need to have demonstrated and rendered probable, can by any alchemy be made a "Religion" for us; but are and must continue a baleful, quiet or unquiet, Hypocrisy for us; and bring—*salvation*, do we fancy? I think, it is another thing they will bring; and are, on all hands, visibly bringing, this good while! . . . No man of Sterling's veracity, had he clearly consulted his own heart, or had his own heart been capable of clearly responding, and not been dazzled and bewildered by transient fantasies and theosophic moonshine, could have undertaken this function. His heart would have answered: "No, thou canst not. What is incredible to thee, thou shalt not, at thy soul's peril, attempt to believe! Elsewhither for a refuge, or die here. Go to Perdition if thou must,—but not with a lie in thy mouth; by the Eternal Maker, no!"

III.

There is a perennial nobleness, and even sacredness in Work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man that actually and earnestly works; in Idleness alone there is perpetual despair. Work, never so Mammonish, mean, is in communication with Nature; the real desire to get Work done will itself lead one more and more to truth, to Nature's appointments and regulations, which are truth.

Consider how, even in the meanest sorts of Labour, the whole soul of a man is composed into a kind of real harmony, the instant he sets himself to work. Doubt, Desire, Sorrow, Remorse, Indignation, Despair itself, all these like hell-dogs, lie belcaguering the soul of the poor day worker, as of every man ; but he bends himself with free valour against his task, and all these are stilled, all these shrink murmuring far off into their caves.

Blessed is he who has found his work ; let him ask no other blessedness. He has a work, a Life-purpose ; he has found it and will follow it. Labour is Life ; from the innocent heart of the Worker rises his god-given Force, the sacred celestial Life-essence breathed into him by Almighty God ; from his inmost heart awakens him to all nobleness—to all knowledge, ‘self-knowledge’ and much else, so soon as Work fitly begins.

And again, hast thou valued Patience, Courage, Perseverance, Openness to light ; readiness to own thyself mistaken, to do better next time ? All these, all virtues, in wrestling with the dim brute powers of Fact, in ordering of thy fellows in such wrestle, there and elsewhere not at all, thou wilt continually learn.

Work is of a religious nature :—work is of a brave nature ; which it is the aim of all religion to be. All work of man is as the swimmer’s : a waste ocean threatens to devour him ; if he front it not bravely, it will keep its word. By incessant wise defiances of it, lusty rebuke and buffet of it, behold how loyally it supports him, bears him as its conqueror along.

‘Religion,’ I said, for properly speaking all true Work is Religion ; and whatsoever religion is not work may go and dwell among the Brahmins, Antinomians, Spinning Dervishes, and where it will ; with me it shall have no harbour. Admirable was that of the old monks, ‘*Laborare est orare*, Work is Wcrship.’

Older than all preached Gospels was this unpreached, inarticulate, but ineradicable, forever enduring Gospel : Work, and therein have well being. Man, Son of Earth and of Heaven, lies there not, in the innermost heart of thee, a spirit of active Method, a Force for work ;—and burns like a painfully smouldering fire, giving thee no rest till thou unfold it, till thou write it down in beneficent Facts around thee ! What is immethodic, waste, thou shall make methodic, regulated, arable ; obedient and productive to thee. Wheresoever thou findest Disorder, there is thy eternal enemy ; attack him swiftly, subdue him, make Order of him, the subject not of Chaos, but of Intelligence, Divinity and Thee ! But above all, where thou findest Ignorance, Stupidity, Brute-mindedness, attack it, I say, smite it wisely, unweariedly, and rest not while thou livest, and it lives, but smite, smite, in the name of God ! . . .

“ As to the Wages of work, there might innumerable things be said. . . . Nay, at bottom, dost thou need any reward ?

“ My brother, the brave man has to give his life away. Give it, I advise thee ; thou dost not expect to *sell* thy Life in an adequate manner ? What price, for example, would content thee ? The just price of thy *Life* to thee—why, God’s entire Creation to thyself, the whole Universe of Space, the whole Eternity of Time, and what they hold : that is the price which would content thee ; that, and if thou wilt be candid, nothing short of that ! It is thy all ; and for it thou would’st have all. Thou art an unreasonable mortal ;—or rather thou art a poor *infinite* mortal, who, in thy narrow clay-prison here, *seemest* so unreasonable ! Thou wilt never sell thy Life, or any part of thy Life, in a satisfactory manner. Give it, like a royal heart ; let the price be Nothing ; thou hast then in a certain sense got all for it ! ”

HYMN.

So here hath been dawning
Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ?

Out of eternity
This new day is born ;
Into eternity
At night will return.

Behold it aforetime
No eye ever did ;
So soon it for ever
From all eyes is hid.

Here hath been dawning
Another blue day :
Think, wilt thou let it
Slip useless away ?

CARLYLE.

ANTHEM.

The future hides in it
 Gladness and sorrow ;
 We press still thorow,
 Nought that abides in it
 Daunting us,—Onward.

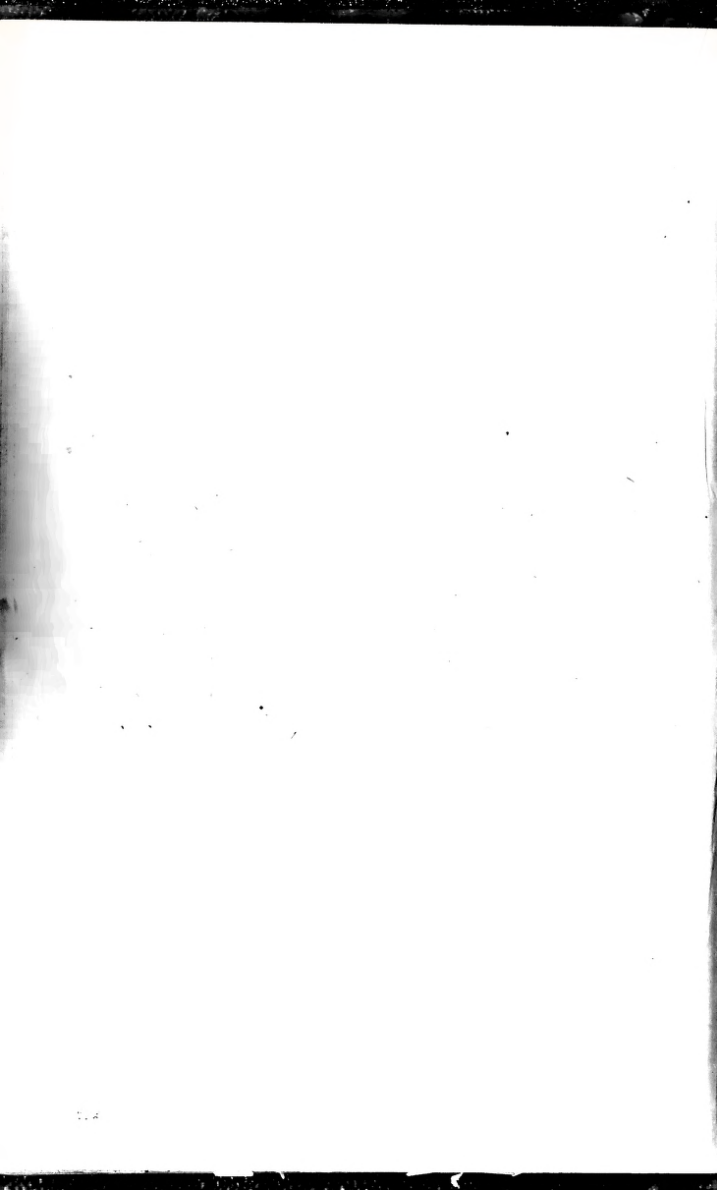
And solemn before us,
 Veiled the dark Portal ;
 Goal of all mortal :—
 Stars silent rest o'er us,
 Graves under us silent.

While earnest thou gazest,
 Comes boding of terror,
 Comes phantasm and error ;
 Perplexes the bravest
 With doubt and misgiving.

But heard are the Voices,
 Heard are the sages,
 The Worlds, and the Ages :
 “ Choose well ; your choice is
 Brief, and yet endless.

“ Here eyes do regard you
 In Eternity's stillness ;
 Here is all fulness,
 Ye brave to reward you.
 Work, and despair not !”

GOETHE, TR. BY CARLYLE.



THOMAS CARLYLE.

THOMAS CARLYLE was buried, on Thursday last, in the village of Ecclefechan, long ago raised from obscurity by being his birthplace, now consecrated by holding his dust. The public eye had turned rather to that spot near Edinburgh, where, amid the mouldering walls of Haddington Cathedral, among her kindred, lies the wife who so long shared the toils and furthered the aims of his life. How strong were the ties that bound him to that spot is shown in the tribute on her tomb. It may, in a sense, be unimportant where one is buried; yet when a man rests from his labours, his works do follow him. If he have lived for a high aim, his life is a testimony; and, be it great or small, that testimony should be faithful to the facts, and its influence continue in the direction of the life. There was a genuine instinct beneath the desire of the patriarchs to be gathered to their people. Of Jacob it is written—"These are

the twelve tribes of Israel: and this is it that their father spake unto them, and blessed them: every one according to his blessing he blessed them. And he charged them, and said unto them, I am to be gathered unto my people: bury me with my fathers in the cave that is in the field of Ephron the Hittite. In the grave that is in the field of Macpelah, which is before Mamre, in the land of Canaan, which Abraham bought with the field of Ephron the Hittite, for a possession of a burying-place. (There they buried Abraham and Sarah his wife; there they buried Isaac and his wife; and there I buried Leah.) The purchase of the field and of the cave that is therein was from the children of Heth. And when Jacob had made an end of commanding his sons, he gathered up his feet into the bed and yielded up the ghost." The patriarch died in an Egyptian palace: his son had become Prime Minister of Pharaoh: his body might have rested in a pyramid. But whatever lesson or lustre his name possessed must be reflected on the humble people of whom he had come. If Egypt wished to honour him it must go, as it did, with its "chariots and horsemen," to the lonely field in a distant land.

Not in accordance with the spirit of Carlyle's life, or his last charge to those around him, could he be laid in any proud pyramid; not in Westminster Abbey; not in Haddington Cathedral; not even in

such Arimathean sepulchre as the Scotch kirk would have given him. Carlyle is gathered to his people, not to their creed, but to their heart; to those who, amid whatever ignorance, did their best for him, and succeeded in nourishing in him the moral strength which exerted a unique influence on the world.

Thomas Carlyle was a glorified peasant. Some little time ago one of his aristocratic friends set about showing that he was descended from a great family which lived in a castle; but the sage smiled at the attempt which for the rest came to nothing. He was, indeed, the last of the family so lowly born. From the first that sturdy and sensible stonemason, his father, and his wise wife, steadily climbed towards that height which their son reached, and their descendants sustain. Nevertheless, they were at his birth very poor. Within a hundred yards of the spot where he now rests stands the small house of which his parents occupied but two rooms. The room in which this great man was born is humble enough, lit by one little window. It is now occupied by the village sexton who dug his grave.

And as he was thus born among the poor, so amid peasants chiefly he was laid to rest. There was sufficient manifestation of feeling throughout the country to have made the funeral one of vast dimensions; to avoid all appearance of an ostentation always odious to him the place and day of the burial

were kept private. Few even in Ecclefechan knew them. Many were off installing a new minister in a neighbouring village church. A red-coated fox hunt was going on in fields near by. Only when the bell began tolling did the inhabitants know of the hour. With exception of a few intimate friends who had gone from London, and his relatives now far removed in position from the circumstances amid which the author was born, they who gathered around the grave of Carlyle were mainly peasants. The public school children gathered around the gates and on the walls; the workpeople, chiefly youths, clung to the iron railing of the enclosure. There was a profound interest pictured on every face. An intense feeling hushed the lowly groups who, amid the snow, with heads uncovered, looked upon the wreath of flowers, read the name and date, and perhaps realised that here was one who with opportunities no better than their own had won a high place in the heart and honour of the world. Nay, with fewer advantages than theirs, as they might be reminded by the bell tolling from a School Board tower. There was no such school in the days of Carlyle's childhood.

And there they read the great man's tribute to his parents on their tomb—the words “gratefully reverent of such a father and such a mother”—and learned that a man may depart from the creed of his people, may leave behind their condition and their

ways, yet preserve the true heart of his early life, its simplicity and humility. That grave will speak more eloquently than the Kirk pulpit which could pronounce no benediction over it. An old peasant along the road was heard to say to another, "What a pity you man was an infidel!" The two shook their heads over their greatest countryman. Alas, how little they knew of fidelity who could think of that life as infidelity! But their children will learn more from that profound silence amid which the thinker was laid to rest. They will know that the greatest man that ever grew up there was one who had no part nor lot in the dogmas taught them. No dogmatic tree ever produced such fruits!

The lowly conditions of Carlyle's early life,—the pedestal that raises him in honour,—did also, as I think, influence his teachings. He knew too much of the poor, their ignorance and superstition, to believe that their suffrage should be trusted in government. At the same time he knew too much of the nobility, gentry and parsons round about to believe that their suffrage was much better. So he came to his passionate worship of heroes, and pursued his life-long dream of a time when they would take the place of nobles without nobility, and of kings whose crowns were baubles. The milennial prophecy which the lad heard at Kirk—Christ on the throne, Satan chained in the pit—became to

the man a vision of the latter day, when the wisest man should be king, and the worst man bound down. But this thinker, who so resisted democracy, has shown his faith in the fundamental worth of the common people by the enthusiasm with which he paid homage to the heroes sprung from them. He wrote the life of Schiller, whose mother was a baker's daughter; he admired Richter, whose father was a poor under-schoolmaster, and his mother a weaver's daughter; Paul Heyne in that "poor Chemnitz hovel, with its unresting loom and cheerless hearth, its squalor and devotion, its affection and repining; and the fire of natural genius struggling into flame amid such incumbrances, in an atmosphere so damp and close." Luther, the worker in iron; Dr. Johnson, whom he calls "the born king, likewise a born slave;" Robert Burns, in whom he saw "the noblest and ablest man in all the British lands," holding the plough with hand worthy to sway the sceptre; these were his heroes,—these his kings. Their high authority lay not in lineage, but in that divine right of genius which had raised a lowly Nazarene to be lord over kings. Very few of his worshipful heroes were men of what is called high birth. Such was this anti-democrat's tribute to the masses. He sometimes idealised men emerged from them; and seemed hardly to do justice to the happier conditions of life. Many men have utilised early advantages

for great service to the common people, —John Knox, for instance, and Cromwell, Voltaire, Washington.

Nevertheless, there is no nobler sight than the steady victory of intellect, character, energy over the obstacles which paralyse so many, and no epic Carlyle wrote is grander than the epic that he lived.

Between that small room where Carlyle first saw the light, and that smaller grave which hides him from the light, it is hardly a hundred steps: yet what a Life-pilgrimage lies between those terms! what stretches of noble years, of immense labours, of invincible days rising from weary nights, mark the fourscore years and five that led from the stonemason's threshold to a hero's tomb!

What could his parents give him? An ever present sense of an invisible world, of which this life is the threshold,—a world of transcendant joys marking the crown which the universe prepares for virtue, with an underside of unspeakable pains which mark the eternal brand fixed on evil-doing. Of this world they could teach him little, only that it was a place of brief probation by suffering and self-denial. For the rest they can only send him to a poor little school hard by. It, and Ecclefechan influences generally, are travestied in the experiences of Herr Teufelsdröckh in his native "Entepfuhl." "Of the insignificant portion of my education which depended on schools," he says, "there need almost no notice

be taken. I learned what others learn; and kept it stored by in a corner of my head, seeing as yet no manner of use in it. My schoolmaster, a downbent, brokenhearted, underfoot martyr, as others of that guild are, did little for me, except discover that he could do little." This poor schoolmaster pronounced his pupil fit for one of the learned professions. That meant the ministry. So the father must toil more, and the mother save more, that Thomas may go to the University and become a preacher.

But, meanwhile, there is another university than that at Edinboro', and little Thomas is already studying in it more deeply than pedagogue or parent suspects. That university is the universe itself, and little by little he finds that Ecclefechan is a centre of it. The little burn runs before the door; as he wades in it the brook whispers of its course as it passes on to the river, on to the sea, out into the universe. The swallows come from afar—from Africa and other regions—to nestle in the eaves of the house. The stage coach, as it comes and departs, becomes mystical to the lad when he learns that it connects the village with distant cities, and is weaving human habitations together like a shuttle. The village road leads to the end of the world.

But he is yet a little boy when he thus begins to learn the alphabet and primer of nature and of this world. With the invisible universe he is supposed

to be familiar: the most ignorant Ecclefechan peasant has explored God, Heaven and Hell; and the cleverest lad among them is yet too young at fourteen to make the discovery that such familiarity with the invisible world is only another name for total ignorance of that and this too. So the boy takes his first step towards the pulpit: he is sent at fourteen to the university. But there every step he takes is away from the pulpit; unconsciously for a long time, but with painful consciousness in the end. To him, as to so many, that tragical experience had to come of parting from the faith of father and mother, and with it smiting the hearts he most loved. It was the darkest day of that man's life when the hour came, so proudly anticipated by his parents, when, with the high reputation he had already gained, he should enter upon that ministerial work which to them represented all that was glorious on earth; and when, as that hour came, he confessed to himself that he had no belief in what he was expected to preach; that he could never, with any honesty of mind, enter the pulpit. This, then, was the blighting end of all the hopes that had glorified that little village home! This, then, was the only payment he could make to his dear ones for the toils, sacrifices, stintings his education had cost them! And with what prospect to himself? What work and what fate was there for a young heretic in

Scotland seventy years ago? He had no means; he certainly could not depend on others. He tries school teaching, but that is not his vocation, so is not an honest one. He studies law, but finds that even less to be his true work. He longs for action; but there is no post he can occupy, no work that summons him, save only to be a writer of books. But even for that he is hardly prepared. His ideal of a book is very high. Only "once in the two centuries or oftener there is a man gifted" to write a real book, he somewhere says. The true book is ever the Word made flesh to dwell among us and reflect a divine glory on the world. Carlyle's youth had passed and left the strong man still struggling with cares and doubts—the great mind filled with those "blank misgivings of a creature moving about in worlds unrealised."

The eagle poises long ere it swoops down, like swift lightning, on its prize. This eye sun-kindled is also sun-dazzled as its search first turns earthward to find that which shall nourish the mighty heart winged for daring flight. From that painful suspense and long pause, when,—supporting himself by writing cyclopædic articles; mathematical treatises, and the like,—Carlyle was more really eating his heart and awaiting the opportunity of his genius,—there came a sorrowful poem. It is one of the two or three rhymed pieces he ever wrote, though the poetic

faculty was supreme in him, transferring all his work; the prophet's burden on him was too painful for his genius to rise into song. It is the 'Tragedy of the Night-Moth.' As the lonely scholar, daring great things, reads Goethe's mystic page, a bright-winged moth flits in from the darkness: the tiny fire-worshipper circles around the candle, then darts into the flame, and—puff!—the moth is dead!

“ Poor moth ! near weeping I lament thee,
 Thy glossy form, thy instant woe ;
 'Twas zeal for things too high that sent thee
 From cheery earth to shades below.

“ Short speck of boundless space was needed
 For home, for kingdom, world to thee !
 Where passed unheeding as unheeded,
 Thy slender life from sorrow free.

“ But syren hopes from out thy dwelling,
 Enticed thee, bade thee earth explore,—
 Thy frame, so late with rapture swelling,
 Is swept from earth for evermore !

“ Poor moth ! thy fate my own resembles :
 Me, too, a restless asking mind,
 Hath sent on far and weary rambles
 To seek the good I ne'er shall find.

“ Like thee, with common lot contented,
 With humble joys and vulgar fate,
 I might have lived and ne'er lamented,
 Moth of a larger size, a longer date !

“ But Nature’s majesty unveiling,
 What seemed her wildest, grandest charms,
 Eternal Truth and Beauty hailing,
 Like thee I rushed into her arms.

“ What gained we, little moth? thy ashes,
 Thy one brief parting pang may show :
 And withering thoughts for soul that dashes
 From deep to deep, are but a death more slow.”

Hither, then, that village road which leads to the end of the world had brought this pilgrim. When he started out that world-end seemed to be ministry in the Scotch Church. He toiled to that height and found it a mere hillock,—many summits rising beyond that. Other seeming mountains also turned to hills beneath his ascending steps, until at last he came to the highest, the ruggedest of all,—the soaring summit of his own ideal.

But as he was climbing that stony mountain path, with feet lacerated at every step, lo, a new light shines around, a warm glow beneath which the path is fringed with flowers. Woman’s love has come to his side, taken his hand, looked deeply into his eye : thenceforward no more is he to journey alone, or unsustained, until that dark day, forty years later, when she who had irradiated his home expired, and he wrote on her grave that the light of his life was gone out.

Bright and beautiful was that presence which was

with the scholar when, amid as bleak and lonely a region as eye can rest on, he undertook his life-task. Along the fifteen miles of country road leading to that solitude called Craigenputtock, their first home, one passes a few spots which recall the influences under which the Scottish child is brought up. One may pass from the monument of Burns, at Dumfries, showing the muse touching the youth on the shoulder as he holds the plough; a few miles further, one may pause at the grave of "Old Mortality," who passed his time deciphering mossy inscriptions on tombs; and near by may read the inscription which Walter Scott wrote on the tomb he raised over Helen Walker, whom he immortalised under the name of Jeannie Deans—the girl who would not tell an untruth to save her sister's life, but did journey on foot to London, and saved her at last. The inscription says—"Respect the grave of poverty when combined with love of truth and dear affection." And that admonition the pilgrim may well bear with him to the far home amid the moors, where the same unswerving veracity, combined with dear affection, took root and sent their rich fruitage through the world of literature.

For a long time there was poverty. His ideal was too high for the world to care for it just then; yet as he said, "Experience charges dreadfully high wages, but she teaches as none other." He gathered

richest invisible harvests from those dreary moors. There was plain living and high thinking, and gradually health came back.

Here, at Craigenputtock, Carlyle wrote "Sartor Resartus." He had written the "Life of Schiller," but in "Sartor Resartus" he wrote his own spiritual biography. It seemed at first a thankless task. Publishers refused it. It lay silent for seven years, and when it appeared by instalments in a magazine the subscribers grumbled at it; but it found in America one able to read in it the history of his own spirit—the prophecy of a new life coming on all souls. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who first collected those papers, journeyed across the ocean that he might grasp the hand and converse with the heart of his intellectual brother. The last thing I ever heard Carlyle say was, "Give my love to Emerson. I still think of his visit to me at Craigenputtock as the most beautiful thing in my experience there."

Carlyle was a great man to America before he was known to his own country. He had even felt at one time as if his destiny might lead to a residence in America. He said to Edward Irving, "I have the ends of my thoughts to bring together, which no one can do in this thoughtless scene. I have my views of life to reform, and the whole plan of my conduct to remodel; and withal I have my health to recover. And then once more I shall venture my bark upon

the waters of this wide realm, and if she cannot weather it, I shall steer west and try the waters of another world."

So he said when he was 25 years of age. But he presently recognised the meaning of what Goethe said to a youth who talked of going to the New World,—“Your America is here, or nowhere.” London summoned him from his lonely hills. He fixed his home here, and for more than a generation lived and taught in a way that left London no need to envy Athens with her Socrates. Socrates never more resolutely exposed the shams of Athens. They gave him poison. They began giving Carlyle critical poison; but he outlived it and his critics; and finally the throne offered him its Grand Cross of Bath. He had not worked for such wages, however, and Majesty's gift was declined with thanks. It is a pity he did not at least visit America, as he had intended. He would have understood better the depth and significance of that long struggle, culminating in civil war, by which the Republic emancipated itself by setting free those enslaved within its borders. During that struggle his voice was heard on the wrong side; but some years ago a lady whose son had fallen in that war, sent him the Harvard Memorial: he read the book containing the record of those young men who saved and liberated their country, carefully; and when that lady came to see

him personally, he took her hand and said, even with tears, "I was mistaken."

Carlyle's name, through this mistake, could be quoted by the slaveholder, but never justly. The man was never really on that side. The servitude in which he believed was entirely ideal. To him the ideal Society would be one in which the ignorance should be directed by knowledge, unwisdom controlled by wisdom, and the indolent find their truer happiness in obedience to the order of true and good leaders. There was something of sweet old Scotch simplicity in this dream of the patriarchal life he had read of in the Bible, but it never existed in any modern community. In his eagerness to believe that such a Utopia of perfect subordination between the higher and lower might be realised, he lent a too ready ear to the fanciful pictures which southerners personally drew for him of their pastoral life. I have often heard him talk of that southern Arcadia, which I, who was born there, knew to be a chaos. But no man was more opposed to injustice and oppression where he recognised them; and no man would more have overwhelmed the actual vices and brutalities of negro slavery, had he lived amid them, than he who detested the last French empire, and whose latest protest was against placing a memorial of its fallen heir in Westminster Abbey.

Carlyle has been called a Worshipper of Force,—

of physical force. That is a superficial judgment. It was moral force that he revered in Cromwell, and in other heroes. He sometimes found that he had misjudged his man, and confessed it. He was severe on Sir Robert Peel when that Minister was most powerful, but when he saw in him the courage to redress a wrong he revoked his sentences. He idealised Frederick the Great,—the freethinking king, the friend of Voltaire,—but as his biography of that monarch proceeded he discovered that he was no hero in a moral sense, and at the close of the labours which gave the world that great historical work, he said to Varnhagen von Euse,—“I have had no satisfaction in it at all, only labour and sorrow. What had I to do with your Frederick?” Carlyle respected physical force as the means of moral force. As he bowed reverently before the hard hand of the labourer who was changing a bit of chaos, a clod into fruit,—saw in it a sceptre nobler than that of sham kings,—so did he see in an army fighting for a right cause a great implement bringing order out of disorder. But he never respected mere brute force. The purest force worked in silence. He who poured scorn upon Louis Napoleon when he was the strongest ruler in Europe, was prompt to defend Mazzini when a powerless exile in England.

I have heard an anecdote that, in a circle where the Duke of Wellington was severely criticised, some

one ended all censures by saying—"Wellington was so great a man that I have forgotten his faults." The same may be trulier said of Carlyle. Whatever faults he may have had will be speedily forgotten in the memory of his great services and grand life. It was natural that he should be misjudged, because of his unique character, and the powerful individuality which held him aloof from all parties and all movements. Popular movements no sooner make roads than they begin to wear ruts, and then settle down into the ruts hopelessly. The popular notion, for example, of what a Republic is, has become as much a formula as the monarchial form of government. But that kind of political conventionalism may prove as hampering as any older system. When Carlyle had theoretically melted all the chains of the Past in the fires of his just heart and brain, the popular leaders expected him to pour their molten strength into this or that democratic mould. They who hailed his iconoclasm were bitterly disappointed at his rejection of their new schemes. But the thinker believed that the universe had a scheme of its own—a scheme far vaster than any shaped by chartist or democrat; and he preserved a true freedom when he bade men work at what was before them, trust that each further day would bring the light and strength for that day, and the fairer order eventually appear.

Of the like character was his religious position and

influence. He was one of the most religious men that ever lived. His life was a long self-sacrifice, a never-failing charity, an unceasing worship. Therefore, it could not be contained in any creed. "To what religion do I belong?" wrote Schiller; "To none thou could'st name. And wherefore to none? Because of my religion." It was only the fervour of Carlyle's religion which led him to turn from the Scotch Church with a breaking heart: it was that which ignored each hallowed dome which shut out the vault of heaven, and the higher vault of reason, beneath which, to his last day, he knelt with wonder and aspiration. He could not see in the Church Articles thirty-nine pillars supporting the universe, and each sect was to him only some umbrella which its devotees mistook for the sky. Fifty-six years ago Carlyle reminded the world that while superstition might degrade the world freethought could never harm religion. He then paid his homage to the man whose memory was a red-spectre to Christendom,—even to Voltaire; and, chiefly, as he said, because Voltaire "gave the death-stab to modern superstition." "That, with superstition, Religion is also passing away, seems," he continued, "a still more ungrounded fear. Religion cannot pass away. The burning of a little straw may hide the stars of the sky; but the stars are there, and will re-appear. . . . Old Ludovicus Vives has a story of a

clown that killed his ass because it had drunk up the moon, and he thought the world could ill spare that luminary. Let us not imitate him ; let us not slay a faithful servant who has carried us far. He has not drunk the moon ; but only the reflection of the moon in his own poor water-pail."

The doctrines which Carlyle learned at his mother's knee, though outgrown, survive in slight expressions of his later years ; just as the dialect of Dumfriesshire has a scholarly survival in that style which so puzzled his critics. An afterglow of Calvinism is in his necessitarian philosophy, and he uses the metaphors of Gehenna to burn up the incredible cant about Hell. In the same way his far-reaching humanity is sometimes expressed in phrases that belong to a past age of conservatism. M. Taine, in his "History of English Literature," says that in reading Carlyle's volumes "we discover, at last, that we are in the presence of a most extraordinary animal, relic of a lost family, a sort of mastodon fallen on a world not made for him ;" and we "dissect him with minute curiosity, telling ourselves that we shall probably never find another like him." There is some truth in this, too. There are some men whose greatness is largely in their adequacy to shove the world on beyond even themselves. Wordsworth was such a man : he renewed in man that love and feeling for nature which gave a poetic

soul to science ; and science went on with that impulse, leaving the poet still with his ritual in Grasmere Church. Another Wordsworth, or any great man of kindred genius, can hardly be produced again. Another Carlyle has been rendered as improbable by the momentum with which thought speeds on the road where his own spur started it. That, however, is true only of what is most casual in the man, most on the surface. The heart of Carlyle still beats in all the best aspirations of our time. It will be a longer time than we shall live to see ere mankind approaches the banner of this leader, much less passes it. If any one will read attentively his essay entitled "Characteristics," written fifty-six years ago, he will find there a spiritual prophecy which every thinker risen since has confirmed either by failure or fulfilment, and which still remains a prophecy, nay, a pillar of fire for all faithful men and women to follow. That great essay, which, flashing across the sea, kindled a new beacon in New England, gathering about it a fraternity of the free, was but half understood then, is not fully comprehended now. It is the first statement of the Religion of Humanity. When Byron and many another were filling the air with wailings, or curses, this inspired peasant announced the faith that would move on unhasting, unresting as the stars undisturbed in their eternal calm by the rise or fall of empires,

or of temples, or of deities made by man in his own image.

“The doom of the Old,” he declared, “has long been pronounced and irrevocable; the Old has passed away; but, alas! the New appears not in its stead; the Time is still in pangs of travail with the New. Man has walked by the light of conflagrations, and amid the sound of falling cities; and now there is darkness and long watching till it be morning. . . . Deep and sad as is our feeling that we stand in bodeful Night; equally deep, indestructible is our assurance that the Morning also will not fail. Nay, already, as we look round, streaks of a dayspring are in the east; it is dawning; when the time shall be fulfilled it will be day. The progress of man towards higher and nobler Developments of whatever is highest and noblest in him, lies not only prophesied to Faith, but now written to the eye of Observation, so that he who runs may read.”

“Everywhere the eternal fact begins again to be recognised, that there is godlike in human affairs. In all dialects, though but half articulately, this high Gospel begins to be preached; ‘Man is still Man.’” “He that has an eye and a heart can even now say: why should I falter? Light has come into the world; to such as love Light, so as Light must be loved, with a boundless all-doing, all-enduring love. For the rest let that vain struggle to read

the mystery of the Infinite cease to harass us . . .
 'Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy
 might' . . . Behind us, behind each one of us lie six
 thousand years of human effort, human conquest;
 before us is the boundless Time, with its uncreated
 and unconquered Continents and Eldorados, which
 we, even we, have to conquer and create: and from
 the bosom of Eternity shine for us celestial guiding
 stars.

My inheritance, how wide and fair!
 Time is my fair seedfield, of Time I'm heir."

More than fifty years of brave life, of unswerving
 fidelity, of unfaltering pursuit of truth, on the part of
 him who so wrote, followed that first sign of a religion
 for time, for this world,—a religion turned from
 metaphysics about the Infinite to seek and save man
 from the evils that afflict and degrade him. And we
 may say of him who awakened the generation of
 which we are spiritual offspring, that he is indeed the
 heir of Time. What he sowed in that unbounded
 seedfield, Time will not suffer to perish. That high
 influence,—raised by death above all that transiently
 enveloped it,—that Spirit which as it came from
 deeps of experience shall call to every Deep,—will
 remain to do its work for evermore.

Farewell, great and faithful father! We, thy
 children, born of the light that lived in thine eyes,

offspring of the fire in thy heart which burnt all fetters, bid thee farewell, now that thy hands are folded on thy breast. But we know thou wilt remain still with us ; we shall see thy strong hand at work wherever shams and falsities are falling ; and when the night is upon us we will remember thy long watch and look for the morning-star ; and when the dawn comes it will reveal thy face, no more in pain, transfigured in the triumph of thy truth ; and thy name enshrined in every heart that shall live to reap in joy the harvest thou in tears didst sow !

