

Lagash, and also that other period referred to in Genesis xi. 2, 9, during which the descendants of Noah were multiplying and journeying from where the ark settled unto the land of Shinar, which must have occupied some, perhaps many, generations.

It is thus, by the evidence adduced (reinforced by the further evidence suggested, which might be largely added to), demonstrably an error to assume that the recorded "generations of Shem" from the Deluge to Abraham make a complete register. The assumption that it is complete is no doubt very ancient and still widespread, because it is naturally made on a cursory reading of the genealogy, but it can scarcely be held in the light of Scripture analogy and Scripture usage when dealing with genealogies.



Sentimentality.

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"Of all broken reeds, sentimentality is the most broken reed on which righteousness can lean."—ROOSEVELT, *at the Guildhall.*

WHAT is sentimentality? It is the disposition to judge and act in obedience to feeling rather than reason. It has been defined briefly as "feeling for feeling's sake."

By feeling is to be understood the series of delicate thrills or resonances, along the finer nerve-fibres, which are known to be generated by every idea conceived and entertained in the mind. These thrills are probably of an electrical nature, leading from the brain-centres, and are of very considerably varying intensity, many of them being, from the character of the ideas that originate them, far too faint to be apprehended in consciousness. Such as are cognizable, according to psychologists, range themselves under two grades—sentiment and emotion, the latter being the more intense form, capable of passing onward even to hysteria.

The mind, when it becomes submerged beneath the swelling surf of an emotion, even though itself has first aroused it, for the time being has parted with its own self-control, to some extent at least, and often almost altogether. Under the soft spray of a sentiment it still retains, whether or no it adequately exercises, its ordinary inherent capabilities. Emotion commonly evinces itself in external bodily manifestations: sentiment hardly so at all. Emotion, too, in the nature of things (unless it deepens and solidifies into passion), does not admit of as persistent reiteration as does sentiment. Hence the sensibilities evoked by, *e.g.*, sublimity, pathos, love (in the intense and vehement sense), and fear, do not, as they properly come under the head of emotion, specifically call for review here. It is with sentiment only that we are concerning ourselves for the moment.

Now a series of physical thrills, mentally generated, will be, according to their nature and cause, either pleasurable or the reverse. In the case of such as do not prove agreeable, the normal outcome is an endeavour, not always by laudable means, to avert or to dislodge from the mind the thoughts and ideas, of whatever sort they may be, that from their nature occasion them. Where they are found entirely pleasant, on the other hand, and especially if they retain the gentle level of a simple sentiment, the natural inclination is to harbour (or to reproduce) in the mind the originating thoughts and ideas.

All would be well if the pleasure-giving ideas were always founded on a basis of reality or rationality. Too frequently, however, they can be shown to rest on spurious and untenable ground-work.

In the first place, luscious ideas are being constantly entertained and fostered which owe their birth to unveracious and misleading, or simply misinterpreted, representations of *art*. The all too ready receptivity for these furnishes the most easily recognizable variety of sentimentality. It has acquired a particularly dominant foothold in the religious domain. Now there can be no occasion for any vindication of true art, with

the noble and gracious purposes it is designed to serve. But we dare not conceive of it, with Schelling, Schlegel, and many other assertors of its "divinity," as though it were independent of all relation to reason. As with faith, its concepts may transcend reason, that which is cognizable—indeed, to be satisfying, they must needs at least suggest something higher than what is cognizable, something limitless—but they must not conflict with what we apprehend and know to be rational or actual. Indeed, true taste demands that finer feelings be attempered with judgment. Only thus can taste be at all ancillary to the moral sense, as philosophers like Dugald Stewart have attested. Then it may even be said to constitute a phase of the moral sense.

These representations, giving rise here mediately to sentimental conceptions, are external to the mind. There is another and a distinct type, however, of this mental-cum-physical phenomenon which calls for more careful notice still. It is an internal, a subjective, and consequently more subtle, variety of sentimentality. The mind, in default of an idea or ideas of the desired sort grounded on actuality or reason, suffers a certain faculty of its own—viz., *imagination*—to cater unguidedly for its need. An artist within sets to work at portrayal, inside the studio of the mind.

Let it now be allowed at once that imagination, properly conditioned, can and does have its uses. For instance, our progress in science has been indebted at almost every step to the help of hypothesis, which is simply a form of imagination. It was in regard to the scientific realm that Tyndall stated that "when nourished by knowledge patiently won, and bounded and conditioned by operant reason, imagination becomes the mightiest instrument of the physical discoverer." "Imagination," also Sully points out, "has its own legitimate function, when subsisting in a calm and orderly form, in building up the fabric of knowledge. When duly controlled, imaginative activity not only leads on to the grasp of new concrete fact, but even paves the way for the higher processes of thinking.

Mobility and flexibility in the images of memory conduces to activity of thought. By breaking up complex mental images into segments and by re-arranging the material in new forms, it facilitates abstraction and introduces fresh combinations of the thought-elements."

"Imagination must create nothing," Ruskin laid down; "its function is to penetrate truth, to associate truth." But, unhappily, his ruling suffers constant violation. The imagination is encouraged to create, to create recklessly. It is allowed, in fact, to sink itself to the level of what we more commonly call *fancy*, wherein the improbable and the impracticable, the superficial, the volatile and transient, are granted as ready admittance to its immaterial canvas as their better opposites. Then the mind, forgoing its discriminative faculty, discarding all keen regard for absolute truth, indulges itself in the choice semblances pictorially conjured up within and the delicious sensibility evoked by them, as though it were engaged in the contemplation of that which could fairly be claimed to be either veritable or rational. Not much wonder is it, therefore, that Bishop Butler is found characterizing imagination as "that forward delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere: of some assistance indeed to apprehension, but the author of all error."

Little children are often found uttering grotesque and fantastic fibs, without the slightest desire or intention to deceive, from the simple cause that their imagination is, for the time, in a certain sense more developed than their moral and voluntary and, no doubt also, reasoning faculties. As they grow up to maturity, if their characters be healthy and well disciplined, the materially spectacular ideals of their imagination give place more and more to moral and ethical ones. And a happy provision of Providence it is that men should feel their whole organic frame responsively exhilarated and aglow, gently and therefore the less transiently, from the ideals, the morally beautiful contemplations, sanctioned by reason, which engage and enkindle their minds. It is indeed inspiring to all around even to know that there are men and women beside and

amongst them thus animated. To this state of righteously evoked, yet suitably controlled, mental stimulation it is that we apply the description "sentiment" when we intend the term in a higher and appreciative signification. On the contrary, where the moral ideals that propel the finer physical feelings are illusory, lacking a basis of actuality or rationality, we have to do with "sentimentality."

"They are dangerous guides, those feelings."

"Nothing," says Ruskin, "can atone for the want of truth; not the most brilliant imagination, the most playful fancy, the most pure feeling—supposing that feeling *could* be pure and false at the same time." The psychologists are unanimous in their warnings here. Stout, for example, in discussing imagination, recalls how Sidgwick pointedly called attention to "cases in which we act contrary to a general resolution, under the influence of a seductive feeling—in short, sophisticate ourselves"; and Stout's explanation is that in such cases "we dismiss judgment on the validity or invalidity of our pretext . . . whilst the seductive feeling leads us to contemplate the pretext complacently, and determines our action by warding off interference"—that is, interference of other thoughts calculated to dissipate the 'pretext.' Sully, Ladd, and the great Bain also testify to the danger to the interests of truth and recognition of fact arising out of the feelings, and the enticing pleasure they can afford.

Yet, again, in the ethical connection, where there is not obstruction, there is a deplorable amount of misdirection of that precious quality, moral energy or earnestness, brought about by this sentimentality or illusory idealization. Mr. Roosevelt's strictures, when he pronounced the dictum that heads this article, were specially meant for the benefit of a certain type of English politician. This latter's imagination has been continuously conjuring up the delectable picture of the tribes of the earth each and all governing themselves peacefully and prosperously. And he has become so carried away with his ideal as to fancy, in the face of all the evidence to the contrary,

that the mere handing over to any given one of them of the reins of administrative control will disclose that tribe's thorough competency to discharge the functions of self-government there and then. And Mr. Roosevelt, looking at Egypt as a representative case, has not felt satisfied with the way in which the theory has been working out when practically applied. Others also have observed that the weakness is beginning to affect us nationally.

In the religious sphere sentimentality at present runs riot among us. Religious sentimentality may be defined as the disposition to entertain and contemplate agreeable images or fancies within the mind, whether they shall have been suggested from outside or simply internally conceived, and to suppose such a mental exercise to be a devotional attitude, divinely guided and approved, on the ground that the fancies or images entertained happen to possess some, often remote enough, suggestion of or association with the Divine; whereas all the while it is mainly or altogether for the pleasing gentle organic sensibility which they tickle into activity that they are appreciated and relished, if need be in cool disregard of some divinely revealed counsel, ay, even of ordinary and obvious reason.

Art here, as has been already observed, is the chief medium of external stimulation. And the best of the authorities on art have themselves been sounding warnings upon our languid ears. According to Ruskin, they who "mingle the refinements of art with all the offices and practices of religion" must beware "how they may confuse their enjoyments with their duties . . . lest we mistake a surrender to the charms of art for one to the service of God, and, in the art which we permit, lest we substitute sentiment for sense." The incontestable "beauty of holiness" is by many confounded with a purely imaginary and delusive holiness of beauty. "There is an error which is not uncommon," says C. H. Waterhouse in his "Signification of Art," "of accrediting the Beautiful with an attribute of sacredness or sanctity. The apprehension of the Beautiful has no *necessary* connection whatever with goodness or righteousness,

or with the dictates of a pious motive." Professor Gwatkin, in his "Knowledge of God," after reminding us that when men were tired of controversy in the eighteenth century they made a tolerable peace in the Church by dropping the religion and preaching morality instead, ventures the question whether we are not now doing the same thing over again, only that art is the substitute this time.

In this connection "religious" painting, "religious" pen-pictures (historical or fictional), "religious" pageantry, embellished phrase of hymn and sermon, are in turn laid under contribution. (We forbear from including music, because we agree with that host of authorities who maintain that music, "sacred" or otherwise, does not, of itself, generate definite ideas; and because the form of sensation which it evokes, though closely akin, is distinct from that with which we are dealing—to speak technically, is afferent rather than efferent.)

Among hymns the phraseology of which ministers to this propensity, Faber's are the most outstanding examples. His "Hark, hark, my soul! angelic songs are swelling," will occur to the mind of any sensible reader who is acquainted with hymnals. His "O Paradise! O Paradise!" is not very much better; as Bishop Chadwick warns us, "Heaven may be longed for with a view to its unruffled sensuous repose, as though it was a pagan elysium, the thought of it being suggested by nothing more than discontent with our toilsome, prosaic life." And his "O come and mourn" veritably passes across the border-line of our subject, and belongs to the heading of emotionalism. The late Bishop Lyttelton of Southampton, in his *Diocesan Chronicle*, when deprecating sentimentality as "one of the chief foes of true worship," urged that, to the great majority of those who delight to sing it, "Lead, kindly Light," has probably no meaning, or only a sentimental meaning.

As regards pictorial language of the pulpit, F. W. Robertson, with reference more directly to the preacher than the audience, defined sentimentality as "that state in which a man speaks things that are deep and true, not because he feels them strongly,

but because he perceives that they are beautiful, and that it is touching and fine to say them." The definition, however, requires qualification. The things spoken may sometimes not be very deep or true. "Clever word-painters," according to the great art-critic, Hamerton, can "dazzle people by sounding phrases and brilliant metaphors into the belief that they have really received a very noble impression, when the whole force of the impression, if analyzed, would be found to be due to the music of the sentences and the splendour of the metaphors." Thus the atheist in his hall of science can have his feelings titillated just as effectively and impressively as a professed Christian in a church. Again, the deep and true things spoken might be felt pretty strongly, but be so enveloped in decorative diction as to have the strenuousness of their import blunted for the hearers. Very many among the rising section of the Non-conformist ministry three or four decades ago, when stung with the taunts of Matthew Arnold and others about their lack of "culture," made haste to cultivate an embellished poetizing pulpit style, and we need not doubt but their motive and purpose was excellent. But it could hardly be claimed to-day that the marked attention bestowed upon this accomplishment has permanently advanced their cause or wrought salvation in Israel. "I make bold to say," Dr. Chalmers had long before affirmed, "that as much delight may emanate from the pulpit on an arrested audience beneath it as ever emanated from the boards of a theatre; ay, and with as total a disjunction of mind, too, in the one case as in the other, from the essence of religion."

But it is far from enough to recognize sentimentality in the religious connection to be a futile and profitless thing. The mischief of it is of a more positive kind, and strikes deeper.

At its suggestion, in the average picture or sketch, religion is made to appear as though it were only the concern of such as stand outside the circle of prosaic, workaday life. It is only the aged and tottering who seem ever to peruse the Bible; it is only pretty, well-dressed children, with head a tilt and eyes unnaturally upturned, who sing hymns; it is only these, and

tense maidens with flowing hair, who know how to pray fervently.

From it have arisen erroneous and unworthy conceptions of our blessed Lord. In the view of the enthusiastic Gambier Parry, who wrote "The Ministry of Fine Art," the noble, loving face of Christ has been degraded by the degenerate modern schools of Christian art. "Taking refuge in His meekness and gentleness, and ignoring the grander elements of His character—His splendid independence, His boldness in denunciation, and, when necessary, His ruthless severity—they picture Him a mere creature of weak sentimentalism—effeminate, inane."

The prevailing relish for pictures of angels and cherubs with human figures does not tend to fortify the due emphasis that should attach to the grim fact of human sinfulness. The ideal they set forth is one that certainly extends to the skies, but does not first of all plumb the depths of that moral evil which man has been involved in and dare not ignore. Similarly, granted that "natural religion" has its own independent contribution to make, the marked prominence frequently given now to flower services and their details is not calculated to enhance in the minds of our children the relatively far greater importance and preciousness of *revealed* truth—the faith by virtue of which Abel offered a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain.

The disposition develops a spurious catholicity which enables those who become possessed with it to enter into a maudlin sympathy and fellowship with the most alien religious systems. Sir Walter Scott contrived to behold medieval conditions, not as they really were, either ecclesiastically, intellectually, or socially, but in a golden halo of spirituality, chivalry, and romance; and the captivating, though delusive, influence of his representations has been enormous. Latterly his idealisms in this connection are being embodied in pageants, to which Jesuit preachers from their pulpits wish all success, inasmuch as they "reveal in a most striking fashion the intimate relationship between Rome and England."

The purely internal, the directly idealizing modes of senti-

mentality—to which, as being the less obvious form, one ventures to direct special attention—are not absent from the religious sphere, even on its common levels. It is long since sentimentality of this sort first began to play a part in modifying the beliefs of professing Christians. For example, to its influence was due, we can hardly doubt, the transcendental position attributed to the Virgin Mary among one section of Christendom. Heaven became graced thereby with a tender, motherly personage, whom (through the overlooking of passages like Isaiah xxxi. 5, lxvi. 13) it was imagined to be lacking.

The guidance of Revelation, explicit or implicit, it will be seen, becomes of little account when sentimentality, of whichever mode, affects an entrance. Indeed, its votaries are not beyond avowing so. “Let us rejoice,” proclaims an essayist in the *Homiletic Review* (December, 1904), “that the old dogmatic expression of religion has spent itself, and must give way to a more poetic and imaginative expression.” This is very different from the standpoint taken up by a far more sagacious thinker of a former day, Abraham Tucker, when he enunciated that “religion is the art of disciplining the imagination.”

To conclude, it may be observed that, from the more responsive nature of their organic structure, with their preponderant endowment of the finer and more delicate order of nerve-fibre, the feminine portion of the race appears plainly to be more susceptible to this tendency than the masculine. The same may be inferred with regard to some, as compared with others, of the male section as well, so far as they approximate physically to the constitution and temperament that mark the feminine. Happily, though one may be organically susceptible, he or she, through maintaining the empire of reason and will, may prove more immune from this weakness than another who is at better advantage physically. Members of either sex, indeed, who are but passing through the adolescent period, with its physically tense and at the same time unseasoned conditions and its limited experience, are peculiarly liable to be affected with the tendency. Hence it is from persons at this stage of life, to

whom the finer organic impressions (notably those that are stimulated by objects of art) keenly appeal, that the bulk of the "converts" are gleaned to such communions as cater most for these sensibilities. Hence it comes about also that many at this period of life at which professions are chosen, through misinterpretation of feelings in which sentimentality predominates over Spirit-led piety, conclude, and are prompted to the conclusion by their friends, that the ministry is their proper sphere; and consequently are found afterwards, as a rule, swelling the ranks either of the ceremonialists in the Anglican and cognate Churches, or of the poetizing and word-painting class of preachers among other communions.

A pre-eminent safeguard against this weakness, whatever be the age or sex, will be found in a strenuous course of living; and this not solely, though specially, of the intellectual sort. It is recognized by psychologists that even a suitable and balanced muscular efficiency exercises, in a measure, through the connecting medium of the nerve-system, a reflex effect upon the quality of the mental working. Not, indeed, that any development of the kind can do much in the way of neutralizing or dislodging delusive ideals or prejudices already stubbornly formed.

But the Christian believer will look for his security here in nothing less than a constant loyal dependance on his part upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit through the Word. Not His guidance independently of the (written) Word—a presumptuous aspiration sure to terminate in a still more illusory mysticism; nor yet His guidance operating along the lines of selective elements and phases of the Word; but through the Word assimilated broadly and proportionately and as a whole. In the leading of the Spirit who "searcheth all things," and of the Word which "discerneth the thoughts," lies the infallible protective against this insidious tendency.

