A STUDY OF HISTORY.

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History is hardly a word to conjure with; the sound of it, I fear, kindles very little enthusiasm. We recall our school days—the dry facts—battles, treaties, dates, and such like, laboriously learnt by heart. We were not much interested in what we thought to be little more than a record of dry facts. History is far more than only this. Even as regards facts, modern exploration and research among buried ruins and masses of parchment and papyri have brought so much to light that only a very dull mind can remain wholly indifferent. Every year the spade work being done in Greece, Egypt, Asia Minor, and the Euphrates Valley is altering what was once considered certain; every year scholars, disturbing the dust of centuries in ancient haunts of learning, are finding treasures which, when deciphered, must be taken account of by the historian. Facts are never to be despised—facts may be made thoroughly interesting; but History is now recognized to be far more. The old historians were generally content with a correct chronicle; if they turned aside it was usually to glorify king or country, or the ecclesiastic institution or party with which they were connected; generally speaking, they had no further purpose or aim. Even Gibbon, painstaking and industrious as he is, never seemed to think that there could be anything more for him to do than to record the events which, step by step through a period of more than a thousand years, constituted the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. He might turn aside occasionally to moralize for a moment, and he keenly enjoyed gently insinuating a sneer at some Christian saint, but if his facts were faithfully recorded, and they nearly always were, he does not seem to have thought that more was, or could be, wanted.

Now things are different; with Freeman, Stubbs, and Green, with Milman, Bryce, Gardner, and Sir John See-

ley; and, above all, with Lord Acton, a new era has opened, history has become a Science, and as a Science it is studied. The old school told us—often very well—what happened; for them the facts were enough; the new school tell us why the facts happened and the manifold issues thereof, whether social, political, or ecclesiastical.

Perhaps, and all honor to him for so doing, Carlyle led the way. His French Revolution is a Drama—or rather a series of dramatic acts, told with the zeal and enthusiasm of a Hebrew prophet. No more powerful or impressive sermon was ever preached than Carlyle's awful account of the death of that unhappy monarch once called The Well-beloved; no history shows with more tragic horror that there is retribution on this earth for crime, profligacy, tyranny and misgovernment; that God is not mocked, whatsoever a *nation* sows that shall a *nation* also reap. And ever since—as I have said—History has been studied not only as a science, but religiously—as a task fundamentally sacred. We want more now than "the Waverley novels view of History," to quote Sir John Seeley—we want to see the ideas underlying the facts; we want to learn the development or retrogression of a people—what caused great forces to be set in motion, and why the streams of progress or defilement came this way rather than that. Dominating ideas, national or ecclesiastical ideals, are the theme of the modern historian who takes Thucydides rather than Herodotus for his model; and has rightly refused to be led astray by Carlyle, and turn History into a series of Biographies. Carlyle's "Heroes" is indeed a fascinating book, but History is not hero worship. The ideas dominating a period are greater than any particular man. The man might have perished, but for all that the idea would have persisted.

Pope Hildebrand, for instance, is one of the most interesting persons in the mediæval period. Sir James Stephens, in his Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography, has

given us a fascinating account of him; but when you read Milman's Latin Christianity, you see that great as Hildebrand was, he was but a prominent actor in a long and inevitable conflict; and that the Emperor Henry, standing barefoot in the snow until that stern ecclesiastic at last saw well to forgive, was only an exceptionally dramatic incident.

Or take Oliver Cromwell, whose life Carlyle himself has written in narrative so stirring that in spite of blemishes and partisanship, we continue to read it. Yet turn to Professor Gardner and there you see, told in a style quite as interesting and in a far more grave, temperate, and judicial tone, that the Puritanism and Anglicanism of the Stuart period represented in an extreme form religious liberty and ecclesiastical authority, one of which was bound to gain sway over the other; that their ideals were wholly different, and that, therefore, even if Charles had loved Laud no more than James, his father, loved him—if Oliver had been drowned, as he nearly was, in that Huntingdonshire mill-stream, yet the contest both in Church and State had to come.

Carlyle's dictum, in spite of his eloquence, cannot convince us; the course of History is determined not only by the masterful spirit of this man or that, but by persistent tendencies, by the broad and deep currents of ideas, working in the minds of masses of men, and seized at last by one man capable of directing them.

I do not think the true lesson of History can be better expressed than it was by the Athenæum's reviewer of Lord Acton's Lectures. "Lord Acton's message to the world was a great idea—the idea of placing history in a more intimate relation with the moral sciences than has ever been done before. The roar of the ages sounded to him one long thunderous spiritual and moral warning, a summons to clearer thinking, bolder action, wiser judgment. History was to him a great code of ethical principles and examples, and for him the supremely impor-

tant book in the code was the book Liberty; and under the book the title Conscience; and under the title, the chapter Toleration."

For such study of History as I would endeavor to suggest, the records of very early times will not help us much. Archæology seldom satisfies the intense curiosity it excites; the Hittites and other tribes are interesting when Professors Sayce or McCurdy tell the tale; Indian legends in Longfellow's hands, and Norse legends in Matthew Arnold's are delightful poetry, but we do not really learn much; for European History there is not much real light before "the strong-winged music of Homer," and for the Semites before the great migration from Ur of the Chaldees. The Orientals, India, China, etc., I must pass by.

But then, when permanent light, as distinguished from flash-light comes, we find that there are three dominant forces already swaying the destinies of humanity; the Family, the State, and Religion. As soon as History really begins, you find these three factors already there; they may be more or less developed. The idea of the State, for instance, was very feebly developed amongst our own Teutonic ancestors, but it was there in germ. The sense of Kindred, the Family tie, we always find, and never is religion absent. And not only are these three forces always there at the beginning; they continue in varying degrees of strength through the whole course of History; they are with us still. Perhaps in the earliest times, the Family—the Ancestral—tie is the strongest of the three, stronger sometimes than even Religion, while in modern times perhaps it is the weakest. In Greek History so strong is it that the great difficulty of Greek History is—forgive the Irish Bull!—that for a long time there is no Greece. There are Dorians, Spartans, and many other tribes inhabiting that little land of eternal interest, each claiming descent from some half divine and wholly mythical ancestor, and each as full of jealousy

and quarrelsomeness as it is possible to be; but there is no nation.

In Rome, naturally, the idea displayed itself in laws and organization, all framed in analogy to parental ideas; and since, first by the Imperial sway, and then by Justinian's Code, Roman Jurisprudence has become that of the whole of Western Civilization, the same ideas have shaped the laws of every European kingdom almost to our own time.

In Hebrew history the family tie is still stronger. In reading our Old Testament we hardly realize that we are reading the account of how a clan developed into a tribe, —or rather tribes—united only by the sense of common ancestry and common religion, and how these tribes at last coalesced into a kingdom. Yet the idea is far stronger in Hebrew history than in Grecian or Roman. We see the better side of it when we read how "by faith Joseph when he was dying gave command concerning his bones," a command reverently obeyed. We hear the worst side in the proud reply, "We be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage."

But through the Hebrew race the idea has stamped itself more permanently than it has through Roman Law, because of its constant use in religious metaphor. In the prophets, especially, metaphors from family life constantly occur; and so the two ideas of Family and Religion become intermingled, each greatly increasing the strength of the other. Hebraism handed on these metaphors to Christianity, and thus the idea of the Family tie has become part of the permanent ideas of every people, by being incorporated in the worship and creed of the one eternal religion. Nor has it died out in other respects; common kindred still lies at the base of every nationality; blood is still thicker than water; though, as I have already said, the tie is not now perhaps so strong as our second force—the idea of the State.

Mere growth of numbers inevitably weakens the family bond. On the other hand it strengthens to some extent the idea of the State, especially in that form in which we first find it—the City State. Strictly speaking, the *City* State hardly arises in Israel; in Greek History it is *the* factor; while Roman History is simply the history of a city that became an Empire.

The power of those ancient city states is difficult for us, who somewhat stupidly always connect power with mere magnitude, to realize. The Greek cities, on both sides the Hellespont, and for many years Rome also, would have been hardly more than villages in modern Lancashire. You will remember Aristotle argues that the city-state must be small, and he gives a reason which seems, to our modern notions, absurd. The city, he says, must not be so large that the *ecclesia*—and the *ecclesia* was practically all free adult males—cannot all meet in the Agora, and be addressed by one orator. If the city is over large, says Aristotle, the herald would have to be a Stentor. This seems to us absurd; to Aristotle it was a truth almost obvious. But this smallness—as *we* should account it—intensified, rather than diminished their amazing power. When the need came, the power this ideal had was marvelously shown, especially in war. It is difficult to realize that the great host—great, however much you allow for Oriental exaggeration and Oriental inability to count—that the great host of Xerxes was repelled by the citizen-soldiers of a few petty little villages, as we should say. Yet I need not say how they did it, for no one is so ignorant as not to know of Thermopylæ. And as regards Athens at any rate, that is the least part of the tale. Athens as it was in the days of Pericles belongs not to Greek but to *world* history, for it has left its mark that will abide to all time. It was a short period, doubtless; but during that short period in Learning, in Art, in Architecture, in Oratory, and in general capacity, that little city-state attained a height

which never has been equalled and probably never will be.

Then turn to Rome, dull and uninteresting in comparison with Athens; yet its power is equally marvelous. Its origin we do not quite know, but its steady, continuous, almost unchecked, growth we do know. It is one of the marvels of history how that city grew year by year till it conquered, absorbed, governed, and long before the time of Constantine was supreme over the whole of Western civilization.

And it is perhaps still more marvelous that, after the Republic had become an Empire so strong was the very name of what had once been a mere city-state, that in spite of the transfer of the seat of Government from the Tiber to the Bosphorus, in spite of the devastation of the soil of Italy by Barbarian host after Barbarian host, in spite of the nominal holders of the Imperial office sinking into such puppets as Augustulus; in spite of the fact that all real civil power passed into the hands of Franks or Teutons and that even they could hardly hold their own against the far stronger power of the Papacy—yet the Imperial power remained in theory, and there was nominally a Roman Emperor until 1806 when Napoleon abolished, with much more besides, the empty title.

I need not waste time in showing the permanency of Religion as a force in History; no one disputes it. But I notice one or two aspects. First, its originating power; by which I mean that by religion, new states spring up. All along history we find this happening. Take, for instance, Islam. A religious doctrine was preached in the seventh century after Christ among the Arab tribes, and forthwith those populations till then feeble and disunited became a mighty state, and in the course of a century had founded cities, overthrown empires, and established a great federation of states covering a considerable section of the globe, and united amongst themselves by the bond of a common religion.

Take Holland. What created that nation, living in a land only kept habitable by an incessant contest with the ocean and possessing no natural wealth in minerals or the like, yet capable of producing heroes like William the Silent and our own William III; capable of creating and developing a commerce that rivaled and once even exceeded our own; capable also of founding and for long retaining colonies wealthy and important? Solely Religion.

Or take America. Professor Seeley has pointed out that the numbers of the emigrants in the Stuart period varied exactly with the rigour of the enforcement of ecclesiastical discipline. When the Anglican Church was weak there was no need for the Puritan to go. America, in a word, came into being because of the desire for religious liberty.

And secondly, I notice the power of adaptation to changing conditions which Religion shows. The family tie grows weaker not only as numbers increase, but also because the Philosopher and the Historian explain away the mythical ancestral traditions on which it rests. But religion is as flexible and as adaptable as it is vitalizing, because it can change the mode by which it expresses itself. Not perhaps always its ritual, that is very slow to change; but its literature, its didactic form changes as the nation grows intellectually. It is so in every nation. All early religious literature is poetry, the ballad or the song. In Greece we have Homer—the Iliad. In Israel the earliest records are the fragments of the Book of the Wars of Jehovah and the Book of Jasher preserved in the Pentateuch. So the old Norse legends, which Carlyle loved and Matthew Arnold too, are half history, half religion. Hiawatha is simply the Indian legends and nature-myths which Longfellow collected; whether or not they were handed down in ballad form, or were mere folk-lore, I do not know; at any rate the Bard was the religious teacher.

But he did not continue so. As men grow mentally we find a parallel development and the Bard gives place both in Israel and in Greece, to men who felt all the burden and the weight of the problems of this unintelligible world, though they expressed the doubts and anxieties within them in somewhat different form; in Judæa in Apocalypse or Dialogue; in Greece in Dramas where the justice of the course of this world is defiantly questioned.

Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides are somewhat earlier than Job, Ecclesiastes, and certainly than Daniel (if Daniel be placed in Maccabean times) but the difference in time is slight, and the likeness in the expression of religious thought is both close and striking.

Both in Greece and Israel, popular religion began to be questioned much about the same period, and with the same consequences; namely, that the Bard gave place to the Philosopher.

But it was suitable that it should be so, and it can be shown that all along the line of history, religion has shown the same self-adaptive power. It is because of this that the religious idea never dies, or can die from history; it has the invariable accompaniment of life,—self-development. When we come to the Middle Ages, we find the threads of the three ideas of the Family, the State, and Religion, entwined in what is one of the most interesting of historic studies—the Mediæval Empire and the Mediæval Church. These two, for centuries existing side by side form a unique study in history.

At the beginning of the fourth century, Constantine changed the seat of Empire from Rome to that new city on the Bosphorus which he built and called after his own name, doing thereby one of the most pregnant deeds in history, though it may be questioned if Constantine in the least realized the importance of what he was doing. For the effect of the change is not so much that the importance of the Eternal City was, for the time being, diminished, but that by the creation of another Capital,

while the glamor and glory of the former still remained, the way was prepared for that division of the Empire into East and West, which became a decisive fact on Christmas day, A. D. 800.

On that memorable day, Professor Bryce tells us, after the reading of the Gospel, Pope Leo III arose, advanced to where Charles knelt by the high altar, and, in the sight of all, placed on his brow the diadem of the Cæsars; then bent in obeisance before him, while the Church rang with the shout, *Karolo Augusto a Deo Coronato magno et pacifico imperatori, vita et victoria.* With that shout Mediæval History—at least as far as Europe is concerned—began; and, far more than merely that, from that memorable year we see the great idea of the Middle Ages at work; we see the two powers—the Church and the Empire—the Spiritual Realm and the Secular Realm—the "two swords," as men then understood Christ's words, governing in concert the nations of Europe, always nominally in alliance and sometimes really so; but more often in antagonism, either open or concealed.

For centuries the Papacy and the Empire ruled side by side; and in time men argued that because it was so, therefore it must be so; the Mediæval philosophy explained why, as Professor Bryce has so lucidly told us in his Holy Roman Empire, a book of which it is really, not conventionally, true to say that it is indispensable to the student of history; and of that mediæval theory the most thorough-going Protestant must surely say that it was magnificent. It was an attempt to place Church and State in true relationship one to the other. It was a genuine effort to realize both the Johannine city, by whose light nations should walk; and also the *Civitas Dei* of S. Augustine. The magnificent ideal did indeed break down and now is utterly lost, but while it lasted it was magnificent. While the idea was dominant—that is from about the time of Hildebrand (Gregory VII) to Boniface

VIII—or roughly, from the eleventh century to nearly the fourteenth—you have a period when the number of great men, great contests, great movements, great ideas makes any choice amongst them almost embarrassing. It is the age of Hildebrand, of Anselm, of Abelard, of S. Thomas of Canterbury, and of Innocent III.

It is the age of S. Bernard, S. Dominic, and S. Francis. It is the age of the Crusades, of the Venetian power, and of the Latin Kingdom in Palestine. It is the age of Duke William; of Henry II; of Edward I; of Frederic Barbarosa; and of S. Louis of France. It was the age of the Schoolmen, and the age when most of our noblest Cathedrals were built. It was the age of Chaucer, and of Dante; the age of Earl Simon and the beginning of the English Parliament.

Of course there was a darker side. Priests were superstitious; a Norman Baron was often an awful brute; and a mediæval castle must have been indescribably filthy; but it was an age of great ideas, and therefore —for that is the way of Providence—of great men to carry them into action. Its very failures are noble, the Crusades for instance. It is easy to belittle them—to say that the very idea of the sanctity of the soil of Palestine was mere superstition; and that many of those who took the cross took it from anything but religious motives. Granting both these statements, nevertheless the Crusading ideal compares favorably with the ideals of our English wars of the Eighteenth Century; to fight for the Holy Sepulchre is at least a more honourable ideal than to fight for markets in India or for a monopoly of the slave trade. If the Norman Barons were not all saints neither were Clive and Warren Hastings. When the worst has been said, the Crusades widened men's minds; their horizon was enlarged; Western Christianity and Western Civilization found they could learn something both from the Greek and also from the Mohammedan.

Chivalry was created; the Knight returned (when he did return) a Gentleman, consecrated by a new vow. Often he built a Lady Chapel for the Cathedral of the Diocese, or in some way he adorned the Church of his parish. Though the Mediæval Church had its faults, its corruptions, and its superstitions; yet it was dominated by a great idea, and the record of its achievements stirs the imagination.

Yet it fell, and about the fourteenth century, both Church and Empire declined, and with terrible rapidity. After Albert I in 1298 to Maximillan, every Emperor had a rival; "none," says Professor Bryce, "are worth remembering."

In 1305, the Papacy entered on the "Babylonish Captivity;" when that was over, the Schism began which the three great Councils hardly settled; and then followed Popes Borgia, Julius, and Leo X,—men amongst the worst the world has ever seen.

In England during the same period, the Wars of the Roses were fought by men whose one claim on our gratitude is that Shakespeare has taught from them undying lessons. In France, one heroine appeared whom the English burnt; until the fifteenth century was some half way through its course, the annals of the whole of Western Europe are a dreary record of turbulence, insurrections, famines, wretchedness, and misery.

Then came great changes; some of them so startling and unexpected that we are practically in a new world. In 1453, Constantinople fell, and few events are more pregnant than that fall, the account of which fired even the cold-blooded Gibbon.

The Turk became a factor in European politics. The terrible Mohammedan power (not in those days "the sick man") had now to be reckoned with in European politics. A power that was feared, as well it might be, for no one of the Kingdoms of Europe could stand alone

against the Turk; and so low had Europe fallen morally that even the Papacy could coquette with him.

The Empire alone saved both the Church and Europe. What would have happened if in 1571, Don John had *lost* the battle of Lepanto, we cannot tell. Even as it was, more than half the Mediterranean remained a Turkish lake.

When Constantinople fell, and even before its fall, scholars fled carrying with them the light of a new learning to cities that welcomed it with an unbounded enthusiasm, and the Renaissance period began.

At the same date, speaking roughly, Caxton's press was set up; and soon printed books began to pour over Europe. Art and Science had a rebirth. Greek literature, both classical and theological, was studied with intense enthusiasm; men read Plato as well as Cicero, and "Greece rose from the dead with the New Testament in her hand." Before long Erasmus published the text of the New Testament, which sold with amazing rapidity; in Cambridge Colet lectured in English—an unheard of innovation!—on S. Paul's epistles; in 1515 More published the Utopia; and in 1517 Luther nailed his theses on the doors of Wittenburg Church. The egg which Erasmus had laid was hatched—with consequences.

Contemporary with this widening of the intellectual horizon, the very framework of the world itself widened, how much men could not tell; the heated brains of bold adventurers were filled with the imagination of more and more lands to discover. In 1492 Columbus sailed, and Plato's fable land was found to be a reality; in 1497 Vasco da Gama rounded the Cape of Good Hope.

In years not longer than the lifetime of one man, the whole aspect of the world was completely altered and soon changes began to show themselves. It is sad to say so, but, morally, the effect at first was wholly bad. The Renaissance brought mental but not moral light; the men of the sixteenth century were very clever, they were

neither mean nor despicable, but they were heartless, cruel, sometimes wholly without conscience, and appallingly intolerant. John Knox desired that the Catholics should be exterminated; Calvin would not go quite so far; the Cardinal of Lorraine was an unshrinking advocate of assassination. And such as were the leaders, so also were their followers. Catherine de Medici told Queen Elizabeth that if Catholics were treated in England as Protestants had been in France on S. Bartholomew's day, there would be no objection. Murder, in those days was not a "regrettable incident" but simply a weapon of political warfare. And the women of the period were even worse than the men—clever, but worse. Mary Tudor, Mary Queen of Scots, Queen Elizabeth, Margaret, King Philip's sister, whom he made Governor of the Netherlands, and who managed better than any man—were all able women, but they lied, they intrigued, they hated, they murdered.

In an environment so wholly changed we must expect to find the old ideas of Family, State, and Religion, change also. They changed indeed, but they still held sway, as they always will. The family tie remained, as it still remains, though weakened as I have said. We see, for instance, its power, and for a time at any rate, its permanence in the theological truce of Augsburg (1555) when the maxim *cujus regio, ejus religio* was accepted. Logically that concordat seems absurd; why should a man's creed be determined by his being born on this side of a river or chain of hills, rather than on that? Yet as a matter of fact, creeds *are* so determined.

The Religious Peace of Augsburg was the one peace that attained to any real success in that unhappy time of unceasing strife. Dr. Lindsay says that could it have been made permanent, the wild anarchy, the bitter religious antagonisms of the Thirty Years War would never have occurred. So strong is the family bond.

Take another illustration—the case of Poland. When that shameless and iniquitous partition was made, doubtless the powers of Europe thought the amalgamation of the Poles with the peoples of their own Kingdoms was only a matter of a few years more or less. They have been finding out their mistake ever since; the Poles have never forgotten their nationality; the family tie is not forgotten even yet.

Turning to both the State and Religion, we find the change is great indeed. We find the power of the Empire has gone although nominally it remains. After Maximilian, no Emperor took the trouble to be crowned, nor was it worth while when power was gone, and Kings paid no other deference than the observance of polite formalities. But its want was felt; the loss of an ideal is always felt; and the European kingdoms created a sort of substitute in the doctrine of the Balance of Power—a curious idea, which in the eighteenth century was not without effect. But the State idea saw other changes. Before the sixteenth century, Church and State, Papacy and Empire, had jointly ruled; then monarchy was theological. Afterwards, the Renaissance raised the idea of the State, and the Lutheran revolt weakened the Church, consequently Monarchies became National. Later, the Counter Reformation pushed religion to the front again; then came Peter the Great, and Frederic William the first, who introduced Military Monarchy, and declared that Government must be uncontrolled. And so there began what Lord Acton calls, "that tremendous power supported by millions of bayonets—which is the greatest danger that remains to be encountered by the Anglo Saxon race."

The Papacy also remained, but greatly different, now that almost every nation of Teutonic blood had revolted, and only the Latin races remained under its obedience.

Yet, again Religion showed its marvelous power both of rebirth and of adaption to changed environment. In place of the one Church organization, Nation-

Churches arose; they are here still. They quickly claimed independent authority; soon we hear of Anglicanism; we very nearly heard of Gallicanism in the days of the Grand Monarch; we may hear of it again.

But in truth—though it seems absurd to say nowadays, when yesterday's newspaper is accounted "Ancient History"—we are far too near the changes—far greater than those of any period in the Christian era—of the sixteenth century. We are not at the end—we are nowhere near the end—nor can we tell what the end will be, of the Renaissance and of the revolt from Rome. To some extent we can see the course events are taking. We see how the Lutheran movement was largely checked by the Counter-Reformation. We see Calvinism under the name of Puritanism becoming dominant for a time in Scotland and in England, and in the State as well as in the Church. And that meant the rise of Democracy—the power of the opinion of the whole of the people; an idea not contained in Lutheranism which always relied on Rulers. When King James said to those whom the Commons sent to him as a deputation, "Set stools for the Ambassadors," the insight of the British Solomon was true; for they were the representatives of a power destined to become stronger than the sceptres of monarchs; the power, that is, of the people, with the idea of individual liberty underlying it. To sum up briefly; the changes of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries are mainly—in the State, the power of the people; in Religion, Individualism; the assertion of the claim of each man's own conscience. Both these ideas grew steadily through the centuries after the Reformation and both of them are growing still.

Coleridge, it is said, once asked Charles Lamb, "Charles, did you ever hear me preach?" "I never heard you do anything else," was the reply stuttered out by that immortal humorist; I also will preach, it shall not be for long.

One of the uses of the study of history is that it trains us to take large views.

"Have big maps," said Lord Salisbury. I agree; adding, "read histories covering a long period." We see, when we look on the past as the man on the hill side looks back on the landscape, that events—*pregnant* events, to quote a phrase from Sir John Seeley—are few, and it takes long years for their effects to be fully worked out. Hence the record of a short period only may be worse than useless, unless well written; it may even mislead. Deeds done in decisive years had their causes in periods, perhaps in centuries, long preceding them.

For instance: I have preferred to speak of the Teutonic revolt from Rome rather than of the Reformation; not from theological reasons, but simply because it is impossible to assign any exact date for that movement.

Luther nailed the theses on Wittenburg Church in 1517, but the movement against the Papal Court had begun even before the days of Wycliffe. So again, the war between Charles and the English Parliament in one sense began in August, 1642; but the long contest between the Puritan spirit and Church authority had begun before Elizabeth's reign. Neither Rome nor the Stuarts in the least understood the magnitude of the issues they were confronting; no age, I fear, ever does. Every age as it comes seems unable to discern the signs of the times; only the student of history gets help because he alone it is who sees the direction which *ideas* are taking, and can compare those of his own age with those in preceding times.

In this sense, history repeats itself; similar ideas recur; and may be expected to produce similar fruits. The lesson is not always easy to learn. The immense change in environment must always be taken into account; to do this is no easy matter. We may ask, for instance, Is liberty safe in the present day? It would be a foolish answer to say, Yes, simply because a modern

M. P. is in no danger of being arrested by King Edward VII, as the five were by King Charles I.

Again, History teaches us to distinguish between the permanent and the transitory. This, stated baldly, seems almost a needless lesson; we can always distinguish that, people say. On the contrary, there is nothing harder than to distinguish between permanent ideas and that visible framework which in a particular age they may take, but which is always transitory.

For instance, when the monasteries were destroyed by the much-married monarch of pious memory, no doubt many a monk despaired of religion; when General Monk brought back the merry monarch, not of pious memory, when John Milton had to hide his head, and the regicides were exiled or fled; then no doubt many a Puritan thought the light of liberty was put out.

Not so in either case, and in both cases the student of history would have been helped to discern that despair was needless, that no abiding ideas were gone, and that though the environment was altered, the underlying idea remained.

Again, History teaches progress—but I must explain the word. *Spiral* progress, not progress in a straight line—a progress therefore quite compatible with periods, even long continued periods, of deep depression. In history, the word Evolution, misleads. No doubt in the Divine mind there is one idea—"One far off Divine event to which the whole creation moves"—but that idea is both too vast and too far off for any finite mind to grasp. What we can see, I think, is a change in the condition of things; both an elevation and a growth of the environment of humanity. On the whole, we see an elevation of general morality; of education, courage, and self restraint and by these things—to quote Lord Acton —"History aids us to see that the action of Christ who is risen on mankind whom He redeemed, fails not, but increases; that the wisdom of divine rule appears not in

the perfection but in the improvement of the world."

But all this is quite compatible with reappearances of terrible individual depravity; we have no lesson from history teaching that such cannot recur. Only they will work in a different scene; and that means a great deal. I can conceive another woman as bad as Catherine de Medici. She could not even plan, still less carry out, another S. Bartholomew. And one thing more. Study History, for History carries you, like no other study except the best poetry can, where we see, even if as in a glass darkly, events *sub specie aeternitatis.*

Behind the theatre of life, the strutting of the actors on this temporary stage—behind the changes, the transits, and the turmoil there is another world—a world-soul to use the Platonic phrase, which shows the true meaning. Behind the stirring incidents—behind the changing scenes—behind the passions, the crimes, the intrigues, the ambitions, the miseries, and the sins—behind the seemingly tangled web of folly, of falseness, and of wrong, formative ideas from earliest ages worked; they work now, and will work.

History is the governance of God made visible; the ideas which are His thoughts are behind; His hand holds every thread; He attunes to one vast harmony all events; each age its own lesson tells; the rolling ages have their meaning, they mean intensely and they mean good—"to find their meaning is my meat and drink."