

So we will exemplify our reverence for this beautiful kinship of the Lord of life with the gentle lowing kine, by taking them in their thousands and tearing them from their homes, and driving them with blows and dog-bites for weary miles, and forcing them with twisted, broken tails and dragging chain right up to the fatal axe.

And if perchance they were to ask what they had done to be thus tortured, the Christian world with one loud voice replies—"Your ancestors gave home and shelter and hospitality to our beloved Master on His birthday, so we celebrate the memory of their beautiful deed by torturing and slaughtering thousands of their descendants on the annual festival which commemorates His birthday!"

The Master came as the victor over Death and the inaugurator of the reign of Life, we therefore celebrate this festival by emphasising every form of butchered death, and we teach our children that we celebrate our own escape from spiritual death by inflicting a myriad physical deaths upon others.

The Prince came to teach that Love shall conquer Force and that the brutal must be replaced by the divinely gentle. We celebrate His festival by declaring that might is right, that the stronger shall ever prey upon the weaker, and that the brutal in man shall be perpetuated.

The Son of Man came to declare that the killing of animals and the offering up of their roasted carcasses was not pleasing to the Divine Father of all. We celebrate His festival by perpetuating for man's pleasure what God refused to have done for His own glory.

Thus the Pagan instinct of the Roman Triumph remains, and so long as there is only some killing to be done and some pain to be inflicted, the brute instinct in the human race is satisfied and is quite oblivious of the ghastly inconsistency of doing it to celebrate such a festival as that of the birthday of the most gentle and meek, the most self-sacrificing and humane, the most tender and compassionate of all who have ever been born of woman.

Gentle Christian men and gentler Christian women declare that they cannot "keep the feast" of the gentle Christ who accepted the hospitality of the kine, without they eat some of these slaughtered kine—roast beef—good old English roast beef!

They solemnly declare that the festival kept in memory of the most gentle, who came to teach the highest form of gentleness, cannot be "kept" without inflicting pain, terror and death upon thousands of gentle animals.

"Christmas," they say "would be no Christmas to us without our Christmas dinner, and our Christmas dinner would be no Christmas dinner without part of the dead body of a slaughtered ox for us to eat."

"Our Christmas festival is wrapped up in our Christmas dinner, and our Christmas dinner is so intimately connected with pain, slaughter and death, that we cannot understand anyone enjoying Christmas without roast beef!"

This is only the end of the Nineteenth Century.

There will perhaps come a happier and a humaner Twentieth.

For this we shall pray and for this we must work.

Josiah Oldfield.

It is possible to live the Divine life. Not only to see with the mind the oneness of all things, but to enter into that oneness, to live in it, to be one with every living thing, to let antagonisms vanish and only Love prevail.

KATE ATKINSON BOEHME.

The Overcoming of Pain & Death

"And I heard a great voice out of the Throne saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He shall dwell with them, . . . And He shall wipe away every tear from their eyes; and death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain, any more."

Rearly nineteen centuries have passed since the Seer of Patmos gave to the world the vision of a future Golden Age as it was revealed to



him. We are just so many years nearer to the fulfilment of the prophecy. He declared that it was "faithful and true," and although the last year of this dying century has been specially marked by violence and bloodshed, by tears and anguish, by sickness and woe—in spite of the fact that an

awful harvest has been reaped by death in Africa, in China, in India, and throughout Christendom—notwithstanding that Christians have fought against Christians on the banks of the Vaal, and that our Chinese brethren, both the guilty and the innocent, have been butchered in the name of the Christ by the waters of the Peiho, and notwithstanding that more than 300,000,000 sentient creatures, who are classed as 'cattle,' have been ruthlessly slaughtered during this 'year of grace,' 1900, to feed a degenerate race with a needless type of food, I believe that St. John's vision of a blessed future will yet come to pass!

From the depths of my soul I believe it—that the time is coming when pain and tears and death shall be no more! Not suddenly, nor by any miraculous manifestation. Slowly and with difficulty—a step at a time—will the great change be wrought. One by one will the sources of pain and sorrow and cruelty and death be discovered and removed. One by one will the stumbling blocks of error, ignorance, transgression and self-worship be swept aside, until upon this very earth on which we now tread, the kingdom of God will be established in transcendent power, and the reign of universal peace, goodwill, blessedness and spirituality be ushered in. Then, and not till then, will the time come when death shall be completely beaten back and overcome.

But how is it all to be brought about? By Angels and Archangels, by Principalities and Powers? No, not by these, but by men and women whose eyes have been opened to see the vision of a better time, whose hearts have responded to the divine call. By faithful souls who have been inspired with holy resolution to win their way to freedom and spirituality and Godlikeness, to strive against the forces of desolation, to sweep away, if possible, the giant evils which now devastate this fair world of ours. Angels will doubtless help them, the Higher Powers will enlighten them and endue them with strength, but the great work will have to be accomplished by the process of evolution, and by human instrumentality. If history teaches us anything it teaches us this.

But who are called to this work? To whom is this privilege of leading our race to a higher plane of experience to be given?

In every land at this present time the workers are being raised up. Without noise or publicity, in the solitude of the chamber, on the lonely hilltop, beneath the silent stars at eventide, the call to service and to the quest of the "Holy Grail" is being heard. The way of the Cross—the way of the Christ—is being revealed to such as are able to apprehend, and the still small voice is being heard as it whispers: *Follow thou Me!* Rich and poor, gentle and simple, of every tongue and clime, they are pressing into the ranks of the militant host which is to wage a holy war during the coming Century against the empire of Darkness and Wrong, and to prepare the way for the Era of Life, Righteousness and Peace. Not many mighty, not many learned—as this world's learning goes—but those who are able to "become as little children" as a preparatory step to "entering the kingdom."

'Tis a holy calling! To be chosen for the sacred work of 'prophecy,' of 'light bearing,' of 'preparing the way of the Lord'; to be commissioned to tell out the Truth and to challenge Wrong, to "turn many to Righteousness," to "break the bands of wickedness asunder and let the oppressed go free," to walk in the footsteps of the prophets of the past and to follow the great Nazarene Reformer and Revealer! Which of us is equal to it—who of us worthy? May we not all exclaim, in tones of wonderment, "Can this honour be mine, is it possible that this blessed privilege is for me—even me?" With all my proneness to evil, with all my love of ease, with all my fear of man and shrinking from self-sacrifice—can I be accounted fit to bear the vessel which contains the sacred fire? Can I be reckoned worthy to make some of the rough places smooth and the steep places plain?

'Tis well that we should feel thus! If we did not, perchance the call would not come to us. For 'tis only those who realize their own insufficiency who feel after that Divine hand which alone can uphold—who cry for that baptism of the Spirit's power which transforms the weak things of this world and makes them mighty. The Reformers and Teachers of bygone days have all experienced this sense of weakness. Jeremiah exclaimed, "Behold I cannot speak, for I am a child"; Moses said unto God, "Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh?" But even to us, as to them, will be given the Divine assurance: "Fear not, I will be with thee!"

"Neither shall there be pain any more." What a prospect! Some of us have become so sensitive to the wail of anguish that arises to Heaven from myriads of afflicted creatures, both human and sub-human, that the sound of the joyous Christmas bells is well nigh stifled altogether, and it sometimes seems that this Earth of ours must be Hell itself. This suffering will only be lessened, and ultimately brought to an end, by those who believe in such a possibility, who search out the causes of pain and disease and who address themselves in real earnest to the great task of removing them.

We know—that is, some of us do—that three-fourths of this affliction and misery is *preventible* even now. It results from ignorance and from transgression of the Laws of Health and of the Law of Love. Misled by blind guides, in bondage to degenerate appetite, poisoned by vendors of garbage, inoculated by serum-worshipping quacks, poor mankind stumbles on recklessly to the surgeon's operating theatre or to an untimely grave—often too prejudiced and too mentally befogged to be willing even to listen to the warning voice of reason and entreaty—sowing day by day

to the flesh (by eating the bodies of the dead) and of the flesh reaping corruption—living by the knife, and perishing by the knife—trampling upon humane, just, and merciful sentiment by ruthlessly slaughtering the weaker and more defenceless denizens of earth, or by sanctioning their torture at the hands of legalized Inquisitors, and by so doing, bringing down upon the human race the Nemesis which pursues all who wantonly inflict injury and outrage.

The New Century is dawning! The world in its unrest and despair is crying afresh, "Who will at this time show us any good?" Let us arise and dedicate ourselves to the work of proclaiming the remedy for this misery and confusion—obedience to Physical and Moral Law—regard for the Rights and claims of others—search after Truth—and effort to find the "Way that leadeth unto Life." As these things come to be generally followed and practised we shall see *Divinity* becoming manifest in *humanity*, the groaning and travailing of Creation will be hushed, and the glory of the Coming Kingdom will overspread the Eastern sky.

The very magnitude of the vision—of a world redeemed from pain and death—is calculated to make us doubt the possibility of its realization. Some may, perhaps, feel the end is so far away that it is almost useless to make any attempt to reach it. So felt the Israelites about the promised land. Only two of them had the faith to say "We are well able to go up and possess the land"—and those two enthusiasts, Joshua and Caleb, were the only two out of all the host in the camp who lived to "enter in." Let us remember that each effort of ours, however humble, may lessen to *some extent* the sum total of ignorance and pain, may let *some* light in upon the surrounding darkness, and encourage *some* struggling brother or sister to take heart afresh on the toilsome march to the Golden Shore.

And let us not forget that we shall not be left unaided and alone in this great work. The present unrest and expectation of the world is a 'sign of the times!' Spiritual forces of great magnitude are ere long to be brought into operation on this planet. Those who are most keenly sensitive to psychic influences can almost hear the sound of the mighty wind—the Breath of the Spirit—that is coming to hurl back the forces of evil in a manner that the world has never seen hitherto. When the hour has come, we shall know and understand. Meanwhile, it is for us to help on the "Coming of the Kingdom" by hastening that hour, and in so doing we shall not only bring blessing to others but shall ourselves enter into the joy of Him who saw, afar off, the result of the travail of His soul—and was satisfied.

The conflict against Death will be long and heavy. Scarcely any adequate or systematic attempt has yet been made to resist and curtail the ravages of the destroyer. Man even goes out of his way in this and other lands to add to the grim harvest, and laughs to scorn the Divine command "Thou shalt not kill." But we who are 'called' must combat this "last enemy." We must lessen the number of his prey, and at the same time strive to lessen his prestige as a foe. We must face the Goliath for our own sakes and for the sake of others who shall come after us, so that the idea may germinate and grow in human consciousness "that *death can be resisted and ultimately overcome.*" This attitude on our part is essential, for so long as man believes that Death is irresistible no serious effort can be put forth to overcome it. The belief must be first evolved that the "Life" consciousness within us can be so developed and strengthened as to become eventually stronger than death. We, individually,

may not reach the goal, at any rate in this incarnation, but we may, if we ourselves fail, make the attainment easier for others, by our attempt to overcome.

And we must remember that death is two-fold in its nature. There is spiritual death and physical death, absence of spiritual consciousness—the real death—and absence of physical consciousness—the seeming death. The *real* death must be overcome first. We must awake from the sleep of mere animalism to the consciousness of the *oneness* of our finite souls with the Infinite Soul, and learn to feel that the divine life throbs in the veins of our inmost being and that we are immortal. Then we shall no longer fear the change of body which physical death brings about—so conveniently and beneficently for some of us. And as the divine consciousness grows and waxes stronger, our command and influence over our physical bodies will become greater. We may then push back the 'King of terrors'—having torn aside his mask—lengthening our "allotted span" from seventy to a hundred years—increasing it from a century to a century and a-half—until, ultimately, those of our Race in whom the Spiritual Life has most completely transcended the animal life, will overcome death altogether, and will walk this earth as long as they wish to do so—*without dying*. We may not see it in this our day, but the time is coming when death shall be overcome by Life!

"But, how about arterial degeneration?" some sceptical materialist will doubtless exclaim. True, good friend, we cannot ignore facts and physical laws. And that is one reason why some of those who are seeking to lay hold of the Eternal Life wisely abstain from the flesh of dead animals—for it contains so much calcareous deposit. They want to keep their own veins clear of earthy incrustation, as well as disease. In this way, and by hygienic living, and by other physical means, they seek to aid the soul to "overcome." Now do you understand that there is some *method* in this 'madness,' and that when both physical and psychical means are adopted to prevent the causes of death and corruption from operating, there may be some possibility of success being attained?

If the historical record does not misguide us, the Elder Brother and Leader of our Race—the "first-born amongst many brethren," reached this altitude of achievement and is clothed to-day with the same body—although etherealized and transformed—that He wore when His tired feet toiled up the steep of Calvary. Although the pith and marrow of His esoteric doctrine has been hidden from the world for nineteen centuries, having been smothered by accumulations of man-made dogma which have been piled upon it, the twentieth century will witness a bringing to the light of the great revelation made by Jesus. The impassable gulf which has been artificially created between Him and His lesser brethren by mediæval ecclesiastics, will soon be bridged and its paralyzing wideness be reduced by knowledge of the Truth. We shall then no longer feel mocked by the exhortation "Follow thou Me!" Then, as the conscious and rejoicing 'children of the Father,' we shall perchance aspire to climb the rugged steep to Heaven in the very footsteps of the first-born Son. And "the Great Peace"—for which our inmost hearts so ardently yearn—will no longer be regarded as a wild dream of the Buddha of the Orient, but as a blessed state of Harmony and Rest which storm-tossed and sorrow-stricken men and women may with confidence hope to attain.

Sidney H. Beard.

"Forasmuch!"

"Forasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto Me."

Rot in the times of old, but quite lately in Hyde Park, London, on a sultry day in summer, there lay under one of the trees a poor sheep, panting, dying from the heat. By its side there knelt a little ragged boy, a street arab, his tears marking gutters in the dust of his soiled face. He had run down to the water, again and again, and filled his little cloth cap with water, which he held to the mouth of the sheep, bathing its nose and eyes, until it began to show signs of returning life, speaking to it all the time loving words such as his own mother may have spoken to him.



A gentleman walking near, stopped, and looking with amusement at the child, said, "You seem awfully sorry for that beast, boy."

The cynical tone of the speaker seemed to grieve the little boy, and with a flushed face he replied, in a tone of indignant and tearful protest—"It is God's sheep."

The gentleman grunted and walked away. I felt the presence there of One who said to that child: "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these, you have done it unto Me."

When the prophet Jonah was in a bad humour because his prophecy of destruction to Nineveh had not been fulfilled, and his sheltering gourd had withered, God said to him:—"Thou hast had pity on the gourd, . . . which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I spare Nineveh, that great city wherein are more than six score thousand persons (infants) that cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and also much cattle." "His mercies are over all his works." He cares "for every living thing."

Mrs. Mary Lovell cites the following:—"As a contrast to the pitilessness of man, how pleasing and how pathetic is the story, told by the elder Pliny, of a dog which belonged to one of the victims of Tiberius Sabinus, a Roman Knight of high distinction. This dog followed him to prison, and afterwards to the place of his execution.

The poor creature, just as a dog of to-day might do, remained by the corpse of his master, and with pathetic cries and howlings lamented his loss. When food was offered him he took it and held it to his master's mouth, and finally, when the body was thrown into the Tiber, the generous animal leaped into the river and endeavoured to keep the remains of his master from sinking.

In that day there was certainly a strong contrast between the disposition and behaviour of dogs and men; *sometimes there is strong contrast still.*"

Shall we perhaps at the last when "nothing shall be hid" which has been done in secret or openly, be made to see gathered together the sum of pain and agony suffered by God's creatures whom man has tortured? and may not the torturers perhaps hear, in a sense which they did not expect, the words addressed to them: "Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the *least* of these, you have done it unto Me."

Saul of Tarsus, convicted, asked in his terror, "Who art Thou, Lord?" and received the reply, "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." "I am He whom thou torturest," is a word which may yet be heard. (Mrs.) Josephine Butler.