

I.

The richness of the Religious life.
Lxx T. Ps. 121^t I will lift up mine eyes unto the
hills, whence cometh my help

Ever since we first began to ~~look upon~~^{expect} to work with wonder and fear, amazement and reverence upon evidences of a power in things a power which he could not account for there has been a steady and ever richening development of the religious instinct in his nature. ~~This development has become so~~

If we could trace our way back over the dramatic years, centuries, and ages of history, and find ourselves face to face with the earliest, ~~and~~ and most simple of religious feelings, I fancy that we should find man unarm'd, shrinking with fear and trembling before what would seem to us most commonplace, and most easily explained conditions. In the early stories of the old Testament there are evidences of a time when men stood with fear before a spring of water bubbling out of the earth. Unable to explain ^{by his knowledge} the cause of such a marvellous phenomenon, he attributed to the presence of a superior power, which worked in ways

that he could not understand. He felt
the presence of a former superior to himself,
and converted the flame into sacred gowd
and it became a flame of worship for him.
Whenever anything strange or unexplainable
happened, there the great superior power had
now working, and there in his religion im-
mortal asserted itself, and said "Take off
the shoes from off thy feet, for the place where
on thou standest is holy ground."

Sometimes, when I have been free from the
thoughts of history, and philosophy, in moments
when my mind was off its educated guard
and had slipped back into the simple habits
of its primitive nature, I have fancied that
I have felt the same feelings of reverence and
awe come over me, as came to the mind of early
men, who education was that of daily life. I remem-
ber one night I had been ~~too~~ ^{too} caring for hours
on a quiet silently flowing river. It was one
of those soft peaceful evenings in June when
one seems bound to slip silently away from the
life of man, and lose himself in the

single hawuries of severity and inthinking
meditation, of such as ^{my} the & unlettered child
of nature could feel. Following without thinking,
without being roused from the working slumber
by very force of habit, the usual custom, I passed
the course upon the sandy shore, and leaving it
there, let myself be led by an invisible
spirit up the narrow winding pathway through
the trees to a little spring which trickled
out from the rocky soil. It was such a quiet
secluded spot, so hidden from the outside
^{wold} world by a wold of trees, and shaggy distinguished
from them by the flood of light from a full
moon which forced in through an opening
in the trees behind me, involuntarily I stopped
in reverence at the beauty, the mystery, the
evidence of the presence of an unseen power. For
one moment I stood there charmed by the divine
presence. In that moment I think that I
must have felt as the primitive man, unin-
fluenced by science or philosophy, felt as he
stood in the presence of some divine superior
power manifesting itself in single acts they

of nature, and responding to his religion in strict, secret there are alter for religious worship.

At times, when we let go away from the activities of life, yet our mind seems to though them off the training of ages, and slip back into its primitive simplicity, and reveal to us the very simplicist of all religious feelings, that reverence for the presence of a former superior to ourselves. In truth, the water trickling from the rocky soil, the great tree growing from the earth, the tremendous mountains rising from the plains, the fierce wind, the thunder and lightning, all the works of nature, are they not still evidences of a power, unseen, but whose presence we cannot doubt, a former so superior to our power, that the means of confusion fail us, and should we not know bow down with fear and trembling before that power, and fortify ourselves in its presence fearing lest it annihilate us completely?

But the fear of the Lord is but the beginning of wisdom. So feel the presence of a power

inferior to ourselves is but the beginning of religion.
There is a great truth hidden in that story which
is told of Robert Burns. He was taken at one time to
be see a bit of bold rugged mountain scenery.
Pleased for its beauty and grandeur. His eyes
wandered over the scene spread out before him
in reverance and awe, taking in all the
marvels of the inspiring mildness, until they
finally rested with tenderness and love upon
a group of little cottages in the valley where
human nature was having giving expression
to its forms of love and goodness. For though Burns
that bit of human nature transformed the
whole landscape, and gave it life and coloring
which only human life can give. When we see
a land scope fainting, which gives no suggestion
of human life, how cold and melancholy it seems.
Something is out there which ought to be there.
just the sweet suggestion of some would give
the picture new life for us.

None could not rest content with in seeing
the superior form only, but as he grew in experience
and wisdom he discerned that he himself

6

could do things which were related in some way to the unseen power. He could plant seeds and responding to the soil, they would grow up in the very place where he had planted them. The unseen force could move a tree but he could convert the tree into a boat or a house. The unseen force could move a mountain, but he could move a great pyramid and a sphinx. So year by year he learned that in many ways could he could do things in much the same way that the unseen power did. As he thought of this strange coincident, of the strange similarity between some of his own works and the works of the unseen power, he came to the conclusion, that he must be like the power, it must be that God had made man in his own image.

That we akin to God is the second great truth of Religion. When man first discovered that truth they saw in it only most crude meaning. God made man in his own image. physically. hands. feet. face, body.

But as the centuries passed by it became a truth capable of greater significance than that of mere physical life himself. Men began to trace, a moral and intellectual himself, and finally in Jesus, we have the conservation of the truth, the spiritual relationship of God to man, as father to Son. And my father as one said Jesus, See the form in

In the form in which Jesus put the truth,
 and in the meaning which it had for him
 we find its highest ~~the~~ expression, but we
 have been tardy in apprehending the full
 meaning of it. Do we often stop to think
 that we are able to think because the Father
 thinks, that we know because the father
 knows, that we love because the father first
 loved us, that whatsoever we may do
 it is not we that do it, but the father who
 worketh in us. Not ^{that we} only are we his in
 our straight bodies, as we so easily thought,
 but that we are his in our minds, in our
 good word purposes, in our spiritual motives,
 in all that we are or hope to be. Sons of

8

one great father who is whom we live
and move and have our being.

Brough the power of this truth our fear in
the presence of the great overwhelming
~~power~~ is transformed into trust and
dare and love. Are not the very laws
of our God numbered? Are one of us by the
utmost endeavor ever escape from the
care and control of the great ~~power~~ ^{being} to whom
we are akin. Confidence. peace. safety, trust
serve to us to drive away fear and doubt.

Even as the truth of this spiritual relation=
ship is dawning upon our minds, there
follows closely behind it another truth
not less important. The ~~young man~~ ^{my} who
has become old enough to appreciate the
intimacy of the relationship which he bears to
his father, so becomes inspired with the
desire to work with his father, to assist
in his swelling in doing the work
which the father does. The working out
of this desire is seen most notably

former

on the farm. What boy does not soon at an early age take some share in doing the farm work, helping to tend the cattle, assist in the plowing, and harvesting. It is the most natural, and the most perfect ~~of the~~ part of the boy's education. How unfortunate for the boy who lies in the city that he is deprived of this natural right.

How naturally do we, as we become old enough in years, and as humanity becomes old enough in civilization, turn ourselves to the work of the Father, and feel the dignity, and the sacredness of doing a work which helps to realize the purpose of the great world power. How simple, yet how profoundly true are those words of Jesus.

"Truly, verily, I say unto you. If thou can do nothing of himself but what he saith the father do." Gradually, as we grow in spiritual power we are coming to discern the thick great truth of religion. Not only do we feel ourselves in the presence of an infinite being, but we feel that the infinite

Being is akin to us. Not only is the Being akin to us, but we are seeking a common cause with Being. If we search after the truth we have as a helper him who is truth. If we seek to give expression to truth by goodness, we have as a co-worker him who is the source of all goodness. If we seek to lead another into the ways of truth we are supported by him, who watcheth with infinite care over the most wayward and delinquent of his children. If we seek to lead another into paths of duty, and purity we can depend upon the co-operation of him who rejoiceth over the finding of one lost sheep, more than over the safety of the ninety and nine who go not astray. Whatever free or power within us that inspires us to work for the good of man, for the enrichment of life, for the growth of human souls, we can be spurred on to greater action, to more unceasing labor, to more glorious life by the thought =

edge that the great infinite God in whom we live and move and have our being is working for the same ends that we are, that the very existence of the idols in our minds is due to the fact that they also exist in the infinite mind.

The deepest, the most powerful religious experience is to be filled with the greatness of this truth, that you and I, who go about day by day, individuals outwardly distinguished by individual power, are in the very presence of the infinite God of the Universe in whom we live and move and have our being, to whom we are akin, and with whom we seek a common cause.

How commonplace, how meaningless seems that life which is spent ignores this truth, and spends itself in vain search after trifles by excitements by indulgence of all passing desires, by following the most trivial will of the wish aims of selfishness, greed, and vanity. How grand and noble seems that life, which follows

this truth, and regulating the desires and passions of his mind and body to the realization of the truth and goodness of the Deity's purpose of living. Colmby seeks its way through the manifold duties of the day, obediently following the wishes of God as they are revealed to him day by day.

The religion life, is not a life of sacrifice, not a thin, narrow exclusive life, enfeebled of all that makes life rich and grand, on the contrary. it is a full, complete, even bounding life, which regulates the pleasures of today to the needs of eternal happiness, which makes the desire of today the working tools in seeking an eternal hope, which seeks to make the supreme act of life not an act of sacrifice, but an act of devotion, devotion to what is true, and eternal. devotion to what is soul satisfying and worth while. The religion life in its fulness is the life that it gives most sacrements and balmies to all the duties, and the

acts of a human being, and fills the soul with
a happiness that is unknown to the insatiable;
a happiness that can come only to him who
feels the presence of a superior being, to
whom he is akin, and with whom whom
he seeks a common cause, and with trust
confidence, and assurance, says. "I will
lift up mine eyes unto the hills. whence
cometh my help."