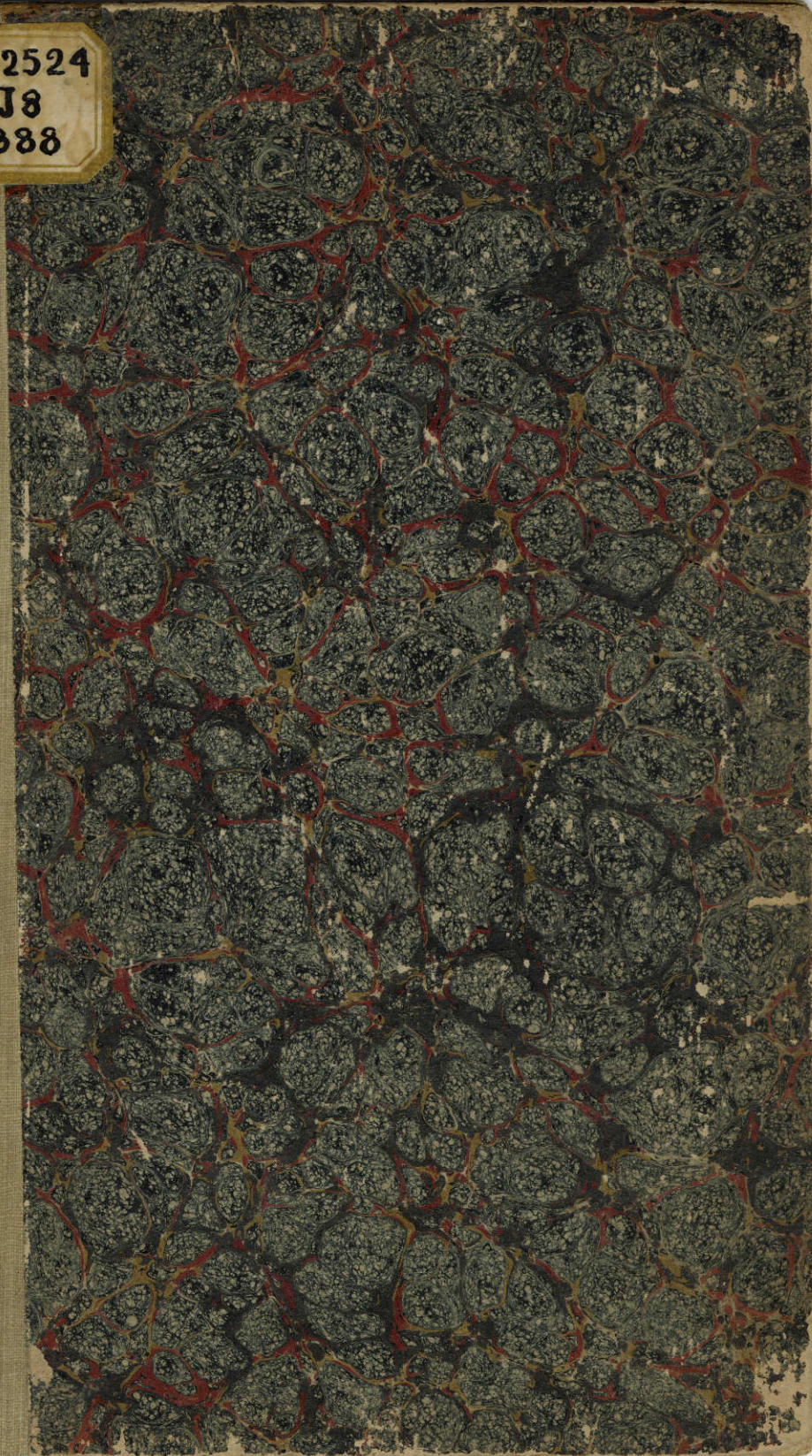


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"THE ETHICS OF THE DUST."

THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY.

# "THE ETHICS OF THE DUST."

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE GRADUATING CLASS, JUNE 7, 1888,

*David Starr Jordan*

—BY—

DAVID STARR JORDAN,

PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY.

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## "THE ETHICS OF THE DUST,"

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A wise preacher whom I know, once said: "The Bible was written by out-door men; if we would understand it, we must read it out of doors." They were shepherds and fishermen who wrote the Bible, men who night after night had been under the stars, and to whom the grass on the Judæan hills had made the most comfortable of pillows. Even kings and prophets were out-of-door men in the days of Samuel and David. Out-of-door men speak of out-of-door things and each man who speaks with authority must speak of things which he knows.

In this fact, if you will let me compare small things to great, you will find my apology for speaking my message to-day in my own way. I wish to draw certain lessons in morals from certain facts or laws in the sciences in which I am interested. For we study what we call Nature, not alone for the objects themselves, but because the study brings us nearer to the heart of things; to Him who is the final answer to all the problems of death and of life.

There is a stage in the development of the human embryo when it is not yet human, when it cannot be distinguished from the embryo of other mammals, as of a dog or a sheep. There may be then at the same time two embryos apparently alike, the one destined however to be dog, because of its canine ancestry, the other in like manner to become human. These two, we may assume, may be absolutely alike to all the tests we can offer. They differ neither in structure, nor in form, nor in chemical composition. The lines along which they develop seem parallel for a time, but at last divergence becomes evident and their courses separate forever. The one seems to lose little by little its human possibilities, while the other goes too far in its way ever to turn aside toward doghood. The one moves toward its end as man; the other toward its destiny as dog.

But a difference must exist even when the identity of the two seems most perfect; a difference intangible, immaterial, but none the less potent in its certainty to lead to results. The one holds within it the possibility of humanity which the other has not. No conditions of which we can conceive could bring the dog embryo to manhood, because the possibility of manhood is not in it. There is then something which transcends chemistry, which tends to bring each embryo through many changes to a predetermined end, which makes the offspring a duplicate of the parent.

X This is essentially true, if the development be complete and normal. If its growth goes on in the wonted fashion, it becomes what it can become. Its enclosed potentiality or hidden powers give form to its life.

Of course not all development is normal. Growth may cease prematurely; it may be cut short by Death and that which might have been a man becomes as nothing, or arrested development may leave a state of perpetual immaturity. This happens among men sometimes. There are dwarfs in body and dwarfs in mind—those who reach the age of manhood, while retaining the stature or the intellect of childhood. Again, decay or decline, soon or later, comes to all living things. If decline begins prematurely, we have degeneration instead of development. What is true of man in these regards, is true of all life in its degree, for the realm of law is broader than humanity. A plant which has grown under a stone or an animal which has suffered mutilation, will have but a partial development. A long continuance of imperfect growth results in degeneration. These are nature's failures, and many failures lie on the road to perfection.

So in the moral world. Badness is the evidence of distorted development. Total depravity is not the state of nature. It is the good man who is natural; it is the others who are not themselves. "Great men are the true men" says Amiel, "the men in whom nature has succeeded. They are not extraordinary. They are in the true order. It is the other kinds of men who are not what they ought to be."

In the physical world there may be partial, distorted or degraded development, and this may take place in mind or in body. These are departures from the normal type. Like deviations from the ideal type of moral growth we call "*Sin*."



Sin is man's failure to realize his spiritual potentialities. It is the discrepancy between the actual and the possible man, which is our measure of sin. Sin is the spiritual analogue of retrograde or arrested development in the animal or the plant. From a plant that grows in sunshine and rain we expect more than from one which sprouts in the cellar. We expect more from a man now than when men lived in hollow trees and dressed in skins and feathers.

I do not care to discuss the question of the origin of the potentiality of manhood in that which becomes man. Science can point out the facts or laws, but it cannot lead us to the feet of the law-giver. It cannot reveal to us the eternal why, which stands behind the sequence of phenomena. The continuity of law shows us the strength there is at the heart of the universe. It is "the expression of the Divine Veracity in Nature."—(*Newman Smyth.*)

But whatever the law or the source of the law, we know that the growing embryo seems to be guided by an inherent power, the subtle production of heredity. This may be thwarted, modified, defeated by surrounding circumstances, but it can never be wholly subdued. "Blood will tell," says the common proverb, but the difference in blood is not one to be detected by the tests of the chemist or the microscope of the anatomist, and there too progress begets progress. Naturalists tell us of cases of development beyond ancestral lines, of perfection beyond previous completeness. In such growth the conditions which mark full maturity in the ancestor become mere phases of youth in the ambitious progeny. The maturity of the latter in one or many ways overleaps ancestral lines. Such advanced development here and there through the organic world is one of the most efficient causes of the onward progress of the mass. By the side of the philosopher, the common man, you or I, seems like a child. The development of great souls has gone on in accordance with a higher potentiality than ours. Or rather it may be, in accordance with a potentiality which we may possess, but which has lain dormant within us, for great men need great occasions. Circumstances affect all development. They may draw us out or they may hem us in. They may raise us, as it were, above ourselves, or they may close around us, so that the man we ought to have been, we can be only in our dreams. And if the environment be too exacting, even these dreams may cease at last.

Most of us have felt that some noble spirit we have known has lived the life we ought to have lived; that he is the man that we might have been.

The lower animals and plants offer their analogies to this. Each develops along the line of the resultant between the force of its own potentiality, and the resistance of its environment. Thus all degrees of fitness are produced, and from these varying degrees comes our perception of the law of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence. The fittest is that which in one way or another has the strongest potentiality. Prof. Cope has suggested that one of the primal causes of difference in organic life lies in the conditions of advanced or retarded development. A higher, that is a more definitely developed organism, is one that has taken a step in its growth beyond those taken by its ancestors. It has omitted non-essential phases, and has gone at once, as by a leap, to a higher phase of its possibilities. It has come so much nearer the fulfillment of the potentialities within it. Another organism may, on the other hand, stop short of ancestral acquirements. It is degenerate because less of its potentiality has become actuality than in its ancestors.

Florists save the seed of the most perfect flowers, that from these in one line or another the species may reach still higher perfection. Stock-breeders recognize progress as inherited and they choose their stock accordingly. So we have year by year swifter race-horses, stronger dray-horses, better milch cows, heavier-fleeced sheep, more sagacious dogs and pigeons of more fantastic forms. Along certain lines of development, anything is possible with time and patience. Because this is so, with each generation our domestic animals and plants become better and better adapted to satisfy man's needs or man's fancy. But the potentiality of the race-horse was in the old nag, its far off ancestor, who may have trotted his leisurely mile in ten minutes. The potentiality of the trained dog "who can do anything but talk" lay in the gaunt and cowardly wolf, from which the races of dogs are descended.

There is, of course, nothing new in this idea. The idea of potentialities in life goes back to Aristotle and beyond. The philosophy of Evolution is one of the oldest of human philosophies. These facts we recognize in the very terms we use. More perfect development



comes from within, and is assisted, not caused by favorable surroundings. We educate, that is, we lead out; we develop, that is unwrap, what is hidden in the original package. We evolve, that is unroll, as the ball of the fern-bud unrolls in the great fern-leaf. And so we unroll, unwrap, lead out whatever is already within; we can help to actualize latent possibilities. But whatever is finally brought forth, existed in potentiality in the embryo, no matter how inert and impotent this may have been. But not alone in the embryo, for whatever is in the embryo must have been a possibility with the parent. The embryo is in no sense the beginning of life. It is as Erasmus Darwin has said, "a branch or elongation of the parent" rather than a separate being.

No great soul comes from nothingness. There must have been strength behind it. There must have been a potential Lincoln, in Lincoln's "poor-white" ancestry, else a Lincoln could not have been. In each life, there exists a potentiality of something not yet attained. Were it not so, the bounds of progress would be already attained, and swifter horses, brighter flowers, sweeter songs, nobler thoughts and purer lives than have already been there could never be. The potentiality may be imagined as a directing line leading onward into the future, outward into space, and for any organism to grow along this line is for it to make the most of itself. And the most too for its descendants, for the added power must itself fall into the grasp of heredity. The gains of the individual become the birthright of the race. The man of yesterday is a child beside the man of to-morrow. Our ancestors of centuries ago dwelt beside the Swiss Lakes in childrens' play-houses. The man we dream of will be above the vicissitudes and temptations of humanity. The perfect man will be the master of the world, because the perfect master of himself. Whatever one generation has tried persistently to do, the next may accomplish easily. If by effort we have, as it were, excelled ourselves, our children may almost without effort excel us in the same line.

These facts have their analogy in the moral world. If Sin is retarded or distorted development, then righteousness is farther development along the line of our ethical possibilities. Righteousness is thus achieved only by constant effort in the direction of self-control and of self-devotion. As Aristotle says: "Nature does not make us

good idea



✓ good or bad, she only gives us the opportunity to become good or bad, that is, of shaping our own characters." "Emphasize as you will," says Dr. Schurman, "the bulk of the inheritance I have received from my ancestors, it still remains that in moral character I am what I make myself." "Men may rise on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things," and in a similar way, on stepping stones of their dead ancestry, do races of men rise to higher civilization. But without effort, conscious or unconscious, in the direction of a higher life, each succeeding generation will remain at the level of those before it. Then as nothing is stable in the world of life, where there is no advance there will be retrogression. And thus have fallen all races and nations and communities whose guiding principle has not been the fulfillment of duty.

If there be any truth at the basis of these analogies they are susceptible of wide application in the affairs of human life.

A central result of modern scientific study is the thought that all life is bound together by heredity, the ancestry of all beings going back with gradual changes through countless ages to simpler and simpler forms. Connected with this is the fact that the various stages in the development of any embryo correspond in essentials with the conditions of full development in the creation which, one before another in geological history, have preceded the appearance of the form in question. "The physical life of the individual is an epitome of the history of the group to which it belongs." (*Hæckel*.) The embryonic life of a child corresponds in a general way to the history of the group which culminates in man. The stages in the mental development of the child of this century should represent the stages passed through in the infancy of the Aryan race. In this sense, each life is a condensation of all human history.

But great as are the general resemblances among animals or plants, no two are ever quite alike. In the average, life shows great sameness. The fact of averages hangs like an incubus on the shoulders of all ambitious of distinction. "Commonness will prevail," as Dr. Candolle said of the abundance of grasses. (*Amiel*.) In a flock of sheep, a herd of cattle, a meadow of clover, an assembly of men, one seems like another. The monotony of averages is appalling. The burden that Christian carried to the golden gate was only the average man's aver-

age load of sin. Everything is arranged for the average man. Ready-made clothing fits the average man. We have our tables of mortality showing just how long the average man will live and just what are his chances of tooth-ache, *delirium tremens* or the penitentiary. We cut off portions of bread and meat perfectly adjusted to the appetite of the average man. We plan courses of education for him and methods of study for his children yet unborn. . . . We preach sermons of average length for the good of the average soul. Respect for the average is the basis of all public action, from the economics of the boarding-house keeper to the management of an army or the guidance of a State.

But against this average there is constant rebellion. Some blade of grass will tower above its fellows, "tall reed grass," as Carlyle puts it, "among creeping herb." Some forest tree will be in the vigor of its youth, when its neighbors have long since ceased to grow. Some college student will treat as child's play the hardest problems his fellows may undertake or the hardest work which his professors, with their sublime faith in averages, may lay out for him.

In this vein, Amiel says: "The immense majority of our species are candidates for humanity, nothing more. We ought to be men, but practically we do not succeed in realizing the type of our race. Semblances and counterfeits of men fill up the habitable earth, people the islands and the continents, the country and the towns. If we wish to respect men, we must forget what they are, and think of the ideal they have hidden within them, of the just man and the noble, the man of intelligence and goodness, inspiration and practical force who is loyal and true; of the higher man and that divine thing we call a soul. The only men who deserve the name are the heroes, the geniuses, the saints, the harmonious, powerful and perfect examples of the race."

Yet when we look more closely at the mass we find there an individuality we did not see before. Among our many acquaintances no two are alike in feature, voice or thought. You may search all day to match one clover leaf with another exactly like it. There are no two organisms in this world quite alike, and though we might find two men, two dogs, two birds, two blades of grass alike in all physical respects, they might be unlike beyond comparison in that which we can-



not see, their ancestries, their destinies or their potentialities. Their paths converging may have crossed from different directions, bound toward different ends. Their apparent identity is but the likeness of a moment in a swiftly changing scene.

We cannot tell a ship's place by its latitude and longitude. We must know more than that. Whence has it come, how is its helm? Who is the pilot and which way are the winds blowing? The forty of you before me to-day seem at first all to have reached the same point in life's journey. Not so. You may be as far apart as the ships for a moment in sight on the sea. Ground swells of hereditary tendencies, the helm in the hands of some mastering potentiality, breezes blown from the lips of "the strong god, Circumstance," all these are pushing you apart. To-day you are here together, but never again so long as this world shall last.

We shall have, some day, it seems to me a science of Historical Ethics by which we may learn what ought to be from a study of what has been. But the central question in this study would not be as Dr. Schurman has it, "What in the past has man thought ought to be?" but "What in the past has justified itself by leading man on to higher things?" Manifestly we can discover traces of the path which humanity shall tread, by looking backward over the track humanity has trodden. Not alone over the early history of man, for only the smaller portion of this is within our reach. Our history of man is only a history of civilization, for barbarism writes no history. Yet we can look beyond the clouded period of human barbarism to the still older history which we share with the brute. If we find the line of direction of past development from animalism to civilization, we may in a way project this line into the future as the direction of human progress.

What is this line of direction? How does man differ from the brute? I shall not use as a distinction the presence of the immortal soul in man, for that is a potentiality beyond the reach of our knowledge. It is the heritage of faith.

But the intellect of man is certainly a distinctive possession. "It is not necessary," as has been said, "to deny intelligence to the lower animals when we assert that the human mind is the most colossal and revolutionary of all the modifications any species has undergone." It would not be necessary even to deny the elements of conscience to a

a real good thought

dog or horse, to recognize the fact that the conscience is one of the colossal attributes of manhood. The feeling of individual responsibility, the knowledge of good and evil, this is man's burden and his glory.

Intellect and conscience, these are the acquisitions won by humanity, and by virtue of which it is humanity. It does not concern us to know what conscience is, nor what may be its origin.

Dr. Schurmann says that we know the right "only by feeling it in our bones" and no speculation on right or wrong has any authority or validity beyond the speculator himself. In a sense, this must be true, for right is a line of direction, rather than an absolute position in ethical space. There is no standpoint of absolute righteousness. If there were it would mark the limit of spiritual progress.

The reality of conscience remains a fact, whether we look upon it as an inherited reflex of ancestral opinion of what is helpful or hurtful in human action, or regard it as the result of the inherited experience of the race, as to what in the long run brings good or bad for the individual. Conscience in our case is a property of manhood, and the stronger the conscience in any man or race, the higher the place in the scale of spiritual development.

I think that the conventional comparison of the conscience to a lodestone is not the worst of analogies. Conscience is the "inward monitor," as we say, the guide which points out for us the direction of the future of our race. It tends to place us in harmony with that "something not ourselves which makes for righteousness." The fulfillment of noblest potentialities in the individual soul, that is "right."

What falls short of this is arrest of development, imperfection, sin. No conscience is infallible, and of course there may be distorted conscience, dormant conscience, or a conscience which knows no good save immediate pleasure. A clear conscience is of itself the result of normal development. Arrested development is none the less a fault, that its subject is not aware of it. Nature absolves no sinner on the plea of ignorance of her laws. The bent twig is none the less bent that outside influences have done the bending. The tree's duty was to grow upright, and in this it has failed.

Now as we look backward over the annals of slowly advancing



humanity and behold the gradual development in wisdom, skill, self-control and charity, can we not also look forward along the same line to a future of ideal manhood? Have we not in fact in the character of Christ, the perfect culmination of the potentialities of humanity? Do we not find in Him, who said in the presence of his tormentors, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do," the absolute extreme of that sense by which man has risen from the brute? If Christ be the perfect man, he is perfect in this, that the potentiality of the race finds its fulfillment in him. Who so wise, so loving, so self-devoted as he? Towards such a height we must be rising, else our development is but partial, degenerate, awry. Viewed in the light of perfect humanity, all else that we know is but infantile. Our growth is finished, decay and death overtake us long before we begin to realize any appreciable nearness to the sublime ideal of the Christian faith.

It is often said that conscience is only relative, for what is right to-day will be wrong to-morrow, and there can be no absolute good, but the pleasure or the utility of the individual. Let us consider this for a moment. For example we may take the customs and laws of marriage. The patriarchs of old did wrong, so the chronicles tell us, but neither the patriarchs nor their prophets, scathing moralists that they were, counted the possession of many wives as even the least of their wrong-doings. The sin of David lay not in taking another wife, but in the murder which gave him possession of her. Our civilization now condemns such marriage as a sin, and all our laws and beliefs tend to preserve the sanctity and the unity of the home. What is the meaning of this? Is marriage for life but a fashion of the time, to pass away as polygamy has done when opposite tendencies have sway? Is not the one really right, and the other really wrong? Let us apply our tests to this question.

It can be proved, I think, that the highest development of humanity comes from the development of the home. The elevation of woman has been the keystone in modern ethical progress. The ennobling of the wife and mother means the elevation of the race. But the elevation of woman is impossible in polygamy. If this be true the highest potentiality of the race can be brought about only through the pure marriage of the equal man with the equal woman. It may then be literally true that polygamy, wife-beating, wife-selling and

similar practices were right in the infancy of the race. They may be right among races still in their infancy. It is their "judgment that light has come into the world." They may be part of a stage of growth through which humanity must pass before higher things are possible. We are beyond it now, and unless a degradation of our type sets in, we have passed it forever. The combination of lust, greed and ignorance which dominates the valley of the Great Salt Lake, is an anachronism in our civilization.

In like manner, we have gone through a slow process of development in our regard for the rights of others. To the lowest animals each other animal is an alien and an enemy. A little higher in the scale, we observe the rudiments of family or of social life. Yet in a general way, to the brute all other brutes are objects of suspicion and hatred.

The earlier tribes of men killed the stranger and doubtless ate him, too, with perfect serenity of conscience. Even the most enlightened nation of ancient times murdered and robbed all alien to their race, as a high and sacred duty toward the Lord. Their God was a god of battles.

I need not enlarge upon the gradual extension of a feeling of brotherhood among men. The history of civilization is a history of the growth of charity and tolerance, but the end is not come. No one can doubt that the progress of humanity is in this direction of regard for the rights of others, if indeed this be not the central fact of human progress. Human life is growing sacred. Growth in Christianity means growth in civilization, for Christ himself was the prophet who proclaimed the law of love.

The history of slavery teaches us the same lesson. Once, to enslave a conquered enemy was to treat him with comparative kindness. Slavery is a positive advance from cannibalism or from massacre. We find no condemnation of slavery in the early history of the Jews, we find none in the early history of Europe. Slaves have been bought and sold in our century by strong, pure men, who felt no rebuking conscience. The heroes of the Revolutionary history were, to say the least, not abolitionists. Yet it is true, *for the Lord hath said it*, that the man of the future will not be a slaveholder. There can be no free men in a land where some are slaves, because whatever oppression



comes to my neighbor in some sort comes to me. "He hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth," and "Whatsoever ye do to one of the least of these my brethren, ye do it unto me."

We know that humanity is growing toward the recognition of the rights of all, men and women, toward the cardinal doctrine of democracy—equal rights for all, exclusive privileges to none. It requires no prophet to foresee this as the tendency of human institutions. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," said our fathers a century ago, "that all men are created free and equal, endowed with certain inalienable rights, and that among these rights are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." And these rights cannot be denied, even though the image of God shine faintly through a dusky skin.

"Whether conscious or unconscious, yet Humanity's vast frame,  
Through its ocean-sundered fibres feels the gush of joy or shame;  
In the gain or loss of one race, all the rest have equal claim."

Already, too, the feeling of brotherhood is extending outward toward the brute creation. A Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals would have been inconceivable in the days of Front de Bœuf and Cœur de Lion. It is inconceivable now in those countries which are a century or two behind our race in the march of civilization. In the city of Havana, at two o'clock each morning, long lines of mules laden with pigs and sheep come in from the country. These animals' legs are bound, and they are slung head downward in pairs saddle-wise over the back of a mule. And thus they come down from the mountains in long processions, the pigs lustily squealing, the sheep helpless and dumb, and not one human heart in the city that notes their sufferings, for in Cuba no one seems to care for an animal's pain. On Sunday afternoon in this same city of Havana, fair ladies and gay cavaliers repair to the brightest of their festivals, the bull fight. A bull fight is not a fight, it is simply a butchery—a fair battle has some justification. A bull maddened by pricks and stabs is permitted to rip up and kill some two or three worthless or blind horses, to be afterward stabbed to death himself by a skillful butcher. A civilization which delights in scenes like this is to us simple barbarism. The growth of the race is away from such things. Cruelty to animals may not have been wrong when the race was undeveloped, and when no con-

science was enlightened enough to condemn it. Cruelty in all its forms is a badge of immaturity, and toward neither man nor beast will the ideal man of the future be cruel. With time the feeling of brotherhood will extend to all living things, so far as community of sensation makes them kin to us.

"I would not enter on my list of friends  
Though graced by polished manners and fine sense  
The man who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

We cannot tell where our progress may lead, but this is certain, that our present relations toward animals, right as they may be now, will some day be barbarous. It may be that the time will come when the civilized man will regard the rights of every living creature on the earth as being as sacred as his own. This end may be far away, too far for us even to dream of it, but anything short of this cannot be perfect civilization.

"If man were what he should be," says Amiel, "he would be adored by the lower animals, toward whom he is too often the capricious and sanguinary tyrant. A day will come when our standard will be higher, our humanity more exacting. '*Homo homini lupus*,' said Hobbes; 'man toward man is a wolf.' 'The time will come when man will be humane even towards the wolf—*homo lupo homo*.'"

No fact in the Bible stands out more clearly than that of the gradual growth of the rule of love. "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," even this marked a great advance over the ethics of the Ammonites and the children of Heth. Yet between this and the sermon on the mount, lies the whole difference between barbarism and the highest civilization.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you."

"But dig down, the old unbury, thou shalt find on every stone  
That each age has carved the symbol of what God to them was known,  
Ugly shapes and brutish sometimes, but the fairest that they knew;  
If their sight were dim and earthward, yet their hope and aim were true.  
As the gods were so their laws were. Thor the strong might reave and steal;  
So thro' many a peaceful inlet tore the Norseman's eager keel;  
But a new law came when Christ came, and not blameless as before,  
Can we, paying him our lip-tithes, give our lives and faiths to Thor."



This question then is ours. Are we doing our part in the growth of the race? In the current of life, are we moving forward? Do our years mark milestones in humanity's struggle toward perfection? Is the god within us somewhat more unrolled, when our development has reached its highest point? Can we transmit to our children a better heritage of brain and soul than our fathers left to us? Has the race through us gained some little in the direction of the law of love? If we have done our part in this struggle, our lives have not been in vain. If we have shirked and hung back, then ours is a line of retrograde descent and our lineage is a withered branch on the tree of humanity.

To live aright then is to guide our lives in the direction in which humanity is going; not all humanity, not average humanity, but that saving remnant from whose loins shall spring the better man of the future. The purpose of life is to be as near the man of the future as the man of the present can be. But we must be patient, with all our striving. The end of life is not yet. Humanity is still in its infancy, and this old world is old only by comparison with the years of human life; only through centuries on centuries of struggle and aspiration can humanity approach divinity, and the law of love be supreme.

Books have been written on the seven or eight "decisive battles" in the history of civilization. Great battles there have been but the stake in any battle is less than it appears. There can have been no "decisive" battles. The growth in humanity goes on whether battles be lost or won. The leaven of Christianity would have wrought its work in Europe if Charles Martel had been overpowered by the Moors at Poitiers; a battle may decide the fate of a man or a nation, but not the fate of humanity. Kings can not check its growth, Priests can not smother it. It is never buried in the dust of defeat.

Slavery died, not because the battle of Gettysburg was lost; it was doomed from the beginning, and its death was only a question of time. Nothing could have saved it, and the success of its defenders on the field of battle would only have postponed the end. Half slave and half free is a condition which can never be permanent. That which endures is that which brings out the higher potentialities of manhood. All else must pass away.

Viewed as steps in the evolution of ascending humanity, the events

in human history have a deeper meaning to us. Our studies become ennobled. What have been the conditions of growth in the past? What conditions have led to decline and degradation? What tends to keep the individual retarded and immature, and what tends to bring him further toward the ultimate humanity?

If we find in the life of Christ, the perfect exemplar of individual development, the model for our emulation through the ages, then our condition of development is in nearness towards Him. Whatever our creed or philosophy, we must recognize this fact, that all progress toward the ideal manhood is progress in the direction of Christly living. Professor Drummond, leading us over a misty path which I cannot always follow, brings us at last to the same conclusion.

"The goal of Evolution is Jesus Christ!"

"De Imitatione Christi" is one of the grand books of the Middle Ages. Imitation of Christ, so far as the imitation is real, not in speech, not in dress, not in ceremonies, but in the inner life, this alone can place us in closer harmony with God, and with our fellow men. The very expression "love of God" resolves itself into love of Good, love of that which is abiding, in distinction from that which is merely temporal. It may reduce itself into love of the higher life, in which the progress of the race consists. For, in the words of the good Thomas A'Kempis, "It is vanity to love that which is speedily passing away."

The despairing words of Guinevere, give the keynote of the conditions of growth:

"It was my duty to have loved the highest!"

"This is the first and great commandment, and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

What is this law, but the law of growth? And does it not gain its force and impressiveness to us, if we recognize it as the same law which works through all life? It has worked on in the lowest forms which have held the human potentiality and through the slowly diverging series up to the man who has within him the germ of the Christ, the son of the living God. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor." This is God's command, and it is His command because obedience to it is a condition of man's growth.

Still another lesson comes to us from the history of life. It is not



always the most favored races from which the highest development proceeds. Some types rise, culminate and decline, leaving others which were below them to take up the onward march. It is not the Egyptian, Greek, or the Roman civilization which has given rise to the civilization of to-day. The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. But our Saxon civilization may go with the rest. That the future alone can tell us.

If faith in higher life gives place to faith in things material, if our progress be toward "faith in the Everlasting Nothing and man's digestive power," as Carlyle puts it, if in short the stories of Greece and Rome are repeated in London and Paris and New York, and still worse, if the life of London and Paris and New York becomes the life of our millions of country homes, then we too shall fall back into decline and degradation, and some other race, perhaps now barbarous, will carry forward the standard of the living Christ. This we know, that nations are as the men who compose them. And no nation is so strong that it can stand on injustice, greed or self-gratification.

"Where empires towered that were not just,  
Lo the skulking wild-fox scratches in a little heap of dust.  
We see dimly in the present what is small and what is great,  
Slow of faith, how weak an arm may turn the iron helm of fate;—  
Count me o'er Earth's chosen heroes, they were men that stood alone  
While the men they agonized for hurled the contumelious stone;  
Stood serene and down the future saw the golden beam incline  
To the side of perfect justice, mastered by their faith divine,  
By one man's plain faith to manhood and to God's supreme design."

If one word of what I have said to-day might remain in your minds, it would be this: There is an ideal manhood, to which, in God's Providence, our human race must come. Every step toward this end which the individual man may take is a step won forever for humanity. To this end, we as teachers have given you all helps within our power, in the little time you have been with us. The end rests with you. It is your part in life to work with all your strength toward the realization of ideal humanity, to add one more link to the chain which joins the man-brute and the brute-man of the past, through the man of the present, to the perfect man of the future, the man who is likest Christ. And to this end it remains for you to love God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.



