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Reason and Sentiment

Reason or sentiment rule the world. The first, mainly by appealing to the brains of the few. The second by influencing the hearts of the many. The theories advanced by man today in but repetitions of those advanced centuries ago. The two forces in man's nature have ever been at war. The highest success of the one has indicated and still indicates the defeat of the other. What has occasioned this opposition? Is it necessary? Is it natural?

Thought is man's key to life. He who does not use it knows not what it is to live. The moral sentiment is the wall which encloses the brightest picture of life. He who unlocks the portal with the key, thought, sees stretching out before him broad fields of gray beauty. Once across the threshold a new life begins. All of the quiet and ease of indifference are gone. Each one is constantly struggling to make his portion of the field more fruitful. We draw people to admire the beauty and worth of the produce. Some great minds, not content with what beauty patient industry may produce, explore the dark recesses of almost unknown caves. They may return bearing a gem of the purest water which adorns them henceforth.
Few thus succeed. Many return to find that they bear only a glow-
worm whose light fades before the sun of searching criticism.
Undismayed, the earnest mind renew the search to finally attain the
scholar's crown.

For the last three hundred years substance in all of its
forms, has been examined. The telescope has enabled the eye of man
to wander among the starry worlds. With the microscope the minutest
forms of animal and vegetable matter have been examined. The flash
of light from the brain of man causes the form of matter to be change.
Transforming the waste into the fertile field, pierces the mountain, spans
the river, throbs the electric spark from continent to continent and enables
the human voice to swell from city to city. All of this concerns matter. It
is only the entry, the vestibule of the magnificent temple dedicated to
the moral. It performs well its part only so far as it enables the
greater number to enter this temple. Here in the holy of holies lies
sentiment or sentiment. Here are collected the relics of three thousand
years of philosophical research. Each age, each nation, each generation
has added its theory. Each mind considers his own fancy as the bright
particular gem. Each generation with its own scales, weighs the con-
tributions of its predecessors. If found wanting they are thrown aside
as of little value if they are excepted and stamped with the
seal of the generation the more charm is added to the beauty
which builds up conservatism. This approval is seldom grant-
ed. Not only is this true in the field of matter but it also applies
to the field of mind. When we look back we can scarcely realize
the advancement that has been made since the Greeks speculated concerning both mind and matter. The human thought was but just entering into each of these departments. It knew but little of the material. Still less of the immaterial.

We can not now tell how the ancient paganism arose. It was accepted by the Greeks and the rule of the gods over the life of man was acknowledged. Every poet yielded to the impulse. Every stream had its god even free it was age. But questioning arose. These questioning words first with reverence. The philosophical schools of the Greeks passed through the same plagues that those of today have passed through. They arrived at the same conclusions that the materialist of today advocates. The scientific triumph, as it was then regarded, was proclaimed as man's release, as a message of glad tidings. Following this came cinicism and stoicism. Greece, with its philosophy not founded on morality, fell, and the brightest spark in ancient civilization was extinguished. Rome gaining the empire of the world blended the gods of State with those of the Hellen. The intellect of the world adopted Greek morality and Greek philosophy. The Roman struggled for national glory. Allured on by that beacon and struggling to subdue the world she remained sparse for a time. When Roman power had been established, when the world was romanised, Rome turned upon herself. The Barbarian completed what civilization without sentiment had commenced. Europe the home of refinement was plunged into the degradation of the dark ages. Morality had long
ceased to be a national influence. It was destined to remain lost till the revival of learning; may it was one of the principal influences in the awakening of reason. Thought then became the power that ruled national actions. In the advancement was thought alone? So it was always aided by a rapidly widening moral sentiment.

The outward sweep of reason is beyond parallel. In 1613, fully the great French minister, not thinking of the sweep which thought was destined to make during the following three hundred years, said that France could place in the field a better force of artillery than the world had ever seen before or would see again. How would it compare with that of today. Every apartment of thought is alike. Progress in all has been rapid and constant. When we stop to think we stand amazed at the advancement. It is the coast of the nineteenth century. In the following centuries science will look back to this time as the golden age from all literature now looks back to the sixteenth century.

The field of matter is not extended enough for the scientist. He demands new territory for investigation. To satisfy this demand a materialistic philosophy is founded. The new field is instantly filled with explorers. Images of great beauty are thrown down and broken that new forms may be moulded in their place. The materialist says you are worshipping a god you know nothing about. Quietly we will allow no such idolatry. But do they offer anything superior? No, and we demand of those who would shut us out that they police. That they consider before this work of destruction goes farther. The world to day mourns the
destruction of the beauty sculptured by Phidias. At the same time goes on the destruction of images as far superior to those of the old Greek artists as mind is superior to matter.

Should we become discouraged at the little progress made in the field of mind? Three hundred years ago the field of science was comparatively a blank. The world was hotly debating the Copernican system. The nature of electricity and magnetism was unknown. Chemistry was an amusement or pastime in the search for the philosopher's stone. It was only when the analytical system of investigation took the place of the synthetic that science took the great forward step. When the facts are observed and results deduced instead of establishing a theory and observing the facts agreeing with it. When the same change is made in the investigation of the field of mind a greater progress may be expected. The philosopher of to-day discards as useless and inane everything that he can not explain by certain rules. There are laws of nature. Every man of intelligence admits them. Matter in all its forms is subject to these laws; but in admitting this is it necessary that we bow down in blind worship? Is man satisfied to stop here? Is there nothing higher? Is the theory of morals a dream of the dark ages or a mythological story that the intelligence of the nineteenth century has left especially appointed to destroy? Is it necessary in admitting the laws of nature that we bow to the ax of fatalism? Does the progress of civilization depend on scientific
thought alone? If so we can but dismiss the theory of progress, basis on the idea that there is in man a multitude still. Let the world pause long before it takes such a step. When the period of scientific investigation is passed, under the rule of such a fatalism, man will be plunged into an abyss by the side of which the dark ages would form a picture of light and beauty. Christianity like all other human ideas is imperfect. Shall we, because of this imperfection, condemn it and throw it aside as useless? If the simple row-boat had been discarded because it was dangerous on the ocean what would have been the civilization of today? If steam as a motor had been declared as useless because its imperfectly developed what would be the condition of the manufacturing interest today? Morality being one of the foundation forces, it takes ages to discover and correct its imperfections. The time required for such corrections only add new testimony to the importance of the principle. History shows that the world was never led by reason alone. All ages of unbelief have been dark. The people of the orient dream of their fate written in the iron book and will not stop aside to avoid it. Shall future ages say of us fatalism prevented their development? We do not claim that the moral sentiment alone is necessary to advancement. Let sentiment and reason be united and thus will be reared a structure perfect in its roundness, beauty.

In recognizing the power of sentiment we do not deny
to reason its legitimate field. Reason has to do with matter. Does the theory of development apply to mind no less than to matter? Is the soul matter only of a finer nature and more delicate organization than in the plant or animal? Does the mind decay and moulder away as the body? Is the last solemn curvilinear orb of a tribute not less to the soul than to the material part of man? If all of these questioning can be answered in the affirmative then are we restricting the field of reason? We must throw away one of the greatest forces in the elevation of humanity. If they are answered in the negative, the great power that sentiment has over the masses should lead us to cherish it with the greatest care.

To us as Americans this question especially appeals. A representative government it is important that the passions of the people should be restrained. Can there be a greater influence enlisted than that of the moral sentiment. The scientist of today would develop one set of faculties at the expense of another. In his desire for rapid advancement he is neglecting to build one wall of this temple. Will a perfect structure thus be erected? It is true that we are largely indebted to science for our present position. Should we for that reason recognize it as the only civilizer?

Thought tends to individualize man, sentiment to socialize him. It leads him to extend his sympathy beyond the circle of his acquaintance, beyond that of his fellow countrymen. He turns from his own world to the new living. His thoughts are
conducted backward along the highway of history and forward among the problems of the future. He upholds in the victories and mourns over the defeats of the past. He longs for the possible brightness of the future. It is only when the two are combined that the highest civilization can be attained. We are not going contrary to nature in demanding the union of these two forces. Such a union is inevitable. See the golden age as it approaches. If based on its standard sentiment and reason with clasped hands while liberty stoops over them her banner, the spirit of virtue pours out through the thoughts of men. The nations of men are united by reason and sentiment.

Shall we dwarf the human soul by an overwhelming materialism? No, but realize and realizing acknowledge and acknowledging preserve the ideal as well as the real side to civilization. With sentiment and reason combined lay a firm foundation. A foundation on which posterity may build a civilization as far superior to that of today as today is to that of a thousand years ago.