

PROPHECY—TRANSCENDENTALISM—PROGRESS.

ONE of the most philosophical of modern preachers has written, — “The practice of taking a passage of scripture, when one is about to give a discourse, is not always convenient, and seldom answers any very good purpose.” I shall not discuss this proposition, but leave it for the decision of those, whom it more immediately concerns. I have found it convenient thus to preface a lay sermon, a word of “prophecy in the camp;” chiefly in the hope that it will answer the good purpose of bespeaking a favorable consideration of the doctrine it is believed to contain. The passage selected is contained in the 29th verse of the 11th chapter of the 4th book, called Numbers, of the history of the Hebrew nation attributed to Moses.

“WOULD GOD, THAT ALL THE LORD’S PEOPLE WERE PROPHETS.”

I feel warranted in using the term prophet and prophecy in a larger signification than is usually attached to them. In the text, and other places where they occur in the Hebrew scriptures, and the writings of the Christian apostles, they cannot, without violence, be interpreted in the sense of literal prediction. Much unnecessary embarrassment, as it seems to me, has been placed in the way of Christianity, by resting its credibility upon the success of the attempt to establish the strict relation of literal prophecy between particular facts of the Christian history, and passages of the Old Testament. This is to degrade it from a system, bearing within itself the testimony of its divinity, and reposing upon the innate and indestructible convictions of the human mind, to a system of ambiguous authority, depending upon the authenticity of ancient records, and subtleties of verbal interpretation. Instead of being a revelation to the individual mind, it has become a mere inference from historical credibility; a conclusion of logic from certain possibly true premises, instead of a self-evident truth, whose witness is always the same, and always accessible, amid all the ambiguities and mutations of language, the revolutions of literature, and convulsions of empires.

It is, however, sufficient for me at present, to verify the remark, that, in the text and other places, prophecy has a different, and more indefinite meaning than foretelling.

It appears from the history, that Moses, being disquieted and perplexed by the complaints of the Hebrews on account of their sufferings in the wilderness, selected seventy of the elders of Israel to assist him in "bearing his burdens." Sixty-eight of the seventy came up to the tabernacle of the congregation, and "*prophesied*, and did not cease." But two of them did not go up to the tabernacle; however, the Spirit rested on them also, and they "*prophesied in the camp*." The people seem to have been shocked by this irregular field preaching, and some of them, in their zeal for the sanctity of the tabernacle, ran and told Moses, that Eldad and Medad were *prophesying in the camp*. Joshua, the son of Nun, was particularly scandalized, and urged Moses to forbid them. But Moses said, — "Enviest thou for my sake? Would God, that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them."

Whatever may have been the precise functions, for which the seventy were selected, it would seem that the exigencies, which made their appointment necessary, would not require the power of literal prophecy; but rather the gift of insight, the faculty of communication, instruction, persuasion, a deep sense of the mission to which Moses had called their nation, a profound faith, and the earnest eloquence, which could infuse their own convictions into the minds of their countrymen, and animate and encourage them amid the difficulties under which they were almost sinking in despair.

This view of prophecy is illustrated and confirmed by the words of Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians; — "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts; but rather that ye may prophesy. For he, that speaketh in an unknown tongue, speaketh not unto men, but unto God. But he that prophesieth, speaketh unto men, to edification, and exhortation, and comfort."

And again; — "If all prophesy, and there come in a man unlearned, or that believeth not; he is convinced of all, he is judged of all, and thus the secrets of his heart are made manifest, and so, falling down upon his face, he

will worship God, and report that God is with you of a truth."

The gift of literal prophecy would seem to be as barren and ineffectual for the conversion of the unbeliever, as the gift of tongues, with which the apostle is contrasting it, and even as unintelligible to the hearer. To work the effects attributed to it, the mind of the hearer should be able to comprehend the utterance of the prophecy; the prophet must address some common principle of the human mind, appeal to ideas already existing there, and produce conviction by giving form and a voice to the slumbering intuitions of the soul, which have but awaited the fit time to awake into life.

The gift of prophecy is one to be acquired; for Paul, as the conclusion of the whole matter, gives the exhortation, — "Wherefore, my brethren, *covet* to prophesy."

It may aid in admitting this view of prophecy, to remember that, in several of the ancient languages, the same word was used to denote the prophet and the poet; prophecy and poetry were regarded as identical. Thus Paul, in his letter to Titus, quoting a Greek poet, calls him a prophet. The poets, or prophets, were the earliest legislators and civilizers of mankind. Moses, the founder of the social system of the Hebrews, whose institutions at this day, after the lapse of thousands of years, modify the habits, and influence the destinies of his countrymen, was a poet of the highest order, and owed his unbounded authority over his countrymen as much, perhaps, as to any cause, to his deep prophetic, or poetic, insight. What Moses was to the Hebrews, Orpheus, and especially Homer, were to the Greeks, and through them to all modern civilization.

It may not be an unnecessary remark, that poetry does not consist in versification. Rhyme is an easy, and almost purely mechanical acquisition; and facility in its use is attained in perfection by multitudes, in whom is discerned scarce the faintest breathing of the poetic spirit. Measure, too, is only one of the forms in which poetry utters itself; but rhythm, no more than rhyme, must be confounded with it. The utterance of poetry must not be mistaken for the feeling. Poetry is thought, sentiment, insight; and the garment of words, in which it may be clothed, is not its sub-

stance, more than the form, or the hues, of the leaf are the perfume of the flower. Poetry is prophecy, and the poet is a prophet. For what is poetry, the poetic spirit, but the faculty of insight of the Good, the Beautiful, and the True, in the outward universe, and in the mysterious depths of the human spirit; that inward sense, which alone gives significance and relation to the objects of the material senses; by which man recognizes and believes in the Infinite and the Absolute; through which is revealed to his soul the spiritual in the material, the unseen in the visible, the ideal in the actual, the unchangeable in the ever-changing forms of external nature, incorruption in decay, and immortality in death; that faculty, by which, in his own consciousness, the vast expansiveness of his intellect, the insatiable and ever-enlarging wants of his soul, the power and comprehension of his affections, the force and freedom of his will; he discerns his relation to all being and to eternity. Such revelations are prophecy in the highest and truest sense; and they who receive them are inspired. Only when he discerns the "open secret of the universe," is able to look through the veil of the visible, and read the deep, infinite significance, which it contains and shadows, are man's eyes truly open. He then becomes a prophet, a seer of the future, and his utterance is with power.

The days of prophecy are not, as is commonly and vainly asserted, past. The generation of the prophets is not extinct; and while the earth, and the heavens, and man endure, the universe will have its revelations to make to every soul, that bows a pure ear to hear them. "The human mind, in its original principles, and the natural creation, in its simplicity, are but different images of the same Creator, linked for the reciprocal development of their mutual treasures."

If I have succeeded in the attempt to show the true significance of prophecy, I may be permitted to say, that it is, in other words, the utterance of what is called in a modern system of philosophy, the Spontaneous Reason, the intuitions, the instincts of the soul. The reality of this power of intuition is denied, and the question of its reality is the main point of controversy, if I have not misapprehended it, between the adherents of the prevailing phi-

losophy of the last century and a half, and the more recently revived school, which is known by the name of *transcendental*. The former deny, except, perhaps, in a small, and very inadequate degree; the latter affirm the power of intellectual intuition,—the power of the mind to discover the absolute truth. This is not a strife about words, as too many a philosophical controversy has been; but about realities. Rather, it may be said, the decision is to determine whether there is any such thing as reality; whether all, that we appear to see, all that we believe, our faith and hope, our loves and longings, earth, heaven, God, immortality, are aught but chimeras; nay, whether we ourselves are but unsubstantial pageants, mere shadows of dreams.

Transcendentalism, by that name, seems to be but little understood; and the vague notions that are entertained respecting it, are derived chiefly from the distorted representations of its opposers, or the ridiculous grimaces of scoffers. To many minds, the word may bring up sad, or ludicrous associations, accordingly as it has been presented to them in the gloomy portraiture of those, who profess seriously to fear its unbelieving tendencies; or in the amusing caricatures of others, who have found food for mirth in the illustrations of some of its disciples, which they affected to consider fantastic and unintelligible. By some it is regarded as a mere aggregation of words, having the form, and giving the promise of a high, mysterious meaning; but when analyzed, being without significance,—mere sound, signifying nothing. By others, again, it is supposed to place the reveries of the imagination above the deductions of reason, and to make feeling the only source and test of truth. But though thus viewed, by its name, with suspicion, scorn, or dislike, I apprehend that it is, in reality, the philosophy of common life, and of common experience. It will be found that all men, mostly, perhaps, unconsciously, believe and act upon it; and that even to those, who reject it, and argue against it, it is the practical philosophy of belief and conduct. Every man is a transcendentalist; and all true faith, the motives of all just action, are transcendental.

A brief history of the origin of this philosophy, as a scientific system, will serve to explain its distinguishing

characteristic, and at the same time illustrate my leading proposition.

In the latter part of the seventeenth century, the celebrated Locke published his "Essay concerning the human understanding"; the professed purpose of which was to "inquire into the original, certainty, and extent of human knowledge, together with the grounds and degrees of belief, opinion, and assent." In answer to this inquiry, he began by denying that the mind had any ideas of its own to start with; that there are "any primary impressions stamped upon the mind, which the soul receives in its very first being, and brings into the world with it." The mind he supposed to be "white paper void of all characters," and affirmed that it is furnished with ideas only from *experience*. Experience is two-fold; the experience of the senses, furnishing much the greater part of the ideas from the outward world, which ideas are, therefore called ideas of sensation. The notice, which the mind takes of its own operations, with the ideas thus acquired by sensation, furnishes another set of ideas, which are called ideas of reflection. From sensation and reflection, then, according to this theory, all human knowledge is derived.

It seems obvious at first sight, that, denying to the mind any primary principles, and reflection being, by the definition, only the notice which the mind, this blank piece of paper, takes of its own operations, reflection can add nothing to the stock of ideas furnished by sensation. It is a mere spectator; its office merely to note impressions. The operations of the mind, being confined to the sensible idea, can originate no new idea; can deduce nothing from the sensible idea, but what is contained in it; according to a well known and fundamental rule of logic. It cannot compare and infer, for there are no ideas in the mind, with which to compare the sensible idea; and by comparing one sensible idea with another, no result can be obtained beyond them. Besides, the very act of comparing implies the abstract ideas of identity and difference, which must, therefore, have been prior to sensible experience. Abstract ideas are entirely beyond the province of the senses. The eye conveys to the mind the idea of a tree. Reflection can only note the operation of the mind upon this idea; that is, note the impression it makes. The tree is a

tree, and that is all. Reflection can do no more with a second, a third, a thousandth. Without the prior abstract ideas of number, identity, relation, beauty, and others, or some idea still more abstract, from which these are derived; I see not how reflection can deduce more from a thousand than from one. There is a tree, and that is all. So that, after all, these two sources of ideas are resolved into one, and sensation, the experience of the senses, is the only foundation of knowledge. Give reflection the largest power that is claimed for it; so long as original ideas, the faculty of intuitive perception, of primitive and direct consciousness, is excluded; it cannot advance beyond the outward and the visible; it cannot infer the infinite from finite, the spiritual from the material. The infinite and spiritual are absolutely unknown and inconceivable. Or, at the best, faith is only the preponderance of probabilities; immortality an unsubstantial longing; and God is reduced to a logical possibility. In short, mind is subordinated to matter, bound down by the fetters of earth to the transitory and corruptible, and cannot rise, with an unfaltering wing, into the region of the infinite and imperishable.

Adopting, and seriously believing, Locke's theory, Mr. Hume deduced from it, by the severest logical induction, a system of universal skepticism, and demonstrated that universal doubt, even of one's personal existence, nay, doubt even of the fact of doubting, is the only reasonable state of mind for a philosopher. The doctrines of Locke were also adopted in France, and led, with some modifications, to their ultimate, legitimate conclusions, the almost universal atheism, which characterized the French literati of the last century, and the early part of the present. Unhappy as were these logical results of the system, it was long received as true, without much question. Men of earnest faith embraced it, and defended it, and denying the justness of its infidel conclusions, continued to doubt, "in erring logic's spite;" as Locke himself was eminently religious in defiance of his philosophy. His faith and life were a noble, living refutation of his philosophy. This system has long been prevalent in this country, and is now found as one of the text-books of instruction in intellectual philosophy in our oldest American university.

But the ideas of the spiritual, the infinite, of God, immortality, absolute truth, are in the mind. They are the most intimate facts of consciousness. They could not be communicated to the mind by the senses, nor be deduced by reflection from any materials furnished by sensible experience. They cannot be proved by syllogism, and are beyond the reach of the common logic. They are ideas, which *transcend* the experience of the senses, which the mind cannot deduce from that experience; without which, indeed, experience would not be possible. Are these ideas true? Are they realities? Do they represent real existences? Are spirit, eternity, truth, God, names, or substances?

The philosophy of sensation, even if we absolve it from strict logical rules, and give it the widest latitude, is absolutely unable to give us certainty upon this subject. It leaves the mind in doubt concerning the highest questions, that can occupy it. In the place of an unambiguous answer, on which the soul can calmly repose, and abide events, it gives only a possible probability. The transcendental philosophy affirms their truth decisively. Not only are they true, but the evidence of their truth is higher than that of the visible world. They are truths, which we cannot doubt, for they are the elements of the soul. As they are the most momentous of truths, so their proof is higher and surer than that of any other truths; for they are direct spiritual intuitions. Belief in them is more reasonable and legitimate, than belief in the objects of sensible experience; inasmuch as these transcendental truths are perceived directly by the mind, while sensible facts are perceived only through the medium of the senses, and belief in them requires the previous certainty of the accuracy and fidelity of the material organs. The former are truths of immediate and direct consciousness, the latter of intermediate perception. Transcendentalism, then, is "the recognition in man of the capacity of knowing truth intuitively, or of attaining a scientific knowledge of an order of existence *transcending* the reach of the senses, and of which we can have no sensible experience." The origin and appropriation of the name will be perceived from this definition. This name, as well as that of the *Critical Philosophy*, was given by Kant, a German philosopher,

who first decisively refuted the theory of sensation, and gave a scientific demonstration of the reality and authority of the Spontaneous Reason. I know nothing of the writings of Kant; but I find his doctrine thus clearly stated by one of his English interpreters. "Kant, instead of attempting to prove, which he considered vain, the existence of God, virtue, and immortal soul, by inferences drawn, as the *conclusion* of all philosophy, from the world of sense; he found these things written, as the *beginning* of all philosophy, in obscured, but ineffaceable characters, within our inmost being, and themselves first affording any certainty and clear meaning to that very world of sense, by which we endeavor to demonstrate them. God *is*, nay, alone *is*; for we cannot say with like emphasis, that anything else is. This is the absolute, the primitively true, which the philosopher seeks. Endeavoring, by logical argument, to prove the existence of God, the Kantist might say, would be like taking out a candle to look for the sun; nay, gaze steadily into your candlelight, and the sun himself may be invisible."

That man possesses this intuitive power of discerning truth might be inferred from his creation. God is absolute truth; and man is created in his image. God is a spirit; and therein too man still bears his likeness. Can it be, that this spiritual creation, though clothed with a material covering, should have no power of recognising directly its spiritual relations? that it should bear within itself no traces of its origin? that it should be absolutely dependent upon the flesh, and possess no other means of attaining the higher knowledge, which is its birthright, than the treacherous avenues of its material organs?

"O Zeus! why hast thou given a certain proof
To know adulterate gold, but stamped no mark,
Where it is needed most, to know immortal truth?"

This is to deny the likeness in which it was formed; to reverse the whole order of creation, and the attributes, which man's instincts, as well as his own revelations, ascribe to the Creator. The divine is not thus subjected to the earthly; the immaterial mind to its corruptible and decaying lodgment. The spirit is still a spirit, with the inherent power of spiritual discernment; and it is su-

preme, even amid the incumbrances and hindrances of its material tabernacle. The inspiration of the Almighty still gives it understanding, and the voice of prophecy yet speaks to it in a language, which it can interpret and repeat.

And this is the practical faith, the actual life of all men;—of all men, at least, who act with a purpose, and for an end; in whom their material environments have not extinguished, if that were possible, the consciousness of a higher life. Every act even of sensible experience is a refutation of the philosophy, which denies the reality and truth of human instincts. How much beyond and above the deductions of logic are the thoughts and emotions excited in the mind by the impressions of external nature through the senses. Whence does the song of the early bird borrow its melody, as it rouses the ear of the sleeper from its morning slumber, and seems like audible tones of a universal harmony, echoing voices from that far land, where he has wandered in his so-called dreams? Whence the eloquent stillness of the evening sky, when man stands reverent beneath it, with uplifted eye? Sense beholds nought there but a misty circle of mountains, surmounted by a blue canopy, studded with shining points. Whence come the tones of its silent harmonies? Whence “that tune which makes no noise?” How break forth those mute hills into singing? What fills that azure vault with thousand-voiced stars? Whence arises that light, which comes up into the soul from the bosom of that obscurity?

And what does logic report of the birth of the year,—that loosing of the earth from its chains of frost,—that springing forth of the leaf after the death of winter,—that resurrection of insect life from its frozen tomb? Sense reports nothing more, nor even the probability of more. The tree sheds and renews its foliage from year to year, perhaps for ages. But there comes a period even to the rock-rooted oak, which has for centuries defied time and the elements. Time’s hour of conquest comes at length, and there, too, death at last gathers in his harvest. The report of science is but little more satisfactory. That may inform us with some degree of plausibility, that the material elements, of which these falling and decaying masses are composed, do not perish, but enter into new combinations.

But the time-honored monarch of the forest has yielded to the destroyer; its individuality is gone; it is no longer the same; it is no longer.

“Great Cæsar’s body, dead and turned to clay,
May stop a hole to keep the wind away;”

and that is all that sense and logic can say about it. Beyond that they are deaf, dumb, and blind. Whence, then, comes that voice, which is borne into the inward ear of man on the breezes of spring, whispered by the budding leaf, breathed to his soul by the unfolding flower, and set to music, and repeated in prolonged melodies by the winged minstrels of the year?

And the ocean, boundless and restless, as we stand before it on its everlasting cliffs! The senses discourse to us of its blue waters, its briny taste, its ceaseless ebb and flow, and science discloses to us its secret elements, compels it to yield up its salts, and acids, and alkalies, for man’s inspection and use, and publishes the laws of its tides. But they have not, and they cannot, reveal to us its higher mysteries, its loftier symbols. Not their voices bring to us the tidings of the spirit, which are borne upon its murmuring swell. It is not the eye, which reads the revelation of eternity and power, that is written upon its heaving bosom, or in its deep repose. It is not the ear, which hears the unwearied chant, that arises to the Invisible from all its fathomless depths.

The spreading landscape has its mysteries, too. But sense, nor science can read, much less interpret them. They can only tell of the outward, describe in detail the visible features; the sunny slopes, the expanded meads, the wooded steeps, the hanging cliffs, the flowery vales, the falling cascade, the roaring cataract, and all the picturesque groupings. They cannot pluck out the heart of its mystery. Their vocation is with the mere surface of the material. Not theirs is the mission to develop the *soul of beauty*, which reposes there, nor unfold the deep sublimities of the spirit, which are there enclosed. They see the rock, the wood, the water, and the earth; but the spirit of the earth, the wood, the water, and the rock, come not forth at their conjuration.

It is not, then, the senses, nor reasoning, which disclose

to us the living reality, which is in everything that exists. The senses perceive the outward appearance, but cannot attain to the inner spirit; to the revelations of the Good, the Beautiful, the True, which every creation of God's hand contains for those, who seek it truly, for every one, who reverently opens the inward ear to hear it, and bows a pure heart to catch its inspiration. Not from sense, nor science, do we learn the emphatic truth of the approbation, which the Creator bestowed upon his successive works, when he pronounced them *good*. The prophetic spirit of man beholds them, and feels that they are glorious and divine.

As the philosophy of sensation disrobes earth and nature of their chief splendor, so does it deprive Christianity of its highest evidence, and brings it down to the level of human systems. Denying to man the intuition of the infinite and true, it compels us to scrutinize the claims of religion with the poor and fallible logic of sensation; to rest its truths exclusively upon the authenticity of old manuscripts, of which the original writing is to be deciphered, and by a laborious process restored, and brought up from under the later glosses, which have been written over and nearly obliterated it;—upon the interpretation of Greek and Hebrew particles;—upon scattered fragments of the fathers of the first centuries, picked up here and there amid the accidental relics of ancient literature; upon the agreement of certain events in the Christian history, with vague and isolated passages of the Jewish writings; upon the reality of certain miracles reported in the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—sensation being all the while unable to define or recognise a miracle, or to show how it may prove the divine authority of him who works it; and all the other proofs depending upon the competence and integrity of those historians; and upon the question, whether the histories, which we have received as theirs, are the veritable histories written by the Apostles. Be all these points determined as clearly as they be by philology and logic, verbal criticism and balancing of testimony; the highest conviction they can produce is only a probability that Christianity is true. However high the degree of probability attained, the result still leaves a portion of doubt in the mind. As a consequence,

too, it becomes a religion of the letter; and its rites, from spiritual symbols, become the substance of holiness. Christianity is not a revelation to this age, and to all time; but a cunning historical problem for learned men and scholars to discuss. For, it is to be observed, that the great mass of mankind have not access to the historical testimony, by which the problem is to be solved. The great mass of men, therefore, can have no warrant for their faith in Christianity, but the naked authority of the learned. But the learned differ in their conclusions; draw contradictory inferences from the historical investigation. The great mass, then, are without the miserable support of learned authority for their faith. Even the learned can have no direct faith in Christianity; their belief terminates logically in its evidences. The unlearned cannot have this poor substitute for a living faith. They are left to float helpless, and without a guide upon the shoreless ocean of conjecture, doubt, and despair. "They are absolutely disinherited by their Maker, placed out of the condition of ascertaining the probable truth of that which they must believe, or have no assurance of salvation."

Not thus has the Universal Father left his children dependent for spiritual food. Not by such a faith was the noble army of martyrs sustained, who periled life, and poured out their blood like water, as a testimony to the truth. Not before the power of a historical probability did the pompous rites of ancient paganism recede, and its idols crumble into dust; nor by such a power has Christianity kept on its march of eighteen centuries of conquest. Not such a hope has poured the gladness of heaven into the dwellings of suffering and sorrow; nor that the light, which can fill the ignorant mind with the radiance of divine truth. The masses, though they have never *seen* by the glow-worm light of logic, have always believed in Jesus, as the Christ, and with a faith infinitely surer than authority, or tradition, or historical testimony can impart. Here it is seen of a truth, that "the testimony of Jesus is the *spirit of prophecy*." This is the spirit of prophecy, that true light, which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world, and gives to every one that does his will, to *know* of the doctrine, whether it be of God. This is the spirit of prophecy, the intuition of the true, the faculty

of discerning spiritual truth, when distinctly presented; which gives "the ultimate appeal on all moral questions, not to a jury of scholars, a hierarchy of divines, or the prescriptions of a creed, but to the common sense of the human race."

I have said that atheism is the direct logical result, the ultimate word of the philosophy, which derives all knowledge from the experience of the senses. As it takes from Christianity its only sure support, so it robs the universe of its Creator. The senses can attain only to phenomena, but can give no information of causes. In the action of external things upon each other, the powers by which they are mutually affected, it can note only the naked facts, or at most, only the precedence and succession of facts. The rising of the sun, and the illumination of the earth, are simply facts, which the senses present to the mind; but nowise in the relation of cause and effect. The intuitive element is so closely interwoven in every act of sensible experience, that it is not easy, without some attention and analysis, to perceive the precise limits of the information conveyed to the mind by sensible phenomena. Especially is this the case in those phenomena, which involve the idea of causation, one of the most active intuitions. In observing the succession of certain phenomena, we immediately perceive that one is the cause of the other, and too hastily conclude that this idea of their relation is the result of sensation, as well as the ideas of the phenomena themselves. But it may be easily seen, that this idea is one of the very earliest of which the mind indicates a consciousness. It is shown in the first unfolding of the infant's mind, before the reflective faculty can be supposed to have come into action, or only with the most feeble and imperfect endeavor. In the highest reasonings of the profoundest philosopher, this idea is not manifested more decisively than in the first conscious efforts of the child, in his earliest attempts at philosophizing with his coral and rattle. When looking at the phenomena involving causation, therefore, it is necessary to abstract every element of experience, except sensation, and consider the effect, by itself, which sensation produces. Thus, analyzing the phenomena referred to, it will be found that the mind gets only the ideas of the sun's rising, and the earth enlightened; without

any relation between them, excepting, possibly, that of the order of time. These ideas being attained, the mind, that blank piece of paper, can deduce nothing from them for reflection to note, but what is contained in them. The idea of cause therefore, so far as the senses are concerned, not being contained in them, cannot be inferred from them. It may be admitted, indeed, that the idea of cause and effect is involved in them, as the materials of flame and fire are hidden in a lump of ice. But lumps of ice, or a lump of ice and a flint may be rubbed together a good while, before a spark is struck out. They will be lump of ice and flint still. It requires the electric current to bring out the flame and the fire. Ideas involving causation may be multiplied indefinitely, without helping the matter. Mere multitude will not aid in elaborating that relation. The senses, alone, can by no possibility arrive at the idea of cause, and are, therefore, impotent to furnish the first link in one of the chains of argument most relied on to demonstrate the reality of a First Cause. "Every effect must have a cause." True; but how will you prove it by your logic? or how will your senses enable you to determine which is effect and which cause? Intuition is the only electric current, that can evolve it. The idea of causation is a pure intellectual intuition.

Even if it were possible for sensation to attain to the knowledge of intermediate causes, the logic, which denies to the mind the power of directly perceiving the Infinite, is unable to reach the idea of the ONE First Cause. Unity is still beyond its power. It could only trace an interminably ascending series of effects and causes, to which it could "find no end, in wandering mazes lost;" and the universe would still be without a Sovereign and Head.

To a similar result must every attempt come, which seeks to demonstrate the reality of the Absolute from outward phenomena alone, and discards the transcendental element of the mind. The insufficiency of these premises alone, and the fallacy of such reasoning, have been again and again shown. Skeptics have disproved, by unimpeachable logic, everything but the possibility of the existence of a Supreme Cause. Why then, if the philosophy of sensation be true, is not the whole world buried in atheism and despair? Why is it, that the unknown nook of earth

has not yet been discovered, where man, however deeply plunged in barbarism, and faint and few the traces of his original brightness, does not recognise, and in some form, however rude, worship a higher Power, which created him and all things? Will the obscure tradition of an original revelation to the first beings of the race, as some assume, account for it? But human traditions are not thus constant, permanent, and universal. Other traditional beliefs, which for ages the hoariest tradition had consecrated, have disappeared from the creeds of nations. From articles of religious faith, they degenerate into superstitions, become poetic legends, and having served their turns as nursery bugbears or lullabies, vanish utterly, or remain as monuments in history of the progress, or decline of mankind.

“The intelligible forms of ancient poets,
The fair humanities of old religion,
The power, the beauty, and the majesty,
That had their haunts in dale, or piny mountain,
Or forest by slow stream, or pebbly spring,
Or chasms and watery depths; all these have vanished.”

Why has not this belief, too, perished with the rest? or become a superstition, or an idle legend; instead of continuing to be the most solemn conviction of universal man, in all stages of his progress? Is it not because the revelation is made to every human soul? Is it not, because his relation to the Infinite and the Highest is an indestructible element of man's consciousness; and that the doctrines of the skeptic produce “a harsh dissonance with the whispers of that voice, which is uttered clearly, though faintly in the heart of every human being? Is it not, that “the God *felt* in the soul of man is a thing, which logic cannot dispute out of him?”

In this view the faith of every generation is a new testimony and confirmation of the truth. Man begins to doubt only when he forsakes his intuitions, and betakes himself to his logic. The orthodox symbol is by no means without significance, when truly interpreted, which teaches the necessity of distrusting the conclusions of mere reason, as reason is commonly defined and understood. Reasoning, the faculty of drawing inferences from the facts of sensible experience, is indeed a blind guide, leader of the blind. Error, and doubt, and denial are the characteristics of en-

lightened communities, in which the faculty of syllogistic logic is most developed and honored; and that higher faculty, the true reason, the divine in man, which apprehends truth by the force of intuitive evidence, is disparaged and neglected.

Something like this idea is illustrated in the beautiful romance of *Picciola*. It is related that the grateful prisoner Charney sought assiduously and long to discover the scientific name and classification of the mysterious flower of his prison-yard, whose silent eloquence had rescued him from the darkness of unbelief and despair, and made his prison walls the inner courts of immortality. His search, we are told, was unsuccessful. And so it should have been. His search was idle, and his disappointment full of meaning. He discerned the *soul* of the flower, and its leaves had been for the healing of his spirit. What had he to do with its material accidents, its nomenclature, its stamens and pistils, its class and order? Technological science could not enter that inner shrine without desecrating it. The plain why and because would have robbed it of some of its truthful mystery; made it partial and exclusive instead of universal. It was a flower, from which he had learned the high meaning, of which all flowers are the emblems. It would have become a mere meaningless *Polyandria Polyginia*.

Do not imagine, that in this discussion I am reviving a useless, or an exploded and forgotten controversy. If I have not entirely failed of my purpose, it is seen, that the relations of man to outward nature, the foundation of religious faith and hope, and the grounds of the certainty of all human knowledge are involved in it. It cannot, then, be useless. The subject is, at this moment, the ground of earnest debate in one portion of our community; and the theory of sensation is the standard philosophy of our ancient university. I am not, then, calling up the shadows of the past. The question, besides its intellectual and religious aspects, has social and political relations of the highest importance. The transcendental philosophy alone legitimates human freedom, and vindicates, and at the same time assures, social progress. It cannot, then, be a matter of unconcern to any one, who prizes his individual liberty, and earnestly striving hopes for the universal emancipation of the race.

The philosophy of sensation denies the inward light, and deals only with the outward. Hence it recognises man only in his accidents, his external environments. Let it be observed, that the practical conduct of those, who profess this belief, is not always such as properly follows from their creed. Man's intuitions, however they may be denied, still assert their supremacy. How far short soever he may come of the ideal towards which he strives, he is always wiser in his thought than in his logic, and better in his life. I am, therefore, only speaking of logical consequences. Sensation, then, does not, and by its own terms cannot, see man but in his outward condition, and his personal and social rights are such only, as can be logically inferred from the circumstances in which he is placed. Whatever is, in relation to society, is right, simply because it is. That an institution exists is an ultimate reason, why it should exist. Hence it is conservative of the present organization of society, whatever it may be; and resists improvement, except that, which consists in levelling down to a certain point. The idea of bringing up what is below does not result from any of its logical formulas. It finds man everywhere divided into high and low in social position, and concludes that gradation of ranks is of divine appointment. The few have in all ages lorded it over the many, and this determines that the masses are born for servitude. The earth is not the common heritage of the race; because a small minority has monopolized the whole of it, and it would disturb the existing social order established by Providence to call upon them to give an account of their titles. The masses are steeped in misery to the lips; oppression strides ruthlessly with its iron heel over the necks of the prostrate millions; avarice snatches from the mouth of famishing despair its last crust; monopoly robs industry of its wages, and builds palaces with its fraudulent accumulations. This philosophy looks calmly on, and bids these ignorant, starving, scourged, and bleeding millions take comfort, for their lot is ordained by destiny; that though the earth spreads out provisions liberally for all her children, the arrangements of nature would be defeated, if all should partake of them. It knows nothing of the infinite, and therefore cannot promise them a higher life hereafter, where their sufferings shall be compensated;

but instead thereof, in the freer communities, it bids them take courage and submit; for in some of the changes of condition, which are daily taking place, their children's children may rise, and they shall be avenged in their posterity. It then turns complacently to the favored few, and bids them thank God, that they are not shut out from the light of earth, as well as that of Heaven, like those poor, starving helots; and discourses with unction of charity, and the liberal hand that maketh rich.

It has scarcely a word of reproach for that most ferocious and guilty form of oppression, which exists in this country, whose very existence is transcendental; whose right to be a nation was broadly and unequivocally legitimated upon the intuitive truth of the principle of the equality and brotherhood of universal man. Yet here it sees a system of the most bloody injustice perpetrated; man made a chattel by law, bought and sold like the ox in the market, his body marked with scars, and stripes, and mutilations, a faint, though fearful, image of the deeper wounds, and more horrible mutilations inflicted upon his God-created, and God-imaged soul; a system, which combines and embodies all that is conceivable of mean and despicable in selfishness, of fraud and cruelty in oppression; a system of mingled hypocrisy, treachery, and impiety, defying Heaven, outraging earth, and filling all the echoes of hell with the exulting shouts of demons, at the *realized* possibilities of man's depravity and guilt. In view of these things, which would seem fit to move the universe with anguish, this philosophy is calm and cold as an iceberg, as unmoved and passionless as the granite ranges that bind a continent. It has no tears, nor consolation for the soul-stricken slave; no groans, that a light from Heaven has been extinguished. But it takes the slave-holder by the hand as a brother; offers *him* its sympathy, if a light cloud but arise in the horizon, threatening him with danger; and again pledges itself to interpose the whole might of a nation between him and the retributions of omnipotence: aye, soberly thinks to encourage his trembling spirit, by holding up before him a piece of parchment,—a written constitution—the Constitution of the *free* United States—which, it solemnly assures him, guaranties his domestic institutions of oppression and blood. Pitable

philosopher! Grovelling, earth-burrowing mole! to be pitied, and not reproached, that thou shouldst have conceived, that human constitutions could nullify the laws of the universe; that political arrangements could extinguish the eternal instincts of man's soul, through which the Almighty declares him to be free, and impels him, as with the voice of necessity, of destiny, to struggle for his birth-right. Hadst thou been aught but a burrowing, purblind mole, thou wouldst have known, that every human being is bound, by the fixed and fateful laws of his being, to opposition to such a constitution; that the universe abhors, and will not endure it. Such a constitution is a lie, earth-formed and material; the Spirit of the Universe, which is truth, will not suffer a lie, be it individual, or national. All the powers of nature, unseen but irresistible agents of truth, are at work, and this stupendous imposture must soon explode. The whole moral force of humanity is pledged for its extinction. Come out of the earth then, ye purblind statesmen, and sense-fettered politicians! It is for you to determine, in some measure, whether the explosion shall take place by a silent, scarcely felt transfusion of moral-electrical force, operating by gentle shocks, or whether it shall burst upon the world like a "doom's thunder-peal."

As the human mind can have no direct perception of truth; the inquiry after truth is a mere matter of logic and syllogism; and truth, or rather the logical probabilities of truth, are attainable only by the few, who have the opportunities and leisure to pursue it. The masses are incapable of determining for themselves what is right and good in relation to anything; are as impotent to discover political, as we have seen them to be to find moral and religious truth. Hence, they are incapable of governing themselves, and are of a necessity in a state of pupilage to those, whom circumstances have placed in a situation to investigate. The social order, once established, is sacred; for as authority is the supreme law of this system, a precedent, once settled, is inviolable. Hereditary ranks of governors and governed, or kindred social organizations, with their consequences of privilege, wealth, and power, on the one side, and oppression, poverty, and degradation on the other, become fixed social laws, invested with a divine

sanction. There is no foundation for individual freedom; but the masses are doomed, by an inexorable destiny, to hopeless bondage. As this philosophy begets skepticism and infidelity in religion, so it has no faith, and no promise for man in his social and political relations.

It has no element of, and contains no provisions for social progress. It can discover no change, no improvement in that outward creation, from which alone it gets all its ideas. The same stars, which beamed upon man's cradle, shine upon his tomb. History, its highest authority, assures us they are the same, which sang together at the creation. Except a lost Pleiad, whose place none comes to supply, there they are, identical in number and place. There they shine, and as they shone to Adam, shine they to us. Our faltering steps creep feebly along the same unaltered hills, over which our bounding feet once leaped with ecstasy. The same echoes repeat the complaint of our age's weariness, which were once awakened by our jubilant shouts of youthful gladness. We repose at last beneath the turf of the same unaltered valley, whose early flowers were, in other days, the beautiful emblems of our own spring-time. Alternation we behold, indeed, but no change; succession of individuals, but the same habits, without alteration, increase, or diminution. One generation is the exact counterpart of its predecessor. The flowers of this year are like the flowers of the last. The robin and the thrush bring back no new harmonies from their sunny wanderings. The river of our valley is the same, as when the wild Indian rippled its current with his light canoe. Other harvests are reaped here now, than the red man gathered; but they spring up by the same unchanging law of germination, growth, and reproduction. The corn of the *savage* Pocomptuck was as perfect as that, which the more skilful cultivation of the civilized Pocomptuck produces. Nature is ever the same; and her constancy is her perfection. It is from the *unchangeableness* of her beauty and order, that man derives the divine wisdom she was intended to communicate. The material creation was pronounced *good*. It was created *at first* in the full perfection for which it was destined. Its successive tribes appear and vanish, according to their periods, without improvement, and without change. To have lived, and died,

and reproduced, has fulfilled the law of their being. Man, the last and noblest work of creation, was not pronounced *good*. Progress is his law; and the perfection of his nature must be the work of his own earnest and faithful strivings.

If in her transient generations Nature thus communicates to man no thought of progress; from her more enduring forms still less can he acquire it. Her everlasting hills are the highest symbols sense can furnish him of duration, unchangeableness. The primeval constellations occupy unmoved their ancient habitations; each star *fixed* changelessly to its own celestial space, even be that space an orbit. How then can man infer the mighty law of progress from these fixed and changeless emblems, or which only change without advancing? Chain man to the material, limit him to the knowledge which sensation furnishes, and where were now the race? "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh," would have comprised the whole of its history, as it does that of the trees of the forest, and of all the forms of animal life.

But such is not the sum of man's history. On the contrary, it is a perpetual proof, to which every era adds its own confirmation, that his destinies are guided by an intuition of something higher, than sense can give him any conception of. It has been, and will ever be a history of progress, constant, perpetual. One form of social organization disappears, and it may seem for a time, that there has been retrogression, instead of progress. This may, perhaps, be the case with single generations. But a generation does not embody, nor but partially typify the history of the race. Every form of civilization, every social institution, which in their first establishment are the result and expression of the transcendental element of man's nature, has its mission to fulfil. When that is accomplished, it has ceased to be useful, and must give place to some better expression of the existing attainments of Humanity. But it is only by battle that it can be overthrown; and in the evil passions excited by this contest of the past with the present, society may appear to recede. The age, which immediately succeeds a great social revolution, may seem to have gone back towards barbarism. But the recession is only apparent, or at most, but temporary. In the seem-

ing chaos the elements of order are silently and powerfully at work; whatever there was of living truth in the extinguished forms, is diffusing itself with a more vital energy, now that it is rid of its hindrances of formulas; a thousand falsehoods, and false seemings are annihilated in the tumultuous heaving of the social elements; and out of the chaos arises at length a higher, and truer and wider civilization, embracing a larger portion of humanity in its benefits and blessings. More perfect institutions are established, in their turn, when their work is done, to give place to something nobler.

The warlike barbarians of the North of Europe overthrew the Roman empire, which contained all that the world then possessed of science, art, and culture. The period, that succeeded, history, with little insight, has been accustomed to regard, under the name of the Middle Age, as the return of the ages of darkness. Yet in this darkness, how many principles most important to Humanity, but unknown to Rome, were at work, and taking deep root in the general mind. Individual man began to be of account; the masses, by means of the religious orders, to emerge from their social degradation; and in the fit time, a new civilization commenced, more comprehensive than the Roman, based on higher and broader principles, and aiming at higher attainments, embracing all that was true and living in that of Rome, and much besides that the Roman did not dream of.

Or to take a more recent example. How many falsehoods, by which man has so long been defrauded of his birthright, robbed, beaten, and trampled on, were extinguished by that transcendental French Revolution. How many forms of social injustice and oppression did it destroy. How many hidden truths did it develope. What lessons of the worth and the might of man, aye, of peasant man, did it force into the quailing hearts of despots of every grade, from the castellated baron of the banks of the Garonne, to the terrible autocrat of the Neva, whose will is absolute over half a continent. What tokens of love and hope did it send forth to the prostrate, waiting nations. Blind sense looked with horror and dismay, as if it were a volcano of wrath and destruction, upon that beacon light of deliverance.

Thus, through perpetual revolution and change, society casts off its worn out forms, and the symbols that have lost their significance, and by conflict prepares the way for new and fairer developments of Humanity. Every generation has felt that it had a work of its own to do, and not merely to receive, and to enjoy what it received from its predecessor; not merely to transmit its own inheritance of arts, institutions, opinions, unimpaired to its successor, but to leave them more improved and perfected than it found them. Let not generations more than individuals dream that they have already attained perfection; but forgetting the things that are behind, labor to build monuments of progress in advance of those, which are crumbling around them.

It would be a mistake to suppose that revolutions are the causes of progress. They are only its indications. They do not originate or discover truth, but only labor to establish and give it utterance. The progress has been already made in the general mind; the revolution is needed to sweep obstructions from its path. They announce, not generate improvement. They are, therefore, the results, not the originators of advancement. The forms and institutions of society are, as I have said, the expressions of its existing attainments; the attempts of society to preserve what from period to period it has gained, and thus prevent the race from retrograding. They may be regarded as the monuments of its spiritual acquisitions; as historical monuments, the obelisk, the pyramid, and the triumphal arch, preserve the memory of its material conquests. All monuments, from their very nature and design, belong to the past almost from the moment of their erection. As Humanity by the laws of its being, must continue to advance, it will leave its forms and institutions, of which permanence is necessarily a chief object, behind it. They cease to represent its spiritual state, and as far as it is bound by them, they impede its onward march; they become not only useless, but an incumbrance, which it cannot bear, and must throw off. The difficulty of relief arises in part from the reverence for the established, especially when time has given it a species of consecration, which, as well as progress, is a law of humanity. But the chief obstacle is in the difference of individual progress. Institutions

represent only the average attainments of a community; the majority may even be below, rather than above the standard. To this portion, whatever its relative numbers, the institution, or the form will continue to be a holy symbol, long after it has lost its holiness, and become to another portion, an antiquated absurdity to be rejected, or a crushing burthen to be got rid of at any rate. In this difference of individual progress, commences the struggle of the present with the past. In this conflict Humanity may be sometimes overthrown for a season. But it rises again, strengthened even by its defeats; and revolution, with the reform, or utter subversion, of the old, spiritless forms, and the building of new, more finished, and beautiful monuments, commemorates its triumph, and indicates its progress.

As with individuals, so with nations, every step of progress makes each succeeding one easier. Every improvement in the social institutions of a nation prepares the way for another, that is to follow it, brings it nearer, and gives assurance that it shall be accomplished with less expense of human happiness. Benjamin Constant, in his Essay on "*the Progressive Development of Religious Ideas*," has given a striking illustration of this majestic law of acceleration. He has noted four distinguished stages in the civil and political progress of man, as he has departed from the savage state; each stage terminated by a revolution more or less sudden and violent. The first stage is a *theocracy*, the period denoted by the reign of the Gods, to which the annals of every people go back. This is the reign of the priesthood, a consecrated caste, claiming a commission from Heaven, and a mysterious, but absolute supremacy. All men out of the sacerdotal caste were regarded as unclean and degraded by their nature; and hence slavery under a theocracy was most severe, humiliating, and least susceptible of mitigation, still less of abolition.

When the warrior caste superseded the sacerdotal, indicating the second stage of progress, slavery, though more cruel and bloody, lost the sanction of religion, the consecration of mystery. It no longer existed by the divine will. It was the fortune of battle, and the slave, by a reverse of fortune, might become the master.

Feudalism, the third stage, was not precisely slavery. The slave became a serf, attached to the soil, instead of being merely a personal chattel. His life became of some consideration, and he had a sort of precarious right of property.

A privileged order of nobility, divested of feudal privileges, indicates the destruction of feudalism. The serf has become a commoner. In this new revolution the life, liberty, and property of the plebeian have acquired safeguards, and though still exposed to great injury and oppression, his condition is immeasurably in advance of that of the slave of the theocracy, the Helot of military conquest, or the serf of feudalism.

These successive revolutions seem to have followed each other with the accelerated velocity of a falling body. The duration of the theocracy is unknown; but it is probable that it continued longer than the institution, which succeeded it; for the earliest traditions of the race point to it as belonging even then to the hoariest antiquity. Slavery by conquest existed more than three thousand years; feudalism, to which it gave place, continued eleven hundred; while within two hundred years after the overthrow of feudalism, a *privileged* nobility had ceased to exist in France, and the American Revolution had annihilated forever, as a social institution, all distinction of ranks — *in the Caucasian race*. Constant wrote his work, I believe, before the noted "*Three Days of Paris*," and the consecration of the "Citizen King." Be it added now, then, that that almost bloodless revolution was separated by an interval of only forty years from the so-absurdly-enough called "Horrors of the French Revolution," and by only ten or fifteen years from the battle of Waterloo, and the restoration of the old dynasty in the person of "Louis the Desired;" and we may say with a comfortable degree of courage and hope, as Constant said, — "They, who write within the next fifty years, will have many other steps to trace." And when we remember, that within the last lustrum, the magnificent West India Revolution has been effected; that a similar revolution is preparing, and almost ready to be evolved in the French Indies of both hemispheres; that the "pledged philanthropy of earth" has assembled, in the commercial metropolis of the world, in

a "World's Convention," in sympathy and for the redress of the black man's wrongs; and that seven thousand men in these United States have bound themselves by an oath to take no rest, till they have vanquished slavery here with the freeman's weapon at the ballot box; may we not include the *African* race with the Caucasian, in our encouraging cry, — "*Frisch zu, Bruder*," — Courage, brother; much as the devil has to do in it, the earth still belongs to the Lord!

I have indicated thus particularly the political progress of mankind, because political institutions and monuments denote, more conclusively than any other, the actual condition of Humanity, of man in his spiritual development; and because this progress seems to me to be more decisively transcendental. Popular institutions, including in this connexion religious establishments, inasmuch as the religious and political development of nations are very intimately connected, — being, as has been said and repeated, the expression of the prevailing ideas of a nation; its forms of government and legislation, which are concerned with the rights of man, *as man*, are the only tolerably accurate tests of the position of man in the mass, of the progress of Humanity towards individual freedom, and universal equality. Hence, his social and political environments are of much higher importance than his scientific progress. Man's freedom is the essence of his being; and the nearer he is to a state of absolute independence of will and action, the more perfectly will his whole nature be developed, and his destiny on earth accomplished. Man's scientific culture, as science is understood, is by no means the highest object, and is for the most part material and mechanical. His progress in science, practical arts, industry, mechanical invention, in everything relating to the outward embellishment and physical comfort of society, has been rapid in proportion as progress in these is more easy, as it depends more on individual endeavor, as it is aided, if not wholly carried on by sensation and mechanism, as it does not require the largest development of the highest powers of the mind, and as it is opposed by few inward or outward difficulties. Political institutions, the most hostile to individual liberty, have been, and are, the most zealous promoters of letters,

science, and exterior culture. The reign of the Roman Augustus has passed into a proverb. The Augustan age of France denotes the reign of him, who could say, "*I am the State,*" and carry it out. We all know how it is at present with the three imperial and royal personages, who conceived and instituted the "*Holy Alliance.*"

But in all the relations of man the law of progress is constant and universal. In all departments it has been transcendental. Man has been indebted to mechanism only for the means of effecting it, and the modes of recording and perpetuating it. The great ideas, in which reforms and revolutions have originated, have not resulted from any calculation of profit and loss, ingenious inquiries concerning the balance of trade, nor any of the processes of the logic of experience, or of mechanical combination. They have been founded in the perception of a spiritual truth, an insight of the invisible, an invincible dissatisfaction with the seen and actual, and a strong yearning for something yet unknown, better able than the present to realize the deep-felt possibilities, the infinite yearnings of man's spirit. This seems to me to be obvious enough in relation to religious and political reforms. But even in things more immediately connected with the material world, and within the more direct sphere of the senses, we find the same necessity of referring to a higher faculty than sensible experience, to account for progress. The falling of an apple is said to have suggested to Newton the law of gravity. If all the ideas in the universe, accessible to the senses, had been in Newton's mind at that moment, and the wonder-working apple had fallen plump into the midst of them all; still, how were it possible, with those materials alone, to work out the immaterial, purely abstract idea of gravity, a pure force, invisible, but all-pervading and universal, intangible, yet all-controlling, not to be perceived by any one, nor all the senses, and yet binding the material universe together in unfailling order, and perfect harmony? In like manner it may be seen, that the great discoveries in science, and inventions in arts, presuppose an order of ideas not supplied by the external senses; beyond their reach; and which are necessary to give vitality, practicability, and even reality, to the communications of the senses.

But, returning to the political progress of mankind; it is evident that this progress is the result of a perception, faint at first, but becoming clearer in each epoch, of the principle of the natural equality of all men. This is one of the ultimate facts in man's history. The earliest political convulsions exhibit glimpses of it. The earliest political and religious revolutions have aimed at, and tended to develop it. From theocratic slavery, through military servitude, feudal vassalage, the almost empty subordination to a privileged nobility, and the nominal parity of rights in a republic, this great principle has steadily advanced, in a great degree unconsciously on the part of the agents in revolutions, towards its fulfilment. Every new revolution is a new approximation to it. Every successful resistance of oppression is an earnest of its triumph. Even those revolutions, in which liberty seems to be cloven down, scatter wider its seeds, and prepare the way for a broader regeneration. These times are full of "millennial fire-shadowings" of its coming. Its ultimate establishment, as the universal law of earth, towards which the march of progress is advancing with accelerating steps, will be the consummation of man's political destinies.

It is not an unimportant inquiry, but one of the deepest significance, what is the origin and foundation of this idea? Does its truth depend on our being able to deduce it argumentatively from outward experience? to prove it as the nett result of an arithmetical calculation and balancing of pro and con, why and why not? Can man's equal right to freedom be legitimated only from without? Is it the conclusion of a syllogism, of which the eye and the ear alone can furnish the major and minor propositions? Or is it an essential element of self-consciousness, without which we cease to be? a truth to be attained and comprehended as readily and as fully, by the ignorant peasant, as by the subtlest dialectician; and the proof of which lies not in an appeal to earth, and the earthly in man, but to Heaven, and the universal spiritual intuitions of Humanity?

The idea of man's equality is not derived from his birth. Inequalities of physical organization, and moral and intellectual differences, which cannot be accounted for by the observation of outward phenomena, are apparent almost from the moment of his entrance into life. The condition

of his earliest years would lead to a different view of his appointed destiny.

It would not be the result of the observation of his social condition, in any age or nation. Inequality appears everywhere to be the law of his present being. Some of the race are born in the purple, inheritors of absolute authority over the liberties and lives of their fellows; surrounded from the cradle by all the environments of grandeur and luxury; to whom Nature and Art seem appointed to minister with all their treasures. Others, and far a greater number, whose doom, too, is not written upon the skin, first look out into life from squalid hovels; cradled in poverty and rags; with no inheritance but the universal air, which cannot be exclusively appropriated; doomed to go on from infancy to age, the slaves of toil, laboring and suffering that others may be idle and enjoy; debarred from all knowledge but what is derived from having sounded all the depths of wretchedness; and thus pass to their graves from generation to generation, degraded and hopeless in life, and the consciousness of a higher life almost erased. Between these extremes society is a system of inequality in manifold gradations. The intellectual manifestations of men, though by no means coincident with their physical condition, would lead to a similar result. What premises has logic here, by what induction can it draw forth the regenerating doctrine of equality?

Nor is this idea presented in the sum total of man's condition, as wrought out in history. There man is always and everywhere exhibited in the horizontal division of rulers and subjects by inheritance; of those, whose right it is to oppress, and those, whose inexorable duty is submission. The social institutions of every nation in every age have been founded upon a denial of this principle. The republics of antiquity had no conception of it. No revolution, till within the last half century, though aiming expressly at the improvement of the condition of the subject orders, has asserted it. One recent attempt to embody it in political institutions terminated in a military despotism; from which logic, justly enough according to its light, concluded that it was a falsehood and chimera, without foundation in the universe. One nation has solemnly announced it as the highest social truth, and professedly made it the

basis of its political establishments. Yet that same nation has shown that it has little practical faith in it; and that the most hopeful believers believe in it with important limitations, and regard it very much in the light of a philanthropic experiment, of which the result is rather doubtful. One half of the nation openly treats it in practice as a lie, to which it is not bound to pay even an outward respect. The other half not only acquiesces in this contumely on the part of the first, but in the development of its own institutions has effectively nullified it, in manifold respects, and fully realized it in none. The logic of sense, then, if we allow it the power to draw moral conclusions, would infer from the condition and history of the race, either that this idea is a falsehood unmixed; or, if it may contain a portion of truth, that it is a pure, useless abstraction, or only applicable on certain conditions, and in certain circumstances, which have not yet occurred in its experience, and of the occurrence of which all its analogies contain no promise.

But this idea is, nevertheless, a reality, in spite of the lame conclusions of forensic logic. It rests on a surer basis than sensation, or reasoning from outward phenomena, or any of the mechanical elements of man's nature. And well for man that it has a higher sanction; that it is not of the earth, earthy, and subject to be cavilled at, doubted, or denied, according to the reflection it receives from outward things, from the contradictions of his social condition, and the anomalies of the political systems to which he has been subjected. State to any one, whose interests or passions are not concerned in denying it, that a man is a man: that simple declaration invests him with sacredness, strips off all the outward garbs of reverence or shame, which accident has put upon him, and places him, in his original divinity, upon that broad platform, where there is nothing above him, or below him. This principle, then, in the words of another, is "a deep, solemn, vital truth, written by the Almighty in the laws of our being, and pleaded for by all that is noble and just in the promptings of our nature." It is, as the noblest declaration of human rights ever announced to the world, asserts, "a self-evident truth;" a truth based, like the faith in the All-perfect, in the intuitions of man's soul, placing his

right to freedom on an immovable basis, as unchangeable as the attributes of the Creator, and making every act of oppression of man by his fellow, not only a personal wrong, but a crime against Heaven. This truth, thus authenticated, inspires a deep, religious love of man as a friend, and a brother united to ourselves by a common and equal destiny; a truth, which scorns the miserable distinctions of color, birth, and condition, and compels us, whatever defacements he may have suffered from society, or himself, still to regard him as a brother, whom we are to love and labor for; a truth, which gives and receives illustration from all the events in man's history, when viewed in its light, and forbids us to despair for Humanity, even in its darkest fortunes. A truth, which inspires invincible faith in man, and confidence in his fortunes; and in relation to him, as to all things, leaving the dead past to bury its dead, and retaining only "its immortal children," rejoices and courageously acts in the living present, trusting, with unwavering hope, in the transcendent destiny, which lies rolled up for him in the future, and which the past and the present have been, and are, working together with the future in unfolding.

Let me illustrate the relations of this subject in another aspect. The most striking characteristic of this age is its mechanical tendency. This is observable not only where it might be expected, in the industry and physical culture of society, of which mechanism is the appropriate instrument. The old modes of production are superseded by easier and more rapid mechanical processes. Machinery supplies the place of human labor; the fleet horse has yielded to fleetier steam; and the winds become laggards before its powerful and untiring wings. All the material business of society is accomplished with a precision, rapidity, and productiveness, more than realizing the most fantastic visions of the seers of the past.

But this mechanical tendency is observable, and its footsteps are becoming daily more deeply imprinted in the departments of society, not apparently lying within its province. And this seems to be the natural result of a philosophy relying exclusively upon the senses, or which at the most, can have conceptions of the spiritual only through the medium of matter. The results of such a

philosophy must be essentially material. Beholding the almost omnipotence of machinery over the material forces of nature, and the physical miracles it works; its logical inference must be, that mechanism is the ultimate force in the universe, and an equal wonder-worker in moral, as in physical things. Moral force, if there be such a force, is absolutely inert and powerless, unless set in motion by a material mainspring. The indications of such a faith are but too apparent in the whole life and activity of society. They are visible in the almost exclusive devotion to the sciences conversant alone with the outward. The physical sciences are chiefly cultivated, and that mechanically, being reduced to mere classification and nomenclature. — In theology, which has no absolute demonstration of a God; but only some ambiguous glimpses of him in the curious mechanical contrivances and adaptations of matter, which it has discovered by means of its telescopes, microscopes, dissections, and other mechanical aids. — In morals, which look for a sure foundation, not in the infinite, intuitive sentiment of *duty*, of *right*, "which enters every abode, and delivers its message to every breast;" but in some demonstrable fitness of things, some calculation of profit and loss, which it calls utility, or at the highest, some single, positive, material revelation of the divine will to a remote age. — As in its foundation moral science is thus material, it is equally mechanical in its instruments. Moral reformers seldom rely upon the spiritual power of their doctrine, but upon the aptness of their contrivances, the mechanical power of association, the material energy of combined action, and the force of public opinion. The prophet is of less account than the warrior. — In politics, government is a machine, by the gradual perfecting of which mankind is to be made free and happy; instead of being regarded as the result and the record of man's progressive advance towards freedom and happiness. Hence too exclusive reliance is placed upon institutions, statutes, forms, and material forces. — In the aims of politicians, which point only to the improvement of the physical, economical, *immediately* practical condition of the people. — In the means of political operation most relied on; trained and drilled organizations, and other mechanical appliances, too often subjecting the individual judgment to the party

will, and thus in effect imposing upon him the slavery he seeks by these means to get rid of.—In the popular rules of judgment and action in morals and politics. Here the inquiry is not concerning the absolutely right, the right in itself; but what will be profitable, what politic. The ultimate appeal is not to man's conscience, but to his interests. Expediency sits upon the throne; and men, as politicians, feel at liberty to postpone their most solemn convictions of truth, when it appears at present unattainable, and to aid in upholding an acknowledged falsehood, until the political machinery, in some of its chance evolutions, shall come against and crush it.

This tendency is exhibited in the reverence for public opinion, the fear of uttering boldly what is in the thought; forgetting that as truth is to the ALL, so to each individual man his own convictions are the highest thing in the universe; and that whoso falsifies the truth in his mind, were it only by compromising it, pays sacrifice to the devil, and enlarges the borders of the empire of darkness.

In the ends and modes of education, which aims chiefly at the outward, the material, physical science, by means of Peter Parleys and Boards of Education, with their systems diagrams, atlases, pretended purports of history, and other machinery adapted to attain the great end of knowledge made easy.

And finally, this tendency is manifested in its great result,—the prevailing unbelief in the power of individual endeavor. "I am but one, and the race is numberless. What can I do?" And thus no man thinks of undertaking any enterprise without first securing the aid of an association or party, provided with all the nicely adjusted, patent machinery, by which society is regulated and impelled. Failing in this, with his most earnest canvassing for partisans, he consoles himself for giving it up by the reflection, that the times and the fates are unpropitious. Short-sighted coward! If but one, does he not know that he is omnipotent for himself, and responsible for himself, and not another for him? Was it truth he was desirous to promote? And does he not know; does not the whole past, with its Christs, Luthers, Foxes, Wesleys, and its hosts of prophets and reformers, answer to his own deep hopes; that truth and not mechanism, governs the uni-

verse; that it is faith, and not machinery, which is to work out the infinite destinies of mankind; that the poorest, toil-begrimed and disfigured workman, with living faith in a truth, is a match for all the machinery in the world, set in motion by falsehood; nay, more than a match, by the whole difference between Heaven and earth, time and eternity?

Thus everything is reduced to logic and ratiocination; and as men believe nothing but what there is a visible or tangible reason for; so they have no conception of power, but as an engine, with wheels, and springs, and levers. Through the whole compass of society, "this faith in mechanism has now struck its roots deep into man's most intimate primary sources of conviction; and is thence sending up, over his whole life and activity, innumerable stems, fruit-bearing and poison-bearing. The fact is, men have lost their faith in the invisible, and believe, and hope, and work only in the visible."

This exclusive cultivation of the outward, in so far as it has facilitated and increased the productiveness of industry, and multiplied the means and rapidity of communication, has undoubtedly been attended with many benefits; though perhaps the evils as yet have exceeded them. The present perfection of machinery has increased wealth, and the means of wealth; but it has increased accumulation, tended to concentrate wealth in few hands, and thus enlarge the inequalities of social conditions, and by the machinery of associations founded on wealth, to give to classes and corporations advantages similar to those possessed by the feudalisms and aristocracies, which our social systems have rejected. Besides, it is asserted by competent observers, that modern machinery has actually increased the daily amount, and diminished the reward of individual human labor. In introducing the labor of children in the operations of machinery, an amount of evil has been inflicted on the world, of which the revelations of eternity alone can disclose the extent. At present, the perfection of machinery has given a new impulse to, if it has not created the inordinate, all-engrossing desire of wealth, so strongly marked in the character of our times.

Yet these results, even if they were to be permanent, are less pernicious than the destruction of moral force, of faith and hope in its power, which is indicated and caused

by the mechanical character of the age. But this is not the end. The ultimate effects of machinery upon society have scarcely yet been conceived of. Moral force is, after all, the parent of all other force, creating and controlling, and making all subservient to the spiritual advancement of man. Material mechanism cannot extinguish the deep, primary intuitions of the soul; but for a time suppress them. The mighty power acquired by mechanical combinations is not long to be monopolized, but to be made the grand instrument of individual and social progress. Man has not been permitted to discover, and subject to his use, so many physical agents, only that he might "build more houses, weave more cloth, forge more iron," and multiply his material enjoyments, without any direct regard to his moral and intellectual improvement. The abridgments of labor are destined to benefit all mankind, and every individual; and the abundance of production is to be communicated impartially to the whole race. It would not be difficult to point out some of the steps, by which this result is to be reached;—a result not the less certain, though we could trace no step of the process, by which it may be wrought out—when every man, by the impartial enjoyment of the advantages of machinery, shall be released from the necessity of more labor than is necessary to secure a sound mind in a sound body; when not a portion only of society shall live in luxury, while the masses remain slaves of toil, mere beasts of burden; but every man shall enjoy undisturbed leisure for the cultivation of his higher nature; when all the Lord's people shall be prophets, and the transcendental principle of the entire equality of all men before the Common Father be established, as the universal law of earth, superseding institutions, and abolishing all the distinctions which now divide man into governors and people, representatives and constituents, employers and employed, givers and receivers of wages, artisans, laborers, lawyers, priests, kings, and commoners; and man be reckoned as man, not to be characterized and defined by his accidents, not to be measured by what is lowest, but by what is highest in him.

Does this seem a mere phantasm—a delusion? Nay, if there be anything to be learned from man acting in the past, it is that his whole history has been preparing for

such a consummation. If there be any certainty in the deepest convictions of man's soul, such is the destiny appointed him. If there be any truth in the symbols of that Book, which Christians receive as a revelation of the highest truth, God himself has announced it.

Man's past history, as we have seen, is the record of his obedience to that "deep commandment," dimly at first, but in each succeeding epoch more clearly discerned, of his whole being, "to have dominion,"—to be *free*. "Freedom is the one purport, wisely aimed at, or unwisely, of all man's toilings, struggles, sufferings in this earth." The generation of the present man is busily doing its part in unfolding this destiny, and giving its demonstration of the universal intuitions. Active as are the movements, deep-rooted and widely-spread the power of mechanism; the moral force of man is still asserting its right to rule his fortunes. Behind the mechanical movement, there is a deeper, more earnest spiritual movement, in which the former must be absorbed, and made to cooperate. This movement is expressed in the wide-felt dissatisfaction with the present, the earnest inquiry for something better than the past has transmitted, or the present attained, in morals, religion, philosophy, education, in everything that concerns the spiritual culture of man. It is indicated most decisively, where perhaps it is needed most, in the popular efforts for large civil and religious liberty. The depth of this movement cannot be measured by the senses. It defeats all the calculations of logic. The old despotisms are not alone affected by it; but it is most earnest in the freest nations. It laughs at all the political mechanisms, which are contrived to restrain it, whether in the shape of "Restoration of the Bourbons," Holy Alliances, Citizen Kings, Reform Bills, or Constitutional Compromises. The advent of a "Louis the Desired," cannot prevent "Three Days of July;" Carbonari and Chartist rebellions break out in spite of Congresses of Vienna, and disfranchisement of rotten boroughs; *Citizen Kings* do not find their thrones couches of down, nor their crowns wreaths of roses; and fraudulent Constitutions of the United States, which guaranty perpetual slavery to one sixth of the people, do not satisfy the remaining five sixths, that, with respect to them, the right of suffrage, and a parchment

declaration of rights, fill all man's conceptions of the liberty for which he was created. Doubtless there is much folly, even madness, and much aimless endeavor, in these movements; as no popular movement, nor even much earnest individual striving after an object worth striving for, is without a portion, more or less, of such. I am not now characterizing the present movements by their degree of wisdom or folly, insight or blindness. I refer to them as the working of a principle deep planted in the inmost being of man, and pointing to a state of higher attainment and more perfect freedom; of which we can, at present, conceive but the faintest foreshadowings; higher than mere political freedom, and perfecting of institutions; which institutions can in no wise represent or embody; which all uttered and unuttered prophecy indicates; when Christ, in all his true, divine significance, shall reign upon the earth.

Through toil, and suffering, and blood, the race has advanced thus far towards its destiny. Through toil, and suffering, and blood, the remainder of its course is doubtless appointed. Through suffering alone can the race, as the individual, be perfected. The progress and the result are to be obtained by man's endeavor. To the race, too, as to the individual, is it appointed to work out its own salvation, in cooperation with Him, who is also working in man's purposes. For this was man endowed with the faculty of prophecy and insight, that he might be a prophet and a seer. But it is to be remembered, that only the *power* is given to man with freedom of will. The rest must be all his own work. The Lord's people are not all prophets; and doubtless most of the evils humanity has suffered and is suffering, the crimes and follies which disfigure its history, are the consequences of his want of faith in his intuitions. Man's true life is in the unseen. His truest culture is of those faculties, which connect him with the invisible, and disclose to him the meaning, which lies in the material forms by which he is surrounded. The highest science is that, "which treats of, and practically addresses the primary, unmodified forces and energies of man, the mysterious springs of love, and fear, and wonder, and enthusiasm, poetry, religion, all which have a truly vital and *infinite* character." For this culture the spirit of man has its own exhaustless resources within, and the

material creation speaks to it in thousand-voiced prophecy. The heavens and the earth, the stars and the flowers, the winds and the waves, all that is seen, and felt, and heard, contain revelations. Infancy is a prophecy, with its unclouded eye, over which the shadows of earth have not yet passed, to dim the hues of its celestial birthplace. Childhood, yet bright in its beautiful unfolding; manhood, with its dissatisfaction, its busy restlessness, ever seeking, never finding, its scheming activity, with or without an end, or conscious aim; age, approaching the summing up of life, and recounting its chequered experience; history, as it traces the eventful progress of the race; science, unfolding the immensity of the material universe; the great and good of the past, revealing the wondrous possibilities of man's nature; the good he enjoys, no less than the evil he suffers; even his follies and crimes; all phenomena, and all events in his experience; all suggest inquiry into the problem of life, and man's destiny, and at the same time furnish him the means of solving it.
